



A.C.L. NEWS

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Build on the past, seize this moment, create the future

At the ACL's annual Synod Dinner in October, more than 200 Synod members packed the Town Hall Food Court to hear Dr. Peter Jensen, Principal of Moore Theological College give the address.

In response to many requests for copies, we are printing the full text in this issue of ACL News.



The critical moment of my life was the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade.

Two things happened. First, I became a definite, committed, evangelical Christian, living for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, a challenge from Mr Graham led me to the ministry of God's word.

I was sixteen. I did not know it at the time, but, humanly speaking, the Diocese of Sydney was basic to the success of the Crusade.

Many Anglicans of the day scorned and even attacked the so-called fundamentalist, Billy Graham.

Leaders such as Archbishop Mowll, Bishop Clive Kerle and Bishop Marcus Loane disregarded criticism by other Anglicans and welcomed the Graham team.

Around the country, some other Anglican leaders were half hearted or outright critical of Mr Graham, his methods and his message. Our own leaders were clear, supportive and involved. We praise God for them. Being from Sydney, they were used to such criticism, and they made exactly the right choice.

They, in their generation, put the Bible and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus first. **My question tonight is: are we going to do the same in our generation?**

My theme is that we must, or we will fail God, his people and our nation.

Who we were

It was a critical moment for the Diocese. Let me explain who we were, so we can see who we are, and who we should be.

The 1950s saw large church and Sunday School attendances. The churches seemed to be flourishing. But an acute observer would have been very worried even then.

The Christianity of the people was not evangelical. It was a sort of 'common Christianity', a

'lowest common denominator' Christianity. It had a strong moral emphasis; Christianity was about behaviour not belief; parents sent their children to Sunday School in the hope that they would grow up decent citizens rather than committed Christians. To be born once was enough; to be born again was excessive. The ranks of church-goers were swollen with the unsaved. The real religion was materialism.

Naturally, there were many fine, born-again Christians in the churches. But the evangelistic strategy matched the need of the moment: it was therefore aimed at nominal Christians, the church-going unsaved; the nominal uncommitted. It had its successes, but the next decade saw a massive change. This sort of evangelism was about to lose its audience.

Their materialism was no defence, as our society mocked God openly and embraced public blasphemy, promiscuity, abortion and drugs. The twin ideologies of the gay and feminist movements, not to mention greed for money, became far more important in shaping society than the teaching of the Bible. The young were honest and turned the indifference of their parents into clear rejection of the gospel.

Where we are

The promise of personal autonomy fuelled the rebellion against God. We are now living through the equivalent of a spiritual cyclone, a cyclone of a far greater intensity than Cyclone Tracy, the destroyer of Darwin. Do not be

society, but in an ignorant and rebellious culture. Genuine Christianity offends the opinion-makers of this culture. We must expect the culture to demand that we change the gospel to suit its version of the truth.

How have we survived the cyclone so far?

In general terms, the mainstream Christian movement in Australia has not survived all that well. Its constituency is aging; its numbers are in significant decline; what it stands for is a mystery to most of its fellow citizens; ordinands are fewer and older than ever before; the missionary spirit is in neutral; we are selling the assets left to us by earlier generations of Christians. These are the outward and visible signs of decay.

The culture has offered to smooth the pillow of a dying church. If we promise not to be missionary, not to believe in the wrath of God, not to say that the Lord Jesus is the only way to God, not to order our lives according to God's will, not to preach biblical ethics, not to oppose the gambling, materialistic ethos which surrounds us – then we may come in from the cold, we may be accepted back into polite society.

To this pressure, many Christians have capitulated; indeed whole churches have capitulated. They have become captive to culture, rather than captive to the word of God.

Let me focus on the Diocese of Sydney.

We are not exempt. No doubt we have compromised; certainly we have suffered; we have also responded inappropriately. But, as with other churches who have taken their stand on gospel and

"To be born once was enough; to be born again was excessive. The ranks of church-goers were swollen with the unsaved. The real religion was materialism."

In the 1960s, Australia awoke to the fact that it was non-Christian. The moralistic 'common Christianity' was shown to be empty and even hypocritical. In one decade – that is all it took – nominalism was dealt a death blow, and the churches began to lose their constituency.

Those who were born once had no answer to the massive assault on Christian belief and practice.

alarmed or surprised if your church is tiny and struggling, if the vast majority of the people around you are indifferent to spiritual truths, if it has proved immensely hard to pass on your faith to your children, if the media are hostile to your leaders and to your faith.

All this, is what we must expect and get used to. We are not living in an even nominal Christian

Bible, there are also unusual signs of hope and progress.

We can actually see progress being made under the good hand of God. We should recognise that the mere fact that we exist at all, and that most of our churches are self supporting even if small, is a miracle of God-given tough mindedness. Gloom is out of order: we believe in a sovereign God. In this spiritual cyclone, survival is good news; progress is better.

But this progress is no accident: it has stemmed from a commitment to Bible and gospel, and it has been the consequence of willingness to engage in change, and thoughtful planning for the future.



"Leaders such as Archbishop Mowll (pictured), Bishop Clive Kerle and Bishop Marcus Loane disregarded criticism by other Anglicans and welcomed the Graham team."

How do we cope with the pretty strong criticism that we sometimes receive?

Let me make a few points.

First, sometimes we are being condemned for our true faults and there are always things to repent of and amend.

Second, the criticism is nothing

new. I can show you the same criticisms being made in the 1880s, 1904, 1933, 1958 and so on. This is because the Diocese of Sydney throughout its long history has virtually always stood for gospel and Bible first, and other church people, let alone the world, do not like it. They did not like Billy Graham; they have never liked Moore College. But these are the concrete manifestations of gospel and Bible.

Third, the criticisms are often ignorant of Anglican history.

Fourth, we should respond graciously and winsomely.

Rather than being frightened or dismayed, therefore, let us understand our own history and be true to our principles. I am saying that we have a history, one marked by a determination to be true to Bible and gospel. As a result, we have also been willing to change and engage in strategic thinking about how to survive and grow for the sake of Christ.

For example, let us note four points about the strategy (out of the very many) which have kept us going.

First – the evangelism of the nominals in the fifties and sixties.

Thank God this was done. It meant that there was vigorous church planting, and a good number of converted people to witness for Christ in the next decades. During these decades the nominals flooded out, making our churches seem small; but smaller had advantages in strength and determination. We older converts have been very active in the community, in the schools and in the churches since the 1950s, and we promise to keep it up in the various nursing

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homes to which we shall shortly be consigned!

But the danger is that, in late middle age, we will fail the gospel by being too conservative for the needs of this hour.

Second – the pioneering of new ways of evangelism and nurture in the 70s.

People like John Chapman, Dudley Foord and Paul Barnett saw that evangelism would have to change; they worked very hard at re-equipping us. We were not idle; we re-tooled the factory. From my perspective, August 1976 was the crucial turning point; up to that month the number of converts remained small; from then on the Lord has particularly blessed the preaching of the gospel in fruitful and exciting ways. We had new methods, but we gave the same message.

It is only the gospel under the power of God's Spirit which makes new Christians and nurtures older ones. Whatever further changes lie ahead of us, the gospel and the Bible must remain unchanged. Conservatism here is essential.

Third – The growing number of deeply committed and well trained lay men and women.

To survive the secularist challenge we must out-live, out-think and out-love the world. We need to have ordinary Christians who believe the Lord Jesus and who know and live their Bibles in the world; men and women who automatically believe the Bible more than the media or liberal Christianity.

From the early 1970s, God was blessing us with such movements as the revitalised Katoomba conventions. The result of this and

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many other initiatives is that we have a Diocese which is rich in outstanding lay leadership, and also in humble, unknown servants of Christ who honour his name continually. Clerical domi-



Chappo at the 1980 Sydney Uni Mission

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nation is a curse; responsibility for the Bible and the gospel in church and community belongs to all of us. We cannot leave it to professionals.

Fourth – the congregational emphasis that has proved absolutely essential for the good health of the Diocese.

The church is the local congregation; the real action takes place in the parish, not head office. However important the Diocese, the episcopacy and the liturgy (and all are important), they exist to serve the congregation and not the other way around.

Grasping this meant that local congregations throughout the spiritual cyclone have not waited to be led from the top, from some mythical 'them' who, if only 'they' would do something, would save the day. We have not waited for permission to change what happens in church; we have done what needs to be done to nurture Christian of all ages.

We have engaged – and we still need to engage in – a principled radicalism.

Where to from here?

God has blessed and kept us amazingly. The first of these blessings, however, are gospel and Bible, and our use of these gifts will determine the nature of his future blessings.

My question is, will we continue to put Bible and gospel first? My theme is that we must, or we will fail God, his people and our nation.

It sounds simple and right when put like that, but it has never been easy to have this priority. We are going to need to be as wise and courageous as our spiritual forebears.

The trouble is that the tests of our faith are never obvious: allegiance to Bible and the Lord Jesus come wrapped up in hard issues like homosexuality, or parish boundaries or the prayer book or the ordination of women to the priesthood; or our relationships with other Anglicans; or the significance of daily work.

Confronted with such issues, attention to scripture will issue in tenacious and costly obedience to God. Then our position needs to be expressed in clear, courteous, loving and persuasive teaching. We must never attack the person of others, no matter what their views; but we must not shrink from disagreeing with them.

Sometimes it almost seems that being from Sydney Diocese is a crime in itself!

But let me assure you that such problems are not new; they are part of our very history as a Diocese; it is because we have put Bible and gospel first at many difficult and tumultuous times that we are who we are.

We ought never to be proud of being from the Diocese; but we ought not to be ashamed either. Our stand is on Bible and gospel, not on a Diocese. It is the cause of our unpopularity in some quarters; but is also the cause – and I know this through exten-

sive overseas contacts – that there are many others who draw strength from the stands we take on issues of principle. Sydney is by no means isolated in the evangelical or in the Anglican world.

But what should our continuing strategy involve? Let me suggest three memorable commitments for each of us.

First – Build on the past.

History helps us understand who we are and where we are going. The developments I have outlined represent the gospel and the Bible in action. For example, study them and you will see that they have been shaped by the type of men and women who have been involved in our church.



Moore College students.

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Absolutely crucial to the future is the choice of persons for the work of the Diocese who will value Bible and gospel above all things. We need men and women of real insight and of considerable courage to lead our churches, to guide our schools, and to serve on our departments, boards and councils. They must have the wisdom to apply gospel priorities to the work for which they are responsible.

The future belongs to the men and women, to the church, that determines to preach the gospel of Jesus and be ruled by the Bible. Fail here and we will fail God, the church and the nation.

Second – Seize this moment.

The most extraordinary feature of the present moment is the large number of young men and women seeking to engage in the ministry of God’s word.

There is an unparalleled movement of God’s Spirit occurring in our midst. It has not just happened. It is the precise result of the hard work and prayer of the last three decades. If you are looking to see what God is doing in our world, stop assuming in your doubting Australian way, that it must be in Africa or amongst the Pentecostals.

First gaze on this local movement in wonder, and then look up to the abounding gospel opportunities for the young men and women of this city, and the wider Diocese.

The Diocese is very much involved in this; we can continue to support it, own it, pray for it, rejoice in it; or we may fail it through being narrow minded or miserly or even jealous of it. God does not owe us anything, and he does not need to use us.

We need to own this movement; we need to own its fervour, accept its mistakes, guide its priorities, be generous with our sons and daughters. Here we have a unique opportunity for the gospel to spread in our Diocese and into all the world.

Third – Create the future.

The gospel first landed on Australian shores via an evangelical Anglican, Richard Johnson. He was only here because evangelical leaders like William Wilberforce insisted that he be sent. By their daring initiative, they gave us a sacred trust: to ensure that the gospel and the Bible be available for all Australians of whatever racial background, social class, or geographical location.

We must be a missionary Diocese. Our church is narrowly English in name, but it must be comprehensive in fact.

Our fundamental aim should be to address the secular challenge by providing flourishing Bible-based, gospel-centred, people-nurturing churches in as many places as possible. We need to be both prayerful and intentional; trusting and planning.

Conclusion

I have given you a theme and a question.

My theme is this: that unless we put Bible and gospel first, we will fail God, the people of God and our nation.

The history of the second half of the twentieth century shows the truth of this theme. However inadequately we have proceeded, we have been blessed by God in the cyclone of secularism by keeping the priority of preaching the gospel and obeying the Bible.

We are still in the midst of the storm. Our problems are legion. But we have not lost our way.



Broughton Knox as Vice-Principal of Moore College in 1956.

"In developing Moore College, for example, Dr Knox always had a hundred years in mind."

In developing Moore College, for example, Dr Knox always had a hundred years in mind. I would say from 1960 to 2060 should be the period that we are thinking of.

In my view we have done much to improve the church. Church life is far better now than it used to be forty years ago. That task must continue. But we have done little yet to engage in the next great labour, for my theme is not just about the church, but about the nation, our own dear land.

The sheer power of secularism has marginalised us; it has been very difficult to live for Christ and preach the gospel. But we are developing the experience, the resources, the people, the strategies to challenge the world of secular Australia, and to remind it of the gospel it so desperately needs to hear.

Will we accept the logic of our history? But that leads back to my original question:

Despite the difficulties and the adverse criticism they received, Christians like Mowll, Loane, Kerle and Knox put the Bible and the gospel first in their generation.

Are we going to do the same in ours? •

Dr. Peter Jensen is the Principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney.

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Archbishop Goodhew's Legacy

On March 19, Archbishop Harry Goodhew will retire as Archbishop of Sydney. This will mark the end of a long and distinguished ministry within and beyond the diocese of Sydney.

Earlier this year he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for services to the Anglican Church and the community. This is a fitting recognition of his long and faithful service.

Prior to becoming Archbishop, Harry served as Bishop of Wollongong and had also been Archdeacon in the same region. Previously, he was rector in several parishes including Wollongong, Carlingford and Coorparoo in Brisbane.

As a bishop, he was in the forefront in encouraging churches in his region to modernise and seek ways of presenting the christian message in a contemporary way. In 1993 Bishop Goodhew was closely aligned with the organisation of the first large conference featuring Bill Hybels and the Willow Creek team at Darling Harbour and acted as its host.

As Archbishop he has maintained a strong commitment to the national Church and also played a major role at Lambeth in 1998 in bringing that conference to accept a biblical view on sexuality against the powerful efforts of the liberals aligned with ECUSA.

Archbishop Goodhew has been a longtime member of the Anglican Church League and has been a member of its Council and vice president and emeritus vice president for many years up to the present. The League has always appreciated his support and his occasional attendance at the ACL's conferences and Council meetings.

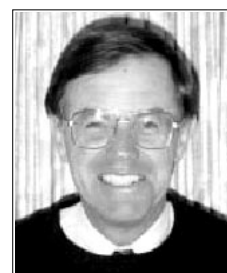
His life-long commitment to evangelism and to making church

life effective and relevant will be one of his lasting legacies to the diocese and the Australian Church.

The ACL offers its thanks and good wishes to him and Mrs. Goodhew as they lay down one task and, as would be expected, take up another. May they have a long and happy retirement.

Canon Bruce Ballantine-Jones is the President of the ACL.

Evangelical Bishop Elected to Appellate Tribunal



The Rt Rev Peter Brain, Bishop of Armidale, has been elected to membership of the Appellate Tribunal of the Anglican Church of Australia.

The Appellate Tribunal is like a 'high court' for the Anglican Church of Australia, giving opinions on matters referred to it - many of them relating to the Constitution of the Church.

Bishop Brain's election was by postal ballot of the House of Clergy in order to fill the vacancy left by Bishop Bruce Wilson, the recently retired Bishop of Bathurst.

Bishop Brain is the second evangelical bishop to be elected to the Tribunal - Bishop Tony Nichols of North West Australia was elected by the House of Laity late last year.

Other members of the Tribunal include - Mr Justice Ken Handley and Mr Justice Peter Young from Sydney, Archbishop Ian George and Mr Justice David Bleby from Adelaide and Mr Justice Clive Tadgell from Melbourne.

Most recently, the Appellate Tribunal gave its opinion that Lay Administration at the Lord's Supper is not contrary to the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Primates Meet to Discuss “Pastoral Crisis”

Kanuga 2001
International Meeting of Anglican Primates

From March 2-9, the Primates of the Anglican Communion are meeting at the Kanuga Episcopal Conference Center in North Carolina in the US.

This annual gathering flows out of the increased dialogue at the 1998 Lambeth Conference.

Pressure is being brought for the meeting to focus on dealing with the widely reported “pastoral crisis” in the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA).

In January, **To Mend the Net**, a collection of essays in support of a proposal was published – edited by Archbishop Drexel W. Gomez of the West Indies and Presiding Bishop of the Southern Cone of America Maurice W. Sinclair.

The proposal is for the Primates’ Meeting to exercise “enhanced responsibility” over the Anglican Communion, to deal with problem areas (with ECUSA being the most immediate).

The full text of the Preface is available on the ACL website at www.acl.asn.au and is well worth reading – but the key points of the proposal are these –

“1.8 The current situation in the Communion makes it necessary to know how better to identify the limits of Anglican diversity and relate them to our classical Formularies...

Three recent developments, in particular, have brought this matter to a head.

(a) The widespread refusal of dioceses, especially in the United States, to respond positively to the Lambeth ’98 resolution on sexuality and

(b) the recent decision of ECUSA’s General Convention to monitor progress towards women’s ordination in all dioceses and

(c) its placing of non-marital sexual relationships alongside marriage for support by the Church.

Such revision of the Christian ethic is unacceptable to a majority of Anglican Provinces and to an important sector within the member Church most affected by it. Should it go unchallenged by the Primates’ Meeting, the immediate prospect is of a division within ECUSA, leading in its turn to a split in the Communion...”

So what action is proposed against an intransigent diocese or province?

“3.5 Godly Admonition: The Primates should communicate and commend the guidelines to the relevant Province(s) and or diocese(s) and ask for approval and confirmation of their acceptance... The Primates would look for openness to godly admonition... This step would be taken with a very positive intent.

3.6 Observer Status: If the guidelines are refused or if they evoke an unsatisfactory response, then the Primates

Meeting should recommend to the Archbishop of Canterbury that he offer observer status in international meetings (Primates or Lambeth Conference) to the non-co-operating Province(s) and diocese(s).

3.7 Continuing Evangelization: Parallel with the measure in 3.6 the Primates Meeting should recommend to the Archbishop of Canterbury that he authorises and supports appropriate means of evangelization, pastoral care and episcopal oversight in the affected dioceses or Province(s).

3.8 New Jurisdiction: In the event of prolonged and evidently permanent rejection of the guidelines, the following should occur. The Primates’ Meeting should advise the Archbishop of Canterbury how best to establish a jurisdiction whose practice lies within the limits of Anglican diversity. This jurisdiction then would be recognised as a representative part of the Anglican Communion. There would be the simultaneous recommendation that communion be suspended with the intransigent body.”

Please pray for godly wisdom for the Primates as they meet early this month.



The Primates of the Anglican Communion – at their meeting in Portugal last year.

Opinion: Mend the Net with ‘Papal Primates’? – Robert Tong



Many agree that the situation in ECUSA must be challenged. But how?

Your answer may depend on what you understand the Anglican Communion to be. Is it a hierarchical structure like the Roman Catholic Church or a fellowship of independent national Churches?

While supporting the work of overseas friends who are seeking to call elements of ECUSA back to God’s Word, Robert Tong suggests that the proposal in the book **To Mend the Net** may try to solve one problem by creating others.

Robert Tong has been a lay member of the international Anglican Consultative Council and is currently Chairman of the ACL.

TO MEND THE NET, Anglican Faith & Order in Renewed Mission, is published by
The Ekklesia Society in the US.

To Mend the Net is a collection of five essays in support of a proposal to give the annual meeting of Anglican Church Primates power to admonish a diocese or province, reduce them to observer status at Lambeth, and ultimately create a new diocese or province to replace the recalcitrant.

The proposal is aimed principally at the Episcopal Church of the USA – to halt and reverse the persecution of orthodox Christians and to correct the pursuit of unbiblical belief and practice.

Since the Lambeth Conference in 1998, a coalition of conservative bishops has pressured the American liberal bishops to abandon blessing same-sex unions, the ordination of practising homosexuals and to desist from legislative coercion to those diocesan bishops who oppose women’s ordination to the priesthood.

The New Testament record does not reveal church structures beyond the local congregation. Of course, apostolic visitations and correspondence linked communities of Christians. Even attempts by the mother church of Jerusalem to exercise hegemony were rejected.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, it is the bishops who are the true successors of the apostles and who exercise their supervisory functions. The Bishop of Rome and the College of Cardinals rule the Church on this basis.

Is the proposal in **To Mend the Net** that the thirty eight

Anglican Primates effectively become a College of Cardinals?

Sydney Synod is hardly likely to acquiesce to such a proposal. What if, for example, the Primates took a negative view of lay administration of the Lord’s Supper, or of the establishment of Sydney-style congregations beyond the Diocese?

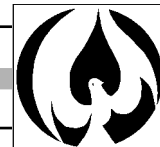
The very idea of a “College of Primates” exercising jurisdictional authority strikes at the very heart of Anglicanism as it has developed around the world.

At present, the Anglican Communion is a fellowship of independent Churches, bound together by their origins in the Church of England. They share a common liturgical framework and episcopal ordination.

Yet even these are breaking down under the pressure of liberalism and ritualism at one end and, as in the case of some in ECUSA, apostasy at the other.

Evangelicals are discovering a new robustness, especially in the Third World, and the last thing we need to be doing now is to create a new layer of power and coercion built around the arbitrary and quite unbiblical concept of a College of Primates.

Evangelicals everywhere should pray for the Primates as they meet, that they may make wise decisions – both about the situation in ECUSA and the proposals contained in **To Mend the Net**. •



Subdivide Sydney? Not a Great Idea

Dr. Bruce Kaye, General Secretary of the General Synod, told a recent gathering of clergy in Brisbane that regionalisation as practiced in the Diocese of Sydney and other large dioceses is a bad experiment that should be abandoned in favour of dividing into several smaller dioceses.

His main reason is that large dioceses – and by extension, larger regions – do not allow the church community to experience “episcopal ministry”. When asked to respond, Archbishop Goodhew declined to support the proposal.

Smaller diocese?

This is an old debate which has already been canvassed in Sydney. Regionalism, as it is developing in Sydney, is much to be preferred to breaking up a diocese into smaller units of, say, 35 parishes, as Dr. Kaye suggests.

There are several reasons why Dr. Kaye’s suggestions as reported are not sound.

To subdivide Sydney to six or seven dioceses of thirty five parishes each would create massive diseconomies of scale. Many small dioceses in Australia are virtually insolvent now and questions of amalgamations are in the air. The complexities involved in breaking up the diocesan endowment and other great Sydney institutions would be almost

impossible to unravel. It would certainly threaten the present source of Sydney Diocese’s financial strength, the Glebe Administration Board.

Subdivision would also multiply diocesan organisations and costs.

Further, it would *not* free up the assistant bishops, who presently have limited administrative duties, to get closer to their parishes as Dr. Kaye hopes. Rather, it would create *additional* responsibilities which would keep them from closer engagement with their parishes, so the very benefits promised would not materialise.

National church life surveys paint a depressing picture of devastating decline in the Anglican Church around Australia, with the exception of Sydney. Whatever its shortcomings, many churches in Sydney are at least holding their own, and in many places they are growing. Why would Sydney want to threaten this?

Evangelical character

Perhaps the most serious flaw in Dr. Kaye’s idea is that it would weaken the evangelical character of the parishes. Imagine four or five new smaller dioceses with different bishops with different policies on training and ordination. In time, pressure would build up to alleviate clergy shortages by im-

porting from elsewhere clergy with training inferior to that provided at Moore College.

Forms of churchmanship, presently unknown, would begin to creep in and, over time, the evangelical character of the parishes would be watered down. As each successive bishop took office, the drift from Sydney’s Biblical roots would continue. What has happened in some previously evangelical dioceses in Australia would happen in Sydney.

Within a generation or two, evangelical ministry would disappear in many places. That is a high price to pay for some hoped-for benefit of increased episcopal ministry.

Too early to judge

Regionalisation, as it is practised in Sydney, is a developing thing. It is too early, after just four years of the present system, to make definite judgments as to its success. It is certainly too early to declare it a failure. With ongoing reviews and fine-tuning, it will develop to provide real grassroots participation in local resource allocation.

The Diocese as a whole will continue to enjoy the benefits of scale and energy that can only come from a large, well managed and endowed diocese. •

With Thanksgiving for Neville Thomas

In early January, many were saddened to hear of the death of one of the ACL's Vice-Presidents, Neville Thomas, after a long illness.

In wider circles, Nev was best known as a highly talented musician. Learning the clarinet at the age of seven launched him into a life of music. During World War II, Neville served in the Australian Entertainment Unit and later he toured with the ABC Concert Band during the Vietnam War.

Both before and after WWII, he studied at the Conservatorium of Music, eventually joining the staff, teaching the clarinet, sax and flute. He spent 29 years there, lecturing in the Diploma of Music Education. He co-founded the Pan-Pacific music camps and kept in close touch with friends in the US.

Neville was leader of the Sydney Saxophone Quartet and founded the Saxophone and Clarinet Society in 1976.

In the early days of Australian television, Neville played in several of the TV big bands – Tommy Tycho's band, Bobby Limb's band, JO'K's *Sing, Sing, Sing*, to name a few.

Due to his characteristic modesty, it is likely that few younger members of the ACL Council guessed his wealth of talent. His obituary in *The Sydney Morning Herald*

reveals that he was listed among the world's top 50 clarinetists.

Nev was delighted when, in 1992, he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for service to "music education and related organisations".

As impressive as his musical credentials may be, there was much more to Neville Thomas than his music, for he was a man who

"he was a man who knew and loved the Lord Jesus Christ and who knew the reality of being saved by grace through faith."

knew and loved the Lord Jesus Christ and who knew the reality of being saved by grace through faith.

In 1967, to improve his understanding of the Bible, he began full time study at Moore College. He was a lay preacher and Synod representative for many years for his home church of St. Jude's

Randwick. He taught Sunday School and was on the Parish Council. He was also a chaplain to the Conservatorium, he ministered to inmates at Long Bay Gaol and visited patients at the Prince of Wales Hospital.

Nev was a humble Christian man who wanted others to come to know the Saviour. It was for this reason that he served as he did on the ACL Council and as a Vice-President. He was overjoyed to see men and women turn to Christ and parishes embrace evangelical ministry.

In personal relationships, many have testified to his kindness shown in a variety of ways and how he thought of others, taking the Lord Jesus as his great example.

In 1995, Nev's wife Val developed Alzheimer's disease and Neville looked after her at home as long as he was able, but his own health was failing too.

Nev's funeral at St. Jude's was a joyous occasion, filled with the sounds of the music he loved.

The words of Philippians 1:21 & 23 are fitting: "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain... I desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."

Neville Thomas laboured cheerfully for Christ in Sydney, and now knows that the reality of being *with* Christ is 'far better'. •

For information on joining the Anglican Church League, please see our website at www.acl.asn.au – or write to the address below.

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A Call to Pray for the Election of a New Archbishop

The election of an Archbishop of Sydney at the special session of Synod beginning on June 4 is of great importance for the future of the work of the gospel in Sydney and beyond.

We invite you to join us at these venues to pray together for this election Synod.

These open meetings are for prayer and not for lobbying or discussing candidates. They are being organised by the ACL, or by others as indicated. We hope you can come!

Georges River Region

Moorebank, Friday 4 May, 8:00pm at St Thomas' Church, Nuwarra Road.

Carlton, Wednesday 23 May, 8:00pm at St James' Church, Henry & Percival Streets.

Northern Region

Narrabeen, Tuesday 15 May at 8:00pm at St. Faith's Church, 5-9 Clarke Street

Roseville, Wednesdays 28 March, 25 April & 23 May, 8:00pm at St Andrew's Church, corner Hill Street and Bancroft Avenue

The Roseville meetings are the initiative of, and are organised by, the Rev Mark Calder, ph. 9412 2553.

South Sydney Region

Concord North & West, Tuesday 15 May, 8:00pm at the Rectory, 9 Turner Avenue, Concord

Woollahra, Wednesday 16 May, 8:00pm at All Saints' Church, 85 Ocean Street

Western Region

Blackheath, Wednesday 16 May, 7:30pm at St. Aidan's Church, Hat Hill Road.

Northmead, Thursday 17 May, 8:00pm at Northmead Anglican Church, Thomas Street.

St Marys, Wednesday 16 May, 8:00pm at St Mary's Church, King Street.

Wollongong Region

The Wollongong regional prayer meetings in each deanery are being organised by the Wollongong Regional Council through the Rev Peter Tasker, ph. 4261 6914.

Please watch for publicity in your local churches.

We'll also post the details on the ACL website at **www.acl.asn.au** when they become available (including a downloadable pdf file you may like to print and distribute in your church).