

## First Ordinary Session of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Sydney: October 1993 and March 1994

### Presidential Address

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

Monday 11 October 1993

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

For many of you this will be your first experience of Synod. Welcome to the club! This is my first experience of Synod as President. We will need to learn together.

#### Whose We are and Whom We Serve

We gather as members of the Diocese, laity, clergy and bishop to conduct the business of the Synod. There is, as you will have observed, a substantial agenda to be considered. Before we give ourselves to that business, let us reflect on who we are and what we represent.

We represent the Diocese and its churches. We represent God's people in this Diocese. We represent a great family of men and women who call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

While our legislation is the main purpose of our assembling, there are two things we cannot overlook. The first is whose we are and whose business we are seeking to pursue. The second is the spirit in which we need to conduct our affairs.

As to the first let us recall whose we are and the ends which we pursue. We gather as a company of God's people to seek His honour and to fulfil His purpose. His glory is our aim; His will our sole pursuit. Though our business will become detailed and demand our close attention, though personal opinions, preferences and concerns will emerge, we need to maintain our perspective of whose we are, and whose purpose we are seeking to accomplish.

The second is a necessary consequence of the first. As God's people, as brothers and sisters in this segment of God's family within the Diocese, we have an obligation to display the spirit of the family as displayed in our Elder Brother and Head. Let me quote:

“You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them ... A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:13-27 and 34-35)

#### A New Commandment

As representatives of the churches and this diocesan family, we have a divine mandate to display in our interactions, whose we are and whom we serve. Let our Synod be a model for interpersonal relationships for the rest of the Diocese. May it be that every one who rises to address the Synod will know that they will be heard with respect and courtesy; that where strong disagreements surface and contrary opinions are urged with vigour and strength, it will be done in a manner that commends the assertion that we are God's people and that we meet as sisters and brothers in Christ. It would be great if we could all conclude this session of Synod feeling that we had really enjoyed the experience.

These remarks prompt me to say something about myself, my agenda and some of the issues that I believe we must tackle together in the future.

Previous Presidents of the Synod have used this Address for a number of different purposes: to review, to inform, to canvas issues and to alert to matters of concern. On future occasions I may do the same. However today I want to look into the future. I want to think with you about where we need to be moving and what may be some of the issues with which we need to grapple, as we move towards the end of this century.

As I do, I pause to look back briefly to April one. On that evening I thanked the Synod, the Diocese, and many others, for their prayers for me and all involved in that election and I sought the continuance of that ministry on our behalf. I repeat my thanks to the many who regularly uphold Pam and me in prayer. Please do continue.

I am most grateful for the support of so many people in helping me move into my new responsibilities. The assistance of people within and without St Andrew's House has been generous and sustained. Especially am I grateful for colleagues like Bishop Watson and Bishop Barnett, Archdeacon Skillicorn, Miss Dorothy Steel and the other members of my episcopal team. I also wish to acknowledge my debt to Bishop Reid and Bishop Cameron for their assistance as they have now moved into retirement and to Archdeacon Richardson as he retires as Archdeacon of North Sydney.

On that evening we stood and sang together, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you". May it be so among us.

### **Living in the Presence of God**

At the close of that Synod I had the opportunity to speak briefly. I expressed my conviction that as a Diocese we had a strong sense of what we should be doing and where we should be heading. I believed then and now that we know our task is to glorify God, to seek His kingdom and to do His will; to sustain and empower His people for their life with God and for their work and witness in the world; to reach lost men and women in every strata of our society and around the world, to witness to where people may find the true good which they seek, and to reveal the compassion of our heavenly Father to all who are distressed and in need. I said it would be my task as Archbishop to see that vision kept sharply focused, to see that human and material resources are wisely and imaginatively directed, to see that leaders are encouraged, to ensure the health and vitality of every congregation, to keep our institutions vigorous and relevant, to see that we maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and that we walk in the Spirit, not in the flesh, living and working as the children of God. Clearly this is not my task alone. It is our task. It is my task to do all that I can to see that we do what God has called us to do.

Luke opens The Acts of the Apostles with the words, "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up, after He had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen".

Commenting on these words John Stott has written:

"Luke's first two verses are, therefore, extremely significant. It is no exaggeration to say that they set Christianity apart from all other religions. These regard their founder as having completed His ministry during his lifetime; Luke says Jesus only began His ...The Jesus of history began His ministry on earth; the Christ of glory has been active through His Spirit ever since, according to his promise to be with His people '... always, to the very end of the age".

This claim not only sets Christianity apart from all other religions; it sets the agenda for every church that lays claim to being Christ's. It affirms that a true Church is not self-regulated and self-directed. Its first call is to live *Coram Deo* - "in the presence of God". It must live under the direction of the Christ of glory and seek its life, strength and direction from Him. If it is to be genuine, it must be an expression of the continuing ministry of Jesus in our part of the world today.

At the very least this will dictate that we must be, a praying and a listening Church. If we are convinced of our need to be directed by our living Head, we will be constantly before him in prayer. We need His direction, His gifts, His guidance and His mercy, if we are to be an expression of His continuing ministry in the world. We should use every skill and resource that human wit can place at our disposal. We must use them, however, as a gift from Him. We must never use them apart from Him or in place of Him. Used apart from Him, our resources become idols that fascinate and distract. Used under Him, they are tools for the task.

Those who pray well, listen well. We must listen to God as he addresses us in and through His word. The Scriptures are our guide, as Christ, by his Spirit, causes new light to shine from them for our direction. God must be allowed to speak in our midst and we must continually learn to listen and obey. The humility and preparedness to engage with one another in understanding God's purpose for us now is a major priority. God "opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble". Therefore in humility of spirit we must seek to be taught afresh to listen to God in His word and follow Him with courage and devotion.

### **Mission and Vision**

In the context of dependence on Christ and obedience to him, we must face some of the issues which confront us. These are challenging days in our national life, in our life as a Diocese and as a part of a national Church.

For all that people say about the monochrome nature of this Diocese, it is diverse; very diverse, a fact which I have discovered as I have moved over its 27 deaneries in the last few months. Perhaps more diverse than a number of others in Australia.

On the first of April I said that Pam and I would seek to be servants to all in the Diocese. By God's grace we will. But it is important, I think, that I state as clearly as I can where I stand as a man and as a bishop.

My Christian experience began with an appreciation of who Christ is and what He did for me when He died and rose again. My understanding of God, of myself, of the Church and of mission grows from my understanding of the Cross. My desire is to proclaim Christ and His saving work, to call men and women to faith in him and to surrender to Him. My ambition is to see the Church in this Diocese live by the Holy Spirit in the fruits of Christ's work to the glory of God.

As someone who has found salvation in Christ, I have come to stand in that tradition which honours the Bible as God's word written, and as our rule of faith and practice. I look to see "head" (orthodoxy), "heart" (orthocardia) and "hands" (orthopraxis) touched and shaped by Scripture. I hold that salvation is only experienced through dependence on Christ crucified. We bring nothing to our deliverance, but our sin. I also hold that such faith is never alone, it has as its necessary fruits a life of loving obedience to God. I wish to live and die in this faith and to draw others to it. These emphases standing within the traditions of orthodox and credal Christianity make me, I understand, an evangelical Christian.

My commitments have found their home and expression within the Anglican Church, because I am convinced that its doctrine and formularies support and express those things which I hold dear. Because of that I have not only been a member of this Church, but I have accepted ordination, consecration and election as a diocesan bishop within it. Therefore, the Diocese should know that I am set to lead according to those principles and convictions and to advance that cause within its life.

My visits to the deaneries of the Diocese in the last few months have impressed upon me its vitality and diversity. I wish to say to all within the Diocese that as bishop I will seek to act with charity and fairness to all who accept the doctrines and discipline of our Church and who profess and practice the faith of Christ as we have received it. There is diversity in emphases and expression within the Diocese which needs to be acknowledged. We are not all cast in the same mould. Such diversity can be invigorating or destructive depending on how we handle ourselves. We are all under an apostolic and therefore divine direction to "speak the truth in love". This is the process by which we reach maturity. Truth, God's truth, is our most precious possession. It is God's lamp for our feet and his light for our path. We must follow that word, we are bound to allow it to modify us all again and again. We are all bound to place ourselves under its authority. That will mean the capacity to debate, discuss and guide each other as we seek to understand that word and apply it to our circumstances. Such a process can be testing as we know, especially where the issues over which we hold contrary opinions are of substance. We cannot avoid such issues. We must work them through. We must also handle the process in an appropriate fashion. We need to deal with one another as brothers and sisters in the one family. We ought to talk with those with whom we disagree. We need to avoid stereotyping that makes simple categorizations which can misrepresent the realities of the individual and their position on controversial issues. The process, we are taught, must be done "in love", in the Spirit of love and by the guidance of that Spirit. It should be possible for us to display to others a model of the way we handle diversity and resolve difficulties. We must offer each other that measure of respect and dignity which is the outcome of love born of God's Spirit who is the Spirit of Truth.

If we are in any sense God's people, His church, then we must look to Him for His merciful direction. We are not just another organisation. Our life calling and enabling come from God. Therefore we must be, as I have already said, a praying people. Prayer cannot be a desirable "add on" among us. It must be at the heart of our life. If we live by faith in the Son of God, we must live by prayer. Faith and prayer are symbiotic - their union is both necessary and advantageous. We must also be a people, looking for such light as God will cause to shine on us from His Word for our guidance. We must believe that God has answers to our dilemmas of which we are yet unaware. If we together wait on Him, seek from Him obedient and yielded hearts and minds, permit ourselves the liberty to change our minds and follow after Him, He will undoubtedly lead us forward. He is our refuge and strength, our very present help in trouble. We have no hope but Him.

### **Liturgical Reform**

As I have moved around the deaneries, one topic has consistently attracted lively discussion. Laity and clergy are alike concerned about the shape and future of the Anglican Church. They ask 'What is Anglican?' They question what this means within this Diocese and what it means in the Church in Australia.

It is worth reminding ourselves of our position.

The Fundamental Declarations in the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia declare that -

1. The Anglican Church of Australia being a part of the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ holds the Christian faith as professed by the Church of Christ from primitive times and in particular as set forth in the creeds known as The Nicene Creed and The Apostles' Creed.
2. This Church receives all the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation.
3. This Church will ever obey the commands of Christ, teach His doctrine and administer His sacraments of holy baptism and holy communion, follow and uphold His discipline and preserve the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons in the sacred ministry.

The ruling principles, in part, say -

“This Church being derived from the Church of England ordains and approves the doctrine and principles of the Church of England embodied in the Book of Common Prayer together with the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons and in the Articles of Religion sometimes called The 39 Articles ... ” and while it is declared that this Church has plenary authority to make alterations and take other actions, these must be consistent with the Fundamental Declarations, and provided that the “... Book of Common Prayer together with the 39 Articles be regarded as the authorised standard of worship and doctrine in this Church and no alteration in or permitted variations from the Services or Articles therein contained shall contravene any principle of doctrine or worship laid down in such standard”.

Thus we have a statement that says, we are a Church committed to the faith of Christ's Church as declared in the creeds, holding the Bible as the God-inspired rule of faith and committed to obeying Christ's teaching, His doctrine, administering His sacraments, upholding His discipline and following a three-fold order of ministry, according to the principles laid down in the Book of Common Prayer and the Articles.

For a great number of people these elements and consequently what it is to be Anglican have been encountered in the regular involvement in our forms of common prayer when Anglican Christians have come together to join in the public worship of Almighty God.

Many people are therefore understandably disturbed when they encounter what The Reverend Dr David Peterson described in a paper recently delivered at a conference of the Evangelical Fellowship of Anglican Churchmen when he wrote:

“I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say we are in the midst of a deepening crisis with respect to our forms of public worship in this denomination. In the first place, Anglican Evangelicals are divided about whether or not they want to have any form of liturgical uniformity at all. Many churches seem to be abandoning the use of AAPB for their major Sunday meetings. Others use only excerpts, selected by the minister to fit in with a different order of events each week. This is applauded as a sign of liberty, creativity and a striving for relevance, but what results is often doctrinally thin, pastorally superficial and a bit of a 'hotch-potch', lacking any logical flow. Sometimes the service seems to be constructed around the music, using the 'hymn sandwich' approach. Sometimes everything else seems to be a preparation for the sermon with no independent value or significance. Decisions about what to leave out and what to include are often made on pragmatic, rather than theological grounds”.

The move away from the use of prescribed liturgical forms is, in many cases, the outcome of a deep and laudable desire to reach people currently outside our churches; to give a more contemporary expression to our common life, and to experience a greater degree of flexibility in both the style and content of our services.

It may just be possible, too, that this movement is an expression of something deeper than the forms themselves or their mission intent. It may be generated by something that is essentially “Australian” and modern: a dislike of anything thought to be at all pretentious, unauthentic, imposed or simply traditional.

Whatever the reasons we now have a situation where many clergy have problems of conscience, caught between the pressures of sworn undertakings and the desire to be relevant to people for whom they sincerely believe our present forms are not appropriate. For lay people, the problem is also acute. Some feel cheated and hurt that order, balance and predictability have been replaced by forms which are shallow and unsatisfying.

Others are delighted by services which are relaxed, fast moving, contemporary in expression and which contain the element of the unexpected. Mix this with those who use the set forms in a way that people find attractive, edifying and sustaining and you have a picture of a situation which is complex indeed.

A pattern is emerging across the Diocese. An earlier service on Sunday which is traditional following either BCP or AAPB First or Second Order. Another mid-morning gathering oriented towards families which may have a more “creative” use of the AAPB forms. Then an evening service of a much-freer kind, probably directed towards younger people.

We cannot overlook the great strengths of good liturgical forms, when used with vigorous and faithful preaching. They edify and instruct. Common patterns also affirm common life. “They enable Christians from different congregations to recognise each other as part of the one Church”. Neither can we ignore the “mission” setting in which many of our churches operate. We must reach fresh groups of contemporary Australians. Part of our problem may be the effort to combine edification and evangelism, worship and witness in the one event. Whatever the case, we all have a major stake in a good outcome.

The matter is further complicated by the likelihood that the Anglican Church of Australia will move towards the production of a new Prayer Book in 1995. To date, our own contribution as a Diocese to its contents has been limited. Other matters have occupied our attention as a Diocese and Prayer Book revision has not been an issue to which any great number have given close attention.

This is in marked contrast to what took place in the preparation of An Australian Prayer Book. In that case services were given extensive trial usage and were subject to wide discussion. This has not been the case to anything like the same degree as we move towards a new Prayer Book in 1995. Given all this, what are we to do?

1. We must give this question serious attention. So much of our life has been and is associated with the forms of service that we use regularly. They shape us. We cannot treat the matter with indifference or leave it simply to the wit and inclination of each individual. Liturgical issues must come back on to our common agenda.
2. We must recognize the demonstrated need for flexibility to meet the circumstances of our times in the “mission” setting of many of our churches.
3. We must articulate for ourselves the essential elements of God-honouring worship as we have received them in our liturgical structures. We come together as His people. His will and word must control what we do. Good forms are an aid and not a hindrance to corporate worship.
4. We must work co-operatively to develop a range of possibilities for acceptable patterns of worship which have our common consent and which we will all be prepared to recognize as appropriate and be committed to their use. In short, we probably need to expand the possibilities of what we acknowledge as recognized worship patterns and be prepared to work within those expanded borders. Individualism and isolationism raise the possibility of losing a common core of sound biblical principles for common worship.
5. We must give greater attention to the training and resourcing of those who have the responsibility of leading public worship.
6. We need to give further consideration to the ways in which we present service material: the printing of service cards, the production of overheads and the use of computer-driven material.

The Standing Committee has appointed a Liturgical Committee to begin addressing some of these issues. In addition I have invited a group of people to give me advice in this area.

By these means I trust that we can make a fresh start in liturgical planning. I believe we must facilitate the flow of information between Liturgical Committees and local churches. In this way doctrinal content, appropriate forms and local needs can be productively interactive. It is my hope that regional staff, bishops, archdeacons and area deans will help resource this process at the coalface, so that our work provides the means both for outreach and sustained nurture. With forms of common prayer go the related matters of what is appropriate dress for those who lead services, how churches should be furnished, how available space is to be employed and how music is used. All these have their part to play and all need close and thoughtful attention.

I pray that I will not be misunderstood when I say that there is more at stake than simply what happens in our own Diocese. The Bishop of North-West Australia recently wrote to me saying:

“Sydney is the spiritual powerhouse of the Anglican Church and must not turn its back on the rest of the denomination. There are many congregations and thousands of faithful believers around the country holding on in discouraging circumstances. They are not necessarily evangelical, but they are Christ-centred and wonderfully responsive to faithful teaching when it comes their way. It may be hard for Sydney friends to imagine, but the Prayer Book Services and the systematic reading of scripture are their spiritual bread and butter, their source of knowledge both of God's grace in Jesus, and of the Christian walk. Sydney must not selfishly abandon them and turn in on itself by, for example, failing to provide maximum input and leverage in the process of Prayer Book Revision. Be sure that Sydney will not escape the influence of the world, the flesh and the devil by cutting itself off from non-evangelical dioceses!”

### **The Ministry of Women**

Christ's Church is a home for women and men. It is not a women's church nor a man's church. It is His Church. He calls both men and women into its life. He pardons and accepts men and women. He gives gifts to women and men according to His pleasure. He places His word on the hearts and lips of both sexes. He calls them to be mutually submissive to Him and to one another. We also live in a society which is seeking to come to terms with a major shift in gender roles and expectations.

It is small wonder that in seeking to clear our thinking on the nature and expression of “headship” as it is found in scripture and how this is to be expressed in our society, we are in debate over the issue of the elder, presbyter or priest in our church structure.

Synod members are probably aware that I have not been a supporter of the move for women to be priests. My reasons are simple. I have not been persuaded that, given the order of our Church where ordination to the priesthood or presbyterate is with a view to placing one person in sole authority in a congregation to minister the doctrine, sacraments and discipline of Christ, we should move from our long-established order with its roots in what is seen as apostolic teaching. I know others see the matter differently. Many whose commitment to Christ and the scriptures I respect have come to understand the Bible and its present application differently. The way forward is to continue the dialogue in the spirit of mutual respect, prayerfulness and courtesy. I understand that there is a motion on the business paper to allow this 43<sup>rd</sup> Synod to see out its life before the debate is raised again in this house. I would commend that. The issue cannot be ignored or dismissed out of hand. However, I do think we need some space to come to terms with what now prevails in the Australian Church, and give ourselves time to talk further with one another on this important matter.

Both men and women, employing their gifts in the service of Christ, is the ideal. We must continue to consider the role and function of the elder, presbyter or priest in our denomination.

I call us all to a renewed commitment to each other, to search for the mind and will of God, and to a willingness to submit our minds and spirits to the guidance of God by His Spirit through His Word, as we continue to work on these important issues.

With a view to advancing the ministry of women in the Diocese, I have appointed the Reverend Dianne Nicolios as an Archdeacon with special responsibilities for women's ministry. She has an extensive job description which includes the support and encouragement of women both ordained and non-ordained. Dianne will replace the Reverend Maureen Cripps whom Archbishop Robinson appointed to a similar role. Maureen is retiring early for health reasons. I express my sincere thanks to her for her fellowship and faithful work and commend Dianne to your prayers.

### **Lay Presidency**

The matter of Lay Presidency at the Holy Communion has been before the Synod in one form or another for a number of years.

In 1985 Synod received a report on the subject. That report saw the desirability of such a provision in three circumstances:

- “(a) where the minister of the church is unable to conduct the Lord's Supper, or
- (b) where there is no minister of the church because of a vacancy in the cure, or,
- (c) for institutions such as Deaconess House, by a suitable member of the church or institution.”

A dissenting view expressed the opinion that “there was insufficient need for this provision in the Diocese and that a reformed view of word and sacrament does not of necessity require that those licensed to preach should also preside at the Lord's Supper”.

Resolution 18/85 says, in part:

“ ... This Synod endorses the principle of lay presidency and requests Standing Committee to investigate ways the possible legal and other difficulties in enacting this principle could be overcome ...”

In 1987 a report from the Legal Committee recorded a majority opinion that lay presidency was permissible while a minority said it was not. The Archbishop was not persuaded as to its permissibility and indicated that he would not give his assent to any ordinance purporting to authorize lay presidency.

In 1987 the Provincial Synod considered the question because it had become “an issue of controversy within this Province”. The Standing Committee of Provincial Synod declined to refer the matter to the General Synod on 3 June 1991.

No legislation has been promoted to General Synod on this subject though the topic has received some attention by the General Synod Doctrine Commission.

Last year two notices of motion appeared on the business paper of our Synod and were referred to the Standing Committee when time failed for their consideration. One sought legislation to enable deacons to preside at the Lord's Supper; the other sought the same provision for lay persons. The Standing Committee referred both notices of motion to the Diocesan Doctrine Commission for comment. Two reports have been produced. The Report on Diaconal Presidency considers that there is “no theological objection to legislation which would enable deacons to preside at the Holy Communion. The Report on Lay Presidency concludes that “there are no sound doctrinal objections to, and there are significant doctrinal reasons for, lay presidency at the Lord's Supper”.

There is a motion on our business paper which will allow debate on the question of lay presidency. It asks for legislation to be brought to the next session of Synod to make this possible.

Both diaconal and lay presidency will raise genuine concerns for many despite the opinions of the Legal Committee and the Doctrine Commission. Not all those who would be against such moves could be classified as unreformed or sacerdotalists. My esteemed predecessor was not prepared to assent to legislation enacting any such provisions.

My own position is not quite so unequivocal. I can see the merits of licensing permanent deacons to conduct the Lord's Supper in certain situations. I can agree that there are no theological reasons why lay people cannot be licensed to do the same. My uncertainties lie in the area of order, of what the long term consequences may be for ordained ministry, as well as the obligations which might rest upon me as a diocesan bishop in this Church and as the Metropolitan of New South Wales. These will require more reflection on my part before I can indicate my response to legislation that might be presented to me in 1994.

### **Effective Leadership**

As the bishop of the diocese one of my most important tasks is the recruitment, selection, training, supporting, resourcing and oversight of those who are licensed to lead and minister in the churches of the diocese. These issues will be a major focus of my attention in the coming year. The maxim that under God everything depends on those sent out to advance gospel ministry is validated repeatedly in experience. I purpose under God to give the churches the best leadership possible.

### **Regionalisation**

The Regionalisation Report received in the Synod last year and the submissions made in response to resolution 7/92 have been reviewed by a committee appointed by Standing Committee. That committee reported to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee gave consideration to draft ordinances based on the report. One approach was to create a structure focussed on ministry with a Regional Council able to receive and distribute money. A second was more extensive in its provisions, following the general lines of the model presented in last year's report.

The Standing Committee finally resolved to delay the introduction of any ordinance until the next session of Synod. Two reasons, among others, seemed to dictate that more attention should be given to any ordinance

to be brought forward. One was the complicated and inter-related web of responsibilities, organisations and ordinances which need to be carefully considered. There was insufficient time to do this adequately. The other was that in new and revised Areas of Episcopal Responsibility, new Bishops and Archdeacons are just now being put in place. The new Episcopal Leadership Team needs time to settle into their pastoral duties before having to consider how a new ordinance structure might work.

The matter is set down on the Standing Committee's Agenda for consideration after this session of Synod. I know that deferral of the matter will cause some disappointment, but there are major issues involved (including the unity of the Diocese) which must be considered.

### **Unacceptable Sexual Behaviour by Clergy & Lay Persons**

Considerable publicity has been given in recent months to the question of sexual misconduct by clergy and other church-related workers.

The matter is receiving serious attention at the present moment. A task force is working on procedures for dealing with both allegations of such behaviour as well as with victims and those shown to have been guilty of such misconduct.

It is heart breaking to contemplate such abuse of a position of trust. However, should it occur, our protocols for dealing with victim and offender need to be suitable to meet the circumstances of each or any case.

### **Unemployment**

There are other issues which we face together as Christians in Australia and which require our compassionate concern. Unemployment is one of them.

It is one of the most serious social problems ravaging our country today. It is a problem that strikes the skilled and unskilled, the old and young, the individual and the community. More often than not it hits those who are already disadvantaged. Unemployment is the single greatest contributor to poverty in Australia (ACOSS 1992). Middle-class families find it more difficult to cope with long-term unemployment because they had such confident expectations of a comfortable standard of living (Australian Institute of Family Studies 1992).

Financial stress, loss of hopes and dreams when the family loses its home, isolation, children having problems at school because of tension at home or having constantly to move to cheaper accommodation and move schools, poor nutrition, health problems, poor role models when neither parent goes out to work, all serve to limit the lives of thousands of children.

Many young people have never had a chance to work, many middle-aged people will never work again and will need government income support for the rest of their lives.

Regardless of the government in power, the problem of unemployment is not going to be easily or quickly remedied. There are simply insufficient employment opportunities available. Australians can no longer assume that they will find employment and, if they do, that it will be anything more than temporary. Phrases such as job security or a job for life belong to a golden past and find no place in today's reality. School leavers facing the prospect of long periods without employment become demoralised, families fall into poverty, and the out-of-work suffer from public prejudice and at times abuse. The gap between the rich and the poor increases. As we are made in the image of God it is part of our human nature to work. The fact that a large number of Australians are denied this function is keenly felt by those who suffer and those who seek to find just solutions. There is a great need for the Church to respond with practical programmes that reaffirm the individual's desire to work while providing constructive avenues for the expression of that desire. Job creation schemes, skills co-operatives and support groups are all areas where parishes can and should be active. Some good models exist. For example, the Archbishop's Winter Appeal etc. providing constructive avenues for the expression of that desire. Job creation schemes, skills co-operatives and support groups are all areas where parishes have been active. For example, the Archbishop's Winter Appeal funded a parish-based project to provide services for mid-career unemployed and retrenched people. So far 13 parishes have participated, and many others have since initiated similar projects. Wollongong's Small Business Complex, Work Ventures, Care Force and church caring programmes around the Diocese are further examples of practical steps that can be taken to offer help and support.

### **The Year of Indigenous People**

1993 is the Year of Indigenous People. The Mabo decision and its consequences have placed the circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples prominently before the public notice.



We have a responsibility as fellow-Australians to see that fairness and understanding mark the relationships between all sections of our community; that must be especially true with regard to those who feel dispossessed and marginalised. The process of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people must be strongly supported as we seek an harmonious future for all Australians.

We in the Christian community have an obligation to understand and assist our Christian brothers and sisters in these indigenous communities as they seek to make Christ known and relevant and to be conscious of our capacities to act inappropriately towards people from cultures different to our own.

### **The Year of the Family**

1994 will be recognized as the Year of the Family. As Christians we have always emphasised the importance of family life. Our churches and our homes are the focus of so much that is taught about human relationships. They are one of the most important contexts in which Christian faith and commitment have their expression. However, some values publicly advanced challenge those very relationships that contribute to the stability and health of families. We are in the midst of a social revolution and Australian families are feeling its impact.

We know that for a large number of people the idea of 'Mum Dad and the kids' does not reflect their experience of family life. A recent publication from the Australian Institute of Family Studies revealed that one in four children are born to unmarried women and as many as one in five women born in the late 1960's will not have children at all. The percentage of divorces, de facto relationships and sole parent families have risen considerably in the last 20 years. Unemployment, greater mobility and changing views on gender roles are also having an impact on the values and structures of Australian families.

In a Christian understanding of family, values such as love, respect, discipline, emotional support and direction for life are meant to characterize the atmosphere in which a family unit functions. Parents are called to model the values they teach their children. Children are called to respect and acknowledge the God-given responsibilities of their parents. Abuse and violence are the very antithesis of what is to be expected in Christian homes. With Christ as Head, family members are called to honour each other in the responsibilities which He has given the members to care for and nourish each other. Fathers have the responsibility to be Christ-like figures of nurturing concern: mothers a responsibility for supporting and sustaining encouragement in the process of developing a new generation of men and women of God.

We must, while affirming our commitment to family structures of the more traditional kind, recognize that for many the ideal has not eventuated. In the life of our churches we must be alert to the needs of those whose experience is something different. As we structure the life of our local churches, we must be aware of the increasing number of men and women who marry later in life or who will not marry at all. Ministry must take account of things as they exist as well as the patterns we believe God would have us pursue. We must not ignore the alienation and isolation felt by many in our community. As we uphold the family and assert family values, not only in 1994 but in every year, we must also minister to those whose circumstances and experiences do not approximate what we hold up as God's purpose for us.

### **Sydney Olympics - 2000 AD**

We have all felt the thrill of Australia being selected as the location for the Olympic Games in the year 2000. The choice of Sydney as host to the world will provide the churches of Sydney with a wonderful opportunity to represent the Lord Jesus Christ to the vast number of visitors and athletes who will be with us. I invite the Synod to see this as a unique moment and join me in planning to make it an outstanding period in the life of Sydney and its churches.

### **A Focus on Growth**

I want to focus now on how we can plan and develop active growth and greater vitality in the spiritual life of our churches.

In order to grow, we need to understand the type of "growth" that is desirable.

While I have never considered the counting of heads as the ultimate criterion, the fact is that in the pages of the New Testament, the progress of the early church is stated in numerical terms (Acts 2:41,47; 4:4;6;7). Growth or decline in numbers cannot be ignored as indicators of how we are fulfilling our mission. People responding to Christ is an obvious element of growth.

There are other aspects of growth as well.

Genuine growth occurs when members of a local church grow in their understanding of the Scriptures, and actively live as disciples of Christ; when daily they are growing in conformity to the image of Christ, loving God with heart, mind, soul and strength, and their neighbours as themselves.

Genuine growth occurs when the church serves the society in which it exists; “service” that is modelled on Christ's own concern for the poor, the weak, the needy and disadvantaged.

Genuine growth occurs when we cross cultural and social barriers to touch fresh groups of people with the message of God's redeeming grace.

Genuine growth occurs when we effectively influence community thinking for good, and help to shape the institutions and outlook of our society.

All these levels of growth are important, and they inter-act. However, we should not be afraid as members of Christ's people in the Anglican church in Sydney to say that we long to see people growing spiritually and the kingdom of God growing in numbers. We should actively pray for this ... long for this ... work for this and wait with anticipation for the Lord to answer our prayers.

Today is a day of opportunity.

In his research, one of our best known social commentators, Hugh Mackay, charts the impact that rapid change is having on the beliefs and needs of Australian people. He describes us as an Australian community more or less in shock as we accommodate a revolution in attitudes to gender roles, marriage, the family, work, politics, banking - in fact, to just about every aspect of life.

Australians are responding to this rapid change with bewilderment, feeling that they have lost their bearings. Many wish they had a more coherent set of beliefs and a standard of enduring values.

Despite a reaction against institutionalism, many in our community are fascinated by the institutional churches and by our message.

Research also indicates that people would like the church to be more active in society - although they do not themselves want to be more active in the church.

I had confirmation of this over recent months in discussion with business leaders across the city. Many have expressed their concern about a decline in values and ethics. They have said the church should be more vocal and give stronger leadership in these areas.

The challenge for us is to find new, creative ways to take advantage of our community's “religion watching” and to build on the spiritual sensitivity expressed by 75% of the people in a recent census who believe “there is something out there”.

It is no concession to complacency to say, in the same breath, that some very wonderful things are already happening within our churches. God **is** at work.

It is exciting to see the wide variety of ministry that is already occurring.

For example on the Parish Level -

- (a) There has been much new church development through the Vision 2001 programme.
- (b) Inter-parish co-operation has begun in areas like Marrickville, Parramatta, Drummoyne and Campsie.  
Others continue a sustained and faithful witness, and some with considerable growth and expansion, eg Figtree and Castle Hill.
- (c) University Chaplaincies have continued to touch a wide range of young men and women who will provide future leadership in Christian ministry.  
Thousands of young people are contacted in schools.
- (d) We have continued to expand specific ministries among people of other cultures, for example, Vietnamese, Maori, Muslim, Turkish, Chinese.

- (e) There has been direct effort to communicate with people of other cultures through ESL work, local parish involvement and friendship.
- (f) At another level, the broad spectrum of social welfare is ministered to through our organizations such as the Home Mission Society and Family Counselling as well as ministry in gaols and hospitals.

Perhaps most importantly, there is a willingness and desire on the part of many of our parishes to experiment with new methods of outreach.

I want to pledge myself this afternoon to encourage every Christian and every parish - to build on the opportunities that God has opened up. I trust that we can expand church life in every parish so that Christ may be uplifted and many brought to know the reality of his saving love.

There are certain factors that cause churches to grow.

The New Testament says that the primary cause is the divine impetus. It is God who makes the church grow, so we must always look to God for direction. Our part is to follow the leading of His Spirit. We cannot achieve any growth as God's people - at any level - by depending only on secular strategies. We are the body of Christ. The growth that comes from God is by the Spirit of God alone.

I repeat, there is no substitute for prayer! Diligent sustained prayer that is exercised with repentance and a commitment to be obedient to the will and purpose of God.

Again on this level we can be encouraged. Did you know that, in addition to the regular prayer life of local churches, there are more than 50 small regional groups across the diocese, some 7,000 people already praying for a fresh movement of God's Spirit in our churches?

These groups began in 1989, the 30th anniversary of the '59 Graham Crusade - with a longing to promote spiritual awakening and the spread of the gospel. They started at Lindfield and quickly grew - in fact the groups are still spreading. The emphasis is on teaching people how to pray biblically - and in different groups great things are happening.

Prayer triplets have resulted in significant numbers of people coming to Christ. For those of you who are involved in any of these prayer groups, let me encourage you to continue with renewed hope. For those of you who haven't yet started...need I say more!

While acknowledging that God is the One who stands behind the expansion of the early church, the New Testament also sets out a number of other strategies used by those who carried the gospel to the world.

- (a) The disciples took advantage of benefits provided by Roman administration and by the existence of Jewish Synagogues and places of prayer. They used every opportunity to speak and be heard.
- (b) They obeyed Christ's strategy of taking the gospel to the local people, to the country, to foreigners and overseas.
- (c) They eliminated unnecessary hindrances to Jewish or Gentile acceptance.
- (d) They targeted population centres, such as Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome.
- (e) They established centres of christian life in homes and halls, and appointed elders to encourage young churches to grow.
- (f) The number of active agents was multiplied.

Just as the early church was led by God to develop strategies for spreading the gospel, we are being challenged today, under God's guidance, to develop creative practical strategies for kingdom growth in the Sydney diocese in 1994 and beyond.

How can we achieve this? What strategies should we adopt to effect the changes needed, so that we can effectively bring the unchanging good news of Christ's love to our rapidly changing community?

First, there is the need for continual prayer and **personal commitment** by every member of the clergy and every lay person to follow Christ in holiness of life and in commitment to service. We must all be seen to be joyful, winsome people, living and witnessing to the love of Jesus.

The simple task of making friends for Christ's sake is beyond none of us and is a basic strategy for Christian communication. We must multiply the number of living agents willing and able to work for fresh growth and development.

Second, we must **set attainable objectives for ministries.**

We cannot expect to be effective in taking the gospel into our community without first having some understanding of the people and complex nature of the communities which surround our parishes.

Developing strategies and setting ministry objectives must begin at the parish or Deanery level. This process can be facilitated and resourced by encouragement from the Regional Bishops, Area Archdeacons and other church agencies.

Over the last ten years or so we have gathered a substantial body of information to help us do this.

Researcher Peter Kaldor describes the Sydney Diocese as having *seven* types of communities. If we take a look at these, it gives some idea of your own parish community - and how other parishes in Sydney are similar to yours.

1. Firstly, there are the non-urban and far-flung regions of our Diocese - areas like Lithgow in the west and the Shoalhaven in the south.

The distance of these regions from Sydney and from the services normally provided by diocesan organizations within the metropolitan area, tend to place a greater burden on them.

The clergy experience a degree of isolation and have to travel long distances to exercise pastoral care and attend diocesan meetings.

Growth in these areas is occurring, and, although it is not at the same intensity or speed of home development in Sydney, the local clergy at present are faced with providing a broader ministry without the same degree of help from the Diocese.

2. If you live in suburbs like Avalon, French's Forest, Carlingford, Miranda and so on:

- **Your community has a high proportion of people with tertiary education.**

- Many with professional occupations or high incomes.

- You have lower percentages of 20-30 years old.

- Fewer people who have been divorced or separated.

- You are largely Anglo-Australian.

- Attendance rates at your churches are relatively high and you have a clear and accepted role in the community.

3. If you live in Springwood, or in the Castle Hill area, or towards Engadine or Kiama:

- **You have higher percentages of families with children.**

- You have fewer people who are divorced or separated than other areas.

- The education of children is an important mission priority in your area, as is the task of helping adults gain a mature faith which affects their lives and priorities.

4. In suburbs like Hurstville, Liverpool, Dee Why and Granville:

- **Your community has fewer people with tertiary education or professional occupations.**

- Your community is more culturally diverse, and you are faced with serious issues of bridging cultural barriers if Christian faith is to become central in the life of your community.

- Your congregations are small, and issues of financial viability often pressing.

5. Suburbs as geographically separate as Camden, Wisemans Ferry and Albion Park in the Wollongong region can all be grouped together.

- **Your communities are characterised by large population growth, with many new, young families moving in.**

- Your average age is disproportionately young, and although new estates provide opportunities for many, unemployment is a major problem, and can be up to three times the rate of more stable areas.
  - Mission in your areas face shortages of committed people and a diversity of cultural groups, many of whom have not connected with any church for generations.
6. **Multicultural communities in Sydney are in a band from the inner city through to Fairfield in the west.** They have more than 50% of people born overseas, and there our parishes face enormous challenges.
- Many of our churches here were built and developed when the local community was quite different. They now face the choice of either learning to minister across cultural barriers within the community, or to maintain a dwindling, nominal ministry
7. Inner urban parishes in suburbs like Balgowlah, Randwick, Balmain and Ryde.
- **Have a highly mobile population of career professionals, aged 20-40.** These people have lower church attendance rates than any other section of the Australian community. The Sunday School strategy of mission is totally inadequate here.
  - There are fewer children, higher rates of divorce, and therefore more people living alone.
  - The highly mobile population is less attached to the local area, and communities tend to be "interest" based.
  - Parishes in these areas also face great problems. Our people are coping with old buildings designed when the areas were stable, dormitory suburbs.
8. **In our main Central Business Districts, our churches have tended to be regional, drawing people from city and suburbs.** They have generally focused on mid-week ministry to workers and shoppers.

So far, I have painted a profile of your parish communities with a very broad brush.

However it is now possible to compare your congregation to the local community using Census statistics for indicators such as age, gender, ethnicity, mobility and education.

Furthermore you can overlay this with information on your parish from the Church Life Survey, and see for example 5 year projections of your congregations growth; how closed off your congregation is from the surrounding community; how ready your people are to talk about faith issues or to invite people to church ... all this compared with the national average.

The volume of information now available is immense. But we can use it to help us re-shape our ministry.

However, knowing about ourselves and the community does not automatically guarantee that we become **evangelistically enterprising**. We need to be able to interpret these statistics in order to develop new strategies and generate new experiments in ministry.

I want to stir your imagination this afternoon; to challenge you to consider embarking on major experiments with ministry in suitable areas of Sydney.

We could select areas say in the Eastern Suburbs or the Outer West; or in Inner Sydney. Then with the full co-operation of groups of churches, prayerfully plan a strategy for an intensive outreach ministry into those areas.

It will be possible to marshal professional advice, and make use of the research information we now have available. Resources could be pooled. Clergy and laity would need to be willing to co-operate and be prepared to take some risks.

To be successful - such as experiment would need the full backing of diocesan organisations. Appropriate media coverage could assist in giving focus and support for such programmes.

We have done experiments before, but not on the magnitude I envisage. I am asking each of the bishops to discuss these possibilities with groups of churches in his area; seeking their full and voluntary co-operation in coming up with a plan that can be implemented for a comprehensive ministry strategy to every person in their area.

The objective of our diocese should be, at this point, to subsidise mission, rather than maintenance.

As well as experimentation, I want us to be *dynamically Anglican*.

Within the structure of our diocese, there are changes needed to ensure that encouragement, support, and stimulation are closer to those involved in ministry at the local parish level. This will involve changes at the level of pastoral care between the Archbishop, the Assistant Bishops, the parish clergy and the local congregations.

I am looking to the Assistant Bishops and Archdeacons to establish relationships of both mutual trust and spiritual fellowship that will lead to the deepening and strengthening of the spiritual life of the Diocese in its local churches, and the development of greater capacity to touch our community and to make and nurture disciples.

To achieve this I have established a 5th area of Episcopal Oversight within the Diocese. Many churches in this area are facing significant challenges and developing new methods of ministry will be both difficult and demanding.

It will be different from the Parramatta area, with its diversity of congregations and greater geographical distances.

While there will need to be some flexibility as we work to get the best alignment for these new areas, Parramatta will now have 55 instead of 65 parishes, and the new Assistant Bishop of Parramatta is Bishop Brian King.

The new region will be different from the North Sydney area which has traditionally been an area of strong congregational life. North Sydney will now have 64 parishes instead of 76. Bishop Paul Barnett will continue as the Bishop of North Sydney.

The Wollongong area, in the main, has its own local sense of identity will retain the same number of parishes, and the new Assistant Bishop in this area is Bishop Reg Piper.

The Southern area of the Diocese will be divided so that South Sydney will now have 56 parishes instead of 83, and Bishop Peter Watson will take the oversight of this area.

The 5th area of Episcopal Oversight is culturally diverse and subject to special problems because of this. It will be known as the area of Liverpool and Bankstown, and my assistant Bishop in this area is Bishop Ray Smith. There will be 48 parishes in this area.

Within each of these areas I am looking for a greater measure of Area Deanery or sub-deanery planning to advance our ministry capabilities across the diocese. My visits to the deaneries have convinced me of a willingness among laity and clergy to plan together.

In order to make all of this work, we will require a different emphasis in our training of church workers. We need to recruit, equip and train people with leadership skills. We need others who have special gifts, both clergy and laity, who are willing to work with that leadership. They in turn should invigorate, sustain and encourage our lay people to live faithfully and effectively in the community and to reach out and touch other lives with the gospel of Christ.

To be effective, these changes will need the wholehearted backing of all diocesan organisations. Organisations such as the Youth Department, the Department of Evangelism, the Board of Education, Home Mission Society, G.F.S., C.E.B.S., and Mothers Union are already consulting with parishes to determine real needs, then working co-operatively to focus resources on meeting those needs. This will need to be further developed.

Our 4 media organisations have recently been merged and re-structured with a mandate to provide greater media support to parish ministry.

We have in place the Vision 2001 program to help provide new churches and to help churches in older areas. This too should be strongly supported and expanded if we are to cross ethnic barriers and help people from different cultural and social backgrounds, to plant new churches in new suburbs on the fringes of Sydney and to revive work in older areas.

So, I propose the following as a broad strategy for growth in the spiritual life and witness of our churches.

## **Presidential Address – 11 October 1993 (First Ordinary Session of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Synod)**

---

1. First, prayer. We must pray for fresh spiritual vitality. Pray also for a new sensitivity to God's guidance in reaching out to our community. Let us be diligent in praying that God will give us a great sense of purpose that unites us in our witness in this city.
2. Second, to understand the communities we live in and develop fresh approaches to ministry, mission and service. To this end that we will embark on at least one major experiment with ministry in a suitable area of Sydney voluntarily sharing ideas and resources.
3. Thirdly, make our smaller diocesan areas of episcopal oversight work. I want to see areas created where bishops, clergy and lay people can consult, plan and work together and resource each other to implement effective teaching and outreach.
4. Fourthly, to continue significant re-structuring of parishes and church property in a number of areas to allow us to be more flexible, and to minister more effectively.
5. Fifthly, to increase the number of living agents of the Gospel so that all are active 'carriers' of the Gospel and more will be prepared to give their life to this task.
6. Lastly, that these new initiatives have the full co-operation and focused resources of our central organisations.

Together we are being called to find a common sense of purpose, of unity, and of determination to achieve what Christ is calling us to do.

In Christ we have the answer to fear, uncertainty, and insecurity.

Our task now is to learn together how to express our certainty in the uncertainties of contemporary Australian society.

May we live and work *Coram Deo* "in the presence of God" and for Him alone.