

New Primate Prays

As his first response to being elected Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia on 9 July 2005, Phillip Aspinall prayed. Initially daunted and increasingly aware of 'the great trust and responsibility committed' to him, prayer remains his constant ally.

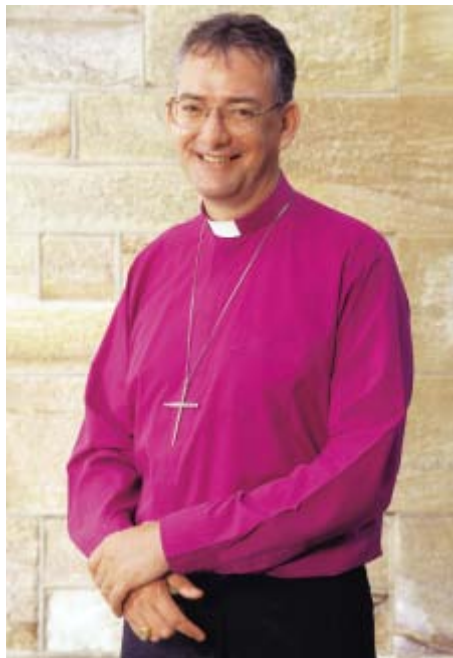
Phillip Aspinall's primacy was unique before he began in it. The 2004 General Synod fixed the term of this current Primacy to 2007, since the shape of the Primate's role will then be under discussion. But the man elected to the position told the *Record* that far from being in a 'holding pattern', there was a strong sense of getting on 'with the mission we have been called to'.

'In fact, a number of church leaders have said to me that we can't afford to be in a holding pattern, the mission before us is too urgent and we need to get on with it.'

Mission and church unity are twin themes to which the new Primate often turns. 'It is only realistic to expect disagreements and differences in a family the size and complexity of the Anglican Church of Australia.'

'The Primate has a role in the face of those dynamics to help the church remain respectful; to help the different parts of the Church listen to each other and work together through the struggles and kind of keep the family together.

'So I think the Primate needs to have a real love for the Anglican Church, an eye for all the different members of the Church, and perhaps especially for those who are least like the primate himself, I suppose, to make sure everybody is



included and makes their contribution.'

The *Record* asked how the Primate can best serve the local congregations that make up the ACA.

Archbishop Aspinall unquestionably acknowledges the efficiencies and benefits when the church acts at a local diocesan and regional level. Equally, he highlighted tasks which can be done nationally, including 'creating and sustaining a vision', keeping national church priorities 'before us' and assisting non-metropolitan dioceses with resources.

Archbishop Aspinall said no one assumes all Anglicans think and feel the same way. He said, like any group of human beings, the challenge was not in always agreeing, 'but to find ways of dealing with each other constructively and positively when we disagree.

Continued page 5

The Australian CHURCH RECORD

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"The tone of early ... New South Wales was fashioned by the evangelicals. They were the ones in the colony with power both to persuade and compel. ... only the sorry farce in their subsequent history drives the historian to search for their worm of failure."

Manning Clark, *History of Australia*, I.109.

Contents

-
- P2: A Clear Example to Follow and a Clear Command to Obey | John Chapman
- P2: New Evangelical Church for Perth | Matt Greenwood
-
- P3: Editorial
-
- P4: In layman's terms for those who's ministry is not full time | Russell Powell
- P4: Dry Land, Dry Bones | Alison Blake
-
- P5: Whom do you trust? | Chris Jolliffe
-
- P6: NEW SYNOD: First time in Synod? What's in your briefcase? | Joanna Warren
-
- P7: Decision Making in the Synod | Barry Newman
-
- P8: Oppressed by the Church, we appealed to Caesar!
- P8: What does Sydney want from a Primate | Neil Cameron
-
- P9: Protecting the Sheep against the Shepherds | Robert Tong
-
- P11: Everyone loves a mystery, except when it really matters | Mark Thompson
- P11: The Rhetoric of what we don't really know | Peter Bolt
-
- P12: 'Separation of Church and State'? A Time for increased Jingoism?

NEW COLUMNISTS DEBUT

In this issue we welcome Tim Adeney, who will help us to keep thinking relationally; and Russell Powell, who will share his enthusiasm for 'lay' ministry.



When building on sand, especially above an ancient rubbish tip, one must provide your own rock. In May this year, George Whitfield College, Capetown, commenced building its new study centre. The Study Centre will stand on 35 x 8 metre steel reinforced pillars cast in holes drilled into the ground. The Centre will house the library which includes books donated from various places in Australia.

A Clear Example to Follow and a Clear Command to Obey

John Chapman



John Chapman told people about Jesus for many years as the Sydney Diocesan evangelist, and continues to do so now in his retirement.

He Lord Jesus is the perfect human. He is the person God meant us to be. He is the person we will be like in glory. It is the great work of the Holy Spirit to make us Christ-like, and nothing will prevent him from accomplishing this work.

Have you noticed the Christ-like characteristic described in Matthew 9: 35-38:

36When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

When He saw the true condition of the people around him his heart was filled with compassion – just like when He raised the widow’s son at Nain; or when the Father loved the world so that he sent his only begotten Son to die for us.

If I am to look at the world around me through the ‘eyes’ of the Lord Jesus Christ I too will see that, apart from Christ, they are ‘harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd’. If I am to be Christ-like I should be ‘filled with compassion’. I am to long for the salvation of people who are apart from Christ. They are in desperate plight. They are lost, blind, dead, and helpless. They are without hope for the future and without a guide through life now. They are to be pitied. No matter how well secure they may appear to be, their position is desperate. They are just like us before Christ saved us.

We are given a **clear example to follow**. We are to love them with a view to their salvation. Can I ask you if this is so for you? I think it is easy to forget how great their need is! Do you think we need a new work of the Spirit to soften our

heart and to see them as they really are?

Not only does this passage give us a clear example to follow but it also gives us a **clear command to obey**. Our Lord Jesus tells us to ‘pray the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field.’ It seem clear to me what we are called to do. We are to pray that God will raise up more and more people to take the gospel to the lost world.

Can I ask you if you are doing that?

It is not a difficult command to obey. My experience was that as I prayed like this, it occurred to me that I could be the answer to my own prayers. I could go as a ‘workman into his harvest field’. I could seek out people and, at an appropriate time, could tell them of the One who came to seek and save the lost. There was no need for me to wait for others to go.

When I started to act like this I realised how few of us there were and, that in turn, caused me to pray more that the Lord of the harvest would send out more workers.

While there is still time, please ask Christ to give you the compassionate heart and please pray for more workers. ●

New Evangelical Church for Perth

Matt Greenwood



Former Sydney Anglican Minister Matt Greenwood is leading an evangelical church plant in Perth's Western Suburbs.

(“In February this year about 16 of us started meeting as a Bible study and planning group”, Matt said. “We had the first official meeting of the Western Suburbs Community Bible Church on Sunday June 12, and are now regularly getting 35 adults and 15 children.”

“Seven or eight people came to our first Newcomers Welcome Night, and all of those people have joined our first *Introducing God* group which started at the end of July.”

The decision to plant a church was only made at the end of December. Matt and his family had been on staff at an Anglican church in Perth where it was expected Matt would be appointed Rector. However, when Matt indicated he would follow through on his original indication that he would gradually introduce a more Biblical

Planting a church in such a short space of time has not been easy.

shape to the ministry of the church, the Diocese appointed someone else.

Despite discussions with several Sydney parishes, Matt and his wife Cecily could not shake the belief that they should stay in Perth if they could.



At that time Matt had a serious accident in which he sustained a number of spinal fractures and was very nearly a quadriplegic. He spent a couple of months in bed recovering, and this gave him the time to rethink his ministry options.


“I guess it’s true of everywhere, but God just made us very conscious of the need here.”

Planting a church in such a short space of time has not been easy.

Continued page 3

Editorial Looking Ahead as we Look Around

2005 is the first year of a new Synod in Sydney. These incoming Synodspeople take their place in the midst of a Diocese that has already firmly grasped 'the mission'. All diocesan institutions and organisations are busy re-thinking their very existence in terms of how they contribute towards the mission—towards reaching those around us.

 This is an important task. Jesus himself asked people to lift up their eyes to see that the fields were white for harvest. The coming of the Son of God into this world brought a new time, and mission became the priority against which all else is evaluated. Evangelism is not the only task, but it provides the overarching framework. In God's plan the Son of Man was to die, to rise again, and to launch the mission to the nations. That is where we stand

now: reaching out to those around.

One trouble with important tasks is that we don't want to trust people with them. After all, it is too important. The perceived importance of the task seems to vary inversely to the number of people who can be trusted with it. Let's not take the risk with someone untried, with little experience—the task is too important! Let's not take the risk with someone young, for goodness sake, the importance of the task demands someone at the other end of life!

judgement. He trusts the gospel, and that gospel can be in the mouth of the most inexperienced, or the most youthful, or the most inept, or the most ignorant, or the most—come to think of it, it can be in the mouth of any human being at all.

As Synod looks around in mission, it also needs to look ahead. Who will carry the gospel into the future? Where are the next generation which will continue to fight the good fight? On human standards, they will always be a risk. But if we think

The perceived importance of the task seems to vary inversely to the number of people who can be trusted with it.

But isn't it the babies' babble, praising God, that shames the wise? There is only one Messiah, and he, for some strange reason, is no respecter of age, or experience, or any of the other worldly standards or criteria of

God's thoughts after him, there is no risk, if the next generation faithfully believes. And if they do, then why not pass the ball on to them? It is only as they catch it that we will see them run. And run they will. ●

New Evangelical Church for Perth [CONTINUED]

"The most difficult thing for us is that we haven't been sent out as a core group of 30-40 people from one strong church. We have literally started from scratch with the small number of individuals who said they'd join us."

"But God has been wonderfully faithful, providing us with everything we've needed by the time we needed it. It's often been at the eleventh hour, but I think that has helped us to learn a bit more about trusting God."

While WSCBC's members expect it to be hard work, the church is looking to God to continue their growth into the future. The church is drawing on an area of about 50,000 people in which there are very few Bible-based, evangelical churches. WSCBC has made *Introducing God* the centre-piece of an outreach program and sees plenty of scope for it. They also hope to be able to start a youth ministry and another congregation early next year, if not before. There's also the intention to plant another church-

planting church in 5 years time.

"It all sounds impossibly ambitious really. But my recovery from my injuries brought home to me in a more personal way the truth that ours is a God who can do the impossible."

Matt says WSCBC's greatest needs are for prayer, financial support and for more mission-minded evangelical Christians to join them. ●

If you'd like more information about WSCBC, you can contact Matt on 0414 413 670 or matt@wscbc.org.au.

The Australian Church Record

The Australian Church Record is an evangelical newspaper in the Reformed Anglican tradition of the historic creeds and the 39 Articles of Faith, and the standard of teaching and practice in the Book of Common Prayer. We accept the Scriptures as God's word written, and as containing all things necessary for salvation and the final authority in all matters of faith and behaviour.

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In layman's terms for those who's ministry is not full time

Russell Powell



Russell Powell juggles priorities as a Christian, a father, and someone with the face for radio.

I heard an interesting interview the other day with Jimmy Carter. I've always had a soft spot for Jimmy—because of all the politicians of his era, he seemed the most genuine about Christianity. His church-going, and public God-talk was not 'put on' for the voters. One of the things I had forgotten about those days was that he taught Sunday school before becoming President. In fact, he was lampooned for that by political cartoonists, having a 'Sunday school teacher' in the White House was great fodder for the comedians.

What I didn't know, and this interview brought it out, was that he taught Sunday school whenever he could during the White House years and continues doing so today whenever he is home in Georgia. Not bad for an 80 year old who still regularly rushes around the world. The interviewer expressed surprise, the implication being that for someone who was a President of the United States and then an international troubleshooter, why bother with a group of kids in Plains, Georgia? Carter didn't see it that way at all, saying it was one of the most important things he could do, to pass on to the next generation instruction in the faith. Mind you, the Sunday school is now all-ages with an overflow for tourists who just want to meet the ex-president. But from the schedule on their website, he will only miss four Sundays in the next four months.

Do you have high-flyers in your congregation—Doctors, lawyers, MP's?

There's not a profession that could compare with the pressure of being American president—or an ex-president for that matter. The peanut farmer from Georgia had the perfect excuse to beg off from ministry commitments. They say if you want something done, give it to a busy person. I think that's true. If the busy

Do you shy away from asking the high flyers?

person has shown a capacity to handle several projects at one time, then all they need is help with the priorities. Do you shy away from asking the high flyers to become involved in ministry, because they're too busy with work? Just remember, for high flyers or for low flyers, there's always much more to do than we can possibly handle. It's a matter of priorities. Just ask Jimmy Carter. ●

Dry Land, Dry Bones

Alison Blake

Desalination plants, networked reservoirs through our suburbs, buckets in our showers to collect grey water—Australians are increasingly thinking laterally about water. We're returning to the water-wise ways of our grandparents. The people of God (and even those who hope there's a Great Rainmaker in the sky) are thinking vertically. We're praying for rain—in our church gatherings, our Bible study groups, our Sunday schools and school scripture classes. We recognize that the God who created the waters above and below, continues to rule their flow. So we ask him, in his mercy, to water our barren, dry land, and provide for those who struggle in drought. (Just as an aside, can you explain, to adults and children, from the Bible, why God may *not* send rain, in answer to our prayers?).

But I'd like to encourage you, in your prayers, to ask our Father to also water the spiritually drought-stricken and barren

people of our land. Australians (wait a minute, let's think globally, like God!), *all* people are spiritually desolate and lifeless, and will continue to be unless they come to personally know Jesus, the living water.

We need to see people as God sees them—like the Israelites in Jeremiah's time—forsaking God and feverishly pursuing a futile quest for water in cracked wells (Jeremiah 2). Without the life giving Spirit of God, people are inwardly dried up, their hope is lost and they are "clean cut off". They are lifeless, dry bones, as God showed Ezekiel in the valley (ch.37). Pray that God, in his mercy, might pour his life-giving Spirit into the spiritually desolate, enabling them to recognize their thirst and Jesus who will satisfy that thirst

Jeremiah describes those who trust in the Lord as being planted by water, sending out roots, bearing fruit and remaining green through drought. Jesus declares that rivers



Alison loves to talk about the (divine) weather.

of living water flow from the heart of those who believe in him (John 7). We who are alive are invited to partner God in his work of breathing life into "living dead". So we persevere in prayer.

Privately, with your family and as you gather with God's people, ask God to reveal Jesus to men, women and children who need to know him as the only one who can satisfy their longings, who washes us clean, who gives certain hope and lasting joy, who refreshes the weary and who gives and sustains life. Make, take and pray for opportunities to share Jesus, the water of life, as Jesus shared himself with the woman at the well. Thank God for guiding you to Christ, your spring of living water. Ask that he would keep you from turning to "broken wells" for water. ●

RELATIONSHIPS

Who is my neighbour?

Tim Adeney

The last person to ask this question ended up on the wrong end of a stinging rebuke from Jesus. So it is with caution that I reopen this question. After all, what Jesus said was clear enough; *anybody* might be our neighbour.

Which is where things start to go wrong for us; this *anybody*, it seems, is actually quite hard to find. By this I don't mean we can no longer find people to love, rather the opposite. We meet more people than we can ever hope to remember the name of, let alone pray for, let alone *love*. *Anybody* is Everywhere.

And so we seek not so much to love our neighbour, but to love the world. We set out to love *everyone*, and so we go about implementing programs that are good for people in general, perhaps not realizing that to love everyone in general is to love no-one in particular.

And it is the particular person who misses out. We leave the one before us, in search of the 99 out there.

We have missed that our neighbour is *someone*. A person with a name and (probably) an address, and they might not need what we customarily offer, but they will need, and you can love them, even if you can't love all of them. It is at once both liberating and challenging. It is liberating because we are free to respond to the call of Jesus and give ourselves over to loving some people and not others. It is challenging because we will have to **give ourselves** over to loving some people.

Remember God so loved the world. We are called to love our neighbour. It might be *anyone*, it can't be *everyone*, it must be *someone*.

Tim mingles with his neighbours in Petersham.

Whom do you trust?

Chris Jolliffe

Thursday, May 19th, the eve of Synod. Tomorrow a new archbishop for Adelaide will be elected. Four candidates have been chosen—only one, a known evangelical, and—by most people's reckoning, an 'outside chance' at best. In a Diocese where evangelicals are a minority, and a denomination where the archbishop will be chosen by majority vote, whom can we trust? With whom can we form alliances, so that a godly, gospel hearted man will be elected? Last year saw the evangelicals team up with the Anglo-Catholics at our 'no result' election synod. Like evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics also believe in the authority of the Scriptures, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and Christ's death for our sins, and also wanted an archbishop who held similarly to the truth. This year, the same alliances will be made. But is it right to put our trust in such alliances?

On the Eve of Synod we make our plans, but more importantly, we put our trust in God.

What a joy to have the scriptures, which says things as they are! It is not an archbishop, but Christ Jesus himself who is the chief shepherd of his church, who shepherds his church in conditions both good and bad (2 Peter 2:1, 5:4). Indeed, God is so sovereign that he works out everything for his own ends (Proverbs 16:4). He is the one who raises up the humble, and who brings down rulers from their thrones (Luke 1:52)—a truth particularly poignant in Adelaide! We saw it with our own eyes. History was made. Last year was the first time since the founding of Adelaide in 1836 that a minister from Holy Trinity (Adelaide's pioneer church) was appointed rector of another Adelaide Parish. The hand of

God was clear: the nominators had approached our previous archbishop; their request was dismissed, yet within weeks, the archbishop had resigned, and the acting administrator authorized the appointment. David Wright is now Rector of the Parish of Larg's Bay, exercising evangelical ministry.

So now, on the Eve of Synod, we make our plans, but more importantly, we put our trust in God. If he can direct the heart of a king like a watercourse, he certainly can direct Synod. And so we pray. Taking our cue from Hezekiah (in Isaiah 37), or from the Peter and John in Acts 4, it is precisely because God is sovereign that we can pray specifically for God to overrule. Here is an alliance we can trust!

POSTSCRIPT: Sunday May 22nd. The personal value in praying to our Sovereign LORD beforehand was that I went into Synod with a quiet confidence that God could be trusted throughout the election process. It also freed me from some of my customary defensiveness at these gatherings, and enabled me to connect well with a number of Parish priests. And the outcome? A new archbishop has been elected—Bishop Jeffrey Driver (previously the Bishop of Gippsland). God has given us an archbishop who says he believes in the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, Jesus' death for sins, and his return to judge! We remain confident—but not nervous—'cautiously optimistic' for the future, and keep praying with humility to our Sovereign LORD to prosper gospel ministry.

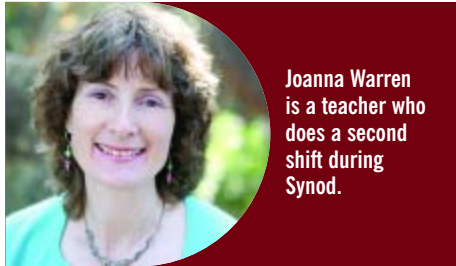


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do you want to interact about anything in ACR? Why not write a letter to
letters@australianchurchrecord.net

NEW SYNOD

First time in Synod? What's in your briefcase?

Joanna Warren



Have you been elected as a Synod rep for your parish? And will this be your first Synod? Rather like fitting together Ikea furniture, it can seem a little daunting, trying to work out what fits where, as you try to conscientiously work through all the papers, books and documents have started to come your way. In the end it all makes sense, and the nuts and bolts of information, lists and documents are assembled in their place.

Good personal preparation for Synod is really important if you want to be able to serve your congregation as well as you can, by participating intelligently in the Synod. Debate and discussion in the actual meetings often moves quite fast, so it helps if you have understood the basic issues and any underlying principles of motions or proposed legislation before you arrive. As well as reading through the materials, praying and reflecting, I have also found it useful to meet with the other reps from the parish and talk over some of the more important pieces of legislation or motions that appear on the business paper.

Now to the books and papers.

1. The hard-cover *2005 Year Book* serves as a very useful reference book for all of the organisations and many of the individuals involved in ministry in the Diocese. It includes all the office bearers of various Boards, Councils and Committees, including those of schools, colleges, welfare organisations, Standing Committee and Regional Councils. It further lists all the Anglican clergy (with contact details, as well as where they have worked) as well as details of all the parishes in Sydney (plus contact details). A very useful book if you want to

find out who does what, or if you want to contact people. It's rather heavy, so I usually don't bring it to Synod meetings, but will use it at home.

2. The newly reprinted *Acts Ordinances and Regulations* is just what it says. If you need to refer to a piece of legislation currently in force in the Diocese, especially if there is a proposed amendment to it, then this is where you find the original. If new legislation is adopted or if anything is changed, then that update will eventually be found at www.sydney.anglican.asn.au, under *Acts and Ordinances*. Reprints of the entire book are only made every few years, so in subsequent Synods, the website is the place to check for updates.

While we're mentioning the site www.sydney.anglican.asn.au it might be

It helps if you have understood the basic issues ... before you arrive.

just as well to say what else you can find there. It is the website for the Secretariat of the Diocese and has lots of useful information on how the diocese is structured. What is the Standing Committee? Who makes up the Regional Councils? This is under the heading *Administration*. There is also information about past Synods (including Business Papers) as well as information about the 2005 Session of Synod. If you feel that you don't really know what's what (let alone who's who), then this is the site for you!

3. The 3rd book you'll receive is the key to using all the others. It will be titled *2005 Session of Synod*. It contains the Report of the Standing Committee (an extended summary of the matters they have dealt with over the year), other reports and papers on various matters (including audited accounts), reports from each of the Regional Councils, and most importantly, the texts of pieces of legislation (Bills) which will come before the Synod for discussion and decision during this session

of Synod. Standing Committee's Report is well worth reading as a useful background to Synod, as well as helping to understand the processes that have resulted in Bills, Reports or Motions that are on the agenda for the Synod.

When the Business Paper for the first day of Synod arrives, you can start to see what is going to be discussed and when. Bills will be listed for debate with a page number usually referring to the Synod Handbook. When you turn to the Bill in the Handbook, you will find an explanatory statement giving the overall purposes as well as important details about the need for the Bill, and the effects of what is proposed. Following this is the actual text of the proposed legislation. If the Bill is proposing changes to current ordinances then you may very well have to go to the

Acts Ordinances & Regulations book to see the whole thing, and work out what exactly is proposed. I try to make it my practice to read through every piece of proposed legislation well before the day, scribbling notes, highlighting text and summarising my responses and concerns. If you can persuade the other Reps from your Parish to do the same, then it will be most helpful, especially if you can talk through and clarify issues beforehand. Most Rectors will have been to more Synods than you, and will have a wider background understanding of various matters to be raised as well as specific knowledge. Make sure you talk!

The other items that appear on the Business Paper for Synod are often Motions which are matters for Synod to debate and sometimes act on. Sometimes the Synod is asked to express its support or concern, establish a group to inquire, request Standing Committee to prepare legislation, or called to act in some way. These motions do not appear in the handbook, so need to be read through

and thought about on their own merits. It can be useful to find out the background of the mover—here the Year Book might help. Prayerful commonsense and Biblical thinking can often clarify the issues, and talking it through with others may reveal issues you hadn't thought of.

It helps if you have understood the basic issues ... before you arrive.

If you find that you feel strongly about any matter that is going to come up, then why not prepare to speak in Synod, if you get the call during debate. It is always best to write out what you want to say at home, so when you get to your feet, aware of hundreds of eyes all looking at you, your nervousness doesn't cause the ideas to fly out the window. Synod is always a stimulating, interesting and significant time. But it is costly on a personal level. You will need to make sure you can be at Synod as much as possible—some employers will allow you to take time off to attend, but you'll need to organise this. Personal details of work schedules and domestic arrangements might need to be changed so you have the time you need. At least 5 evenings will disappear, and after a hard day's work you will find you are doing a second shift till about 9.30pm—tiredness the next day is guaranteed!

The recently established focus of Gospel and Mission in the Synod meetings has been wonderfully refreshing. News from other parishes and countries helps to encourage us and freshen up our own local vision for mission in our suburbs. Despite the tiredness it is exciting to hear about what the Lord is doing across the Diocese and around His world, and exciting to be part of decisions that will further His kingdom. ●

PUBLIC GALLERY TO SWELL AT SYNOD

Three years into his office, the Archbishop has booked the town hall for the first night of Synod. He has issued an invitation to Sydney Anglicans to fill its chairs and balconies, to celebrate things past, and pray together for things to come.

Date: 10th October

Tickets will be required (ask your minister)

Decision Making in the Synod

Barry Newman



Many Synods have helped Barry Newman to decide about deciding.

Here is a motion up for debate. There are moves to alter an ordinance. There are amendments to consider. How should one vote? It is not always easy to decide. Perhaps the following suggestions might help.

First and foremost we need to be thinking theologically and our theology needs to be grounded in the Bible. Of course, the Bible doesn't speak definitively and directly on many, perhaps most, issues discussed at Synod. Yet even when we seek to be simply wise, if our understanding of things Christian is askew, there's a good chance our simple wisdom will be also. In fact to be truly wise is to be Biblically informed and committed.

Any Biblical understanding could become important at any time. It will depend upon the matter under discussion. However the following reformation highlights will never let us down: Christ alone, by grace alone and through faith alone, the Scriptures being our sole ultimate authority and source. If we keep this to the fore of our thinking: that there is no other name by which we can be saved other than that of Jesus Christ, and that it is by grace that we have been saved, through faith, and this not from ourselves, not by works - it is the gift of God, we will be delivered from making some serious mistakes. We need to remember that our justification and our sanctification have no meaning apart from the righteousness which is of God. Righteousness should be at the fore of our thinking. We must never forget that as his people we are his servants in and out of Synod. Our service for him and our desire for his glory should be foremost as we endeavour to make up our minds. As his servants, the mission that God has laid for gospel proclamation, the necessity of our loving one another and acting for the good of all people, should weigh upon us heavily.

Of course there are often a number of considerations that will influence any decision to be made. A motion can have some

obvious benefits as well as some obvious downsides. Yet it is often worthwhile to ask questions that flow from our Biblical commitment. Will gospel proclamation be furthered? Is this likely to lead to the saints being better equipped? Will the matter give rise to a false impression of Christ the Lord? Is it likely to benefit the rich rather than the poor? How will this affect other Christians in other places? How will it affect the way we use our money, our property and our human resources? Are injustices likely to occur? Will this result in greater glory for us or for Him?

The "Will gospel proclamation be furthered?" question is one of those very fundamental ones. However, it needs to be elaborated upon with additional issues being raised such as: Will a different solution be even better for gospel proclamation? Will such a move have longer term effects compared to another? In what ways will the gospel be better received and better understood? What other consequences will flow from such a decision? Will this help people in our society to recognise their misunderstandings of the gospel? Decision making is tricky. Yet a concern for the whole gospel to be proclaimed and understood with the consequent making of disciples is likely to serve us well as we deliberate.

Any Biblical understanding could become important at any time.

One strategy that might help from time to time is to temporarily put off our Anglicanism. Thinking only within one's denomination, let alone one's diocese or parish locality and practice, will result in significantly blinkered thinking. We are Christians first, hopefully with our strong commitment to the Bible, evangelicals second, and Anglicans third. We must not lose sight of the existence of other Christians just as we must never forget the reality of Christian activities outside of our own immediate locality. Furthermore, though we are Anglicans grateful for our heritage, we recognise, at least because of our heritage, that our beliefs and practices must from time to time come under the all-seeing-eye of Scripture. No one rightly thinking could imagine

Continued page 10

Oppressed by the Church, we appealed to Caesar!

If it wasn't bad enough for Robinson Cavalcanti, bishop of Recife, Brazil, a largely evangelical diocese in a largely liberal Province, to be deposed by the Primate of Brazil, Orlando de Oliveira, it was even worse when 37 of his supportive clergy were then deposed, without trial, leaving 90% of the Diocese's people without pastors. According to the *Church of England Newspaper's* report (18th September), this 'constitutes persecution of those who wish to uphold biblical and traditional Anglican teaching on human sexuality'. In December,

when the Primate forbade the evangelical Diocesan Synod to meet, it ignored his instruction and then registered the Synodical minutes with a civil notary. Primate Oliveira declared this synod to be void and, through Suffragan Bishop Filadelfo Oliveira, called another, without the deposed evangelical clergy. At this point, Bishop Cavalcanti turned to the civil courts: 'oppressed by the Church, we appealed to Caesar!' The Civil Court judge ruled that the December Synod was valid, and bishop (F.) Oliveira, even though acting on Primate (O.) de Oliveira's

instructions, had no authority to void acts of synod, or the power to convene a synod, but that this was, in fact, a breach of canon law.

As the orthodox clergy and congregations of the Anglican Communion are increasingly under threat of losing position and property, Christian lawyers should be thinking about how to fight the battles before the secular courts—and win! Especially when property is involved, it will no doubt come to this. This Brazilian case brings some good news on an otherwise black landscape. ●

What does Sydney want from a Primate

Neil Cameron

In one sense, it is presumptuous for me to express any view (except my own) as to what Sydney wants from a Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia.

The Primate has a number of very limited functions that are to be found in the 1961 Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia. For example

- He can convene a meeting of the house of bishops (s.12) and certify their decisions at such meetings and the number of votes cast (s. 14).
- He convenes meetings of the general synod (s. 17).
- He collects the lists of representatives of the dioceses to the general synod (s.17).
- He appoints and calls non-diocesan representatives to the general synod (s.17).
- Unless absent, he is chairman of the house of bishops and of the general synod (s.20).
- If president of the general synod, he certifies canons made by and proceedings of the general synod (s.24).

This list is not exhaustive but should be sufficient for the reader to appreciate that the constitutional role is of a fairly minor administrative nature. In particular, it gives the Primate no authority to make public statements.

The Primate has been given functions under some canons of the general synod

but, unless the canon is adopted by a diocese, the Primate has no power to intervene in the order and good government of the diocese.

The Primate must be the bishop of a diocese and that position may give him authority but only within the diocese.

What does give rise to contention is the question as to whether a Primate should do things in his capacity as Primate beyond the very limited range of tasks conferred on him by the 1961 Constitution and any relevant canons of the general synod. My view is that Sydney wants a Primate to do those things which he has been authorised to do under the 1961 Constitution and no more.

The problem, in part is that the media seek a spokesman.

The 1961 Constitution states that statements as to "the faith of this Church" may be made and views affecting "spiritual, moral or social welfare" may be expressed but this authority is given to the general synod only. The only right of a Primate to make such statements or express such views is that given to him by virtue of his office as bishop of a diocese.

Take the notorious article in the Bulletin on the Resurrection (or non-


resurrection) written by the last Primate. That could and should have stated that it was written by Dr Carnley as Archbishop of Perth. It could and should have stated that Dr Carnley did not speak for any of the other 22 Australian dioceses. The article could also have stated that Dr Carnley did not know if many Australian Anglicans agreed with him. He must have been aware that there were those who did not or were very unlikely to do so. No one then would have complained about the article or paid much notice. Regrettably, the article did not.

The problem, in part is that the media seek a spokesman, a leader who can state the views of the organisation which he "heads". The fact that the headship is nominal or even non-existent is of no concern to them. The other part of the problem is that the person who holds office as Primate may succumb to the demand of the media to speak for the Anglican Church as a whole whereas he has no authority to do so.

There is something else that, in my view, Sydney wants. That is a prompt, effective and well publicised correction by our church leaders and other ministers of wrong or inappropriate statements of the faith and wrong or inappropriate views affecting spiritual, moral or social welfare made by a Primate who exceeds his authority. ●

Changes in the Brisbane Diocese

Alan Moore

 he times they are a changing” in Brisbane Diocese, but how the changes will impact on the clergy and people of this Diocese is not at all clear to this correspondent.

THE RECENT REMOVAL of David Chislett as rector of All Saints Wickham Terrace has simply added to the questions and sense of uncertainty in the minds of many lay people and clergy.

However, what this action has made crystal clear is that the provisions of the canons can be used to act against a rector who associates with any Christian Church which is not in communion with the Anglican Church of Australia. The advice I received at the recent Brisbane Synod is that there is no other church in Australia with whom we are in communion!

On 13 July 2005, after he was just elected Primate, Archbishop Aspinall commented on the ABC Religion Report, “I want to call the 4-million or so Anglicans in Australia to a unity of commitment. We have to deal with each other with respect, especially those with whom we differ deeply. We need to be tolerant of each other and take time to work through these divisive issues, and they will be with us for some time, I think.” This led me to ask what “a unity of commitment” might involve.

The unity I see being required in action in Brisbane is uniformity to the constraints of the canons. The commitment I see in action in Brisbane is a commitment to the canons and good governance.

I would find it much more encouraging if the commitment we were being called to was to Jesus Christ as Lord.


If there was also a call to a commitment to work together to amend the canons as necessary to allow for more diversity of expression of our unity in Jesus, rather than using the canons to restrict and diminish the little diversity we currently experience, then I would be greatly encouraged.

My fear is that the changes I see developing will not lead to greater expression of genuine diversity in unity amongst Anglicans but rather a further splintering of our fragile fellowship. ●

Alan Moore is the Rector of St Andrew’s South Brisbane.

Protecting the Sheep against the Shepherds

Robert Tong

 ydney lawyer, Robert Tong, is a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Panel of Reference, which met for the first time last July in London. The Panel arose out of the Primates’ February meeting to discuss the Windsor Report. ‘In order to protect the integrity and legitimate needs of groups in serious theological dispute with their diocesan bishop, or dioceses in dispute with their Provinces’, it was set up ‘to supervise the adequacy of pastoral provisions made by any churches for such members’.

Robert is well qualified for this panel. Having served both Sydney Synod and the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia for many years, as well as being a former member of the Anglican Consultative Council, he has experience of Anglican processes from the local to the international level. As one of the editors of the *Record’s* response to the Windsor Report (see advertisement, p.10), he understands the significance of that report and the great need to protect churches and ministers seeking to conduct a biblical and orthodox ministry in areas where this is no longer regarded as the norm.

Apart from a small number of international representative bodies (and these are recent in origin, except for the Lambeth Conference), the Anglican Communion has a history of being able to function

without much permanent international structure. The Archbishop of Canterbury has no international legal jurisdiction, nor can he invoke any legal sanctions. His Panel is in the same situation. Further, neither the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Primates or even the Anglican Consultative Council are able to create *Intra Provincial Canon Law*. Any international initiatives depend upon the willingness of the parts of the communion to work together.

The hope and expectation is that the Panel will have credibility and standing in the Communion and with the support of the Primates, its work will have moral and persuasive effect. It will be a real test of a willingness to work together.

Apart from deciding how the Panel will operate in future, the inaugural meeting surveyed the existing schemes for Episcopal ministry set up to protect those out of sorts with their own bishop. They also discussed several hypothetical cases.

With the next plenary session not scheduled until May 2006, Lambeth Palace has already received many requests for reference to the Panel. In several parts of the Communion, heavy handed tactics by bishops have begun with a vengeance, and local ministers and churches have felt their brunt. The Panel now awaits their first reference. ●

New Primate Prays [CONTINUED]

At this point, the Primate relies on a version of the Golden Rule, seeking to ‘treat people who differ from me and my views in the same way as I would like to be treated by them; that is, with respect, with decency, with careful attention to what people actually think and say, and to do that with proper reference to the kind of frameworks which hold our church together.’

He explicitly hopes that Australia’s church meets challenges in like manner, by valuing humility and acknowledging that because ‘none of us knows the whole mind of God perfectly’ humility is needed to learn those aspects of truth grasped by those ‘with whom we differ’. He said such

an approach acknowledges that ‘Anglicans of all perspectives have important contributions to make.’

The Primate drew a distinction between political challenges and politicking. Archbishop Aspinall said while Jesus didn’t seem to ‘politic’ or ‘muster power blocks’, that His life unquestionably ‘had the effect of challenging power structures and political organisation’ and that the same will be true for all who are taking their cues from Jesus’ example. ‘If we are really living the radical life that we are called to live, our very lives, what we say and what we do, will end up being a political challenge.’ ●

Continued from page 7 that as Anglicans we automatically have “gotten it all right”. In genuinely desiring to be more objective from a Biblical point of view, putting off our Anglicanism, even temporarily, can be very difficult. Perhaps it is no more or no less difficult however, than temporarily suspending one’s commitment to any cherished principle or perspective, in order to check the rightness of one’s position. Yet every now and again for the truth’s sake we need to be more independent of our entrenched understandings.

Often a matter is debated in Synod with little time for many of us to consider what might be the likely outcomes not directly associated with the overt matter being presented. The problem is exacerbated in an ordinance or motion that has been, or is likely to be, substantially amended. It often requires the sharp mind of another to see where the issue is likely to progress in an unexpected direction. Yet the problem may be averted if further consideration is deferred, even if only until the next day.

Few members of the Synod warm towards complicated legal or economic issues. Most of us simply don’t have the expertise. However, we still need to be Biblically minded and ask those important questions. What ethical issues are involved? What group of people are likely to be affected and will that be a fair and just outcome? Is it legality dictating theology? Is it business cunning undermining gospel courage? Is there a way other than the legal route for



TFOAD: much downloaded; Book still available.

In February alone, almost 5000 copies of ACR's response to Windsor, TFOAD, was downloaded from our website. It was also available for download from two other sites, officially, and a third unofficially! This critique of the Report and its accompanying collection of essays was sent to every Primate in time for their discussion in Ireland. Part of its uniqueness is that it not only critiques Windsor, but moves beyond critique to offering an evangelical understanding of church, churches,

and denominations, and a perspective on the current crisis that seeks to move outwards from the gospel of Christ. Although helpful in the current discussions, these essays therefore have abiding interest in assisting people to think about church life in the context of denominational issues. Printed copies are available for a mere \$10 from Matthias Media.

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against those with whom we feel we don’t, regardless of the matter under discussion and the force of any arguments involved. We may have a positive attitude towards one group of people and the way they are going to vote, because they have similar views to us on other matters unrelated to those being debated or simply because we like them. In the cold light of day how can we possibly defend this way of operating? Yet it happens. Our responsibility in Synod is, with whatever Godly insight we have, to make the wisest decision possible. In

making in the Synod can be quite daunting, but being theologically and Biblically well-informed and committed is the most important characteristic we can bring to the debates. Even the clergy need to recognize their constant need to examine their practices and beliefs by the light of Scripture. Generally, the members of the laity are less well off. In the main, we will not have received a rigorous theological education. However let us not despair. Learning under good teachers, becoming teachers ourselves, being actively involved in Bible Study groups, engaging in theological discussions with our peers, attempting to react christianly to the issues of our society, reading christian material, engaging in local and missionary efforts in the proclamation of the gospel and even enrolling in the Moore Theological College Correspondence Course—all help. It is not as though the lay vote is not as important as that of the clergy. In terms of numbers it is more so. The lay membership of the Synod compared to that of the clergy is in the ratio of almost 2:1. Regardless of how many are present, where there is at least a quorum, and if voting involves a 2:1 laity to clergy ratio and is not carried out by houses, if 60% of the clergy has it right and 60% of the laity has it wrong, then the overall decision is wrong. On the other hand if 60% of the laity has it right and 60% of the clergy has it wrong, then the laity has saved the day!

Of course none of us should be interested in simply getting it right, making the right and wise decision for the sake of wisdom and rightness itself. Rather our prayerful concern will be that by the work of the Spirit of God, God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be glorified. ●

Our responsibility in Synod is, with whatever Godly insight we have, to make the wisest decision possible.

dealing with the issue? Will it deliver us from unnecessary complications in ministry? Will it help us to be more compassionate towards those who are suffering?

When all is said and done, finally making up one’s mind can still be extremely difficult. We can always abstain from voting if we think it appropriate, though, if our presence in Synod is to be at all valuable, this should be very much the exception rather than the rule. We can always ask for the opinion of trusted friends. It might be that we can do no better than trust the arguments presented by others in whom we normally have confidence. This is not a matter of opting for a cheap and easy solution to the decision-making dilemma. It simply recognises the complexity of some issues that face us, and the need to sometimes rely upon others.

On the other hand, we may often vote, almost as a general rule, with those with whom we feel we have an affinity and vote

order to do that, we must put indefensible prejudices aside and give some serious consideration to the defensibility or otherwise of the various positions adopted.

Occasionally, perhaps with a little fear and trepidation, we find ourselves out on a limb. Even our friends are thinking differently. The truth is they may not be thinking much at all! In humility, we take courage in our hand and act independently and perhaps almost alone. We will have considered the facts, the pros and cons, the likely ramifications, even the ramifications of acting alone, but above all the Biblical perspectives that relate to the matter under discussion. Before God and before the Synod we take our stand. We may not have engaged in the public debate, we may simply have voted yes or no, being in the stark minority. If we can make such decisions but not take ourselves too seriously it can sometimes even be fun.

Returning to the beginning, decision

Everyone loves a mystery, except when it really matters

Mark Thompson



Mark addressed 'clarity' in the 2005 Annual Moore College Lectures.

person. For others it demonstrates that we need to listen to 'the Church', which exists to give the official interpretation of this murky old Word. If the Bible's meaning is locked in mystery, then who can open its obscurities to the ordinary person?

clear for the ordinary person to grasp.

Why would it be any other way? If a light is set on a lampstand, not under the proverbial bushell, then surely God will make himself plain when he reveals himself to us? Puzzles are okay for the

If the Bible's meaning is locked in mystery, then who can open its obscurities to the ordinary person?

Many of our contemporaries do not agree that the Bible clearly states its message. Many love to speak of 'mystery', as if this exists in the Scriptures, and as if it is an asset. For some, this is the platform from which to launch some kind of new approach to interpretation that promises to unlock the puzzles of the biblical text for the 21st century

However, we need to realise that none of these questions are new. For hundreds of years, not only have Christians maintained that the Bible is clear, but they have also been answering the complaints of others who claim it is not. It may not always be easy reading, but there is a plain meaning of the Biblical text, and it is sufficiently

entertainment section of the Saturday paper, but life and salvation are far too important for God to speak with a stammer about these issues. God is well able to make his Word known. The good news is that he has done so. ●

The Rhetoric of what we don't really know

Peter Bolt

The trouble with the New Testament is that it comes from ancient history. To an Australian, that means it comes from at least a month ago. Our sense of history is often so not present at all. But, even if we are aware that 'ancient history' is a *very* long time ago (at least *three* months), we still have trouble explaining the New Testament as part of that time.

something, but it certainly doesn't say *everything*. What if it only represents *one* brand of Christianity, and there were many others who didn't write their version down, or whose version was suppressed by powerful opponents. What hope have we got *then*? What hope have we got in ever knowing anything, since there is so much we *don't* know?



Peter Bolt stands in amazement at his ignorance of the ancient world, and at the event that turned it upside down.

You see, there is so much that is unknown in the ancient world. Just imagine if the only thing that survived from Sydney 2005 into 500 or 1000, or even 2000 years from now, was one page of the *Sydney Morning Herald* – and the sports page at that! What could future ockers really expect to learn from that about what it was like for us here and now? There is so much they would not know.

Our sense of history is often so not present at all.

But this kind of rhetoric is empty. The New Testament in fact, is part of the *solution* not part of the *problem*. It is the best first century source we have, and ancient historians ignore it at their peril. And it is not a book about something of the same standard and irrelevancy as an ancient sports page from the *Sydney Morning*

Herald. It is about a man who lived, died and – and here is the real importance – rose again from the dead. This is an event infinitely more vivid than 9-11, or the death of Diana, or the bombings in London. Everyone who knew of this event would remember every detail of where they were, and who they were with, and the colour of the wallpaper at the time they heard of this event.

So what hope have we got to understand the ancient world? After all, what knowledge we have is *so* partial. And the New Testament itself, well, it might say

What is significant about the New Testament is not the amount of stuff that we *don't* really know, but the incredible stuff that we *do*. ●

Women and the Word



Jane Tooher trains women for ministry at Gladesville, NSW.

The litmus test of prayer: Am I an adult or a child?

Jane Tooher

During a normal day, when do you think is the time that most defines who you are? When you are relating to others? When you are busy at home? When you are at work? When you look in the mirror? When people say things about you? When you are alone? When you hear or read God's word?

One of the key things we need to remember about ourselves, is that we are women who are able to pray to God. Because Jesus died on a cross and paid the penalty that we deserved for our sin, we not only have access to God, we are able to call the God of the universe our Father. We are his children. And what is one thing that is characteristic of a child? They ask for things. They need to ask for things. They need help. They cannot live by themselves. They could not survive. They are not adults. An adult can survive by themself. Of course it is good and right to act as adults in many ways, but in our relationship with God, our prayers need to show that we come to God as his children.

In Lk 18:9-17, Jesus tells us that the Pharisee comes to pray, yet he does not ask for anything. The tax collector comes to pray and he not only asks, he begs. He recognises his need before his Father. Straight after this story, Jesus says what type of people will enter the Kingdom of God. What type does he say will? Only those who receive the Kingdom of God like a child. Only those who recognise their need and ask. Your Father wants you to ask things of him. You need to ask things of him.

Training topic idea:

1. If you came to God in prayer and did not ask for anything, what would that say about you?
2. Read Lk 18:9-17. Pray from this passage, e.g. that you will recognise who you are before God, just like the tax collector and the children did.
3. What are some things that you need to ask God for? Spend some time now praying for these things. ●

'Separation of Church and State'? A Time for increased Jingoism?

In recent days there seems to be a rising tide of opinion, perhaps whipped into a strong surf by the Australian media, that 'Church' and 'State' need to be kept separate. The 'Left' have been alarmed at yet another conservative victory in the recent federal election, which was aided and abetted, apparently, by 'the Religious Right' rearing its head in Australian politics. Perhaps with the Hollingworth debacle fresh in mind, the public seem ready to be persuaded. In a move uncharacteristic of the 'Left', a leaf is pulled from the history of the US of A, and the call is becoming increasingly shrill that 'the Church' should keep out of 'the State', as, it seems to be assumed, has been the case previously.

But someone needs to demonstrate this assumption is so. Australia is not America. Our early history was studded with Christians in positions of influence, and evangelical Christians at that. These were people whose roots were well connected to Political Evangelicals such as William Wilberforce and his 'drinking mates' (!) who were active for social change across a wide variety of agendas. These roots extended to NSW through people such as Governor Hunter, Governor Macquarie, the chaplains-cum-magistrates-and-landowners, a number of other officials, the editor of the first newspaper, and the school teachers. Our first Archdeacon, Thomas Hobbes Scott, during his brief but turbulent time in the colony, was second in importance only to the Governor, and had a seat in the fledgling Legislative Assembly. Christians were, of course, prominent in all kinds of voluntary societies seeking the betterment of others, but they were also involved in the movement towards trial by jury, self-government, the abolition of transportation, the acceptance of emancipated convicts into society, and other causes of 'the State'.

And, from a 'State-wards' direction, to cope with a new situation in which there was no established Anglican church, a large Roman Catholic population, and the

presence of Methodists, Presbyterians, some Jews—and even Unitarians—unlike America, Australia appears to have decided against not supporting any, in favour of supporting them all.

And this simply continued into the present time. Rather than excluding religion, our constitution protected the right to freely practice. Christian groups have been present in our politics for a long time, from the DLP, to Call to Australia, to Family First. Our policy of multiculturalism ensures that every citizen is free to practice their religion and so our state is once again supporting all. In the present climate with the attachment of terrorism to some brands of Islam, it is difficult to see how religious issues are not a concern of the State. The increasing numbers of Australians in evangelical and Pentecostal churches each Sunday, and the changed social situation of Australian Roman Catholics, has given rise to politicians from both sides actually courting the Christian vote. Since the Family First preferences went to the Liberals, they appear to have been marginally ahead in this department, but this resulted in the Labor Party forming its Faith Values and Politics working group. No, it seems that our politicians, ruthlessly pragmatic as usual, do not believe in the separation of the Churches from the State. Even in the twenty-first century, Australia is not the quintessential Enlightenment land. From the beginning, through the middle, and even now as we are still heading towards the End, Australian society has been a mixture of Enlightenment thought in interaction with strong Christian roots. So what do we say about the clamour for 'Separation of Church and State' from some obviously uninformed quarters?

Before this new tide of opinion crashes us all on the beach, someone better ask the question whether the cry for separation of Church and State suffers from that most heinous of all crimes.

It is simply un-Australian. ●

Next issue, watch out for ...

1. Post-Synod round up.
2. More on the Primate debate, with an eye on 2007.
3. Scriptural Interpretation and General Synod document.