

**Address**  
**by**  
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**Archbishop of Brisbane**  
**to the**  
**Second Session**  
**of the**  
**75<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane**  
**Saturday 24 June 2006**

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## **Introduction**

In the name of God I welcome you to this Second Session of the 75th Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane.

When we gather in Synod I have a deep sense of gratitude to God for all of you, and for the many others you represent. Of course I'm particularly conscious of those I work with most closely and depend on from day to day and I thank them. But as I look around this hall I'm reminded by your faces of my weekly visits to the far flung reaches of this diocese. I'm reminded of the varieties of service that go on in those places in the name of Christ and this Church. And I'm deeply grateful that you have responded to God's call to share in Christ's mission – in parishes and organisations, in schools and community services - in many places and in many ways. I thank you, and through you the whole diocese, for all that you are and all that you do in what can be difficult circumstances. And I thank God that 'the light of the ... glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' is the same light that shines in your hearts and from your faces and lightens the darkness in every corner of this vast diocese (2 Cor 4.6-7).

We share in Christ's mission. How we might move forward in that mission, is the keynote of this address. I sense that the time is right, and that the mood is right too, to bring squarely into focus moving ahead in mission.

The General Synod of our Church made such a call in 2004. The Standing Committee has made mission its main focus and appointed a National Mission Facilitator, the Rev'd Stuart Robinson, whom we were pleased to welcome as preacher at the opening eucharist last night. I notice that bishops all around the nation are tackling mission in addresses to synods this year. And there has been a national series of conferences in the last few weeks on 'unleashing the mission shaped church'. About 170 people gathered in Brisbane last week for such a conference, most of them Anglicans. Mission is certainly front and centre.

We all recognise that mission always involves moving outwards beyond ourselves to love and serve, as God does in Christ. So there is an essential dimension of mission that involves us beyond the boundaries of the Diocese; and of course the two dimensions are related to each other. Without detracting from the importance of that dimension of mission, I want to concentrate in this address on moving ahead in mission within the Diocese of Brisbane. Let me first remind us of the foundations on which we build.

## Theological Framework for Mission

In April this year Bishop Tom Wright, the Bishop of Durham, gave a series of insightful and passionate lectures about mission: the mission of Jesus and the mission of the Church in a post-modern world. I want to borrow from Bishop Wright to put before us an overview which I think provides a helpful framework for thinking about mission.

Grand narratives are pretty much out of fashion in our post-modern world. But we can't avoid the fact that the basis of the Christian faith is just such an overarching story. And the Christian grand narrative goes something like this:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. But from the beginning human beings got it wrong. They acted destructively and the consequences of sin spread throughout creation marring every aspect of it.

God called Abraham to deal with the consequences of sin – 'in you,' God said, 'all the families of the earth will be blessed,' (Gen. 12.3) not cursed as a result of sin, but blessed as a result of Abraham's and Israel's vocation. These two fundamental affirmations emerged in the story. The world is in a mess, but it is still loved by God. The dream of Israel is that God will act through Israel to put the whole world to rights. Israel is to be a light to the nations, a source of blessing.

But century after century Israel itself gets it wrong. They sell each other into slavery in Egypt. When God rescues them from slavery in the Exodus, all they do is complain about the food and drink on the way to the promised land. When they arrive, they eventually get their way and get a king after God's own heart and then the king mucks it up. They build a temple where God promises to dwell forever, but it becomes so corrupt that God sends the Babylonians to tear it down.

So the story of Israel is the story of a people carrying the promises of God for the world, but sorely in need of those promises themselves. Israel clings to the dream that the creator God would act through them to deal with the great issues of the world. But Israel itself is in need of being put to rights.

Israel knew it was called to be a light to the nations, but a long line of pagan nations, one after the other, crushed Israel: the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians – and last of all, by Jesus day, Rome. So instead of being God's people **for the world**, as in Abraham's original call, the people of Israel came to see themselves as **chosen to be blessed themselves**, and the rest of the world going to hell, going to be wiped out by God as he saved and vindicated Israel.

So the prophets of the exile looked forward to the time when God would come back, God would rescue God's people, and God's justice and salvation were going to spread over the whole earth. There was going to be an amazing rebirth of God's original vision of the people of God and the earth.

In short, there was going to be a new creation.

Now, when Jesus came and started speaking about the time being fulfilled and the kingdom of God being at hand, he was saying that the day has come. The great story of the people of God through the centuries, the whole of world history, is coming to its climax **now!** This is the moment. 'Repent and believe the good news' meant put aside your own agenda and get on board with Jesus' agenda. He is the one through whom and in whom the new creation is beginning now!

So, in the gospels, we find that everywhere Jesus goes, new creation happens. When Jesus calms the storm, order is brought out of the chaos of the waters covering the earth, just as it was in the Genesis creation story. Jesus cures the blind see, makes the lame walk, sets the captive free. Wherever he goes creation is set right, healed, renewed. The final evil to be defeated is death itself and that victory is clinched in the resurrection. The new creation is definitively here.

That's why John is so concerned to emphasize that the resurrection happens on the first day of the week: he says so twice (20.1, 20.19). The first day is the beginning of the new creation. And you find these echoes all the way through John. The opening words of the gospel are 'In the beginning', the very same words with which the first creation in Genesis 1 begins. This is the new Genesis. In the first creation it was on the 6<sup>th</sup> day that human beings were created. In John on the sixth day, the Friday, Pilate brings Jesus out in front of the crowd and says 'Behold the man' (John 19.5). Behold indeed. Here is humanity as humanity is meant to be, set right, the new man. This is Genesis fulfilled as God originally intended. World history has reached its climax, God's intentions are fulfilled, new creation has begun.

The problem is, if God has acted to set the world to rights, how come there's still so much wrong with the world. Good question. The answer is we live between the launch of the new creation and its final culmination in a new heaven and a new earth. New creation has begun in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus; there's no turning back – but we await its culmination.

In the meantime, we have a job to do. Jesus said 'As the Father sent me, so I send you' and he breathed the Holy Spirit into them (John 20.21-22). In a nutshell, that's the mission of the church. We are sent by Jesus, as he was sent by the Father, to spread the ramifications of the resurrection throughout the whole earth. As Bishop Wright said in a memorable phrase, the mission of the church is to implement the resurrection, to work with God in carrying through the new creation.

This is a quick, very broad-brush sketch of the Christian story. There's much more that could be said. But there's enough in this overview to tell us who we are and what we are to do. It's a framework for thinking about mission. And you can see straight away how it gives rise to the marks of mission that we're familiar with:

**The mission of the Church is the Mission of Christ to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom**  
**To teach, baptise and nurture new believers**  
**To respond to human need by loving service**  
**To seek to transform the unjust structures of society**  
**To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth**  
**To worship and celebrate the grace of God**  
**And to live as one, holy, catholic and apostolic church**

## **Embracing Growth – a Change of Mindset**

Last year the diocesan plan we began to put together talked about cultivating a change of outlook throughout the diocese (appendix 1), nurturing a new mindset, if you like. I want to build on that beginning and say how important it is for us now to open our hearts and minds to embrace growth.

Now that might seem a very strange thing to say. After all we're so used to thinking we're in decline. For years, for decades, we've been reading reports and hearing talk about the decline of the church, declining attendance, declining numbers of people offering for ordination, declining resources, declining influence in society, declining relevance. Successive National Church Life Surveys have painted a picture of decline. Media reports have highlighted decline as well as abuses and conflict in the church that have led to reduced trust in the church and church leaders and reinforced decline. Politicians have been critical of church leaders when they have tried to participate in discussions in the public arena and questioned their credentials for doing so.

So it's no wonder we've become used to thinking negatively about who we are, and what we do. We've tended to become convinced that further decline is inevitable and that's coloured our outlook and our expectations.

Now, there are several things to say about this. First of all, the impression of church decline everywhere is not true. A recent article reported on church attendance in Italy and showed that in recent years there had been a marked increase in attendance rates. Modest growth has been recorded in some parts of the Anglican Church of Australia, too. A number of dioceses actually have growing attendance levels.

So church decline is not inevitable. That can be difficult to hear and believe because of the conditioning we've undergone over the last 30 years or so. We've accepted that church decline is part and parcel of the changing culture in which we live. It's one of the products of post-modernism and the changing place of religion in society that we just have to accept. Well, actually and somewhat surprisingly, that's not so!

In recent years the place of religion in societies has become more important, not less. Following September 11 and its aftermath in terrorism and armed conflict in various parts of the world, world leaders and the community at large have recognised that religious outlooks are important aspects of human society that have to be understood and taken into account. Religion is around to stay and we'd better make it part of the solution rather than allow it to be part of the problem. Interfaith dialogue is an essential aspect of mission in today's world.

But more importantly for our purpose today, we have not recognised the extent to which we have been unwitting collaborators in our own decline. We have actually been responsible for decline ourselves, to a fair degree, because of the policies we've followed, the practices we've encouraged and the decisions we've made.

Bob Jackson (2005), an archdeacon in the Diocese of Lichfield, has made a convincing case that attendance in the Church of England has declined because of the Church's own deliberate policies, decisions and practices. Much of the analysis and argument seems to me to apply to Australia too.

If this is true, it means that we are not simply helpless and at the mercy of a cruel post-modern world that has it in for us. If it's true that to a large extent we have contributed to our own decline by our own decisions, the corollary is that, to a larger extent than we have imagined, it is in our hands to change those policies and decisions and to embrace growth.

In this address I want to stimulate and encourage a change in the church's culture and expectations from 'acceptance of decline' to 'going for growth' (Jackson, 2005, 4). I want to draw on some of the key findings of Jackson's research and describe some of his suggestions and draw out some of the implications for each of our five commissions. I hope that will help to firm up our emerging vision for mission, provide some impetus and grist for the mill for each of the commissions, and assist us to turn around acceptance of decline to going for growth.

And let's be clear from the outset that growth isn't simply a numbers game. When we talk about growth we're talking about growing the church's impact for God's mission. Numbers are part of it but there's much more besides.

## **Bishops and Archdeacons**

Before I look at each of the commissions in turn, let me say first of all that there are also implications for bishops and archdeacons and other diocesan leaders. There is a whole nest of policies and approaches to do with care for clergy and leaders that need to be in place to reinforce a basic growth strategy. In making appointments, the main focus is to find the best leader in mission to grow the particular parish or agency concerned. And there are lessons bishops need to learn about the damaging impact of long vacancies and the need to leave clergy in place long enough for growth to happen, but not so long as to undermine it.

The church will not grow if clergy feel burnt out, stressed and joyless. Clergy can't be left feeling isolated and guilty as if they are solely responsible for decline in the church. There are many factors that have played a role in the cycle of decline that's been at work in the life of the church. Diocesan policies and decisions have contributed along with all sorts of reasons that are beyond the responsibility of individual clergy. Clergy can sometimes feel personally responsible for decline, when, looking at the total picture, they may well be more the victims of a culture of decline than perpetrators of it.

Putting together a workable strategy for growth that will reverse decline, rather than simply manage it, will, in itself, give clergy a shot in the arm. Being able to share with each other the joy of growth will mitigate isolation and guilt. But we may also need to work on providing new opportunities for older clergy, some of whom are worn out from years of overwork and stress. Making sure working hours, holidays, days off and recreation are all realistic and supportive will be important to avoid workaholicism and stress. We could look at opportunities for older clergy to spend the final years in ministry mentoring younger clergy by working as assistants. Other options include moving to part-time ministry perhaps while living in their own house.

As we go for growth problems and workloads might increase in some respects. We will need to match that with proper attention to care and morale. As clergy and other leaders are asked to assume new roles and ways of ministering so they will be supported and assisted to do so. Continuing education through clergy conferences as well as professional development opportunities all need to support the culture change from decline to growth. The bottom line is that it is possible to put in place strategies to turn decline around. When that starts to happen there will be new energy and optimism.

Let me turn then to the contribution that each of the commissions can make to a diocesan strategy for growth.

## **Parishes and Other Mission Agencies Commission**

In England and Australia a cycle of decline has become established in many parishes. It looks like this. Diminishing attendances lead to a worsening financial situation which makes it harder to pay for clergy which leads to there being fewer of them. Fewer clergy to do the work means less contact with people and less engagement with the community which reduces church attendance even further, which means even less money and so less clergy, and so the downward spiral continues.

There are other factors at work contributing to this cycle (Jackson, 2005, 7-9, 17-28). An increasingly elderly clergy age profile and worsening clergy and church morale are factors because younger clergy tend to have younger congregations and it's younger congregations that grow. But the church has been pursuing a policy of discouraging young ordinands. On closer examination team ministries were shown not to work, despite all sorts of good intentions. So much energy goes internally into keeping the team functioning which means much less time and attention directed externally relating to the community. The way clergy appointments are handled is a factor. Congregational growth tends to happen between years 5 and 12 of an incumbency but very often clergy move before year 5. And long interregnums, designed to allow a parish to save up some money to pay a new priest, can be destructive. A vacancy longer than 6 months contributes to a rapid downturn in attendance and undermines a parish's financial capacity.

Now, clearly, many of these factors are within the power of the church and church leaders to change. They are to do with decisions and policies that are in our hands. What is required is a consistent focus on growth for the whole diocese together with a set of policies (about people and money) that work together to reinforce the strategy. And it is within our capacity to do it.

Providing the right people with the right skills in the right places at the right time can lead to increased attendance, which leads to increases in the financial resources available, which can support a larger workforce, and a cycle of growth can be established. A coordinated approach and a focus on growth can reverse decline.

Of course, it's not all about policies and management. Churches can only grow if they're in touch with the risen Jesus and are committed to sharing the good news about him. But given that foundation we shouldn't underestimate the impact of our decisions. They can either help or hinder growth.

There are two levels in view here. The sorts of policies I've just been talking about are to do with decisions at diocesan level. Decisions like how we recruit, appoint, support and keep clergy and other leaders are key ones usually made by bishops and archdeacons. They're important.

Perhaps even more important are the decisions taken at the parish level by clergy and parish councils. How we provide for teenagers is an indicator both of our capacity to keep children beyond childhood and to nurture young adults in the faith. What we do with service times and noticeboards can all contribute to an overall strategy to engage people. There must be intentional efforts to teach and to share the faith. Churches that don't change decay, so the choice is between either a comfortable death or an uncomfortable life (Jackson, 2005, 58). There's a huge range of practical tools and resources available now which local churches can use to plan for spiritual renewal and growth. The key is to focus both on the life of the church and on engagement with the local community (ibid, 72-76).

Interestingly, Jackson discovered that some churches which had lost their stipendiary priest were growing and some churches without paid leadership at all were growing faster than some with paid leaders. This happens where the laity of the church have learned to live in a

different way. In these churches mission was seen not as running a church activity with a church organisation but as the laity living out their faith in their daily lives. Educating the laity wasn't to do with teaching lay people how to run the church better. It was about assisting them to live more faithful lives. In other words the church as an organisation or institution had taken a back seat and the focus was much more on a community of faith relating to the wider community around them. This involves the whole congregation not just a team of special leaders. Growing the church requires lay people not just to keep the wheels of the institution turning but to tell their own stories of faith.

Fresh expressions of church are part and parcel of growing the church and the associated uncomfortable life. Synod last year asked the bishops to provide some guidelines about fresh expressions. In consultation with deaneries and parishes that has been done and the guidelines made available throughout the diocese. They are reproduced as an appendix to this address.

Alongside enlivening and freshening existing congregations and faith communities we have large new population areas where we need to plant and grow new churches.

## **Schools Commission**

A similar situation faces us when we turn to the schools commission. Recent demographic work undertaken by the commission has identified 8 priority areas where new Anglican schools are currently needed and are feasible. That's an enormous opportunity for us as well as a significant challenge.

Delivering excellence in educational outcomes through existing and new schools is an important part of mission. There is more to our schools than that however.

What makes Anglican schools distinctive is the wider context of the Church's mission within which they are set. If schools are part and parcel of our mission, and mission is about new creation, then schools are one of the means by which the work of new creation can go forward.

To set education in the context of mission, and therefore new creation, is to suggest that our schools are places where each new generation of students can grasp the Christian grand narrative as a bigger context within which they will make their contribution to the world. Our task is to help students see that the occupations they choose and the lives they live are means by which God's work of new creation moves ahead.

Schools can come to see their role as engaging students in all manner of environmental, technological and philosophical issues as well as the arts – all in the service of new creation. So it's not just about educational excellence, cultivating knowledge and skills, so that students can excel in their chosen fields. It's also about providing a broader context in which students are assisted to discern their vocations, their callings; to see how their knowledge and skills and chosen professions will make a contribution to God's renewal of life on the earth.

We also have much work to do exploring the ways in which schools can function as faith communities. It's a complex area which invites a number of debates. In one sense schools are clearly faith communities, in that they are communities of a sort and are also related to the faith in some way. Debate arises, though, around whether schools should aim to be like church congregations and seek to evoke and nurture confessing faith in every member of the community. Some would say yes, that should be our hope if not our expectation. Others would say no, we should be more open and accepting of people of no faith and even other

faiths in our schools, maintaining an open stance to the wider community and encouraging dialogue and exploration.

Even if one takes this latter view, though, it begs the question of how schools could embrace more intentionally the evangelistic dimension of mission. And it leaves open the possibility of developing intentional faith communities as part of the wider school community – a kind of church within a school which is intentionally evangelistic. Such initiatives ought to benefit the school itself in practical ways. They should also strengthen the church's overall mission by making intentional use of the catchment that the school community and networks provide. A 2003 NCLS publication, **Profiling Australians**, revealed that 35 percent of young parents participated in organisations associated with their child's school (Bellamy, 2003). There are clues here for a broader approach, incorporating other dimensions of the marks of mission.

## **Community Services Commission**

And this kind of thinking, about incorporating other dimensions of mission, is not limited to schools. It can be applied to our community services as well. Clearly, the work we do in community services is one way in which the healing, reconciling, restoring work of new creation goes on. They are part and parcel of the church's mission to respond to human need by loving service and our efforts to transform unjust structures. That much is clear and there's plenty of room for development on those fronts.

But, to think in another direction as well, to what extent could our community services workplaces also be occasions of Christian faith community? Again the matter is debatable, but there seems to be room at least for some forms of Christian community, like cell churches for example, to operate as part of our community services. There are appropriate and sensitive ways for worship, proclamation, teaching and formation to take place in conjunction with delivering community services.

I'm not for one minute suggesting that, in a coercive or manipulative way, we should be imposing our faith on the people we serve. But I am talking about making available to those who work or volunteer in our services, as well as to those we serve, the heart and soul of what we do and why we do it. There is a spiritual dimension to human life which is more and more being recognised by medical and allied health fields. If anyone in human services is well-placed to serve people by offering opportunities to explore that spiritual dimension as part of the journey to wholeness and healing and new creation, it is the church-based services. There is room for creative innovation in this area.

Because God is concerned with renewing the whole creation not just with order in the church or saving individuals from a world that's going over the edge of a cliff into oblivion, the church finds itself in the public square in conversations that concern the general public, the shape of our society and the character of our community. Very often our community services people are at the cutting edge of dealing with issues of justice and care in our community. One only has to think of the work we do with refugees, with unemployed people and with those living with HIV/AIDS. Better communication and interaction between those involved in this work and our parish and faith communities will enliven and strengthen both, I think. Each can be enriched and strengthened by the other so that parishes embrace the justice and care dimension of mission more fully and community services derive strength and purpose from worship, prayer and the explicit celebration and practice of faith.

## Ministry Education Commission

Developing our three core commissions in these ways will require leadership of a high standard. This has implications for the work of ministry education. There is an additional task beyond what has been necessary in the past. We need still to train and equip people for the work of pastoral care but we also need a new breed of mission leaders; that is, people who will lead and grow and fashion communities of care. This is a kind of entrepreneurial role that requires a different set of skills and a different outlook. These leaders will be people who call into being things which don't yet exist. That is, create institutions and organisations and communal forms that express and point to and deliver new creation. I've reproduced in an appendix to this address a set of characteristics that highlight the nature of this leadership role.

The question is what will ministry education look like if we make mission the central focus. Let me imagine something of the future of ministry education in the diocese.

The heart of the enterprise will be giving people experience and practise at doing mission (McCoy, 2005). People in formation will be exposed to communities of faith actively and creatively engaged in mission. Learning by doing and experimenting will become increasingly important without displacing the need for sound academic skills and knowledge. Developing the right balance will produce a breed of entrepreneurial leaders. This will be the heart of ministry education in the years ahead.

A programme producing entrepreneurial leaders in mission will only be any good to us if we have a good number of people participating in it. That requires us to create a pool to fish from, if I might put it like that. A pool of potential leaders will be created through the combined efforts of youth ministry, university chaplaincy and tertiary ministry, Christian education programs in parishes, schools and other agencies. All these ministries will be educating people in the faith with confidence and clarity, especially young people. The whole diocese, and every part of it, will be intentional about spotting able young people and tapping them on the shoulder. So there will be a pool of people who are committed to and passionate about their faith, with leadership gifts and potential and looking for ways to be involved in mission. We will assist them to discern their vocation, whether it be as deacon or priest, youth worker or evangelist, educator or community worker, and guide them into an appropriate formation stream for that ministry. Our seekers days of recent years are a healthy start in this direction but there's a long way to go. Getting there will be a responsibility shared by every part of the diocese.

At the other end of the formation programme will be an effective deployment strategy so that we send the right people to the right places. We will have a pool of passionate, educated, entrepreneurial leaders prepared to serve where they are needed, and we will be able to direct them to identified priority areas.

In turn this will see new and vital communities of faith of different shapes and characters emerging. These communities will have embedded in their DNA, as it were, a desire to send people into God's mission, by recruiting and guiding them into education and formation. These communities will be generous in giving of people and money to see the mission go forward.

Ministry education will see parishes and mission agencies, schools, and community services as all integral to mission. They are all active agents in the Christian grand narrative. They all give expression to the new creation that God is bringing about. In all three sectors we will have leaders well versed and formed in the grand narrative and with the confidence and imagination to see what they're doing as part of that new creation.

Some past policies will be changed, like saying to young people who offer for ordination 'Come back later'. This just hasn't worked because many of them have trained for another profession, got married, started a family and taken out a mortgage, making it difficult to commence training at a later age. We will also make the process as helpful as possible. For example, students facing final exams need decisions about vocation to be made during their final year, and despite the best of intentions they're not necessarily helped by 12 or 18 months of exploration before they even attend a vocational discernment conference.

Young ordinands are needed if the church is to grow. They are also needed to be future leaders. Jackson (2005, 114-115) wryly observes that the army doesn't recruit colonels it recruits cadets; and the health department doesn't recruit specialists it trains junior doctors! This is not to say that there are too many older ordinands. It is to recognise that there are too few younger ones.

## **Diocesan Services Commission**

Just as there are policy decisions about people that can help or hinder growth, so there are some ways to deal with money which lead to decline and other ways that can undergird growth. In the gospels Jesus spends more time talking about money than about faith. How we handle money is closely related to our spiritual health as individuals and as a church.

First and foremost Christian giving shouldn't look and feel like a taxation system. In this respect, the Diocese of Brisbane is already on the right track. We have a system of voluntary parish contributions based on Christian giving. From time to time some of us are tempted to try a formal assessment system such as those in place in some parts of the Church of England and elsewhere in Australia. Jackson (2005, 157-168) cautions us about heading down that road.

Under a formal assessment scheme parish contributions to the Diocese are calculated on the basis of a kind of parish tax return. And people relate to those systems in much the same way as people relate to a taxation system. Enormous amounts of time and energy are spent trying to make sure it's fair to everyone. But there will always be some people who feel that they've received a rough deal. So there's always agitation going on to reform the system. And each time the system is changed there are new winners and new losers so it's not long before the new losers are agitating again for further change. There doesn't seem to be a perfect system and so any system almost invites churches to try to beat it and to minimise their contribution - their tax. On top of that it's very difficult for such systems to cope with fresh expressions of church, to cater for the differences between large and small churches and instead of encouraging growth, growth often appears to be taxed.

Instead, a healthy system will reflect a generosity of spirit and the values of the kingdom. It will be based on principles like: the strong should help the weak; the church should keep a presence in every community as far as possible; denominational bonds should be strengthened; and we should encourage generosity out of freedom and personal relationship (Jackson, 2005, 171-179).

The Church of England is struggling in this area because for many years clergy stipends have been paid out central funds held by the Church Commissioners. We find that situation hard to imagine. Our local parishes have always been responsible for the costs of local clergy. In England they're just getting used to that idea.

Then there are the costs of the diocesan operation. Those costs can be shared by all the local churches in a number of ways. Jackson suggests the total should be divided by the number of

stipendiary personnel and a share allocated to each ministry unit on that basis. Any other diocesan income (from investments and so on) can then be applied to missionary activity through grants to parishes or direct spending by the diocese.

Any parish giving over and above the local costs and its share of diocesan costs is shown in the parish accounts as Christian giving. This voluntary giving based on freedom, love and personal relationship may be directed in three ways.

It may be given to a diocesan fund to ensure that the church keeps a presence in as many areas as possible. This is basically how our own Bush Ministry Fund works. The diocese can then pay a subsidy to allow a parish to pay its bills, including its share of diocesan costs.

Secondly, Christian giving may go to a diocesan fund overseen by a board made up of representatives of the diocese and the givers themselves. The trustees of the fund decide which projects to support.

Thirdly, Christian giving may be made directly from parish to parish or from parish to project, often within a deanery but beyond those boundaries as well. Parishes can help each other out and can actively support growth projects they see as worthwhile.

This mixed approach means that parishes meet their basic obligations to the diocese but are not taxed if they generate more income for development projects or if additional income results from such projects (Jackson, 2005, 215).

That's the income side of the equation. What about expenditure? Controlling costs involves working as a diocesan team and looking as objectively as possible at the big picture to set priorities, even if that is uncomfortable. It's not about individuals fighting for their own corner, but making the growth strategy the focus for the diocese as a whole (Jackson, 2005, 181-192).

Dioceses should look hard at: chaplains (and whether institutions shouldn't pay for their own chaplaincy services as parishes must); diocesan ministry advisers (youth, children, education and whether parishes believe their usefulness outweighs their costs); buildings (whether some diocesan services can't be relocated at reduced costs); and diocesan committees (whether the size and frequency of meetings can be reduced and whether some are 'talking shops' contributing little to mission).

A fundamental shift in thinking needs to take place at the diocesan level. In the past budgets have been formulated on the basis of how can we keep going what we already have. How can we maintain ministry? We need now to join up the financial strategy to the growth strategy and ask how can we provide resources to grow the church.

Jackson (2005, 193-208) floats the idea of a Diocesan Growth Fund. This recognises that the existing diocesan budget is basically ring-fenced for keeping going what already exists, for maintaining inherited patterns of church life. A Diocesan Growth Fund would in turn be ring-fenced and preserved for growth initiatives into the future. It would be built up over the longer term as a capital asset, with its capital value preserved against inflation, and excess income in any year used to fund growth projects.

The DGF could be built up in a number of ways: by freeing up any available existing assets, from allocating unexpected windfall income to this fund, and from Christian giving for growth by parishes, organisations and individuals.

The DGF would be managed by a board which would represent bishops, diocesan personnel, and donors. Applications could be received from all levels in the diocese including bishops, archdeacons, parishes, deaneries, schools, organisations. Funds would be granted according to developed criteria but be primarily for people rather than buildings. Partnerships would probably be a priority with the DGF contributing perhaps on a \$ for \$ basis with the project sponsor.

The purpose of the fund would be to have the diocese offering financial help to assist with their growth initiatives.

Now we wouldn't want to just pick up and copy all these suggestions. Indeed, we're already making good use of some of these ideas such as the way our parishes contribution scheme works, the Bush Ministry Fund, the Good Shepherd Fund and Anfin. But there are some new ideas and some nuances here well worth thinking about. It shows how a diocese could approach money matters in a coordinated way, in keeping with the principles of the kingdom of God and in a way which supports a basic growth strategy.

## **Conclusion**

In this address I've deliberately focused on one recent publication which, although arising from the English context, in my view, contains a lot of common sense that's applicable in Australia. And it offers a lot of hope. I believe it is possible for us to embrace growth as a strategy right across the diocese. I've tried to draw out some of the implications of a coordinated strategy for growth for the work of each of the diocesan commissions and for the bishops and archdeacons.

I don't for one minute suggest growth will be easy. There are forces at work in our society against which we will have to struggle. But evidence in both England and Australia already shows us that growth is possible. With constructive policies, practices and decisions there is more within our reach than we might have thought. A practical step might be for your parish council, or some other group of which you are part, to read and discuss the possibilities opened up by Bob Jackson's book.

I invite each of you, together with each of those you represent, to shoulder a share of the load and to see how, in the faith of Jesus Christ, God might yet use us as agents of his mission of new creation in the church and in the world.

Let us tackle the work before us with a renewed confidence in God and a renewed sense of purpose about the mission God has called us to share.

Amen.

## Appendix 1

### Our Outlook

The following table was compiled to describe the outlook that we will encourage within the Diocese.

<i>Wherever we find...</i>	<i>we encourage...</i>
defensiveness	confidence
decline	growth
division	diversity
ignorance	understanding
standing still	learning and growing
clinging	experimenting
nominal	committed
closed	open
isolated, withdrawn	engaged with community
tired	beautiful
observers	ownership
pessimism	optimism
stinginess	generosity
cold, rational	warmth
receiving	contributing
ideas	experience
suspicion	trust
silos (isolation)	communion
fear	courage

## Appendix 2

### **Ad clerum arising from resolution of Synod 2005 regarding fresh expressions of church**

May 2006

#### **AD CLERUM**

Dear brothers and sisters

#### **New Expressions of Church**

At the session of Synod held in June 2005 the Synod carried a resolution relating to new expressions of Church and the need to explore further initiatives in outreach. A copy of the resolution is attached to this email.

The bishops and I had a preliminary discussion about the various elements in the resolution, and in November 2005 an Ad Clerum highlighted some of the issues and invited people within the parishes and other ministry areas, and at gatherings of chaplaincies, area deaneries and archdeaconries to contribute their thoughts.

Ten submissions were received and were very helpful in further understanding the issues. It is clear that it is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules from the outset that both rule in some possibilities and rule out others. Rather, we suggest that any and all ideas should be open to consideration via a proper process. However, some principles may now be confirmed:

People, parishes and other ministry areas should be encouraged to develop initiatives in mission and have space to do so. Our policies should tend to be permissive of new expressions of ministry rather than restrictive.

New expressions of church should be respectful of the existing, inherited expressions.

In considering desirable characteristics of a new expression of Church from an Anglican standpoint the Lambeth Quadrilateral provides foundational principles. The Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888 was written to set out the Anglican standpoint in matters of Christian reunification. A copy is attached for your convenience. Of course all these attributes may not be fully evident from the beginning of the emergence of a fresh expression of Church. However, over time the new initiative should grow to embrace them all.

We should be aware of and make good use of the diversity of worship styles and formats provided for in our prayer books. Any initiative or new expression of church, if it involves worship, must be consistent with the *Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia* – in particular, that means that the Book of Common Prayer together with the Thirty-nine Articles are regarded as the authorized standard of worship and doctrine. Canons of General Synod adopted in this diocese have also authorized the two Australian prayer books. In addition, the Archbishop can authorize deviations if they do not contravene any principle of doctrine or worship found in the BCP or the Articles.

The services of Baptism and Holy Communion have important places in the BCP and the Lambeth Quadrilateral. For evangelistic purposes, it is possible for those new to the Anglican faith to be nurtured on a liturgy of the Word, which in time leads to participation also in sacramental worship.

Respecting each other as colleagues and partners in Christ's mission means respecting the particular charges and responsibilities each one has been given under God, by the Archbishop. We are not completely independent agents acting autonomously but members of the Body of Christ. Our respect for each other should be very evident when considering initiatives in mission that propose to cross existing responsibilities or boundaries. This is not to preclude such possibilities but it does mean they should be developed with care and mutual respect.

Any extra parochial proposal needs the approval of the Archbishop through the Regional bishop. The proposal should have the agreement of the Parish Priest and Parish Council in which the 'new expression of church' is to be located.

Consensus is the ideal but if that is not possible, there may be instances where the Archbishop-in-Council can resolve the matter under Sec. 5(3) of the Parishes Regulation Canon. In other circumstances it may be appropriate for the Archbishop to resolve the matter by designating the proposal as a 'chaplaincy' and in that way authorize the new area of ministry and license a priest to it.

An annual review of the operation of an extra parochial proposal will be undertaken by the Regional Bishop for the first three years.

Parish boundaries do not place a limitation on the people's freedom to worship and minister and be ministered to across the boundaries – within the physical limitations imposed by distance. We use parish boundaries rather to delineate the places where the necessary pastoral duties of the clergy and parish ministry teams are to take place and which should not be neglected but fostered and helped to grow.

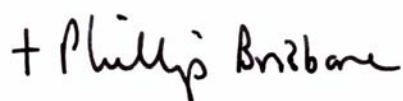
At present there is the possibility for non-geographical parishes. We currently have two such parishes, each formed around a particular indigenous group. The *Parishes Regulation Canon* [sec.5(1)(b)] permits a parish to be defined by reference to "a group of people which in the opinion of the Archbishop-in-Council is a unit of ministry suitable for the constitution of a Parish". This provision makes further flexibility possible.

Diocesan canons and regulations are there to assist us in carrying out our share in Christ's mission. They represent the considered wisdom and discernment of this diocese as to how we best live and minister together. However, we are not to be enslaved to the letter of the law. If we find the law restricting what we together discern to be God's call to us then of course canons and regulations can be changed. An important question to ask is what mission initiatives do we feel called to undertake but find ourselves prevented by the current rules. If the current rules are too inflexible then let's consider changing them.

Brothers and sisters, thank you for all you are doing to promote the work of Christ. Please be assured of my prayers for you and for your parishioners as together we seek to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in building up the Kingdom of God in this diocese.

With my best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phillip Brisbane". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Archbishop

## Appendix 3

### Future shapes of ministry from Jackson (2005, 121)

Pastor to the flock	Leader in mission
Church curator	Church planter
Chaplain	Missionary
Settler	Pioneer
Conformist	Entrepreneur
Being safe	Taking risks
Maintaining existing forms	Pioneering fresh expressions
Doing the ministry	Ensuring it is done
Father Cork	Enabler of others' ministries
Multi-competent dog collar	Specialist team
Single-church leader	Oversight of churches
High-cost operation	Volunteer-led
Lone Ranger	Collaboration in the team
Middle-aged	The young
Manager of decline	Inspirer for growth
Building-centred	Relationship-centred
Rock of stability	Manager of change
Authority figure	Authenticity advert
Establishment figure	Counter-cultural leader
Independent operators	Working together

## Appendix 4

### Resolutions of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Synod, October 2004 referred to in the Address

#### Mission & Attendance – 67/04

#### MISSION AND ATTENDANCE

That this General Synod:

- 1 Expresses its appreciation to Mr Wayne Brighton, Mr Keith Castle and Dr John Bellamy for their comprehensive report *Church Attendance and Mission 1991-2001* and helpful concluding discussion questions, which was both confronted and positively challenged the Anglican Church of Australia with the raw statistical realities of our declining attendance and relevance in Australian society.
- 2 Acknowledges that the Anglican Church of Australia is called to be an active participant in God's mission to our nation whereby its people might be saved through hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ as declared in Holy Scripture in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 3 Responds to our declining attendance not with despair or discouragement, but with renewed trust in our sovereign God, confident in the words of Christ that he will build his church and that the gates of hell shall not overcome it; and therefore resists any temptation from within or without our church to adapt the unchanging gospel in an effort to make it more palatable to an unbelieving generation, since the gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe.
- 4 Recognises that the Anglican Church in Australia has undergone substantial numerical decline as shown in the *Church Attendance and Mission 1991-2001* report (General Synod 2004 Book 3a, Standing Committee Report, pp102-131), resulting in significant demographic challenges to the sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 5 Acknowledges that without immediate and wide-spread action, the alarming rate of decline (~20%, General Synod 2004 Book 3a, Standing Committee Report, p109) in the under 50 age group is a cause for grave concern for the future of the Anglican Church in Australia. This must be our highest priority.
- 6 Affirms that an important strategy for future mission in Australia will be the development of a 'mixed economy' Church consisting of existing and fresh expressions working together in partnership. As the development of this model will require considerable cooperation and collegiality it asks that:
  - (a) the Standing Committee of General Synod:
    - (i) make evangelistic mission a priority strategic issue for the next triennium;
    - (ii) examine local and overseas initiatives at starting new communities of faith and fresh expressions of church to ensure that the Church nationally is better informed about developments and potential areas of interest;

- (iii) pay particular attention to the recommendations of the Children’s and Young People’s Taskforce (as previously approved by this General Synod) in their deliberations concerning the development of new communities of faith;
    - (iv) determine what training and development might be necessary to foster leadership and ministry skills required in these areas; and
    - (v) release resources, both human and financial, to further work in this key area as appropriate.
  - (b) the Bishops’ Conference to:
    - (i) consider the consider the place and potential contribution of new communities of faith and fresh expressions of church to the long-term life of Australian Anglicanism;
    - (ii) discuss how permeable our parish and diocesan boundaries might need to be in view of the fact that our society lives increasingly in networks than neighbourhoods;
    - (iii) determine what appropriate processes and procedures might be required to facilitate ministry across these geographical boundaries; and
    - (iv) how they might play an active brokering role in their apostolic duties as leaders of mission.
- 7 Urges dioceses to more clearly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ by:
- (a) appraising the health of existing ministries and parishes;
  - (b) reviewing diocesan ordinances so as to better facilitate mission initiatives;
  - (c) considering the contribution of new communities of faith to this goal;
  - (d) developing medium to long-term strategic plans for the grown of the church through evangelism;
  - (e) developing diocesan processes, procedures and partnerships for brokering mission initiatives within and across diocesan boundaries; and
  - (f) releasing diocesan resources, both human and financial, as appropriate to support such strategies;
- 8 Encourages the formation of a coalition of interested parties and practitioners so that learning and resources about starting new communities and faith and fresh expressions of church might be shared and developed.
- 9 Requests that the General Secretary collate, summarise and distribute the feedback from the discussion at this Synod and subsequent deliberations from the Standing Committee of General Synod.

- 10 Recognising that much of our resources are tied up with maintaining various structures in our church, encourages all diocesan standing committees/councils and synod meetings in 2005 to re-examine the percentage of their financial budgets that directly resource church growth, church planting, evangelism and evangelism training in their diocese, and to plan how they might proceed in the difficult realignment of resources towards such ends.
- 11 recognising that strong leadership is essential if decline is to be reversed in our church, and that proclaiming the gospel in an increasingly secular Australian society requires of our people much courage, boldness and inspiration, encourages all bishops and incumbents to lead their dioceses and parishes by personal and public example according to their evangelistic gifts and abilities.

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