

The Link

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

2018 AUGUST/SEPTEMBER



Age has not wearied him

Ray Smith at Gafcon

BISHOP RAY SMITH IS NOW 82 YEARS old. In December this year, he will celebrate 60 years since his ordination to the Anglican clergy. For a total of 27 of those years, Ray ministered in the Armidale diocese at a particularly important time in its history. In 1965, Clive Kerle was elected as Bishop of the Diocese. While there were some evangelical clergy already in the diocese, (Trevor Griffiths, Matthew Burrows and Bruce Holland to name just three), Clive Kerle was the first evangelical to hold that position. His election signaled the beginning of Armidale's great evangelical tradition. Ray Smith was there at the beginning, and in September this year, he

will be back to celebrate the 60th anniversary of St Paul's Tamworth, the church where he ministered so effectively in its early years. We have much to learn from an old warhorse like Ray, so we asked him for a rundown on his Armidale years.

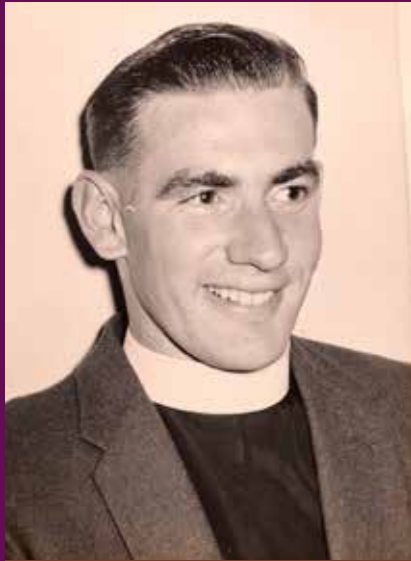
"Like so many things in the design of God, my going to Armidale was as a result of subjective factors rather than a prayerful well thought out plan on my part", he said. "When I entered Moore College in 1956 at aged 20 to train for the ministry I did not apply to be a Sydney candidate but had a vague idea of serving with the Bush Church Aid Society. My decision to apply to work in the Armidale Diocese came

about through the influence of three men—Trevor Griffiths, John Chapman and Peter Chiswell. I had met Trevor in 1953 at Moore College and the following year joined him as a youth group leader at Yarra Bay (La Perouse) in Sydney. After college he was ordained in the Armidale Diocese where he served as an assistant curate in Gunnedah and then as Vicar at Mungindi. I had met John Chapman at a Katoomba Convention houseparty in 1955. In January 1957 he invited me to accompany in him on a mission he was taking in Gunnedah where Trevor Griffiths was ministering. In the May of that year I visited Trevor in his

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Headline

Vicar of St Paul's Darrell Parker is grateful for Ray Smith's ministry in Tamworth.



Ray Smith at the beginning

"The name Ray Smith features prominently in the history of St Paul's West Tamworth. Ray served as Vicar here for 7 years between 1971 and 1977. For many present and past members of St Paul's, those years are remembered and celebrated as a time of significant change and spiritual growth. Along with other churches in the Armidale Diocese, this was a time of transition for St Paul's as it increasingly moved from being a church built around the anglo catholic tradition to be much more like the strongly evangelical church it is today. Change is always hard and for some, these were difficult days. Ray and his wife Shirley faced many challenges, joys, and also, no doubt, some discouragements. Ray was not the one who began or authored this time of change, and nor was he the one who completed the task, but his leadership was absolutely crucial in helping make St Paul's the church it is today.

This year celebrates the 60th year of the current St Paul's church building. The Parish Council has invited Ray Smith back to Tamworth to be the guest speaker at a celebratory dinner on the evening of Saturday September 1st. The dinner's purpose is two fold: Firstly, to thank God for what he has done both in and through St Paul's in making Jesus known to many, but secondly, to work hard at having renewed contact with many people who have an association with St Paul's but are not currently part of God's family here. I like to call them the 'Fringies' - those who would call St Paul's 'their church', but are not part of our fellowship and who very likely, don't actually know Jesus. This dinner is part of on-going efforts to have a gospel ministry to the large 'Fringe' population of St Paul's. This is something we know is very dear to the heart of our former vicar, the Rev. Ray Smith. We look forward to having Ray and Shirley back among us."

From page 1

new parish, Mungindi. While I was there he encouraged me to consider applying to Bishop Moyes, the Bishop of Armidale. Meanwhile John Chapman was now in College and after our trip to the Diocese earlier in the year had continued to encourage me to consider ministry in Armidale. I had also become friendly with Peter Chiswell who had started college as well in 1957, as an Armidale candidate.

After graduating from Moore College, I commenced work in the Diocese in 1958 as an assistant in Barraba. I moved to Moree in 1961, still as assistant, then became Curate-in-Charge at Ashford. I moved on to Uralla as Vicar, and spent a short time as Director of Christian Education and Chaplain to New England Girls' School. From 1971 to 76, I was the Vicar of St Paul's West Tamworth. I took on the job of Archdeacon of the North West, then branched out to become Diocesan Archdeacon and Director of Christian Education. That position entailed me looking after parishes

I first learned to depend on the sovereignty and grace of God.

Firstly, and most importantly, I learned about the sovereignty of God in bringing about His plan and purpose, and the power of God's Spirit to transform people's lives through the proclamation of the Gospel and teaching of God's Word. This has challenged me and given me confidence to teach the Bible, promote evangelism and engage in caring ministries, in different settings, one-to-one, small groups and to whole congregations.

I learned that church growth is the work of the Holy Spirit. God grows His church in line with His will both through planning by his servants but also quite independently, sometimes in spite of them. Two strategic things we can do are; first, to encourage, equip and release lay church members for the one-to-one-ministry of witnessing, discipling and care in the congregation and community. Second; to organize Biblical/Christian Education programs to expand Biblical knowledge and understanding as well



Peter Chiswell, John Chapman and Ray Smith

without incumbents. I organised and trained local teams to run the churches where there was no clergy help available.

My old friend Peter Chiswell succeeded Clive Kerle as Bishop in 1976. In his term of 25 years Peter Chiswell proved to be one of the finest and most effective bishops in country Australia. His major achievement from an evangelical perspective is that he completed the process of establishing the Anglican Reformed Evangelical Tradition in the Diocese which had begun under Bishop Kerle.

Looking back over 60 years I can truthfully say every ministry in which I have engaged has been significant in my ministry formation. Each ministry has been greatly blessed by God, despite my sinfulness and shortcomings. In many respects I do consider my time in the Armidale Diocese as the most significant and rewarding in my life. It was in Armidale

as to equip church members for ministry. I began my ministry in Armidale setting out to be a one-man-all-competent-in-everything-minister who performed all the ministry in a parish. I began to learn in Armidale Diocese the importance of training and releasing others in the congregation so that evangelism and ministry instead being confined to one person expands exponentially through many others.

I also learned in Armidale that ministry to an individual in assisting them grow from an unconverted state to being fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ is a long term process, which includes. Over the years, I have consistently noticed principles which inform this process.

We need to befriend people, and be patient sharing of Gospel facts. When the time is right, we need to challenge people to make a decision to follow Jesus. We need to

assure and help them to establish them as new disciples in basic beliefs and practices, like regular Bible reading and prayer. We need to encourage them to deepen their understanding through more intensive study of the Bible and Christian beliefs, and of course, we need to promote the idea of being a member of a small Christian fellowship group for sharing, Bible study, prayer and engaging in service. Finally, we need to equip them for the basic ministry of witnessing and caring as well as exercising their particular ministry gifts.

I can trace my enthusiasm and competence for evangelism, under God, back to my Armidale days due the example, passion and training provided by John Chapman. My administrative ability and skills I learned from the examples of Peter Chiswell and Peter Smart, and as a member of Diocesan Council and other committees.

While in the Diocese I learned my counselling skills by engaging in a New South Wales Marriage Council program conducted in conjunction with the Counselling Unit at the University of New England, and in a Holistic Counselling Course (Sydney Diocese) conducted in Tamworth.

I gained my expertise in theological education by extension (TEE) in Armidale Diocese as a result of being a private study student with the Australian College of Theology, being an external study student at the University of New England, and from mentoring by Ms. Patricia Harrison, an international TEE specialist, who providentially resided in Armidale. TEE later led to an appointment as the first director of Extension Ministries at the Trinity Episcopal College of Ministry (Pittsburgh, USA) for 4 years."

We asked Ray what advice he would have for young people who are just beginning a life of ministry.

"God is sovereign...He works out His purposes. We must be faithful in seeking His will and following His leading, not worrying about our own security. Amazing things will happen! God has looked after us in a marvellous way. My wife Shirley and I didn't focus on setting ourselves up for the end of our lives, but God has cared for us wonderfully. We both believe in making the most of opportunities up to the end of life. I suppose I will have to 'retire' at some point, but in the remaining years of my life, I would like to do some ministry amongst both the gifted and able people in later life (I'm not allowed to say old people!), as well as those who are more frail and needy. Just because you are older, it doesn't mean you have to give up proclaiming the gospel and ministering to those who need to hear it."

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2018

God and the drought

Rev. Brian Kirk
Vicar-General

IN A RECENT EDITION OF THE SUNDAY Telegraph, dated July 2, there was a supplement simply called 'Bone Dry – Our Invisible Drought Special Report'. I am not normally a reader of the Telegraph, even at the best of times, but I thought this edition was worth adding to my Sunday reading after church.

Filled with moving stories of families impacted by the drought, reports of farmers selling off stock or hand-feeding, crops destroyed, debts mounting, government inaction or misdirected action, I became captivated by the startling statistics in the middle as the paper highlighted the effects thus far on the different regions around NSW.

What stood out for me was the lack of rain in the western region (11mm in 2018 to date) and north-western region (11.8mm in 2018 to date) of NSW. The Armidale Diocese, which includes the North-West and Northern Tablelands, is largely being affected by drought. This is impacting the production of important commodities such as chickpeas, wheat, cotton, beef, sheep meat, wool and vegetables, and placing great pressure on the producers and local businesses. Many people in our local churches and communities are being significantly impacted by the drought!

My first parish as an Anglican Minister in this Diocese was Ashford/Delungra in 1992. The region was in the midst of a drought. I remember being offered calves and lambs for free because farmers were having great difficulty finding feed for their stock. Those who had kurrajong trees were considered fortunate because they were able to prune the trees and feed the leaves to stock to keep them going. Businesses in small rural communities were struggling to keep their doors open. Times haven't changed!

The Telegraph supplement went on to highlight some of the demands of farmers from governments under the title, 'What we want'. I agree that farmers and rural businesses need appropriate financial, emotional and mental support. But my question is, 'What do we need?' Governments can't legislate rain but God can!

The Bible, God's Word, calls us to 'Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make music to our God on the harp. *He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills*' (Ps 147:8, italics mine). God



reminds us that He is Lord of creation, the one who provides for all living things. He is the one who brings life-giving rains, not the Bureau of Meteorology.

We may be asking why God has allowed this drought to occur? I cannot answer that question. I suspect even the meteorologists are scratching their heads because El Nino – the cause of many drought periods in NSW – is not a factor. As I read the Bible, it states that some droughts are the judgment of God (Amos 4:6). But not all droughts are connected to divine punishment (Acts 11:28). Some droughts are simply a reflection of the brokenness of our world, in which sin has destroyed God's original perfect creation.

The important question we do need to ask ourselves now is 'How are we to respond to times such as this?'

One of the purposes of a drought in the Bible is to bring people to repentance, to help people recognise their dependence on God as the One who provides rain for survival, and to turn people back to God in humility and faith.

Drought is also a call for us to pray. The Uralla Parish and other churches in the Diocese have organized specific prayer events to pray for rain. Why? Prayer is recognition of our dependence upon the Creator and an indication of our trust in our heavenly Father. Through prayer we can surrender our problems completely to God and ask for divine intervention.

At times like this we also need to remember the assurance that God cares for His children and promises to sustain them even when times get tough. Psalm 55:22 says, "Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall". So we need to



Taking the stress out of the HSC

RELAXING AT THE BEACH, LEARNING TO SURF, HAVING A laugh with your mates and learning about Jesus are not the things that immediately come to mind when you say the words Study Camp! Young Life's Study camp is all about providing professional Higher School Certificate tutoring, efficient study, mental refreshment and opening up areas of new thinking for the HSC students of our region. A huge bonus is to take some of the stress out of the HSC for students. It helps those who stress too much to relax a little and encourages those who lack focussed concentration to find their rhythm for study!

The seven-night camp held in the first week of the spring Holidays (1st -7th October) is the ideal way for students to get the double boost of relaxation while still studying before their exams. HSC teachers in a wide variety of subject areas are provided for group and individual tutoring, and students complete at least four hours of mandatory tutoring each day. The day program is balanced out with beach activities, relaxation and amazing food.

"It's a special week" says Regional Manager for Young Life, Brendan Hatte. "Students get a chance to extend the fun and excitement of graduating at this camp, we make it a place where they can really enjoy themselves while being productive in study", he said.

The HSC is a time of transition for all HSC students. Many are full of

dreams and ambitions, while others are less sure about the direction they want to take. It is a time when young people are really considering who they are and what they want to be. The Young Life Study Camp gives campers a genuine opportunity to hear the good news message about Jesus each night with the opportunity to ask their cabin leaders, teachers and tutors about what they believe. "We believe everyone has the right to hear the message of Christ in a clear way in both words and actions. We are so grateful to Diocesan Youth Encourager Tim Stevens for agreeing to share the gospel bit by bit each night" said Camp Director Samantha Brennan. "And it's all done in the context of a Christ-centred community. The whole camp including our Work Crew, Cabin Leaders, Program Team, Tutors and Coordinators work together to give a first class experience for students."

One Student from 2017 said, "The food was amazing and the tutors were really helpful. I'd rate it ten out of ten" Would they recommend the Camp to HSC students next year? "Yes, I feel more prepared for my HSC because of Study Camp." Students overall gave 94% satisfaction with the tutoring offered at camp.

Young Life's HSC Study Camp has a 30 year history of delivering wonderful experiences for students from the region with over 600 students attending. First pioneered by Keith and Mary Lou Doe who



Dependence and the drought

THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY'S Anglican Aid has launched an appeal to help communities hit by the crippling drought in Western New South Wales. The public appeal will raise funds to provide resources to churches in North and Western New South Wales, which are already dealing with requests for practical support for families impacted by what, in many places, is the worst drought since 1900. The Diocese of Armidale (along with the Diocese of Bathurst) will become a distribution point for the donated funds.

Armidale Vicar-General, the Rev Brian Kirk said, "The suddenness of this drought has caught many by surprise. The impact is not just on farming families, but on

How the Deanery stays in touch

Lisa Newnham

On Sunday the 3rd of June the Namoi Deanery got together for a touch football competition. The competition began in 2009 between Gunnedah and Narrabri, previously also including Wee Waa, with Quirindi/Boggabri joining the competition for the first time this year.

This year the games were played in Gunnedah, with teams travelling from Narrabri, Quirindi and Boggabri to participate. Narrabri won all of their three games, however Quirindi/Boggabri won the trophy, receiving bonus points as a new team.

Greg Stones, who helped organise the afternoon, said "It was great to see Boggabri and Quirindi make the effort to combine and make a team...hopefully the touch afternoon will continue to build relationships across the deanery and lead to good fellowship across the area."

It was a great afternoon of fellowship as people from the Deanery came together and the afternoon finished with a sausage sizzle.

Scott Dunlop, Vicar of Gunnedah said "The Touch Football afternoons are a great way to have fun through sport with the Anglican family from other places. It's been good to see the social Touch afternoon grow from originally Gunnedah and Narrabri ten years, to four churches competing this year. The teenagers particularly enjoyed the afternoon and the friendly competition, but the older players like myself, just hoped we didn't pull a hamstring. You'll be please to know God was gracious and no reported injuries occurred, only a bit of hurt pride here and there! We look forward to a great competition next year and other churches from around the diocese would be welcome to join in."



now serve with the Church Missionary Society in South Asia, the camp was once held on a National Park island in the Great Barrier Reef: the long trip, the transporting of precious books by boat and living in tents certainly added a level of adventure in those days! One year it was held in house boats on the Gold Coast Broadwater (gentle waves while studying made this a one-off deal). Since the mid-1990s the camp has settled into camp sites closer to home, firstly at Lennox Head and latterly at Scotts Head. These sites provided the desired environment, while still being weather proof for sleep and study! The

upcoming camp will again be held at Scotts Head and will provide along with all the other activities an introductory surf lesson which was very positively received by the largely rural clientele last year.

Over the years the Young Life Study Camp has continued to be a wonderful opportunity for parishioners to actively engage with mission in a very practical way, which make a real difference in young people's lives.

If you would like more information about the camp please visit www.younglife.org.au/studycamp/ or contact studycamp@younglife.org.au.

whole communities, especially small rural businesses. I have heard of people dropping food parcels at farm gates, and while that is wonderful, it does mean that small local businesses can lose out. There are many ways to help out; give farmers a voucher from the local small grocery shop, get the farmers away from the farm. Some places are giving farm dinners just so the farmers can get away from the constant vision of dry country and emaciated stock. I've even heard of people giving vouchers for weekends away.

"One of the big problems is that feeding stock takes a lot of time, so other things are left undone. Some of our larger churches have been supplying volunteers to go out to the farms to help where they can...it is a great

encouragement to see God's people supporting local farm families. A farmer's wife told me recently that sometimes it is difficult to make decisions – whether to keep or sell stock, for instance – so having someone come in as a sounding board, to give a new viewpoint, to help think outside the box can be very helpful.

"There is a general move throughout the Diocese for churches to call communities together to pray for rain. Even Calrossy school in Tamworth held a prayer service at the start of the school day recently. There have been or will be services held in Moree, Inverell, Uralla and Tamworth, just to name a few. We want to let people know that the church is actively supporting those on the land. I know that the prayer events in Tamworth have been well

publicized in local media, well received by the community and well attended. I think that a natural disaster like this drought highlights people's vulnerability. They realise they are not all powerful, but there is someone greater in control of weather. I think that there are a lot of God-fearers in our community, and when things get tough, they suddenly realise that they need to recognise their dependence on this higher power. We are certainly praying that Christian farmers might not lose their faith, and that others will see their need for God. In the realities of life, there are many things over which we have no control, but God does have control and He will always be bigger than our worst circumstances."



Headline

Getting craft in South Tamworth.

MANY CHURCHES IN THE DIOCESE RAN holiday clubs for primary school children in July. Here are reports from just a few.

Inverell

This year, 45 children came to investigate the question “Who is this man?” Mike Hickenbottom, from the Nightly News, ventured to Nain to interview eyewitnesses to a very unusual funeral procession, then to the weather bureau and an owner of a local fishing company in Galilee following a strange weather phenomenon and, finally, Thomas, a close friend of Jesus following what was at first thought, a body stealing crime.

As a dead person was raised back to life, a violent storm was suddenly calmed, and a dead body found walking around and very much living and alive, the question “Who is this man?” was answered. This man is Jesus, the Son of God. He has power over all things.

Jesus has come to undo what the first Adam did. He beat death. Because of Jesus, our sin is gone and death is not the end of our story. Getting it right about Jesus is the most important things we can do in life.

John 3:6 was the Memory verse and children spent each day playing games and singing songs to ensure it was planted firmly in their minds.

Leaders from St Augustine’s, ably assisted by five of our High School Youth Groupers, spent three days getting to know the children, teaching them, laughing with them, singing, playing games, creating great craft, playing with Lego and, best of all, sharing their faith in Jesus as they talked about the Bible and the good things we learn about Jesus from it.

Younger siblings are hanging out to be old enough to attend and one young man declared firmly as he left on the last day, “Well, I’ll be back tomorrow. See you all then!” For others, the sting of being too old for Kid’s Club next year was soothed by the fact they’ll soon be old enough to join our High School Youth group.



The Inverell leaders were a suspicious-looking lot!

South Tamworth

We had kids who were excited to be here who enjoyed learning about Jesus through songs, drama, games, craft and more. On the Lightspeed Locomotive, the kids adventured with us through medieval times, met Pharaoh in ancient Egypt, danced their way out of the 70's, escaped from dinosaurs, and saw the wild west. This wonderful way to connect with our community saw between 68-85 kids come each day.

They learnt how to TURN to God, TRUST in Jesus, and how to TRAVEL through life with him. Then they discovered how to TALK to God in prayer, anywhere, anytime, and about anything! The final lesson shared with them was the TRUTH that is found in the Bible.

We praise God for the Kid's Club team, who worked tirelessly to share Jesus with these wonderful kids. We look forward to next year.

Boggabri

Boggabri held it's 5th Quiz Worx kids' club these past school holidays. Though numbers were down from previous years it was great to be able to connect with a number of families not connected with church. Quiz Worx have a great gift of being able to present the gospel in a creative, engaging, and faithful way and the kids' really responded well. The theme this year was 'God's team, which is the best team, the greatest team and the team that lasts forever.' We looked at who the captain/coach of God's team is - Jesus, and how and who can be on God's team - all who trust in Jesus. As well as getting kids to engage with the good news about Jesus there was also a good dose of games and food. We're hoping that kids' club families will join us for a special kids' club service in a few weeks' time where we'll sing songs and hear Bible stories from kids' club.

Armidale

This year, our Holiday Kids Club was a huge success - we got to share the Gospel and our lives with young ones and their families throughout the whole week. As with previous years, our friends from Quiz Worx joined us for the Holiday Kids' Club - They do a really amazing job in presenting the gospel in a fun, interactive and memorable way! (The volunteers will have the memory verse rolling around in their heads for years to come, as I'm sure the kids will also). Through the week, we saw a few kids say that they trust in Jesus, and were able to give away a fair few Bibles to children who didn't have one at home.

And although Kids Club was just last week, I have already received a few messages from parents:

"Thank you! My daughter was so excited about the gift of a Bible and she was so full of stories from each day". A child in Year 6 "loved the week, and said that she wants to be back as a leader next year". Throughout the week, we capped the tickets at 50 kids each day and we had 25 volunteers serving tirelessly throughout the week. Thinking about these numbers, that's one volunteer for every two kids - meaning that with enough planning, we could easily increase the amount of spots for kids next year. Our team is really hoping that Holiday Kids Club becomes a 'must-do' for kids in our town, and we are also trusting that God would be using our efforts to cause much 'Gospel fruit' in the lives of these young ones.

Cathedral kids enjoying the Quiz Worx presentation.

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Staying local and growing in godliness

Rachel Doran

Years ago I was invited to my first women's conference. Alongside ladies from my bible study and others from this Diocese, I joined three thousand women in Katoomba to sing God's praises, to hear his word being taught, and to queue for tea, coffee, food, the bookstall and bathroom facilities. We joked that we should get T-shirts made that said 'Relying Heavily on Grace' so we could push to the front of the long lines. At that conference we were challenged to take off our old natures and habits and to replace them with 'clothes' worthy of daughters of the King. We arrived home tired but elated, yet it took less than twenty-four hours before we were struggling to wear those new clothes in our old surroundings. Desiring to remain accountable, for months we asked each other what we had been 'wearing' that day or that week. In God's mercy, we began to see change.

In the years following, those making the trek to Katoomba were always grateful but would sigh and say how wonderful it would be to have quality speakers at a comparable event in our own diocese. That way it might not take a week to recover from the trip and would enable those less able to travel long distances to attend. It would also offer women in the diocese a special opportunity to support each other through ongoing friendship. Under God's grace that dream was realised, having become an annual diocesan women's event for the past decade. Since 2014 the event has had the title 'New Life', with the most recent conferences taking place in Tamworth.

Last year we were blessed by Christine Jensen's practical and heartfelt advice on prayer and Carmelina Read's insights from 2 Thessalonians on living in the light of Jesus' return. Susannah Thompson courageously shared her compelling testimony: a talk which was still being discussed long after the conference ended. Accompanied by skilled musicians, we found joy in worshipping God together in song and further inspiration to grow using a variety of Christian resources made accessible via a pop-up bookstall. At the same time we were provided with a wonderful opportunity to develop relationships over tea, coffee, cheese platters, delicious treats and Saturday lunch.

New Life 18 will be held on September 7 & 8 at Carinya Christian School in Tamworth. The theme is 'Love in hard places: Studies in the Book of Ruth', with Jenny Salt, Dean of Students at SMBC, and Margie Newman from the Armidale Diocese as guest speakers. Please think of someone to invite and join us! No doubt those who attend will find themselves truly nourished, without need of standing in lengthy queues. newlifeconference.org.au

Preaching good news

IN JUNE THIS YEAR, THE COMMISSION for Education and Discipleship ran a preaching conference in Barraba for the lay people of the Diocese. Philip Firth (right) from Narrabri attended and was excited about what he learned.

"The conference was run to give some tools to those lay people who preach God's word across the Diocese in various settings," he said. "There were lay preachers and Sunday school teachers as well as people from all sorts of church roles in between. The only necessary qualification was a desire to communicate God's word clearly. The Commission for Education and Discipleship has been set up to facilitate growth in Christian maturity across the Diocese. Its key aim of 'disciples making disciples' will be achieved (hopefully) through encouraging and training in Christian discipleship. The commission also has the role of helping to educate and equip Christians in the Diocese on various social issues through assessing and reviewing some of the available resources."

This was a conference which drew people from all over the Diocese. "Any lay person who has responsibility of conveying God's word to the people of our diocese was welcomed to the conference. We had everything from teenage Sunday school teachers to octogenarian lay preachers!" said Philip. "I really hoped that there would be a number of people from the smaller parishes in the Diocese. I hope that the next time we run a conference like this, even more of those folk will be able to come. We were thrilled to see people from Tenterfield to Quirindi, to Narrabri to Boggabilla at the weekend. People came from 16 different parishes. It was great to have such a diversity of parishes and people from different ministries. Archdeacon Geoff Hearn spoke on how to prepare a sermon. He gave a sermon which was critiqued by the Reverend Rod Chiswell from Tamworth, as an example of what sermon feedback might look like. There was a group session analysing a passage. And then Geoff gave those attending a number of tips and tools which might be useful as they prepare their own sermons or talks."

Some people might wonder why a preaching conference for lay people is worth doing. Surely vicars and their assistants do the preaching! But that is not how the organisers see it.

"Preaching is of the utmost importance", Philip continued. "When it is truly proclaimed, the word of God has the power to save people and to teach and correct Christians as we



struggle to live in service of and honour to our Lord and Saviour. What could be more important than to be equipped to carry out this eternally important task? Within our Diocese, there are a number of parishes and outlying churches that would not have the word of God expounded and explained each service if we were solely reliant on the clergy. There are also many times a year when clergy are away or sick or unavailable for other reasons. We need to have lay people who have a heart for the ministry of teaching God's word when clergy are unavailable. If they are well trained they will be able to serve their fellow believers even better."

For Philip, the weekend was a time of learning. While he learned many things, his take-home message was simple. "The first thing to do is to pray. If God working is not in us first, we are in no position to explain His word to others. Read the passage carefully. Digest, then reread it. Digest, then read it again!"

The Diocese of Armidale is blessed with a number of outstanding preachers, both clergy and lay. Please pray for all those who have responsibility for proclaiming God's word, whether that is from a pulpit on a Sunday, or in a school Scripture lesson, a youth group, or a men's or women's evangelistic event.

How can people have faith in the Lord and ask him to save them, if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear, unless someone tells them? And how can anyone tell them without being sent by the Lord? The Scriptures say it is a beautiful sight to see even the feet of someone coming to preach the good news.

Romans 10:14-15



Youth leaders- all fueled up and ready to go.

THE FUEL CONFERENCE FOR THE YOUTH LEADERS OF THE Diocese was held at Copeton Dam on July 27-29th. John Woodhouse (former principal of Moore Theological College) was the keynote speaker on Colossians. Diocesan Youth Encourager Tim Stevens spoke on technology and the importance of keeping young people safe online and Emma Little, young women's worker at St Peter's Tamworth, gave three talks on the Reformation. The Reformation, at first glance, might seem an odd choice of subject at a weekend devoted to youth ministry, but for Emma, who has a passion for the subject, it as a very important part of the education of a young Christian person.

"My talks were based on three people who were very significant to the Reformation; Martin Luther, John Calvin and Thomas Cranmer," she said. "I think sometimes we can become complacent about our history. Many young people may not even know what the Reformation was or why it was so significant. Many truths that those involved in the Reformation fought for, and in some cases died defending, are things that we take for granted now. Many of our Diocesan churches celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation last year. But how can something so long ago and so far away have significance for the plugged in, online generation of today? The reformers understood the importance of understanding God's word for themselves so that they could defend the truth against false teachers and those who sought to lead people astray," Emma said. "These same issues that were relevant 500 years ago are just as important today. As Christians we need to be clear about what God's word teaches so that we can faithfully teach it to others but also be able to recognise false teaching. There is so much that we can learn about our history from those who were involved in it, including how they went about influencing change and standing up for the truth. I think the way they conducted themselves can be a great example for us today as we seek to speak to people about the truth of the gospel."

We asked Emma if she could think of a hypothetical situation where one of the youth leaders at the weekend might be able to explain or defend the gospel better because of understanding more about the Reformation. "Yes!" she said. "Christianity is a completely unique religion and understanding some of the differences between Christianity and other religions is always helpful. The Reformation was the rediscovery of salvation by grace alone and not by works. This is what separates Christianity from every other religion. Being able to understand and explain these differences is important. I hope the people who were there on the weekend came away with a greater appreciation for our history. So many things that we now take for granted are a product of the struggles that took place during the Reformation. I also hope they were captured by church history because it is full of amazing stories and people that bring it to life! That's part of what I love about history, even though these events took place 500 years ago they involved real people, standing up for the truth of the gospel. It seemed that there were so many 'ordinary' people who were driven to do extraordinary things because of their

In a box

Steve Price, Chaplain at Calrossy School in Tamworth attended the conference and came home encouraged by what he heard.

"There were about 40 people there, from across the Diocese," he said. John Woodhouse's message from Colossians that true freedom is not doing whatever you want to do, but rather, putting your trust in Jesus and living for Him, really struck a chord with people. I think it is what our leaders of young people really need to hear. Then, they can encourage the kids in their care not to bow to the pressure of the world's idea of freedom, but to stay rooted and built up in Jesus. Tim Stevens' presentation on keeping young people safe in their dealings online was particularly helpful, and Emma Little's talk on Calvin, Luther and Cranmer were great reminders of how the faithfulness of those three men has had a huge impact, not just on the church, but on the whole world. One of the best things about the weekend is being able to meet leaders from other youth groups to challenge and share ideas with each other. It was a great weekend!"

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From Walgett to Jerusalem

Tory Cayzer-Walgett

IT IS HARD TO PUT INTO WORDS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GAFCON 2018. I didn't realise this until I was there.

The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) supports Anglicans who desire to proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations. The 1950 delegates at GAFCON 2018 (including 316 bishops, 669 other clergy and 965 laity) represented 50 million of the 70 million worldwide Anglicans.

Each day included Bible teaching from Luke 22–24; prayer groups; plenary talks on God's gospel, church, and world; and seminars/presentations/networks. All this was toward producing a statement to the Anglican churches of the world. This statement includes:

Over the past twenty years, we have seen the hand of God leading us toward a reordering of the Anglican Communion. GAFCON has claimed from the beginning: "We are not leaving the Anglican Communion; we are the majority of the Anglican Communion seeking to remain faithful to our Anglican heritage." As Archbishop Nicholas Okoh stated in the inaugural Synodical Council: "We are merely doing what the Communion leadership should have done to uphold its own resolution in 1998."

In 1998, the gathering of international Bishops at the Lambeth Conference, approved Resolution 1.10 on Human Sexuality. This resolution affirms the Bible's teaching on marriage and sexuality, and was approved by an overwhelming majority. However, the resolution has since been rejected by parts of the Anglican communion without disciplinary action taken by the Instruments of Communion, that is, the leadership of the Anglican Church. At GAFCON, I heard and sensed deep grief and hurt at how the leadership of the Anglican church has treated those who have urged the worldwide church back to the truth of God's Word the Bible.

The highlight was talking and praying with Christians from around the world. Most people I met would say: 'Please pass on my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Christ in your country.'

Each day, I sat next to Bishop Michael and Jennifer from Uganda. They want to see the families in their Diocese live God's way in the Bible. In front of me sat Polycarp, a business man in Nigeria. He wants to see the youth of his church not stray to the empty promises of the so-called Prosperity Gospel that is sweeping their youth away.

Others, rejected by their own Dioceses and Provinces, said they feel like they belong again in the Anglican church after fellowshiping at GAFCON. Now they have faithful leadership they can turn to, and networks to draw support from to proclaim Christ in their part of the world.

We heard an interview with a New York couple whose congregation was kicked out of their church building by their Diocese for preaching the Bible's view of sexuality. Having a young family of my own, I was moved to hear that their young family had to pack and leave their house immediately. Praise God, their church family came to help pack! Remarkably, their Diocese would not sell the church building to them for \$150,000 but sold it to Muslims to make a mosque for \$50,000. When the couple were asked what they would say to Christians who are facing persecution: 'God doesn't owe you anything, it's an honour to suffer for Christ.'

We heard from a Nigerian man (Fulani in northern Nigeria) whose life is constantly threatened by Islamist gunmen raiding his house, and who even lost a worker to recent gunfire. When asked do you enjoy persecution his answer was 'Of course! Persecution makes you



Janene Lewers was one of the many Australian delegates who volunteered as ushers.

stronger. And if you are going to die, die as true Christians!'

A Christian pastor went to prison to face brainwashing, including 6 months on death row with no food and no light. All he had was the Lord's Prayer. It got so bad, he decided to suicide but as he prayed for the last time, God showed him a cross, spoke to him and assured him of His love and protection as His son. Rather than suicide, he yelled out his first sermon for everyone in prison to hear: 'Jesus is Lord!'

Our own Diocese is blessed with faithful Bible teaching. After speaking to clergy and laity from around the world, I quickly saw this isn't the case worldwide. It would be easy for us to take for granted our weekly sermons, Bible studies, 1-to-1 meetings through the week, Youth Groups and the training available to us, where we meet Jesus in His word, help each other understand and apply His word, and disciple one another toward Christian maturity. My prayer is that the Bible would be at the centre of God's church, that all of our people would be equipped to use his Word to grow in faith and obedience, and share the good news of Jesus with those around us.

Through the week I came to appreciate how crucial is the NextGen program we offer each year in the Diocese of North Kigezi, Uganda. Training men, women, and children how to faithfully read the Bible as God's good news of Jesus is the key to us 'faithfully proclaiming Christ to the nations.' My prayer is that more Dioceses would partner across the world so that more Christians would have access to NextGen training and preaching training. To that end, a conversation began over dinner at GAFCON with another Diocese not far from Australia about forming a partnership, but more on that later.

Can I encourage you to read the statement 'Letter to the Churches – GAFCON Assembly 2018'? Ask your local minister, otherwise it can be found online: <https://www.gafcon.org/news/letter-to-the-churches-gafcon-assembly-2018>

Please pray for the repentance of those in the Anglican communion who have strayed from the true faith. Pray that they would not ignore the 50 million Anglicans represented by GAFCON, but more importantly they would not ignore the clear teaching of the Lord Jesus in the Scriptures. Pray that the priority of the whole Anglican communion would be to faithfully proclaim Christ to the nations. People without Christ go to hell, enough said?!



This motley crew spent the weekend learning how better to minister to Indigenous communities.

Brian Kirk
Indigenous Sub-committee Chair

THIRTY-FIVE PARTICIPANTS, AS WELL AS THREE CHILDREN, took part in the inaugural Indigenous Ministry Training Weekend at Copeton Dam on 11-13 May, 2018. The keynote speaker was Rev Neville Naden (currently the Bush Church Aid Indigenous Ministry Officer), supported by his wife, Kathie.

Participants came from across the Armidale Diocese and included both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The aim of the weekend was to encourage and equip people in ministry to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, who make 10.8% of the total population of the Diocese.

Each day began with worship times led George Ferguson (Aboriginal Ministry trainee at South Tamworth Anglican) and the Reverend Rod Chiswell. These times of worship included uplifting testimonies of how God had been at work in the lives of people. Neville Naden conducted sessions on: *What is an Indigenous Church; Leadership; Discipleship; Indigenous Theology; and Challenges for the Indigenous Church into the Future.*

Neville encouraged the participants to identify and note the differences between an Anglican Church and an Indigenous Church. Some of those differences included: the importance of people and community, limited resources, not being connected to a building, informal, less reliant on written liturgy, the value of music, respectful of elders and a 'come as you are' mentality.

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In the workshop on *Leadership*, the group identified many common characteristics for leaders in the church: being a servant of all, having integrity, empowering others, setting a good example, being prayerful, responsible, visionary and driven by conviction from God's Word.

Bishop Rick Lewers commented that it was 'a fantastic weekend'. Participant feedback from the weekend was also overwhelmingly positive with some asking, 'When are we doing this again?', and others commenting, 'It helped me to think more about Indigenous theology and its place in outreach and ministry', and 'A good weekend that encouraged me in pursuit of the gospel and its spread in an Indigenous context.'

One of the highlights of the weekend was the opportunity it offered people from across the Diocese to meet and fellowship with other Christians who are serving among the Indigenous people of our area in difficult contexts. One participant expressed the value of this opportunity: 'It was good to meet Christians I haven't met before, to reinforce and refresh old friendships, and to learn methods in which I can become a better, truer disciple and better minister to those in need'.

In the light of this feedback, the Diocesan Indigenous Sub-committee is considering how to build on the success of the weekend and encourage ongoing gospel ministry in Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander communities. We would like you to pray for us as we continue in this work.



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

John Bunyan



Ania’s plans

ANIA BRAIDING IS A 17 YEAR-OLD YEAR 12 STUDENT IN TAMWORTH. SHE WAS raised in a Christian family, and made a decision to serve Jesus as her Lord and Saviour at the age of ten. She is the sort of young person youth pastors love, because she is what is known as a “keen bean”! Serving in church is a part of her DNA; so much so that next year, she will take a year out to hone her ministry skills as a Year 13 apprentice. This means she will be able to study the Preliminary Theological Certificate (PTC) through Moore College, while working at her home church, St Peter’s in Tamworth.

“One of the great things about Year 13 is that year is that I will be able to go to all the youth camps as part of my training! I love all the camps we run in the Diocese, though FUEL is my favourite. During the week, I will be spending my time doing kids’ work, leading a small group on Wednesday nights and helping to lead the youth groups on Friday nights. I am really looking forward to digging in to the Bible through the PTC, and I hope I can do a couple of extra subjects as well. My plan is to head off to university the following year...not locally, but Wollongong or Newcastle. I’d like to be a high school Japanese teacher. I realize it can be a difficult time for a young Christian, transitioning from family, a long-term church and old friends to start fresh in a new place. So I am trying to plan for that now.

“When I leave home, I hope I can develop close christian friendships to keep me accountable. Of course I will be asking God to help me when I am faced with trials, and temptations. I am certainly praying for good times with study and socializing, but my first priority is time with God. I hope to go to university with one of my christian friends from Tamworth. We are hoping to get into the same accommodation so that we can build each other up in our faith. I think that having

close Christian friends is really important.

“The other important thing is choosing the right church to attend. I will be looking for a church with good doctrine, a church that preaches truthfully and straight from the Bible.

I want to be a part of a really welcoming church, a church that has people from different backgrounds, different walks of life. I really enjoy getting to know people of all different ages and races. I always try to remember that meeting with Christian people is not just for Sundays. You can plan other times to meet up and pray, or even just send each other Bible verses.

“As I look at the rest of my life, and think about how I am going to keep my enthusiasm for ministry at a high level, I know that I want to ask God to help me through tough times... whether that is persecution, or just exams! I hope I will be able to surround myself with people who are encouraging. Lately, I have been thinking a lot about verses in the Bible that urge us not to be anxious and to put all our worries into the Lord’s hand. Just the other day I highlighted Philippians 4:6, and I think that is a great verse to live by.”

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,

About

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