

[Draft Briefing for Melbourne Synod 2019]

## **Background to Motion 11: Church of Confessing Anglicans Aotearoa / New Zealand**

*How did the new Anglican body in New Zealand originate?*

- The Anglican Church of Aotearoa / New Zealand and Polynesia (ACANZP) voted in favour of blessing same-sex marriages in May 2018.
- Following this decision, six parishes decided that it was necessary to leave their existing diocesan structures in order to remain faithful to Christ. In addition, others who felt they must leave ACANZP formed six new congregations. Since they wanted to remain Anglican, an alternative structure was conceived in the form of a new extra-provincial diocese.
- Representatives of the twelve churches met on May 17 of this year to establish the new structure and elect a bishop.
- Reverend Jay Behan was elected as first bishop, and will be consecrated in Christchurch on October 19. Bishops from many Anglican provinces will gather to lay hands on Jay, authenticating his ministry and that of the new diocese.

*What kind of people are involved?*

Mark and Pip Hood are part of the new diocese and are known to many in our diocese. Mark studied at Ridley College, was ordained in Melbourne, and served in parishes in Melbourne and Geelong, before moving to Christchurch to serve in Anglican parishes there. In 2017 Mark became the vicar of St Christopher's, Avonhead, a flagship parish with four congregations.



Following the ACANZP's move away from orthodoxy, Mark and Pip made the difficult decision to leave St Christopher's and start again. The new congregation, Redeemer Church, meets in a High School on the west side of Christchurch.

The sacrifice that Mark and Pip have made is typical of those who have come together to create the Church of Confessing Anglicans in New Zealand. Other faithful Anglicans have remained within the structures of ACANZP, such as in the predominantly orthodox diocese of Nelson.

### *Summary*

It would be a great encouragement to the new diocese and to faithful Anglicans throughout New Zealand if we were able to assure them of our prayers and support through this motion.

## **Background to Motion 17: Response to Wangaratta Synod**

### *What is the situation in Wangaratta?*

- The diocese of Wangaratta covers the Northeastern part of Victoria and includes the town of Albury in New South Wales. Their average Sunday attendance is perhaps a little over one thousand. John Parkes is the bishop of Wangaratta.
- The 2019 meeting of the diocesan synod, held August 30-31, dealt mainly with the question of blessing same-sex marriages.
- In his Presidential address, Bishop Parkes presented a rationale for rejecting the Bible's teaching on marriage.
- A motion regarding *Blessing of Persons Married According to the Marriage Act Regulations 2019* was presented to the synod. The motion included a liturgy to be used where "a minister is asked to and agrees to conduct a Service of Blessing for persons married according to the Marriage Act 1961."
- The liturgy contains many elements familiar from the prayer book marriage services, including vows and prayers for the couple in their life together.
- The liturgy was approved by a substantial majority, despite the pleas of many bishops, clergy and lay people around Australia.
- Archbishop Freier asked the Diocese of Wangaratta not to make use of the liturgy and referred the matter to the Appellate Tribunal for consideration. The Tribunal will consider if the liturgy is legal within the constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia.

### *How significant is this disagreement?*

- The actions of Bishop Parkes and the Wangaratta synod represent a very serious threat to the unity and witness of our national church.
- The doctrine of marriage as the lifelong exclusive union of a man and a woman is basic both to Christian belief and Anglican practice. Those who actively reject the doctrine place themselves outside the bounds of orthodox Christianity. Those who promote another doctrine are acting in a schismatic way, destroying the unity of Christ's church.
- Further, the Wangaratta liturgy is pastorally damaging, encouraging people to continue in behaviour that places them in danger of exclusion from the Kingdom of God. In doing so it fails to support the many brothers and sisters

who experience same-sex attraction but who are endeavouring to live within the bounds of orthodox faith and practice.

### *Summary*

This motion provides a way for us to express our initial response to the action of Bishop Parkes and the Wangaratta Synod in approving this liturgy. It provides space for them to reflect on their actions and to reconsider the direction in which they are moving.