

**BEING A CHURCH IN MISSION:
REFLECTIONS FROM TASMANIA ON
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA**

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Ridley College

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I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this topic which is very close to my heart. The living God is a missionary God and he calls his people to be a missionary people. Our context demands a refocusing on this primary call. In this paper, I will reflect on my lived experience over fifteen years as a Diocesan Bishop with a deep desire to reshape a diocese for mission¹. I am joined today by Paul Cavanough who was my partner in leadership for 14 years acting as my Director of Ministry Services¹. The Tasmanian Anglican story of those years cannot be told without Paul's contribution. We trust these reflections will shape some ways by which we might consider our National Church.

SOMETHING ABOUT OUR FUNDAMENTALS

Imagine you are sitting in front of a Royal Commission Public Hearing. You are in the witness box having taken the Oath. Arrayed before you are Commissioners, barristers, staff, and because it is being live streamed, you are on view to people around the nation. It's far from a relaxed situation! The Counsel Assisting the Commissioners asks, "Without asking for a sermon, Bishop, would you mind briefly assisting us with what are Anglican values as you see and understand them?"² What comes to your mind? What values define us?

Two years previously, at the Tasmanian Clergy Conference, I spoke on, 'The BCP and Anglican DNA'. I believe that the Book of Common Prayer 1662 (BCP) sets out to form and nurture a Church that is,

- Christ-centred,
- Bible soaked,
- A Church in society, and of course,
- A Church at prayer – the BCP is after all, a prayer book!

¹ Parts of this paper were developed in the Chapter 'A New Openness to Change' by John Harrower and published in 'Facing the Future (of the Anglican Church in Australia): Bishops Imagine a Different Church' edited by S. Hale & A. Curnow, Acorn Press, Brunswick East, 2009, Chapter 20. [Book here](#)

² Royal Commission Case Study 20, 'The Hutchins School', Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Public Hearing, Hobart, November 2014. <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/case-study/049259f2-65f3-4d80-9605-972e1e47bd01/case-study-20-november-2014.-hobart> Transcript (Day 057): 24 November 2014, TC5812 – TC5814.

But that was at an Anglican Clergy Conference: a Royal Commission is a legal forum. What gains gravitas at a legal forum? Yes, legal documents. The Anglican Church of Australia has a legal document: its Constitution³. How do you imagine the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia begins? It begins with ‘*Fundamental Declarations*’:

1. “The Anglican Church of Australia, being a part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, holds the Christian faith as professed by the Church of Christ ... in particular as set forth in the ... Nicene Creed and Apostles’ Creed.”
2. “This Church receives all the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by the inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation.”
3. “This Church will ever obey the commands of Christ, teach His doctrine, administer His sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, follow and uphold His discipline and preserve the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons in the sacred ministry.”

I shared this as best I could with the Royal Commission⁴. I believe we need to share the ‘Fundamentals’ energetically with our Christian communities and embed these values in our worship, fellowship and mission. These fundamentals resonate with the aims and character of the BCP, as outlined previously. On these fundamentals we, the Anglican Church of Australia, participate in God’s work in the world. These fundamentals are strong enough to support new ways of being God’s people.

In all our endeavours we trust in God’s passion and faithfulness to build His Church. Referring to Jesus’ response to Peter’s “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mathew 16:15-18), John Piper comments,

“The mission and life of our church is not ultimately dependent on human initiative or human wisdom or human perseverance. It is ultimately dependent on the power and wisdom and faithfulness of the risen and living Christ to keep this promise: “I will build my church.” Not, “You will build my church.” Or, “Missionaries will build my church.” Or, “The clergy will build my church.” But, “I will build my church.” Christ has an unwavering commitment to gather his church from all the peoples of the world.”⁵

In the fifteen years I served as a Diocesan Bishop, I can assure you that there were times of struggle. That struggle was always within the context of moments of grace when God revealed the building of his church, person by person, minister by minister, grace and mercy in abundance.

³ The Standing Committee of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia, ‘The Constitution Canons and Rules of the Anglican Church of Australia’, The Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation, 2014.

⁴ Op.cit., Case Study 20, ‘The Hutchins School’, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Public Hearing, Hobart, November 2014.

⁵ John Piper, ‘I will build my church from all peoples, <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/i-will-build-my-church-from-all-peoples> viewed 28 March 2016.

One evening at an ordination enquirers' retreat, an enquirer said, "Just tell me what hoops I need to jump through and I will jump. My burden is to make disciples of Jesus." Within three months he was enrolled here at Ridley Melbourne and three years later, with an amazing wife at his side who had also been studying at Ridley, that passion to make disciples of Jesus was to be expressed in rural Tasmania.

Our part, the Anglican Church of Australia's part, is to bring all that we are in Christ to the place in which we live. The Apostle Paul greets the Colossian Church, '... to the saints ... in Christ, in Colossae' (Col. 1:2). In Tasmania, our desire was to be in Christ in Tasmania.

SOMETHING OF OUR CHALLENGE

Two decades of National Church Life Surveys (NCLS) have provided a shocking reality check grimly detailing the critical decline of the Anglican Church of Australia. The Surveys remind us that we live in a time when Christian ministry is complex.

The Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) faces numerous national challenges:

- 1) Australia has growing urban but declining rural population.
- 2) Australia has growing urban suburbs without land allocated for religious purposes.
- 3) Christians are a declining proportion of the Australian population.

The Anglican Church of Australia itself:

- 4) Has a declining share of the Christian population of Australia.
- 5) Struggles to maintain commitment to voluntary work in the local community, but is determined to do so.
- 6) Has a terrible history of child sexual abuse by clergy, but many in the community still regard the Anglican Church highly.
- 7) Is structured traditionally and largely populated by traditional actors.
- 8) Has a national structure with limited authority and resources.
- 9) Has 23 Dioceses, each one with limited authority but significant accountability.
- 10) Has Dioceses which vary widely in resources and culture.
- 11) Has a Parish culture which is largely parochial (congregational).
- 12) Struggles to work collaboratively across parishes, dioceses and provinces; and in a diocese across parishes and agencies (eg. welfare, school, and chaplaincies).
- 13) Originated, and supports, the work of Anglicare across Australia, one of the largest Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in the family service sector.

In addressing these challenges, I have sought earlier in this paper to highlight three key principles:

1. This is God's work. God is building his church.
2. Don't lose sight of the Fundamentals.
3. Have a go! Let's do some hoop jumping together!

SOMETHING ABOUT TASMANIA

Tasmania is an island state of Australia with a population of 500,000. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the population centres are greater Hobart (207,000), greater Launceston (104,000) and Burnie/Devonport (80,000), with the remainder of the population spread in smaller towns and rural districts across the state.⁶ The population pattern has resulted from geographical, historical and commercial factors that have led to a large number of small but significant centres developing across the state. The Anglican Church also has strong links to the development of the state. Tasmania has a high proportion of its population on welfare. In that sector of Tasmania, Anglicare is the largest NGO in the State, well respected in the community and endorsed by government.

In the ABS 2006 Census some 160,000 Tasmanians declared themselves to be Anglican. Sadly, only 3,000 of them would find themselves in Anglican worship centres on any Sunday morning. The nineteenth-century mission strategy to have a church building and priest within easy walking distance of every Anglican has left a legacy of church buildings and parishes scattered across the state. Following some rationalisation, there are now currently 43 parishes with 115 worship centres in active use. The decade of evangelism in the 1990s saw church attendance in Tasmania decline by 30 per cent. The Anglican Church of Tasmania faces critical decline.

Many Anglicans have taken these and similar challenges seriously. The key question is whether this brings an openness to deep change that will bring new life, or tolerable minor adjustments that makes slow death more palatable.

In the words of Quinn and Caza, ‘deep change is transformational change.’⁷ The evidence of an openness to transformational change is found where leaders are stepping out of institutionalised culture where protecting the *status quo* has been paramount, and stepping towards refocusing on the church’s biblical mandate as God’s mission agency. These leaders are committed to the reality that ‘We are not in the business of institutionalising mission; we are in the business of liberating the people of God for mission.’⁸

In 1997, Bishop Phillip Newell, then Bishop of Tasmania, reflecting on the NCLS 1996 survey results for the Anglican Church in Tasmania wrote, ‘What stands out with clarity is that merely trying to do what we did in the past only better, working harder, pedalling faster, has not turned the ship around. It has, if anything fueled the sense of frustration and failure in our clergy and lay leadership. We need a different way of being church.’⁹

⁶ ABS, *Tasmania at a Glance*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2008, p. 2.

⁷ R.E. Quinn & A. Caza, ‘Deep Change’, in *Encyclopaedia of Leadership*, Eds. G.R. Goethals, G. Sorenson & J. M. Burns, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks CA, 2004, p. 326

⁸ George Carey, 1996 ‘Looking to the Future’ [Archbishop of Canterbury: Presidential Address at ACC-10](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/1996/10/30/ACNS1007) <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/1996/10/30/ACNS1007>.

⁹ The Tasmanian Anglican August 1997 p.2.

SOME THINGS TASMANIAN ANGLICANS TRIED

What do you do with declining rural parishes? – In Tasmania, the Anglican parish is often the last Christian denomination with physical plant and priest in the region.

Abandon the region or seek alternative patterns of Christian life and ministry? We have,

Explored different patterns of Christian community.

Over the years 1998 and 1999, the Diocese of Tasmania began to put in place a model of ministry based on Paul's metaphor of the Body of Christ from Ephesians chapter 4. The Council of the Diocese endorsed a vision of 'Every congregation and organisation participating in the mission of God by being a ministering community in which needs are discerned and ministries are identified, called and used.'

In Tasmania in 2000, as the new Diocesan Bishop, I shared the vision of 'Every Tasmanian committed to Jesus Christ', declared that the diocese be known as 'The Missionary Diocese of Tasmania', and challenged every Anglican to live as a 'missionary disciple'. These strong statements of missional intent highlighted the commencement of intentional deep change in the Anglican Church in Tasmania. This forthright approach was criticized by some clerical and lay leaders, as well as the Premier of Tasmania! Yes, expect criticism. We are talking about Jesus Christ!

In a diocesan context, conceptual and visionary thinking needs to be grounded in contextual reality. It was clear in Tasmania that the inherited model of every parish with a priest was simply unsustainable. Overtime we came to acknowledge, bless and order the diversity in our Anglican community within the ordinances of the diocese. We affirmed a local pattern of ministry known as Enabler Supported Ministry and introduced patterns to be known as Anglican Community Districts and Anglican Pastoral Districts.

Explored a missional leadership.

The mood of the diocese at the end of the 90's decade of evangelism was best described as highly anxious with very low levels of understanding of how to address the reality of critical decline. At this time, the diocese needed to call a new bishop. A deeply conservative community faced the stark reality of 'change or death?' In faith, they decided for change and a bishop with a commitment to mission and evangelism. Tasmania prayed for and called a missionary bishop. At my first synod in October 2000, I concluded my Presidential Address by declaring,

You elected me, trust me.

You elected a missionary, let us be missionaries together.

You elected an innovator, let us be innovators together.

You elected a change agent, let us change together.

You elected a missionary bishop, let us be a missionary diocese.¹⁰

This declaration was met by a standing ovation from synod, leaving me in tears. The diocese was clearly warming to their new leadership.

¹⁰ J. Harrower, 'Reaching Tasmanians for Jesus Christ', Tasmanian Synod Keynote Address, Anglican Church in Tasmania, 27 October 2000, www.anglicantas.org.au/resources-synodaddress2000/ .

In time, I shared the vision for the Anglican Church to be a healthy church transforming the lives of every Tasmanian, and for every Anglican person to be a prayerful activist, enlivened by biblical faith and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Explored a willingness to take risks.

My initial slogan for the diocese ‘All Tasmanians committed to Jesus Christ’ clearly expressed a commitment to deep and transformational change. Obviously, if every Tasmanian was to know of Jesus Christ a lot needed to change in the Anglican Church. In very general terms, an environment of high levels of anxiety about the future of the church, with very low levels of understanding of how to address the issues, is not conducive to strategic planning but is an ideal environment for the entrepreneurial strike.

But there is a danger here of ego and insensitivity. Leadership in the way of Christ sees to ‘knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.’¹¹

We decided to leverage every piece of episcopal authority toward these priorities. We assessed risk, we sought to be risk literate, and became convinced that there are risks worth taking. In this environment, with this conviction and in God’s grace we were able to move very quickly to establish mission initiatives. The office of the bishop was able to bless and release evangelists to seniors’ ministry, sailing ministry and family outreach using donkeys.¹² Criticism came when I chose to ordain godly men and women who did not meet some of the requirements for ordination described in the National Church’s guidelines for bishops in this matter.

Addressed critical and urgent matters.

We began ‘cleaning the cupboards’ to deal with the potentially crippling issue of child sexual abuse by Anglican Church workers. This involved a public apology to victims at my first media conference, developing a Pastoral Support and Assistance Scheme, making myself available to meet pastorally with victims and to personally apologise to them, the use of diocesan funds to finance the pastoral support, and my active media presence in seeking to make transparent our complaint processes and pastoral care . In 2002, I called for a Royal Commission into child sexual abuse and have supported the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse which was established in 2013.

¹¹ J. Piper, ‘The Marks of a Spiritual Leader’, Desiring God Resource Library, 1 January 1995, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader> viewed 28 march 2016.

¹² Gayelene Harrower trained donkeys for church and community events as a way of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Gayelene’s donkeys have appeared in Cathedrals, parishes, street parades and community events offering ‘living stables’ and rides explaining the cross on the donkey’s back and the One who rode them in love for us.

Embarked on embedding a missional ecclesiology in diocesan life.

The diocese had for some time been considering the seminal work of twentieth-century missiologist Roland Allen who said,

St Paul's churches were indigenous churches in the proper sense of the word; and I believe that the secret of their foundation lay in his recognition of the church as a local church (as opposed to our 'national churches') and in his profound belief and trust in the Holy Spirit indwelling his converts and the churches of which they were members, which enabled him to establish them at once with full authority.¹³

We believed that transformational change could be built on this same trust. Permission giving is a sign of openness to change, and it needed to be a characteristic of our diocese. If the bishop could not trust his clergy and lay leaders, then we were doomed.

The missiology of Roland Allen was foundational to our establishing a pattern of parish life known as Enabler Supported Ministry. Parishes who could no longer afford reasonable levels of stipendiary ministry, yet sustained a heart for ministry and mission in their districts, would be enabled to continue in full ministry. A key concern with this pattern of ministry is the incumbency of the parish. My conclusion was that the only logical place to position the incumbency of a parish in this context was with a team of lay and ordained people. Yes, it is not usual. But I note this in order to illustrate that our context called for new ways of being church. I took a risk with team incumbency. The priority was to sustain the mission of the church rather than institutional guidelines or inherited structures.

Cultivated a permission giving culture

Based on our Fundamentals and directed to mission, 'permission giving' in the diocese required the bishop to delegate new authorities to rectors. This included the conduct of weddings, funerals, baptisms and worship services in non-consecrated buildings; determinations with regard to the marriage of divorced persons; the development of ecumenical partnerships; the licensing of lay workers; and the use of new liturgies to respectfully reflect the culture of the people to whom we were seeking to minister more fully. This type of change was not easy for some to whom it appeared to be a sure course for chaos and disaster. Recruitment of clergy and lay leadership became, and continues to be, an extremely high priority. Some who simply could not or would not come onboard with the bishop's vision left the diocese or the Anglican Church. We needed to accept these decisions as health-giving for both parties.

In a very mixed and dysfunctional environment, the focus had to be on missiology. There was much that divided us. The hope was that the mission of God would unite us. Within two years, the diocese became the Missionary Diocese of Tasmania, the bishop became the Missionary Bishop, archdeacons became Mission Support Officers, archdeaconries became Mission Networks, the Diocesan Ministry Officer became the Diocesan Mission Enabler, bishop's visits included Mission Conversations, and parish priorities became Mission Action Plans. There is no doubt that we could be accused of overkill, and in many ways we under-delivered; however, no one could say our intention was not clear!

¹³ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?*, author's preface to 2nd edn, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids MI, 1962, p. vii.

Cultivated a missional lexicon and explored its possibilities

The Mission Conversations became a central strategy in moving the diocese toward deeper levels of understanding. It was a simple idea, really: bring the lay and clerical leadership of clusters of parishes together to talk about mission and their role in the work of God in their patch. Mission was not just for ABM and CMS overseas, but also for us at home in Tasmania.

We found that many Anglicans simply did not have the language of mission and were deeply fearful of evangelism. Many were ashamed of a perceived personal failure to keep their own children and grandchildren in the life of the church. Others were profoundly ashamed of the abusive behaviour of some clergy. Many had lost confidence in the Gospel and the work of God in the world. This church needed to be lovingly re-taught not to be afraid but to trust God and each other. At our mission conversations we would talk about the things that we could see God doing in our lives and in the church. As we told stories we came to understand that God was at work through us in our homes, workplaces, our business practices, sports clubs and serving the community. We also managed to gather a few ideas of how we could get closer to God and to participate in his work in Tasmania.

Reassigned and rebadged traditional roles.

The appointment of Mission Support Officers began a critical rethink of the role of the bishop's support team. These offices needed to enhance the missional agenda. We decided to move many of the traditional responsibilities for property and management matters from archdeacons to the Registrar. Respected clergy who were previously archdeacons were then released from some of the burden of line-management to focus on supporting local mission. They were given the title of Mission Support Officer. This action was one of the earliest in our intent to reshape and integrate institutional structures to facilitate a 'missionary diocese'.

We aimed to facilitate the consideration of missional priorities at every level within the diocese. For example, a missionary diocese must have a synod that facilitates mission, but the same must apply at every level. We challenged the diocesan council, the ministry council, Anglicare (Tasmania), our schools and our agencies to critically re-examine their missional agenda.

WHAT CAN A BISHOP AND DIOCESAN LEADERSHIP TEAM DO?

A bishop cannot do all the ministry that needs to be done! A bishop needs a leadership team, and that is illustrated by Paul Cavanaugh's presence here, this evening.

A bishop's leadership is gained through their team. Shared wisdom, delegation, communication, complementary skills, all are essential. Having said that, of course at the end of the day, the leader bears the responsibility for the team's activities¹⁴.

¹⁴ See for example the Administrator's words at the Installation of the 12th Bishop of Tasmania, 19.3.2016: *The Bishop is escorted to the Bishop's Cathedra by the Administrator and the Dean. The Dean says*

Articulate vision, and the principles and messiness of mission.

As anxiety levels lowered and understanding grew, we were asked to explain our vision for the diocese. People had begun to see that the future might look very different to the past. In 2004 I released my vision for the diocese entitled ‘a healthy church ... transforming life’.¹⁵ It is important to note that this was not a diocesan vision. We made no attempt to gain diocesan-wide consensus on a vision. It simply would have taken too long. The vision encouraged each parish with seven principles:

We will embark on an ambitious plan to transform the life of the Anglican Church in Tasmania over the coming years. The heart of strategic planning within a church is our relationship with God. Therefore our work is a spiritual process.

Seven principles should guide this work:

1. Be faithful to our relationship with God and one another.
2. Develop and implement plans at every place of calling and responsibility.
3. Examine every aspect (theology, demographics, economics, etc) of our diocesan community and propose plans that reflect these realities.
4. Think big and do not be afraid to take risks and ask big and difficult questions. Become risk literate: neither risk averse nor risk indulgent.
5. Listen to one another with open minds and un-defending hearts.
6. Explore and identify the relationships and resources essential to carrying out our ministries.
7. Invite broad and open contributions to the process.¹⁶

This process was supported by Anglicare (Tasmania) distributing, and the diocese providing training in, the *Mission Action Planning* kit authored by Stuart Robinson (Evangelism Ministries), Cheryl Smith and Michael Wilson (Strategic Ministries, Anglicare).¹⁷

We were encouraged by the reaction to this process. Several parishes developed sophisticated strategic plans. In fact, it became obvious that if we were serious about the Roland Allen principle to recognise the local church as the primary mission agency, then it was not necessary to develop a shared diocesan-wide strategic plan. Instead, we moved

Richard, Bishop in the Church of God, I install you in the Dignity and Chair Episcopal of this Cathedral Church. The Lord preserve your coming in from this time forward and forevermore. Amen

The Administrator taking the Bishop's right hand says

Richard, I induct you into the real, actual, and corporeal possession of the Bishopric of Tasmania, and of all its rights, dignities, honours, privileges and responsibilities.

[Note: “real, actual, and corporeal possession” are taken to mean the “finances, property and people” pertaining to the office of the Bishop of Tasmania. – clearly a task that cannot be done alone!]

¹⁵ J. Harrower, ‘ahealthychurch ... transforming life: The Bishop’s Vision for the Missionary Diocese of Tasmania’, Anglican Church in Tasmania, February 2004, www.anglicantas.org.au/ .

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁷ Stuart Robinson, Cheryl Smith & Michael Wilson, *Mission Action Planning: The M.A.P. – For Churches and Organisations in the 21st Century*, Anglicare, Evangelism Ministries, Anglican Diocese of Sydney, 2005.

to the development of a Diocesan Council Mission Action Plan.¹⁸ This document described the priorities over three years of the bishop's senior team and the diocesan council. The plan described a very significant review of our primary diocesan structures. Pathways have been developed for community ministries and local district projects that with imagination and risk taking can grow alongside or restructure a parish¹⁹.

Our approach was to continually increase understanding and lower anxiety levels. As these two goals are achieved, we will have an environment which is much more conducive to significant change. We have often run a long way ahead of the capacity of individual parishes to respond. There has been tension and debate, but significant change has occurred.

Build trust

At my ordination in 2000, as an episcopal (pastoral) staff was given to me, the Primate said, "John, receive this staff as a sign of your pastoral office. Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, and not a wolf. Encourage the faithful, support the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, restore the outcast, seek the lost."²⁰ The symbol and exhortation provide a reminder of the vital role the Bishop has in nurturing and sustaining healthy relationships. Where there is trust, so much can be achieved. And, never forget, trust means votes on the floor of synod!

Healthy relationships are to characterize the life of the Body of Christ. The bishop is responsible for building health and trust. Initially that trust may be won by the bishop, but with encouragement it will transfer to people and parishes. Building trust means spending time with people in their lives and ministries: travel, telephone, correspondence, teaching and dare I say it, social media and meetings!

Release resources to the margins.

We have not underestimated the difficulty of transforming local parishes. At times we have been extremely exasperated with what we have felt to be a very slow pace of change, and this has been most frustrating in the light of our hope to develop many 'fresh expressions' of our life together. In the light of these experiences, we felt that we had to find a new way to develop these ministries in Tasmania. In what has become known as 'The Imagine Project'²¹ we found a way in 2008 to establish diocesan-based rather than parish-based fresh expressions. The Bush Church Aid Society of Australia (BCA) continues as a mission partner in this and many other projects throughout Tasmania.

The Imagine Project was a three-year trial involving three local mission projects under the supervision of specially consecrated and commissioned bishops: a missionary bishop for projects and training, and another for stewardship. The ordination as a bishop of the CEO

¹⁸ 'Mission Action Plan July 2008', Missionary Diocese of Tasmania, <http://www.anglicantas.org.au/map/> .

¹⁹ These possibilities have been formalized in the Diocese's Parish Administration Ordinance, http://www.anglicantas.org.au/assets/Parish_Administration_Ordinance_1995_as_amended_at_Synod_2014.pdf

²⁰ 'The Ordination of Bishops', A Prayer Book for Australia, Broughton Publishing, 1995, p.806.

²¹ This is a reference to Ephesians 3:20, '[Our God] who ... is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we could ask or imagine ...'

of Anglicare Tasmania enhanced its connection to mission and affirmed it as a ministry of the Anglican Church. The appointment of missionary bishops appeared to be an extraordinary step by many. However, we believe that it was absolutely necessary for us to rediscover the primary missional or apostolic role of a bishop in the life of the church.

Monitor the pace of change.

Monitoring the mood or climate of the diocese has been essential in adjusting the pace of change. Our aim has been to lower levels of anxiety and raise the levels of understanding to the point at which it is possible to undertake significant strategic planning. However, it is essential to lead the diocese knowing its reality. We refused to take the ‘she’ll be right approach’, or worse still, to hyper-spiritualise our situation by not balancing faith with appropriate action. As mentioned earlier, we were able to move very quickly to establish mission initiatives and this necessitated careful ongoing monitoring.

Review Performance.

Within Australian Anglican polity, the diocesan bishop has fewer direct powers, other than persuasive influence, than people expect. In a State like Tasmania the role of the Anglican Bishop is very public and is expected to take a lead in public policy. However, it is possible, and very effective, to stimulate change through modelling key principles. By way of example, communication is essential to performance. Do we know what we are doing and why? Do other people know? How can we review, if we don’t know what we set out to achieve? My experience is that improved communication invariably emerges from performance reviews of organisations and individuals. My regular email newsletter and early commitment to blogging, Facebook and Twitter, all arose out of feedback from my ministry reviews.

I undertook a number of externally conducted ministry reviews during my time as Bishop of Tasmania. The key recommendations of these reviews were made known to ordained and lay leaders. Each of the senior staff undertook similar reviews. As a result, we believe that we have slowly built a healthy culture of review within the diocese. Not all are comfortable with a formal process, but we discuss issues of continuous ministry review and professional development. We have undertaken reviews of ministries that we have developed, and in particular, enabler-supported ministry.

SOME THINGS WE LEARNED

- 1) Not everything works the way we had trusted it would work.
- 2) It's hard to grow 'the new' alongside 'the old'
- 3) The people of God are uplifted when they pray together.
- 4) Leadership is costly. I recall my wife's reflection, 'Underneath the mitre lies a crown of thorns'. The saying well sums up the cost of episcopal leadership.
- 5) Team ministry builds people and projects. God's people working in Ephesians 4 mode and with Galatians 5 character, bring much blessing.
- 6) Partnerships build mission: Anglicare Tas, BCA
- 7) Train and release all the people of God to be 'in Christ, in Tasmania': in their homes, with families and friends, in business ethics, in sports and community clubs, in the workplace, around the BBQ and in their Christian communities.
- 8) Communicate.
- 9) Fix what is broken.
- 10) Engage society with the Good News of Jesus by word and deed: Christians loving their neighbours, participating in public debate about euthanasia, asylum seekers, etc, serving the local community – Australians are interested these days in deed rather than word.
- 11) Release the evangelists.
- 12) Reshape structure and roles.
- 13) God is faithful: Keep going. There are risks to be taken.

IN CONCLUSION: SOME THINGS WE COMMEND

Christ at the centre: Mobilizing the people of God for missionary discipleship.

In a conversation with the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, we asked, "What can a bishop do?" The Archbishop responded enthusiastically, "Tell the people about Jesus!" The way of Jesus Christ must be embedded in the life of each and every Anglican in Australia. The exhortation rings out, "You are in Christ, be Christ to one another!" Relationships built on respect, servanthood and the fruit of the Spirit, build trust in one another and foster a greater willingness to trust God. This is crucial to building a healthy church which in turn is privileged by the Holy Spirit to participate in transforming lives into the image of Christ.

Do we Anglicans live fully in Christ?

When we are in Christ thoroughly, deliberately and consistently, the Anglican Church in Australia will be what it is called to be, 'in Christ, in Australia'. Christians in their family life, workplace, recreation clubs and community groups living fully in Christ. Australians are interested in what they see lived.

Do we Anglicans live what we speak?

Bible soaked: Teach God's people

We encouraged Anglicans to take people with them to places where the Bible is honoured and taught: Bible forums, Ministry Conferences, CMS Summer Conference and the Bishop's Teaching Workshops. We partnered with BCA for writing online lectionary resources, and partnered with Moore and Ridley Colleges in developing a Diocesan Certificate in Ministry. We determined that through one-on-one ministry, letters, blogs and public engagements, we would be a Bible soaked people.

Do we Anglicans have the Bible, the Word of God, in our hearts and on our lips?

A Church in Society

a. Walking with the broken.

The sexual abuse of children by Anglican Church workers in Tasmania was a scandal that in many ways overwhelmed us in the years, 2001-2005. Despite legal and financial counsel to the contrary, I gave an apology to victims of child sexual abuse, initiated a pastoral response, including financial assistance to survivors of abuse. After announcing this pastoral response, I recall a reporter shoving a microphone at me and stating aggressively, "So Bishop, you will be responsible for bankrupting the Church?" I replied, "I may be responsible for bankrupting the Church, but I will not be responsible for bankrupting the Gospel of Christ." The reporter looked puzzled, turned and walked away. The exchange was never reported.

Yes, it did cost the Anglican Church of Tasmania significant resources to administer this pastoral response, but Jesus' way is the way of humble service. The Anglican Church of Tasmania took the path, the great risk, of perhaps bankrupting the institution of the Diocese of Tasmania. But in taking the risk, the Anglican Church of Tasmania walked the way of Christ. We thank God for his wisdom and grace in guiding that difficult step.

Will we Anglicans continue to take difficult steps?

b. Modelling engagement with social issues.

Jesus calls us to be salt and light in the society in which he has placed us. A bishop has the opportunity to present a Christian perspective on community issues. While the primary aim is to influence public debate and opinion; the modelling of constructive Christian conversation on controversial issues is significant. Christian and non-Christian people appreciated this engagement: not that all agreed with the views expressed! Anglicans were equipped with materials through the Bishop's blog, Diocesan website and social media.

We are called to communicate the Good News of Jesus. Our experience is that the traditional print and online media are of decreasing utility. Why? At a meeting in the board room of a major media outlet, I asked the Managing Director what the company saw as their contribution to the social capital of Tasmania. The answer, following a significantly long silence, "We have shareholders." So sad: dollars beat society's health.

For us Anglicans, are there power holders who are preventing us from getting on with God's mission?

Prayer is fundamental.

God desires prayer and the people of God are uplifted when their senior leadership arrange for their bishop to tour the Diocese over two months in order to pray with and for them and their communities. Two prayer pilgrimages, *bishop@prayer* in 2004 and *people@prayer* 2010, gathered Anglicans and other Christians around the Tasmanian islands on beaches, mountains, forests and farmlands; in parishes, prisons, hospitals, homes, Anglican welfare agencies, schools and chaplaincies.

A major spinoff of the prayer pilgrimages was the investment in relationships. Relationship building and relationship maintenance is key. In most dioceses in Australia, this demands a great deal of travel by senior leaders. There is little doubt that with goodwill much can be achieved, but without goodwill little can be achieved. Praying together builds relationship with God and within the people of God.

Could we Anglicans be described as prayerful activists? Do we want to be?

And so to prayer. I close this paper with a prayer that reflects my heart for the Anglican Church and all the peoples of Australia: ‘A Prayer for transforming life’,

Transforming God, as we meet together
fill us with your wisdom.
Give us the capacity to work
boldly and with humility,
embracing the challenge of mission.
Use us to bring transforming life
to our Christian Communities
and to all Australians.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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