



FROM BISHOP TREVOR



Bishop Trevor writes on What is Christian Freedom?

page 2

KNOW YOUR BISHOP



Know Your Bishop series continues with Bishop Chalmers

page 3

LITTLE TREASURES



Read about the recent Little Treasures holiday program

page 3

UPDATE FROM EENC



An update on recent activities from the EENC

page 4

Encouraging Good Religious Education in Anglican Schools



Rebecca Morris leads small group discussion

The end of all education is not merely the acquisition of knowledge but the training of character ... Any education worthy of the name must ... develop the intellectual, spiritual and moral faculties within the character of the child.

Using these words from Bishop Barlow, third bishop of our diocese, Bishop Trevor Edwards opened the recent conference for teachers of Religious Education in Anglican schools in this diocese. He emphasised the key role of religious education practitioners, who are on the front line in engaging with un-churched children coming typically from families with little Christian knowledge.

The conference took place in St Mark's National Theological Centre on 9th May. Its purpose was to draw together RE teachers to encourage them, to give subject-specific professional development and to create professional networks of support. Seventeen teachers of Religious Education representing seven of the eight schools overseen by the diocese attended.

Dr Grant Bell from St Martin's College at CSU in Wagga Wagga delivered the keynote address, providing opportunities for interaction and reflection on the theme of the Teacher Leader and the School Community. He focused on how leaders can build communities of care and respect, explained the contexts where this happens, and discussed how an Anglican school

will express Christian values in its programs, roles and personnel.

Dr Ruth Edwards, the Diocesan Education Consultant, tackled head on what she termed the 'great Anglican identity crisis', where, despite their Anglican affiliation and responsibility to Anglican church-goers, Anglican schools are dominated by their role as social institutions. She suggested seven reasons for valuing the Christian faith, and commented on the recently released Diocesan Guidelines for teaching religious education. Participants reacted with wry laughter to references to the limited time they have to deal with a huge range of material of great intellectual and spiritual complexity.

Three of our RE teachers shared with their colleagues units they enjoyed teaching, giving a brief overview of context, aims and resources. Lyndal Foote from Canberra Grammar Junior School showed how a richly creative Year 4 unit on Faith and Art uses transdisciplinary concepts to link religious content to other class work, and to instruct children in unique Christian ideas while also respecting the commitment of those of other faiths.

Gareth Tyndall from The Riverina Anglican College generously made available a wealth of resources for a secondary unit on the Sermon on the Mount and Social Justice, demonstrating reflective self-critique for continuous improvement.

Rebecca Morris from Burgmann

Anglican School spoke about a Year 9 overview of the Bible, illustrating specific approaches and introducing hearers to some creative activities for engaging students based on a realistic evaluation of classroom dynamics.

Attendees much appreciated these sessions led by local practitioners. They provided the foundation for interactive group work where all could share together ideas and lessons which work, as well as canvassing approaches to the challenges and frustrations of teaching RE, and to determining aims, strategies and selection of material.

Participants were enthusiastic about the conference. They enjoyed the combination of academic input and

practical examples, and the affirmation of their work. One participant commented that he arrived fearing boredom but found a growing synergy developing as people interacted around relevant discussions. There was a general keenness for further such conferences which bring ideas and people together.

For further information contact Dr Ruth Edwards on: redw7191@uni.sydney.edu.au

Keynote speaker Dr Grant Bell addressing the group



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Bishop Trevor writes...

What is Christian freedom?

I recently attended the annual Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast. The guest speaker was Os Guinness, a prophet of our times, who spoke about freedom. The big issue is actually defining freedom. This was the challenge presented by Os Guinness. As a young man I read one of his earliest books, *Dust of Death*. Many books later, he has whiter hair than mine, but is still urging us to look at our world with Christian eyes.

In his talk he pointed out that freedom is paradoxical. In our everyday usage the term is commonly applied to freedom *from* constraint, oppression, slavery and so on. That is, we are thinking of *negative* freedom. But Christian freedom is *positive*. Jesus sets us free *for* a fulfilled life and gives each individual choice. He frees us to be the people God intended us to be. Christian freedom is the freedom of being a child of God, freed from condemnation and the power of sin. Christian freedom is freedom from self-centredness so

that we look beyond self to others. It is an expansive freedom, where we have space to grow to be like Christ, focussed on serving others with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness and self-control. Christian freedom is freedom from the futility of mortality, in order to enjoy the glory of eternal life.

Os Guinness explained that from these Christian freedoms, given through the grace of our Sovereign Lord, has come the whole Western tradition of democratic freedom for each individual. He named a string of atheist thinkers who assert that freedom is an illusion. The more we take on such ideas, the less choices we will actually have. Like cut flowers, Western democracy will have no future when severed from its Christian roots.

I have listened to plenty of news stories recently which illustrate the erosion of freedom of speech and conscience, and show confusion between freedom *for* good and freedom *from* harm. I encourage you to think carefully before being taken in by plausible voices which claim to act in love



but actually deny truth or silence debate. Freedom is grounded in truth, not just theological truth, but everyday accurate facts.

Are we, to use Guinness's words, prepared to shoulder the task of sustaining the Christian truths in which our positive freedoms are rooted? We need to bring our faith into the public space, and

never capitulate to the pressure to be private about our beliefs. That means speaking out in our families, clubs, neighbourhoods and workplaces. It means actively supporting parliamentarians who identify as Christians, some of whom spoke up at the Prayer Breakfast. It means talking in groups in your congregations about how to do these things effectively, and praying together about the challenges you face.

We cannot afford to be complacent or inward-looking about truth and freedom. We are responsible to God and to our fellow humans to use what freedom we have to act for the good of all.
+Trevor

On 25th May the Reverend Elizabeth Dyke was inducted as the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in Bendigo by Bishop Matt



Clergy Moves

The Reverend Susan Kemp (a deacon from the Diocese of Bunbury studying at St Mark's this year) has been granted an ATO.

The Reverend Brian Champness will be inducted as the next Rector of St Paul's Ginninderra, on Thursday 14 June, at 7.00pm by Bishop Trevor. All welcome.

The Reverend Neil Percival will be inducted as the Rector of Young Anglican District Church on Saturday 30 June, at 2.00pm, at St John's Young, with the service led by Bishop Trevor. All welcome.

The Reverend John Jenner has been granted an ATO.

Contributions to Anglican News are very welcome

We love to hear stories of things happening in your parish that highlight our dream of a Diocese in which the love of Jesus transforms people and communities. If you have a story to submit please send it to:
alison.payne@anglicands.org.au.

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The Preaching Seminars Return in 2018

The local branch of EFAC is proud to be putting the Preaching Seminars on in Canberra in 2018. The current treasurer, Reverend Jonathan Holt, commented, 'The Preaching Seminars is by preachers for preachers. There is a wealth of knowledge and skills amongst the regular preachers in our city and we can help each other to hone the craft of preaching at an event like this one.'

The Preaching Seminars has locked in five possible presentations for the 2018 event, scheduled for Saturday, July 21st. However, the day itself has only three spots for the seminars. Those who plan on attending the event are invited to vote for the three seminars they most want to hear. To obtain a link to the online survey for the Preaching Seminars just contact Reverend Jonathan Holt (jonathan@lvac.org.au).

'We know that this is not the typical way an event of this kind is run', added Jonathan, 'But we want local preachers to get involved in their own learning. We are also grateful for the preachers who offer seminars – even the ones that don't get chosen.'

The seminars from last year's event have recently been published in the Essentials Magazine, a publication of EFAC Australia (copies are available from Reverend Nathan Manwaring, the local branch secretary). 'Anyone is able to come; lay preachers, parish priests, ministers of other denominations. This is a resource for regular and occasional preachers, and we want to encourage this part of the ministry of our churches', said Jonathan.

by Reverend Jonathan Holt

A lot with a little, and a big God

BISHOP WILLIAM CHALMERS



Sometimes I wonder whether our diocese will ever be out of debt. And the feelings that go with indebtedness have the potential to halt ministry expansion, don't they? New ministry is risky and debt can make us risk-averse.

This set of feelings rhymes with the experience of our second Bishop, William Chalmers.

Chalmers entered the St Augustine's Missionary College at Canterbury, and later was accepted

by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel for service in Borneo. He played an important part in translating portions of scripture into Dyak but had to leave Borneo for health reasons just three years later.

Borneo's loss was Victoria's gain. He worked in various parishes, demonstrating an aptitude for starting new ministry and the structures that support those ministries. In particular, he was instrumental in establishing the Australian College of Theology. He was well-liked as an insightful pastor and a keen intellectual.

It's little wonder that at our first ever election synod, debate lasted just one day and nominators of the other candidates withdrew to throw their support behind the installation of Chalmers.

However, it appears the diocesan profile (if such a thing existed) wasn't up to scratch, because writing to a friend shortly after his installation Chalmers observed:

'The church here is in a very low state. Every organisation seems out of gear, every department of administration is hampered with indebtedness.'

This situation was compounded with the 1890-1893 depression and when, in 1895, it was discovered that the diocesan solicitor had embezzled the episcopal endowment fund and several other church trusts. The money could not be recovered and it left the diocese with very little money for advancing new ministries.

Seeing the threat to gospel advancement, Chalmers vacated Bishopthorpe, choosing instead to rent it out to fund ministry, and moved into a modest home with his wife Ettie. For the majority of his episcopacy he took a half-stipend.

He then retooled his ministry around catechesis and discipleship, both of which required little money but, he was confident, produced persevering saints, and evangelism. 'Parish Missions' were held in each parish around

the diocese.

Like Thomas before him, he was an expert fundraiser and was able to cast vision back in the UK for the evangelisation of the New South Wales inland. Leveraging this money, Chalmers oversaw the establishment of 16 new churches, and not just new churches but ministries specifically for Indigenous people and the Chinese population.

Chalmers' episcopacy was tragically cut short when a leg injury from the Tumut vestry led to a fatal heart attack. Some have argued that Chalmers' time was too short to make a strong judgement about, but I say he did something remarkable: the number of those attending church across the diocese was higher per-capita than when his ministry started. His confidence in Christ averted risk-aversion.

*Reverend Steve Boxwell
Renew Anglican Church*

NB. This is the third article in the series *Know Your Bishop*, which is not being published in order.

Little Treasures Holiday Program



In April Embracing Ministries had our first Little Treasures Holiday Program. Little Treasures is a holiday program designed to include all children regardless of their ability. It gave 35 primary school children the opportunity to learn the Easter story, make new friends, and have fun in a supportive and loving Christian environment. In the program we offered many activities to cater to the individual needs of all the children on the program, both for those with disabilities and those without. In Little Treasures programs, inclusion means that children and youth with disabilities or special health care needs are actively participating in social, educational, and developmental opportunities along with their peers without disabilities.

One family asked to share their experience of Little Treasures, and how their son was fully included.

Dalanglin's story

School holidays for families with children with special needs are far from anything that defines 'relaxing' or 'fun'. If anything they are the opposite. The child is distraught due to the change in his daily routine and the lack of structure which a school day would usually have. The days become an endless round of stress and challenging behaviours and everyone prays for the term to begin again.

When I first heard of Little Treasures, I jumped at the chance of having our boundless bundle of energy and cheekiness, Sydney, enrolled. The fact that it was a program that was conceived by Andrea and her team gave me all the confidence that I needed that it was going to be the best thing for Sydney.

But what further blew my mind was the thought that they had put into every little detail regarding what the program could give to the child.

Since Sydney was a non-verbal boy with autism and with a high

dependency on supports for even his most basic needs like meal times and toileting, I was told that he would be looked after one-on-one by a highly trained support worker. When I was introduced to Mary-Ann, she took the trouble to visit me and to learn all that she could on how to look after Sydney.

We were also emailed a social story about the program to read to Syd which helped our son a great deal as he can otherwise get very anxious about new places.

As a family we were invited to attend a 'meet and greet' day before the program commenced and that was a wonderful way to be introduced to the place, the people working there and to the community of parents and children at large.

I'm writing about all this activity prior to the program starting because for Sydney, preparation is half the battle won for a successful outcome and Andrea and her team understood that and walked with us every step of that path.

And what can I say about the actual program itself! It was a resounding success because it not only gave my son a safe place

to spend time in but they had a comprehensive and creative daily schedule that allowed him to observe, participate, learn and immerse himself. The facilities with their amazing outdoor areas and several indoor spaces created a wonderful environment for him to thrive in.

But the best part of it all for me as a parent of a child whose world can be socially very isolating was the chance for Sydney to be in an inclusive program where he could mingle and socialise in his happy, carefree, non-verbal manner and be accepted as just another happy, energetic kid. The value of that was priceless. As an exhausted mum, the time I received to get my chores done and to know my son is well taken care of is priceless. What did Sydney himself think of Little Treasures? Well you just couldn't wipe the smile off his face for the entire three days when he was there.

Thank you Little Treasures team for the gift of your program and may God continue to empower you as you empower those amongst us who need it more than others.

by Dalanglin Dkhar

Update from the EENC



Discussions underway during the first consultation workshop at SMIV

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Episcopal Election Nominations Committee would like to thank the many participants who attended the consultation workshops throughout the Diocese and thank you for the overwhelming response to the online survey.

The committee is now working on the selection criteria and Diocesan profile with the aim of distributing both drafts by the end of June.

Once the drafts have been distributed, members of Synod will then have a short time (2 weeks) to review the documents before they become final. During this period the Diocesan ordinance allows for a quorum of Synod (being 20 clergy and 40 lay members) to petition the Registrar if they believe it to be unsatisfactory, in which case a session of Synod may be called to resolve the issue and finalise the profile and selection criteria.

The EENC hopes this does not eventuate and is working hard to ensure that the profile and

selection criteria reflect the feedback received during the consultation phase.

Once the drafts become final, people will then be able to suggest candidates to the committee based upon their ability to meet the Selection Criteria. To aid in this process a candidate form will be provided. Before suggesting a candidate it is essential that a time of prayer and discernment be undertaken.

Thank you for all your prayers and support. It has been encouraging to know we are covered in prayer.

Yours in Christ

The Venerable David Ruthven
Chair

For more information on the EENC visit: <http://anglican.org.au/our-diocese/governance/synod/episcopal-election-nominations-committee/>



Pantry Appeal... a call for help

Winter can be a difficult time for many Aussie families struggling to make ends meet. For more than 10 years Anglicare has been running the Pantry Appeal in Canberra to help families get by during the colder months of winter. This year we are doing things a little differently and are looking for churches or groups to assist during the months of July and August.

It's easy to get involved!

Here are some suggestions:

- Run a Pantry Appeal collection at your local shopping centre.
- Volunteer as a pick-up driver. We're desperately seeking drivers to assist with the demand during the Pantry Appeal.
- Hold a food collection in your church.
- Raise funds to donate to the Pantry Appeal.

To get involved please call Tatum on 6278 4816 or visit <https://www.anglicare.com.au/services/get-involved/appeals/pantry-appeal/>

Camp Pelican needs your help



Camp Pelican's campsite, Wambiri, is out of action due to the bushfires in Tathra earlier this year. This means we need to move venues this coming Summer and that brings a significant increase in our costs for camp.

These are costs we simply can-

not meet on our own, we need your help to enable our camps to operate this coming summer.

There will be more information in the next issue, but if you'd like to sponsor a camper visit:

<http://www.synergy.org.au/sponsorcamper/>

"Thank you, Australian Anglicans, for making a difference..."



30 JUNE 2018 DEADLINE

To donate to our End of Financial Year Appeal visit www.anglicanoverseasaid.org.au or call 1800 249 880



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