



Ministry and Mission: Yesterday and Today

**'Nothing in this life is more sacred or greater ...
than those things that pertain to the sacrosanct evangelical ministry,
the ministry of the eternal salvation of humanity itself'**
Martin Bucer

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A noble task?

“Here is a trustworthy saying”, declares the Apostle Paul, “whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task” (1 Tim 3:1). The truth is, however, contemporary Australian Christians might find it a little hard to resonate with this sentiment. Perhaps the Apostle would have made more sense if he’d described it as a “brave” or “desperate” task – “heroic”, possibly, but only in the reckless or foolhardy sense.

For starters there is the authority that comes with office. As a likely relic of our convict past, it’s no secret that Aussies tend to be rather cynical on this score. Often this is with good reason. We have finely tuned radars when it comes to detecting self-serving abuses of authority, and tragically the clerical office all too often falls foul of this scrutiny. Nothing is uglier than tales of laziness, heavy-handedness, bullying, infidelity, domestic violence, or the sexual exploitation of minors amongst the ranks of pastoral ministry. All this disgraces the name of Christ and severely hampers our witness, calling to mind Paul’s damning assessment that “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (Rom 2:24).

But sometimes the Aussie disdain for authority has a less sinister cause. Often it simply stems from the bare fact that we don’t like being told what to do. Of all forms of sermonizing, perhaps none is more insufferable than the wowser who climbs up to his soap-box



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pulpit week after week. Fortunately, one of the beauties of a volunteer organisation like the church is that its attendees are free to register their protests with their mouths, wallets, or feet – and so we often do.

When you add to this a growing public intolerance of Christianity in the secular West, it is no surprise that many Australian Christians no longer honour pastoral ministry with the respect it once held, but increasingly consider it a rather reckless aspiration for an exceptionally brave few. This is before any mention of job insecurity, workload, a relatively nomadic existence, and so on.

Of course, there is nothing new or uniquely Australian to the “foolhardy” perception of pastoral ministry. Paul surely felt that perception

as much as anyone. Even a quick glance through his second letter to the Corinthian church makes that point well enough. For all that, however, he does not cease to call it a “noble task”, indeed, something “worthy of double honour” (1 Tim 5:17).

I take it the reason for this is the significance God accords to pastoral leadership within the being and organisation of his church. It is an appointment of Christ himself (Eph 4:11), we are told, an imprint of his unique authority as “head” over his “body” (Eph 4:7-16), “builder” of his “house” (Heb 3:1-6), “shepherd” over his “flock” (John 10:1-18). That is to say, in the eyes of the New Testament, pastoral leadership is not a pragmatic

affair – a case of freeing up some time for one volunteer to do a bunch of jobs that the rest of the volunteers have neither time nor inclination to do. It is no less than a Christ-ordained “means of grace”. It is the chosen means by which the chief shepherd has determined to tend and watch over his flock (cf. John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4). Hence it is an indispensable office which the church actually *requires* for its spiritual health, and to which it must gladly submit (Heb 13:17).

None of this is to deny the critical importance of “every-member” ministry. It is not to say that teaching the Scriptures, proclaiming the Gospel, encouragement, acts of service and hospitality are to be the exclusive preserve of a professional class. Nor is it to denigrate the importance of specialist ministries to children or youth – indeed, in our Diocese we rightly ordain to the Diaconate those who are called to “give instruction to young people in the Christian faith”.¹ Paul readily attests to the importance of each gifted member of Christ’s body serving for the common good (1 Cor 12:7).

But it is to say that there is to say that there is a unique Christ-given power and authority to the office of the one who is formally recognised by the church as a “pastor-teacher” – that is, the one who is publicly acknowledged with the unique responsibility for proclaiming the word of God and caring for the flock, whether in the local assembly of God’s people, the school, the university, the seminary, etc. It is no exaggeration to say that the spiritual health of the church depends on this office in a way that it does not on any other.

Not surprisingly, the New Testament sets a high bar for this office. A pastor must be spiritually gifted for the task, something which is recognised as a demonstrated or “qualified” ability to teach and defend what accords with sound doctrine (cf., 1 Tim 3:3; 2 Tim 2:2, 24; 3:2-5; Tit 2:1). This is not an arid academic ability but one which is acutely sensitive to the connection between biblical truth and the state of the lost, as well as the diverse needs of the flock (e.g., 2 Tim 4:2; Tit 2:2-10). Equally important as a proven ability to teach is the call to live nothing short of an exemplary life

(1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:6-9; 2:7-8).

Consequently, we must be active in urging those who are faithful and gifted to step forward for the task. We must ensure they are properly qualified. In our Diocese there are formal mechanisms in place to confirm that our pastor-teachers have a tested ability to teach. There is a process of examination into which representatives of the whole church have input. We also subject them to the discipline of theological education. Indeed, the programme of theological education these candidates receive is important enough that it is rightly accountable to the whole church

through the Synod, distinguishing Youthworks and Moore College from other training institutions, and highlighting their unique and vital significance to the life of the Diocese. Once appointed, we need to hold them to account for their life and doctrine. We need to pray for them and support them financially. And we need to submit to them so as to make their work a joy rather than a burden.

Since peaking in 2010, the number of those being presented in our Diocese for ordination to this office has steadily declined. Various reasons are cited anecdotally for both the peak and the decline – a proliferation of ungifted candidates, a run of inappropriate appointments, a failure in identifying

and training the future generation, a reluctance to step up, and so on. Not so long ago there was talk of too many candidates and not enough jobs; now there is talk of too many vacancies and not enough people to fill them. Cynicism abounds, it seems.

Perhaps it is the case that some of our pastoral leaders have disappointed us through inadequate gifting, or even worse, infidelity. Perhaps it is that we have dropped the ball in identifying and raising up the next generation of pastors. Perhaps it is that gifted people are increasingly reluctant to step up in the face of rising hostility towards pastoral leadership, either from within the church or from without. Perhaps it is that resources are being redirected to personal interests or well-meaning causes elsewhere (e.g., property, youth and children, missional strategies, etc.).

Whatever the reason, any neglect of this office is to our collective shame and spiritual detriment.



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1 A service for “The Making of Deacons”, in *An Australian Prayer Book* (Sydney: AIO, 1978), 606.

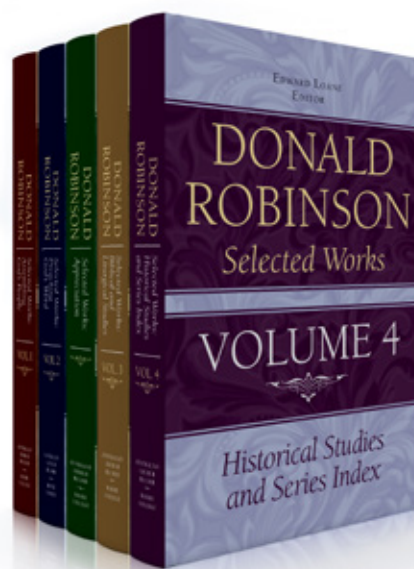
The vitality and future of this office is, of course, the daily responsibility of organisations like MTS, Moore College, Youthworks, as well as existing office-holders (Bishops, clergy, ministry staff). But it is not just their responsibility – the whole church needs to be invested in it constantly. Undoubtedly Christ will for-

ever preserve his church. But he ordinarily does so by his appointed means that he commands us to embrace in faith. And therefore, we cannot afford to be negligent or cynical when it comes to the precious pastoral task, or else we risk capitulating to our own spiritual malaise. **ACR**

The Donald Robinson Legacy and Book Launch

On Saturday 16 March 2019, the Australian Church Record in conjunction with Moore Theological College, was pleased to host the book launch of *Donald Robinson's Selected Works, Volumes 3 & 4*.

The well attended morning hosted teachers and students, clergy and laypersons, and family and friends of Donald Robinson. Those present were treated to a feast of reflections on Robinson's life and ministry. Lionel Windsor shared his own reflections on Robinson's biblical insights. Rory Shiner not only shared learnings from his doctoral work on Robinson (the full text of which is published below), but interviewed Peter Robinson for reflections on family life, and interviewed Edwin Judge for reflections on a life of friendship with 'Don Robbie'. Archbishop Glenn Davies provided reflections 'of an Archbishop on an Archbishop' and afterwards launched the two new volumes, before Ed Loane rounded off the morning with his own comments on this important contribution to



Sydney's theological heritage.

The regular refrain afterwards among those who had the privilege to attend, was that Donald Robinson was a remarkable scholar and statesman. He captured his students' attention with daring and erudite exegetical work on the Scriptures, and he held firm evangelical commitments together with a generous churchmanship during his archiepiscopate. Overall, it was a great morning – and a great reminder of the rich tradition of searching the scriptures bequeathed to us through the life and ministry of Donald Robinson, and encapsulated in the two new volumes of his *Selected Works*.

However, if you were not there, or if you have not had a chance to obtain these new publications – do not simply take our word for it! Order your copy of the new volumes of Donald Robinson's *Works* soon, through Matthias Media: www.matthiasmedia.com.au/donald-robinson-selected-works **ACR**



Things I've Learned Along the Way

Studying D. W. B. Robinson

Introduction

In the year 2001, about fifty metres from where we now stand, a young West Australian skipped a Hebrew class to listen to a slightly and elderly man, dressed in bishop's purple and a clerical collar, teach on the Epistle of James. The class stood as he entered the room and remained standing while he prayed. They addressed him, neither by his Christian name 'Donald', nor by the title of his most recent posting, 'Archbishop', but by the clerical order he occupied through the laying on of hands, 'Bishop Robinson.'

The whole spectacle struck the young West Australian as other-worldly and exotic, but not pompous or inauthentic. The effect was to lull students into a false sense of security—a security quickly removed as this unassuming figure treated the class to an exegetical *tour de force*, with original and daring insights thrown at the unsuspecting class with a muzzle-velocity for which none were prepared.

Context

Today I have been asked to share some of what I have learned whilst studying the life and work of Donald Robinson. I feel I need to first offer some explanation of how I—someone not from Sydney and not an Anglican—became obsessed with this towering figure of Sydney Anglicanism.



Rory Shiner,
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I moved to Sydney from Perth in 2001 to study at Moore College. I was brought up in a wonderful Baptist family and Baptist theological environment—pious, conversionistic, dispensationalist and Arminian. Through a complex journey I found my way into the Reformed version of the faith and, after some years of work and ministry, I got in a car and drove across Australia to attend Australia's most prominent College in the Reformed tradition, Moore College.

My first year was thrilling, but also disorientating. The theology was rich and clearly evangelical, but the emphasis and approach to scripture was distinct. The deck was reformed, but the cards were shuffled very differently. Matters

I thought would be settled were open for discussion, exegesis was an adventure, covenantal theology was subsumed under the wider category of kingdom, critical theology was read generously, and biblical theology was everywhere. The categories of Reformed theology were servants to the task of reading the Bible, rather than a dominant voice which had decided beforehand what you would discover in the Bible before you had opened it.

I was both bewildered and enthralled. Curious, I made it one of my projects to work who had shuffled the deck in this way.

I began listening my way through the Moore College tape library. First was D. B. Knox, whose lec-



tures were exciting and illuminating with respect to my question. I then moved onto the other figure whose name I also kept hearing (though not *quite* as much), Donald Robinson.

I was captured. The style of lecture was more formal and less Socratic than Knox, but the proposals were to my mind even more original and exciting. I devoured them all, talked about them enthusiastically with friends, palmed-off some of his exegetical insights as my own, and eventually became that West Australian who skipped a Hebrew class to listen to the man whose teaching was re-shaping my thinking.

Biographical sketch

So, who was that small, elderly man in purple saying profound things to a classroom of Moore College first years?

Donald William Bradley Robinson was born in Lithgow, NSW in 1922, the son of prominent Anglican rector, R. B. Robinson. He grew up in Lithgow, Leichhardt, Chatswood and eventually Newtown as his father occupied various roles the diocese. His academic record at high school was patchy. Crucially, however, was able to begin Greek studies at school, which put him in a powerful position for biblical studies later on. Spiritually, he was a convinced evangelical. He has no awareness of a conversion experience, and was an active Christian witness and ministry right through his years of schooling.

At Sydney University, he studied classics and languages, exercised Christian leadership in the Evangelical Union (EU), and stood at the very start of a long and noble tradition of EU presidents and vice-presidents marrying each other. University was interrupted by war service in Brisbane and PNG.

He studied at Cambridge in the immediate post-war years and drank deeply from the cup of the Divinity department there.

He and his treasured wife Marie returned to Sydney in 1951 and, after ordination and curacies, began teaching at Moore College in 1952, an institution at which he was to teach continuously until 2002. The only years in which he did not teach were the decade of the 1980s, when he served as Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of NSW.

My PhD topic was Bishop Robinson's thought and influence, and I am currently working on a biography. What lessons have I learned along the way? Very briefly, I have four:

1. Reading the Bible is an adventure

First, Robinson taught me that reading the Bible is an adventure. He taught his students that the world of the Bible was untamed, wild, not garden, but wilderness. To enter into the world of the Bible was to enter into a world where we are visitors, not proprietors. We are like guests in another person's country, and we are required to exercise the associated virtues of humility and curiosity. It is not our job to colonise the Bible, but to understand it on its own terms, and—if we are disciples—to allow its patterns and concerns to shape our own.

Robinson was the consummate curious and humble guest. His powers of observation lead him to see sometimes startling and uncomfortable features in the biblical landscape. He believed that "the saints" in the NT was a technical term for Jewish Christians, that question of the extent of the canon was a live one for us today, that the church was not the new Israel, that "baptism in the Spirit" is not a synonym for conversion but a post-conversion Pentecostal experience and so forth. Indeed, his book of baptism in the NT was rejected by evangelical UK publishers on the grounds that it was too radical. It was apparently said that Robinson's work would be for baptism what John Robinson's *Honest to God* was for theism.

Robinson relentlessly interrogated the text for what was there, which made reading the Bible an adventure, rather than an exercise in theological confirmation bias.

2. Tradition creates obligations

The second thing I've learned from Robinson, which sits in some tension with the first, is the obligating power of tradition. Alongside Robinson's sometimes radical exegesis sat a tenacious loyalty to the traditions of the Anglican communion. Indeed, the contrast between Robinson the scholar and Robinson the archbishop was so profound that many felt he had abandoned his scholarship by the manner he approached the role of archbishop. He put down his radical scholar's pen and picked up a conservative bishop's staff, somehow seeing the two roles hermetically sealed-off from each other.

There's something in that. But for what it's worth I have found myself resistant to the idea that he set aside the one role in order to take up the other.

I believe there is a greater through-line between his scholarship and his episcopacy than has generally been realised. History creates something of an optical illusion here, giving the impression of two distinct phases when in fact there was great overlap. For example, Robinson was writing some of his most original scholarly work whilst serving as bishop in Paramatta. And whilst he was thrilling students with his radical NT ecclesiology in 1960s, he was simultaneously immersed in the liturgical revisions that would lead to the publication of *An Australian Prayer Book*. Somehow, these things were happening together rather than in succession.

His doctrine of church has both affinities and key difference with what Knox was also teaching. A careful disentangling of the Knox from the Robinson view of church can be helpful in this respect.

Conversely, Robinson continued to exercise his original scholarly judgement in the debates of the day as archbishop. His argumentation against the ordination of women to the priesthood is an example. For this he drew deeply on his understanding of the canon, of the nature of apostolic authority, of the roles of "Gospel" and "Apostle", and on the nature of biblical *paradoxes* (tradition). It was a distinct formulation of the argument, grounded in the NT theology he first began to hammer out at Cambridge, and it won the respect of theological opponents such as Kevin Giles.

I think what we can see in Robinson is a kind of Burkean regard for tradition. The primary obligations

placed on us by the tradition of scripture do not then render as nothing the obligations of the traditions in which we find ourselves. Non-scriptural tradition can (and in some cases must) be put aside. But the process by which this is done is iterative, complex, and patient. He shared the spirit of Chesterton in seeing tradition as a democracy of the dead, giving a voice to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. And he shared Burke's intuition that institutions and societies are complex, and any lever of change you pull will almost always cause other changes you did not anticipate and may not welcome.

I am here being descriptive rather than programmatic, trying to make sense of what was, rather than prescribe what ought to have been. Robinson's commitments were extremely frustrating to those seeking urgent reform in the 1980s. But his commitment to those traditions was principled, and part of consistent pattern of thought. If I am too much a creature of my own

generation to embrace the same commitments, I have come at least to admire them and the coherence of his commitment to them.

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3. The value of principled collaboration in scholarship

Thirdly, I think I learned from Robinson the value of principled collaboration in scholarship.

The Sydney diocese has sometimes been accused of organisational and theological isolation. It has become one of my regular dinner party set-pieces to argue that this is not so. Robinson's scholarship is an excellent counter-example. Two examples will serve the point.

First, Donald Robinson is increasingly and correctly recognized as the father of the Australian biblical theology moment—this disciplined attempt to understand the Bible on its own terms. Robinson's work on this in the early 1950s was hammered out in continual conversation with Father Gabriel Hebert, a leading Anglo-Catholic biblical scholar.

Secondly, across the 1960s and into the 1970s, Robinson's work on *AAPB* was in very large measure a product of an intellectual partnership between Robinson and Brother Sinden, the Anglo-Catholic liturgist.

Indeed, if we go back to the 1940s, it is interesting that Robinson went to Cambridge because of the work of critical scholars such as C. H. Dodd and C. F. D. Moule, at a time when many English evangelicals went to Cambridge with the strong encouragement to ignore anything they were taught in the Divinity School.

Robinson's capacity to combine evangelical conservatism with a principled and generous interaction with non-evangelical scholarship was both remarkable and fruitful, bequeathing to us artefacts such as the *AAPB* and Goldsworthy's biblical theology, both resources that no sane evangelical would now want to do without.

4. Leadership beyond personality

Finally, I have learned an important leadership lesson from Robinson. Robinson is remembered as a scholar more than an archbishop. His conservatism was frustrating for those clergy shaped by his exegesis. Both of the major battles of his episcopate—the battle for mutually recognised orders in the national church through a male priesthood, and the battle for Anglican forms of worship in Sydney, were both battles that did not go his way.

However, Robinson's personal integrity and almost superhuman ability to play the ball and not the man were deeply impressive. He has a strong sense of the role, and did not allow personality or personal loyalties to move agendas forward. Much like his scholarly collaborations, he seemed able to argue vigorously for his position in the context of debate, and then maintain warm and affectionate relationships with his opponents when off the field of battle.

There is a (perhaps apocryphal) story that Robinson was once at a function. A young girl came up to him and said, "You are a very important man", to which he replied, "No, but I have an important role."



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Conclusion

Mark McKenna, Manning Clark's biographer, describes Clark's archive as a kind of testimony to a monumental ego. As McKenna began working through the archive, he discovered notes and annotations from Clarke's pen all through, directing the researcher to grudges, personal vendetta and historic animosities, which Clark felt his biographers ought to factor in. Clark's vanity led him to engage in a futile post-mortem attempt to control the opinions of others.

In this respect Robinson is Clark's very opposite. His archive, which I am slowly working through at the moment, is free of vanity, ego, or any attempts to exercise control over public opinion, save the occasional

Edwardian sense of discretion. Having occupied the highest office in the diocese of Sydney, when his duties ended, he happily returned to teaching, preaching, family, and parish service. Sydney rector Raj Gupta, when a student at Moore College recalls door knocking with the elderly and retired bishop in his home suburb of Pymble. Robinson enthusiastically door-knocked his local street—in bishop's purple of course—but knowing the names and circumstances of most of his secular neighbours. He spoke warmly and personally. And yet he would get to the point: "Now, let

me tell you what we are doing. We have students here for a College mission and we are going about sharing the news of Jesus Christ."

To me, it seems fitting that his last lectures were to a small group of non-Hebrew students, most of whom were blissfully unaware of the roles he has held, or the fact that the biblical theology which has encouraged so many of us to seek a Moore College education was largely of his making, or that the sermons of Phillip Jensen or the instructed we'd received in the AFES owed so much to this unassuming figure, who stood in front of us, saying surprisingly radical and insightful things about the Epistle of James. **ACR**

Bathurst Needs Sydney's Pallium

In the medieval church the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was appointed by the crown in England, needed to receive a pallium from the Pope which represented his ecclesiastical authority. The pallium was thin scarf-like vestment and the last Archbishop of Canterbury to receive one was Thomas Cranmer. Just a few years after receiving his pallium, Cranmer led the Church of England out of papal jurisdiction and by the end of his episcopacy he had done away with sacerdotal vestments entirely. One element of the English Reformation was that the appointment of an Archbishop of Canterbury no longer required the validation or support of an external ecclesiastical authority.

On the first night of the 2018 session of Synod a report was presented proposing Sydney Diocese supply substantial financial support for Bathurst Diocese. The extent of the support was \$1.5 million paid over six years (\$250K pa) which would be used to fund both a bishop and registrar for Bathurst. In return for Sydney meeting the financial costs, Bathurst would have to elect a bishop that received the approval of the Archbishop of Sydney. Why would Bathurst submit to this external ecclesiastical infringement? The short answer is that it is a financial imperative. The report said "Bathurst has fallen on hard times". The reasons given were changing rural demographics as well as reckless overspending and the need to compensate victims of historic



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child sexual abuse. The result is that they cannot afford to pay their own bishop. The proposed solution was that Sydney would pay for their bishop but he will not be entirely their own choice. Written support will be required from the Archbishop of Sydney for the funds to flow and the written support can be withdrawn at any time entailing the cessation of financial support.

The thrust of the argument given for appropriating \$1.5 million of diocesan funds for this purpose essentially boiled down to three factors: charity, mission and precedent. In terms of the first point, those promoting the motion to support Bathurst argued that the diocesan "kitty is bone dry". Synod was told that as Christian brothers and sisters, "It is just the right thing to do!" Furthermore, the argument was put that just as the Apostle Paul commended the Gentile churches to financially support the impoverished church in Jerusalem, so Synod should provide the funding for Bathurst's bishop and registrar. The parallel, however, was weak at a number of levels. For example, the Jerusalem church was not looking to fund a bishop, they were not in poverty because of reckless overspending and compensation for sin, and, importantly, the gift was given without strings attached by the givers. This last point was picked up by a member of synod who argued that if Sydney was to be charitable

then it should give the money freely or else not give it at all. Another member of synod sought to amend the motion so that rather than merely a welfare subsidy to meet ongoing costs, Sydney would give \$1 million each year for six years to replenish Bathurst's endowment so the diocese could stand on its own feet again. If charity really was the motivation and "it was just the right thing to do" then each of these suggestions had merit. Nevertheless, neither was endorsed by the Synod.

The missional argument for giving the financial support was based largely on the census figures for Bathurst Diocese. The report included the data that there are 33 parishes and 17 ministers working more than 3 days a week in the Diocese. According to the last census the population is 275,000 and 23.3% (64,000) identify as Anglicans. The report went on to quote the Lord's words in Jonah 4:11: "Nineveh has more than a [sic] 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?" Indeed, this is a very compelling missional motivation. What was lacking in the figures presented to Synod was any accounting of the workers who would take the gospel into the harvest. With only 17 ministers working more than three days a week less than half of the parishes in the diocese have a dedicated pastoral and missional leader.

With so few in the front line, are Bathurst and Sydney expecting too much of this episcopal leader's missional ability? Furthermore, the number of clergy was really the only hint the report gave about how many people regularly attend an Anglican church and when considering that some clergy are supported by organisations such as BCA one must conclude there are not many practicing Anglicans to partake in the mission at all. The mover of the motion was asked roughly how many people attended Anglican churches in the diocese on an average Sunday but was unsure of the figure. Another issue that was sadly overlooked was the age demographic of these Anglican churchgoers. The census figure of Anglicans is relatively meaningless in the context of assessing the strategic missional significance of Sydney's financial investment.

Of even greater significance, however, is the theological priorities of those who would undertake the mission. Those familiar with the history of Bathurst

will know that, although it began as an evangelical diocese, by the early years of the twentieth century it was marked by advanced Anglo-Catholicism. Essentially the gospel priorities of the reformation—Bible alone, Faith alone, Grace alone—were undermined in this movement. The relationship between Bathurst and Sydney deteriorated further when, in the 1940s, Bishop Wylde of Bathurst, sought to impose illegal liturgical innovations on the diocese. Key leaders in Sydney supported some Bathurst parishes in a legal resistance against the bishop. While the details of the Red Book Case need not be rehearsed here, the point is that past

leaders of Sydney Diocese were so concerned at what they believed was the perversion of the gospel in the practice and belief of Bathurst Diocese they were willing to go to court to stop it. Sadly, while the report spoke a great deal of the missional importance of funding a bishop and registrar, there was little evidence that the priorities of those in the parishes of Bathurst were biblical gospel priorities.

The significance of this oversight should be put in the context of recent Sydney Diocesan involvement in the national Anglican scene. In 2014 the Viabilities and Structures Task Force of Australia's General Synod produced a report assessing the state of churches

across the country. Like the proposal regarding Bathurst, the viabilities and structures task force used census figures to measure how many Anglicans there were (rather than those actually attending church) and it looked at the future financial viability of dioceses. Sydney Synod responded to the report in 2015 asserting both that a "glaring failure of the Report is its employment of census figures when discussing attendance and numbers of clergy" and that the "viability of churches and church structures is not principally about finances and resources but gospel integrity." It appears in 2015 Sydney Synod received a report criticising particular failures of a General Synod's approach but in 2018 Sydney Synod was presented with an internal report with exactly the same flaws.

The final reason given for offering support to Bathurst was that there is a precedent. Armidale was particularly highlighted, demonstrating the similar-



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ity of demographics and pointing out that Sydney has supported ministry in Armidale previously. The report stated “If it makes sense to support Anglican gospel ministry in Armidale, then it makes sense to support Anglican gospel ministry in Bathurst.” The next paragraph included the sentence “Through our Work Outside the Diocese (WOD) committee, Sydney Diocese currently provides almost \$100,000 annually to support evangelical ministry in the Diocese of Armidale, the Diocese of the Northern Territory, the Diocese of North West WA and the Diocese of Tasmania.” There are two things worth noting about the argument from precedent. Firstly, four dioceses usually share almost \$100,000 i.e. on average a little less than \$25,000 each. What is proposed for Bathurst is an order of magnitude larger than what is generally given to other evangelical dioceses. Secondly, according to the report, the WOD committee gave the money “to support evangelical ministry”. This is a telling comment and explains much about the proposal.

Why has Sydney not supported Anglican ministry in Bathurst previously? It is because Sydney believes evangelical ministry is authentic Anglican ministry

and Bathurst has not been evangelical. Why would Sydney offer support only on the strict condition that the bishop must receive the endorsement of Sydney’s Archbishop? It is because Sydney believes that through the influence of an evangelical bishop, or at least evangelically sympathetic bishop, evangelical ministry can expand and flourish in Bathurst. Although these reasons were not stated in the report or the arguments at Synod—and such weak arguments were used in their place—they are surely the reasons that stand behind the proposal and its particular condition. Those in Sydney Synod understood this, saw the potential gospel good, and supported the appropriation of the funds. Bathurst had previously unanimously endorsed the proposal stating their understanding that the diocese would retain “its independence, identity and integrity”. Well, sending a pallium will cost Sydney \$250,000 per year. For Bathurst, receiving a pallium will cost also. It will cost the loss of autonomy in episcopal appointment. But surely both dioceses perceive the treasures in heaven that will be stored up as this initiative, and the evangelical ministry it promotes, expands the gospel growth in western NSW. **ACR**



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What happened at last Synod's debate on the remarriage of divorced persons?

This is an article I've both wanted to write, and wanted not to write, since last year's Synod. I've wanted to write it because honestly, I was greatly troubled by some aspects of our conduct during our debate, on the final night of Synod, of a motion concerning the remarriage of divorced persons. Further, as I've spoken to others, some (though not all) were similarly troubled. Perhaps we are outliers. Tender consciences. Maybe others saw no problem with what ensued. Time will tell. But on the off chance that there is some substance to the sense of unease that I, and others, felt, I hope it will be beneficial, and not needlessly divisive, to try and give voice to my concerns, ideally so that across the Diocese, we might take time to reflect on what happened, and give consideration to how our process during important debates like this could be more edifying in the future.

At the same time, though, I have hesitated to write this article because I fear that despite my best intentions, it may still sow division. I do not expect that everyone will agree with my assessment of what went on. I also quickly admit that the procedural environment of Synod is not one that I'm very familiar with; some may dismiss my concerns as simply Synod naivety. Others may feel that I am attacking them, or someone they know and support, personally. This is not my goal - I have deliberately not referenced by name any individual who spoke during the debate.



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However, to speak candidly about what happened inevitably requires speaking specifically as well. For some, this may call to mind particular speeches and/or speakers, and some will sense a direct, or indirect, criticism of this or that person. Again, this is not my goal. All I can ask is that, as readers, you refrain from considering my observations in terms of any particular individuals and try to keep considering the principles of how we conducted the debate. That is the matter I am trying to raise.

Above all, though, I have hesitated to write this article simply because the underlying topic of debate - the remarriage of divorced persons, is so crucial for so many people, and there is a risk that any discussion of this article will

morph into a discussion of that issue, rather than the process of our Synod discussion. I understand that the underlying discussion needs to continue. Again, though, my goal here is less to contribute to that ongoing discussion itself, and rather to stir up consideration of how we conducted the debate on the final night of Synod last year.

Enough caveats. The debate to which I refer was over a motion concerning the remarriage of divorced persons. Specifically:

Synod, noting that it is the prerogative of the Archbishop or a Regional Bishop, in accordance with the laws of this Church, whether or not to

approve the remarriage of a divorced person, requests the Archbishop and Regional Bishops to consider approving the remarriage of a divorced person, where that person has been abused physically or emotionally by their former spouse.

Let's start with a simple observation concerning the debate's outcome. After a long period of speeches, the motion was eventually put. The outcome was not easily determined: not by voices nor by hands. It went to a secret ballot. On October 24, the Diocesan Secretary wrote to all members of Synod informing us of the ballot's outcome:

For	325
Against	161
Informal	1

Accordingly, the motion was carried.

Does anything strike you about this result? Two things strike me. First, that a vote which could not be tallied by hands or by voices resulted in a 2:1 outcome by secret ballot. The reasons for that are certainly worth pondering further. The second thing that strikes me, though, is that just 487 votes were tallied. This, despite a full Synod membership of 'about 820 members', according to the Secretary. In other words, on a crucial motion that has potentially far-reaching consequences – exegetically, theologically, and pastorally, less than 60% of Synod members were present to cast a vote (conceivably some Synod members were present but chose not to take part in the vote. In my view, this is not much better than being absent).

Opinions may differ, but for my part, I do not think this is satisfactory. Yes, of course, the time given to Synod each year is costly. I feel that as much as anyone, at least with regard to ministry at church and life at home (I acknowledge that I feel it much less than many with regard to travel, given my proximity to the city). And I know that this was the final night of Synod; in all likelihood, other times during Synod week may have much higher rates of attendance and participation. And yet we all know that Synod runs for five days. The dates are given well in advance. The whole thing is part of our being a Diocese together. It's one of the (few) mutual commitments that we are asked to make, and all of us ought to do all that we can to keep it. After all, we are

all willing to receive the benefits of being part of the Diocese. If we weren't, why else would we be a part of it? Is it fair, though, to receive the benefits and not carry the responsibilities? Our attendance and participation at Synod are surely two of those responsibilities.

What about the debate itself? The crucial aspect of the motion was the inclusion of physical or emotional abuse by a former spouse as a matter for the Archbishop and Bishops' consideration of a divorced person remarriage. Assumed in the motion is that until now, physical or emotional abuse by a former spouse had *not* been a deciding matter in the consideration of a divorced person remarriage. From here, however, a critical ambiguity arose that then ran its way through the rest of the debate. Strictly to the letter of the written motion, some seemed to interpret it as asking nothing more than for episcopal *consideration* of a matter. Presumably, they could consider it, and then reject it. The tenor of much of our debate, however, suggests that for others, the motion included an implicit acceptance of the fact that physical or emotional abuse by a former spouse is appropriate grounds on which the Bishops could approve the remarriage of a divorced

person. On this latter reading, the motion, in effect asked Synod to approve a change in our policy and practice.

Obviously, the broader canvas against which this motion, and the subsequent debate, sits is the biblical teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Even exegetically, though, let alone pastorally, these are not straightforward matters, as anyone who has given serious time to investigate them must recognize. To state what should be clear to all, not everyone agrees with where the biblical boundaries are set for us on these matters.

Early on, therefore, there was a plea for the motion not to be passed until the Doctrine Commission could give consideration to the matter and present a report back to Synod. The argument here was that given the great significance attached to marriage biblically, not just for our own human affairs, or our pastoral care of God's people, but also in terms of depicting God's relationship to his people, any change to our understanding of marriage, including the ethics of divorce and remarriage, should only be done with immense caution. As a Diocese, the body to which we



The crucial aspect of the motion was the inclusion of physical or emotional abuse by a former spouse as a matter for the Archbishop and Bishops' consideration of a divorced person remarriage.



have consistently looked to help us with such things is the Doctrine Commission. Therefore, let's pass it to them and ask that they give Synod a report.

For some, this suggestion seemed sensible and appropriately cautious. For others, it was deemed cowardly and uncaring. Very early on, an attempt was made to reject any delay by taking Synod through all the key biblical texts and explaining why there was no impediment to the motion being passed. Inasmuch as it took us to the Scriptures, this was admirable. In its expectations for a moment of Synod, however, it was, in my view, foolish. As if so large and diverse a group could be persuaded in so short a time to make their mind up on a matter so complex and weighty!

Responses to this flowed quickly, however, and then there were responses to the responses. Some expressed a hesitation to accept, or even to follow, the complete biblical case that had been so quickly presented. Others appeared cynically to dismiss these responses as disingenuous, a faux-humility. Some expressed a dismayed outrage that any of us could not already have made up our minds about this matter, or that we might not concede what they regarded as plain-as-the-light-of-day. Clearly there was strongly felt emotion on both sides of the debate. This should not surprise us, given the topic of discussion. It ought to be guarded carefully, however, for emotion often blocks our ears to what others are saying, and our minds from making charitable assumptions concerning their motives.

Remarkably, there were some who seemed largely oblivious to the fact that there was even an issue that needed resolving, expressing their understanding that the motion's supposedly new element had long been the Diocesan view of the Bible's teaching. In my opinion, this view was especially disheartening. It seemed to imply a lazy reliance on things we learned or were taught at some point in the distant past, as if we are not called continually to examine and re-examine the Scriptures, always seeking to reform and/or enrich our life and doctrine by it. Do any of us really think this?

After a reasonable time of debate, we seemed to get lost in a procedural quagmire. There were amendments to the motion; there were amendments to the amendments; there were motions to not put the

motion. There were (sadly?) several points at which many members Synod laughed audibly, particularly when some new speaker suggested a step that would take us down some new synodical cul-de-sac. Perhaps this was our weariness speaking. After all, it's not very likely that the evening session of Day 5 at Synod is the best time for us to weight up such an important matter.

In the end, the various amendments were all voted on. Eventually, we found our way back to the original motion. The procedural complexities we had endured were then exacerbated by the fact that an outcome could not be determined by voices or hands, and so the secret ballot was cast and the motion was passed.

And yet still, what are we to do with that critical ambiguity concerning the interpretation of the motion? Are we to conclude that all 325 Synod members who voted *for* the motion necessarily approve of the idea

that physical or emotional abuse by a former spouse is appropriate grounds on which the Bishops can approve the remarriage of a divorced person? Or is it possible that some, perhaps even many, voted for the motion in its strictly literal sense: that they were very comfortable with the Bishops *considering* the matter, perhaps even with the unspoken assumption that they would consider it and reject it?

I left my first Synod (2017) greatly encouraged by the quality and manner of our debate and procedures. However, this debate on the final night of Synod last year, left me very discouraged. My biggest concern is what seemed to be

our willingness to push careful theological reflection into the background, thereby relegating to second place our commitment to listening to the Scriptures as our first and chief authority. Would we not have been better served by asking our Doctrine Commission to consider again both the teaching and the contemporary application of God's Word?

Yes, of course, it is beholden on all of us, and most especially if we are already in pastoral ministry, to have settled convictions on matters such as this. We must have a view of what the Bible teaches and how it is to be applied. Clearly, from our Synod debate, many of us do already have such convictions. And one of the great strengths of our Diocese is the way that it enables local church ministry to carry on with such a



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great degree of autonomy, where our ministry convictions can take hold in the context of unique and particular pastoral relationships.

When we act together as a Diocese, however, and that is what happens when we gather at Synod, our convictions must be worked out together, in gospel partnership with one another, in peaceful fellowship, prayerfully sitting under the authority of God's Word and striving to come to a common mind. When a topic as important as this one comes up, and our views are so passionate but divided, we should be willing to act cautiously, even if it means returning to the Scriptures once more. If we start with the assumption that not one of us has a fully complete biblical understanding, then we are set free to consider that brothers and sisters who think differently on some matter ought to be listened to carefully. And so together we ought to be driven back to the Scriptures, that with God's help we might come to a proper agreement. This, again, is surely a role that the Doctrine Commission can play for us, not in order to 'cook the books' ahead of time and make this or that outcome inevitable, but simply to let the Word of God be our authoritative guide, as it should be.

If we are not to let God's Word play this role, what else is left to us by some form of pragmatic thinking? Perhaps the pragmatics of emotion, whereby we set theological considerations beneath our overwhelming sense of what 'feels' right, of what feels to be the 'nicer', the more compassionate and caring outcome.

Or perhaps it would be the pragmatics of seeking

the popular path in the eyes of the world, whereby we try to take whatever action might win the smiling, if begrudging, approval of the culture around us. And certainly, on an issue where our world's standards have moved quickly away from even the outward appearance of likeness to biblical teaching, not to mention the fact that some of our deep failings over matters like domestic violence have become so publicly known, it's not hard to think how theology could take a back seat to taking the action of which the world will approve.

Or perhaps it would be the pragmatics of Synod politics, whereby whenever an awkward debate comes up, we simply try to 'procedure' our way out it. And certainly, on an issue which is as complex as this, and where opinions are so deeply divided, it's not hard to think how theology could take a back seat to the desire simply to get ourselves out of a tight spot, or to just kick the can further down the road.

I suggest that, in varying measure, all three of these pragmatic paths were present in our debate on the final night of Synod. To think that we could have done these things on a matter of such importance as divorce and remarriage, where real lives will be shaped and molded by our decisions, is, in my view, sobering. However what I think was even more concerning was the possibility that we allowed these things to take precedence over our ongoing commitment to careful theological thinking as the primary basis upon which we, together as a Synod, make such important decisions. **ACR**

GAFCON in Sydney

What's Next? Confidently Preaching Christ. This is the vital theme which the GAFCON leadership will be soon impressing upon Anglicans throughout Australia. Building on the momentum of an extraordinarily encouraging GAFCON conference last year, meetings in major cities throughout May this year will provide the opportunity to continue and deepen links with this important movement of the Gospel. Representing two third of the world's Anglicans, Archbishops Ben Kwashi and Foley Beach (respectively General Secretary and Chairman of GAFCON) will spearhead the roadshow. If you are curious about GAFCON, this will be an important chance to hear stories of the Gospel spreading around the world, and to be challenged concerning how to participate in the future of the Anglican Communion.

Sydney meeting at Moore Theological College, 9am-12:30pm, 4 May 2019.

Registration details and more information at: www.gafconaustralia.org

The Valuing and Devaluing of Theological Education

Among the myriad challenges facing the Church of England is the state of theological education. Part time and mixed mode study dominates the theological educational landscape. Residential theological education is deemed too expensive. In many places, two or three year theological degrees with optional original languages are seen as sufficient for pastoral ministry. The few remaining evangelical theological colleges provide the most robust forms of training, with Oak Hill College the most outstanding among them. Nevertheless, even some evangelicals themselves seem confused about the importance of theological training, with theological college seen as primarily an opportunity to do university ministry, or with short and narrow in-house church courses mistakenly seen as a sufficient alternative to longer in-depth theological training. Whatever the motivating factor – perhaps the decrease of funding, desperation for numeral growth, or well-intended activism – the devaluation of theological education does not bode well for the national church of our motherland.

The evangelicals of the early English Reformation cast quite another vision of ministerial theological education. When they were in the ascendancy, evangelicals prioritised theological education. In terms of pre-college training, a theologically robust catechism was published in Latin and English, and was required



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to be taught at all grammar schools throughout the kingdom (consisting of evangelical doctrinal discussion which modern theological students would find challenging). In terms of college training, clergy were residentially trained in divinity over several years, and were generally expected to be proficient in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.¹ In terms of post-college training, episcopal visitations raised and maintained the theological standards of the clergy. Bishop Ridley privately and personally examined the learning of every priest and curate in London, Bishop Hooper focused upon the adequacy of preaching and knowledge of the Lord's Prayer throughout Gloucester, and Bishop Ponet focused upon the minister's own

theological knowledge, and his ministerial catechising of the young in Winchester Diocese.

When the English evangelicals fell on hard times, their adherence to the priority of theological education was even more striking. During the reign of Queen Mary Tudor, almost 1,000 evangelicals went into exile on the Continent. Most of the leading clergymen, and many students from Oxford and Cambridge found refuge in Strasbourg or Zürich. It has been often recognised that students from these two latter cities would later fill many senior roles in the Elizabethan

¹ The latter (Hebrew) coming to prominence a short while after Greek.

Settlement (contra those who found refuge in Geneva and would later generally find a home among non-conforming Puritanism). What is not often recognised is the importance of the role that theological education played in their time of exile. In Strasbourg, students such as Edmund Grindal and Edwin Sandys were taught by Peter Martyr Vermigli, Girolamo Zanchi, and John Ponet. In Zürich, students such as John Jewel and John Aylmer were taught by “Bishop” Bullinger, Konrad Pellikan, and Vermigli (who moved there in 1556). Although times were tough for the English evangelicals, their commitment to a deep theological education remained unshaken.

There are three additionally noteworthy features about the English exiles and their theological training. Firstly, great fundraising efforts were made to ensure a high-quality education. While the exiled students boarded in hostels together and eked out a meagre existence, wealthy evangelical merchants back in London secretly sent them money, as did evangelical patrons throughout the Continent such as the Duke of Württemberg. Secondly, exciting ministry opportunities were turned down by students so as to ensure their own theological education. Recently discovered letters from Edmund Grindal and James Haddon record that the desire to learn Greek and Hebrew properly was the reason why they turned down important leadership opportunities among the growing exile ministry at Frankfurt. Thirdly, the English exiles were training with long-term ministry in view. They could not have predicted when Queen Mary would die and whether Elizabeth would be alive to succeed her. But they were dedicated to serious theological education for the well-being of Christ’s church wherever they might minister in the future. Thus, this long-sighted approach to theological education goes some distance to explain the firmly evangelical character of the Elizabethan Settlement.

So, what has Strasbourg to do with Sydney? Well, the same high priority and long-sighted approach to theological education has characterised Sydney evangelicalism since the arrival of Richard Johnson, whose well-used Cruden’s concordance arrived with him on the First Fleet in 1788 and remains today in the Moore Theological College library. The same priority and approach drove Thomas Moore to envision and provide for Moore Theological College which opened in 1856, and drove Broughton Knox to strengthen and extend the Moore Theological College degree program in more recent years. Indeed, this priority and long-sightedness is articulated well in Knox’s mature reflections

on theological education within his recommendations for the establishment of George Whitefield College, Cape Town, in 1986:

The minister of the congregation is the teacher of God’s Word to the congregation. This is his main task. He will have other duties and opportunities of service as a Christian, but his main task is that of teacher.

...Since the training of a minister is so crucial for the spiritual life and eternal destiny of members of the congregation and their families, nothing but the best possible training in knowledge and character should be accepted.

...The expansion of the three year course into a four year integrated progressive course, each year building on the earlier years, in core subjects. A theological student looking to ordination to a life time [of] ministry needs four years study as a minimum if he is to study at proper depth all the subject[s] which should be covered as well as receive practical instruction and experience in preaching, evangelism and other aspects of the ministry.²

We in Sydney have received a great inheritance of theological education from those evangelicals who have come before us. The high priority and long-sighted character of theological training has enabled evangelicals to both advance the Gospel in the good times and prepare for future advancement of the Gospel in the harder times. There will always be financial challenges, numerical aspirations, and distracting opportunities. There will always be attempts to redirect funding for theological education into other noble – probably shorter-sighted – endeavours. There will always be efforts to confuse the necessary curricula of a theological college with that of a bible college or a local church course. However, the temptation to succumb to these wrong turns ought to be resisted. Of course, I write with vested interests, as a new Moore Theological College lecturer! However, I also write with recent experience of the sad state of theological education in the Church of England, and I have observed students pass through their (evangelical!) theological education with little formal teaching on the doctrines of Scripture and of justification by faith alone.

The threat of devaluing theological education is,

2 D.B. Knox, *Report by David Broughton Knox to the Executive of the Synod of the Church of England in South Africa on Theological Education*, Peter Spotalis Archives, Moore Theological College.

in reality, an opportunity. It is an opportunity to hold fast to our high appreciation for theological education while others do not. It is an opportunity to send well equipped men and women into our churches in Sydney with the education other institutions do not provide. It is an opportunity to give the best help and assistance to the churches of other Dioceses, Provinces, and

Churches. It is an opportunity to give the finest possible training to people who will spend their lifetime holding out the Gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord to a world which so desperately needs to hear that message. Should we devalue our theological education? By no means! [ACR](#)

Evangelism in South Africa



An interview with Kenny Lloyd, Pastor of Word of Life Church, Port Elizabeth

1 | *Kenny, can you give us a short introduction to the Word of Life ministry?*

Ten years ago we started some Bible studies on campus trying to make sure students here were being taught the true gospel. We wanted to have the Bible opened for and with them, so we started a Bible study on campus at lunchtime and got two Bible studies going in the evenings so we could reach students in the university residences. We used Tony Payne's *Just for Starters* in the beginning. It was nice and easy – not too much exegesis involved for them, just manageable bite-sized pieces of crucial Scripture to get them used to the Gospel. We found that was a hit, so we followed up with *Discipleship for Starters*, also by Tony Payne, and enjoyed that material. After one year

went by we decided to start Sunday morning and evening services. This meant we could not only have Bible studies, but also services with Gospel preaching and prayers. In some ways, we see our church as a bridging church. Given that students are not here for long (3, 4, or 5 years – sometimes we only meet them in their final year), we hope that this will be a bridging experience; a black evangelical church on campus so when students leave Port Elizabeth they will go and find and evangelical church where-ever they end up.

2 | *Who are the men and women that come to Word of Life, and what are some of the challenges they face in South Africa?*

There are young black men and women from all over South Africa, and some as well from Southern Africa (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Namibia, Cameroon, Nigeria – though not all nations represented at the same time). The things that they face

in South Africa, primarily in the Eastern Cape, is the legacy of apartheid. Many families are broken. It is the exception to the rule that they come from a family where Mum and Dad have had a stable and faithful marriage, and are still together – at least two thirds of students come from broken families. Most of them do not know their father, and their father has played no role in their life. For many of them where that is the case, it's Granny and Mum who have raised the children. Some of them haven't had a fantastic education. They have been in rural schools where they haven't had access to technology nor well resourced schooling. They come from communities where tuberculosis, HIV, crime, drunkenness, and African traditional religions are rife, and many have been raised with an animistic worldview. It's a great challenge for them to trust in Christ when things become difficult in their lives. We sometimes say for many of our people, that during the day they might be Christians, but at night they turn to African traditional religions, and so we are constantly discipling people to put their trust in Christ when serious things happen to them.

3 | *How has the way you have evangelised changed over the time you have ministered at Word of Life?*

We've had to take on board real shifts in society as a result of Rhodes must Fall, Fees must Fall, and the reaction against colonialism and western colonial education. This has brought with it an increased resistance to what is perceived as a white western European and colonial, and thus an irrelevant and unwanted gospel. That is the reality for many people, and so I think partially explains why we no longer have students streaming into evangelical churches where the gospel is preached. I suppose the way evangelism has changed, is that it is more difficult now. It is a slower process to gain trust. Before that trust is built up, it is difficult for people to listen. So, we need to get people into our homes, need to get people to camps, and we need our own converted young people to be the key inviters because they already trust us, and so those they invite will be more trusting. I suppose apologetically, we have had to be more awake to deal with their questions. The question of suffering is huge for our young people. In addition to the enormous suffering their parents experienced under apartheid, many students have suffered greatly through their complex family situations. To pretend that that isn't real for them, that it isn't a stumbling block for them, as far as coming to

Christ as concerned, is to be irrelevant and outdated and unsympathetic towards the young people.

4 | *How has the way you evangelised remained the same while at Word of Life?*

I think it's remained the same, in that the content of the Gospel is untouchable and received from the apostles. So we have not changed the content, and nor would we want to, and nor Lord willing ever will we. We endeavour to call people to repent of their sins and trust in Christ as the only saviour. We still find that Bible studies are the best places for evangelism because students can ask questions there. And they feel safer there than they might in a church service because there they can ask questions of their peers who have very good answers for them. We also find that having short camps throughout the year, for example we have already had a newcomers camp where we dealt with the theme of family, given that many of the students come from broken families. That gave us a great opportunity to express the Gospel clearly for people, some of them for the first time.

While the content of the Gospel remains unchanged, we are trying harder to understand their lives better. There's a lot of mental illness and mental agony for South African young people in particular. So we try hard to sympathise with their world and their experiences, and yet at the same time bring the Gospel to bear on what they are going through.

5 | *What lessons have you personally learned about evangelism through your ministry at Word of Life?*

I once read in a book by John Stott on preaching, the quote: 'truly souls are hardly won'. For us that seems to be our experience – this is our 11th year. And by God's grace there have been people converted to Christ. But to my knowledge there are not many people who have been converted in 11 years. So that's lesson number one I have learned – that souls are not easily won.

For example, souls are not easily converted to a life of faithfully following Jesus and embracing him as their only hope and putting aside their legalistic framework – perhaps even their desire to synchronise Christianity with African traditional religions. Those ways are not easily put aside.

The other thing we've learned is that evangelism and prayer are surely married. We have endeavoured to pray earnestly every week, Thursday afternoon and Friday afternoon are our two prayer meetings in the

week. Not always hugely attended, but we stick to praying twice a week for all the needs of our church and ministry, including the lost and those who do not know Christ.

I think to quote Chappo, the first 50 years are the hardest. I do think we are finding that as well – it has been hard to remain clear and faithful to the Gospel handed down to us in the Scriptures, and it's at times been hard to persevere. And every now and again, in the past 11 years, we have slacked off in our evangelism. It has not been easy to maintain it and keep the fires burning for evangelism.

6 | *Having ministered previously in Sydney, and having visited frequently since, what have you appreciated about evangelism in Sydney, and what regarding evangelism, do you think we can improve on?*

The main churches we have visited have been Church by the Bridge Kirribilli, St. Mark's Northbridge, and St. Thomas' North Sydney, and well as Holy Trinity in

Wentworth Falls. We have found these to be praying churches, and churches that were taking the initiatives. We have often been there over Christmas time, and we have been reminded of how the Sydney churches that we have visited are trying hard to make good contacts with their local community through whatever means. And that's been a challenge and encouragement for us to see those efforts – to link up with people who live near the churches.

We have also been encouraged by the preaching in Sydney, which has often been evangelistic in its intent. I am not in a position to make any suggestions regarding evangelism in Sydney but rather to keep encouraging the brothers and sisters to pray, as we have even seen them doing, that God would do his great work of saving people.

Perhaps I would end with Ephesians 6:19-20: 'Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains.' **ACR**

Evangelism in The Pilbara

1200 km away from the nearest capital city. 600km away from the nearest set of traffic lights. 440km away from the closest town. 440km away from the closest McDonalds. This lands you in the town of Newman. A mining community with the beating heart of the town being the largest open cut Iron Ore mine in the Southern Hemisphere. Every day approximately 400,000 tonnes of Iron Ore is transported, by train, from Newman to Port Hedland. From Hedland the Iron Ore is transported across the world.

Mining is typically a younger person's profession, so the town is predominantly populated by younger families. The population in the town is anywhere between 4500-5000 people.

Being so far from anywhere in Newman, the vast majority of people in Newman have little or no family in town. This is one of the contributing factors which drives the sense of community in this town.

The best way to get to know people in town is to get out and be a part of the community. There are plenty of activities for kids and families to participate in as well



Roger Kyngdon, Rector of Newman Anglican Church

as other community events. The community thrives through people in the town volunteering and being a part of community groups. Such as schools, sporting groups and other community groups.

Last year while my family and I were attending the BCA Family conference Mark Short showed a map of

the country which shows the percentage of Christians across the country as taken from the last census data. The least amount of Christians in the population is in the Pilbara area.

My wife and I have experienced this directly, in that many people have no knowledge of what a minister does and what their job is.

For us in our community in Newman this puts us in a wonderful opportunity for evangelism and for connecting into the community in which we live in.

Part of this connection into the community is driven by our own personal needs, but also through our desire to share the good news of the gospel with those around us. Through community groups we have become involved in we have the opportunity to share of our lives and show our love and care for the community through our volunteering and also through being involved in people's lives.

In a community as small as ours it is impossible to fly under the radar. You can't escape to the nearest suburb and be anonymous, which is a positive thing and at times a negative thing. But it also means that we have more opportunities than we might in other areas.

During last year we held a number of family events. Such as a Christian alternative to halloween and other events around Christmas. Through these events and our weekly Kids Club program we have seen families not connected to the church begin attending these events and making connections to our church and also people at our church who they know from around our community.

Once the weather in Newman becomes bearable for those not used to it, we see the population of Newman increase as the "grey nomads" arrive in their caravans on their way up and down the West Australian coast. With the stunningly beautiful Karijini national park on our doorstep Newman is a great stopping point to stock up for continuing their trip and seeing the sights. We have opportunities to evangelise to them as they pass through town and encourage them to stop into other churches around the North West Diocese. The North West Diocese clergy are all faithful evangelical men seeking to proclaim Christ in all they do. There have been moments where someone

has passed through a town and a minister has made contact with them and begun the process of leading them to Christ, and they have moved on from that town but heading towards another town where there is someone who can continue their journey towards faith. When things like this happen you are reminded that you are working as part of a team. You may be hundreds or thousands of kilometres away from each other but it is a team.

As you may be aware, a lot of the workers on the mines in and around Newman are "Fly in Fly out" (FIFO) workers. Typically we do not have much contact with them as their accommodation is usually outside of town or on the mine site itself.

Last year, out of the blue, I was contacted by one of these FIFO workers who was very distressed at some trouble he had got himself into. He wanted to meet with me so he could get a "religious perspective." I agreed to meet with him so I could hear his story.

The thing which distressed him the most was that in his eyes he had lived a good life up until now and could not understand why he did what he had done. It was a great opportunity for me to point

him towards the gospel and also the idea of original sin and the idea that without the death and resurrection of Jesus, none of us are good enough for God.

After meeting with him, and remaining in contact with him he has turned up at church twice. He keeps on telling me that he does not believe in God and that he is coming to church for some perspective. But he keeps on coming and people at church are getting to know him and pray for him.

In a place like Newman you need to be ready to think on your feet and take whatever opportunity God throws at your feet. Whether it is the person making your coffee or the mine worker you bump into at the shops.

The North West diocese is a long way away from Sydney. There are many differences to working in a suburban context, but there are so many great opportunities to proclaim the good news of Jesus. If you are looking for a change in ministry please contact the bishop Gary Nelson. He would love to talk to you about ministry opportunities in the North West. **ACR**



In a community as small as ours it is impossible to fly under the radar. You can't escape to the nearest suburb and be anonymous, which is a positive thing and at times a negative thing.



Lessons in evangelism from an ordinary local church

The Georges River region of Sydney is a fantastic place to do ministry. What we've found since coming to St Paul's is that there are so many gospel opportunities. Naturally, it is a challenge at times to know which to say yes to and what to say no to, but one of the very encouraging patterns we've noticed is that just getting in and having a crack at something often bears fruit. I suspect this is partly because there are lots of people and not as many churches as you might find in other regions of the diocese.

Because of this we're often meeting people who are very positive about being invited to church. We've been reminded a number of times of Jesus' words in John 10 that his sheep will know his voice and follow him (John 10.4). Take Hamid¹ as an example. Hamid walked past our church and saw a sign that said 'looking for a fresh start in 2019? So are we. We'd love to meet you.' The sign resonated with Hamid and he walked into our church one Sunday. He, like many in our area, migrated to Australia years earlier. His family is very religious but Hamid had spent the last 10 years or so living in darkness and running away from the Lord. Hamid has been to church every week since then and has joined our blokes bible study group, he's also begun seeing a Christian psychologist to seek help in breaking some negative patterns. We've met a number of people like Hamid who have reminded us that there are many of his sheep in our parish who are waiting to hear his voice.

What's Canterbury like?

Canterbury is a fascinating place to do mission. You may have heard of the Latte Line, describing Sydney's cultural and socio-economic division. Well, Canterbury is smack bang on the middle of the line. This was brought home to us during the debates surrounding



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Senior Minister of
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Church Canterbury

the 2017 plebiscite into same sex marriage. Half of our parish is situated in the Grayndler electorate which was the 3rd highest yes voting electorate in the nation, and the other half of our parish is situated in Watson, the 2nd highest no voting electorate.

It's a place of incredible cultural and political diversity, and it's a place that changes astonishingly quickly. For example, according to the 2016 census there were a negligible number of Mongolians living in Canterbury. Just eighteen months later, so many have moved into the suburb that Mongolian students

now make up 15% of the local primary school population. All of this means that our task of making disciples of Jesus in Canterbury and Hurlstone Park means we need to be flexible, quick to act and creative.

What's worked

Revitalising and planting congregations gives you a kind of permission and impetus to go hard in the community, trying lots of things and pestering people with lots of invitations. One of our big aims over the last 2 years was to develop staple outreach ministries that would bear fruit for a long time to come. We've tried a bunch of things: community barbeques, playgroup, kids club, parenting seminars, a youth drop-in, Anglicare's Mobile Community Pantry, evangelistic courses, food drives, door knocking, a trivia night, a clothes-swap, and lots and lots of leafletting. We've planted an evening congregation and re-potted our morning congregation.

There's still lots of work for us to do but we simply wouldn't have been able to see the fruit we've seen had it not been for the creativity, courage and gospel generosity of others.

Three years ago I began speaking with my then-rector, Antony Barraclough (West Pymble) about developing an ongoing partnership with a church in the Georges River region. To cut a long story short,

¹ Not his real name.

that ended in us leaving West Pymble and joining the saints in Canterbury and Hurlstone Park. St Matthews West Pymble took us on as linked missionaries and, with my wife Claire, and I began at St Paul's in January 2017. West Pymble supported us in 3 key areas: financially (as St Paul's, like many churches in the GRR, had not been able to provide a full time stipend for a number of years), prayerfully, and by sending people to move into the area and join us. All of this meant that we were able to do a lot more ministry much quicker

had we not had that injection of resources and prayers.

I mention this because it has been a huge blessing to St Paul's over the last 2 years, but also because it's a model that, I personally think needs to be replicated if we are going to make disciples of Jesus in the Georges River region. I'd also wholeheartedly encourage people heading into ministry to think creatively about what it might look like to serve the Great Shepherd in less resourced areas of our city. **ACR**



ONLINE BLOG BE INFORMED

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The ACR Online – share the love

From the very conception of the *Australian Church Record* on July 1st, 1880 (then known as *The Church of England Record*) the original founders of the ACR aimed to help the church of God ‘hold the Christian faith with a firm and unwavering confidence’.¹ Since that time the ACR has produced over 2300 issues of its journal, with each issue seeking to do just that – to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

In 2016 the ACR decided to enter into the online space via its very own blog. One could ask why the ACR wanted to add to an already very crowded online space! However, the answer to that question is simple. For one, to have more people speaking of Christ and the salvation he brings to the lost can’t be a bad thing. In an online space that is crowded with the empty deceits and delusions of Satan, what a delight it is to read those articles about the forgiveness we find in Jesus. Yet, the primary answer is that the *raison detre* of the ACR is the same as it was in 1880. We want the church of God to hold to the faith with an unwavering confidence, and we believed that such a cause would be further by providing regular online content.

Thus, since November 2016 the ACR Online has been hard at work providing regular, short, and sharp articles from an array of writers on an array of topics. It has been an encouragement to see these picked-up, shared, and commented on via social media. Of greater



Mike Leite, Assistant Minister, St. George North Anglican Church

encouragement is to hear of how people have been spurred on in the faith by our writers, or informed in such a way that helps them live lives that further glorify our great God. We’ve even seen some of our pieces generate ongoing discussion and help determine the theme of a conference!²

However, here is how you can help. We want our readers to be a part of our *raison detre*. We know that people are reading our articles (the stats tell us that!), but how great it would be to have even more brothers and sisters spurred on

to hold with unwavering confidence to the Christian faith. Thus, we are asking our readers to do two things. Firstly, if you haven’t already, make sure you like our [facebook page](#) and subscribe to our [website](#). And secondly, we believe that our writers have good things to say, and so we want our readers to ‘share the love’ by sharing and forwarding the articles that they find helpful. The online space is a funny space that is fast moving, but the more people share and forward content, the greater help that content can be to others.

Who knows what means we’ll be using in the future to communicate the gospel of our Lord Jesus. But one thing we know for sure is that those who belong to Christ will continue to contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. And as long as the ACR is around, we too can do no other. **ACR**

1 ‘Our Object and Our Purpose’, *The Church of England Record*, Vol. I No. 1, Thursday July 1st 1880

2 *The Pastors Heart* episode with Phil Colgan and Craig followed the ACRs interview with David Robertson. Nexus 2019 topic on evangelism was partly due to the discussions on evangelism in Sydney following the Robertson interview.