

The Issue Before Us

A wide-angle photograph of a city street intersection. The street is paved with asphalt and has white lane markings. Several traffic lights are visible, some showing red lights. Pedestrians are crossing the street, and a few cars are parked or moving. The buildings on either side are multi-story, with some showing signs of wear and others being more modern. The overall scene is a busy urban environment.

“For all Christians, the likelihood is rather that as our discipleship continues, God will make us increasingly weakness-conscious and pain-aware, so that we may learn with Paul that when we are conscious of being weak, then—and only then—may we become truly strong in the Lord.

And should we want it any other way?”

J.I. Packer

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Not I, But Christ



Mark Earney, Head of Church History and Lecturer in Christian Thought, Moore Theological College

A remarkable revolution takes place when a person is converted. I will never tire of reflecting upon the conversion of Saul of Tarsus that day on Straight Street in Damascus. After he met the Lord Jesus Christ, the activist antagonist had atonement applied, and the archpersecutor became the Apostle Paul. All his sinful desires and shameful acts – the approval of Stephen’s stoning, the persecution of Christians, the Pharisaical pride – these things, and much more, were put to death in the death of Christ. He put it succinctly years later: “I have been crucified with

Christ.” But his very next words were, and are, just as stunning: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20a). The old man had gone, and the new had most certainly come. Meeting the Lord Jesus was the most important thing that had happened, or would ever happen, in his life.

Now, what does it mean to no longer live, but to have Christ living in you? It cannot be understood in physical terms. When we are converted we continue breathing, and the ascended Christ continues reigning from his heavenly throne. It seems to me that Paul is speaking about the deep and abiding union with Christ we receive by faith and by virtue of the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere he says that we are united to Christ in his life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and even his heavenly session. Thus, Martin Luther once commented on the Apostle Paul’s language in Galatians, and said that Christ adorns our faith as colour or light adorns a wall. It is an inescapable reality that the ‘I’ of a converted man or woman can never be separated from the ‘Thou’ of Christ. Everywhere you and I go, Christ goes before us.

This remarkable truth of our union with Christ has plenty of implications

for us. One of the most important is embedded in Paul's next words: "And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20b). That is, living by faith means a certain self-effacing and Christ-focused stance throughout the converted life. Consider Paul's own ministry. Jews demanded



The articles within the present *ACR Journal* are aligned with this vision: to see Christ clearly commended, and to see men and women take comfort and rejoice in him.



signs, and Greeks sought wisdom, but Paul preached Christ crucified (1 Cor 1:23-24). He did not proclaim himself but Jesus Christ as Lord (2 Cor 4:5). In fact, Paul counted everything as a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ (Phil 3:7-11). It is little wonder he summed up this stance in the memorable words: "to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21).

If that is living by faith for Paul (or at least scratching the surface of it), what might we say about living by faith for ourselves? Well, living by faith in Christ Jesus impacts our vision for life and ministry in two major ways: commendation of Christ and comfort in Christ. On the one hand, we have a responsibility to commend Christ high above ourselves. In our preaching and teaching, in our marketing and promotion, in our

marriages, our service of others, and our generosity. In all these ways, and more, there is a relativising of ourselves and a lauding of the Lord required. On the other hand, we can revel and rejoice in our inseparable identification with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When we are mistreated, misrepresented, or even misunderstood, we may take comfort in our union and communion with Christ. When ministry is hard and feels joyless, when we cannot humanly see the way ahead, when we feel like giving up and finding something easier to do – we may find deep comfort in Christ, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross and scorned its shame. We may rejoice as we follow in his footsteps and participate in his suffering.

The articles within the present *ACR Journal* are aligned with this vision: to see Christ clearly commended, and to see men and women take comfort and rejoice in him. We truly wish to see the name of Christ exalted and lifted high, we deeply desire to see myriad men and women raised up for Christian ministry, and we earnestly desire to see countless Australians converted. Why? Because we know the revolution which takes place in the soul of a converted man or woman, and we believe that the essence of the converted life is simply this: "not I, but Christ." Oh, that the Lord would revolutionise the souls of the Sauls in our city of Sydney, that the name of Christ Jesus would be highly exalted in this city, and that safety would be sought in the Suffering Servant! To these ends, we must fervently pray on. **ACR**

The Issue Before Us

The Rector Shortage

It is time for us to have an honest look in the mirror. We have a serious problem ahead of us. The number of men, women and children who live within the parishes of our diocese is growing, but the number of rectors available to preach the gospel to those parishioners within our diocese is decreasing. To put it bluntly, there is a very serious problem concerning clergy supply in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney.

The *ACR Journal* has recognised this issue and for the last few years has attempted to underscore the importance of the ‘noble task’ of ordinary pastoral ministry. In the previous *ACR Journal*, we have raised the issue of ‘the recruitment problem’ in our diocese and the urgent task of raising up the next generation of men and women for the ministry of the gospel. Moreover, in the last six months we have reinitiated a research project (last conducted by the *ACR* in 2012) into the clergy supply shortage in our diocese.¹ We plan to release some of our findings across the forthcoming issues of the *ACR Journal*, but the purpose of this article is to present some data concerning the present number of rectors within our diocese and provide some estimated projections concerning the future number of our rectors.

Here are the numbers:

1. Vacant Parishes

Of the 269 parishes within the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, there were 29 parishes without a rector and without arrangements and appointments in place to appoint an incumbent as of 14 October 2019.² Since then some vacancies have been filled but many more parishes have become vacant, and estimates suggest that there may be as many as around 50 vacant parishes by the end of 2020. For the sake of our argument, and for consistency with other Year Book data, let us assume an optimistic figure of 29 is a reasonable estimate of vacant parishes by the end of 2020 (we shall return to this assumption later).

1 We are grateful to Michael Figueira for his work on this *ACR* project.

2 According to §5.14 in the minutes of proceedings of the Synod for Tuesday 15 October of the 3rd Ordinary Session of the 51st Synod of the Diocese of Sydney, 2019.

2. Retirement of Rectors Based on Age

The retirement age will be lifted to 67 by 2023 in accordance with the age at which a person becomes eligible for the Aged Pension. Therefore, according to our synthesis of the data in the most recent Year Book:

- In the next 5 years (by 2025) 33 rectors will have retired.
- In the next 10 years (by 2030) 71 rectors will have retired.

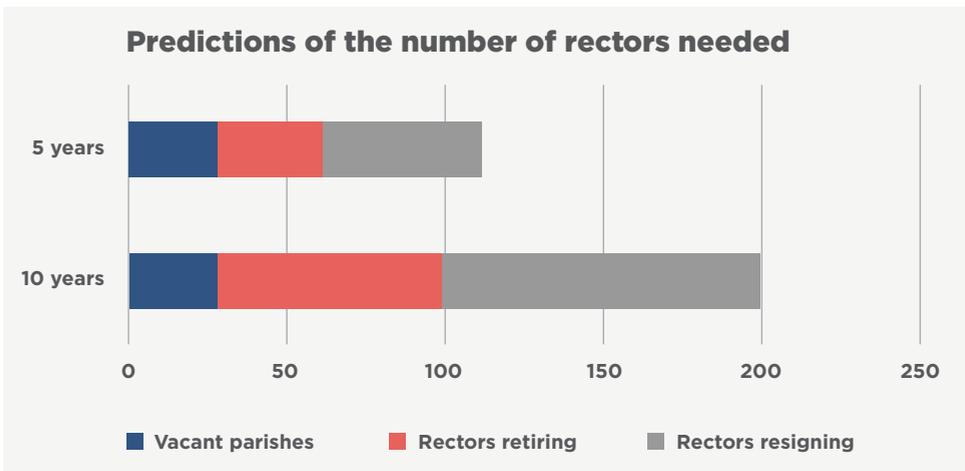
3. Resignation of Rectors

In a recent near-three-year period, 33 rectors resigned (for diverse reasons). These rectors did not conclude their ministry at retirement age nor take up another incumbency.³ This equates to a mean of 11 resignations per year. For the sake of our argument, let us assume that this number is reduced to an average of 10 resignations per year.⁴

4. Predictions Based on Current Trends

Based on the data in point 3, then, the number of rectors that will be needed can be calculated as follows:

- In 5 years, we will need 112 new rectors = 29 vacant parishes + 33 rectors retiring + 50 rectors resigning.
- In 10 years, we will need 200 new rectors = 29 vacant parishes + 71 rectors retiring + 100 rectors resigning.



3 Between 1 January 2017 and 14 October 2019.

4 If more rectors who are scheduled to retire in 5 and 10 years' time resign early this will mean that there will be fewer rectors retiring. We have tried to factor this in by using an average of 10 instead of 11 resignations per year.

5. Number of Presbyteral Ordinations

Between 2009 and 2019 there were around 178 presbyteral ordinations. Between 2009-2013 there were 45 presbyteral ordinations. A change in the ordination policy in 2014 enabled assistant ministers to be ordained as presbyters without an incumbency. This saw 55 presbyteral ordinations in 2014, 22 in 2015, 13 in 2016, 17 in 2017 and 15 in 2018 (we understand there were 11 or less in 2019). Therefore, although the 2014 change in policy temporarily lifted the number of presbyters, these numbers show a general decline in presbyteral ordinations afterwards.

6. The Pool of Available Presbyters

According to the current Year Book there are currently 75 presbyters in assistant minister or senior assistant minister roles who are not rectors, and thus are theoretically available to take up an incumbency.⁵ However, of this pool of potential rectors there are various reasons why many would or could not be able to become rectors (e.g., family reasons, nearing retirement and serving as senior assistant, and so forth). Additionally, this pool may decrease in number over the course of 5 to 10 years, given low presbyteral ordinations and retirement age restrictions. Notwithstanding these factors, and admitting the difficulty of obtaining a precise figure of those from this pool who would or could become rectors, there remains a sizeable number of presbyters reasonably available to become rectors (a generous estimate would be 55 at present, keeping in mind the positions which will be left vacant should these 55 become rectors).

We want to be careful not to overstate the situation based on the above data. Nevertheless, given the current number of vacant parishes, the number of rectors due to retire, and the current trend concerning the resignation of rectors, our diocese faces a serious challenge: a significant shortage of rectors in the next 5 to 10 years (noting, of course, that this is only to maintain the status quo without even considering the need for new churches to be planted!). Obviously the projections given above are estimates only and therefore approximate. There are many variables involved, making it extremely difficult to determine the extent of the future rector shortage.⁶ However, the data gives a clear indication that a shortage lies ahead.

The high number of rector resignations is also a significant factor worth noting. These resignations are due to a whole host of reasons, including the desire to try

- 5 There is a larger pool of presbyters who occupy other positions (e.g., theological college lecturers, Anglicare chaplains, missionaries), who sit outside the normal process of moving from assistant ministry to rector roles. While some of these may move back into parish ministry, we assume that most will not.
- 6 For example, variables such as COVID-19 and the number of vacant parishes in 2020 demonstrate the difficulty of making accurate predictions. Similarly, the declining number of presbyteral ordinations complicates any forecasting.

something new (e.g., chaplaincy or parachurch ministry), a desire to wind down from the pressures of running a church, moral failure, or burnout. If this trend continues then our projections become closer to the mark.

While this article has specifically focused upon the data on rectors within our diocese, we acknowledge that a much larger and broader discussion needs to take place to determine the factors affecting the supply and demand of clergy in our diocese. Some of these factors may include:

- The absence of a strong Sydney Anglican recruitment ethos.
- The diversification of kinds of MTS apprenticeships.
- The perceived need to work or undertake a ministry apprenticeship before Moore College.
- The decline in numbers of students at Moore College.
- The lack of clarity about the priority of local church ministry over parachurch ministry.
- The average age of students entering Moore College for the BD or BTh.
- The impact of the average age and circumstances of family life on the geographical flexibility of potential first-time rectors.
- The ordination policy for a large and permanent diaconate and narrow presbyterate.
- The length and procedures involved in the presbyteral ordination process.
- The hesitation of assistant ministers in becoming rectors.
- The need for rectors to train assistant ministers for future incumbency.
- The resourcing of parish nominators for a more efficient and effective search for rectors.
- The need to bolster resilience and rejuvenate presbyters to serve in parochial ministry until retirement.
- The need to question negative rhetoric about ‘the centre’ when administrative complexities are increasingly burdensome to rectors.
- The impact of the reduction of archdeaconries on episcopal responsibilities.
- The list could go on.

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list of the factors which may be involved in our present crisis of clergy numbers. In fact, some of these may be less significant than others. We simply want to start some more conversation and create the ‘noise’ necessary for us all to be provoked into action. The situation is far more complex than any one person or group can solve on their own. We all need to see the challenges and opportunities ahead of us and take responsibility as a diocese. And while the last couple of months have provided an increase in the amount of ‘noise’ when it comes to recruiting for ministry (some helpful, and some more about ‘spin’ and

‘smoke’ than anything else), we must realise that all this talk is just that – ‘noise’. As always, it is the vision of the gospel and our biblical convictions that will drive us into action. We need to be praying for more workers of the harvest for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be working together as a diocese to reach a city with millions of people who desperately need the forgiveness of sins that Jesus offers. Indeed, not only the city of Sydney, but all the people of the world who were made to glorify their God.

In July, the ACR released the book *The Mission Before Us: Why Sydney Anglican Ministry?* It is aimed at prospective gospel workers and casts a wonderful vision for the importance of parish ministry.⁷ Others too are already trying to think and work strategically in this space. Moore College is hosting ‘From Sydney to the World’ on Saturday 15 August 2020 in conjunction with the episcopal, archidiaconal, and theological leadership of our diocese and some other parachurch ministries. Let us not allow these things to simply be more ‘noise’. Let us get on with the task set before us.

The number of unsaved souls is climbing, and the number of incumbent clergymen is declining. Therefore, unless we are content with seeing men and women perish without hearing the good news, or unless we are content with seeing our Sydney Anglican churches crumble, we must take up the mighty challenge which lies before us. That is, something must be done to address the urgent task of raising up the next generation of ordained Sydney Anglican ministers of the gospel. With everything that has been said, we know that ultimately God is the Lord of the harvest. Let us continually bring this petition before him: “Lord, we ask you to send out workers into your harvest field, for your glory and for the wellbeing of your people. Amen.” **ACR**

7 A free copy may be requested by emailing missionbeforeus@australianchurchrecord.net

Why We Should Say Yes to Sydney and Anglican!



Nigel Fortescue, Senior Minister,
Christ Church St Ives

“Are you here because we are a good boat to fish from or because you want to be an Anglican clergyman?”

This question, asked during my Sydney Anglican ordination interview process, took me on a journey in which I became deeply committed to both Sydney and Anglicanism. My faith was birthed through low-church gospel ministry where the prominence and significance of the sacraments and of bishops was paltry at best. I was taught that the gathering was where it was at,

and that “we will certainly be in danger of [despising the true church of God] if we exalt ecumenism, or denominationalism, or diocesanism above the unity of the local church”.¹

In my view, this right theology has often been over-applied; that is, in an effort to ensure the right place of the local church in our theological thinking, many have come to despise denominationalism and diocesanism. Not only is this theologically unnecessary, but the end result is that fewer people start a theological education with a denominational vision and so church planting, chaplaincy and student work (the so-called ‘frontline ministries’) are attracting the attention of candidates in greater and greater numbers. Somehow, our pursuit of right theology has cannibalised the gathering it sought to protect.

Twenty-five years into formal Anglican ministry in the Diocese of Sydney, I am still here because I want to be an Anglican clergyman. Sure, I’d be

¹ Donald Robinson, *The Church of God: Its Form and Unity* (Punchbowl: Jordan Books, 1965), reprinted in *Donald Robinson: Selected Works Volume 1*, p. 251.

equally content serving the Lord Jesus in a different type of work, but there is something marvellously compelling about wearing the badge that says both Sydney and Anglican. I have identified five distinctive elements that have shaped both me and the church I serve that make it both something to be thankful for and a ministry worth unashamedly embracing for a lifetime.

First, Anglicanism is profoundly gospel-shaped. From the first page of the Prayer Book, you will find gospel truth abounding. Littered throughout is the news that “salvation is found in no-one else [but Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). This eternal reality has shaped the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Creeds, the Homilies and the prayers. Of course, if you find yourself amidst a low-church gospel ministry as I did, news of a Prayer Book may seem entirely foreign, but the reality is that everything that takes place in your church has been and is being shaped but the foundational gospel legacy found therein. If not for that book, written in 1662 and built upon since then, you would not have the clarion call of the gospel ringing from the pulpit, piano, and prayers, Sunday by Sunday.

A younger, immature version of myself once foolishly found itself in an argument with Dr Peter Jensen about the uselessness of the Prayer Book. Needless to say that when he reminded me that even those who have abandoned the Scriptures but follow the Prayer Book week by week unknowingly proclaim the life-giving gospel

to each other through the Service of Holy Communion, I closed my mouth and gave thanks that even those who have abandoned the gospel continue to proclaim it because of our gospel foundations.

Secondly, Anglicanism is wondrously biblically-centered and theologically governed. From the beginning, not only did we establish the reading and preaching of the Scriptures as the high point of our gatherings, but the Reformers enshrined a ‘local adaptability’ principle. The expectation of the Prayer Book was that ministry would change and alter in accordance with the times by the legitimate authority of those who were authorised to deem it expedient or necessary. Essentially, thinking theologically from the Scriptures about the nature of church practice and ministry was enshrined from the beginning. Those who feel locked in or restricted by Anglicanism are the same group who do not understand it. In all its iterations, the expectation of Anglicanism is that we will be driven back to the Scriptures again and again to shape our gospel proclamation for our hearers without reshaping the gospel. This marvellous principle has undergirded for me enormous creativity in ministry without losing the safe mooring and shelter that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

All that said, we here in Sydney need to keep learning how to uphold established truth and practice with greater and greater humility and grace. GAFCON has been a great pathway to this for me as we have gathered with gospel-shaped, biblically-centered

Anglicans from around the world whose expression of ministry is often radically divergent. We must continue to draw the comb of the Scriptures and deep theological thinking across our own teaching and practice and allow others to do the same for us.

Third, and building on our biblically-centered approach, we are teaching-focused. The church puts at the forefront of what it does, the very thing it should do – preach the Word. Paul’s charge to his apprentice in 2 Timothy 4 remains the charge of the clergyman.



There are many duties that a clergyman could do and many the world expects we should do, but there is one that Anglicanism demands we must do: teach the Bible.



My most recent license instructs me to “preach the Word of God and perform other ecclesiastical duties”. One clear instruction and one general instruction. One focus from which all other foci might build from. There is no doubt that care, prayer, and personal devotion are crucial to the life and work of the clergy, but most crucial is the preaching of the Word for the growth in maturity and godliness of the church. Anglicanism expects that you will make it so. There are many duties that a clergyman could do and many the world expects we should do, but there is one that Anglicanism demands we must do: teach the Bible.

Fourth, Anglicanism is future thinking. Throughout the Prayer Book is an expectation that the next generation of pastors will be prayed for, raised up, encouraged, and trained. You might say that there is an expectation that things we hear taught in the Bible are to be entrusted to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others (2 Tim 2:2). By this point you may be thinking, he just keeps going on about the Prayer Book – and you would be right. But my purpose here is to show you that at the heart of Anglicanism is everything you would expect church to be. Far from being ‘of another age’, everything is thought through, even the future. The structure of Anglicanism encourages succession planning and passing the baton to the next generation through modelling, education, and training. While Jesus tarries, we need reliable men and women to teach others, and our denominational structures provide excellent pathways for this to come to fruition. Indeed, the joy of the powerhouse of a diocese is that as a church leader you can keep preaching the Word while others support you in the task of entrusting the work to the next generation.

Finally, Anglicanism is globally visioned. The structure of Anglicanism means that every corner of the globe is in a parish and is a concern of the church because every human is a concern of God. Our globally visioned church reminds us of the fact that in eternity, men and women from every nation, tribe, people, and language, will stand before the throne and before the Lamb (Rev 7:9). The beauty in this

is that Anglicanism is never limited to the church, but every new estate or town, school or university is already in a parish, already being prayed for, and already has a team of people ready to minister to it. That is not to say that there cannot be more, but it is to say that anything new is already the concern of the church that is already there.

There is so much more that could (and perhaps should) be said but I am proud of the Sydney and Anglican badge I wear and I invite you to join me in ministry in this boat – not just

because it is a good boat to fish from, but because it is built on foundations that are unashamedly worth embracing for a lifetime of ministry. You may be an Anglican who has never held a Prayer Book, never seen a vestment, and never understood the role of a Bishop, but I guarantee you that your faith has been shaped by a people and a history that keeps putting first things first and has done so for more than 450 years. If I was starting again, my answer to the ordination question would be – both! **ACR**

Assisting the Assistants



Chris Braga, Senior Minister,
Glenmore Park Anglican Church

The Apostle Paul was not some kind of lone-wolf-ministry-legend who achieved great things on his own. His ministry was increased as he trained, deployed and encouraged others. In his letters, we read how he had dozens of co-workers who were instructed to come, stay and go to assist with various churches (1 Tim 1:3; Phil 2:23; 2 Cor 12:18; Titus 3:12; 2 Tim 4:9). Paul's work was multiplied by a group of like-minded gospel workers, both men and women, who were dedicated to the cause of Christ.

What vision do you have for your assistant ministers? Do you have a vision that sees the possibility of them

coming to you, staying for a while, and then going to serve elsewhere? Do you have a vision for your male assistants serving as a rector elsewhere? Do you have a vision for the cause of the gospel that is bigger than your church?

Rectors need to be preparing their assistant ministers not just for the years with their own churches, but for the ministries they will have in the future, particularly for the men they can be developing to be rectors. Let me share with you six things you can be doing now to prepare them for the future.

Share how you are shaped by the gospel

The most important resource a minister has in their leadership of others is the fact that they submit to Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Unless we are being shaped by the gospel ourselves we cannot rightly call on people to follow. This means our submission to our Lord is not only a one-off conversion experience, but a daily experience filled with grace and characterised by love and endurance. It is easy in full-time Christian ministry to so professionalise our 'work' that it is removed from the reality of following Christ

ourselves. It is critical that we model what it looks like to be shaped by the gospel so we do not develop leaders who are clinical professionals.

Share how your ministry is shaped by the gospel

Paul's pastoral letters are filled with his thinking as he applies the gospel to different situations. He shows Timothy not just what to do, but why he should be doing it. It is easy for pragmatism to win the day if we disconnect the gospel from the task of ministry. It is critical that our assistant ministers see how the



We need to prepare our churches for the reality that we do not get to keep everyone we love and that the cause of the gospel will take our staff to new places and new opportunities.



gospel applies to even the most basic of ministry activities. This will take time as we read the Scriptures together, share our thinking and wisdom, and not just complete a checklist of tasks. We want our assistant ministers to be able to think theologically about all manner of different situations and not just follow instructions.

Share a vision that is bigger than your church

It is easy to have a big vision for your church but a small vision for kingdom

work elsewhere. We need to give our assistant ministers a vision for the gospel across our city, nation, and the world. We need to prepare our churches for the reality that we do not get to keep everyone we love and that the cause of the gospel will take our staff to new places and new opportunities.

Share your relationships with other rectors

The senior ministers function as a 'band of brothers' who hold similar roles and take seriously their leadership of our churches. It is extremely helpful for assistant ministers to be able to move into a senior ministry role and find support, encouragement, and partnership among this fellowship of rectors. Therefore, rectors have a role to play in introducing their staff to other rectors as they seek to help the churches in their region find and encourage new rectors.

Share the experiences they will need as rectors

Give your assistants some responsibilities that they will need to fulfil as rectors. Involve them appropriately in the development of the teaching program, in finances and budgeting, and in fundraising and recruitment. Do not shield them from these experiences but share them with them. Have them report regularly to parish council, not only to give them a small experience of this, but to build trust between your parish council and the staff team. Let the staff experience the care of your parish council for them and their ministry.

Share your confidence in them

Taking the step to being a rector is one that is filled with uncertainties. As you encourage and build confidence in your assistants, they will find that they had more in them than they expected. Instead of having a view of everyone 'reaching their full potential', be determined to encourage and stretch them

so that they develop beyond what they even thought was possible themselves.

As much as we want to hang on to a great staff member we have grown and developed, if he is ready to become a rector, we need to bless our churches with them. While our ministry may not benefit, the kingdom will. **ACR**

What is a Stipend?



Phil Colgan, Senior Minister, St. George North Anglican Church

The Greatest Privilege of All

It is now 17 years since I left Moore Theological College and started out in ordained ministry. In that time I've had all sorts of ups and downs, joys and struggles. However, one tension or temptation that has always been there is to see my ministry as a job. In my secular 'career'¹ I worked long hours but was remunerated accordingly. Even if I wasn't paid an hourly rate as such, there was a sense that my employer was paying me to own that portion of my life. However, they did not own the rest of my time – my other time was mine for me to use as I saw fit.

Over the years I have been tempted to view my ministry in the same way. That is, to see my remuneration from the church as a wage or a salary, tied to my hours worked and a right to which I am entitled. Some would argue that there is no problem

with that way of thinking – doesn't the worker deserve his wages? However, in my view, when we slip into this way of thinking we have failed to understand the fundamental privilege of being set aside for full-time ministry.

Remember that being paid for ministry is a privilege and not a right

We must never forget why we are involved in vocational ministry. I am not at St George North Anglican Church because they pay me to fulfil the role of senior minister. I am here because I am convinced that Christ died for all and that, without Christ, people are facing death and judgment. That means I am determined to

¹ I use the word 'career' to make a point. In my view no Christian has a career. Instead, they have a job where they work hard as if for the Lord, but which they could drop at any time if there was a better way to glorify God in their life than the job they are currently doing.

use this life God has given me for the maximum gospel benefit. In that light, I am convinced that serving in this role is currently the best way for me to do that. More importantly, others are convinced of that fact and so are willing to pay me so that I don't need to be distracted by the need to earn an income.

However, I will keep serving Christ whether I am paid to do it or not. When I went to Moore I went with no guarantee of being paid for my ministry. In fact, I would argue that if you are not okay with getting to the end of four years at theological college and then going back to your old work and also ministering for free, then you shouldn't be at theological college – and I wouldn't pay you to work in ministry anyway! No one is owed a living from the gospel. You are not suitable for ministry if you wouldn't do it (and aren't already doing it) for free. That is the perspective we must have on being paid for ministry.

I must see my pay as a 'stipend' not a 'wage'

One of the most helpful things that I was told when I left Moore was that in Anglican ministry, we get paid a stipend and not a wage. Whether or not the definitions of those words are as clear cut as I am using them here, seeing the difference is essential. A wage is a payment for services rendered – I might get paid \$25 per hour to work for 38 hours a week, and the remaining 130 hours in the week are mine.

A stipend on the other hand is paid to cover my living expenses so that I am free from the burden of having to earn a wage.

As an Anglican minister I am paid a stipend. I am not paid according to how many hours I work – that would be a wage. Instead, I am paid enough so that my time is liberated for ministry. I am paid enough so that I do not have to work to support my family. Another way to consider this is the old sense of being provided with a 'living'. We are not employees, but are instead like a mother who cares for her children. No one would say that she should be paid a wage for that work (or that you could limit it to a set number of hours!) but instead she should be supported to be free to fulfil that role.

Of course, this does not sit well with our secular world's view of industrial relations and Fair Work Australia guidelines. Working in our modern world, we are required to give expectations on every aspect of employment. Job descriptions must be given that set out the hours to be worked (and of course by consequence the hours that are then 'my own'). There is some need for this even in ministry roles – to protect against unrealistic expectations and abuse. However, there must be recognition that such 'protections' will never fundamentally fit with a biblical view of ministry. They are a safety net rather than the basis of understanding our role.

There are benefits and costs in being paid a stipend rather than a wage. Some weeks, because there are many people in crisis, I will need to work 70 hours a week and be out every night of the week. I am not free to say that I am too tired or busy to visit the person in crisis – whatever the hour of the call. However, other weeks

when I am exhausted and need to recharge, I am free to see that I need to work less and take some time off mid-week to go for a swim or a round of golf.

In ministry it is often hard to determine what is ‘work’ and what is not. Is a round of golf with a parishioner in order to talk about his marriage issues ‘work’ or ‘play’? Am I ‘at work’ when I hang around picking the kids up from school and talking to other parents? If I see myself as being owed a wage, these become important questions. However, because I am paid a stipend I am only accountable to God (and others within my church to whom I make myself accountable) for how I use my time, so I don’t need to make such clear cut distinctions. My ministry cannot be contained in set tasks and times – it is all of my life.

This does not mean I don’t take time off – I work hard to preserve one day off in seven. However, I don’t take that day off because that is ‘my time’. I do it because it is God-honouring as it strengthens, refreshes and enables me to use my whole life for the service of Christ.

My great concern is that, as modern ministry culture has moved down the ‘wage’ way of viewing ministry remuneration, we in ministry might fall into the trap of still accepting some of the benefits of working for a stipend (e.g. freedom in the use of ‘our time’) but also being demanding the rights of working for a wage (e.g. crystal clear delineation of set boundaries for when we are working or not).

What about part-time workers?

Of course, this is even harder for those who are only paid part time for a ministry role. How does the understanding of stipend apply when we are only paid to work 2 days a week in ministry? This might work for some very specific ministry jobs (e.g. you are paid to run a kids’ program on Wednesday afternoons and Sunday mornings). However, most ministry roles do not fit into two neat days (or whatever the time being paid for).

A better way to view such positions is to see that you are a ‘tent-maker’. You are giving your whole life in the service of Jesus (just like someone being paid a full stipend), however the church can only afford to pay for the equivalent of 2 days of your required stipend. As a result you must go and do whatever other hours of work as a ‘tent-maker’ that you need to do in order to make up the rest of your ‘living’. Of course that limits the extent of your time available for ministry – but it might be you can do 1.5 days or it might be that you can do 3 days – why do they or you care that you’re only paid for 2 days? That’s not how ministry works or should work.²

2 Of course, the great difficulty is that this does not fit in with modern industrial relations expectations. In that light, job descriptions with expectations on the use of time are important and can provide a retrieval where there is failure in the employment relationship. However, this should be seen as the safety net. Far more important is that there be a joint expectation of what the ministry role should look like and grace shown from both sides.

Other consequences of being paid a stipend

If I am being paid a stipend (including provision of a house, etc) to set me aside so that I am free to give all of my time for gospel work, then there are several other consequences to consider:

1. I am not free to work other jobs

If I am paid a stipend or a living, then my time is no longer my own. To have another job on the side is to use my stipended time for my own benefit rather than for that which I have been set aside. (As opposed to the part-time ‘tent-maker’ situation described above.) As a result, if I do other work outside the parish then any income I receive should be returned to the parish.

This does not mean that I am only free to do parish-related work. Precisely because I am paid a stipend, I am able to do all sorts of Christian ministry outside the parish (coach other clergy, serve on boards and committees, write articles, speak at conferences). However, I should do this with the good will of those who pay my stipend. Moreover, given it is not my time that I have used, any rewards (meagre in my instance!) for these efforts should be for the benefit of the ministry that pays my stipend (not my personal gain).

2. This has an impact on what clergy spouses do with their time

Every family needs to make their own decisions about whether just one or both spouses will be in paid work (not just ministry families!). However, where a minister is paid a sufficient stipend to set them aside from needing to work, and where that stipend (and other support) is sufficient so that the family is left in ‘neither in poverty nor riches’ when they reach retirement³, then that should be a major factor in the decision as to whether, and how much, their spouse should be in other paid work. To simply say that being a minister is ‘his job’ and has no bearing on the rest of the family is to fundamentally misunderstand Christian ministry.

When a person who has a spouse enters ordained ministry, that is not a decision just for them, but for their whole family. It is of course unhelpful when a parish has expectations of a clergy wife⁴ that she will effectively be an unpaid second full-time worker or automatically run the women’s ministry of the church. However, that does not mean that there should be no expectations of a clergy wife. As with many of these sorts of issues we often swing on a pendulum from one unhelpful extreme to another, never landing in the middle (in this case the two extremes being: ‘Two workers for the price of one’ vs ‘No expectations at all of a clergy wife’).

3 Retirement is of course a strange word for those in ministry and perhaps we need a better term for continuing in ministry but ceasing to be paid a stipend (superannuation funded tent-making perhaps?).

4 I use the ‘clergy wife’ intentionally as I am referring to the most common circumstance for clergy in the Diocese of Sydney. However, there are other related but different considerations where the ordained worker is a female and she and her husband need to make decisions about work and money.

At the very least the parish should expect:

- That she be a godly woman committed to Christian service as is appropriate for her giftedness, family situation and stage of life;
- That she be committed to her husband's ministry and see that they are in partnership in that ministry, such that her own commitments outside the parish are secondary to their 'primary calling' as a couple. I do not subscribe to the notion of all people having a vocation (a discussion for another article), but if anyone has the vocation it must be the person in ordained ministry.

In that light, if the family receives a stipend (including a house and all other things necessary to live in neither poverty nor riches) and the wife decides to work, it is fair to assume that in many cases:

- Her work should not in any way impinge on her husband's availability for service;
- Her extra pay should lead to a more than linear increase in the family's giving;
- Managing the family should not presume upon the freedom the stipendiary worker has with their time.

I will use a somewhat trivial example from our own marriage to illustrate. Over the years I have sometimes dropped the kids off and picked them up from school (far less than perhaps I should have). Often, we have made the decision for me to do that because Victoria is meeting with another lady to read the Bible or perhaps setting up for Ladies' Bible Study. This is a great benefit of being a stipendiary worker – that is, the freedom to be available in this way. In fact, I see it as a great use of my time, as our stipend is to liberate us to be partners in ministry. However, I would be more uncomfortable regularly using the freedom of my 'stipended' time in this way if it was simply to allow my wife to earn money. The greater work flexibility provided to gospel workers is a privilege not a right.

I am not intending to make or impose rules on others here, but simply to make the point that there are consequences that come from deciding (as a family) to enter ordained ministry and to receive a stipend for that ministry. Different families will all work differently, but our decisions should be determined on the basis of these principles.

Getting it right

Of course different people will draw different lines on some of these decisions and even within my own staff team we have made slightly different decisions in working these things out.



The greater work flexibility provided to gospel workers is a privilege not a right.



However, I find the two different strands of teaching on support for gospel workers in Paul's writing a helpful guide. On the one hand there are the encouragements to the congregation to generously support those who do the work of the Lord. In fact, support for gospel workers is a 'right' in some sense. For instance:

For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." (1 Timothy 5:18)

However, Paul himself then sets an example of not presuming upon such rights and especially being willing to give up that right where it is better for the cause of the gospel to do so. 1 Corinthians 9 is a great example of this. In verses 1-14 Paul sets out why gospel workers should be provided for, reaching the clear conclusion in verse 14:

In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

However, in verses 10-27 he then explains how he and others have been willing to give up this right so as not to hinder the cause of the Gospel – *"But I have used none of these rights!"*

This tension, it would seem to me, best captures the essence of how ministry support should work, and things breaks down when the two perspectives are reversed. That is, when churches demand that their workers follow Paul's example and give up their rights and work for a pittance; or when workers see their pay as a wage that they are owed and their ministry as a 'job'.

Instead (as has been my experience for my entire ordained ministry) the biblical model works when churches seek to be generous in providing for the needs of those who labour amongst them and in the harvest field on their behalf seeing that they have a duty and an obligation to provide in that way. However, even while knowing that we have this 'right' (and even teaching the congregation about this!) the worker should seek to keep the perspective that this is a generous provision that should not be presumed upon. When we keep this perspective, it seems to me that we are holding that tension and fulfilling both strands of the biblical teaching on this matter.

There is no harder role than to be a pastor-teacher of God's flock (other than perhaps being the spouse of such a person!). However, in my view there is no role so fulfilling. I would do it whether I was paid or whether I had to do the most menial of jobs to make enough money to keep me and my family fed, clothed and housed. What a privilege that people are willing to pay me a 'living' so that I can give so much of my time to preaching Christ and caring for his flock. My prayer for myself and for all my brothers and sisters who are paid to do what we would do anyway is that we never lose that perspective. **ACR**

On the Ministry Conveyor Belt



Hugh Jonas, Assistant Minister,
Auburn Anglican Church

Being pushed on to the conveyor belt at Hunter Bible Church (HBC) was one of the greatest privileges of my life. In fact, it was life-giving.

I was swept into a menacing ministry machine that would slice and dice me, push and prod me and lovingly lacerate me until I was reprogrammed to endorse this very experience as the best possible production-line for anyone's life.

Let me tell you about that journey.

I began a ministry apprenticeship at HBC in 2010, but was I ready?

Flicking through old emails a decade on, I find one written to the church interview panel, before I met them

face-to-face, explaining my mysterious wisdom, beyond them, as to why they should not make me an apprentice. The brief suggestion in reply: "come along, be interviewed and be yourself."

It was too late to escape, because, looking back, the process had begun on me long before that step which took me inside the machine. The apprenticeship helped me to realise that.

Right from my first day there at HBC, years earlier, even with hindsight I cannot easily see where I could possibly have alighted, though I always suspected quality control might snatch me away at any moment!

I never felt ready, but the gospel is powerful fuel. Otherwise, the sage advice of my interviewer, "be yourself," would never have been right. It was myself that was the problem – it was myself who was not yet ready to serve.

In that old email, I see good, even godly reasoning to resist an apprenticeship (I'm rather encouraged by my argument even today) but what my godlier advisers gently indicated was that godliness will never lead you away from ministry!

If you follow Jesus, you serve. He changes you. It's not HBC's conveyor belt, it's his!

As I hear the gospel, by grace I put off sin and am transformed into his glorious likeness – my friends and I prayed and still pray regularly for this.

Over time I was offered increasing opportunities to serve. I was asked to read the Bible 1-1. I was asked to ask someone else to read 1-1. I was asked to be involved in a ministry team. I was asked to lead a ministry team. I was asked to lead a team of leaders.



... as you serve, the best way to serve others is to help them serve. If you are not helping others serve Jesus with their lives, are you really serving Jesus?



I was served wonderfully by that gospel air-I-breathed at HBC. As I served as an apprentice I was served this mindset: if life following Jesus is about serving (because Jesus so wonderfully first served us), as you serve, the best way to serve others is to help them serve. If you are not helping others serve Jesus with their lives, are you really serving Jesus?

This was seen in some of the common expressions in our training: “put yourself out of a job”, “how are you working to replace yourself?” and “who are you bringing to Mission Minded?”

It was embedded in the culture. Mid-year, every year, around the winter school holidays, someone would always begin asking the question, “Who are you bringing to Mission Minded this

year?” Every ministry leader would be made to answer; Growth Group leaders too would be expected to consider who they should tap on the shoulder. By the end of July there’d be a list of 100 names of people who needed to be invited.

I remember Richard Sweatman and Evan McFarlane independently running ministry workshops at separate Mission Minded Conferences. They both said that this list was a key starting point in the cycle. “Even if you don’t think there are any, sit down with a sheet of paper and write 10 names, your 10 best-shots. Invite them to Mission Minded.”

From there a tremendous momentum developed. Jesus’ call to “take up your cross” is strengthened by fellowship with those making radical decisions to follow him. That is why finding the first 10 is the hardest. But once the cycle is rolling, it becomes easier to continue than to stop.

At HBC, it became the expectation that there would be a bunch of people stepping up into ministries each year, and always some taking steps towards apprenticeships. There was always movement.

As someone who much prefers doing it myself over asking someone else (doing it myself is usually much easier), there were times that this constant movement was incredibly uncomfortable. But that’s service. And I am working at overcoming my selfishness.

Since those days, I have left the Hunter Bible Conveyor, finished Moore College and now continue serving with the team at Auburn and Newington Anglican. Outwardly, the machine looks very different here (dare I say, less

shiny), but I have discovered that even Anglicans have the same fuel. The gospel challenges us to give up our lives and serve our Lord Jesus.

We are faced with all kinds of ‘wisdom’ as to why people are not ready to serve. They are past uni-age, they don’t speak our language, they read the Bible differently, they think the church ‘minister’ serves them, they are busy forging lives for themselves in a new country.

These barriers are significant, but life is found in serving Jesus so godliness will never lead you away from ministry.

My first apprentice, in his second year, is currently curating a Google doc with the list for our ministry retreat

later in the year. COVID-19 is not allowing for a big conference, but this might provide a new opportunity for us with some of those who don’t quite fit the Mission Minded mould. I just looked at his list and there are people born in 10 different countries from 4 continents.

Ministry training here is very long and slow and we have fumbled through countless *faux pas* crossing cultures. The ever-present temptation to DIY is real, as no one is ever ‘ready’. But the machine is running and Jesus graciously moves us along his production-line. As people from many nations are reprogrammed to serve him day and night, we rejoice to sample a sweet taste of the heavenly life. **ACR**

Taking Up the Challenge



Michael Figueira, Student Minister,
Sadleir Anglican Church

I thank God that he continues to raise up faithful shepherds to lead his people. In the following section there are some short articles by a number of young rectors in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. Specifically, they are reflections on why they have taken up the challenge of becoming a rector.

As I read their stories, I am reminded by the Scriptures that these are men

who have been appointed with a very great responsibility: to be “shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:20). The church ultimately belongs to God, and yet he has entrusted particular leaders with the duty and charge of shepherding his flock. The responsibility can seem overwhelming, perhaps it would be, if it were from merely human efforts and motivations. Yet this is not the case, for the Holy Spirit divinely appoints these shepherds, and God by the word of his grace continues to sustain and strengthen them for the task (Acts 20:28, 32).

As a current student at Moore Theological College, I look up to these faithful men who have stepped forward to become rectors in the diocese. I am challenged by the sacrifices that they and their families have had to make, I am inspired by their gospel-hearted commitments and I am warmed by their honest reflections. May their stories do the same for you. **ACR**

Becoming a Rector



Prash Colombage, Senior Minister,
St Stephen's Willoughby

I remember sitting, as an assistant minister, in a conference midway through 2019 having a growing sense of the opportunities for the gospel to go out in our nation. Speaker after speaker got up and encouraged us about the power of the gospel, reminded us of the need of the nation and pointed us to the opportunities to effect change. Maybe it was being surrounded by great leaders and likeminded pastors, maybe it was the sense of purpose in the event, maybe it was the opportunity to celebrate real gospel success – regardless of the factors, I felt genuine optimism. Then it occurred to me – much of what was being spoken about relied on the input

and leadership of the senior minister. For all my enthusiasm, my boss, sitting next to me, was the key to bringing about this change. He would first need to cast the vision, then chart the course and encourage us through the journey. That's the responsibility and privilege of leadership. At that point my conception of ministry changed.

Back in 2008, 5 years into practising law, it occurred to me that my primary calling was not to work in the secular sphere – as rewarding as that had been – but to spend much of my time in the local parish context. I had spent years leading Bible studies, mission teams, and youth groups. I had loved the privilege of occasional preaching and teaching. Eventually I realised that these things needed to become the central focus of my life rather than dovetailing into other aspects. So, I finished my job and moved to Moore College. For the subsequent 11 years (4 as a student minister and 7 as an assistant minister) much of my joy came from living out numerous opportunities for word and prayer ministry in the intimate and intense context of a local parish.

Our time as a family serving at St James Croydon (2013-2019) will forever be a highlight – a wonderful staff team,

a ministry which saw fruit, lives which were changed, God becoming more real in people's hearts. Leaving St James at



I saw a part of Sydney which historically knew the gospel but had now forgotten the blessings of grace.

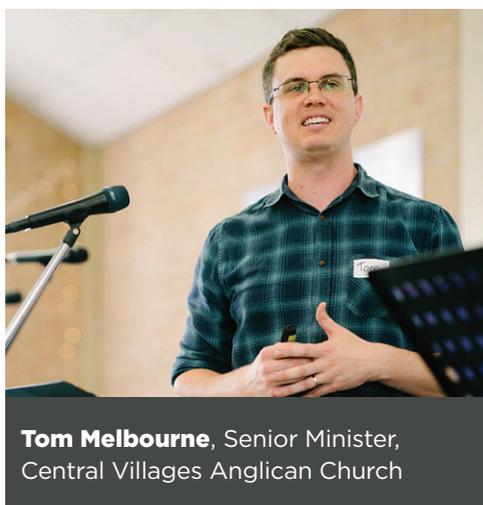


the end of 2019 was hard. We didn't plan to leave but I always had an approach of taking the call if someone asked us to consider a move. In the past it had not eventuated into anything of signif-

icance. When St Stephen's Willoughby called, it did. What I sensed was a group of God's people in need of the leadership which St James had so well trained me for. I saw a part of Sydney which historically knew the gospel but had now forgotten the blessings of grace.

Our church in Willoughby is surrounded by 70,000 people who need to hear the gospel. That is a privilege and a challenge. I have had to relinquish some of the joys of being an Assistant Minister but now I have the great task of pointing us to God's vision for his church, charting a course and encouraging the saints. The trade-off is worth it. **ACR**

Becoming a Rector



Tom Melbourne, Senior Minister,
Central Villages Anglican Church

Why did I want to take up the challenge of being a rector? Crikey. That's a complex question, and answering it means running the risk of 'tooting your own horn' a bit. Please know, dear reader, that I'm acutely aware of the many ways I fall short of what an 'ideal rector' would be. Nevertheless, I was so delighted to be invited to become the rector of Lawson (in the Blue Mountains) in January 2018, and I'm grateful for a church and a bishop who were keen to take on a 30-year-old as their new senior minister.

Having a great 'support team' was essential in making this ministry transition. My wife, Alison, remains a huge

encourager and also a brilliant challenge-bringer at times, and I wouldn't have wanted to move in this direction without her by my side! While I was an assistant at Emu Plains my senior minister, Roger Cunningham, was a great model for what is needed for that role. Roger also gave me plenty of room to develop the aptitudes needed to take a leading role in church life. Without his encouragement and permission to do big things as an assistant, I doubt I would have developed the confidence to take a step 'out of the nest'.

The main factor that would have stopped me from taking this step would have been Emu Plains Anglican Church itself. I had the joy of serving Jesus there for close to 7 years, and ministry was thriving and fruitful. How could you possibly give that up, in order to go someplace where the opportunities might not be as good, and where you have to 'start from scratch' relationally? It is a real dilemma, one that I found agonising, especially when every week you're seeing people you know you would be leaving behind if you moved on.

And yet, I did move. Because God is sovereign, and I am his. Because the harvest is plentiful, and precious, but

the workers are few. Because no church should be so dependent on one person that the church thinks it cannot survive without them. (And I'm so pleased that Emu Plains has more than thrived without me – me leaving would seem to have been a catalyst for many others getting busy in ministry!). Because I was ordained to be a servant of God in a diocese, not just in one particular church. I find in parish ministry that it is easy to be accidentally blinkered, and unable to see beyond our own churches. I'm convinced that it is crucial for us to instead foster a team mindset, where the neighbouring churches are not competitors but mission-critical partners. In order to reach this city, we Anglicans have committed to the strategy of establishing mission outposts in most suburbs, and when one of them is struggling, or is in dire need of leadership, it's often a good thing for the other churches to sacrifice a bit in order to see that place

continue to be useful for the kingdom. Sometimes that sacrifice comes in the form of sending somebody out, setting aside our fellowship with them, because Jesus is worth it.



I'm convinced that it is crucial for us to instead foster a team mindset, where the neighbouring churches are not competitors but mission-critical partners.



It surprises many when they hear that, in Sydney at least, ministers are not moved around by our bishops. There's all sorts of good reasons for this being the case. But what it does mean is that we clergy need to take the initiative ourselves, and consider moving ourselves on for the sake of the bigger kingdom picture. **ACR**

Presbyteral Ordination: “How Long, oh Lord?”



Raj Gupta, Lead Pastor, Toongabbie Anglican Church and Acting Co-Director for the Moore College's Centre for Minister Development (CMD)

Fatal Forms

I have always been struck and challenged by the interactions between Jesus and the Pharisees. Time and again Jesus points out that, while the Pharisees may indeed have the outward appearance of belonging to the Lord, their hearts have wandered away. I suspect this wasn't a sudden change. It is the reality of what can so easily

happen over time. People just have a tendency to cling to external forms and past patterns or traditions in unhelpful ways. Even though times and circumstances change, it is so hard to constantly check the things to which the human heart has attached itself.

Reassessment and Innovation

While his own salvation was not at stake, the Apostle Paul himself was confronted with the need to change his own strategy, under God, when he saw the opportunity to take the gospel to the Greeks. He too had to re-evaluate his desires, objectives, and methodology as the Lord presented him with new circumstances.

Now, we certainly don't live in apostolic times. Our salvation might not be at stake in the same way as the Pharisees. Nor are our actions apostolic in the same way as the Apostle Paul.

Nonetheless, the need (and even challenge) to come back to our basic purposes and re-evaluate our methods applies to us too. That is, we need to revisit those things to which we might have become accustomed and attached, and to re-evaluate our methods in light of new circumstances.

Unchanging Gospel, Changing Church

I learnt an important phrase a number of years ago: "While the gospel of Jesus Christ does not change, the church must constantly be changing." I personally find this constant need to stay on my toes an ongoing challenge. The Lord has shaped my instincts and taught me to think through particular ministries over the years.

The challenge to change applies both individually and corporately. It was people like Phillip Jensen, who both argued and led the way, that one must hold on to theological truth and constantly innovate. This meant that things like wearing robes in certain church contexts needed to stop in order to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I still remember listening to a recording of Phillip's memorable talk at the 1988 EMA conference

“

...while the core driver must be the preaching of God's word, the place of innovation was absolutely vital.

”

in London, where he argued how the missional demands of the gospel drove you to reform practices. What struck me in listening to it several years later was how a number of the innovations he cited as examples, themselves did not last.

In my own more recent research into church growth dynamics, I was fasci-

nated to see that while the core driver must be the preaching of God's word, the place of innovation was absolutely vital. And, furthermore, innovation must apply to past innovations and decisions themselves.

In what follows, I suggest some ways in which our diocese may benefit from change, particularly in the light of new circumstances.

The Current Presbyterial Ordination Processes

In particular, I will offer some reflections on the issue of the current presbyterial ordination processes in the Diocese of Sydney. Some time ago now, and with good reason, the diaconate was widened to allow particularly for specialist ministry staff. At around the same time (2017), the processes for ordination to the presbyterate were tightened up, lengthened and linked far more directly to the office of being a rector. Significantly, it was also changed to an opt- in process with a two-year 'period of discernment'. These changes had good reasons at the time.

However, we now exist with a different set of challenges. Whilst the colloquial term 'minister drought' might be a tad extreme (within Sydney Diocese are still hundreds of trained, gifted, and godly men and women in vocational ministry), it is certainly true that there are a large number of vacancies. This is to be understood on the broader canvas where there are less men and women in training for vocational ministry (across the Western world) and, on the other end of the spectrum, we are also seeing

a notable number of people leaving parish ministry later in life.

The issue is broad. I want to focus the remainder of this article on some reflections about the applicability of the current presbyteral ordination processes to the current day and age. It is worth considering since, without sufficient leadership in place, it does appear that our collective mission to reach Sydney with the gospel is being impeded.

I would have become a rector later

As I reflect on how the Lord has worked in my life, I recall that I became a rector at the age of 36. As I look back now, even in the midst of many mistakes and lessons, I see that I had more energy at that stage of life. And this was energy that I was able to use for the gospel. Prior to that, I had two assistant minister positions, each for 2-3 years. I was heavily invested in the ministry in each of those positions. And as I have been reflecting on this article, it just dawned on me that to sign up for an optional two-year discernment process to be a rector would have reduced my commitment to the ministries that I was invested in at the time. It would have been strange to commence a process that said I was willing to leave, not long after I had just started in a position and investing myself in people. I can't help but think, in hindsight, that it would have delayed me being available to be a rector.

If my experience is representative, then the average age for someone to become a rector is probably now higher. It is usually a sign of humility

to be unsure of one's gifting and abilities. I have developed enormously as a Christian leader over the years (thanks everyone for their patience!). But I didn't start as a fully developed rector.

But I am not convinced that this is optimal, for most people have more energy in their late 20s and 30s than in their 40s. Additionally, around that time, and



The process of having nominators turn up ... was a powerful and regular reminder that the kingdom of God is bigger than the parish I was in at the time.



especially as children advance through high school years, it should ordinarily be expected that life may place certain constraints on geographical flexibility and thus willingness to move. And furthermore, it only seems to follow that an unintended consequence is that the pool of people allowing themselves to become so available is shrinking. I get that.

I have only developed as a Christian leader as I have been in the chair. And to make the step of applying for an additional process would have been an additional psychological barrier. Maybe that is a good thing. But, at least for me, the process of having nominators turn up (even if it came to nothing) was a powerful and regular reminder that the kingdom of God is bigger than the parish I was in at the time. It was only in wrestling with 'live ammunition' that I was, with God's help, able to make some assessment of the immediate and

real opportunities (rather than a hypothetical possibility) that the Lord was shaping me to consider.

The two-year discernment process has limitations

Now, importantly, I am not advocating nor accepting the lessening of the 'quality' of candidates. Yet equally, having now completed a number of assessment forms for those in the presbyter



Is it time to bring about innovation to the innovation, noting the significant unintended consequences?



process, despite its strengths, I am not convinced that the current two-year process is without its limitations. The forms are broken up into several categories. Some, in my judgement, are helpful and thought provoking and can contribute to someone's development: preaching, managing the vision, godly living, and articulating ministry development goals (though should not all of these things be part of a regular coaching relationship between rector and assistant anyway?). With others though, I regularly find myself saying: "Any assistant will be more limited in their opportunities to conduct and/or oversee this (e.g. a vision process for a church, staffing oversight, and fundraising)." In addition, it is near impossible to assess how one might go in overseeing the administration burdens

that senior leadership generally brings.

None of this is to say that assessments should not be made because they are too hard to undertake. We certainly need to make assessments. But, now that we have some history with such a system, does the two-year process necessarily improve the quality of candidates? Or, is it time to bring about innovation to the innovation, noting the significant unintended consequences?

What might a future system look like?

Allow me to conclude by tracing some contours for what a future system might look like:

- Clothed in prayer.
- Increased involvement of an existing rector in their current assistant's development, from the moment they leave Moore Theological College. I believe that many would dearly embrace being more intentionally involved, and also learn much themselves in the process.
- It's time to develop a template for a 'job description' for a rector, based on but not limited to the Anglican Ordinal. Again today, as I was training a group of rectors in church staffing, and exhorting them to have job descriptions for all staff, the comment was made, "hang on, what's my job description?"
- Reduce the psychological hurdles to allow more to move down the pathway of being available to serve as rectors, by shortening the presbyter pathway.

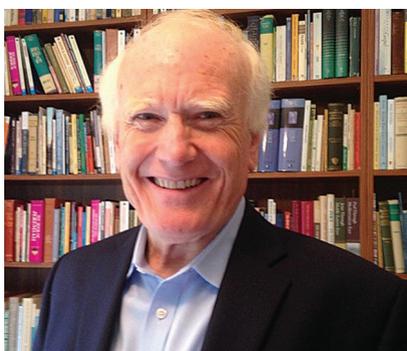
- Be more deliberate in training parish nominators in what to look for regarding how churches work behind the scenes and thus in their recruiting of rectors (CMD is working on developing such a workshop as I write), and then similarly train assistant ministers in what nominators are being taught.
- Encourage nominators to provide honest and constructive feedback where it is sought, and encourage those speaking with nominators to seek it.
- Recognise that all rectors will grow and need support in their new role, by heavily investing in their training as they start.
- Instil coaching and/or mentoring as normal, as a means of assisting people to self-reflect and a safe and trusted space to process.

I am sure that these suggestions are not complete, and many readers could

probably very helpfully augment this list. What seems common though, is the opportunity to broaden reliance from a particular drawn-out process to a more wholistic development culture, from which a broader and younger pool of people are being developed to be available for more leadership roles.

If we are overly attached to the current presbyterial ordination processes, the attachment is certainly not in the same category of the Pharisees, where salvation was at stake. However, I do find myself wondering if such attachments are akin to those the Apostle Paul led the way on, teaching and modelling the need to become all things to all men and women, so that by all possible means, some may be saved. In other words, given the world in which we find ourselves, while certainly not the whole picture, we have a great opportunity for innovation and development. Let’s do it. As someone once said, “for the sake of the gospel.” **ACR**

Reflections on My Expectations of Ministry Fifty Years Ago



John G. Mason, Honorary Canon of St Andrew's Cathedral and Commissary to the Archbishop of Sydney in the USA

I have been asked to reflect on my expectations of ministry around the time of my ordination in the Diocese of Sydney some fifty years ago.

1. Background

1.1 A Changing World I became a student at Moore College in 1966, in the decade of significant cultural upheaval. In 1962 the Pill had been released, and the Beatles sang, *All you need is love*. It was an age of drugs and sex and of protest against the Vietnam War.

Some forty-five years later, in August 2011, *The Wall Street Journal* carried an article by Dr Jonathan Sacks, then chief rabbi in Britain, commenting on the 60s: In 'Reversing the Decay of London Undone' he wrote: "In virtually every Western society in the 1960s there was a moral revolution, an abandonment of its entire traditional ethic of self-restraint... The Judeo-Christian moral code was jettisoned. In its place came: whatever works for you..."

1.2 The Unchanging God Yet, in the goodness of God, the sixties in Sydney was the decade following the 1959 Sydney Billy Graham Crusade when thousands of lives had been changed through the ministry of God's gospel. In his mercy, at the end of the fifties God had brought many to himself, preparing potential ministers for gospel ministry in the age of change. We see God's faithfulness to Jesus' words: "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it..." (Matt 16:18).

For my part, having been taught the Scriptures from an early age, I had increasingly come to commit my life to the Lord. That said, it was during my study at Sydney University in the early 60s that I was confronted with the new lifestyle patterns my contemporaries were adopting. Identifying two key questions that were foundational to my faith – the authenticity of the New Testament and the resurrection of Jesus – I worked at addressing them. Ancient History was one of

my subjects. Impressed with the weight of evidence that pointed to the historical reliability of the New Testament and the physical resurrection of Jesus, and personally drawn by God's love in Christ, I committed my life to serve him in the ministry of his Word.

Following a year of teaching secondary school English and History, I entered Moore Theological College in 1966 (aged 21). Ordained in Sydney (deacon, 1969; presbyter, 1970), I was assistant minister at Yagoona, St Michael's Wollongong, and then Eastwood, before undertaking a New Testament research degree at Durham University, UK. Returning to Australia in 1976, I was invited to start a new church in Wanniasa as well as teach New Testament at the Canberra College of Divinity. By God's grace, St Matthew's Wanniasa commenced under my ministry leadership. I was also the founding chairman of Trinity Christian School, Wanniasa.

My earnest prayer and deepest longing was, and still is, to see people of all ages everywhere to come to a vital, personal, and growing relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord. I am keen to help people understand that Jesus is the one person who provides meaning and hope for us in our confused and anxious world.

Through my own reading of the Scriptures and my first-hand knowledge of the hours my father put into preparing for his Bible-based preaching ministry, along with my own reading, I had come to understand that the ministry of God's Word is key to the life and growth of God's people. My reading had included J.I. Packer's *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* and *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* as well as John Stott's *Basic Christianity*. I was also aware of John Stott's significant expositional preaching ministry at All Souls Langham Place, London.

I understood that ministry would require hard work and was not for the faint-hearted. Prayer and growth in God's love through an ever-increasing understanding of the Scriptures would be essential.



I had come to understand that the ministry of God's Word is key to the life and growth of God's people.



2. Ministry in a Fallen World: Texts that have carried me through

Given that my ministry is primarily the ministry of God's Word, let me identify four texts that have been foundational and inspirational.

2.1 The Task of Ministry - Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus said, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Jesus' commission of his closest followers *to make disciples* is one of his enduring mandates to his people in every age. We are not just called to make *converts* and amass statistics! Rather, *going* we are to make disciples, *baptising and teaching*. Baptism in the *name* (singular) of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, signifies a changed understanding of God and a vital relationship with him through the Lord Jesus. Furthermore, those who were baptised are to be **taught** more about Jesus and the new lifestyle he commands.

And because the Lord Jesus has all authority, his commission to his people guarantees his power and the outcomes he desires. Indeed, we find in these words the authority of Jesus already in operation. They are the anticipation of the consummation of his kingdom at the end of the age. Jesus' concluding promise is so encouraging. Our English translation *always* masks a Greek expression we only find here: it means *the whole of every day*. Jesus promises to be with us as we *make disciples* of others, *the whole of every day to the very end of the age*.

For the present two kingdoms exist side by side. There is the kingdom of this world with its chaos and noise, good times and bad times, love and laughter, but ultimately its darkness and despair. Alongside this, there is a very different kingdom, as different as night is from day. It is Jesus' kingdom holding out meaning and hope, joy and laughter, for eternity. But it is here we feel the pinch: we're not there yet.

2.2 The Hard Work of Ministry – Colossians 1:28-29

It is he (Christ) whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.

I think it was Peter Johnston, Rector of Islington, London, who gave a talk at Moore College on the work of ministry with special reference to these verses. Ministry involves hard work.

In this section Paul provides a job specification for effective ministries that build good churches. In good churches the members are making spiritual progress, and for that to happen lives need to be grounded and formed in the truth. No church is going to grow which goes soft on truth. Paul was committed to putting in the hard work to ensure that people heard and were built up in the truth of God's Word.

The word *struggle* is the word from which we get our word, *agony*. It described the ancient wrestler in the athletics arena, struggling with his opponent and involving intense physical exertion. This is how Paul saw his ministry of teaching and preaching. School teachers will understand. Getting new ideas across to unresponsive minds can be gruelling. And that's exactly what Paul experienced in all the churches.

We see something of Paul's methods as he proclaimed God's Word and warned God's people against error. It is also helpful to notice that Paul didn't see himself

working alone. Consistent with Jesus' promise, Paul tells us in verse 29 that as he worked, God was also at work with him. Paul appropriated and experienced God's power at work, not by experiencing some mystical sense of power running through his body, but through seeing the results of God's work – people growing into maturity in Christ.

2.3 Don't Lose Heart – 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's Word; but by open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God...

In the midst of the vicissitudes of ministry two challenges constantly stand out: **'Why don't people believe?' and 'How do people come to believe?'**

Paul's words, *the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers* are helpful.

Many interpret these words as a reference to the power of evil. But while in the Parable of the Sower Jesus speaks of the devil taking the seed of God's word from people's hearts before it has had time to take root and grow, he also speaks of other reasons people fail to respond to the gospel (Luke 8:11-15).

However, I find another reading of the phrase makes better sense of Paul's meaning. *The god of this age* is an appositional genitive meaning: 'the god who consists of this age'. People make *this age* their god. And that is what blinds them.

Another example of this kind of phrase is in verse 6: *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God* meaning, 'light which consists of the knowledge of the glory of God'.

So, reading the phrase *the god of this age* in this possessive sense, Paul is saying that it is the idolatrous preoccupation with the material things of this world that blind people to the spiritual realities of the next.

This is consistent with the overall teaching of the Bible that it is because people have chosen to worship what is less than God that God has given them over to a darkened mind. And yes, the devil finds it easy to steal the Word of God from their hearts.

To bring a Reformed Anglican perspective to my reflections, Dr Ashley Null has recently summarized Thomas Cranmer's understanding of human nature: "What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies." Cranmer understood that "the trouble with human nature is that we are born with a heart that loves ourselves over and above everything else in this world, including God. We are born slaves to the lust for self-gratification..." In other words, men and women choose unbelief.

So, to a **second question**, how does anyone come to believe? Paul's answer is found in verses 5-6: *For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ*

as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

People come to believe through the proclamation of God's good news in Jesus Christ. But there is something else: God chooses to accompany our speaking with an element we can't provide – his miracle of illumination. With reference to Genesis 1:3-4, Paul is saying that turning from unbelief to belief involves an act of divine initiative as awesome and powerful as the act of creation. God says to our hearts, "Let there be light" and there is light. And this light is the knowledge of the glory of God that is found in Jesus Christ. And what we see in the face of Jesus is not some spiritual insight. It is the vision of deity.

To return to Paul's opening words of the chapter, he is saying that his ministry is not about himself, but Jesus Christ as Lord. It is not his gifts of preaching and oratory, his charisma and charm, that wins men and women to faith. Rather, it is their encounter with Jesus.

Paul is telling us that in his ministry he focuses on Jesus – that Jesus is not just a great teacher or miracle worker, but God walking in our shoes. Paul wants his hearers to know that Jesus is the prophet who fully and finally reveals God because he is God in the flesh.



God's Spirit turns on the light so that we see Jesus.



And given that men and women worship the world and not God, Paul's words here indicate that he spoke of God's mercy being far greater than we ever dreamed. And as he preached, God through his Spirit was taking the veil from people's hearts, enabling them to see the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

We see why Paul did not lose heart. God chooses to work through our verbal ministry which announces God's mercy. Given the flow of Paul's thought from the end of 2 Corinthians 3 into chapter 4, we see that it is God's Word and the power of God's Spirit that opens our eyes to Christ. God's Spirit turns on the light so that we see Jesus.

One of the great truths about ministry is that the outcome of faithful preaching where God is at work is changing hearts and lives. Ashley Null says this about Thomas Cranmer's theology: "It is a religion of the heart. If our hearts change, then so will our actions and attitudes". It is God's glory to have rescued us and turned our hearts to him. Clearly prayer that God will honour his name is tantamount. But will he?

2.4 Pray for the Honour of God's Name – Luke 11:5-13

In Luke 11:9 and 10, Jesus says: *"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."*

In verses 5-8 Jesus tells a parable which tells us that because of his very nature,

God will answer our prayers for the honour of his *name* – something that Jesus said we need to pray for (Luke 11:2).

And in Luke 11:13 Jesus says: *“How much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”* He was speaking of the day when God would send his Spirit into the world opening our minds to hear God’s voice through his Word, and opening our hearts enabling us to call him *Father*. Jesus’ words, *“Ask... seek... and knock...”* became etched in my memory.

3. Some Observations:

3.1 The ministry of serving God through preaching and pastoring a congregation of his people is a very special privilege.

3.2 Because the ministry of the gospel is hard work, and if one is considering marriage it is so important to pray for the right marriage partner – someone who understands the privilege and challenges of this ministry and who is willing to partner with you in the Lord’s work.

3.3 From New Testament times local churches have been key for the mission and the formation of God’s people.

3.4 Because the ministry of God’s Word has both public and private aspects, I have found the pattern of Bible reading, prayer, and preparation in the morning, with pastoral and midweek meetings from lunch through the afternoon, a useful pattern. In the age of computer and cyber connectivity it is too easy to remain bound to the screen and neglect the importance of face-to-face personal, pastoral ministry.

3.5 With the cultural changes today and now the challenges of Covid-19, church life and ministry structures may need to be reviewed. For example, senior ministers of a cluster of churches could explore ways that ministry effectiveness and efficiency can be improved by working out of one centre with certain specialised ministries across the several churches – children’s and young peoples’, ministry training, counselling and care, communication, and administration. Distinctive larger churches are needed. But with their large ministry teams they often draw people away from smaller churches, leading to ministry inefficiency and loss of vitality in both the larger churches and what could become, more effective neighbourhood churches that can address specific local needs. **ACR**

John was the founding minister of St Matthew’s Church, Wanniasa, ACT, and founding chairman of Trinity School, Tuggeranong, ACT. He was senior minister of St Clement’s Church, Mosman, NSW, before accepting an invitation from Timothy Keller to establish a new (Anglican) church in New York City. He is the founding minister of Christ Church NYC and what is now Emmanuel Anglican Church, NYC. He is the President and Chairman of the Anglican Connection and for over six years has been writing the weekly Word on Wednesday – see: www.anglicanconnection.com

Sydney for the Sake of Others



Malcolm Richards, Bishop for International Relations, and Director of the Moore College's Centre for Global Missions (CGM)

Sydney Diocese and Moore College are known in Anglican and wider Christian circles throughout Australia and around the world. Like it or not, most observers would acknowledge that the Diocese of Sydney has an influence that extends far wider than the diocese itself.

I have experienced first-hand the benefits of this. In this short article, I will reflect on the importance of this wider Sydney influence from my personal experience in my Christian life and ministry. In conclusion, I will also make some observations about what has made this wider influence of Sydney Diocese possible.

I did not grow up in Sydney or in the Anglican Church. I have been in full-time Christian ministry for over 30

years, but have spent much of it outside the Diocese of Sydney. I have served in Anglican parish ministry in Canberra and worked for CMS, first as a missionary in Congo and then, until mid-2019, as the General Secretary of CMS NSW & ACT.

Like many outside of the diocese, I have relied on Sydney and have been fed from the broader Sydney spiritual ecosystem for my entire adult life. While working in Canberra and Congo I never thought of myself as a 'Sydney Anglican' but that wider Sydney influence formed me as a Christian, trained me as a student of the Scriptures and shaped my ministry practice. Now as International Bishop of the Diocese, I see first-hand the place Sydney has in the broader Anglican world.

Early Christian Growth

After growing up in a largely liberal Methodist church in Canberra, I finally submitted to Jesus as Lord in Year 12. As a new Christian, I fell in love with studying the Bible at Phillip Jensen's lunchtime Bible studies in the late 70s while studying Optometry at UNSW. Following university, I was nurtured and taught by another Moore College graduate, John Mason, at Wanniansa Church in Canberra.

Looking at mission and training for ministry

As a committed evangelical Christian, when the time came for Elizabeth and me to consider missionary service, our senior minister (John Mason) sent us to talk to and then apply to CMS. Intending to use our professional skills as missionaries (optometry and social work), CMS required us to have a year of theological college training – and where else would we go but to Moore Theological College where those who had disciplined us had been taught themselves?

The Bible and Mission Diploma (as it was called back then) was excellent in giving me a good biblical understanding of the gospel and a theological framework for ministry. However, it was not adequate for a lifetime of word-based ministry, so after two terms as a CMS missionary in Zaire (now DR Congo), I returned to complete my Moore College training. I have found that the strong biblical and theological foundation that Moore provided me was excellent preparation both as a missionary and as a pastor in Australia.

As a CMS Missionary

I have served twice as a CMS missionary with 10 years of Australian parish ministry between the periods of work in Zaire/DR Congo. In my first time as a missionary I led an evangelistic youth ministry and conducted training seminars for clergy and lay church leaders (no optometry!). After completing Moore and 10 years in parish ministry I returned to Congo to start a Bible College in the

Diocese of Kindu (DR Congo).

Cross-cultural ministry in an under-resourced location can be very isolating. My pressing need was for resources that I could translate into Congo Swahili or use in lesson preparation. While no program or resource can be just taken from one context and used without thought in another without proper gospel contextualisation, the Sydney networks (e.g. Moore College, Matthias Media and others) kept me going and provided ideas that I could use and develop.



CMS required us to have a year of theological college training – and where else would we go but to Moore Theological College where those who had disciplined us had been taught themselves?



Resources are important, but equally important was the ability to think theologically and to have a well thought out, biblical framework of ministry that I could model and teach to others. I owed this biblical understanding of ministry to Sydney and to my training at Moore.

Australian Parish Ministry

Canberra-Goulburn Diocese is now a much friendlier environment for evangelicals, but like-minded people were scarce in the period I was there. Again, ministry in an environment where evangelicals are the minority can be lonely and isolating. Fellowship with other evangelicals is crucial for ideas, resources,

accountability and staying fresh.

It was so important to have access to the few evangelical Anglicans in the diocese together with like-minded Moore graduates working for other local ministries (e.g. Crossroads Christian Church, Focus-AFES, Woden Valley Bible Church).

There were a number of important networks which also served me well, giving me access to fellowship, teaching and partnerships in ministry. The most important were CMS (CMS Summer School plus local events), EFAC (local, State and National events) and AFES (NTE and yearly NTE mission in my parish).

What do people outside Sydney Diocese and our partners overseas want from us?

In the last 10 years as CMS NSW & ACT General Secretary and now in my joint roles in the Centre for Global Mission (Moore College) and as International Bishop I have had many opportunities to hear directly from our partners around the world. What do they think of us? How can we be most useful?

In short, they trust us. They trust our doctrine because we are Christ centred and Bible focused; they trust our people because we are well trained in doctrine and ministry and committed to Jesus; they trust Moore College and the resources that Moore and other parts of the diocese (e.g. Youthworks) produces.

In this era of Anglican realignment and Sydney's role in GAFCON, a Tanzanian Bishop aligned with GAFCON told me: "We need Sydney to keep doing

what you do – encouraging us to stay focused on the Bible and focused on Jesus. In this current battle for the hearts and minds of Anglicans we see there is a main champion for each side – The Episcopal Church on the liberal side and Sydney Diocese on the orthodox/evangelical side. We need you to keep being who you are for our sake."

What has enabled Sydney to have this wider influence outside its diocese?

Many have contributed opinions about why Sydney has this position of influence. I would emphasise three things that are most important:

i. Strong Churches

The Diocese has resisted the worldwide Anglican trend to split and to create more dioceses and more bishops! Instead it has stayed unified and has concentrated on creating strong churches. Of course, not all Sydney Diocese churches are without problems! But in most churches the people are taught the Scriptures and have an opportunity to become mature followers of Jesus, and evangelism happens.

Sydney churches export many people around Australia and around the world, not because there is some master plan developed by strategists in St Andrew's House, but because the people have understood the gospel and want to take the good news of Jesus where it is needed. It is no coincidence that CMS NSW & ACT produces 65-70% of all CMS missionaries from Australia and that its strongest link is with Sydney Diocese.

ii. Strong Training

Moore College is another major reason why Sydney has had this wider influence. People trust Moore to instil good doctrine and a biblical framework for ministry. Having a strong central college has not only been a major factor in the development of strong churches in our diocese but it has also attracted those who wish to train for ministry in other dioceses as well as theologically like-minded networks such as CMS, AFES and FIEC and many others. Significantly, because of the strong community aspect of Moore College, graduates are provided with a network of supportive ministry colleagues who will go to a broad range of ministries.

Its graduates are also the best advertising tool. Just as I trained at Moore because those who discipled me trained at Moore, so too Moore College teaching, such as PTC, goes to more and more places around the world because people in far-flung places ask Moore graduates where this Bible knowledge that they have can be accessed.

iii. Strong Partnerships

This history of strong churches combined with a strong central training college means that many strong partnerships have developed. These partnerships are also a key reason that the influence of Sydney is so broad.

The four-way set of partnerships between Sydney Diocese, Moore College, AFES and CMS are particularly significant. These partnerships have led to many opportunities both in Australia and overseas. Note that the basis of this

set of partnerships is the common theological foundation and the resulting trust that exists.

Sydney Diocese has some very strong historic partnerships, mainly through CMS, with churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the last 10 years these links have been further developed through the appointment of an International Bishop (Peter Tasker) and the strategic involvement of Sydney Diocese Anglican Aid. Sydney churches have also had strong relationships with many student movements around the world in the last 30 years through the CMS/IFES/AFES link. Now with the arrival of Gafcon, we have developed a number of new significant partnerships and there is strong potential to develop more.

Conclusion

In my ministry and in my own Christian walk I have witnessed the benefits that a strong Sydney Diocese brings to those well outside the boundaries of Sydney Diocese. The connections we have in Australia and around the world are good for Sydney but also, by God's grace, have been used by him for the extension of Christ's kingdom. This work does not happen automatically. It requires the fundamentals to stay in place: strong churches, strong training (strong doctrine and biblical patterns of ministry) and strong partnerships. As we work for Christ both locally and further afield we must continue to invest in these fundamentals. **ACR**

Staying Fresh as a Rector



Ray Galea, Lead Pastor, Multicultural Bible Ministry (MBM) Rooty Hill

Even before COVID-19, every rector was aware of the growing pressure of the role: the demands of compliance, managing expectations and criticisms from the congregation, tensions within parish council, the demands of meeting the budget, keeping the staff aligned with a common vision, and the challenges to see both church and gospel growth. COVID-19 has simply escalated that stress by requiring so many decisions on an ever-changing treadmill. The result is that we can be left feeling tired and uninspired with a gnawing sense of failure as we count the days to our resignation or retirement.

At different stages of my ministry I found refreshment in the following:

1. The wonder of the gospel of grace refreshes our soul (Acts 3:19)

I learnt early on in church planting that it's easy to focus on the care of everyone else's soul except my own. I was delighting in their salvation and forgetting that before I am a shepherd I am a sheep; before I am a pastor, I am a child of God. As we plan, strategise, and set goals, we must not lose sight of our Lord Jesus "... who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20b). We never outgrow the need to intentionally meditate on God's word, reflect on his majestic character and joyfully praise him for every spiritual blessing in Christ. Each day of the week I try to focus on a different blessing found in Ephesians 1:3-14.

2. Staying fresh involves remembering why we first came into ministry

As a twenty-something I prayed that God would give me the privilege to teach God's word and pastor his people. It was a noble task (1 Tim 3:1) that I had permission to aspire to. In recent times, I have felt the temptation to resign. Not long ago I put into my prayer notes a question to myself: "Ray, why do you want to retire so much?". Next to it I placed a little gem of a verse in Colossians where Paul writes, "Tell Archippus: 'See

to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord'." (Col 4:17)

Now is not the time to prematurely end my ministry or lose my zeal. There may be good reasons for some to finish but I did not have one. It was time to recall afresh the privilege we have as under-shepherds to the Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep.

3. Staying fresh involves considering my quota of hardship as discipline

"Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children" (Heb 12:7). It is clear that the Father's love for us is found in his sovereign hand during hard times. These last few years have been a season of discipline for me as God chips away at my pride, and I am learning yet again to depend on him. Like many Australian men, I'm forever battling with the 'god of comfort' that keeps wanting me to retreat to that place where I want to be left alone and avoid pressure, criticism and responsibility. Staying fresh means choosing to practise reflection and repentance as a lifelong activity. Now is not the time to postpone or defer godliness. To that end, I recently attended an anger management course with some of the men from my church.

4. Staying fresh does not happen alone

I was surprised to find how often the idea of refreshment came up in the New Testament in connection with the ministry of others. The Roman church (Rom 15:32), Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:18), Onesiphorus

(2 Tim 1:16) and Philemon (Phil 1:20) were all identified as sources of refreshment for Paul. We are better together!

I have been thankful to God for a group of men who have journeyed with me throughout my life and ministry. Just being in their company, having them ask direct questions, praying together and creating a safe place to share struggles for nearly 30 years has been a constant blessing. Another way of doing this is joining a Formation of Ministry group, prayer partners, accountability partner or some other type of support network.

5. Staying fresh means being intentional about a work-rest rhythm

I remember six months into MBM, my wife Sandy sat me down and gently said, "If it keeps on going like this it's not going work." To this day, I don't know what exactly was not going to work, marriage... ministry... but she had my attention. It was a shot over the bow I needed to hear. I was working too hard and not taking my day off and when I did I was not emotionally present. I had no work-rest rhythm. I was harming myself, my family, my church and my relationship with God. 'Dropping tools' each week and ceasing from my normal pastoral labours became an act of faith that I am built for heaven, that it is God's church not mine, and he is the one who gives the increase not I. Taking time to rest, to renew, and to celebrate was also how I glorify God. It involves practising daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, annual and life- phase 'work-rest' rhythms. You have to plan to rest well.

6. Staying fresh by seeking the right professional help

I'm grateful for the provision by our diocese of the clergy assistance program. During the last few years I've lost my confidence in a number of areas due to some major pastoral mistakes on my part. What was helpful for both my wife and myself was seeing our own psychologists to process the constant pressure, wounds, and struggles we find ourselves in. There are good reasons to retire and to resign but it is important to first explore those reasons that are causing those desires. Often they can be addressed. Counselling, professional supervision and mentoring on a regular basis are a key way keep going in a healthy way.

7. Staying fresh involves having a clear vision and mission

After 30 years of pastoring the same church I have had to reinvent myself every seven to ten years. I'm obviously not referring to modifying the gospel and the biblical principles of gospel ministry. I'm particularly thinking of the need to recast the vision and mission of the church afresh. By vision and mission, I mean contextualizing the timeless great commission as it pertains to our particular time, place and specific context.

By my mid 50s I noticed I was wandering again, and feeling aimless. I knew I had another 15 years to go and it was time to recalibrate again. The rector must face the question, 'What is the next step for me and the church God entrusted to my stewardship?' This is where making time to work *on* the ministry and not just *in it* is crucial. I set aside some time to

think, read, pray and share with others what the next 10 years (2015-2025) might look like. The process resulted in 10-year smart goals which we now prefer to call 'God desired outcomes' (GDO). The process energized me and still does. We are half way into our 10-year plans and even before COVID-19 we were behind where we hoped to be but I have no regrets, for these GDO's drive us forward and stop us from being content with the status quo.

8. Staying fresh means never stop learning

So often we hit a brick wall in ministry and lack clarity amid confusion. Ministry is complex and developing a healthy and mature church to present to Christ on the last day takes great wisdom and skill. For that to happen we need to seek help from a mentor, coach or supervisor. Personally, I think it was pride that took me so long before I put my hand up to ask for help. The first of my many mentors/coaches was Rod Irvine 12 years ago and he was a game changer. It was scary at first, but I quickly grew to learn so much in the hands of a wise and experienced pastor and brother. The process refreshed me. I am so thankful to God that today we have such excellent resources with REACH Australia and Moore Theological College's Centre for Ministry Development (CMD).

Let's also not forget to laugh, get the right kinds of sleep, nutrition, exercise and recreation. Don't forget to stay on top of your health issues especially for us men who are the least likely to see a doctor. **ACR**

Lowering the Ordination Bar



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

Twelve years ago my wife and I set out on a bit of a journey. I had been restoring a 1958 Volkswagen Beetle, and was towing it to Nana Glen, just west of Coffs Harbour, to get a new engine installed (I'd caught 'the bug' as they say). It was supposed to be a simple one-day job, but like all things 'cars', it blew out to a two-day task. Thus, at the lovely invitation of the engine installer and his wife, we found ourselves staying overnight at their house.

During dinner that night we somehow got talking about faith and Christianity. Very quickly we found out that they were weekly church goers and

belonged to a local Anglican church. My wife and I were relatively young Christians at the time and had been attending a Sydney Anglican church for 5 years or so. We were completely oblivious to the politics surrounding Sydney Diocese outside of Sydney itself. So, when we mentioned that we attended a Sydney Anglican church we were taken aback by the sudden change in tone. They were still lovely and polite, but you could tell there was disapproval at our belonging to a Sydney Anglican church.

As we kept talking it became apparent that the crux of their disapproval was over the ordination of women to the presbyterate. Their diocese allowed it, ours didn't.

As we talked further, they began to explain why Sydney Anglicans were wrong. Their particular church had recently been looking for a new senior minister. It wasn't a big or fancy church. Nor was it a big or fancy town. It was hard to attract a new senior minister to come. No man would come but a woman happily did. Indeed, if they were not allowed to have a woman serve as their senior minister, then they would still be looking and might *never* have appointed a new pastor! I must admit

that I sympathised with the reasoning. I felt their plight and their solution seemed logical and fair.

Again, I was a relatively new Christian at the time and was still growing in my understanding of the Scriptures. I was glad for my minister who helped me think this through once we got back to Sydney. Very simply he took me to the Bible and showed me why the Sydney Diocese refused to ordain women



Given the projections for future clergy retirement rates and the small number of men being ordained to the presbyterate, those vacancies will only increase in the coming years. As they do, what will be a major temptation?



to the presbyterate – it was unbiblical. He also taught me another very simple lesson: we can never let the particulars of a situation cause us to compromise biblical teaching and our convictions.

Now, why do I tell you this story? Because at present we have around 40 vacant parishes in our diocese. Given the projections for future clergy retirement rates and the small number of men being ordained to the presbyterate, those vacancies will only increase in the coming years. As they do, what will be a major temptation? It will be to compromise. It will be to ‘hole fill’. It will be to ordain people to the presbyterate and appoint people to senior minister positions who are unsuitable or ill-equipped at best, and biblically

prohibited at worst.¹ And that temptation will be very real. And it will be real for good reason! We’d have to be heartless not to sympathise with nominators spending months upon months trying to find a new pastor. We’d have to be loveless not to feel for our brothers and sisters in a church who long for a new pastor. Nevertheless, what would be far worse than having vacant parishes would be diluting the quality of our senior ministers by lowering the ordination bar. What would be far worse for those vacant parishes would be appointing someone who is not suitably qualified or trained for the ministry and who in turn will see their ministry burnt up (1 Cor 3:12-15).

What might this lowering of the ordination bar look like then? Most significantly, it would be to remove the requirement of a thorough full-time theological education.² In a modern world like ours, given all the part-time study options, diploma level options, and various hybrid ministry models, the temptation will be to suggest that these other options are just as viable. Therefore, why should we insist that future senior ministers need to give themselves to a four-year full-time theological education? Add to that the possibility of a

1 And just for the sake of clarity, what I argue in this article is the requirements for ordination to the presbyterate. That is, the ordination necessary to take up a rector’s role. I am not arguing in regard to the ordination to the diaconate, or for assistant ministry.

2 Currently for a man to be appointed as the rector of a church within the diocese of Sydney he must have completed four years of theological education at Moore Theological College. Any appointment outside of that requirement is an exception to the rule.

two-year ministry apprenticeship, and that's a potential six-year commitment! Surely these things are too much to ask. And yet, aren't the warnings in Scripture towards the church leader strong enough for us to take seriously the equipping of the church leader? I read passages like 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, Acts 20:17-36, Hebrews 13:17 and James 3:1 and I see an expectation upon the leader to be well-equipped for the task. How can a church leader "encourage with sound teaching and refute those who contradict it" if they do not have a firm grasp of the Bible's teaching? How can a church leader "rightly handle the word of truth" if he hasn't committed himself to deep learning of that truth? Furthermore, do we want the kind of men who are unwilling to commit themselves to the hard study of God's word and training in ministry practice to be the future senior ministers of our churches? I'm not sure if that kind of person understands well the "noble task" they desire (1 Tim 3:1).

I would argue further still and say that we must not lower the ordination bar for senior ministers by removing the requirement of full-time theological education at *Moore Theological College*. At least not without being clear on the flow-on effect. Under God, the Sydney Diocese is what it is and has done what it has done by holding to particular requirements for presbyteral ordination and subsequent incumbency. In large part it has been the necessity of full-time theological formation at *Moore College* that has given shape to the distinctives of our diocese. If we remove that necessity, we change the shape of our senior ministers, and

in turn the shape of our diocese.

Of course, this is not to say that four years of Moore College will see the future senior minister fully equipped for the task! It's a lifetime of learning that Moore equips you for, and ministry



In large part it has been the necessity of full-time theological formation at *Moore College* that has given shape to the distinctives of our diocese.



practice is something we must grow in throughout our ministry life.³ And this is not to say that other theological colleges around the world are vastly inferior to Moore! My point is, if we remove the requirement of a four-year full-time Moore College theological education, it will change the shape of our diocese forever. And I believe that that would be to our detriment. I would also suggest that it would be to the detriment of the broader evangelical cause. Sydney Anglicans, in general terms, hold to particular biblical convictions and possess their own particular distinctives as a result of their ministers' theological formation at Moore College. And these distinctives are an important part of broader evangelical conversation and have had a great impact on the broader evangelical movement for good. If we lose those distinctives, then we lose the

³ And of course, there are examples of those who have completed four years at Moore College, and yet have shown themselves *unsuitable* for the task!

good influence that those distinctives have on broader evangelicalism.⁴

If the projections of the *ACR* for future clergy numbers are correct⁵, and if the number of vacant parishes is due to therefore grow, then there will be real temptation to compromise in the area of ordination policy and subsequent appointment of senior ministers. Some will begin to call on our diocese to ordain women to the presbyterate to fill those vacancies. We must stand firm against this. It is unbiblical. Some will suggest that four years of full-time study at Moore College should no longer be required for presbyteral ordination or



What we must not do is 'hole fill' and dilute the quality of our ministers.



subsequent incumbency. We need to be clear on what that would cost.

Some will argue that an over-emphasis on theological education and ministry experience gets in the way of mission. What we need to do, they would argue, is to plant more and more churches and get on with evangelism. After all, the message of the gospel – Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins – is not too difficult a message to share and articulate. And yet, surely

the New Testament letters show us how quickly the believer can stray from a right understanding of that gospel message. Surely, those same letters show us how quickly false teachers can come into the church. And don't Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 scare you just a little? Here is a church leader, who though himself is saved and believes in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, makes a complete mess of his ministry. Worse is to imagine that the loss of his ministry is the loss of people to eternal hell.

No, we can never let the particulars of a situation cause us to compromise biblical teaching and convictions. And isn't this most important when it comes to the appointment of senior ministers as the shepherds of God's church whom God purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28-31)? That is why we insist on four years of full-time theological formation. What we *must not* do is 'hole fill' and dilute the quality of our ministers. What we *must* do is preach the kind of sacrificial discipleship in our churches that will see all our people living radically for Jesus, with some then making the call to give themselves to full-time gospel ministry. And we must then train these men and women to be faithful servants in God's church (1 Cor 4:1-2), and in particular we must train the men to be as best equipped as they can be for the role of senior minister. Now is not the time to despair. Now is the time to get on with raising the next generation of gospel workers, not only for our churches in Sydney, but also to be sent all across the world for the glory of our Lord.

There is much for us to be praying for and working towards. **ACR**

4 And this is just as true the other way around! Other evangelical denominations or movements have their own distinctives, and with those distinctives they bring their own influence upon the broader evangelical movement.

5 See the editorial of this issue of the *ACR Journal*.

View from the Pew

David Worboys: Georges Hall

Given the increasing number of vacant parishes and the relatively small number of men being ordained to the presbyterate, the ACR thought it would be helpful to interview some current nominators to hear their ‘view from the pew’ in appointing a new senior minister.

David, thank you for being willing to share your experience with us. Can you tell us how long Georges Hall were looking for a new senior minister and what the process looked like for you?

The nomination team at Georges Hall commenced our search for a new minister in September 2018. We fairly quickly assembled a profile of the parish and collectively agreed on a list of our expectations for a new man at the helm.

Within a month or so we had a handful of names as potential candidates that were passed to us either by word of mouth from friends and family, Bishop Peter Lin, or the nomination board. From the outset we created a cloud based document accessible and editable by all nominators to keep track of people we were contacting, their current positions, their initial response to

our approach, sermons listened to, and other general comments pointing to a person’s suitability or otherwise.

At the end of our search in March 2020 our list had grown to 90+ names who were all contacted at some time. Over the course of 18 months we directly interviewed 11 men who passed our first contact assessment and importantly, showed an interest in exploring the situation further. These interviews usually lasted 3 to 4 hours with questions back and forth and followed by a team debrief for another hour or so. These sessions were mostly all on week-day evenings with a level of intensity commensurate with the task at hand.

During the 18-month period, three of the 11 names progressed to 2nd round interviews, church visits, more online sermons, referee interviews and further discussions. Two progressed to nomination and finally Nate Cheung accepted the invitation to lead us here at St Martin’s – praise be to God!

It’s probably important to point out that we had approached Nate back in November 2018 but at the time Nate was not really ready to consider a move. Then circumstances changed in early 2020 and thankfully Nate came back into contention. The rest is history, so they say.

This is the second time you have been an active nominator at Georges Hall. 12 years ago you were part of the nominating team that appointed Gary Bennetts. How was this time different to the last time?

Yes, I had been on the nomination team that found Gary back in 2007. It's all a bit hazy now but I think the main difference seems to be the number of assistant ministers who are busy and content with their current jobs and commitments. This is great in one sense, but it does make it harder to find someone to take on a 'one man show' at a small church like St Martin's when the opportunity arises.

In looking for a new senior minister for Georges Hall you spent most of your time speaking to assistant ministers in the diocese. How did you find conversing with many of the assistants in our diocese?

Yes, the specifics of St Martin's and Georges Hall led us to concentrate our search generally within the assistant minister ranks. This had been a successful strategy previously and we considered it still relevant to us today.

In general, all the men we contacted were happy to take our calls. Unfortunately, a few never called back for reasons unknown. A little disheartening at the time.

Some expressed surprise that their name was out there as a possible candidate. Some declined very quickly. Some prayed for us and contacted us later

with other names. It seems the general approach from the nomination board and others is to suggest names based either on a possible match to the specific circumstances of a church, or if little is known about an individual his length of service in his current role. This second mechanism became more the case as time went on.

It took a while (all in God's timing of course!) to appoint a senior minister at Georges Hall. What were some of the reasons you encountered in assistants saying 'no' to Georges Hall?

There were quite a few different reasons for saying no to Georges Hall, including:

- Not time for a move, just started here, children at critical school age
- Current and future commitments need to be honoured
- Suburb demographics not appealing
- Not comfortable taking on a 'one man' church
- Comfortable in current role, not seeking a rector's role.

I should say some of these reasons are legitimate considerations, so the trick I suppose is to strike someone who either does not have any of these reasons, or is willing to 'bite the bullet' on one or more of them if they exist.

I should also point out that we actually said no to a lot of the names on our list where we thought there was an obvious mismatch.

What advice would you have to current assistants in the diocese given your experience?

- I'd encourage assistants to be open minded in any discussions with church nominators and if possible, not be too hasty in saying no
- Don't be so engrossed in their current roles to the exclusion of other possibilities that God presents to them
- Consider, set, and execute a personal development plan that sees them naturally morphing into a rector's role even if that feels outside their comfort zone
- Get your rector to teach you the ropes of his role in readiness for a move
- Don't underrate the potential lay support available in a 'one man' church
- Aspire to a rector's role.

What advice would you have to current senior ministers with assistants under their care?

I think rectors need to foster a big picture view of things. Yes, it's important to get things right as best you can where you are, but I think it also important to equip assistants for the role of rector somewhere else.

Have regular one-on-one reviews with assistants to identify development needs and then make it happen or even to nudge them if the time is right for them to step up and out.

Ensure assistants don't get too 'siloed' doing the things that come naturally to them but avoiding the things outside their comfort zones. Ideally, small 'one man' churches like Georges Hall need men who either have broad experiences upfront or a predisposition to develop them.

Any final thoughts you would like to share?

From my perspective, the whole nomination process tends to be a snapshot in time. I think there will always be churches who find men quickly and others that may never find the right man. 18 months sounds like a long time to find someone but in the scheme of things I think we are all very happy with the outcome and well worth the wait and energy spent.

On top of all this we were thrown the COVID-19 curve ball early in the year. Despite this God has shown us how to continue our search and finally get our man. Nate has the unusual challenge of leading a new bunch of people in very restricted circumstances. With God's help it will all go well.

As a nominator you need to remind yourself regularly that God is in control and he has always got the right fellow in mind and your role is to discover this plan. In our case we have been blessed with Nate Cheung and his family coming our way. **ACR**

View from the Pew

Leah Arthur: Shoalhaven

Given the increasing number of vacant parishes, and the relatively small number of men being ordained to the presbyterate, the ACR thought it would be helpful to interview some current nominators to hear their ‘view from the pew’ in appointing a new senior minister.

Thank you Leah for being willing to share your experience with us. Can you tell us how long Shoalhaven were looking for a new senior minister and what the process looked like for you?

Our minister resigned in August 2019. After this our first priority was to consider what we were looking for in a rector and where our church wanted to go over the next 5 years. We had been blessed with an excellent preacher, so this and community connection and evangelism were identified as our two main priorities. We were clear on the type of person we were looking for as a church and approached 28 ministers and assistant ministers to consider our church.

One of our nominators would contact a potential candidate, and as a result significant phone conversations were had with 8 people, 4 of whom

ended up saying no and 4 others who were on hold to ask later in the year. No conversation went to an interview.

In looking for a new senior minister at Shoalhaven you spoke to many assistant ministers. How did you find conversing with the assistant ministers in our diocese?

We didn’t have any negative experiences with people’s manner – all of the people we spoke to were polite and friendly. Some for good reason weren’t in a position to consider the role and were helpful in telling us why. Some offered to pray for us too and help us with other names, even if they weren’t in a position to come or to consider our church. Only one of the 28 did not respond to our contact.

What did you find surprising in your role as nominator?

We felt like our church ticked all the boxes so to speak – financially stable, pastorally happy and in a lovely part of the world with national parks and good coffee. Despite this, we felt that there was a lack of engagement with our position. Given the ‘sea changers’ that we have seen to our area over the last 10 years we had assumed that there would be a

certain level of interest in the position. We had prepared ourselves not for an instant yes, or a quick search, but for discussion and engagement from the clergy.

Typically, however, people had made their decision when they responded to us and instead of facing discussions around the positives of the region we were left fighting to convince people to consider our parish.

When we looked through the numbers in order to contribute to this article it became apparent that there was no one reason for this – rather it is a combination of issues.

Reasons given:

- 7 of the 28 cited either spouse or children's needs (i.e., spouse's current work situation or children's education).
- 5 of the 28 cited that they felt it was not time for them to leave (one was acting rector).
- 3 of the 28 cited new church initiatives or particular ministry commitments.
- 3 were in discussion with us, but all looking to mid-2021.
- 2 of the 28 wanted to stay at their current church to support new ministers.
- 2 of the 28 wanted to stay in Sydney to support elderly parents.
- 2 of the 28 said they did not match our profile.
- 1 had just accepted another position.
- 1 no reply.

It is worth saying that in the midst of the process – given the time it takes to listen to and consider each individual – each “no” becomes disheartening. However, we are also aware that there

is a need to go through God's process and await his planned person despite the disappointments.

Did the process of speaking to assistant ministers raise any concerns with you?

When speaking to assistant ministers it became clear that the diocesan view of when a minister was ‘ready to leave’ or ‘fair game’ differed vastly from the minister's own view. At the beginning of the process I approached an assistant minister and came away convinced I had made a mistake due to his concerns around the time frame he had been at his current church. When we checked, however, we were told he had indeed been there long enough. This discrepancy leads to lost time – we listened to each person preach at least once, normally twice; as well as a general confusion in the process.

We felt this was compounded by the fact that we are a single minister church where a new minister would not have the benefit of a ministry team. This may appear at first glance to be a problem for us, but it is indeed a problem for the diocese. If assistant ministers are being trained in a ministry team environment, the regional churches which tend to be single minister churches may struggle to attract young rectors.

As a first-time nominator would you like to see any changes or additions to the process in appointing a new senior minister?

I found everyone involved in the process incredibly helpful. We often asked

what appeared to be silly questions, but we were always warmly answered by the diocesan staff. As a lay person I did find the process confusing, especially the terminology used to describe individuals (rector, presbyter, deacon, being presbytered, ordained etc). This was especially difficult when using the Year Book to source possible names. Although an explanatory instruction of the regulatory processes was given to us at the start, I think a very simple graphic flow chart with some key word definitions might be helpful.

One of the things we found surprising was the apparent lack of a coordinated diocesan approach to helping nominators with the identification of possible candidates, which I have touched on above.

I would also like to point out that the diocesan staff were very quick to adapt to COVID-19 and the use of the digital technologies actually made our lives much easier in some regards! Driving to Sydney (at least 2 hrs) for a half-hour interview is in my opinion an inefficient

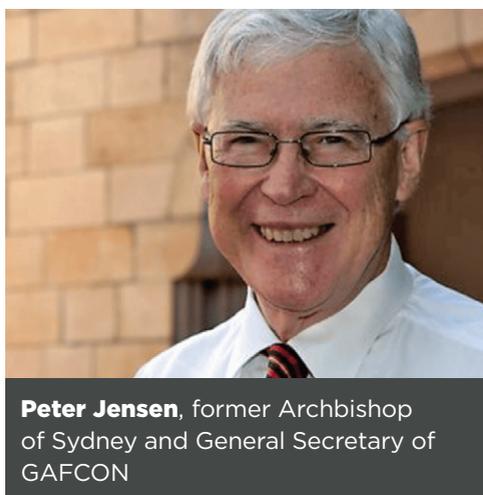
use of the time of 5 people. Being able to conduct the same meeting on Zoom was a real blessing, especially to the two of us who are working full-time. Travel can become a burden for people in regional areas and I would really like to encourage the diocese to think through continuing to use these technologies to assist regional churches.

Any final thoughts you would like to share?

The nominating process was time consuming and at times confusing, but we were well supported. We were blessed to come together as a really functioning committee who were able to encourage and spur each other on. We also felt the really powerful force of our parish's prayers and can honestly point to the sovereignty of God in the appointment of our new rector.¹ We have learnt a lot as individuals about patience and humility and our expectations of our clergy. **ACR**

¹ We are delighted to have Bishop Rick Lewers (Armidale) as our incoming rector!

Review: The Mission Before Us



You are an Anglican from Sydney? Get this book. Read it carefully. Read it prayerfully. If it is aimed at you, do something about it.

And it is aimed at all of us. Think of it this way. When we go to CMS Summer School, we are rightly delighted to meet the new missionaries and become aware that we are part of a movement of world mission. This book challenges us to recognise that, more than ever, we are living in a mission field right here, and that we all need to be a part of the work of praying for and raising up Christian workers to win the lost and build up the churches under God. We cannot be complacent.



There are times when we have to be especially discerning of what the Lord has done and is doing. He has set us in the midst of a great part of his creation with a rapidly growing population from all over the world. He has enriched us with financial resources. He has asked us to preach and live the gospel. And at this very moment we are beset by a shortage of workers, both men and women.

Five years ago that was not the case. Now it is. Let us call on the Lord to

send us the people we need. We have a long tradition of training and employing men and women in the work of the Lord. Let us take it up again.

The Lord has gifted us with excellent opportunities for training, pre-eminently at Moore College. If we understand our own identity, especially through the history of our Diocese, we will see that this is no accident, but is the result of the labours of the generations before us. Likewise, the work that has been done to evangelise and equip young people has been extraordinary. We thank God for this and for many

other blessings which he has given us.

I am very glad indeed that the ACR has published this challenge. It is made up of nineteen brief chapters written by leaders of our churches and institutions. It sets out the foundations of the summons to ministry in Sydney, the challenge that lies before us, and the wisdom we need to know what we must do about it.

I am immediately praying that the Lord will continue to send us the right people and that we will recognise them, challenge them, cherish them, equip them and use them in his service. **ACR**

Ed: A free copy may be requested by emailing missionbeforeus@australianchurchrecord.net

Vale Bishop Ivan Lee

Raj Gupta



It is with great sadness that I heard the understandable news that Bishop Ivan Lee's thanksgiving service will not proceed. I have known Bishop Lee for the duration of my time of more than a decade as rector in a church in Western Sydney, and for much of that time as a colleague on Standing Committee.

Bishop Lee has always had a passion for the Gospel, and particularly for the impact of the Gospel in Western Sydney. Over many years, he has served

tirelessly for the sake of the Jesus Christ. So much of his work has been behind the scenes – I suspect few people would know the extent of his dedication, love and care for people who both know Jesus, and those who do not yet know Jesus.

I think it was particularly when he got sick in more recent years that we saw his own personal suffering for the Gospel in a new and profound way. I remember talking with him at this time and was inspired by his desire to use the circumstances that the Lord had

brought him to be useful to the Gospel. I remember that we spoke about him sharing his own story as he came to church, seeking to help others point to the source of all hope. And this is what he came and did.

It was only later that I thought about the toll that this must have had on him – as he did this in place after place, reliving his pain and – at the time – uncertain future in this world. Yet, he would have it no other way than to use any and every opportunity to proclaim Christ.

Many people spoke to me about

the inspiration and encouragement they felt from Ivan’s ministry. I myself was overwhelmed when, subsequent to his passing, a number of people at my church took the initiative to put together a sympathy card for Virginia and Ivan’s family. This unprovoked act speaks volumes about the appreciation that is felt among many for our dear brother’s faithful service over many years.

Thank you, good and faithful servant, for your many years of service pointing people to Christ. **ACR**

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CREATING HABITS

Creatures of habit: Getting our habits under control



April 1, 2019 by [Beverly Whitaker](#)

In part 1 we looked at why it's so important to harness our habits for good. Now we turn to the nitty-gritty practical stuff about what this might look like. At the risk of stating the complete obvious: we made time for the things we really want...

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