

Department of Evangelism (New Churches) Reconstitution Ordinance 2010

Explanatory Report

Purpose of the Ordinance

1. The Department of Evangelism (New Churches) Reconstitution Ordinance 2010 (the "Ordinance") has the following purposes –
 - (a) to enable the Board of the Department of Evangelism (the "Board") to pursue the evangelistic purposes of the Diocese with a special focus on the planting of new congregations and fellowships ("new churches") in the Diocese, and
 - (b) to reconstitute the Department of Evangelism and its board as the New Churches Board to reflect this special focus, and
 - (c) to make a number of governance changes to the Board, including a reduction in the number of Board members from 15 to 10.

Background to church planting focus

2. The decision of the Board to pursue a church planting focus arose from the following comments made by the Archbishop in his Presidential Address to Synod in 2009 –

"I have always thought that part of the answer (to our vast evangelistic challenge) will include a dedicated evangelistic fellowship, a local missionary society. I have looked to create something like that without success. As we have prayed for our city and its region this year, there has been what seems like a remarkable spiritual movement summoning young men into church planting. Is this the answer to our prayers? I think that this could be exactly what it is. Something is happening and it may be of great significance. Our local churches need to be on top evangelistically. Connect 09 is part of that. But for whole areas of the city and for whole tribes this is not going to be enough. I hope that when we meet again next year I will be able to describe the way in which a movement of the Spirit has begun to show its fruit for Christ.

That was last year. This is what I wrote to Bishop Al Stewart this year:

As you know I have come (reluctantly) to the conclusion that the way to see this happen is to ask you to be the

one to lead it. You understand my hesitation. But you also understand that I have overcome that reluctance in the belief that what we see here may well be what the Lord is doing. Someone else can capitalize on all you achieved in Wollongong. But you are the man for us to trust ourselves to God's Spirit in breaking new ground for Christ.

I am therefore writing on the recommendation of the Board of the Department of Evangelism to offer you the position of Director of the Department. The position would be particularly concerned with church planting: inspiring, recruiting, training, placing and supporting evangelistic church planters in the Diocese...While churches planted will begin wherever possible with the goodwill and encouragement of the local rector and regional bishop, permission will not be necessary for such a church plant."

3. In response to the Archbishop's comments, Synod passed resolution 25/09 in the following terms –

"Synod welcomes the appointment of Bishop Al Stewart as the Director of Evangelism Ministries from February 2010 and gives thanks for his service as Bishop of Wollongong. Given the fact that, unlike in the past, grants to the Regional Councils used to seed-fund ministries in so-called 'desert' areas and to 'lost tribes' are unlikely to be available, Synod –

- (1) encourages Bishop Stewart to focus particularly on the raising up of church planters for those areas where Anglican ministry is currently struggling and has a limited impact on the community,
- (2) encourages Bishop Stewart to look to organisations such as CMS and AFES for models for raising the funding for this task,
- (3) calls upon churches throughout the Diocese to partner in mission together with these church plants to support them prayerfully, financially and in the work of evangelism to reach these areas for Christ."

4. As indicated by both the Archbishop and the Synod, one of the key strategies for reaching those in the Diocese with the Gospel of Jesus will be the planting of new churches; new churches that will reach new people. This is just one part of the broader evangelistic strategy currently underway in the Diocese as outlined in the *Strategic Directions 2010 – 2012* document considered by Synod at its session

in 2009. The growth of our existing churches is of course vital as is the other major strategic initiative involving the establishment of Mission Areas and the cooperation of ministries within such areas.

The Church and the Mission

5. The New Testament speaks of the church as believers gathered around Christ in heaven. “Christ gathers his church around himself. He adds to it day by day those who are being saved. But where does the New Testament think of Christ being at the present time? The answer is clear, Christ has gone into the heaven, there to remain until the parousia.” (Acts 3:21, 1Peter 3:22, Col 3:1, Acts 7:55). “The clearest reference to the fact that the church of Christ is a heavenly entity at the present moment is the passage in Hebrews 12:18-24.”¹ However, “the church of Christ primarily a spiritual entity, must express itself in local, physical geographical assemblies or gatherings”.² “Moreover, Christian fellowship is naturally not restricted within the local congregation; the congregation is the expression of the fellowship which is the church of Christ. This latter will overleap the limits of geography to create fellowship between congregations.”³

6. It is in this wider fellowship of the gospel we can work together to reach the people of our Diocese with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. As the Lord Jesus builds his church and draws people to himself through his Spirit empowered word; as he raises up Evangelists, and preachers, as his people live out the gospel and speak the gospel to others, new churches will be brought into being. These new churches will need to be flexible and culturally sensitive so that no barriers of language or culture are put in people’s way as we hold out the word of life, and welcome them. We must realise now that we are in a missionary situation and need to consider the outsider. “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some” (1Cor 9:22).

Two types of new churches

7. The Board is working on the basis that there are broadly two types of new church that can be established across the Diocese. These can be referred to as “transplanted congregations” and “new fellowships”. It is the Board’s aim to implement the Archbishop’s vision by supporting both kinds of new church.

Transplanted congregations

8. It is expected that across the Diocese a significant majority of new churches will be new congregations begun at the initiative of our existing parish churches. For some time our parish churches have

¹ D. Broughton Knox – ‘Selected Works’ Volume II, Church and Ministry – (Matthias Media 2003) Page 27. See also Ephesians 2:6

² Ibid Page 30

³ Ibid Page 31

been starting new congregations to allow for further growth when buildings are full, or to reach new ethnic or cultural groups etc. These congregations are linked to an existing church or parish and are usually large enough when they begin to support a pastor. We may call this method, "transplanted congregations". This method is now common and effective.

9. The support planned to be provided for transplanted congregations by the Board includes training days for rectors and other parish leaders to help them use their churches as planting bases. The Board, through Bruce Hall and Al Stewart, is meeting regularly with Moore College students regarding working in new churches. The Board is also working with Archie Poulos regarding the introduction of the Diploma of Ministry/Church Planting at Moore College.

10. Because transplanted congregations remain part of an existing church or parish, clergy and laity are appointed and licensed to undertake ministry in these congregations under the existing framework for appointments and licensing in the parish/church context.

New fellowships

11. In addition to transplanted congregations, there is also need to encourage a smaller number of church plants which may be called "new fellowships". These consist of a leader who draws together a core group and begins an evangelistic fellowship. These may be necessary to reach a particular ethnic group, affinity group, or to begin new gospel work in some geographic area where local churches do not have the resources or people to begin such a new fellowship. These "new fellowships" will not be formally linked to an existing church or parish. The Board expects, under God's hand, they may grow through evangelism and welcoming the unchurched.

12. The Board's aim in respect of new fellowships is to act as a kind of nursery for their establishment until such time as they become viable ministries in their own right and can look to transition to one of the existing parish ministry structures within the Diocese.

13. Because new fellowships will not initially be part of the existing parish ministry structures, modified arrangements are necessary for the appointment and licensing of persons to serve as leaders of these fellowships. The modified arrangements are discussed in more detail below.

Why we need new churches

14. The principal reason why new churches are needed is because new churches (both transplanted congregations and new fellowships) give new opportunities to reach new people.

15. Some of the reasons why new churches give new opportunities to reach new people are as follows –

- New churches provide a specific platform for gifted evangelists.
- New churches have no history. This makes it easier to do new things.
- Congregations and their pastors are 'hungry' in new churches. They must grow to gather resources. All members own the responsibility to grow.
- The 'starter' group join knowing that they are not mere passengers, but partners in the ministry, and so expect to be called on to be highly involved.
- Pastors know their task is to assist and enable congregation partners to do the work of ministry. This differs from the common expectation in settled churches that staff are appointed to do the ministry.
- Pastors know their task is to proclaim Christ to the world. In settled ministry so much time can be spent in administration and committees that the pastor has no time to lead the congregation in seeking the lost.
- Church plants think about who they may reach and how to do it. Settled churches often wait for newcomers to walk through the door.
- The community may come to ignore existing ministries while new ministries draw attention and publicity.
- Church plants have little distance between pastor and congregation who are engaged in the relationships with unbelievers, making training and contact easier.

16. In particular there is a need to start new ethnic based ministries to meet the many different cultural groups that now live in our city. In the contact phase, the majority culture inevitably alienates the culture which is trying to be reached. Starting new churches minimises this potential for alienation.

17. In addition there has been the emergence of many new cultures (tribal groups) in our society that are not geographically based (based on leisure interest, vocation etc). There is a need for new churches that aim to reach these sub-groups rather than a particular geographical area.

Fellowships – definition, nature, planting and leadership of etc.

Definition of fellowship

18. Clause 2 of the Schedule to the Ordinance defines "fellowship" to mean a fellowship of persons who meet together on a regular basis within the Diocese under the pastoral leadership of a person who is appointed by the Board and who –

- (a) if the person is a member of the clergy, holds a general licence or authority to officiate in the Diocese, or
- (b) if the person is not a member of the clergy, holds an authority to lead the fellowship issued by the Archbishop pursuant to clause 16 of the Schedule to the Ordinance.

Nature and planting of fellowships

19. The Ordinance provides that a fellowship is a ministry of the Board (clause 15(1) Schedule). A fellowship is taken to be outside any parish of the Diocese (clause 15(2) Schedule). Although the permission of the minister and the Regional Bishop is not necessary, it is intended that fellowships be planted and operate with the goodwill and encouragement of the Regional Bishop and the minister of any parish in which a fellowship meets or operates (clause 15(3) Schedule).

Appointment of leaders

20. It is proposed that the leader of each fellowship (whether clergy or lay) will usually be employed by the Board. However the Ordinance does not prevent leaders being appointed by the Board in a voluntary capacity.

21. The remuneration and other benefits to be provided to employed leaders of fellowships will be a matter for the Board to determine subject to meeting minimum wages and conditions required by law. It is expected that many new fellowships will have an uncertain level of income in their early stages. They will rely on pledges from supporters. A leader of a fellowship will be employed for the number of days per week that they can demonstrate they are able to be paid at a wage level set by the Board. As financial support increases so will the number of days that the leader is engaged per week. Until a fellowship reaches a certain level of financial stability, it is anticipated that leaders will be employed under short fixed-term arrangements. This will enable the viability of the venture to be reviewed at regular intervals and allow employment arrangements to be adjusted if necessary.

Episcopal oversight

22. The Board considers that episcopal oversight of the leaders of fellowships is important to ensure this ministry is appropriately recognised and integrated with ministry across the broader fellowship of the Diocese.

23. A member of the clergy who is to be appointed by the Board to lead a fellowship must hold a general licence or authority to officiate in the Diocese. These are issued by the Archbishop. This requirement broadly parallels arrangements for the licensing of clergy as school chaplains.

24. Lay leaders of fellowships must hold an authority to lead the fellowship issued by the Archbishop pursuant to clause 16 of the

Schedule to the Ordinance. This arrangement is proposed because the existing system of lay authorities under the Deaconesses, Readers and Other Lay Persons Ordinance 1981 provides only for lay authorities to be issued in respect of ministry in churches (being buildings licensed for divine service etc) and parishes. These authorities are appropriately issued by the Archbishop or an Assistant Bishop on his behalf. However the ministry of a fellowship need not be undertaken in a church building and will also be treated as being outside any parish. Accordingly the Board considers that a special lay authority issued by the Archbishop prior to the fellowship transitioning to a mainstream parish ministry structure is necessary.

Relationship of fellowships to the cost recoveries framework

25. Because fellowships will be extra parochial, they will not be part of the parish cost recoveries systems established under the Cost Recoveries Framework Ordinance 2008. All “on costs” associated with the leaders of fellowships will be provided by the Board through its employment relationship with the leaders.

Governance of Board

26. In addition to pursuing a focus on new churches, the Board is taking the opportunity to update a number of aspects in relation to its governance. The governance changes reflect a number of standards proposed in the draft Governance Policy for Diocesan Organisations due to be considered by the Synod this year.

27. The Ordinance proposes the inclusion of a specific object for the Board, namely to advance the evangelistic purposes of the Diocese, especially through the planting of new congregations and fellowships (clause 4(1) Schedule). This object is amplified in clause 4(2) of the Schedule which enables the Board, subject to the provisions of the Ordinance, to fulfil its object by such means as the Board considers expedient including by –

- (a) resourcing churches and parishes to evangelise, especially through the planting of new congregations in the Diocese, and
- (b) identifying, training, supporting and appointing suitably gifted persons to evangelise, especially through the planting and leading of new fellowships in the Diocese.

28. Clause 5 of the Schedule provides that the Board has power to do all things necessary and desirable to fulfil its object including, without limitation, the specified powers listed in clause 5. These include the power to enter into contracts and employ persons. These powers are similar to those given to other unincorporated bodies in the Diocese, such as the Anglican Education Commission and the Anglican Media Council.

29. It is proposed to reduce the number of members of the Board from 15 to 10 (clause 8 Schedule). Consistent with the current thinking on governance, the Board considers that a smaller more focused membership will be more effective in achieving the objects of the Board than a larger group. In addition, it is proposed that the 6 Synod elected members of the Board should comprise 3 clergy and 3 lay persons and be elected by rotation, that is one clergy and one lay person retire at each session of the Synod rather than all Synod elected members retiring at the first session of each Synod (clause 10 Schedule).

30. Also consistent with the draft Governance Policy is the inclusion of a requirement for a member of the Board to sign a personal statement of faith in order to be eligible to be elected or appointed to the Board (clause 9 Schedule).

31. The Ordinance provides that the Board is to elect one of their number to be chairman of the Board for a term of up to 3 years. Such a person is eligible to be re-elected as the chairman provided that a person cannot hold the office of chairman for more than 9 consecutive years (clause 13 Schedule).

32. Transitional arrangements for the reconstituted Board are set out in clause 3.

Standing Committee's response

33. The Standing Committee requested that the bill for the Department of Evangelism (New Churches) Reconstitution Ordinance 2010 be promoted to the Synod "by request of the Standing Committee".

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

ROBERT FORSYTH
Bishop of South Sydney

24 August 2010