

First Ordinary Session of the 44th Synod of the Diocese of Sydney: October and November 1996

Presidential Address

By the Most Reverend R.H. Goodhew, Archbishop of Sydney on Monday 28 October 1996.

Welcome to A New Synod

I welcome you all to Synod, especially our newcomers. We gather as brothers and sisters in Christ, members of the one Body, to do the business of the Church of God in its Anglican expression in Sydney. You represent your parishes but your focus must be more than that. You should think and act for the whole church in the whole diocese. I ask you to speak, decide and vote prayerfully, as in the presence of God and for the well being of all in the diocese.

Some of the issues we will consider are matters on which people hold different views. They hold them with strong conviction. Some are theological, others financial and structural. Remember, when someone differs from you, even strongly, they also share with you a genuine desire to honour the same Lord. We must be united in those things which are gospel essentials, things which if surrendered would destroy the Gospel. For the rest we may allow each other an appropriate liberty. What we cannot do, is fail to honour our responsibility to practise a gracious charity in all we do and say. I remind you that the Scripture says,

Let your love be genuine. Abhor what is evil, cleave to what is good.
In your love for the brethren show one another affectionate kindness.
Prefer one another in honour. (Romans 12:9-10. Cranfield)

Thanks to Bishop A. Nichols

On behalf of us all, I thank Bishop Tony Nichols for his sermon to us today. A son of this diocese, Bishop Nichols fulfils a challenging role as bishop of the Diocese of the North West. We thank him for his ministry to us and commend him to the God of all grace.

God At Work in Our Diocese

As Archbishop, I want to give thanks to God for so many evidences of his grace and activity amongst us. There are some very difficult areas in our diocese; there are other areas where we need to make a greater impact; nevertheless our churches display a spiritual energy in which we should rejoice. I am greatly encouraged by the reports I receive from the Regional Bishops about the efforts undertaken by parishes to be intentional and focused in their life and witness. Our diocesan organisations are vigorous and committed to honouring God in the service of people. There is evidence that we are learning to be a Church for all Australians, not just for white Anglo-Saxons. The number of people seeking training for future service for God is a constant cause for thanksgiving. When people wish to paint a picture of gloom concerning the Church, I look at the evidences of God's work and take courage. I hope you do the same. Our great God will fulfil his own purposes. Our task is to live in obedient love under the rule of His Word and Spirit. With that responsibility in mind I turn to consider our future and to comment on some of the matters on our business paper, which bear both upon our obedience and our life together in the Diocese.

Where Does the Future Lie?

Moments of choice come to institutions as well as individuals. We may well be reaching such a time. A recent edition of the ACL Newsletter asked the question: "Is the umbrella still working?" It suggested that the Anglican Church is in "mortal danger" and needs to persevere in "fighting for the truth". Issues such as the ordination of women to the priesthood, A Prayer Book for Australia, liberal Catholicism, the restriction of sacramental ministry to clergy, questions recently referred to the Appellate Tribunal, the planting of churches in other dioceses, and the opinion that there is a widespread departure from the use of authorised services are all given as indicators that the "umbrella" of the Anglican Church in Australia is under great strain. A question is posed, "Can the Church we love deal with these strains...?" ¹

The question is sound and should be addressed. But we need to probe further, to ask, can this diocese deal with these strains within its own ranks? Can our churches deal with these stresses? Can we individuals deal with them?

In a similar vein, an Anglicans Together article said "History is now repeating itself". It says the spirit of the 1603 Millenary Petition is alive and well. It claims that clergy who have forsworn to wear "the chasuble cannot now be persuaded even to wear the surplice"; that "What was formerly a matter of robes has now become merged into a debate about matters of policy"; and further, that "Lay presidency, ... makes nonsense of church order and subverts the role of the ordained ministry". It concludes "In the days of the Judges, each man did that which was right in his own eyes and the result was anarchy and confusion." ²

Finally the recent issue of Essentials, the Journal of EFAC Australia, carried an article which *inter alia* saw the Anglican Church in Australia "entrenched in the 'shoot itself in the foot' mode", and this diocese of Sydney, "set on self destruction (with) evangelicals pre-occupied with internal faction fighting".³

Whether these opinions are accurate or not, they undoubtedly express concern about our present situation. They prompt the question "Where does the future lie?"

The best way forward its not always immediately obvious. We need to pray for guidance. We also need to be aware that we are children of our own times. So, we should ask, "Are our tensions the agitations of the Spirit of God, or are they, even in part, an ecclesiastical expression of that post-modern individualism which we deprecate in the wider society?" In the post-modern climate we can be influenced by the loudest voices just because the foundations are being shaken? We need to move with care and dependence upon God.

The writer of the "Essentials" article also referred to the Main Game and the Side Show. In general terms I believe he is correct when he describes the "Main Game" as "growing churches and evangelising Australia and the world" and the "Side Show" as the "Diocese (and) the ACA". If we are not focused on winning the lost, and building them up in their life of obedience to God, we have lost biblical direction and deserve to wither away. But in reality "Main Game" and "Side Show" are mutually interactive. Both need to be played well.

If we are not prepared simply to drift into a condition where individuals determine what is 'right', or 'Anglican'; or where the individual parish clergyman is supreme in determining issues of doctrine, liturgy, and administrative order; or where our fellowship is largely a matter of property held in some common arrangement and superannuation benefits; then fairly soon we must make some firm resolutions about the shape of our association. If through lack of courage or because of an unwillingness to address difficult issues, we give credence to a range of undebated assertions, such as, for example, the inevitability of the demise of any semblance of uniformity in public worship, we have only ourselves to blame if we do return to the disorder of the days of the Judges.

People who push the edges are both a blessing and a bane. They can force the wider constituency out of lethargy and acceptance of the status quo. In that role they are the saviours of an organisation, and deliver it from death by atrophy. They can be the sign of the future. On the other hand, they can be iconoclastic and unnecessarily destructive, eliminating and uprooting structures which serve a beneficial and enduring purpose. In times such as ours, radicals and conservatives must find constructive common cause in charting the future.

I would not be happy to be the leader of an organisation in free fall. In this forum we assemble to represent our unity and fellowship as a diocese. We are more than just a conglomerate of otherwise autonomous units. I challenge you to grapple with the hard questions. But do so in full recognition that we are bound to make "every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3 NRSV). It may take time, but we must come, by gracious persuasion, to a place where we can say "it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." (Acts 15:28 NRSV).

Race Relations in Australia

Before I address matters which bear on the life of the diocese there is a wider issue upon which I wish to comment.

I have been saddened to hear that many of our Asian and indigenous brothers and sisters have been grieved by recent comments in the community of a racist nature.

While it is right to discuss controversial issues in an open and honest way, there is much in the recent debate which has been ill-informed, provocative and deeply offensive. I have heard that some of our Asian brothers and sisters have been physically and verbally abused, and some spat at while walking down the street. Others talk of their deep sense of grief at finding themselves rejected in the country they have chosen as their home.

The Bible affirms that regardless of race, each person is made equally in the image of our loving creator. A mono-cultural, Anglo-centric Australia would neither benefit the gospel nor promote peace and justice in our world. I encourage us all to go beyond tolerance, and to welcome the sojourner to our gate.

I turn now to issues which appear on our agenda.

The Use of Our Resources

First, I refer to some issues raised by the APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE. This is the mechanism by which we allocate the financial resources available for distribution in 1997. It is, therefore, a particular focus of attention. It places a dollar value on aspects of our diocesan work. It is, in some measure, a strategy document representing our goals and priorities.

My first comment relates to **the reduced amount of money available** for distribution. Note two matters. One is the effect this will have on our *work amongst children and youth*. The Education Commission and the Youth Department have both been subjected to a substantial reduction in their funding. Both agencies play an important role in advancing work amongst youth. At a time when we believe that we must reach young people in small parishes as well as the larger ones, and when access to State Schools provides an outstanding opportunity to contact a great number of unchurched young people, this is a difficult decision. This Synod cannot ignore the possible results of the decision. Sadly, when money is limited hard decisions have to be made. But we should be deeply concerned by a gap in such a vital area of work.

A second and related issue is the *dependency upon investment income* we have developed as the means by which we finance many of our ministry initiatives. Thank God for our resources, for those who have managed them, and for the use we have been able to make of them. At the same time, please note that, unlike every other diocese in Australia, parishes in this diocese do not pay anything that might properly be called an assessment. By that I mean a contribution towards the costs of diocesan services and ministry. What is paid is an amount levied to recover those local parish costs which are paid centrally, eg., Insurance, Superannuation and Long Service Leave. The amount paid is a cost recovery mechanism rather than an assessment to pay for services beyond the parish. Not all the costs incurred centrally are recovered. In all other dioceses assessments are paid to cover central diocesan ministries and services. Our parishes pay nothing. We can be grateful to God for this but I ask the Synod to consider whether or not this is spiritually healthy. Is it good that parishes have no open and consistent fellowship in supporting work in the diocese beyond parish boundaries?

At the same time it is also important to recognise that there will be some **parochial units which will find it difficult to pay even those recovery costs**. They are struggling to meet their basic ministry expenses. Increases in stipends add to their concerns. This struggle to meet financial budgets can be daunting and depressing in areas which need as much encouragement as possible. The Regional Bishops and Archdeacons are giving attention to these areas. They have developed, and are continuing to develop, specific strategies. We must not abandon difficult areas simply because they are difficult. While there are people living in any place who need Christ, we are bound to search for fresh ways to offer them appropriate evangelistic and pastoral ministry.

I anticipate that these strategic concerns will figure prominently in the agenda of the new Regional Councils. We have already visited these questions over and over again. But the solutions must be found, and now. We cannot push them off for a further decade or two. There is undoubted wisdom in putting resources, both human and financial, into areas of high return. It is sensible, logical and good stewardship. Yet we are the Church of Jesus Christ and as such we are charged to make His Name known to all people. Appropriate strategies, and people with a missionary spirit who see these harder places and the unreached people in them as worthy of love and sacrifice are what is needed. We must be prepared to offer them personal and strategic support. People should be set up for success not failure. There are other areas which are populated with significant numbers of winnable people whom we have not yet reached. This too, requires attention. Church members need to be helped and encouraged in their person-to-person witnessing. Bishops, Archdeacons and Area Deans, along with their Regional Councils and local parish leadership, will need to fashion ministry strategies for their Region which deal both with responsive and less responsive areas. While recognising parish autonomy, there is need for a policy in each Region that encourages the review of wider areas to promote enhanced ministry capacity. Greater regionalisation must produce better overall ministry practice.

My final comment concerns **Regionalism**. This is the first Appropriations Ordinance to come before us since the passing of the Regions Ordinances last year. Their passage, together with the amendment of the Standing Committee Ordinance, represented a clear decision by the Synod to give greater substance to our regional structure. This year's Appropriations Ordinance gives financial expression to our decisions. Synod can now

see some of the implications of the decisions. The Regional Councils will be responsible for allocating grant monies for parish and other related ministries. In addition the Ordinance allows the Synod to decide how the diocesan departments shall receive their future funding: will it come directly from the Synod or will it be necessary for them to seek it from the Regional Councils? The Bill's movers will explain the details to you but the decision is yours. Some folk believe that the need for Departments to persuade Regional Councils to support them financially will lead to the dismantling of their work. Others believe that Regionalism will be a pale and attenuated arrangement if the Councils are not able to influence the performance of the various ministry agencies by controlling the flow of financial support. Your decision will be pivotal. We would be foolish to damage good work, yet Regionalism needs to be significant. What this Synod decides will determine the character of Regionalism, the locus of decision making about ministry in the diocese, and the future agenda of Regional Councils.

What Role Should Women Play in the Church in this Diocese?

The Bill for THE GENERAL SYNOD-LAW OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CLARIFICATION CANON 1992 ADOPTION ORDINANCE 1996 marks the end of a three year moratorium on our debate on the question of women being ordained as priests. Resolution 10/93 says

Synod notes the report of the Committee appointed pursuant to resolution 10/91 and -

- (a) recognises that evangelicals hold different views on some aspects concerning the ministry of women within our Church; and
- (b) recommends that there be a moratorium on the issue of the ordination of women to the priesthood until at least the 44th Synod.⁴

The Report referred to in 10/93 was the last major document on this topic placed before the Synod. The issue still excites strong emotions. Proponents of priestly ordination for women claim three grounds for their request: justice, Scripture and culture. In terms of justice, the argument is that women should have equal access to ministry opportunities along with men. Where gifts are appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of a priest it should be possible for a woman to have the opportunity to do so. With regard to Scripture, it is argued that the traditional understanding of this matter represents a faulty exegesis and/or a biased or conditioned hermeneutic. Regarding culture, it is asserted that a restriction which once may have protected Christian congregations from causing offence in the first century, now has the reverse effect at the end of the twentieth. Opponents of the idea of women having a leadership/teaching role in a congregation also offer three grounds generally: the teaching of Scripture, Apostolic tradition, and the preponderance of their view in the worldwide Christian family.

The Bill seeks to admit women as presbyters but restricts access to any appointment as a Rector or Curate-in-Charge. It endeavours to extend the ministry of ordained women while recognising the 'headship' principle. This was the position developed by Evangelicals at the second English NEAC Conference in 1977 and expressed in what has been called the Nottingham Statement. That document envisaged " ... the creation of a local, ordained group of presbyters' who *may* include women' ... " Section J6 said,

We repent of our failure to give women their rightful place as partners in ministry with men. Leadership in the church should be plural and mixed, ultimate responsibility normally singular and male.

This approach was of course overtaken by later events but it is a statement which might be considered appropriate by the promoters of the Bill.

Those who oppose women in the priesthood argue, amongst other things, that this Bill represents the 'thin end of the wedge', and that it is contrary to the nature of our ordination service. That service, it is claimed, contemplates that the person so ordained will have the cure of souls in some locality. Against this, the 1993 Report reasoned that

The process of ordaining Priests is separate from induction into a parish. Similarly, the process of authorisation is separate. According to the 1992 Year Book, there are a significant number of Priests (just less than a third) active within ministry in our diocese who are not, and never have been, Rectors or Curates-In-Charge, including a number of heads of Diocesan organisations.

This has prompted some to argue that it is far less destructive to the character of the orders of ministry as we receive them in this Church to ordain priests, some of whom will not be in charge of parochial units, than it is to authorise deacons to conduct the Lord's Supper.

Those who believe that God has spoken clearly in Scripture on the issue of local church leadership and of women or wives teaching men generally or their husbands specifically in the church and thereby exercising authority over them, will see change in the direction of this Bill as an abandonment of faithful obedience to God, and will be apprehensive of the consequences of such wilful disobedience. They will feel deeply that the Church has abandoned apostolic authority in favour of the dictates of a society influenced by the values of an inappropriate feminism. They are concerned that people will leave and move to other churches seen as maintaining biblical integrity. They sense, not without some justification, that those who hold women priests to be unbiblical, will soon find that they have no place in this church. Those who believe with honest hearts that the Bible is to be understood differently will wish with equal passion to see change. They argue that the current situation causes women to leave the church and makes the church they love appear as an oddity in the surrounding culture.

There will be yet others who feel in conscience that the situation is not as clear as either of those groups assert, that there is room for some reverent agnosticism which may permit a decision that seems good to a godly majority. Some place the issue in the basket of gospel essentials, others do not. There may also be others who, confused and weary, wish the issue would go away. The fact is that it will not, and cannot, be put aside. The Bill forces us to make a decision.

I wish I could relieve the tension which attends this matter but I do not think I can. Each of us is bound to decide on the basis of what we believe God says in Scripture, and how we believe we best please Him in applying His word in our present circumstances. If all concerned were able to concede that the issue is about how to apply the teaching of the Bible in a changed social context and not about abandoning Apostolic authority then some heat might be taken out of the debate. It might help us if we could see each other as brothers and sisters struggling to offer God our obedience rather than view each other as potential heretics. Holy Spirit come, please be our Teacher and Guide!

Although I am not sure that any one player holds all the exegetical aces in this game, I personally, I have located myself on the conservative end of the spectrum in this matter, while being strongly committed to advancing ministry by women in the church. I have functioned on the basis that reserving the priesthood to men while authorising women to minister in the churches provided a workable and practical expression of the balance of male leadership and ministry by women which I have judged to be consonant with Scripture and our tradition. That is still my preferred position. This Bill however is designed to honour the 'headship' principle while giving greater recognition to women in ordained ministry. It would permit women to minister in Word and Sacraments in situations such as a children's hospital, or in institutions composed predominantly of females.

To adopt this Bill could leave us, as some argue, with a permanent 'underclass' in the priesthood. It may well be 'the thin end of the wedge', and only the beginning of a widening debate. There are certain to be people who later, will want to press for the removal of the restriction on incumbency, and then urge for women in the episcopate. I cannot see that pressure abating. However each successive step would need to be argued as a separate issue, if the present measure becomes our rule.

As the President of this Synod I too must be prepared to listen carefully to the debate. I urge you to do the same. Pray that God will give us the sort of consensus which he brought about in Acts 15. Remember, we do not work here in an isolated corner. Many are watching, both in this country and worldwide. Our decisions will be noted in many places. May the Lord grant us mercy to move only in obedience to Him.

Before leaving this topic I add one further word. I wish to express profound gratitude to all the women of this church. These debates could easily cause you to feel that you are a commodity about which we, predominantly men, make determinations. I regret that. You are the larger proportion of our numbers. You serve with strength, intelligence and patience. I recoil from any attempt to be patronising. I desire simply to acknowledge the dignity and honour which is yours in the presence of our Lord and Saviour.

Ordering Our Public Worship

The Bill for the GENERAL SYNOD - PRAYER BOOK FOR AUSTRALIA CANON 1995 ADOPTING ORDINANCE 1996 offers the Synod the opportunity to consider whether or not it wishes to adopt a Prayer Book for Australia as an authorised book for use in the diocese.

I gave my support to the passage of APBA as an Ordinary Bill through the General Synod as a book of "Liturgical Resources authorised by the General Synod". My reasons were that a significant input had been made at the Liturgical Commission itself by those members who were from our own diocese: Dr. Bartlett, who was Chairman, Mrs. Collison, Dr. Lawton and also Dr. Peterson, who for a period, acted as a consultant; that a considerable number of changes to the draft book had been secured subsequently by Evangelicals; that the

contents did not compel interpretations that were contrary to Evangelical concerns; that the book was clearly marked as a "Liturgical Resources"; that the Book of Common Prayer remained the standard of doctrine and practice for this church; that there was no guarantee that a newly appointed General Synod Liturgical Commission charged with the task of amending further the draft book would be as sympathetic to Evangelical concerns as the one which had produced APBA; that Evangelicals from other parts of Australia supported this approach; and that the Canon would only operate in Sydney if it was accepted subsequently by our Synod.

Each Synod representative has now had the opportunity both of personally considering the Book as well as hearing its contents explained. In addition you have the Report from the Diocesan Doctrine Commission. It is now your task to decide whether or not to adopt it as a book generally available for use in the diocese along with An Australian Prayer Book and the Services of our Book of Common Prayer.

The Book appears to have received fairly wide acceptance across the Australian Church. Viewed as a collection of "Liturgical Resources" it would, in my judgement, be difficult not to acknowledge that it contains much useful and useable material. A number of Evangelicals, however, while recognising the many strengths of the Book, have voiced concerns about aspects of it. Apart from issues of size and cost, a drift in the tenor of some of the Collects and prayers, issues to do with the Lord's Supper, the muting of themes like God's wrath and judgement, elements in some of the Pastoral Services, and an expanded use of symbols, are cited as worrying trends. People feel they cannot have the same confidence in its contents as they do with BCP even though it may pick up on some themes inadequately treated in BCP. It is a fair question to ask: where and how do evangelicals make their concerns known? How does one react to trends which lead away from reformed and biblical standards?

The issue however is wider than the decision to adopt or not adopt APBA. The time has come when we must honestly face the question of the status of common prayer and liturgical worship in our diocese. All clergy have sworn before God to conduct corporate worship according to the prescribed forms. The laity are thereby guaranteed services which are biblical and edifying. Worship in our Church has been contractual. The clergy have rights and protections, so do the laity. It would appear that this is not now the situation in many churches. Motives which have prompted this move away from our set liturgies are not hard to discover. The desire to reach a variety of people in ways which are relevant and effective is commendable in itself. Yet there is a cost.

I am sympathetic to the motives which prompt non compliance. I have not always been an Archbishop. As a parish minister I struggled, like most of you, to reach unreached people, to edify young and old, and to be loyal both to Christ and to the Church which I have made my spiritual home. I have done my own share of experimenting. But as the Archbishop, I am bound to reflect on a wider range of issues and I want to suggest that this Synod also has that responsibility.

We have always been a liturgical church. That means more than simply believing that there should be some sort of order in our services. All Christian worshipping communities follow some order even if it is no more than a sequence in the mind of the person leading the service. All such communities use the Bible and pray. For us liturgy has meant a specific, authorised form that those set aside to minister in the church undertake to follow. As a result Christ's people know what to expect when they gather for worship. When you elected me archbishop of this diocese you required me to promise to uphold its laws and regulations. Part of that obligation is to see that clergy fulfil their own undertakings. I have to say I find it impossible to do, impossible because there is no common mind amongst us. I am in a position similar to clergy who, having made promises, are conscious that few, if any, expect them to adhere to their word. This is not a spiritually healthy situation. The question is easily brushed aside with the comment that common sense and a desire to grow will dictate to an Archbishop what ought to be done. My difficulty is that what to one person is clear common sense is to another nonsense. What some hold dear others slight. Some assert that if the promises made stand in the way of gospel advance then the promises must be put aside. For my part that is a particularly poor ethic, especially when there are other alternatives available which do not involve breaking promises and oaths. I find it extremely difficult when I am asked why I fail to hold people accountable. The question is, where would one start to do this with integrity? These issues are more extensive than liturgical concerns. They cover a wide range of matters in our fellowship as a diocese, but now the liturgical one is pressing. We are in danger of losing something which has been a principal feature of our life and character. As the one charged by you with the responsibility of seeing that the rules of our fellowship are observed I would be glad to have those rules clarified for everyone's benefit. Our focus must be unquestionably on making Christ known and helping our churches to be evangelistic, and to be so enterprisingly, not just on keeping rules and maintaining the institution. But our rules provide our shape and our character. I appeal to the Synod, to assist me in addressing this issue.

I hear comments like, "The age of uniformity and common prayer is dead and gone for ever." I don't question the idea that the age when every congregation should say and do exactly the same thing in precisely the same

manner may well lie in the past. I am as conscious as anyone else of the changing preferences of younger generations and of the particular needs of a variety of ethnic congregations. I venture to say that we are now often doing 'in church' what we once did in fellowship groups and other settings. But I am not so easily convinced that it is either passe or unhelpful to have elements of church services which are common and regularly employed. It has been a principle of worship and part of our educational and pastoral strategy to edify people by the constant use of certain key elements in our public services. Our forms have put into people's minds words with which to confess sin, to praise God, and to pray for issues which we are exhorted to bring before God. They have taught people the moral and spiritual precepts revealed by God, the value of both Old and New Testaments, the active place of the Psalms in Christian spirituality, as well as giving a concise and catholic expression of the faith, and a balanced and biblical approach to the sacraments. To abandon all this for the creations and passing predilections of an individual clergy person, or the inclinations of those whose main interest is music, may, in the long run, prove to be a poor trade off.

Evangelism is crucial, but so is the corporate life of God's people when they assemble. The Christian pilgrim must travel the road to maturity and death with as much support and encouragement as it is possible to give. Public worship must be sustaining for the mature as well as engaging for the new Christian. I do not underestimate how hard it is to gather and maintain people at the present time but I am, in the context of a debate about a new Prayer Book, asking you to think about the issue of common prayer.

It is possible that some who take a strong line against APBA in this Synod will be those who themselves rarely use the authorised forms already in existence. A section of APBA has been very closely scrutinised by our Doctrine Commission. In some sections it has been line by line, word by word. It will probably receive the same sort of review in this house. It will be evaluated for what it omits as well as for what it includes. Prayers in other parts of the book will no doubt be similarly considered. That is appropriate. My question is, "If that is appropriate for a new prayer book, is it not also appropriate for what is done week by week in parish churches which construct their own services?" If a Doctrine Committee spends long hours of meeting over words and phrases and nuanced meanings in the Thanksgiving prayers of APBA, and they should, (I requested them to do that work even before the Synod made a similar request), what about those prayers which, it is asserted, are being created and used in some of our churches? Who evaluates them with the same rigour?

Sisters and brothers I am not a legalist. I am not interested in forcing our churches into forms so fixed and stodgy that they are totally incapable of responding to our own times. I want to win the lost for Christ. I want people to find common worship contemporary, enriching and geared to their mental, emotional and cultural circumstances. But I want to say to the church in this diocese: "Stop and think. Where are we going?" I do not believe we should drift into a situation where a principle of Anglican worship is lost, where the sturdy framework which has supported biblical theology, preaching, and Christian formation is abandoned, where each local church becomes the absolute determiner of what is acceptable public worship, and theologically untrained musicians have the controlling influence over what is said and done. I think an inaccurate notion has taken hold in the minds of many, namely, that it is impossible to have engaging worship services that follow a pattern in which certain elements are constant; that is, apart from the multiple repetition of verses from a few selected hymns. I think we are in danger of selling future generations short.

There are a range of options open to us at this Synod. Each has a consequence that needs to be carefully weighed. We could accept the book recognising that few will use it all and that the rules of selectivity will prevail. I think it is likely that this will happen even if the book is not adopted. The problem is then: how does one register a protest about a perceived drift in a non evangelical direction? Another option is to adopt the Canon but register a strong and detailed protest about its tendencies and perceived deficiencies with the General Synod, expressing commitment to addressing these issues in future authorised services and revisions. This would keep us as participants in liturgical revision in the wider church in a way which would be more difficult to sustain if we fail to adopt APBA. A third option is to decline to vote on the Canon and leave the use of the book or parts thereof in the diocese, to those parishes who may ask me to approve its use under section 4 of the Constitution. The other option is to vote against its adoption and to continue with BCP and AAPB and whatever else is being done in public worship. This last option may have the effect of isolating us from making, with integrity, any further input into the liturgical process, and in addition, may be felt as a curtailment of liberty by those parishes (almost 40 in number) who have sought permission for its trial use.

The shortest route out of what may be a lengthy debate with the potential to divide the Synod into happy winners and disgruntled losers may be to pursue the Section 4 option. The Synod is of course master of its own business and you will decide what course to adopt. Whatever you do, I counsel you to act with wisdom and care. We are looking both at our own spiritual interests and those of the wider church in Australia.

Whatever the outcome we must not abandon the task of developing liturgical material for ourselves and for the church in this country. We may be wise to consider in due course the development of services of our own,

first as an attempt to encourage the wider use of well prepared services in this diocese, and as a contribution to whatever may follow APBA. This is a course which is not without its difficulties. Others may well feel free to do the same and in directions which we might feel are not in the best interests of Anglicans generally. Whatever we do we must be more consistently involved in the process of liturgical revision. Generally speaking, as a diocese we have neglected this area of work in recent years. With the exception of some who held up our end in the National Church we left the work to others. I hope we will not repeat that omission.

Since with the production of APBA the Diocesan Liturgical Committee has completed its brief and lapses with the appointment of a fresh Standing Committee, it is my intention to appoint an Archbishop's Liturgical Panel. I will ask it to do at least two things. First to plan and conduct a series of seminars across the diocese to assist clergy and laity in the preparation and conduct of liturgies fitted to the variety of settings in which our churches operate. Then to begin work on fresh material as a contribution to future liturgical developments. Developing good liturgy is a skill. We need to produce from among us people who can serve the church with excellence in this area of expertise.

I have referred on numerous occasions to the idea of being Dynamically Anglican. Initially I too smiled at the mirth with which this idea was greeted in a variety of contexts in the diocese. I smile no longer. I think it may point to a deep malaise. It could witness to a basic uncertainty about who we are; somewhat like an awkward teenager not yet certain of his or her personhood. I do not detect the same embarrassment amongst Baptists, Roman Catholics or Presbyterians.

In briefing those whom I have asked to act as Selectors for Sydney Ordination candidates, and as Ordination Chaplains, I have outlined my assessment of Anglicanism and of what I consider to be a dynamic expression of that form of Christianity. It is the framework in which they have agreed to operate on my behalf.

I assert that Anglicanism has 4 dimensions.

The first is **Theological**. I contend that Anglicanism is Apostolic, Catholic, Protestant, Reformed, Calvinistic, Evangelical and baptises infants (Paedobaptistic). Its theological moorings are set out in the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles of the Anglican Church of Australia. These commit Anglicans to Scripture, The Creeds, The Book of Common Prayer and the 39 Articles. That is the faith of Australian Anglicanism, a faith which has been held in a tradition which values intellectual integrity, and in a manner which is thoughtful, reflective, humble, disciplined and generous.

The second dimension has to do with **Public Worship**. The Anglican Church is not a free church where form and function are determined by the minister or the local eldership. The reverse is true. Form and function have been determined by the whole church as a guide to clergy, with a mind to the protection, instruction and edification of the people, to give balance to teaching, and to provide Scriptural worship. Its public Services have been liturgical and comprehensive, that is, they have followed a determined order, they have sought to assist people through their whole life's journey as well as embracing and celebrating the Bible's full sweep of revealed truth and salvation history. While these patterns have a certain fixity, provision has been made, and should be made, for reasonable flexibility.

The third dimension relates to **Ministry**. Anglicanism supports the idea of ordered ministry and recognises the three traditional orders. These orders, Bishop, Priest and Deacon have their own particular responsibilities and duties. It is an episcopal church, recognising in each diocese a chief pastor appointed for the glory of God and "the edifying and well-governing" of the church. It is a church organised on a diocesan and national basis which expresses its life in parochial and local church structures. The intention of ministry is pastoral and evangelistic and its instruments are Word and Sacraments ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit. It aims to draw in God's elect, edify and nurture them, equip them for their life and service in the world, and prepare them for heaven.

The fourth dimension has to do with **Ethos**. Anglicanism is national in its focus. It takes seriously the life of the nation. It is transformative, seeking to influence the society of which it is a part with Kingdom values. It is Ecumenical in that it recognises other families of believers and Synodical by opening up the organs of government to laity as well as clergy.

These four dimensions operate **dynamically** when those who hold them are infused with love for God and for others; when they walk by the Spirit and are empowered by him; when they endeavour to be contemporary without being shallow; when they are both maintenance and mission minded; when they grow where they are planted, and while functioning with common forms, display a flexibility appropriate to their commitments and situation. At the heart of an Anglicanism which is truly dynamic is anointed preaching. Such preaching is born

of God's Word, prayer and the operation of the Spirit. It is loving, warm and passionate. It is the most powerful medium used by God for the edification of his people.

The criteria which I have given to Selectors and Chaplains have been more succinctly expressed by saying that we are biblical, credal, sacramental, liturgical and episcopal. I leave this with you now as you discuss forms of public worship. I ask you to consider not simply the pros and cons of this new book of liturgical resources, but also what is to be the fate of liturgy in our churches. Ground lost now will be hard to regain in the future.

Dealing with Sexual Misconduct

In June this year I issued a Protocol for Dealing with Sexual Misconduct by Church Workers in The Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney. This unhappy topic has been the subject of attention in each of my Presidential Addresses. I regret that the process has been so extended. It was complicated and required a great deal of consultation. The document has been circulated throughout our churches. Please continue to make its existence known in your church. We have supplies available for you to distribute to members of your congregations. Knowledge of their existence and contents can act as a deterrent. Five contact persons are in place located across the diocese. The telephone numbers of those people can be obtained by phoning 9264 7106. I ask you to encourage people who believe they have a genuine concern to call one of those numbers and make their concerns known. We have begun a process that I hope will result in the production of a Code of Conduct for church workers that will have wide acceptance across the diocese as a recognised standard of behaviour in our churches.

Events in the last few years have made us aware of some of the inadequacies of our existing disciplinary legislation. I undertook while before the Royal Commission into Police Corruption in NSW and later on television, to pursue strenuously the removal of the provision in our present Tribunal Ordinance that limits charges being brought to a period of twelve months after an alleged offence. That provision seemed to offer an unwarranted protection to people guilty of sexual misconduct.

There are two bills for Ordinances before you at this session which relate to this concern. One, the Tribunal Ordinance 1962 - Amendment Ordinance 1996, seeks simply to remove the twelve months time limitation from our existing Tribunal Ordinance. This at least must happen. The other is the Church Discipline Ordinance 1996. This proposed ordinance seeks to establish an additional mechanism to deal with offences of a sexual nature. I ask the Synod to give careful attention to both pieces of proposed legislation. I do not believe we can close this session of the Synod without passing, at least, the first of these.

We must ensure, as much as we are able, that our churches are safe places. We need to create both an environment and procedures in which alleged victims and perpetrators are treated adequately and with justice.

Therefore I am saddened and disappointed to learn that there are some clergy who, for reasons best known to themselves, are not encouraging their congregations to be aware of, and to make use of, the protocols which have been circulated.

Aboriginal Ministry

I understand that a motion will be proposed to the Synod concerning ministry to Aboriginal Australians. Its intention is to make possible the creation of a trust. The income generated by that trust will be used to train Aboriginals for ministry amongst their own people.

This diocese has the largest concentration of Indigenous people in the Country. Apart from the work of CMS, BCA and ABM in other parts of Australia, the Anglican Church never involved itself significantly in supporting ministry to Aboriginal people within the Diocese until the 1970's. The parish of South Sydney currently maintains a ministry to Aboriginal people through men like Rev. Bill Bird and now Ray Welsh.

Those proposing the motion believe that to be effective gospel ministry will need to be done by Aboriginal people in a way which they judge to be most appropriate. Aboriginal Christians are not averse to worshipping with white Australians in their congregations or having white Australians meet with them. What they do believe, along with most other specific people-groups, is that evangelism and nurture are best accomplished amongst people with common concerns and needs.

The proposal, though challenging in its financial requirements, is not one we can easily ignore. Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders are uniquely indigenous. They have a particular claim upon our concern. There is much to be done to make some amends for the impact we have had upon those who lived here before we

came. The training of people who can share Christ with their own folk and build them up in Him must commend itself to us. I hope we can make a positive response to this challenge which will be placed before us.

The Future of Our Nation

We face significant challenges in our national life. There is a marked tendency amongst us to be cynical about political leadership. Justified or not it is not healthy. Our unemployment statistics reflect the marginalisation of a large body of people in which the young are a worrying component. Little wonder that we have the highest youth suicide rate in the industrialised world. While poverty in Australia may not have the profile that it does in less developed countries we cannot ignore its growth amongst us. Indigenous Australians express resentment at the treatment afforded them and feel their concerns are not being adequately addressed. In addition the basic unit of our society, the family, continues to be under stress and distressing stories of abuse come to light.

No one denies the difficulties of dealing with these and the many other issues which confront us. Difficult or not they cannot be ignored. Near the root of many of our dilemmas lies an absence of real hope and the presence of an attitude which is short on a genuine spirit of service, and long on self-interest and rights. A truly supportive community must learn to care on a wide front.

We hold that the human condition requires the work of the Spirit of God for lasting renewal. Yet while we pray and work to that end in presenting Christ as Saviour and Lord we cannot ignore our civic responsibilities.

Leadership in our public life must have a genuine desire to serve the whole Australian community. We must support and encourage those who display this commitment. There needs to be a greater interest by God's people in the welfare of the nation: a greater effort to hold others accountable for their responsibilities to the community and to be held accountable ourselves for our service to others. There are those in this Synod and in our churches who are in positions of influence. We must support them and encourage them in the use of their influence to effect good outcomes. The bulk of the church lives the greater part of their lives in the networks that make up society. If there is value in "salt" and "light" they must to be employed where they are needed.

We must view with concern the diminishing exposure of those presently growing up in Australia to the fundamental outlines of the Christian message. These are often communicated today by the medium of secular presentations for purposes of entertainment, debate or censure. This is not a new insight by any means, but I wish to register once more the challenge which it represents. Our Media Department is small and its budget limited. It does very well with what it has but the challenge remains. Who will contend in the 'agora' of modern Australia for the claims of God in Christ?

The World Beyond Our Shores

The recent visit of Bishop Emmanuel Kolini from Zaire was a powerful reminder to many of us of the difficulties under which many of our sisters and brothers live out their discipleship. He also brought the challenge of the need not only for evangelism but for the teaching of those who turn to Christ.

Our preoccupation with our own challenges must not divert our eyes from influences in other major population areas which are inimical to the Gospel of Christ. Islam moves in Africa with the resources of oil rich supporters. It is a faith where religion and politics are one. We know the effects of earlier incursions in North Africa in bygone centuries when active Christian communities all but disappeared. If people are to be won to Christ and nurtured so as to stand strong in their faith, the church in places like Zaire are right to look to us for help.

The Missionary Hour in this Synod is not always strongly supported. That is a pity. It represents an effort to help us see concerns that are wider than our own diocese and to remind us of our brothers and sisters in every place who call on the Name of the Lord. Mission at home and beyond is one. I offer our congratulations and prayerful support to the Rev. Michael Hamaty, a member of this Synod for many years, who has recently taken up the post of National Secretary in Australia for the South American Missionary Society. I also challenge you and your parish to renewed commitment to world mission.

The Role of this Forum

Before I conclude I would like to make a comment about this forum. I hold Synod to be very important. We come together representing the churches of the Diocese, and as the Church in this Diocese, to determine issues which affect our common life. Because I hold this view, I was greatly disturbed by an opinion I saw expressed in a recent A.C.L. publication. It said,

The Synodical process is not based on truth but on numbers. Decisions in Synod are made on the basis of majority opinion. Furthermore, Synod members are not always elected on the basis of their godly discernment and wisdom.⁵

Do many here share that opinion? If that view of this Synod is widely held we ought to stop meeting now. We are wasting our time. Better that we discern who the 'prophets' are in our midst who speak, "thus says the Lord", and follow them. Or we might circulate Synod papers with relevant boxes for marking with respect to motions and bills. This would certainly save the time taken by speeches, for the opinion quoted can hardly regard them as intended to persuade concerning truth and the mind of the Spirit on any perplexing issue. It must see them as an exercise in political flag waving. A third possibility of course, is to ask all those who were not elected "on the basis of their godly discernment and wisdom" to leave forthwith.

If you detect a measure of sarcasm in my remarks, and you consider it misplaced, I ask your forgiveness. It springs from concern for the church in this Diocese, not lack of it. If we cannot seek God's mind together with open hearts and minds, we have reached a sorry state. I want to preside over an assembly of God's people where participants wait upon God for guidance, look for truth from anyone who speaks it, and offer respect to those with whom they may differ. If the group and the party rule, liberty of thought and freedom of conscience will go.

If you share my concern for this forum you can do three things. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for this whole assembly, and for yourself. Give serious attention to all that is written and spoken. Have courage to make your own assessments. Finally, speak and vote as before your Lord regardless of the opinion of others. Sometimes independence is hard to sustain. It requires strength of character, integrity, and a sense of being accountable to Christ alone, but I commend it to you. I would gladly see us find a way of reaching consensus decisions on issues before we act, rather than moving on narrow majorities. However, until we reach that point this is the best we have. Do not despise it or misuse it.

Back to the Future

Finally, what of the future? The issues that I have canvassed in this address, and others which we will consider, are our tensions and challenges, not our defining characteristics. We have God's Word, and His Spirit is with us. We move into a future which belongs neither to Chance nor to any human agency, but to God. We can and must work together as His people, to serve Him as he deserves by means of the spiritual resources that He provides. Our hope is defined and assured in the resurrection of our Master. Let us continue to work hard at the "Main Game". That means living by faith in God, and living as credible witnesses to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In fact, it means being OBSERVABLE GOD'S PEOPLE, PASTORALLY EFFECTIVE, EVANGELISTICALLY ENTERPRISING, GENUINE CARING AND DYNAMICALLY ANGLICAN. May we be all that to the glory of God. Amen.

In the Diocese

Before we commence the business of Synod I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Archdeacon Skillicorn, who is to officially retire at the end of February as my Personal Assistant and Registrar, for his loyal and conscientious service, and to warmly welcome Canon Peter Smart who will succeed the Archdeacon.

Other changes occurring in my Senior Clergy have been the resignation of the Ven Paul Perini as Archdeacon of South Sydney to become full time Archdeacon for Ordination and Ministry Development and the appointment of the Rev. Trevor Edwards as Archdeacon of South Sydney. Archdeacon Richardson also retired this year and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to him for his long and dedicated service and wish both he and Janet God's blessing as they enter this new phase in their lives.

My sincere appreciation must also be recorded for the loyal and devoted service of other clergy who have retired since last we met: the Rev. Canon Austin Day who retired in April last after 32 years as Rector of Christ Church St. Laurence, the Rev. Alwyn Griffiths from Carlton, the Rev. Bill Payne from Malabar, the Rev. John Baxter from Glenbrook, The Rev. John McDonald from Artarmon, the Rev. John Campbell from Smithfield, the Rev. John Dyer and the Rev. Graham Defty from Hornsby Heights.

Others of unfailing dedication who have died since last Synod include the Rev. C. R. Flatau, the Rev. Canon H. Rawson, the Rev. Canon W. K. Deasey and Deaconess E. R. Hudson, Mrs. Dorothy Abbott and Mrs. Louise Camroux.

Endnotes

1. A.C.L. News. July 1996.
2. Anglicans Together. September 1996.
3. Essentials. The Journal of EFAC. Winter 1996.
4. Year Book of the Diocese of Sydney 1994. p.343.
5. A.C.L. News. September 1996. Synod Edition. P9.