

AUSTRALAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

Day 1 –Saturday, 20 Oct.

Primate's Day

Gav Poole

The latin word *primas* means, "one of the first, excellent, noble". On the first day of synod we had the opportunity to listen to our Primate and then decide on how long we wanted him to act as such. That is, two of the major activities for the day were The Presidential Address and amending the Primate Canon.

Firstly, let me say something about the question time. You won't find recorded in the minutes the audible groans from around the house when Sydney people arose to ask questions — often before the question was even asked!

Certainly Sydney representatives dominated the question-time on the first day.

Anyone who has been to a Sydney Synod will know that questions are an important part of the proceedings. The question time is useful to gain information. In the interest of open disclosure and fair debate, questions are important. Other delegates commented that the questions showed that Sydney representatives were on top of things as General Synod commenced.

The Presidential Address hinted towards expected tension later in the week. With agenda items like The Episcopal Church (TEC) and women bishops, who would be surprised? Archbishop Aspinall attempted to pre-diffuse the tension by reminding us of our common ground: we all claim to belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

The Archbishop skilfully paved the way for such a diverse house to move

forward on these issues, using careful language and a measured tone.

This may have masked however what seemed to be an attack on radical positions.

Take for instance, the Archbishop's comment, "We need to remind ourselves that we cannot sacrifice any one of the marks of the church in favour of another. It is simply not possible for us to give up the call to a distinctive holiness in response to an anything goes notion of inclusiveness. But it is equally true that we cannot set aside the call to unity and catholicity out of a too narrow view of moral rectitude."

Although the 'guilty parties' were not identified, clearly the Archbishop believes that some group fits the charges.



Gav Poole at Governor General's Reception

AUSTRALAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

If applied to the TEC situation we may conclude that, those in favour of Gene Robinson's consecration would seem to be guilty of the first error, whilst those who support incursions from other parts of the communion into TEC would be guilty of the second.

The two issues are not, however, on the same moral level. Are we to believe that those Primates who have extended a shepherd's hand to the faithful in TEC have somehow set aside the call to unity and catholicity? Did this error spring from a too narrow view of moral rectitude? Surely it could be argued that the interventions stem from a high regard for the unity that is found in the gospel and the catholicity of true believers who hold to the authority of God's word.

Are those who have walked the middle ground to be applauded for their inaction? To deal with the tensions by neither condoning the actions of TEC, nor overreacting may appear to be sophisticated. But there are brothers and sisters in TEC who are frustrated by revisionist bishops. Some are locked in legal battles for their property and other assets. Calmly standing on the sidelines assuring them that, "we're working it out", isn't helpful. Although a caution is prudent, inactivity cannot be considered the high moral ground.

The Presidential Address was received with acclamation.

Later in the day we considered the Primate Canon. Two possibilities were discussed before deciding on the third:-

- 1) Status quo.
- 2) A full-time detached Primate. In other words, a person who would delegate the oversight of the diocese to an assistant bishop and would concentrate on the national denomination rather than trying to do both.

- 3) Limit the Primate to a period of six years with an additional three-year option.

Seconding the motion, Dr Muriel Porter confessed that this was chosen on economic grounds. The reality is that the national denomination cannot afford a full-time detached Primate.

Some thought this option was too quickly abandoned. George Browning, Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn, complained: "It is not a matter of pride that our national church is weak and our regional church is strong." He argued that the community's demand for a central voice is growing and that often the Bishop of Canberra has been looked upon to fulfill that role.

Dirk van Dissel, Dean of the Murray disagreed. "Our church is in grave danger of becoming fat at the top and scraggy at the bottom ...", he said.

This raises the question: Do we want the Primate to be more available to represent the Australian Anglican denomination? What would he/she do? Would this serve or hinder us in the local church?

The main role of the Primate in the past has been mainly to chair meetings. His authority is no greater than any other Archbishop. He, like the others, has to argue and persuade the national denomination of anything he proposes.

A move to a full-time position would change this dynamic. There is a natural pull to the centre. This must be resisted if dioceses and local churches are to maintain their autonomy.

It should therefore be applauded that General Synod did not go down the path of a full-time Primate. But perhaps we haven't heard the last of this debate.

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

Day 2: Sunday

Reflections at the Cathedral

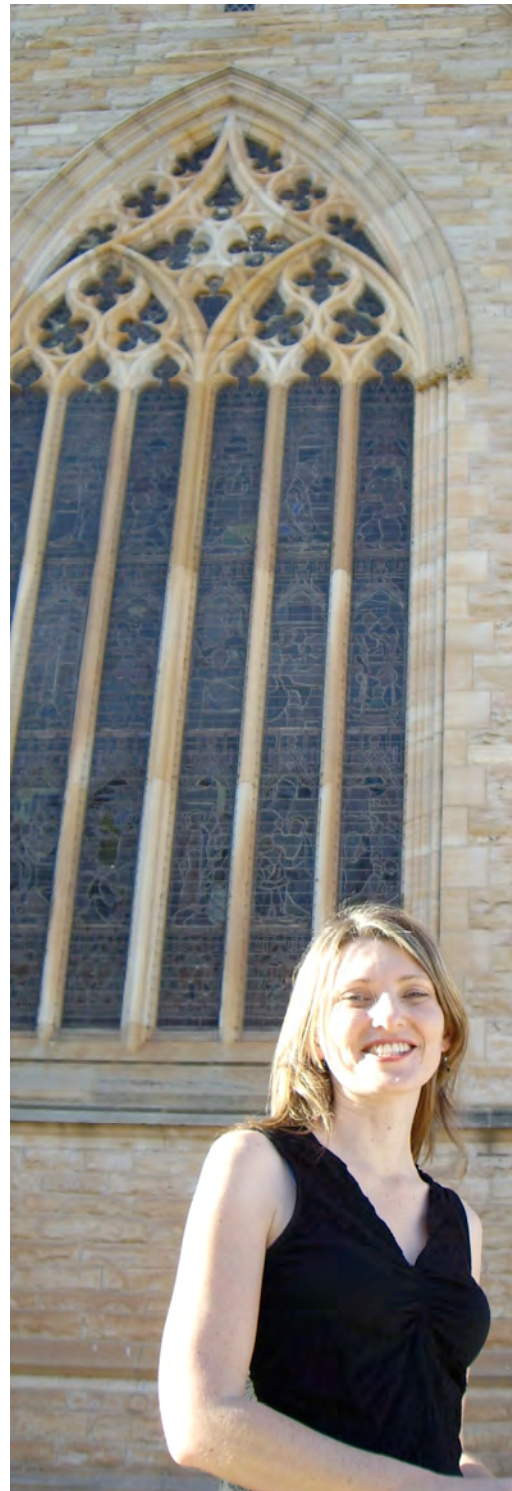
Michelle Philp

On the afternoon of the second day of synod we headed off to the Goulburn cathedral for a special service. It was fifteen years since I was last in that cathedral and on how much has changed, both for me and in the Anglican church, over that time.

Back then I drove to Goulburn from Wagga with my minister and his wife. We were going in support of a local woman who was to be ordained as a priest. We had been there a few months previously, on the occasion where the ordination was stopped for legal reasons, and were returning to see the ordination go ahead. Yet even on that second occasion I was already starting to have some niggling doubts over whether or not this was right ...

All the arguments I had heard until that point were from culture or what other people told me God would 'want': 'God loves men and women the same – he wouldn't discriminate on the basis of gender'; 'The objections to women's ordination are based on only one verse in one of Paul's letters – but Paul was a misogynist, so you can dismiss that'; 'The Bible was written for a different culture. In the modern era things are different...'

Yet as I sat there in the General Synod 2007 service I was there as representative of the 'dreaded' Sydney diocese (the group who I'd previously thought were women haters) and I was in opposition to both women bishops and the unspoken agenda of ordaining homosexual clergy. What had happened?



I certainly hadn't been brainwashed, but I had been changed by the Word of God. I had come to take the Bible seriously — including the passages I had previously dismissed. I had come to see that God does have a wonderful plan for both men and women but that doesn't mean they have to be the same in every respect, or take on the same

AUSTRALAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

responsibilities in the family or in the church. In fact, I'd come to see that God's plans for men and women, as laid out in the Bible, were so much better than what I'd thought. They actually involved a much higher form of love and respect between the genders than what any modern notions of equality could possibly dream up.

It is interesting to notice the same old arguments now being used for ordination of homosexuals: 'God loves everyone equally, he doesn't discriminate.'; 'Its all a question of interpretation'.

I think it is the last point that has resulted in changing my view most of all. God has given us His Word and while we may not always fully understand it, it is clear. We need to have our minds renewed by carefully reading the verses that trouble us in context of their book and in context of the whole Bible.

The other part of my thinking that has changed relates to the doctrine of sin. Fifteen years ago, I knew that Jesus had died to save me, and that that meant I would go to heaven, but I didn't know what he had died to save me from. Sin is not a very pleasant concept and one very rarely discussed in some Anglican circles. It was hard not to notice at General Synod how rarely sin was mentioned. A motion later in the week, basically thanking God for Jesus paying the penalty for our sins, not only met objection, but was eventually considered too controversial to be put.

As we sang 'In Christ Alone' during the service at Goulburn, the volume very noticeably dropped during the verse about the wrath of God being satisfied. Yet without understanding both sin and God's just wrath, the overwhelming graciousness and loving kindness of Jesus dying on the cross is completely

emptied. The love of God is reduced to a nice feeling or a warm glow.

When I was first exploring Christianity, people wanted to make it all very palatable. 'God's love is seen in creation' or 'close your eyes and imagine God giving you a big hug'. Yet, it wasn't until others pointed me to the Bible and showed me what God says love is, that I could actually appreciate it. For God's love is so much bigger than any of these wishy washy ideas that I had been fed 15 yrs ago or was hearing all over again at General Synod. Romans 5:8 says it all 'But God demonstrates his own love in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.'

If we don't take God and his Word seriously we miss out on His true love.

The 'Newman Motion'

Towards the end of the week, Sydney Layman, Dr Barry Newman, sought to move a motion thanking God for all the benefits of Christ's death. Basically the motion simply listed benefits that could more or less be read straight off the pages of the New Testament. It seemed like it should have been a 'motherhood motion'.

After a brief, emotion-filled debate (with one speaker saying that it was his daily struggle to know, 'Why did Jesus die?'), General Synod voted that the motion be not put.

There was much talk about 'mission' at this General Synod. But if Paul could summarise the Christian gospel as, 'we preach Christ, and him crucified', and the basic Christian experience is the assurance of salvation arising from Christ's death ('who can separate us from the love of God, ... Christ Jesus died ...'), then it makes you wonder if the ACA is actually engaged on the same mission.

AUSTRALAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

Day 3:

Mnemonic Monday

Wendy Colquhoun

Monday morning has dawned. In a darkened hotel room it is evident only from the slivers of light framing the curtains. Following the general custom of dressing and breakfasting I take my seat in the hotel conference room at the end of a row reserved for representatives from Sydney Diocese. I am glad to be seated near a good friend. Representatives from Bathurst are seated in the row in front, and behind are representatives from North Queensland. As the week progresses our small group discussions will be with North Queensland due to the reduced attendance of the Bathurst representatives.



Archdeacon Bob Jackson led the Bible Studies

The day begins with a bible study on 'Church Growth' by Bob Jackson, 'The Archdeacon Responsible for Growth' in Litchfield Diocese, UK. For me, the balance between God's role and the church's role in delivering growth needs further thought. The idea of a 'Back to Church Sunday' successfully employed

in the UK as a tool for changing church life, cultivating a culture of invitation and welcome, has limited appeal where I live. Many of my neighbours are unchurched, claim to be atheists or come from cultures that are not Christian. Here welcoming is not so much the problem as the need is to develop a culture of invitation.

Now to the business paper for

M - Motions

O - Orders of the day: 9.10am, 11.00am, 7.30pm

N - National Register

D - Deliberations on the Episcopal Church

A - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island presentation

Y - Year 2015 - Millenium Development Goals

Motions

Motions are tabled in three categories and are called over in order. Two motions by request of Standing Committee for the continuation of Reference Committees and for the endorsement of the Indigenous Statement of Commitment and Affirmation of Faith and Justice are carried. There are objections to four motions including a motion for equal representation of women in decision making at all levels of church government. This, I think, is demeaning for women who prefer to be appointed on merit.

From General Synod Commissions and Committees there are 11 motions including three from the Professional Standards Commission and three concerning Millenium Development Goals, all of which relate to Orders for the Day. Of the twenty two motions from Members of the Synod, two are carried: a request for government support for Sudanese immigrants; and a recommendation for the adoption of a code for behaviour by clergy and church

AUSTRALAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

workers with particular reference to sexual conduct. The remaining motions, to be debated later in the Synod, reflect a broad range of issues including environmental, social, indigenous, doctrinal, liturgical, and ecumenical. I am impressed by one particular motion incorporating a doctrinal statement about Jesus which I anticipate will encourage and unify us as a national church, expressing in present day language what we believe. This I think will be a helpful statement for dialogue with my Muslim neighbours. (In due course this motion failed.)

Orders of the day

The National Register is to be debated in the first session, followed by consideration of the Millennium Development Goals and the Indigenous Presentation in the second session. Legislation includes a bill to incorporate the Australian College of Theology as a Company Limited by Guarantee and a bill, later passing as a Special Bill, to allow the solemnization of marriage when both bride and groom have not been baptised. In the evening there is to be a Presentation on the Episcopal Church.

National Register

Introducing the National Register Bill, Garth Blake stated five guiding principles for the drafting of the new bill. The challenge is to maintain the balance between the two theological imperatives of protecting the vulnerable (children and adults) and protecting the innocent (and their reputations). Two substantive issues are who is to be on the register and the what and why of the recorded information. The recording of allegations is a concern. The reference to Professor Oates' assertion that children do not make up their complaints of sexual abuse, does not address the issue of false or vexatious complaints by older children or children who have become adults. Further concerns elicited from

questions include access to the register, the removal of information from the register and the resourcing and security of the processes.

Deliberations on the Episcopal Church

Mr. Robert Fordham and Archbishop Peter Jensen each gave a presentation on the response of the House of Bishops of the Episcopalian Church to the Windsor Report. Archbishop Jensen speaks persuasively, informing us that the dissenting opinion of Mouneer Anis, Primate of Jerusalem and the Middle East was not incorporated in the original report of the Joint Standing Committee to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Following the presentations, we meet in small groups to discuss the response of the House of Bishops of TEC. Summaries of our discussion will form a basis for a reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury who has requested that our Primate ascertain how far his Province is able to accept the Standing Committee's assessment that the House of Bishops has responded positively.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Presentation

Bishop Arthur Malcolm, retired Aboriginal bishop is granted permission to speak. He is a fine man with a wise understanding of the differences between indigenous and non-indigenous cultures and a deep appreciation of the gospel of our Lord Jesus. It is very moving to be addressed as "Brothers and Sisters in Christ" and to pray a prayer he and his non-indigenous wife wrote.

A powerpoint presentation entitled 'A Time for Commitment', caused me to reflect on some of the questions that confronted me when I read the book 'Rainbow Spirit Theology'. Following the presentation the current Aboriginal Bishop, Jim Leftwich challenged us to work out the principles of reconciliation by endorsing a statement of

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

Commitment and Affirmation. The motion is carried by acclamation. A motion passes for the Federal Government's monitoring of its intervention in Aboriginal communities.

Year 2015 - Millenium Development Goals

In response to some grave statistics for poverty, hunger and lack of access to clean water, Bishop Browning asks us to consider the question *What does the Lord require of us?* (Micah 6:8). He suggests that in following Jesus' example in Luke 4:18, our concern is to be for the poor, the imprisoned, the blind and the oppressed. As I read Luke 4:18 I am conscious that the ultimate deep needs of these people are met in Jesus who is the fulfilment of this quote from Isaiah 61:1. It is helpful to focus on the eight Millenium Development goals, including the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, and to reflect on the fact that we can make a difference. A 2007 ABM pilgrim reminds us that a group of professionals built the Titanic but one amateur built the ark.

At the end of the day I ask myself "What, indeed, does the Lord require of us as members of the Anglican Church of Australia?"

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: WHO CARES?

Peter Bolt

So many arguments in General Synod seemed to be about the numbers.

The discussion about Mission, really began at the 2004 Session, when the rapidly declining numbers in Anglican Churches started the alarm bells that continued to ring in 2007. At least this time the statisticians had worked out a better graph. If you graph 'rate of change (read: decline)' you can now

show a graph that is 'levelling out' (no one left to leave?), or even 'beginning to turn' (the minister had a new child?). Far less depressing to see those graphs!

Then there was the overwhelming amount of information presented about the many real needs in our world. In a remarkable moment of passionate concern, Synod was even told by Bp George Browning that addressing climate change was the 'core business' of the Church. According to the Millenium Goals, seeking to remove poverty from our world by 2015, we are not really where we should be half way through the programme. And on it goes.

And all the while, the argument from numbers continues. Even though a speaker in the environmental cause said the basic problem was that there are too many of us, most seemed to speak as if the loss of human life is still an evil: 1200 children die every hour; so many 1000s die in poverty per day; 25,000,000 deaths from HIV/AIDS since 1981 (roughly 1 million per year).

Normally, such figures depress me. This time, I was more overwhelmed by another set of figures that had come with me to Canberra.

Just before General Synod, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (October 13–14) had noted that the world rate of abortions was declining. This, I thought, was good news. But then I saw the numbers. Apparently 90% of women will have an abortion during their reproductive life. And, as for the 'decline': in 1995 there was an estimated 46,000,000 abortions world-wide; but in 2003, the *Herald* was pleased to report, the number had fallen to 42,000,000.

No mention of these children at General Synod. Who speaks for this group? They must be the most vulnerable, poor, defenceless of all. Are they also 'core'?

AUSTRALAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

Day 4: Hump Day

Michelle Wilsmore

Phew, it hasn't been as bad as others had warned me who had attended before but I'm glad that today is 'hump day' – three days done, three more to go.

More of the House of Laity made the morning sessions than in the House of Clergy – I'll let you ponder as to why this would be so. The people I have met from other dioceses around the country have all been quite nice to me and my fellow Sydney representatives have been extremely helpful in helping me to fathom what is actually happening in the sessions and make my time in Canberra enjoyable.

The day opened with bible study leader Bob Jackson, an Archdeacon from the Diocese of Litchfield, giving a none-too-subtle plug for Jim Ramsay's 'welcome pack'. Bob then went on to discuss how Litchfield is going for growth. After 1000 years it can be said that the Church of England is changing and that nationally in the UK it has stopped shrinking. He mentioned that you can get a greater number to attend church if you have a trained children's/youth worker and that the main morning congregation is the one for growing churches with families whilst most people are lost from evening services. Evening services need to be particularly focussed for the age group attending which are mainly older teens and young adults without children. They also found that weekday services had the largest growth and that he could envisage church soon becoming 24/7. Churches with under 45's will grow faster than those with mainly older congregations. Churches that focus on quantity do not grow however if you focus on the quality of the service then quantity will follow.

A mission segment followed the bible study, which had various speakers and showed some overheads. Stuart Robinson's short video presentation was particularly good, assembling the information he had compiled from various parishes and the work that they were doing to encourage church attendance. We saw things like Surfers' Church at Maroubra and 'Adopt a Block' from Berkeley near Wollongong, both of which had been most successful.



The rest of the day was tedious – mostly legislation. A new replacement bill for the National Register Canon was issued, incorporating about 7 pages of amendments that had been accepted by Garth Blake on an already amended bill. What followed was much confusion trying to make amendments of a typographical and grammatical nature to the new replacement bill. Phew— if you are still with me on this then maybe you should consider being on General Synod. I'm sure that I've drunk more coffee today than I normally do in 6 months!

The evening session ended with 'The Listening Process'. We heard the stories of 4 gay/lesbian people read by actors. One was a man who had always known that he had been gay but had remained celibate in accordance with the scriptures; another was a woman who

AUSTRALAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

had led a terrible life in childhood, had entered into an abusive lesbian relationship for 8 years before deciding to take hormone treatment to become a male and also had a double mastectomy, before finding God. She is now happily married with children. The two stories were powerful and you really felt for what both of them, but especially the woman, had gone through. The other two speakers, however, were very self-centred and bitter about the fact that their homosexual lifestyles weren't celebrated by the churches they were in and that they had to move to find dioceses that accepted them and their lifestyles.

I pondered on what this process was meant to make me feel and the only conclusion I can make is that it seems to me that there are some sections of the Anglican Church in Australia that would perhaps like us to follow in the footsteps of TEC and Canada and accept homosexuals who are open in their relationships but still want to play an active role in the life of our church – which from my understanding of scripture would clearly be abhorrent to God. I felt that now we have ordained women and the path has been cleared by the Appellate Tribunal for women to now become bishops that this was the new bandwagon that some of the more liberal dioceses now want us to jump on.

However perhaps the biggest puzzle for me to ponder was a 'sculpture' I only noticed after lunch at the front of the room. It appeared to be a big ball of chicken wire, which had been tied up with red ribbons and flowers with some words on it that I could not actually read from my seat. Nothing was said about this fascinating adornment so I am no clearer on its meaning than I was when I first noticed it. I must say though that it was a talking point amongst the people that I had afternoon tea and dinner with, who were as much in the dark as I was.

Day 5: Ground Hog Day

Graeme Marks

“Well, it's Groundhog Day ... again”. Those were the words of Phil Connors, the hapless TV weatherman played by Bill Murray in the 1993 movie, Groundhog Day. Every morning he woke to find he was living the same day over and over again.



It's Wednesday of General Synod and it began the same way as all the other days. I cleared my desk of yesterday's papers only to discover that when I arrived this morning, they were back, albeit the date was changed and the motions were different.

The day was a shorter day since we had the afternoon and evening as free time with a reception with the Governor General Michael Jeffrey at Yarralumla.

We began with formal prayers and a reading from Philippians 3:7-15a. Archdeacon Bob Jackson from the Diocese of Litchfield continued to lead the daily Bible study. I was encouraged by his focus on v10 "...that I may know him [Christ] and the power of his resurrection... (ESV)". He continued to share with us some pragmatics about

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

how to get people back in their churches.

Most of the morning was given to motions and a Bill concerning the Environment. Bishop George Browning, Chair of the Anglican Communion Environment Network introduced the matter. He referred to a report of the Prime Ministerial Task Group on Emissions Trading which he wrote, and spoke about the link between environment change and the poor.

After this initial presentation, Rosie Catt from Grafton diocese presented further information. There was a time of questions and general discussion around a 'theology of climate change' prior to a number of motions, passed without dissent. What was not really clear to me is to what will happen as a result of the passing of these matters. We then turned our attention to another motion about an Environment Working Group of the General Synod. Karen Sowada from Sydney spoke in support on the motion about the effect of climate change may have on mission and an amendment focusing on the "sovereignty of God over all creation". Narelle Jarrett added a call upon the Federal Government to help those in the Pacific islands whose livelihood is affected by climate change.

A problem with the drafting of the Bill meant its deferral.

Professor Chris Bellinger's motion asked the Standing Committee of General Synod to recognise the School of Christian Studies of Christian Studies at Robert Menzies College as an Anglican Theological College. Another matter was the consideration of the Canon concerning Holy Orders to tidy up how ministers are ordained.

In the afternoon session, Kay Goldsworthy (Perth) moved a motion

regarding Equal Representation of Woman on all church bodies. Margaret Rogers (Sydney) suggested this was not an version of the ordination of women issue, but rather the desire to get a better representation on committees given that women make up more than 50% of the population. Lesley Ramsay (Sydney) and Margo Percell (Rockhampton) made the point that God is the giver of gifts to His people and there is no reason to assume that God allocates gifts across the gender equally and therefore the basis of appointment to committees should be on how God has gifted us rather than by gender. Alison Street (Sydney) expressed her concern for the motion that it may affect the quality of decision making may be compromised for the sake of gender balance. She was concerned that there could be a movement to tokenism. The motion was passed.

The reception at Government House was well attended and provided a welcome relief from the 'doings' of Synod — and refreshments of high quality. The timing was right as I think many of us needed a break. The Governor General spoke of his interest in the Federal Government's school chaplaincy programme and wished the Synod well in its deliberations.

Perhaps the highlight of the day was the evening meal, shared by a number of us of like mind from different dioceses. It was a great encouragement to discover other members of General Synod who share an urgent desire to see people come to salvation through the proclamation that Jesus died and was raised again, so that we can be forgiven from sin.

And so to bed! Now it's Thursday morning ... "Well it's Groundhog day...again!"

[Editor: no report for Thursday]

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH RECORD: GENERAL SYNOD 2007

Jennifer Flower thanks God it is Friday!

“Oh bother! What *did* happen on Friday?” - Winnie the Pooh

At the end of a long week, I approached our last day with mixed feelings.

Communion was taken at the commencement of the day & following morning tea we moved into the Orders of the day. The Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen successfully moved a motion without notice noting the re-formation of an Association of Apostolic Ministry for those people nationally who have concerns about the effect female bishops will have on our Church.



Bishops Michael Hough and Peter Jensen re-form the AAM

Photo: Stephen Tong

Finances next. Oh joy unbounded! Despite the fact there was a power-point presentation, all I can really remember was that the writing was blue on a ‘parchment’ background! So you can see, even visuals did not make a discernable dint into my number-numbed brain. I am extremely thankful to God for men like Doug Marr who understand all those numbers and wiggly-lined graphs.

The motion regarding a Drought Fund began with a ruling that this motion was out of order, with others calling for a dissent to the ruling, which regrettably was lost.

There was a lot of hilarity over a motion regarding the titles to be used in the next Book 5 (info about reps), which ended up not being put.

Rev Rob Haynes (Northern Territory) moved a motion about Indigenous Identity & Australian life, which was sobering and contrasted greatly with the fun of the previous motion. The language and sentence structure was debated in great detail highlighting the importance of this issue. Helen Carrig (Adelaide) challenged southern state Anglican Churches to support out Indigenous Australians in the north by financially supporting them through ABM or CMS. This motion was passed with an overwhelming majority.

Archdeacon Dr Davis Powys (Melbourne) urged synod to find an electoral system that will promote harmony and health in our outcomes and to promote this in our national Church. Protocols in regard to how these affect the good governance of our Church got me very confused when Elizabeth Smith (Melbourne) spoke against it, but it finally passed amended.

By this stage I would estimate that approximately ¼ of the reps had left, for varying reasons and the stalwart few clock-watched for the final 2 motions, but these passed on a ‘new’ call over. With the house-keeping motions of thanks etc to wrap up 2007 General Synod we left with prayer and skies that threatened and delivered on its promise as we left.

Even though General Synod can be mentally and physically exhausting I’m glad I was a Sydney rep once again. My prayer is that the Australian Church stays true to Christ and the Gospel.