

# AN INSPIRING TEACHER AND FRIEND



**O**n 7 March 2001, we celebrated the life of one of the most inspiring and talented minds of Sydney Anglicanism in the late 20th century, with a funeral in St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney. Bruce Smith died on 3 March, after an all-too-short battle with leukemia, at the age of 68. Bruce's ministry stretched across four decades, in various places and roles, but it was everywhere characterised by an overwhelming love of Christ.

The younger generations remember Bruce as an outwardly alarming but inwardly charming man, an academic enthralled by the arts; someone who to the casual observer seemed eccentric or even aloof, but to those who knew

him even slightly was revealed to be an exceedingly generous and intimate friend. His unkempt, besuited presence in the bookshops of Newtown and the corridors of Moore College is greatly missed.

However, those who knew Bruce in the 60s and 70s saw an even more dominant figure in the Sydney Anglican scene. Bruce graduated from Moore College in 1952 (also gaining the bachelor of divinity from London University). He was ordained in 1956 and served in many Sydney parishes on the north shore and inner city. He was a regular media spokesperson, featuring in television debates, where he would employ his wide knowledge of philosophy and literature in

He interwove his poetry (of which he published two well-received volumes) into his sermons and shared his own deep personal grief and exhilaration as a part of the groaning creation that awaits its redemption.

Grief came to Bruce Smith through the breakdown of his marriage in the early 70s and his subsequent withdrawal from full-time theological lecturing. His public profile was greatly diminished from this point onwards, but his personal witness to Christ was unabated. Friends say that he grew as a model of God's grace and mercy until his last day.

Bruce Smith was an unusual and outstanding Christian man, a preacher and

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the service of the Christian viewpoint.

Bruce was loved as a teacher of theology who could communicate the *force* and the *feeling* of the truth. His delivery style was eloquent and virtuosic with a deep appreciation of the fact that a lecture can also be a performance.

teacher who never ceased to feel the weight of sin and the weight of glory. He leaves behind generations of Christian students and ministers who have enjoyed his theological passion and his appeal to Christ as the one who, in the end, satisfies all of our desires. ●