

Third Ordinary Session of the 48th Synod of the Diocese of Sydney: October 2010

Presidential Address

Delivered by Dr Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Sydney, on Monday 11 October 2010.

This glittering city began as an experiment on human nature. The history of Sydney raises the questions, 'What is a human being?' 'Can we create better humans?'

In October 1786, a sailor stole a pair of silver mounted spectacles from a shop in London. He was arrested. 'With every mark of joy in his countenance, and twirling his hat over his head, (he) hollered out "Botany Bay ahoy!"' The sailor had heard a wonderful rumour: New South Wales was intended to be run by the convicts.

He was not entirely wrong. One of the architects of the whole scheme was the Home Secretary, Lord Sydney. For him, transportation was not a penalty in itself, and even convicted felons did not lose all the rights of an Englishman. He thought that after a relatively brief settling-in period under the rule of military authority, the new colony would be self-governing, run by morally improved convicts.

He was influenced by the argument that when convicts became land-owners they would become good citizens. As one contemporary said, '(even thieves)...cease to be enemies to society whenever they regain their full human rights and become proprietors and cultivators of land.' Professor Alan Atkinson remarks, 'Ideas about commonwealth were thus reinforced by an Enlightenment understanding of the perfectibility of humankind. For men and women of optimistic temperament, wickedness no longer seemed to have any powerful connection with original sin. It could be more usefully attributed to faults of environment and therefore...might easily be corrected.'

The dream of human perfectibility is a proper one, a Christian one. Furthermore, environment does shape human nature. As those who bear the image of God, when we work in the world in accordance with God's principles, fruitfulness follows. For example, we believe that an ethos of justice and compassion will foster goodness. We believe that even adversity will not defeat us if we trust God. We want our community to follow God's law and believe that it would be for the good of all. Could Jerusalem be built here at Sydney Cove? Can a better environment make better men?

In London, reality prevailed. The Governor, not redeemed convicts, was to be in charge. They found adversity in the form of disease and drought; skulduggery, hangings, banishments and floggings, they imported. The newcomers did not renounce sin and crime at the equator. But there remained something of the first vision: at least the convicts were not slaves. The spirit of William Wilberforce had a great deal to do with the shaping of our nation. These lowly convicts were men and women made in the image of God. They were not disposable human machines. The 'comical figures dragging ball and chain shackles, demonized criminals, degraded victims of brutal punishment,' writes Dr Grace Karskens in her brilliant book on early Sydney, are stereotypes which 'have so little to do with life in early Sydney.' At one level they were free men and women, living in their own houses and getting on with family life.

And in some ways it worked, because social and physical environment does shape human good and evil. Sydney offered better food and a better climate. In 1797 there were three hundred children in the new community. Karskens says, 'By eighteenth century standards, Sydney was a great place for children' Christian ministers did their best to teach these young people. This much is true about the great enterprise of sending convicts to Botany Bay: social betterment can improve people, just as social deprivation can demoralize and marginalize us.

But we all drag around the ball and chain of original sin. Dr Karskens reminds us that, 'The city of Sydney is predicated on the dispossession of Aboriginal people - their loss underpins the city's foundation and growth as it expanded over more and more of the country.' The first people were sinners too, of course, but they possessed the resources on which this town was built.

In the earliest years of Sydney the Aboriginal presence was welcomed and visible. English and Aboriginal place names sit side by side in Sydney as did the people: Parramatta, Wilberforce, Woolloomooloo, Camperdown. But there is no hiding the truth. As Sydney grew and gained pretensions, it became a white town and Aboriginal people were marginalized and despised. Men began to ask whether they were really human and there began a shameful story which has not yet been resolved.

What is a human being? Can we improve humanity? Our yearning for perfection is proper. Our commitment to education, to treating human beings properly, to the imprisoned, the dying and the young to mention three

vulnerable groups, has been fruitful. But it can be lost. When we deny original sin; when we embrace the teaching of the basic innocence of mankind; when we commit to the perfectibility of human nature in this age; we begin to believe in ourselves. We think that as basically good people, our motives and decisions and actions are generally good rather than bad. We open ourselves to ideology of the secularist - the ideology which glorifies the self, which defines freedom as human autonomy, the right of individuals to determine the course of their own lives and deaths, according to their own needs and values.

In fact we create, not golden Jerusalem, but glittering Babel, the city of pretension and confusion and injustice. And under the impact of the false doctrine of human goodness, the imprisoned, the dying, and the young have most to lose.

How does our advanced society treat the imprisoned?

Poorly.

There are biblical principles of punishment. Punishment must be firmly based on justice. We should not punish the innocent. When the guilty are punished it must be in proportion to the seriousness of the crime - when the Bible says, an eye for an eye, it is demanding that punishment be limited and proportionate, not harsh, cruel and excessive. The humanity of the offender must be respected, all the more so when their guilt has been established and they are in our hands. There must be opportunity to rehabilitate and reform and spiritual counsel must be available. Surely we owe this to our neighbours in prison.

When punishment is clearly based on just principles, we can afford to allow for other purposes. There may well be circumstances when the appropriate punishment is less than some sort of equivalence. As well it is legitimate to have punishment in place in order to deter others and to keep the community safe. But if we do not serve justice first, we will find that punishment becomes an evil. Thus if correction is the chief aim, it may take longer to reform a thief than it would a murderer and hence require a longer gaol term.

In fact we have too many gaols, we have far too many people in gaols, we keep them there too long, we have people on lengthy remand who are then proved innocent, we have a high percentage of prisoners with psychiatric illnesses, there is a disproportionate number of indigenous people in gaol. We have still to be reconciled in practice; the dispossession is still paid for in the tears of successive generations. Each prisoner costs about \$75,000 a year to keep off the streets. Because the huge budget is so tight, we are now keeping prisoners in their cells for something like 16-18 hours per day. The medical facilities are not what they should be. The prison staff ('unsung heroes' according to a friend of mine who works in a gaol) is over-stretched, the opportunity for rehabilitation is very limited.

It is wrong to blame government. It is we who go on about law and order, we who have created the political necessity for bad policies. We have a State election coming up. The parties are working on policy issues. It is very important that this does not become a law-and-order election; it is also very important that penal reform is not neglected. In some ways the original inspiration of the colony was more enlightened than we are. We should help our government to do better. We should seek a really serious discussion of the philosophy of punishment, as well as a hard look at what actually happens in gaols.

How do we treat the dying?

We do well. But this is becoming a society which values individual rights above all else and exalts in human wisdom. As a result, once again euthanasia is being demanded. This is a debate about who we are as humans. My fundamental problem with it is that we are sinners and we do not have the moral capacity to administer it. It is the myth of so-called voluntary euthanasia. At a moment in time of adversity and suffering we ask people to make up their minds about termination of a life. We cannot - we can never - know what is going through the mind of the sufferer or of those whose lives will be changed by the death of the patient. No doubt there will be grief; but there can also be relief that I am no longer responsible; there can be pleasure in the knowledge that I stand to inherit; there can be the stress of needing the hospital bed. When the patient is very vulnerable, they are being asked whether they wish to die early and the ones to whom they look for advice may have reasons for saying yes which are undetectable even to themselves. No system of prior decision making can get around this; nor are we to think that euthanasia will be confined to the elderly or the cancer stricken. We will also have it demanded as a right for the young and the mentally ill. After abortion on demand, this is the next stage in the unjust harvesting of innocent human life, the next and dreadful stage in a culture of expedient death.

The philosophical point in favour could not have been expressed more clearly than by the ethicist Dr Leslie Cannold writing in the *Sun-Herald*. 'Opponents of dying with dignity will tell you that the core moral principle in a civilized society is respect for life. This is outdated tosh. The central moral value in a modern multicultural society is autonomy, the right of individuals to determine the course of their own lives and deaths according to their own needs and values.' This chilling statement has so much tendentious about it that it is hard to know where to begin dissecting it. But note this. Its basic expression, that the central moral value in a modern multicultural society is autonomy, is a boldly sectarian and secularist assertion. It is based on the denial of

original sin and it leads to a denial of the full humanity of others, since it asks us to be self-centred.

It really says that no matter how many cultures there are in modern Australia, the only culture which can be trusted to provide moral guidance is the culture of unbelief. And this is the horrifying culture of individualism, the culture, the cult rather, which is bleeding our society dry of compassion and friendship. No wonder that Psychiatrist Dr Tanveer Ahmed reported that 'increasingly I have been called to patients, rich and poor, with vague physical complaints only to realize that they merely wanted someone to talk to.' He speaks of western notions of individualism before concluding, 'In reality, we are more alone than ever.'

How do we treat the young?

The issue this year has been about the provision of Special Religious Education in our schools. One senior political leader said to me that he had begun by thinking that this was simply a discussion about the management of children. I do not doubt that a number of those pressing for this believe that sincerely. But as this person listened to the debate, he came to see that the bulk of support came from those who wanted to see SRE abolished all together that is from secularists. We must not be naïve. This is indeed another round in the cultural struggle between the gospel and secularist thought and it involves very different views of human nature and of human freedom.

From the very beginning of the colony, Christians have been in the forefront in the provision of education especially education in God's word the Bible. Those 300 hundred healthy new Australians required holistic instruction. It was very clear when the Protestant churches gave over their schools to the state that there would be access to teach their religious doctrines during the normal course of the school week and that parents and children would never be put into the unfortunate situation of having to choose between SRE and some other subject. That is the point at issue: the existing guidelines say that parents and children should not have to make this choice. Secular schools are not secularized schools. Anyone familiar with how schools work knows what a sensible arrangement this is. You cannot pit language and sport against each other for example, or say the student must choose either or maths or English.

The attempt by the NSW government to vary long-standing wisdom has been both unwarranted and inept. There are two issues. First, *should* this be done? There has been virtually no debate about this fundamental question. The only reason given for the innovation is the number of children not attending SRE and what can be done for them. This is a school management question - the classes are characteristically only 30 minutes in length and any well regulated school can find a useful individual activity for children in this time. In any case, the provision of ethics classes will not solve the alleged problem. The classes will be voluntary and so there will continue to be children needing supervision. Furthermore it is difficult to conceive that ethics will be taught throughout the school program from kindergarten to upper primary.

The second issue is whether this *can* be done.

The actual handling of the experiment was poor, apart from the brilliant publicity campaign that surrounded it. We do not as yet know what Dr Knight the evaluator thought of it, but she has been set an impossible task. Deep and lasting offence was caused by the invitation to all children to take part and not just children in the non SRE strand. More than that, there was a degree of secrecy about the actual subjects to be studied and the methods to be used. It may well be that many parents imagine that their children are being taught right and wrong without religion getting in the way. But the course is more a discussion in philosophy, useful no doubt, but not perhaps what people thought suitable for children.

As Anglicans in this Diocese we have always had a strong commitment to State education. This has been sustained to no small extent by the SRE provision in our state schools. I have to say, therefore, that I was surprised that the NSW Government allowed itself to be drawn into so controversial an area. It has united Jewish, Muslim, Roman Catholic, Buddhist and Protestant educators in opposition. Once more it will be an area where many people will be studying the policies of the political parties as the State election draws near, and I hope that Anglicans throughout NSW will let their views be known to their local members.

On the other hand what of our own schools? Last year I urged us forward to the task of thinking through the educational philosophy. I also said that we need an institution of some sort to encapsulate and enunciate our philosophy of education. To that end I commissioned two groups. One under the chairmanship of Tony Willis is looking into how we can best create an Anglican Institute of Education. As well, I asked a group of educators and theologians under the leadership of Professor Trevor Cairney to write a book in answer to the question, 'What is Anglican Education?' They have been thinking, writing and meeting since early this year and it has so far been a fascinating and rewarding exploration. I am expecting a fine book from it. But one of the first results from this exploration became clear almost at once. If we are to talk seriously about education, we are going to need to be very clear about our anthropology - to be able to answer the question what is it to be human?

Christian education requires us to teach Christianity; that is clear. As a generalization with many exceptions, I do not think we do this well enough. A Christian school requires a pastoral and prayerful ethos; that is clear. I

think that we could give more attention to achieving this intentionally. A Christian education requires us to think through the curriculum with the gospel in mind. I think that attempts to do this are often either omitted altogether or are facile. Avoiding the attempt is to surrender to the unbelieving culture. Referring from time to time to Biblical texts is artificial. Becoming fixated on evolution as the touchstone of everything is shallow. That is why anthropology is so important. It is the Christian doctrine of man which will enable us to compare and contrast with the anthropologies which undergird all the disciplines - literary studies, economics, science, art, history.

We often neglect the key importance of doctrine in Christian thought and activity. Mere recitation of biblical stories or texts is not enough. We need to think through and be shaped by the teaching of the Bible as a whole. We must ask our pastors and theologians to teach us what the Bible says about God, about redemption, about the Holy Spirit, about the church, about all its themes. And here in particular about human beings.

The contest between the gospel and the secularist and other religions is a doctrinal one. Failure to apply the gospel to the modes of thought represented in the academic disciplines as they are taught in schools and universities is a significant lapse. It hardly matters that we teach Christian studies if the teaching of other subjects proceeds with unchallenged assumptions about what it is to be human. It is this vacuum of thought which has led to the present spate of well-known scientists engaging in dubious theology, untutored philosophy and strange metaphysics. Not surprisingly, some of their colleagues have become worried about the reputation of science as a result.

Please do not misunderstand this. I am not saying that we can construct or should want to construct a Christian version of economics or biology or history. I am not suggesting that they are all branches of theology. Indeed, I would argue that the Bible frees these disciplines to be themselves. But I am saying that a two-way conversation needs to occur between a thoughtful biblical Christianity and the various disciplines and crafts by which we exercise our dominion in the world, and that a key point of contact is our concept of the human. Our Mission in contemporary Australia has many facets. It was said of the Christians in the ancient world that they won their world for Christ because they *out-lived* and *out-loved* the unbelievers. But it was also said that they *out-thought* them, and it is in the intellectual sphere that we have the most work to do.

We have been called by God to the daunting and yet exciting task of out-living, out loving and out-thinking our contemporaries so that we can point them to the Lord Jesus Christ. You can see that much of this thinking needs to be done in the area of our doctrine of man, and that we see that human life in this world is far from perfect. The perfection for which we yearn belongs to the age to come. Certainly that is our own experience at all sorts of levels, personal and corporate. I have mentioned that we need to approach pain and adversity as Christians. As you know we ourselves have not been exempt from such adversity in the area of our financial resources.

I need to tell you where we are with all this and what progress we have made this year. We need to think of this again at this Synod, as we will at the next and we will need to make some tough decisions. But I trust at every stage we will remember to hope in God and glorify him, be personally generous and continue our fervent commitment to living out the Christian life in this glittering but needy city.

Let me explain where we now are.

At the Synod last year we were landed with the immediate task of confronting the Global Financial Crisis as it impacted the Diocese. We heard an explanation of what had happened. We received an apology. We were presented with the thinking of our Mission Board Strategy Committee. I was proud of the way in which the Synod proceeded with frank debate, calm decision making and vision for the future. To be able to reduce our expenditure by 50% and to use the crisis as an opportunity to think once again of what we stand for and what we must do was exactly the right way to proceed. We did not merely slash and burn; we actually began some new work and made sure that our vital work was funded. We did not do the obvious and raise taxes; on the contrary we made it an aim not to levy parish assessments, and we succeeded.

Furthermore, we undertook to review and renew our operating methods, especially those associated with the Glebe Administration Board. We did well.

But that was only the beginning. This was only half the job. In a crisis, the first response is to rescue and repair. That is immensely hard work. But it is only the prelude to the similarly hard work of renewal. The work needed for renewal only becomes clear after an elapse of time. The danger is that if you repair hastily without analysing the problems, you will expose your structures to further damage in years to come. We are now seeing all the more clearly and painfully where things have gone wrong and where we need to renew as well as repair.

Let us be careful not to exaggerate here. The inheritance of our Diocese through the two great Endowments, the Diocesan Endowment and the Endowment of the See is still very strong in terms of assets. Between them they amount to almost \$200 million on current market values. There is much for which to be thankful, much to preserve and much to renew. Our immediate problem is that much of these assets are now significantly underperforming and not producing the cash-flow that we want. We have 'lazy assets.' We need them to get

out of bed and start performing for us. Our major task in the next decade is to preserve the assets while growing the cash-flow. And, humanly speaking, that is going to require prayerfulness, skill, wisdom, patience and self-control. It can be done, but it is what we do here in this Synod and in the next two years which is going to set the foundations for the future. *We* are going to need prayerfulness, skill, wisdom, patience and self-control.

Now let me explain what I see on the landscape after the Global Financial Crisis, and let me explain what we have done and what I think we need to do.

What are the problems?

First, our cash-flow. When we met last year, my understanding was that we would need to cut the expenditure from both the Diocesan Endowment and the Endowment of the See by 50%. Basically, and wonderfully we achieved something of that order. There was considerable pain, but also there were savings which we should have made but which were forced to make. From about March this year, however, matters became worse.

The Glebe Administration Board, especially conscious of their obligation to protect the value of the Endowment, began to offer their advanced warning that in their view we would need in future to distribute significantly less even than the \$5.2 million per annum made available in this trimester. These were in the nature of advanced warnings: the actual work on which such findings could be based was not made available to the Standing Committee until August. I might add for the historical record that even in the period before the Global Financial Crisis, the Standing Committee had reduced the proportion being distributed in line with advice from the Board. But the Board is now saying that even this reduced proportion is too generous.

At the same time, the Endowment of the See Committee was informed that the cash-flow from the rental at St Andrews House would most likely be reduced to nothing for the next several years, reducing the money available to that Endowment from approximately \$2 million to a quarter of that amount. The reason for this in brief, was the need to refurbish several floors of St Andrews House in order that they may be attractive to the existing tenants or attract new tenants; and the timing of the refurbishment, just prior to the downturn. In the event the existing tenant has decided to leave. Given that something like \$20 million was still owing on the earlier re-fit of the lower floors of the building, this additional borrowing would mean that nothing would now be available for distribution.

In round terms, it seems possible that the amount of money available from these sources to support of Diocesan works in the next few years is going to be reduced from the \$7.5m of 2010 to something like \$4 million. Our major rethink of last year was only the beginning. We are, as I have said, asset rich but cash poor.

The second major problem relates to governance. Our losses have uncovered problems with the way in which we conduct our affairs and do our business. In part this is ethos. In part it is to do with structure.

In terms of ethos, we are profoundly conscious of our need to preserve the gospel and to do so in part at least through the wise governance of our Boards, Councils and Institutions. So we should be. Long experience both here and elsewhere has shown the real, fatal and ever-present danger of allowing our ministries to be taken over and re-directed by those who do not share this gospel outlook. This is fundamental and should be a constant. But we are also a voluntary association, with relatively few paid workers.

It is too easy for us when we put good people in place simply to leave them there for too long a period of time. In some cases, a lengthy period is excellent; it provides wisdom and continuity. But when a Board is old in service together, dangers emerge. Our volunteer status also means that we are sometimes too trusting of one another and not sufficiently acute in seeking accountability. Taken together, we have to make better use of our human resources (which are abundant) and to train ourselves to ask the questions which need to be asked.

In terms of structure, we also have inherent strengths and weaknesses. As to strengths, we are democratically based and transparent to the world. Our neighbours know our business. We are very much into checks and balances, rightly fearful of a system which puts all power into one set of hands. We rightly safeguard the independence of our parishes, schools and organizations. We are certainly not like a great company; we are not a single organism. We do not have a Chief Executive Officer. The Archbishop is certainly not such a person: we usually and rightly elect a person whose ministry is the preaching of the gospel and the care of the churches, not high finance and administration of assets, and we therefore distribute the powers and responsibilities inherent in what you may call the temporal side of our work between groups of people, voluntary and paid. The Chief Executive Officer of the Glebe Board and the SDS is of course, not the CEO of the Diocese as a whole.

What the present problems have revealed is that at some key points we have allowed unconsidered and unhelpful relationships and habits to endure. Especially with regard to the Boards which have been charged with the administration of our Endowments and the service of our central bodies, structures and lines of responsibility and accountability have not been properly worked out. We have taken some easy options which work well mostly and seemed to make perfect sense in good times, but which have proved costly in time of crisis. In the absence of one presiding brain - an element of our way of doing things - we have not observed

the dangers in time. Change is required.

I have spoken of the repair and renewal that is needed after a testing event. In order to achieve satisfactory repair and renewal, proper analysis of what went wrong is called for. Indeed this is one of the blessings of adversity; it is indispensable to a genuine renewal. It must be intellectually acute and morally clear. Adversity and even defeat are friends if we use them well. I believe that this is indispensable for us.

But I counsel against recrimination. Last year we were given and we received an apology. The game of imagining, finding and pursuing responsible parties is not going to work here. At best it results in delay and diversion of energy. At worst it will see us tear one another up in an unseemly and ungodly way.

Like you, looking back I can now see many of the things I should have done, things I should not have done and even clear moments when I should have spoken up or insisted on different behaviour. As I look now, I can see structures and committees where I have been in the chair and where reform would have made a lot of sense and may have saved some of our money. At one level, I guess, you could say that the Synod itself is responsible. By all means blame me; but if you are going to spread the blame beyond me, ask yourself whether you would have done better; ask yourself whether you are prepared to yield up the good elements of what we do, such as our ethos, or synodical government, in favour of more power in fewer hands and fewer of those frustrating checks and balances which long wisdom has shown to be important in a sinful world.

Brothers and sisters, it is worth reminding ourselves that we are not the first generation to be challenged so fundamentally. One of the reasons for the current weakness of the Endowment of the See is that during the building of St Andrews House in the 1970s, the builder's bankruptcy put the whole project in danger in an unfinished state. Archbishop Loane was persuaded, very unwillingly, to allow EOS money to be used to bail the building out; the money was meant to be a loan, but it was never repaid; it has meant that the EOS has always had this somewhat lazy asset and it has been disadvantaged all these years and still is. But we survived the crisis. Time does not permit me to refer to other very serious losses and restructurings which have occurred over the decades. I see this as the inevitable results of having an Endowment at all, and we have to take the good times with the bad. If we know our history we will not be disposed to panic or despair.

So, how are we going to manage change? How are we going to renew our structures so that they will better serve our Mission and our Gospel? We have immediate, middle term and long term issues to see to.

Let me tell you what is happening.

First, in the immediate, the Glebe Administration Board has engaged in a wholesale and rigorous self examination. Half its membership is new; half continues. As reported last year, it had already invited professional review by the firm of Cameron Ralph. Throughout this year it has put the recommendations of the review into effect. Of course this has been made all the more difficult by the tragic sickness and resignation of its CEO Mr Steve McKerihan. We are immensely grateful that Mr Mark Payne was at hand to take over as acting CEO and he has been fully engaged in managing the affairs of the SDS and GAB, and asking the fundamental questions which need to be asked about the nature and purpose of these bodies. From this has come the warning that the distribution level may be unsustainable. This is bad news; but it is a measure of what we need and what we may expect. We need to know the worst in sufficient time for us to act. Already the Board has changed beyond recognition in order to meet the new challenges. The Standing Committee monitors these advances. Further change continues.

Second, when I became aware of the magnitude of the problems facing us, and the reasons for them, I decided that we needed something more than our present structures could provide to re-think our situation and help both with the immediate crisis and also with the long term renewal. We needed nothing short of an Archbishop's Commission to transcend our present structures, re-think and advise. I was able to draw together a group of experts under the chairmanship of Mr Peter Kell and I asked them to do two things for us. I asked that in the space of three months they would report on how we may resolve our current cash flow problems, especially in the Endowment of the See. Then I gave them twelve months to advise on our structures, to help us see what changes we need to make in the way we do business. At the same time, I asked a parallel group of mature Christians to pray for the work of the Commission and at every point their work has been bathed in the intercessory prayer of these saints.

The Archbishop's Commission made its initial report in August both to me and to the Standing Committee. They suggested immediate and mid-term things which need to be done to help with the cash problems we are experiencing. Some of their recommendations have already been put into effect and we have seen the benefit. But they made us acutely aware of the unbalanced portfolio of assets which is hindering the EOS, assets which to use their term, are lazy and relatively unproductive. In due course, this situation needs to be addressed and where appropriate redressed. But that will require deep thought from the Synod. The Commission is continuing to meet and they will make more far-reaching recommendations about both governance and finances in their final report. Let me say that I have already found the work of the Commission encouraging and bracing. It is definitely integral to the task of analysis and renewal which we have set before us.

Third, the Standing Committee has once again and rightly asked the Mission Board Strategy Committee to start planning at once on the issue of what work we can fund in the next three to five year period and what changes we will need to make in order to fund it. To take an immediate example, the office of the Archbishop and the regional Bishops has been curtailed by the spending cuts of 2009. Now is the further opportunity to ask fundamental questions about the exercise of the episcopate in our Diocese and how it should be supported. For example, how many regions do we need and should the regional bishop be financed by the parishes through the Synod, rather than by the Endowment of the See? Clearly, if the Diocesan Endowment is able to distribute less in the period 2013-15, we will need to start thinking at once about how this will impact the works which are at present supported by these funds. Planning for this must begin at once.

One more thing. You will be aware that of the intention to debate the future of Bishops Court at this gathering of Synod. I think it was in 2007 that I discussed with Steve McKerihan the necessity to set up a working party to consider the future of Bishops Court. Over the years we have had advice from various commissions and committees to sell the property and to house the Archbishop elsewhere. For various reasons we have not done this.

On the last occasion, it was decided by the Standing Committee in May 2001 to sell the house before the appointment of the new Archbishop in June. Attempts were then made to find new accommodation, but this proved very difficult and in November Christine and I moved into Bishops Court with the clear understanding that we would move to other accommodation should it become available. Nothing more was done, and in fact Christine and I have found the existing Bishops Court to suit our style of ministry very well indeed, I have never regretted living there. The same was true of Archbishop and Mrs Goodhew. The capacity to entertain, the opportunity for hospitality, especially visitors from overseas, the constant flow of meetings in the Board room, its proximity to the city - all these and other things have made our tenure very fulfilling. It is both a home and a place of ministry and business.

I asked for the Report three years ago, well before the Global Financial Crisis, because I knew that our continued use of the house will always be an issue. If we are to sell it, we need to do so in good time before the next person is appointed so that we can find an alternative and offer that to my successor. Leaving this decision to the last moment will not work. Furthermore the purchase of a new Bishops Court, would best be facilitated by the release of funds from the existing Bishops Court. From that point of view, it is indeed a 'lazy asset'. However, not only will the sale of Bishops Court, should that be what we agree to, facilitate the purchase of the next home, it is also made very opportune by the present need of the Endowment of the See for a healthier cash-flow.

The Report has come out in favour of a sale. You know also that Christine and I are prepared to help find a suitable new home and to move before my time as Archbishop is ended. We will do so if that is what the Synod decides is in the best interest of the Diocese. If money is released by this sale to help the Endowment now rather than in three years time, it will come at a very happy moment. If the money does not come in this way, the Synod will have to consider how our ongoing work will be funded. No doubt there are ways, but they may not be as convenient as this. You know you have my very good will in whatever decision you take.

Matthew Henry, wrote about King David that, 'When he was at his wits' end, he was not at his faith's end' The financial issues are grave, but I am not despondent and I hope that you share my confidence in God and the word of God and the Spirit of God. The things we planned last year in order to keep fulfilling our Mission, prosper. We are here in the great arena of the Diocese of Sydney to make Christ known and to help make men and women human. The tragedy which is optimistic secularism, continues to deprive men and women of their proper humanity. God has not left us without resources to make him known, although our resources now will come to us in different ways. Our adversities have given us an opportunity to re-think what we are doing and to be generous. God is our strength, and his people are the conduit of his mercies. The good news is that there is evidence that the Lord is at work through us bringing many of his children to glory. Let me tell you about it.

Through Connect 09 the Lord has blessed our renewed commitment to the community, as a way of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with all. Counting church-going Sydney Anglicans is very difficult. But on the figures we have, and using considerable caution, we grew numerically in 2009, perhaps by even as much as 5%. To grow at all is significant; to grow by anything like that percentage is sensational. The figures may be approximate. But grow we did in the very year when we all together prayed, shared the word of God and went out into the community. We give God our praise. Let us take fresh heart, and keep sharing the word of God.

But the important numerical growth may never show up in the counts we make on Sundays. Matthew Pickering the Rector of Nowra received a phone call to attend the bed-side of a dying man. He found a man who had been handed a copy of *The Essential Jesus* by a visitor from the parish of Huskisson where he lived; he found a man who had read the Gospel of Luke in this version; he found a man who wanted to know how to become a Christian; he left a man who found the Saviour and whose whole hopes had been transformed as a result, to the astonishment of his wife. I believe that there must be many such stories all over our Diocese.

How are we continuing the spirit which motivated Connect? Here are four ways out of many:

First we have decentralized our Mission through the development of Mission Areas. I am pleased that so many Rectors have taken the lead in this new initiative. The key aim is to carry on the principles of Connect into the future. You will remember that these principles are all intended to make us turn outward, looking into our community with a heart for our parish and our region. We are to pray outwardly; we are to research outwardly; we are to plan outwardly; we are to work outwardly; we are to partner each other; we are to prepare for outsiders to come. I believe that we are seeing the dawn of a new era of partnership in gospel ministry. We are becoming aware of the rich resources of the whole diocese. But the key is for every church to keep connecting with its parish.

We are only at the beginning. Some of our steps are tentative and may even prove unsustainable. But if you are gripped by the vision of so many of our fellow citizens who do not know Christ because they do not have access to the word of God, surely you will be positive about this initiative. It has gospel origins and I think it works on gospel principles. Surely even a wrong-headed program can be used as a stimulus for evangelistic prayer throughout your region of this great city and its environs. In my Area, our Mission Leader told us that there are 4,600 Anglicans in church on Sundays in a population of 250,000. What is this, but a great challenge and a great opportunity, not to huddle in fear or complacency but to use our resources for God, or rather to ask him for his resources for the sake of his name being made known.

Second, we have set Al Stewart loose on the growth of new churches. He has been recruiting church planters, assessing potential local missionaries, talking to students, encouraging new work, inspiring effort. We can see something of the shape of his ministry in the new ordinance which comes before us at Synod this year. It gives us a chance to encourage and support this work that God is doing. Two of the newly graduated and ordained Moore College men are going straight into the work of starting new churches, a rather radical development, but one which needs to happen.

At the same time and in fellowship with Al, Bruce Hall has given himself energetically to the inspiration and direction of cross-cultural ministry. He tells me of a new church for Islanders led by Seti Latu, a new church for second generation Vietnamese with Cam Phong as pastor, and the appointment of returned missionaries Paul and Lyndal Tait to minister amongst Muslims. There is much else to report, but if I can summarize, it would be to say that Bruce senses a new mood in our midst of interest in cross-cultural ministry, less fear of people who are different, a greater willingness to take responsibility for the real parish which surrounds our local churches. He agrees that many of us feel as though we do not know what to do, but he is willing to help with that. We also have our failures and our struggling ministries. As long as we can take off the dark glasses of the old imperialistic and racist attitudes we will begin to see our Sydney Diocese as it now is and love the strangers whom God has brought to us.

I am hoping that Mission Areas are making life intolerable for Bruce and Al with requests for manpower and new churches and help with cross cultural mission. In their turn they are going to give you lots of opportunities to be generous with people and with money. Bruce has told me that the greatest challenge he faces is how to fund all the work which could be done. Let us not fail because we have been too mean spirited.

Third, we have virtually completed one of the largest changes to our way of doing ministry in the history of the Diocese. It is the fourth of our Mission Policies - the one about reform of structures - in action. We have created permanent deacons and by so doing allowed for far greater flexibility of training and deployment than ever before.

At the same time, we have given special attention to the ministry of the presbyter/rector. The creation of a permanent diaconate allows us to acknowledge the many people with skills in ministry who are not going to be Rectors but who can specialize and be part of teams or engage in front line chaplaincy work. It has given us scope to seek out those who, following biblical principles, can assume the responsibility of being the Rector and give them the further and specialized training for that role as well as testing before they assume it. The old days of an automatic move from deacon to priest and therefore to Rector are over. A church in mission in contemporary Australia cannot afford such a mindless approach. In particular we want our presbyter/rectors to be leaders with vision for both church and parish, able ministers of the new covenant, teachers of God's word in life as well as in speech.

This is an immensely important development for the future. Naturally as with all radical change it has had its gainsayers and critics. But it is now a fact and stands ready to bear good fruit. We passed through a small drought in numbers, but now we have a sufficient cadre of men trained and willing to take on this role. If we are going to make best use of those who offer for ministry and continuously improve the choice of Rectors, as needs to be done, this is the way to do it and there should be few or no exceptions to the policies we have adopted. As with all worthwhile change there are risks involved. I have two cautions.

First, it is absolutely necessary that Moore College continues to provide and monitor the highest standards of preparation for ordained ministry.

Second, we need a constant supply of those who see in the local church one of God's greatest works in all the world and want it to flourish as an agent of God for the knowledge of God in its local area, its parish.

Fourth, with much foresight Synod last year provided for the Year 13 program to be expanded. Our younger people need the training and fellowship which will help equip them for a life time of living for Christ. This year there are 41 enrolled: surely our aim should be for all of our school leavers to do it. One of the glories of our Diocese is the number of mature and well-trained lay men and women who are true partners in the gospel. Their servant hearts, their fervent prayers, their acts of mercy, their ministry amongst children, teenagers, the elderly, in the community, their witness for Christ in the workplace, their support of ministry with clarity and theological acumen, their generosity of time and money, their willingness to help in the work of the Diocese, their leadership of their own families, their independence of spirit, their work as lay readers and preachers - all this and so much more make it so often a joy to minister in our churches and constitutes one of God's richest blessings to us. The Year 13 program is going to continue and even improve that rich tradition. From it will also come those whose life-work for fifty years ahead will be in the ministry of God's word.

Imagine. Most of them will live and minister here in this glittering part of God's world, this laboratory experiment on human nature, this outgrowth of Botany Bay, now including Berowra and Ulladulla and Lithgow. Here they too will be forced to answer the questions with which we began: 'what is a human being? Can we create better ones?' Alas for the glitter which deceives. They will hear on every side the answers of those who do not believe in original sin but believe in human goodness and therefore their own goodness, their own perfectibility.

They will also hear that it is our evolutionary origins which offer the true explanation for morality.

Thus behaviours which were regarded as uncivilized have now been incorporated into our understanding of human nature and justified as simply the way we are. It is the case that we are permissive by nature, and so it ought to be the case. Sin becomes virtuous; evil is applauded. The framework of sin and judgement is lost and we have no way of judging right from wrong. The ego is enthroned, the autonomous I is Lord of all.

Under this influence some of them may waver. They may seek for the prizes which this city may offer: wealth, position, celebrity, pleasure. But those who listen to God will know that we have not created Jerusalem, but Babel once again. They will hear the cacophony of the secular masters of communication who have no single simple story to tell and to share. They will see that we are the geniuses who have created the internet and the moral pygmies who have turned it into a playground for depravity. As they study society they will know with increasing clarity that the true answer to the question of human identity and purpose is in Jesus Christ.

For there is a better and truer way than this age has ever found. It is this: to recognise that we are indeed the lords of the world, created in and as the image of God to care for the world and sustain, not pillage and destroy it. It is to recognize the dignity and worth of the human person, no matter how young, how old, how corrupt, how decayed. It is to recognize that we are the beloved creatures of the living God. But it is also to recognize that we are inherently sinful; that we are not as bad as we could be, but we consistently fall short of the law of God in word, in deed and in the thoughts of our hearts. That beneath every glittering work of our hands there is envy and greed and prejudice and other works of ugliness. Our prisons, our hospitals, even our schools, cannot bring the changes which will perfect human beings. Only the gospel can bring the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and the true glory which ennobles humanity, which brings us to our true identity and purpose.

We know these things because one perfect human life has been lived among us which demonstrates it all. The burning love of God for men and women has been demonstrated for all time by the willingness of his Son to take our nature upon himself permanently, to become the head of our race in place of fallen Adam, and even to die for us in a sacrifice which has made the heavens ring with glorious praise ever since. Even the most savage and depraved of men is one for whom the Saviour has come and has died. But then, too, we know that our greatest hopes for a Jerusalem are never going to be met in this life and in this world. Our city is a snare and delusion if we think of it as heaven. We are born and born again to hope, the hope of the new Jerusalem, the real Jerusalem, the Jerusalem that is yet to come. It is there that we will see him who was slain and it is there at long last that we will attain that glory which is promised to us, the glory which is not glitter but which is the glory of freedom from sin; and life and joy in the presence of and in the likeness of the true man, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Peter F Jensen

Archbishop