

How do we do ministry in a contemporary and modern setting?

That is what this journal attempts to answer, and this issue is filled with some great discussions of that very question. This issue contains a pastoral reflection, five research articles and seven book reviews.

These articles address significant issues such as women in leadership, three articles on intercultural ministry, and one article on why young adults leave the church. These articles demonstrate the changing culture that the church exists in: one where there is an increasing (good) demand for gender equity, where diverse cultures are increasingly intermingling which presents both challenges and beautiful opportunities, and where young adults are increasingly leaving the church. This changing context calls for new practices, new approaches, new mindsets to what it means to do and be the church, and what it means to do ministry.

All of these articles went through a rigorous double blind peer review process and were subject to various rounds of revisions – proving the quality, determination, and value of these articles and their authors.

First, we have **Dr Sue Holdsworth** who explores how volunteers in intercultural pastoral care express Jesus' command to love God and one another – and shows how hospitality, active listening, and nurturing relationships can strengthen church ministry towards migrant communities.

Second is **Dr Daisy William**, who also explores ministry to migrants through an informal English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching program. William's findings add to those by Holdsworth that it was through the caring Christian community that participants encountered Jesus – rather than through a formal devotion, sermon or Bible study.

Third is **Nathan Polley** and **Ky Vannary**, explore the concept of *koinonia* (fellowship) in the context of a Cambodian ministry to help rescue women from prostitution. The authors find that a holistic, community-driven approach integrating spiritual,

relational, and vocational support is needed in this context. This weaving of community is clear so far.

The fourth article is by yours truly, **Tim Mullen**, where I explored why young adults are disengaging from the church – and I found that religious dogmatism is what causes young people to leave the church. I call my readers to consider using open dialogue and relationally inclusive approaches – something that continues this weaving of the importance of love, community, and humility.

In line with inclusivity, fifth is **Reverend Karen Haynes** and **Dr Pam Condie**, who explore the history of the Baptist Church in Queensland with regard to approving women's ordination in 2024. This article is a fascinating discussion of why this took so long for approval, where other states had approved women to be ordained long prior. While this article does not explore the same themes of community, and the love of Jesus explicitly, there is much to be said for how the church can express its love to women by freeing them to do what God has gifted them to do. That would be a truly loving and inclusive church community.

Then is a pastoral reflection by **Neville Carr**, which builds this emphasis on love for one another and the community of faith by challenging readers to consider how pastoral care is not only the job of the pastor – but a responsibility and joy which all congregants can partake in.

Finally, we have seven book reviews, which are stimulating and engaging. Thank you to Stephen Parker for editing this section.

There are clear questions that these articles cause us to consider in our contemporary ministry:

1. How am I being inclusive and creating belonging? How am I removing barriers that alienate people from the church?
2. How am I participating in creating a caring, supportive and healing church environment?
3. How am I balancing tradition (and doctrine) with adaptability and humble dialogue?

4. How am I extending beyond spiritual formation to engaging justice and community needs?

I truly hope that these articles, reflections, and book reviews are encouraging and edifying to you, dear reader, in your journey of faith and in wherever (and in whatever form) God is having you minister.

Tim Mullen

Editor