

NEW CRANMER SOCIETY NEWS AND VIEWS

NUMBER 52: SEPTEMBER

c/o 8 Minnie Street, Brunswick 3056



VIEWPOINT

i.e. fiduciary monitoring, strategic deliberation, and generative and creative perception. For

CHURCH GOVERNANCE IN A CHANGING TIME – SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE

At this Synod we will again elect, as is our custom, 4 clerks and 4 lay persons to be members of Council, and the Archbishop may also appoint certain lay members, including me (since my appointed time as an Archbishop's appointment will also expire). Thus it has been for generations, but at this Synod a Bill is to be introduced to cut Council numbers in half.

With some mixed feelings, **I give my wholehearted recommendation to you to vote for this change**, designed to come into effect at a time appointed by the next Archbishop. Council in my experience has been a tumultuous reflection of the strengths and weaknesses of Melbourne Anglicans, justifying every thinkable positive and negative epithet except "docile". The last 3 Archbishops have each in my observation longed to have this body reconstructed. Successive plans and hopes have been thwarted, probably not universally for the best of motives, but not necessarily always for wrong reasons.

The aim of the reform is to maintain the Council as the most diversely representative and workable body of advisers to the Archbishop (and also, as we have been recently helped to realise, the assistant bishops), principally chosen by Synod from those who do not hold formal government office. This is not a brief that can be discharged by a small body.

But a large body cannot effectively do all three branches of essential governance work-

these tasks, some of which I believe have not been done consistently well with our present structures, other bodies will be needed, some already in existence, some needing to be created once the form and role of the plenary Council is settled.

The restructured Council will still mostly be reactive. I therefore also have a further and potentially much more risky suggestion for inclusion in the restructured Council processes: at the end of each meeting a maximum of 10 minutes or so be set aside to invitation of comments 'from the floor' addressed to two standing questions. "1 Have we performed as well as we might to advise and support the Archbishop and bishops on the matters before us?" and "2 Is there anything which the Archbishop or we should be addressing before it becomes acute?" (I plagiarise these questions from a well known governance text).

Viewpoint continued next page

14TH ANNUAL SYNOD BREAKFAST

Bishop of the Eastern Region

Bishop Stephen Hale

"Denominational Leadership Today -
Helping or Hindering Church Renewal?"

Saturday 8 October 2005

7.45am for 8am

Sergio's, 465 Spencer St,

West Melbourne

\$20 for breakfast alone, or \$30 with NCS
annual subscription.

Payment on the day (No Credit Cards)

Bookings are essential, and should be made by
calling 5962 6620 by Wednesday 5 October or
email to tcand@netspace.net.au

VIEWPOINT (CONTINUED)

SHIBBOLETHS FOR A NEW ARCHBISHOP?

This is not the place to reflect and speak on the leadership of +Peter Watson, but as that time and place will soon come, I do encourage you to think about things in the past five years in the diocesan leadership that have been pure, lovely, commendable, excellent and worthy of praise (Philippians 4.8).

As we also increasingly collect our thoughts, desires, hopes and prayers, and also probably fears and anxieties, about the choice of our next Archbishop, it may be useful to remind each other first about what we have already published as a template sheet of desirable qualities for a Melbourne Archbishop. If you binned your copy and now regret doing so, contact any member of New Cranmer Council to receive another.

I also want to remind you, in the anxieties quarter, of three matters where the last Board of Nominators sought a response to relay to the Synod meeting from those under consideration:

1 Lay presidency at holy communion. We are content with outcome of the Panel of Inquiry appointed by Archbishop Rayner, that this is not a matter expedient for Melbourne. Moreover it is a matter on which liberty of conscience may be allowed privately, and we hope is not a matter that need add to strains in fellowship between us and others elsewhere. This is probably not a first importance matter for the next Archbishop.

2. Ordination of women as bishops. This will be a matter on which we expect our Archbishop to lead positively, recognising the strong consensus of Synod, but also respecting the conscience of those who are troubled by indications in Scripture about God's purposes in asymmetry in gender relationships. We want to honour both the consensus and the conscience if we can. We expect our Archbishop to proceed in step with General Synod canons.

3. Homosexual relationships in church leadership. We support the last Lambeth declaration on this subject, and expect our Archbishop to take the lead in upholding it.

The three former matters in one way or another have in the recent past touched our relationship to each other and with our leaders. But another far more vital matter of relationship to God in Christ has arisen in recent Melbourne discussion. It concerns the nature of God's purposes for this world in Christ Jesus. As Lesslie Newbigin said, "The Christian will be eager to co-operate with all projects which are in line with the Christian's understanding of God's purposes in history" and "the point of view of Christian faith is skewed if it begins with question 'who is going to be saved?' We have to ask, how is Christ to be honoured and glorified?" There is only one true light that enlightens everyone (John 1:9). We expect our Archbishop to be as unequivocal about this as we are.

Finally, do we hope for, and will we strive for an evangelical Archbishop? It all depends on definition. If it means being an archbishop in the contemporary heritage of our namesake patron, Thomas Cranmer, who at the time of his mature faith accepted the word evangelical, among others, to describe himself, then yes, we do. But the word "evangelical" in some of its particular Melbourne pronunciations cannot be turned into a "shibboleth" (Judges 12.6) that members of the New Cranmer Society should seek to use as a codeword to guard the entrance.

SYNOD – A GREAT PLACE TO BE

Let us rejoice in our freedom to gather openly in Synod and consider together the Lord's business for us, when so many in our region of the world are in fear of their lives if they confess their faith.

Tony Greenwood