

The Link

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

2018 JUNE/JULY



Growing up and out

Scott Dunlop, Vicar of Gunnedah Anglican Church is a man who is passionate about men's ministry. He modestly suggests that he is no expert, but his years of thought, planning and experience make his opinions worth knowing. We asked him to outline his understanding of the what, why and how of ministry to men who are not yet Christian, as well as to those who need to be encouraged to keep serving faithfully.

WHAT?

Ministry is all about continuing the ministry that Jesus began, building the Kingdom of God, as we call people to repent and have faith in Jesus, and grow to maturity in Him. God continues to work through His Word, by His Spirit, to build His Kingdom. Therefore, men's ministry is seeking to be involved in these things but specifically targeting men. A high school principal at a boy's school once said, 'males need to know what needs to be done, when it needs to be done by, and what will happen if they don't.' There is a lot of truth in his words, as men are more about facts and what needs to be done, whereas women tend to be more relational in the way they interact and learn. Therefore, men need teaching and encouragement to learn to be a godly bloke for Christ, not to be just focused on work commitments and hobbies, but to be investing in their relationship with God, their wife and children, as well as the church family.

WHY?

The 2016 National Church Life Survey revealed that 63% of our Diocese is female and 37% is male. This has consequences in lots of different areas and is a serious problem that calls for action. Particularly when you consider that men are supposed to be the spiritual leaders (Ephesians 6:4), and head (1 Corinthians 11:3) in their own families as well as their church families. When men grow in godliness and maturity, it brings benefits for their marriage, their whole family and also the church. The church will always be weak when there is a lack of godly men leading. Rather it needs to grow stronger by reaching men for Christ and helping them grow to maturity in Him. Feminism has left men confused as to what their role in the family and ultimately the church is supposed to look like. So men need to hear what God's Word says about being a godly man in their family, church and workplace. Gathering

men together gives them the opportunity to be encouraged specifically in this way. Also, evangelism to men is an area that needs a lot of time and energy. Statistics show that when a man is reached for Christ you win a whole family. An article in *Evangelicals Now*, May 2003 states, *If you lead a child to Christ, 3% of their families follow. If you lead a mother to Christ, 17% of their families follow. If you lead a father to Christ, 93% of their families follow.*

The Bible doesn't tell men to take initiative and be proactive at work because they naturally do this. However, it does tell men to lead spiritually in their families and in their church families because this won't come naturally, and doing it will be a struggle and a step of faith. Most men have plenty of commitments on their agenda, so if they aren't careful to have godly priorities, it is very easy for their faith, Christian service, and family commitments to get pushed out or slip down

Continued on page 2

Operation Loomberah Storm!



It's not often you see a tank zipping across the paddocks.

Dub Gannon
St Paul's Tamworth

ON SATURDAY 7TH APRIL, WE HELD A men's evangelistic shed event in a farmer's shed at Loomberah. At this particular shed event we visited a collection of military vehicles, which included a number of tanks.

The farmer has had a personal interest in tanks since he was a boy and in adulthood he collected military tanks and other military vehicles, a number of which were from World War Two. In his spare time, he would restore these vehicles. He very kindly invited us to come and have a look at his collection and tell us all about it.

We had just under 20 men come. Men from the church were encouraged to invite their non-Christian friends. After showing us through his collection he took us for a ride in a tank which last saw action in Desert Storm during the Gulf War of the 1990s.

He took us for a ride across one of his paddocks. The blokes loved it. Men remarked how quickly it went, and how the ride was relatively smooth. Afterwards, we had a barbeque with some good quality scotch fillet steaks. As the men enjoyed their steaks, I gave a short gospel presentation and I had some gospel tracts available for those who wanted

one. The blokes enjoyed the afternoon and the steaks went down well!

Since then we have had another men's event. About 26 of us went to watch the West Tigers play the Newcastle Knights in Tamworth. It was enjoyable game which was followed by a meal at one of the local pubs. In May we had one of our regular Men's Breakfasts. The breakfasts are opportunities to encourage men to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. In July/August we will have a Men's Pub Games evening; in September a Men's Clay Pigeon Shoot, and a golf day in October. All of these events will be opportunities to bring non-Christian men along and to share the gospel with them.

If we look around our churches – in most cases – there are more women than men. Of course, we want more men in church! So how do we do that when it is often so hard to get men to come to church? A good way to begin is to do some specific men's events. They are great opportunities to reach men with the gospel. One of the secrets of men's ministry is to go to where the men are, and show them (rather than just tell them) the gospel is for them too.

From page 1

the list. We should heed the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:58, *'Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.'*

HOW?

Community happens in country towns, so a godly life that shows Jesus in action does get noticed. It is a great witness for Jesus, as people watch on and are challenged. Country community enables contact with the same people a lot more regularly than would happen in the city.

Our vision for the church is to be growing up and out in Christ. We want men to be growing up in Christ toward Christian maturity, and also growing out in Christ in being a witness for Him. To achieve this, we encourage men to be leaders in the Church family and leaders in their own families. Most men don't naturally do this but need encouragement in fulfilling their most important God-given roles. We specifically seek to help men grow up in Christ through our bi-monthly Men's Shed Breakfasts on Saturday mornings. We meet in the shed of a bloke from church for fellowship and look at a topic from God's Word to help us grow in being the man God wants us to be. We are also seeking to establish a culture of one-to-one Bible reading as men meet up regularly to read the Bible, pray and support each other. Men's Conference attendance is encouraged, and we also hold 'Men's Convention without the Travel' which is held on a Saturday. We show videos of talks from a men's convention, along with a few local testimonies and fellowship over the day.

For those not yet Christian, the ministry has to begin early. We encourage everyone in the church family to pray that one of their family or friends, who don't yet know Jesus, might come to faith in Him in the next five years. We specifically seek to help men grow out in Christ and be a witness for Him by running bi-monthly Men's Toolbox Dinners. These give men a place to bring mates they have been praying for, and building relationships with. These are men's only events with a Christian speaker, a 'blokey' activity, and are generally off church site. Also we have held a few 'Man vs Wild' father and son camps which have been popular for church and non-church men. These are held in the bush, with just a knife, water bottle, and sleeping bag the only needed things. Various activities happen, from building the hut that you will sleep in, to arrow shooting competitions, as well as a bonfire, and Bible talk.

Ministry to men is a marathon, not a sprint. Christian growth in godliness takes time

The Bishop speaks ...on making better men

Bishop Rick Lewers



I HAVE AT TIMES BEEN ASKED WHY WE NEED A MEN'S ministry. It may be oddly controversial in an age more confused about gender than any since God's creation of the first man and woman, but a simple answer is that I am a man and I need ministry from men. There is nothing clever about that. Men need the friendship and encouragement of other men. Australians should know that more than most, as we prize mateship. It's normal and it's helpful and that's before we have said anything theological.

That doesn't mean that all ministry to me is by men. In fact the primary ministry to any man is from God through His Word, and at the heart of any men's ministry should be the primacy of God's Word. A man will never know what it is to be a man until he does business with the Creator's purpose for him. Even a ministry offered within marriage by spouses is done best when the Word of God takes primacy. I am married to one of the finest ministers I have ever met. She serves like Christ, encouraging, rebuking, and exhorting me and I am often trained by her in how to be a husband, a father, a Christian man and leader as she points me to the Scriptures. But she is not a man and nor does she, or I, want her to be. Together we share a common humanity even though we do not share the same gender.

Objectively, a woman can no more understand being a man than I can understand being a woman. A man and a woman may complement one another perfectly but we are clearly not the same. As such, subjectively, there are deep things that as a man I would never share with a woman. By way of general application, some things should not be shared with a woman because they are simply unhelpful, unloving, or worse they may cross boundaries of holiness and jeopardise relationship. There are times, as a man, when you want to know you are experiencing some level of normality as a man. You want to test with other men that feelings, thought life, and struggles are not unusual. There are times when a man needs the wisdom of other men to address all sorts

of issues in a helpful way: to get things off one's chest; to unpack disappointment before it reaches a point of depressing no return; to talk through anger before it is unleashed in destructive ways. There are times when a man need the strong rebuke and correction of another man who takes him seriously and not just another beer.

It may be a subjective observation but I think women are good at this and take opportunity to meet and to talk woman to woman. Men on the other hand have been notoriously poor at this, needing the opportunity and the encouragement to take such opportunity, to gather together. A well thought through men's ministry shaped by the primacy of God's Word can change a man, change relationships, change marriages, families and communities for the better. It is, I believe, why God determined that children enjoy both a father and a mother. There are things a son needs to learn in the men's ministry we call fatherhood. A father is the one man who is meant to be the most important and most trustworthy guide to manhood that a son has. You only have to look at the carnage that follows absent or poor fathering to realise the value of "men's ministry" shaped by God's Word.

Starting a men's ministry may be as simple as a dad spending time with his boys in God's Word. Of course you can start a men's ministry by gathering some of your Christian mates to read God's word together. You can also run some men's events with a view to introducing other men to Jesus who will send them home better men.

Sadly, someone will read this and complain about all that I have omitted to say. I have noted the value of women's ministry. I want to stress the crucial importance of a father's relationship with his daughters. I want to condemn the dark side of men given to promiscuity, violence, abuse, and the abdication of responsibility as much as I would condemn the same in women. But I will never apologise for wanting to see men's ministries everywhere, where men will come under the ministry of the primacy of God's Word.

as men come under God's Word and are transformed by His Spirit. There are no short cuts to maturity. Reaching men for Christ takes time as we build relationships, pray, and seek to introduce them to Jesus. Billy Graham always said that men need to hear the Gospel about 30 times before they commit their lives to Jesus. So we need perseverance and persistence. We wrote *The Tackle Box* to help evangelism in parishes. It's a resource that is written by locals in our country Diocese for locals in our Diocese. There are 25 articles in

three main areas: Preparing for Evangelism; Evangelism to Individuals; and Evangelism in Church Contexts. It's a booklet, not a book, and is therefore not the final word on a topic, but a great introduction and stimulus for discussion and training in evangelism.

It has been encouraging to see it going further afield. Bush Church Aid had a look at *The Tackle Box* at a recent Senior Officers' retreat and "...felt it would be a blessing to their BCA Field Staff", and asked permission to distribute it through their network nationally.

Ridley College in Melbourne has asked for a copy to put in their library. Someone described many people in the church as the sleeping giant. They have incredible potential for Christ but just need mobilizing and training. In the past, generally speaking, the church hasn't had a big emphasis on training. So it has been a great privilege to be able to produce a local tool that can help people around the Diocese in our core business of evangelism.

You can download your own copy of *The Tackle Box* on the Diocesan website.

Have caravan-will help out

They say that travel broadens the mind. But a group of people from St Peter's Cathedral in Armidale have realized that there is a form of travel which brings blessing (and more than a small amount of fun) to those who travel, and those who are visited by the travellers.

Gavin Waters takes up the story:



Narelle Waters, Kevin and Anne Birkett, Gavin Waters (trying to hide), Rosalie Goldsmith, Jacob, Jo, Annika and Tory Cayzer, Stephen Goldsmith

NARELLE AND I HAVE BEEN BLESSED TO HAVE TRAVELLED much of Australia during our married life. We have made it a regular practice to visit local church services when we are in town on a Sunday. This has left a real feeling for small communities, some of these congregations are as small as two other people plus the preacher and us making five. We looked at joining Bush Church Aid but felt led to help out within our own Diocese. Narelle still has a full time job so getting time away is sometimes difficult. Armidale Diocese covers a large area and our Armidale Cathedral has a large congregation. After a few discussions with our Dean and the Bishop we were told of a

number of small churches in our Diocese needing some help with some maintenance jobs and encouragement, and so began the idea to help out at Walgett. This was a little daunting as we had not done anything like this before. So we were very pleased when, after a discussion at our Bible study group, another two couples decided to join us.

Armed with tools, pop rivets, squares, saws, gurneys, brooms and sundry bits and pieces – as well as our Bibles – we headed off. Two of our group arrived on Saturday, so we could join Tory Cayzer's church service on Sunday, and a third couple arrived on Monday. So began our getting to know and fellowship with the Walgett, Collarenebri and Cryon church families. We spent six days camping near the church in our caravans and being part of whatever went on, as well as attending to guttering, down pipes, tap replacement, gardening and other small jobs. Joining and helping with their church services at Walgett, Collarenebri and Cryon as well as an Easter service at the Kookaburra Court Age Care Unit was also part of our activities for the week. The local community enjoyed having a pianist and hearing male voices singing at the services. Some of the group joined the locals for the weekly Sing Australia get-together at the RSL club.

The group that went to Walgett didn't have any specific skills, but were keen to make a difference with our most westerly parish. We all stayed in our caravans near the church on a vacant block which allowed us to share with the family during the day and to start work early in the morning before the temperatures warmed up. For our group from Armidale the temperatures seemed really warm but the locals thought the weather was only mild! Time went quickly and before we knew it, it was time to leave. We did so feeling that we had encouraged the people we met and felt encouraged ourselves. It is great to know that we can make a difference, even if it is just in the hearts of our brothers and sisters in Christ, as we stop a while, and take the time to let them know we care.

Anne Birkett, who went with us, said "We were a group of older couples who owned caravans and had time on our hands. As the men were all handy with maintenance type activities, we felt that some of that time could be spent helping our out-lying parishes, who are short on local personnel, with jobs around the church and vicarage. We also wanted to simply be an encouragement to the clergy families and congregations. The people at Walgett told us our visit had been a blessing to them. However, I felt we were blessed, just as much, to see God's faithful people, even though they are small in number, meeting and encouraging one another as God's family, and reaching out to others with the good news of Jesus' love for all people."

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Going forward from Jerusalem

From June 17th-22nd this year thousands of Bible-believing Anglicans will gather in Jerusalem for the third Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON).



The first GAFCON in Jerusalem in 2008 was a joyous event.

THE GAFCON MOVEMENT IS A GLOBAL family of authentic Anglicans standing together to retain and restore the Bible to the heart of the Anglican Communion. Their mission is to guard the unchanging, transforming gospel of Jesus Christ and to proclaim Him to the world. They are founded on the Bible, bound together by the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration of 2008, and led by a Primates Council which represents the majority of the world's Anglicans. GAFCON works to guard and proclaim the unchanging, transforming Gospel through biblically faithful preaching and teaching which frees our churches to make disciples by clear and certain witness to Jesus Christ in all the world. The GAFCON journey began in 2008 when moral compromise, doctrinal error and the collapse of biblical witness in parts of the Anglican communion had reached such a level that the leaders of the majority of the world's Anglicans felt it was necessary to take a united stand for truth. A crowd of more than one thousand witnesses, including Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, clergy and lay leaders gathered in Jerusalem for the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON). The second conference, GAFCON 2013, was held in Nairobi, Kenya, at which over 1,300 delegates from 38 nations and 27 Provinces of the Anglican Communion were present. The gathering gave the Primates a mandate, through the Nairobi Communiqué and Commitment, to take forward the work of the GAFCON movement.

Dub Gannon (right), Associate Vicar at St Paul's Anglican church, will be attending the Jerusalem conference (along with Bishop Rick Lewers and others). GAFCON is close to Dub's heart.

"I am going as I know what it is like to work in a context where there is moral compromise, key doctrinal error and a collapse of biblical witness", he said. "When one makes a stand for biblical truth they are persecuted from

within the church for doing so. It is not easy to make a stand and if possible there are those within the church who will squeeze out those who are authentic Anglicans. By attending I want to offer my support and encouragement to those Anglicans around the world who are attempting to stand for the gospel under quite difficult circumstances to keep going. I want them to see that I stand by them."

The Armidale Diocese is, of course, one of the few remaining evangelical dioceses in the world, so why is GAFCON important for us?



"Thankfully, we are a diocese where biblical truth is upheld and we are encouraged to preach the gospel, and the clergy are committed to that", Dub said. "When I speak to my brothers in the UK they cannot believe there is a diocese like Armidale in existence! They are encouraged to hear there are places in the world like the Armidale Diocese where the leadership team is committed to the gospel. People in the Armidale Diocese need to realise and be reminded there are other areas where to be an authentic Anglican is no easy task due to the pressure they face from within the church. We need to pray for our Anglican brothers and sisters in tough areas

that they stand firm despite the pressure they come under from liberal church hierarchy."

Dub is really looking forward to this trip to Israel, the first of two visits he will make in the next year. "Israel is a great setting for the conference as there are so many good pictorial reminders that the Bible is true. That is one reason why I am particularly pleased to be leading a tour to Israel and Jordan with Archdeacon Darrell Parker in May 2019. Seeing Israel and Jordan is a wonderful opportunity to visit not only the places Jesus lived and walked, but also to see some significant sites from the Old Testament. While we don't need to go to Israel to come to a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, visiting these historic sites which tie in with our faith is a tremendous encouragement and helps affirm and contextualise what we believe. I remember during my first visit to Israel I started to re-read the gospels and as I did that I was able to picture a number of the places spoken about in the Bible. It really helped grow my understanding and knowledge of the Bible by visiting these places. I found it really encouraging experience and I would like to give other people the opportunity to experience the same. So, at each site we visit we will read relevant scriptures that tie in with that place. The tour will be aimed at encouraging people to grow in their trust in the Lord Jesus. We will also have the opportunity to share the Lord's Supper together at the Garden Tomb and by the Sea of Galilee. We will visit places such as Petra in Jordan, Jerusalem, Bethany, the Dead Sea, Masada, Jericho, Bethlehem, Lachish, both Caesareas, Mt Carmel, Megiddo, Tiberias, Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Capernaum, Mt Beatitudes and a number of other sites. We will be staying in good quality hotels and one of those hotels is on the edge of the Sea of Galilee. There are still some places left on the 2019 tour. If you need any further information, please don't hesitate to get in touch."

We need to talk about gender



THE WORD “GENDER” WAS ONE WE USED TO USE GLIBLY AND easily, when asking if a new baby was a boy or a girl. Things seem to have changed dramatically around the use of that word in the past two years or so. Why? How are we now supposed to think of “gender”?

Rob and Claire Smith (above) have done a lot of thinking and research in the whole area of sex and gender. Rob’s PhD is on the subject, while Claire has written articles and books on sexuality issues over many years. Together, they travel around speaking to people about how we are to think biblically when it is the last thing the world is urging us to do. Associate Minister at St Peter’s South Tamworth, Xavier Lukins has invited them to speak on the topic *Making Sense of Gender Confusion*, in September, this year. “I have invited Rob and Claire to come and speak with aim of equipping Christians in our Diocese to think biblically and to speak the truth in love on this issue. We are faced with a rapidly changing world which, in some quarters at least, is starting to or has already embraced radically new views on gender (The safe schools program being one example of this). We need to know as Christians what God says on this topic and how to react in helpful ways - both to honour our Lord and love others. Rob has already come to the Diocese in the past to speak on the issue of same-sex marriage”, he said. “I knew he was doing further research in the area of gender which flows on from his work on same-sex marriage. He has also run seminars with Claire in the United Kingdom on this issue so I felt it

would be good to benefit from their knowledge and experience.”

Claire explained their presentation. “We begin by presenting an overview of the cultural situation and the development of the ideas that have brought us to where we are now”, she said. “We then work through the language...the LGBTQIA acronym...what all those letters mean as well as some of the new terms being used around sex and gender. We then turn to the Bible, to see what it has to say about sex and gender. We, finally, outline a series of principles to guide our pastoral response to these issues and those affected by them. Our reasoning is that a lot of us feel very surprised and somewhat unsettled by the pace of change around issues of sex and gender. The transgender phenomenon seems to have come out of nowhere (which is not the case), and people are struggling to understand what it is, why we are where we are, especially in light of the community cultural discussion that is going on at the moment. It is easy to feel confused about it and wonder how we are to think about this, as Christians. As people who believe that God knows and loves us, we want to understand what He has to say about that.”

Rob would love to have lots of people from the Diocese come along to the talk in September. “There are two reasons”, he said. “One is that there are people who are genuinely confused about their gender identity and we need to know how to best care for them and minister God’s word to them. There are real sufferers out there who need thoughtful, compassionate, biblically informed care. The second reason is that there is a major culture war going on which we need to understand, so that we might engage helpfully in conversation with friends, neighbours or members of our own family.”

“However much society changes, and however much we think we have advanced away from the teaching of Scripture, God’s word is always sufficient to meet our needs”, Claire said. “Remarkably, when we turn to Scripture, we find that it does actually speak about these things. There is a biblical understanding of what it means to be human and made in God’s image as male and female. We want people to understand how the Bible is good news in understanding and responding to these issues.”

Please pray for those who are struggling with gender identity, and pray for Rob and Claire as they seek to shine light on these difficult issues.

Chaplains heave a sigh of relief

IN THIS YEAR’S BUDGET, THE FEDERAL Government showed its ongoing commitment to the well-being of public schools students by maintaining funding for the National School Chaplaincy Programme.

Generate Ministries, the largest provider of school chaplains in NSW has been serving schools in chaplaincy since the beginning of the national program. “Every week chaplains in NSW have nearly 2,000 formal conversations with students, staff and parents. Every term Chaplains deliver 4,000 program sessions covering issues including bullying, relationships, grief

and loss, family breakdown, resilience and school disengagement” says James Flavin, General Manager of Generate Ministries. “The funding will enable schools to continue this valuable program and we look forward to seeing even more NSW students and their school communities benefiting from the support of a school chaplain. The opportunity to serve public school communities of NSW is a real privilege and a responsibility we never take lightly.”

It has a far reaching effect within our Diocese too. Howard Barnes from the Tamworth Chaplains Board said, “I am

absolutely delighted that our chaplains can breathe a sigh of relief because it means they don’t have to look for new job! The chaplaincy scheme has been running for ten years, and some of the chaplains have been in schools for that long – sometimes even longer than the principal! Often these days, even the staff is looking to the chaplain for guidance in many areas. More and more I am hearing principals and staff say ‘we couldn’t do without our chaplains.’ Please continue to pray for the work done by chaplains in the Diocese, and for the provision of even more chaplains to serve in our public schools.”



Living like Daniel

That certainly looks like a youth muster!

Tim Stevens
Youth Encourger

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE THE ODD ONE OUT? WHEN I WAS in high school, I always felt left out. For example, I was regularly the last one picked for a team when we played a sport. It didn't even matter what the sport was. Rugby, football, baseball, athletics, team walking: always one of the last picked!

I thought the solution was just to pick a sport I was good at, which led me to take up competitive, state, High School lawn bowls. I was pretty good at it and even won a few competitions, but I found that I was then excluded for other reasons. I'll leave it to you to work out why that might have been. But often harder, when you're a Christian in your youth, you can be made to feel like you're the odd one out, and people find all sorts of ways to make you feel it. But different to a sport, when you're a Christian, it's easy to feel like you are deliberately excluded just because you trust in Jesus.

With this in mind, over the weekend of the 27th-29th of April, the young people of our Diocese gathered at Glen Innes Showground for our annual Youth Muster weekend. This year we had a change of venue, which while colder, still provided a weekend of warm and genuine fellowship as the youth of our Diocese spent the weekend engaging with God's word.

But back to being excluded. Being left out can be tough, but that's also where a weekend like Youth Muster can be a huge help. For this one weekend a year, around 200 young people come together to encourage each other, and to be encouraged by God's word as they work out what it means to live for the True King.

With this in mind, this year we spent time learning from the Old Testament book of Daniel, which is a book about a couple of teenagers who were trying to live for God in a world that wanted them to do the exact opposite. As we worked through Daniel, we heard some pretty exciting stories about how they trusted God when life got tough. As these familiar stories from Daniel kept coming up, everyone was encouraged to live for the True King, even if life gets tough for us here on earth.

Dan Wu (Moore Theological College), Mike Turner (St Matthew's Ashbury) brought us the talks on the weekend, and I even got a chance to speak! Dan Wu was particularly encouraged by the way young people were engaging with God's word as they tried to apply it to their lives. As Sydney imports, both Mike and Dan were blown away by the way everyone welcomed them. (I'm now a local and am used to it!)

But more important than anything was the rejoicing experienced at the news that at least three teenagers came to trust in Jesus for the first time. Countless young people also resolved again to live for Jesus for their lives. In this respect, the weekend was a huge success.

A special thank you needs to out to Greg Stones and the catering team who kept us warm and fed all weekend with some excellent cooking. Also, a big thank you to Andy Newman and the band, who at last minute, came together and helped us to bring praise to our God through song.

Youth Muster 2018 was a great weekend of fellowship and learning from God's word. If you'd like to see a little video, we've put together, head along to armidaledioceseyouth.com. The talks from the weekend are up on the website too.

But that's not all! We've got a busy second half of the year ahead. On the weekend of the 27th-29th of July, we're holding our FUEL: Youth Leaders Weekend at Copeton Dam. John Woodhouse (ex-principal of Moore College) will be coming to teach our youth leaders about freedom from Colossians. Emma Little (St Peter's South Tamworth) will be giving some short talks on the Reformation, and I am really looking forward to leading us in thinking about technology and the important job of protecting teenagers online. Then to finish off the year our YouthSurge combined youth nights will be happening in Gunnedah and Armidale on the 2nd of November.

See armidaledioceseyouth.com for all things related to Diocese-Wide Youth Ministry information. There are lots of things to give thanks for after this year's Youth Muster, and we're already planning for next year!

When SMBC came to Barraba



Chris McEwan and Greg Forder

IN THE WEEK OF APRIL 8TH TO 15TH, THE quiet streets of Barraba were overrun by an enthusiastic team from the Sydney Missionary and Bible College. Events for men, women, children and youth were planned and came to fruition in a way that surpassed the hopes of Vicar, Phil Coghlan. “We had 33 men of different ages meeting in the Vicarage backyard to eat pulled brisket and pork burgers and to hear a short message about Jesus. Another day, a member of the mission team who is a horticulturalist provided about 30 women with some creative advice about gardening and the good news about Jesus”, he said. “The kids at both Barraba Central and Bingara Public Schools really enjoyed Easter-themed concerts, while nursing home residents loved having team members come and run a church service for them. We didn’t give the team a break on Sunday...students preached, ran Sunday School and taught the church some new songs. Youth group on

Sunday was great! We ran a sausage sizzle at the high school on Tuesday and invited the kids there to a youth games afternoon on Thursday. We had many good conversations with teens at the sausage sizzle and had a few come to Youth games afternoon. We are praying they will continue coming for youth group.”

Of course, having a bunch of city students in a country parish was a great opportunity to commend rural ministry and Phil Coghlan took full advantage of it! “The team was able to have a lot of time with the me to discuss the ins and outs of country ministry (from my perspective at least).” Phil said. “They also got to hear from locals about the history of the town and the church and what living in Barraba is like. I feel that the team went away feeling like they had a better understanding and appreciation for the nuances of ministry in the country. I hope the mission week will lead to some of the team to consider heading

out of Sydney into a rural setting to proclaim Jesus to the lost, and I would be very happy to see any of the team members come and join us in the best Diocese in the world!”

Team members were billeted with congregation members for the week, and for one congregation member, it was a life-changing experience. Greg Forder played host to Chris McEwan. Greg told us “It was great having Chris stay with me! I cleared my calendar for the week, so I had a lot of time to pray and read the Bible. We had so many conversations about faith and the Bible...it was such stimulating conversation! It was just total sadness for me when the team left. It was so good to see all those young people with faith in Christ. It’s a message that needs to get out in Barraba. It has caused me to really think about devoting more of my time to my church and to Christ. I’d definitely encourage anyone to host a mission team member if a mission comes to your church.”



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Continuing to care

Gus Batley

Chairman, Board of Anglicare Northern Inland

FROM THE FIRST OF JULY 2018, THE SERVICES OF ANGLICARE Northern Inland (ANI) will come under the direct control of its larger sister organisation, Anglicare Sydney. Both organisations seek to make the Lord Jesus known through their works of compassion, counselling and education. Both seek to glorify God through their engagement with the needy and those experiencing serious dysfunction. Both are known for their ability to touch a chord, not only with Christians seeking help, but particularly with those we might never see in a church.

When CEO Veronica Rodenburg resigned in October 2017, due to ill health, the Board of ANI took on the challenge of exploring what the future of ANI might look like. One option was simply to seek out a suitable replacement. The other option was to ask whether it was time to take a different approach altogether. The Board's thinking was shaped by three significant issues. One was our financial position, which has always been very prudently managed, but was facing dwindling funding support from government and philanthropic organisations. A second issue is the value of ANI to the wider community: we want to see this unique ministry prosper and expand. A third issue became apparent with the very decided shift in Australian politics against overtly Christian organisations: we want to see ANI's Christian integrity maintained and protected.

So it was that in April of this year, the Board of ANI, with the support of the Diocese, entered an agreement with Anglicare Sydney that sees the Sydney organisation assume control of ANI's services. The business will be overseen by Anglicare Sydney, however, the plan is to appoint a local Regional Manager, who will oversee day to day operations in our four centres (Moree, Armidale, Inverell and Tamworth). In addition, the Board was concerned to retain a 'local voice'. A local advisory committee will therefore be established, with the ability to provide input directly to management. Would ANI simply become a North-Western outpost of a large metropolitan business? That is certainly not our vision. One of ANI's strengths has been the local operator's ability to utilise local networks and relationships, with an awareness

Bringing our visions together

Anglicare CEO, Grant Millard said "We want to support ANI staff through the amalgamation, and make it a smooth transition for staff and clients. ANI and Anglicare are closely aligned in their Vision, Mission and Values. We aim to serve the community in Jesus' name, and make a positive difference in the lives of others. We are both committed to providing counselling, family skills, financial counselling, services for people living with mental illness, and programs working with Aboriginal families. We are excited about the possibility of growing existing services in Northern Inland. There's also an opportunity to expand on the range of services offered. Anglicare will continue to build on existing relationships, working collaboratively with local parishes and with others in the community. We want to develop a meaningful response to socio-economic disadvantage, retain and grow existing services, and generate new ways to meet the needs of those we serve."

of local issues. This is precisely how *Hope for Life*, for instance, came into being. An outreach program to assist pregnant young indigenous women was the brainchild of one of our Board members, who, living locally, knew exactly what issues impacted in their town. *Hope for Life* is local; it is unique, and it came from God's people. (How good is that?!) We want to retain the ability to encourage that kind of initiative.

For some, the question might inevitably be, Is this the end of an era? In a sense it is. The 'barefoot organisation' - the inspiration, more than thirty years ago, of Ray Smith and Lois Reid - requires greater resources to continue serving our communities' growing needs. But by the same token, the answer to the same question is *no*, because our services will continue. Anyone walking into one of our ANI centres on July 1 will see...precisely what they would have seen on 30 June. Anglicare Sydney is keen to take time to understand ANI's services - our counselling, our education, our *Hope for Life* project - in order to learn how to support them and, God willing, expand them. We trust this is less the end of an era, than the conclusion of a chapter.

Let's go to the movies...

We all love to go to the movies, but so often, there is nothing we really want to see. In July and August, you can spend a pleasant Sunday afternoon at the movies, help raise some money for a good cause, and even invite your non-Christian friends along to see a good movie and hear a short talk. These events support the work done by Dr Catherine Hamlin (NSW Senior Australian of the Year 2018) as she seeks to eradicate obstetric fistula from Ethiopia, the continent of Africa, and eventually the whole world. Proceeds raised will go directly to the Foundation.

So invite your friends along to see *Mary Magdalene* (right) on 1st July, or *Paul - Apostle of Christ* on 5th August. The movie starts at 2.30 and the cost of admission is \$16.50 at Forum 6 Cinemas in Peel St Tamworth.



SU and us

ONE OF THE GREAT PARTNERSHIPS IN OUR Diocese is the one we have with Scripture Union. For over 150 years, Scripture Union Australia has brought the gospel to countless children and young people through beach missions, school groups, holiday camps and Bible study material. Dave Tankard is the SU North-West New South Wales Regional Coordinator, and he is passionate about ministering to children in as many different ways as possible. He told us about two of those ministries:

Stephen Miller from Nundle takes a break from the football field for some indoor games with boys at the Rugby League Camp (pictured right)



“SUPA Clubs – Learning More About Jesus”

Do you notice how Gabbi and Luke are always so engaged during your Scripture class? Are you saddened that there is no way to connect further with them on a regular basis? Well maybe there is ... in fact there is a simple and delightful way to do just that, every week, right at school! It's called SUPA (Scripture Union Primary Age) Club. SUPA Clubs are recognised by the Department of Education as “Voluntary Activities of a Religious nature”, and operate in twelve primary schools across our region. They are the “little brother” of high school ISCF groups, and a beautiful way for adult volunteers - frequently Scripture teachers - to have richer and deeper times of engagement with students than can occur in Scripture classes, growing understanding and experience of Christianity. SUPA Clubs are places where students in years five and six, though also year four or even year three in some schools, meet to eat lunch together once a week, and do any or all of the following... pray, play, make things, sing, and read the Bible. Scripture Union provides “ready to go” resources.

If you are interested in starting a SUPA Club, the steps are:

1. Pray for a second and ideally a third person to partner with you in a small team.
2. Seek the Principal's permission - I can help with this conversation.
3. Get in touch with me to register the group, for ideas, and resourcing.
4. On October 27 attend SUPAday in Tamworth. SUPA Leaders and supporters will celebrate successes, share ideas, and be trained to run effective ministry for primary school children.

(This training can count as part of the required ongoing development for Scripture teachers in the Armidale Diocese.)

SUPA Clubs are perhaps the simplest and most rewarding thing a Christian adult could be involved in for an hour a week - with eternal results!

Seeds that bloomed



Ashleigh Parsons lives in Armidale and attends one of the Cathedral congregations. But being in church on a Sunday was not a part of her childhood in Gunnedah.

“I didn't grow up in a Christian family but looking back many little things pointed me to Jesus. My godmother gave me a few age-appropriate Bibles over the years, I was invited to SUPA club at Gunnedah South Public School by a Christian friend, then a missionary kid whose aunt was my teacher became part of our group at school and invited me along to youth group where it became like a family. I probably always called myself a Christian my whole life not really knowing what that meant (looking back it was definitely the Spirit stirring up something!). I officially became a Christian at KYCK in 2008.

I think SUPA club, along with scripture classes in primary school, were what God used to give me some foundations where I could grow and have a basis for my faith at a young age. Not having a church attending family, many of those fundamental ideas about Jesus came from SUPA club and scripture classes. To anyone starting up a SUPA club, you never know the seeds you plant. You do your best for God's glory and He will do the rest. Being open, honest, friendly and approachable is so important. You might not always be able to reach kids the conventional classroom way but never underestimate the power of your attitude and life as a witness; that might be all they will remember, but you never know who it might impact!”

Helping Boys in faith and footy

During 2014-15 I would tell people who work with indigenous boys about Scripture Union Cricket Camp, and sometimes heard the reply “our boys don’t play cricket - do you have a footy camp?”. When I remembered the way that any mention of Rugby League would cause the faces of indigenous boys to sit up and notice during Scripture at Oxley Vale Primary School some years ago, a seed was planted! For years Janelle Tongue of St Luke’s Loomberah was dreaming and praying for how she might work with her son Alan, ex-Canberra Raiders captain, to bring rugby league and the gospel together in a ministry to boys. From God’s perspective Rugby League Camp was inevitable!

It happened for the first time in March 2017 in Tamworth, drawing a dozen leaders and 27 boys. The second one in March 2018 saw that grow to about a third bigger. Our hopes for having a ministry with an especially strong appeal for indigenous boys began to be realised, with several attending. God taught us all - team and boys - so much about loving one another, about serving, about putting each other’s needs first. About being prepared to change our plans. Two stories must suffice to illustrate:

A year six boy, who gets into a lot of trouble at school, came along. At our camp he never gave even one minute’s trouble, and by the last Bible study, he was asking very real questions about God and the Bible.

Another year six boy needed constant one-on-one attention, would not participate in any activity, would not eat, would not stay within boundaries, and felt he needed to challenge the authority and test the patience of every leader. Fortunately, God had graced our team with a nurse who understood this boy’s medication, and an experienced support unit teacher. Janelle and I were able to sit with this boy late on the first day and ensure that he understood our boundaries were firm, and that he would not remain on camp if things didn’t change. He asserted that he would not sleep that night. We told him God gives sleep to those He loves (Psalm 127), “and He loves you”, before praying and hoping desperately that this would be true that night! He had a magnificent night’s sleep, and was a transformed boy for the next two days, still requiring much time from leaders, but very little grace. He began showing care to others, by offering hugs to leaders, water bottles to the boys, and a smile to everyone. His carer just could not believe that we meant it when we thanked her allowing him to come to camp.

The story of SU camps in the north-west continues this July with a brand new Rugby Union Camp being held in Tamworth, headed up by Joe Goldsworthy. See www.sunsw.org.au/camps for information.

Encountering the freedom of Christ



Richard Gibson speaking at Autumn Encounter.

Nick Stone

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH OUR freedom in Christ? That was the question posed to us by Richard Gibson at this year’s CMS Autumn Encounter. The gospel has set us free from sin, death and judgment – how should we respond? Paul says “Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.....So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.....For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, that they may be saved” (1 Cor 9:19; 10:31, 33). Autumn Encounter was packed with encouragements and challenges just like this. Let me give you a snapshot. Rick Lewers preached from Colossians 1 about God’s character and His mission for the world – a God who has “rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (1:13-14).

We heard from CMS missionary T about what God is doing in South East Asia, and he spoke about the challenges of sharing the gospel with someone who has a very different worldview from you – in his context, Buddhists. He encouraged us to be “learners of people” – as a way of showing God’s love and seeking how best to share Jesus with

them.

A new CMS missionary, M, shared a little about where she will be serving – the Middle East – and her desire to “get to know the women behind the hijab”. She wants to live life with them in the hope of sharing stories of Jesus with them, that they might see Him as far more than a prophet, but God’s Son and our Saviour. M also spoke of displaced people – refugees, asylum seekers etc. We can often approach the topic of immigration through political, social or economic lenses – but M encouraged us think through what God might be doing through the massive migration of people around the world. She showed us from the Bible God’s love for the foreigner residing among us, remembering that we too, at one time, “were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:11-13).

If you missed Autumn Encounter this year can I encourage you to consider going next year? Attending a mission conference like this strengthens our faith, as we’re reminded of God’s kindness in bringing the life saving message of the risen Lord Jesus to the nations.



Jamie's careers

“...there's no discouragement shall make him once relent his first avowed intent to be a pilgrim...”

John Bunyan



MY NAME IS JAMIE CHAFFEY AND I grew up in the Tamworth area as the youngest of three children. As a child our family occasionally attended the Catholic Church of St Peter's in Tamworth, mainly for Christmas, Easter and special events. I grew up with the understanding that I was a Christian, even though we had very little interaction with other church goers, no discussions of the Bible or its content, and never prayed as a family.

During my teen years and prior to marriage I had no Christian influence in my life, but I did have lots of attitude! I left home at age 17 as I wanted to run my own race, and unfortunately I lived it like there was no tomorrow. Most weekends were spent working hard at spending every cent I had earned during the week...partying hard and drinking with mates. My understanding of what I thought was a Christian led me to believe that because I wasn't a bad person I was right with God, even though I regularly succumbed to temptations and sin and was very self-focused.

Fortunately for me, my prior career as a supermarket manager led me to Gunnedah, where I met my beautiful wife, Judy. We were married in 1993 and have welcomed four wonderful children - Jack, Molly, Lucy, and Tom - into our family. The influence of family members and other Christians that we knew, coupled with the increased responsibilities of being a parent, led Jude and me to become semi-regular attendees to the Anglican Church with our children. At church we learnt about God's word as it was preached in sermons. Looking back now I can see that this was truly when God started to work in my life, as the more I attended church the more being with believers helped my faith both at home and work, and the more I learnt about God and Jesus, I began to realise how important it was to have Him in my life.

All of my adult life I have been in

management or leadership roles, and as I began to understand God's word more, I realised that the total focus of my time on business and my career had come at a heavy cost to my family and allowed no time for a relationship with God.

In order to be a Christian, with a true relationship with God, I knew that I would need to surrender to Him and put my total trust in Jesus. But for me, surrendering was very difficult as I've always been in charge and this didn't come naturally.

At a parish dinner, words from Bishop Rick Lewers struck a chord with me and weighed heavily on my heart. The testimonies that were given and the fellowship with others on the night also had a particular impact on me. I began to see the inner peace and comfort, joy and strength I would have once I truly surrendered to Jesus and asked for forgiveness for my sins.

I took that step of faith with Jesus and surrendered to him as my Saviour and Lord... I had finally gathered the strength to stop sitting on the fence. Since beginning my close relationship with Jesus I now have a peace that I've never had before. The stresses and pressures of my work and home life balance had both an emotional and physical effect that was very draining at times, but now I feel comfort and support when I hand my stresses and worries over to the Lord. I am the Lord's work in progress.

Ephesians 2 : 8 to 10

“For it is by Grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are Gods workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

In 2016, I nominated for a position of councillor in our Local Government elections with the hope of becoming part of the leadership team in the Gunnedah community. I was not only successful with my nomination onto council, but have also been blessed with the opportunity to lead the council as Mayor. I am confident this was God's will, and His plan to place me in this position of leadership as a well-known local Christian, to lead with the values that give praise to God. For me, the biggest hurdle in surrendering to God and gaining that personal relationship was the notion that I was in charge. My pride and self-focus held me at a distance until God's grace humbled me and I was saved through faith. I hope my story about my journey toward Christ is an encouragement, particularly if you have not yet found that peace and comfort.

About

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