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THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

AUGUST 2021



Crafty changes

HOW QUICK THINKING KEPT MINISTRY PLANS ALIVE IN LOCKDOWN

*Mental health and COVID 2.0 • Synod postponed
Not giving in to fear • Don Carson on life & faith*



Love the Lord in lockdown

Getting ready: Members of Life Anglican in Quakers Hill saw lockdown coming and filmed their kids' club drama in advance.

Judy Adamson

There might be a lockdown, but that hasn't stopped our parishes from creating inventive ministry and outreach over the past month or so.

Amid the return to online-only services and pastoral care by phone or Zoom, quick thinking across the Diocese has also helped some churches do the (almost) impossible to ensure God's word gets out there.

As the recent school holidays approached, the QuHACKK (Quakers Hill Anglican Church Kids Klub) team were determined the annual event would go ahead. But they didn't have much time.

Rector the Rev Geoff Bates says that the week before lockdown was announced, the increase in restrictions meant work had already begun to move events online.

"We had changed our holiday kids' club to two different sites because of the four-square-metre issue, but then we realised it wasn't going to work," he says. "We had almost 300 kids plus 100 or so volunteers... In our larger venue, [restrictions] meant we would have had 200 kids in a hall and no adult supervision except for whoever was on the platform."

"Then when lockdown... was announced at 2pm on Saturday afternoon [June 26], that put all the changes on steroids! We got a team and did all of the physical things that needed to be done before lockdown came into effect at 6 o'clock that night."

This included packing and delivering hundreds of craft boxes to homes across the area. The team even managed to get a box of craft to a family linked to the church that was getting on a plane that

SOUTHERNCROSS August 2021
volume 27 number 7



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COVER IMAGE: Kids' club craft is filmed at Quakers Hill.

Publisher: Anglican Media Sydney
PO Box W185 Parramatta Westfield 2150 NSW
P: 02 8860 8860 F: 02 8860 8899
E: info@anglicanmedia.com.au

Managing Editor: Russell Powell

Editor: Judy Adamson

Art director: Stephen Mason

Advertising Manager: Kylie Schleicher

P: 02 8860 8850 E: ads@anglicanmedia.com.au

Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement.
Inclusion of advertising material is at the discretion of the publisher.

Subscriptions: Garry Joy

P: 02 8860 8861 E: gjoy@anglicanmedia.com.au

\$44.00 per annum (Australia)

Printed by: Southern Colour



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LIVESTREAMED EVENT



All hands on deck: Extra volunteers help pack craft boxes at Quakers Hill before the lockdown deadline.



Take a bow: The QuHACKK cast of "A Dragon's Tale".

night to move to Perth. The kids were able to take part in everything while in quarantine on the other side of the country.

Even parents who had initially sought a refund when the church moved the program online gratefully received the packs after lockdown was announced, because it provided them with activities their kids could do at home.

"It became extremely popular in the lockdown context because they couldn't have organised something else for their kids," Mr Bates says. "Craft went out to 500 kids – we just couldn't believe it!"

The music and drama were prerecorded, along with a video tutorial for the kids' craft. Some of the memory verses were done live by a "wizard" and, in line with the Medieval theme, a king and a queen sat at a table providing a live link for each element of the morning – including feedback from the kids and pictures of the craft they had done.

"We think we were the only church that did a kids' club during the last holidays," Mr Bates says. "We were so close to closing ours but we just pushed through."



Crafty congregation: Members use materials supplied to children in their "QuHACKK-in-a-box".



Podcast format: Soul Revival Digital's panel in action during the Jonah weekend.

A QUICK CHANGE OF PLANS

It was also all systems go at Soul Revival Church in the Shire on the day prior to lockdown. Youth pastor Ethan Crawshaw says the leadership team was confident that lockdown was coming, and so decided to prepare for that weekend's services to be online.

"During the first lockdown we had six separate services a week with different sermons and different people leading, which was excellent, but because of the late notice on Friday we thought we'd just put one out," he says.

"We recorded it at 9.30 on Friday night, after youth group. It was wild!" he adds with a laugh. "But it was also really lovely, because all the youth leaders had a role. A junior leader in Year 12 read the

Bible, another of our leaders prayed and our youth co-ordinator did the sermon, and it was a lovely night.

"The lockdown was announced the next day in the middle of a wedding at church, but we were ready... The service went live on Facebook in time for our 5.30pm service that night."

But that wasn't all. The following Friday to Wednesday was supposed to be Soul Revival's week away. The adults were to hear local bishop Peter Hayward speak on Luke while the kids did Jonah, yet suddenly the 250 members who had planned to be away together were all going to be at home – apart.

More brainstorming followed, which resulted in senior pastor the

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Rev Stuart Crawshaw writing a sermon series on Jonah in less than a week as leaders quickly pivoted to an all-online event.

"He preached on Thursday night, and we recorded one service that night and another three on Friday," Ethan Crawshaw says. "While we were brainstorming all of this, the Government said that we couldn't sing, so we decided to change the format even more and turn it into a podcast.

"We had a panel of three service leaders, and they would have a chat to each other, and then we would have a kids' segment with a puppet... The kids sent in questions for the puppet to read out, which was hilarious.

"We also have a lady in our church who is an art teacher... she did these beautiful artworks for each of the Bible readings, then took a video as she scratched some of the paint off. With Jonah 2, as the



Jonah visuals: Interactive art for Bible readings by Cassie Waddington.

reading was read out a whale was revealed, which was really cool."

The church used prerecorded music clips from 2020 and then knitted the podcasts together into a package. Members also took part in a live trivia night on Facebook, and a movie "watch party" on Sunday night.

"I think people responded really well," Mr Crawshaw says. "After the trivia night we ended up sitting talking to people for three hours live... it was a beautiful way to have community in that weird space.

"One of the things we really wanted to do was love people. Everyone was watching the same old things quite a lot during COVID [last year] and we got into a pattern. So, we wanted to give them something they could be a part of online rather than something they would all just sit and watch.

"At the same time, it was very important for us not to get rid of the liturgy and remove the fact that it's a church service. Despite calling it a podcast I think we managed to pull off that 'service' format and stay true to that liturgy while still doing something different."

WHATEVER WORKS, DO IT

Parishes have held daily lockdown lunches online, ramped up the Zoom prayer meetings, morphed a Christmas in July outreach event into an "iso-baking" Zoom feast with accompanying talk, and put together videos of kids at home doing the actions to a Colin Buchanan song. All good stuff to share at online church.

Lego has also been a big lockdown winner – particularly as parents found themselves at home with their kids throughout the school holidays. Photos of people's latest creations have been a regular feature on social media, so high school teacher and PhD candidate Matthew Payne put the message out on Facebook about the annual "Big Family Build" run by Christian outfit Zenos Media.

This year's theme was Biblical metaphors and similes. Mr Payne and his 11-year-old son Caleb built the "body of Christ", while serious Lego enthusiast the Rev Joel Moroney – families minister at Willoughby Park – created the full armour of God with his older sons Oliver, 7, and Lucas, 5.



The Lego armour of God: Joel Moroney with Oliver and Lucas.

"We started off by coming up with the idea together," Mr Moroney says. "We went through all the Bible books we had up in our bedroom and picked stories out that we thought could work... then I designed it and gave them sections to work on."

"For my five year old I built it and unbuilt it and showed him how to do it himself, whereas all the rockwork around the side, that's my seven year old. I just gave him the pieces and said, 'Go for it'."

"We have been playing with lots of Lego during lockdown... I've been sorting through the Lego room – I have a room just for my Lego – which is spilling into the living room at the moment. So I'm under pressure to get it back into the Lego room so people can actually walk through the living room!"

Mr Payne says that, aside from Minecraft, Lego is his son's favourite thing. Entering the Big Build gave them something to do together that was both fun and Bible-related, which has been particularly handy during lockdown.

"We've had a lot of time!" he says. "It does help to have good activities for kids when they're going stir crazy because they're not allowed to go and see their mates."

GOD'S STILL AT WORK

Not being able to do things as normal has been rough for everybody, yet God is still building his church.

Geoff Bates says that in 2021, for the first time in the 19-year history of kids' club at Quakers Hill, parents were able to watch the entire program rather than just seeing snippets at family nights or on Sunday. "We had ministry to the parents or carers of these children in a way we have never had before, and that was gold," he says.

"Out of lockdown something special emerged. At Life Anglican we were able to produce a resource that other churches – small



The body of Christ: Caleb and Matthew Payne pose with their Lego entry.

or large – can use, which is something we wouldn't have done otherwise. People need to see that good came out of a challenging time.

"And because we had Zoom meetings for the kids in small groups, where we did activities and taught them about Jesus, lots of kids recommitted their lives to Jesus – and 10 per cent of 500 kids said for the first time that they want to follow Jesus!"

"We were blown away by the way God answers our prayers. In fact, we were surprised and delighted. He always does more than we can ask or imagine."

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Church plant for one of Sydney's fastest-growing suburbs



Begin with prayer: Members of the Macquarie Park church plant at the congregation's "soft" launch.

Hannah Thiem

Macquarie Park is a multicultural hub that is growing at twice the rate of your average Sydney suburb. It is home to the second-largest business district in NSW, two metro stations, a huge shopping centre and a university – all of which draw hundreds of thousands of people who don't yet know Jesus.

With 36,000 people expected to move in over the next 10 years, Kirribilli-based parish Church by the Bridge saw an urgent need for more churches in Macquarie Park that could reach these people with the gospel. After a successful launch in May, with 97 attending the first service, senior pastor the Rev Paul Dale says that "God has opened a new door for the church in this area of Sydney".

Any new church plant faces its challenges. But for CBTB Macquarie Park, these difficulties have been compounded as they started meeting less than two months before the lockdown.

"It's hard to keep that going when we can't gather and relationships were just forming!" says site pastor the Rev Andrew West. "Some people had only been a part of our church for two weeks."

Despite this, Mr West says the congregation is trusting in God. "[We] know that he is building his church, even if the timing of this lockdown isn't what we would have chosen."

Mr West asks for prayer that God will help the team form deep relationships even when members can't meet face to face, and that they will love one another deeply during this period. But more than

anything, he asks for prayer that the lost will be saved through this church plant.

"Pray for revival, pray for God to be glorified and the lost won for Christ."

God is already working through the launch participants, too. As a member of CBTB for more than 11 years, Belinda Lu is encouraged by how God is working through the church. "God has graciously grown our church family from five services to eight services across Kirribilli and Neutral Bay and now the launching of a new service at Macquarie Park," she says.

Ms Lu decided to be part of the launch after realising how regularly she was in Macquarie Park for shopping, exercise and social activities.

"After much time in prayer, it made sense to be part of the launch," she says. "I am excited to be a light for Christ and do life with others in my local community."

Her prayer for the new congregation is that members will build relationships and be united in Christ as they work together to reach the lost in the area.

SC

CBTB Macquarie Park meets in Trinity Chapel at Macquarie University. Those interested in joining the congregation can contact Andrew West (andrew.west@cbtb.org.au).

New course helps parish nominators

Tara Sing

A training course has been launched by the Centre for Ministry Development to help nominators navigate the tricky process of finding a new senior minister for their church. The course is a free, self-directed resource that aims to equip a team of nominators with the skills they need to identify the right person to serve their church family.

The inspiration came from the number of questions Peter Mayrick, co-director for the Centre for Ministry Development, and his colleagues were receiving from nominators looking for guidance.

"I found that after completing the [nomination] process, a range of nominators called to try to understand the process and how to go about it," Mr Mayrick says. "That's why we all thought it was important to do something like this."

The Rev Dr Raj Gupta (above), who headed up the development of the course, says there are complexities to being a nominator many people aren't aware of until the responsibility is thrust upon them.

He adds that many nomination teams are navigating the process for the first time – or, if they have done it before, usually a significant amount of time has passed and a number of procedural changes have occurred.

In addition, the system and the ordinance can be a challenge to understand, even with bishops and the Diocese offering guidance and assistance, and nomination teams may be unsure where they should start looking, or who to consider as a good fit for their church.

"How do they know the pool of people they can choose from?" Dr Gupta asks. "What is a presbyter? How do they know who is in the process of becoming a presbyter? How do they know how they should think about who they suggest? Should they look to a church of 500 people? Is that the best thing for them to do when their church is 50 people?"

The Nominators Training Course acts as a handbook that can help nominators each step of the way. "We lead people through a process



to prayerfully reflect on where their church is up to, and therefore the kind of person they need, under the Lord," Dr Gupta says.

"We make suggestions to help people get through things in a timely manner. [We cover] interviewing techniques – such as behaviourally based interviewing techniques. We talk about the importance of communication with candidates."

The team sought feedback from bishops in order to design a course that works within the diocesan process, helps people follow the ordinance and, ultimately, will see the right person step into the role as senior minister.

"Our prayer is that the Lord would use this resource to assist nominators in finding the best fit for their particular parish to lead them into the next chapter, as they seek to reach their area for the Lord Jesus," Dr Gupta says.

"One of the big things we need to do as a Diocese is have the right people in the right places at the right times with the right facilities. We hope this resource will help people prayerfully work out what that looks like."

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Children's ministry from Manly to the Top End



PHOTO: Svetlana485

Tara Sing

It's not often you can combine a passion for children's ministry with a passion for mission and a love for the red dirt of the outback. The Rev Naomi Ireland is thrilled to be able to do all three in her new role supporting children's ministry leaders across the Northern Territory.

After spending seven years ministering to families and children at St Matt's, Manly, Ms Ireland has started partnering with Bush Church Aid to work for the Anglican Diocese of the Northern Territory. Her role will be to work alongside churches – building relationships with children's ministry leaders – to see the faith of children grow across the Territory.

"I can't tell you how God will use me, but I'm looking forward to seeing it!" Ms Ireland says. "I'm looking forward to seeing how God works in those individual relationships that may come, and how I can invest in the lives of little people around the diocese."

Many of the churches Ms Ireland will be working with are located in remote, Indigenous communities, where she will have opportunities to hear from local leaders and find ways to helpfully and appropriately support the great gospel work that is already happening.

"I'm excited about growing in my understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal culture and building deep relationships with my Aboriginal brothers and sisters," she says. "I've got a real desire to

be a strong and good ally for Indigenous people.

"I'm not Indigenous. I can't pretend to understand the things they face, even today – whether they be remote communities or urban Aboriginal people. I want to be someone who listens and learns and is eager to support in ways that are useful. Listening to what they need, rather than telling them what they need, is important to me."

In preparation for ministry in the Top End, Ms Ireland spent six months at St Andrew's Hall, the Church Missionary Society's intensive training centre for missionaries.

"I don't know that you can totally and utterly prepare," she says. "You do your best, seek to learn and understand as much as you can, but until you engage with people... The biggest preparation is holding in balance the fact that you have something to offer, and you need to come willing to learn."

As she settles into life in Darwin and begins her role, Ms Ireland's prayer is for the churches in her new home. She asks for others to join her in her prayers.

"Pray that I'll be a humble learner and a good ally to my Aboriginal brothers and sisters, and that I will listen well to what they're saying," she says. "Pray for the continual ministry that's happening in communities, and that God will continue to provide good support for leaders. Pray that God will raise up the next generation of Indigenous leaders to lead churches in these communities." SC

a kid like me need2 someone like you



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Minister on two continents – at the same time

Judy Adamson

If you had asked Michael and Karen Crichton at the beginning of 2020 what they thought the immediate future held, they would have said, “India”.

In mid-2019, they undertook cross-cultural training with CMS at St Andrew’s Hall in Melbourne. Late in 2019, Mr Crichton was invited to become pastor of the Delhi International Christian Fellowship (DICF). He resigned as rector of St Alban’s, Lindfield and made preparations to go to Delhi. All that remained to do was celebrate their daughter’s wedding and get on a plane.

“Our daughter got married in March [2020] – and that was the weekend when lockdown restrictions were introduced,” he recalls. “We were meant to fly out to Delhi five days later but, thanks to COVID, we never got there.”

Anticipating a short pandemic delay, Mr Crichton began to run online services for his congregation on the other side of the planet.

“I would pick songs, a Bible passage, I’d prerecord the service leading and the preaching, and other people would do the Bible readings and prayers,” he says. “At the beginning I thought, ‘I’ll be doing this for a couple of months – that’ll be fine’, and it ended up being 15 months!”

The couple moved from Lindfield to a rental property in June 2020, and from the rental property to the rectory at St Clements’, Mosman in December, as Mr Crichton had become acting rector. All throughout this time he kept up his work with the Delhi church.

“I figure I was one of the busiest clergymen in Sydney, with two churches,” he says with a laugh. “It was pretty full-on!”

Most members of DICF are expats and a number had returned home because of COVID, so people were logging in for the services from the US, Japan, Singapore and Africa, as well as India. Everyone kept in touch via WhatsApp, posting prayer points or making comments live during the service.

By early 2021, the pandemic seemed to be settling. After meeting solely online for almost a year, unable to see each other because of restrictions, church members in Delhi finally met again face to face in February and March.

“Everything was looking good,” Mr Crichton says. “We’d waited a little longer before committing to leave to make sure everything was fine and because we wanted to get our vaccinations. Then the devastating wave of the Delta variant hit.

“It’s hard to appreciate what it’s been like for them compared to what we’ve been through. A number of members... had parents or other relatives die and they couldn’t be with them, and couldn’t get them the oxygen or medical care that they knew they needed. That was pretty tough. We had the WhatsApp group... but you can’t give people a hug or cry with someone face to face.

“When I saw on the news the images of funeral pyres, of bodies piling up everywhere, I thought, ‘We might not get there for another 12 months’... and at that point I knew we couldn’t go.

“We felt that God was shutting the door rather than us having to decide to pull the pin. We were really sad. We had our hearts set on going, and we also felt a sense of responsibility for the church. But



Long-range pastor: (top) Michael and Karen Crichton with church members in the background on TV; (above) a DICF service in March this year.

this [ministry from a distance] couldn’t continue long term.”

Mr Crichton spent nine months leading two churches on two continents, then – much to his surprise – became rector of St Clement’s last month.

“We’d been having lovely a time at Mosman and really enjoying our ministry among the people here, but we hadn’t thought it was an opportunity for us,” he says. “We’d kept on saying, ‘We’re going to India’... but it just wasn’t to be.”

He says June 27 was their last online service with the Delhi church, and he and his wife “wept through the whole thing” as they watched it and received comments and texts from members. “That was hard, to say goodbye,” he says.

The church is now looking for a pastor to lead them through online services for, potentially, the rest of 2021 – and Mr Crichton says the ministry is crucial for congregation members.

“It was hard to keep doing the services online month after month, because these are people we never actually met, but it became apparent as time went on that my services and preaching were actually a faith lifeline for them.

“It has been an amazing journey of faith but God has been faithful and kind every step of the way,” he adds. “Scripture says, ‘Man makes his plans but God guides his steps’. That has certainly been our experience.”

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Synod postponed

The COVID pandemic has forced the postponement of the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney for the second year in a row.

Synod is the governing body of the Diocese where parish rectors, lay representatives and diocesan delegates meet annually. The membership of Synod numbers more than 600 people.

Normally held over five days in October, it was postponed last year due to COVID measures making large gatherings impossible. A shortened, one-day session was held in May this year, along with an election Synod for Archbishop.

Planning was well advanced for a regular Synod session to

commence on September 6 when lockdown began late in June.

A circular to Synod members said that Archbishop Kanishka Raffel made the decision to postpone, with the concurrence of the Standing Committee, in response to the significant increase in community transmission of COVID-19. In addition, even if restrictions ease by September it is expected that the rules still in place for gatherings and social distancing would prevent such a large meeting as Synod from going ahead.

The Standing Committee will meet early this month to consider alternative dates. SC

Going forward with Gafcon Australia

Russell Powell

The Gafcon Australia conference planned for Sydney may have been stopped by COVID but its work is moving forward, according to an online announcement.

Instead of a week-long conference, a livestreamed session on the night of Monday, July 19 was told of a plan to care for Anglicans isolated in their own dioceses by revisionist teaching.

"With great sadness and regret, we realise that many faithful Anglican clergy and laypeople will no longer be able to remain as members of the Anglican Church of Australia if changes allowed by the Appellate Tribunal majority opinion take place in their dioceses", said the chairman of Gafcon Australia, Bishop Richard Condie.

"We love these people and don't want them to be lost to the Anglican fold. We want them to be recognised and supported as they love and serve their own communities."

Bishop Condie expanded on Gafcon's statement last year, Commitment 2020, pledging to form a new diocese for Anglicans who will be forced to leave the Anglican Church of Australia.

The multi-step plan starts with a new church entity formed through a company structure, led by a small board of directors. Former ACA churches would be able to join as affiliates of the new entity, through an affiliation agreement. Later, these churches will become a Diocese, establishing a Synod to elect a bishop and a standing committee.

The diocese, once established, is expected to be recognised by the Gafcon primates – as they have endorsed the formation of similar dioceses in the USA, Canada, Brazil and New Zealand, where the established Anglican Church in these countries has departed from the teaching of Scripture.

Gafcon Australia also announced the appointment of the Rev Michael Kellahan as its first executive officer. Mr Kellahan was previously executive director of the religious think tank, Freedom for Faith.

The Gafcon movement began in 2008 at the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem, where Anglicans met from around the world to work to heal and restore the Anglican Communion in the face of theological revision.

The historic Jerusalem Declaration, made at that conference, guides the movement. Gafcon Australia was formed in 2015.

The global movement now embraces more than 70 per cent of the world's worshipping Anglicans with the catchcry "Proclaiming Christ faithfully to the nations".

"It grieves the Gafcon movement that these measures are necessary," Bishop Condie said in a statement, "but the support of faithful Anglicans has been the objective of Gafcon Australia since its beginning.

"Gafcon Australia embraces evangelical, catholic and charismatic Anglicans, ordained women and men, and laypeople, each of whom uphold the Jerusalem Declaration. We see a great future for faithful Anglicans as they love ordinary Australians with the gospel." SC

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Sickness, COVID and the hope to come

Kanishka Raffel

John's Gospel records an episode in the life of Jesus that is both deeply personal and powerfully universal. As far as Scripture records, Jesus never experienced illness himself. He did, however, experience hunger, thirst, the barbarous physical cruelty of flogging and crucifixion. And of course, Jesus experienced death.

Jesus is famously recorded on numerous occasions being swamped by people who were ill or suffering from some mental, physical or demonic affliction. His reputation as a healer was documented even by non-Christian ancient sources.

In John chapter 11 we are given a window into how Jesus was affected by the sickness of others. He evidently had a special and close relationship with the little family of Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus in Bethany. When Lazarus becomes ill, his sisters send word to Jesus: "Lord, the one you love is sick". When Jesus comes to Bethany and stands outside the tomb in which the body of Lazarus has been laid, John records that "Jesus wept".

Christianity does not promise its followers a life free from illness. On the contrary, faith in Christ isn't a protective bubble from the ordinary sorrows and suffering of this fallen world, which groans for its liberation from death and decay. The ancient account of the disobedience of the man and the woman in the garden at the beginning has unfolded in myriad cascading sorrows and calamities throughout history. The presence of sickness in the world is a wretched reminder of this continuing reality.

But in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, Christians proclaim that there is a new world coming – restored, healed and liberated from disease, decay and death. Jesus demonstrated the presence and power of this new world in his healing of the sick around him and in commanding the dead, including Lazarus, to rise. By his death and resurrection Jesus secured the certainty of that coming, future world as its King and Redeemer.

So, what does all this mean in light of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic? First, Christians approach this crisis with confidence that, in life and death, Jesus is Lord. Nothing is more pressing than reconciliation with him, nothing is more wonderful than the promise of his presence with his people in this life and the next.

As a result, second, we may live in times of crisis not in fear



or anxiety, but in prayerful trust and loving service of others. We take action on the basis of what will honour Christ and serve our neighbour; we resist temptations to selfishness or neglect of others.

It's important to be as well informed as we can be. The website sydneyanglicans.net has a COVID-19 page full of information relevant to the conduct of ministries across the Diocese, including resources and advice about maintaining spiritual and physical wellbeing in this time of lockdown. Anglicare provides counselling services and can be contacted on 1300 651 728.

I'm grateful for the way in which local churches have responded creatively and cheerfully to the needs of members and their own communities, and for forbearance with the restrictions that have been placed on our ability to meet in person. God approves law abiding, and Scripture calls us to submit to our governing authorities and to pray for them, as "This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:3-4).

SC

Sovereign Lord, you are the hope and healer of your people and have promised a world where there is no more sickness or crying or death. By your death and resurrection, you have set your people free from the penalty of sin and death. We pray your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Please prosper the work of those who are administering the rollout of COVID vaccines. Please strengthen those who are treating the sick. Please comfort those who are mourning the loss of loved ones or living in fear of this disease.

Uphold those facing financial stress or social isolation and make us a generous and caring people.

Please give governing authorities wisdom in their management of this crisis, and give your people your peace beyond understanding, generous and wise hearts and a renewed trust in your sovereign goodness and glory.

Turn the hearts of many now experiencing fear and anxiety that they may find the peace that is the fruit of the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

A woman who did not give in to fear



The godly life and service of Dorothy Mowll are an example for all Christians, writes JANE TOOHER.

God has been very kind in giving the Sydney Diocese many excellent Archbishop's wives. Dorothy Mowll was one such woman. When you read about her life there is a recurring theme: that she did not give in to fear. Indeed, in 1957 she wrote in her diary, "The frontiers of the Kingdom of God were never advanced by men and women of caution".

Dorothy did not give in to fear because her concern was to serve and love God and her neighbour before herself (Matt 22:37-40). This eternal focus helped her achieve many great things in this life, and helped her not become bitter with the many hardships and sufferings she faced.

Born in England in 1890, Dorothy went to live in China at six months of age. Her parents, the Rev John Martin and his wife Eliza, had served there as missionaries since 1881 – first when they were single, before marrying in 1884.

When Dorothy was only a preschooler, her mother Eliza and younger sister Olive died. Following their deaths, her father took his three eldest children back to England for their education.

Dorothy and her younger brother Cyril remained in China, where they were looked after by their aunt Emma Goldie – also a CMS missionary.

Mr Martin quickly returned to China, albeit to a different location. He was now in Ku-cheng (Gutian County), where nine missionaries and two of their children had been murdered just two months earlier. These victims included Australians Nellie and Topsy Saunders, and Annie Gordon. Emma Goldie later brought Dorothy and Cyril to live with their father, and he wrote of the impact of their arrival:

The presence of the children made a favourable impression on the people, the Christians being specially pleased. Not very long after their arrival, I heard it was reported that the Heathen and Christians had been heard to say, "The missionaries were not afraid to live in Ku-cheng again, and they indicated by bringing up the two children they were willing to entrust themselves to us."

We see above, and in other writings, that Dorothy's father, mother and aunt all made decisions that showed they did not give in to fear, but rather prioritised serving and loving God and their neighbour before themselves. This worldview was normal for Dorothy as she grew up, and she would choose it for herself.

Dorothy returned to England for her education but, like her father, mother and aunt before her, decided she wanted to be a missionary in China. To equip herself for the task, she took cookery classes, studied teaching and nursing, and undertook missionary studies with CMS.

MISSIONARY SERVICE

Dorothy arrived in China in 1915. Her annual missionary letters reveal her love and concern for the local people's physical and spiritual needs; her desire to train the locals in ministry and have them be the leaders; her priority for education; her lack of complaints despite challenging circumstances; her fearlessness; and her desire to do pioneering evangelistic work ever since she was a child.

She also helped people through her geographical skills by charting some previously unmapped regions of the country. In recognition of this, the Royal Geographical Society elected her as a Fellow. Her love of maps went along with a love of mountain climbing – for example, in August 1917 she was the first foreigner to conquer a 5800-metre peak known as the Chin-ting-shan, or Nine Pinnacle Mountain.

Her husband, Howard West Kilvinton Mowll, was the Assistant Bishop of West China from 1922-1926, Bishop of West China from 1926-1933 and then Archbishop of Sydney from 1934-1958. Bishop William Wharton Cassels, one of the Cambridge Seven, married Howard and Dorothy in Sichuan province on October 23, 1924. By all accounts it was a happy marriage. Former Archbishop of Sydney, Sir Marcus Loane, wrote in Howard Mowll's biography that

Marriage brought to Bishop Mowll the great joy of an ideal partner, though there were so many contrasts in their life and manners. He was solemn and she was gay; he was dignified, courteous and shy while she was full of merriment, adventure and vitality; he was slow and deliberate in thought, speech and movement, while she was fond of games and loved walking and gloried in the mountains; he was tall and handsome while she had those direct and disconcerting eyes.

He was always in need of an intimate companion in whom he could wholly confide, and he was to lean on her with absolute confidence. She was ready to play her role as his interpreter, and

set out to win for him the trust and goodwill of the Chinese; and he relied on her without reserve in all questions of language and travel quite as much in all the details of judgment and action. Their minds were drawn into one mould of thought and plan, and the passage of years only increased this deep sense of absolute harmony.

The pattern in China was to repeat itself in Sydney, where their lives were completely organised around the pivot of the diocesan activities. Their happiness and their fellowship with each other had no limitation, except in the absence of child-life from their home.

Dorothy was known to keep a cool head in stressful situations, which was especially helpful since they were victims in China of robberies, assaults and a kidnapping. In one such robbery, Howard was stabbed and clubbed, and Dorothy was also clubbed. Loane says about Dorothy during that assault that "her presence of mind never left her, and she tried to persuade them [the robbers] to sit down and drink a cup of tea".

No doubt Dorothy's ability to remain calm in stressful situations helped Howard in many and various situations both in China and Sydney.

MOWLL VILLAGE: CONCERN FOR AGED CARE

Dorothy Mowll got to know many women in the Sydney Diocese during World War II as they served alongside each other in the ministries of the Church of England National Emergency Fund (CENEF), which provided for the needs of servicemen and women. As a result, she became aware that some of them did not have adequate means to provide for their future. Howard was also worried about how clergy and missionaries would face life after retirement.

In God's providence, Pattie Menzies was also concerned for the housing situation of older Australians. According to notes in the



2021 OPEN WEEK

30 August – 3 September



moore.edu.au/open



An ideal partnership: Dorothy with her husband, Howard Mowll.

archives of Anglican Retirement Villages (now Anglicare), she influenced her husband – Prime Minister Robert Menzies – and he, the Australian government:

[...] in March 1955 the Minutes of CENEF Board of Management Meeting contained the following paragraph:

"His Grace the Archbishop mentioned the suggestion of Mrs Mowll that homes for retired Clergy and Church Workers might be built and suggested Menangle as the site. The Archbishop's announcement was prompted by the Commonwealth Government having recently passed the 'Aged Persons Homes Act'."

When the board was deciding on a site for the proposal, three properties came before them: Menangle, Bowral and, later, Castle Hill. No-one except Dorothy was keen on Menangle, so following her death it was not pursued. Howard was keen on Retford Park in Bowral, but the board considered Elwatan estate in Castle Hill as the preferable choice:

On 15th November 1958, the Standing Committee of the Diocese passed an ordinance entitled "Church of England National Emergency Fund Constitution Ordinance 1958". [...] Clause 8 of the Ordinance includes a provision that the land and premises described be used as a "Church Veterans Village".

Mowll Village is one of the most extraordinary contributions Dorothy made to the Sydney Diocese. She had the excellent foresight and vision to recognise the importance of promoting a way of life for retired people – beyond just providing them with housing. Mowll Village was opened on October 24, 1959, exactly one year after Howard Mowll's death.

TRIBUTES

Dorothy was appointed OBE in 1956 for her service to others during World War II and in the years following. After her death on December 23, 1957 from Hodgkin's disease, tributes flowed in from around the world, testifying to people's great love and admiration of her and their thankfulness to God for the woman she was.

She lived a life of service and love to God and her neighbour and took the many opportunities God gave her, not giving in to fear. Whether we are male or female, it is kind of God to provide Christian sisters like Dorothy to help model the Christian walk. And it is gracious of God that many in China, and we as a Diocese, have been blessed by God's work in Dorothy's life.

SC

Ms Jane Tooher is director of the Priscilla and Aquila Centre and lectures in church history at Moore College.



**heart
mind
life**

School Readiness Information Evening

**Tuesday 10 August, 5pm
ONLINE**

**How do you know if your
pre-schooler is ready to
start school in 2022?**

**At this information seminar, you will
discover some of the school readiness
indicators that point to whether or not
your child is prepared for Kindergarten.
You will also hear about our engaging
Early Stage 1 learning program.**

**Please book your place at:
[www.sacs.nsw.edu.au/events/
school-readiness-for-kindy](http://www.sacs.nsw.edu.au/events/school-readiness-for-kindy)**

**E: enrolments@sacs.nsw.edu.au
P: 02 9286 9664
Sydney Square, Sydney, NSW 2000**

www.sacs.nsw.edu.au



An Olympic request

Lord, grow your church: Believers from 75 churches and ministries across Japan sing "The Blessing".

Judy Adamson

Japan needs our prayers.

It's not as though the nation of 122 million people – fewer than one per cent of whom are Christian – doesn't already need prayers from God's people. But when you add COVID and the Olympic Games to the mix, things start to get complicated.

"It's a sad story," says Kodai Yamamoto, who is a member of the Sydney Japanese Evangelical Church at Naremburn-Cammeray. "We were very excited about hosting the Olympics two years ago, and the opportunities, but nobody welcomes it now."

COVID infections have spiked in Tokyo in recent days. In addition, prior to COVID many thousands of people were expected to come to the city to see the Olympics and Paralympics. Local Christians and missionaries were gearing up for outreach events and greatly increased opportunities to talk about Jesus. Most of these aren't possible now, but the encouragement is still for people to pray – for the safety of locals and athletes, for COVID in Japan, and for God's word to go out despite this setback.

"It's a good idea for Australian people to pray," says Mr Yamamoto, who remains part of the leadership team at his home church in Tokyo. "Even though there are no spectators at the Olympics we can pray... It's a very difficult field to spread the gospel, but we can pray [Christians] will have the strength from God to do that."

CMS NSW and ACT is encouraging its members to pray for wisdom and safety as the Olympics and Paralympics are held. Youth With A Mission suggests Christians around the globe use the Games as a reminder to pray for a spiritual awakening in Japan – for unity in the Spirit among believers, and for a continuation in what its Tokyo office describes as "a new level of openness in the hearts of the people".

The Japan International Sports Partnership still plans outreach during the Games (at a reduced level because of COVID), and also asks for prayer. JISP's director, the Rev Hiroaki Yonai, said: "We

really want you to pray as partners for the salvation of the souls of Japan and for sports ministry... We are praying to see much fruit and rejoice with people all over the world after these major events".

Adds Mr Yamamoto: "The word will still go out... through good times or bad times you need to share the gospel with the world, so we can pray that [Christians in Japan] will get strength from God and strive to tell people the gospel."

For specific prayer points during the Olympics and Paralympics, sign up to www.japan1million.com or YouVersion's 17-day Pray 4 Japan plan.

COVID AND CHURCH IN JAPAN

Churches in Japan aren't ordered to close their doors like here in Sydney, but that's not because COVID isn't a problem. It's because the Japanese constitution doesn't allow the Government to enforce a lockdown. It can only declare a state of emergency and ask people to stay at home. Not everyone complies, and for churches the decision can be particularly tricky as there is no official stance on whether religious activities are allowed.

Mr Yamamoto is aware of one church that stayed open and caused a COVID cluster, which resulted in Government criticism and wasn't a good witness, especially when Christianity is such a minority religion. On the other hand, older members may not have the technology to navigate online meetings – while younger members, who can be struggling with financial hardship from job losses as they also try to manage tertiary studies, want in-person support and connection with church friends.

"Some people just try to find churches that continue gathering in their buildings," he says. "That kind of church will say, 'We keep the church open by faith'... so people who are not satisfied with the decision to close the building want to go to a 'stronger' church."

"Australians can pray that God will give leaders of the churches in Japan strength to go through this difficult situation." SC



I live in Fairfield...

PHOTO: Wykymania

Tara Sing

With a high number of cases of community transmission, and with extra lockdown measures in place, life in the Fairfield local government area looks very different to a month ago. We asked three local Christians how the latest lockdown was affecting their lives, and how we can be praying for their community.

A DIFFICULT SEASON

For nurse and mum of three Mandy Ponnuswamy, life has become a frustrating juggle of remote learning, shifts at the out-of-area hospital where she works and trips to a testing clinic every three days. Also an essential worker in warehousing, her husband Jason joins her for regular testing.

"Initially the shops felt similar... it didn't seem like we were in a pandemic," says Mrs Ponnuswamy, who attends St Barnabas', Bossley Park. "This week it was very quiet. I think people are starting to take it seriously now."

I was trying to decide which shops to go to because there have been so many [local] cases. I went to a different store and then found out there was a case at my local shops at the exact time I would have been shopping. I only go out for essentials, but we run out of fruit and veg and milk and bread every week."

They are feeling the loss of not being able to meet with their church community. "Growth group and church on Zoom and YouTube are really hard, especially on a Sunday when the kids are so loud that we don't hear anything. [But] we are still prioritising having church on... we want to show our kids that church is a priority regardless of the circumstances we are in. If they can see that we are listening, or trying to listen, hopefully it shows them how important God is and meeting with his people is."

She prays God would provide resilience for her family and for Fairfield residents. "Pray we would keep trusting Jesus despite hardships and uncertainty. This is very stressful. A lot of people are really worried. Pray we would look out for people, praying for them, messaging and for lots of little ways we could be caring for them."

MINISTRY COMPLICATIONS

Living in the Fairfield LGA has made life much more complex for the Rev David Ould (below), assistant minister at St John's, Parramatta. When the lockdown was announced, his children were on a church youth camp, and he was taking his wife away for their 20th wedding anniversary.

"We had a lovely lunch together, and we were just outside Goulburn when my phone pinged," he says. He arranged a livestream church service while heading back to Sydney, and the children were picked up from camp by others.

"We're all so used to it, so as a leadership team we pivoted quickly, but also the weariness is deeper this time," he says. "Last year we didn't know what to expect, but now we know where it could go... The Delta strain is upsetting in that it just is clearly worse, and that unnerves people."

The past weeks have involved countless shuffling, with funerals to rearrange, weddings to postpone and the inability to physically be with those enduring hardship. "A church member had day-long surgery, and I couldn't be there," he says. "I'm not allowed to be there, whereas normally I'd go sit with the spouse for a while."

Although there are limitations, and in order to continue work Mr Ould must undergo testing every three days, he feels he has little to complain about. "There are multigenerational families living next door, but their work is outside the LGA so they can't do it. I can't complain when I think about what they're going through, and they're people with English as a second





"Pray we would keep trusting Jesus": Mandy Ponnuswamy with her husband Jason and their three children.

language. It's the tradies who are now missing out on the work."

Reflecting on the sovereignty of God helps him stay grounded. "This is a blip in the timeline," he says. "You have to believe that God knows exactly what he's doing, not just on the meta scale but with each of us individually... Two thousand years ago, Christ was born, lived, died, ascended – and sometime in the future he will return and there will never be another pandemic."

He adds: "It has been really encouraging for me when people have written and thanked us for the efforts we have made to adapt and continue to look after them... There have been real disappointments for pastors and they struggle to know what to do and how to look after people. Do know your pastor does care and is working hard, especially if he is on his own."

CULTURE SHOCK

The once-bustling streets of Cabramatta are now empty during the day, and a "total ghost town at night", according to Alex Manisier, (right) who attends Cabramatta Anglican. Mr Manisier is able to work from home but his housemate works outside the area and is required to undergo frequent testing.

There is a mix of gratitude and frustration. Mr Manisier is thankful to still have work and no financial troubles but misses interactions with people at church, the office and playing sport.

"I'm pretty introverted, but I haven't experienced this kind of isolation and loneliness before, so it's been an uphill battle trying to stay motivated while lockdown chips away at my mental health," he says. "I know people try to substitute face-to-face with video calls, but when you spend the working day on Microsoft Teams calls, the last thing you want to do when you finish work is jump on another call."

Shopping for essentials is now a strange experience. Growing

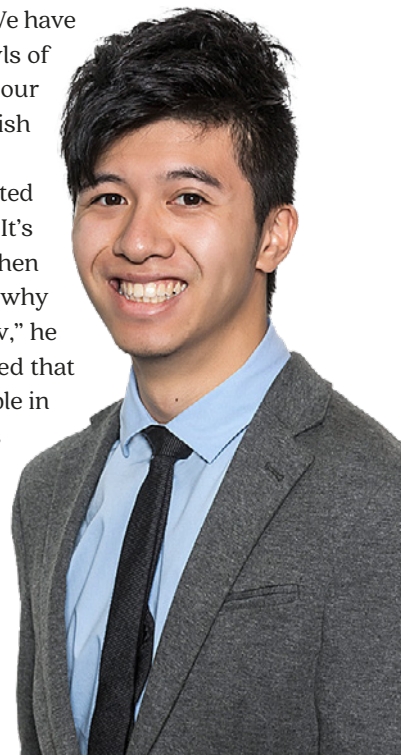
up in the area, he has fond memories of shopping with his mother and the interactions with friends and the community. The lockdown has affected the culture of Cabramatta's residents, many of whom are blue-collar workers from Vietnamese, Cambodian and Chinese backgrounds.

"I'm worried for local businesses and their employees," he says. "Not just because my favourite pho or pork roll shop might close down, but because the identity of our town is inseparable from its food. When we get visitors at church, we shout them Vietnamese food and bubble tea. We have conversations with our mates over bowls of bún bò Huế... that's such a big part of our local culture that it's scary to see it vanish overnight."

Mr Manisier admits to feeling "frustrated and confused towards God" right now. "It's difficult enough to spread the gospel when we're not in a pandemic, so I don't know why God has made it even harder for us now," he says. "But at the same time, I'm reminded that he has frustrated and confused his people in the past, and ultimately worked things for his glory."

"I don't know when this pandemic will end, or what lies for our church beyond it, but I know God is good and I know that God doesn't delight in our Sunday morning gatherings as much as he delights in our daily trust and obedience. That's what I have to keep reminding myself of."

SC





Cling to God, care for each other

Judy Adamson

We were hoping COVID lockdown wouldn't happen again in NSW but, once the cases kept coming, it was not surprising when the Premier kept extending the stay-at-home orders for Greater Sydney last month.

Just like 2020, our work and life patterns have been mucked up. And, just like 2020, anxiety and depression have reasserted themselves in the lives of many people – if they ever went away.

“For people who have still not recovered from last year, this has pushed all sorts of buttons,” says the Rev Dr Keith Condie, co-director of the Mental Health and Pastoral Care Institute at Mary Andrews College.

He adds that returning to lockdown in late June was worse for those whose mental health was adversely affected by 2020, because “they were hoping it was all over. This has just tapped into the difficulties of what happened last year, and there’s that sense of ‘I can’t do this again’.

“Some people did pretty well last year, and a lot of that comes down to having good social support. So, I’ve been locked down with my wife – we’re fine, we’re happily married. But if you’re living alone, or you have small children, or you’re in a family situation where things are not at all straightforward, it becomes a very difficult time.”

Dr Condie was one of three people Anglican Media spoke to early last year about COVID’s effect on mental health, and it seemed timely to ask for their thoughts about how Christians should respond this time around.

THE LONG COVID JOURNEY

Psychologist Bronwyn Wake, who works at St Andrew’s Cathedral School, saw mental health referrals increase last year – but this was after the city returned to a more normal rhythm.

“I think that was because, when we experience a crisis, often the adrenaline kicks in, we put our head down and push through it... and once it feels like the end is in sight we start to relax and process everything,” she says.

“My concerns are around the fact that people had started to let their guard down, so because of this they may have been less prepared [for another lockdown]. I get a sense that for those people in a mentally good place there was an acceptance and a familiarity to it... but for those who aren’t it could have been quite triggering.”

Inquiries have tripled at the practice of clinical psychologist Valerie Ling, who also works with staff and students at Moore College and with clergy through the Centre for Ministry Development. She believes the lockdown is simply part of the “journey” of COVID in Australia, noting that research from last



Prayer, care and remembering God's goodness : (L-R) Keith Condie, Bronwyn Wake and Valerie Ling.

year (and previous disease crises) suggests we will feel the effects of the pandemic up to three years from now.

"A few months ago I was also looking at the Google search trends between the different states," she says. "I wrote something about the statistics – that more people are using mental health strategies than ever before – [and] in the state of Victoria you were finding more people Googling burnout and exhaustion, which is a factor of multiple lockdowns.

"I think we haven't seen the full consequences of the pandemic yet, and it's not just related to lockdown."

WHAT DO WE DO?

There are plenty of things that we can and should do – and not do – as we work our way through this latest COVID chapter (see box).

Mrs Ling advises people to go back to basics: work on good sleep practices, have regular COVID-safe exercise, and be on the phone often to family and friends – which is good for us as well as them. She also suggests those working from home pace themselves and have realistic expectations about what they can achieve.

"Another issue is that, because we're so fatigued, we've lost a lot of the gumption to persist with [Christian lockdown supports]," she says. "We need to continue to create those Zoom breakout groups and Zoom prayer meetings. Hebrews talks about not giving up, and persisting... and at a time when we can't meet physically we need to press on, continuing to keep the digital world as the viable option even though it tires us.

"This is a time of trouble and trial, but the health and holiness of the church is extending love and care in the messages of grace and hope."

Mrs Wake adds that rather than ruminating on things we can't control, we should turn our thoughts and actions in a more positive direction. "I can't control the fact that I need to stay at home at the moment, but I *can* control what I do with my time... and change the focus from that sense of uncertainty and lack of control to lifting my mood," she says.

"The impact of routine is really important at the moment because when there's so much that's out of our control, to have a structure and a routine is really helpful. It brings a sense of normality to the day.

"You can also seek to help others. I can check on my neighbour. I can offer to buy groceries. I can bake cupcakes and leave them on their doorstep. I can meet a friend who's struggling and we can go for a walk together."

WHAT IS GOD DOING?

It's okay to ask this question! Dr Condie observes that "lots of people are feeling this way", but adds: "Let's follow the example of the psalmist, take our questions and concerns to the Lord and be honest in our dealings with him.

"Let's share with him what's on our hearts, but at the same time just go back to Scripture and remind ourselves of the constancy of his goodness and his love: that he is our refuge and strength, the resurrection hope that we have – and that he did not spare his own Son.

"He's done the biggest thing, so although this is really hard for lots of people, in God's providence there are truths revealed to us in Scripture that we can cling to."

Adds Mrs Wake: "You haven't been stripped of power in this situation, even though it can feel like you have been – and for most people that's where anxiety can come from. God is in control in terms of that bigger picture.

"As church communities we can encourage each other to lift our eyes from the things that are our everyday experience right now. Also, when you put an eternal perspective on it, this is not all that there is. There is a hope and future that we have through Jesus, so connection to that eternal perspective is really important. That knowledge of hope as well as community I would see as being very important for churches right now."

SC

HOW TO RESPOND

- Limit your time checking news updates
- Call friends and family – particularly those living alone
- Work on good sleep, eating and exercise habits
- Spend time outside appreciating God's creation – or find ways to bring nature inside with you
- Stay in the word and prayer, and be sure to pray for others
- Do the Zoom groups and the prayer sessions with people from church
- Spend time on activities (baking, hobbies, exercise) that lift your mood
- Think of simple ways to love and encourage friends and neighbours

Hope in the Builder



*Don Carson is a giant in the theological world and a great friend to this Diocese and country. A Canadian by birth, he taught theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois for 40 years, has written dozens of books, founded The Gospel Coalition with Tim Keller and has travelled extensively to preach and teach. He talks to **SIMON MANCHESTER**.*

You grew up with a pastor for a Dad, so do you remember your conversion? And how did your call to ministry come about?

I am uncertain whether I became a conscious believer at the age of eight – almost nine – or during my second year at university. At that juncture and for some time afterward, my aim was to gain an advanced degree in Chemistry and serve in a local church as a faithful layperson. Through a number of providentially ordered experiences, I was redirected to seminary training and vocational Christian ministry.

Did you ever wrestle with thoughts of the pastorate or the mission field before your long ministry in a theological college?

I was several years into pastoral ministry, including church planting, before the thought of teaching full time in a theological college crossed my mind. After teaching for about a dozen years, I very nearly returned to pastoral ministry but was very strongly challenged to stay where I was by [American theologians] Carl Henry and Kenneth Kantzer.

Apart from your own father and mother, who helped to shape your theology and your priorities in life?

I do not know how to answer this question. I can think of scores – indeed, hundreds – of people who have influenced me, but none has been the definitive mentor that some people seem to have enjoyed. For better or worse, that has probably made me a bit more eclectic than some, or perhaps just a bit more confused.

I've heard you say that your students (across 40+ years) miss a lot of what you say but don't tend to miss what you say often. So, what have you tried to say often?

Not “say often” but “get excited about”, though very commonly they are the same thing. And what excites me is the gospel – the robust, comprehensive, transforming news of what God has done to save and transform his rebellious image bearers through the matchless sacrifice of his Son on the cross, and his liberating resurrection from the dead.

That must never ever be assumed while we go on to other topics.

What is merely assumed in our teaching and preaching is soon relegated to the second or third tier of importance. Of course, other topics must be dealt with, but the “other topics” must find their place under what is of capital importance.

How have you juggled home, college work, writing and such a huge amount of travelling? You must have spent years in planes and airports!

I'm far from sure I got this right: you'd have to ask my wife and my kids. Of course, there are stages of life that demand more time – family illness, challenges from the kids, changing energy levels and so forth.

Working at TEDS [Trinity Evangelical Divinity School] for such a long time, what special dangers do a seminary and seminary lecturer face?
If you teach Christians all week, and often preach to Christians on the weekend, there is a danger that you will forget, or at least neglect, how to talk with unbelievers. There is something wrong with a seminary lecturer who never – from one year to the next – finds a place to explain clearly and succinctly to an unbeliever what the good news is, who Jesus is and what he has done. Moreover, there is at least some danger that you rest on old notes that you took 30 or 40 years ago, so that you are not refreshing your lectures.

You began The Gospel Coalition with Tim Keller in 2005 – was the aim to unite the church as well as equip the church?

Yes, but not at the expense of trying to unite all that calls itself the church. We are a coalition, not a denomination; to appeal to our oft-repeated mathematical analogy, we are a centre-bounded set – with the centre being the blessed gospel of Christ crucified – not a boundary-bounded set.

How do you think The Gospel Coalition is affecting the people of Christ and even the non-Christian world?

As it has always been our aim to foster new TGC units that are self-sustaining, self-governing and self-propagating within the agreed confessional parameters, how much TGC is affecting the people of Christ varies a great deal from country to country, from language group to language group. You are probably better positioned than I am to assess how The Gospel Coalition Australia is doing.

TGC websites operate now in 15 languages, all of them growing. Some of our digital materials – all of them free to users – are introductory, but there are many mid-level Bible studies and

theological essays, and the journal *Themelios* is pitched at a more advanced level and attracts hundreds of thousands of readers.

Taken as a whole, TGC has strengthened the hands and hearts of a new generation of pastors and other leaders. In some areas (e.g. the Balkans), TGC brings together converts who a couple of decades ago were committing genocide. Those who access TGC regularly are learning how to preach expositively, and in ways that feed the people of God.

Compared with the needs all around us this is still very much a day of small things, but we can be grateful that over the past year more than 40 million different individuals came to our website.

What are you yourself concentrating on now? And, given the shutdowns of the past 18 months, are there more projects or books in the pipeline?

I'm afraid I've got to the place where I usually do not talk about forthcoming projects until they are actually in the press!

What is the wisest thing that you've heard (or said or thought) about this pandemic and the human response?

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed (Lamentations 3:22).

We have so greatly valued your many visits to Australia over the years. What are one or two special memories of your time here?

Above all, the people I've met – not least you and Kathy.

Is there a new trend that you see in the Christian church of the 21st century and what would you want people to know and do about it?

Yes, there are several quite striking trends – but few if any are manifested worldwide. In other words, quite diverse trends are showing up in different corners of the globe.

For example, those who keep track of such things provide rich evidence that many parts of the Muslim world are witnessing greater numbers turning to Christ than at any time in the past 1300 years. I could outline some of the trends in the Western world, but the most important response is faithful, bold, loving articulation of the gospel, winsome in word and deed (cf. 1 Peter 2:11ff).

What keeps you hopeful as you survey the global scene?

Jesus said, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it”. That is the fundamental ground for hope. Empirically, that is being worked out in many corners of the world – both the opposition of the gates of Hades, and the building of the church by the Master.

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Who'd be a mother?

Christine Jensen



What do you think being a mum is all about? I remember thinking during the birth of my firstborn, 50 years ago, “Isn’t this the 20th century? Surely there must be pain-free childbirth?” Even having the epidural didn’t seem that pain free after a day’s labour.

Then there is the breastfeeding and one adventure after another, not to mention the crying and the colic, the teething and the sleep patterns. As I read once, “Full-time motherhood is like holding down two jobs”.

You never seem to do enough for your child – the one-on-one time, the extra playtime that would be good, reading bedtime stories in peace and quiet. There always seems more to do and you often feel inadequate. You constantly compare yourself and your baby’s achievements to others the same age. You know: “My baby sleeps through the night”; “James is rolling over”; “Susie is sitting up”; “Phoebe has six teeth already”; “Sam was toilet trained in a week”.

Meanwhile, it’s taken you six months and they still don’t do poos in the toilet. And when you go out, yours seems to be the one that is badly behaved – or maybe the one that is so shy they won’t leave your side. You just feel a failure.

And this is only the beginning! You never stop being a mother once you have begun and you feel every pain, every grief, every disappointment as though it were your own. There can be times in later years when your teenagers will do things you never imagined they would do. Mind you, all these things are balanced by very considerable joys as well, the joy of love.

My mother had only one child and I think that this was her ideal. I will never forget the look on her face when we announced that number four (bad enough in her view) was actually going to be twins. But I survived and have now reached grandmother status many times over.

Has it been worth it? I suppose I could have decided not to have children and/or accepted my mother’s unspoken but clear advice to have one child only.

I remember many years ago a friend of mine went door to door as part of a mission, equipped with a questionnaire. One question was, “What is the purpose of life?” When he asked this to a Greek lady at one house, she said simply, “To have children”. To my friend that seemed like a rather circular answer. We exist as a race simply to populate the planet with more of ourselves. We will

die and simply replace ourselves. Is there not more to life?

Well, of course there is. But the answer is not as strange as it may sound. As worldly people, we tend to think automatically in terms of this world alone. But according to God’s word, this life is only the beginning of what is. We are not born for this world, but for the world that is to come. In this world, however aged we may be, we are mere children compared to our adult selves, living eternally in the next world. In fact, we are immortals.

When a baby is born, whether healthy, sick or disabled, we are seeing the very first moments of the life of one who is destined for immortality. As parents and, I have to say, especially mothers, we are given the extraordinary privilege of bringing this little one into the world, of protecting it, feeding it, teaching it, loving it. From us – ordinary human beings – this child is going to learn love, learn truth, learn life itself. From us, this child is going to learn about God and through us, the little one is going to be invited into a relationship with God.

The amazing thing is that God has given this vital task to very ordinary people. We are not all leaders or professionals or professors or artists. Most of us work hard to make a living and to live unremarkable lives. Except that it is to people such as this that the Lord gives a paramount task of growing children into adults who know and serve him and other people.

Is it too hard? Of course it is – if we are simply on our own. But the Lord tells us two vital things. First of all, he is in charge of all things. He does not leave us on our own. The first task of the parent is to pray for the child. And even when we feel like a failure – and which mother does not sometimes? – we need to remember that our God is the one who can do all things, redeem any situation, and bring good out of pain.

The second lesson he teaches us is forgiveness. We are forgiven through Jesus, and we need to forgive others because we have been forgiven. The home with Jesus at its centre is a home where forgiveness may be found. And the best thing a mother can do is to have the assurance of her own forgiveness and point to Jesus as the source of forgiveness and the inspiration of our own forgiveness for each other.

Who’d be a mother?

I would not have missed it for the world!

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Christine is married to Peter and they have five adult children and 26 grandchildren. She is the vice president (senior) of Mothers Union Australia.

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LETTERS

FAITH IN FICTION

I was very interested to read the article about Christian writers of fiction (SC, July), think it is well worth reading and will be recommending it to many. I have an interest in young adult and children's literature and usually read one, if not all, the YA books on the Children's Book Council of Australia shortlist each year.

I was thrilled when I read Claire Zorn's first book, with the authentic portrayal of a Christian teenager. And then it was shortlisted – praise the Lord! Just a positive mention about something to do with the Christian faith is significant. It is so good to have material out there like this, that is very accessible to the not-yet Christian world.

It was good to be encouraged in the article to support Christian fiction authors in whatever ways we can. I look forward to trying books by some of the authors mentioned in the article, and I'm very interested in knowing what else is out there.

Barbara Kennard
Keiraville

REMEMBER THE LISTENERS

In his article "The purpose of preaching" (SC, June) the Rev Paul Grimmond misses several very important points about preaching. His extensive text covers the preacher's research, preparation and deliverance of a sermon, mainly on the writings of William Perkins (1558-1602). However, there is no mention of those receiving the word of God – the listener (i.e. the congregation).

A sermon is of no use without a listener. Every listener has a tolerance level up to which they can comprehend a meaningful amount. After that, a sermon becomes a lecture.

How many times after church have you heard parishioners ask, "What was that all about?". This brings into question how long a sermon should last. I put this question to my parish administrator and was told each preacher can choose how long they go for (i.e. open ended). This is not a good scenario. I suggest there should

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be guidelines issued by Synod to prevent sermons that go on forever and have lost the listeners' attention. For your consideration, I propose anything over 15 minutes is too long. If a preacher can't cover a passage in this time, then the passage is much too long.

Most parishioners go to church to hear the word of God, be uplifted and leave in a good frame of mind. A long lecture/sermon is not recommended to achieve this result.

Ken Puffitt
Bundanoon

DIFFERENT KNOX

Thank you for the *Southern Cross* magazine, which is very interesting to read and keeps us informed on so many different levels of the work of the church. Or should we say God's work in our community!

May I make a correction to the article on Terrey Hills (SC, June)? I thought you should know that it was in fact Canon David Knox, not his son Broughton Knox, who went out weekly to take services for the congregation at Terrey Hills at the request of his cousin, the Sunday school teacher Charis Young.

Patricia Braga
Castle Hill



Stevenson to support the supporters

Ministry to youth: Andrew Stevenson speaks at KYCK.

Andrew Stevenson is returning to Youthworks in October to lead its Ministry Support Team – a team he was part of for the best part of a decade before spending the past 8½ years as youth and young adults minister at St Michael's, Wollongong.

"I start on day one of term four, and I'll be leading the team that I used to be in!" he says. "The role will be half time managing the team and half time being an advisor again. I'll work wherever there's a gap – wherever we don't already have an advisor."

There are eight ministry advisors at Youthworks, and Mr Stevenson says their role is to help each parish do its work more effectively in the four areas of primary and high school SRE, and church children's and youth ministry.

"These areas are obviously integrated in lots of ways but, when you think about it, they really are four different aspects of what a parish does in a church ministry space," he says.

Advisors help churches with everything from resources

and teaching materials to team training and strategy for community outreach.

Depending on the needs of each parish team, advisors run or facilitate camps, provide mentoring support, run network meetings, conferences, and liaise with schools and the Department of Education.

Mr Stevenson, who has also been chairman of KYCK for the past five years, says the vision of Youthworks, which is "to see an effective youth and children's ministry in every church", puts into a nutshell the focus of the advisors' roles – and his job as their manager.

"Advisors meet with youth and kids' ministers, can work through a check list to see what they're doing well and where they might need help – and they're the point of contact if the church is looking for a particular resource or has a problem they need to solve.

"Advisors are also aware of the youth and kids' ministers who may be less experienced or more isolated and therefore

in need of greater support."

Mr Stevenson says the "number one reason" he's taken the job is because he wants to provide more assistance to the parishes that simply aren't able to do the ministry they would like to do.

"I want parishes that are doing well in youth and kids' ministry to keep doing well... but a lot of little churches out there have got great people but just aren't as well connected and resourced and need some help.

"I really want to mobilise bigger churches to help smaller churches. Our advisor team has a pretty strong network, so we really want to use that to help make it happen!"

He is replacing the Rev Ed Springer, who recently became the senior minister at Orange Evangelical Church.

"Ed and I have done many projects, camps and events together over the years," Mr Stevenson says, "and in the spirit of Psalm 78 and passing on the baton I really want to continue the great work he's done."

The Rev Robin Vonk, senior assistant minister at Nowra since 2018, became rector of Albion Park on July 19.

The Rev Dr Matt Wilcoxon has returned from ministry in the US with his family and became rector of St John's, Darlinghurst on July 22.

The Rev Michael Mantle will become rector of St Thomas', North Sydney on September 1. He has spent the past six years at St Helen's, Bishopsgate in London, where he pastored the parish's 6pm congregation.

VACANT PARISHES

List of parishes and provisional parishes, vacant or becoming vacant, as at July 26, 2021:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| • Ashbury | • Menangle |
| • Balmain | • Paddington |
| • Cabramatta* | • Peakhurst-Mortdale |
| • Camden | • Pymble |
| • Cherrybrook | • Rosemeadow* |
| • Cronulla* | • Ryde |
| • Eagle Vale | • Toongabbie |
| • Figtree | • Ulladulla |
| • Greenacre* | • Wahroonga, St Paul's** |
| • Huskisson | • Wilberforce |
| • Keiraville** | |
| • Kellyville | |

* denotes provisional parishes or Archbishop's appointments

** right of nomination suspended/on hold

Get the most out of quiet times

Tara Sing

How to Read the Bible Better

by Richard Chin (Matthias Media)



How to Read the Bible Better packs everything I've ever been taught about understanding God's word into less than 70 pages. With so much information in such a small book, you would expect it to be difficult to wade through, but Richard Chin has a lightness and clarity about the way he writes. His succinctness means he is quick to get to the good stuff, and his many examples quickly drive home a point before he moves on to the next topic.

Chin explores the different aspects of what makes for better Bible reading. He unpacks why we should bother to read the Bible, discusses the different ways we approach God's word, then helps readers understand how context unlocks meaning in each passage. He also provides practical frameworks, helpfully accompanied by diagrams that clearly display how each framework operates.

This is the kind of book I wish I had been able to give to people in the past – teens graduating from youth group, members of my Bible study, and delegates in groups at Bible training conferences.

What makes it such a great gift is not just the subject matter, but the title itself. If Matthias Media had simply called it *How to Read*

the Bible and omitted the "Better", it would be an awkward gift that implied the receiver didn't already know how to read their Bible. The "Better" is genius, as it scratches an itch we all have: to be able to know God more deeply and enrich our Bible reading experience.

This was Chin's intent – to see people everywhere come to the Bible and be uplifted, encouraged and ultimately transformed. However, his definition of "better" means more than just experiencing a marginal improvement in your Bible reading time. He hopes the book will result in people reading God's word the way God intended: prepared to listen, love and obey the truth.

This is a handbook for getting the most out of your Bible every time you open it. You could easily read the book in one sitting, but it's worth referencing each time you read your Bible. It will help sharpen your Bible reading skills, and prepare your mind and heart for encountering the living God through his word.

It's a no-nonsense, clear and accessible guide to helping Christians grow as disciples of Jesus, and go on to make disciples of Jesus.

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Darrowby delight

Judy Adamson

All Creatures Great and Small

Streaming on Britbox; available on Apple TV

While it's famously been said that life wasn't meant to be easy, sometimes you long for a little simplicity – and at the moment, if I can be offered the TV version of comfort food with hot chocolate and a good hug, I will snap it up instantly.

That's the best way to describe what it's like watching the new version of *All Creatures Great and Small*. You don't have to have read the popular series of books by James Herriot – or seen the original TV series with Robert Hardy and Christopher Timothy – to appreciate a collection of well-drawn characters, eccentric farmers and animals galore.

And speaking of animals galore, even though it's been 30 years since *All Creatures* graced our screens there could be no doubt of the public appetite for remaking the series. You only need to look at the proliferation of vet-focused reality TV shows, including one based in the Yorkshire practice where the real James Herriot (aka James Alfred Wight) worked for many decades, to know that there's a ready-made audience.

And the series doesn't disappoint. Within the first half hour, young vet school graduate James Herriot (Nicholas Ralph) has travelled from his home in Glasgow to the Yorkshire Dales for an interview with practice owner Siegfried Farnon (Samuel West), been given a tryout and taken on. He's got lost, got soaked, met a pretty girl, admired the stunning countryside and had more than one taste of the blunt personalities and farm animals of Darrowby.

No one expects him to last as assistant to the crotchety Siegfried – there have been a string of failures – and he's viewed by most locals as a novelty: a city lad who won't come up to scratch in a farming community.

Certainly James is wet behind the ears, but he's smart and has

a good work ethic, which makes him a natural foil to Siegfried's charming, carefree younger brother Tristan (Callum Woodhouse).

I don't remember a huge amount from the original series, apart from some particularly funny moments, plus exasperation at the antics of wastrel Tristan – and that's probably a good thing. It helps to focus attention on what's before me. And what's before me is simply delightful.

The Dales are presented in all their unspoiled glory, beautifully shot and very much a character in their own right. The makers have carefully recreated the late 1930s in dress, style and attitude, along with the constant, day-to-day struggle of many to make ends meet.

What is more – and better – is that careful consideration has been given to the lives and history of each character. They appear before you fully formed, with past joys and tragedies that are only hinted at and then carefully revealed in a manner that helps you understand why they are as they are.

You know from the books that James will make his home in Darrowby, but you still worry with him over making the right choices, balancing the care of animals with the needs and concerns of their owners. As Siegfried says, "The animals are the easy part. It's the people that cause all the bother".

The whole series is a breath of fresh air. No swearing, no sex or innuendo, no alien invasions or international crises. Just everyday life up north with a pint or two at The Drover's Arms, and classic characters such as Mrs Pumphrey (the splendid Diana Rigg in one of her final roles) and her spoiled Pekingese pooch Tricki Woo.

It's lively, funny, heartfelt and pretty addictive. Seven episodes are definitely not enough, and you will get to the end wanting more – so it's just as well that series two is already in the works. **SC**