**Hope in Tough Times**

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**Hope in Tough Times**

**Part 1: Hope in Tough Times**

I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather and inso doing honour elders past and present.It is timely that this Synod is meeting over the weekend of the Federal election in thatparallels that can be drawn. Like voters across the country, this Synod will be confrontedwith some big picture issues over the next few days. Our Diocese is facing seriouschallenges to our mission which are unfolding on a much larger, national and even globalstage: from the Royal Commission into child sexual abuse to rural decline; from theologicaldisagreements over human sexuality to the impact of secularisation.Our nation too is being tossed on stormy seas beyond the direct control of our politicalleaders: from looming military conflict in the Middle East to the end of the internationalcommodities boom which could potentially lead to economic downturn.One undercurrent of the Federal election is that voters want a leader who will deliverAustralia to a place of certainty, safety and security. Or to put it more simply: We arelooking for hope in tough times.A survey last week by Anglicare Australia (supported by our local Anglicare) of its 500 of clients

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more than 10 per cent of whom live in our Diocese

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suggested that a leader whocould promise stability and security would be highly attractive to the electorate.These voters, most of them in very vulnerable circumstances already, expressed fears aboutlooming job cuts and unemployment; frustration about seemingly out of control rises in thecost of living and the lack of affordable housing. And a very large group of them expressedanxiety about the increasing numbers of asylum seekers.While we may not agree with the politics surrounding some of these issues, it isunderstandable that people tossed about on rough seas will hope for a safe haven wherethey can rest and rebuild.The Bible is very clear on the sort of Christian leadership that delivers hope inextraordinarily tough times. The Bible calls for leadership that is very firm on core beliefs,but allows scope for different approaches. It is leadership that is strong when it comes toproclaiming with clarity the gospel of Jesus Christ, but it calls on the leader to model loveand respect; openness and patience with those with whom he or she disagrees. This

concept of leadership points to my vision for this Diocese as a ‘mixed economy church

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Theroot of this model is expounded by Paul in Romans Chapter 15, verses 1 to 13.

**ROMANS 15: 1-13**

15

If our faith is strong, we should be patient with the Lord’s followers whose faith is

weak. We should try to please them instead of ourselves.

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We should think of their good and try to help them by doing what pleases them.

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Even Christ did not try to please

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himself. But as the Scriptures say, “The people who insulted you also insulted me.”

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 And the Scriptures were written to teach and encourage us by giving us hope.

5

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live at peace with each other, as you follow Christ.

6

Then all of you together will praise God, the Father of our Lord JesusChrist.

7

Honor God by accepting each other, as Christ has accepted you.

8

I tell you that Christ came as a servant of the Jews to show that God has kept the promises he made to their  famous ancestors. Christ also came,

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so that the Gentiles would praise God for being

kind to them. It is just as the Scriptures say, “I will tell the nations

about you and I will sing praises to you

r name.”

10

The Scriptures also say to the Gentiles, “Come and celebrate with God’s people.”

11

 Again the Scriptures say, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles. All you nations, come and worship him.”

12

Isaiah says, “Someone from David’s family will come to

 power.

He will rule the nations, and they will put their hope in him.”

13

I pray that God, who gives hope, will bless you with complete happiness and peacebecause of your faith. And may the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope.

The context for understanding this passage is found in Romans 14, famously addressing theproblem of how those who enjoy greater Christian freedom in their thought and action

should deal with those who don’t—

the so-called weaker sisters and brothers. Paul

encourages ‘the strong’ not to view ‘the weak’ as failures at living up to their standards of

faith but, rather, as joint members of Christ who are united in Him.Rather than put ourselves in the position of having to judge a weaker sister or brother for

being weak, it’s be

tter says Paul, that we forego our rights and thereby avoid provoking a

scandal in the first place: “Let us therefore no longer pass judgement on one another, butresolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another” (14: 13).

 Where a weighty Gospel matter is involved, however, Paul never flinches in siding with oneperspective over another. The theological and pastoral challenge is to know the difference

between “food and drink matters” and “Gospel truth matters

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We need help distinguishingbetween the issues where we have freedom of choice, on the one hand

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but where weought also to renounce our Christian freedom if necessary for the sake of the weak. Andmatters that undermine the essence of the Gospel, where like Paul, we must stand firm. In

Paul’s context this sort of issue was the Judaizers’ requirement that Gentile converts be

circumcised.

Paul’s path forward is to encourage us to focus on persevering with the weak.

He shows hishand by moving explicitly to address the issue of Jewish and Gentile Christians in the sameChurch.

This was the equivalent of the “human sexuality” or “lay presidency” or “womenbishops” crisis of the day.

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In verse 15: 5, “the God of steadfastness and encouragement”, in other words the God

of the Scriptures

“in accord with Christ Jesus”—

is asked to grant harmony in both Christian life

and praise to this “mixed economy Church” of Jews and Gentiles.

 Philosopher Bertrand Russell said that a strong ideological position may be a veiled bid forpower. Paul presents this spirit of rivalry in these passages as the fundamental barrier torealising the Christian promise uniting strong and weak, Gentile and Jew, in Jesus Christ.This passage, therefore, suggests there is significant room for Christians to disagree as long

as it’s done in the right spirit.

However, the point is this: on the ‘other side’ of any

argument we must see the people behind the words.

As human beings, the ‘other’ is of

unquestioned value and Christ identifies with them, so insulting them means insulting him.But this does not mean that they are necessarily right. They are to be respected for the sakeof who they are, though this does not mean accepting any of their beliefs with which wemight disagree.The end willed by God is joyful mutual abiding in the body of Christ, which requires

openness to God’s Spirit by the whole body.

God desires to fill our hearts with the Spirit of

peace to replace the anxiety we feel about becoming the ‘losers’ in a power struggle.

Eventhose, like me, in perceived positions of power, can sometimes be driven by a feeling of isolation, that the so-

called ‘other side’ has strength in numbers.

This is a dangerousmindset to fall into. Christ does not despise the strong nor deny their rights. However, thevery fact of their strength is a pointer to their responsibility in Christ. The gospel redefinesstrength in terms of mercy and forbearance. This undercuts the whole worldly logic of self-assertion and winning at the expense of the other.Giving our fears over to God, who is sovereign over all, is the starting point for animaginative re-badging of our differences within the body of Christ. God really can bringpeace and harmony in his Church, despite the plain fact of division, disunity and the ever-present risk of damaging each other. Paul is very frank in acknowledging this reality. Andyet his tone is one of encouragement and hopefulness. This is because Paul trusts that Godcan deliver the outcome he constantly prays for.So the Bish

op’s Dream that we can become

**a diocese where the love of Jesus transformsindividuals and communities**

ultimately begins with us trusting in the Lord’s greater

purposes. Only He can bind us into one healthy body functioning together for mission. Thisis our hope in tough times.

**Drawing Hope From the Past**

Our 150

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year reminds us to look back first, drawing on the experience and inspiration fromthe pioneers of our past, before reaching out towards the dream. When you take on aleadership role, it is wise to look back at your predecessors to absorb the hard lessons theyalready learnt. As you reflect on their triumphs and failures, sometimes one particularChristian forebear will resonate more deeply in our soul. They can even become spiritualmentors lighting the path out of a moral or ministry maze. For me that guide has beenBishop Barlow.

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Christopher George Barlow was the third Bishop of this Diocese, effectively covering theperiod from Federation to the start of the Great War. He was installed as Bishop in 1902and retired in March 1915, just prior to his death at Cooma rectory.This was the Edwardian period: Emily Pankhurst and the Suffragettes were fighting for thevote; the Salvation Army had become a powerhouse for social reform. William B

ooth’s

book -

In Darkest England

- published in the 1890s, influenced Edwardian Christians torediscover a vision for social welfare based on his Christian evangelical principles.Locally, the most significant event was the founding of Canberra as the nat

ion’s capital.

Born in 1858 in Dublin, there are two defining facts of Barlow’s life.

Firstly, he entered hisstepfather's manufacturing firm in London, without going to university. Secondly, heresigned his partnership at this firm to become secretary to his lifelong friend

[GeorgeStanton,](http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/stanton-george-henry-4634)Bishop of North Queensland. In the early 1900s Cape York was very much thefrontier of the British Empire.In 1881 he entered the ministry serving at Mackay, Charters Towers, and then St James' Pro-Cathedral, Townsville. On Stanton's translation to Newcastle, Barlow was elected tosucceed him, becoming the first man ordained in Australia to be elected bishop by anAustralian synod. As he had no university degree the appointment was challenged but hewas immediately granted a Lambeth doctorate by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

**Secularism and Anglican Education**

The first big lesson I have drawn from Bishop Barlow’s legacy is the key role education

should play in shaping our mission to the contemporary secular context.It often feels like we are the first generation to confront the challenge of secularism. Butthe trajectory of secularisation began over 150 years ago. And we can look to ourpredecessors for clues on how the Church should respond.Bishop Barlow pinpointed the growing indifference to religion within the secular schoolsystem. And, more importantly, gave the Diocese the confidence and hope that, under God,we could draw on our resources to confront the challenge.A quick summary of the historical context is required to explain. In the early colonial periodschools were run via the local congregations of all the major Christian denominations:Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Roman Catholic.

I suspect it was Barlow’s own relatively humble educational background that led him to see

the important role the church could provide in schooling the average child. He looked tocommission rural clergy who could act as community teachers, reaching out to isolatedfarming families who would otherwise struggle to access secondary education. This ismissional thinking. Seeing a social need, and asking how the church might be resourced tomeet that need in order to intentionally further the mission Christ.

But Barlow’s context was even more complicated, and more relevant to us.

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As the 19

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century had progressed, the association of Christianity and education becameincreasingly problematic. Professor Tom Frame explains:

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Schools, and then universities, were the principal battleground for sectarian warfarebetween competing doctrinal systems and rival visions of society. Education was the placewhere the churches would seek their ascendancy over one another. Given that believing insome form of divine being and belonging to a religious community was near universal, thechurches turned on each other rather than on dealing with the sources of economicinequality or political exclusion.

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Pointing to gaps in the various denominations’ education provision, politicians in the 1870s

and 1880s had argued for quality control and standardisation of schooling. And given thechurches seemed incapable of working together in harmony, Governments claimed theyhad no choice but to absorb the church schools and create a universal public educationsystem. The result: a succession of colonial parliaments enacted laws whose chief outcomewas marginalising the churches from primary and secondary education in every Australiancolony.Soon public education meant secular education.

And whereas the word ‘secular’ had been

traditionally understood as non-clerical and non-denominational, it was gradually re-

interpreted to mean “without any religious content

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Neutrality became indifference whichmorphed into animosity and hostility.It was in this context that Barlow developed his vision for Anglican secondary education.It was Barlow who first articulated the need to develop a formal network of Diocesanschools. With the choice of Canberra as the national capital, Barlow foresaw that theMonaro would one day sustain a major city.

With an eye on Canberra’s future, the Church

of England Grammar School for girls and boys was established in Cooma in 1906. ThisAnglican school would ultimately relocate to Red Hill two decades later, and be renamedCanberra Grammar.It was Barlow, arguably more than Radford or Burgmann, who understood the power of secondary education to develop minds that could engage in thoughtful Christian dialoguegiven the increasingly secular context.

On this score our times are not that different to Barlow’s.

Yes, we have militant atheists.But they are far from the dominant voice in the public square. As Australians grapple withwhat it means to live in a multicultural society, there is also a growing openness to religiousbeliefs of all kinds. A century after they were banished from their classrooms, the churchesare again significant stakeholders in education and training, with their contribution toshaping the ethics and values of society respected by the majority of Australians.However then, as now, the risk for religious schools and tertiary institutions is that they willbe identified with the problem of religious conflict. We must ensure that Anglican schoolsare known as institutions that help their students to be shaped by the love of Jesus

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placesthat teach respect and compassion for all human beings no matter what their background.Our schools face many very real challenges. In Canberra our schools may have wonderfulfacilities and healthy waiting lists, but increasingly they face the hard task of remaining

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beacons of the gospel in the face of the growing secularism which continues to define the

nation’s capital.

Our regional schools face other challenges. While seeking to provide afaithful Christian witness to their community, they are presented with issues that go to scale

and demography when serving a smaller ‘market

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To this end, I want to be clear to Synod:there is more work to be done to ensure the longer term sustainability of our south coastschools. I am convinced this will require a closer and continuing working partnershipbetween the school councils, the Diocesan School Council (DSC) and the central agencies of the Diocese.Nevertheless, at the wonderful Anglican Education Celebration held last month atSt

Saviour’s cathedral it was clear to

me that Barlow’s vision had come to fruition.

Over 700students representing each of the seven Anglican Schools associated with the Diocese werein attendance. I particularly want to thank Mr Phillip Heath, Head of Radford College andChaplain, the Reverend Nikolai Blaskow, for organising the service and presentation of eight

Mallus Floribunda

trees: seven to be planted at each of the schools, and one to be plantedin the Cathedral grounds. I also want to acknowledge the work Nikolai has done inorganising prayer teams. Our mission is hope-

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unless it comes from the Lord, our callingcomes

through the guidance of prayer, and all our achievements come as a blessing of theHoly Spirit to the glory of the Father.

Three other significant projects launched this year are shaped by the same spirit that drove

Barlow’s vision for Anglican education:

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Last month we unveiled plans for our new Anglican School at Googong at the offices of the Mayor of Queanbeyan. I am very excited that a remarkable partnership betweenthe developer, the architects and the Diocesan Schools Council had produced a designthat is not only cutting edge in addressing environmental sustainability but one of themost beautiful school designs I have seen. We have already received expressions of interest from nearly 200 people, with building work set to commence in January orFebruary. Stage one of the co-educational facility will include an early learning centreand a primary school, which will open for the start of the 2015 school year. Phase twowill be a high school. The facility will eventually accommodate up to 1100 studentsacross all educational levels. Mr Willard and the team from the DSC have served us wellin this new venture.

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Secondly, we have commenced a new Anglican Tertiary Ministry, with theReverend Brad Lovegrove commissioned last month to provide focused leadership to

student ministries with Canberra’s universities.

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Thirdly, the parish of Ainslie, with the support of the Property Trust, have been

successful in gaining Federal Government funding to build All Saints’ College, a tertiary

residence on the parish site. Although the DA has not yet been approved, the sketchplans are very exciting and illustrate the potential of the proposal. This is a greatministry project aiming to tackle a genuine community need: a critical shortage of

affordable rental properties for Canberra’s relatively large student population.

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**Diversity in Mission**

The second major lesson I have learnt from Bishop Barlow is the need to recruit clergy froma diverse range of backgrounds and traditions if we are going to take the good news of Jesusout into a complex and diverse society.

Barlow’s ministry priorities were shaped b

y his Low Church formation and outlook but hewas not wedded to any party position.

The Australian Dictionary of Biography

records his

address to the New South Wales Provincial Synod in 1907, where “he deplored party bigotry

within the Church and pleaded for more tolerance and humanity towards differing points of

view.”

 What is most significant about Barlow is that he respected and promoted those of othertraditions who were committed to the mission-field. It is for this reason that Barlow didmore than any other bishop, in my view, to set the character of this Diocese, as a place thatcelebrates Christian diversity centred around a common calling to share the good news of Jesus with the world.

Barlow’s main priority was to recruit clergy who did not simply expect a settled ministry

amongst the middle classes. He had great skill in identifying Christian leaders from alltheological traditions, such as the Bush Brothers, who were suitable to work in a ruralmission-field.Barlow brought in people from a range of backgrounds, including people from working classsituations. Not surprisingly, given his own educational history, h

e didn’t judge ministry

candidates by their academic degrees. Rather, he asked a simple question: what kind of pastor would this person make?The result was that an entrepreneurial mindset infused the Diocese. He gave clergy thepermission to dream big and risk failure, by leading the way.Barlow focused on the twin strategies of boosting fundraising in order to resource churchplanting. He reorganised the Church Society which increased support from £600 to nearly£3000 a year. This new found financial strength enabled him to subsidise the poorerparishes, and provide for clerical training.

Around 45 churches were built during Barlow’s

episcopacy.In a similar way we hope the Jamieson House development will generate the income weneed to launch new ministries and build churches. Construction is well underway, withexcavations for the basement completed and crane put in place to begin the upwards build.Unit sales remain strong and we have reached a significant financial milestone with incomenow almost matching the build costs. My appreciation and thanks particularly goes to PhilDavies and his team for their leadership in this complex project.

Of course not all Barlow’s big idea

s bore fruit. Visionary enterprises, such as theBishopthorpe High School for Girls at Goulburn and a theological college, both set up in1906, did not ultimately flourish. But the point is he was willing to take the risk and acceptthe possibility of failure.

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The mis-

steps ultimately didn’t matter.

Barlow gave hope to the Diocese through his visionfor Anglican education and his promotion of a range of mission activitiesIt is this spirit that I see reflected in three further developments within our Diocese thisyear:

**1. Missional Activity**

In this past year we have been privileged to see new congregations and expressions of church surface across our diocese. These include more formal gatherings such as the SuttonRoad Mission District and the Mulwaree Anglican Mission district, through to experimentalcafe church, social justice services, new ministry in nursing homes and small groups thathave emerged from Alpha courses and the like. It is all very heartening.

**2. Support for Renewal Ministries**

Secondly, I have acted to provide oversight for what are sometimes described as 'renewal'ministries in the Diocese. The 'charismatic' has a great deal to offer us in our mission, buthas historically lived less easily within the Anglican tradition, so in consultation with myEpiscopal team I have invited Canon Gill Varcoe to serve as a 'go-to' person for me in thisarea. She has the relatively unusual combination of being experienced and at home incatholic, evangelical and renewal streams of Anglican theology and worship. Gill will takecarriage of arranging opportunities for teaching and mutual encouragement and support,and is also available for missions, seminars, personal mentoring and 'trouble-shooting'.

**3. 150**

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**Church Plant Project**

Thirdly, Archdeacon Paul Wallis has been commissioned by me to undertake aSesquicentenary church plant project, drawing on the network developed through the

International Ministry based around Canberra’s diplomatic community.

 It is particularly apt that this project is pioneering - by crossing new cultural frontiers

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andlooks to the future of the Anglican Church in Australia which must become increasinglyethnically diverse to be true to our mission.Paul Wallis explains:

“…it will constitute a special unit of church with a mission focused specifically on hospitality

towards those in Canberra from overseas. Its special ministry will be to create social opportunities for befriending and helping our international neighbours to feel happy and welcome in Canberra and to enjoy life together in our great city

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Gathering together a core group of supporters, this new faith community will meet every

fortnight at the Wallis’ home in Casey

. Paul and Ruth were commissioned for this new workby the ministry team from Gungahlin last Sunday.

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**150**

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**Anniversary**

At the heart of the transformative power of the gospel is the hope of new life in Christ.We tagged our 150

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celebrations with three phrases: Be a pioneer. Be a Local. Be inspired.The aim was to encourage each of us to do three things this year:

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Firstly, try at least one new thing at church. Perhaps you have the energy and passion tostart a new ministry, a new event, or a new community activity. But pioneers includethose who take a risk in supporting a new church venture not just the leaders.

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Secondly, look outwards at your immediate neighbourhood. Start with the people wholive in your street. Build relationships and pray for them, looking for opportunities toserve their needs.

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Thirdly, listen to the many stories of how God is working in the lives of people in ourchurches and Praise God!For my part, I have committed to five longer-term projects based on the three themes of our celebration 150

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year - to be a pioneer, to focus on the needs of my neighbours, and tofollow the call of Jesus. My hope and prayer is that each of these projects will have anongoing legacy for many years to come.

**1.**

**St Saviour’s Cathedral**

With the blessing of our Dean, the Very Reverend Phillip Saunders, I have elected to focus

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of my personal ‘pioneering’ efforts on and around our wonderful Cathedral.

TheCathedral, of course, has been a focus for our 150

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celebrations with the main civicreception for our joint birthday with the City of Goulburn held on the Cathedral commons. Iwant to thank all those associated with the Cathedral celebrations, especially the Friends of Cathedral for their tireless efforts.

It is wonderful to see the success of the St Saviour’s Rose

which has captured the hearts of many in the Diocese and will soon feature in a special rosegarden planned by Goulburn-Mulwaree Council. My hope is to capture the energy aroundthe 150

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to bring my dream for the Cathedral to fruition. I want to ensure the Cathedralcontinues to grow as a centre of excellence and innovation in mission

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as evidenced by theMessy Church ministry and new Social Justice Service initiated by Cathedral staff. For mypart, together with a committed leadership team and my tireless and good humoured wife,

Jane, the F5 congregation has been planted. ‘F5’ –

Fellowship at Five is a contemporaryliturgical evening service that reaches open de-churched people. Around 60 or so now call

‘F5’ home.

An adult fellowship group, F10, now meets each Monday morning and smallgroup ministry has also begun.Another facet of my engagement with our Cathedral is determining

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with the Dean,Chapter and Cathedral Council

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a strategy for the long-term financial viability of St

Saviour’s.

More work is required in this arena and given that I am now domiciled in ourSee City, I can attend to this matter more effectively. Our Cathedral was designed and

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supervised by Edmund Blackett and his son Arthur, with the foundation stone laid in 1874with completion in 1884. Bicentennial grants enabled underpinning of tower foundationsand construction of the tower in 1988. The Heritage Conservation Project aims, not only to

continue the work of completing Edmund Blackett’s design but, most urgently, to address

serious conservation needs that have arisen. The project will be one of many years and willrequire extensive funding. It begins this year with the establishment of a ConservationManagement Plan being developed by heritage architect Michael Fox Associates. TheHeritage Conservation Project will be officially launched in March 2014.

**2. Diocesan Social Justice Project**

For the second of my 150

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projects, I have been pondering, ‘Who are my neighbours?’ and‘What are their needs?’ This is not simply a question I’m asking as I engage with people in

our See City. No, no, the souls of Canberra and our vast diocese in general also weighheavily on my heart. Throughout the year, I have looked out of my office window in Civicand prayed for my neighbours: the politicians and senior public servants that keep themachinery of Government rolling onwards. How do we, the Church, engage with apopulation that is particularly skeptical of religious claims, one of the most secular andwork-oriented cities in Australia? One potential door that I suspect may open easily isaround ethics in the workplace. There are examples in the UK where Christian think tanks inthis space have developed deep and transformative dialogues with their city on issuesaround work-life balance, relational well-being and business ethics.My second project therefore is to ensure the development of a coherent social ethics andsocial justice agenda, and in this task I will be particularly supported by Bishop StephenPickard. We are greatly blessed to have Bishop Stephen remaining connected with us,especially through his new, strategically important role, as Executive Director of AustralianCentre for Christianity and Culture at Charles Sturt University. He has provided leadershipto Anglicare at a difficult and challenging time in its life. More of that later. But at thispoint, I do want to publically thank him for his hard work and acknowledge the greatwisdom he has applied in that role. Bishop Stephen has built strong relationships with keysenior Anglicare managers over the past year, and this means he is well placed to engage

with Anglicare’s social justice resources as we develop a Diocesan Social Issues Commission.

Bishop Genieve has been and will continue to work with +Stephen in this arena.The Environment Commission is a related committee at the crossroads with membership,and it is my hope that with Bishop Stephen joining the Commission, we will see new energyand impetus around its work. Bishop Stephen, as a member of Bishop-in-Council, will seekto keep before our key governance bodies the vision of a sustainable Diocese. He is also in aposition to build links between the work of the Commission and the ACC&C with its socialequity focus.

**3. Annual Cross Walk**

The third project is ultimately about listening to Jesus’ call to take up our cross and follow

him. The cross walk was undoubtedly about trying something new and out of the box thatwould catch the public eye (and given the number of front page newspaper stories itgenerated, it actually worked!). The serious aim was to highlight the symbol of the cross in

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order to focus people’s attention on the message of the gospel –

that Jesus is the risen Kingwho has conquered death for our sake. However, it also gave me the opportunity to listen

to the work of God’s Spirit across this Diocese.

I found it inspiring and spiritually uplifting tohear the testimonies of the many people I met on my walks through towns on the SouthCoast, Southern Tablelands as well as Canberra. It is for these reasons that I plan to doanother Cross Walk next Lent, this time from Temora.

**4. Alpha Courses**

There have also been a number of important 150

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year mission projects either led orundertaken by others and I would draw your attention to the upcoming promotion of a150

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Diocese-wide invitation to run a new Alpha program. The Reverend MargaretCampbell has skilfully taken carriage of this endeavour and it will begin

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in force

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following

the ‘Connect to Church’ invitation on 2 March

2014.

**5. 150**

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**New Testament Distribution**

By now I hope you have seen the special New Testaments which have been sourced fromthe Bible League and designed as a 150

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birthday gift to the community from the parishesof the Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn.In May, 20 000 copies of these New Testaments were delivered by the Bible League to theGood Shepherd Anglican Church, Curtin who, under the leadership of the Reverend Guy andMrs Sita Matthews, are kindly co-ordinating this project for us all. Already three quarters of these Bibles have been ordered, and nearly 16,000 have been delivered to our churches.Around 85 per cent of our ministry units so far have participated in the vision.A number of parishes ran out of copies and have come back for more.Athough I am aware that many of you have received your orders, there will be a formallaunch and commissioning of our Bible project ambassadors as part of the Cathedral servicetomorrow afternoon.My vision for this project can be summed up as 1-3-1-1: that every single member of theAnglican Church will pray for 3 people and give away one New Testament to them duringthe year.Many individuals are sharing in this vision. Some have chosen to pay themselves for a boxof 120 New Testaments on behalf of their parish. One rainy day a man arrived at Curtin on abus from the north of Canberra in order to take a box back to his parish. Each box weighsabout 17 kilos.With Christmas activities coming up there will be plenty of opportunities to give away NewTestaments. Please contact Guy Matthews to order your copies - $60.00 a box. Guy ispraying that his garage will be empty of New Testaments by the end of the year.I would like also to thank Anthony Miller, Boyd McCarron, Jeremy Halcrow, DouglasBucknell, Trevor Capps and Gill Varcoe for their energetic promotion over the past 2-3 yearsof the missional possibilities for this year, which many of you have taken up with inspired

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creativity. What we are doing together in this year will continue to bear fruit for theKingdom of God in the years that follow.

**Part 2: Our Hope: The Light of Christ in Dark Times**

We have been reflecting on the sort of Christian leadership that will provide hope in toughtimes. Both Paul in his letter to the Romans and our own ministry pioneers like BishopBarlow provide what I contend is the right model: strong leadership when it comes toproclaiming with clarity the central orthodox truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, married toa respect for diversity of practice and a valuing of differences of opinion within the Churchbody.But we cannot underestimate the darkness we confront. Our hope can not, and does not,rest in human leaders who are frail, prone to error and will ultimately fail us. So the

Bishop’s Dream that we be

**a diocese where the love of Jesus transforms individuals and communities**

does not primarily focus around the actions of myself as Bishop or theactivities of the Diocese, rather it is a spiritual calling to open our hearts to the love of Jesus.Jesus talked about the love of God as a light in the darkness.

“…If we live in the light, as God does, we share in life with each other… if we confess our sins to God, he can always be

trusted to forgive us and take

our sins away.”

 So an openness to the love of Jesus must include a mature theology of confession andreconciliation; an openness and transparency around our failings as a Diocese; and acommitment to walk in the light and flee from the darkness of our sins.

**Professional Standards**

The last 12 months have indeed been a sobering time in relation to Professional Standards.The most significant event was the announcement in November 2012 of a RoyalCommission into Institutional Child Sexual Assault.The Royal Commission will continue to consume a significant proportion of the time andenergy of Diocesan staff. I am currently expending around one third of my energy onprofessional standards matters. My expectation is that the findings will shake the churchesto their foundations. This Diocese is not immune.Beloved, this is an area where by acts of commission and omission on the part of membersof the clergy and laity over many decades, we have, I confess, acted shamefully.It is important we acknowledge past failings and the damage this has inflicted on vulnerablechildren and their families and the pain (and dysfunction) that has ensued. When the abusewas committed, the innocence and joy of childhood was stolen. For so many, their liveshave been inexplicably damaged and as a diocese we need to take responsibility for that.Over the recent decade we have implemented professional standards protocols, guided bypolicies implemented by the General Synod. But looking back before that time, theDiocesan leadership was acting without clear guidelines. Diocesan personnel may havebeen out of their depth when confronted by allegations. With the increase in awareness of

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child sexual assault, especially since the late 1990s, we now understand that some of thosehistorical practices may have further traumatised victims and their families.Nothing we can do or say can ever give back what was taken from those precious children.However, as a Diocese there are things we must do to address, in some form, the wrongs of the past.Firstly, if we are aware of any child abuse that has been perpetrated in our Diocese at anytime, recently or long ago, we can make contact with Celia Irving or Peter Barnett, ourimmensely capable and dedicated Professional Standards team. Do also pray for Celia andPeter as their workload is significant.Secondly, we can ensure that we do all we can to ascertain if there is information in clergyfiles where we received allegations of child sexual assault and any evidence of inappropriateresponses by the Diocese at that time. To this end, I advise that every clergy file bothcurrent and in archives back to 1920, will be reviewed. This process in an incredibly time-consuming process, but one I believe is essential.Thirdly, given what we now know about care of victims, we can ensure that we do all we canto locate the victims who had previously made contact with the Diocese where we believethe Diocese should have given a different response; and offer our profound apology forwhat happened to them, as well as invite them to share ways in which we may be able toassist them towards healing in their lives.Fourthly, and this is for all of us, I call all of us to a time of corporate repentance. Please praywith me the prayer on the screen.

Holy God,you dwell in a high and lofty placeand also with those of humble and contrite heart:humble us,open us to receive your gift of contrition and repentance,and the passionate will to live in holiness.[Silence]We do not ask for mercy for ourselves,but trusting your mercy, we pray for your justice for your little ones who have been abused by your church,through what we have done, and what we have left undone.In your sovereign grace and great love,heal and restore,

in Jesus’ strong name we p

ray. Amen

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**Residential Aged Care**

The words of that prayer are also apt as we reflect on the challenges this Diocese hasconfronted over many years in trying to deliver aged care services.Tomorrow, Mr Trevor Ament and Bishop Stephen Pickard will explain in more detail the

rationale for the decision to sell five of Anglicare’s residential aged care facilities as going

concerns to another aged care provider.I am informed that the sale process is progressing well. Ernst and Young, who is managingthe sale for Anglicare, has received formal expressions of interest from more than 30 agedcare providers, with more to be added to the list. Over the next two months theseproviders have the opportunit

y to look at Anglicare’s operations in more detail.

By the endof October, it is expected that a short list of potential purchasers will have been developed

for the consideration of Anglicare’s Board.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr Ament, Bishop Pickard and Professor IngridMoses, Presiding Member of the Anglicare Board, for their leadership and wisdom in guidingthis issue towards a resolution. It should also be noted that the work undertaken by theprevious Anglicare Board in 2009 is assisting us now by providing the foundations and theframework for the comprehensive external review undertaken this year. I want to againacknowledge, as I have in previous Synod Charges, the efforts of former Anglicare CEO KeithWaters, the previous Chair of the Anglicare Board, Paul Baxter, and his Board colleaguesfrom that period

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many of whom continue to serve on diocesan committees and ministries.I hope they all know that I am deeply appreciative for the sweat and tears they expended inthose years

to confront Anglicare’s challenges.

The move to sell was never an easy or straightforward decision. Not now and not in 2009.There were always a multitude of perspectives to hold in balance and as we now have theinfrastructure, processes and opportunity aligned, the timing appears right.This Diocese takes seriously its calling to care for the vulnerable frail aged in our midst, andmany faithful members of our Diocese had invested time and money; sweat and tears, intobuilding and operating our nursing homes over many decades. We need to celebrate theseendeavours. Their legacy will lived on, even as the homes begin a new era managed byanother provider.That said, last year during the Ginninderra Gardens sanctions, I called together an EpiscopalWorking Group under the able leadership of Archdeacon-emeritus Anne Ranse to look atthe key issues. Their very thorough and hope-filled interim report is available to this Synod

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and you all have it on disc.

At the time the divestment of Anglicare’s five r

esidential Aged Care facilities was announcedin June I wrote a pastoral letter which attempted to outline the two key factors we mustalways keep in balance as a Church

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we must hold in tension our divinely inspired missionpriorities with the humility to recognise our human capacities and limitations. This is what Iwrote at the time:

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I have consistently said that part of the mission of this Diocese is to provide a ministry of love and support to vulnerable and frail older people in our community. However, thismission priority is undermined if there are gaps in our capacity to deliver truly Christian care.This is particularly true when the Church has the responsibility as nursing home operators.The solution is to explore partnerships and other alternatives to deliver best practice care

while focusing on the spiritual dimension of aged care ministry which is the Church’s core

competency.

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This Diocese will remain committed to ministering to our ageing brothers and sisters, notleast through our Forrest Centre aged care partnership

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The Forrest Centre is a uniqueecumenical partnership between the Diocese and the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary,which also delivers community-based aged care packages across the wider Riverina region.I am also heartened that Anglicare has been able to chart a sustainable path forward whileretaining three supported retirement communities.

**Aged Care Chaplaincy**

Finally, this Diocese remains committed to providing aged care chaplaincy. The hugechallenge of providing chaplaincy services to residents of aged care facilities is a key facet of the report to which I made reference. The Episcopal Task Force surveyed 31 parishes,identifying 71 aged care facilities within their boundaries. Projecting these figures suggeststhere are more than 100 facilities within the Diocese, a scale which should prompt us to seethe importance of better structured ministry to these facilities.

As the report states: “Thesepeople don’t deserve to be forgotten.

Nor should their spiritual growth and nurture

suddenly terminate because they are ‘put away’ in a facility.”

 At this point, I want to especially acknowledge and thank all the clergy involved in aged carechaplaincy in our Anglicare facilities including the Reverends David Ruthven, Joy Harris, LouOakes, Morton Johnson, Robyn Moore, Jill Elliot, Wendy Bloomfield, Steve Clarke, PatrickCole and Guy Matthews - for their wonderful ministry especially during this difficult period,caring for residents and staff at our facilities. In addition, we have been well served by acommitted, selfless, team of volunteers who have given their all in the service and care of residents. Their efforts are to be applauded and as the abovementioned report states, weneed to invest in these volunteers as their ministry is a tangible expression of Christ

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s lovefor those in our care.Most issues will be able to be clarified once we are in a position to announce the new agedcare provider; including the exact shape Anglican aged care chaplaincy will take into thefuture. However, can I reassure you that the Diocese will continue ministry in thesefacilities?For example, at Brindabella Gardens, I have already invited the Reverend Morton Johnsonto continue as Anglican Chaplain. With the fundraising targets reached for the BrindabellaGardens Chapel, Anglicare will complete the new Chapel. Already, the foundations of theChapel have been laid and the internal chaplaincy office has been built.The ongoing use of the Chapel by the Anglican Church is being negotiated as part of the saleagreement. My expectation is that I will open and consecrate the new building as an

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Anglican Chapel prior to Christmas and it will provide Morton with a base for his ministryinto the future.

**Anglican Diocesan Services**

Not unrelated to the aged care decision, is the move to implement shared corporatefunctions between the Diocese and Anglicare. A new entity has been created calledAnglican Diocesan Services (ADS) under the leadership of Mr Trevor Ament, which hasresulted in efficiency savings for both Anglicare and the Diocese. ADS currently has about50 staff providing a range of services including human resources, risk management, payroll,finance, IT, property, insurance, legal services, and fleet management.With the creation of Diocesan Services, Archdeacon Matt Brain

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with my blessing has

accepted Mr Ament’s

invitation to transition from Synergy Youth to Director of ParishSupport, Chaplaincy and Mission. This role (in part begun under the ministry of the lateArchdeacon Chris Short) will assist parishes and the various chaplaincies of the Diocese toaccess the missional resources they need in their advance of the Kingdom.Audit and risk is another area set to benefit from the new arrangement. MarianneCavanagh has been appointed on an initial 6 months contract as Risk Manager, DiocesanServices. She is beginning her work by analysing the raw data that Anglicare has alreadycaptured around its risk profile.Mariann

e’s background includes 20 years working in corporate governance roles with public

and private companies with a focus on constitutions; legislation; and compliance. Morerecently she worked with the Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation, again in a corporategovernance role which included risk management and internal audit functions.As Risk Manager, she will be looking at all agencies across the Anglican Diocese of Canberraand Goulburn.

**Anglicare Leadership**

The implementation of shared services will take some time to bed down properly. Theimplications for the remaining head office staff at Anglicare are still being worked through.

Please pray for Anglicare’s management team through this time of significant

change.With Bishop Pickard taking up the position at the ACC&C, the Anglicare Board has appointedone of its senior executives Jeremy Halcrow, Director of Communications and StrategicPartnerships, as Chief Executive Officer. The Anglicare Board believes that Jeremy has theunique experience and skills required to guide the organisation through this transitionperiod. It is important at this time that Anglicare is led by someone with strongrelationships with key Diocesan staff, not least with the General Manager of DiocesanServices, Mr Trevor Ament.

Furthermore, one of Jeremy’s key roles over the past few yearshas been driving the development of Anglicare’s strategic plan.

The Anglicare Board hasnow tasked him to develop an evaluation mechanism over the next year in order to identifywhich programs are producing quality service and mission outcomes. This data will berequired post the aged care divestment to guide the future shape of Anglicare.

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**Province of NSW and Tri-Diocesan Partners**

Our wider Anglican Province of NSW is also experiencing a time of significant transition andchallenge.In the months of July and August I was Acting Metropolitan of NSW. This gave me a deeperinsight into the issues facing our neighbouring Dioceses. Community expectations aroundthe kind of professional management the Church must provide is being followed by theburden of increased Government regulation. And I must add, in most regards, tighterregulations in such areas as professional standards and child protection are thoroughlywelcomed and justified. But all this means we must rethink the shape of parochial ministry,especially in those rural areas which have borne the brunt of population decline. Socialchanges are undermining the viability of traditional models, not merely of localcongregations, but of whole Dioceses.

Looking across our seven Dioceses, there are significant ‘gaps’ in Episcopal leadership.

Earlier this year both Newcastle and Riverina Dioceses failed to elect bishops

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and theGrafton Synod has now entered its discernment phase. I addressed the Grafton Synod twoweeks ago. Your prayer in these matters is most welcome.Of most immediate significance to us are the issues facing our Tri-Diocesan partnersRiverina and Bathurst Dioceses.Due to internal rules within the Riverina Diocese I have been called on to assist in offeringcomment around their Episcopal election arrangements. I am hopeful that a resolution isclose at hand.

Bathurst’s financial issues have been well canvassed at previ

ous sessions of this Synod. Ithas been publicly reported that Bathurst Diocese continues with debt issues. While the saleof the Diocesan schools in Orange and Dubbo to the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporationhas made a significant contribution to addressing this issue, I am advised by Bishop Ian thatmore work is required.

**New Archbishop of Sydney and Cathedral Convention**

It is due to the significant challenges facing the Province of NSW that I was especiallyheartened by the election of Dr Glenn Davies as Archbishop of Sydney. Glenn has thenecessary experience of the wider Anglican Church to understand the role he can play insupporting all the NSW dioceses to fulfil our common mission

to be agents of thetransforming love of Jesus.

 Indeed Archbishop Glenn had been for some time Canon Theologian of the Diocese of Ballarat, so he knows how to minister to our various traditions.

Archbishop Glenn will be speaking at our Cathedral Convention to be held at St Saviour’s on

January 18 and I do encourage you to take the opportunity to engage with him. I do notdeny that Archbishop Glenn has different views on some key issues, not least the priestlyministry of women. However, we ultimately share a love for Christ. And the health of ourProvince requires us all to work at strengthening the relationships between our Dioceses.

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From my point of view, it is important that Archbishop Glenn gains an understanding of ourconcerns around ministry and mission.The Convention will also be an opportunity to hear from o

ne of the Anglican Church’s more

dynamic Gen X leaders: the Reverend Dr John Dickson, Director of the Centre for PublicChristianity, Macquarie University.An Anglican priest and author of 18 books, John is known for engaging in dialogue throughthe media about Christianity.

**The Anglican Communion and Covenant**

My personal support for the Covenant has not waned and positive comments from parishescontinue to filter through (following the distribution of General Synod study materials lastyear). With a great many Episcopal vacancies and Episcopal Election Synods in Australia, achange in the Primacy next year

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and a new Archbishop of Canterbury

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we do need toreengage in this conversation.Can I invite you, in your regular intercessions, to continue in upholding Archbishop Justin ashe seeks to be a balm and a salve to an increasingly fractured Communion?

**Federal Election**

**1. Asylum Seekers**

Given we have reached the zenith of the Federal election, it is timely to reflect on theconduct of the campaign. As Christians we should eschew simplistic slogans that diminishthe humanity of others and simplify complex issues.A number of Anglican Bishops have been outspoken during the election campaign aroundthe asylum seeker issue, seeking a more compassionate response. On his election asArchbishop of Sydney, Dr Glenn Davies said that as part of his new role, he will reach out toasylum seekers, and reminded Christians that it is important to show them empathy. Hesaid: "My concern is that often asylum seeker

s when they're in detention are unemployed…

Part of God's gift is to be able to be creative and to do things. If you're just sitting in adetention centre, that's demoralizing and demeaning."In Melbourne Diocese, there has been an organised advocacy campaign and Bishop PhilipHuggins, who is Chair of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and also of the MelbourneAnglican Social Responsibilities Committee, said that Australia has an honourable history of fully welcoming refugees from places of persecution and violence. Quite so.When thinking about the asylum seeker issues I encourage you to be guided by three ethicalprinciples (to which I have given voice across various fora):

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Firstly, generosity towards the refugees. The importance God places on showinghospitality towards the foreigner is a theme that runs through the Bible;

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Secondly, protection of human life; and

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Thirdly, providing asylum seekers with certainty as soon as practicable. Research hasshow that one of main causes of mental illness within detention centres is the longperiods spent in limbo.A satisfactory solution to the asylum seeker issues seems further away than ever. It is amuch vexed policy issue and in my view a satisfactory outcome will never be reached untilIndonesia, I would venture to suggest, is part of the solution.Given the vulnerability of the asylum seekers and the fact that a solution appears beyondhuman capability, I fervently believe that this is a matter that desperately requires ourcollective prayer.There are a number of other issues of national importance that have barely been mentionedas part of the Federal election campaign. I want to draw your attention to two of these.

**2. Indigenous Reconciliation**

I especially encourage our churches to actively support the moves towards Formal

Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia’s Constitution

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ngage with the `Journey of Recognition’ that will arrive

in Canberra next year.Reconciliation is at the heart of our faith.

As God’s people we embrace this journey and the

deepening of relationships that it brings. We therefore acknowledge:

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the special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the history of ournation;

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the need for healing within many Indigenous families and communities within thisdiocese; and

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Gods Call to enable culturally appropriate and sustainable ministries.

In 2013 we celebrate the end of the first year of Anglicare’s Reconciliation Action Plan

(2012-2016) (RAP). Developed by Archdeacon Karen Kime, the plan was endorsed by theAnglicare Board and given life across the dioceses of Canberra & Goulburn and Bathurst.

Archdeacon Karen’s work has led to scholarships being provided for Aboriginal students of

teaching, medicine and theology. In addition, financial support has enabled Aboriginalyoung people at Broken Hill to attend a Christian youth camp on the south coast.In Wagga Wagga the Ignite Indigenous Youth Mentoring Program earned the ReconciliationAward for excellence at the recent Anglicare Leadership Forum. Indeed, Reconciliation isnow becoming part of the way in which Anglicare is both educating the wider public andreaching out more effectively to Indigenous Australians.Elsewhere, over 30 locals and volunteers at Bega completed a workshop that assisted themto communicate more effectively with Indigenous Australians. Special guest for that daywas Uncle Ossie Cruise, respected Elder and Pastor. This training has also been provided toa number of parishes that wish to outreach their local Indigenous communities. Parishessuch as Wellington in the central west, Woden, Bega and Turvey Park have embraced suchtraining.

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Archdeacon Karen will also be representing us at the World Council of Churches Assemblywhich meets every 7 years and this November will gather in South Korea. She has beennominated as part of the leadership team for the Ecumenical Conversations that will takeplace, and will also be attending the World Indigenous Peoples Gathering scheduled tooccur before the assembly.

**3. Gender Violence**

The issue of gender violence is one that is increasingly prevalent within Australian societyand one that cuts across all sections of the community. This year, the UN Commission onthe Status of Women, found that the emotional, physical and sexual abuse of women isrising and that the home was identified as one of the most dangerous place for women andtheir children to be. In Australia almost one in three young women and women over theage of 55 experience abuse. Further, it is experienced by Aboriginal women at a far greateroccurrence than any other group of Australians.The Anglican Communion and the Primates have called the Church to respond and bear

witness to this issue. As Christ’s Church we can no longer turn our back on the abuse

experienced by women and children; we can no longer ignore the Gospel and its call forteaching and leadership at both the Parish and Diocesan levels.Strategies such as the equipping of clergy and lay ministers; of naming the problem in

preaching and teaching; of making worship a `safe’ place to be are all needed to address the

issue of family violence. There are a growing body of resources across the Anglican

Communion to help this happen, and within our own nation the development of ‘home

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grown’ resources has begun. Importantly, each diocese is encouraged to develop a localized

response to these issues.Over the coming months, a Working Group will be established to advise us on the wayforward; to develop strategies at both the diocesan and parish level and to identify suitableresources that can equip us to lead in these matters. I commend the members of this groupand call for your prayers as they seek to serve us in the task ahead.

**Closing Remarks**

Despite the tough times we face, we can put our hope in our Lord Jesus. The love of Goddoes transform individuals and communities.Over the past five years I have been grateful to God for the ministry and fellowship of twocolleagues, who this year were called to serve in leadership in other capacities in theChurch.In February, the Right Reverend Ian Palmer was consecrated Bishop of Bathurst. Bishop Ianhad served for the previous seven years as Rector of Queanbeyan as well as Archdeacon of South Canberra, and as Archdeacon for Chaplains in this Diocese.Similarly, Bishop Ian Lambert has been a great source of strength for me during my time asyour bishop. As you are all aware, he was recently commissioned as Anglican Bishop to theAustralian Defence Force. +Ian and Jill have moved to Canberra and as previously

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mentioned will continue, in a more limited capacity, their engagement with us as a diocese.

I look forward to +Ian’s ongoing company and friendship.

 Further, Professor Tom Frame is another colleague who has provided invaluable assistanceto me since I arrived in this Diocese. His decision to resign as Director of St Mark's NationalTheological Centre before the start of the 2014 academic year will bring to an end asignificant era for ministry training in this Diocese.

I have greatly appreciated Tom’s leadership, insight, frie

ndship and partnership in thegospel and anticipate ongoing Kingdom advances through his leadership of the MulwareeAnglican Mission District.I feel it right to mention two other people at this point. The first is my dear friend andcurrent Head of Radford College, Mr Phillip Heath. Phillip

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who is also a loyal andenthusiastic member of Bishop in Council

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is to take on the role as Principal, Barker College,in Sydney. I am so grateful to Phillip for his tireless service and fine Christian examplethroughout his time at Radford. I will greatly miss him.The other person who has recently moved on from our diocese is the Reverend Trish Stuart-Smith. I want to publicly thank Trish and her team of intercessors for the time they havetaken to pray for my ministry and to accompany me

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where appropriate - on variousmissional assignments (such as my walk with the cross). Trish and her husband Peter havemoved to Tasmania to establish the International Order of the Cross.I have also been wonderfully served in this past year by a company of able and giftedcolleagues. My Episcopal team comprising Bishops Trevor, Genieve, Stephen and DeanPhillip have been unstinting in their support and care, as have Trevor Ament, DorothyDashwood and the Registry staff, my E.O. Bev Forbes, our regional and portfolioArchdeacons (John, Karen, Matt, Paul, Bronwyn, Caroline and Anne), our very hard workingBishop-in-Council and again my long suffering and joy-filled wife, Jane. Thanks to so manyof you for contributing to my Episcopal Appeal; your generosity has been a real fillip forministry.As we reflect on the past and look with hope to the future, we are working together to builda Diocesan culture that both has the confidence to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, butalso respects diversity and provides space for different approaches.

A vision of a ‘mixedeconomy’ Church.

 I dream of - and serve within

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a diocese where the love of Jesus transforms individuals andcommunities.The Lord be with you.Amen.+StuartBishop of Canberra & GoulburnSeptember 2013