



**Archbishop's Presidential Address
First Session of the 53rd Synod of the Diocese of Sydney
The Most Reverend Kanishka Raffel
11 September 2023**

Like most people, I can recall where I was on Sept 11, 2001. I had visited a local family in Shenton Park, Perth to discuss the baptism of their child, and returned to my home around 900pm. I glanced at the television and noticed they were broadcasting some kind of disaster movie. I changed the channel and to my surprise found that the same movie was on the next channel. A moment later, of course, I realised it wasn't a movie. A plane had flown into the North Tower of the World Trade Centre in New York and before long, I along with millions around the world, watched horrified and disbelieving as a second plane flew into the South Tower. That night 2996 people from 80 countries around the world lost their lives in the most deadly of terrorist attacks, including 10 Australians. The next day the newspaper headlines proclaimed 'The day the world changed forever' above images of billows of smoke emanating from the twin towers, shortly before their devastating and gut-wrenching collapse. No doubt, 9/11 as we have come to refer to it, has cast its shadow over the first two decades of this century, provoking amongst other things, Australia's twenty year military involvement in Afghanistan.

About two thousand years earlier, a Jewish teacher and healer was executed by crucifixion, nailed to a cross by the Roman Empire. On the third day, he walked out of the tomb in which he had been laid. Ever since, Christians have said, that was the day that changed the world forever. In the aftermath of 9/11, US President George W Bush announced a military response that was originally called Operation Infinite Justice but later changed its name to Operation Enduring Freedom. They were names redolent of aspirations of cosmic, if not divine, magnitude. Infinite Justice, Enduring Freedom. In reality, military operations are incapable of producing such results.

'It is for freedom that Christ has set you free', the apostle Paul said to the Christians in Galatia; and to the philosophers and sceptics of Athens, 'God has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.'

Raised from the dead, Jesus speaks to his eleven doubting disciples and launches his own mission: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always to the very end of the age.

Jesus initiates a mission that expresses a four-fold comprehensiveness.

It is authoritatively presided over by the Risen Lord Jesus himself.

It is a universal mission - to all nations offering personal and eternal relationship with the Triune God, Father Son and Spirit.

Its fruit is the obedience of faith; a community of disciples taught and obedient to the Word of Christ. Its timeframe is open-ended; this mission is to endure until the very end of the age.

All authority, all nations, all that Jesus commanded, ever-present.

Such has been the shape of Christian mission from the beginning. And so it remains today.

Purpose

Under God, the boundaries of our diocese reach from Berowra Waters in the north, Norfolk Island in the east, Lithgow to the west and Ulladulla in the south. It stretches 300 kms from north to south along the coast and 150 km west at its farthest point. It encompasses the greenfield corridors in the north west and the south west of Greater Sydney; it includes the mighty Illawarra, the Southern Highlands, the Blue Mountains, as well as the settled suburbs of Sydney from Vaucluse to Strathfield, from Rooty Hill to Campbelltown, from Kellyville to Manly and everywhere in between. The lands that are the traditional custodianship of the Eora in the Sydney Basin, the Dharawal in the Illawarra, the Yuin peoples of the south coast and the Dharug, Gundungarra and Wiradjuri peoples of the western ranges. I acknowledge and offer my respect to them and to their elders, and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters among us today.

Within this geographical territory every local church is engaged in ministering to their specific community. Although we have one gospel of the Lord Jesus to share, we recognise that in different parts of Sydney there are particular challenges and opportunities associated with bringing the gospel to the people of that area. This is the work that every local church undertakes as you think about what it means to hold out the word of life in the place that God has put you. What a joy it is, that across this complex and multicultural diocese there are Anglican congregations seeking to love and serve their neighbours, making Christ known in every place. Isn't that thrilling? It is typically Anglican that we should seek to minister to every soul within the geographical territory that we call the parish – but it is also reflective of the Lord's love and care for the one sheep that has gone astray, the Lord's attention to every sparrow and to every human made in his own image. We care about individuals because the Lord who made us all, is personally concerned for everyone that he has made.

Here is one of the great strengths and gifts of our Anglican polity. We are mission minded and comprehensive in intent. We seek to proclaim the gospel to every creature under heaven.

Making disciples is primarily the work of churches. Foundational to the work of disciple making is the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ so as to call on those who hear, to repent and entrust themselves to the Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of sin and new life through faith in his name. Because we grow as disciples in the same way that we become disciples – hearing, receiving, trusting and obeying God's word in prayerful dependence on his Spirit – this is the mainstay of churches. In all kinds of word ministries, among believers and not-yet believers churches engage in making and growing disciples. But as a diocesan fellowship of churches and other organisations, including schools we ought to give thanks that in Sydney this is a purpose we share.

I am bringing before the Synod a statement of purpose and priorities for the diocesan fellowship. It is not intended to be a mission statement for your church. Nor is it intended to be a mission statement for the organisations all of which have their own specific ministry purposes. But it seeks to recognise that the disciple-making purpose of the churches may be, and also is, served by the organisations and schools that under God, are part of our diocesan fellowship. I want to invite us to think creatively and intentionally about how as a diocesan fellowship of churches, organisations and schools we may collaborate in the broader purpose that we share – the enduring Christian purpose of making disciples until the end of the age.

1.1 Fellowship

For us, the word fellowship has become sentimentalised and almost trivialised to the point where we hardly mean more than a pleasant cup of tea (or even a good chance of a lukewarm cup of tea!) and an innocuous conversation after church. But in scripture, fellowship and its synonyms – participation, sharing and partnership - are words full of vitality, promise and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul gives thanks for his partnership or fellowship in the gospel with the Philippian church 'from the first day until now'. It was first and foremost a sharing in Christ, a unity that was born from the Spirit as the Philippians put their trust in Christ and acknowledged him as Lord and Saviour. The partnership of the apostle and the believers in Philippi consisted in their *prayers* for him and his

gospel mission, their *sharing in suffering* for the gospel as they experienced the opposition that he also experienced and as they *imitated* the costly pattern of Christ, humbling themselves in service of one another; it consisted in a *financial partnership* as their extreme poverty welled up in compassionate gospel generosity to support Paul's *mission* and to *bring aid* to the destitute and desperate brethren in Jerusalem. Such are the majestic contours of the word 'fellowship', just in the letter to the Philippians. So much more than a cup of tea!

So when I talk about the diocesan fellowship of churches and organisations, I am speaking in a shorthand way about the fellowship we share as Christian believers. In the biblical sense organisations don't have fellowship – people do. Even when we speak of the fellowship of churches – as we might to describe a denomination – we mean the fellowship of the believers who are united in Christ, who share in the Holy Spirit who binds us together and works in us to conform us to Christ and corrects, trains, encourages and equips us by his Word.

As Sydney Anglicans who gather as churches, we have by ordinances of this Synod brought into being organisations and schools who along with the churches seek to serve the disciple-making purpose of the Lord Jesus. Shaped by the gospel we share in a common purpose.

Our earliest Anglican organisations were schools, established by the Colonial Chaplains for the Christian education of the children of the colony. In 1856, under Bishop Barker's leadership, the Synod established the Church Society. Its objects were the provision of church buildings and clergy for new areas, and mission to the Aboriginal people of Sydney. Evidently, it was the forerunner of New Churches for New Communities, Evangelism and New Churches and the Growth Corporation! In 1911 it changed its name to the Home Mission Society (the forerunner of Anglicare today) and expanded its objects to include training of lay evangelists (anticipating the Department of Evangelism), support for women's ministry, the building of schools, a loans board for building churches, and ministry to welcome migrants – functions which continue today through the Schools Corporation, Sydney Anglican Loans Board, the independent ADM and the Priscilla & Aquila Centre, and Anglicare. (Although it is hard to know how they managed to do all that without an acronym!)

Moore College was established soon after the Church Society in 1858 and 160 years later continues to train men and women for gospel ministry not only in our churches but schools, universities, and other setting, not only to serve in Sydney but throughout Australia and the world, not only for Anglican ministries but in many denominational and non-denominational contexts. How we thank God for our College.

The churches in Sydney have always sought to combine resources to advance the gospel in fellowship with one another, and created organisations to that end, as creatures of the Synod.

But today, it is neither certain nor especially common in Anglican dioceses, in Australia at least, that churches, schools and organisations share in a common gospel purpose.

I met recently with the men and women who serve in Anglican schools in the diocese as Chaplains and teachers of Christian Studies. How glad and grateful I am for their dedication, imagination and heart to bring the gospel to the children and young adults with whom they interact many times a week, often over many years, the vast majority of whom have no other opportunity to hear of the love and sovereign grace of the Lord Jesus. Another 70 or more chaplains are engaged by Anglicare to bring the word of God to those who live in seniors living communities or seniors care; or hostels, hospitals, prisons as well as to those who serve in police or emergency services. About 6000 people meet weekly in churches run by Anglicare chaplains.

But when I speak of sharing in a diocesan purpose of disciple-making, I am not only speaking of those who serve directly in word ministry. SDS are not primarily engaged in making disciples. SDS puts into effect the decisions of this Synod and provides support in legal, finance, and HR, so as to facilitate the ministry of our churches. The Property Trust and the Growth Corporation engage with

parishes to steward the property resources of local churches in such a way as to expand and sustain the ministry of the parish. Yet no one should doubt that the brothers and sisters who serve in these organisations are self-consciously oriented toward the disciple making purpose of this diocesan fellowship. How grateful we can be for the expertise being brought to bear in these areas of property, finance, law and development in the service of making disciples.

What's more, it is overwhelmingly the case that those who govern our schools and organizations, as well as those who lead them, share a common conviction about the gospel mission in which we are engaged. This is not merely a matter of Synod appointments to our organisational boards, but an answer to our prayers that God would raise up men and women of godly character and gospel conviction with a willingness to serve in governance and oversight, as well as in management. Over 300 Sydney Anglicans serve on school and organisational boards. Many of them are highly skilled people who generously bring their expertise, along with a gospel heart. Most of these people, not to mention the hundreds more who serve in our organisations and schools, are members of our churches. So the local church is enabling and strengthening the Christian character and purpose of our organisations by providing the essential *ministry of the word* that equips believers for all that God has prepared for them to do, and the *Christian community* in which together we seek to know the Lord, serve his people and grow up into the whole measure of his fullness.

Does this sound like I am stating the obvious? I can assure you it is not! Rather it is a work of God which we ought to recognise, receive in humble thanks as a gift from our Heavenly Father, and treasure as a stewardship to be put to the service of the Lord's commission to make and grow disciples.

The draft Governance Policy that comes before the Synod is both an expression and a bulwark of the Christian purpose of our organisations. Over many years, the Synod has sought to ensure that the men and women who serve as governors of our organisations and schools are people of Christian faith and character. The draft Governance Policy on which you are invited to provide comment and feedback takes this another step forward with the Statement of Commitment to Organisational Faithfulness. Many of us are familiar with the trajectory of organisations founded with Christian intent to serve a Christian purpose, only to slowly wax and wane in demonstrable Christian commitment over time. We can think of international household names like the Red Cross and Harvard University that have traversed this path. The Statement of Commitment to Organisational Faithfulness is a way of ensuring not only that those who serve on our boards are themselves Christians, but also that they will pursue the Christian purposes of the organisation as they are expressed in the organisation's constituting documents and in accordance with our biblical convictions. It is a significant step forward.

That we may say with some confidence that our diocese is a fellowship of churches, organisations and schools shaped by the gospel and sharing in a common purpose, is something for which we ought humanly to thank our forebears who have laboured to articulate a biblical vision of Christian mission and ministry which has been so fundamental in the devotion and discipleship of so many of us Sydney Anglicans. But we ought also, under God, to recognise that this is a rare and precious legacy and a vital stewardship. We have, if I may put it this way, been given five talents. We might reverently recall the Lord's saying, 'From those to whom much has been given, much will be demanded, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.'

Luke 12:48b

What might we then do in partnership with one another for the sake of the gospel in which we share? What are we hoping to see?

1.2 Multiplication

Under God we seek to see God multiply believers in Christ, multiply churches and multiply workers for the harvest field. The multiplication of faithful Christians, bible-believing churches and servant-hearted gospel minded leaders in the church, family and community at large is the work of God, work that only God can bring about, and we may only dare to articulate such aspirations in prayerful

dependence on God's Holy Spirit to work first in us, changing our own self-centred and self-promoting hearts to hearts broken by the Lord of glory and grace, and hearts broken for the world alienated from God and facing his just judgement. We need the work of God in us, so that we long for the welfare of our neighbours and friends and fellow Sydneysiders with the longing of Jesus who wept over Jerusalem, though it was hardened against him.

1.3 Context

The Synod business paper describes some of the context in which we seek to proclaim Christ as Lord, and our community's great need for the light, life, health and hope of the gospel. I am very grateful for the sustained efforts of Dean Sandy Grant along with others in the diocese, and beyond it, including notably our host in this place, the Rev Stu Cameron for their effort to see legislative action to restrict the accessibility of online gambling services and poker machines, both of which target the most vulnerable and cause immeasurable grief in hundreds of individual lives and families.

We join all Australians in being grieved and outraged by the number of women, especially, who experience violence in their own homes. Our Domestic Violence Monitoring group reports to this Synod.

The Anglicare report 'Hungry or Homeless – Tough Choices in a Cost-of-Living Crisis' records the vulnerability to homelessness experienced by increasing numbers of young people as well as women and children affected by family violence, and by working Australians sometimes with more than one job, who are unable to access affordable housing. I thank God for all that our ministers, churches and agencies, including many of you, are doing to bring practical help, compassion and hope to people in all kinds of vulnerable circumstances. Thank you.

The context of our mission is no less needy than it was at the beginning but at least in some places, it is arguably less open. Amongst other things, the widening gap between the individualism of the wider culture and the biblical ethics of humanity put us at odds with the dominant culture's primary virtue of autonomous self-expression. However, this is hardly new. Jesus said, '...it is from within, out of a person's heart that evil thoughts come – sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.' (Mark 7:20-23). We hear the word of the Lord and instantly know the conviction of his Spirit.

I have no hesitation in saying that the disciple making mission that the Lord entrusted to his disciples was intended by him to be an expression of obedience to the great command to love God with our whole selves and to love our neighbours as ourselves. What greater gift could we offer our fellow Australians than just what we ourselves have received? The experience of God's rescue from the coming wrath, forgiveness of sin and adoption into his family, through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord and his Cross. What greater treasure is there than the riches of God's grace to be known in the gospel of his Son? What greater refuge is there than the rest offered by the one who is lowly and gentle in heart? What greater freedom than the light and easy yoke of the Lord who loved us and gave himself for us?

2. Process

In pursuing a common purpose as a fellowship of churches and organisations and schools, I am urging upon us more intentional commitment to communication, collaboration and coordination. The three Cs! Talking together, working together and planning together. As the Funding Principles report says, such things do not require funding! But they do require an investment of time in relationships, prayer that might build trust and a mutually encouraging sense of partnership, a willingness to forgive and to persevere. Can we cultivate instincts of communication, collaboration and coordination? I believe there are many benefits from doing so, including the potential to multiply our impact, identify opportunities that might otherwise go unnoticed or unattempted, and avoiding overlap and duplication.

And I believe that it is urgent that we do so. Few people have any reason to visit a church, and the vast majority of people in Sydney have no real likelihood of encountering the gospel of the Lord Jesus in the ordinary course of events. Collaborative effort can multiply the opportunities for people to develop friendships with Christians or encounter the gospel message.

Of course, such collaboration already exists in spades!

Mission Areas of course, bring together local churches in the same geographic area. Some are able to offer mutual encouragement and support among the senior ministers, some allow youth and children's ministers to network and coordinate activities and outreach, some conduct regional mission reaching out to their neighbourhoods in a concerted and coordinated way. At one level this may seem both obvious and not that significant but on the contrary, this takes generosity, vulnerability humility and a self-forgetful commitment to the progress of the gospel. I thank God for such expressions of gospel partnership amongst our churches and I hope you will pray with me for more, and do what you can to foster such work.

The Anglicare mobile community pantry ministry operates in 52 parishes across the diocese, last year resulting in more than 23000 contacts with customers served by 350 church volunteers. When I talk to rectors about this, they all tell me this has a positive impact on the way the church is regarded in the community even by those who don't access the service, and in many cases leads to opportunities for further ministry including attendance at church run community events, church services, and bible study groups.

The Anglicare Cross Cultural Services team (full disclosure – I am related by marriage to a team member) directly partner with English Language ministry teams in 87 churches across the diocese, including training and classroom resources. Just in the last month, I heard of a woman from a non-Christian religious background who began attending ESL classes in a local church two years ago, subsequently joined an easy English bible study and was recently baptised. This is a story repeated around the Diocese.

It's a source of great joy to me to hear about the way in which Youthworks is supporting and resourcing youth and children's ministry in our local churches. The Youthworks Ministry Support Team works with 20 youth and children's ministry networks across the diocese to run 20 youth and kids leaders' training days for 1500 volunteer leaders in our churches. The Leaders in Training camps for years 9-12 have grown to 3 camps a year with 750 youth participating from 140 churches. Many of these church groups are small and unspectacular to the casual observer. But in God's economy, he uses the things that are not to shame the things that are. Here is the fruit of collaboration across the fellowship for the purpose of making disciples. Churches, schools and our own organizations like Youthworks serving in partnership. These young leaders are already serving in their churches and schools. Will you pray with me that in the future they may lead our churches, schools and organisations as well as their own families, communities, ministry enterprises and organisations?

At an organisational level, the property managers of six diocesan organisations have reinstated quarterly meetings, and the newly formed Sydney Anglican Schools Heads Association (known as Sasha) has begun to interact with my team and the Standing Committee on behalf of Anglican School Heads in a way that is enhancing our ability to work collaboratively, encourage one another, plan and pray for the common mission we share.

I'm grateful to Archdeacon Flinders who has worked closely with the CEOs of our organisations to establish a CEOs 'Executive' last year, and this year the CEOs of Anglicare Simon Miller and the Anglican Schools Corporation, Peter Fowler are bringing to the Synod a motion (M5) in which they are seeking your encouragement to advance the goal of collaboration in the disciple-making purpose of the diocese within the framework of their specific organisational purposes, and encouraging all of our organisations to amend their constituting ordinances so as to allow them to advance the broader

purpose of the diocese in addition to their mandated purposes. If I may say so, this is wonderful gospel-mindedness. Enhanced communication, collaboration and coordination cannot be imposed by ordinance – at least, not effectively and not sustainably. This motion originated with the CEOs (not with me!) and speaks of a warm affirmation of our common purpose, but more than that, of a generous spirit of partnership and mutual accountability. I give thanks for such things, and I hope you will draw much encouragement from it.

3. Priorities

In order to see a multiplication of believers, churches and leaders, we have identified several priority areas in which we hope to facilitate greater collaboration as a diocesan fellowship over the next five years.

Our highest priorities arise from our most fundamental commitments.

As Sydney Anglicans we are committed to the truth, authority, clarity and unity of the Bible as God's Word, our rule in life and faith, and we rejoice that through the ministry of the word, God works powerfully in the lives of his people by his Holy Spirit, as we 'read, mark, learn and inwardly digest' Holy Scripture.

We are committed to prayer as a gift and privilege of the children of God to ask for what we need for life and service of God, and a means of grace by which God is pleased to bring about his purposes in the world.

We are committed to obeying and prioritising the command of Jesus to make disciples of all nations by going in love to all those who do not know Christ, whether our near neighbours or those overseas, whether sharing our culture or from diverse backgrounds.

We are committed to the local church as the gathered people of God, an outpost of the gospel in every community (being transformed by the truth, grace, love and joy of the Lord) which has the responsibility to proclaim the gospel in the community and make Christ known in word, in loving relationships with others and in works of service.

If you were to ask me what I hope might be the lasting impact of this Presidential Address, I would say a renewed commitment to *partnership in prayer* - for the work of making and growing disciples.

That as the churches of the diocese we would not only be concerned for prayer for our own ministries, and the work and witness of the members of our church, but also for the disciple making and disciple growing work of the neighbouring churches and our gospel impact on our local area. That we would pray gladly for our partners in CMS and Anglican Aid in seeing the world transformed by Christ, and for our College in its vital work of training men and women to serve in word ministries in our churches, schools and many other settings. And that we would pray for the ministry of our schools and organisations in all the ways in which God uses them to proclaim Christ, to serve the community, to make and grow disciples of Jesus.

Oh how would God answer our prayers for the spread of the gospel and the building of his church if our prayers were as wide as his concern for the world into which he sent his Son?

How wonderful it would be if as a diocesan fellowship of churches and organisations and schools we embraced the fellowship of prayer more deeply, more consistently and more expectantly. Who knows what the Lord might do? We make our plans and I hope that the plans before you will be welcomed. But God will have his way with us, and fulfil his purposes among us, as we pray.

From such fundamental commitments arise our highest priorities of the ministry of the word, prayer and every Christian pursuing the works that God has prepared for them to walk in.

But in addition to these ever present priorities, over the next five years, we have identified several other priority areas for collaboration across the diocesan network. They are Rector well-being; recruitment of new leaders for new ministries; collaboration of schools and churches; media engagement and church planting.

3.1 Rectors

We want our churches to flourish. This is primarily a work of the Holy Spirit as God's word is received with joyful and prayerful dependence in a fellowship of people seeking to love and serve one another and doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to the Father through him. Humanly we rely on our Senior Ministers as they both exercise responsibility for the ministry of the word, and lead others in doing the same, whether employed and trained members of a ministry team, or church members serving as the Lord enables them within and without the life of the local church. In recent weeks I have attended several regional clergy gatherings and it is a great joy to me that our churches are led by brothers who love the Lord, who love his people, who love his Word and who work hard to bring the word to bear on their own hearts, before preaching to others. This is a great gift from our Heavenly Father.

The Rector Workforce report published in 2021 identified some of the challenges resulting in some rectors experiencing fatigue in their ministry roles and conversely, the value of diocesan support in HR, legal and property matters, and ministry support from mentoring, training or informal peer networks.

Three specific items are before the Synod that are seeking to resource and strengthen the ministry of our senior ministers, let me say something about two of them. There is a proposal in the funding principles that the costs of the Diocesan Registry which oversees licensing and safe ministry, among other things, should be transferred from the Endowment of the See to the costs of the Synod. While this may seem somewhat technical, the real outcome is to facilitate the appointment of one or two archdeacons, which will in turn create more capacity and free up the Regional Bishops to offer greater support to rectors, something that has been compromised for more than a decade after the temporary suspension of the role of regional archdeacons. I hope the Synod will support this proposal, precisely because its effect will be to enhance our capacity to support senior ministers who give themselves wholeheartedly to the oversight of our churches.

Second, the Synod is asked to endorse the proposals for the staged introduction of pastoral supervision. This is not a form of line management – to use a term from the secular corporate world. Pastoral Supervision is confidential guided self-reflection and conversation around faithfulness in ministry practice. It is an opportunity, to reflect on our own ministry goals and experiences so as to understand the dynamics at work in our own responses to the pressure we experience, and to better manage ourselves for sustainable fruitful service of the Lord. I have been engaged in Pastoral Supervision for about three years, as a supervisee, and although somewhat sceptical at first, I am now convinced that it will play a significant role for many in fostering healthy and enduring patterns of ministry.

3.2 New Leaders

3.2.1 Marginalised Areas

The Ministry in Marginal Areas Committee was established as a permanent sub-committee of the Standing Committee in 2015. A report in 2021 found that effective ministry by churches in marginal areas needed a strong culture of engagement with the local community beyond formal church services, including addressing community needs, involvement in community events and intentional relationship building. A strong culture of acceptance, hospitality and non-judgementalism was especially important, as was the necessity for local leaders who both understand and can respond confidently to the experience of people in such areas. This is information we got from the rectors who serve in these places. They know what they're talking about! Importantly, the same kind of activities for making disciples, engagement with the Bible in sermons, bible study and in one to one

relationships, are equally important in marginal areas ministry as elsewhere although there may be the need for a broader range of opportunities and sensitivity to literacy issues and the experience of people from diverse backgrounds.

The Ministry in Marginalised Areas Committee or MIMAC is partnering with Centre for Ministry Development, the Western and Wollongong Regional Councils, Evangelism and New Churches and Moore College to deliver a ministry training program known as the Well, for people from marginal areas to minister in marginal areas with a focus on making disciples in their communities. This is a great gift and blessing from God as a variety of our organisations as well local churches partner together to see people come to Christ and grow in Christ in parts of Sydney that where we have struggled to be as effective as we would like.

I bring it to your attention as an example of our continuing priority of the recruitment and training of new ministry leaders, including a focus on men and women to minister in specific cross-cultural, indigenous or demographic areas. The 11 ministry interns enrolled in the Well Training Program are from 8 cultural backgrounds including First Peoples, Anglo Australian, Gujarati and Pakistani, Filipino, Fijian, Ghanaian and Liberian are based in 10 local churches (including Sadlier, Nowra, Mount Druitt, South Liverpool, Berkley, Minchinbury and Doonside). In partnership with their mentors and churches some interns are planting new ministry, for example in a public housing setting, or for vulnerable members of a local community, other are specifically seeking to minister to marginalised youth, another is ministering to a group from his culture online (in a closed location). I am extremely grateful for the way in which Moore College has made the Diploma of Biblical Theology available in a format taught intensively and examined in practical and oral assessments. As well as a cohort of diocesan organisations the interns are supported by a benefactor external to the diocese. Nevertheless it represent a significant partnership for the spread of the gospel in communities largely untouched by the gospel. I am tremendously excited by this work and grateful to the Rev Craig Hooper and Dr Coz Croscombe, and the supporting rectors, for the crucial role they are playing in developing this model of local ministry in marginal areas.

3.2.1 Indigenous Ministry

We are seeking to make Indigenous leadership and ministry a priority for our diocesan fellowship also. I'm delighted that one of the interns enrolled in The Well is Brendon Garlett who is pastor of Shoalhaven Aboriginal Church in Nowra. Another Indigenous man is enrolled at Youthworks and involved in ministry at Living Waters church in Redfern. This too is a source of encouragement in the life of our diocese. The Synod will consider the request of the Sydney Anglican Indigenous Peoples Ministry Committee to appoint a committee to report on how to support the leadership of Indigenous ministry in the Diocese.

Sydney has the largest urban population of First Nations peoples in the country and we are grateful to have four indigenous-led ministries, including three churches. But there are numerous challenges including that some of the elders of the Indigenous Christian community, many of whom have served faithfully with very little support for many years, are now reaching an age where they cannot be expected to continue to shoulder the greater part of the work, and yet we have few in the wings and no pathway which accounts for the demands and the obstacles faced by Indigenous brothers and sisters who seek to serve the Lord in pastoral ministry.

In recent years, the Synod has acknowledged past failures in relationships with First Peoples and committed itself to finding ways to be more intentionally involved with the ministry of the gospel to and with Indigenous peoples. We are bound to do so. As Archbishop Robinson said in 1987, anticipating the bicentennial, "One of our failures in Australia has been our inability to come to terms adequately with the Aboriginal people whose lands we annexed and made the basis of our prosperity. We cannot undo the past or be charged with the offences of our forefathers but...if we are humble to God's Spirit we may find the way to live in the land together for his glory."

As we live with the gains of previous generations built on the dispossession of First Nations people, so they live with the losses and their ongoing impact reflected not least of all in what we have come to refer to as ‘the gap’ – the marked and pervasive discrepancy in virtually every measure of health, education and standard of living. I hope the Synod will warmly welcome the conversation about the best way to support Indigenous ministry into the future including the appointment of significant leadership roles.

3.3 Schools and Churches

There are tremendous partnerships between schools and churches around the diocese. Richard Johnson Anglican School has been the home to Life Anglican Church Marsden Park since it planted, before Covid; Tara has been home to Dundas Telopea parish while they undertake preparations for a move to a new location; one of the congregations of St Peter’s Campbelltown has been located in the School for many years. The newly launched Leppington Anglican College shares facilities with Hope Leppington and children regularly spend time in the church building including for chapel. I could go on. But the partnership between schools and churches goes far beyond sharing of physical resources. Students from several schools serve in the Rough Edges ministry of St John’s Darlinghurst. One of our school Principals in the Western region and the rectors of local Anglican churches meet from time to time for prayer, with each referring families and young people to each other as they have opportunity. Many of our churches make sure that they pray publicly for congregation members who are also teachers or Heads of Schools or School governors. Many rectors include the local Anglican school principal in their pastoral visiting schedule, and many serve on School governing boards, and some are chairs of our schools. Young people are coming to Christ in our schools. How important it is to have a pathway for them to the local church.

The Synod will consider 3 motions from the Education Committee seeking to invest in a deliberate way in deepening partnership in the gospel between schools, churches and the wider diocese including appointment of an Education Advisor to the Archbishop and enhanced training resources to be provided by Youthworks and SDS for Christian teachers, Chaplains, and Staff. I commend the report to you.

3.4 Media

Earlier this year, I commissioned some work to examine media strategy for the diocesan fellowship. I am grateful for the contributions of many within our network. We have identified media engagement as a focus of collaboration for the diocesan fellowship not only because this area of our ministry has been significantly under-resourced for well over a decade but because the media represents both an opportunity for gospel engagement, and some level of risk when, as happened in the weeks before Synod, matters are reported in good faith and yet without conveying all the nuance that many of our reports contain, resulting in considerable distress and confusion. I am immensely grateful to Russell Powell and his team who accomplish a great deal with very little. I hope you will welcome further work in this area.

3.5 Planting Churches

Last year, the Synod agreed to three significant property proposals relating to our commitment to plant churches in Sydney’s expanding Greenfields areas. First, that the Land Acquisition Levy should continue for another ten years. This has allowed the ACGC to progress property acquisition opportunities in a timely way. In the last year properties at Box Hill and Catherine Fields have been acquired. This is a great answer to prayer and a direct outcome of the synod’s decision to partner in this way.

Second, that we should seek to develop a diocesan-wide ministry-directed property-strategy (as I like to call it, the DWMDPS!) so as to harness our property assets to ensure that we are able to provide Anglican ministry in greenfields areas, and third, that under certain circumstances, where there are property assets surplus to the needs of local ministry they may with the agreement of the parish be held in trust for the wider purposes of the diocese - our wider disciple making purpose.

This relates to the proposal in the draft property strategy for the SW Region that we allocate our property resources in the SW working on a ratio of one parish to every population of 30000 people, and consider amalgamations of parishes where there are significantly less than that number of people in the catchment of a parish, or the parish property resources are not fit for purpose, since they were built at a time when the needs of the area were far different than they now are or soon will be given the projections for the SW to experience very considerable and sustained population growth of more than a million people over the next thirty years.

The time frames in which we are speaking necessarily mean that we are casting our minds and our prayers to times and ministry needs and opportunities that we may never see ourselves. Certainly, almost none of us in this Synod who make these decisions will be the decision makers in thirty years time. In considering the draft property strategy for the South West, in anticipation that we will undertake similar work for the whole diocese, we are faced with the challenge of making provision for the ministry of Sydney Anglicans three decades from now. If we cast our minds back three decades, that takes us just to 1993. I was in second year at Moore College. I'd been a Christian for 7 years. I would not have anticipated that I would be making this speech, and we cannot anticipate what ministry will be like at that time. But we can commit ourselves to being a disciple making church, that seeks to proclaim Christ as Lord and ourselves as servants of others for his sake. We can prayerfully commit ourselves to such decisions today in the prayerful hope and expectation that those who follow us will share our vision of the glory of Jesus and our purpose to serve him by calling our neighbours to repent with us, to put our faith in Jesus, to know the assurance of his love and to live for him and his coming kingdom.

We may need to make decisions that make us uncomfortable or sad, especially where we have personally benefitted or contributed to the ministry of a local church over a long time. These are the very things we long for and build as Sydney Anglicans.

But the One we serve and proclaim gave himself for our sakes and asks nothing less than that we too should willingly give ourselves for others, and for the gospel; leaving home and fields and family for his sake.

The Synod is invited to provide feedback on the draft policy, and I hope that you will commit it to prayer and respond generously, humbly and hopefully for what we may seek to provide to those who will take up this work long after us.

It is a reason for humble and hearty thanks giving that church planting is written into the DNA of Sydney Anglicans, and arguably Anglicanism worldwide. From the earliest days of the diocese St James King Street planted some of the first parishes including St John's Darlinghurst, and the now gone St Peter's Woolloomooloo. As well, St James was the largest contributor to the Church Society in the 1850s that was heavily involved in establishing new parishes and providing stipends for new clergy. St James continues to make substantial financial contribution to the work of the diocese today, from their property assets. Through the early part of the last century St Matthew's Manly planted St Faith's Narrabeen (1897), St John's Mona Vale (1907), St Albans French Forest (1918) All Saints Balgowlah (1925) – 16 churches in all between 1873-1938. And St Matthews was itself established by St Ann's Ryde and St Thomas' North Sydney. In the 1970s partnership saw St Clements Mosman assist in the establishment of St Clements Lalor Park, and St James Turramurra with St James Whalan. As a young Christian at St Paul's Carlingford, I remember being impressed by families that were moving house to help out at St John's Doonside. More recently, alongside other churches and individuals, St Philips Church Hill, South Head Parish and St Mark's Darling Point, Strathfield, St Ives, Manly and North Sydney, have contributed generously to the greenfields plants including in Leppington, Stanhope Gardens and Marsden Park as have many others.

Meanwhile Evangelism and New Churches partners to support church planters and pioneer workers including in marginalised areas and among ethnic and culture-specific communities. Most recently

ENC working with Pitt Town and Rouse Hill parishes, along with NCNC and ACGC in establishing a church plant in Box Hill.

I hope you will join with me in thanking God for this brilliant heritage of gospel generosity among Sydney Anglicans of which we have been direct beneficiaries, and which is still wonderfully in evidence today. And I hope you will pray that the Lord would grant to us in our day a similar godly concern for the generations to come that we sacrificially collaborate in the diocese to provide for the ministry of the gospel in new areas in the decades to come.

4. Posture

Outside my office painted on the wall in large letters so it can be seen by everyone is 2 Cor 4:5.

For what we preach is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Here is what I pray will be our constant posture. We proclaim another not ourselves. We are Sydney Anglicans, but we're for Jesus, not ourselves. I have suggested to you that there is a Sydney Anglican heritage of faithfulness and gospel fruitfulness for which we ought to give hearty thanks to God and which we ought to commit ourselves to stewarding with prayerful, joyful, urgent and deliberate intent. But we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord.

He is our great obsession, he is our heart's delight, his mission is our great concern, his honour our highest goal, his Kingdom our true home and happiness.

And we are the servants of others for his sake. We do not seek to be servants of the Lord to make ourselves great but to declare the greatness of him whom we serve. We do not proclaim his Lordship to secure lordship for ourselves in his service. We make ourselves servants of others for his sake. Not only for their sake, though we long that they may know the wonder of his love, the beauty of his truth, the fullness of his life; but foundationally that he may be glorified as people turn to him and trust in him, him who alone is worthy of all honour and praise and glory, and dominion and blessing and riches - now and forever. Amen