

# NEWSLETTER No 41 March 2010

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## President's Reflections

I was tempted to give this column, the heading, "lies, damned lies and statistics" (with apologies to Disraeli) but thought that might be provocative. One of the many tasks awaiting my attention this week is the compilation of our annual parish statistics which were supposed to be sent to the Registrar of the diocese by the end of February. I am always reluctant to do this, partly because it's a bit time consuming and I find 'on line' forms a terrible bother to complete but mainly because I am more and more of the opinion that our diocese is far too preoccupied with numbers.

As you are all aware back in 2002 our Archbishop Peter Jensen launched the diocesan mission with its aim of having 10% of the population of Sydney in Bible based churches by the end of the decade. Leaving aside the ticklish question of what is a 'Bible based' church (one that follows the lectionary, perhaps?), the aim of growing our congregations has much to commend it. The positive effect of the mission and Connect 09 which grew out of it, is that parishes have been encouraged to be innovative and imaginative in their evangelism. New congregations have been planted and record numbers of students have graduated from Moore College. Whether we are in ordained ministry or committed laypeople we are all delighted when we see people coming to faith and growing in faith.

**Our Lord's great commission 'to go and make disciples of all nations' as stated in the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel, remains relevant for all Christians.**

But it is also true that the mission has had its down side: the emphasis on numerical growth has led to considerable discouragement and even depression among some clergy. I have no statistical evidence for this but plenty of anecdotal evidence from conversation with other ministers. Many clergy feel pressured to perform and to keep the statistics favourable. If one's congregation is not growing significantly then the temptation is to feel that you are failing, or not working hard enough. I remember leaving a Connect 09 meeting last year and hearing one minister remark, 'How much more do they expect us to do?' We have forgotten that God calls us to be faithful, but not necessarily successful. **We also easily forget that it is the Holy Spirit who**

**brings people to faith and the spirit does this in many different ways, often unexpected.**

It is interesting that in Paul's prayers for the churches found in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians he never prays that they will grow numerically. Instead he prays that 'their love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight' (Phil. 1.9); he prays that they will have 'a spirit of wisdom and revelation' as they come to know Christ more (Eph.1.17) and he prays that they will 'lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work.' **I believe we have become so focused on evangelism that we have neglected the spiritual growth of our congregations and in particular their pastoral needs.** We have been so busy planning the next big evangelistic outreach that we have neglected the sick, the lonely and the marginalized in our congregations.

The New Testament church grew at an astonishing rate but numbers were never mentioned – growth came as a by-product of being vital caring

Christian communities. Jesus said, "**By this everyone will know that you are my disciples; if you have love for one another.**" (John 13.35) **We want to be mission minded churches but we also want to be churches which are growing in love for God and for each other - the two should be natural companions.** That I'm sure is the reality in many of our churches but it is sadly not the public perception of the Anglican Church in Sydney. When people describe us they are much more likely to use adjectives like judgmental, discriminatory and litigious. Might it also be true that part of the reason for the huge financial losses sustained by our Diocesan Endowment last year was the desire to make bigger profits so that more mission activities could be put into effect. We have behaved like a corporation selling a product, rather than a community inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

There is much more I could say but perhaps I should stop writing now and go and fill out that statistics form.....

Philip Bradford  
Parish of Hunters Hill



# DIOCESAN FINANCES WATCH.....

Last year there was frustration among many of those members of Synod who are not members of Standing Committee that a full report on the financial loss was not given until Synod in October. For the purposes of this report, a reference to Synod members, excludes those who are members of Standing Committee

Synod members were told at Synod that they must share the responsibility for the financial disaster. In theory this is true but the limited access to adequate information in a timely manner makes it impossible for Synod members to fulfill their responsibility.

Let's consider the difficulties we face. Synod papers, and financial reports of the SDS and Glebe Board, are received only three weeks before the Synod meeting. In addition, on the first day of Synod, some 30 plus reports are tabled in Synod. Certainly those are available for review by members during the hours that Synod chamber is open. No copying facilities are available and it is not possible to obtain copies at or after Synod has concluded.

During the year, the SDS website provides access to Standing Committee Monthly reports (SCM Reports). With due respect, these reports are so abbreviated as to be of little use. As an example, take the situation of the Anglican Retirement Villages (ARV). Their report tabled at Synod showed substantial losses had been incurred, but where can Synod members learn whether Standing Committee is addressing these problems?

The SCM Report for 29 June 2009, noted that a report of the ARV "had been deferred". The SCM Report of 27 July 2009 also noted that the report of the ARV had been deferred. All subsequent SCM Reports had been totally silent on the finances of the ARV.

Another example is one of the motions on the Business Paper for the last day of Synod requesting an interim report on the changes to be made to improve the corporate governance and financial management of the Glebe. At the close of Synod, that motion had not been debated and the Dean moved that this and another outstanding motion be deferred for consideration at the next meeting of Standing Committee. The SCM Reports of 9 November and 7 December 2009 stated that consideration of the referral had been deferred. The Report of 14 February 2010 states that Standing Committee had agreed not to proceed with any consideration of those motions!

It has been suggested that financial information cannot be provided on the website because it would be available to the world at large. If this is an issue, there is no reason why it cannot be made available through password access to Synod members, in the same way as the Year Book access is made available. Apparently,

such a novel concept requires amendments to ordinances.

**It is not reasonable that Synod members should be kept in the dark. What else are we missing?** If you are aware of any other financial issues that should be considered, please email our editor. At next Synod we must ensure that whatever amendments are needed to enable information to be provided are debated.

Susan Hooke

**BROUGHTON PUBLISHING**  
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**NEW RELEASES**

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**MARCH Sun 14** Visit to the Imam Husain Centre

**Thurs 25** The Need for a National Conversation About Religious Freedom

**APRIL Thurs 15** Immigration:

The Building Blocks of Australia's Future

**MAY Sat 15** Getting a Grip on the Old Testament

**Sun 23** Losing My Religion with Tom Frame

**JUNE Sun 6** Anglican Heroes? John & Charles Wesley

**Sat 19** A Christian Perspective on Near Death Experiences

**JULY Sun 4** Treasures of the English Hymnal

**Sat 24** St James' Church: A Legacy of Lachlan Macquarie

**AUGUST Sun 8** Mission—God's Agenda or Ours?

**Tues 24** Silence in the City Begins

## VALE

### **Maida Stelmar Coaldrake (1919-2010)**

'A flower of the Anglican Communion' — that is how Father Greg Jordan SJ described Maida Coaldrake in his eulogy at Christ Church St Laurence on 6 February last. Maida would have appreciated that tribute, for she loved flowers, she loved her family, her students and her church. She was a lifelong Anglo-Catholic: we sang the same hymns at her husband's requiem forty years ago as we sang at hers.

Maida Coaldrake enjoyed a distinguished academic and teaching career, at a time when many women were content to stay at home. Born Maida Williams in Queenstown, Tasmania, she was educated at Launceston primary school, Methodist Ladies' College, Launceston (on a scholarship) and the Universities of Tasmania (BA, with a university medal, 1937) and Melbourne (MA, 1945). In 1939 at a Student Christian Movement conference in Mittagong, she met Frank Coaldrake, a member of the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne and a convinced pacifist.

In 1945-50 Maida was youth organizer for the Diocese of Tasmania. In May 1947 Frank Coaldrake became the first Australian civilian to enter post war Japan, supported by the Australian Board of Missions. He returned to Sydney two years later, his health broken by the privations he had endured, and on 3 December at Christ Church St Laurence, he and Maida were married. She went back with him to Japan. With her son William, foundation professor of Japanese at the University of Melbourne, she later edited and published the detailed newsletters Frank and she wrote together to send to supporters in Australia: they appeared in 2003 as *Japan from War to Peace. The Coaldrake Records 1939-1956* (Curzon Routledge). In 1957 Frank Coaldrake was made chairman of the ABM and the family moved to Sydney, where their three children were educated.

On a voluntary basis, Maida taught church history and the history of mission at the House of the Epiphany in Stanmore. In 1966 she was appointed a teaching fellow in modern history at the University of Sydney, where she exercised her many gifts, both as a teacher and a pastoral guide to first year undergraduates. Frank died very unexpectedly in July 1970, soon after his election as archbishop of Brisbane.

Thereafter Maida resumed a full-time academic career. In 1974 she returned to the University of Tasmania where she became a senior lecturer and established courses in Japanese history and language. She retired in 1984 and the following year was awarded a doctorate of the University of Tasmania, by examination. From 1974 to 1998, as a visiting professor, she annually took part in the summer sessions in Asian Studies at the Sophia University in Tokyo, a Jesuit foundation, and taught at St Hilda's Anglican Girls School in Tokyo.

In recognition of her achievements in education, in 1997 she was awarded the degree of honorary Doctor of Letters of the University of Tasmania; at the same time Emperor Akihito of Japan conferred on her a distinguished order rarely bestowed upon foreigners. In 2006 she was entered on the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women.

*May she rest in peace.*

*Ruth Frappell*



### **CONGRATULATIONS TO SYDNEY ANGLICANS WHO RECEIVED AN HONOUR IN THE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

Member of the Order

***The Reverend Dr Geoffrey Glassock AM***

Service to community through development of programs and services to assist people experiencing grief and bereavement and to the Anglican Church of Australia

Member of the Order

***Mr Robert Tong AM***

Service to the Anglican Church of Australia through a range of diocesan and national executive and administrative roles, and to the law as a practitioner and as an academic.

Member of the Order

***The Honourable Lloyd Waddy AM RFD QC***

Service to law, the constitutional debate and to the community through a range of educational and arts organizations.

Officer of the Order

***Mr Robert Maple-Brown AO***

Service to the community through leadership and executive roles with a range of charitable organisations in the areas of the arts, health, welfare, medical research and education, and through philanthropy.



***VISIT US OUR ONLINE***

***[www.anglicanstogether.org](http://www.anglicanstogether.org)***

# BOOKS FOR REFLECTION

Reviewed by Mandy Tibbey, Enmore Parish

*Bridget McKern* RN MN, whose background is in nursing and healing therapies and who is a parishioner at St Mark's South Hurstville, is a writer worth reading. She has written two very special works: " *Living the Journey: Everyday Heroes tell their Story*", published in 2007 and " *Five Seasons: Poetry of the Soul*", published in 2008 ('Five Seasons').

**"Living the Journey" is a collection of stories of struggle, passion, loss change and resurrection.**

*Bridget McKern* allows us to be witnesses to the journeys of a diverse range of people who have faced difficulties that, at times, have overwhelmed them, including the disability of a child, addiction of a partner, unemployment, infirmity, depression, abuse, betrayal, loss of profession, leaving a marriage and returning to it.

In each of these situations, those interviewed have struggled with brokenness, messiness, frustration, pain and loss and found the inner and outer resources and resilience to chart their own paths to new life. Their persistence is very encouraging. No matter how difficult, their lives have not remained stuck in difficult places. What has helped? For some the support of friends, family or church has been important. For others nature, for others even one person who opens new ways of seeing.

***This book honours the journey, the finding a path to abundant life from childhood to old age.***

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**In the second book, "Five Seasons", *Bridget McKern* uses the five elements of Chinese medicine to structure her poems:** Fire, signifying summer, health, enthusiasm, joy compassion; Earth, signifying late summer, stomach, worry, recollection; Air signifying autumn, lungs, grief, letting go, clarity; Water signifying kidneys, fear and free will; Wood signifying spring, liver, anger, resolution and vision.

These, she says "refer to the dynamic connections of energy or chi in the body. They are like moving rivers of energy that interplay and support or control each other...each circle element has its own balance of Yin and Yang which holds the moving pattern in harmony with one another. When there is too much of anything, another energy will be called to complement and damp down the too-muchness or give more strength when it is lacking."<sup>1</sup>

The beauty and depth of *Bridget McKern's* poetry lies in linking the seasons of nature with the seasons of the human spirit, the eternal with the ordinary, God with us.

She begins with 'Summer's Day':

*Sweet whispering breezes  
In oak and liquid amber notes*

*High above my verandah  
What are you saying this summer day?  
Life goes on through funeral days  
And celebrations  
War and peace alike  
Each day has its own story  
Its own unique character  
Busy or dreaming  
Full or empty  
Fast or slow  
No matter what the pitch  
Our lives weave in or out  
As natural and insistent as breathing*

*I love this ever present air  
It reminds me of God*

In 'Storms of the Psyche' she vividly portrays emotions we all experience:

*'Storms of the Psyche'  
Come like summer rain  
In torrents  
Bursting from the sky  
Drenching, drowning  
Turning sand into mud  
Drains tuneful with the cries and tears  
Of the tormented  
Intimations of thunder*

*A sudden flight of birds across the sky  
Looking for shelter from the storm  
Homeward bound*

This contrasts with the peace of 'New Year in the Tarkine'

*Entering the forest  
I am greening my soul  
  
Walking on a green moss carpet  
My feet sing contentedly  
  
Entering my tent home  
The forest holds me in soft darkness....*

*.....I lay my past year out  
On the washing line of time well spent*

*To blow in the wind  
And to fall like a leaf spiralling back to Earth*

*The circle of creativity begins and ends with a Word  
That sounds like the sigh of the wind in the high branches*

*My breath joins the Great Breath of the Forest  
We breathe together in tranquil reunion.*

*Unselfconscious, accepted, as we are  
In the moment by moment adventure of life unfolding...*

In 'I am Blessed', she says:

*...I sit and meditate..  
A spider's gossamer thread glints  
And the warm sun is bathing this place of beauty and peacefulness...*

<sup>1</sup> P81.

*The love of family connects me with the gossamer thread  
of life  
Fragile and yet so strong  
Rebuilding brokenness  
Re-souling our inner lives*

*Reminding us of love that endures all things  
Here we build our dreams of a New Heaven and a New  
Earth  
Where Goodness parents the Children of Love.*

The mystical unity of the whole creation emerges in  
**'We are One':**

*Smile at a stranger  
With love in your eyes  
WE ARE ONE*

*Listen to another's pain  
Without judgement or blame  
WE ARE ONE*

The wonder of a rainbow in **'At Barbie's Place':**

*That Rainbow  
Like a soft silk scarf  
Across the roof of your house  
The bands of purple  
Breathtaking in their intensity  
And then the Orange  
Hovering over the town and Bay  
On fire with beauty  
The blue hills beyond  
The swathes of melted silk colour  
Moving quietly  
Across the country  
Where you have made your home  
A blessing with sea and sky.*

Some poems are overtly theological, such as  
**'Theological Discomfort':**

*Give me discomfort any day  
Rather than a false assertion  
That I feel comfortable  
Far better to show the anger  
Than to stifle in politeness  
And I'm-all-rightness  
Dare to be myself...*

*...Beware the hypocrite within  
That worm in the soul  
That all of us are prone to...*

*Therefore my brothers and sisters  
Let us walk warily  
Lest our own pretensions  
Get the better of us*

The struggle for women's ordination within the Anglican  
Church urges her on to embrace new forms of church:

*You are the new creation  
To you who know the birthing process  
Is given the church of the future.  
The purpose, to give birth, not death  
To bring my people through their labour pains  
A safe passage  
To leave old forms behind where they are irrelevant*

*To leave old tombs of death and destruction  
Sin and guilt  
And rise through the glorious womb  
Of new birth, new visions, new awakenings...*

The life of faith is evoked in '  
**Storms – Millenium Closing**':

*I am a boat that has broken its mooring  
And am drifting, drifting  
Further out to sea  
The coast is not clear anymore*

*...We have to sail by the winds of change  
And hope that these settings will bring us to a land  
That is a sure home  
Where peace prevails  
And all creatures are safe...*

*Here we live productive lives  
Tending our children and our gardens  
Enjoying the sunshine of each others love and comfort*

In **'Monastery Healing'**, reflections have space:

*In this valley of the Soul  
I weave the broken threads of my life..*

*Sometimes the threads are broken beyond repair  
With deep regret I cast them down  
Into the furnace of my heart  
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust  
That they may be compost for a garden of remembrance  
With roses of the rarest fragrances  
And the healing lilies of compassion..*

*I find the finest yarn..*

*The threads must hold the weft of Truth  
They must be woven with the strength  
Of humility and praise  
Strong enough to last my everlasting days*

*Rain, rain, in my soul  
Sweet gentle soaking of dry ground within  
Fill me with new life and new growth  
Soak me to the very roots  
Down, down to the depths of my being*

*Ah! The trees breathe again  
The plains rejoice  
The magpie carols her throaty thanks  
Kookaburras echo from the hills  
The land, the land is singing  
And all things live.*

These poems will refresh and delight you! They are honest, evocative and draw us into the deeper realms of the Spirit in beauty and wonder. *Bridget McKern* is a healer. On many levels, these are healing poems that bring us back to our deepest selves, to our connection with others, with God and God's good earth.

Both publications available from *Bridget McKern*  
Phone 02 9546 4557 or e-mail <bridget@mckern.biz>  
Cost - **'Living the Journey'** (incl p&p) - \$25;  
**'Five Seasons'** - (incl p&p) - \$15.



# One Church One Faith

## Centenary History of St Peter's Anglican Church, Cremorne 1909 – 2009

The year 2009 was a momentous one for St Peter's, Cremorne when, during May and June, we celebrated both our centenary and welcomed our new rector, **Fr Neil Vearing**, and his wife **Heather**.

The anniversary of the first service held in the church was celebrated on 3 May, at which **Bishop Richard Appleby** both celebrated and preached.



1923 – Church and newly completed War Memorial Hall, the latter opened by the former Prime Minister, W M “Billy” Hughes.

The work and dedication of the women of the parish was recognised on 24 May with our Acting Rector **Fr Ken Munns** as celebrant, and **the Revd Dr Julia Perry**, Chaplain to Anglican Care in the Diocese of Newcastle (and an ordinand from St Peter's to Newcastle Diocese in the 1980s) the preacher.

No time to rest on our laurels, as on June 5 **Fr Neil** was commissioned and he and Heather welcomed to the parish family. Complete with balloons and streamers, on Sunday afternoon 7 June the church resounded to a brilliant British “Proms” Concert produced by Director of Music **David Coburn** (and there is to be a repeat performance this year at 2pm on Monday 14 June, the Queen's birthday holiday).



2009 – Patronal Festival Eucharist

Lto R: Fr Ken Munns, Archbishop Roger Herft, Fr Neil Vearing

**Then on 28 June the culmination of our two months' celebrations with our Patronal Festival Eucharist, with Fr Neil as celebrant, Fr Ken as Deacon, and an**

**old friend of the parish, Archbishop Roger Herft, the preacher, and luncheon guest following the service.**

The heading of this article epitomises the history of St Peter's, and the future. But it is also the title of a book commissioned to celebrate our centenary and researched and written by historian **Dr Ruth Frappell**, well known to many Anglicans Together subscribers.



The book is now with the printers, and it is anticipated it will be launched either at the end of April, or early in May by **Justice David Davies**, who has had a long association with St Peter's. Anglicans Together subscribers will be receiving an invitation. We hope to see you there.

To quote from the Foreword written by **Bishop Ken Mason**: “The excellence of this production highlights two things. Firstly, it reveals what fascinating information is to be found in parish records, which need to be collated. Secondly, it demonstrates how important it is that such endeavours are taken on by competent, sympathetic and knowledgeable writers with a strong sense of history, such as **Dr Frappell**”.

The book will retail at \$35.

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**St Peter's Church has moved into 2010** undertaking many activities from Bible study to patchwork. Some of these began with small beginnings two to three years ago but have grown, appealing, or are a service, to the wider community. There is **Playtime for Toddlers**, accompanied by a parent, every Thursday morning for two hours in school term time. This outreach to the community is an opportunity for parents to get to know each other within the area in which they live.

**Tuesday Talks** once a month - this is Morning Tea followed by a talk for up to an hour including question time. Topics have ranged from spirituality, climate change, the corporate world, education, travel, psychiatry and Christian principles. Speakers have been from both within and outside the parish. There is an

untapped depth in congregations of spirituality, experiences, life styles and careers.

**Words and the Word @ St Peter's:** - A monthly Book Club meeting on a Friday night for a communal meal followed by discussion on the content of the chosen title. Each member takes it in turn to select the book, which can be on any subject from Religious to fiction, with the provisos that the title is available locally through bookseller or library, is a reasonable price, and that it is not of "Gone with the Wind" length.

Newcomers from outside the parish are welcomed.

**St Peter's continues to be very much Community and Mission oriented, and supports a wide range of Missions**, including Taldumande, a youth refuge (secular) in our local area with whom we have been associated since the 1980s. All fund raising activities are for Missions. Our total giving to Missions for 2009 was \$20,497.

*Anne FitzPatrick*

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## **ANGLICAN CLERGY SUPPORT SHEIKH MANSOUR LEGHAEI**

*Fr Dave Smith* of Holy Trinity, Dulwich Hill and *Fr Gwilym Henry Edwards* are members of the "Marrickville Multi-faith Round Table", a group, consisting of local Christian (of various denominations), Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Parsee leaders, which is supporting *Sheikh Leghaei's* fight against deportation back to Iran.

Sheikh Leghaaei is the leader of the Imam Husain Islamic Centre in Earlwood set up in 1997 and given the blessing of the then Attorney-General Philip Ruddock. Currently, ASIO are refusing to reconsider its negative security assessment of the Sheikh, who arrived with his wife and small son, Ali, 13 years ago. Sheikh Leghaei now has four children; the three children born in Australia will be allowed to remain in Australia, but his wife and eldest son, now 20-years old and studying at a university, are to be deported.

Speaking on the ABC Late Line programme on Monday, 9 March, Fr Dave said "They made a negative security assessment of him, what, 13 years ago and they've left him here for 13 years?"

Fr Gwilym said: "He's been denied natural justice. If he hasn't been able to see what charges are raised against him or to defend himself, I would have thought that was a basic human right."

**TRANBY ABORIGINAL COLLEGE** Australia's oldest indigenous education provider (established in 1958) has announced, that due to lack of Government financial funding, it will have to reduce the number of Certificate courses offered in 2010.



Tranby, in the inner western suburb of Glebe, is an adult education provider catering exclusively to Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) students from around the country. It offers certificate and diploma level courses in legal studies, governance, Aboriginal Studies, Community development, office skills and literacy and numeracy.

The Anglican Church was involved in Tranby's foundation, through *The Reverend Alf Clint*, who had been a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and, with the support of the Australian Board of Missions, founded Tranby in 1958 as a hostel for young indigenous men training to run co-operatives in the bush. It has now evolved into an institution providing courses in governance, office skills and Aboriginal history.

*Lindon Coombes*, Tranby's Chief Executive Officer said in an Address to the NSW Reconciliation Conference "At a time when "social inclusion" and "closing the gap" are the catch cries when it comes to Indigenous issues, it is an embarrassment that an Institution like Tranby finds itself in a position where it is dealing with declining revenue from government and is expected to operate in a constant state of uncertainty."

"Tranby is a special institution, an iconic institution, for many reasons. Firstly, we provide a free education to Indigenous people from anywhere in the country. If you are an Indigenous adult, anywhere in Australia and have the required aptitude to undertake our courses – you can gain a qualification from Tranby and will have all of your expenses covered, and will also enjoy Aunty Patty's exceptional food."

"I am also immensely proud of the role that Tranby plays in providing a re-entry point back into education for many of our people – particularly older people wishing to re-engage with education. For many of our students, Tranby is the only viable option for further education because of the support we are able to provide, and because we are one of the few educational facilities that doesn't just accommodate Aboriginality – we embrace it, in fact we live it. It's difficult to articulate what it means for Aboriginal people to come to a place where you're part of the majority and where your culture is the prevailing culture."

"One of the cornerstones of reconciliation is Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working together for a common cause. In this context, there is no better example of reconciliation than Tranby."

The full text of *Lindon Coombes'* Address is on the Tranby website [www.tranby.edu.au](http://www.tranby.edu.au).

**A DATE FOR YOUR 2011 DIARY  
OCTOBER FRI 28<sup>TH</sup> - SUN 30<sup>TH</sup>  
ANGLICANS TOGETHER  
WEEKEND AWAY**

Tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops  
A time for food for thought, fun and friendship

# 'THE BIBLE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH' PROJECT

launched by the Anglican Communion

Posted: January 28, 2010 1:17 PM | by ACNS: <http://www.aco.org/acns/news>

*'Our engagement with the Bible has several aspects to it - rather like the different parts of a house. The actual black print on white paper on which the words of the Bible are written resembles the front door of the house - our point of access and welcome. Then as we enter the house we find ourselves standing on Christ the Rock, who is the living foundation-stone of the whole building in which we are located. The walls that separate us room from room can be linked to the different contexts which we bring to our study and exploration of the scriptures, which affect the shape and parameters of our reading. But overarching all, as a roof for the entire building, is the world-wide Church which both embraces and offers a generous boundary for our reading.'*

This striking image was offered by **Archbishop David Moxon** of New Zealand Archbishop and Co-Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia and Bishop of Waikato, as he opened the first meeting of the Steering Group of **'The Bible in the Life of the Church'** at St Andrews House, London, 30 November - 3 December 2009.

**'The Bible in the Life of the Church'** is a major project being undertaken over three years by the Anglican Communion, mandated by the Anglican Consultative Council at its Jamaica meeting in May 2009. It is seeking to discover how Anglican Christians read the Bible, recognizing the very diverse contexts we inevitably bring to this reading. With the support of the Anglican Communion Department of Theological Studies, the work of this Bible project will largely take place in a number of Regional Groups based around theological education institutions in Kenya, Southern Africa, South East Asia, Oceania, North America and Britain. Representatives of each of these regions were present at the opening Steering Group meeting in London and together set up the process that the Regional Groups will seek to follow throughout the coming year.

We are also planning to set up a number of "User Groups" that will enable input from other parts of the Anglican Communion. We also have on the Steering Group members from Latin America and Nigeria. The "User Groups" will take part in the project by testing out material that emerges from the work of the Steering and Regional Groups.

In order to enable the overall task with which this 'Bible project' has been entrusted, it has been

agreed to ask those who will be participating to undertake first of all some serious biblical engagement with the Fifth Mark of Mission of the Anglican Communion. ***The Fifth Mark of Mission speaks of the missionary imperative, 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.'*** We hope that, through exploring together a selection of key biblical passages which relate to this theme - widely acknowledged as one of the most crucial challenges facing the Churches and humanity today - we will be able to offer evidence of the way in which we, as Anglicans, actually handle the Bible and to identify principles of biblical interpretation.

Reflecting on the Steering Group meeting, *Stephen Lyon*, the project's administrator said, *'those involved left London excited by the possibilities of the project. It will involve the grass roots as well as scholars; encourage an excitement in exploring the Bible; take seriously the diversity of our Communion while acknowledging the foundational place Scripture has always played in our common life.'*

*Clare Amos*, the Anglican Communion's Director for Theological Studies, echoed this commitment to ensure that the project takes seriously the widest possible range of Anglican experience. *'At our meeting in London we shared both our high hopes for the task, and a range of creative ways of taking this work forward. We want the people of the Anglican Communion as a whole to share the sense of urgency and importance that the project is generating. It is vital that different regions of the Anglican world are empowered to make their distinctive contributions. Stephen and I believe that among our responsibilities will be to ensure that news about the progress of the work is shared widely. One of the tools for this will be a section dedicated to the project on the Anglican Communion website. So watch this space!'*

The Regional Group representative for Oceania is the **Rev'd Dr Charles Sherlock**, Executive Officer, Board of Ministry, Diocese of Bendigo, Australia.

