

Presidential Address 2006

1. Cassell's *Dictionary of Insulting Quotations* is one of the books I keep permanently beside my bed. It gives me pleasure to hear what has been said about real leaders. Take General Eisenhower, whose credentials included being the Supreme Commander for the invasion of Europe in 1944 and President of the United States of America.
2. Dean Acheson said of him 'I doubt very much if a man whose main literary interests are in Zane Grey cowboy stories...is particularly well equipped to be the chief executive of this country...particularly where Indian affairs are concerned.'ⁱ Nikita Krushchev, the Soviet leader was bold enough to claim, 'President Roosevelt proved that a president could serve for life; Truman proved that anyone could be president; Eisenhower proved that your country could be run without a president.'
3. My call today is for us to develop *leadership through change*. I give you this challenge: to fulfil our Mission we need leaders; we need leaders who are able to lead in the midst of change, and leaders who will themselves create necessary change. We need leaders who are driven by a vision for the gospel to go to the whole community. We need to give them permission to change. And we need people who embrace such a vision, encourage initiative and support their leaders.

4. It is not easy to be a leader; the blame falls on the just and the unjust. It opens us to criticism; it calls for uncommon energy and commitment; it is disturbing; it makes us accountable. To be a leader is to accept the risk of failure; to learn to live with insults and rejection; to sacrifice for others. No wonder we reward leaders with the flim-flam of titles and special clothes and honours!

5. But we need leaders. As the Sydney Anglican community, we have committed ourselves through the Diocesan Mission to an evangelistic outreach of significant proportions. It is not quite as demanding as the invasion of Europe, but it requires energetic and planned effort on a large scale. Furthermore, we are evangelising in a hard place at a hard time. I am always interested to hear from our African friends who are experiencing vast evangelistic success. They confirm that when it comes to secular western culture, they would find it as hard as we do. It is a daunting project. I am not in the slightest surprised that we are finding it rugged work and sometimes dispiriting.

6. We must not be dismayed at the difficulties. The failure of secularism creates opportunities for the gospel. And the failure of secularism becomes plainer by the month. Secularism fails to support the central concern of the truly human life: relationships. And Australians regard

relationships and families as their chief source of happiness. These are issues about which the Bible speaks with power, most notably our obligation to love.

7. In an excellent article in the *Australian* Paul Kelly helps us to understand what we are going through culturally, and how well Mr Howard - and now Mr Rudd - has understood the mood of the nation.ⁱⁱ Kelly refers to the battle between the cultural progressives and the cultural traditionalists. Quoting Francis Fukuyama, he points out that, 'The culture of intense individualism...spilled into to the realm of social norms where it corroded virtually all forms of authority and weakened the bonds holding families, neighbourhoods and nations together'. Kelly says, 'The story of the past 15 years is that tolerance will not suffice as the glue to bind society. The dwindling postmodernists who still think this have lost the plot'. I have longed for the day when I would see that in one of our newspapers. Now let's hear it for love!

8. Whatever we think of Mr Howard's policies, according to Kelly he has understood this. It is right and proper to disagree with the policy and operation of Government: I have expressed disagreement most recently over the continued detention of David Hicks, for example. But there is something revealing about the malice and hatred, the sheer lack of civility - dare I say the failure to love our neighbour? - in so many of those who write to newspapers about the Prime

Minister. I think it reveals a fear that Mr Howard's social conservatism may actually have proved to be broadly correct - and that it is the libertarian position which has done untold harm, during the forty years that it has been the ruling philosophy. Let me add, lest you think that I am merely endorsing Mr Howard, some of these insights appear on the other side of politics as well, for example in the writings of Mr Lindsay Tanner.

9. The gospel of Jesus is strikingly relevant to all these common human concerns. We are talking the same language as our neighbours - and the word of God, with its emphasis on love not tolerance, on community not individualism, on self-discipline not permissiveness is going to enhance human life and make our aspirations more readily achievable. Let me say that I have never had better opportunities than this year to share the gospel with others. Our context may be tough, but the Lord is still in charge.

10. The Mission has forced positive change in parishes and organisations. But we have also exhibited a tendency towards timidity and passivity, sometime even selfishness and sloth, which needs to be addressed and grappled with if we are to take seriously our goal of reaching all Australians with the Gospel. We have failed as yet to come to terms with our first policy: 'To call upon God for such an outpouring of his Spirit that his people will be assured of his love through his word,

seek to please the Saviour in all things, manifest the godly life and be filled with prayerful and sacrificial compassion for the lost in all the world.'

11. In fairness, however, it is also sometimes hard for the local church to know what to do and to have the time and energy to do it. The new Mission Board is dedicated to the task of bringing the resources of the Diocese to the aid of the churches. We want to help you do the best job you can in mission. But this will require an acceptance of the need for change and an energetic commitment to reform.

12. Reform is inherent in the Mission itself. The fourth policy of the Mission calls upon us 'To reform the Life of the Diocese (including our culture, ordinances, customs, use of resources, and deployment of ministry) to encourage and enable the fulfilment of the fundamental aim.' We have made reforms; so far we have not gone far enough in the changes we need to make. Much of what we do is still shaped by the nineteenth and twentieth century experience of church life. We are functioning well for a 1970s social context. We are ready to fight the last war. How do we so advance as to meet our missionary challenge, while remaining firmly committed to the gospel and the scriptures? The key to fruitful change is godly leadership and trained mission partners.

13. I know that I am calling for something that is very demanding. It is especially difficult to lead in times of challenge and change. It is harder to be a Moses than a Solomon. The life of the people in Egypt was unpleasant. They groaned under their harsh servitude; they were the victims of a genocidal plan; their hopes were eaten up by their fears. Under God, Moses became their saviour. He defeated Pharaoh. He led them across the Red Sea. He brought them virtually to the Promised Land.

14. And yet, again and again, this same people became unwilling and rebellious; again and again they contrasted their present plight with their days in Egypt, and they said that they longed to go back: 'We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost - also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!' (Num. 11: 5,6). The condition of the people in slavery was intolerable; and yet some of the people preferred to tolerate the intolerable rather than to dare the unknown. The challenge for Moses throughout his long ministry both before and after Sinai was a twofold one.

15. First, he had to get the people to accept and live by the word of God. He had to ensure that the word of God was believed and preserved. Indeed it was only because they had the word that they saw themselves as a people. Change that is worth accomplishing has within it the unchanging core of who we

are, what we stand for, what we purpose to do with persistence and endurance. We must say, as the people did, 'We will do everything the Lord has said' (Ex 19:8). 'Sydney-anglicans' must always be a Bible people, a gospel people. That's our inner core.

16. Second, the word had to transform lives. Thus it forced him into a battle to overcome the social, political and spiritual forces which dominated the people. Then he had to persuade them to do what they did not want to do. This is one of the key tests of leadership. It is easy to lead a people who wish to go in a particular way. It is difficult to lead a people who are unwilling or frightened or comfortable or simply resistant. And yet the leader has to manage this, especially when the external circumstances make it imperative. To do it, he needs vision, energy and support.

17. Moses illustrates that leaders for change must be both radical and conservative; indeed the more conservative they are, the more radical they can afford to be. Only by a sustained obedience to the word of God can we afford to make the changes demanded by our spiritual environment and task.

18. I have referred to Moses as the leader, but the real leader of God's people was God himself. Authentic Christian leadership will always be based on the word of God and

energised by the Spirit of God. And that is why if the people of God are living obediently, they will accept it and follow it. But why should I allow change?

19. The problem is a spiritual one. The first policy of the Mission calls on us so to preach the gospel of God's grace that God's people will pray and sacrifice. If God's mercy has gripped you and you trust his unchanging word, it will demand constant change. An ever deepening repentance towards God is inherent in being Christian, as we seek to please the Lord in all things. This word commits you to pray and to work for the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the building and defence of the church. This word forces you to love others, to be outward looking, to connect to your community, to seek to make it easy for all people to hear the gospel and to enter the fellowship of God's people. It is a transforming word.

20. We shrink back. Twenty-first century people have lived through tumult. No other generation has experienced such ever-hastening transformation as we have. We change jobs frequently; we change houses frequently; we learn new communication skills constantly; we suffer relationship transitions which would astonish previous generations. We have seen Australia turned into a new, non-British nation. We have been through a moral and spiritual revolution as well as an economic one. September 2001, the Bali bombings and Global Warming have seen us catapulted into a new and

frightening world. We experience the vertigo of constant choice.

21. This poses a problem for churches. Church may represent just about the only place in our lives where there is no variety – it is the same yesterday, today and forever. Indeed, that may be precisely what we love about church – it is a place of tranquillity in a world of storm. At least here is a pew we can occupy without fear of challenge and demand. In the words of an old hymn: ‘Change and decay in all around I see...’: for us, change, any change, *is* decay.

22. Is this still a problem in our Diocese? Is necessary change still resisted? Let me take you to a make-believe church I have ‘visited’. The details have been altered; the facts are as I state them. Demographic change has altered everything outside its doors. The original Anglican population is now tiny, represented by a few lonely souls hanging on to their church, an oasis of peace in a world transformed. When they moved in, fifty years ago with their young families, the houses were new, the streets just paved, the only language, English, and the Sunday School burgeoning. Now most of their friends have moved or died, and there are no children of their ethnicity.

23. The building is conventional for the 1950s and well preserved, even attractive. It is abounds with memorials and

memorial windows and flags. It is dark inside. The pews are hard; there is a centre aisle; the table is a sturdy wooden one standing against the back wall; the pulpit is ornate. The building is *heavy* with memories; you can sense them as you enter. I was married here; Joy was baptised here; we laughed together at that funny sermon there; we had to pick up the money we dropped here; the fellowship group always used to sit just there; you asked me that question by the door; it was standing there that I first met Graham; I had to get up on the roof to fix that leak; they had to bring the coffin in by the side entrance; that is the window in memory of my mother; I was sitting in that pew when I came to know the Lord.

24. Am I mocking this? In no way. When St Barnabas Broadway was destroyed by fire, a church which we attended for a dozen or so years, it was as if someone had taken our family photo album and trashed it. Key personal memories have been assaulted, torn from their context in space and erased.

25. But this church actually repels newcomers. It is not really interested. If by some miracle newcomers of a different ethnicity arrive, they cannot cope. We call it vandalism – when people who know nothing of the past, people who care nothing for our past, people who are different, enter the church and take it over. They show no respect for what is here; they spill food on the carpet that I paid for; they allow their children to run around in all the wrong places; they give

up the good old hymns; they don't like the organ; they change the furniture; they know nothing of Menzies and Whitlam and the Bank of New South Wales and the Vietnam War; in fact they may have been on the wrong side in the war.

26. It's a bridge too far that last one isn't it? We cannot voice it even though we may think it. We cannot voice it, because we know it is untrue and wrong and we should not think it. But although we are glad to see the church fill up again, we are not glad that it is with people who are so different. And when they want to make changes to the things we do, we frustrate them. I remember being in such a church once and asking the leaders why they did not think of replacing the very old fashioned pews with comfortable seating and so make more room? 'The parish council', they said, 'we would never get it past the old Anglo people on the parish council.' It reminded me of the story that when decimal currency was introduced in 1966, some anguished soul allegedly said, 'Why can't they let the old people die out before the introduce such a big change?'

27. I can sympathise with this feeling; but do we not realise how damaging it is? Some of our churches are marked by a sense of passivity, a sort of habitual Christianity in which reassurance trumps repentance, in which we are more like to be transfixed than transformed. Church has become a place

in which we carry on a covert resistance movement until help arrives from the Archbishop of Canterbury!

28. How can such churches be led? Some ministers have been drained of their vitality and joy by struggling to serve such congregations. They have tried to offer real leadership, but have been met with criticism and rejection. Of course you also get ministers who are incompetent or lazy or wrong-headed or simply not as good as Moses. But ministerial incompetence is not the general rule. The truth is that many such churches are not really viable and it seems likely that they will follow the path of others to amalgamation and oblivion unless they are prepared to join their minister in working for change. Do we want good leadership? Then we must face the spiritual problems of whether we want to be led.

29. I have to warn you that we are going to find it increasingly hard to find suitable ministers for such churches. Gifted younger people will join a movement; they will not join an institution. They are not looking to spend their lives merely acting as a chaplain to an unresponsive group, using an impossible building. They *will* be challenged by the thought that they are joining a missionary movement, one that is outward looking and able to respond to new needs. I find it difficult to ask people to parachute into such churches; they would prefer to start a new church.

30. One of my most vivid memories is of a dear friend of mine who was a member of the same church as me. He was a Professor at the University, a man of impeccable rectitude, an adornment to the gospel. He grew up as an Anglican in the bush, where they do things a bit differently. He cherished a more formal style of church; nothing flash: he is what you may call a Prayer Book Christian; like me if it comes to that. His faith is part of him; it is very much who he is; and church with the Prayer Book and a bit of dignity is part of that inner piety which makes the man what he is.

31. We met in the pews one Sunday morning. We had just been through what for him was a travesty of church - substance but no style; omissions of all the things which we cherished - music, indescribable.. 'I miss the old ways,' he said. Then he paused. 'But, Peter, I'd rather give up the old ways, hard though that is, for the sake of what we are now doing for Christ.' For there in that church as the Bible was being taught were young and old men and women being transformed by the Spirit of God, coming to faith and going ahead in Christ.

32. Change is painful you see; loss actually hurts. But if we want our churches now to reconnect with their communities; if we want them to be able to welcome new people, to become Australian churches and not just English churches washed up

on this alien shore – we are going to have to signal to our ministers that we are ready for changes which do not compromise the gospel but establish and commend it. One reason for the tiredness of our ministers is that they find some people in the pews or on the parish council hard to shift even on minor matters: in fact it may *be* the pews.

33. And yet, other churches with similar demographics survived and are vigorous. Why? Let me suggest five characteristics of such churches.

34. First, they were the sort of churches which had a ‘buy-in’ mechanism, rather than simply a ‘drop-out’ one. It was better to choose to be a Christian, rather than to assume that you already were. To translate that into more usual terms, if your church stressed the need for individual conversion, it was more likely that you would get a larger proportion of young people to stay attached and to deepen their commitment over the years. It was actively looking for conversion growth.

35. Secondly, they were the sort of churches which practised a strong preaching and teaching ministry, based firmly on the authority of God's word. The word was taught; the word was believed; the word was obeyed; the word was cherished. Although such biblical teaching ran increasingly against what the worldly culture was saying, because it had the ring of truth and was coherent, it steeled people to be counter-

cultural and to stay faithful to the Christian faith. The liberal tendency to come to terms with culture, to accede to cultural demands, has proved to be death to the churches.

36. Third, they were churches which laid an emphasis on service of others, especially through evangelistic work. Vibrant churches were training churches. They trained their Sunday school teachers and youth leaders. They trained their Bible study leaders. They ensured that when their young people went to high school they joined ISCF or Crusaders and when they went to University they attended the Christian Union and were trained in their systems of evangelism and cell group leading. They taught the Moore College courses. They supported the Church Missionary Society Summer School and the Katoomba Convention movement. They were strongly involved in the Billy Graham Crusades and had people trained in personal evangelism and follow up. They used the offerings of our own Youth Department. Their young people were active in camps and beach missions.

37. Fourth, they were the churches who began to stress mutual ministry and the need for fellowship. The church at an earlier period was the parish church, a religious expression of the surrounding village or suburban culture. But when population grew and suburban life became impersonal, church had to provide a far deeper level the friendships and fellowship. The 70's and 80's were the age of the small group,

the church as coffee house and the growing participation of members in leadership of services. At a theological level, these were the churches who began to see the local church as the true expression of the Body of Christ, as being more important than the Diocese or any denomination. Likewise, there was a sort of necessary turn inward here, as we had to give more attention than ever before, to the quality of local church life. Building up Christians at a time of serious challenge to the faith was rightly seen to be a high priority.

38. Fifth, they were churches who responded well to the need for change. Most of our churches have altered beyond recognition in the last twenty-five years - altered fundamentally in what we do when we meet. Dress has changed; formalities have changed; services have changed; architecture has changed; preaching has changed; music has changed; the content of services has changed. I have hesitations about some of these alterations, but, taken as a whole, I applaud them. Failure to make these changes would have shown a preference for church-culture rather than the gospel, for the outward rather than the inward, for elitism rather than universalism.

39. The leaders and people of most our churches have shown great courage. They have intentionally submitted to biblical authority while making changes. They pushed ahead, caring

sufficiently to make sure that church still has some relevance in the culture in which we work. Not to have made these changes would have endangered our very survival. But have such churches themselves advanced to the limits of where they need to go? Consider evangelism.

40. Previously, evangelism took place within the church. Many nominals attended from time to time. Most people who were converted through our evangelistic efforts tended to be those with closest ties to the church. The complete outsiders were considerably rarer. We knew how to evangelise nominal attenders but not the outsiders. But as fewer of the community came into youth groups, as there was a decline in infants brought for baptism, young people for confirmation, and couples for marriage - so our natural contacts withered. In the eighties and nineties we concentrated on friendship evangelism and church growth that did not replace contact with the community.

41. The turn inward, one of the key mechanisms for survival, is indispensable, but dangerous. It cuts the churches off from the social context around them, from their parishes. A little while ago I described a hybrid example of a 1950s style church, hanging on desperately with its old building and dwindling Anglo congregation. But they are by no means the only churches which are now facing the challenge of change

or perish. The 1980s style church is also in danger – despite its larger numbers, different music and its coffee and its informality and its better preaching. Just as nostalgia about the church-building or the services can be a barrier to necessary change, so too can complacency about, or nostalgia for, the same old faces, the same old people. It may not be the same pew where I always sit, but it may be the same person to whom I always talk or the same home group that I have been meeting with for 30 years. Church can become merely a religious club for people who still like the Rolling Stones. You see, it is not a matter of '*what* is new'? Fundamentally, it's a matter of '*who* is new?'

42. Let me set you a test: Why do men hate going to church? You can respond in three ways. If you are antique, the easiest thing to do is simply to blame the men who are absent. If you are thinking mission, you will at least agree that it a good question. If you are thinking leadership, you will act to do something about it. The question, by the way, is posed by the title of David Murrow's book: *Why Men Hate Going to Church*. To read it will force you to ask, how must we change? If you think that the title is provocative, wait until you read the book. It is irritating and yet shrewd.

43. In fact it does not matter if you read the book or not, as long as the question really works on you; as long as you demand an answer, and then set to work doing something about it. It's

a key question, since when men relate to church, their families are more likely to come and more likely to stay. One thing is for sure: you will not increase your contact with men by treating them as though they are women. In other words, don't even ask this question if you are not willing to do something new and different.

44. Without abandoning any of the five chief features of our churches - conversion, preaching, training, fellowship and reform, we also need a leadership which will help to turn outward, to re-engage with the world in which we find ourselves - to study and be committed to the community once again. I am not suggesting a huge program. Just to ask about the missing men may be a good start. This time, however, it is not that we see the parish as a mission field made up of dormant Christians, but rather as a mission field of those for whom faith itself is a vague memory, who know little or nothing about Christ and his kingdom. We need to ask ourselves, in God's name and for the sake of the Lord who died for us, and for his sheep scattered in all the world - how are we going to reach these people for Christ and his gospel?

45. That, of course, is the real point behind the 10% goal. It is not a 10% increase in congregations but 10% of the population. It is intended to make us look outward, to take responsibility

not merely for our church, but for our community, our parish and indeed the world beyond.

46. I have said that we need a leadership like that of Moses. What does that mean? First, unswerving commitment to the word of God; second, willingness to lead through change. But what if our churches are poorly resourced, or passive, or satisfied, or frightened or ill-equipped? What if a church cannot face this challenge for fear of sacrifice and change? That is where godly leadership *and* trained mission partners come in. It is also where the resources of our whole network in the Diocese need to be available to the local church. We cannot simply leave the minister to do it all.

47. Take one obvious way in which the network serves the churches. By God's grace our Diocese already rests on a powerful and powerfully sustained theological base, a deep commitment to God's word amongst clergy and people. Without it we could not even contemplate the Mission on which we have embarked. Sometimes we fail and lapse from it; we are not always worthy of this mercy of God; we can never take it for granted; it is under constant assault. But we do have it and it is worth knowing where it has come from so that we can appreciate it and guard it. By what means has God provided such leadership for us already? The chief answer is Moore College. The Principal and Faculty model that clear submission to biblical authority which must also be

a mark of our churches if we are to prosper at all in such a secular climate.

48. Moore is one of the very earliest tertiary institutions in Australia, ranking in age with such great Universities as Sydney and Melbourne. Its immense contribution to our well-being and its contribution to the evangelical cause elsewhere, is beyond cavil. I say this so that we may glorify God for his mercy and be all the more determined to guard its life as virtually the first duty of the Synod.

49. What has it given us first and foremost? Biblical Theology. The last four decades have seen a sustained secular assault on Christian truth. The College has responded by teaching the Bible in a way which makes sense. It is the secret to the life of our churches. By it, we remain committed to Biblical authority even in a society which constantly denies it in word and deed. And this has been a blessing to us and our children - and to others around the world. The Christian, relational way of life is proving itself, not least in family and sexual ethics. I am convinced that what the Bible teaches on the nature of marriage roles of men and women in families is increasingly being supported by cultural experience.

50. Why do I emphasise Biblical Theology? When the liberal challenges of the 1960s began to emerge, it was absolutely essential that the Christian faith be re-stated in a form which

was faithful to the Bible but flexible and innovative. We needed the means to draw fresh water from the old and pure well. The first, chief, and prior commitment was to the Bible as the one inspired word of God. Because the Bible came from God himself, in all its variety and complexity, it still remains a single book. The variety of the Bible is one of its major glories; but its unity is fundamental to its authority.

51. Flowing from that, there comes a basic rule of interpretation: the Bible interprets the Bible. The surest way to understand its meaning as a whole and the meaning of the parts, is to compare passage with passage; to see each verse and each paragraph and each book in its context in the Bible as a whole. Of course, such matters as background and linguistics play a key role also; but the comparison of scripture with scripture is vital. From this comes Biblical Theology, the teaching of the Bible as a whole, given in the way in which the Bible develops it.

52. The present debate about human sexuality often betrays a failure to grasp how the interlocking teaching of scripture in Old and New Testaments can be brought to bear on contemporary life. The Bible is read subjectively, or as an endless succession of small segments without a proper connecting link or a single voice. The lack of a proper approach to the Bible prevents its message ever impacting on the church. You cannot say with authority, 'The Bible says...'

Once people lose confidence in the word of God, the preaching ministry of the church is lost. Once the preaching ministry is lost, the world's message is heard in the church, instead of the church's message heard in the world. Then the churches decline.

53. One critical point debated with great fervour at the end of the last century was the role of men and women in the family and in Christian fellowship. Men and women are equal in Christ. Are their roles interchangeable, in the human family and the church family? Let the whole of scripture speak for itself. The answer is clear: the ministry of women is encouraged; the eldership of women in the congregation is denied. By obeying scripture at this point we have been blessed, not least in some truly remarkable ministries by women, but also in the encouragement it gives to men to take up their specific responsibilities. We are seeing many men and women offering for biblical ministry and to model family life.

54. I fully accept that it is the right of members to see whether Synod is prepared to reopen this subject. I believe that those who wish to do so are men and women of integrity. But I cannot offer any support to the proposal. I am unpersuaded by arguments that this is all a power play by men to keep women out; I am even less persuaded by allegations of injustice and inequity; experience has shown me that what

starts as a plea for diversity finishes as a means of exclusion and division; I am concerned that some of the central arguments in favour would lead to changing our position on human sexuality. What I cannot change is the Bible and our commitment to be ruled by God through his word. To me, the Biblical teaching on this matter is clear, and following it will lead - is leading - to blessing for us all. Discarding it may make us more popular with the secular world; it will not help our Mission.

55. In Moses we see commitment to God's word as he led God's people through necessary change. Likewise, the College's commitment to Biblical Theology stimulated innovation. The training of men for ordained ministry in the 1950s was astonishingly different from what the College now offers to men and women. But at heart it remains the same. The aim is to shape people for a ministry of the word and prayer; this remains the essence of the pastoral ministry and if we wish to be a biblical church, it will always remain the same. We simply must produce godly and well-equipped pastors of the flock of God, amply schooled in Biblical Theology. That is how we will obey the biblical injunction to 'let the word of God dwell among you richly' (Col 3:16). Furthermore, whatever we may say about reform and change and about leadership, nothing can ever take the place of preaching and prayer as the fundamentals of our Mission. This is the first of

our policies, and all will be lost if we forget it, no matter what changes we may make.

56. The last decades have seen necessary changes of emphasis in our training. I think that we had to establish in the 1960s that the ministry was not simply a one man show, a mono-ministry, but involved the shared spiritual eldership in a congregation. Then, in the 70s we had to establish beyond a shadow of doubt that pastoral ministry remained the ministry of word and sacrament, in the face of such challenges as the attempt to turn Christian ministry into psychological counselling. Later, we had to argue that the Christian ministry involved evangelism, in the face of the challenge to a sort of narrow pastoral call to be the teacher alone. These gains must not be lost. But now there exists a further need to bring out elements of the pastor's role. This you may call missional leadership.

57. 'Leadership' is itself a concept which is found in the biblical account of ministry in the congregation. Thus we are told to, 'respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you' (1 Thess 5:12); and 'Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as those who must give account' (Heb 13:17); and 'Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double

honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching' (1 Tim 5:17).

58. The essence of leadership, biblically speaking is *the exercise of designated responsibility in obedience to God and in the strength which he gives*. It does not have to be flashy; it does not have to be dictatorial but it requires moral courage; it is not intended to be harsh or unheeding; the good leader will undoubtedly be a good listener; it should not be unfair; it is not the province of merely a few; it is intended to be of service, as the Lord himself taught.

59. Please notice that I have described this as a *designated* responsibility. On the whole there will be a commissioning to Christian work, an invitation and a recognition. Those around us should recognise our appropriate gifts and graces and summon us into leadership, or accept our offer of leadership. Notice, too, that I have described leadership in terms of 'responsibility.' Responsibility captures the typical Christian concept of service; we serve others by taking the burden, by being willing to accomplish what needs to be done; by being determined to complete a given task or occupy our post until further notice. We do it in obedience to God, that is we do what he wants us to do in the way in which he wants us to do it. It is also a reminder that we are accountable to God himself for the exercise of our leadership.

Furthermore, to do this requires the strength of God, in gifting and sustaining us in the role we have been given.

60. It is not, therefore, that the shepherds of God's people are being called upon for something either essentially new or alien to their existing calling. Shepherds are already leaders; already they have accepted responsibility of a most onerous kind. Already they are responsible for ordering the life of the congregation in a way which glorifies God, edifies the people of God and commends the gospel to unbelievers. This surely must be a given of this designated responsibility.

61. But there is a renewed calling which our Mission summons our leaders: it is the calling to be responsible not just for the church or congregations, but for the parish, for the geographical area in which he has been asked to work. It is a renewed calling, because that is exactly what the Rector of the parish used to regard as his duty; it was more or less supplanted by the need to care for the congregation first and foremost – and this still needs to have our careful attention indeed. We also need to look out intentionally into the community around us and ask ourselves how are we going to reach its population for Christ

62. The differences are twofold. First, the old parish contained many nominal believers who needed challenge and

encouragement, but still identified themselves as Christians. We ought not to think that they were easy to evangelise - it has never been easy. Now there are fewer and fewer nominals. Second, parish churches are stronger than they have ever been before. What I mean is that the standard of the ministry has perceptibly risen (at least in skill if not in godliness), and, as a result, believers are better equipped, more flexible. More than that, the number of churches with teams of paid ministry has risen dramatically. The minister may say he does not want to be a leader, but whether he likes it or not, he is. The difficulty is that some of us are still acting as though we are only congregational leaders rather than missional leaders; our focus remains entirely inward, rather than both inward and outward. The first change we may need to make is a personal one: the re-organisation of our diary to better reflect our total responsibility, to the Lord, to the family, to the church, to the parish.

63. Two year ago I indicated in the Presidential address my intention to initiate changes to the structure of ministry in order to support and encourage that outward focus. We have now begun to put that process into action. The basic permanent ministry of the word of God is that of being ordained deacon. Ordination indicates on the part of those being ordained, that they intend to give their life's work to this ministry. Within the diaconate there is a great diversity of specialist ministries of the word. Thus, the basic four year

Moore College and three year post ordination Ministry Development Programme has not been changed. However we are changing the training requirements for some specialist ministries.

64. It still will not be easy to satisfy them. We are not looking to lower standards, but to change the pattern. Put simply we are looking for men and women who want to be involved in long term ordained ministry, but are not seeking to become presbyters. This will increase the size and the flexibility of the ordained stipendiary work-force; on the other hand, we still want presbyters. In fact, that is a fundamental need. And it is the broadening of the diaconate that gives us the opportunity to increase the specialised role of the presbyter.

65. We are really looking for a culture shift that will make it clear that the task of being the incumbent includes having a responsibility both for the church and for the parish. Of course, I need hardly say, we already have many such people. In order to assist his process, I am lengthening the time between ordination as a deacon and ordination as a presbyter, and increasing the level of specialised training which is expected of the men who are going to take on this further level of responsibility.

66. Change. There's that word again. And I know the state of play well enough to say this: many of our clergy are tired and

some are a little dispirited. The evangelisation of the world, starting with Sydney has proved harder than we imagined! It is all very well to do more and to lead better, but we are only able to do so much and our resources, not least our human resources, are limited. It is all very well for me to say that the task of the presbyter is to be towards the parish; it is already a full-time job to keep the church afloat. This is true, and is one of the reasons why we as a Diocese will put even more effort into helping the leaders to lead more effectively, especially supporting them through change. But the indispensable support needs to come from members of the church who embrace necessary change, though they may find it difficult.

67. Tonight we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of a second great organisation, Anglicare. Once again, it is a ministry of which we may be very proud indeed. Since Peter Kell has been the CEO, we have lived in a state of constant and far-reaching change. I must say at once that this radical change is not intended to be a criticism of the prior leadership. On the contrary, there were many fruitful changes made to Anglicare under the previous team. Under God we are very grateful for what they achieved.

68. But our environment does not stand still, and an organisation like this one is bound to develop. In particular, the Diocesan Mission is itself confronting Anglicare, and has forced us to

ask new questions about its aims and ethos. Thus, as Anglicare still reaches out to the needy in our community with practical help, it will do so motivated more and more out of concern for the relational crisis which is doing so much damage in the community. There has been a tendency for Anglicare to ask for help of the churches; but we now want Anglicare also to ask, how can we help the church relate to its parish area? Can Anglicare act as eyes and ears, to help the church to get to know its own parish in a way which it has not done before? Can we help you actually relate with love to your community? And can the church help Anglicare to see where the true needs are?

69. Now what have I observed? First, change is made so much easier when the overall vision for change does its work. That overall vision, which the leader has to produce, and teach and talk about, has to win the hearts and minds of those involved. I believe that it has every chance of doing so when the vision is inspired and driven by the gospel itself. But it is amazing how resistant to gospel initiative even Christians can be. Real change is only possible when we are prepared to give up our small ambitions, stop defending our little patches, forswear our petty mindedness, put self to one side and give ourselves and our money to the work. I believe that I have seen something like that happening at Anglicare under the wise and energetic leadership of Peter Kell; I have immensely high hopes that a new and even better Anglicare

will emerge. A lot of people are going to have to be prepared to accept a different way of doing things: but imagine the power let loose for the gospel when many people join together in a mission partnership!

70. Which leads in to the second observation. Think back to the five marks of strong churches: conversions, preaching, training, fellowship and reform. If we want fruitful change, change for mission and not just change for change's sake, we are going to need to devote ourselves to training and being trained. This is really the third policy of our Diocesan Mission. Mere attendance at church is not enough; we need attenders to become members and members to become partners, partners in the Mission. This will require our churches to embrace a training ethos and an intention to see all in the church properly disciplined. Our ministers are not going to be able to handle this Mission unless they are well supported, especially by the laity.

71. Once again let me say that to my great joy this is exactly the task which Anglicare has undertaken of its own staff. As well as the ordinary and necessary in-service training in professional areas, Anglicare is committing itself to creating a culture of Christian instruction available for all who work in its fellowship. Indeed it is not just Anglicare. Our Schools have caught the same vision and as we will hear later in this Synod we are at long last beginning as a Diocese to enter the

field of teacher education. It is almost outrageous that we have not as yet created a situation where those who teach Christian studies in our schools have specialist training; indeed, why should this not be available for all who teach in Anglican schools? The change in Anglicare and the Schools is a sign that God is at work.

72. Can this be translated even more to parishes? We have accepted and adopted a parish system to deliver the gospel to the community. Can we now see the churches of these parishes change for mission by bringing training into every part of our programme, moving our people from attendance to active partnership in the Mission? I know that a great deal of *education* occurs already; indeed our educated and committed laity is already one of the great strengths of the Diocese. But one of my personal goals for the year ahead is to make the resources of the Diocese more and more available for the parishes, so that together we can *train* our people in knowing the Lord and being able to make him known. This stands as one of the chief challenges of the next stage of our Mission.

73. I said this at the beginning: that 'my call today is for us to develop *leadership through change*. I give you this challenge: to fulfil our Mission we need leaders; we need leaders who are able to lead in the midst of change, and leaders who will

themselves create necessary change. We need leaders who are driven by a vision for the gospel to go to the whole community. And we need people and structures who embrace such a vision, encourage initiative and support their leaders.'

74. Moses had to move an unwilling people forward. You will remember that he had to do this without compromising the word of God in the slightest. You will remember that it was God who actually used him to do this task: as in all ministry, as in all Christian leadership, it is done in the strength of God. He was a most unwilling leader. It took the Lord speaking from the burning bush for him to accept the charge, and there were times when he clearly felt that it was too great for him to bear. When they made the golden calf, the Lord said to him, '*your people, whom you brought out of Egypt, have become corrupt.*' Moses said to the Lord, however, '*why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt...?*' (Exodus 32:7,11). As far as the people went, they were quite happy both to offend the Lord and to insult their leader: '*Come make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.*' (Ex 32:1).

75. I do not think that the majority of our Sydney-anglicans are like that. I think that there is a great willingness to serve the Lord, although it involves sacrifice. There will be those who shrink back; some will say we have tried and it has been too hard for us; some will say, 'You do not know the people that God has given me to lead'; or, 'you do not know the one who has been sent to lead us'.

76. But think of this: think of what the Lord has done and is doing in our midst - there are mighty works going on here. Moore College, Anglicare - and time does not permit me to talk about St Paul's College and St Catherine's School also 150 years old this year. What an outburst of invention and energy was let loose in the year 1856, when their resources were far less than our own! These and other great works of God are a constant reminder that he has not left us; indeed, he has brought us to this very hour seeking our obedience so that he may bless us further. Indeed, in 2006 we have the opportunity to arrange to welcome as members of the Synod representatives of our indigenous churches. I believe that the Lord has moved among us in the creation of these churches, and I hope that we do not hesitate to give that ordinance a cordial reception. We can never forget the debt we owe to the first inhabitants of our land.

77. But even if we the great works of God were invisible to us, even if we had to endure scoffing rude, like President

Eisenhower, we would press ahead for another, deeper reason. For we hear the voice of scoffing rude of course in the gospels. 'Friend of sinners'; they scoffed; 'Let him come down from the cross if he is the King of Israel', they jeered; 'Where is your father?' was there a hint about his legitimacy in that?; 'you are in league with Beelzebub', they charged; Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him; Pilate's soldiers made him wear a crown composed of thorns. Peter denied him; Judas betrayed him. But through the endurance of Jesus God changed the world forever.

78. What is going to motivate us to take up the challenge to lead?

The New Testament sees Jesus as the Leader of our salvation. We are 'to run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.' F.F. Bruce says of this: 'Jesus...is presented as the one who has blazed the trail of faith and as the one who Himself ran the race of faith to its triumphant finish... (He) led all the people of God from the earliest times along the path of faith'.ⁱⁱⁱ

79. As we consider him, the Bible says, we are 'not to grow weary and lose heart.' How do we see him? We see him crucified for us and so we recognise that, impelled by his love, we will sacrifice ourselves for him. He sacrificed all to

win the souls of sinful man and women. That surely determines what will we do for him, for them?

80. How do we see him? We see him seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and we remember that he is in charge of the world, that he is even in charge of the secular forces and the spiritual forces which so hinder the spread of the gospel. This is not the place in which to grow weary and lose heart. We should not be like the people who grumbled in the wilderness. We have together made great changes in this Diocese for the sake of Christ and his Gospel. But this is only the beginning of our missional obedience to him. This Lord Jesus is in the business of changing things, of transforming individuals and societies. Accept that power, and go forth full of faith and strength and joy to serve him. And remember his enduring promise: 'Lo,' he said, 'I am with you always, even to the end of the world'.

ⁱ Quotation slightly altered.

ⁱⁱ 'Ideas Politician' in *The Australian*, 12/10/2006

ⁱⁱⁱ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, London, 1964, 351.