

# *Reimagining ministry in the Diocese of Melbourne: working for a Biblical, Anglican, and contemporary/future-focused vision for Gospel ministry.*

Our scope includes the mission and ministry of:

- Parishes and Authorised Anglican Congregations, and churches for new growth areas.
- The Diocese of Melbourne.
- All other ministries within the Diocese, including the selection and training of ordinands, chaplaincy, youth and children, Aged Care, community involvement, evangelism, mission and outreach, schools and universities, and central administration.

**Saturday March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2024.**

**Ridley College 10:00 to 2:00.**

## **REIMAGINING:**

10:00		<i>Welcome and prayer.</i>	
10:15		<b>Merging churches as a missional activity. Interview with Angela Cook.</b>	
10:45	<b>Ministry with the Aged. Kirsty Brown.</b>		<b>Making disciples who then make disciples. Mavis Payne.</b>
11:15		<i>Coffee</i>	
11:45	<b>Gospel fellowship: Diocese and local churches. Tim Arnold-Moore and Fiona MacLean.</b>		<b>Church planting. Andrew Seedhom and Mark Tibben.</b>
12:15	<b>Ordination training. Rhys Bezzant.</b>		<b>Ministry with First Nations people. Bruce Bickerdike and Lonny Bendessi.</b>
12:45		<i>Time to pray</i>	
1:00		<i>Lunch</i>	
2:00		<i>Depart</i>	

**The next Reimagining Conference will be held at Ridley College, 10:00 – 2:00 on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June.**

# **Merging churches as a missional activity.**

**Angela Cook.**

**St Augustine's Moreland and St Alban's Coburg West and South Pascoe Vale combined in 2023 to create St Alban's and St Augustine's Merri-bek.**

## **Tell us about the merger.**

If I haven't met you, hi, I'm Angela and I have been at St Augustine's Moreland which merged last year with St Albans Coburg West and Pascoe Vale South to become St A's Merri-bek, since 2017 and I love doing ministry in the inner north of Melbourne. It's a quirky place but there is a lot of opportunity to share Jesus with a community that often is very anti-Christian and post Christian. As one of the St Alban's wardens told me the electorate that our parish is in is one of the most progressive in Victoria and Australia. But people still need to hear about Jesus and need to see healthy Christian communities which they can grow in.

St Augustine's has had a long and rollercoaster journey as a church, about a hundred years ago it had the largest Sunday school in Melbourne, over 500 hundred children and it planted St Albans Coburg West and St Johns Brunswick West to keep kids from dangerously crossing the railway like to come to church. But as we all know the world has changed significantly since then and people have come and gone from Brunswick and Coburg. The very white working-class brickworks gave way to the Greek and Italian post-war families and then Lebanese and other Middle Eastern people fleeing war and displacement. The churches didn't do a great job a connecting with the new world that grew up around them. And in particular when St Augustine's had to be pulled down in the 1980's because it was built on poor foundations - I think there's a parable in that - the church struggled to connect with the community and build momentum in gospel growth. Thanks to partnerships with Ridley College and St Jude's when I arrived at St Augustine's there was a small group of godly people gathering, and one thing we did have in common with the church a hundred years ago was children. We began focusing on ministry to families and began to grow, but one of the challenges of growth was the building we found ourselves in. We were meeting in an old Salvation army church on Sydney Road. There is no outside space, just a rabbit warren of rooms added on over the years. One of the clear limiting factors for our growth was going to be space. Space to grow to a sustainable size, space to teach, support and nurture our young people and just space to park!

As I began to look around at our Deanery meetings I saw that most of the churches in this inner northern/west area were small, struggling with older buildings and with clergy who were working hard with increased compliance responsibilities. I started thinking and praying about what it would look like for healthy gospel churches to thrive in this area. And we have plenty of buildings.

We don't lack buildings, I'm all for church planting in areas where there are no Anglican buildings but we have lots and lots of buildings in the inner suburbs. What would it mean for churches to be able to grow and work together. What could we do together to see Jesus proclaimed and people built up in faith. And St Albans Coburg West is just 1.9km from St Augustine's on Sydney Road and so I connected first with St Albans about perhaps running a kids club together as they had space and a school just across the road. That was in 2020.

As St Augustine's grew it was clear that we needed our property to serve mission not to inhibit it as the building was beginning to do, and so we began talking to our Bishop and the property department and paid for a site review which supported our ideas.

I was keen to start talking merger or co-operation long before anything happened and God certainly taught me patience, and how to have good conversations with the Bishop, but after the effects of Covid and the increasing vacancies in parishes such as St Alban's, we had a window to get both parish councils in the room. St Alban's was now without a minister and Sunday attendance had dwindled to about 5 or so as their elderly congregation moved into nursing homes or were promoted to glory. They had physical resource and we had the people resources.

However the conversation still wasn't straight forward. St Albans had moved more decidedly Anglo-Catholic and liberal and that was quite a long way from the more low- church evangelical church that St Augustine's is. There was a lot of anxiety and concern to be managed as we discussed how to move forward and I have learnt a lot about change management and holding people's anxiety.

We've been merged for almost a year and I still haven't got permission to touch the memorial garden, but I'm getting close. I think in the end being able to treat people with grace, hold our values and pray, God opened the door for the merger to go ahead. There were a number of people who were holding things together at St Albans who didn't attend on Sunday and who I'm not sure where they are with Jesus, they were happy to step aside, but we have worked hard to welcome and be generous with them. The organist managed two months before she stopped coming, but she struggled with her memory and so every week was hard as she grieved the change again. We worked hard to connect people before anything formal was done with visits and combined church picnics and to be people of grace in all things.

It's been almost a year and the anxiety of the first few months of services has faded and we have the new normal. There have been wonderful surprises, the St Aug's people love being able to kneel at a communion rail – even the kids, especially the kids. St Alban's is embedded in the community in a way that a Sydney Road site isn't, so when we decorate the church window for Christmas and Easter people notice and when people are looking for a church they come in. There's lots more to do but we have room to grow, in depth and in size and that what the goal was.

## **What Biblical principles shaped the merger and the way you did it?**

For me there were a number of principles that shaped the merger. First is the real focus on growing a healthy sustainable church who shares Jesus, serves Jesus and grows in Jesus. That been part of my vision for the church since I became the vicar. I want our church to be a place where people meet Jesus with grace and grow in him and love each other. That vision really springs from Matthew 28 and the great commission and my role as a shepherd under the good Shepherd Jesus. So that's what drove the desire to give the St Augustine's community a healthy and safe place to grow, for the kids to invite friends to, where families with small children could safely park their cars. But also I could see that there was a community down the road who wasn't healthy, that perhaps had lost sight of Jesus and I wanted to help them too.

When we began having conversations it was clear there were some big theological and ethical issues that the communities disagreed on, and as I sought to move forward, I wanted to be clear on where I stood but not try and fight all my battles on the first day. You know how Colossians tells us to Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, I wanted to be as gracious as possible but hold fast to my non negotiables. Confident that as I preached the gospel it would change people, The first series I preached was people Jesus met in Luke and we preached through the Alpha series next. I believe that the gospel is transformative and that the Holy Spirit is at work and he was definitely involved. At one point both parish councils had a conversation and I thought we that's it. They aren't keen. It's not going to happen and the Bishop and I were very happily surprised when we got an email wanting to move forward. I kept reflecting on Psalm 127, 'Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.'

Sometimes I just had to wait for God's timing and trust that the gospel will do its work.

But one of my pragmatic, but I think biblical principles, after reading Acts 4 & 5 with my staff team, is wanting property to serve ministry not to hamper it. The St Albans people loved their church but were struggling to be a community of God's people because of the burden of paying the bills and doing maintenance. St Augustine's had outgrown a building that had accessibility issues which we couldn't afford to fix. The building isn't the church, it's the people. We need to be able to let the building serve the people in the different phases of the church's life in a city, from the original St Augustine's and its daughter churches in the 1910's to now, and for the future.

# Reimagining Ministry with the Aged

Kirsty Brown  
March 2024

## Introduction

### Statistics

The number and proportion of the population that is ageing is increasing. The following statistics paint the picture<sup>1</sup>:

- Over 65s made up 15.7% of the population in 2018
- The number of older Australians is expected to triple by 2065
- Over the past two decades, the number of people aged 85 years and over increased by 125.1%, compared with a total population growth of 34.3%
- Just over half of older people in residential aged care are estimated to be living with depression
- Up to 40% of people in aged-care homes do not receive any visitors
- 191,000 people lived in residential aged care in 2021
- At least 80,000 of those residents do not have access to spiritual/pastoral care

### Observations

Some observations from working in the aged care sector:

- Common challenges experienced by people as they age include: loneliness, bereavement, fear of dying, regrets in life, lack of purpose, physical changes, chronic illness, psychological changes, poverty
- People are staying at home longer and coming into residential aged care later
- Those entering residential aged care present with higher care needs
- Approximately 70% of residents in aged care are living with dementia
- The average length of stay in residential aged care is reducing – in our facility it will soon be approx. 6 months
- Residential aged care is effectively becoming palliative care/hospice
- Government funding is moving more towards in-home care – it is the first principle in the Final Report of the Aged Care Taskforce (March 2024)

### Opportunities

The two times in life when people are most open to considering identity, purpose and meaning are when they are university age and when they are approaching the final season of life. Young adults are looking forward to what they might be in life; towards the end of life is a time of reviewing whether or not life has been meaningful. These are both significant times for people to be introduced/reconnected with Jesus and the hope that he brings.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources: [Final Report of the Aged Care Taskforce](#), ABS, 2019 report by National Ageing Research Institute titled [Mental Health of Older Adults](#), [www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au](http://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au) & [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)

# Biblical Principles

Our care of the elderly is based on four biblical principles:

## Value all

From the creation story, we learn that all mankind has been made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27). Therefore each human being has value as one who is created in the image of God. Regardless of the value placed in an individual by societal norms (eg in relation to disability, age, gender, culture etc), Christians seek to care for each person as one who is created by and valued by God. We will treat all people with respect and dignity inherent with their personhood. We will therefore seek to provide spiritual safety for those who might appear marginalised by society.

### *Created to age*

Through our understanding of God's creation, the concept of time was brought into effect prior to the creation of humankind. God created us to age. However, Genesis 3 recounts the introduction of challenge in life and ultimate death as a result of the Fall.

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.*  
2 Corinthians 4:16

Thus the experience of degenerative disease, frailty, general decline in health and other symptoms of ageing are expected within our lifespan. As we believe that all are created in the image of God and that ageing is part of God's creation, our theology of ageing supports the view that personhood is the irrevocable gift and call of God. Even if we experience dementia or other forms of decline, we are still viewed as people of value in the eyes of God.

The Bible is realistic in its portrayal of old age, positive in its attitude towards the value of old age, and specific in its commands concerning how older people should live and how the elderly should be treated. Older persons are to be respected, cared for, and loved as human beings (Exodus 20:12, Leviticus 19:32, Proverbs 16:31, Isaiah 46:4, 1 Timothy 5:1-3, Titus 2:2-3).

The ability to age well includes being able to focus on the spiritual themes and tasks of ageing, such as coming to terms with death and dying, forgiveness, transcending loss and disability, and finding meaning and hope at the end of life.<sup>2</sup>

### *Palliative care*

Where there is no reasonable human hope of recovery, it is the person's wish to be allowed to die, and we are unable to help, then technology should not be used only to prolong the dying process when death is imminent, for there is a time to die, which is in God's hands (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2). It is not our place to extend this time.

Dame Cicely Saunders, the founder of the first modern hospice for terminally ill patients, had said that her aim was "to add life to their days, not days to their lives."

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<sup>2</sup> MacKinlay, Elizabeth. *The Spiritual Dimension of Ageing, Second Edition*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2017.

## Love all

Christians are called to love God and to love our neighbour (Matthew 22:37-39, 25:40). Who is our neighbour? Our neighbour is all who are made in the image of God, our fellow human beings. We are called to love. And as we love, we do so as Jesus would. As Christians we seek to respect, care for, and love all human beings as our neighbours.

## Serve all

Through Jesus' example (Mark 10:45), we are shown how to love others by serving them. And we are to treat all people as we would want to be treated ourselves and will seek to be servant-hearted in all encounters with others. We seek to care for people with an attitude of compassion, patience, respect and discernment (Luke 6:31).

In serving others, we seek to be relational. We believe that we were created to be in relationship with God and with others. Relationship and connection are therefore fundamental to living. We do not undertake our interactions transactionally, but instead we seek to listen, to understand, and to know, others.

## Holistic

Jesus gives life which is fulfilling and meaningful (John 10:10b). As Christians we seek to enable individuals to find meaning and purpose in life such that they can live life to the full. We will practice deep listening, recognising that fullness of life will be a different expression for each individual, within their own unique story, in the context of God's story.

Human beings are not just biological beings, but comprise body, mind and spirit (Matthew 22:37). We seek to be whole person focussed. All of us have a spiritual dimension – we are born with the potential for spiritual expression.

## Reimagining Ministry with the Aged

The aged care sector is an increasingly regulated industry, thus requiring more safeguards in place to enter and engage with vulnerable residents. The church's resources are diminishing and clergy are pressured for time and priorities, and is currently mainly only ministering to those who are already connected with a church community. Our model of ministry needs to be reviewed in light of the challenges and opportunities.

### **Current model**

- Minister/congregation takes monthly church service at local aged care facility
- Minister/pastoral carers visit members of congregation in aged care facility
- Many facilities not catered for
- Non-Anglican residents don't receive spiritual or pastoral care

### **New model?**

- Spiritual care practitioner/ chaplain onsite for all residential aged care facilities/retirement villages/home care providers
- Pastoral care volunteers from congregations trained to support chaplains
- Minister/pastoral carers visit members of congregation in aged care facility

Anglicans are respected in this industry. We can take a lead in establishing spiritual care practitioners/chaplains. By growing relationships and being present, we can be there for when people raise questions about God, about purpose, about death (we can have lots of door knob conversations!). We can be the presence of Christ to the marginalised and the vulnerable. We can be their advocates, their mediators. We can listen to them deeply. We can help them reflect on God at work in their lives. By God's grace we can give hope.



# Reimagining — Discipling Leaders for Ministry

## Mavis Payne

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### Introduction:

Without godly ministry leaders, God's people wander. As people made for community, we need ministry leaders to provide focus, direction, inspiration, vision, guidance, teaching, encouragement, wisdom, models, challenge, correction, pastoral care. As God's people, we need leaders who teach and live the apostolic gospel. We need ministry leaders in every generation, in every people group.

In history, ministry leaders have emerged when:

- There are attractive models of embodied, mature godly leadership
  - The need for mature ministry leaders in every generation is made known
  - Ministry leadership is valued
  - The church is praying for God to raise up godly men and women to lead his people
  - Elders are intentionally mentoring, training, walking alongside younger leaders
  - Discipleship into Christian maturity is intentional for all ages, from children to the elderly
  - The cost and joy of ministry leadership is articulated
  - The purpose of ministry leadership is for God's glory, not human affirmation
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### Biblical Models and Principles:

#### **JESUS IS OUR MODEL:**

Jesus was the mature, godly leader; he was obedient to his Father, working for his glory and the coming of God's kingdom, at the cost of his own life. (John 17.1-5; Luke 22.41-44) He invested in others from the beginning of his public ministry (Mark 1.14-20; John 1.35-51), walking alongside his disciples — teaching about God's kingdom (Luke 6.12-49), challenging them to trust him (Luke 8.22-25), inviting them to step into ministry themselves (Luke 9.1-9), reflecting with them about the application of his teaching and ministry (Luke 9.10-22), calling his disciples to come with him and learn (Luke 9.28-36), warning them of the cost of following him (Luke 9.23-27; 9.57-62), believing in them (Luke 10.1-24), teaching them (Luke 11.1-13), forgiving them (Luke 18.15-30; 22.23-30), praying for them (Luke 22.31-32; John 17.6-26), sending them out, assuring them of his ongoing presence with them (Luke 24.48-49; John 20.21-23).

**Peter is an example of an emerging ministry leader:** Jesus named Simon 'Peter', a rock on which future ministry would be built (John 1.42); he called Peter to follow him and learn from him (Luke 5.10); Peter acknowledged Jesus as Messiah (Luke 9.18-20); Jesus warned Peter that he would betray him (Luke 22.34); afterwards he challenged Peter: do you love me? — as the precursor to being a ministry leader. Reinstating Peter as a leader, Jesus then reminded him of the cost of ministry and called Peter to follow him, even to death. (John 21.15-23)

#### **PAUL AS A MINISTRY LEADER:**

Paul brought everything from his background to ministry — his biblical knowledge, tenacity for godly living, privilege as a pharisee and Roman citizen, and his persecution of believers. His conversion to acknowledging Jesus as Lord was followed by a transformation in his thinking (Romans 12.2) — his Jewish privilege was laid aside for the inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s people; his powerful position in society was laid aside to identify with Christ in weakness. He articulated and lived the gospel in contrast to pervading Jewish thought and Roman culture (Philippians 3.2-4.2).

As a pioneer ministry leader, Paul was always involved in ministry with others alongside. He was sent out by the church along with Barnabas (Acts 13.1-3); he took Timothy with him and left him behind to continue the work (Acts 16.1-5); he then wrote to Timothy — mentoring him in ministry leadership (1 & 2 Timothy). Paul worked alongside men and women, encouraging them to take their place in leadership — for example: Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18.1-3; 18.18-21).

Paul faced hardship, knowing this was part of following Jesus into ministry leadership (2 Cor 4). He reflected on his Christian life and shared this with others for their growth (Col 1.24; 2.1) — that ministry is not about self (2 Cor 4.5-7), but by God’s mercy, so we do not lose heart (2 Cor 4.1). His imprisonment was for the benefit of the gospel (Phil 1.12-14). Paul prayed for those he was investing in, and shared these prayers with them (Eph 1.15-23, Phil 1.9-11; Col 1.9-14). For Paul, his joy in ministry was witnessing others trusting in Jesus and growing in maturity (Phil 4.1; Thess 2.19-20). He struggled hard for the gospel (Col 1.29-2.1) and God’s glory (Eph 3.20-21).

From these examples of mature leadership in ministry we see biblical principles which we do well to return to again and adopt in our part of God’s story today.

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## **As we have seen:**

### **MINISTRY LEADERS ARE GODLY, PLAUSIBLE ROLE MODELS**

- their own maturity in Christ is visible
- they reflect upon and share with others the value of ministry leadership
- they wear the scars of ministry and celebrate the joys, for God’s glory

### **MINISTRY LEADERS INTENTIONALLY INVEST IN OTHERS**

- They disciple those younger in the faith
- They create opportunities for younger leaders to step into leadership
- They reflect, challenge, pray for, pray with potential and emerging leaders
- They teach those who are reliable and who will be qualified to teach others (2 Tim 2.2)

### **MINISTRY LEADERS IDENTIFY THOSE WHO ARE POTENTIAL MINISTRY LEADERS**

#### **A potential ministry leader:**

- Is a disciple of Christ:
  - With a growing acceptance of living in God’s grace
  - For whom being ‘in Christ’ is the basis of their identity
  - Who is growing in living openly before God in prayer
  - Who exhibits a visible shaping of their life as a beloved child of God
  - Who is committed to growing in biblical truth

Is called by God into leadership — a confluence of gifts, opportunity and passion  
They have emerging ministry gifts, which have the potential to grow  
They accept invitations to step up into leadership opportunities  
They have a growing passion for others to know and love Jesus  
They work with others and are accountable to others

Has a maturing godly character:

When tested, they are able to stand firm 'in Christ'

They have an openness and willingness to learn from mistakes and from others

They have a growing capacity to manage their responsibilities

They are committed to guarding their life and the gospel (1 Tim 4.16)

Has a growing awareness of God's vision for mission and ministry:

Christ For a world that knows Jesus; people from every nation who will bow before the King, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2.10; Rev 7.9-12)

For God's kingdom to come on earth as in heaven

service, so That the role of ministry leaders is to prepare God's people for works of that they will be built up into maturity in Christ. (Eph 4.11-13; Col 1.28)

### **MINISTRY LEADERS WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMERGING MINISTRY LEADERS TO BE ENVISIONED, EQUIPPED AND SUPPORTED.**

Ministry leaders have a global vision of God's mission, and intentionally look for opportunities to encourage and develop emerging ministry leaders to explore possibilities beyond their own part of God's kingdom. They develop intentional partnerships between parish, diocese, overseas and local para church mission agency, theological college, university ministry — together developing possibilities and pathways for developing ministry leaders, not just for their own sphere of God's mission, not just for this generation.

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## **Reimagining discipling leaders for ministry:**

Imagine a parish where youth are encouraged to participate in a small group bible study, walk with a mentor, attend CMS SUTS youth camp, step into leadership opportunities within their congregation and in para church missions and camps; where they are trained, where a mentor reflects and prays with them about where God is leading them.

Imagine Christian parents raising their children in the faith, reading the bible and praying with them and for them; modelling being a servant missionary with them; praying for God to take and use them in his mission wherever he calls them.

Imagine encouraging a tertiary student to step into a ministry leadership role on campus with a Christian group; releasing them to learn and grow as disciples and cross-cultural missionaries.

Imagine inviting a younger emerging leader to be your ministry apprentice: modelling, discipling, giving them responsibility, reflecting with them, praying with and for them, challenging them to continue in ministry and go further.

Imagine specifically inviting emerging leaders to consider working part-time so they can study theology with a view to being further equipped for God's mission.

Imagine groups of emerging leaders who are seriously interested in ministry and mission, meeting together with a mentor to explore ministry possibilities, joys and costs, and God's calling.

Imagine sending a gifted and valued member of one congregation to work alongside a church planter so they can be further equipped for growing God's church.

Imagine encouraging a mature, experienced Christian leader to consider studying theology so they can transition into full-time Christian ministry or mission; and imagine them being offered financial support to make this possible.

Imagine preaching which not only grows depth in being disciples of Christ — equipping and challenging people to live the whole of life under his lordship, for God's glory — but also equipping and challenging them to be engaged in God's global mission as servant leaders wherever they are, wherever there is a need, wherever God calls them.

Imagine public prayers which not only pray for the current church's leaders, but also for the leaders of the future church. Imagine praying that God will raise up ministry leaders from amongst us here.

Imagine elder ministry leaders continuing to invest in younger ministry leaders: mentoring, coaching, praying for, praying with.

**Imagine emerging ministry leaders becoming current ministry leaders who continue to invest in those who are coming after them. Investing in other leaders is part of the DNA of ministry leadership.**

## Reimagining the Diocese: Gospel Partnership

*Tim Arnold-Moore and Fiona McLean*

### A. *What is the diocese?*

- We are the diocese! The diocese comprises all the parishes/churches in a geographical area, the archbishop and bishops, the diocesan administrative centre, diocesan agencies and schools, associated committees, theological colleges, etc
- We work together, which means making decisions are made that affect more than one local church
- We are distinctively Anglican
- Our diocese is a mix of high church and low church (liturgical practice), liberal and orthodox (theology), Anglo-Catholic, Evangelical, Reformed and Charismatic (traditions)
- Benefits of being organised into a diocese

### B. *Biblical principles for a healthy diocese*

1. It's God's church! Keep trusting him.
2. Keep the Bible at the centre of our lives and ministries. Ensure our decisions are guided by Biblical principles and not corporate culture or fads or mere pragmatism.
3. Honour those in leadership.
4. Have a bigger picture than just your local parish/congregation.
5. Seek unity (if at all possible) – with fellow evangelicals and with others. Seek to work together for the common good.
6. Be realistic. Unity is not always possible or even good.
7. Cultivate a godly character.
  - a. Be patient and gracious.
  - b. Seek to get to know people.
  - c. Be humble.
8. Recognise the costs.

### C. *Reimagining the diocese: Imagine a diocese ...*

#### VISION

- where the focus is on the “core” business of supporting local churches and planting new churches
- where decisions about money and property and staffing and everything else are based on gospel values, not just on pragmatism or management principles; where we are willing to take risks at times that don't seem financially sensible
- full of vibrant growing churches with strong and capable leaders, lay and clergy
- where every ordination candidate is celebrated as a great choice by all present

- with so many well-trained clergy and lay leaders that parish vacancies are filled quickly and we are sending people out to support churches outside our Diocese and create new ministries within our Diocese

#### MONEY

- where we seek to be good stewards of the resources that we have
- with a Service Centre and Episcopate funded completely from return from assets with no Diocesan assessment

#### CULTURE

- where all diocesan staff (especially those in senior positions) are committed and engaged Christians
- where all diocesan meetings include times of prayer for our work
- where every AiC and Synod decision made – every motion, and every Bill –advances the gospel
- with “Tiger teams” of expert clergy and lay people that could come to a local church and help them with specific needs (e.g. property management, compliance)

### *D. Reimagining the diocese: What part can you play?*

1. Strive to maintain a focus on the Bible and on the gospel in your own life and ministry.
2. Pray:
  - for our diocesan leaders (bishops/archbishop and others, including registrar, management staff), including in your Sunday services and parish prayer meetings
  - consider joining the monthly NCS Prayer Meetings on Zoom
3. Invest in relationships with others in the diocese – neighbouring parishes, deaneries, ministry conferences, EFAC and Gafcon, NCS events, etc.
4. Speak up and help shape the culture of the diocese. Attend and participate in Synod, speak and vote.
5. Join NCS to work together for renewal and reform.
6. Look out for and suggest good lay people to serve on diocesan committees, working groups, etc. Consider volunteering yourself! Use your experience to support not just your local church but others around you so that together we are more effective.
7. Seek to raise up good ordination candidates who can lead our local churches
8. Be informed – know what decisions are being made and what is happening in other local churches in the Diocese and beyond

# Draft 1

## Reimagining church planting

Mark Tibben and Andrew Seedhom

### Introduction

Church planting is neither radical nor new. It is not radical because it is a normative expression of gospel ministry in the New Testament. It's not new as Christians have been doing it since the earliest chapters of the Christian story to advance the gospel into new areas. In Genesis 12, when God chose Abram, He chose to not only bless him and his offspring but to bless the nations through him. Jesus picks up on this inter-Testimonial strand in the Great Commission telling his disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matt 28:19-20). In the New Testament as worshiping congregations are established we see the nations are to be blessed through the people of God as a visible community called the church. Our task is to re-imagine how we do church planting in light of the people, structures, and resources that God has given us in the Dioceses of Melbourne today. Church planting is an important tool in the work of the church and contributes to its overall flourishing.

### Biblical principles

#### 1. **Worshiping congregations is the primary unit of mission.**

The multiplication of Churches in the book of Acts is as natural as the multiplication of individual converts. Paul doesn't do evangelism without church planting. Converts lead to congregations.

A good example of Paul's general missionary strategy can be found in Acts 14.

1. Firstly we see *Evangelism*. In Acts 14:21 Paul and Barnabas *evangelised* ('Gospelised') Antioch.
2. Secondly we see *Community Formation*. In Acts 14:22 Paul and Barnabas strengthen and encourage the believers, teaching and congregating them, incorporating them into *community*.
3. Thirdly we see *Leadership Development*. In each place Paul visited, he chose leaders from the converts, who now took on the task of teaching and shepherding the people in the faith. When Paul begins meeting with the people, they were called disciples (Acts 14:22) but when he left them, they were known as Churches (Acts 14:23).

In Acts, planting churches is not a traumatic or unnatural event, it is woven into the fabric of the Apostles ministry, and so it happens steadily and naturally.

## **2. Churches look different in the new testament**

While local congregations are seen as the natural consequence of evangelistic activity in the New Testament (Acts 13:1; 14:23; Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:2; Rev. 1:4, 11), we also see a variety of local expressions operating to fulfill the great commission within a given context. That is, the mission of the gospel going out into all the world doesn't produce just one type of Church: the mission is model agnostic. For instance, the Jerusalem Church (Acts 15, Gal 2) is a type of resourcing Church that takes on local and regional planting initiatives and is governed by a prominent and respected Council. Smaller house churches are formed in Lydia's home in Philippi (Acts 16:40) and Priscilla and Aquila's home (Romans 16.3,5). Paul attempted some radical revitalisation projects in synagogues (e.g. Acts 13:14, 14:1, 17:1-2, 17:10, 17:16-17, 18:4, 18:19, 19:8, 28:17) and in other places he forms congregations out of 'third space' ministry like the public square (Acts 17:16-34, 19:29-41). As we read through the New Testament epistles directed to these new congregations, we notice they do share some common distinguishing features, for instance they were centered on word and sacrament, but we also notice their idiosyncrasies which often stem from the context they find themselves in.

## **3. Sent in teams**

An interesting pattern that emerges from the New Testament is a preference for team based ministry. Jesus, who is surely a very competent leader, gathers a group of twelve ministry apprentices for both training purposes but also for encouragement and support (John 13-17). When Jesus does seek to give the twelve a first taste of ministry without his presence, he doesn't send them alone, he sends them out in pairs. (Mark 6:7-13). Again, when he expands his training program he sends the seventy-two out in pairs. (Luke 10:1-24). In the book of Acts the apostles seem to replicate this model: Paul always seems to have a partner and/or trainee in ministry, Barnabas, Mark, Silas, and Timothy. The New Testament doesn't seem to understand gospel ministry as a solo enterprise and Paul's letters always confirm his love and gratitude for his co-workers in the gospel spread throughout the network of churches he has planted or ministered to.

## **Reimagining church planting**

### **1. Planting keeps the Church's contextual blade sharp, and evangelistic endeavor at the pointy end.**

A common objection to reading Acts as a wholesale endorsement for church planting goes something like this. "We don't need to start new Churches, we should strengthen and fill our existing Churches before we think about expanding." Indeed, this is a salient point especially in a Diocese with many flagging and failing churches. However, as the Church practices the discipline of being a generative organism we see two things occur: a) new churches reach new people and b) new churches renew existing churches. Firstly, the process of planting intrinsically orients the new congregation towards the community. While being missional is the call for all



Christians and all churches, there is a practical sense in which established churches naturally gear themselves towards established congregants. Planting allows the church to view the community with fresh eyes: it asks contextual questions, and puts evangelism on the agenda. Secondly and importantly, planting is not only beneficial for the plant, it is just as beneficial for the sending congregation. The process of planting forces rejuvenation and refresh. New leaders need to be raised up to fill holes, existing ministries practices need to be re-assessed. As we reimagine the future, it is critical that the churches of the Diocese see planting as something good for them. Not simply in the sense that new congregations are formed, but as the primary motor by which rejuvenation and revitalization of existing congregations occurs.

## **2. Church plants can be adaptive to changing sense of place**

What is considered “local” is rather different to what it used to be. In the sprawling modern metropolis of Melbourne, a town center, or group of ten-thousand people, or a 5-kilometer radius may no longer be good indicators of where local community resides. While the parish system has its merits, we must be awake to the fact that we live in a far more mobile culture than even fifty years ago, and certainly more so than medieval Europe from which the parish system emerged. Demographics change too quickly and radically for the “one-size-fits all” approach of parish ministry to be effective in the modern world. These complexities mean we must opt for a dynamic approach to church planting that encompasses a multiplicity of models: the resource church, house churches or missional communities, revitalisations, neighborhood churches, parish churches, large regional churches etc. This is not to say churches should not be local, simply that local may mean different things to different people. Some people will worship in congregations local to a cultural or ethnic identity, some people will worship in congregations local to demographic expectations (ie. Young Adult congregation, or a family service), some Churches may play on the strengths of a “broader local identity” and draw from a wide catchment area, some will be neighborhood churches that seek to reach a particular suburb. All this is to say that as we reimagine the future of planting churches in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, we are not forced to choose the “correct” or even the “best” model. We need all sorts of Churches to reach all sorts of people.

## **3. Team ministry**

It is possible to level a charge against the parish model that it has made ministry life a lonely one. It seems to primarily envision siloed parish ministers, jack-of-all trades and masters-of-none, as the normative pattern of ministry life. From the 1970's planting methodologies were additionally encumbered by insights from the corporate world which championed the heroic leader: the omni-competent, high capacity, multi-functional visionary leaders of tomorrow! This new generation of special forces church planting Steve Jobs were going to re-shape the very Kingdom of God! We can thank God that some of the winds of bravado have left the sails of church renewal. An antidote to our individualistic age and individualized conception of ministry is a team based approach. Team based ministry provides a ballast against the ups and downs of ministry life, it provides some grounding when things are flying high, and provides a lift when things are down in the dumps. Critically, it allows ministers

to function in their gifting most effectively. It is unfortunate that only those who have the opportunity to work at bigger churches get to experience the encouragement and support that team ministry provides. As we reimagine the future, it may be fruitful to explore sustainable models of team ministry. The Minster Model (or Resource Church) provides a promising avenue for exploration, but other models exist (ie. Holy Trinity Brompton sending out apprentice planters with new church plants). What is clear is that we are already part of a team called the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, we are part of regional teams called Deaneries, and as we look to the future we should be asking the question: "What can we do together that we can't do alone?"

# Reimagining Training for Ordination Candidates

Rhys Bezzant

## Theological Considerations for Renewal of Ordination Training

- Christ gives us an example to ask for leaders for the church (Mt 9:35-38)
- God delights to provide leaders in response to prayer (Mt 10:1-4; Titus 1:5)
- Leaders have significant authority (Hebrews 13:17)
- Leaders are accountable for their authority (James 3:1)
- Leaders need training to use their authority (Mt 10:5-42; Mt 13:51-52)
- Leaders take on public authority (Acts 13:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:6)
- Leaders use their authority to empower others (Eph 4:11-14)
- Leaders require lives of integrity and integration (Mt 23; 1 Timothy 3-4; 2 John)
- Leaders face increasingly challenging contexts (Mk 10:45; 2 Cor 11:1-15; Jude 3-4)
- Leaders require notable gifts (1 Cor 14:1)

## Present State of Play at Ridley

- Monday Program: Chapel, lunch, formation group, + class for some
- Anglican Institute with two faculty offering 9 hours per week
- Small number of candidates at Ridley (presently 6)
- In addition, there are several aspirants and others in discernment in the AI
- Limited ministry/leadership experience of candidates is common
- Bishop supportive of Ridley's formation has been so helpful
- Faculty and Board of the College provide generous encouragement
- New stipend for a full-time ordinand
- Ongoing conversations with other Foundations to supply a stipend
- Ridley's commitment to release Faculty to assist in recruitment of ordinands
- Ridley Faculty engaged significantly with ADOM and the national church
- Standard expectation that candidates take a degree of at least 3 years duration

- Recognition of the rigour of our training by non-Anglicans

### **Pressure Points on the Ministry Pipeline**

- Decline in funds in adjusted terms from ADOM to the College
- Decline in funds from ADOM to candidates
- Decline in funds from placement parishes to candidates
- Increasing financial need among those considering ordination
- Clergy are time-poor to invest in training those with aptitude and enthusiasm
- Clergy are not surprisingly hesitant to lose good people from their parish
- Ordained ministry is often seen as unattractive
- Senior leadership in ADOM seen as uninspiring
- Training culture/internships/apprenticeships not very developed in parishes

### **Imagining a New Future: Envisioning | Funding | Training | Praying**

- Developing honest reflection and conversation about the needs of ADOM
- Nurturing in ADOM/parishes a more robust vision for Gospel ministry
- Persuading ADOM to rethink the funding for ordination training
- Parishes providing support/living allowance for candidates from mission budget
- Cultivating engagement with Ministry Training Strategy Victoria conferences
- Affirming the value of pre-College training courses/institutes
- Nurturing pre-College CALD cohorts in various regions of Melbourne
- Developing increasingly bespoke competencies-based formation program
- Sourcing new funds to offer as stipends to candidates
- Encouraging aspirants to offer earlier for discernment/selection
- Renewed appreciation of feeling part of a cohort for resilience and longevity
- Encouraging Anglican school chaplains to plant vocational seeds in pupils
- Intercessions for vocations more regularly in Sunday services/on Ember Days

# **Some reflections by a non-Indigenous person on the way forward toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by Bruce Bickerdike.**

## **Some biblical, theological, historical and sociological reflections.**

### **1. Biblical reflections.**

Gen 1-2. We are all made in God's image. All people are of equal worth and significance because we are created by God and called to act as His agents in His created world.

Gen. 3. Because all have sinned there is no society or people group which is not impacted by sin. So, before European invasion Indigenous 'nations' were populated by those created in God's image but who were also rebellious sinners like all those who have come to Australia since.

### **2. Historical reflections**

Indigenous society was profoundly negatively impacted by European invasion. Firstly, disease brought by Europeans, to which Indigenous Australians had little or no immunity, caused the death and disintegration of many language groups. This was followed by punitive killings, sometimes supported by the police but often ignored by the police and magistrates (John Cribben, 'The Killing Times'). The abuse of Indigenous women and the resultant spread of sexually transmitted diseases had a significant impact on fertility in Indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples were systematically removed from their traditional lands and forced into mission stations causing a break down in families, cultural practices and the loss of languages (H. Reynolds, 'Dispossession, Black Australians and White Invaders').

Some of these mission stations were run by churches in relatively compassionate ways but the loss of land linked with the breakdown of traditional social structures caused much despair and lack of hope. However, many missions run by the churches, or the government, treated children and adults harshly showing them little respect and dignity. Indigenous people in the main became outcasts in their own country with very little control over their lives.

Later policies of separating so called 'half-castes' from their Indigenous mothers (and wider relatives) added to the breakdown of family and social structures and community cohesion. These policies of removing so called 'half-caste' children from their mothers and sending them to missions under the control of adults, who were often poorly trained and lacking in genuine care for the children, added to the misery. Nobody seemed to care about the non-Indigenous fathers who had abandoned their children!

Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians needs to acknowledge this history and its on-going social impact on Indigenous families and communities across Australia. While non-Indigenous Australians living today are not responsible for the actions of past Australians, we are beneficiaries of the dispossession and almost universal lack of meaningful compensation to the Indigenous peoples.

### **3. Sociological Reflections**

The bringing of the Gospel to any group of people is always something to be celebrated as many Indigenous Christians do (see J Harris, One Blood). But we also need to acknowledge

that often the Christian message was too closely tied to the authorities who led the invasion of Australia (I Breward, 'A History of the Australian Churches'). The Churches were often uncritical supporters of Government policies in dispossessing Indigenous Australians. The churches (missionaries) often confused 'civilising' Aborigines (encouraging them to dress and act like Europeans) with sharing the Gospel. In spite of these actions many Indigenous people chose to become Christians (see J Harris, *One Blood* and *We wish we had done more*; and the non-Christian writer, Robert Kenny, *The Lamb enters the Dreaming*; M Harris, *A Story of Fire, Indigenous Christianity*; I Jordan, *Their way, Towards an Indigenous Warlpiri Christianity*; Swain and Rose (ed), *Indigenous Australians and Christian Missions*.)

If reconciliation is to be meaningful there needs to be an acknowledgement of this history and its ongoing social impact while also acknowledging how God has worked, often in spite of the misguided actions of many missionaries.

Many people of Indigenous descent in Victoria were reluctant to publicly affirm their Indigenous heritage because of discrimination. In more recent times many have had a renewed sense of pride in their Indigenous heritage while some are less willing, given discrimination, to also affirm their non-Indigenous heritage. Non-Indigenous Australians need to give Indigenous people space to decide how and in what ways they wish to celebrate their diverse heritage.

#### **4. Biblical Reflections**

In the OT and in the NT there is a constant message about God's concern for the poor, marginalised and powerless, both Hebrew/Jew and Gentile (Psalm 35; 82; 113; Prov. 13; 31; Amos 8; Job 30; Zech 7; Jm. 2; Mt. 11; Acts 10; Lk. 18;). Jesus regularly showed compassion to those who were outcast (the ten men with leprosy Lk. 17; The woman who had experienced twelve years of bleeding Mk. 5, see Lev. 15). There is a wide gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in regard to a range of criteria; health, schooling, housing; life expectancy work opportunities etc. Non-Indigenous Australian Christians need to be at the forefront of those seeking to close this gap by supporting Indigenous groups and individuals to be able to have control over their lives and to be able to advocate for their people.

#### **5. Theological reflections.**

Our response to Indigenous Australians needs to take account of the historical impact of invasion and dispossession and its ongoing effects on Indigenous groups. Following the example of Christ we need to support the empowering of Indigenous peoples to have the resources to be able to organise their lives in ways that affirm their worth and dignity.

The Gospel message challenges all people to critique their cultural patterns to seek to discern, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, those practices which are Godly and those which are not. Given the history of missionaries telling Aborigines what they should change in their cultural patterns, often with little understanding of these practices, it is best for non-Indigenous Christians to support Indigenous Christians by giving them space to seek the leading of the Holy Spirit to critique their own cultural patterns and beliefs.

Christians from all socio-cultural backgrounds need to develop a strong Christological focus from the Scriptures. Understanding of 'God', of the 'Spirit' and our role as God's image bearers needs to be informed by the person and work of Christ. Through Christ is how we understand God, the work of the Spirit and our place and role in God's creation and our destiny. Christ is also our role model for authentic human living as true representatives of God. This is also true for Indigenous Christians as they try and discern what truths God has taught them in the past and what practices and beliefs they need to modify or renounce in the light of the Scriptures and the leading of the Spirit.

### **Biblical reflection Acts 17:26-27.**

**Opening truth** - God created all humankind from the 'one' common ancestor ('one blood' in KJV). This verse was quoted by many of the early non-Indigenous missionaries to support their calls for justice and protection for Indigenous Australians and to affirm their common humanity (Harris, One Blood 35ff).

**Context** – Athenians prided themselves as having come from the soil of Attica. They saw themselves as superior to others, especially those they called barbarians (Bruce NICNT 358, Bock, Bakers 566).

**Implications** - 'Neither in nature nor in grace – neither in the old creation nor in the new – is there any room for ideas of racial superiority' (Bruce 358).

ἔθνος – nation, people, race. There are many issues with the translation 'nation' because in our English usage it implies political and social constructs. A nation can be a group of people from a common language group but more often it is a diverse group of people brought under one rule by agreement or by conquest.

Does Paul mean that every people group (race, tribe, language group) has been allocated their place on the earth? This implied idea that God has placed every 'indigenous' peoples in their land is problematic.

Indigenous and Islander Australians have a strong claim to be the first peoples to arrive in Australia but the land areas which they traditionally lived on for thousands of years. We don't know how the different Indigenous language groups settled in their land areas, whether by agreement or conflict. When we think about the UK or Europe, who are the 'Indigenous' peoples of these land masses?

The intent of Paul's argument is surely that God is sovereign in all human affairs even in what may seem to be an arbitrary creation of 'national' boundaries and the 'rise and fall of nations'.

God's sovereignty does not rule out human responsibility in the bringing together of tribes, language or people groups by agreement or by force.

Paul argues for God's sovereignty in the creation of humankind and in their social and political affairs. The purpose of reminding his hearers is so that they will seek to know God who is near. This message has a corporate challenge for people groups as well as a personal challenge for 'each of us'.

Humankind have been created by God to reflect His character (Gen. 1). Humankind's rebellion against God by failing to reflect His character is dealt with by the actions of a loving God. In Christ God reveals His love for humankind, in spite of our rebellion, by providing the means for us to be reconciled to Him through the death of Christ. True reconciliation between people groups can only begin when we are reconciled to the God who is near (Acts

17:27).

### **Reconciliation.**

In the NT humankind is said to be estranged from God because of rebellion, sin, against God (1 John). Out of His love God in Christ has reconciled humanity by paying the penalty for sin, death (2 Cor. 5:18). This reconciliation has to be appropriated by humans through repentance and faith. In responding to God's gift of reconciliation humans are given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor.5:19). This involves firstly, as God's agents (ambassadors), being the means by which the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:19; Jn 16:7-11) convicts sinners and enables them to respond to God's reconciling work with repentance and faith. This reconciling ministry also involves living a new life in fellowship with God and representing Him in the world. As God's representatives, believers are to live as reconciled people in relation to other believers and to the wider world.

Reconciliation is used loosely to describe the process of uniting people who are estranged. Normally this involves both parties being willing to be reconciled. In relation to indigenous and non-indigenous Australians this is complicated by our painful history. Non-indigenous believers are challenged to seek reconciliation in meaningful and practical ways but to allow indigenous Australians to respond in their way and in their time.

Until as recently as the 1970's many Indigenous people hid their Indigenous identity because of actual or feared discrimination. In recent years many have rediscovered their Indigenous heritage and may be less likely to celebrate or acknowledge their other heritages. This is an understandable reaction, and one non-Indigenous Australians need to respect.

Some closing the gap statistics: much higher rates of incarceration for indigenous adults and young people, higher levels of drug and alcohol abuse, much higher numbers of children in out-of-home care (mostly with non-indigenous families)

How can non-indigenous Australian believes seek to be reconcilers?

### **Some practical suggestions.**

1. Being prepared to listen to Indigenous people expressing their hurts, anger and disappointment about past and present government and church responses.
2. Being open to learn from Indigenous Christians for example their understanding of family. Family when disrupted by alcohol or drug abuse can cause tensions. However family is also a fundamental source of support, nurture and mutual obligations. Indigenous experience of family can enrich the wider Christian understanding of what it means to be God's family.
3. Become informed by reading about the impact of non-Indigenous and Indigenous contact.  
**General reading:** Australian Institute of Indigenous and Torres Straight studies web site; *deadlystory website*; *firstpeoplesrelations vicgov. Website*; H Reynolds, *'Dispossession, Black Australians and White Invaders'*; John Cribben, *'The Killing Times'*; G Presland, *Indigenous Melbourne, the lost land of the Kulin People*; I West, *Pride Against Prejudice, Reminiscences of a Tasmanian Aborigine*; older but informative – Rowley, *The destruction of Indigenous Society*; *Outcasts in White Australia*.

**Christian/missions reading.** A Massola, *Indigenous Mission stations in Victoria*; I Breward, *A History of the Australia Churches*; K Cole, *A History of the Church Missionary Society of Australia*; J Harris, *One Blood, 200 years of Indigenous encounter with Christianity: a story of hope* ; J Harris, *We wish we*



*had done more*; P Mercer, *Yulki, our Indigenous Sister*, Wontulp-Bi -Buya (ed) *Rainbow Spirit Theology*; M Hart, *A Story of fire*; I Jordan, *Their way, Towards an Indigenous Warlpiri Christianity*; Robert Kenny, *The Lamb enters the Dreaming*; older but informative Swain and Rose ed., *Indigenous Australians and Christian Missions*. W.H. Edwards B.A. Clarke, *From Missions to Indigenous Churches Introduction The Uniting Church in Australia and Indigenous Missions*, Sydney Open Journals. Pastor Ray Minniecon, *Message of reconciliation*, Video. 'ed. L Sherman & C. Mattingley, 'Our Mob, God's Story. Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Artists share their faith'; 'Common Grace' resources.

4. Become informed about Indigenous history in your local area and also about any Indigenous groups in your area. Most local Councils have reconciliation groups and information about local indigenous groups and events. Explore inviting Indigenous individuals or groups to speak at Parish events. Members of the working groups on Treaty preparations with the Victorian Government may be willing to talk about their journey and how the process is being developed across Victoria.

5. Develop a regular ministry of prayer for Indigenous Australians and regularly bring these prayer concerns to the wider Parish including in Sunday worship.

6. Explore links with Indigenous Christians in the Anglican Church and beyond especially in Melbourne and Victoria.

7. Explore links with the Anglican Diocese of the Northern Territory and their work in Indigenous Communities, and at Nungalinga College.

8. Explore a mission trip to the Anglican Diocese of the Northern Territory. It is important to work with the Diocese to ensure any such trip to Central Australia, Darwin and Nungalinga College or an Indigenous Community, is mutually beneficial, culturally sensitive and respectful of the local non-Indigenous and Indigenous leadership.

## **Reflections on Ministry from a Wirangu Perspective**

**Lonny Bendessi**

Hello everyone my name is Lonny Bendessi

My people names are Wirangu/kookatha which is from the far Westcoast of South Australia and Wangakthaa which is from the southern goldfields' region of western Australia. I am currently in my fourth year at Ridley I have previously completed a diploma in Ministry and I am currently studying an Associate Degree in ministry. I am currently in my last semester God willing!

Studying at Ridley has been one of the most impactful moments throughout my Christian faith, learning about God's word in subjects such as (OT & NT Foundations] having that broader overview of scripture. Or what I'm currently doing, two advanced bible subjects which means going in a book or books in the bible going deeper in both context and going more into biblical history like diving into another time and another world which is also gives me more admiration and motivation to continue to study God's word.

### **Challenges**

It wasn't easy coming to Ridley as I was willing to serve God and follow Him wherever He leads me, it was hard to leave home, it was hard to leave my family, my community, my church my people. Coming to a new city not knowing anyone only trusting in the Lord was all I had I remember the first day being here I was frightened I didn't know what to expect. But over the years I have grown in confidence in trusting God.

Reality - Studying at Ridley myself is also challenging I didn't complete high-school I'm a year 10 drop out so it was big challenge coming into the academic world. I remember writing my first essay I was freaking out but over the years I started to grow a bit more confident. It still continues to be challenging, but I am thankful for the support from faculty, tutors, lecturers as much as continue still through my studies I am confident that God will see me through my through.

As my time continues at Ridley it really encourages me not only to share what I've learned but to walk along side others who are wanting to learn about how important it is to understand the context of God's word. Just as my leaders did with me as I came to faith I was curious asking questions also I was slowly working in the church before my time at Bible college and a few others other that helped me throughout my studies at Ridley.

Highlight how people look to you now as a leader.

Not only that I've recognized my position as an upcoming leader both here at my church in Melbourne (MIFC) and my church back home in Adelaide and the wider community I've recognized how much of shortage of young indigenous faith-based leaders. There are currently two more that I know that are studying: one student is at Youthworks College and the other is studying at the Brisbane School of Theology. Please pray for more leaders!!...

Remember. Pray FOR MORE ABORIGINAL FAITH-BASED LEADERS!!!

God Bless you all.