



The Importance of the Word

**“For like the body must be fed daily with meat: so the soul requires
her meat, which is the Word of God.”**
Hugh Latimer (1553)

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Evangelism at All Saints' Church Belfast

All Saints' Church is a church near Belfast city centre, established in 1887. It has been one of the centres of reformed evangelical Anglicanism in Ireland over the course of its existence, and, by God's grace still faithfully proclaims the gospel just as it did when it was established.

The morning congregation is a diverse congregation numbering around 150 people, with many young families, retirees and everything in between making up its numbers.

The evening congregation had been a smaller congregation, of around 60 people: most were 'twicers' (people who attend church twice on a Sunday, common practice in Northern Ireland) – or fringe church shoppers who would float around between churches on a Sunday evening.

In September 2018 the evening congregation was re-launched as UniChurch Belfast. We have been able to see tremendous growth in the last year, more than doubling our number of weekly attendees and seeing around 15 people become Christians.

The story of how this has occurred is as follows.

My background

I have worked in ministry for around 8 years, as a youth pastor at a high school, and as an assistant pastor at 3 churches.

One of the greatest pitfalls that I have fallen into throughout my time in paid ministry is 'majoring in the minors'. I have been prone to dedicating much effort and energy into ministries and events which saw little



Dave Jensen, Assistant Minister, All Saints' Belfast

fruit and gained little traction.

I would spend a lot of time investing in 'outreach' or 'connection' events: in other words, pre-evangelistic events or programs which had the intention of being a bridge between the church and the community. I would then attempt to put on evangelistic events or programs off the back of the connection events. More often than not, my efforts produced no fruit whatsoever. At certain times, I was able to see the pre-evangelistic event connect with non-Christians,

however I was unable to turn that connection into a conversion.

The end result was maximum energy and effort, for very little fruit – resulting in maximum discouragement, and frustration.

MBM

However, in 2016 I had the opportunity to work at a wonderful church in Western Sydney called MBM, where the lead pastor Ray Galea had thought long and hard about how to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus in a way that was both efficient and effective. In other words: he turned my prior logic on its head and proved to me that there was a method which, under God, often worked in seeing people become Christians.

Working at MBM instilled several principles in me which I saw as very effective in a large church in Sydney's wild west. The question was: would those principles translate to a much smaller church in Belfast, Northern Ireland?

The principles put to the test

The two principles which MBM instilled in me I'll summarise as:

a) In-reach is out-reach

b) out-reach is evangelistic

In-reach is Out-reach

MBM would run what could be classified as 'connection' events: but they weren't pre-evangelistic. They weren't for non-Christians. They were for Christians. Meals, social activities, kids' fun activities, family fun, craft club, and other such programs still took place: however, their aim was not to bring non-Christians into the community to 'belong before belief'. Their aim was to 'connect' Christians in with one another. To include them in the Christian community.

These things were generally run by congregation members, and had a wide appeal. The various events weren't the focus of the church's activities – but rather a regular, routine collection of activities which church members could be involved in. Non-Christians were certainly welcome! But they are not the focus of the events.

The output of this in-reach was threefold: 1) People loved each other 2) People loved church and, best of all, 3) People wanted the people they loved to experience it. The principle is a simple one: the more people enjoy something, the more they will invite others along. Focusing on the Christians was an effective way to galvanise and excite them for their role: to invite their non-Christian contacts to something explicitly evangelistic.

UniChurch

The All Saints' staff team surveyed members of the existing evening congregation, and asked them 'what is it you want most in your church?' Two answers were consistent across those surveyed. Firstly, the Bible taught. Secondly, a sense of authentic community.

Of course, this is no surprise – God created us to be in community with one another, and our culture is desperate to experience it. However, we also wanted to commit to the community for its own good, not confuse it with pre-evangelistic connectivity.

So we decided that we would put on a free dinner before church, where people could come and hang out prior to the service. This worked well for a while – before numbers began to drop off. We replaced it over Summer with an extended and advertised time of tea and coffee prior to church, and have now moved to fortnightly dinners.

We recruited a team to organise a church social activity once a month: from going to a café, to visiting the city Christmas fair, a quiz night, etc. Some of them have been terrific: some not as effective.

We started 6 new weekly Growth Groups (Bible Studies) – not common in a country where fortnightly growth groups are the norm. This was wonderful for the Bible teaching opportunity – and also involving one another in each others' lives. We encouraged our Growth Groups to value the community aspect of their gatherings – spending time chatting intentionally, and

hanging out outside of the group. Organically some of the guys started a 5 a side soccer team, and some of the girls started meeting to crochet.

From the outset we were very clear: these are not evangelistic events. Yes – you can invite non-Christians along: but it's not for them. It's for you.

Out-reach is evangelistic

However, there is a danger with focusing on your Christians: and that can be if you forget the mission the Lord Jesus has given us – to be witnesses to the ends of the earth with the gospel. If you just focus on Christians, then you'll have a very close knit loving Christian community – but you'll never grow, and you'll never see anyone saved.

In conjunction to the focus on in-reach was another, even more dedicated branch of the church: the evangelism pathway. That is, the method which was utilised to effectively proclaim the gospel.

The method that MBM used was twofold:

1. The Sunday service

There was an earnest commitment to ensuring every Sunday was 'invite friendly'. What does this look like? At the least, not embarrassing: a warm welcome, clear and understandable language, with a big focus on being as personally welcoming as possible. The gospel mentioned every week – with a constant drive towards the...



If you just focus on Christians, then you'll have a very close knit loving Christian community – but you'll never grow, and you'll never see anyone saved.





Belfast.

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2. Regular evangelistic course

MBM runs a 4-week course called *Explaining Christianity*, followed up by a Bible study. It is fairly low maintenance, and very easy to run. It is on every term. Prior to its running, it is heavily advertised from the front, and the congregation are also given 'invitation cards' with which they can invite other people.

The desired outcome is that our congregation – people who love Jesus and love church – will invite people they know to come to either church, or a course – ideally both. Often, a church invite would lead to attendance at the course.

UniChurch

From the outset, we desired to improve the Sunday service in the evening. We recruited people from amongst our congregation to take ownership of certain aspects of the service: music, welcoming, and so on. We insisted upon our musicians rehearsing much more together, and the staff team being more intentional about how they operated up the front in service leading and preaching.

In addition, 6 weeks after our launch, we ran our evangelistic course. UniChurch and All Saints' Church run a very similar course to MBM, called *LIFE*: a 4-week course investigating the claims of Jesus. This is run every term, and a team of congregation members was recruited to help run it and act as evangelistic hosts throughout the course. The first course saw

3 conversions – the second saw 8, the third 2, and the fourth 3. We are getting ready to have our fifth course later this year.

Stories

There's very little that beats seeing people come to know and love Jesus.

Let me tell you about a few of God's new children.

Susie comes from a Christian family, but never took her faith seriously. She was invited along to our church by a friend, but found things a bit intense. She was then invited along to the *LIFE* course, where she first truly understood the gospel and gave her life to Jesus.

Tim is a rugby playing plumber, who had no interest in faith. One of his mates, Jimmy, invited him to a church service, which he liked, but was still not convinced. He couldn't make the first *LIFE* because of rugby, but came to the second course. He made a connection with one of our hosts, and his girlfriend made a connection with that host's wife (also a host). Tim and his girlfriend Kate grasped hold of the gospel: repented and put their faith in Jesus. They are now serving in children's ministry. Kate's brother Angus came to a later course and became a Christian.

Mary came to the *LIFE* course after being invited by her brother, who goes to a different church. Coming from a Roman Catholic background, attending anything connected with Protestantism can be an issue in Northern Ireland – however, a few weeks after *LIFE*

finished, in the follow up Bible study, Mary repented and put her faith in Jesus.

Daniel is the father of one of our church members. Recently retired, he was enjoying life to the full but was aware of something missing. Through the patient witness of his son and daughter-in-law, he began attending church, and then registered to come to *LIFE* on the condition that no-one else knew – and so his son was not able to attend! Daniel put his faith in the Lord Jesus and now serves on our supper and hospitality team, and is actively involved in a Growth Group.

Sandra started attending Uni-Church with a Christian friend who had started attending. She found all the talk about God and Jesus extremely confronting – and so would leave immediately after the church service. However, she eventually met other Christians, and began to realise that they weren't that different from her: not perfect, as she'd thought, but rather sinners full of the hope that comes only through Christ. Sandra became a Christian through one-to-one evangelism.

Not all of the people who have professed faith are still walking with Jesus – and some of them have not connected in with our church and so are going elsewhere, or still searching for a church. I don't want to give the impression that we are seeing conversions all the time – we're not! And that the structure and strategy we've implemented has resulted in a well oiled machine where nothing goes wrong – it hasn't! But under God, having a laser focus on ensuring we're intentionally evangelistic in conviction and in practice has resulted in gospel growth.

As I've reflected on the last 12 months here in Belfast and our evangelistic efforts, there are two principles which I've found helpful to abide by which I thought I'd close by sharing:

1. Keep your powder dry

The data indicates that whilst we might desire most Christians to be involved in daily personal evangelism, that is an unrealistic expectation. So the intention is to make it as easy as possible for all our Christians to at the very least invite one person a year to attend one of the courses, or come along to church on Sunday.

How many invitations do most regular evangeli-

cal Christians have in them every year? Anecdotally, around 2 or 3. So we don't want to be running 100 pre-evangelistic connection events, because our people will waste their invites on these things. Rather, we want them to 'keep their powder dry' and actually use their invitations on events and ministries where the gospel is clearly and effectively proclaimed.

The same goes for our energies and efforts. Running programs and ministries can be an exhausting endeavour. It's best to save our energy for the events that really count: where the gospel is proclaimed.



But under God, having a laser focus on ensuring we're intentionally evangelistic in conviction and in practice has resulted in gospel growth.



2. Don't confuse in-reach with out-reach

One of the most common errors I kept falling into previously in ministry was operating under the belief that any interaction with non-Christian people was evangelism, or out-reach. An American preacher puts it this way: If everything is mission, then nothing is mission. Operating

under this mindset presents 4 obvious dangers:

- 1) You connect with non-Christians but never share the gospel.
- 2) You waste gospel money and energy on non-gospel activities and events.
- 3) You delude yourself into thinking that your church is on mission, when it's not.
- 4) You don't engage in effective mission because you think you're already doing it.

Don't confuse in-reach with out-reach! Yes – put on activities and events: but not for non-Christian people. Do it for your church people – so they grow to love one another more and grow in community. Of course, these events can have non-Christians attend – but don't have that as the focus.

Instead: ensure that you're running authentically evangelistic events that give your church the opportunity to invite their contacts to come and hear the greatest news of all. Communicate with your church that these are the events to invite people to.

Conclusion

Jesus has called us to be witnesses of his death and resurrection to a dying world. Let us think honestly and strategically about our ministries – and plan with godly wisdom and insight – and get to work! **ACR**

ACL Dinner Address

Bishop Jay Behan



Jay Behan, Bishop of CCAANZ

On 19 October 2019, Jay Behan was consecrated Bishop of CCAANZ in Christchurch, New Zealand. ACNA Archbishop Foley Beach and Chairman of GAFCON Primates Council presided, former Archbishop of Sydney Peter Jensen preached, and various others, such as Dean Kanishka Raffel of Sydney were involved in this important occasion. One month earlier, the then Rev. Behan addressed the Anglican Church League Sydney Dinner, published here with permission of the ACL and Bishop Behan.

It is a real privilege to be invited to speak tonight at the ACL Dinner, so I'd like to thank Andrew Bruce and the ACL for the invitation. Not least because it allows me to personally thank the Diocese of Sydney for the incredible hand of friendship and fellowship you've extended to us in New Zealand for a long time but especially recently.

In the midst of a General Synod decision that has left many Anglicans in NZ confused, distraught and isolated, the encouragement and support we've received from here has been humbling and a great blessing.

I have been asked to speak about the situation in NZ and what I'll do is give a very brief overview of what's happened, then offer some reflections or thoughts that have been important to us, and outline how we're still learning to respond in this difficult situation.

Last year at our General Synod, Motion 7 was passed. This motion allowed canonically the blessing of same-sex marriages and civil unions. It also allowed, by silence, the future ordination of those in such a relationship since it was deemed to be a relationship blessed by God.

The doctrine of marriage remained technically untouched (although it is hard to argue we've not at least diminished or confused the doctrine as we bless marriages unknown to our formularies). There was no compulsion for clergy to bless same-sex marriages, and none of these marriages were to be blessed without episcopal consent.

However, it's sparked a crisis for Anglicans within our province. There was confusion, hurt, feelings of betrayal, anger, sadness. Through the process of wrestling with what to do, and how to respond, the Church of Confessing Anglicans in Aotearoa and New Zealand (CCAANZ) came into being.

Four key issues have come out of this, and the first is that **the principle is clear, but how we respond is cloudy**. As we know, the main principle at play in this debate is not primarily human sexuality, as important and personal as that is. The main principle is the authority of the Bible.

Are the Scriptures our authority in all matters of faith and conduct or do they compete with culture, public opinion or personal preference?

Because the Scriptures are clear. There's very little



ambiguity or room for debate over it, not if you examine the Bible honestly. We had a diocesan presentation on human sexuality in Christchurch a couple of years ago which demonstrated this. The presenter outlined what he called the *Progressive* position and *Traditional* position.

Six PowerPoint slides were used to teach the *Progressive* position but only one slide to teach the *Traditional*. Afterwards, some evangelicals were outraged saying it wasn't balanced, more time and effort went into putting forward the *Progressive* position. But I was relaxed.

The discrepancy occurred because, in essence, the one slide on the *Traditional* position said, *the Bible means what it says*. The *Progressive* slides had so many caveats and qualifications that it needed six slides. The principle on these issues is clear.

How we respond in the current crisis, however, is cloudy. It's not at all straightforward. How do you know when a line has been crossed? How do you know what the right reaction to a line being crossed is? Do you countenance separation or not, if so, when, how?

We must respond, not by just sticking our heads in the sand and abdicating the responsibilities we have to God's flock. So, how? The Scriptures help but don't give definitive answers to these exact questions. We know how seriously Jesus took the unity of believers. He prayed it for us the night before his death. To separate or divide is no small thing and if we ever treat it lightly or can't wait for it, shame on us.

But the Bible also tells us there are times when

continuing to be in fellowship with those who are in unrepentant sin or causing division can also be wrong. Which takes precedence, when? This is hard to work out!

Our consciences respond differently. One minister can sign, another cannot. Some ministers felt they could remain if they can still preach and practice the truth, other ministers felt they cannot stay if the structure now allows false teaching and another gospel. I hope my next three points will help on how to respond, but it's cloudy!

The principle is clear and we must therefore be inflexible on it. We do ourselves and the people we're called to love and serve no favours when we ignore it, or attempt to make it more palatable, or give the impression it's complicated or more nuanced than it is... no, it's clear. Sin needs to be called for what it is, warnings need to be given if they are required, and *that* is loving.

But the response can be cloudy. Therefore, we must have a level of flexibility on our responses and how we view the responses of others. So, the principle is clear (inflexibility) but how we respond is cloudy (flexible). Must be careful not to do the opposite.



Kanishka Raffel,
Dean of Sydney

This brings us me to the second issue: **recalibration or realignment means that maintaining relationships is crucial.** In the Anglican provinces that have made unbiblical decisions promoting a false gospel, lay-people, clergy, churches and dioceses have had to work out how to respond.

And so, in North America, in Scotland, and Brazil, and now New Zealand, as the national church has made decisions there has been schism, a forming of new structures. And that strains relationships. It's happened in New Zealand when orthodox Christians who believe the same on the issue respond in different ways. Blame, pain, anger, frustration come all too quickly and we become in danger of falling out with the very people we should be in fellowship with.

So now, in NZ you have orthodox, Jesus loving, Bible believing Christians in the ACANZP structure and in the new extra provincial diocese we've just created (CCA). That brings relational difficulties. For us it's been painful and difficult. Those who've remained feel like we've abandoned them, left them weaker, caused division: *how could you do that just when we need you?*

And then we who've left can be just as bad as we act and speak judgmentally with moral superiority: *how could you remain part of a compromised church?* People have made difficult, costly, principled decisions on both sides and they feel strongly they've done the right thing (principled), so a very flammable situation.

I have a younger brother who was ordained earlier this year in ACANZP, and he has remained in. My brother loves the Lord, is faithful and is totally orthodox on this issue but he's responded differently. At his ordination service there was a split amongst those from CCA who felt they could go and support his ACANZP ordination (taken by the bishop of Christchurch who has permitted the blessing of same-sex marriages) and those who couldn't.

But remember the principle is clear, but the way we respond is cloudy. We're going to have to bear with one another as people work out their responses... and conscience and circumstances play a huge part. We must exercise patience and respect.

And things are still shifting. North America has changed hugely since 2002 and the decision of the Diocese of New Westminster to authorize the blessing of same-sex marriages; it's changing in Australia, and it will keep changing in NZ. Continued change

means responses will continue to change and if our relationships are in tatters now it'll be hard to reconcile later.

In this ever-changing context, recalibration and realignment will continue. This means we must work hard on our relationships, because we need each other and the witness to Jesus will be greater. If we've fallen out with our orthodox brethren because we've responded differently at different times, we will be the weaker for it.

I think this period of recalibration is going to last a while. During it we must make an extra effort with the faithful who respond differently, by not adding fuel to the fire, not looking down on others, forgiving quickly when we've been slighted, carving out time for fellowship.

So, the principle is clear, the response is cloudy and recalibration means maintaining relationships is crucial. Thirdly, **beware the danger of selfishness and comfort.** These have been the two biggest impediments

for us as we've made responses. Selfishness, meaning we think if we are okay, it's okay. Comfort, meaning we allow our comforts to adversely affect our decisions.

One of the big selling points of Motion 7 when it passed at General Synod was that it allows all of us to hold our position, to teach our position, and to practice our position. I

was taken aside before the vote and told that I don't need to worry about what others are doing, for you can hold, teach and practice your integrity. Do you see the problem with the second half of that sentence? That's a scarily similar sentiment to one found in the Old Testament when Cain with breathtaking arrogance said to God, *Am I my brother's keeper?*

Yes! We're not to just worry about what we can live with, what we're doing, what our consciences can cope with. We're to care for others, their situation, supposed to look out for their consciences. We're supposed to hold each other to account, supposed to love others enough to care what they do and teach. In other words, what happens in Wangaratta and what happens in Scotland concerns you.

But the selfishness in Motion 7 is also very possible to be in us as we make our responses to it. The danger is that we make decisions that suit us, and that we only work with the people who are closest to us and we do things that benefit us.

One of the principles I speak about a lot that



Recalibration or realignment means that maintaining relationships is crucial.



guided us in our decision-making process was “not just us, not just now”. This was important so we were not just making decisions for us or that worked only in the present. Our decisions were guided by what others need and by what will last. Remaining Anglican was, in part, not because it is the only way, but because of the proven capacity to last over 500 years regardless of personalities.

That’s meant for us as a Diocese being broader in theology and practice on secondary issues than is the preference of some of us. That’s tricky to navigate and has a whole host of related issues with it. We want to hold the line on biblical authority, but we must avoid selfishness. And comfort also plays a part. I’ve had to lose very little in my life of following Jesus, embarrassingly little when I look at our brothers and sisters who live in fear for their own lives and loved ones.

Yet I still baulk at the thought of walking away from the comfort of buildings or pensions or a good reputation with outsiders. And these things can unduly affect our responses—they can trip us up. The danger with selfishness and comfort is we drift into them, without even realizing, passively. So, we must beware and be alert to the dangers of selfishness and comfort in our responses.

Which brings us lastly to **Jesus first, trust him**. It sounds clichéd and redundant, but it’s the most important and it brings everything else I’ve mentioned and all I haven’t mentioned into the right perspective.

In this context we have problems of selfishness affecting our responses, problems of getting obsessed in denominational infighting, problems of despair and bitterness, problems of losing heart at the rising secularism around us and the capitulation of the church. All of them find their solution when we remember

Jesus, who he is and what he has done.

It is hard to be selfish when you follow the one who came to serve and give his life as a ransom. It is hard to become obsessed with structural arguments when you know that God so loved the world He gave His Son, so our core business is preaching Jesus to a world that desperately needs Him. It is hard to lose heart when we follow the one who builds His church. And it is hard to not be thankful when you know the privilege and joy of knowing Jesus as saviour and Lord. So, keep Jesus first, trust him.

The Diocese of Sydney will have a huge role to play in the coming days. I am very thankful to you for your faithfulness over so many years and the inspiration and example it is to so many of us. You will need to continue to be clear on the principle moving forward but you will also have to exhibit patience and forbearance, because within the diocese you have different opinions on how to respond, and because others within the Australian province respond differently.

And as the context continues to change, as Wangaratta is joined by others, as other lines are rubbed out or moved or drawn more vividly, this ongoing recalibration will mean that fellowship will need to be more intentionally developed and maintained. And that will be a blessing to all and a great witness to the Lord. And you too will need to beware the dangers of selfishness and comfort.

Remember your privilege and responsibility is not just to make decisions and take actions that will suit yourselves but serve others. We in NZ have been blessed by you already in this way; please continue to do it for others. And that will be enabled and strengthened as you continue to put Jesus first. Once again thanks for the privilege of sharing with you tonight.

ACR

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The *Australian Church Record* has served Australian Christianity since 1880, seeking to promote independent and evangelical thinking amongst Australian Anglicans. Since 2004 the publication has been online. Back issues are on the website, which also enables notification emails to be requested. www.australianchurchrecord.net

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.

Publisher: Australian Church Record

Editor: Mark E. Earngey

The *Australian Church Record* is designed and typeset by Lankshear Design

Australian Church Record.

ACN 000 071 438

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Before I Forget



Simon Manchester, Rector of St. Thomas' North Sydney

The Australian Church Record is very pleased to interview Rev Simon Manchester, who has been Rector of St Thomas' Anglican Church, North Sydney for the last thirty years and a great encouragement to many throughout.

What were your first impressions of St Thomas' when you arrived there in 1989? What did you think about the challenge of revitalising the parish?

I had not seen St Thomas' when I first heard of it – so when I visited I was struck by the building and grounds and position as a place for gospel ministry. The congregations were small, the people were fragile – very concerned for the preservation of their traditional services. The Sunday services were BCP at 8am, 9.30am, 11am and 6pm – the 11am was choral communion.

We observed all the traditions for the first year.

Then it seemed to me that some of these services were actually keeping people away – in order to keep a few happy – so we began to make changes at all but 8am.

There is a great deal of discussion about vision and strategy in today's church growth literature. What was your vision and strategy in those early days of ministry at St Thomas'?

2. I think it was Frank Retief who said his five-year goal was “to preach as well as he could next Sunday”. I had – and have never had – a strategy. There comes a time where you have to believe the Lord has given us the essentials in the pastoral epistles and

we don't depend on a book or conference to tell us how to survive. We ran *Christianity Explained* for the lost (lots of wedding couples) and preached the Word to all. Setting a tone of kindness in the midst of religious opposition was important. Slowly the roots went down and the branches went out.

How did you navigate the challenges of having a young family while slowly turning a then-small church around in a more evangelical direction?

It was hard on my children. They left a church with lots of children and (at ages 8, 5 and 3) came to one with virtually no children but them. I would like to go back and do it again telling them and the church that I needed to be home more (physically and mentally and emotionally) and couldn't keep everyone happy. But the North Sydney grounds are great and the local school and park and whole area – plus some kind parishioners – made it a treat as well.

In light of the joys and challenges you have experienced in parish ministry, how did you avoid ministerial burn-out over the last thirty years in North Sydney?

I do have lots of energy for work but – apart from the Lord’s safekeeping and continual kindness – the Word every week fed me, friends encouraged me, books stimulated me, people challenged me and my sweet wife Kathy looked after me incredibly well.

What is the significance of personal Bible reading, personal prayer, and personal evangelism in the life of the ordinary pastor?

I drove/drive my kids nuts by talking to everybody I meet so I do like opening conversations for gospel contacts. It was good to tell my parishioners my evangelism blunders – and that I get my best thoughts long after the conversations – so they knew we all are ‘learners’ in gospel work. I find it hard to go into the day – a battleground not a playground – without biblical glasses on and honest conversation in prayer with the Lord. I don’t get up early (7am) and I try to spend 8-9am with my Bible and prayers. I try to read Scripture that has nothing to do with preparation – just directed to me. I tell the Lord about myself first and when I’ve brought Him my messes I go on to other things and people.

Why has St Thomas’ placed a premium on expository preaching over the last thirty years?

The expository ministry priority is what I saw modelled in my curacies – under David Peterson and Dick Lucas. Plus I was aware as an 18-year-old convert that John Stott did his great work largely from the pulpit. So if he could do his global work from a pulpit I thought I could do my local work from a pulpit too. There are many people questioning systematic exposition but when I get up on Sunday who wants to hear my tiny thoughts? The Scriptures provide things bigger than a thousand professors can come up with.

Why has St Thomas’ retained a 1662 BCP service at 8am, and formal liturgical features such as Creeds and Confessions at its other services?

I said that I would “continue liturgical standards” (high standards!) when I came so I promised to keep the BCP in the church somewhere. The original 8am congregation has now died but the Lord still sustains the 8am (maybe 90-100 people?) and as for Creeds

and Confessions – they do us all a power of good in linking us to the long ‘gospel train’ we are on and feeding our minds with clarity and confidence.

What Christian books have encouraged you through the course of your ministry?

I read a lot – so no books have been super-helpful beyond the obvious textual books that have played a big part in the ministry. Someone said their favourite biblical book is the one they are preaching on and I understand that.

What advice would you give to the young minister who is attempting to renew and revitalise a small parish church?

People will care what you know when they know that you care. Get to know your people. An hour with an old widow can shed more light on your preaching than some commentaries.

Preach lots of grace. The text that changed my ministry is Isaiah 30:18.

Help your people to know that Jesus is true and great – gracious and wonderful. Failure is not final. Teach them His love and you will see His love will go through them. The Christian life is the most privileged position in the world.

What ministerial work will you undertake after you conclude your time at St Thomas’ at the end of this year?

I have been offered a small role at Moore College in mentoring students – hopefully getting alongside them to help their preaching go forward with joy. And maybe a locum job – or take up an invitation to speak somewhere.

[A big part of my role at Moore will be making sure Mark Earney is properly cared for – coffee poured, shoes cleaned and lecture notes written – Ed].

Lastly, what do you pray, when you consider all that the Lord has done through your ministry at St Thomas’?

I heard John Piper asked once what he did when people thanked him for his ministry and he said, “I’m always amazed”. When you know yourself you thank the Lord He can draw a straight line with a crooked stick. My prayer then is, “Thank you for great patience and kindness – keep me going and growing”. **ACR**

The Recruitment problem

While I was training at Moore Theological College (2012-2015) the constant rhetoric was that the Sydney Anglican Diocese was oversupplied with full-time gospel workers. We were warned from the very beginning of the need to be creative in funding our own Sydney Anglican positions if we were to stay in Sydney. From one perspective, this was a great win for the Kingdom! It forced many people to consider full-time gospel ministry outside Sydney and caused those who wanted to stay in Sydney to consider the cost of staying.

However, the rhetoric has quickly changed. At our Synod this year the Standing Committee provided a report entitled 'Steps to encourage ordination'.¹ The report detailed the declining numbers of students attending Moore Theological College and the subsequent declining numbers of those putting themselves forward for ordained ministry in Sydney. The report goes as far as to say "there is a danger of supply not keeping up with demand" and that "the situation is urgent". How quickly the rhetoric has changed since I was at Moore.

At one level the Standing Committee's report on ordination numbers is a concern. We don't know the exact numbers or impact of the clergy shortage going forward, but research compiled by the Australian Church Record in 2012 showed that there will be some shortage of rectors over the next 10-15 years.² However, at another level the report provides for us some good



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reminders and should therefore drive us into action. For instance, for the report to state that "the situation is urgent" is a good reminder. The situation has always been, and will always be urgent! That's what has been so unhelpful with the rhetoric of the last decade or so stating that Sydney is 'over-supplied' with full-time gospel workers. It's just not true. The situation is urgent. We live in a pagan city of 5 million people who all need to know of the forgiveness of sins that Jesus brings. And that's

not to mention the responsibility we have to send gospel workers from Sydney into Australia and to all the nations!

We, as a diocese, have a duty to steward all that God has given us, and he has given us hundreds of reformed evangelical churches, with 55,000 adults plus youth and children attending every week. To have so many Bible believing churches within one diocese is unique and a gift of God. With that gift, we need to train up more men and women to be full-time gospel workers for the sake of the lost in our city and across the world. Thus, we can never talk about 'over-supply'. Even the language of 'supply not keeping up with demand' can be unhelpful if what is meant is that we are not producing enough clergy to fill our current churches. We're not simply interested in keeping the status quo and providing enough ordained ministers to fill current positions. We need hundreds more positions if we are going to reach those in our diocese and continue sending gospel workers to the nations.

So, how should we begin to address our recruitment problem? Here are five thoughts.

Firstly, we must pray. It's a simple one, but it's the one we often neglect! A brother recently asked

- 1 The report can be read on pages 151-158 of *Book 1 2019 Session of Synod*. The report is worth reading for some of the helpful insights and observations it makes.
- 2 The Australian Church Record is currently undertaking research to provide up to date numbers on clergy in Sydney and give analysis on possible scenarios into the future.



me, “how often do we pray that God might raise up gospel workers in our diocese? How often do we pray that God might raise up gospel workers from within our own church?”. These are challenging questions to ask. We must begin by praying to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field (Matt 9:38).

Secondly, we need to acknowledge that we have a recruitment issue here in Sydney. The report states that churches like EV Church on the Central Coast and Hunter Bible Church in Newcastle are the biggest sending churches to Moore. Why aren’t Sydney churches sending people? We in the Sydney Diocese need to recapture the importance of training the next generation. I know of the increasing workloads for the Rectors amongst us and how easy it is to point the finger, but we must all acknowledge that there is a problem and begin to address it anew.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, we need to preach and live out sacrificial discipleship in our churches.³ Have we been living and preaching a kind of discipleship that fails to call on all Christians to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ (Mark 8:34)? If we have, how can we then expect anyone to be willing to give their lives to full-time stipendiary gospel ministry? Are our churches too comfortable and complacent and is the call being made to imitate Paul as he imitates Christ (and all that that looks like throughout 1 Cor 8-11:1)? As the report helpfully observes, “Settled, comfortable ministry does not promote the urgency of evangelism”.

3 I say ‘sacrificial’ discipleship, but really it’s simply what the Bible calls ‘discipleship’. Biblical discipleship by definition is sacrificial.

“Why aren’t Sydney churches sending people? We in the Sydney Diocese need to recapture the importance of training the next generation.”

And for those of us who are in ordained ministry, we need to watch our lives and doctrine closely and ensure that we are being examples of sacrificial discipleship to the flock under our care (1 Tim 4:16).

Fourthly, we need to change the rhetoric. No more talk of ‘oversupply’ or being ‘well resourced’ (even if God has been very generous to Sydney). The situation *is* urgent. Millions (and billions around the world) are perishing without Christ and are failing to rightly give God the honour he deserves. This will always be the case until Jesus returns. Thus, the rhetoric must always be ‘there is great and urgent need’. Perhaps an argument could be made that now is an appropriate time to convince the majority to ‘stay rather than go’. Perhaps, in the short term, the rhetoric needs to be that we need to strengthen Sydney Anglican ministry so that Sydney Anglicans can continue to send people to all the nations.⁴

Fifthly, and finally, this does not mean that we should encourage anyone and everyone into stipendiary gospel ministry. That would be a disaster. Rather, we need to encourage all people to be full-time workers of the gospel (and to the sacrificial discipleship of point three), and rightly encourage those suitably gifted and able to enter full-time stipendiary ministry.

We should welcome the report presented to Synod this year. However, we need to acknowledge that the report is actually that – a report. There is a big task before us in the Sydney Diocese when it comes to recruiting. And yet, the task has always been a big one. The Pastors and congregations of this diocese need to get on with the work of training, sending, and funding the next generation of full-time stipendiary workers. Moore Theological College, Youthworks College, and MT&D all have their role to play, but the real work starts with each local Sydney Anglican church. The situation *is* urgent. Praise God for all the ways he has used our diocese for the sake of his Kingdom and glory. And let us pray that God might continue to bless the ministry of Sydney Anglicans to the praise of his glory. **ACR**

4 On the one hand I hesitate to make such a suggestion. We can be very quick to be inward looking and forget our duty in sending people to all nations. And yet, on the other hand, in order to keep sending missionaries through CMS, BCA, and other organisations like AFES (including funding those different organisations), we need to keep Sydney strong.

God's Word Written

An Anglican Understanding of the Bible

“Lord, open the King of England’s eyes!” In a loud voice and fervent prayer, mere moments before his death at the stake in 1536, William Tyndale uttered these words. Regarded by John Foxe as “the apostle of England”, the great Gloucestershire translator heartily desired that all people should have unfettered access to God’s written Word, the Bible. He hoped that the ploughboy would grasp as much of the Scriptures as would the priest. He knew that the Word of God spoke to the many misguided traditions and misunderstood decisions of his day, and believed that that Holy Scripture was the touchstone which tries all doctrine.¹¹

We can – and should! – give thanks to God that Tyndale’s dying prayer for Scriptural supremacy was answered in abundance. King Henry VIII authorised the Great Bible, which was first published in 1539. The significance of this development should not be lost on us. Every parish in the realm was ordered not only to purchase the new Bible, but to chain it to some convenient place within the church such as the lectern. It was so popular that a royal injunction was soon required to prevent people reading from it out loud during ser-



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mons! Evidently, this Bible was “Great” not only by virtue of its size, and its accessibility, but most of all, its authority. This point was made plain through the woodcut image printed upon its title page. On the frontispiece, the Lord Jesus sits at the top of the picture and declares “... so shall my word be that which goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me void” (Is. 55:11). Underneath Christ sits King Henry himself, who hands the “Verbum Dei” to Archbishop Cranmer and Vicegerent Cromwell, who then distribute it to others, and in response to all this, the people cry out “Vivat Rex!” So important were the Scriptures, that Thomas Cranmer would write in the Preface to this Great Bible that, “this book

... is the Word of God, the most precious jewel, the most holy relic that remain on earth.”²

Since those early days of the English Reformation, Anglicans throughout the world remain convinced that the Bible is “the most precious jewel” on the earth. This is the reason why Cranmer coupled the liturgy for morning and evening prayer in the *Book of Common Prayer* with a lectionary which entailed the reading of most of the Old Testament once a year, most of the New Testament three times per year, and the

11 William Tyndale, “The Exposition of the first epistle of S. Iohn” in John Foxe (ed.), *The VVhole works of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, Doct. Barnes ...* (London: John Day, 1573), RSTC 24436, p. 414.

2 Thomas Cranmer, “The Prologue to the reader” in *The Byble in Engylshe that is to saye the content of al the holy scrypture ...* (London: Grafton, 1540), RSTC 2071, *.ii’. This, and subsequent early modern quotations have been modernised.

Psalter once a month! This is the reason why the King James Version of the Bible has gripped Christian men and women throughout the centuries. And this is the reason why millions of Anglicans around the world today respond on a weekly basis to the hearing of the Bible with, “Thanks be to God”. What drives this central feature of Anglicanism is the important fact that the Bible, according to our *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*, is “God’s Word written.”

The classic Anglican appreciation of the Scriptures as “the most precious jewel” is a fair distance away from Bishop Peter Stuart of Newcastle’s recent description of the Bible as “an authoritative text for Anglicans.”³ We may dismiss much of Bishop Stuart’s article as a mixture of historical and theological error. But the ambiguity within the phrase “an authoritative text for Anglicans” does raise an important question for us: how is the Bible authoritative for Anglicans?

An admirable attempt to engage with this question was recently penned by Bishop Murray Harvey of Grafton.⁴ Most commendably, he writes that the “ultimate purpose” of carefully interpreting the ancient Scriptures in our modern day “is that we might meet and know Jesus.” Practical advice for reading Scripture is provided, and devotional reading of the Bible is enthusiastically encouraged. Furthermore, the article displays some awareness of our Anglican foundations with reference to the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*, the *Book of Homilies*, the *Book of Common Prayer*, but most importantly of all Bishop Harvey engages with Scripture itself. Nevertheless, within his well-intended piece, there are some infelicitous remarks related to the nature, the authority, and the interpretation of the Holy Scripture. Since these matters carry significant consequences, the present article aims to clear away some confusion and provide some clarity concerning “the most precious jewel” of our Anglican heritage, the Bible. This clarity is vitally important in light of current debates within the Anglican Church of Australia.

“What drives this central feature of Anglicanism is the important fact that the Bible, according to our *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*, is “God’s Word written.”

How do Anglicans understand the Nature of the Bible?

Let us start with the nature of Holy Scripture. Bishop Harvey helpfully grounds the doctrine of Scripture in our doctrine of God: we have a God who communicates with human beings. Moreover, the church is the creature of the Word (and not vice-versa) and is thus a witness to the Word, not its judge. Therefore, he rightly states that “Anglicanism has always cherished scripture and given it a central place in its life and worship.” In fact, with reference to Article VI of the *Thirty-nine Articles*, Bishop Harvey explains that the reason for this ecclesiastical importance is that the Bible is sufficient for our salvation. The importance of these commitments cannot be overstated: Anglicans believe in the God who is there, the God who is not silent, and the God who saves. When we next consider our well-loved and well-read Bibles, we should pause and rejoice in

wonder! For the God of this universe has deigned to lisp precious words to us, his beloved children.

So far, so good. However, it is where Bishop Harvey attempts to explain the relationship between the Word of God and the words of Holy Scripture, that we encounter some problems. Apparently, it is difficult to determine what the English reformers believed about the inspiration of the Bible. Harvey asserts that whatever they believed was in stark contrast to the continen-

tal reformers who used phrases like “God breathed”. This is untenable, not simply because the continental reformers did not write (nor often speak) in English, but because it is a false dichotomy. The key verse in question is 2 Timothy 3:16, which uses the Greek θεόπνευστος and is rendered “scriptura divinitus” in the Latin Vulgate. This is translated by various editions of the Bible as “inspired by God” (e.g., the Tyndale’s NT, the Geneva Bible, KJV, ASV, RSV, etc) or “God-breathed” (e.g., NIV, ESV). Either translation is legitimate, since it reflects Paul’s use of the Greek word in this verse – a use which Bishop Harvey has not understood rightly. He writes that “Anglicans do believe that the Scripture writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit in their work”. But this verse does not speak of the writers being inspired (though they certainly were, as 2 Pet. 1:21 indicates). Rather it says that the product of the writing was inspired, viz. “All

3 www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/6473441/why-the-archbishop-should-reconsider/ accessed 14 November 2019.

4 www.graftondiocese.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/North-Coast-Anglican-October-November-2019.pdf accessed 14 November 2019.

Scripture is θεόπνευστος". The emphasis is on the writings, not the writers. Therefore, he incorrectly concludes, "so we should take seriously their original context." Because of the inspiration of the *Scriptures*, the Apostle Paul teaches that we should take seriously the original *text* and not merely the original *context*.

The early English reformers understood this vitally important point. The Preface to the first Book of Homilies in 1547 (contra 1542 as per Bishop Harvey) speaks of the "very Word of God ... according to the mind of the Holy Ghost, expressed in the scriptures". Archbishop Cranmer, in his first homily (*A Fruitful Exhortation to the Reading of Holy Scripture*) attributes "the most infallible certainty, truth, and perpetual assurance" of the Scriptures which are given By God who is "the only author of these heavenly meditations."⁵ An illustrious group of Marian prisoners, including martyr and theologian, John Bradford, declared the Scriptures "to be the very true Word of God, and to be written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost".⁶ The Church of England's great defender, Bishop John Jewel, wrote, "All that is written in the Word of God is not written for angels and archangels or heavenly spirits, but for the sons of men and for us ... It is the Word of God: God opens His mouth and speaks to us, to guide us into all truth".⁷ Thomas Lever spoke concisely of "Gods Word written in the Holy Scriptures by inspiration of God".⁸ Bishop James Pilkington of Durham writes that "Scripture comes not first from man, but from God, and therefore God is to be taken for the author of it and not man."⁹ And the Elizabethan Archbishop of York, Edwin Sandys, set forth the same

opinion: "The foundation of our religion is the written Word, the Scriptures of God, the undoubted records of the Holy Ghost."¹⁰

Furthermore, the inspired nature of the text of Scripture was enshrined into the Anglican formularies authored by our Reformers. Archbishop Cranmer's famous collect for the second Sunday of Advent captures the close connection between the words of Scripture and the Word of God: "Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning ... that by patience, and comfort

of your holy Word..." This God-breathed nature of the Scriptures is implicit in the Ordinal's form of service for the ordering of priests, wherein immediately after the ordinand is charged to be a "faithful dispenser of the word of God" he is given a Bible by the bishop. But the most succinct account of the God-breathed nature of the Scriptures is found in Article XX of the *Thirty-nine Articles*, which simply speaks of "God's Word written".

Therefore, while our Anglican forebears did not claim to exhaustively know the precise details of how the original authors came to write the inspired Scriptures, they

knew enough to say that these authors were inspired by God, and this resulted in the inspired Scriptures. Moreover, despite attempts to marginalise the doctrine of inspiration, this foundational position of the English reformers has remained in place for subsequent Anglican theologians. "The Holy Ghost," wrote nineteenth century Bishop J.C. Ryle of Liverpool, "put into their minds thoughts and ideas, and then guided their pens in writing them."¹¹ And more recently, Anglican theologian John Webster, wrote that "Inspiration is the Spirit's work of illuminating the prophetic and apostolic writers, and providing both the impulse to write the matter and verbal form of their writings."¹²



While our Anglican forebears did not claim to exhaustively know the precise details of how the original authors came to write the inspired Scriptures, they knew enough to say that these authors were inspired by God, and this resulted in the inspired Scriptures.



- 5 Thomas Cranmer (ed.), "A Fruitefull exhortation, to the readyng of holye scriptrure" in *Certayne sermons, or homelies appoynted by the kynges Maiestie, to be declared and redde, by all persones, vicars, or curates, euery Sondag in their churches, where they haue cure* (London: Grafton, 1547), RSTC 13640, A.ii' (Preface), B.iv'.
- 6 John Bradford et al., "A copie of a certayne declaration drawne and sent out of prison by Mayster Bradford, Mayster Sanders, and dyvers other godly Preachers" in John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* ... (London: John Day, 1583), RSTC 11225, p. 1470.
- 7 John Jewel, *A view of a sedicious bul sent into Englande* ... (London: Newberie & Bynneman, 1582), RSTC 14614, p. 133.
- 8 Thomas Lever, *A treatise of the right way* ... (London: Bynneman, 1575), RSTC 15552, A.iii'.
- 9 James Pilkington, *A godlie exposition vpon certeine chapters of Nehemiah* ... (Cambridge: Thomas, 1585), RSTC 19929, A.ii'.

- 10 Edwin Sandys, *Sermons made by the most reuerend Father in God, Edwin, Archbishop of Yorke* (London: Midleton, 1585), RSTC 21713, p. 6.
- 11 J.C. Ryle, *Old Paths: Being Plain Statements on Some of the Weightier Matters of Christianity* (London: James Clark & Co, 1972), 18.
- 12 ὑπό πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι: On the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, in J. Gordon McConville & Lloyd K. Pieterse (eds.), *Conception, Reception, and the Spirit: Essays in Honour of Andrew T. Lincoln* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015) p. 238.

How do Anglicans understand the Authority of the Bible?

The English reformers' understanding of inspiration has necessary implications for the authority of the Bible. But an important warning needs to be sounded at this juncture. Anglicans ought to be wary of conflating God's inspiration of the Bible into God's inspiration of believers. Bishop Harvey veers dangerously close to such a problem when he writes that our decision to live and serve in response to God's call "is part of God's ongoing revelation and inspiration". It is true that God inspires Christians by his Holy Spirit insofar as we are transformed more into the image of Christ ("cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit"). But the inspiration of God in our lives does not produce perfect and infallible persons. However, in the case of the prophets and apostles, the inspiration of God produced perfect and infallible Scripture – they spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). Due to this perfection, Article XX states that one place of Scripture cannot be repugnant to another. On this basis – that Scripture cannot err – the same Article XX declares that the teaching of the Church cannot be contrary to Scripture. Indeed, Article XXI states that even General Councils of the Church "may err, and sometimes have erred." And therefore, Article XXII declares that erroneous doctrines (like purgatory) and practices (like the adoration of the host) are "repugnant to Word of God." The Edwardian *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* rightly and summarily states that "The authority of divine Scripture is to be believed to be so great, that no excellence of any creature may be set above or equated to it."¹³ Thus, our human decisions and theological opinions must submit to the authority of Scripture, and they may even be granted ecclesiastical authority, but they cannot ever claim the same authority of "God's Word written".

This is germane to the discussion of the canonicity of the Scriptures. Bishop Harvey rightly states that Anglicans "have always been conscious and respect-

ful of the historical process of compiling what we now know as the Bible (forming the Canon)." But it is difficult to know what his subsequent citation from Dean Martyn Percy contributes to the conversation. Of course, the Bible has not "come from heaven to earth like a fax." Is there any Christian who would make such a claim? The compiling of the Canon was not a matter of investing a certain set of extant books with divinely inspired status, but a matter of recognising those books which were divinely inspired and preserved by God. If the caricature from the controversial Dean is intended to refute the possibility of perfectly and infallibly inspired Scripture, then the English reformers would simply and sharply disagree. Anglicans have long recognised (not "authorised"!) the perfect quality of the writings of the prophets and apostles, and the separation of the canonical writings from the

apocryphal writings in Article VI of the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* bears out this truth.

All this has a bearing upon what Bishop Harvey calls the "distinctive *Anglican Tripartite of Scripture, Tradition and Reason*". But what is precisely distinctive about this? When compared to the rest of the magisterial reformers of the Protestant reformation, there is nothing especially distinctive about how the English reformers co-ordinate Scripture, tradition, and reason together in their theological method. The soteriological

sufficiency of the Scriptures implies the insufficiency of tradition and reason, and thus we have the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*. Actually, the view that Anglicans have a novel stance on the interplay between Scripture, reason, and tradition, is itself distinctive. Indeed, it is a distinctive of a certain historiographical mythology which not only misunderstands that the English reformers were in fact Protestants (indeed as continental as the continental reformers – contra the peculiar "Englishness" stressed by Victorian historians!), but also habitually distorts the doctrine of the Anglican theologian Richard Hooker.

It was once fashionable to set forth the judicious Mr Hooker as the father of the three-legged stool approach to Christian authority: Scripture, reason, and tradition, and all in equal measure. This anachronistic appeal to Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical History* was then regularly used as a wax nose to sup-



Thus, our human decisions and theological opinions must submit to the authority of Scripture, and they may even be granted ecclesiastical authority, but they cannot ever claim the same authority of "God's Word written".



¹³ Gerald Bray (ed.), *Tudor Church Reform: The Henrician Canons of 1535 and the Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* (Woodbridge Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2005), 179.

port all manner of things which the English reformers, and Hooker himself (!), would have vigorously disagreed with. Traditional Anglo-Catholic authors have positioned him as a champion of the *via media* between Rome and the Reformed, and more liberal Anglicans have used the reasonable and traditional legs of their imagined three-legged stool to relativise Hooker's biblical bottom-line. Fortunately, recent scholarship has put a bomb under these hagiographical distortions of Hooker. Certainly, Richard Hooker was opposed to the extreme end of non-conforming Puritanism (just as Archbishops Cranmer and Parker were opposed to mavericks in their own day). But modern scholars have unpicked John Keble's selective publication of Hooker's *Laws*, and through careful re-examination are now unanimous in their view that Richard Hooker's ideas were consistent with Reformed theological thought. For Hooker, episcopacy is not conceived to be of the essence of the church, predestination stands in continuity with Calvinian orthodoxy, and Scripture is the supreme authority which rules over reason and tradition.¹⁴ To be sure, Hooker's *Laws* remains an important piece of Anglican theology and is distinctive in its own right, but it is a piece of conforming Reformed theology nonetheless.



To be sure, Hooker's *Laws* remains an important piece of Anglican theology and is distinctive in its own right, but it is a piece of conforming Reformed theology nonetheless.



How should Anglicans therefore read the Bible?

Bishop Harvey rightly commends “dialoguing with Scripture in the light of reason.” An Anglican approach to the Scriptures does not preclude, but rather requires a reasoned reading in communion with the saints throughout the ages. Hooker is a fine example of this. Yet another good example of this can

be found in Archbishop Cranmer's theology of Holy Communion. Cranmer's great eucharistic project involved years of research into the theological opinions and traditions found in patristic and medieval theology. He sifted through swathes of his summaries of these opinions to see which Church fathers best agreed with Scripture. And Cranmer used reason devastatingly in his debates with Bishop Stephen Gardiner to demonstrate the absurdity of holding to a substantial presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

The reason for the Anglican insistence on “these your creatures of bread and wine” was Cranmer's dogged determination to exclude a substantial presence of Christ at the Lord's Table because, on the one hand, it was unreasonable to posit a substance without its proper accidents, and on the other hand, it was biblical to believe that Christ was physically present in heaven and would only physically return in order to judge the living and the dead. Anyone familiar with

Cranmer's writings on the Lord's Supper may easily perceive that his arguments from tradition and reason are regulated by his arguments based upon Scripture. The same could be said about the method for the rest of the English reformers. Therefore, we might say that Anglicans are not “no Creed but the Bible” people who shun the use of reason and tradition. Though we believe in *Sola Scriptura* we do not believe in *Nuda Scriptura*.

Bishop Harvey also provides us with the wonderful example of how William Wilberforce interpreted the Scriptures to abolish the slave-trade. This points us to another vital hermeneutical point concerning the Bible. Harvey writes that “interpretive wisdom is required when using it to contribute to contemporary debates. Because the Bible is a lengthy document composed over a long period in diverse contexts, it does not always present a single position on any given issue.” Australian Anglicans have some wisdom to offer here through our own answer to this interpretive challenge. The contribution to the discipline of Biblical Theology by Archbishop Donald Robinson (1922-2018) and theologian Graeme Goldsworthy (1934-) has enabled generations of Anglican clergy to understand the relationship between the diversity and unity of the Bible. Through an understanding of the unfolding story of salvation in the Bible which centres

14 W.J. Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker: Reformer and Platonist* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Diarmaid MacCulloch, “Richard Hooker's Reputation” in *All Things Made New: Writings on the Reformation* (London: Allen Lane, 2016); Nigel Voak, *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology: A Study of Reason, Will, and Grace* (Oxford: OUP, 2003); W. Bradford Littlejohn and Scott N. Kindred-Barnes (eds.), *Richard Hooker and Reformed Orthodoxy* (Göttingen, V&R, 2017); W. Bradford Littlejohn, *Richard Hooker: A Companion to His Life and Work* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015); Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason: Reformed Theologian of the Church of England?* (Carlisle, Paternoster, 1997).

upon Jesus Christ, we may quite easily understand why some moral commandments in the Old Covenant have been abrogated (e.g., eating shellfish), whereas others remain in force (e.g., stealing), and others have been transformed (e.g., Sabbath observance) under the New Covenant. We are only scratching the surface of the brilliance of this ecumenical contribution, but further reading of Robinson's *Faith's Framework* and Goldworthy's *According to Plan* is strongly suggested.

Therefore, how do we mind the hermeneutical gap between the ancient authors then and modern readership now? This is Bishop Harvey's central concern, and we are well placed to make an answer. Part of the answer lies in properly co-ordinating the authority of Scripture, with the other authorities of reason and tradition. Part of the answer lies in properly understanding the unity and diversity of the Bible in order to read Scripture sensitivity. But the most vital part of the answer lies in the nature of Scripture itself. That is, the answer to the hermeneutical question (*how do I read the Bible?*) relies upon the answer to the metaphysical question (*what is the Bible?*). After all, if we do not believe that the Bible really is God's Word written to us, then it may be a mere tool in our ministerial kit, but it will never be "living and active" to us. If we do not believe that the Bible is the very Word of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, then it may never be "sharper than a double-edged sword" to us. We may miss – to our great shame – the spiritual fact that Holy Scripture "penetrates even to dividing joints and marrow" as it "judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Heb. 4:12). John Webster puts it well:

*"What, then, is it to interpret Scripture? An answer to that which envisages interpretation as negotiating the distance between a text from the past and an interpreter in a self-contained present is too thin an account of the hermeneutical situation, and fails to grasp what is metaphysically fundamental in biblical hermeneutics: Christ is God, and he is speaking."*¹⁵



Therefore, the basic interpretive challenge to many modern Anglican readers of Scripture is that of biblical authority. Are we willing to allow the vivifying voice of God's Word written to shape our thoughts and attitudes – even with unpopular matters?



This does not make the interpretation of Scripture easy for all people. Archbishop Cranmer knew this and provided pastoral advice in Bible reading in his Homily on Scripture. Some parts of Scripture are easier to understand than others. The Scriptures are full of low valleys and plain ways which are easy for all to enjoy, but also high hills and mountains which few can ascend into. So, those who are not able to "brook strong meat" should "suck the sweet and tender milk, and differ the rest until he waxes stronger, and comes to more knowledge." But all who delight in the Scripture should know that the Lord will provide help to understand what is necessary for us to know. In one of his most beautiful turns of phrase, Cranmer encourages us in our reading of the Bible:

"Let us night and day muse, and have meditation, and contemplation in them. Let us ruminate, and (as it were) chew the cud, that we may have the sweet juice, spiritual effect, marrow, honey, kernel, taste, comfort, and consolation of them."¹⁶

Nor does a proper Anglican understanding of the Bible make the interpretation of Scripture comfortable at all times. Let us consider the pastorally important matter of welcoming LGBTI+ persons into our churches. Does this require the affirmation of same-sex sexual practice? The Scriptures clearly condemn "those who practice homosexuality" in the same list as the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Some have unsuccessfully attempted to interpret this passage such that sex within the context of faithful and loving homosexual relationships is permissible, but most scholars agree that the Bible is abundantly clear on the matter. Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch rightly comments: "This is an issue of biblical authority. Despite much well-intentioned theological fancy footwork to the contrary, it is difficult to see the Bible as expressing anything else but disapproval of homosexual activity."¹⁷ Therefore, the basic interpretive challenge to many modern Anglican readers of Scripture is that of biblical authority. Are we willing

15 John B. Webster, *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 49.

16 Cranmer, "A Fruitfull exhortation", B.iii, B.iv.

17 Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), 705.

to allow the vivifying voice of God's Word written to shape our thoughts and attitudes – even with unpopular matters? Are we willing to submit our reason and traditions under the majestic authority of Scripture? Are we willing to hear the Word of God and respond – however awkwardly – with 'Thanks be to God'? Contemporary Anglican ethicist, Oliver O'Donovan, helpfully writes:

*"Faith in Scripture is a readiness to risk living by it and placing our hope in it. It is not a posture of knowing everything or of having the answer to every question. It is a willingness to accept Scripture on its own terms, without presuppositions or conditions that we have imposed upon it."*¹⁸

Our English reformers wisely enshrined the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures into our Anglican formularies, and our Australian forebears did likewise with the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles set out in the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia. But modern Australian Anglicans need fresh courage to stand upon the Scriptures. We are

often at odds with our world over subjects like the creation *ex nihilo*, the Virgin birth, human sexuality, and sacraments. Therefore, we need courage to believe God's Word written. We are often at odds with our own flesh, as we are slowly but surely transformed into the full measure of the stature of Christ (Eph. 4:13). Therefore, we need courage to regularly read Holy Scripture and risk our own spiritual lives on it. And we are always at odds with the devil, who prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1. Pet. 5:8). Therefore, we need courage to stand firm in the faith deposited in the Scriptures, knowing that one little word from God's Word can fell our greatest spiritual foe. We can live with forgiven hearts and clear consciences because our Lord Jesus Christ made that "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the world." But our hearts and consciences must remain captive to the Word of God. This is why Tyndale prayed for the King of England's eyes to be opened, and this is why faithful Anglicans have always clung to Holy Scripture as the "most precious jewel" on earth. Therefore, let us pray, as in the Great Litany in the *Book of Common Prayer*: "From all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil: God Lord deliver us." **ACR**

18 Oliver O'Donovan, "Scripture and Christian Ethics", *Anvil* 24/1 (2007): 24.



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Keeping, Growing and Using Your Greek

Tips for Ordinary Pastors

Introduction: A Proviso

This is an article to encourage ordinary pastors and other Christian workers to keep, grow and use their Greek.¹ I teach Greek at Moore College, and I am convinced of its value and importance for ‘ordinary’ pastoral ministry. But as I start I need to be clear about what this article is not. This is not a subtle critique of those who are in pastoral ministry and who have never learned Greek. I can think of *many* pastors and Bible teachers whom God has used powerfully in my own life who had little or no formal training in biblical languages. These men have had powerful Bible-teaching, evangelistic and church-planting ministries. In fact, the reality is that *most* Christian leaders around the world do not possess the biblical languages and God is using them in powerful ways to build his Church. However, in the West, and in Sydney in particular, we are uniquely privileged in that training for ministry can and does include the biblical languages.² And so in this article I am speaking to those who *have* studied Greek (or are studying it), in order to encourage them to keep using it.

At Moore College (as in many other colleges), our students take three semesters of Greek. After



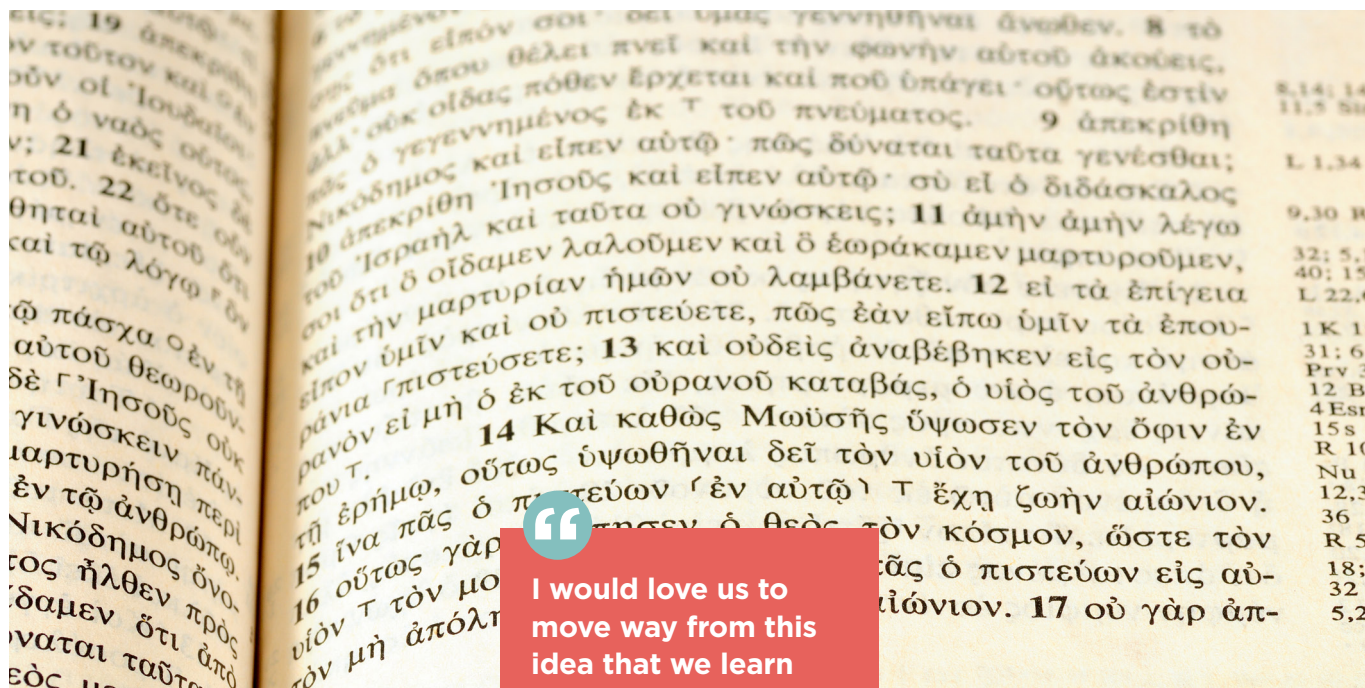
two semesters students begin to take exegetical classes where we examine the Greek text of John’s Gospel together. Nothing brings me as much joy in my teaching life as seeing our students begin to apply their Greek skills to a close examination of the text of the New Testament. Our exegetical classes are essentially an in-depth Bible study on the Greek text. However, few things bring me as much disappointment in my teaching life as meeting a former student who sheepishly tells me that they no longer use their Greek. I understand the pressures of pastoral ministry and I realise that as a lecturer I have a unique opportunity that makes it easy (necessary even) to keep using my Greek. However, it doesn’t have to be this way! I have

friends who scraped through Greek at college and yet 10, 15 years later I’ll see them with their battered UBS which they still struggle with but which is still their daily companion.

Be Persistent

For many people the seeds of giving up Greek are sown at college. Students get to the end of their three semesters of Greek learning and they struggle through the exam and with a sigh of relief they know that they have sat their last Greek exam. From then on, it is just a case of doing as little Greek as they can get away with. Again, I do want to acknowledge for some

1 Much of what I say in this article applies to Hebrew too.
2 For a defence of the importance of the biblical languages in the training of ministers, see www.australianchurchrecord.net/the-valuing-and-devaluing-of-theological-education/



I would love us to move way from this idea that we learn Greek at college and then spend the rest of our lives letting it slip away. Rather we should think of college giving us the foundation which we spend the rest of our lives building on.

people this will be an unavoidable reality. Language learning can be unbearably painful and it may have taken a super-human effort even to get this far. However, for many – most even – I think the mindset of having *finished* their Greek education is very unhelpful. The thought is – well if *this* is as good as it gets – I will never use Greek in the future.

I think a more helpful mindset is to see that you have made it to base-camp! I know that might have the reverse effect – all that learning and you are only at basecamp. However, the reality is that while three semesters gives you a solid foundation in grammar, syntax and vocabulary it is only that – a foundation. Yet the encouraging news is that you have the rest of your life to climb the mountain!

I would love us to move way from this idea that we learn Greek at college and then spend the rest of our lives letting it slip away. Rather we should think of college giving us the foundation which we spend the rest of our lives building on.

Be Creative

To keep and even develop our Greek we need to be creative. Continuing to revise paradigms, principal parts and vocabulary are all great things to do but in the busyness of parish ministry they are hard to keep up. The key, I think, is to keep ongoing Greek

learning being interesting and creative and, further, to integrate it into your daily time in the word and your prep.

Here are a few suggestions:

Software: There are a number of commercial software programs and an excellent free one from Tyndale House in Cambridge.³ Often we

think of Bible software as a crutch, but maybe to keep with our mountain analogy we should think of it as climbing sticks! I think it is fine to be realistic and to be thankful for the great resources out there. Software is not a substitute for learning Greek but it does help you continue to use your Greek. To quote Paul – οὐδὲν ἀπόβλητον μετὰ εὐχαριστίας λαμβανόμενον (1 Tim 4:4), and I think that includes Bible software!

Greek New Testament: However, as good and useful as Bible software is, nothing helps as much as time spent actually reading the New Testament. Nevertheless, it can be discouraging to open up your Greek New Testament and have to look up every second word. To counter this, you can buy what is known as a “Reader’s New Testament” – Greek New Testaments with less common vocabulary footnoted. But perhaps the best approach is to make your own reader’s New Testament. That is to take a UBS and read through it

3 www.stepbible.org/

and every time you come to a word you don't know you make a note in pencil. Make it a one (or 2 or 5!) year goal to read through the entire New Testament this way. You will then have a fully marked up copy which you know you can consult, confident that you know or have a note on the meaning of every word.

Another practice that I have found helpful is to listen to the ESV daily podcast (which is freely available online) and read along in the Greek (you can also do this with Hebrew). It lasts for 15 minutes a day, and it takes you through the entire New Testament (and the Old Testament) in a year. Although your level of engagement with the Greek might not be as high as slowly reading it yourself, this is a very manageable way to ensure that you are engaging with the Greek at some level every day. As well as podcasts, other resources can help: Rob Plummer puts out a daily 2-minute video called the Daily Dose of Greek which is very helpful.⁴ There are also books that lead you through daily reflections on a Greek passage.⁵ Perhaps you could form a reading group with colleagues or other pastors to read through a biblical book. Even meeting for an hour once a month would have a significant impact on maintaining and developing your Greek.

Although it might sound hardcore, consider memorizing a passage (e.g. Philippians 2:5-11) in Greek. The discipline of committing the passage to memory will help embed the Greek in your heart and mind. I know people who have done this and found it to be one of the most helpful things they have ever done in terms of Greek learning.⁶ Obviously, doing your sermon/Bible study prep in the Greek is a very helpful way to maintain and develop your Greek. The discipline of looking at the text closely in Greek and having to read slowly will not only help with your language skills, but it will also help you to interact with the passage at a deeper level.

4 <http://dailydoseofgreek.com/>

5 For example, J. Scott Duvall and Verlyn D. Verbrugge (eds.), *Devotions on the Greek New Testament: 52 Reflections to Inspire and Instruct* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012); Paul N. Jackson (ed.), *Devotions on the Greek New Testament Volume 2 Testament: 52 Reflections to Inspire and Instruct* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017).

6 And for the really hardcore you could consider signing up for an online course where you learn to speak Koine Greek (e.g. www.conversationalkoine.com/). There is increasing evidence that the best way to make progress in a 'dead' language is the same way as you do in a 'living' language – by speaking it.

Be Optimistic

As I mentioned before, I would love us to move away from the idea of 'keeping' our Greek that we have learned at college. Rather, I would love to see us think of 'growing' or 'developing' our Greek. We have our whole lives to keep working on our Greek.

One of the hindrances though is the idea that unless you are an absolute expert you won't get anything out of reading the Greek. I think this is misguided for a few reasons. Firstly, the simple process of reading slowly and working carefully at the Greek helps you pay attention to the passage you are working on. Secondly, although we are very well served by a large number of excellent English translations and commentaries, these can never be a substitute for our own engagement with the Greek text. As an example, I was struck recently while reading Galatians 5

by Paul's use of slavery language. From chapter 3 he has been warning the Galatians against being enslaved to the law. At the beginning of chapter 5 he makes the climactic call: "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (5:1 ESV). In verse 13 he reminds them that the freedom they enjoy is not for the sake of indulging the flesh, but he reminds them that they must "through love serve one another" (5:13 ESV). The

ESV is fairly typical in how it renders this last clause, but reading in the Greek you will see that the verb is actually δουλεύω. They are not to submit themselves to a yoke of slavery, but they are to enslave themselves to one another! While some of the commentaries will point this out, the freshness of discovering it yourself I think helps our engagement with the text.

Conclusion

I think the phrase "little and often" is helpful in conclusion. Dipping into your Greek every day – perhaps via one of the means I mentioned above or simply by reading a verse – will help you maintain, and more importantly, grow your Greek. The Greek New Testament is a wonderful resource and we live in an age with so many helps that there is no reason why we can't spend the rest of our lives continuing to climb towards the summit! **ACR**

“The discipline of looking at the text closely in Greek and having to read slowly will not only help with your language skills, but it will also help you to interact with the passage at a deeper level.”

Evangelism in Sadleir

Back in May 2017 I was on a road trip with my Dad from the Glass House Mountains to Sydney on the way home from a family reunion. I was on holidays in the Eastern States during my four-year posting as a BCA field staffer at Paraburdoo/Tom Price in North West Australia.

Dad was taking his turn to drive as I sat back and enjoyed the view when suddenly David Tyndall (then acting Rector at St Mark's Sadleir), rang me to ask if I'd be willing to be interviewed by the wardens as they searched for a new rector.

It's now almost two years since I was appointed Rector at St Mark's. But when David first called I still had a deep desire to serve as an evangelical Anglican outside of Sydney. Sadleir was right at the bottom of our list of options but the Lord in his timing moved it to the top of the list, and I really thank him that he did. We love serving here! One of the comments David made to me over the phone that day in May which struck a chord deep within me was, "I have never been in a church where people become Christians so often."

The reason this struck me so deeply is because my experience, like that of many Anglicans, is a shyness about evangelism, a hesitancy, or perhaps even a doubt that evangelism is really effective. But at Sadleir there is a great bunch of people who have a deep practical belief in the power of the gospel to save (I can claim no responsibility for this, they were like this when I



Dave Morgan, Rector of St. Mark's Sadleir

arrived). In the past 20 months I am aware of about 10 people who have become Christians through the evangelistic ministry of God's people at St Mark's. And to my delight, only a couple of them have been a fruit of my own evangelistic ministry – it's wonderful to be part of a team. It's my pleasure to share some of the stories below.

Christianity Explained

Jacinth is an honorary Assistant at St Mark's, and for many of her 50 years of vocational ministry she has used *Christianity Explained* prolifically. Her time at St Mark's is no exception. I suspect she may be the one of the few people in the

world who has run that course more times than its author Michael Bennett!

Jacinth has offered this course about 5 times over the last 20 months. It's been a struggle at times in terms of attendance, and it's hard to know why (this hasn't historically been the case). There have been times when she has been quite discouraged by these haphazard attendances. Nonetheless I am aware of at least 4 people who have been converted through this ministry in that time. Jacinth's faithful perseverance has borne fruit! It's lovely also to reflect on how people ended up joining the course in the first place. One came along to church with a Christian friend (believing herself to already be Christian as well) and realised through doing the course that she was not yet saved, and so gave her life to Jesus. Another

was a lady who had come along to women's Christmas events for years, and over all those years her friend had been praying for her. She did the course, and was saved! Another was the mother of a long-time member of St Mark's. She now identifies as Christian.

Another new Christian is an Islander man who attended his daughter's baptism earlier this year and started *Christianity Explained* with Jacinth shortly after. Of the three in his group, he was the only one to complete the course. Towards the end he was deeply moved and confessed Christ! We thank God that though the ministry is hard, it has borne real fruit.

Baptism and Discipleship

It was on Resurrection Sunday 2018 that a Year 12 girl and her mum came and sat at the back of our 8am traditional service. I was preaching on Matthew 28:16-20 on the complete authority that Jesus has following his resurrection from the dead. One of the applications I raised was for people not yet baptised to consider getting baptised as an expression of becoming disciples of the risen Jesus.

At St Mark's we still have the handshake with the pastor when the congregation leave the building. The Year 12 girl said to me that she would like to be baptised. I was later to learn that years before, someone from St Mark's had door-knocked her and gave her an *Essential Jesus* book.

Following on from that conversation I invited her to join the church and to do the *Just for Starters* course with one of the women from church. Pam, a really godly lady from St Mark's then visited this girl and her mum several times, and shared *Just for Starters* with them as the Year 12 girl came along to church each week. This young girl has since joined Pam's Bible study, and been baptised with Pam as her sponsor.

Getting straight to the point

Ans is the pastoral worker at St Mark's and is great at following up with people. I remember three conversations with her in particular:

The first was before I started as Rector. Ans was sharing with me how some people she has worked with have said something like, "Ans, why are you so

pushy with the Jesus stuff?" (she isn't by the way, she's just intentional). Her response was, "well there is salvation in Jesus and if I don't tell you about it you might miss out!"

The second was about two months into my incumbency. She mentioned a lady who had just become a Christian. At this point I had only met that lady once in passing, but Ans had already been to visit her in her home, shared the gospel with her and led her to faith!

The final was a similar conversation. A new lady and her four kids turned up at church one evening. She was a pastor's kid and had been going to church all her life. Ans had been to visit her within the next week or so and shared at staff meeting that "she became a Christian the other day." It turns out this lady had never really listened at church. It had been a cultural thing for her. But Ans, using *Just for Starters*, had explained the gospel in a way she had never heard before. She is now a committed Christian and a member of St Mark's.

“

We thank God that though the ministry is hard, it has borne real fruit.

”

Evangelism and Baptism

One of the things I love about all the above stories is that a number of people are involved in most of them. It's wonderful to be part of a team, holding out the word of life together.

The last story is probably my favourite because so many saints were involved in it. Gary came to St Mark's about a year ago with his partner. His partner's mum is a lovely Christian woman who already comes to St Mark's.

After he had been for a few Sundays, I remember Gary saying, "Dave, I really don't get much about the Bible." So, I gave him a Bible and invited him to men's Bible study. He started attending occasionally. Over January I ran an evangelistic course for three couples (of which Gary and his partner were one) called *Gospel in Four Meals*. This is a great relational evangelistic course developed by Rory Shiner from Providence church in Perth. Gary was quite engaged by the course but in conclusion shared on his feedback form that he had been spiritual but not religious at the start of the course, and was still of the same view.

A couple of months later he did *Christianity Explained* with Jacinth, who I already mentioned above. Once again he enjoyed the course, yet remained unconverted.

But things shifted during the week of Moore College mission. I had asked the Moore College team

to visit our men's Bible study and to do a visual summary of the Bible's story.

Gary came along to that Bible study and was blown away. The story gripped him like never before. He went home with a copy of *God's Big Picture* by Vaughan Roberts and devoured it.

That Sunday though was the last straw. Michael our student minister shared his testimony, and as Michael spoke, Gary was convicted and came to place his faith in the Lord Jesus. He grabbed me as we left church that day and said, "Dave, I want to be baptised. I believe." Gary was baptised on Resurrection Sunday

this year. Praise the Lord!

I think the people who have been saved have been my deepest source of joy in ministry here. Seeing God so powerfully at work is wonderful.

Please do pray for more people to be saved, and also pray for those who have been. Life is often very messy for people who live in our area. It can make ongoing discipleship and church attendance very challenging for some, including some of those mentioned above. Please pray that God who began a good work in these people will bring it on to completion on the day of Christ. **ACR**

Of Synod, Schools, and Churches

If the number of questions and proposed amendments is anything to go by, one of the discussions in which members of the recent Synod were highly engaged concerned a bill for the *Synod Membership Ordinance 1995 Amendment Ordinance 2019*.¹ In its original form, the bill would amend the existing ordinance in two key ways: first, it would expand the Declaration made by all sitting members of Synod to incorporate a Statement of Faith; and second, it would require that a small number of heads of Diocesan Schools be included as members of Synod.

This article concerns the latter modification to the existing ordinance.

In support of making this change, two key argu-



Nathan Walter,
Senior Minister,
Naremburn Cammeray
Anglican Church

ments were advanced. On one hand, it was suggested that including some heads of Diocesan Schools would be a clear and practical show of support for our school heads from the Synod. We were told that the reason such a show of support was needed was a perceived *lack* of support among our school heads at the moment. Apparently, this lack of support stretches back several years, but it was felt most keenly towards the end of last year, when the heads wrote a public letter to MPs calling for fresh legal protections for religious freedom. This letter had been signed by the heads

at the request of 'the Diocese'.² The furore that erupted in response to the letter was severe, and involved some of our heads facing, at times, significant and very personal opposition, even including threats to their own safety or that of their family members.

¹ Just to break that title down a little bit, an ordinance concerning the membership of Synod was already in place – the *Synod Membership Ordinance 1995*. However, a bill (proposed ordinance) was brought to this year's Synod which, if passed, would amend that existing ordinance. Hence, the *Synod Membership Ordinance 1995 Amendment Ordinance 2019*.

² There were times during the debate at this year's Synod when it almost sounded as if the heads of schools had sent the letter at the request of Synod. In fact, no such request was ever discussed or made during Synod last year, nor in the time after that by the Standing Committee acting on Synod's behalf.

On the other hand, however, the proposed amendment was also argued on the basis that our Diocesan Schools are apparently on the frontline of our Diocesan mission, and therefore ought to be represented in Synod. Because the case for this was never closely questioned, it was never unpacked in detail. When it was mentioned, however, the key consideration seemed to be the vast reach of our Diocesan Schools within our wider community, particularly conceived in terms of the number of students and families which our schools serve.

As a basis for including some heads of schools as members of Synod, however, neither of these arguments is, in my view, compelling. Regarding the issue of school heads feeling the support of the Synod, beyond the obvious fact that some of them would be ‘in the room where it happens’, it was never clearly articulated how the Synod membership of just a handful of heads – three only, from a constituency that is both diverse and disparate – would address this. Muddying the waters further, the bill’s question time revealed that the precise mechanism by which particular heads would be appointed as members of Synod had not yet been fully worked out. On top of everything, as the discussion progressed, it turned out that there were already a number of heads of schools present as members of the Synod; more, in fact, than the proposed three!

Inasmuch as last year’s letter and the outcry that followed represent a low point in the relationship between ‘the Diocese’ and some heads of schools, this should definitely be addressed as a matter of priority. Where steps can be taken to address any past errors of judgment by those who requested the letter, or to acknowledge the significant cost that the heads have borne in all this, or to give encouragement and support to the heads in their leadership of schools and their public stance as Christian men and women, these should be taken without delay. But to think that we will repair the relationship simply by giving Synod membership to a few representative heads is, in my mind, like using a square peg to try and fill a round hole.

My concerns run even deeper when it comes to

the suggestion that our Diocesan Schools are the frontline of our mission. I don’t doubt for a moment that our schools have an enormous reach within the community. But if we are now saying that they are the frontline of our Diocesan mission, I think we are misrepresenting their primary function, which is education, and admitting a critical failure in the primary function of our churches, which is public gospel proclamation.

I fully understand that our schools do more than *just* education. As an ex-high school teacher, I am a great advocate of Christian teachers – I think the opportunities for displaying and proclaiming the gospel are immense. And for a school overall, there is the opportunity to craft a whole community whose life is built around the gospel. But at the end of the day, schools exist primarily for the work of education, and teachers exist, fundamentally, to teach their particular subject matter. In my case, as a music teacher, I taught crotchets and quavers. No-one is ever saved by such knowledge!

On the flipside, however, a primary function of our churches is public gospel proclamation: to declare at every opportunity the wondrous news of Christ’s death and resurrection, by which the lost are saved and the saved are strengthened, and then continually built to be disciple-making-disciples. Where churches get caught up in activities that are entirely unconnected to

public gospel proclamation, they have become distracted from a primary task that they are meant to be doing. If we seriously think that our churches are no longer on the frontline of our Diocesan mission, I think we have got a much more fundamental problem than we have yet recognized!

I am well aware that for perhaps all of the points I have raised, there will be different opinions. Those conversations should certainly continue. However, what I want to do now is step back a bit and consider a bigger question, the answer to which, if we can settle it, will help us when similar questions arise in the future. It’s the question of what Synod should be, and who Synod should be for. These are vital questions, and in my view, it is regrettable that we had to debate the bill



I don’t doubt for a moment that our schools have an enormous reach within the community. But if we are now saying that they are the frontline of our Diocesan mission, I think we are misrepresenting their primary function, which is education, and admitting a critical failure in the primary function of our churches, which is public gospel proclamation.



for amending the Synod membership ordinance before the release of an upcoming Standing Committee Report on the nature and purposes of Synod.

How should we think about these matters? If we admit that a modern ‘organisation’ like the Anglican Diocese of Sydney is not based directly on any particular instructions or structures that we see in the New Testament, what theological considerations can help us make such decisions about the membership of Synod? Or are we completely free to fashion things however the mood takes us?

Theologically, I suggest that the most important considerations from the New Testament that bear on these issues concern the nature of the local church, and the relationship between local churches and/or Christians geographically separate from each other.

We know that the gospel of Jesus Christ addresses not only the broken vertical relationship between us and God, but also the broken horizontal relationship between us and one another. The book of Ephesians wonderfully unpacks this in relation to the old division between Jew and Gentile. Both were in need of Christ coming to preach peace (2:17). And yet because he has preached peace to both groups, the peace they now experience through him is not only with respect to God (2:18) but also with respect to each other (2:15-16). This means that now, in Christ, we are built into *the church*, the vehicle by which God now displays his manifold wisdom for salvation, even in the heavenly realms (3:8-10). The same things could never be said of schools, or of nursing homes, or theological colleges. It is *the church* which God gathers together, and which Christ is constantly building.

However, we know that Christians do not exist only in a local church, in complete independence and isolation from others. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, for example, he addressed them not just as a local church, but “together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours” (1 Cor 1:2). A New Testament word often used for the association and working together of one church with another, or with a particular individual, is *fellowship* (e.g., Rom 15:26-27; 2 Cor 8:4; Php 1:5, 4:15).

Such fellowship and sharing together is important, and wonderfully God-honouring. It is an expression of the gospel, and of the achievements of the gospel, and of the priority of the gospel among God’s people. But it is not itself the same thing as ‘the church’. It is something that reflects moments of opportunity, and God-given connections and interests. But it is not itself something that acquires in the New Testament the same significance that the church has in God’s plans of salvation.

What does all this mean for our understanding of the Synod? Perhaps we should first ask: what does all this mean for our understanding of the Diocese? At the risk of over-simplification, there seem to be two basic answers to this question. Some regard the Diocese

as primarily the fellowship/network of *local Anglican churches*. Others regard it as the fellowship/network of *all Anglican ministries and organisations*.

On the latter view, ‘the Diocese’ is made up of not just local churches, but also Moore Theological College, Anglicare, Anglican Schools, etc. On the former view, however, the significance of the local church will be upheld as a matter of priority and principle, with activities such as Moore Theological College, Anglicare, and Anglican Schools etc., being viewed rather as a kind of joint venture – things which can be achieved by local churches acting together, but which would not be possible for any one local

church alone. Such ventures must not become independent of the churches. Christians in local churches must ‘own’ them, or else they will cease to be a genuine outcome of partnership between our churches. But they exist to help and reflect the gospel ministry of our local churches, not the other way around.

Without doubt, the membership of Synod is a vital matter. But the decisions we make about this will reflect our understanding of Synod. And our understanding of Synod will reflect our understanding of the Diocese. And our understanding of the Diocese must reflect our understanding of God’s plans of salvation, and the critical role that the church plays within it. **ACR**

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This means that now, in Christ, we are built into *the church*, the vehicle by which God now displays his manifold wisdom for salvation, even in the heavenly realms (3:8-10). The same things could never be said of schools, or of nursing homes, or theological colleges. It is *the church* which God gathers together, and which Christ is constantly building.

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With Thanksgiving

The Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies, Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of NSW

In his recent and final Presidential address to the third ordinary session of the 51st Synod of the Diocese of Sydney, Archbishop Glenn Davies remarked that his primary responsibility was to be a guardian of “the faith that was delivered once for all to the saints” (Jude 3). The *Australian Church Record* wishes to thank Glenn Davies for faithfully serving in this, and myriad other ways – especially through the proclamation of the gospel and prayer for gospel ministry – over the past seven years.

Throughout his tenure Archbishop Davies has exhibited his deep concern for all people. Benefitting from his years in parish ministry (Curate at St Stephen’s Willoughby, 1981-2; Rector at St Luke’s Miranda, 1995-2001), Glenn has preached the gospel throughout the churches of Sydney, Australia, and the world, and has sought to see many enter into eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ. This has been evident, not only in the churches themselves, but increasingly so in his annual Presidential addresses to the Diocesan Synod of Sydney, and his regular Easter and Christmas addresses. Glenn has also been sensitive to the temporal needs of all kinds of people, and throughout his archiepiscopacy has called for compassion towards Syrian refugees, the protection of Iraqi Christians, and for special attention for children in detention centres.

Archbishop Davies’ experience in New Testament research and teaching has positively impacted his ministry in many ways. Having served as Lecturer and Registrar of Moore Theological College (1983-1995), Glenn has displayed a great appreciation for the College (often describing it as the ‘Jewel in the crown of the Diocese’), and had the privilege of dedicating the new Teaching Centre to the glory of God

at its opening ceremony in 2017. Glenn’s scholarly eye for detail is renowned and is observable not only to those who attend meetings with him, but also to ordination candidates whose theological convictions are carefully examined – the latter point attesting to Glenn’s desire to see confessionally Anglican and genuinely biblical leadership across the Diocese.

While the word ‘churchman’ has gone somewhat out of vogue, Archbishop Davies has provided a good example of what this term means, for he has been a strong encouragement and support to the Church of God. He has enabled the New Churches for New Communities initiative to flourish, and many men and women have come to faith through these new ministries. He has consecrated several bishops, which has included the re-introduction of episcopal ministry in the under-resourced George’s River region through Peter Lin, and the refreshing of episcopal ministry focused upon international relations through Malcolm Richards. Glenn has been both an irenic and determined figure in the national church, with the ability to relate warmly and collaborate across diverse strands of churchmanship while strongly advocating orthodox and evangelical Anglican convictions. The latter has been clearly seen in his 2019 Presidential address which called for those who wish to change the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Australia (especially its teaching on marriage) to leave us. It has also been demonstrated with his efforts in the GAFCON movement, most notably through his involvement in the consecration of Andy Lines (AMiE) and Jay Behan (CCAANZ).

Lastly, the ACR thanks Archbishop Davies for his courage in the public proclamation of scriptural truth. He was an outspoken advocate for biblical



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His willingness to follow the sacrificial example of our Lord Jesus has inspired many others to do likewise.

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freedom as the censorship of biblical Christianity has increased, and came to the defence of the defenceless during the recent controversy over abortion legislation in NSW. Glenn’s determination to take a strong and public position on these important moral matters has encouraged numerous clergy and laypersons to similarly speak out and stand up for the teaching of the Bible. His willingness to follow the sacrificial example of our Lord Jesus has inspired many others to do likewise.

marriage during the same-sex ‘marriage’ debate, has been a determined voice for religious

Therefore, the ACR gives thanks to God for the archiepiscopal contribution of Glenn Davies. Indeed, the ACR rejoices in the wisdom of our God, whose ways are higher than our ways (Isa 55:8-9), and his sovereign provision of a godly and gospel-hearted leader for a time such as this. We pray that the Lord will strengthen Archbishop Davies for the final months of his episcopal ministry, and trust that the Lord will bless and keep both Archbishop and Mrs Davies in the coming years.

The ACR Editorial Team. **ACR**

Time Limited Tenure for the Archbishop?

On the first night of the 2019 session of Synod the *Archbishop Election Amendment Ordinance 2019* was debated and introduced. In general, the Bill was uncontroversial. It had been the result of a working group set up in response to a motion at the 2018 session of Synod requesting that the Doctrine Commission report, 'An Evangelical Episcopate', be incorporated into the Sydney Archbishop Election Ordinance. There were several amendments, mostly minor editorial changes which were accepted by the mover and seconder. One amendment, however, did cause some interesting debate and the substance of the proposal is worthy of further consideration. Essentially, this amendment would have changed the current tenure arrangement for Archbishops of Sydney (until 68 years old with a potential two-year extension) to be limited to twelve years if the archbishop is younger than 68 at that time. The amendment proposed that after twelve years the office would become vacant and an election would be held, with the former archbishop able to stand for re-election.

There were several arguments put forward in support of this amendment. Foremost among them was that it would free Synod up to appoint a younger man into the role with the assurance that they would not necessarily be in office for too long. Twelve years was suggested as a good length of time in which to achieve various goals and maintain vitality in leader-



Ed Loane, incoming Warden of St. Paul's College

ship. Supporting material for this case included a table of the age on appointment of previous archbishops along with the length of their time in office. Certainly, since World War II the age of incoming archbishops has been on average higher than those appointed previously. As an aside, the debate also raised the issue of the potential benefits of implementing limited tenure for rectors and other ministers. There is precedent for this system in other dioceses around the country and, like with bishops, a case can be made both for and against terms of office. For example, such a proposal should take into consideration the way parishes such as Centennial Park and

North Sydney have benefitted greatly from the long term tenure of rectors. In a similar way, probably the two best Arch/bishops of Sydney were Bishop Barker and Archbishop Mowll, who each served in office more than 25 years. Our diocese benefited greatly by these men not being limited to twelve years in office.

The arguments in the debate against the amendment included the fact that there is nothing at present preventing Synod from appointing a younger man than has been the common practice (as long as he is duly qualified including being above the canonical age of thirty). Furthermore, no archbishop is required to stay until they reach the age of retirement. Factors apart from age may be more of a determining factor in Sydney's election of archbishops. For example, all

of those elected to the See were previously either a bishop or principal of a theological college. The first two bishops were appointed in England and one had been an archdeacon and the other had been a rector prior to appointment. Issues were also raised about the proposal of having an archbishop stand for re-election and the potential consequences of how such an election may impact leadership in both the first term as well as the following term(s). Perhaps the most compelling argument against the amendment

was that such a significant change in the nature of the terms of appointment to the office of archbishop needed further contemplation and consideration. As a result, the amendment was defeated, but the possibility of a time limited term for archbishops will continue to be considered because Synod passed motion 64/19 which requested Standing Committee to provide a report on the subject. We look forward to seeing the various merits and difficulties that this report presents at a future session of Synod. **ACR**

Best for Last

There's something about saving your best until last. Very few sportsmen achieve it – going out with a grand final win or an Ashes century. Certainly, very few politicians achieve it – often they are dragged kicking and screaming from their seats well after their 'golden years'. Yet, the two Archbishops under whom I have served as an ordained minister in the Diocese of Sydney both managed to save their best Presidential addresses until their final ones (that is not meant to be a criticism of their earlier addresses by the way!). There is something about knowing this is the final innings that in both cases created a clarity of challenge that stirred the soul for the spiritual battle we are called to engage in.

Interestingly, both Archbishop Jensen and Davies left with words about the importance of guarding the faith. In 2012 Archbishop Jensen challenged us to stand for biblical truth:

Let me give you my experience. I do not regard myself as a combative man, but over the course of my Christian life there has scarcely been a period when there have not been contests



Phil Colgan, Senior Minister, St. George North Anglican Church

between the world and the gospel and within the Christian fellowship over doctrine, contests in which as a teacher of God's word I have been forced to take part [...]

But I warn you all, that if you shrink back in your day from contesting for the gospel, if you opt for the quiet life and a nice reputation, if you prefer political compromise to biblical truth, you will lose your way and squander the mighty legacy of a Marcus Loane, a Broughton Knox, and an Alan Cole. Do not let the last word spoken over your generation be the chilling Last Word of the daughter-in-law of Eli: Ichabod, 'the glory has departed'.

What a challenge to stand firm for the gospel and to not be the generation that allows God's word to slide away.

How wonderful then, that, seven years later, Archbishop Davies has not just fought that fight himself but continued the theme in his final Presidential address. Of course, now in 2019, Archbishop Davies is responding not to general issues but to the specific

crisis within the National Church. His call was far more specific but no less challenging:

My own view is that if people wish to change the doctrine of our Church, they should start a new church or join a church more aligned to their views – but do not ruin the Anglican Church by abandoning the plain teaching of Scripture. Please leave us. We have far too much work to do in evangelising Australia to be distracted by the constant pressure to change our doctrine in order to satisfy the lusts and pleasures of the world.

Sadly, in the weeks that followed, too much attention has been given to people misunderstanding (either genuinely or mischievously) the Archbishop's call for people to "please leave us". It is not the purpose of this short article to discuss whether such 'misunderstandings' should have been considered in advance or different words chosen. However, I would say this – much of the response from within evangelical circles has focused on the need to speak intelligibly to and not offend the outsider (it seems in the light of 1 Corinthians 14). However, surely that good aim must not subvert the primary biblical aim of 'church' (and by inference the Synod) to encourage and equip the 'insider' to stand firm in the faith and fight the good

fight for Christ? My personal view is that sometimes it is not possible to speak in such a way that achieves both aims, and so that primary aim must prevail. A discussion perhaps for another day?

However, setting aside that controversy (though relevant to it), I wish people had focused more on the way Archbishop Davies challenged us to see standing firm for truth and the proclamation of the gospel to this nation are together our primary aims. How wonderful to hear the Archbishop of Sydney reminding us that of all the things we do, it is 'evangelising Australia' that is the primary task set before us. Yet, how wonderful to also be reminded that while standing firm for the truth and fighting doctrinal fights is an annoying distraction to that main task – we must do it. In the end, what good is it preaching a gospel to people if it is not the gospel that saves? What good is it inviting people to join a church, if it's not the church built on the foundation of Christ and the Apostolic teaching? What good is it inviting people to come and listen to the word, if it is not the Word of God?

Please join me in praising God for Archbishop Davies and his clarity and biblical leadership. However, please also join me in praying that we would take up that joint charge of evangelising Australia and standing firm for the truth of God's word. **ACR**