



Seeing women,
from generation
to generation,

flourish

in Kingdom
work

THE STEADFAST FAST

Cave of the Lord

NEVER CEASES; HIS MERCIES
NEVER COME TO AN END;
THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING;
GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS.

Lamentations 3: 22-23

Anglican Deaconess Ministries acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land where our head office is located, the Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation. ADM pays respect to elders past, present and future. ADM also acknowledges the over 300 nations of Aboriginal peoples and the Torres Strait Islander peoples of these lands now called Australia.

Dear friends,

What a joy it is to sit within the community of Anglican Deaconess Ministries! Since January 2020, I've been honoured to serve as acting CEO of an organisation I've known of throughout my life. I've long admired deaconess work in parish life and in the Homes of Peace.

ADM's heritage is firmly based in the desire to provide pathways in sharing the gospel through works of service in Christ's name. The more I've learned of ADM's history, the more inspired I've been to see how the deaconesses responded to the needs of their time. I've watched that same spirit endure in the ADM community during these challenging times.



Many times this year, I've thought of Paul's letter to the Corinthians in which he says, "*Therefore (because of the Resurrection), my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast (stand firm), immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.*" – 1 Cor. 15:58.

I can say with certainty that those associated with ADM have been steadfast in their "work of the Lord", sharing the gospel and labouring with him. Just before the pandemic, amazing ministries were happening around Australia. But during the time of COVID-19, this outward tradition continued in different ways. No longer able to support each other within St Andrew's House, our team continued in planning, prayer and projects online. Mary Andrews College went from 100% face to face teaching to 100% online learning in a few weeks. Though ADM's work has always centred around personal interaction, ADM's programs have adapted to new circumstances since March.

These challenges have happened alongside the usual changes in people's lives. We weren't able to honour MAC's graduates, farewell Rev. Jackie Stoneman in St Andrew's Cathedral, or commission Rev. Dr Katy Smith as principal of MAC. And Dr Kate Harrison Brennan, CEO from 2015 to March 2020, has also moved on to new challenges reflecting her passions for justice and equity. We wish her well and are grateful for her visionary service.

Yes, it's been a year of changes and challenges for Anglican Deaconess Ministries, but with God's steadfast love anchoring us, we have remained focused on the call to be *steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*. It's been my privilege to serve as acting CEO and watch ADM hold true to its heritage of serving Christ while serving others.

Maryanne

Maryanne Davis
Acting CEO, ADM



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ADM's mission is to raise up women with theological formation for practical and public engagement.

This leads to our distinctive strategic focus: to work across the intersections of what we call 'form', 'engage' and 'do'.

Our key program areas are Mary Andrews College, the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute, mercy and justice ministries, support and funding for Christian women and public events. Each of these programs works at the intersections, stewarding ADM's rich legacy by supporting, training and equipping Christian women to serve Christ and his church.

form

theological formation

We reorient people to Christ for theological formation.

engage

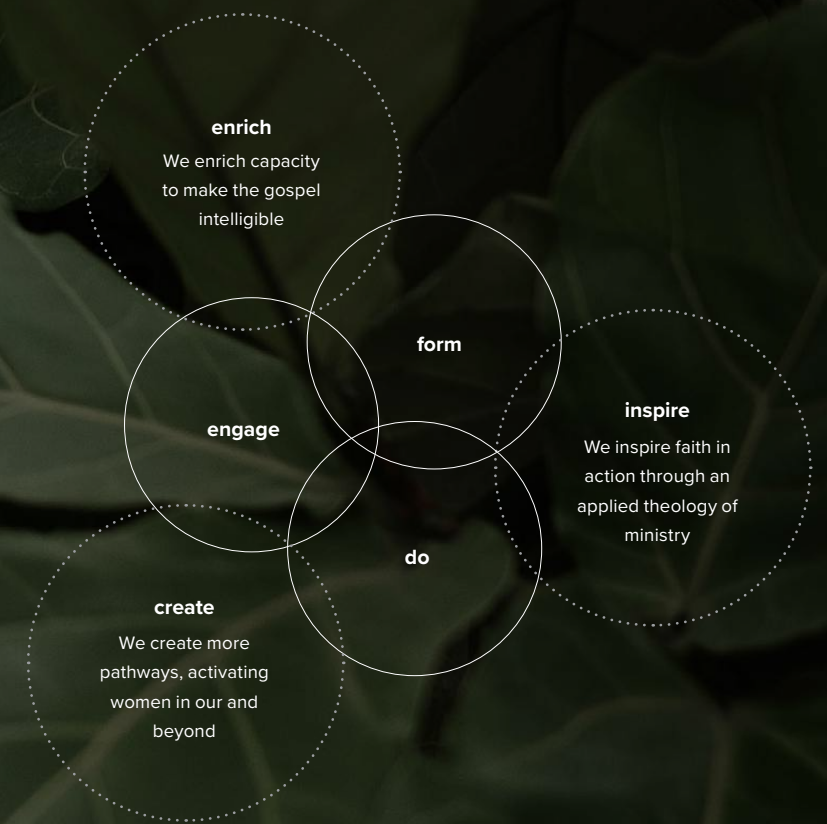
public engagement

We engage our neighbour as public and friend with the good news of Jesus.

do

mercy & justice

We do justice and mercy, tackling poverty for women and children.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

– Jeremiah (Lamentations 3: 22-24)

Steadfast love. This year I am deeply thankful for all those who are part of ADM: those we serve, members, staff and directors. In a year when the pandemic has strained everyone’s lives, it has been a privilege to stand with each of you as you have continued in the steadfast love of the Lord that enables you to hope in him.

On behalf of the Board, I want to offer my deep and profound thanks to two significant women whose work has anchored ADM in serving the Lord Jesus.

Firstly, Rev. Jackie Stoneman. Thank you for your faithful ministry that has seen Mary Andrews College grow as a training ground where theology and practice meet. A college that in turn grows faithful workers who share the ultimate hope that Jesus offers. Your deep care for others, based in your own faithfulness to Jesus, has shaped the character of Mary Andrews College in a way that will continue to shape its future. Thank you.

Secondly, I want to acknowledge the tireless, visionary and hope-filled work of Dr Kate Harrison Brennan. Over the last five years ADM has broadened its reach and impact across generations and across Australia. We have grown in capacity, renewed our vision for a new generation and funded women in a way that respects and honours their faithfulness. Thank you. Our prayer is that, as you serve the Lord in new ways, you will know his steadfast love.

I wish to extend my deep thanks to each member of the ADM Board who give generously of their time and skills with deep commitment to honour Jesus. The Board has met online throughout the year and each Director has given over and above as we have governed ADM through the external impacts of 2020 and the significant internal change. We are thankful for the steady and wise influence of Mrs Maryanne Davis who stayed on as Acting CEO longer than she had originally committed. This year it is important to note the particular contribution of Dr Christine Grice, Mrs Sarah Matthews, Rev. Phil Wheeler and Ms Nerida Peart as members of the CEO recruitment committee. They have worked faithfully to seek God’s leading in the appointment of ADM’s next CEO.

God’s mercies are new every morning because of his steadfast love. My prayer this year has been that all those who make up ADM and those who we serve will know this truth in heart, mind and will. This year we have awakened to vast challenges, but for ADM, these are also opportunities as we seek to serve with the good news of Jesus in a world longing for hope.

Jenni

Rev. Jenni Stoddart
Chair, ADM



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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2 May 2006

The Bible and human flourishing

By Rev. Dr Keith Condie

“Oh, to have a job you liked, a mate you trusted, a child who loved you, a purpose in life.”

So said a character in Jonathan Franzen’s contemporary novel, *Purity*. It’s one person’s vision of wellbeing, a glimpse into the longings that inhabit our hearts and give shape to our activities or, at least, our hopes for what a flourishing life might be.

New Testament scholar, Jonathan Pennington, believes that a desire for flourishing, both individually and in groups we are part of, lies behind much of what we do as human beings. Across different times, cultures and worldviews, people have sought a happy, secure and meaningful life.

Exactly what this good life looks like, however, and how you obtain it, is contested. Within western thought for much of the last two thousand years, human flourishing was understood relationally. What was good for me could not be isolated from the web of relationships I belonged to, and the responsibilities that flowed from them. Love of God and neighbour were not simply religious duties; they were vital means to a person’s wellbeing. Even with the turn away from the transcendent that characterised the Enlightenment, the moral imperative to care for our fellow humanity continued to be affirmed.

But as philosopher Charles Taylor and theologian Miroslav Volf have noted, all this changed in the late twentieth century. The focus shifted much more to the individual alone. Human flourishing became about my flourishing, i.e., finding satisfaction and enjoyment in the pursuit of my wants and desires. And much of today’s ‘wellbeing’ industry, worth billions of dollars, reflects this focus. Cleansing diets, decluttered homes, well-toned bodies and such are now perceived as markers of the good life.

Yet is this true human flourishing or simply an expression of selfishness? As *Sydney Morning*



“THE BIBLICAL VISION IS OF A TRULY WONDERFUL STATE OF AFFAIRS WHERE PEOPLE’S NEEDS ARE MET, THEIR GIFTS USED FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS AND THEY ENJOY FULNESS OF LIFE WITH GOD, EACH OTHER AND THE REST OF THE CREATED WORLD.”



ADM’s vision is to see women from generation to generation, flourishing in kingdom work. Rev. Dr Keith Condie, Co-Director of the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute, gives a glimpse of what that might mean.

Herald journalist, Elizabeth Farrelly, wrote, “Where ethics asks, ‘how can I do good in the world?’, wellbeing asks, ‘what is good for me?’”. So, we are left asking, what really is human flourishing?

The Bible, of course, shines light on this question, but perhaps in a less than straightforward manner. At the heart of the blessings that flow from God’s redemptive work in Christ is the forgiveness of our sins. But we are not only ‘saved from’ but also ‘saved for’, and the redeemed life is affirmed as the best sort of life. As Jesus said in John 10:10, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”.

But Jesus also said, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.” (Luke 9:24). And here lies the tension. Much of the Christian life as depicted in the New Testament — dying to self, taking up one’s cross, offering ourselves as living sacrifices, considering others before ourselves, and welcoming poverty of spirit, mourning and persecution — would hardly fit with contemporary understandings of human flourishing.

A common way to resolve the tension is to point to our future hope. God’s sure and certain promise is of everlasting joy in his presence, in a renewed and restored creation. It truly is a picture of life to the full. But what of now? Is this life, as theologian Ellen Charry asks, “no more than a vale of tears simply to be slogged through somehow in hopes of a heavenly reward”?

I believe not. As Pennington so helpfully demonstrates, human flourishing is a key biblical theme that traverses both testaments. There we find concepts such as peace, blessing and maturity that reveal God’s loving purpose for people to experience the very best form of life.

The texture of that good life is rich and varied. At its heart is being in a right and fulfilling relationship with God, something graciously gifted to us through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. From that reconciling work flows harmony and abundance in every aspect of human life

— our relationships, our health, the economic system — and beyond. The biblical vision is of a truly wonderful state of affairs where people’s needs are met, their gifts used for the good of others and they enjoy fulness of life with God, each other and the rest of the created world. The imagery of the Old Testament prophets captures it:

“They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water.” (Isaiah 49:10)

“In that day each of you will invite your neighbour to sit under your vine and fig tree,” declares the Lord Almighty.” (Zechariah 3:10)

We know that this portrait of wellbeing cannot be fully realised in this fallen world. Nevertheless, God does bless and enrich us in the here and now. That blessing is found in walking in his ways, living a life of godliness in obedience to his word (Psalm 1; 119:1-8). It’s a cross-shaped life and we will encounter hardship and difficulties along the way. But it’s also a life inhabited by joy and peace, no matter what is happening to us and around us (Philippians 4:4-7). As Christians we have more to be grateful for. Even when created things fail, every spiritual blessing is still ours in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

This truth is put wonderfully by the seventeenth-century Puritan writer, John Flavel:

“There are two sorts of comfort — natural and spiritual. There are times to exercise both, and times when the former is suspended (Psalm 137:2). But there is no season when spiritual joy and comfort in God is unseasonable. Spiritual joy is nothing else but the cheerfulness of our heart in God, and our sense of our interest in him and in his promises ... Sad providences are but for a moment, while spiritual joys are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:7).”

And that ‘eternal’ includes now. Yes, one can lead a flourishing life in the present.

What, then, of the so-called good things offered by our world? Many of them truly are good. Healthy minds and bodies, economic provision and the like, fit the divine vision for our wellbeing. But in this life such things are relativised. God has greater purposes for his people while we await the consummation of his kingdom. Love for him and for others motivates us to preach Christ and reach out to those in need. And in so doing, we will find purpose and meaning that glorifies God and fills our hearts with joy.

So, let’s not buy into every wellbeing message that comes our way. Let’s remember that not every desire that arises in our hearts is for our good (or the good of others!), and that pursuing pleasure doesn’t always deliver the satisfaction promised. The psychological science is now confirming what the Bible has long taught: that merely focusing upon ourselves does not deliver a flourishing life.

Instead, let’s thank God for his mercy and kindness in enabling us to “take hold of the life that is truly life” (1 Timothy 6:19). Let’s be grateful for his promise of a new order to come when the heartaches of this life will be no more (Revelation 21:1-4). ●



Rev. Dr Keith Condie is a Co-Director of the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute. This article is adapted from a masterclass workshop he gave at the 2020 School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement, that he co-taught with his wife Sarah, Co-Director of the Institute.

For more information on the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute see page 23.

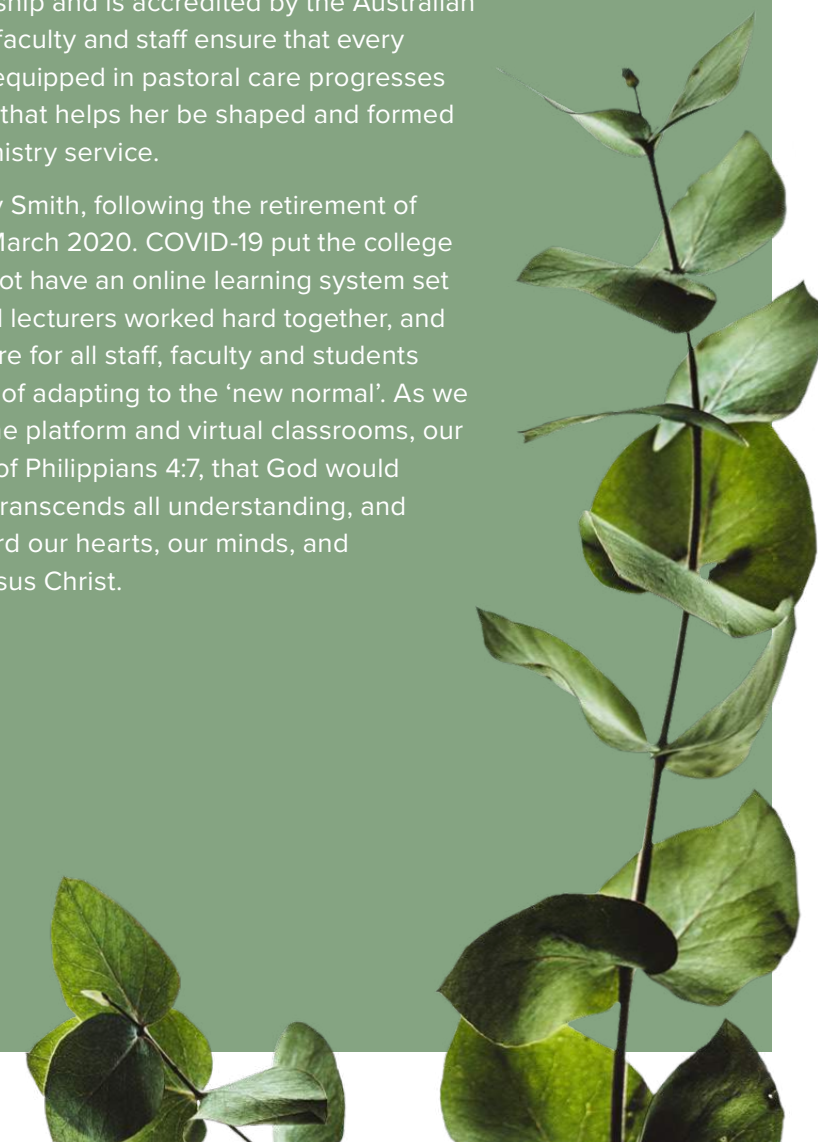


MARY ANDREWS COLLEGE

Mary Andrews College exists to train women who love Jesus and who desire to serve him faithfully in their church and local community context. The college offers mentoring and support from the moment a woman applies to study at MAC until the moment she graduates.

Our formal theological education program is centred on biblical pastoral care and discipleship and is accredited by the Australian College of Theology. Our faculty and staff ensure that every woman who wishes to be equipped in pastoral care progresses through a course of study that helps her be shaped and formed for a lifetime of faithful ministry service.

MAC is led by Rev. Dr Katy Smith, following the retirement of Rev. Jackie Stoneman in March 2020. COVID-19 put the college at serious risk, as we did not have an online learning system set up. However, students and lecturers worked hard together, and the college was able to care for all staff, faculty and students during the unsettling time of adapting to the 'new normal'. As we met through our new online platform and virtual classrooms, our prayer echoed the words of Philippians 4:7, that God would work in us his peace that transcends all understanding, and that this peace would guard our hearts, our minds, and also our joy in the Lord Jesus Christ.



EQUIPPED FOR CHANGE, CONFRONTED WITH CHALLENGE

How MAC's new principal embraces life's 'messiness'



On her first day as the new principal of MAC, Rev. Dr Katy Smith was sent home. COVID-19 had hit Sydney and the staff of Mary Andrews College — Australia's only theological college founded to equip women for ministry — were told that for safety reasons, they would be working remotely.

With students and lecturers already connecting in a range of units, Katy's first major decision was whether to keep classes going at all. The physical campus at St Andrew's House had to close on March 18, 2020.

"Though I believe formation occurs best when we rub shoulders with one another," she said, "with the need to practice social distancing this was the next best thing for MAC to be able to continue equipping women for faithful ministry in the local church and the world."

So, with experience in online learning platforms, Katy helped guide MAC courses into the online education space of Moodle within two weeks. It wasn't easy. But change rarely is.

Before coming to MAC, Katy served as the Executive Officer/Branch Director with the Church Missionary Society in South Australia and the Northern Territory, working with the local church to raise up, equip, and send out long-term cross-cultural workers for the sake of the world's gospel poor. The challenges of location and cultural diversity were sometimes difficult to navigate. But with seven years as the Old Testament Lecturer and Director of Postgraduate Studies at Bible College of South Australia, during which time she completed her PhD through Trinity College Bristol, Katy gained valuable tools and insights for mission in today's context. Her research master's degree — which she earned from Ridley College while also teaching — explored a theology of God's grace in the Psalter. During this time, Katy was ordained in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne and served as an Assistant Curate in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. She earned a Bachelor of Theology with First Class Honours and an Advanced Diploma of Ministry from Ridley.

Pictured: Rev. Dr Katy Smith meets online with MAC students and lecturers.

When a physical injury meant she'd had to let go of a lifelong dream in ballet, her studies helped her make sense of her new calling to — and investment in — biblical scholarship.

"While I was training for vocational ministry, my lecturers invested time and energy mentoring me for lifelong ministry," Katy said. "Because of that, I was convicted of the responsibility to invest in the next generation to teach and preach the whole counsel of God with faithfulness and the wisdom of the cross. That conviction redirected my steps."

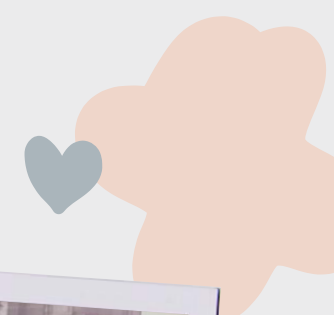
As a lecturer, first at Ridley and then at Bible College of South Australia (BCSA), she loved training students to understand the Old Testament for their ministry contexts. Alongside her teaching at BCSA, she established the postgraduate coursework and research pathways, which offered vocational development for gospel workers in South Australia.

Such leadership experiences shaped in Katy a vision for MAC, building on its legacy of equipping women to serve Christ faithfully. She believes holistic formation and shaping women's identities in Christ is key to theological education, not just building knowledge and practical skill.

"As followers of Jesus, we're called to take up our cross and follow him, which includes how we lead the organisations entrusted to us and how we teach others"

When the pandemic hit, that commitment only deepened. Yes, MAC had to postpone its 2020 graduation ceremony for 71 graduates, but despite the new challenges, Katy and the MAC faculty and staff remained determined to continue their study units.

"As followers of Jesus, we're called to take up our cross and follow him, which includes how we lead the organisations entrusted to us and how we teach others," she said. "We train women at MAC to enter the messiness of life, to meet people where they are. I think it's fair to say this new situation with COVID-19 introduces a new level of messiness in all of our lives. But it also gives us a new opportunity to explore how we can lead in gentleness and kindness, displaying generosity and restorative grace as we flourish together in Christ." ●



Legacy of love

Farewelling Rev. Jackie Stoneman

By Elisabeth Carter

Rev. Jackie Stoneman's last week as principal of Mary Andrews College was quite different to what she expected.

Instead of attending the MAC Graduation, the coronavirus meant Jackie wrapped up her 12 years as principal from her desk at home in Fairfield Heights. On her final day, colleagues farewelled her over Zoom. But with years of experience trusting in God's surprising plans — plans that ultimately led her to MAC — the 10th principal of Australia's first women's Bible college was hardly fazed. Most of Jackie's journey, and legacy of leadership, was formed around God's surprises and promises.

From music to Moore College

Though she initially trained as a teacher, passing on her passion for music to her students, it didn't take long for Jackie to ask herself if she really wanted to teach music for the rest of her life, or "would I rather teach people about Jesus?"

Jackie knew, though, that a move into full-time ministry was no small thing. She worried whether, as a woman, she would be able to study and serve God in ways she believed she was called to. Besides, when she first began praying about going to Bible college, she couldn't get an answer. "I wanted an angel to appear or a fax from heaven," she said.

Pictured: Jackie is farewelled by MAC lecturer Jill McGilvray at a special Back to MAC celebration in 2019 (left); Jackie with Kate Harrison Brennan and with some of the ADM Trainees in 2017 (top).

But soon it did become clear, especially as she continued reading the Bible, and as she met various women who had studied at theological college. By 1981, Jackie began studying at Moore College, though at that time, female students were enrolled at Deaconess House (now Mary Andrews College).

"Being able to study the Bible full time was incredible," Jackie said.

Three years later, she graduated and entered parish ministry, her first six years in the Parish of Belmore and the next four in the Parish of Denistone East and Marsfield. In 1989, she was part of the first group of women ordained as Deacons in the Sydney Diocese.

Soon after, Narelle Jarrett, then principal of Deaconess House, asked her to join the teaching staff. Though Jackie loved her parish ministry, she always felt her 'life' verse in Isaiah 50:4 said otherwise: "The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed."

"Teaching is my gifting from God," she said. "That was an opportunity I couldn't pass up."

And so from 1998 to 2007, Jackie taught diverse courses with a developing focus on pastoral subjects, including 'Pastoral Care' and 'Interpersonal Relationships'. Though she loved teaching at high school, it was adult education, teaching a group of people who really wanted to learn and develop practical skills for ministry, that helped her see there was no better job for her.

“Thank you Jackie, for so wholeheartedly investing your time and talents into training us for the greatest thing in the world — to love and know God and to love our neighbour better. Thanks to you and to MAC for being an incredible support to me during my unexpected battle with breast cancer during my studies ... It has been a privilege to have you as a principal and also a teacher. You are an inspirational Christian woman.”

— Ruth Lee,
MAC Graduate

Changes and focus

In 2007, the Anglican Deaconess Ministries board gave full responsibility for the female Bachelor-level students to Moore College. At that point, sensing a major change, Jackie resigned from lecturing and finished her Master’s degree.

“It was a challenging time,” Jackie said. “Some of us wondered if Deaconess House would even continue.”

But Deaconess House was reborn. Under the new name of Mary Andrews College, and with a fresh focus on training lay women, Jackie was appointed Director of Studies, her title later changing to Principal.

Soon, MAC flourished, with classrooms across Sydney bursting at the seams. Often Jackie would expect a small number of students for a new course and twice as many would come, reinforcing for her the hunger many women had for Bible training. At the same time, a niche for Mary Andrews College began to solidify.

“Because the church doesn’t always do pastoral care very well, we wanted to help people see that there was a biblical basis for pastoral care,” Jackie says. “It wasn’t just taking a casserole to someone or being a Christian social worker.”

The newly articulated focus of MAC met a need in Sydney churches. “I’ve always believed that pastoral care is important, that God is interested in us in a holistic way,” she said. “When people are cared for, they will actually be in a better position to share their faith.”

As principal, Jackie began to practice what she preached and invested in caring for her students and lecturers. She demonstrated concern for individuals beyond their grades, and a passion to equip and strengthen them for the work God had planned for them.

Back to MAC

On Saturday 16 November 2019, the MAC community came together for an exciting mini-conference. Full of inspiration, worship, teaching and reunions, the day was a way to honour and farewell MAC Principal Rev. Jackie Stoneman.

➤ Watch Jackie’s two talks on ‘Daring Dreams, Disruptive Grace’: mac.edu.au/back-to-mac-day

Others quickly noticed. “In my seven years studying at MAC I witnessed Jackie, a godly woman, pouring her heart in leading students to flourish in the garden of study,” said Wendy Whale, MAC 2019 graduate. “She helped us see how to use our God-given skills and abilities in ministry more effectively.”

A steadfast faith

While Jackie experienced many joys leading MAC, she’ll be the first to admit it was not without its challenges. Questions from the wider community about women in ministry and theological study cropped up regularly.

“But here at MAC, we always just wanted to train people to do whatever they think God wants them to do,” Jackie said. “If that’s only working with women, well, that’s a great thing to do! And if it’s broader than that, that’s great too.”

By 2019, Jackie knew she needed to take another new step: retirement. After 12 years as principal, she believed it was time to pass on the torch to MAC’s next leader.

“God is the jigsaw puzzle God,” she says. “He puts the pieces where they’re meant to be. I was the right person at the right time but I knew it was time for someone else to take over.”

Since ‘retiring,’ Jackie still spends her time caring for and teaching others about God: in local churches, prisons, and through training women in Myanmar. But MAC holds a special place for her, and she’ll continue supporting theological education in prayer and an occasional lecture.

“I hope MAC never loses the vision that ordinary women who struggle still have potential,” she said. “When they are nurtured and encouraged to see what God can do in their lives beyond what they think is possible, they’ll see his great surprises and promises.” ●

Pictured: Jackie with MAC students in 2012 (below) and photos from Back to MAC day (right).



in their words

MAC Graduates often tell us that their time of study prepared them to serve God in ways they hadn't imagined — and that's certainly been the case in 2020! We asked three MAC Graduates to reflect on how their training and experiences at MAC prepared them to minister during the COVID-19 crisis.



Brielle Buckley Advanced Diploma of Theology, 2019

I had always wanted to study theology but starting a family put that idea on hold until I discovered the flexibility of studying at Mary Andrews College. After applying for a job with Generate working to support public school ministries, I was encouraged to work towards a Diploma. Thankfully, MAC was straight across the hallway from my office!

As Communications Director of a Christian organisation, my faith needed to be well-founded in the Bible. Balancing part-time work and part-time study with a young family was difficult at times, but was made possible with the support of MAC.

After six years of part-time study, I finished my Advanced Diploma of Theology and I was invited to interview for the role of Junior School Chaplain at Danebank. I started this role at the beginning of 2020.

Of course, COVID-19 soon changed the shape of my role quite a lot. One of my main responsibilities was running chapel, but restrictions meant we could no longer gather all the students together. I started to do online videos instead, which definitely brought its challenges, but I was thankful to still have the opportunity to communicate the gospel in a creative way. I also heard that some parents were sitting down with their kids to watch chapel too, which was really encouraging.

COVID-19 has also affected Generate, as SRE teachers were not allowed to go into schools for several months, and chaplains have had to deal with the increase in anxiety among families and school staff. But it has been wonderful to hear, and share, how Christian ministry workers have been continuing to serve their local schools, bringing peace and grace into a tough situation.

This year has further strengthened my passion that all students and school communities, both public and private, need to have access to the good news and love of Jesus throughout their life at school.

Pictured: Brielle using her creativity to communicate with students online during COVID-19.

Sally Kliffen Diploma of Theology, 2019

COVID-19 has changed so much. My husband and I planned to move to Dublin with his engineering work at the beginning of 2020, but of course that is now on hold, maybe permanently.

Life in Australia has also changed. Like many, the ministries I am serving in all look quite different now, as we seek to show that Jesus is not only our Lord and Saviour, He is our Refuge and Rock.

The pastoral care subjects that I did at MAC, including those related to ministry to seniors and those with mental health issues, have enabled me to contribute

within my church's Care Team, helping our parishioners to grow and feel cared for, connected and encouraged. My forte has been emailing with several parishioners, checking in on how they are travelling, offering encouragement where I can.

We have been particularly mindful of our more vulnerable, especially the elderly, those without family support and those with limited technology. I have been helping to transcribe our weekly sermons, prayers, songs and announcements from audio to text, then printing and delivering them to those who do not have internet access. We've had some lovely feedback concerning this.

Faye Hillier Diploma of Ministry, 2019

God has blessed and grown me over the past 10 years as I have studied a Diploma of Ministry at Mary Andrews College. I was able to choose subjects that have both interested and challenged me, within a timeframe that made space for parenting, job changes and house renovations.

My studies began in 2010, after stepping into the role of Pastoral Care Co-ordinator at my local church the previous year. My first three subjects, 'Pastoral Care', 'Practical Pastoral Care' and 'Understanding Grief', were gold! Through them, God equipped me with the skills I needed to help transition my church through a significant period of change.

At the end of 2013, my role expanded to include a day a week of chaplaincy in the local Anglican retirement village. I found myself welcomed into a community of 160 active retirees, including a dynamic group of faithful Christians who were running a vibrant Sunday church service. God nudged me to study 'Ministry with Seniors' the following year, and I'm pleased to say this chaplaincy role has since grown to three and a half days a week. It encompasses ministry to residents, their families and staff through many and varied opportunities: hospital visits, prayer times, service leading, pastoral visits, funerals, special



"My first three subjects, 'Pastoral Care', 'Practical Pastoral Care' and 'Understanding Grief', were gold! Through them, God equipped me with the skills I needed to help transition my church through a significant period of change."



services, celebrating Living Treasures and so much more. What a journey it's been alongside another fantastic chaplain, Andrew Hudson!

One of my final subjects was 'Pastoral Evangelism', which was a catalyst in running the Alpha course in 2020. There was lots to love about hanging out together over morning tea, exploring questions of faith and the meaning of life. We made it to week seven before COVID-19 arrived and all small groups and church services were put on hold. The topic for that final week, 'How Does God Guide Us?',

proved timely as we waited on God to lead us.

Since that time, ministry at the village has taken a very different shape. It has involved a lot more pastoral care through one-to-one interactions, albeit wearing a mask. I have drawn on the first pastoral care subjects I studied at MAC, listening and loving as if I were 'Jesus with skin on'. The 'Understanding Grief' subject also came to the forefront in helping residents live with the unforeseen changes brought about by a pandemic.

The struggle is real, and yet the blessings are countless. In the midst of lockdown, God enabled us to run an informal, outdoor church gathering at 11am each Sunday, broadcast on a loudspeaker across the village. It reached a wider audience than would normally come to church, even beyond the village to the surrounding unit blocks! As the 5pm church service resumed under COVID-19 restrictions, it continues to be supplemented by the 'alfresco' worship at 11am. God's kingdom is flourishing in the 'young at heart'!

Pictured above: Retirement village residents gather for a COVID-safe service (photographed by Faye); Faye with one of her dear elderly friends (pre COVID-19).

who we are serving, not on the programs we are serving in; and the fundamental truths about God that hold me in good stead in all of life's many seasons.

I knew I was in for a new challenge this year, expecting it to be in a new country. Instead God has prepared me, through my studies and changed circumstances, to serve him right here, right now, during these strange and challenging times. I am still called to be 'Christ's love with skin on', bearing the same message just in a slightly different situation — God loves us, he is in control and he desires relationship with us all.

For kids, we have been putting together activity packs that I deliver to over 50 children fortnightly. Currently the topic of these packs is prayer, to teach children how to rely on God no matter what is happening or how they feel. So that, along with the transcripts, means I've been doing a lot of letterbox loitering over the last few months!

What I learned at MAC will last me a lifetime — the pastoral care skills that can be recalled in special conversations; being spurred on to create and maintain good prayer, Bible reading and studying habits; strategies to remain focused on

➤ To find out more about studying at MAC visit: mac.edu.au



Return to Learn

When 11 students attended MAC's Return to Learn event in February 2020, they might not have expected to gain as much confidence as they did. Some had been out of the classroom for decades, but with eager minds and ready notebooks, they re-entered the world of education.

The study skills workshop explored topics such as 'Making the Most of a Lecture,' 'Getting the Most out of Your Assignments,' and 'What Can I Do with what I Learn?'

This was MAC's third Return to Learn event, which also gave students the opportunity to receive a preview of the college and learn practical skills for success in upcoming classes. The two day workshop created a sense of camaraderie and community for the attendees, preparing them to take on their studies with more insight and direction.

"God provided me with the chance to be here and have the opportunity not only to learn, but build community as I come back to study the Bible."

As one woman said: "I saw through Return to Learn that God always finds a way to get you where you need to be. God provided me with the chance to be here and have the opportunity not only to learn, but build community as I come back to study the Bible."

➤ To find out more about studying at Mary Andrews College visit: mac.edu.au

Pictured: Caroline Brigden, Catherine MacBeath and Carolyn Hallam take part in MAC's Return to Learn program.

WHEN DISABILITY WELCOMES YOU TO CHURCH

By Dr Louise Gosbell

When my brother-in-law John was a teen, a new minister started at the church that my in-laws had attended for years. John, who has Down Syndrome, had welcomed people at the front door of the church, distributing church bulletins, and carrying candles in for liturgy. He loved serving the church.

Sadly, his contributions ended with the new minister, who argued that someone with an intellectual disability didn't have the capacity to understand or respond to the gospel and so should not be allowed to represent the church, even if simply welcoming people.

I was shocked. How could a minister so openly exclude a person with a disability from participating at church? Even though I had a degree in theology, I'd never thought about disability from a Christian perspective. In fact, I was certain that disability was something that had never been addressed during my theological training or any church training I'd attended.

Ever since, I've thought a lot about how Christians can respond to disability in ourselves and others, especially when it's not discussed in churches or theological colleges. I began to ask questions. What is a Christian response to disability? How can we grapple with some passages in Scripture that mention disability? What barriers might prevent people with disabilities attending churches? These questions have occupied my writing and ministry for almost twenty years.

In writing to the church in Corinth, Paul describes God's people as the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:1-31). Just like there are different parts of the human body with different functions, so it is in Christ's Body. This Body, with its diverse parts,



is to live together in unity, recognising the gifts of all its members as they come together to do God's work in the world.

This means not over- or under-estimating our own gifts or the gifts of others. Instead, we are to accept that everyone has different gifts, and that God gives each of those gifts to be used to his glory. This also means recognising, "God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be." (12:18).

The characteristics which some might consider a limitation to a person's ability to function in the world — like a person's intellectual disability — are actually irrelevant in Christ's Body.

Dr Louise Gosbell

Earlier in the passage, Paul says that the gifts of each believer are given as a "manifestation of the Spirit" (12:7). "Manifestation" can also be translated "revelation," so spiritual gifts are given to help reveal God's Spirit. Each member of Christ's Body is a vessel through which God brings about his purposes.

So the characteristics which some might consider a limitation to a person's ability to function in the world — like a person's intellectual disability — are actually irrelevant in Christ's Body. All of our bodies have limitations and weaknesses. And while some bodies might appear as more limited than others, it doesn't impact God's ability to work through each for his glory!

As Paul says, those members of the Body which "seem to be weaker are indispensable" (12:22). All members of the Body of Christ are broken vessels in various ways but our limitations — whether from disability, insecurity, fear, sickness, or anything else — are not a hindrance to God's

Pictured: Dr Louise Gosbell with her brother-in-law John and her daughter Lily.

gifts working through us to reveal his love. If anything, Paul tells us the complete opposite: "God's power is made perfect in human weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

God is at work through human ability and disability to bring about his purposes in the world, that is, through the times we think too much of our own abilities and when we doubt we have any; through the gifts which are publically praised and the quiet gifts of compassion, service, and peace-making which often go unrecognised. Our limitations and disabilities are part of how God works, not a barrier to it.

When that minister met John, he saw someone who speaks slowly, and who takes a minute to process information. What he didn't take the time to see was John's patience and perseverance, his kindness and sensitivity. The minister only saw John's limitations as a hindrance to God's work rather than an expression of God's gifts to the community.

The challenge for us as Christians is to look beyond the exterior, to look beyond the characteristics and traits that our society so reveres and instead embrace the beautiful diversity of Christ's Body. Incredibly, God works through all of us, through our limits and imperfections to bring his message of grace to a broken and needy world.



Dr Louise Gosbell is a lecturer and the Dean of Students at Mary Andrews College. She was a 2017 ADM Senior Research Fellow and her PhD on the language of disability in the gospels was published in 2018. This article first appeared in *Propel Sophia*.



Photo by Katarzyna Grabowska on Unsplash

MENTAL HEALTH & PASTORAL CARE INSTITUTE

The Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute (MHPCI), Co-Directed by Keith and Sarah Condie, assists churches as they do their work of caring for people, especially people who are struggling with their mental health. This is done through providing resources to strengthen relationships, through running short courses and seminars for churches and ministry staff, and supporting those with lived experience of mental ill-health and those who care for them.

In adapting to COVID-19, the resources and support provided by the MHPCI have become even more critical. The Institute has continued to pursue its strategy, adapting to a socially distanced environment by pre-recording sermons for churches and running online training sessions. One of the Institute's key resources, Building a Safe & Strong Marriage, has been developed into an online course, making it easy for couples to participate from home. It is hoped that this will assist couples during a time of greater vulnerability to stay emotionally connected. MHPCI has published articles and will continue to adapt in order to assist ministry staff and congregation members as they support the mental health and wellbeing of their communities.



CULTIVATING

wellbeing

IN A CHURCH COMMUNITY



Part of the MHPCI's work is to promote preventative, relationship-building practices in churches.

Sarah Condie, Co-Director of the MHPCI, provides some reflections on signs of wellbeing in a church community and practices that can help to promote wellbeing. This follows on from Rev. Dr Keith Condie's article on the Bible and human flourishing (page 8).

What does wellbeing look like in a church? Journalist Michael Bones recently wrote in *The Canberra Times* about the good many churches do, how, "they use ancient practices to care for souls; they give a sense of belonging and meaning and are doing this pretty well."

Yes, a reporter noticed the benefits of belonging to a church community, but what exactly are these ancient practices that care for a soul? How can churches build a culture of wellbeing? What traits and practices reflect a church's wellbeing?

DELIGHT

If churches are filled with men and women who delight in God, there will be an inner joy which radiates, affecting everything about that church community. Using the language of enjoying God and finding delight in Jesus will help churches speak about God in deeply personal ways.

CONNECTING

God has wired us to be relational, and given us one another for support so as not to fall. This means we encourage people to join small Bible study groups and a team to serve. We notice who isn't part of a group and invite them, or who isn't coming to church and follow them up.

WISDOM

Many Australian feel a sense of entitlement and that bad things — like bushfires, drought

and pandemics — shouldn't happen to us. But materialism or worldliness is deceptive and can pull us away from God without us realising. That's why we need a new language of wisdom to counter these cultural messages. As we help people make sense of their world, they begin to see that life is messy and that we can grow from adversity. We need to see our lives the way God sees us, learning resilience and what God's values are so we can make wise choices.

PRAYER

Work on your own prayer life. Praying is one of the hardest habits to cultivate. This is what Charles Spurgeon said about praying: "pray until you can pray; pray to be helped to pray and do not give up praying because you cannot pray. For it is when you think you cannot pray that is when you are praying." Why not set aside a time of day to pray, and use your phone to remind you that it is time to pray? Start by using The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). It is a great scaffold to begin cultivating this habit. When meeting with other Christians, build prayer into your time together.

THANKFULNESS

Gratitude changes neural pathways in your brain. As we nurture thankfulness, we'll find that we begin to notice the positive things in our lives more than the negatives and we'll begin to reframe the negative, becoming grateful in the process.

WORTHINESS

Songwriter Sara Groves wrote that she wants to "help a soul find its worth". This captures the essence of wellbeing. If people find their worth in Christ, then they will be able to say "it is well with my soul" no matter what has happened in their life. And when we create a church culture where people are welcomed as they are, remembering key things from their lives as we walk with them through hard times, their sense of worth is reinforced.

LISTENING

Why is listening so important? Isaiah wrote (in 50:4), "The Sovereign Lord has given me

WHEN WE LEARN TO LISTEN TO GOD, WE ALSO LEARN TO LISTEN TO OTHERS ...LISTENING CAN BE VERY HEALING.



a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed." When we learn to listen to God, we also learn to listen to others. It is a difficult skill to learn, which requires intentional discipline and God's help, but this skill promotes wellbeing in a community. Listening can be very healing.

KINDNESS

Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit. We are encouraged to be people who are "clothed with kindness" (Colossians 3:12). Being kind is a way of demonstrating practical love. A church marked by kindness and care contributes towards its overall wellbeing. It's the simple task of looking to the needs of others and thinking of what we could do that might be helpful. Even secular research has shown the benefits of kindness — it can help people recover from illness.

HOPE

We thrive when we have things to look forward to. It puts our lives in perspective. Christian hope lifts our spirits beyond the inevitable difficulties we face to remember that when Jesus returns, these things will be no more. Filling our minds with verses like these brings peace and quiet confidence: "We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and shield" (Psalm 33:20); "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Romans 15:13).

"His soul shall abide in wellbeing" (Psalm 25:13) captures an image of flourishing, contentment, a settled disposition, centred around the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. When a church promotes such wellbeing, it is indeed good news!



Sarah Condie is Co-Director of the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute. This is an excerpt from a masterclass she co-taught with Rev. Dr Keith Condie at the 2020 School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement.

practices

FOR CULTIVATING WELLBEING IN YOUR CHURCH

Plan a sermon series on enjoying God.

Offer half day prayer retreats teaching biblical meditation.

Help people tell their salvation story so as to fall in love with their Saviour again.

Develop the habit of thankfulness to God.

Encourage people to write down three things (at least) each day they are thankful for.

Give out blank notebooks to keep track of all they are thankful for.

Keep track of people who come to church and follow up when they are absent.

Remember people's names and some unique quality about them.

Involve people in groups — not just Bible study groups, but ministry and other serving teams.

Help teams build cultures of caring for one another and praying together.

Teach on suffering — explore a series on the book of Job or Lamentations.

Learn about lament and how to make lament part of church life.

Learn how to read and use the Psalms, God's book of prayer.

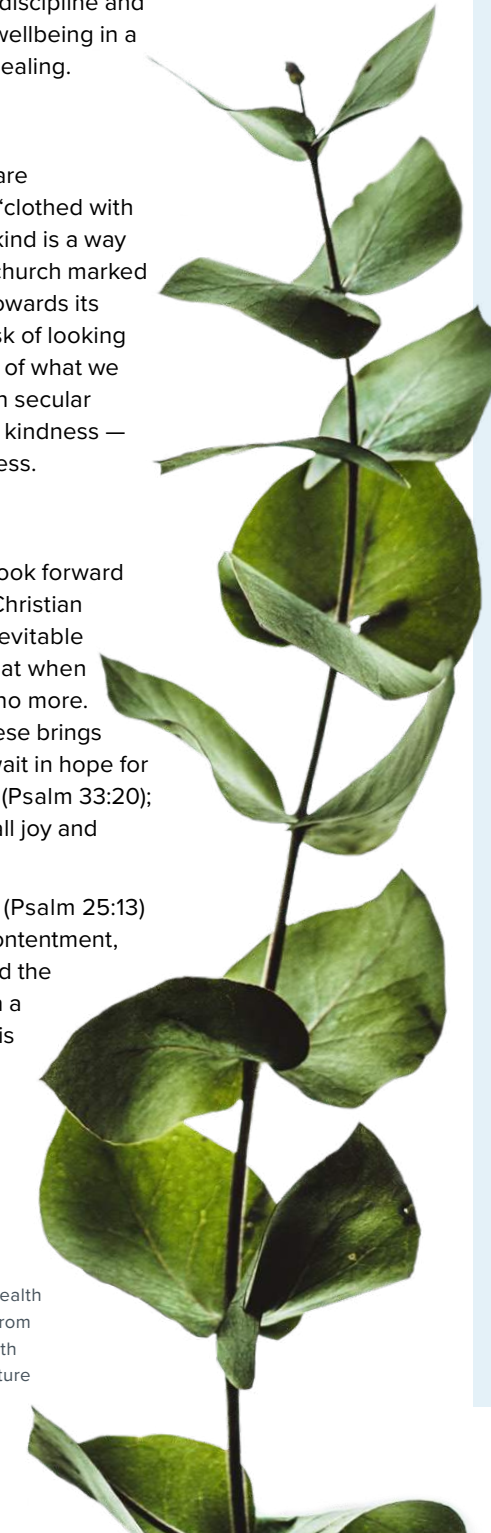
Read the book of Proverbs together and learn about wise living and making wise choices.

Explore what perseverance looks like; learn from positive psychology about resilience.

Share biographies of Christian heroes of faith.

Encourage members to tell others how God has shaped them through adversity.

Encourage healthy habits: daily prayer, rest, Bible reading, sleep, exercise, healthy eating and fun!



10/10

World Mental Health Day is marked each year on 10 October (10/10). As a response, the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute produced a series of 10 short video interviews with carers, those living with mental illness, ministers and professionals, all aimed at addressing stigma and encouraging conversation around mental health within church communities.

“The church has so much to offer those dealing with mental illnesses or struggling with mental health issues,” says Sarah Condie, Co-Director of the MHPCI. “Christians are people of hope, loved by God, and they can offer both to others. We’re excited to see how these videos and resources assist the church as it cares for its people.”

Accompanying the trailer and videos is a free practical church service pack that includes talking points, specific prayers, church announcements, biblical readings, and tips to support those struggling with mental health. Church leaders can use the guide as necessary to assist their congregations in acknowledging the reality of mental ill-health amongst all Australians and particularly within the church. The videos and accompanying resources are free and accessible to anyone, any time of the year, through the MHPCI website.

“Because nearly one in two Australians will experience a diagnosable mental health condition within their lifetime, we wanted to acknowledge the importance of caring for those who might be struggling,” said Rev. Dr Keith Condie, Co-Director of the MHPCI. “God does not look upon people according to their feelings or how mentally healthy they are, but according to the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. These resources provide churches with ways to communicate this message to members of churches and to offer them encouragement, comfort and practical support.”

“Mental Health Month is an initiative that encourages individuals to consider mental health and wellbeing, regardless of their lived experience,” said Rev. Dr Condie. “It’s a great opportunity for the Christian church to understand the importance of mental health and to care for its people with grace and wisdom.”

> Watch the 10/10 video series on the MHPCI website: mentalhealthinstitute.org.au/resources/1010-videos

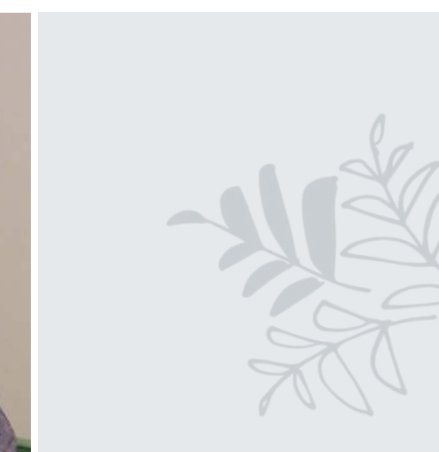
“MENTAL HEALTH MONTH IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND TO CARE FOR ITS PEOPLE WITH GRACE AND WISDOM”

Rev. Dr Keith Condie



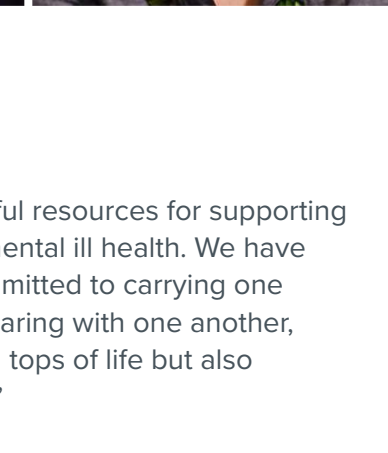
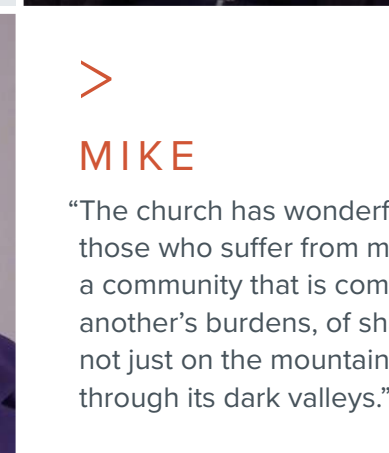
ALEX

“Bipolar is not what defines me. I am not bipolar. I’m Alex who has bipolar. Everyone has mental health. Some people have good mental health, some people have not-so-good mental health. And everyone can move between all those in their lifetime.”



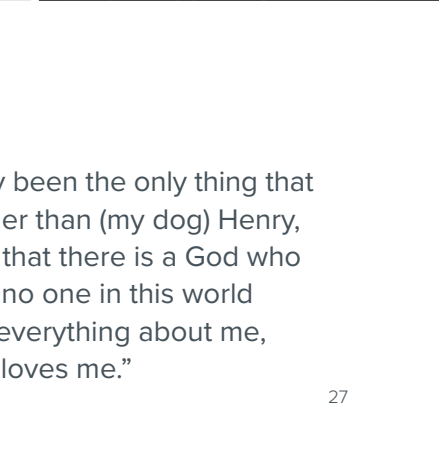
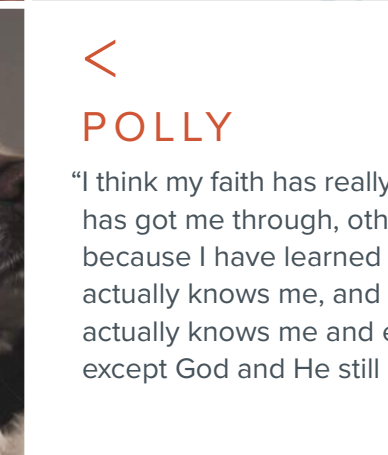
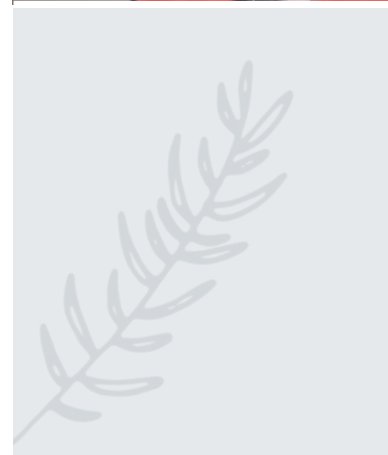
MIKE

“The church has wonderful resources for supporting those who suffer from mental ill health. We have a community that is committed to carrying one another’s burdens, of sharing with one another, not just on the mountain tops of life but also through its dark valleys.”



POLLY

“I think my faith has really been the only thing that has got me through, other than (my dog) Henry, because I have learned that there is a God who actually knows me, and no one in this world actually knows me and everything about me, except God and He still loves me.”





How churches can help prevent suicide

What can churches do to prevent someone from taking their life? Dr Karen Mason, professor of Counselling and Psychology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, spoke at the 2020 School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement on the difficult issue of suicide prevention. Here are some of her suggested steps.

Public prayers

Be intentional about praying publicly at church on matters related to suicide, perhaps on a Sunday in September close to World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September — or any Sunday — using specific prayers (see Prayer for life below).

Equip members

Churches can train members to listen well and ask that hard-to-ask question, “Are you thinking about taking your life?” Suicide prevention training enables them to know how to respond and what steps to take next. One of the most important interventions is to seek professional help. “Call Lifeline (13 11 14) with the person sitting next to you,” said Karen. “Call, don’t leave them alone, or go with them to the nearest hospital emergency room — your nearest access point for services. You can help them get help.”

Safe places

Churches have the potential to create a safe space for people who have suicidal thoughts, as well as for those with family members or close friends who battle such thoughts. Providing a place for them to share without fear of judgment or criticism is a vital ministry. “There has to be a recognition that we’re all human beings, we all struggle,” Karen said. “None of us has it all together.”

Know your community resources

Network with the key providers of assistance. Connect with GPs, mental health professionals and other services that are points for referral and assistance. Involving others shares the burden of managing this complex pastoral need.

Prepare well

When a suicide happens, churches who have prepared well will know how to offer care and support. “Suicide is a cataclysmic event — it changes everything,” said Karen. “Finding people who can grieve with a family, sit with them and listen is important and will be needed for a long time. Sadly, this is the time when people often leave their church, especially when they can’t find the support they need.”

Talk about suffering

Having a fully developed theology of suffering will help a church talk about the brokenness of life. The Christian faith can provide a sense of hope, inviting us to cling to life, find meaning and cope with pain. If Bible study and prayer are encouraged, church members can draw on these spiritual resources to offer hope to those finding life hard. People with suicidal thoughts need to be reminded of the hope that faith in Christ provides and how God deeply loves them.

Kits and letters

For those struggling with suicidal thoughts, Karen suggested church members work alongside them to make a specific resource: a hope kit. This contains photos, souvenirs, prayer cards or Bible verses that are meaningful to the person and serve as a reminder of reasons to live. She also recommended Virtual Hope Box: an app that does a similar thing, and is easily accessible by a vulnerable person from their smart phone. Karen also encouraged churches to commit to writing a letter to those who have struggled with suicide and to do this regularly: weekly or monthly for six months to five years. “Research shows that this personalised intervention is successful in protecting and saving lives,” she said. “It may take time, but a church has the potential to help save lives.”



Dr Karen Mason is the author of *Preventing Suicide: A Handbook for Pastors, Chaplains and Pastoral Counsellors*, and, with Scott M. Gibson, the recently published *Preaching Hope in Darkness: Help for Pastors in Addressing Suicide from the Pulpit*. She is pictured above standing between Keith and Sarah Condie, Co-Directors of the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute.

> For more resources on suicide prevention visit: mentalhealthinstitute.org.au/resources/suicide-prevention

Prayer for life

**We pray to you, Father,
for all those in despair,
That they would choose life.
For those facing
devastating loss,
That they would remember
your presence and
intercession for them.
For all those who feel
they are a burden,**

*That they would love
themselves as you love them.
For all those without hope,
That they would find in you,
Father, a reason to live.
For those who feel alone,
That they would find in
our gathered community
a reason to live.
For those facing evil
in this world,
That they will remember*

*the redemption of the evil
done to Joseph.
For all those suffering the
misery of depression and
other psychological pain,
That they could reach out for
help like blind Bartimaeus.
For all those in
despondent desolation,
That we would reach
out to them.
Almighty God, you alone*

**give life and take it, but
life is not easy.
With the psalmist we proclaim
that without you we would be
swallowed alive, torn up and
engulfed by the flood and
swept away by the torrents
of this life.
Preserve us, Father. We put
our hope in you, Father, Son
and Holy Spirit.
Amen**

RAISING RESILIENT Parents

Supporting parents in those early days

By Helen Briton Wheeler

At a recent meeting at Church by the Bridge, Sydney, in between rocking sleeping infants, chasing inquisitive toddlers and rubbing tiny backs, young mothers swapped notes about the sleep patterns of their children. They talked about maintaining relationships with their husbands, going on 'dates' and making time to relax.

One mum, Georgie Goddard, joined the monthly group when her son Sam was three weeks old. "I will never forget that first meeting. I was sleep deprived and worried," she said. "But I left feeling refreshed and positive. Both the leadership and the fellowship with the other mums gave me the boost I needed to know that I could tackle motherhood."

GP Janine Morrow, who joined after the birth of her daughter Rose, was drawn to the affirming space the group provided.

"I craved connection with other people, as my world changed from seeing lots of people all the time (as a GP) to caring for my baby," she said. "I loved coming to this group and getting to know others. We were able to talk about all the changes we were facing together as Christians. It really helped to connect me and feel supported at church on Sundays as well."

Georgie and Janine were part of a Raising Resilient Parents course, one of six that took place across churches this past year. The courses give practical help and spiritual support to new parents. Together with their husbands Ben and Phillip, respectively, the two new mums found the opportunity to talk together about their own resilience and what values they share in how they parent their children. Both couples are now expecting their second children.

While there are wonderful joys to motherhood, first time mothers like Georgie and Janine face a raft of problems, with isolation a major one.



One of the MHPCI's initiatives is the Raising Resilient Parents Program. A prototype of the program has been developed and trialed in partnership with a small number of churches. Sarah Condie, Co-Director of the MHPCI, is now working on building out the support for parents so that it encompasses the first 1000 days of a child's life. The MHPCI is looking forward to making this available to churches across Australia.

That's why Sarah Condie, Co-Director of the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute began developing the Raising Resilient Parents program three years ago with Lyn Worsley, Director of The Resilience Centre.

"This is a good-news story about how we can support people in our community," Sarah said. "One of the key things to helping first-time parents is connecting with other first-time parents, helping them realise that they are not alone."

Lyn agreed and explained how first-time parents can feel quite alone. "Often their sense of self is tied up in their career," she said. "They lose friendships, they lose their workplace, and they feel their skill sets are not developed, so they don't always feel good (about the changes)."

As a result, Lyn believes young mothers need to find their three areas of strength: friendships, family and community. "People who attend a church may find all these areas of strength in one place," she said.

So Sarah and Lyn partnered with churches in Sydney during 2019 to develop the program, recruiting facilitators from each church to take part in an intensive training course that Lyn ran. Sarah oversaw the program, keeping in touch with the facilitators.

Pictured: Di Codrington, Vanessa Hughes, Lenore Symons, Sarah Condie, Megan Winch and Emma Yin at a facilitator training session.



"Both the leadership and the fellowship with the other mums gave me the boost I needed to know that I could tackle motherhood."

Georgie Goddard

"The Christian faith absolutely plays a role in building resilience," Sarah said. "Young mums are hungry for spiritual encouragement and in building resilience, people in faith-based communities do better than people who don't have a faith-based background."

After a year of leading Raising Resilient Parents, Sarah hopes to broaden the program to cover the "First Thousand Days", which spans conception until a child reaches age two. She says there is considerable research showing

that more support offered during this time has positive impacts on the child's future.

"Having a first baby is a significant challenge for young parents", Sarah said, "and it's vital for couples to strengthen their marriage relationship before they have a baby". Sarah's next plan for Raising Resilient Parents is to focus on creating a template for how a church can support parents in the first one thousand days. ●



Created by Rev. Dr Keith Condie and Sarah Condie, Co-Directors of the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute, to assist couples to nurture their relationships, the marriage course has been distributed to around 2,500 couples. With COVID-19 potentially bringing more stress and more time for reflection, we have adapted our marriage course so that it is now available online for couples to do at home. Church groups receive discounts on orders.

NOW AVAILABLE AS AN ONLINE COURSE!

www.buildingmarriage.com.au





Photo by Jhudei Baguio on Unsplash

MERCY & JUSTICE

Across the globe, women are over-represented in various forms of poverty, exclusion and abuse. Within Australia's neighbourhood, this is particularly pronounced for women in the Pacific, women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and women who have experienced domestic abuse. These women experience significant levels of poverty, violence, and economic and social exclusion.

Since 1891, ADM has served in mercy and justice ministries to bring God's love holistically to people in need, and many of the deaconesses focused on ministering to, and relieving the sick and destitute. We see throughout scripture God calling his people to justice and mercy as an expression of their faithfulness. As mercy and justice are at the core of God's character, and therefore at the core of ADM's expression of God's love in the world, we seek to address the consequences of sin in diminishing women's image-bearing of God. Where there are systems, attitudes, circumstances or structures that hold women back from fully flourishing to their God given value, we seek to serve these women, helping them to overcome those challenges and step into the fullness of God at work in their lives.

Through our mercy and justice ministries, we work to meet vulnerable women in their place of need and provide economic, social and spiritual support to rise up from this place. We seek to address the systems that cause the diminishment of women. We resource and release Christian women to do good works in Jesus' name with a sustainable impact and we point to God as the ultimate source of mercy and justice.

Our ministries in this area are led by Libby Sanders, the Mercy & Justice Program Manager. Specific expertise is provided by Amelia Schwarze, the Domestic and Family Violence Area Specialist and Program Officer (Mercy & Justice).



LIONS or mice?

Biblical advice for domestic abuse

By **Amelia Schwarze** Domestic Violence Area Specialist and Program Officer

I suffer from 'mouse and lion' syndrome. I'm good at telling those close to me how someone else has wounded, insulted or upset me, but much less able to express that emotion directly to the person I am upset with.

Many Christians have taught that "turning the other cheek" in the Bible means we're always supposed to respond as mice in the face of wrongdoing. But part of the nuanced wisdom of Scripture is giving us an appropriate response to conflict in differing situations, from small disagreements to serious issues like domestic abuse, where a touch of lion may sometimes be more helpful. In our meekness, we have underestimated the trauma and damage that comes from continual silence in the face of abuse, and in doing so, have allowed its impact to be played out across generations.

Putting the responsibility with the abuser

John Chrysostom, one of our early church fathers, did not shy away from calling out early Christians who deviated from Christ's standards: he said it was the abuser's responsibility to sort out their own attitudes and behaviour. He described how malice and bitterness can fester into verbal and physical violence, encouraging believers to deal with harmful attitudes before they escalated into damaging words and behaviours.

The apostle Paul agrees. "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice" (Ephesians 4:31). Brawling, slander, and reviling are all New Testament words for verbal abuse, and Paul warns that such unrighteousness will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). What's more, Paul exhorts us not to associate with those who claim to be Christian, and who are habitually verbally abusive. With such revilers we 'should not even eat' (1 Corinthians 5:11).

Biblical advice we've overlooked

In my work with Christian women, Scripture's strongly worded teachings are too often ignored by those who encourage women to endure abusive marriages for as long as possible, which can be profoundly damaging to the abuser, the victim, and any children of the marriage. While a wise response to momentary violence might be to turn the other cheek, this does not suggest we must remain in that situation.

After all, Jesus had no problem commanding the Judeans to "flee to the mountains" when exposed to danger (Matthew 24:16). Proverbs 22:24-25 tells us not to associate with the habitually violent, lest it change our character: "Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared."

Psychiatric and family violence research supports the wisdom of fleeing prolonged exposure to violence, as it has psychological effects that are difficult to undo, particularly for children. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder rates increase among women experiencing abuse and other disorders are generated in children who grow up in abusive households, with devastating effects on women and their children's ability to cope with relationships. Children exposed to domestic abuse, even if they are 'just' witnessing it, face an increased risk of becoming either future abuse victims or abusers themselves in later life.

Roaring and Running

Christians have long taught that marriage is a good thing and should be worked on, even if it costs us. This is absolutely true. However, if we unnaturally prioritise that truth above another — the command to flee habitual sinners — we perpetuate the cycle of abuse from one generation to the next. Both the multilayered wisdom of the Bible and psychological research agree that sometimes, staying put and staying silent like mice aren't the right response.

Don't get me wrong: godly marriage is a gift, one that requires regular work. But when the safety of marriage is violated through repeated abuse, the commitment to love is broken, requiring difficult yet essential choices for change.

Instead of being mice about this issue in public, I believe we need to, with wisdom, start being lions. We need to talk about how we can stop the traumatic impact of domestic abuse being played out on our children and their children. The choices we make now, as individuals and as communities of Christians could, over the next two generations, make the church a much safer place: a place where abuse is acknowledged, talked about, and where those victims who make the godly choice to flee and seek safety are thoroughly supported in those choices. And what a blessing to the Kingdom of God that will be.



Amelia Schwarze is Domestic Violence Area Specialist on ADM's Mercy & Justice team. This article first appeared in *Propel Sophia*.

Restoring sanctuary for Victim-Survivors of domestic abuse



1 in 4 women in Australia over the age of 15 have experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.*



1 in 6 women in Australia over the age of 15 have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner.*

The Restoring Sanctuary Grantee Team



Dr Wilma Gallet is a lecturer at the University of Divinity, with senior project management, research and domestic violence program experience.



She is joined by Nell Kuilenburg who established and managed a Christian women's shelter for over a decade and has continued to work in this space.



Also in the team is Christine D'Souza, a registered psychologist with experience at the intersection of church communities and domestic violence.

In 2019, ADM launched a new initiative to respond to the needs of domestic and family violence victim-survivors — the Restoring Sanctuary Innovation Grant.

The innovative program was launched on 25 November 2019, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The initiative invited skilled women in the church to form new, evidence-based solutions to meet an urgent need for victims of abuse — safe communities that understand their experiences and can support their journey towards safety and healing. We set an objective to the church: to create a victim-focused, theology- and trauma- informed program for use across churches and Christian communities to support the safety, recovery and flourishing of domestic violence victims. ADM committed to support applicants in the development of their concepts, while also providing \$80,000 in one-off funding to the application that best addressed the challenge.

Following a robust process of engagement with many women from across the Australian Church who have a desire to serve in this way, ADM was honoured to award the Restoring Sanctuary Innovation Grant to Dr Wilma Gallet and her group in July 2020.

Libby Sanders, the Program Manager of Mercy & Justice at ADM, shared, “we are delighted to

award Dr Gallet and her group the Restoring Sanctuary Innovation Grant. In the process of this grant initiative, they developed a well-rounded and robust concept, rich in theology and domestic abuse understanding, shaped to support churches in the Australian Christian community and, most importantly, victim-survivors of abuse. Dr Gallet has brought together a diversely skilled team behind the proposal, and we feel honoured to be able to support such a promising program.”

Dr Gallet, a lecturer at the University of Divinity, noted the heart behind their concept, sharing that, “the program aims to create communities where victim-survivors of domestic violence feel safe, believed, included and loved. A sanctuary is a sacred place, a place where the presence of God is felt; a place of safety and

“The program aims to create communities where victim-survivors of domestic violence feel safe, believed, included and loved”

Dr Wilma Gallet

refuge. It is therefore fitting that the church in the 21st century, with a legacy of providing sanctuary, should continue to provide sanctuary to those in need and in particular, be a safe space for anyone who has experienced domestic violence.”

Dr Gallet’s proposed program outlines clear stages for participating church communities to progress through, including a church-specific needs assessment, a workshop for both church leaders and congregants, support in policy formation and integration with local service providers as well as planned resourcing for ongoing learning. The program has been intentionally constructed on a strong foundation of theology, trauma-informed care and a focus on the domestic abuse victim. A reference group of victim-survivors will inform the program’s development.

Dr Gallet is joined in the team by Nell Kuilenburg, who established and managed a Christian women’s shelter for over a decade and has continued to work in this space, along with Christine D’Souza, a registered psychologist with experience at the intersection of church communities and domestic violence. They are partnering with The Christian Research Association, including Rev. Dr Philip Hughes and Stephen Reid, to support the project.

*Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey 2016.

“Many women in the church are well-placed to serve both the local church and victim-survivors in addressing domestic abuse.”

Amelia Schwarze

Applicants for the Restoring Sanctuary Innovation Grant came from church ministries, community organisations and individuals across the country, and final selection included an external review committee with representatives from the Anglican clergy and Christian victim-survivor communities, across both urban and rural contexts.

Speaking on why ADM initiated the grant, Amelia Schwarze, the Area Specialist for Domestic and Family Violence at ADM, said, “we know that churches are not unaffected in the domestic abuse crisis in our country, and yet many feel under-resourced in how they can best care for victim-survivors of abuse. We also know that many women in the church are well-placed to serve both the local church and victim-survivors in addressing domestic abuse.”

Amelia also reflected on the grant process, “Perhaps most encouraging was the spirit of collaboration and support we saw from the Christian women who applied — all truly wanted to see the strongest application raised up through this process. We were incredibly blessed to receive a number of very strong applications from passionate and skilled women from the Australian church.”

> To learn more about the Restoring Sanctuary Innovation Grant and the awarded concept, visit: deaconessministries.org.au/restoring-sanctuary

CHRISTIAN WOMEN RAISE THEIR VOICES FOR THE WORLD'S POOR AND VULNERABLE

Anglican Deaconess Ministries has always sought to see Christian women flourish in Kingdom work and to serve those in need, and we are continuing to do this today. This year, we have engaged in opportunities for action, standing with and calling attention to the needs of our global neighbours, especially those who are often most acutely impacted by poverty and exclusion – women and children.

In September 2019, then CEO, Kate Harrison Brennan and Program Manager for Mercy & Justice, Libby Sanders, were invited by Micah Australia to join 40 women leaders from across the Australian church to travel to our nation's capital and speak up for the vulnerable in the halls of Parliament house. Collectively, the group engaged in 40 strategic meetings with our elected representatives from both Houses, sharing how our Pacific neighbours face acute poverty and a range of compounding challenges. Recent reports indicate that more than 60 per cent of women in some Pacific

Island nations having experienced violence, and one in four adolescent girls experience physical violence regularly. The Christian Women Leaders delegation amplified the voices of Pacific Island nations' peoples in a collective call for a compassionate, principled aid budget and foreign policy approach to engaging with our nearest neighbours.



*Unseen, Unsafe: The underinvestment in ending violence against children in the Pacific and Timor-Leste Published by Save the Children, 2019

Pictured below: 40 Christian women leaders from across the country gathered in Canberra (bottom left); Kate Harrison Brennan as a media spokesperson for the group; Kate with Libby Sanders, Brooke Prentis and Bernadette Black.

ADM returned to Canberra in December 2019 to join Micah Australia's Voices for Justice event with 200 Christians from across the country, speaking again of the gospel's care and concern for the poor. We were privileged to join and learn from senior Aboriginal Christian women leaders including Aunty Jean Phillips, Aunty Alex Gater and Aunty Revina Waldren, along with Brooke Prentis (an ADM 2019 Senior Fellow), and also from a special delegation of 15 Pacific church leaders, led by Rev. James Bhagwan, the General Secretary for the Pacific Conference of Churches. Over four days, the group were trained in theological principles of justice and how to hold frank conversations with our elected officials. Delegates also held over 100 meetings at parliament house, including with senior Ministers and the Prime Minister, the Hon. Scott Morrison MP.

ADM was delighted to be able to sponsor the attendance of four Christian women from interstate to join the delegation. One young woman ADM was blessed

to sponsor was Jerusha Mather, a neuroscientist PhD candidate at Victoria University and a passionate advocate for a range of issues, such as an inclusive medical profession. Jerusha has athetoid cerebral palsy and was especially delighted to be able to join the trip, which coincided with the International Day for People with a Disability. Jerusha spoke into the intersection of disability and extreme poverty in her MP meetings. She was invited to address the Micah delegation at the 'opening event' at Parliament House. Read below her inspiring words as a Christian woman who knows the confronting realities of oppression, as well as the beauty of God's heart and call for justice.

"My name is Jerusha. Thank you (Micah Australia and ADM) for inviting me to talk today.

I was born in Sri Lanka where the doctors said I would never walk or talk. My family came to Australia when I was little for a better future. In Australia, we were fortunate enough to get services that improved my life. I am now a doing a PhD in brain stimulation.

But I sometimes wonder what my life would have been like if I stayed back in Sri Lanka. My life would have been quite limited. I have heard many stories about the injustice that people with a disability face in developing countries. This is not fair. And I am determined to change this.

Voices for Justice is very important because they've given me an opportunity to stand for people with disability in developing countries, to recognise their abilities and independence, to stand for their rights, inclusion, education and employment. Our voice can change people's life and help put back dignity in the heart of humanity.

END COVID FOR ALL

The COVID crisis isn't going to end for anyone, until it ends for everyone.

endcovidforall.com to pledge your support

“ IT IS IMPORTANT TO PERSIST IN THE FACE OF DISCRIMINATION.

Don't give up.

JERUSHA MATHER, NEUROSCIENTIST AND PHD STUDENT

This is the very heart of God. To help those in need. To beam the light of hope. To endure together in tough times. We need to care about justice. We need to break barriers and create possibilities. Give people a chance to achieve their purpose in life. There is hope. But we need action. The current system is broken. We need to build better systems even in poor countries. We need to support their talents and human rights.

Why? Because there is ability in the word vulnerability. It is time we acknowledge this. I believe, together, we can make a difference. We can create a kind and just community. Thank you again for your time. God bless you all."

Speaking up for the most vulnerable during COVID-19

In 2020, with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting all globally, a rapid response from the community was needed to ensure that as we respond to urgent needs locally, Australia also seeks to meet our global responsibilities to support those already in vulnerable positions. As part of ADM's ongoing engagement with the wider Christian community, we joined the End COVID for All Campaign with many other organisations, leaders and individuals across both the Australian church and humanitarian communities. The campaign has been a community movement, gathering over 20,000 signatures calling on the Australian Government to strategically invest in urgent action to protect the world's most vulnerable, strengthen health systems in developing nations and kick-start economic recovery globally. It has also been an opportunity for continued direct engagement with politicians, with our Mercy & Justice Program manager, Libby Sanders, meeting face-to-face with Federal MPs alongside church leaders and humanitarian representatives.

> To find out more visit: endcovidforall.com

We are prayerful that through all these actions in the last year, Christian women would find practical avenues to serve those in need through their engagement with ADM, and that the world's poor and vulnerable would know God's promise of life in all its fullness.





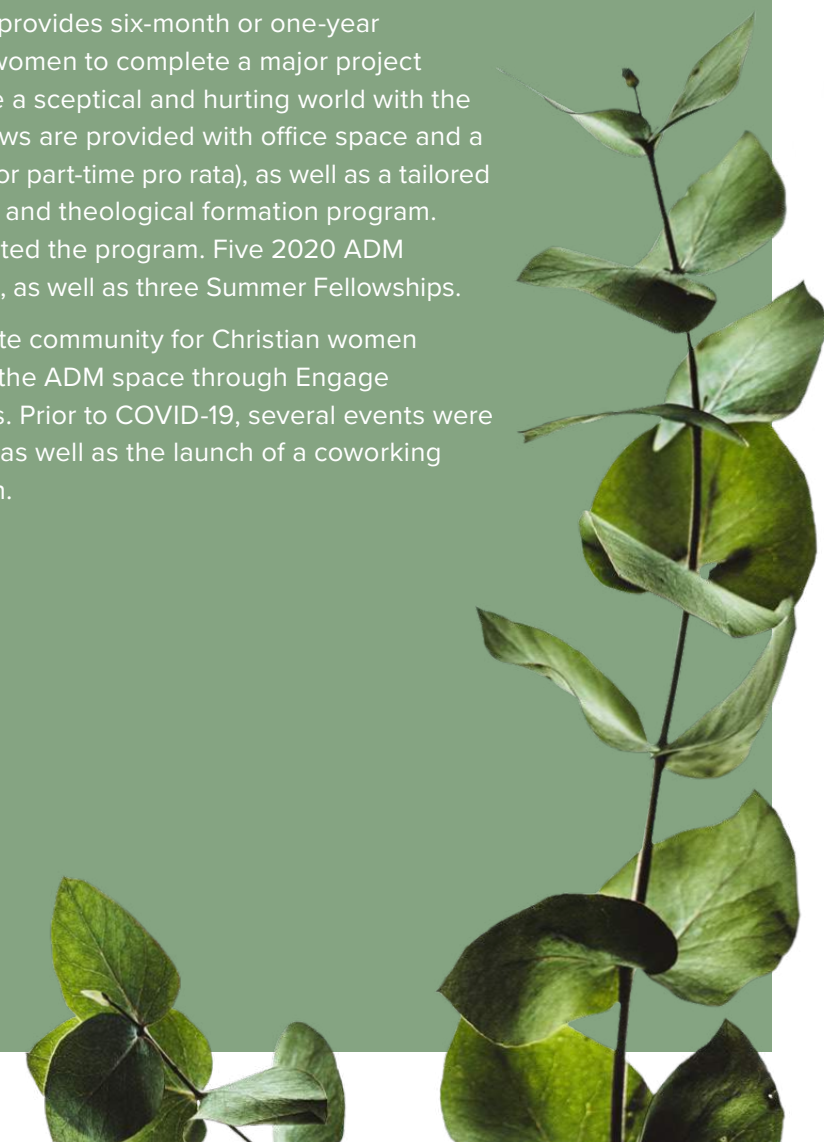
FUNDING & SUPPORT FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

ADM's programs and funding for Christian women reflect our commitment to 'call, train, equip, encourage and support women to serve Christ and his church'. Some provide smaller-scale support and training, encouraging many Christian women. Others make a strategic, high-worth investment aimed at long-term impact in creating pathways for Christian women to serve God's people and engage our world with the gospel. These programs are led by Dr Annette Pierdziwol, ADM's Director of Public Engagement.

The Annual Funding Event provides grants to Christian women leading ministries and gospel-shaped initiatives across Australia. At the 2019 event, grants totalling \$60,000 were awarded to 12 women.

The Fellowships Program provides six-month or one-year Fellowships for Christian women to complete a major project that will help them engage a sceptical and hurting world with the good news of Jesus. Fellows are provided with office space and a bursary of up to \$80,000 (or part-time pro rata), as well as a tailored professional development and theological formation program. Four 2019 Fellows completed the program. Five 2020 ADM Fellowships were awarded, as well as three Summer Fellowships.

We also continued to create community for Christian women and offering hospitality in the ADM space through Engage masterclasses and dinners. Prior to COVID-19, several events were held up until March 2020, as well as the launch of a coworking space for Christian women.





ADM Fellowships raise up Christian women to engage a sceptical and hurting world with the good news of Jesus, as they serve in our churches, communities, nation and world. Our Fellowships provide space and time for Christian women to complete a focused project at the ADM office in Sydney, and pursue avenues to engage the public with their work.

Friendship, writing and the Coronavirus

By **Dr Annette Pierdziwol**
Director of Public Engagement

Looking back over the past 12 months, 2019 and 2020 have looked very different for the Christian women ADM supports through our funding programs, especially the ADM Fellows who work in our Sydney office. Even so, one thing has stayed the same: the unique support and encouragement ADM offers Christian women.

2019

During 2019, ADM Fellows Brooke Prentis, Dr Roberta Kwan, Rev. Dani Treweek and Emma Pitman made the most of their opportunity to work in the ADM office. They worked to complete projects that build their credibility in their respective fields, and help them engage our world with the good news of Jesus. There was much to celebrate:

Dani completed her PhD thesis on a theology of singleness and submitted it for examination. She wrote, “my ministry both to single Christians themselves, and to the wider Christian community on this topic, was all the richer for the time the Fellowship gave me.” (Read Dani’s article on page 45.)

Brooke signed her first book contract in the ADM office. What an honour to celebrate her work — which explores how churches can take the Aboriginal hand of friendship — as well as celebrate her appointment as CEO of Common Grace.



Rebecca Oakley



Amanda Mason



Claire Zorn



Katie Tunks Leach



Dr Robyn Wrigley-Carr

Emma and Roberta both made exciting progress in their writing: Emma with a series of creative essays about women, and Roberta with a book on Shakespeare and theological hermeneutics, as well as research for a new project on Shakespeare and neighbourliness.

When the 2019 Fellows moved out of the ADM office in January, they left behind tangible expressions of thanks: a comical card from Roberta featured a pig carrying four piglets on her back and a note inside, “How much I’ve appreciated being carried along on the back of ADM’s wonderful ministry”.

Brooke gave the office one of artist Safina Stewart’s prints, *Grasstrees*: “The Grasstree is a great symbol to represent us as Aboriginal Christian leaders,” Brooke said. “Thank you for helping me as one grastree to flourish, which helps all of us, the strength of network, community, family.”

2020

Those images stayed with me into the new year, making me all the more thankful for the part I get to play in delivering on ADM’s commitment to ‘carry’ Christian women along, deepening their impact as they serve Christ and his church. The provision of time, space, funds and community is instrumental.

Imagine, then, how challenging this year has been for our 2020 Fellows: Rebecca Oakley, Amanda Mason, Claire Zorn, Katie Tunks Leach and Dr Robyn Wrigley-Carr. Having begun their projects with us on February 1, by June they had spent more time working from home than in the Fellows’ office. They faced disappointment,



Pictured above: Announcement of the 2020 Fellows at the 2019 Annual Public Lecture in St Andrew’s Cathedral; Claire Zorn, Katie Tunks Leach, Amanda Mason, Dr Robyn Wrigley-Carr and Rebecca Oakley with 2020 Summer Fellow Susy Lee

THE 2020 COHORT HAS SEEN THE POWER OF SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER AS CHRISTIAN WOMEN: OF CHECKING IN WITH ONE ANOTHER, BEING ACCOUNTABLE TO EACH OTHER, AND SPURRING ONE ANOTHER ALONG.

frustration and grief as the promise of that precious time and space collided with the implications of the coronavirus. And because some of the 2020 Fellows had families at home during lockdown, or were also working in churches or healthcare contexts, they encountered bigger obstacles than they had expected through this period.

Still, they pushed forward with their projects, each adapting to their unique circumstances. They also took up new opportunities to serve others and to write articles for wider audiences, lending their insights to others during the pandemic’s difficulties.

As a result, the cohort has seen the power of supporting one another as Christian women: of checking in with one another, being accountable to each other, and spurring one another along. Through weekly Zoom catch-ups, we built a different kind of community, sharing laughs

and occasional tears, tea and prayer, while meeting children and pets on screen along the way. They’ve moved forward despite the distance, and in the process, I’ve been encouraged and inspired to look anew at the ways we can keep supporting our Fellows.

And while our ADM team once again this year completed the work of opening and receiving applications for our two major funding schemes, the 2020 Annual Funding Event and the 2021 ADM Fellowships, I’ve come to realise — again — how unique these programs are, especially in a time such as this.

There are very few funding schemes targeted at supporting Christian women, and even fewer — perhaps none — that are offered annually and pay bursaries and grants near industry-standard levels. With so much changing in 2020, including great financial insecurity — which could have further impacts for developing Christian women’s projects and ministries — I remain deeply encouraged by ADM’s steadfast commitment to funding and supporting Christian women as they seek to serve God’s people and our world. It is a joy for us to continue investing in Christian women, through COVID-19 and beyond.

> To find out more about ADM Fellowships visit: deaconessministries.org.au/fellowships

Lessons from a detour

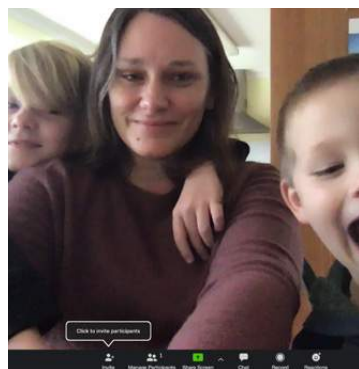
Two of our 2020 ADM Fellows reflect on what they are learning during the pandemic.



Katie Tunks Leach
2020 ADM Senior
Research Fellow

Katie is a registered nurse, ambulance chaplain and lecturer in Nursing at the University of Technology, Sydney.

"I'm working on establishing an evidence base for chaplains in the ambulance service. COVID-19 has of course affected my research both good and bad. As hospital and ambulance staff worked hard to prepare for and deliver care during COVID-19, my ability to conduct interviews and progress my work slowed down. But this also freed me to focus on writing for publications, as well as to work more closely with NSW Ambulance in staff support. The impact of COVID-19 on the health and wellbeing of frontline staff has been significant and the demand for support continues to grow. I am grateful God has blessed me with time I wouldn't ordinarily have. I am also excited to have finished developing a collaborative app with NSW Ambulance that will allow us to capture evidence on what chaplains are doing day-to-day, thus providing data for researching their impact."



Rebecca Oakley
2020 ADM Fellow

Rebecca has been serving cross-culturally since 2012, co-leading a multi-ethnic team spread across three countries in South-East Asia.

"I'm interviewing leaders in support-raised organisations and analysing leadership literature, with the aim to better understand and equip new leaders to lead with both competence and Christlike character. Travel bans resulting from COVID-19 and the fragile health care infrastructure of some countries have left cross-cultural mission agencies with very difficult decisions to make about individual at-risk workers, and how to mobilise others as part of a response. It's an interesting time to be researching leadership, as crises always test and form leadership character and reveal organisational strengths and weaknesses.

Recently, I have begun publishing online articles in various Christian publications to share insights and analysis from the interviews I conducted during my 6-month Fellowship. These articles and my other research on leadership development in mission and support-raised ministry organisations are now gathered together on my website: www.entrustedwiththesent.com"

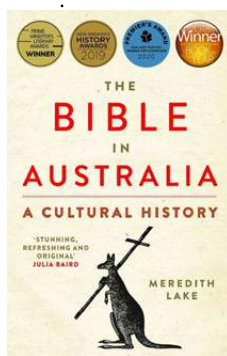
➤ Find out more about the 2020 ADM Fellows and their projects at: deaconessministries.org.au/fellowships



2017 ADM FELLOW WINS PRIME MINISTER'S LITERARY AWARD

This past year, Dr Meredith Lake, 2017 ADM Senior Research Fellow, won the 2019 Australian History Prize in the Prime Minister's Literary Awards for her book *The Bible in Australia: A Cultural History*. This followed on from the award of 2018 Christian Book of the Year. She also won the Australian History Prize at the NSW Premier's History Awards, and in 2020 the Non-fiction prize at the Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature (the last winner of this award was Tim Winton!)

One judge wrote, "The Bible is everywhere in the history of Australia since British settlement — 'under Australian skin', as Meredith Lake eloquently puts it — yet *The Bible in Australia* is the first occasion on which an historian has placed it in the foreground as a subject in its own right".



Another judge called *The Bible in Australia* "a book of remarkable originality. Formidably researched yet carrying its scholarship with an enviable lightness of touch, this is a ground-breaking cultural and social history."

Meredith — who now hosts ABC Radio National's weekly show, *Soul Search* — hardly

imagined such responses when she was scouring documents and writing chapters during her Fellowship.

"Receiving such a generous part time Fellowship from ADM was an absolutely critical intervention," she said when accepting her NSW Premier's History Award. "The Fellowship was a game-changer for me. It put around me the resources I needed to do my best work, to finish the book, and I think, to grow as a person who has something to say." A second edition of *The Bible in Australia* (new cover pictured above) is due for release in November 2020.

A single home... for all

By Dani Treweek 2019 ADM Senior Research Fellow

I suspect that no little girl dreams of growing up to become an expert on singleness... but here I am, on track to earning a doctorate degree in it! My last four years, spent writing a PhD on a theology of singleness for the contemporary church, have been "interesting" to say the least.

There've been laughs, including a Facebook competition for the best (i.e. most terrible) combination of cover image and title for a Christian book on the topic. There've been tears, as I've listened to unmarried Christians share their disappointments, their anxieties, their sense of isolation. There's been frustration, including that one time I literally threw a book across the room. (I know. But at least it wasn't borrowed from the library). But there have also been some surprises, including the fact, given I'm writing about singleness, I've spent far more time thinking about marriage than I had ever anticipated.

And that is why I recently found myself reading another Christian article that focused on the joys of marriage. In it, one contributor described her time away visiting extended family as an opportunity for profound reflection on just how much she valued and missed her own home. She explained that, having finally returned from her trip, she looked at her husband and told him, "You are my home".

As a single woman, I admit that my own personal response to reading that comment was mixed. I found myself alternating between sadness, acceptance, frustration, resignation and probably a range of other emotions I wasn't self-aware enough to identify in the moment. However, I suspect my ambiguous reaction wasn't all that unusual.

You see, the concept of home can be a difficult and even conflicting one for the single Christian. For us, home can be a real thing, but also not much more than an amorphous concept. It can be a place of authentic contentment and refuge, but also the location of heartbreaking loneliness and sorrow. It can be the context in which we excitedly explore our own sense of self-formation, but also a reminder that we are

largely undertaking this task solo. It can be a place of enormous relational hospitality, but also a potential prison of isolation. It can be a place that allows us to establish our own material sufficiency, or just a constant reminder that nobody has ever thought to gift us with a Kitchen-Aid.

It can also be a symbol of our unique position to embrace flexibility and change, or a reminder that we are forever struggling to establish some roots. It can mean we aren't constrained to a massive financial commitment for the rest of our lives, or it can be a persistent reminder that living on a single income often means the insecurity of living in a home that belongs to someone else. And it can be all these things in the one and very same moment.



You see, the concept of home can be a difficult and even conflicting one for the single Christian.

But here is the thing. The fact that "home" is so often the location of such inner turmoil for single Christians can actually be a great blessing. In fact, in it is precisely one sense in which we unmarried Christians are called to faithfully exhort, encourage and even (lovingly) rebuke our married brothers and sisters in Christ.

The fact that we single Christians have such a difficult relationship with the notion of "home" ought to urge all of us to remember that we don't believe that any building of walls and a roof is our

real home; that we don't look upon any earthly city as the place that we truly call home; that we don't find ourselves genuinely at home in any person, other than Jesus Christ.

Revelation 21:1-3 addresses this:

"Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

Married sisters in Christ, never married sisters in Christ, divorced sisters in Christ, widowed sisters in Christ, we, together with our brothers, have a single true home. That home is in heaven. It is the eternal home in which God will dwell among us. It is the home whose doors have been flung open by Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. It is the home whose threshold we will cross as the resurrected new people we are in him. It is the eternal home which we as a family — a church family, the bride of Christ — already call our own because of God's indwelling Spirit.

Yes, the concept of "home" can be a difficult one for those of us who are single. But sisters, let's embrace our ambiguous relationship with this notion of our earthly home because it reminds us that this earth is not actually our home. Let's ask God to take and use what can often be a painful longing for "home" so that he might wonderfully teach us all that our true home is not found in a husband, but in the husband — in our Lord, Saviour and Bridegroom, Jesus.



Dani Treweek is an Anglican minister, PhD researcher, 2019 Senior Research Fellow at Anglican Deaconess Ministries and chair of the Single Minded

Conference Ministry (singlemindedconference.com). When she's not doing any (or all!) of these things you'll find her watching *Survivor*, listening to Les Miserables or revelling in being an aunt.

This article first appeared in *Propel Sophia*.



Q&A

Living the gospel across cultures

WITH AMANDA MASON, 2020 ADM SENIOR FELLOW

Amanda Mason is an Evangelist and Community Chaplain with the Sydney Anglican Department of Evangelism and New Churches. During her Fellowship at ADM this year, she's creating accessible resources to equip Australian churches in discipling Buddhist-background believers.

Q You grew up intersecting various cultures. Tell us about that.

A I often answer that question by saying I have a Western brain and a Thai heart. My heart and emotions have been shaped by my experience of being parented by a single Thai mother. While my brain has been shaped by my Western education (in Australia), I continue to live at a cultural intersection on many levels. Besides being multi-racial, I am also bi-vocational, balancing my work week between ADM's ministry-based fellowship with work I do in public mental health. Both mean I'm learning to communicate complex material to people from diverse health experiences and spiritualities.

Q When you first heard about Jesus in high school, what was it about him that made you want to follow him? How has that shaped your vision for ministry?

A It was his people! The inclusive character of the Christian communities I experienced as I heard the message of grace drew me in as I was 'experimenting' with the idea of Christian commitment. Intuitively, I knew it was Christ's love reflected in their love for one another. What most shaped my vision for ministry and evangelism was why this community and message of irresistible grace seemed so irrelevant to my Thai mother. Sixteen-year old

me couldn't reconcile that. God had created and sent his Son to redeem the whole world. Today's me is still actively reconciling that alongside the whole community my mother represents, i.e., those intelligent, cultured people who just happen to have Southeast Asian Buddhist cultural experiences.

Q As an ADM Fellow, your project helps Christians better understand how to reach those in Buddhist communities. Tell us about the resources you're creating.

A I'm hoping to ignite a constructive discussion about the evangelism and discipleship needs among people from southeast Asian Buddhist cultural backgrounds. That is, how God's love can be shared in a way that is understandable and responsive to what Buddhists are really concerned about. Things like family life or fear of ghosts which can dominate southeast Asian popular media. These themes receive far more emphasis in the southeast Asian worldview; we just don't address them in Aussie pulpits or discipleship. All the while, they're great bridges to understanding who God is.

INTUITIVELY, I KNEW IT WAS CHRIST'S LOVE REFLECTED IN THEIR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

I'm hoping that by giving us things to talk about, we will see an Australian network of mutually supportive collaborators emerge with concern for culturally sensitive evangelism and discipleship. With that goal, I'm summarising insights from a series of missions' books, where each represents a collection of articles authored by Western and non-Western Christ followers who explore essential aspects and insights of Buddhist worldview. Think drip-fed social media etc. to help us better serve others to live reconciled with their Heavenly Father.

Q In your work as a community chaplain and evangelist, what inspires you?

A I love what I get to do. On any given day my work might involve:

- Teaching children Bible stories. When Thai parents ask, I help them set a pattern of reading these stories to their children.
- Spending 4+ hours at a friend's house, doing what I'm invited to do — eating Thai food, playing with kids, whatever builds relationships in the natural ways of life.
- Attending church where Thai people attend or inquiring why things at church are going the way they are between different cultural groups.
- Running a basic Bible study using the storytelling method (which I learned alongside John Bales who coordinated Muslim outreach in Sydney).
- Performing the role of cultural broker to enhance an existing local church ministry.

Q Serving as a 'cultural broker'? What does that mean for you?

The most common definition is acting as a bridge, linking or mediating between persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change. For us in Christian community, it's trying to overcome often misunderstood cultural elements so that the Jesus in the gospels is clearly presented and we're fulfilling the ministry of reconciliation. I feel like I'm fulfilling my vocation most when I'm supporting relationships between Thai people and their local Christian community.

> To read a longer version of this Q&A, visit: deaconessministries.org.au/amandamason



The ADM Annual Funding Event provides support for Christian women leading ministries and gospel-shaped initiatives from across Australia. Applicants demonstrate alignment with ADM's strategic focus areas of FORM, ENGAGE and DO. Here is the story of one grantee from the 2019 Annual Funding Event.

THE PRECIOUS GIFT OF SIGHT

By Susan Milne

ADM grant supports the development of Sarah Crowe's invention.

When Dr Sarah Crowe, a Sydney-based ophthalmic surgeon, visited an eye clinic in the Solomon Islands, she saw first hand the serious vision problems of many residents. Even as she diagnosed them, she realised that few had access to treatment or surgery, let alone glasses.

During the next few days, Sarah began to notice that no one was wearing glasses. Even simple reading glasses were not available, so anyone over 45 had difficulty reading. The other implications were obvious to her as well: people struggled to learn, work, drive or care for others simply because they couldn't see well. And while she saw the positive impact that governments and NGOs were having with various health clinics or surgical visits, she realised what many people needed was simple: affordable and accessible glasses.

So Sarah returned to Sydney and tinkered in between appointments and trips until she invented a system that enables those living in inaccessible and often disadvantaged communities to have their eyes tested and prescription glasses assembled on the spot. The invention offers the gift of sight to people in the world's most remote locations. It also led to Sarah receiving ADM's Annual Funding Event (AFE) top award in the Startup and Beyond category: \$30,000.

As part of her pitch at the AFE, Sarah described the reaction of those who had participated in what she came to call, "The 4eyes pilot trial".

The trial took place in Papua New Guinea in 2018, and many who had suffered for most of their life received spectacles to correct their vision impairment.

"To see people put on their glasses for the first time in their life is so rewarding," she said. "They are amazed and often quite overwhelmed. Some are speechless, some laugh and some cry."

Originally from Montreal, Sarah continued to work in developing communities and quickly realised how few people had access to spectacles. She also came across research from the World Health Organisation that states that 53 percent of avoidable blindness is due to uncorrected refractive error. A recent study in PNG confirmed that it is the largest cause of poor vision, and the majority of people affected are in remote and developing communities. Why? Three reasons: lack of professional services to test for prescription, cost and geographic isolation.

"There was no one to test for glasses and no way to get them due to lack of access to testing and the cost," she explains. "The amount of money that goes into trying to improve healthcare in developing communities is huge and yet this relatively simple problem, which would be relatively cheap to fix, was not being addressed."

Sarah turned her considerable skills to developing a system of testing for refractive error, and instant assembly of spectacles using universal frames and pre-cut lenses. The initial field trial, conducted in partnership



and with generous funding from the Kokoda Track Foundation, was held at the remote Kou Kou village in Oro Province, PNG. Five hundred men and women had their vision tested, and 300 pairs of spectacles were assembled on the spot for those who needed them.

"In a follow-up questionnaire, 98 per cent of respondents gave the highest rating possible to their improvement in vision, but also in improvement to their quality of life," Sarah said. "Many specifically stated that they were able to read their Bibles for the first time."

Because of this pioneering work, Sarah was invited to join 12 other entrepreneurial and inspiring women who also pitched their ideas at ADM's funding event. But when Sarah was awarded the largest grant, she was surprised and delighted.

"It was an amazing day, not only receiving the funding which was a tremendous boost, but being surrounded by the encouragement and optimism of the other women presenting their cases for funding," Sarah said. "Setting up and running a project like 4eyes is such hard work, such an investment of time and money, and sometimes I have questioned whether I can carry on. Receiving the award gave me much needed affirmation and a sense of empowerment which gives me strength to continue. And the community around ADM is an incredible group of women."

The ADM funding — which is likely to be matched by AusIndustry, a federal government organisation which supports innovation — along

"... people struggled to learn, work, drive or care for others simply because they couldn't see well."

with continuing support from KTF, will be used to scale up the project in PNG, with the aim of providing spectacles for at least 1,000 more vision-impaired people there before being rolled out in other countries including the Philippines, Fiji, East Timor, India and hopefully across remote regions of Australia.

The 4eyes Foundation has also been set up to receive tax-deductible donations and has recently registered as a charity. Key to the future of 4eyes is adequate funding, says Sarah, who in addition to countless hours spent on the 4eyes equipment and working as an ophthalmic surgeon, has a busy family life with husband Phillip and four adult children.

Yet she says her Christian faith helped drive the development of the 4eyes system in the first place.

"My faith is a practical faith, it's faith in action," Sarah said. "I believe we are all part of a human community and God has put us on Earth to help each other. I simply feel I have an obligation to use my skills and experience to help others." ●

> To support the 4eyes Foundation and for more information visit: 4eyesfoundation.org



Pictured: People from Kou Kou village, PNG, get their vision tested and receive new spectacles (above), Sarah Crowe conducts a vision test.



ADM ANNUAL FUNDING EVENT



From resources to improve pastoral care in schools to eye care in developing countries, 12 women presented five-minute pitches for ministries and gospel-shaped initiatives they lead during ADM's fourth Annual Funding Event on 4 September 2019. The event provided an opportunity for Christian women to develop innovative ideas as well as gain financial support.

"It's inspiring to see the breadth and depth of creative ways God is leading women to use their gifts to serve him and their neighbours," said Dr Kate Harrison Brennan, then CEO of ADM. "The Annual Funding Event gives entrepreneurial Christian women a chance to bring initiatives into the light in ways that benefit all of us who listen."

ADM received a large number of applications from women across Australia, each of which went through a rigorous assessment process. Four women were then invited to pitch in each of the three categories corresponding to the stage of their initiative — idea, prototype or start-up and beyond. The pitches took place before an expert panel and an audience that included Dr Michaela O'Donnell Long, ADM Visiting Fellow, entrepreneur and De Pree Centre Senior Director from Fuller Theological Seminary, California. (Read more about Michaela on page 54.)

Capturing the grant of \$30,000 in the start-up and beyond category was Sarah Crowe, leader of 4eyes Foundation and an ophthalmologist who invented an inexpensive system of vision testing that can be used to provide frames and pre-cut lenses in impoverished areas. (Read more about Sarah on page 48).

Julie Somerville of R3 Resolutions was awarded \$15,000 in the prototype category for her dispute resolution company to develop legal chatbots that "flip the focus from an adversarial claims process to one centred on collaboration and restoration."

Jessica Chilton and Michelle Walker were awarded \$5,000 for their idea for Foundations, a pastoral care organisation that will help schools to inform and resource parents in their respective communities.

The People's Choice award of \$2,000 went to Natasha Thompson of the Women's Justice Network Advisory Group that provides support and services to women in and exiting prison.

All of the other women who pitched during the day also received input from expert guest panellists and \$1,000 in funding. Selected AFE grantees were also invited to join the 2020 cohort of ADM's Incubator Program, a unique year of support composed of four retreats and a mentor-match to support women in growing their organisations.

"ADM is delighted to offer these awards and support, because we believe in the transformative power of Christian women living out their callings," said then CEO of ADM Kate Harrison Brennan in her opening remarks on the day. "Transformative for the individual, yes, as she grows more and more into the likeness of Christ. But also transformative for the world. So, we work to catalyse this: to give opportunities, support, mentoring, and space to take the next steps on their journey."

> Find out more about the Annual Funding Event at deaconessministries.org.au/annual-funding-event



ADM INCUBATOR

The ADM Incubator is a program of quarterly retreats for Christian women leading ministries and gospel-shaped initiatives. The 2020 cohort is our fifth and final cohort of the Incubator (previously known as The Hub), which has run at ADM from 2016 to 2020.

By Dr Louise Gosbell

This year, I have had the privilege of coordinating ADM's Incubator Program. We have had eight women in the program in 2020, all of whom are in the process of building or developing new ministries and gospel-shaped initiatives. Each of these women have an incredible vision for putting God's word into action in their communities through their respective projects: from not-for-profits to church training workshops and community initiatives.

EACH OF THESE WOMEN HAVE AN INCREDIBLE VISION FOR PUTTING GOD'S WORD INTO ACTION IN THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH THEIR RESPECTIVE PROJECTS.

Our women are keen to find new ways to bring the good news of God's Word to our world. The retreats have been

a time of focus, encouragement, and meditation on God's Word. They have given us all the opportunity to have a time of quiet in the middle of chaotic lives and to be refreshed and renewed in our various ministry journeys. With a range of speakers and sessions at each retreat, the Incubator women have had opportunities to be challenged, stretched and encouraged in their various projects, spurring each other on toward love and good deeds.

These eight women represent just a small number of incredible women who have been part of ADM's programs this year. All are helping to continue ADM's vision of seeing women flourish in Kingdom work.



As well as coordinating ADM's Incubator program in 2020, Louise was a 2017 ADM Senior Research Fellow and was recently appointed Dean of Students at Mary Andrews College.

Pictured: Six of the 2020 Incubator cohort meet at ADM, from top, Louise Gosbell, Michelle Walker, Jessica Chilton, Henrietta Lee and Sono Leone, and seated; Julie Somerville and Kate Cavanaugh with her baby daughter.



WIMSS provides small grants for ministry resources or professional and theological development to support women in ministry.

WIMSS

WOMEN IN MINISTRY SUPPORT SCHEME

Christian women are serving God's people faithfully in an incredible variety of ways in churches and ministries across Australia. Women are discipling others and evangelising in their community. They are involved in church governance, providing pastoral care, leading Bible studies, English classes, serving the vulnerable and much more.

ADM's Women in Ministry Support Scheme (WIMSS) is designed to support women as they serve Christ and his church. WIMSS provides small grants of between \$200 — \$2,000 to be used for ministry resources or professional and theological development.

Since 1891, ADM has been supporting and encouraging Christian women. The first Object of ADM in its Constitution states that one of ADM's key purposes is:

"To call, train, equip, encourage and support women to serve Christ and His Church in: (i) undertaking Christian mission of evangelising, Bible teaching, pastoring and compassionate caring; and (ii) ordained or lay ministry, missionary and other forms of Christian work."

ADM offers a number of targeted funding schemes to continue this legacy of supporting Christian women today. WIMSS is a new addition to ADM's funding of Christian women in 2020. It focusses on supporting the unique resourcing and development needs of women in ministry roles, making smaller-scale grants available to a larger number of Christian women.

> To find out more about the scheme visit: deaconessministries.org.au/wimss

Chaplaincy in hard places

By Emma Pitman

- Engage masterclasses and dinners create community for Christian women and offer hospitality in the ADM space. Several events were held up until March 2020, as well as the launch of a coworking space for Christian women, when both were disrupted by COVID-19.

When Katie Tunks Leach was working on the South Coast of NSW in December, she didn't anticipate staying a few extra days because of the fires. But when she and her ambulance colleague got the call, they turned their vehicle around and drove back towards the blaze, where together they provided pastoral support to the paramedics and community leaders coordinating the fire response.

"I learned so much about what it looks like to sit with people, and to help them in ways that are meaningful to them," Katie said. "I'm used to being a chaplain in the city but this summer opened my eyes to what our rural brothers and sisters face on a day to day basis."

Katie was one of three speakers who addressed almost 40 women — including 10 chaplains — for Anglican Deaconess Ministries' first Engage Dinner of 2020. Rev. Suzanne Gorham, Senior Chaplain to Specialist Units in the NSW Police Force, and Rev. Kerrie Newmarch, Chaplain at Bankstown Hospital, joined Katie, a registered nurse, Ambulance Chaplain and 2020 Senior Research Fellow at ADM, in talking about what it means to work as Christian Chaplains in difficult places.

"Chaplaincy is a ministry of being with people, and journeying with them where they are, and

whatever they're facing," said Suzanne. "Some days it's being intentional in just hanging around officers and others it's responding to tragedy. There are major contrasts of awful and lovely moments."

As a chaplain with the police force, Suzanne knows chaplaincy work is both reactive and proactive. It involves building relationships, and being on call for emergencies. Yet when called to a scene, Suzanne is clear on her role: supporting the police.

"You put your blinkers on. You decide what you're going to look at, and what you're not. Then you focus on the people you're there to serve — the police," she said. "And you pray."

Often leaders within various organisations (police or hospitals) recognise the value of a chaplain's presence in caring for officers or medical responders, even if they don't share the same beliefs. When Suzanne began her role with the police, even she was surprised by how highly valued chaplaincy seemed within the force. Chaplains are ranked officers, on par with Inspectors, and as a Senior Chaplain, Suzanne reports to the Superintendent of Workforce Safety Command.

"It's all very much a ministry of presence," she said.

But such ministry can be difficult and demanding. "As a chaplain, you will often be by someone's side on the worst day of their life," Kerrie said, who now works as a hospital chaplain after years as a chaplain for the Professional Standards Unit with the Sydney Anglican Diocese.

Kerrie became the chaplain for the Professional Standards unit in 2012, and just six weeks later, The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse began. The role of the chaplain, Kerrie said, is to support victims and walk through the process with people who have disclosed abuse. She said that when a church is in crisis, outside pastoral care is critical.



"Chaplaincy is a ministry of being with people, and journeying with them where they are, and whatever they're facing"

Rev. Suzanne Gorham

Kerrie wasn't responsible for investigating any misconduct, nor did she have to make any choices about whether a story was true or not true.

"I was able to do the job because my role was clear as to what I was to do and not do," she said. "Up until 2003, the Diocese didn't have a chaplain in this area. It was dealt with by lawyers. My role was to help deal with the anger and pain of church members, and to support the person making the complaint on their journey."

Such ongoing pastoral care and emotional investment can take its toll. Self-care is crucial, each chaplain emphasised. They are as intentional in maintaining their own wellbeing as they are in providing pastoral care. Suzanne said chaplains must try to avoid what they call vicarious trauma and post traumatic injury, which can result from walking with people experiencing and processing trauma.

← **Pictured:** Rev. Suzanne Gorham, Rev. Kerrie Newmarch with Katie Tunks Leach.

Reflection, supervision, prayer, beauty and focusing on the gospel are aspects of such selfcare. Suzanne goes back often to Colossians to remind her of her purpose, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Kerrie seeks out beauty and intentionally lets go of the day's challenges before heading home.

"When I caught the train home, I'd hop off at Circular Quay station just looking out at the view," said Kerrie. "It helped me to take my mind off what I had seen that day."

For Katie — whose Fellowship project at ADM involves researching best practices in 'caring for the carers' in ambulance chaplaincy — the work requires a practical theology of helping others, trying "to be the hands and feet of God."

Regardless of the setting or the difficult circumstances, the chaplains say they must be authentic if they are to be effective, listening well and praying for others even when they themselves might feel inadequate.

"The gospel has got to stay at the forefront of my mind because if it doesn't, I'm not actually doing gospel work. I'm just being a nice person and that's not what I'm employed to do," Suzanne said. "And that's not what God's called me to do. I'm a person who lives, speaks and shares the gospel by loving God and loving my neighbour. Walking alongside others in the lows and highs is a deep joy, because we have the God of all comfort."

Michaela O'Donnell Long

2019 ADM Visiting Fellow

During her Visiting Fellowship at ADM, Michaela gave the opening address at the 2019 ADM Annual Funding Event, encouraging the pitchers and audience at the start of the day.

She also participated in the event as one of the expert panel members, offering feedback on pitches. Michaela then delivered the keynote address at an evening event showcasing the work of our 2019 Incubator cohort to an audience of over 80 men and women on the topic, "Imagination, risk and innovation: Why the entrepreneurial mindset matters for Christians".

During her time at ADM, Michaela also taught an Engage Masterclass for women covering topics such as being creative and resilient and how to practice empathy, imagination, risk-taking and reflection. In between these public events, she also provided targeted training and mentoring for our ADM Fellows, Incubator participants and ADM staff, workshoping material from her new book, forthcoming with Zondervan in 2021, *New Rules of Work: Your Map to Meaningful Work in a Changing World*.



Pictured: Michaela leads an Engage Masterclass (top) and speaks on the AFE Showcase panel with Kate Harrision Brennan, Rachel Golding and Bernadette Black.

Q&A

As part of her visit for the 2019 Annual Funding Event, ADM hosted Dr Michaela O'Donnell Long from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA, as a Visiting Fellow. The following is an excerpt from a longer Q&A.

Q You grew up in the U.S. midwestern state of Nebraska. Tell us more:

A Nebraska was nothing like Sydney. I grew up in Omaha, a city of half a million people. Outside the city in any direction, you'd find agriculture of various kinds. I realise now that a large swathe of the year was measured by the production of corn. So, although I've never picked an ear of corn in my life, the rhythm of planting, growing, and harvesting is forever sketched into my brain, an aesthetic that's shaped my own expectation for my work. I trust the rhythm of what I have seen, that there is a time for planting, for growing, for harvesting, and for clearing the fields.

Q You attended university on an athletic scholarship. Do sports serve as a metaphor for working in ministry, business or an organisation?

A My husband and I were recently talking about how formative sports have been for me, and about how great athletes are coachable. They learn quickly that there is always room to grow, that critique of their game isn't personal, and that in order to achieve big goals you've got to evolve in your game. I carry this same belief into my work as a leader, writer, mother, and creative. My own leadership style resembles that of a coach — always working with my team to finesse their gifts and skills so that they might flourish in their work.

Q You're now at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, serving as the senior director at the De Pree Centre and lecturer of practical theology. You're also an entrepreneur and co-founder of a branding and video production company. How does theology mix with business?



I THINK GOD IS MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN THE LONG HAUL OF OUR FORMATION THAN ANY ONE THING WE MIGHT PUT OUR HANDS TO.

A When I look back, I can see how all these different parts of my life weave together. I graduated with an MDiv from Fuller, began a company with my husband and God has been very good to us through Long Winter Media. We've learned lots of lessons, met amazing people, created meaningful projects, and paid our bills. But a few years ago, I was desperate to integrate my work as a business owner with my work as a student of practical theology. I studied people who had charted their own way in work, people who I called faithful entrepreneurs. This led me to the De Pree Center. Now, I get to bring my full self to the role: entrepreneurial in that I create programs and resources rooted in my research; writing and teaching about calling, work, leadership, and creative content. It's actually a dream. And I don't take that privilege lightly. I'm committed to stewarding the resources God has given me in this season.

Q What sparked your interest in practical theology as well as helping women in particular develop leadership skills?

A Practical theology is a discipline that revolves around four basic questions:

1. What's going on in the world?
2. Why is it going on?
3. How might the Bible speak into it?
4. What should we do going forward?

Practical theologians seek to answer these four questions in particular contexts with particular praxis. A quick example of how I might answer those questions around women in leadership might include:

1. Women lack adequate mentorship in the workplace;
2. Statistics show that a majority of senior level men are uncomfortable mentoring women in 1 on 1 situations; Because so many men occupy leadership positions, women are missing out on key mentoring relationships;
3. Right from the start, we see a biblical commissioning of men and women working together in the Garden;
4. What if we created resources that outlined for men how to mentor a woman in an approachable way? Therefore, how can we work toward more opportunities for women to be mentored? This is why I love practical theology. It's critical, synthetic and practical.

Q Deaconess Mary Andrews once said, "The measure of what you can do for the world will be simply what you let God do with yourself. With most of us God can do so little because we are so little between his hands. That Jesus really wants me and needs me is the wonder and strength of my life. He has met my every need and in him I am fully satisfied." In what ways might this resonate with you and your work on vocation, calling and entrepreneurship?

A It is convicting in that it highlights how our best doing comes not from getting great at doing, but by deepening our being. When we know who we are, and are deeply satisfied with Christ, it becomes like a wellspring bubbling up and impacting every move we make. I am convinced that most of what we think about how God's calling works in our lives is limited and therefore unhelpful. I think God is much more interested in the long haul of our formation than any one thing we might put our hands to. And in that, the things we put our hands to are part of how God is always forming us. To let our beings sway in intimacy with God and all that God calls us to, we must ready ourselves to be disrupted over and over again.

Q As women prepare to pitch, what guidance or resources might help them work toward their goals in how God is calling them?

A I love hearing pitches from women at AFE. I know first hand how vulnerable it is to put yourself out there, so they have my respect and prayers from the beginning. If I were going to encourage you to think about one thing for your pitch, it would be value add. Value add is a shorthand way to think about the benefit that you and/or your idea adds to society. As Christians, we might think explicitly about how what we're doing is a value add for the Kingdom. What I've learned is that while ideas and stories might overlap, each person brings a unique value add to the table.



ADM PUBLIC EVENTS

ADM public events, such as our Annual Public Lecture and School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement, sit at the intersection of ADM's strategic focus areas of theological formation and public engagement. Through these events, public audiences engage with the good news of Jesus. Together, Christian women and men are theologically formed and enriched in their capacity to make the gospel intelligible.

Along with ADM's targeted funding programs for Christian women, ADM public events form part of our commitment to support Christian women by providing high quality theological content, as well as creating platforms for women to speak and teach. As flagship public events, they are designed for both Christian men and women and for wider public audiences, so ADM's work across all its program areas can be furthered in the broader Christian community and engage our city, nation and world with Jesus.

ADM public events are led by Dr Annette Pierdziwol, ADM's Director of Public Engagement, and delivered by the whole ADM team. At our 2020 School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement we were delighted to have ten of our ADM Staff and Fellows teaching masterclasses.



THE PLEASURES OF PESSIMISM

Dr Natasha Moore explores hope, culture and the end of the world in the fourth Annual Public Lecture.

Global decay, nuclear war and Zombie apocalypses aren't exactly the stuff of cheery evening discussions. But Dr Natasha Moore's address for ADM's fourth Annual Public Lecture on 7 November 2019 at St Andrew's Cathedral provided an insightful, far-reaching and even optimistic guide through what she called, "The Pleasures of Pessimism: On hope, culture and the end of the world".

With almost 200 in attendance, Moore — a Research Fellow at the Centre for Public Christianity who has written on topics such as politics, books, domestic violence, food, and freedom of speech — explored why we often find ourselves intrigued by the dark side of life.

Within the context of an increasingly pessimistic culture, where daily news, publications, even emails highlight what she calls "a collective panic attack", Moore drew from young adult fiction, political commentary, social media, even popular comedians, to show how pessimism can blind, polarise and paralyse us. Yet, she noted, for Christians, the challenge is how to live in a healthy tension between gospel hope and realistic pessimism.

Moore's premise was clear: "many of us (in 2019) have a creeping sense that things are getting worse. With this post-antibiotic age, populism, transhumanism, not to mention the cascading effects of climate change ... are we more fearful than our ancestors? Should we be? Or as one writer put it, is our attempt to abolish anxiety making us anxious?"

One problem with the constant background noise of all this, Moore said, is that it can be harder to distinguish what is most serious and urgent from an authentic sense of crisis. "Our general optimism or pessimism about the future has huge implications for how and whether we can muster the collective will to tackle the genuine crises we face," she said.



Pictured: Dr Natasha Moore delivers the 2019 Annual Public Lecture in St Andrew's Cathedral.

"It doesn't help that actually, in most realms, humans are bad at predicting the future," Moore noted before citing several historic examples of doomsday forecasting gone awry. Yet, "the more respectable face of our dark draw to destruction is to be found in a more or less healthy dissatisfaction with the current state of things."

If we're prone to such perceptions, how are Christians to navigate today's cultural pessimism?

Carefully, Moore said, keeping always a keen eye on the duality of human nature and avoiding extremes.

"The Christian doctrine of original sin — the apparently harsh judgment that we are both corrupt and shockingly corruptible — necessitated a system of checks and balances; a system that did not allow too much power to any one individual or institution," she said. "Strangely, it's the affirmation of the darkness and incorrigible self-deception of our hearts that proves kind — that gives us the wriggle room to give each other the wriggle room to fail, and to build. A sunny optimism about human nature, on the other hand, has a way of making us cynical, and our social systems brittle and volatile."

Moore concluded with the promise of hope, a reminder of what humanity can accomplish for the good of the world, even in the face of grim times. "I believe that in the economy of the Creator, we don't have to choose between doing the things that bring people out of poverty and the things that shore up human freedom and the things that conserve and renew the earth and the things that lead to strong communities," said Moore.

Moore's recent book, *For the Love of God: How the church is better and worse than you ever imagined*, was on sale for the first time at the Annual Lecture and is based on the Centre for Public Christianity's documentary of the same title. The book recently took out the 2020 Australian Christian Book of the Year award. 2020 has also seen Dr Moore develop her ADM lecture into a book, *The Pleasures of Pessimism*, published by Acorn Press.

With a PhD in English Literature from the University of Cambridge, Moore is also the

For Christians, the challenge is how to live in a healthy tension between gospel hope and realistic pessimism.

author of *Victorian Poetry and Modern Life: The Unpoetical Age* and is currently working on numerous other writing projects.

“ADM’s Annual Public Lecture provides a platform for Christian women who are established leaders in their field, and who model a distinctive approach to Christian public engagement,” said Dr Annette Pierdziwol, ADM’s Director of Public Engagement. “Since Dr Moore is one of Australia’s most distinctive public commentators on Christianity and culture, we feel very privileged to have her give the lecture and explore such a crucial topic for us today.”

Or as Moore put it, “I wish us the pessimism to look unflinchingly at the problems, and the optimism to dig for the opportunities hiding beneath them.”

> Watch Dr Moore’s lecture at: deaconessministries.org.au/annual-public-lecture-2019



Pictured: Dr Natasha Moore with Dr Meredith Lake who addressed the 2018 Annual Public Lecture (top); attendees; ADM Board Chair Rev. Jenni Stoddart with Dr Natasha Moore, Dr Kate Harrison Brennan, Dr Annette Pierdziwol and Brooke Prentis.

Q&A THEN CAME A PANDEMIC

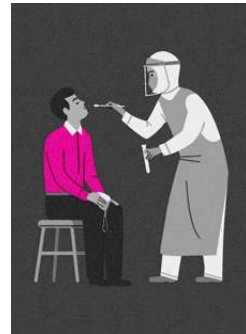
Four months after the Annual Public Lecture the world was hit by a ‘genuine crisis’. We caught up with Dr Moore to hear her thoughts and perspectives.

Q In November 2019, you framed your ADM Annual Public Lecture, around the premise that many of us have “a creeping sense that things are getting worse”. Then a pandemic hit in March 2020. How did you know?

A I just know things, guys. Seriously, though, a lot of what I wanted to say around pessimism and optimism hinged on the idea that, increasingly, we treat everything like a crisis, even stuff that’s really not. Our thinking habits, our habits of consuming news, our filter for understanding the world around us, have all become quite apocalyptic. So finding ourselves right in the middle of an immediate, incontrovertible crisis has for me been a chance to go back over some of my arguments from 2019 and see if they still hold!

Q What has been ‘redemptive’ for you during this time at home?

A When everything hit the fan, it was at a time that felt even more over-scheduled and unmanageable than usual. As an introvert, I’ve long lived by the ‘best plans are cancelled



plans’ mantra, and everything suddenly being cancelled — though the by-product of something so awful — has been clarifying for me in terms of understanding how I function best and what’s important. One thing I’ve been trying to do — after two decades as a Christian! — is learn to pray, to be more sincere, constant and brave in prayer. Increased solitude is good for that, though I’ve also been pursuing it alongside others, reading and zooming.

Q You ended your November lecture by wishing us “the pessimism to look unflinchingly at the problems, and the optimism to dig for the opportunities hiding beneath them.” Any new insights for the church?

A It seems a lot of people are wondering out loud how we might leverage this disruption of ‘business as usual’ to

create lasting change in the way we do things, from the personal to the social/structural. I don’t feel so optimistic about that; it seems to me that the pull of the status quo is strong, and we collectively gravitate towards ‘normal’ as soon as we’re given the chance (for better and for worse). Which isn’t to say we shouldn’t try.

CRISIS CAN BE A CATALYST. CHURCH COMMUNITIES ARE WELL PLACED TO SUPPORT PEOPLE IN CRISIS

I do hope this crisis at least stretches our imaginations in positive ways when it comes to living our lives together. Eventually, that should filter through to genuine change. This does present many of us with the opportunity for more deliberateness in our lives. After all, ‘Apocalypse’ is ‘revelation’; among other things, it reveals us to ourselves. Crisis can be a catalyst. Church communities are well placed to support people in crisis, to invite them to lean into the discomfort of existential questions. As the psalmist put it, we can “taste and see that the Lord is good”!



2020 SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY CULTURE & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

ON HOPE: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND PRAYER
SHAPES THIRD ANNUAL SUMMER SCHOOL

By Jo Kadlecek

It's not always easy creating space in a busy city for theological reflection, even when the ideas shaping culture require it for today's followers of Christ. So when almost 300 women and men from six states and three countries gathered in January for ADM's third annual School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement (STCPE), it took summer holidays to a new level.

Participants explored topics such as how best to reach the nations in a broken world, political theology, suicide prevention, Shakespeare, singleness in the church and a host of other current issues with practical implications for Christian life in the public square. The three-day summer school — sponsored this year by the

Australian College of Theology — included 24 unique masterclasses as well as three evening events with leading Christian thinkers from around the world.

"Each time I come to ADM I feel as if I have come home, to a place where people are connected and are on the same pilgrimage I am aiming to be on," said Dr Sarah C. Williams, Research Professor in the History of Christianity at Regent College Vancouver and Research Associate at St Benet's Hall Oxford.

Sarah spoke at two evening events: one on a panel entitled 'Faith in Action: Past, Present and Future' with Meredith Lake (moderator), Tim Costello, Brooke Prentis and Jacob Sarkodee, and another at the closing reception with a keynote on 'Prayer, Agency and Cultural Transformation' (read an excerpt on page 66). Sarah also taught a two-part masterclass on the theology of first wave feminism where she explored what Christianity teaches us about what it means to be human in various cultural contexts, citing specific case studies of Christian women in history.

"Jesus doesn't just point to the goodness of God — he is the goodness of God," Sarah said in her keynote. "We're transformed in his presence when we stay in prayer long enough. In the modern paradigm we've believed in our own agency to change the world. But prayer (for women in history like Josephine Butler) was a transformative embodied practice, a pedagogy of justice and hope."

The idea of hope and prayer emerged as a recurring theme throughout the week. Executive Director of Micah Australia and a Senior Fellow of the Centre for Public Christianity, Tim Costello,



taught a sold-out masterclass, 'Hope: the world as it is and as it can be'. He drew on his lifetime of leadership experience in public ministry, advocacy and social impact to share his vision for how the Church can and must be a compelling force for good in every corner of the globe.

"The importance of the Christian hope is what has sustained me, and what I've learned again and again through the study of suicide prevention," said Dr Karen E. Mason, Professor of Counselling and Psychology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston where she is also the Director of the Hamilton Counselling Program. With over 15 years of experience equipping others on suicide prevention in faith-based communities, Mason's two masterclasses provided practical steps for church members and ministry leaders to help care for those who might be thinking of taking their life. Sarah and Rev. Dr Keith Condie, Co-Directors of ADM's Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute who also taught a masterclass on wellbeing, moderated an evening dinner discussion with Mason on 'Integrating Theology and Psychology'. Mason was also a guest of Pastor Dominic Steel's show, *The Pastor's Heart* where she discussed practical care for families, theological support for life, and even how pastors might conduct funeral services.

"We need to create a sense of community that opens up authenticity and vulnerability, not only a space where people feel as if they matter and belong," Mason said. "This is the difference between community and deep community."

Other masterclasses took participants on a deep

"WE NEED TO CREATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY THAT OPENS UP AUTHENTICITY AND VULNERABILITY."

Dr Karen E. Mason

dive into theology: Rev. Dr Andrew Cameron, Director of St Mark's National Theological Centre, taught two masterclasses on 'Public Theology' and 'Political Theology,' while Rev. Dr Michael Jensen taught on theological anthropology and genre. Engagement with key figures in the history of Christian thought was another theme, with Rhys Bezzant from Ridley College helping participants get to know the work of Jonathan Edwards, while ADM Senior Research Fellow Dr Roberta Kwan explored Shakespeare and ADM Senior Research Fellow Rev. Dani Treweek took her masterclass on a tour through the surprising history of singleness.

Other culturally relevant topics for work and ministry included ADM Senior Fellow Brooke Prentis's class on 'Taking the Aboriginal Hand of Friendship' and Rev. Erica Hamence (St Barnabas Broadway) on 'Crafting Sermons for Real Life', Stephanie Dunk (COO at ADM) on goal-setting and Mark Stephens from the Centre for Public Christianity on meekness and weakness in an argument culture. All provided insights for developing practical skills.

Bronwyn Lea, California-based author and editor of *Propel Sophia's* online discipleship resource for women, taught two courses on writing for the Internet, providing tips on how to improve as both writers and readers to better serve audiences.



Pictured left: Tim Costello, Brooke Prentis, Jacob Sarkodee and Sarah C. Williams speak at the Panel event 'Faith in Action: Past, Present and Future'



“EACH TIME I COME TO ADM I FEEL AS IF I HAVE COME HOME, TO A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED AND ARE ON THE SAME PILGRIMAGE I AM AIMING TO BE ON”

Dr Sarah C. Williams



“It’s imperative to be an attentive reader before you try and learn how to perfect your writing,” Lea said. “Your words need to be more than the grades you earned in high school; they do not necessarily need to be more complex but rather more specific to keep your readers with such important gospel insights.”

Rev. Dr Michael Jensen and Rev. Megan Powell du Toit, co-hosts of the *Eternity* podcast *With All Due Respect*, discussed how to have meaningful conversations even in disagreement. Their masterclass on podcasting — where they also recorded one of their shows — reflected both their approach and their goals for modelling helpful and respectful dialogue.

“I believe in the sovereignty and grace of forgiveness, which helps me not to be anxious,” Jensen said. “If you are doing podcasting right, it should hurt, because podcasting is an intimate way to communicate. You are connecting with



the audience using your voice, stepping into the most intimate of spaces for people such as their home, car, or in their head. We have a great responsibility to one another.”

Through the range of masterclasses to the countless conversations over tea, participants gained a renewed and shared sense of gospel hope for their workplace and communities, as well as a serious challenge to prayer. As Williams said, “The one who prays is set free from enculturation — freed from the prevailing mindsets, the assumptions, the lies and distortions of our culture that flood who we are as we meet with God in prayer, freed and drawn into active agency with God to mobilise and affect deep and lasting change.” ●

Pictured from top: CPX speaker Tim Costello enjoys a masterclass; attendees in discussion; Bronwyn Lea of *Propel Sophia* teaches her masterclass on writing for the Internet.

First person conversations:

A response to the 2020 fires

By Emma Pitman

Viv and her husband Marty Quee pastor a church on the South Coast in the coastal town of Sussex Inlet. It is a small town of 4,000 that booms to 20,000 in the summer months. January of 2020, though, looked very different as fires tore through the South Coast, altering the sky, the land, and everything in between.

It wasn’t an easy decision for Viv and Marty to make, leaving their home for a few days to attend ADM’s School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement where I first met Viv. When I ask her what it’s like to be here, she says, “surreal.”

“Looking back on it now, being up here in Sydney in another different bubble (the fire) seems like a bad dream,” she whispered.

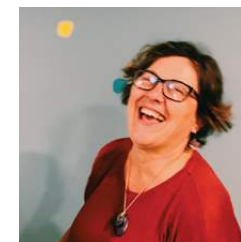
As we spoke in between masterclasses, I tried to wrap my head around what it would feel like to come from her fire ravaged small town, to a theology and public engagement conference in the city. I couldn’t help but see the gospel as the common thread for Viv. The question of what it means to be a person of faith, a Christian voice and leader in a hurting world, is one that many of us, whatever our context, are asking.

The more we talked, the more it became clear that Viv had some answers to this question. I could track where faith, hope and love all appear in her story, what forms they take for her personally, and how they inform her desire to serve. Her story is full of reflections on her community, both parishioners and those she knows as a neighbour or through her work at the local cinema.

Viv reflected an awareness that comes when crisis hits individuals on the margins. She did a lot of the practical and relational work, calling parishioners, or people in the community who she knew were vulnerable: the elderly, those who lived on their own and without transport, people whose mobility was limited, as well as others on the margins of a community who sometimes found themselves scapegoated during a crisis. Viv talked, for instance, about how the Indian owner of the petrol station was harassed and threatened because of the price of the petrol, and how other misinformation was being spread about him. She sought him out, shook his hand, and apologised for what he was experiencing.

“When I couldn’t get through to someone on the phone, I’d get in the car and drive to their places, even the people I didn’t know,” she said. Apparently, the Buy/Swap/Sell Facebook group for Sussex Inlet had become a go-to space for information and networking so Viv responded.

“People were asking how bad things were,” she said. “People from Sweden or New Zealand with loved ones in Sussex Inlet who couldn’t contact them got in



What kind of hope can we offer those who don’t share our faith? How can we, as imitators of Christ, reflect his love? A love that drives out fear by addressing it, not dismissing it?

touch. I offered to call in on them and report back and I’m glad I was able to help.”

It was an atmosphere of valid fear, and I could tell Viv had responded to it in love, by checking on others, and then reassuring their loved ones.

I thought of the familiar scripture in 1 John, “Perfect love drives out fear” as I listened to Viv and what the mechanics of this looked like in the face of a crisis like the fires. When the sky was black and the southerly was coming, carrying with it the debris of encroaching fires both proof and promise of destruction, fear was as pervasive as the smoke. And yet God’s love somehow anchored those who cried out for help.

At the end of our conversation, Viv considered how we might be able to help others have hope in the midst of tragedy and fear. What kind of hope can we offer those who don’t share our faith? How can we, as imitators of Christ, reflect his love? A love that drives out fear by addressing it, not dismissing it? A love that displaces fear, without shaming those who are afraid?

“On the day when the fires came closest to the house, I admit I panicked. The darkness was apocalyptic and gusts of wind were rolling in. My main concern was ember attack,” Viv said. She rushed out of the house with her dogs, her daughter and a guest, (Marty was at the shops) and drove up to a little flat they had been offered on safer land. As the southerly finally passed, Viv received a text from a new friend in Sweden who was checking in to see how it was going.

“It was really bad at that moment, very distressing, and yet this woman I didn’t really know said, ‘Peace, Viv. You can have courage.’” Viv’s fear was being addressed in love. She wasn’t judged for being afraid, but reminded of something bigger, of the peace available when we trust God.

When I asked how the historic fires affected her faith, whether positively or negatively, Viv didn’t flinch: “Positive for sure. That southerly should have led to ember attack. I felt like I watched something miraculous.”

Even as she said the word, she seemed surprised, like she was defying her own doubts. Yet, her hope increased as she remembered how so many people all over the world were praying for Australia.

“When I talk about it now, I hope that people will recognise God at work,” she said. “I believe that’s what it was. Maybe it will lead to more conversations about hard things, like fear and death, and about how God’s love challenges both.”

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An ADM 2019 Creative Fellow, Emma Pitman is a Sydney-based writer.



PRAYER, AGENCY AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

By union with the divine and concentration on something that you will, you create an atmosphere, a circle around you, unseen but real. In holding to God, you and He together, hold and wield (if you will it) a vast creating energy and power. [“Thou shalt decree a thing and it shall be established unto thee.”] Nothing shall be impossible...

Josephine Butler*

By Dr Sarah C. Williams

This quotation distils Josephine Butler’s perception of prayer. This is an area I wish to focus on: not prayer as a prelude to action but as the most important activity in which we can ever engage, and as the practice around which all other activity in our lives needs to revolve.

Contained within a letter written in 1904 to a friend with whom Butler prayed for over 30 years, the quote shows that for Butler, prayer was the first and all-encompassing act to which the follower of Jesus Christ is called. It

is in prayer that we participate with God to ‘mould the course of our culture.’ It is powerful, politically transformative and socially disruptive. In prayer, history itself is moved as the individual is drawn into union with God.

Butler was a 19th century Christian feminist, the mother of modern ideological feminism and many called her the most distinguished woman of the 19th century. Her understanding of the practice of prayer is a lens through which to reconsider how we think about public leadership and political engagement as Christians, and how we imagine cultural change.

All too often we separate the personal and the political. We talk and think in the abstract. But as we bring the ordinary spiritual practices of a woman into dialogue with existing theories

of change, we’ll see that prayer was the pivotal element in a radical socio-political vision within the mainstream of first-wave feminism.

Prayer was the crux of Butler’s political philosophy. It was in and through the practice of prayer that she addressed the key challenge of her day, namely the inequality between men and women, the inequalities of the social, cultural and political treatment of women under the law. Her leadership offered a new way of perceiving things. At its centre was the outcast woman, the object of contemporary fear, hatred and lust. Nurtured in prayer, Butler’s ability to re-imagine the prostitute as a human being with dignity, voice, and equal worth before the law was the centre of her leadership.

Imagination as the link

Imagination linked Butler’s understanding of the practice of prayer to her social, political and cultural imagination. What do I mean when I use the word ‘imagination’? It is deeply rooted in the unconscious as well as the conscious dimensions of who we are as people, a crucial faculty through which we generate and bring into being our concepts and ways of thinking which are not immediately present to the senses.

But imagination is not neutral, in the sense of a gift we’re born with; rather, it is a dimension of the self that must be nurtured and cultivated. It can contract and expand, it can be rich or scant.

We talk often about training the character but less often about cultivating the imagination, and yet the imagination is the crucial perspectival lens



“We talk often about training the character but less often about cultivating the imagination and yet the imagination is the crucial perspectival lens through which our characters are shaped and out of which we lead.”

Pictured: Sarah Williams prays with 2019 Annual Funding Event awardee Jessica Chilton (far left); Sarah Williams at the School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement (top) and a portrait of Josephine Butler (top left).

through which our characters are shaped and out of which we lead. It is certainly the faculty that determines the degree to which we’re able to be genuinely creative people.

Surprisingly little has been written on prayer and first wave feminism, but a great many people have written theories of change. Secular and Christian thinkers have theorised in great detail about the ways in which cultures change over time. But oddly, whilst a tacit nod has been made to prayer as a dynamic in change, in what ways and how prayer changes culture, is strangely ignored and so are individual people who pray. The theories are oddly emptied of the flesh and blood realities of ordinary people’s everyday lives, embracing ideas rather than practices.

Yet in exploring three facets of Butler’s imagination, we see not only how they shaped

her character and the nature of her leadership but her social and political vision as well:

First, in the connection between grief and the cultivation of Butler’s imagination, we see prayer as a pedagogy of justice, often costly and painful.

Secondly, in the relationship between practices and hope — what we might call the habits of her imagination — we see the practices of prayer that change our perception of reality and hope.

Thirdly, in the discursive language of the imagination, we see the way in which Butler’s imagination enabled her to articulate an alternative social and political consciousness.

Pain, hope, and language: we are in one sense moving from the intimate creation of perception to engagement in the public realm. Yet we must remember the order here. Not prayer in order to act, but prayer that gives rise to action.

For how do we imagine cultures change? What do we believe agency is, if not a call to pray: to form networks of prayer, supporting one another, praying with those on the margins, as Butler modelled for us? ●

*Letter to Miss Forsaith, 1904, printed in, Arthur Stanley George Butler, *Portrait of Josephine Butler* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd. 1954), 179.

> This is an excerpt from Dr Williams’s lecture at ADM’s 2020 School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement. To watch the lecture visit: deaconessministries.org.au/sarahwilliams

OUR TEAM

The ADM team was invited to begin working remotely in March of 2020, protecting the safety of our staff, students and wider community. We have continued to meet, plan and pray together online.

STEPHANIE DUNK Chief of Operations	CATHERINE SMITH Studio Manager & Senior Designer	JO KADLECEK GILBERT Creative Director	MARYANNE DAVIS Acting CEO	KEN BREAKSPEAR Company Secretary
SUSAN PHILLIPS Senior Program Administrator	REV. DR KATY SMITH Principal, Mary Andrews College	MARINA BEYNER Executive Assistant to CEO/Office Manager	ANNA MCCARTHY Registration Officer, Mary Andrews College	SARAH CONDIE Co-Director, Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute
BONNIE ROZORIO Communications Manager	SARAH BARRY Registrar, Mary Andrews College	REV. DR KEITH CONDIE Co-Director, Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute	RYAN CARTER Operations Officer (IT and Program Support)	LIBBY SANDERS Program Manager, Mercy & Justice
AMELIA SCHWARZE Domestic Violence Area Specialist and Program Officer	DR ANNETTE PIERDZIWOL Director of Public Engagement	BRANDON TENG Junior Operations Officer	MYRA ROSOLEN Senior Accountant	LAUREN MILLER Office Assistant

Also on staff:

Dr Kate Harrison Brennan (CEO), **Kim Robinson** (Librarian, Mary Andrews College), **Barbara Van Waart** (Assistant Librarian, Mary Andrews College) and **Jacinth Myles** (Deaconess Chaplain).



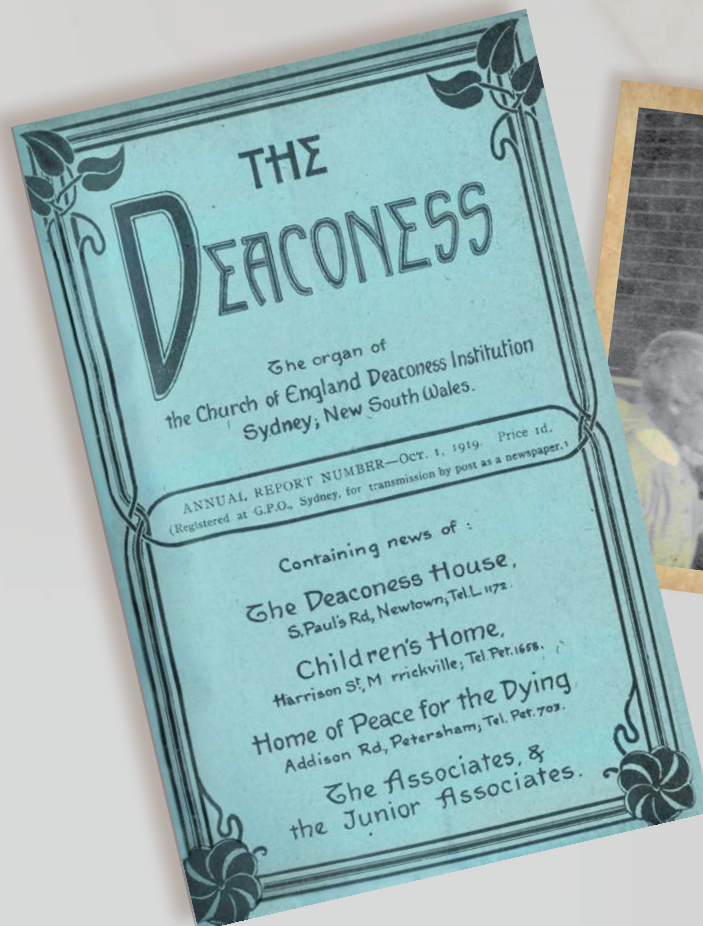
“A BOND OF UNION AND SYMPATHY”

100 years ago, deaconesses battled the Influenza epidemic

They didn't have Zoom. But the deaconesses in Sydney were well prepared to care for those around them during the great Spanish flu of 1919. Despite a swift quarantine response in October 1918 across the country, cases of Spanish flu began to appear in Australia in early 1919. NSW was the first state to declare an outbreak on 27 January 1919. About 40 per cent of the population became ill and around 15,000 died as the virus spread. At just under a quarter of the country's 62,000 death toll from World War I, Australia's death rate of 2.7 per 1,000 of population was still one of the lowest recorded of any country during the pandemic. Nevertheless, up to 40 per cent of the population were infected, and some Aboriginal communities recorded a mortality rate of 50 per cent.*

For the deaconesses, 'the influenza epidemic' meant bush work had to shut down, visitors at the children's home kept away, home visits became dangerous, donation drives and meetings were cancelled, and a new wing on the Home of Peace for the dying had to be built to contain more beds, forming part of a new hospital. And yet the deaconesses remained faithful and grateful for each opportunity God gave them to serve and provide for others, in the faithful ways God had provided for them.

Thankfully for us, they also recorded their experiences through the lens of their faith. The following highlights are taken directly from the October 1, 1919, Church of England Deaconess Institution, Annual Report:



^ A group of deaconesses on the front steps of Deaconess House in 1919.

< 'The Deaconess' cover of the 1919 Annual Report of the Church of England Deaconess Institution.

Church of England Deaconess Institution.

ANNUAL REPORT.

In no institution can there be a greater realisation of the blessings that peace can bring to the world. Has not all our work been touched by the wreckage of war? What numberless homes have we not seen saddened, full of sorrowful, anxious, broken hearts; we have seen broken homes too, and numberless problems very difficult to ravel out and solve. These still continue though peace has come, for many of the wounds of war can never be healed. Still, hope is in the air, for home love is seen on many sides, welcoming dear ones back from the fray, and as our Deaconesses go in and out amongst the sorrowful and the joyful, they seek to lead men and women, and boys and girls too, to acknowledge and worship again the Prince of Peace, Who alone can help us to work out the blessings of the peace He came to give the world.

Our beautiful home has continued to justify its existence during the past year. Every new visitor admires it, and to the younger ones the house itself offers an invitation to come and join our ranks, which we pray may be the result in not a few instances.

Deaconesses and students have been working regularly in eight of the largest and most thickly populated parishes in Sydney. Seven factories have been visited weekly, with dinner hour services and talks with the girls. An unusually warm welcome was given if absence had been caused by illness, the epidemic causing a bond of union and sympathy. It also necessitated a reduction in the number of meetings held, but much good work has been done in the house-to-house visiting, and many cases which might have been overlooked and were put into touch with the Red Cross, nursing secured for many and relief for those whose wage-earners were in hospital.

Influenza has been responsible for the curtailment of much of this year's bush work, as an urgent call came from Wonthaggi last March to come and help in relief work. Yet we have to thank all the Associates, Junior Associates, members of circles, and other kind friends for the way in which they have stood by us all through war time and during the recent epidemics. We humbly thank God that though our students daily visited in their districts, bringing comfort and help to so many distressed and helpless people, no really serious case developed in Deaconess House itself. We are sure that the airy, sanitary home in which we now live contributed not a little to the result, combined with the conscientious carrying out of medical precautions by the members of the household.

It has been our privilege (at the Deaconess Home of Peace for the dying) to help as many as sixty-nine sick ones during the year, of whom fifty four have passed 'within the veil' — the total number received since the Home was opened being 676. There have been times when it was difficult to obtain adequate help for the nursing, owing to the epidemic of influenza, but the Matron and Staff were untiring in their service.

Another year has come and gone — a year of joys and sorrows. Is not life a round of ups and down? And yet, there is always something to be glad about, for life is full of compensations.

*Resources: www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/influenza-pandemic; Deaconess Institution Annual Reports, 1915-1931.

A PRAYER FOR ADM

from Kate Harrison Brennan

As I concluded my time as CEO of ADM, I found myself looking to established forms of prayer to pray for all those at ADM, and those whom we serve. I hope that in sharing some of these here, they encourage you to prayer as well.

– Dr Kate Harrison Brennan, CEO from 2015-2020

God, our maker and redeemer, who, throughout history has called women to serve you, to preach the gospel in word and deed and to point to the coming of your Kingdom, grant that ADM may continue to be firmly grounded in the truth of the gospel, and may be faithful to its teaching.

Lord, you have raised up women throughout the ages and we remember how you have built up your Church through the love and devotion of the deaconesses: inspire us to follow their example that we may in our generation rejoice with them in the vision of your glory.

Hear our prayer which we offer for all faithful women, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth, being intrepid ambassadors for you.

Direct, in our time, we pray, women who speak where many listen and write what many read; that they may do their part in making the heart of this people wise, its mind sound, and its will righteous.

Be ever present, we pray, with your women who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth. Grant to them even now glimpses of your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore.

Strengthen, in particular, we pray, female Aboriginal Christians. Bless them and make their paths straight. Enable us to walk together in love.

God of hope, we give thanks for the gifts, leadership and contributions of women in all areas of life and society. Embolden their vision and put courage in their hearts. Bless, Lord, all those men who lay down their own privileges for the sake of women and who seek to champion women in all parts of our communal life.

We remember before you, almighty and merciful God, poor and vulnerable women and children, especially those who suffer domestic violence, and those who experience mental illness. Provide them with safety and wellbeing, Lord. And through our prayers, may our own hearts be transformed to work for justice and mercy.

Abide with us, Lord, we pray, through these difficult times with the spread of COVID-19. Be present to all those who are ill, fearful and lonely, and with those who serve and care. Pour out your common grace upon your world, holding back this virus, and upholding those in need.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



Kate with a group of retired deaconesses in 2016 at the service to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Deaconess Institute.



Kate joins with Ken Breakspear to open the new space for ADM offices and Mary Andrews College in 2017.



Kate with the Micah Australia delegation of female Christian leaders in Canberra in 2018, advocating for Australia's commitment to foreign aid.



Kate at the 2018 launch of the 'Building a Safe & Strong Marriage' course, created by the Mental Health & Pastoral Care Institute.



Kate with Dr Meredith Lake at ADM's 2018 Annual Public Lecture 'Beautiful Lies? History, religion and our common life', delivered by Dr Lake.



Broadcasting the vision of ADM

On Sunday 13 October 2019, the ABC's religion program *Compass* aired a 30-minute television documentary on Anglican Deaconess Ministries, capturing a glimpse of ADM's 129-year history and into our current ministries.

'Women Who Do' showed how an outside television crew perceived the work of ADM, chronicling our history of early deaconesses in hospitals, schools and children's homes and introducing viewers to some of ADM's current ministries including Mary Andrews College and ADM's Annual Funding Event. It also showcased creative projects from ADM Fellows and their impact in our culture.

The episode — which was replayed for International Women's Day in March 2020 — reflected the many ways ADM has responded to changing contexts and needs in raising up women with theological formation for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus. And because of the show's national reach, ADM and MAC received several inquiries about theological training and various ministries. A handful of women have even enrolled in MAC courses because of the *Compass* program!

"I had seen a very interesting documentary on ABC's *Compass* about Anglican Deaconess Ministries. I was inspired to get involved," said Bron, who first heard about ADM and MAC through the documentary. Bron is enthusiastic about beginning her first semester at Mary Andrews College this year, sharing "I am excited to delve deeper into my understanding of the Bible, and how this shapes my perspective and ability to share the gospel with others."

Pictured (from top): Mary Andrews works with women and their families in Erskineville, Sydney; Deaconess Pattie Mutton reminisces about her work as a deaconess at the Children's Hospital in Camperdown in the 1970's and her involvement in the Healing Ministry at St Andrew's Cathedral; Rachel Golding talks about her initiative 'Dinner on the Table'; Mary Andrews College graduate Katie Thompson helps a young refugee in Greenacre with his English skills.

> To catch a sense of ADM's work and vision, visit: deaconessministries.org.au/women-who-do



FAITH IS NEVER FOUND ALONE

but produces a transformed life of holiness and good works.

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 @flourishADM

Flourish was produced by Anglican Deaconess Ministries, 2020

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SEEING WOMEN FROM GENERATION
TO GENERATION

flourish

IN KINGDOM WORK



Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Psalm 136: 1