

A generous General Synod: unity and mission

REPORTS FROM ALL CAMPS SEEM TO indicate a mood change in General Synod processes. Representatives of Australia's twenty-three dioceses met at Melbourne Grammar school from September 18-23 under the excellent chairmanship of Archbishop Phillip Aspinall.

As usual in its daytime business, the Synod dealt with a great deal of legislation, relating to such things as the National Register, the Appellate Tribunal, Long Service Leave, the Solemnization of Matrimony, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council. Around the edges of the legislation, more than forty motions were deliberated, addressing issues including: Modern Slavery, the Environment, Gambling, Alcohol, Freedom of Religion, Fresh Expressions of Church, Improving Educational Outcomes of Aboriginal Youth.

The controversy in the wider Anglican Communion over homosexual clergy and same-sex unions surfaced occasionally, but when asked to endorse the definition of marriage under Commonwealth Law, the General Synod was pleased to show itself conservative.

Even with moments of controversy, the

themes of unity, mission and generosity were often on the lips of speakers and this mood apparently prevailed. At one fraught moment, Archbishop Jensen invited a hushed Synod to a greater trust between dioceses. Since there were over 100 new members with no personal knowledge of previous fault lines, the two or three angry voices objecting to the Diocese of Sydney grated against a general mood of relative calm and reasonable tolerance.

An attempt to move support for the Anglican Consultative Council from the Special Fund to the Statutory Fund, and thereby forcing Sydney's contribution was defeated with good support from other dioceses. Pleas against an increase of more than 25% in Sydney's required contribution to the Statutory Fund failed to change the 2011 budget, but were referred to the G.S. Standing Committee for further consideration.

Perhaps the generational change detectable in the rest of Western Society can also be detected in General Synod. It might be time to explore unity, generosity and mission in ways that move the rhetoric might further towards greater reality. ●

A deQ. Robin

Bishop Mouneer Anis resigns from AC Standing Committee

ON 30 JANUARY 2010, THE MOST REV Dr Mouneer Anis, Bishop of Egypt tendered his resignation from the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion.

'I have come to realize that my presence in the current SCAC has no value whatsoever and my voice is like a useless cry in the wilderness.'

Bishop Mouneer's resignation is a significant thermometer measuring the temperature of the Anglican Communion's central bodies. While other conservatives were forming their own networks, Bishop Mouneer chose to serve on the SCAC and became one of the Archbishop of Canterbury's most prominent conservative supporters. But his experience has brought him 'to the sad realization that there is no desire within the ACC and the SCAC to follow through on the recommenda-

tions ... to sort out the problems which face the Anglican Communion.

The 'non-action' in response to the 2009 General Convention of The Episcopal Church permitting gay and lesbian marriage was a missed opportunity to endorse the biblical view of marriage as expressed in Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference.

'Many sing praises of "inclusiveness" while at the same time they exclude others. I am deeply disturbed in my conscience when I see a kind of double-standard in dealing with different issues. [...] The orthodox voices are disregarded or suppressed.' ●



PHOTO: WWW.DIOCESEOFEGYPT.ORG/ENGLISH/BISHOPS/MOUNEERANIS

'The stories of Anglican clergy examined for ordination between the innings of a cricket match may not altogether be typical but it was certainly true, as Charles Perry pointed out to the Bishop of Lichfield in 1841, that the training being given to the clergy, bore little relation to the pastoral and the theological demands of their vocation.'

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No worries? – No worries!

Steve Carlisle



Steve Carlisle ministers at St Matthew's West Pymble

AS AUSSIES WE LOVE THE PHRASE 'No Worries'. But not many of us actually live by this slogan. Instead we are marked by ever increasing worry—for our families, our lifestyle, and of course, our eternity.

This worry leads us to a desire to gain security. This is why we have internet *security*, why people are so keen to watch programs such as *Border Security*, why we want *secure* parking, *secure* banking, and *security* in our relationships. However, the reality is that finding security is all too hard. Sometimes it appears that the phrase 'no worries' contains 'no security' at all.

On the other hand, the Lord Jesus held out to his disciples complete security. He gave them something to trust in, something trustworthy and secure.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:14–15)

Life is full of insecurities, but in the midst of worry and insecurity one thing is sure, Jesus has laid down his life for his sheep. He has paid the penalty for sin which we deserve. He has secured for his sheep eternal life. "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:28)

Only the gospel can bring forth the cry 'no worries'. For the gospel message is that salvation comes only by the death of Christ. Not only that, but by his grace holding me



day after day, through every trial, temptation, joy and despair, his hand is tightly with all those who belong to him.

Whilst our lives give us much to be insecure about, Jesus in his death gives his followers true security, today, and eternally. ☺

What was the lowlight of your week?

Alison Blake



Alison Blake talks to Christopher Robin in Sydney's South West.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ASKED, "WHAT was the lowlight of your week?" That sounds like a question Eeyore would ask Christopher Robin.

This week I came away from one of my SRE classes, frustrated once again. I thought I was on top of the material, I was enthusiastic, and on time, but stuff happened that was out of my control. Earlier in the week at my usual half day playing tennis with a lovely bunch of unsaved friends, I again struggled to introduce anything of eternal significance into the conversation. And that was after regularly praying

with my Bible study group that God would enable me to turn tennis-talk into God-talk!

What God honouring answer can I give when someone kindly asks at church on Sunday, "How was your week, Alison?". What do you say to God when, reflecting on "the week that was", you're all too aware of struggle, frustration, or disappointment, as you seek to shine like stars in the universe?

I can serve him with joy, hope, positivity and contentment.

I've decided there are two helpful truths for me to keep in mind. The first is "God, you rule". A simple, but prayer-and-perspective-changing truth! Our heavenly Father is, at all times, in all circumstances, sovereignly and providentially ruling. He is aware and actively superintending my life, the lives of others and

all the events of his world. So what looks to me like wasted effort is, in some way known only to him, God working out his purposes. In my prayers I need to acknowledge this truth.

The second truth is "God, I will rely on you". God rules, so I will commit all I do in my day to him in prayer. He has already prepared the works he wants me to do (Eph 2:10), and they are good, not futile. I can serve him with

joy, hope, positivity and contentment. Yes, there will be times my sinfulness and frailty may make my labours in the Lord appear to bring no glory to him. But no activity or conversation during my week need be labelled mundane, an interruption or a waste. Our labour in the Lord is never in vain. ☺

IT TAKES A HERO, OR A FOOL, TO VOTE AGAINST A motherhood motion.

But sometimes good things need to be questioned for the sake of the best things. So here goes ...

The question: are we currently watching good old conservative Sydney Anglicanism rushing headlong over a precipice into theological liberalism—and all in the name of mission/church planting.

Remember the shipwrecks that already blemish the history of evangelical Christianity. An over-riding commitment to winning the lost at all costs has always been the pathway to liberalism. The liberal seeks to communicate to the world by speaking the same language, by being at the leading edge of the same discussions, by seeking to solve the world's problems. With such noteworthy aims and objectives, it is not long before things of little interest to the world's language, or discussions, or problems just get dropped off the agenda. And as the world sets all the agendas, then it is not long before an updated Christianity emerges. And a gospel that is not the apostolic gospel is no gospel at all.

We have seen it before. Good, solid evangelical movements seek to reach the world in our generation and the urgency of the task, the scale of what is needed, and the great need for multiplying workers soon throws the door open wide to enthusiastic participants in the mission— and 'sound doctrine' is a necessary piece of collateral damage. The enthusiastic 'mission' of this generation becomes the arid liberalism of the next.

Is it extreme talk to say that we are at the edge of this precipice?

Not so. Listen to the rhetoric that keeps bombarding us. So some English representatives from the Emerging Church don't favour theological education at all, let alone learning Greek. So the Fresh Expressions movement even in Australia says that 'Pioneers' simply must not be taken *ex situ* to be ruined by the 'traditional theological education' (self-evidently bad, apparently). Gurus from overseas suggest that the advantage of youthful enthusiasm will be lost to church planting if we send the entrepreneurial types into theological education. The pragmatists amongst us hire those with less theological education than others, because they are cheaper. Those heading for ministry choose the course of least resistance, easy options rather than best; shorter, rather than better; flexible, rather than durable. Plans are made to structure congregations which conceive of some ministers not needing as full a theological education as others. Let's do it half-time, part-time, on the job, sometime, never. The task is too pressing.

See the common element? The real crisis we are facing is not the need for workers for the harvest field. The Lord will take care of that. The real crisis we are facing is this: will there be the faithful people who can teach others the good deposit on down that chain into the future? How will Christ's flock will be fed in the generation after next, when generation next is being so seriously exploited by the kingdom builders? Who will speak for those being deprived of a theological education by those who despise the one they themselves were given? ●

The Australian Church Record

The Australian Church Record is an evangelical newspaper in the Reformed Anglican tradition of the historic creeds and the 39 Articles of Faith, and the standard of teaching and practice in the Book of Common Prayer. We accept the Scriptures as God's word written, and as containing all things necessary for salvation and the final authority in all matters of faith and behaviour.

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Appellate Tribunal does it again

Neil Cameron

A FRIEND OF MINE ARGUES THAT THE Appellate Tribunal of the Anglican Church of Australia has become a political body or, if you prefer, a cog in the political process that enables the liberal-ritualist wing to achieve that which its members cannot achieve by other political process. The latest advisory opinion that a majority of the members of the Appellate Tribunal have delivered gives further credence to that view.

The latest advisory opinion relates to things, which are said to happen in the Diocese of Sydney. Yet, as far as I can ascertain, none of the 26 persons who sought the advisory opinion, while members of the General Synod, are representatives of the Diocese of Sydney. They all come from elsewhere. None of them are affected by the things which they said were happening in the diocese. None of them produced any substantial evidence to the Appellate Tribunal to support their claims. A disinterested by-stander might have thought that the Appellate Tribunal would have been wise to tell the 26 persons to mind their own business. But no, it decided otherwise.

Diaconal administration of the Lord's Supper was the core of the concerns of the

26 persons. They do not like it. They cited nothing in scripture on the subject. Nor did the majority of the members of the Appellate Tribunal. Nor did the majority of the members of the Appellate Tribunal cite any law against it. Laws do not arrive from the ether. Somebody, who has the authority to make laws, must make them. I have no wish to re-read all of the earlier advisory opinions of the Tribunal but I have no recollection of ever

vance of past practices adopted for different times and circumstances all appear to be of little or no concern to the majority of the members of the Tribunal. Words are twisted to mean what the majority would like them to mean.

The advisory opinions of the Appellate Tribunal are not binding. The Appellate Tribunal has no power to enforce its advisory opinions. At the most, the advisory opinions

The freedom allowed by Scripture, the need for effective ministry, the notion of the priesthood of all believers.

seeing anything from the Tribunal on this subject. The closest that I can remember is an extreme Anglo-catholic view, expressed by a minority, on the nature of the ordained minister in priests' orders unsupported by the Bible or The Book of Common Prayer.

The freedom allowed by Scripture, the need for effective ministry, the notion of the priesthood of all believers, the present irrele-

may be relevant in disciplinary proceedings, but the Tribunal has no power to initiate such proceedings, nor is the final result of such proceedings in the hands of the Tribunal. Wiser counsel would have been to refrain making statements which the Tribunal must know are unlikely to be accepted or respected.

The Sydney Synod will be well advised to adhere to its past decisions on this subject. ●



The Australian Church Record and Anglican Church League have produced an 'epilogue' to our previous publication, *The Lord's Supper in Human Hands*, to provide a brief response to the most recent opinion of Appellate Tribunal.

Synod Members: Free. Others: \$5.



Shopping for the Next Archbishop (Part 2) Peter Bolt

OUR SHOPPING LIST FOR THE NEXT Archbishop of Sydney In the last issue of ACR, created some response. So, let the list continue ...

8. Rejoicing in Marriage

From a reader: 'The next archbishop needs to be someone with a strong and stable marriage, and a wife who is fully supportive of his ministry'. Granted. This could fall under item #1, 'must satisfy the basics', and also under item #5, which spoke of being 'psychologically robust' and well-supported. But it is a point well worth reinforcing with a separate

item. Especially as the pressure increases for same-sex marriage, the Archbishop will need to be someone rejoicing in God's good gift of one man, one woman, one flesh.

9. Already in ministry

Word on the Street: 'The next archbishop must have DONE something'.

Apparently, there are some kinds of ministry that are 'DOING SOMETHING' and there are some kinds that are 'NOT'. As unbelievable and as offensive as this sounds, people are actually saying it.

This sloganeering is hardly worth men-

tioning except for how dangerous and counter-productive it really is as we are seeking after a person for such a significant position for some years or decades.

The current mood of pragmatism combines with the tendency of the sinful heart to focus upon human action. But this is not the real problem with this slogan. Under God, EVERY ministry is 'something', and it is not what a person has DONE that is important, but what a person BELIEVES.

That clear, then any person in any ministry is a potential candidate. It is not 'great achievements' that should be looked for, measured

(CONTINUED OVER PAGE)

Complementarianism

Current concerns and future fixes Phillip Colgan



Phil Colgan, serves the St George North group of Churches

I OFTEN MEET NON-BELIEVERS WHO ARE aware of the fact that our Diocese holds to a 'complementarian' view of women's ministry. Of course, they do not use that particular term, but over the last 30 years, our Synod has consistently resisted calls to ordain women as presbyters and it has been noticed by the wider community.

That said, my experience is that Sydney Anglican churches are nowhere near as conservative on this issue as we are publically perceived to be. I am amazed by the number of people I meet who are training for or already in fulltime ministry who 'haven't worked out where I stand on the women's issue yet'. Really? Surely, anyone who purports

to be a teacher of God's word must have worked through the relatively few passages and come to an opinion? Not to have done so suggests either incompetency or, dare I say it, an unwillingness to stand up and be counted.

Even when people do preach on the topic it seems that it is often explained apologetically: 'I understand that this offends, but it's God's word so we have to accept it, even if we don't like it.' It seems to me that our aim is often to defend, rather than to carefully explain and teach people to delight in these truths.

Moreover (and perhaps as a result!), many lay people seem only vaguely aware of the issues involved and the key passages. In my experience, preaching that upholds that women should not be allowed to preach to mixed congregations is often met with comments like:

- "Well you have to teach that, because that's the line in this Diocese."
- "That's one point of view, but I hold another."
- "Really, is this that important an issue that we should even bother arguing about it?"
- "I refuse to believe that!"

If my anecdotal evidence is true (and even if it isn't!) the Biblical view of male and female relationships in the church and family needs more teaching. Theological Colleges need to prioritise teaching on this issue so that no one in ministry can say, "I don't know what I think!" Regular teaching on 1 Corinthians 11, Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 3 and 1 Timothy 2 needs to be on preaching programmes. When teaching these passages we need to slow down and teach them well; Answer the obvious objections and opposing arguments; Go beyond teaching just the conclusion and teach the theological underpinnings; Explain how the relation of men and women in family and church is grounded in the doctrine of creation and in the very essence of the Godhead. We need to teach these truths without apology, believing and teaching that God's way is the best way for us. We need to encourage people to delight in the wonderful way God has created men and women as 'equal but different'. Finally, we need to ensure that our next Archbishop (like the current one) is a man who will boldly and faithfully hold the line on this issue. 🍷

Shopping for the Next Archbishop (Part 2)

[CONT. FROM PAGE 4]

by the world's bells and whistles of 'success'. But faithful (believing) service. Someone who believes; someone in ministry already.

10. Has learned from his experience

From a reader: 'Demonstrated leadership of a parish, college or other Christian organisation'. Word on the street might add: 'leadership of a large organisation'.

There is a trap here. Nobody has been an Archbishop until they are the Archbishop. What is the appropriate arena in which a potential Archbishop of Sydney can gain his spurs? One thing often done is to propose analogies, such as above. Presumably a parish, a college, a Christian organization, of the large kind provides the best analogy.

I guess on that thinking Jesus wouldn't get a Guernsey. But then again, isn't the close, personal leadership across three years with a deep investment in the life of twelve young men who would go on to make a difference in the world a display of excellent Christian 'leadership'? And—pause dramatically—isn't that kind of leadership what a bible study leader could be guilty of? Excellent archbishop

material right there.

It is important to ask the right questions, or to focus on the right issues. It is not what kind of thing has been led, but what has been learned in the leading of it. Or, to ask the question from the side of the shopping list compiler: what are the qualities that we are looking for that enables the leading of a parish, college, or other Christian organization, or bible study group, Sunday school class, family, political lobby group, regular interest group, basketball team? It is not the thing, but the qualities in the end. That is why Paul lists personal qualities in 1 Tim 3, not the arenas in which those qualities were displayed.

The next archbishop needs to be someone who has learned from his experience, no matter where that experience was gained. He will then have the task of taking those same qualities and character and experience into a different realm altogether.

11. Must be aware of the generational change that is happening right now

A blogger (?clear baby boomer sympathies?) pronounced the ACR 'just misguided' in saying

the age of the candidate must be less than 57. Others of a different generation, however, SMSd a loud 'AmN☺☺'. There really is no choice on this one. So, to reiterate the same point in a different way, the next archbishop must be aware that a huge generational shift is already in process. It MUST occur, because it IS ALREADY occurring. This will affect everything.

And because the next election therefore needs to reach a long way down the age scale, I ask again: what do curates want? What do the laity want? What do theological students want? Youth workers? What do ordinands want? And perhaps the largest group: what about those who should be ordinands, but aren't? Don't just wait to see who it will be before you hop on board: get on board and then see who you can influence to make it come about.

And, don't forget. The next archbishop won't be someone from outside. He will be a prophet in our own midst. Look around. Who aren't we noticing?

Let's keep talking ... 🍷

PS to add items to the shopping list: letters@australianchurchrecord.net

An extraordinary ministry

Peter Collier



Peter Collier rejoices to be on the ministry team at St John's.

ON JUNE 27TH, THIS YEAR, WALLY and Rosemary Behan attended their last service at St John's Latimer Square in Christchurch, thirty years after they turned to Christ. Theirs has been an extraordinary ministry.

The church has grown from around 50 people to almost 10 times more. The church is in strong shape financially and it is difficult to list all the ministries that take place within it.

But under the ministry of the Behans the diversity of the people involved in the ministry is even more extraordinary than the numerical growth. In an age where in many churches Sunday schools and youth groups are shrinking and 20's-40's are missing, in each of these areas St John's is abundantly supplied. From All Blacks to abattoir workers, plumbers to PhD students, the different cultural, socio-economic, cultural and church and non-church backgrounds, meld together into an extraordinary community.

In a Diocese which has ordained women for more than 30 years yet struggles greatly to attract men to church, St John's men equal the women. Wally, a former Warringah Rugby coach, goes down well in Rugby-mad New Zealand. It is interesting to note that another distinctive feature of the Behan's ministry is that it is complementarian regarding the roles of men and women.

The Behans have been eager that the church always have a focus on 'raising up the next generation' of Christian leaders. Three of their four sons are actively involved in christian leadership. The young leaders who have been raised up through the ministry of the Behans become difficult to list comprehensively. 4 trainee interns on the payroll of the church; 10 more before them. 3 families currently studying in Australia for the min-

istry, one in London, others already serving as pastors. Young leaders take Bible studies, youth groups and Sunday schools. For a man who can't send an email, Wally has had no trouble in reaching Generations X, Y and Z for the gospel and raising them up as leaders for the future. (Rosie, on the other hand, was 'wired and tired' a decade before the rest of us, working for CNN on the internet at the turn of the millennium).

The ministry of the Behans has had wider influence. A nearby Anglican parish of Sydenham Beckenham is now undergoing a similarly extraordinary turnaround after St John's, led by the Behans, sent fifty parishioners there about five years ago. The thriving University ministries of the Christian Union,

Leadership Conference, and, most recently the Tim Training Course—a one year course aimed at raising up Bible teachers modelled on the Cornhill Training Course in London.

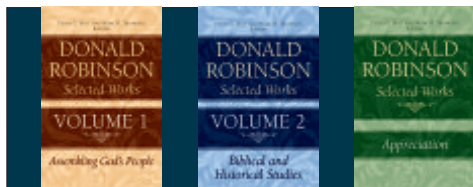
But strangely, perhaps the most extraordinary feature of all about the ministry of Wally and Rosie Behan has been their method. When Wally was finally asked to speak at a Clergy conference, he spoke on Acts 2:42-47 under the heading 'doing the Basics well'. Wally explained in many ways the heart of his and Rosie's ministry: carefully and patiently teaching the Scriptures, prayer, God's people caring for each other, everyone in church being eager to share the good news of Jesus. Nothing seemingly extraordinary. And yet, for a good many years, the ministry

The heart of ... ministry: carefully and patiently teaching the Scriptures, prayer, God's people caring for each other, everyone ... eager to share the good news of Jesus.

Student Life and Campus Church have all been aided by the Behan's ministry with some staff members from each ministry being parishioners at St John's. The Latimer Fellowship, formerly a fading and diminishing group of evangelicals, has been reinvigorated (Wally has been the chairman of Latimer). Wally is also Chairman of the Gospel Training Trust which has partnered with St John's to establish Men's conferences, Snow Ventures, Preaching Conferences and the Youth

at St John's was most unusual in its clear and simple focus on teaching the Scriptures without wavering, and particularly with the unashamed focus on careful, authoritative and serious expository preaching (all sermons preached and written by Wally, edited and typed by Rosemary).

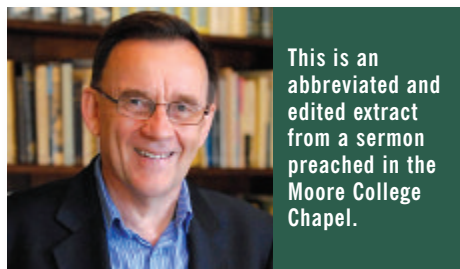
During the extraordinary ministry of Wally and Rosie Behan at St John's Latimer Square, the seed that was sown has multiplied not a hundredfold, but surely a thousandfold. ●



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Oversight: in the grip of grace

John Woodhouse



This is an abbreviated and edited extract from a sermon preached in the Moore College Chapel.

PAUL'S DESCRIPTION OF WHAT IS needed in an overseer in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 presents a picture of a person who is firmly in the grip of the glorious gospel of God's grace.

Today we have all been touched by the culture of *celebrity*. We have imbibed ideas about *leadership* from the business world. Furthermore as we see too many churches in decline, and too few growing, we long for people with new, bold ideas and the energetic drive to change things. But when Paul describes what is needed in those who do the work of oversight in a church, he does not mention many of things that we might have expected.

We are surprised that he says nothing about personality traits, vision, organisational skills, or leadership ability. We should not conclude that such things play no part in the effectiveness of caring for God's people. But we should reassess our preoccupation with these things and our *taking for granted* the apostle's concerns. Paul does it the other way round. He takes lots of things for granted, but draws our attention to what we easily ignore: matters of Christian character.

He paints a picture with eleven elements.

1. It begins with public reputation (v. 2): **an overseer must be above reproach.** Christians are not a secret society and an overseer must be a person of good repute in the public eye.

2. the husband of one wife. Assuming (rather than requiring) that he is married, he must be faithful to his wife. A man who knows God's faithfulness, must himself be faithful.

3. The next three terms could be summed up as 'self-discipline': **sober-minded**—we do not need overseers who cannot be serious. **Self-controlled:** We do not need overseers who lose control of themselves. **Respectable:** we need overseers who can be respected. These are not ostentatious qualities. They describe people who see life in the wonderful, but serious light of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

4. The fourth part of the picture is **hospitable**—one who has love for strangers. The gospel of the one who came into the world to save sinners has only been grasped by the person who *therefore* cares for strangers—those who do not yet belong to the fellowship of God's people.

5. The fifth element in this developing picture, **able to teach**, is not referring to communication skills. What makes a person "able to teach," according to Paul, is that he himself has a firm grasp of the truth. The overseer, "must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine ..." (Titus 1:9).

There is something more important than learning how to communicate well. It is knowing, understanding and firmly believing what you are talking about! It is alarming when a disconnect is created in the minds of some between thorough, careful, deep, extensive learning of God's truth and preaching – as though the very best prepara-

who at one time turn their back on financial prospects in order to do the good work of serving Christ and his people, later care rather too much about money. You cannot love God and money, said Jesus. We need overseers who love God.

9. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive (v. 4). "Manage" (ESV) is not the best translation. The word is (literally) "stand-before". It carries a sense of leadership, but not "management". Also "*keeping* his children submissive" is too severe. It is (literally) "*having* [his] children in submission." A man's care for his family must be such that he can be expected to care for God's people (v. 5).

10. He must not be a recent convert (v. 6)—(literally) "newly planted"—a lovely image of the new Christian: a seedling newly planted in Christ. The good work of oversight of God's people involves such a reversal of the world's values and ways that it requires maturity in Christ. So easily, if you lack that

They describe people who see life in the wonderful, but serious light the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

tion for a preacher is something other than knowing well and deeply what you are talking about.

6. The sixth part of the picture is (v. 3): **not a drunkard.** The use of alcohol to relax, to relate, to escape from stress and anxiety can work—to a degree. But it is no substitute for casting your anxieties on the one who cares for you, or for the love for one another inspired by the Holy Spirit. And the abuse of alcohol for these purposes is completely unacceptable.

7. The seventh component is: **not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome.** The work of overseeing can too easily become a platform for overbearing behavior. Leadership manuals tell us about the importance of assertiveness. Paul tells us about the importance of *gentleness*. When your ambition is *about you*, frustrations can explode in verbal or even physical violence. You take disagreements personally. Rather, we need people who know deeply the gentleness of Christ.

8. The eighth piece of the picture is: **not a lover of money.** It is astonishing how many,

maturity, it becomes 'about you.' Therefore the danger for a newly planted believer is that **he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.** In other words humility is an essential in an overseer. It's *not* about you!

11. Finally Paul returns to where he began, reputation: **he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.** How the evil one loves to bring the gospel into disrepute. How often he uses the same trick: trip up those known who have some responsibility for God's church.

Paul has described a person shaped and formed by the grace of God that has appeared in Jesus Christ (see Titus 2:11, 12). This is not the stuff of celebrity—it's the stuff of godliness. This is not the person who is going to 'change the world'. This is the person who has come to love and trust the one who *has* changed the world. It is not a picture of impossible giftedness—it is a picture of the ordinary (if we can call it ordinary) effects of knowing God's grace. ●

Lessons from the Wheat Field



Christopher Pears is in search of a new wardrobe in Hornsby Heights

Don't burn 'em Christopher Pears

Wardrobes can reveal all sorts of things about our past. Tucked away inside mine, just passed the flair jeans and the tropical shirt, you'll find a very battered pair of R.M. Williams boots, and an even more battered Akubra hat. That's right – I've spent time in rural NSW, the last 13 years to be exact.

The last town we were in had a population of about 2,500, the one before that was only 580. So what's it like living in a small community? Well I reckon I learned lots. Let me share with you something I learned about evangelism.

The thing about small towns like these is that there are not too many anonymous people. It's very much like an episode of *Sea Change*, everybody knows everybody, and the population remains pretty static. Not many people leave, and not many new people come.

And so in a situation like that I came to realise pretty quickly that you can't afford to 'burn' people in your evangelism. The friends that people will invite to a church event one month will be the same people they invite next month, because there are only so many people to choose from. Perhaps in the bigger population centres we can sometimes get used to the idea that we can be a little more aggressive with people because even if we turn some off, there are plenty more out there. But in a small country town you're working with more or less the same people all the time, and if you burn one, pretty soon everyone will know about it.

Relationships become crucial in your evangelism. It's only as trust and rapport develop over time that people's natural aversion to change can be broken down. Yes, we preach the gospel, but we also make sure that even if they don't respond this time, we can continue the conversation over the months and years to come.

But of course, this is not just a country thing, is it ...

So you think you can ... preach?

Scott Blackwell

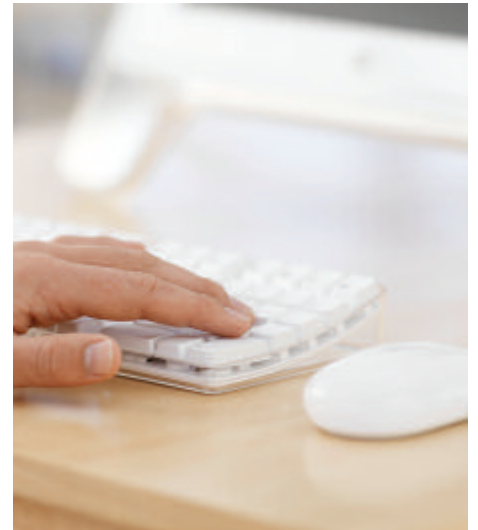
I rarely download sermons off the internet ...

IDON'T DO IT BECAUSE I'M A PREACHER myself ... and because I'm sinful. I'm a firm believer that, on the whole, in any given circumstance, we sinners *will only ever do the least we can do*.

Take the phenomenon of sermon downloading from those I like to call "rock star preachers". When it comes to preaching the word of God, there is no substitute for good old fashioned hard work—the work of praying for insight and understanding, the work of struggling with the text yourself, the work of doing your detailed exegesis, the work of unearthing the context, meaning and significance of a passage, the work of thinking through your biblical and systematic theology, the work of applying what you have unearthed first to yourself, then to your congregation. This is the heart of good and thorough sermon preparation ... and all of this you do BEFORE you pick up a commentary to see what insights or inspirations someone else might have discovered.

Its not as easy as listening to what someone else has said about the passage in a downloadable sermon, and clearly not as fast. Its not as sexy as reproducing the 'gee-whizziness' of sermon celebrities like Driscoll or Dever—but I don't sit in a pew in order to listen to a paraphrase of Driscoll or Dever (you wouldn't believe the number of times I've heard the same illustrations, jokes or applications from preachers who *weren't* those men ... but clearly wanted to be). The evidence of this kind of preaching plagiarism comes when the preacher cannot actually answer questions on the text itself or explain the theological implications that issue from the passage ... because they have not done the work and reading themselves, only reproduced what someone else has said. In an academic environment, your assessment would be 'epic fail' for this kind of shoddy plagiarism. This is not preaching, it is parroting and any fool can do it.

Like it or not, preaching is meant to be a personal activity. It is an activity in which the preacher is meant to prayerfully immerse themselves in the Word of God, work hard and as a result come to their congregation



with an informed understanding of the text as well as a personal insight for their flock having heard God speak during their preparation. This is the *minimum* that congregations ought to expect from their teachers. Good preaching

Good preaching takes time and effort and there are no shortcuts.

takes time and effort and there are no shortcuts, not if the preacher is seeking after edification, education and encouragement.

By all means, listen to good preachers. But do it AFTER you've done the work yourself. When the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy saying: "... the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2:Timothy 2:2-3), I suspect that his use of the words 'reliable' and 'qualified' were not meant to express the notion of taking shortcuts or doing *the least you could possibly do* in order to feed the flock entrusted to your care.



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