

First Ordinary Session of the 48th Synod of the Diocese of Sydney: October 2008

Presidential Address

Delivered by Dr Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Sydney, on Monday 13 October 2008.

Two Hammonds

'This State has the best politicians the breweries can buy', was one of the signs on the great notice board of St Barnabas Broadway in 1930s. Who had the nerve to say that?

It was the redoubtable Archdeacon RBS Hammond, Rector of St Barnabas.

His biography has the title *He That Doeth*, a phrase from the Sermon on the Mount: "Not everyone that saith unto Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven; but *he that doeth* the will of My Father which is in heaven."

There was another Archdeacon Hammond, the principal of Moore College and the author of a book, *In Understanding Be Men*.

Archdeacon TC Hammond's title was taken from 1 Corinthians 14:20: 'In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.'

Both were fine preachers.

TC Hammond, played a pivotal role in saving Moore College and hence the Diocese, from liberalism.

He was a deep theologian with an enormous fund of knowledge and a sharp wit.

He enabled his students to accept the authority of the Bible in the light of scholarship ancient and modern. He taught them that the Lord rules the church through the scriptures. He taught them how to choose between God's word, and the surrounding culture; not by denying all truth in culture, but by giving priority to the word.

We cannot flourish if we abandon the word of God as our regulative principle, in favour of the word of this world, this culture. His challenge is sharper than ever: trust God's word.

RBS Hammond was a preacher and a man of action.

There was a wall plaque to him in the old St Barnabas which said this:

'The Need of the World was on His Heart. Equally prominent as a Social Reformer and Temperance Advocate.

He excelled as an Evangelist and Bible Teacher.

4,440 men are known to have decided for Christ in this Church during his Ministry. "Be Ye Doers of the Word"

'The Need of the World was on His Heart';

'He excelled as an Evangelist and Bible Teacher';

'Be Ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers Only.'

Strangely the name of R.B.S Hammond is today little known.

We have forgotten what great works God did through his servants. Suffice to say this: that during the Great Depression which scarred permanently all who passed through it, he modelled for us that typical evangelical alliance between preaching the word and care for the community, an alliance which so wonderfully reflects and adorns the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Knowing that Hammond was always giving away the clothes from his own back, a beggar once asked him for his trousers. Hammond refused, on the grounds of decency.

They were the only pair he still had, after giving away all the rest.

He fed the hungry, clothed the poor, fought against the drug trade (namely the abuse of alcohol), advised the famous, lifted up the hopeless, and began a whole new suburb of homes for the homeless, Hammondville.

There is also a very fine organisation which is named after him and which has established a world reputation for the care of dementia sufferers.

This while winning 4,440 men to Christ. His challenge is sharper than ever: have the need of the world on your heart.

‘In Understanding Be Men’;

‘He That Doeth’.

Two men to remember; two texts to remember. We will be spiritually impoverished if we forget the past; but, we will be missionally paralysed if we let ourselves dwell in it.

We still need to be mature Christians, obedient to the word of God; we also need to understand our own times. And we especially need to be such Christians right now.

Nations are constantly being put to the test.

In the last 15 years, we have been put to the test of abundance.

As a nation we have rarely been so well off. How have we coped with this?

We have fallen in love with individual choice. We have therefore invested in the three secular values of free choice, to satisfy myself, tolerance, to permit others to have their choice, and incredibly hard work, to ensure that I can make the choices I want.

We may soon be put to the test of want.

We are experiencing a significant economic downturn, with a possible increase in unemployment, poverty, homelessness - even of hunger.

What sort of people will we be now?

There will be far less choice.

Our investment in the secular individualistic values will prove to be as illusory as our investment in some parts of the market. Choice will disappear for many; tolerance will prove too cool for comfort; work may be harder to find.

Instead of the secular values, it would have been better to invest in the great biblical virtues, faith, hope and love.

In abundance or in want, these are better for human beings to aspire to.

I hope that we have not forgotten them, for we are going to need them.

Faith that God is in control; confidence in his future as being that which fulfils human existence; love from him, that makes us generous to others.

These are the qualities we are now going to need more than ever as a community, as a nation.

If Australia does better than others in the crisis, we will bear an even greater responsibility for the poor of the earth.

How can we acquire faith, hope and love? By listening to the word of God.

I believe that it is no accident that God has led us to make next year, the year of Connect09, the next stage in our Diocesan Mission.

It challenges us to be good neighbours in our local community.

Clarifying Connect09

Connect09 is a co-ordinated campaign by all Sydney Anglicans to pray for and personally contact every resident in our Diocese with the word of God, in such a way that that person may connect with us and with the Lord Jesus.

Please notice the following features.

It is a revolutionary *campaign*, not a program; a spiritual movement rather than a planned event.

It relies on local people wanting to serve Jesus. It is a *prayer campaign* first and foremost, prayer for the world we live in, prayer for our community.

It calls on us to pray street by street, suburb by suburb, people group by people group. It is a campaign to *make personal contact*. Friendship evangelism and multiplying churches remain integral to our mission. But Connect09 calls on us to drastically expand the circle of our friends and neighbours.

Connect09 is about the *word of God*.

We are expecting to make personal contact, to increase the number of our friends.

But in the end we hope to share the word of God in an appropriate way with everyone.

It is by the word blessed by his Spirit that God creates faith, hope and love.

We are trusting that the Lord will already be preparing the hearts of people for an encounter, not just with us but with his Son.

Please notice that we intend to connect with people.

Think about this locally. Every contact should lead to sharing the word of God, and every form of the word should open up a further connection.

Always include an invitation, so that the person can follow up if they wish to do so.

We will be providing a special web-site, where people can find out more about Jesus and have questions answered.

We are seeking to reconnect our churches with their community - to rekindle the sense that we have a spiritual responsibility for our neighbourhoods.

We know that people are looking for community, for belonging.

Connect09 presents a formidable but energising challenge to our churches:

How can we tap in to this longing for community?

How can we be community?

We are hoping that Connect09 will transform our churches permanently, because the world we live in, is on our hearts.

The Gospel and Connect09

Let me tell you about the two day overnight conferences held at Bishopscourt for about seven Rectors at a time.

I have held 26 of them, with about 160 Rectors so far.

Each time I have learned something new about ministry and I have been encouraged by the faithfulness of our ministers and their determination to lead in evangelism.

I have seen what Paul refers to in the first chapter of Philippians: 'you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel...' (Phil 1: 27). We can campaign together because we are fundamentally united as a Diocese; we have nothing in principle to divide us; we are in communion with each other.

What is this 'faith of the gospel'?

For Paul, the gospel is the proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord. Come the end of all things, at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, and 'every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (2:10-11).

Of course this does not mean universal salvation.

There will be an obedience freely offered, and there will be an obedience offered under duress. The Apostle knows that there is a path to destruction;

There is an urgency to his evangelism because of the awful consequences for those who do not know God (3:19).

He is not complacent 'For to me,' he cries, 'to live is Christ...'

He is an urgent evangelist.

Being saved means the surrender of the self to Jesus Christ, what the Bible calls repentance. That is why we proud human beings find it so hard.

It is at the root of the secular West's spiritual malaise - the belief that all is well, all is under control, that we have figured out how the world works, and how it can be made to work for us.

At this moment, as we face the possibility of the worst economic crisis in 80 years, our faith in our self has been shaken.

We are all hoping that some help will be at hand, that our fears will not be justified.

I hope that this is true.

But all this is a reminder of our real, our spiritual problem, that we are too proud.

We have no hope of beating death and judgement.

From these mighty adversaries, we certainly cannot save ourselves by economic power or personality power or even moral power.

Our only hope is Jesus. He purchased his people, in his life of perfect obedience, his death on the cross for our sake, and his resurrection from the dead.

He is the one and only Saviour of men and women.

We receive this salvation by abandoning our pretensions, and surrendering ourselves to his rule through repentance and faith.

He is our message.

Do we say, 'For me to live is Christ...?'

Are we urgent for evangelism?

Will we stand firm in one spirit and with one mind strive side by side in the cause of the gospel?

The Elements of Connect09

In Connect09 we campaign through prayer, research, training, contact, partnership and preparation.

This should all be going on in your church and it should be shaking it up!

First, *prayer*. This is a spiritual campaign.

Our weapons are the word of God and prayer.

The key point is prayer for our nation, our community.

We pray that there may be a spiritual awakening, a desire for God, so that when we make contact there may be many people prepared by God himself for the message which we bring.

I believe that God will go before us, and we will experience answers that will surprise us.

Second, *research*. Let's re-think the role of the church in its parish. The parish is our responsibility.

We ask the church to look out into the parish, to understand its demographic setting. Rectors know the obvious things about the parish area around the church.

They know about numbers, ethnicity, education, income, age range...all the things which we can count. Almost all of them agree however, that they have not shared this information with members.

Connect09 is a challenge to church members to get to know their neighbourhood, to survey, to share, to become curious about the streets and shops and people and pastimes and problems and professionals who inhabit the vicinity of their church, their natural mission field. The parish is our mission field.

Let's encourage missional curiosity. Anglicans ought to be experts on the life of this city.

Third, *training*. There is frustration by church members over a lack of opportunities for leadership by lay Christians.

We now have many paid workers.

Here, then, is a wonderful opportunity to train and equip lay Christians for ministry. Connect09 is not a burden - it is an opportunity to see thousands of members of our churches take the chance to become active partners in the work of the gospel. Connect09 ought to see a leap forward in the number of Christians in our congregations who are trained for and experienced in ministry. Once they acquire a taste for this, it will be a joy to them.

Fourth, *contact*. To relate to persons, we have to find them at home or in their work place or at leisure. Connect09 is ambitious: to contact everyone around us.

I think that we will be following a God who is already at work.

There is no easy substitute for a plan which involves visiting people in their own homes.

Despite the growing prevalence of gated communities, most people are still accessible.

Many people will actually welcome a visit.

But there are other places where people gather or walk in numbers and where, with some ingenuity, contact may be made in a way appropriate for passing on the word of God.

Likewise, modern technology gives us some access which the door or the gate denies, not least to teenagers.

Fifth, *partnership*. Most of our churches have engaged in formal evangelism over the years. The difference this time is that we are all involved in doing it together. It is a co-ordinated campaign, with local variations, but the same aims. This provides us with an opportunity to partner with each other in this important work - to ask the parish next door for ideas or for help, for example. I have had a dream that churches may even offer each other teams of people to help to do some of the necessary work. The team itself will return rejoicing and so much better equipped for gospel work than when they left. We also have great resources in this Diocese in organisations like Anglicare, ARV, Youthworks, Moore College, the Schools Corporation and the Secretariat. I have been excited by the way that the leadership of these organisations have been excited by Connect09. They are true partners.

Sixth, *preparation*. I mean by this preparing our churches for new people to join. Many churches would say that there are already between 100 and 200 such people per year, or three or four a week. For some there are fewer; for others many more, in some cases over a thousand. In most cases Rectors have plans about what to do with new people in order to integrate them. But this cannot be the Rector's job alone. We must all be aware of the phenomenon of the visitor and ask ourselves what we intend to do to make people welcome and feel that they can come back.

How seriously do we take this? Have we already begun a thorough shaking up of our welcome, our facilities, our signage, our seating, our cry-rooms, our morning tea, the temperature in the building, our music, our follow-up, our lighting, our accessibility to the disabled... the list is endless. Sometimes we need to look again at what we do in church, our reading, our prayers, our preaching. Sometimes ministers want to do these things but are discouraged by lay resistance; sometimes ministers are the problem. Can I urge you to work together on this?

Just assume that if you make contact and connection with 200 people next year who want to know more. What if they decided to come to your church? What would they find? Who would they find? Would they say that God is in the midst of you? Would they wish to form a relationship and keep coming against all the other things which they may be doing on a Sunday morning or evening?

Are you a missional church? Can you see prayer, research, training, contact, partnership, and preparation? Can you see a new sense of responsibility for your community? Connect09 has already begun.

Connect09 exposes deserts and unreached tribes

What has Connect09 shown me? If you 'helicopter' over the whole Diocese, what are the strengths and weaknesses? As we challenge parishes about Connect09, and as I listen to ministers, we see what I call deserts and lost tribes. I begin to agonise over the areas of our own city where our impact is tiny and where the need is great.

There are areas of Sydney where overt Bible-based Christian witness is so small that to expect the local church to contact all the residents within their parish is ridiculous. Our parishes differ widely in size - one is 1700 people, others over 50,000 people. And then the number of Anglicans involved in church is a small percentage of the people who live in some locations. I was praying about one area of Sydney recently and recognised that we have two churches, with about 200 members in an area of 50,000 people. That set me looking at our statistics again. They reveal that 107 of our churches have less than 1% of the parish population as attenders. Remember, we are aiming at 10% as an initial goal. Here is a call for urgency.

Church numbers differ for all sorts of reasons. What concerns me is whole regions in which our presence is faithful and admirable, but small. This is what I call a desert; within it each church is an oasis; but how will they ever be strong enough to evangelise their region without outside help? Our campaign next year is going to be impossible for some, and even their neighbours cannot help. How can we all help them? More to the point - how can we do a work of church planting and evangelism in such areas?

Connect09 challenges all our churches to continue to change from maintenance to mission. But what of those churches for whom the challenge is far too huge? How can we all help? And then what about the 'tribes', the people groups who have come here and settled among us? Or the sub-cultures of our people who need to be reached by other means than door-to-door. We have churches amongst a number of these tribes, but there must be scores more who have as far as we know no active Christian presence. Does this not grieve you?

I have always thought that part of the answer 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 an 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. Connect09 is part of that. But for whole areas of the city and 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.

But we do not have to wait or leave this to others. Who lives next door to you? Who lives in your street? Who works beside you? Who goes to the gym with you? Who sends their children to your school? Who cuts your hair? Who drives the taxi? It may be an ethnic group; it may be people who cluster around an occupation or a sport or a cultural interest.

Has the Lord given you a special people group to love and pray for and reach? He has done it to me - I chose a tiny and exotic group to illustrate this point some years ago, little dreaming that I would find them in due course and discover where most of the several hundred of them live. I won't tell you who they are. Please find your own! Have the need of the world on your heart.

Us

Do we have the need of the world on our heart?

We commissioned some research about ourselves for Connect09. The man who did the research for us was able to say this about Sydney Anglicans. First, as a whole, we see the importance of evangelism and have it on the top of our to-do list. Second, many of us do not actually become engaged in evangelism. The researcher was really interested in this phenomenon. But he was not all that surprised. He told me that it was like going to the doctor.

We all know that at the end of a session with the doctor, what she is going to say: lose weight and do more exercise. Even if we go with a broken finger, she will somehow slip in this advice before we leave. Furthermore, we will agree 100% with her - but we will not really do anything about it. At least not in a sustained way. Just so, he said, you all believe in evangelism, but your churches do not help each other do it, you don't have plans or strategies in place to accomplish it, and you hang back thinking that someone else will get on with it.

Why don't we? The first problem is fear. We are afraid of rejection. We are also afraid of not knowing what to say, of not being able to lead a person to the Lord when the moment comes. The second problem is busyness. Our lives are so full that it is impossible to find the extra time needed to make new friends to campaign with the church to reach a neighbourhood.

These are significant problems. If it is any comfort to anyone, I share them. I was praying about my list of people who need to come to know the Lord the other day, and realised that for more than half the list I had made no contact at all in the last year. The excuse is being too busy running Connect09. It is all a bit embarrassing. And as for fear of rejection - yes, I guess that is one of the chief reasons why being busy is a good option. Of course I feel embarrassed talking about Jesus to someone who may be offended or critical and who may write me off. It is awkward; it is never the right moment. And I sometimes wonder what is the best approach and even what to say. And if I feel these things, and people expect me to be a bit abnormal and to talk about Jesus - how difficult it must be for anyone who is normal. So, yes, I am a coward.

But not a complete coward. I do manage it more often than you may think. And I am helped because of training I have received before I ever went to College. This was the training I got when I was a young Christian; it was the basic training which has helped most. It helps overcome the fear of rejection and also the fear of not knowing what to say. If as a result of Connect09 all our members received practical, helpful training in evangelism so that they can open up conversations fruitfully and comfortably - that in itself would be a great step forward. Please notice, for example, the new EM course, *Just Start Talking*. My guess is that this is already happening in your church. Why don't you encourage your minister to involve as many people as possible and make sure that you are on the list, even for a refresher course?

But, you know, the underlying problem is a spiritual one. Unless we deal with that, no amount of training is going to solve the problems. We must take the advice of TC Hammond, who told us to know the word, and RBS Hammond who told us to obey the word. As another of his signs said; 'The Bible does not need to be re-written, but re-read.' For faith is the answer to fear, and faith comes as we allow the word of God to be our teacher.

In the word of God we see again and again that he is in charge of the world and even of the human heart. As far as we are concerned, this must lead to obedience, to placing ourselves at God's disposal as he teaches us in his word. As far as others are concerned, it means that we can trust God to open up opportunities and to open up hearts, and even to use our stuttering unsure words to bring light and truth into human lives. People become Christians because friends introduce them to the word of God.

The world of Sydney in 09 is going to be very different from what we imagined this time last year. People are anxious about such things as the economy and about global warming. There are social problems: there are spiritual ones as well. The expectation that we as humans have conquered the world and that it will always yield what we want, has already been severely shaken. The experts are no longer looking so good. These may be times similar to the ones that RBS Hammond ministered in, where he found that help had to be both spiritual and material. The days ahead may well test our capacity to love each other in our community, to be real neighbours, true mates, and in this we Christians need to lead the way. Indeed, faith, hope and love are going to be indispensable.

In particular we have a message which says that God can be trusted. It is a message of hope. As Hammond used to say to people at the end of their tether, 'Failure is not final'; 'God is not a problem to be solved, but a Father to be trusted'. Through Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, we have a peerless hope. We know the God who rules all things. In the end, it is this which must minister to our fears, especially as we live in fearful times and in an anxious community. It is exactly the issue which also explains the GAFCON event this year - that the authentic Jesus Christ is the hope and the light of the world. Which brings me to the Anglican Communion, to the Global Anglican Future Conference held in Jerusalem, and to the Lambeth Conference as well.

GAFCON

As I look back over the tumultuous months of June and July - tumultuous for me at least - I am more certain than ever that the path we chose to take as bishops from this Diocese was the right one: it was right to attend the conference in Jerusalem, and it was right to stay away from Lambeth.

I was there when GAFCON was planned. In a hotel room in Nairobi were squeezed Archbishop Nzimbi from Kenya, Archbishop Orombi from Uganda, Archbishop Akinola from Nigeria, Archbishop Mtetemela from Tanzania, Archbishop Kolini from Rwanda. As well there were leaders from England, from the US, from Canada. It was December 2007, late, far too late to plan a major conference, let alone one in Jerusalem.

But we were late for a worthy reason - there had been hope against hope that a solution would be found to the problems in the Anglican Communion. They had placed their hopes in the Archbishop of Canterbury and the usual processes of the Communion. Now they believed that all those hopes had been dashed and there would be no solution offered, apart from more delay. The time had come to act.

Persistent attempts to portray GAFCON as a breakaway movement or an attempt to split the Anglican Communion are perverse, almost malign.

The 'tear in the fabric of the Communion' occurred in the events of 2003 with the appointment of a divorced and actively homosexual bishop in the United States, and the blessing of same-sex unions in the US and Canada. GAFCON represents a refusal on theological and pastoral grounds to act as though this major division had never taken place.

The Anglican Communion is, I believe, the third largest body of Christians in the world. It is vastly more important than we here often realise.

It represents one of the chief ways in which Christians all around the world receive fellowship, missional help, and attention when they are persecuted or in other trouble.

It is a highly significant entity, to be cherished and maintained, not torn apart.

The aim of GAFCON is to renew and invigorate the Communion and to help bring order and peace out of the mayhem created by the American division.

What is actually at stake here? We all know that the flash point for the major disagreements has been over human sexuality. But it is facile to label this as merely a debate over sex. Sex matters. It matters very deeply indeed. Our personal identity is bound up with our sexual natures and behaviours. When Western culture took a decisive turn away from God in the middle of the twentieth century, it began on a path of experimentation with gender and sex which capitulated to corrupt human desires, our own and that of the world, with tragic consequences.

The 'right' to free choice of who we are and how we behave is one of the idols of this age, as you will soon discover if you ever challenge it.

But fundamentally we are dealing here with a twofold contest of authority.

First God's authority in the world, and his right to say where human happiness is truly to be found.

Second, in the Church, we are dealing with Christ and his Lordship, that is with the gospel itself.

When Christ draws us to himself by his Spirit, we are united in the fellowship or communion of his people.

As the New Testament shows us, that unity is the unity of a Body, in which there is a variety of giftedness but in which all are equally valuable, and the life-beat of the whole is love.

Christ is the Head of this body, the Saviour of it and the ruler of it through his word.

Disobedience to the Head divides the Body and creates a fissure which disfigures.

It is a failure of love.

Extremely powerful cultural forces have revolutionised the way we think about sex and gender issues.

Not all of this revolution was bad for our human life.

However, in some parts of the Christian world there has been a lack in spiritual understanding and hence capitulation to these forces which do not make for human flourishing.

It is a capitulation, despite the clear teaching of scripture. Indeed the way was prepared by earlier debates in which we were constantly assured that passages in scripture are capable of many interpretations, all equally valid. Division was inevitable.

This capitulation is not surprising at one level. We had become so used to living in a Christianised culture that we assumed that culture and church would speak with one voice and that we could occupy a comfortably assured place in a world which conformed to our views.

But we are no longer in such a place.

To be a Christian today requires a self-understanding that we will occupy a minority position, that we will be counter-cultural, that the majority will regard our views as bizarre at best.

However uncomfortable we may find this, we cannot compromise over what the Bible really says about matters such as sex and gender.

What we need to know is, that the events in North America were only the culmination of a long contest within that the Episcopal Church in America over the authority of God's word.

For example, when Archbishop Goodhew visited the US in 1999 as part of an official fact-finding mission, he and the team reported with alarm how far down the road of sexual licence the church had gone and called them to return to Scripture.

The fissure in the Anglican Communion is the direct result of a last symbolic action in 2003, but it had been coming for a long time. No doubt it had its origins in theological liberalism taught in the seminaries and an unwillingness to discipline flagrant breaches of faith and order.

When scripture is defied, the tragedy of division is inevitable. Our conscience can do no other.

That is why unscriptural practices such as the ordination of women to the priesthood have always aroused conscientious protest and division.

In our own Australian Church we now have the women bishops, and although we all intend to stay as united as possible, the pain of division is permanent. Full Christian Communion entails accepting each others' ministries.

That is fundamental. We have now introduced into our Australian fellowship, and into the fellowship within many Australian dioceses, a very painful disunity, which affects our capacity to stand side by side for the cause of the gospel.

In the US church this division was contained temporarily, but in recent days it has become clear that those in favour of egalitarianism are going to make it impossible for those opposed to stay in the church.

This is difficult, but the subsequent development in the area of sexual ethics was of such a clearly unbiblical nature, and of such grave spiritual consequences, that even more people became determined to protest against it, indeed to live in protest against it.

That is a hard choice. We do not love conflict. But there comes a moment when we have no choice, or rather the choice is that which Joshua gives: 'And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve...but as for me and for my house, we will serve the Lord.' (Joshua 24:15).

The very scriptures which urge us to unity, to stand together in the cause of the gospel, also warn us that there are moments when we must break unity to preserve the gospel and the spiritual lives of those in our care.

For many in the US and Canada that was the moment, and they have followed conscience shaped by the word of God, painful though this is.

Can we stand back? There are two reasons why we may not. Paradoxically, the first is that of unity in fellowship.

Those who have determined to believe and obey the Bible on this matter have not changed.

They remain Anglicans. But they rightly can no longer have the same fellowship with those who have embraced unscriptural practices on matters which the scripture identifies as life and death.

For we are not dealing here with trivialities or matters of order.

Jim Packer pinned it: he calls it 'sanctifying sin.'

Those who bravely live out a protest, need our recognition and support.

They need our fellowship to make up for the fellowship they are losing.

As a result of all this I have been privileged to meet and pray and work with outstanding leaders from the Americas - for example, our own David Short from Canada;

Bob Duncan, deposed as Bishop of Pittsburgh as a direct consequence of his unwillingness to stay in fellowship with those who have left the scriptural standard; Archbishop Greg Venables of the Southern Cone who has broken all the boundaries of Anglican taste and good manners to provide recognition and support for Christians in Canada and the US; Bishop Don Harvey from Canada, a gentle man of faith who has come out of retirement to act as a bishop to the 20 or so congregations in Canada who have sought his care.

I have prayed with these men, late at night, on the phone, across the world;

I have shared with them;

I have agonised with them.

They are not firebrands;

they are not revolutionaries;

they loved the church they were in;

they are genuine Anglicans representing differing churchmanship;

they are men of principle.

They are like Professor Jim Packer, who is his eighties after a life lived in the distinguished service of Christ has found himself cut out of his own church by what he calls 'practical heresy'.

For him these matters are not a debating point.

The church has practised heresy, and he must depart from it; it is that important.

The second reason why we cannot stand back is the danger of the spread of this theological fallout.

In Jerusalem, the famous Christian sociologist Dr Os Guinness described what has happened in the US in term of an nuclear explosion.

He saw the resulting fallout as having a global effect.

The struggles in the US are already the same as are occurring elsewhere in the English speaking world and in Europe.

It is madness to think that they will not also occur in Africa and Asia and South America. One of the reasons why great leaders like Archbishop Henry Orombi of Uganda has been so strong in his stand and his total unwillingness to attend Lambeth is his recognition that liberal theology is confronting his own Church and that he has an obligation to defend the Christians of his world against false teaching.

For him, going to Lambeth was not a matter of listening yet again to another point of view, as though what we are dealing with here is a mere matter of good manners:

it was the question of having fellowship and hence offering recognition to those who have endorsed a deadly form of false teaching.

I know that others whom we esteem highly chose to attend, and I honour their choice.

It is not generally known that there were those who attended Lambeth who refused to take Holy Communion with others who were present.

It is not generally known, because that was a private way of saying what I believe needed to be said publicly - the communion which was fractured in 2003 has not yet been repaired through the repentance which brings us back to the gospel and the scriptures.

Not going to Lambeth was virtually the only way of making that plain.

Once I knew that Henry Orombi was not going to Lambeth, it was clear to me that I had to stand with him in that position.

Not to be there spoke a thousand times more powerfully than attendance would have done. How could we share fellowship with those from whom David Short and Jim Packer had withdrawn?

What has happened as a result of the two conferences? Opinions about Lambeth have differed, though most participants seemed to have enjoyed the fellowship it provided and admired the contribution of Archbishop Williams. It was assumed from the beginning that there was no shift in the overall Communion's views on Christian sexual ethics: they were still conservative and biblical. This matter was not allowed to come up for decisive debate. Indeed the Conference itself was deliberately set up in order to avoid making decisions or issuing declarations and the like.

Insofar as the crisis in the Communion was addressed, the solutions offered were much the same as we have seen hitherto - an Anglican Covenant which may or may not be acceptable, which could take a very long time to be ratified and which many say will not deal with the present crisis; a renewed call for moratoria on three activities which have caused offence, but a call which is ambiguous and seems to have been defied already by various Bishops who are not willing to go back on what has been done; and the provision of a Pastoral Forum to care for those who are objecting to theological innovation.

Nothing further has been heard about this Forum as yet and in the meantime Bishop Duncan has been deposed and the Diocese of Pittsburgh has seceded from the American Church - the second diocese to do so and there may be others. Court cases proceed apace. You could be forgiven for thinking that the strategy of those with any power in the Anglican Communion is a strategy of delay. Intentionally or not, it suits the notion that in the end we will all learn to live with the change. There will be a focus on theological education, and especially on hermeneutics in the hope that as many people as possible will be able to imbibe the wisdom of liberalism.

It is no accident that GAFCON's title is a Global Anglican *Future* Conference, that it was held in Jerusalem and that it was for clergy and people. It is no accident that it endeavoured to include younger leadership. It is an awakening, a spiritual movement for the gospel and the authority of the scriptures within the Communion. It has sought to do two things as a matter of urgency: To save for the Anglican Communion those who have been forced to leave their original church; at the same time to address the fundamental theological and spiritual issues which are at stake in this whole matter.

Thus, following GAFCON a Primates' Council has emerged, consisting of seven of the most significant leaders of the Anglican Communion. I am not a member of this, but I have been asked to act as the honorary secretary. They have waited patiently for over five years for help to arrive for Bob Duncan, David Short, Jim Packer and the rest. Nothing effective has been done and they have now concluded that nothing effective will be done. The Primates' Council is willing to recognise and authenticate as Anglican, the ecclesial life of those Anglicans who have been forced to leave their original homes because of 'practical heresy', provided that the cause is grave enough, and provided that the approach is properly organised. In this way they hope to contribute to bringing order to the Anglican Communion and to bring into the Communion those who over the years have been excluded.

As we turned to discuss what needed to be said and done at GAFCON in that Nairobi hotel room, I was struck by the wisdom of the African leaders. For them, one of the great themes of the Conference, indeed, its underlying theme had to be this - the Lordship of Christ and the transforming power of the gospel. What worries them most about western Christianity as they experience it, is not even our worship of sex and money. It is above all the absence of what Paul calls the power of the gospel, its capacity to alter human lives for good. It is not that African Christianity is perfect: far from it. They too have their troubles and deep failures. But they are sure of this - that there is no gospel without repentance.

They are missionaries, and mission was one of the great hallmarks of the experience that was GAFCON. They said 'let us go back to what makes us Anglicans - our origins in the Bible and the Reformation. Let us think about our world without Christ and without hope. Now let us do all we can both to defend ourselves against the perversion of the gospel and to join together positively to advance the cause of the gospel throughout the world.

Yes we have major social problems which must be attended to. True, we are not the only faithful Anglicans. But the preaching of the authentic gospel of Jesus Christ must come first.'

And that was the GAFCON experience. It was not a bleat about the Americans; it was not a conference fixated on sex; it was a wonderful fellowship of Anglicans from so many places, who wanted to be Anglicans; who wanted to help their fellow Anglicans; and who wanted to see Christ glorified. How we sang! How some danced! How we talked with freedom and joy! How we wept! It was a conference which said 'future'.

You see, it is perfectly possible to talk Jesus up, but not to preach the gospel. One night I watched a prominent Anglican giving us the gospel message on television. He spoke so well of Jesus I was delighted. But the Jesus of whom he spoke turned out to be infinitely inclusive. The promises were there, but not the demand.

And yet the real message of the real Jesus and his Apostles was a message of repentance - of despair when confronted with God's law and our failure to keep it which turns to Jesus Christ; of that trust which surrenders all to him, which acknowledges him as Lord and Master of our lives; of that gratitude which willingly submits all our thoughts and our heart and our wealth and our family and our strength to him and him alone; of that humility which suffers the final indignity to the mind of modern man, the humility which sends all our sins to the cross of Christ for forgiveness.

If you have a gospel in which there is no repentance you do not have the gospel. If you have a life in which there is no on-going repentance, you do not have the Christian life; you have mere religion, powerless to save or to bless. If you have a church which is not willing to discipline and to call for repentance, you have a church which is built on some other foundation than that of Jesus Christ.

And so GAFCON was about the gospel and the gospel which calls for repentance, for transformation of life, for ongoing transformation of life, for walking in the light. Of course Lambeth was a fine conference; many fine relationships were forged; there was good prayer and Bible study and liturgy and Canterbury Cathedral and great processions and all that English hospitality can offer. But in my opinion to be committed to Lambeth only, was to say that this was going to be business as usual; that we accept the glacial speed of the Anglican authorities to bring order into a situation which in their hearts they seem to agree with. To support Lambeth alone is to say that these problems may solve themselves given time. GAFCON was held because time has run out - the orthodox Christians in North America need our help now, not at some far future time. And the fallout of liberalism is not going to wait for the next five years before it arrives in our churches. It is here now.

And what of us here? God through our Diocesan Mission has brought us to the great challenge of Connect09. As Anglicans we are sharing the word of God in our culture. We are part of a world-wide movement. And we are measuring ourselves by the same gospel we find in the New Testament. For we are not somehow exempt from sin, or from cultural captivity, or from pride.

Last year we asked the Doctrine Commission for a report on the nature of congregational assemblies. I thank them for the report and look forward to discussing it. With its help we can certainly ask whether what we do in church sufficiently reflects the gospel. Take the confession of our sins and the declaration of forgiveness for example. In a church I was in recently, we had confession and forgiveness. The clergyman invented his own list of sins for us to confess; they sounded exactly what the uneasy conscience of a modern middle class person may dredge to the surface, if pressed hard to say where they had failed in the last little while. The declaration that we were all assuredly forgiven of these mainly imaginary sins was, if I remember correctly, perfunctory, but certain enough to make us all feel a lot better. Apparently God was pleased with us after all.

But this business of coming into the presence of the Lord is no light thing. And the business of assuring people that their sins are forgiven, is no light thing. These are the keys of heaven and hell, administered with great solemnity by the appointed preachers of God's word. Woe to the one who casually assures us in the name of God that we are forgiven when we are not! By what right is this done? I have been invited to confess my sins in such a way that my sins are never identified and my repentance is never required. I was not aware that forgiveness was so cheaply offered; we would take more pains to mollify a fellow motorist than we give to thinking about our relationship with the living God.

In this Diocese, we claim to be Cranmerians - that is, the protestant Reformation has come down to us via Archbishop Cranmer, his thirty nine articles and the Book of Common Prayer.

Let us study and incorporate what he taught us about our approach to God. In his great confession of sin, he identifies our sins not according to the standards of the middle-class conscience, but by the Law of God: 'We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws...there is no health in us...' He does not pretend that a mere outward confession is what is required, but 'He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.' And he gets us to pray for the gift of 'true repentance and his Holy Spirit that those things may please him which we do at this present and that the rest of our life may be pure and holy...'

It is all very well for us to smugly criticise others, but if we fail to manifest the fruit of repentance and godly living we are hypocrites. How long is it since you have examined your own life, starting with the devices and desires of your heart? How many sins flourish there, secretly watered by you and never dealt with, never put to death, to use the violent and painful image of the New Testament? Greed, lust, covetousness, malice, jealousy, anger, hatred - these are some of the inward sins which need to be dealt with if we are to walk in the light. I think that they are present within us because I see them break out into ungodly displays often enough. But they start in the heart. Remember the great text that RBS Hammond stood for: "Not everyone that saith unto Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven; but *he that doeth* the will of My Father which is in heaven."

'He that doeth' - RBS Hammond, evangelist, the need of the world was on his heart and today we may still see the fruits of his labours for Christ. He reached out to the Sydney of his day; he connected because he knew that to follow Christ as Lord was the path of repentant obedience.

'In Understanding Be Men' - TC Hammond, evangelist, teacher of God's word. He was absolutely fearless in teaching the word of God, however unpopular it may have been. That the world may think differently; that popularity may escape him, mattered not at all. He knew that to follow Christ was the path of repentant obedience.

Let me speak personally. GAFCON and Connect09 have dominated my life this year. They are connected as the two Hammonds are connected and they demand the same things of us. I am not involved in these things purely in my own right as Peter Jensen. I have become involved as your Bishop. I know that not all have agreed with my decisions and actions, especially in regard to GAFCON. Nonetheless, I have received great support and manifest prayer, for which I am very grateful. But even if you had turned your collective back on these endeavours, although I always greatly respect the opinion of the Diocese, I would still have gone forward. Our city, our nation, needs the word of God and we need to connect with our community. Our

Anglican Communion needs the GAFCON movement to help defend and promote the pure gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world. I have never worked such long hours or with such intensity - but I can say this - nor have I ever seen so clearly the Lord's hand at work in blessing his people especially in Jerusalem.

As far as I can see, with such wisdom as the Lord has given me, these two great enterprises are of God. True, they both put us in a position of walking, acting and thinking at odds with the cultures around us, who will exert all their efforts, even through other members of the church, to stop us from doing these things. But they both seek to promote and defend the apostolic gospel; they both stem from the written word of God; they both demand of us faith in God's promises and his over-ruling sovereignty. And they both demand of us repentant and obedient hearts, willing to serve the Lord for the sake of his gospel.

In the light of this, then, I can only say this to you: 'choose you this day whom you will serve...'

'As for me and my house, I will serve the Lord'.

Peter F Jensen
Archbishop