

Second Ordinary Session of the 43rd Synod of the Diocese of Sydney: October and November 1994 and March 1995

Presidential Address

By the Most Reverend R.H. Goodhew, Archbishop of Sydney.

Monday 10 October 1994

Welcome

Welcome to the second session of the 43rd Synod of the Diocese of Sydney.

A substantial Agenda is before us for this session of the Synod. There are 20 Ordinances to be considered as well as motions. Some matters to be considered are of great importance to us as a diocese, while others touch upon our relationships with the wider Anglican Communion. We have reserved six days for possible sittings for this session. If it proves necessary to make use of all these reserved dates I encourage you to plan to attend as many sessions as is possible. The issues we are to consider are important and call for a well attended Synod.

Please do note the change of venue for the November 1 sitting: the auditorium at the Convention Centre, Darling Harbour.

There will be a printed version of this address circulated to you later this evening. When you peruse it you may find that it is a slightly longer version of what I say now. There will also be a short 10 minute video available for each parish. I hope that you will take it back to the parish and share it with your parishioners and study groups so that they too may feel included and part of our meeting together as the synod of this diocese.

A Focus on Growth

The life and work of any diocese unfolds and progresses through its churches and congregations, and in every situation where the Gospel is proclaimed and people are sustained in their life with God. Those who advance that work are the clergy and laity of the congregations whose representatives you are in this Synod. My own work, together with that of my Bishops and Archdeacons, the Secretariat, and every diocesan body which exists for supporting ministry, operate to enable this primary work to be conducted in the way that most honours God and achieves his purposes amongst us.

In my first Synod Charge last October, I outlined a broad strategy for advancing our shared mission. That strategy included the elements of prayer; of learning to analyse and understand better the communities in which we live and work in order to develop increasingly effective local strategies; of area bishops facilitating local consultation, planning, and co-operation between clergy and laity; of investigating the restructuring of some parishes and properties; of increasing the number of living agents; and of achieving the support of our diocesan organisations for creative growth in local church life. This is the strategy I have been seeking to advance when I have encouraged each individual Christian, local church, sub-deanery or deanery to be more and more Observably God's People, Pastorally Effective, Evangelistically Enterprising, Genuinely Caring, and Dynamically Anglican. It is this strategy that I have encouraged each team of bishop and archdeacon to pursue in their episcopal area. The purpose of my visits last year to all the deaneries of the diocese, and this year to each of the episcopal areas, was primarily to present the challenge of Vision 2001. In addition I wished to present a challenge concerning the possibilities that exist for local co-operation, planning and freshly focused action. Our mission goes forward predominantly at the level of the local congregation. It must be in the local church, in groups of churches, or in deaneries that the detailed plans suitable to that particular segment of Sydney's human mosaic are developed and implemented.

I also met with the Directors and CEOs of our Diocesan Organisations to engage them in a creative consideration of their unique part in furthering our outreach to new people and our capacity to nurture and support the members of our local church families. My aim is to stimulate a 'bottom up' and 'top down' process that will enable substantial growth both in the numbers of those who attend Anglican churches and in the quality of Christian life lived in them. The reports of the regional teams, and my own movement across the diocese, obliges me to be deeply grateful to God for the quality and extent of the fine work that is done. One hears frequently of people coming to faith and joining in the life of our churches and we hear too of people developing in their walk with God. Yet there is still so much to be accomplished. Like you, I long to see the cause of Christ prospering more and more in the lives of our fellow Australians.

Each Area Bishop, with his Archdeacon, has the task of encouraging and facilitating the work of the churches and other ministries in their area. To inform you of some of their work and plans, and of what is happening in their areas, I have asked each bishop to report briefly to you today.

As Archbishop and Diocesan I want to express publicly my appreciation to the Bishops and Archdeacons for their commitment and hard work. The size and complexity of the diocese makes it impossible for me to do what I earnestly desire, that is, to develop a profound, personal relationship with each parish and member of the clergy in the diocese. We have been convinced that substantial benefits accrue to us all from our size and resources, therefore we have chosen not to divide. Given that situation, the arrangements we have made for episcopal oversight mean that others carry out, at the local level, most of those tasks which the Diocesan Bishop would normally perform. I commend my episcopal brothers and their archdeacons to you. They are an immense encouragement to me. I honour their devotion to Christ, their individual gifts and skills, their commitment to advancing Christ's cause, and their concern for you the people of God. Their deepest desire before God is to facilitate and strengthen you in your service and labour for Christ. I ask you to receive their ministry gladly, to love them in Christ, and to pray regularly for them.

Winds of Change

The 1994 publication of the recent report of the National Church Life Survey, *Winds of Change: The Experience of Church in a Changing Australia*, presses us, as its predecessors did, to consider seriously the results of their research. I want to comment briefly on some of them.

Denominational Switching is clearly a feature of current church life. The 1980s witnessed a significant shift in denominational attendances. Amongst Anglican and Protestant Church attendances the figures were 27% Anglican, 22% Uniting, 15% Pentecostal and 11% Baptist. The arresting figure is the 15% attending Pentecostal Churches. That figure would have been much smaller a few years ago.

Switching denominations is a feature of those between the ages of 20-39 years. Only 15% of people in that age bracket see lifelong loyalty to a denomination as important.

The Anglican Church in Australia has been markedly the major loser in the denominational switching process. It is not possible to be definitive, but there is some evidence that the Diocese of Sydney has not been as affected by switching as have most Anglican dioceses. We have attracted higher levels of switchers than nearly any other diocese, and we also have a much younger age profile. This suggests that the previous emphasis in the Diocese on youth ministry has borne fruit. Most attenders in their 20s in the Diocese are switchers, transfers or newcomers.

While the Survey encourages us in part, we still cannot ignore the need for vitality and spiritual dynamism in our churches. If the 'brand' is of lesser importance nowadays to the younger generation, then there is more need for the 'product' to be satisfying and sustaining. The power of Gospel truth, formulated in accordance with our doctrinal standards, coherent in its ability to relate word and experience, expressed in a contemporary style, impressed upon the mind and heart by the Spirit, supported by a liturgical pattern rooted in Scripture, and experienced in a fellowship where love is a reality, is surely a dynamic Anglicanism capable of winning allegiance by its quality rather than by simple reliance on its name.

It is not simply a matter of addressing the young. There is abundant evidence that people of various ages are struggling and rethinking. Evil has shown itself to be real and pervasive; bread alone is not enough; relationships can be extremely painful and devastatingly fragile; the loss of employment rips apart the illusion of an untroubled pursuit of the good things of our society; rapid change offers fresh possibilities but also threatens disintegration; and a world without meaning is not an existence which the human spirit ultimately relishes. It will not be the name of a 'brand' that will satisfy that hunger. We must provide and engage the people of our generation with effective directions for discovering what their creation in the image of God equips them to experience: God himself. The shattering of the Western Humanist dream by the collapse of the foundations upon which it was built, so vividly described by writers like John Carroll and Diogenes Allen, is prompting people once again to reach out tentatively after 'spiritual' answers. If Anglican Christianity can be dynamic enough to attract those searchers to the Father then it will serve God and this generation well.

Generational differences in approach to public worship are apparent. Older attenders are much more likely to value traditional worship forms than younger ones. Among Sydney Anglicans aged in their 60s, a most valued traditional worship. This was the most popular response among older attenders. Slightly less than a most valued being part of a caring congregation. By contrast, only 6% of those in their 20s most valued traditional worship and 14% valued contemporary worship. This suggests that worship is not the central focus of church involvement for young attenders. The young were much more likely to value solid Bible teaching and being part of a caring congregation.

We should not contemplate taking steps that will rob us of the strength provided by our liturgical traditions, for the young will grow older, and we have yet to see whether a natural conservatism will develop in them as they

move through life. We must also minister effectively to those who value the traditions which have shaped their lives, seen them through the rough and desolate places in their journey through life and filled their minds with an understanding of God and how to respond to him. Yet these trends noted in the research suggest that simplified services perhaps like those contained in the Liturgical Committee's *Experimental Sunday Services* are a step in the right direction, not only for 'seekers' but for young attenders as well. It may well be that a much less formal liturgical style is needed in congregations where the young predominate, and if that is so, more needs to be done to promote good contemporary liturgical worship within the Diocese. Clergy and lay leaders need sensitivity and skill in balancing form and freedom.

There is also a **shift from the local to the regional**. The motor car has brought great changes with it. Nearly 9 out of 10 people go to church by car. With greater access to cars comes a willingness to travel further to church. These days Churches do not just draw purely from a local constituency.

The research shows that 8 out of every 10 church attenders in this diocese live within 10 minutes drive of their church. This suggests that the dense network of small parish areas still has integrity in defining congregational catchments. But we must also recognise that, on average, a significant proportion of a congregation (at least 1 in 5) would come from outside their parish area.

Larger congregations are generally growing at a faster rate than smaller ones. Congregations of less than 25 people actually shrank in size by about 7% during the period 1986-91, while congregations of between 100 and 300 people grew by about 15% over the same period. The continuing decline of some small congregations suggests that other innovative strategies need to be pursued. Such strategies could include: fresh leadership bringing new vision and energy; establishing a new work in parallel with the old; amalgamation; and even permitting some small congregations to close.

The trend towards larger congregations also suggests a need for us to plan some ministry on a regional basis. It is my hope that regions and deaneries will look at this possibility. Please think about it. Planning on a regional basis rather than a local one might include: encouraging small congregations to combine their resources when seeking to reach out in a region; larger congregations providing specialist ministries to a region (eg: ministry to particular ethnic groups); and, in some special situations, congregations working with congregations of other denominations to provide complementary ministry in an area. Strategies like these recognise that few smaller congregations can meet the full spectrum of needs exhibited by people in a local area. By pooling resources it may be possible to achieve more on a regional basis, while maintaining those elements which make a smaller church attractive to some people.

The survey indicates to me an obvious need for **capable and inspiring leadership in the local church**. I can well believe that local leaders, especial my fellow clergy, feel sensitive when statements like this are made, especially if they are toiling away in a difficult and unresponsive area. I do not draw my conclusion with the aim of demeaning, embarrassing or threatening anyone. I have been there too and I know how hard it can be. Nevertheless it is true that churches rarely rise above the level set by the leadership. These remarks are a pledge to action, not an expression of dissatisfaction. I want it known that I am committed to assist local church leadership to attain the highest standards of excellence and creativity. I expect my assistant bishops and archdeacons to make this their first ministry priority. I have asked my ordination chaplains to review the process by which they commend to me people that I might accept as candidates and later ordain for spiritual leadership. I want to ensure that those who are ordained are well trained in understanding the Scriptures, the whole counsel of God and the age-old tradition of the Church; but I want them also to understand the people to whom they will minister and the societal context within which they will minister. I want them equipped to offer that spiritual leadership which our churches require. I am committed to finding ways by which we can assist those in leadership grow in their capacities and in their professional ministry and pastoral skills as they move through their ministerial career.

If we are interested in **attracting and retaining newcomers** there are other aspects of the Survey which we cannot ignore in our congregational life. One principal finding is that newcomers to church life are much more likely than other attenders to have joined their present congregation through some form of personal invitation, either from friends or family or through contact with clergy or some church activity. Some 59% of newcomers in the Diocese commenced church this way. Newcomers also place a higher premium on being part of a caring congregation. This is part of a general trend observed across the whole of the NCLS and suggests that newcomers look not only for spiritual nurture from the churches they attend, but for care and relationship as well. This highlights the importance for Christ's people to be building genuine friendships with others. A witness to Jesus Christ can travel over such bridges. Our local churches need to create situations where friends can enter, find genuine caring, and have the opportunity of exploring for themselves the message of the Gospel.

It must be a critical concern to us that the NCLS indicates that nearly three-quarters of those attending churches of our diocese said that they were not regularly involved in any congregational mission activities. 12% indicated that they looked for opportunities to share their faith while 44% said they were at ease in doing

this. 27% said they were not at ease doing this and found it hard to express their faith in ordinary language. How do we help one another to be winsome apologists for Christ? Local churches dare not ignore this task. I commend to you the consulting services of our Department of Evangelism and of our other agencies who are keen to help you develop outreach appropriate to your situation.

The NCLS allows us to **consider the whole field** of our work and note the trends and gaps we find. Only 39% of attenders in the Diocese are men. The need for effective men's work to address this imbalance remains as acute as ever. Although still under-represented, there has been an increase in the proportion of attenders from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds between 1986 and 1991 from 4% to 6%. However, there is some evidence that people from NES backgrounds are not as well integrated into church life as the Australian-born. They are less involved in groups, and spend less hours in church life. They are less likely to have close friends in their congregation. We have an obvious mission field in the nominal Anglican segment of our population. However, we cannot ignore the fact that those born overseas and their children represent 40% of the population of Sydney. We are experiencing a migration programme that will bring many people from Hong Kong and from other parts of South-East Asia. There is an urgent need for work amongst these new settlers. Projections indicate that by the year 2000, 4% of the Australian population will be Asian, with major concentrations in the city of Sydney. The Department of Cross-Cultural Ministries in our Home Mission Society gives leadership in co-ordinating, researching, and developing ministry amongst the Non-English Speaking groups of the Diocese. They will need our sustained support in meeting these new challenges. English-as-a-second-language programmes are helping parishes touch the lives of newcomers. Youth ministries to the second generation migrant provide a way into whole families. Peter Kaldor has described these second generation offspring as the "missing generation". They do not necessarily integrate into our present youth structures, a fact we cannot ignore.

We must resist the tendency for Anglicans to minister only to professional and tertiary educated people. Only 5% of those attending our churches were from lower occupational status households (where the head of the household, for example, is a machine operator, driver or labourer). By contrast, 25% of attenders aged 15 years and over have university degrees, compared to 6% in the general community. We must ponder what this implies. It is encouraging that our record amongst the more highly educated is strong but can we ignore those who have not achieved or pursued those goals? If we wish to penetrate other areas of our society do we need to examine critically some of our strategies? Do our selection and training processes have a tendency to exclude those who might function best in the 'blue collar' segment of our social spectrum?

Statistics are only as good as the questions asked and the answers given. They are never the last word, but they do provide an opportunity to look at ourselves with a greater degree of objectivity. We have much for which to be thankful to God in the diocese but there are areas that require urgent attention both at the level of the diocese and in the local parish church.

Dynamically Anglican

Over the last 12 months, as I have visited around the diocese as well as during my visits as Metropolitan to other dioceses in the Province I have advanced the notion of us being Dynamically Anglican. The phrase has drawn some interesting responses. One has been a certain degree of playful mirth; as if the juxtaposing of those two words went close to creating an ecclesiastical oxymoron: no such animal might be thought to be possible. Another has been a measure of disappointment: an idea that can be given a different content by different people allowing diverse opinions to lay claim to being dynamically Anglican. A third response has been a request that I should give it a more definite content myself lest it fall by the wayside as something with little practical application.

Debate about the nature and future of Anglicanism is not restricted to this diocese, nor indeed to this continent. I cannot express a definitive word on the subject. What I can do is to say something of what the term means to me.

Anglicanism in this country is defined by the Constitution of The Anglican Church of Australia. For present purposes I fill the term Dynamically Anglican with the following elements.

Its sense of identity: Anglican churches claim to be an expression of "the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ", a creation finally not human but of God. We stand in a long tradition. The English Reformation was not the creation of a new Church. It was the restoration in one country of an expression of a biblical doctrine and an ecclesiology more in line with the Word of God. Dynamism in this sense means to be controlled by the recognition that God himself will continue to work in, with, and through a people who respond in that glad assurance and obedience of faith which is based on the Word of God. In this way, as in first century Rome, Anglicans may be "God's beloved ... called to be saints".

Its submission to the rule of Christ through the Scriptures: it "receives all the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary to salvation". With this foundation Anglican churches hold the faith "as

professed by the Church of Christ from primitive times and in particular as set forth in the creeds known as the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed". The Thirty - nine Articles and the Prayer book of 1662 are our "authorised standard of worship and doctrine". This framework has allowed for a uniformity and conformity in things essential with a liberty over things which do not lie at the heart of the faith. A Dynamic Anglicanism will live with its theological standards not as dead letters but as living truths to be applied over and over again to the changing patterns and circumstances of life in the local church, diocese, national church and nation. It will be intellectually rigorous, committed to truth, generous in debate, but humble in its unqualified submission to Christ through his word. Energised by the truths it professes, a dynamic Anglicanism will strenuously evangelise and nurture, confront and conform, equip people to live with vigour and purpose and to die with hope. It will teach its truth by preaching, by catechesis, by requiring a commitment to its fundamental tenets from those who would be accepted as adult members, and by living the gospel in holiness of life and with a compassionate concern for the welfare of all.

Its sacramental and liturgical heritage: It must be a church committed to a creative ministry of the two Gospel sacraments and to forms of common prayer and public worship which are shaped by Scripture and sound doctrine and are not solely dependant upon the wit, spiritual character and inclinations of the individual minister. Somehow I think that this has been the area in which people have looked for what I thought dynamic Anglicanism to be. Let me say that I **do not** think that Anglicanism is about wearing robes or not wearing robes. I **do** think it is concerned with a proper decorum and things being done decently and in order. I **do not** think it is about being "new fangled" for its own sake, and jettisoning the old simply because it is traditional, or being so addicted to old customs that no change can be contemplated. I **do** think it must follow Cranmer's principle, which was dynamic in itself. His principle was to aim at pleasing God and thereby to be profitable both to traditionalists and innovators alike. We need to be able to accommodate old and young; to be dynamic enough to operate both as a mission base and as a place of nurture and worship. We must evangelise. We must also be able to edify and sustain not just the beginner in the faith but the maturing saint whose growth and experience of life brings the desire for stability, depth and maturity in the forms by which we worship God together in public. I believe the new Prayer Book will offer fresh opportunities for those looking for greater freedom. I have indicated my interest in the possibility of describing, at least for some services, a set of boundaries which represent a 'paddock' of acceptable Anglican liturgical expression. Within the boundaries of that paddock there could be flexibility in the use of the material judged as suitable. It has also been suggested that we might have an office for continuing liturgical reflection and resource building where authorised material could be collected and made available for use. I do not think that a dynamic Anglicanism is an unbridled liberty for everyone to do whatever they wish.

Its ordered ministry: with its roots planted in the Bible and in the conviction that God gives gifts of ministry which the Church should recognise and authorise in a formal way. We have committed ourselves to a threefold order of ministry as a God honouring expression not inconsistent with what is found in the New Testament for the care and edification of the Church. These orders, of bishop, priest and deacon, and the lay people whom they serve who have their own gifts and calling, are dynamic when they are energised by the Spirit and devoted to the cause and glory of God. Ordained and non ordained are dynamic as together they are alive to the love of God poured in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Enough then from me on Dynamic Anglicanism. May it thrive and grow.

Regionalisation

With your papers is material related to Regionalisation in the form of an Exposure Draft for a "Regions Bill 1994" and a "Regions (Transitional Provisions and Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 1994". The draft "Regions Bill", presented in response to motion 7/92, has been prepared on four general principles. 1. That the diocese be maintained as one unit. 2. That the relationship of the Regional Bishops to the Archbishop would continue to be one where the Archbishop delegated responsibilities rather than have responsibilities given directly by ordinance. 3. That the Regional Council structure be maintained. 4. That the distribution of money to grant-making bodies be prioritised across the Diocese (as is done at the moment for ministry grants). The Bill is not presented as an ordinance for this session of the Synod, as requested in 7/92, but as an exposure document for consideration so that it may be debated in 1995.

The history of this matter is a long one, dating back to the 1960's. The draft ordinance could well mark the next step in the journey. What is as clear as it ever was, is the desire that individual parts of the diocese have far greater involvement in the planning and development of work in their own regions. Even apart from geography and demography, the history of the Regions of Parramatta and Wollongong have given them a particular concern for more local responsibility in what is planned and executed in their regions. Parramatta region has, in recent times, felt frustrated when it has attempted unsuccessfully to pilot new initiatives in that part of the diocese. The newly created Episcopal Area of George's River and the reshaped Area of South Sydney are still in the process of working out their new identities, while the North Sydney Area must determine how it might best respond to population movements and some new projected housing developments. It may

be that the creation of the "Diocesan Executive Board", recommended by the Archbishop's Commission, will have produced an instrument capable of helping the proposed Regional Councils realise at least some of their aspirations for financial capacity.

I commend the exposure document to your thoughtful discussion in the regions in preparation for its presentation next year.

Funding our Growth - 2001

The Bishops and Archdeacon have presented me with projected development plans in their regions up to the year 2001. Their projections are reasonable and matched to what can be foreseen as ministry needs in that period. The list totals more than \$20 million. Vision for Growth enabled us to achieve a number of important developments in the seven years of its life, but we now need to face this new challenge. Vision 2001 is the means by which the whole diocese can share in the new work that must be commenced and the old work that needs to be restructured and revitalised. I ask you to make this agent for growth in our diocese an item of interest and concern in each of your parishes.

Diocesan Appeals

I take this opportunity to thank all those who have given so generously to the various appeals which have been presented to you this year. First of all there was the bushfires in January, then the Winter Appeal, followed by the tragic situation in Rwanda, and more latterly, the effects of the drought that now grips more than 83% of rural NSW. Your generosity made possible resources to help those most affected by the fires. Many of our clergy and lay people worked selflessly at the time. In the Jannali area where the most damage to personal property and life occurred, the Rev. Bruce Ballantine-Jones, with your support, and the co-operation of his parishioners, was able to assist many families and to create links of goodwill and respect with the people in the area. People from the diocese donated \$182,057 to our Bushfire Appeal. We received \$400,362 for assistance for those affected by the Rwandan tragedy. For the Winter Appeal which assists the poor and needy in our own environment we have received \$387,189. \$29,958 has been donated so far to the Disaster Fund - Drought Appeal. I have given this drought assistance money to the bishops to distribute amongst clergy so they can offer a little help to families in difficulty. The rural recession and now this drought is making it hard for some country parishes to survive. I hope the Synod may find it in its heart to consider offering some further help to keep ministry active in some of the worst affected areas.

The figures I have quoted to you were correct at the time of writing this Address. If you did your sums you would have already noted that the amounts I have mentioned add up to just under \$1 million. I cannot tell you how gratified I am and how much I thank God for the extent of the generosity of the people of this diocese. In a time when so many of you have found your own personal finances affected by a long-term recession you have nonetheless opened your hearts and your pockets to the world which cries out to you in need. As your bishop I commend the sincerity of your love expressed through your gifts. For we are God's people who know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, so that we through his poverty might become rich.

Developing a More Personal Spirituality

There are signs of a growing interest in the advancement of spiritual life that goes under the general heading of Christian Spirituality. This contemporary movement owes a lot to the void that has been created by materialism generally, and by the failure of Enlightenment philosophy to provide a true anchor for the human spirit. It is, in some situations, influenced by streams of Eastern thought which have touched the jaded Western spirit, offering the prospects of calmness, centredness and peace. In the judgment of some, it is, in part, a reaction against intellectualising tendencies in the Christian community itself where theological information becomes a substitute for a life of faith based on sound theological understanding. Others point to public worship which carries little sense of being a corporate encounter with the living God in word and sacraments, prayer and fellowship. For us spirituality is our response of faith, love and obedience to our Lord in the full spectrum of life including our life within the fellowship of Christ's people. Revival in the past has often begun with a renewal of spiritual vitality amongst the people of God. For that reason I have been concerned by some of the results of the National Church Life Survey. You may recall that when that survey was taken in 1991 36% of those church attenders completing the questionnaires indicated that they read the Bible "Every day/Most Days"; 17% "Several times a week"; the remaining 47% said "Once a week" or less frequently.¹ Among Anglicans the figures were a little more disappointing; 30% said "Every day/Most days"; 16% "Several times a week"; and 54% "Once a week" or less frequently.² The sample was not large (2249 responses) but if it is

1. Bellamy, John Kaldor, Peter Correy, Merilyn Powell, Ruth National Church Life Survey Occasional Paper No.5 - Bible Reading Patterns among Church Attenders. p.2.
2. Bellamy, John Kaldor, Peter Correy, Merilyn Powell, Ruth National Church Life Survey Occasional Paper No.5 - Bible Reading Patterns among Church Attenders. p.3.

representative then there must be a concern that people are not developing the regular habit of reading and reflecting daily on the Scriptures. The opinion has been advanced on the broader scene that:

It is probable that nowadays less importance is attached to regular private prayer on rising and retiring. If so, the change is indicative of a loss of faith not so much in the value of prayer as in the value of discipline for all areas of life.³

Long ago Richard Baxter of Kidderminster wrote:

It is not improper to illustrate a little the manner in which we have described this duty of meditation, or the considering and contemplating of spiritual things. It is *confessed to be a duty* by all, but practically denied by most. Many that make a conscience of other duties, easily neglect this. They are troubled if they omit a sermon, a fast, or a prayer, in public, or private, yet were never troubled that they have omitted meditation perhaps all their life time to this very day; though it be that duty by which all other duties are improved, and by which the soul digests truth for its nourishment and comfort.

His delightfully expressed encouragement to all people was to "take one walk every day in the new Jerusalem"⁴

The blessing of God is for those whose "delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2 NRSV). There is a need for personal disciplines to allow a person to meditate on the Word of God, to grow in the practice of regular prayer as well as to gather regularly with God's people in corporate public worship and fellowship. Hearing and obeying, praying and praising are the exercises by which God's Spirit develops the children of God. If the fruit of an observably godly life is to flourish then we need to be assiduous in the private and public activities which foster this growth.

The Family

1994 is the International Year of the Family. The role of the family is crucial in Christian experience and in the life of the church. Though I addressed this subject last year, because of its importance I want to appeal again to those of you who are parents, or who one day will be parents, to view seriously the role of home and family. The home is the primary area of Christian training and nurture. We need to build strong families and homes where faith and living are integrated in a continuous object lesson of what it is to live under the grace of God. I am committed to both schools and churches having an important part in developing the life and faith of young men and women, but we all recognise that role is primarily for parents. Christian parents have the immense privilege given them by God of assisting their children to grow to maturity as strong, gracious and mature human beings whose lives are focused on Jesus Christ. I appeal to those of you who lead our churches to assist parents in this vital task in every way possible. I ask all parents so to structure their family life that prayer, Scripture reading, the reading of spiritual literature, and conversation about spiritual issues and Christian values form part of the regular pattern of home life. Growing children need to see a genuine expression of Christian faith that teaches not just by word, but by example and spirit, what it is to be a member of Christ, a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

In particular I ask you all to make the diocesan Family Celebration in November a special event in the life of your family and of your church. It will be a way of marking a significant statement as a Diocese about our commitment to good families, both our own and those in the community generally. It will be held at Bicentennial Park, Homebush Bay on Saturday 5th November. Details have been sent to all churches. The programme will have a number of surprises and Mr. Jim Longley, Minister for Family and Community Services, will officially open the day.

Ministry to Children

The focus on the home is not the only focus for the ministry to children. At a time when church growth is of prime importance to the Diocese, some obvious strategies and opportunities to support quantitative and qualitative growth are in danger of being overlooked. Each parish must constantly make strategic and realistic assessments of opportunities for service and ministry. It would appear that ministries among children for most parishes provides a fundamental base for a range of growth ministries: opportunities for teaching, evangelism, and nurture of children in their own right; wider contact with their parents, carers and other family members; integration of children and families into the life of the congregations.

It has been suggested that a reasonable index of ministry effectiveness is the way in which a congregation takes seriously and purposefully the strategies and objectives it has for ministry among children and families. This ministry may take the form of family education and support; teaching and encouragement of children in Sunday Schools and after school activity groups; pre-school activities through kindergartens and playgroups;

3. Yarnold, Edward *The Study of Spirituality*. (Jones, Cheslyn Wainwright, Geoffrey Yarnold, Edward Ed) SPCK. London. 1986. 2nd Impression 1992. p.40.

4. Baxter, Richard *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*. Evangelical Press, Welwyn, Herts., England 1978 p.450 (published c. 1650)

through such organisations as GFS - an Anglican Ministry and CEBS - The Anglican Boys' Society; through the largest direct teaching and evangelistic opportunity given to the churches in Special Religious Education in State Schools; through the support of other ministries to children on a combined churches or interdenominational basis. The linking of such initiatives to other aspects of parish life is an ongoing challenge, whether with regular church services or youth groups, and a challenge requiring a broad consideration of the direction, management and support of all aspects of congregational life.

Church growth perspectives alone may be compelling. However, there are more compelling theological imperatives for ministries among children and young people. Because God loves all people, we must have a ministry to young people which is appropriate to their age and stage of life. Childhood and youth are a unique time of commitment whether for initial submission to Jesus as Saviour and Lord; or for others, a growth in maturity, and for their incorporation into the local Christian community. Because of children's special status and vulnerability, those who minister among them must be competent and skilled in the way they serve children. I have set up a task force under the chairmanship of Bishop Watson and Archdeacon Stoddart with the aim of co-ordinating and encouraging our diocesan organisations that focus on children with a view to assisting parishes establish, maintain, and advance effective work amongst children.

Ministry to Youth

I was taken aback when I read the Youth Department's Diocesan Youth Survey which indicated that less than 9,200 young people attended parish youth groups in any average week. It concerns me that approximately 24% of churches in the diocese have no youth ministry. One positive result identified in the survey was the success of the Youth Department's Disciples Groups. They have produced groups that have a significantly higher level of commitment than the majority of youth groups in the Diocese. Because of the strategic nature of work among youth I have requested the Director of the Youth Department, Mr. Tom Smith, to make a priority over the next three years of assisting parishes to establish and encourage youth ministry where none exists or where it is weak and in need of support. He informs me that the Department's aim is twofold: i) to increase the level of commitment of our youth to the Master, and, ii) to double the number of young Anglicans worshipping in local churches in the next three years. I trust that the diocese will give him the encouragement and support that he needs to accomplish these goals.

Singles

In the *Year of the Family* the church has affirmed the place of the family in society. This does not mean that it is right or preferable for everyone to marry or that everyone will marry. We should not view single people as incomplete. This is not God's view of the single life. A report commissioned by the Evangelical Alliance in England states this finding:

Single people make up a third of all Evangelical churchgoers, but they feel lonely, aren't properly catered for and don't get into leadership positions... They are alienated and marginalised by churches that 'parade married life as the superior lifestyle' or put too much emphasis on family worship sessions.

As members of God's family each of us, regardless of our marital status, will have opportunities and indeed the responsibility of serving Christ. If by our attitude we devalue the ministry of single people we are attempting to limit God's purposes for those He has called.

There ought never be singles in the church - if by singles we mean people who are cut-off or unconnected from the fellowship of believers. We must recognise that all people, married or single, have a deep desire to belong. Each of us has been created to live in relationship with others. In God's community this desire is met and all basis for exclusion removed.

We must ensure that our concern to uphold the family, and any of our theological statements which include familial analogies, should not be so emphasised that we disregard the single people in the congregations. There are some parishes, and I mention Carlingford and Jannali, which have had creative, innovative ministry to the single people in their midst. I want to encourage every congregation to investigate these specialist ministries and determine how they might be tailored to fit the circumstances and membership of your own congregation.

The Archbishop's Commission

Following comments in his Presidential address in 1990, and encouraged by a supportive resolution in the Synod of that year, Archbishop Robinson set up a Commission in August 1991 to "Examine the ministry organisations of the Diocese with a view to their inter-relation so as to assist the Archbishop in determining needs and priorities within the general purposes and aims of the Diocese".

The Commission reported in September, 1992. In its Introduction it commented,

At the first meeting of the Commission it became apparent that the "general purposes and aims of the Diocese" needed to be defined before it was possible to provide anything which would "assist the Archbishop in determining needs and priorities". In other words, what are the objectives or goals of the Diocese? The basic mission of the Diocese needed to be determined before examining the ministry organisations themselves. It was further agreed that once the mission and goals were in place, the structure into which the organisations would fit, would itself be able to be determined. With correct structure "ministry organisations" would largely sort themselves out as to their "inter-relation". This approach to the Terms of Reference was agreed to by the Archbishop.

The Report went on to say,

Our recommendations avoid any hierarchical models and instead propose a much flatter organisational structure in which both "top down" and "bottom up" decision making is encouraged. There is overwhelming evidence that motivation is enhanced and momentum increased in organisations which have followed this path. Team work is an essential ingredient.

To establish a leadership team within the diocesan structure requires a radical change in existing culture. Instead of innumerable committees, engaging hundreds of individuals, doing their own thing, without effective accountability, the Commission sees the Archbishop and his team taking direct responsibility for the ministry organisations, all responding to the one shared vision.

The Commission's report was tabled and discussed at the Standing Committee. Following the Commission's recommendations I recently appointed a small leadership body (the Report quoted above described this group by the title Diocesan Executive Board). To allay fears that might be raised in the minds of some, I have asked that the group should initially have a life of three years after which time it should be reviewed. It will also report to Standing Committee so that it cannot be seen as bypassing our existing structures of accountability.

The group is only just under way. My hope and expectation is that it will deliver what Archbishop Robinson was looking for: a better way of dealing with the ministry organisations of the Diocese, "their inter-relation", and "determining the needs and priorities within the general purposes and aims of the Diocese". I hope that this time next year I can report significant progress to you.

Church Schools and Low Fee Schools

An initiative that I would like to encourage in 1995 is the establishment of low-fee, mission minded, Anglican Schools, in growth areas.

Over many years the Christian church has had a close association with education. In many cases it was the desire to teach people the Scripture that brought linguists to reduce languages to a written form and motivated the setting up of schools to teach people to read and write. There are many developing countries in which the foundation of the school system was begun in missionary movements and even now the leading schools in those countries are often church schools. Their influence for the gospel should not be undervalued. Similarly, the Sunday School Movement began as a way of educating the poor and the children who had to labour during the week. Again the motivation was to teach those children to read and write so that they could know the Scripture. It was a significant factor in the setting up of universal education for all classes of people.

In 1880 most Australians were either nominally Anglican, Roman Catholic or adherents of some branch of the Christian faith. The Anglican Church along with many other Protestants decided to support the State in taking over responsibility for education as long as the churches had access for special instruction. It is arguable that the State and the churches assumed such schools would reinforce the Christian faith, provided the arrangement did not promote one denomination over another.

Our diocesan policy has been and still is to support the State in general education and supplement it with Special Religious Education, since 80% of our young people attend State schools. At the same time the Anglican Church has maintained a number of independent schools which offer a fine education, albeit to only the few of our number who can afford the fees.

In the 1990's the multicultural character of this nation means that the religious composition of our society comprises more than various denominational expressions of Christian faith. We now experience growing opposition to prayer in State school assemblies, to the birth stories of Christ at Christmas and to the resurrection at Easter. There are groups who would like to promote the view in the schools that all faiths are equally valid and these groups oppose the theory that the Christian faith should be the basis of our education system and our society.

It is appropriate, therefore, that we review our strategy on schooling in relation to the State. I recommend that we should consider two aspects of a new strategy. **First**, one that continues actively to support the State system seeking to contribute a Christian perspective and enriching it through the provision of a high standard

of Special Religious Education. Second, that at the same time we seek to offer some complementary models to the State system, that in addition to our existing schools, we offer some low-fee Anglican Schools that are linked through the local parishes with a strategy of church growth and gospel outreach. I recommend that we explore vigorously this second aspect whilst an opportunity still exists.

The Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation, with my strong encouragement, has been exploring the possibility of setting up as many as 15 new schools over the next decade or so in growth areas of Sydney and with the lowest possible fees. I commend the Corporation's report to you for more detail about this project.

Because of changing Government regulations this may be our last opportunity to develop such a strategy. The movement of our society away from an exclusive commitment to Christian faith and values, makes it imperative that we offer some Christian alternative. Because of the rapid population growth, new schools strategically placed could be a very effective way to reach out to the community.

We may have an opportunity now to take a new step that could be as significant as the step in 1880. I commend this initiative to the Synod and the diocese to give the exploration of this possibility enthusiastic support.

The Ministry of Women

I have a special concern for the ministries exercised by women in our diocese. Last October I announced the appointment of the Reverend Dianne Nicolios "as an Archdeacon with special responsibilities for women's ministry". Dianne took up her appointment in January this year. She has become a valued member my staff. Her wisdom, good humour and courage have come to be appreciated by all of us who work with her. Archdeacon Nicolios has a demanding task and I want to commend her once more to your prayers and enthusiastic support. She has established an excellent set of goals in the two main aspects of her role, namely, to pastor women in ministry, and to promote the employment of women in ministry throughout the diocese. Already she has met with support groups for ordained and lay women, with full-time workers individually, with the Regional Bishops and Archdeacons, with organisations that employ women, and with clergy, as well preaching on deputations and speaking at many parish events. She has set up prayer networks to support women in ministry and spoken at regional and departmental conferences. I have invited Archdeacon Nicolios to be one of my newly constituted Ordination Chaplains.

Women, in the regular ministry activities of parish churches, in a variety of church organisations, and as Deaconesses, Parish Sisters and lay staff workers have in the past, and continue in the present, to exercise an enormous influence in the work of the kingdom in the diocese. A majority in the Synod, while not agreeing to the proposal that women should enter the presbyterate, have agreed that they should be made deacons. In that role they have been licensed to fulfil their diaconal responsibilities and also to preach. Though we made this decision as a Synod some years ago it has been reported to me that there are those who refuse to allow women to speak or to minister in the congregation. I am saddened that such views are held about the ministry of our women deacons. I know that it causes them distress. I understand that preaching in church by women now takes place under the oversight and "headship" of the local presbyter as a contemporary expression of the restrictions appearing in Scripture. Since that is the position which we have adopted, I want to be able to encourage women to see full-time ministry in our diocese as a worthwhile and God-honouring vocation. We need to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the creation of opportunities for women to be employed as deacons in the churches of the diocese. Women are currently working in parishes, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, university and other campuses, juvenile justice centres, prisons, and in writing and publishing, media, evangelism, family support, AIDS education and theological education. Archdeacon Nicolios is working to attract more young women into theological training and service within the diocese and to improve opportunities for second and further placements for female deacons and other full-time workers. She is also concerned to secure reasonable tenure for deacons and other full-time workers, to increase the number of women working on parish teams, and to provide assistance in the development of positive team relationship skills for leaders and team members.

Critics of our position over the admission of women to the presbyterate should note the wide range of significant work undertaken by women throughout the diocese. On the other hand we would be foolish if we did not take account of the possibility that intelligent and dedicated Christian women, especially those who are younger, could easily conclude that there is neither recognition nor place for their necessary and God-given contribution to the life of the church in this diocese. The gifts and talents of women and men must be harnessed fully if we are to achieve that measure of fullness which God wills for us. The work of Archdeacon Nicolios is important in giving recognition to the role of women in ministry in the diocese, and in advancing their opportunities for service.

Our Part in the Australian Church

As a diocese we are recognised as having a unique character in our substantial evangelical commitment, a commitment that I wish personally to affirm, support and advance. Nor, may I add, are we as monochrome as

others describe us. Indeed, in my judgement, we are less monochrome than other dioceses within the Australian Church and certainly within the international Anglican Communion. As an evangelical diocese we must play our part in the Anglican Church of Australia. I would like to encourage the Synod to take a positive attitude towards our place in our national church. If we believe evangelicalism to be the most authentic expression of the Christian faith and the best expression of Anglicanism, then I believe we must play our part in the national church by witnessing to this. We need to seek in every appropriate way to bring that understanding of doctrine and practice that goes under the title of 'evangelical' to bear upon the life of the Australian Church. Unless we judge the Australian Church to be thoroughly reprobate, which I do not think it is, we must make our contribution as amongst brothers and sisters and not as amongst the enemy. Let us contend for gospel truth when we consider it to be threatened but we must love our fellow Anglicans as we would have them love us. We must treat them as we would be treated. We must entreat God to show them mercy, making them holy and blameless in Christ as we pray in the same manner for ourselves.

A case in point is the production of a new Prayer Book. We have the option of walking away from liturgical church life and from productions of the national church. I believe that this would be a great loss to us and to the church at large. The Liturgical Commission has listened to our representations in recent months as we have sought to have a voice on the final form of the new book to be produced next year. With many others I thought that more time was needed for the production of this book, but that has not been possible and the book will be produced. I want to express my personal appreciation to Canon Laurie Bartlett, Dr David Peterson, Dr Bill Lawton and Mrs Margaret Collison, who have represented evangelical interests and concerns in the production of the new book. As Sydney Anglicans we must take an increasing interest in matters of liturgy and play our part in their formation.

Lay Presidency

An important question is before us this week in the form of the bill for an ordinance to authorise lay people to conduct the service of Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper. As the person who will be responsible for signing into operation any ordinance that may be passed, I will be listening very carefully to the debate. This is not an issue over which an Archbishop wishes to be at variance with a substantial body of opinion within the Synod, whatever that opinion may be. I am aware, that the matter is one of deep concern for many within the Diocese and beyond. It is seen as something of a watershed among those who argue powerfully, on the basis of a parity of attitude to word and sacrament, that if lay people are authorised on occasions to preach and teach, then there is no reason why they should not be able to administer, in certain circumstances, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. On the other hand for a number of reasons, there are those who believe that this will be a step which will significantly injure the role of the ordained minister and will cross a line that will eliminate an element that has been an essential part of Anglican order and tradition. Neither party, in my opinion, should be judged by the other as not supporting a biblical approach to ministry. I believe the question is one of order and of the way in which the presbyter is seen as fulfilling his ministry in the congregation. Among those who honour the Scriptures and the reformed tradition, there exists a division of opinion at this point. Our order has not thought that it was exalting one sacrament above another or elevating the Lord's Supper above the Word when it maintained the position of the presbyter in the administration of this sacrament. I will listen to the arguments that will be advanced and note the result of the debate, but I wish to indicate that at this point I am not convinced that we have any need in our Diocese to move beyond our present arrangements. I think it is rarely the case that people are denied access to the Lord's Supper for want of an ordained person. I think also that such is the nature of our Diocese and its relationship to the communion at large that we would be wise to pursue this matter on the wider stage of Anglican church life before we move within our own Diocese. In a paper that was originally read at the Derby Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship in October last year Roger Beckwith wrote,

if it is the custom of the congregation (as it is in the Church of England) to discuss matters with other congregations in the diocese, province or nation before introducing important changes of practice, there should be discussion and agreement at the appropriate level first.

Can one then demonstrate a sufficiently pressing emergency to justify authorized exceptions to the rule confining the celebration of Holy Communion to bishops and presbyters? It is doubtful if one can. In Africa ... such an emergency could probably be demonstrated, but hardly in England.

I find myself in agreement with those sentiments as far as the church in Australia is concerned. Information that I have received from convinced Evangelicals in other dioceses in Australia and overseas is that precipitate action on our part as a single diocese would not help their cause in the circumstances where they function. I believe that the Synod should bear this in mind as it deliberates.

The movers of the Bill have indicated that should the Synod agree to it passing, they would move that the Third Reading be postponed until the next session of Synod. This would allow for discussion around the diocese and the wider church on the implications of the proposed action. I must indicate that at this point I would not

be prepared to commit the diocese to unilateral action on this issue. My opinion is that the matter should be pursued in an appropriate fashion in the national church and perhaps in the wider communion before we take any definite steps to introduce this practice. I hope that members of the Synod and other members of the church in this Diocese will not feel that this is a matter to be taken in hand by individuals, and practices begun which have not had the appropriate approval. We are a church committed to order and I trust that this will be honoured in the spirit as well as the letter of the law.

Protocol for Sexual Harassment

As I reported last year, a task force has been working on this question. I have received a report which I am presently considering. I have informed the Standing Committee of my intention in the meantime to appoint a doctor or similarly qualified person in each of three central locations around the diocese who will act as a contact point for people who consider they have been sexually abused. They would make appropriate recommendations to the people concerned. A matter could be referred to the police or to a small advisory committee which I will appoint. This arrangement will operate until there has been further time to consider all the implications of the report that has been submitted to me.

Laity, Presbyters and Deacons

Perhaps the most important and influential thing I do as bishop of the diocese is to select, to train, to ordain and to support and encourage priests and deacons. These are the men and women who offer leadership in our churches, and who under God, shape the character and life of the church in this diocese now and in the future. The church is, to a very large measure, what they make it. This is particularly true of the presbyters or priests. They teach, lead and pastor the people of God in the diocese. They are the ones who encourage and model evangelism, pastoral care and godly living. I am committed to giving the diocese the best leadership that it can have; to have that leadership biblically shaped, theologically sound, pastorally competent and evangelistically oriented; all within the framework of an Anglicanism which is dynamic, vigorous and generous. I have asked for a thorough review of the process by which I select and train candidates for ordination. I am grateful to Bishop Smith, Archdeacon Perini and the men and women who have accepted my invitation to serve as my ordination chaplains, for the work they have begun, seeking to develop further, and hopefully improve, this process. I am committed to the provision of capable clerical leadership in our churches and to the support of men and women in ministry. They are principally the means through which I fulfil my role as the chief shepherd of the diocese. Both as an archdeacon, and as an assistant bishop with regional responsibilities in Wollongong, I have given my best strength to the encouragement of those who lead our local churches. Both Pam and I have been committed to this. We have loved this work because we have come, under God, to love those who were committed to our care by the Archbishop of the day. Neither our feelings nor commitment have changed. Indeed they have grown in us as we have assumed our new responsibilities. We love and prize all those who are under our care as ordained workers in the diocese. Having said that, it is also important that clergy and laity alike know that my primary commitment is to the Great Shepherd and to his flock. One day I must give an account to him for the discharge of the responsibility that I have received from him through you, to care for his sheep in this diocese. Therefore my responsibilities are: first the Shepherd, then his people, and in that context, those who pastor them. The test of my ministry, as it is of those whom I license to care for local congregations, is the quality of the sheep: their number, condition, and fruitfulness. They are the object of our Master's love and attention. Those who serve as bishops, priests and deacons are themselves sheep, who need care, encouragement and support, but they have particular responsibilities amongst their sisters and brothers. We exist for the Master and his people, not for ourselves. Our personal interests are to be subsumed for His and theirs. Our task is, in faithfulness to him, to nourish his people, enable them to fulfil their vocations and ministries, to live well and to die well in Christ. The laity of the diocese are its life and strength. They are the witnesses who will share Christ by word and deed with their relatives, friends, and other contacts. They are the people who will develop Christian families, influence the life of the nation by what they are, what they do, and what they say. They deserve the best that I can provide in leadership both now and in the future. These are the values and priorities by which I will seek to fulfil the charge that I have received from Christ through you. I ask your prayers, support and understanding as I seek to discharge this office as, like each of you, a sinful human being saved by grace alone.

Faithful Servants of Christ

I cannot conclude this address without reference to those loyal, steadfast and dedicated disciples of Christ who have been called to their eternal reward since last we met in this Synod. Their deeds and their service are known most fully to the Master and we, his people too, must give him thanks and praise for the ministry and example they have offered us all. I name them with gratitude and pride for they lived in the sure hope of the Resurrection. Deaconess Beatrice Violet Robinson, Mrs Camille Newmarch, Mrs Ida Judd, Mrs C A Osborne, Mrs G C Stewart, Mrs M M Doyle, Mrs J Blumer, the Rt Rev Neville Langford-Smith, the Rev Bernard William James Gook, the Rev Leo Richard Buckman, the Rev Canon David Broughton Knox, the Rev Te Wheeki Rahiri Tahere, the Rev Leslie George Vitnell, the Rev Frederick Allen Seymour Shaw, the Rev John

Martin Johnston, the Rev Ronald Robert McKinney, the Rev Coles Alexander Osborne, the Rev Roderick William Bowie and the Rev Edwin Harold Victor Pitcher.

Pymble

I now turn to the extremely painful issue of the Parish of Pymble, a matter about which I would much prefer to say absolutely nothing at all.

Mercifully, episodes such as this are not regular occurrences. I understand the concern that it has generated; we do not often enquire into the actions and attitudes of a clergyman and of the laity of a parish, especially the lay leadership. It has been discussed at some length in the Standing Committee. I am aware of correspondence to some of you from Northmead, from parishioners from Pymble, and correspondence and documents from some members of the Synod. With respect to the last mentioned, that is, a 10 page letter from 8 members of the Synod with 3 other documents, I feel the need to say something. I ask the Synod to reflect on what is being done by such correspondence. It is doing what I have studiously sought to avoid doing, namely, conduct the Enquiry into this sensitive matter by a process of public correspondence: the volume of material both as to fact and to interpretation is too great for justice to be done to all the parties by such a process. For the sake of fairness and with consideration for all involved I have not broadcast some of the material now in your hands. Some of the material will be unknown even to members of my own leadership team. That was not to suppress material or keep people in the dark. It was to allow those appointed to do something on our behalf to do it. Synod members should at least entertain the possibility that material in that particular letter is at some points erroneous, expressed without proper context, unavoidably partial, uninformed and consequently misleading, unfair, perhaps even biased and, maybe, inappropriate in what it might be thought to imply about the integrity of some of the parties involved. I ask you to note that none of the 8 authors is a member of the Standing Committee where many of the points made by them in their letter have been considered already and have not influenced that body to do other than what it has done. Most of the authors I know well, and respect them greatly but I am compelled to say that I would have hoped that their years of involvement in cases of marriage breakdown would have suggested that it is always unwise and ultimately unfair to listen to only part or to one side of a dispute, and never wise to do it all in full public view. I recommend that Synod members consider carefully the fine qualities of the 4 clergymen and 2 laymen who have deliberated on all these matters in detail. Please ask yourself if they really look like persons given either to injustice, foolishness or lack of concern for clergy. It is also possible that the Synod may receive a Petition relating to this matter. Reference may be made to it at other points on our Agenda. All the foregoing I believe make it appropriate and necessary for me to say something to you about it from my position.

On 4 January this year I wrote to you about the Parish of St. Swithun's Pymble. My letter, prompted by the publicity given to events in that parish, set out something of the circumstances associated with the initiation of an enquiry under our Incapacity and Inefficiency Ordinance. I now report to you that the Enquiry Committee set up under that Ordinance with the task of determining whether there were "circumstances which shall in the opinion of the Committee raise the question of removing a Clergyman from his Cure on the grounds of incapacity or inefficiency", reported to me on 1 March 1994 with a majority opinion that "there are circumstances that raise the question of removing the Reverend David Gilmour from the Parish on the ground of incapacity and inefficiency." That Enquiry Committee consisted of two clergymen and one layman: two elected by Synod and one appointed by me according to the terms of the Ordinance.

On receiving such a report the Ordinance requires that "the Archbishop shall forthwith appoint three Commissioners of whom two shall be Clergymen and one a Lay Person to enquire into such circumstances and report to him thereupon." On 22 March, in accordance with those requirements, I appointed as Commissioners, the Honourable Justice R. Blanch, the Right Reverend K. H. Short and the Reverend J. A. Brook. I believed that these appointees would be seen as experienced, competent and impartial Christian men who would give all matters and persons fair and dispassionate consideration. They have now completed their task. Their Report dated 22 September 1994 was delivered to me on the morning of 23rd. In the name of the Synod I thank them, and the barrister and solicitors assisting, for their sacrifice of time, their diligence and their hard work. As reported to you by the Standing Committee, they received evidence from 58 witnesses 44 of whom appeared before them, and they worked through some 900 pages of transcripts.

David has been officially notified. Two copies of their Report have been given to him; one for himself and one for his legal advisers. In the terms of clause 4 of the Ordinance David now has the opportunity to make to me "such representations as he may see fit in respect of the report of the Commissioners or of the whole circumstances of the case"

Clause 5 says that

After the lapse of not less than two nor more than six months from the date of such notification the Bishop if he be of opinion that it is expedient to do so may remove the said clergyman from his Cure ...

Clause 9 provides that

A clergyman removed from his Cure under this Ordinance shall not by reason only of such removal be deemed an unfit person to be instituted or licensed to any other vacant cure or charge.

That is where the matter stands at the moment. I await any representation that David may see fit to make to me in the time provided. It is my desire to keep the contents of the report as confidential as possible. I hope that subsequent events do not make it impossible for me to maintain this confidentiality. I have no desire to be secretive. I do believe however that, at this time, no good purpose is served by having the Report widely circulated.

It is right for you to ask why such an action was undertaken and what were the circumstances associated with it. I did outline this for you in my January letter but allow me to do so briefly once more.

The Rector was inducted early in February 1993. Within a few months Bishop Barnett, the Area Bishop, became aware of expressions of dissatisfaction about the rector's style of leadership. Complaints multiplied over the months. Following a particular event in August Bishop Barnett became involved in direct discussions with the Rector and various members of the Parish. During this time he kept me informed about what was taking place.

In October 1993 the Churchwardens privately requested the Rector to resign offering to pay his stipend and other emoluments until he could find another appointment or until June 1994. On 9 November the Parish Council endorsed the action of the Churchwardens in asking the Rector to resign by seven votes to two with two abstentions. The wardens sought my intervention. They believed it was in the best interests of all that David should have another appointment.

On 22 November 1993 some 18 Parishioners commenced an action under our Tribunal Ordinance alleging that Mr. Gilmour was guilty of certain offences under that Ordinance. At a meeting in the Parish on 30 November 1993 an exit poll of those who had signed a declaration of parish membership, conducted under strict supervision, voted 147 to 67 in favour of the action of the Churchwardens and Parish Council; 33 people were undecided and 4 polled informally.

Both Bishop Barnett and I met with David on a number of occasions. We both gave him certain advice. We also met with the Churchwardens and with other people who expressed opposing points of view. We both received numerous telephone calls, faxes and letters. The situation had reached an impasse. Neither of the major parties would move on the question of David continuing as Rector. In an attempt to resolve the impasse I called a meeting on 18 December 1993 hoping to provide a process apart from Ordinance procedures that might produce a fair and godly conclusion. The Rector did not believe he could accept the proposal. So, at that date, after lengthy discussions, negotiations, proposals and counter-proposals, meetings and advice, the situation was deadlocked with no sign of any acceptable solution in sight. I deliberated on my responsibilities in these circumstances. The Rector had been properly appointed, but a very good parish was now in such a state of turmoil as to have attracted the attention of the secular press. I had been elected to be the chief shepherd of the diocese. At my Consecration I was solemnly charged

Be to the **flock** of Christ a shepherd, and not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. Support the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, restore the outcasts, seek the lost. Be merciful, without being remiss; administer discipline with mercy. When the Chief Shepherd appears may you receive the never fading crown of glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I have a responsibility for all the churches, all the people, and all the clergy of the diocese; for the **flock** of Christ, all of it, clergy and laity alike. I did not believe that I could responsibly walk away from the situation and leave it acrimoniously to bleed to a shadow of its former self, in full view of the public eye, as it gave ample evidence of doing. The situation exceeded by far the normal tensions associated with the commencement of a new ministry. At my consecration when asked the question,

Will you maintain and promote (as much as lies in your power) quietness, peace, and love among all men; and will you correct and discipline, according to the authority you have by God's word, the disorderly and disobedient and those guilty of offence within your jurisdiction?

I replied

I will, by the help of God.

The problem was to know how to determine the rights and wrongs of the situation and to act with fairness, justice and compassion for all the parties, in a situation where it might well be thought that the minister no longer enjoyed the confidence of a significant proportion of his parishioners. I therefore took what appeared to me to be a gospel directed, Ordinance sanctioned approach. I encouraged the activation of the Incapacity and Inefficiency Ordinance to answer the question: "Has the minister concerned the capacity to minister to that congregation?" If either the Enquiry Committee, made up of 2 disinterested clerics and 1 layman, or the

Commissioners, composed on the same basis, found in the Rector's favour then it would be open for me to take certain steps. If they found against him then other courses would be open.

I believed that this process, as a way for resolving a dispute amongst Christians, was "gospel directed".

1 Corinthians 6:1-5 says,

When any of you has a grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous, instead of taking it before the saints?

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

Do you not know that we are to judge angels -- to say nothing of ordinary matters?

If you have ordinary cases, then, do you appoint as judges those who have no standing in the church?

I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to decide between one believer and another, (NRSV)

A further question might be why this Ordinance? It bears the date 1906 and appears to have been rarely used. Is it appropriate? This has been a question spoken to at some length in the Standing Committee in recent months. I encouraged the use of this particular Ordinance upon the advice of the Chancellor Mr. Justice K. R. Handley, the person to whom an Archbishop naturally looks for such counsel, advice that was supported by Mr. Justice P. W. Young. While they were the source of the advice upon which the decision to encourage the use of this Ordinance was taken, - sources I may add that have an admirable reputation in an area where their calling is to consider the meaning and application of statutes, laws and ordinances - never-the-less the responsibility for encouraging its use is mine not theirs.

I have described my actions as "Ordinance sanctioned" because Ordinances are the way in which we regulate our temporal affairs in the fellowship of the Diocese. Ordinances express our united appreciation of the way we should order our processes for dealing with certain matters. By using an Ordinance after serious negotiations, and as a last resort, to seek a resolution for a difficult and stalemated situation, we are not using "law" as it occurs in 1 Corinthians 6. What we are doing is using a process by which some impartial people of stature amongst us make a determination and report it to me. That appears to me to be eminently fair and, given the circumstances of the case, 'pastoral' in its operation. It cannot be 'unpastoral' to give all parties an opportunity to be fairly heard and have their contribution dispassionately considered. I consider Paul's direction alluded to above to be pastoral in nature. The process protects the minister from any improper assault upon his rights. It allows the parishioners to be heard. It permits me to fulfil my responsibilities as bishop of the Diocese. It does not threaten clergy tenure. It poses the question of the ministerial capacity of a particular clergyman, in a particular situation, at a particular time. Should there be a finding against the clergyman there is, as I have already indicated, provision for him to be offered another Cure or position.

Concerns have been expressed by some clergy that proceedings under the 1906 Ordinance against David Gilmour and the enquiry into his ministry at Pymble, threaten the position of every or nearly every rector in the Diocese. These fears are completely unfounded. Clergy should be aware that any complaints against a rector must first be reviewed by an Enquiry Committee. The Enquiry Committee is a most important safeguard and one can confidently expect that unreasonable or frivolous complaints would not get past this Committee, which includes a majority of clergy. I must also say that the situation in Pymble at the time when the 1906 Ordinance was invoked was quite unprecedented in all my 36 years of pastoral experience.

I know that there is concern over the costs associated with this process. As already mentioned the Commissioners received evidence from a large number of people. It was necessary to provide trained and competent assistance to help the persons, including the minister, wishing to give evidence to the Commissioners. This is where costs have been incurred. The costs are indeed very high, and the Northmead letter draws attention to this. I must however inform the Synod that the Barrister involved has made no charge at all. The solicitors, who have partners to whom they have responsibilities, have charged at a significantly reduced rate. If justice is to be done, and seen to be done, it is difficult to avoid the costs of justice. Natural justice cannot be denied to any of the parties concerned, least of all the minister. It is impossible, I believe, to envisage any process of resolving disputes of this nature that will not cost money. What we have before us is part of the cost of preserving tenure. It may well be seen as marking the importance we place upon this protection for the clergy.

One final thing. In a letter apparently circulated to some of the members of the Synod by a group of parishioners references are made to the pastoral ministry of my colleague Bishop Barnett. I believe they are ill informed and unjust. Given the circumstances of the case I believe he has acted with integrity and compassion. He is a man for whose skills, pastoral dedication and wisdom I have profound respect. I reckon

it a privilege to work in fellowship with him. Many of you in this house believed he would make an excellent Archbishop and voted for that outcome. I can only say, for my part, that if he had been so elected you would have been served by a man of outstanding quality. I draw that opinion in part from the dedicated and supportive way he has gone about assisting me in my role and in the devotion he and Anita have displayed in seeking to advance the cause of Christ in the churches of their Area and to care for the clergy.

My hope is that, for the sake of the minister and the parishioners concerned, the Synod in its wisdom will choose not to discuss the matter further but allow it to take its course and then discuss the principles involved at a later session of the Synod. Whatever happens I beg your prayers and your moderation in this unhappy process. I sincerely hope that the Synod will not attempt to do again the work of the Commissioners on the floor of Synod. I cannot believe that to be appropriate.

Conclusion

Discipleship and ministry are not engagements which offer unalloyed tranquillity. They are often attended by difficulties and disappointments. But we have overwhelming reasons for confidence and hope: God is sovereign, Christ is triumphant and he has bequeathed us his Spirit. If we are wholeheartedly committed to him and to each other we can courageously fulfil our calling and finally give an account with joy. May God enable us all to live Coram Deo: in the presence of God.

And now we move into the business of this Synod. May we work under his guidance, humbly seek his wisdom and do all our work as an expression of our love for him, for his world and for one another.