



THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

**Delivered by the Right Reverend Derek L Eaton
QSM, MA, Dip Theol, T.T.Cert.
to the first session of the fifty-third Synod
of the Diocese of Nelson**

**Given at St Thomas' Church, Motueka
on Thursday, 6th October (Part I) and
Friday, 7th October (Part II) 2005**

THE PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS (Part I)
(Synod Sermon)

Thursday – 6th October
St. Thomas’ Church, Motueka

WELCOME

A te whanau a te Karaiti
Naumai, haere mai
Haere mai

Welcome to Motueka and to the first session of our Fifty-third Synod – especially those of you recently elected as synod reps and attending for the first time. We also welcome for the first time the Rev Jonathan Boyes, Nelson Hospital Chaplain, Rev Murray Cotter, Rev Dawn Stringer and we welcome back the Rev Don Moses as Vicar of Wairau Valley and the Rev Mathew Newton who has changed houses.

This Eucharist is an appropriate way to commence our synod as we gather in St Thomas’ Church, with each Mission District and Parish represented. It signals the most important aspects of our life together. It puts the Lord of the Church, our Saviour and our God, Jesus Christ, right at the centre of our deliberations. Around this Holy Table we celebrate his death and resurrection – the very foundation of all that we are and do. I trust each of us is convinced of this fact.

Eucharist means ‘thanksgiving’ – so we also gather to give thanks for the past – for all he is doing in our midst today – and we look forward to the future with anticipation as we endeavour to discern his perfect will.

This synod has a number of very important issues before it. You will be aware from reading your papers that there is a motion about Bishopdale College and the training of men and women for ministry. So in this sermon, which forms part one of my Presidential address, I want to talk about leadership – specifically leadership in the Church.

As has been the custom in recent years I have asked others to join me and they will be speaking about aspects of a revamped Bishopdale College and its necessity for the life and health of the Church in the 21st Century. These contributions will form part two of the President’s address tomorrow morning.

THE LORD, HIS CHURCH AND HIS MINISTERS

I’ve entitled this address “*The Lord, His Church and His Ministers*”, for that’s what we are – ministers – ordained and lay. He is the Lord of the Church – it’s his Church not ours. I trust we are all in agreement with that.

We all have a ministry – that’s the New Testament understanding of being a Christian. So I am assuming this afternoon that our desire is to be good ministers of Jesus Christ.

I wonder if the name Mervyn Stockwood means anything to you. When Alice and I were students in the UK many years ago, there was a very colourful bishop of London named Mervyn Stockwood, and on his retirement he spoke about his ordained clergy – and he mainly had words of praise for them.

He said, “I reckon 5% of ministers are mad, 5% are bad and 5% are both mad and bad – and about that 15%” he said, “I have always taken the view that while there’s death, there’s hope for the church” (cynic he was). He continued, “But the remaining 85% are marvellous people endeavouring to do a tremendous job”. (That’s rather typical English humour and not always appreciated).

Now whether there are ministers who are ‘mad’ or ‘bad’ – we here this afternoon, I trust, desire to be good ministers of Jesus Christ – every one of us. I’ve always loved that phrase of St. Paul’s and I have often prayed that that would be an accurate description of me.

A PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST (Ephesians 3:1)

In the opening verse of our first reading the Apostle declares, “I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus”. That may sound, perhaps, like a very dubious text for launching out upon such a topic as leadership in the church.

Leadership in the Anglican Church is of course a very confusing business. Do we only mean ordained leaders? Well, certainly not (as I have already said)! But as Anglicans we are complicated. Purple shirts and strange titles can be very confusing.

I once had an air hostess ask me if the colour of my shirt signified anything – are we colour coded or even colour coordinated. Believe it or not, we did ultimately get into a helpful discussion about Jesus and faith.

We have deacons, archdeacons and even archbishops to say nothing of canons which could mean rules and regulations, clergy or even weaponry! For many today it’s confusing.

I was once asked if there was a difference between a deacon and an archdeacon – so I tried to explain. I also explained about bishops, we got that far, and then archbishops. Then this person said, “Ah, and then the Pope!” To be quite honest, it’s much easier to talk about Jesus!

But no, I don’t mean that leadership is always – or necessarily always – ordained leadership. However, one thing we can be sure of is that our beloved Church is suffering from a dearth of good leadership. Each generation needs to see raised up good and godly leaders.

The Lord, his Church and his Ministers – this Church is part of his Church in the world. “The Bride of Christ”, “The Household of Faith”, “The Body of Christ”, “His Building”, “His Vine Branches” – these are some of the names for the Church. If Christ wants one big thing for his Church it’s that it should be mature – reflecting his glory and bringing honour to the living God.

A number of years ago, when I was Dean of Cairo, I remember preaching on being a slave and a prisoner of Christ. After the service I was accosted at the door and the conversation that followed went something like this, “How dare you call me a slave of Jesus Christ? – I am a child of God by grace”!

I decided we needed to get this sorted and being fairly young and brash I said, “Of course you are a child of God by grace – but if you know your Bible well enough – all this is hammered out for us in the letter to the Romans. We are justified by faith, we’ve received the Holy Spirit and it goes on to say in that familiar passage that ‘you offer your body as a living sacrifice’. (Romans 12:1) Yes, you are a child by grace, but you only become a slave by volunteering – it’s not automatic – and when you volunteer, you don’t have any options. From then on – you don’t say ‘I’m a volunteer; therefore I don’t think I’ll get up this morning’ – we know it doesn’t work like that. Try that after freely volunteering for military service. You could find yourself being court-marshalled”.

When we have committed ourselves – we have committed ourselves! When Paul uses the word ‘prisoner’ here (Ephesians 3:1) he is first and foremost referring to his imprisonment – he’s in jail – but he’s also referring to his inward imprisonment to Jesus Christ and to the purposes of God.

It’s a wonderful text and very meaningful for anyone who aspires to be a good minister of Jesus Christ – who means business with God – and that should include every one of us, and especially those of us called to lead.

Your calling to lead in ministry – whatever that ministry might be and whatever vocation you may have – be it nursing, teaching, law, farming, construction – and yes – preaching, teaching, home groups, worship leading, Sunday School and even parenting (every parent is a leader) and so on – is a call to excellence, to be the very best you can be for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are all disciples and probably most of us here are leaders – or called to lead in some area. Being a leader is, in a sense, being a prisoner – and as you would expect, there is a cost!

The cost of discipleship

Obviously being disciples involves discipleship – but what is discipleship? Is discipleship different for Anglicans? Is there a less costly version of being a disciple? Not according to Jesus, the Lord of the Church or our Anglican forebears, or for that matter those to whom Paul is writing in Ephesus nearly two millennia ago.

Just as there is no Christianity without the cross – there is no Christian disciple without the cross either! Do we realise that? Many don’t today. As we heard in our Gospel reading, Jesus himself said, “If anyone is to follow me, let them deny themselves and take up the cross”. (Matthew 16:24)

If we had been living in Roman occupied Palestine at that time and if we had seen a man carrying a cross on his back, or carrying what is called the “patibulum” – the cross bar on his shoulder – we wouldn’t need to run up to him and ask, “What on earth are you doing?” We would have recognised him immediately as being a criminal –

condemned to crucifixion by a Roman Court and condemned, as criminals were – to carry a cross to the place of crucifixion. Jesus said that following him – being his disciple – was that radical!

Where do we think we are following him to? There is only one possible place to which we are going, if we are bearing a cross and following Jesus, isn't there? And that is to the place of execution. That is why Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book "The Cost of Discipleship" wrote, "*When Christ bids a person, he bids him die*". The call to discipleship is a call to death first of all – the death of our own self-centredness.

Cross bearing was the New Testament's and Christ's dramatic imagery for the death of self – self-denial. "If anybody", says our Lord, "will come after me, let him or her deny themselves". Your will, living God, not mine – renunciation!

Self-denial is not giving up cakes or lollies for Lent. Nor is our cross some painful personal trial we have to bear – my cross – some sickness or whatever – not according to Scripture. It's nothing of the kind! Self-denial is to turn away from the idolatry of self-centredness. It's not denying things to myself – self-denial is denying myself to myself. It's that radical! It's repudiating the idolatry of self preoccupation and the self-centredness seen so much in society today and sadly even in the Church of Jesus Christ – that puts me first!

His will – not mine! "Your will be done on earth as in heaven" – we pray those words often. Taking up the cross is being willing to die to ourselves, our ambitions, our personal successes, our rights, our preferences and so on. It's that radical and it's so foreign to our thinking today, isn't it?

There's a constant tendency in the Church – whatever brand – to trivialise what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, as if all Christian conversion meant was to add a little bit of religious veneer to an otherwise pagan life – prick the surface – scratch the veneer and nothing has really changed underneath. We see it in our individual lives and we see it in our Church life. We have imbibed the spirit of our age.

True discipleship according to the New Testament (echoing the words of Jesus), involves a change so absolutely radical that no imagery can do it justice but death and resurrection. It's death to the old life of self-centredness – self-indulgence and resurrection to new life. It's no bed of roses, it's no sinecure, it's not easy – Jesus never said that it would be. Commitment means there is a cost – we become, in a very real sense, prisoners to God's will.

Jesus himself fought this out during his temptations in the wilderness. He fought until his sweat was as drops of blood in Gethsemane. And day after day we too will need to come back to him and say, "What is your will? Where should I live? What should I do?" Throughout our lives God, as sovereign, can still uproot us at 45, 55, and 65 and place us in something completely different – can't he? Or have I got that wrong? However, most of us don't think that way any longer do we?

A 'prisoner' is how the Apostle describes himself – a prisoner to the Lord of the Church. But there is also a delightful paradox in becoming his prisoner so wonderfully

articulated in the old Book of Common Prayer; it goes like this – “.....in whose service there is perfect freedom”!

Are we fearful? Well yes – sometimes – if I am honest. Will he resource us? Will he give us what is necessary to fulfil his will in our lives, in his Church and in the world? Yes – a million times yes! Equal to anything that the living God calls us to be or to do, individually or collectively (as Church), are his resources.

Lordship, being a prisoner – these are uncomfortable and unpopular concepts in this day and age with so much abuse of power going on around us. Nevertheless, I believe, they are valid concepts when placed in the context of a loving and caring God who has a purpose for his creation.

For each of us, a mental break needs to be made. Technically speaking – theologically speaking, we become prisoners to Jesus Christ for the sake of the world. (Ephesians 3:1) And we accept that, I trust, because the greatest joy is to be in the centre of God’s will for our lives.

I’ve frequently wrestled with this in my own life. I’ve wrestled with clergy about this as I’ve pondered the question of cost. Some of you may remember back to the early 1990’s when Michael Baughen, Bishop of Chester, spoke to about 400 of us gathered for our Diocesan Conference at Waimea College. In one of his addresses he mentioned a very run down parish in Mersyside where within twelve hours of being vacated by the outgoing minister and family – the Vicarage was seriously vandalised.

Thirteen people were approached and asked if they would be prepared to serve in this parish – they all said no – no way, or their spouses did! One said, “Yes, I’ll go”. He hadn’t been ordained long, he wasn’t the most gifted clergy person in the diocese, but he went and God blessed his leadership – his ministry and that parish grew in an incredible way. Only one was prepared to dare!

Bishop Michael went on to tell of how he was greatly challenged by the story of Reginald Heber, a name some of you will possibly know – he’s the author of the hymn, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty’.

He was ordained at the age of 26 and just over three years later was asked to go and be the bishop of the whole of the Indian sub-continent and what was then Ceylon. He had a wife and a small daughter – it took him months to face up to this call – finally he said, “Yes”, to the Archbishop of Canterbury and he embarked on that dangerous voyage by sailing ship. When he arrived in India – he said this, and his speech is written down verbatim. “Anybody coming to this part of the world knows that ere long they are going to have to leave to the care of Him who cares for the ravens (that’s God) those whom he loves most”.

Heber’s first trip, which was going into all the ports of the sub-continent by ship, took 15 months. The work was arduous, dangerous and lonely and within three years he was dead. The next bishop, his successor, died within 6 months of his arrival in India.

Bishop Michael Baughen faced thirteen men who wouldn't live in Merseyside – and Merseyside does have electricity, running water, doctors and no malarial swamps.

When we are called by God – and called to lead especially – we are called to where God wants us to be. If it's Merseyside, Timbuktu, Buller, Reefton or Kaikoura (and I'm not maligning any of those places – God loves them) – it may be uncomfortable but that is where the peace of God will be – and if we are not where God wants us to be – we are out of his will. That's true for all of us – not only for clergy.

Disciples of Christ are prisoners. Obedient Christians, in that sense, are prisoners of Christ. Leaders are to exemplify this. Clergy are to model this for others for the sake of the Kingdom. In that sense we are all prisoners of Jesus Christ.

A SERVANT OF THE GOSPEL (Ephesians 3:7)

Secondly I want you to note with me that the Apostle Paul says, “Of this Gospel, I have become a servant” – a servant of the Gospel. This is true for all who would lead in the Church. For those of us who are ordained, at your ordination and also at your induction into a parish or mission district, you are given this book, the Bible, and charged to “learn from the Scriptures and to proclaim the Living Word”. Your response went like this, “I accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God. It will be the foundation of my preaching and teaching and the basis of evangelism in this place”.

The new Vicar or Priest in Charge then turns to the congregation and asks of them, “Will you work with me in the proclaiming of God's Word and in nurturing one another as disciples of Jesus Christ?” The congregation responds, “By the grace of God we will join with you in this work” – the work belongs to us all.

But laid upon leaders in the Church, and especially ordained leaders, is a very significant responsibility concerning the Word – (Holy Scripture). God expects things from you. You are a servant of the Gospel and perhaps one could say a prisoner to the Lord for this task. It's a tremendous responsibility and an awesome privilege.

When we see the undisciplined use of Scripture, or the lack of submission to Scripture, or the twisting of the meaning of Scripture, or the total ignorance of Scripture, or even the outright rejection of Scripture in some parts of our beloved Anglican Communion – it's so very sad. We are in danger of falling under, not only the censure of Scripture, but even of the judgement of God – we must be careful.

As leaders we have a responsibility before God – more so if we are ordained and have taken vows and made promises. You are to be a servant of the Gospel it says (v7). You are to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (v8). You are to ‘make plain’ or to ‘make it understandable’ (v9). And in this day and age that is a very very difficult task.

Much of the language we use today to communicate the things of God almost seems like a foreign language to the average person in the street. To say, ‘Jesus saves’, may be theologically and biblically correct but it could miscommunicate. It can be meaningless. We need to ask – ‘How do I make this plain’? – “How do I make this understandable”, as Paul exhorts? (v.7).

Recently, on a flight, I got into conversation with a fellow passenger and I found myself struggling to express plainly and meaningfully the good news that God loves us and has a purpose for us – this was with a twenty something year old. People, generally speaking, are so far removed from thinking about God, or a Supreme Being who might be interested in them as individuals and as a community of people created by him. To them it sounds so foreign and is light years away from their interest. There is little understanding of basic Christianity, or the need of the Church, or anything to do with it, apart from civic occasions when God just might get a mention.

I'm not saying that there is a lack of spirituality out there, because there isn't – but as the years roll by, the Church – and dare I say it, God – has been more and more marginalised and the message of real Christian faith has been lost or subjugated by competing ideologies – the message is no longer comprehended – to say nothing of our use of language which doesn't seem to connect any more.

How to communicate the good news effectively in our society today is a huge challenge. How do we prepare men and women for ministry – to be effective communicators of the greatest news there has ever been? It's a massive challenge and in recent years the Church and most of our theological and ministry training institutions have, I believe quite frankly, failed. Yet we believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God for salvation – it needs to be communicated meaningfully to those among whom we live and work. To do so is the highest expression of love we can show our fellow human beings.

My brothers and sisters we are servants of the Gospel and because of this we are called to a task that is often uncomfortable – it doesn't get easier. This is my seventeenth Synod. I've been ordained 34 years and a disciple of Jesus since the late 1950s. To share the Good News doesn't get any easier.

Speaking as a pastor and teacher – when we cease trembling before preaching, before handling the sacred Word of God, then perhaps we should stop. It is an awesome task to stand in the name of God and to minister his Word.

Charles Simeon of Cambridge, that great Anglican divine of 200 years ago said, “You should always preach as if this was your last sermon”.

C.H. Spurgeon, that great preacher of the late 19th Century always said, as he climbed the pulpit steps, “I believe in the Holy Ghost – and without Him I just can't do it!”

Every one of us attending synod is called to be a witness. Not all of us are called to teach and preach, but many of us are. We need to train, to study, to explore and be able to articulate meaningfully the Gospel of God, showing that we are relevant Christians in the community in which we live – that's part of the answer.

We may be able to speak the truth of God's love – we may know Scripture well – but it will bounce off rock unless God the Holy Spirit breaks the ground and prepares it.

Called to be a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Called to be a Servant of the Gospel

A STEWARD OF GOD'S PLAN (Ephesians 3:9)

And thirdly, called to be a steward of God's plan – you are called for a concern. No-one called to lead in the Church of God can avoid the sense of responsibility of being not only a prisoner and a servant, but also a steward committed to the health and growth of the Lord's Church.

Those ordained, I think, would agree with me that we share with the Apostle the daily pressure of the Church upon us. Night and day that responsibility stays – it's 24/7! That's why you are stipended and not paid a wage. It's a calling – a vocation – not a job with set hours. Of course we must be sensible about the pressures and about the need of self-care, (God has commanded one day off in seven) but the calling – the vocation never leaves you. The hard fact is that Christian leadership is non stop pressure until you get to heaven – and quite frankly the sooner we know that and really understand the means of grace available to us to hold us steady and faithful on our journey through this life and in our ministries, the better.

As pastors we're here to serve God – we know that – but we are also here to serve the people. We are stewards of God's plan. We have treasure entrusted to us. I was ordained in England and I will never forget the words of the ordination service and the charge from my ordaining bishop which went something like this – the congregation is, “.... treasure entrusted to you. Christ's own flock – bought with the shedding of his blood on the cross” That's powerful!

Isn't that something? “Treasure” – do I feel like that about those committed to my care? It's a good question to ask as an ordained person, or as a Sunday School teacher, or as a Home Group leader, or as an AAW leader. Do I really feel like that about my people? Christ does – he feels that way about you, about me, about them.

Prayer

The ordination charge continued, “You are going to have to pray because you can't bear the weight of this ministry in your own strength”.

Paul's prayer for the Ephesian Church (Ephesians 3:14-21) is one of the most poignant and moving prayers in the New Testament and models for us how leaders should pray for their people.

The Apostle kneels – he prays – for what? If God has called you to leadership in his Church, your responsibility is to take on your heart the names of the people you serve. Just like the High Priest in Old Testament times had inscribed on his breast-plate the names of the tribes. That's not always easy. Those of us ordained are called to pastor the whole flock – not just those you love or those who you agree with. Taking Paul's example here, we are to agonize before God for the spiritual growth of those in our care.

I've often noticed that when groups of Christians get together to pray it's very easy for them to pray for their bunions or whatever – their human needs – and that's OK – but it must not stop there. Far more important is that every one of our people grows. In his prayer here, the Apostle prays that they may have greater spiritual discernment – that they might be mature in their faith – strong – rooted and grounded in love.

Here we see the heart of the Apostle – the heart of a person called to be the servant of Christ’s flock and a steward of God’s plan – who agonises over the health of the Church.

To really pray for someone is the greatest thing we can do for them. It changes them and it certainly changes us and our attitudes towards them. It will also manifest itself in many practical ways as well – just in case you are tempted to think that praying is a very passive and not very useful activity.

Listen again to Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian congregation – it’s very meaningful. “For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have the power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:14-19)

That’s Paul’s prayer for this church in Ephesus – it’s fantastic! Do I feel that way about my people – that’s the challenge?

When the pastor is praying, when the vestry is praying for the congregation, when the local church is praying for the spiritual growth of its members, there is no stopping what happens. There’s a tremendous expectation, listen again to Paul. “He (God) is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine”. (Ephesians 3:20) Now look at those people in your congregation who you think can never change – and hear that message.

Prayer is a prime responsibility laid upon those called to lead in the Church and sadly this kind of praying is hardly ever taught or emphasised in our theological colleges or modelled by our professors and tutors.

Unity (Ephesians 4:3)

Moving on in our passage of Scripture Paul also emphasises the importance of unity. “Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. This is another essential for those called to lead. Unity in the Church is so important – it’s right up there with truth – but not quite! I sometimes think that we have devalued unity in our local churches and in our dioceses, to say nothing of the international scene. Unity is crucial, we have Jesus own word on that (John 17), but it cannot be, and must not be, at the expense of revealed truth, and this too is a danger for the Church today – we hear the warning bells!

As I’ve already mentioned, I was ordained in the UK. In the ordination service of the Church of England and in many other provinces, those being ordained are given a mandate to promote unity. It always seems strange to me that our New Zealand Prayer Book ordination services are relatively silent on this important aspect of Church life. The scandal of disunity is a scandal on Christianity and it hurts us all when it happens within the Christian family. It’s something that we should weep over.

As leaders we are called to make every effort to promote unity in the Church – the Body of Christ in the world. Do I love the Church as Christ her Lord does? Do I value the Church? Do I see it as God’s invention – not merely a human thing with all its faults and weaknesses? Can I see the Church as the glorious Bride of Christ? I know it’s difficult sometimes – don’t give up on her!

Equipping (Ephesians 4:12)

Finally, some are called says the Apostle, “...to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up....” As leaders we are to equip others. We are to prepare God’s people for the work of ministry – that’s what prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are there for – to equip the people of God to serve in the world, in industry, education, health etc. wherever they work and live. That’s the clear teaching of Scripture.

Ordained leaders especially, are to help God’s people who don’t have the time - because they are not set apart like some of us have been to study Scripture and theology deeply – to think about it – to work it through – to sweat over preaching, teaching and training, so that the saints may be effective in their witness, in their caring, and relevant in their faith, being doers of the Word and not hearers only – whose lives impact the world for Jesus and his Kingdom. Ordained leaders are called to be equippers.

CONCLUSION

So the Apostle is very clear that those called to lead are to be prisoners of the Jesus Christ, servants of the Gospel and Stewards of God’s plan and therefore they will pray, they will promote unity and they will be equippers of God’s people. .

Let me draw this address to a close. Dr Francis Schaeffer, that well known theologian and teacher of several decades ago said prophetically a few years before his death, *“The Church is in for a rough time. We’re facing present pressures, present and future manipulations that will grow to be so overwhelming in the days to come that they will make the battles of the last thirty years look like kindergarten child’s play”*. He made that comment in the 1960’s.

We are in those battles now. The Church has slipped significantly over the past forty years and yet in other ways, she has progressed –it’s a paradox – gains and losses. But the Gospel is still the power of God for salvation and by his Spirit it can penetrate the deafest ears and that’s happening – there are remarkable stories to be told.

We have a Gospel to proclaim. This Gospel we know transforms and God calls us all to be his witnesses – to be involved in ministry – and he calls some of us to lead in his Church.

The great challenge

My sisters and brothers in Christ – members of this synod and by association all our congregations whom we are representing – will you gladly submit as his prisoner? Will you be his obedient servant? Will you endeavour to be his faithful steward? Will I? Will we lovingly pray for our people? Will we earnestly strive for the

Church's unity? And will we seek to see God's people equipped and living up to their full potential? That is the great challenge before us.

We need to be surrendered as his willing prisoners, as his obedient servants, as his faithful stewards to do his will – to be part of his glorious purposes. The Church needs leaders who will do this – who will model this – putting Christ and his glory first.

Where do we find such leaders? How do they train? This has been a problem world-wide and in particular for the Anglican Church in Aotearoa – New Zealand. You will hear more about this during synod.

Can we re-dedicate ourselves this afternoon – and be committed to see these tremendous needs of our church met? It will be costly. Will we aspire to have the very best people in the ordained ministry – called by the living God and recognised and affirmed by the Church and well trained and equipped for the work?

* * * * *

Let's spend a moment in silent reflection. Some of us here are pastors and the Apostle's teaching may have touched us and caused us to think again about our lives and ministries. Others of us here are leaders of a different kind – church wardens, members of vestry, house group leaders and so on – all of us are concerned about the leadership of our churches in the future.

So let's pray for grace to take these things on board for the glory of the Lord Jesus and the health of his church.

Prayer

We desire to thank you living God for your Church throughout the world and for your plan from the beginning that it should receive good pastoral oversight. We cry to you for the church in our land that you will give it increasingly good, holy and biblically orthodox leaders so that it may grow into full maturity and fulfil your purposes in the world. For your honour and glory we ask this, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. Amen

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS (Part II)

**Friday – 7th October
Motueka**

LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

This morning we come to the second part of the President's Address and as I intimated yesterday, I've invited others to join me. They will be speaking shortly.

We're continuing with the theme of Leadership in the Church, keeping in mind the vision for re-vamping Bishopdale College into a theological college. For some time

many of you have been aware of this vision and have discerned a great need in our church today especially in the area of ordained leadership. Last year in my synod charge I signalled that it was time to think seriously about this.

Last April, the day before Pope John-Paul II died, the present Pope – then Cardinal Ratzinger – made an observation which hit the headlines. He was talking about Europe. But in effect, I think, it was a comment about Western Civilisation and it certainly fits our situation in Aotearoa New Zealand. He said, “*Europe has developed a culture that, in a manner unknown before now to humanity, excludes God from the public conscience*”. He went on to say that, ‘attempts to manage human affairs while, “*distaining God completely*”, have led us “*to the edge of the abyss*”’. (Newsweek, August 15, 2005).

Most of you have seen the diagrammatic version of our Diocesan Vision Statement, that places the local church at the centre of things as God’s appointed agent to reach our communities and a world in need.

The role of the Church is vital in bringing healthy change – though most of us, sadly, still look to the world of politics and its leaders. The need for good, godly and competent leadership in the Church, at every level, is crucial today.

THE VISION

Let me draw your attention to a number of things I said in my address last year. The theme was “*The Provocative Church*” – we were considering what our church might look like living in obedience to its Lord. We acknowledged that it would be – a repentant church; a global church; a healing church; an equipping church.

Under that last section – an equipping church, I said, “*This church will have theological colleges and centres of learning that would equip God’s people for leadership and how to engage with the world. I personally long for our Church’s theological and teaching institutions to be places that flourish – that are safe places for young men and women to immerse themselves in pursuits that equip them for ministry in the real world while being supported by parishes that reach out in ministries of care and love to their surrounding communities.*

The Provocative Church will have learning centres where those called and sent for ministry training love to be, and hate to leave. Places where ordinands and their teachers wrestle with pursuing the heart of God, even while coping with making ends meet and juggling family responsibilities.

Places that build up the Faith rather than destroy it. They will be centres of learning where students are impassioned with a vision to pastor, to lead and plant churches where the Gospel is not yet known and enjoyed, to revive struggling and dying congregations, to bring the Good News to the world of business, industry, education and the media – engaging with a world in need through attractive caring evangelism, apologetics and service.

Training centres that talk about – and experiment with – ways to make Scripture come alive in a “post modern” culture. Not “knocking” or demeaning Scripture, but

seeking ways to understand God's providence in a world where so many evil events are taking place. Places endeavouring to find ways to apply a relevant Faith to the knotty problems of 21st Century living.

Centres of learning where the students love and admire the faculty and where the teachers challenge them to think, without making them run a gauntlet of scepticism and ridicule about things orthodox and biblical in order to prove themselves intellectually sophisticated.

They will be centres of learning with Godly teachers, committed to encouraging those entrusted to their care – helping bring their minds under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the governance of God the Holy Spirit and the authority of Scripture for the sake of those that they, in turn, will be ministering to. Teachers whose lives radiate with authenticity and who themselves communicate life with spiritual depth and Christ-like simplicity”.

I ended by saying, “I believe that for the sake of the Church and in the absence of an arguably sound and safe Anglican theological institution in this land, it is time to put more resources, human and financial, into building up our own Bishopdale College”. (Synod Address 2004) I believe that need is greater than it has ever been. “Can we afford to do this?” I can hear some saying. My question is, “Can we afford not to do anything?”

When talking about leadership and training men and women for ministry there are lessons that need to be learned both from scripture and from all that we see going on around us today. God has given us minds – we must use them.

A STRATEGY

The New Testament has a strategy for leadership in the Church. Some of us may not realise that. The Epistles give some very clear advice. This was not only acknowledged by – but heeded to – and taken on board by those who framed the early formularies of our church – Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley et al

We may not always appreciate the language of the Thirty-nine Articles or the Book of Common Prayer, but their content is not only sound, but biblical. Looking at the present difficulties of the Anglican Communion I find myself frequently reading our Articles of Faith and the old Prayer Book. They are still legal and still valid and they should continue to play an important part in our church's life in terms of the understanding of our history and our theology – helping to keep us orthodox in our actions and beliefs.

Our Anglican forebears – echoing the apostles – were deeply disturbed at the prevalence of false teaching – as the New Testament calls it – as we should be.

We have different terms for ‘false teaching’ today – usually much more polite – terms like, “that’s another point of view,” or “that’s another way of looking at it,” often carrying with it the innuendo that it doesn’t really matter too much anyway – your view is just as valid as mine.

The Apostle Paul refers to false teachers in every one of his thirteen letters. He was deeply disturbed by this insinuation of heresy into the church of his day. Teachers and leaders were deviating from the Apostolic Faith and were promulgating false doctrines. The writers of the New Testament letters were concerned – as were our Anglican forebears – and so must we be. It amazes me how little concern we show at times – as if such erroneous teaching doesn't really matter – it does matter!

How should we react? It's one of the important questions we need to be asking today. False teaching and ideologies incompatible with an orthodox understanding of the Faith are sadly on the increase all around us – in society and in the Church as well – the denial of the divine and unique person of Jesus Christ, of his atoning death for all humanity, his bodily resurrection, to say nothing of biblical standards of morality and behaviour in the lives of those who lead in the Church.

What strategies should we adopt when false and erroneous teaching is on the increase? The early apostles and also the Anglican reformers refused to give in to these things in a feeble spirit of defeatism. They didn't remain idle or inactive on the grounds that everybody has the right to his or her own opinion – that's pluralism.

That was not their response. They did not secede from the Church, or give up on the Church as being irredeemable – they were not defeatists – they were not pluralists – they were not secessionists. I believe, we too, must avoid these alternatives.

So what did they do – what was their strategy? Study the New Testament. Look again at our own history very carefully. Let me give you this little epigram, "*when false teachers increase – our duty is to multiply the number of true teachers*". That's exactly what the apostles did – they appointed elders and pastors in every town.

What sort of leaders did they call and commission? Leaders who held firm to the reliable Word – the good news according to Apostolic Teaching – and who taught it faithfully – who defended it vigorously and were engaged in refuting those who opposed it.

Why do we need leadership in the Church like this? Simply because there is much false teaching abroad today – and sadly, we find it in every section of the Church. Sometimes it's a liberal thing – and sometimes it's a fundamentalist thing. So the more false teaching there is – the more sound teachers are needed. That's a New Testament strategy and it makes sense.

THE WAY AHEAD

Can we find a contemporary application? How can we multiply the number of sound teachers, faithful to the Apostolic Faith, to orthodoxy – and we might add, to historic Anglicanism.

Here's a way. It's widely acknowledged that the key institutions for training leadership in the Church are theological colleges and seminaries – places where people are trained for the pastoral and teaching ministry. Generally speaking the Church is a reflection of its theological colleges. They have an enormous influence on the Church and its future because many of its clergy are trained there. It could be said that it is in these institutions that ministers are either made or marred – either equipped and

inspired – or unequipped and influenced in unhelpful directions – or quite frankly, ruined. I know that’s a generalisation but sadly it’s all too often true.

There are, I believe, at least two options or strategies open to us, that we need to embrace. They are not mutually exclusive – an “either/or” – they are a “both/and”.

The first is that we should seek to capture – to influence the theological colleges of the Anglican Communion for the biblical orthodox faith. This may be a long, slow and time consuming process. It would include debating with those who make the appointments – and insisting that orthodox, biblically sound and godly faculty are appointed. Strict criteria should be applied.

The other is to begin afresh and establish an Anglican theological college in an evangelical diocese, where such a venture would be solidly supported and nurtured in a sympathetic climate – where only those holding to the historic Faith would be appointed to the staff – where orthodox beliefs and standards are held and valued – and where there is solid accountability.

There’s no better way to influence the local church (God’s appointed agent for reaching the world with the Good News) and to influence and change the present culture of the wider church in our nation. We must endeavour to capture and establish sound theological education for the sake of the Gospel – for the sake of revealed Truth – for the honour of God. That’s the reason for my own commitment to re-vamping Bishopdale College. There’s a tremendous need in our land and especially for the future of our church.

Over the years we have been attracting to the diocese a significant number of people with the academic and practical qualifications to assist us in this task. (Per capita we have arguably the highest academically qualified clergy of any diocese) Also for some years we have been exporting clergy to other dioceses and even further abroad. A significant number of them have been locally trained. We are a missionary diocese. I understand that as part of the mandate when I was made your bishop. We may be small as a diocese, but our influence by God’s grace for the good of the Church has been noted.

Let’s copy apostolic strategy. When false teachers increase – multiply the number of capable, biblically orthodox teachers.

MAINTAINING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

Over the years, one of the things that I have observed as a bishop has been that when there is a shortage of clergy, the temptation has been to lower the standards of eligibility for the ordained ministry. All dioceses – all denominations – have their selection procedures but they don’t always maintain the standards laid down by the apostles or even the standards outlined in their own formularies. This, I believe, is something of a scandal.

Let’s do what we can, in our own small way, to encourage and follow apostolic strategy and to maintain apostolic standards. I believe our church will be in a far healthier condition and also be in a position to impact the world for good and for the honour of its Creator.

Kia kaha!
May God give us the grace and the courage to act.

* * * * *

A small group has been working hard to bring to this synod for it to consider the establishing of Bishopdale College as a Theological College. This is motion number eight in your papers. I would ask you to listen carefully to those who will speak now – keeping in mind all that I said in yesterday’s sermon and also this morning.

1. Archdeacon Richard Ellena – “A vision for Theological Training”
2. Rev Mark Chamberlain – “Ministry Formation”
3. Mr Ian Pask - “The Financial Ramifications”
4. Rev Dr Canon Peter Carrell – “The future of Bishopdale College in the New Zealand context”.
5. Rev Dr Andrew Burgess “The Benefits of Theological Education for our Leaders”

× × × × ×

APPENDICES

1. A Vision for Theological Education. Archdeacon Richard Ellena- Vicar of Blenheim

I want to take a few moments to cast a vision.

It’s a vision that has been sitting on Bishop’s Derek’s heart for some years now and I believe that it is time to take this vision seriously.

- Imagine what it would be like to see young men and women enthusiastic for ministry and passionate about serving God within their generational culture.
- Imagine a school of theology that offers the very best of evangelical scholarship combined with ministry internship and leadership development.
- Imagine a College that begins each day with prayer – really praying for one another – a place where people really feel as though they are being ministered to – not just taught!
- Imagine young people (and not-so-young people) falling over themselves to gain admission to such a School / College.
- Imagine the Anglican Church in New Zealand when these leaders are released to serve – both within and beyond the Diocese.
- Just imagine....

Well we’ve gone beyond imagining.

We believe that there is a desperate need within the Anglican Church in New Zealand, for theologically literate leaders; men and women who are committed to evangelical orthodoxy and who have been trained and equipped to lead.

This vision has captured my imagination because it is so different to the training I experienced. Mine involved a total conversion to liberal ideology and theology.

I sailed with the Peace Squadron to block the passage of a nuclear powered submarine – and passed ethics.

I went under the bridges with the street kids and passed Christology.
I learned to speak Maori and passed Church History.
I didn't go to Pastoral lectures 'cos they were too boring, and passed Pastoral Care because at least I was honest about how I felt!
I strongly asserted my right to freedom of expression in Old Testament Studies and, instead of an essay on Isaiah, I wrote a musical composition based on Isaiah 40 (no words – just music) and arranged it for Brass Band. Passed that paper (with an 'A' for that assignment).

Contextual theology was the buzzword – you know, change your understanding of God to suit the situation you find yourself in. Systematic theology had long been dismissed by my lecturers as the arrogant ramblings of white, middle-class males. 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' was the set text and I lapped it up and so, by the end of my training for the Anglican Ministry in New Zealand, Aotearoa and Polynesia, I was a convert to the liberal cause and sent off into the mission field of Timaru.

I won't go into any more detail, but two years later – six months into my first parish - I hit the wall emotionally, physically and spiritually. Our marriage was in pieces and this wonderful liberal faith had no answer. It was barren and empty. And it was in this desert time that we experienced the overwhelming love of Christ. It was a 180 degree turn back into the heart of God and into his word. We have never looked back.

I often wonder how different things might have been if my theological education and ministry training had been even a pale reflection of the dream that we are placing before this Synod.

There is a crisis within the church in New Zealand, and we believe that it is a crisis of leadership. It is a deep concern that is shared by many other church leaders throughout the country and evidenced by a recent meeting called by 'Anglican Mainstream.'

There are vacant parishes up and down the country, desperate to find good, sound, biblical leaders who have a passion for the church.

There is an urgent need for theologically literate leadership for the future of the church and yet there is no evangelical alternative in Anglican Theological education in New Zealand.

Here, in this Diocese we have the human resources and the spirituality to respond to this situation. It will be a challenge, but one that we need to take if we are to see new leaders identified and an environment created where people are inspired and equipped for ministry.

This is an investment we are making for the future of our parishes, as much as for the wider church.

Bill Hybels, the Senior Pastor of WillowCreek Community Church has a pet phrase; 'as the leader, so the church.'

We are planning now, for the health of tomorrow's church.

A motion has been placed before Synod that seeks to develop Bishopdale College into a College of Theology.

In a few moments four others are going to present some of the detail of this vision, but this will be a College with a campus; a college that offers, in partnership with a recognized and respected provider, a full degree program.

This is an exciting moment in the life of the Nelson Diocese, but the reality is we're not doing anything new. To quote from the Nelson Narrative – the book that chronicles our Diocesan history; (and please forgive the exclusive nature of the language) *'Bishopdale Theological College came into existence as a result of the energy and vision of Bishop Suter. Like his predecessor, he realized that only an adequate staff of well-trained men could bring the message of the Kingdom to the remote parts of the scattered Diocese.'*

The College dates back to the year 1868 and it lasted as an effective force for 39 years. Bishop Sadlier in 1913 endeavoured to revive its embers but the first world war robbed him of his men, and the attempt proved abortive.

The teaching at Bishopdale College was excellent, for the tutors were all men of first-rate scholarship, and it is interesting to note that in 1886, fourteen years after the system of Examinations for Holy Orders had been in existence, nine of the 20 men in New Zealand who had completed the L.Th. diploma and were entitled to wear the hood, were men who had been trained under Bishop Suter at Bishopdale, and a large proportion had gained a first or second-class pass.'

It's an interesting story to read, but one little passage describing the subsequent closure of the College at the outbreak of war, jumped out at me. Page 200; *The (revived) College lasted from May 1913 to August 1914. Possibly with the establishment of a University in Nelson in years to come the College might be revived. But this is in the realm of prophecy.'*

I believe very strongly that we as a Diocese need to see this prophecy fulfilled, this dream realised for the future of the church. I have two young people in my parish, both in their early twenties, who have a passion to serve God in His church. They need – we need Bishopdale College.

× × × × ×

2. Bishopdale College – Ministry Formation Rev Mark Chamberlain – Bishop's
Chaplain for Church Development

There is a signboard outside the beauty therapist near the Anglican Centre that says 'Change your image change your life.' We live in a superficial age that equates a person's identity with their external appearance. Somewhere along the way we have stopped talking about internal qualities like character and virtues and started to believe that our identity is on the outside. Somehow it doesn't matter if a physics teacher or a politician or a manager has deep character flaws, is greedy or selfish and has a personal life that is falling apart it is still acceptable as long as they function professionally. A disjunction exists between the internal and external.

However the Christian faith is both more realistic and more demanding than this model of personhood. The Bible itself draws a strong connection between the internal and external dimensions of life. It demands coherence between saying and doing, thinking

and speaking, believing and behaving. And these demands are particularly relevant for Christian leaders. We require of our ministers the highest levels of integrity and consistency.

And so it is that Theological Education is not just about Biblical Studies or Ethics or Greek or Church History or Pastoral Care. As important as the specific disciplines of Theology are they must be undergirded by the great commandment to love God and neighbour and pursue holiness of life. You cannot learn theology if at the same time fail to attend to issues of personal growth in faith, character and holiness.

Therefore part of our vision for a renewed Bishopdale College teaching evangelical theology in an Anglican context involves spiritual formation and shaping leaders at the deepest levels of attitudes, habits and character. Learning will take place in a context of prayer and worship. Spiritual disciplines will be fostered. Practical ministry skills will be learned. This positive spiritual tone will enhance all aspects of learning. Our dream is not just about academic qualifications. It is about shaping a new generation for transformational leadership in a challenging new world.

In the last few months I've spent some time reading the historical documents of the Diocese and I've come to realise that our vision for Bishopdale College is fully consistent with the original vision of Bishop Suter when the College began in 1868. At that time there was a tremendous need for clergy and this desperate situation provided the motivation necessary. The following year he had enlarged his residence at Bishopdale, partly by using his own savings, and was tutoring three students. From time to time he took them on his travels around the Diocese and taught them and disciplined them along the way. He seems to have deliberately followed the pattern of Jesus in seeking to shape the character of these young men through his own personal influence.

He believed that ordinands who were trained in the same Diocese where they would exercise their ministry would be more loyal and effective for the work of the gospel. We would admire his methodology today because it was rooted locally and was highly relational; incarnational learning at its best. History bears witness that Bishop Suter successfully engendered loyalty and commitment among his students.

Bishopdale College in its original form operated from 1868 until 1908; a total of 41 years. Bishop Sadlier attempted to re-establish it in May 1913 but World War 1 robbed him of tutors and it closed in August the following year. In recent decades it was re-established in a different form as the training arm of our Diocese.

Today our renewed vision resonates strongly with the original vision of Bishop Suter. We too are faced with a daunting challenge. The mission field is vast and ready for harvest; we too desperately need well trained clergy; we too value leadership training and realise the importance of a positive, evangelical, theological education that also attends to spiritual growth, ministerial growth and character growth. Our vision is nothing less than producing graduates who can lead our churches in our rapidly changing world with faithfulness, courage and effectiveness.

× × × × ×

3. Theological Training and the Financial Ramifications Ian Pask – Diocesan Secretary

As we visualise a Bishopdale College transitioning from its present form to that of a college with a campus, what are the options?

The first campus of Bishopdale College was located at Bishopdale – the residence for the bishops of Nelson. The remnant of that College, The Chapel of the Holy Evangelists stands there today largely unused. The sentimental option would be to build a campus around that Chapel. That dream is a \$2.5 to \$3million dream, all of which would have to be new money. It is unlikely in the short term to be a starter.

Indeed to start, we really need to look at where we are as we embark on a challenging and exciting journey. It is unlikely that a ‘standalone’ campus could be viable. We therefore would have to look at the options of co-locating the campus with our existing resources. This presents a number of options.

There are four parishes in the diocese, which in my view have the necessary land and/or buildings in which exploration of co-location would be possible. They would be Blenheim, Richmond, Stoke or All Saints. For various reasons, I think in reality, the choice narrows down to Richmond or All Saints.

Richmond at present are embarking on a redevelopment programme for their hall and teaching facilities. This redevelopment offers an opportunity of incorporating the needs of a College and/or Anglican Centre into the project. On the other hand, All Saints have an existing building, namely their vicarage which could become available in 2008 or earlier when current leasing arrangements expire. That parish is also embarking on a redevelopment program which may allow for some synergies to occur as well. Should this Synod later approve of the establishment of an interim Board to explore this proposition further, that Board will have some interesting challenges in weighting the respective advantages of each site.

The operating of an expanded Bishopdale College will require an Operating Budget in the region of \$180,000-\$200,000 per year depending on what choices are made and what savings are possible by resource sharing.

So, how is this to be funded?

We have by way of a new and generous benefaction a new source of income available to us. This should produce additional income to the diocese of \$40,000 per year at the present distribution rate. There are a number of budget items within our existing budgets which would have to be reprioritised. Parts of the present Bishopdale College budget would also be reallocated. This still leaves a gap which will have to be funded in new ways. There will be student fees that could cover part of that sum, say \$5,000 per year, per student – so 10 students would produce \$50,000.

Some of the required funds could come from subscriptions. That is, people who are supporting the redevelopment by way of either annual contributions or by a gift to a capital foundation which could generate income.

This idea of an expanded Bishopdale College does excite some people. To date we have already received from sources outside the diocese contributions of \$102,000 which can be used to form the basis of the capital fund. It is also possible in the future that funding may be available from the St John's Trusts in Auckland to support students at our College. The Trustees have historically given the scholarship monies to the College to administer and are currently reviewing that practice. They are talking about giving each diocese those funds for the diocese to allocate to students who can then use those funds at any college.

Should the decision be made to proceed, the interim Board will have some challenging work to do, but it is possible. If there is a will, there is a way. Some new money will have to be found, but if this is the right thing to do, that is merely a challenge to be met.

× × × × ×

4. Theological Education in Aotearoa NZ and Bishopdale College in the Diocese of Nelson

Canon Dr Peter Carrell – Director of Bishopdale College.

(The following are the words from each slide in Peter's Powerpoint presentation).

Four degree providers [Slide Two]

Three major denominational colleges

No Anglican evangelical degree-level college

England, Canada, USA, Australia [Slide Three]

- All have one or more Anglican evangelical theological colleges alongside colleges of different theological character
- Aotearoa NZ does not (yet) have such a college
- Evangelical Anglican leaders outside our diocese are very keen that Aot NZ has an Anglican evangelical theological college

Why an 'evangelical' college? [Slide Four]

- Non-evangelical colleges, for one reason or another, tend to treat evangelicalism disrespectfully
- An 'evangelical' college offers a supportive environment rather than a conflictive environment for evangelicals to study in
- An evangelical paradigm for theological study inculcates 'belief' > 'doubt'

Degree providers [Slide Five]

- University of Otago
- University of Auckland
- Bible College of New Zealand
- Carey College (Baptist)

- [Also possible degree provision through Australian colleges of divinity/theology]

Degree providers – notes [Slide Six]

- No degree provider offers a specifically ‘Anglican evangelical’ ethos
- University of Otago, Bible College, and Carey College offer degree study by ‘distance methods’
- Carey College is Baptist; Bible College is non-denominational

Denominational Colleges [Slide Seven]

- St John’s College, Auckland (Anglican/Methodist)
- Knox School of Ministry, Dunedin (Presbyterian)
- Carey College, Auckland (Baptist)

St John’s College (1) [Slide Eight]

- Significant changes underway at SJC – not well known by our church
- Theological degree NOT taught at the College (accessed through University of Auckland)
- From 2006 SJC teaching focus on ‘ministry formation; training for ministry practice’ – probably at certificate / diploma level

St John’s College (2) [Slide Nine]

- Also ‘in the air’ is a proposal re SJC Trust Board funding of students which could see dioceses have greater choice re funding students at other colleges
- SJC is not ‘evangelical’ in character, and is unlikely to ever be so since it seeks to be a college for the whole breadth of our church
- Nevertheless SJC offers possibilities for Bishopdale College students to be resident at SJC for (a) ministry formation (b) Master-level degrees

Bishopdale College and other colleges [Slide Ten]

- SJC is Anglican but not evangelical
- Carey is evangelical but not Anglican
- BCNZ is evangelical but not Anglican
- Otago and Auckland Universities are neither Anglican nor evangelical

Bishopdale College and other colleges [Slide Eleven]

- Bishopdale College would offer something not currently offered by the other colleges –complementary to them rather than in competition with them!

Why ‘in Nelson’? [Slide Twelve]

- Yes, it would be ideal to have an Anglican evangelical college in a university city
- Yes, the foundation of an Anglican evangelical college requires a supportive diocese and 100% backing of the local bishop
- Yes, only Nelson currently offers Diocesan support/Episcopal backing

- Yes, there is a BCNZ Centre in Nelson, but our proposal is coherent with this ...

Speaking of BCNZ Nelson Centre [Slide Thirteen]

- BCNZ Nelson Centre offers a helpful model for what Bishopdale College may become
- BCNZ Nelson Centre
 - Around 20 full-time diploma students
 - 1 full-time staff, 1 part-time, various contracted lecturers/tutors
 - Low-cost rental premises
 - Annual budget in region of \$150K

Is our proposal out of step with the wider church (1)? [Slide Fourteen]

- No!
- Every diocese and hui amorangi locally trains people for ordained ministry
- Diocese of Polynesia has a college in Suva
- Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa teaches theology through Taapapa and Whare Wananga apart from SJC

Is our proposal out of step with the wider church (2)? [Slide Fifteen]

- Dunedin: access to Otago, Knox
- Chch: Theology House, DOT Scheme
- Wgtn: consortium of theol. education
- Waikato: supports students at BCNZ
- Auckland: does not send all ordinands to train through SJC
- Nelson: we already train some ordinands locally

Nelson and other dioceses [Slide Sixteen]

- We would be doing something a little different to any other pakeha diocese
- But not too much different
- Our proposal has a lot in common with theological education within Tikanga Maori:
 - Some train within Te Pihopatanga “colleges”
 - Some train through SJC
- We would continue to request funds for our lay ministry education work etc, in line with other dioceses

Summing up our proposal [Slide Seventeen]

- Aotearoa NZ theological education survey means the following matters are Strong Possibilities
 - Provision of a theological degree in association with an established NZQA degree-provider
 - Running a small college on a lean budget
- Interim Board will explore what is actually possible re degree-provider, finance, site etc – nothing is yet sorted out!

5. The Benefits of Theological Education for our Leaders

Rev Dr Andrew Burgess –
Vicar of All Saints.

Peter has already helped us to become aware of the ever-changing landscape of theological education in New Zealand. ‘Theological education’ comes in many packages and with a great variety of content.

What is it that we dream of seeing actually happening when we envision the Bishopdale College of the future?

The centre of theology is God. The word itself means ‘God-talk’, or ‘God-study’, and that implies that God-stuff is what students of theology spend time being trained up in. But what does that mean? If we are to talk about God, we must begin in the place where God is to be found. In fact, we don’t so much start in the place where *we* find God, we begin in the place where *God* encounters us, the place where God invades our space, and where God overturns everything we thought we already knew. We begin with Jesus Christ the Son of God who is the ‘Son of Man’ – the truth and reality of God invading our human space and throwing everything into question, ‘the Word become flesh’.

To study theology is to be brought into deep connection with this truth: the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God to make human beings new, and the power of God to create this new community we call the Church. It is the power of God, because it is power in God’s hands.

When we dream of Bishopdale College, we dream of a community of study and worship in which a passion for the Gospel is fed and nurtured. We dream of theology that is a part of the life of the Church, not another subject in a University – even if the standards are to be as high as those of a University.

When the Gospel is at the centre two things follow – we learn to read our faith, and especially the Bible, and we learn to read our world. Gospel theology does not produce narrow leaders who know nothing of our world, or of what happens in it. The Gospel tells us of the God who passionately loves us and our world and whose power to save leaves no stone unturned and no part of our world untouched. Those who are trained in listening to the voice of God in the discipline of theology are thus trained to ‘read the world’ and understand what is happening in it. They are equipped to identify the ways of the world and to march in step with God’s critique and God’s love.

To be trained as a theologian is therefore to be trained as a leader in God’s church – a theological education does not by itself create a great pastoral leader, more is required than that, but a theological education contributes enormously to ability to lead in God’s church. Many versions of the Gospel are offered to us, in the many seminars and training sessions that pass through our cities, in the variety of television ‘churches’ and programmes. We live in an age that worships ‘success’, and we are constantly offered this or that form of preaching or of church structure, or even this or that prayer, as the key to ‘success’ in the church. We must have leaders who are equipped to tell the wheat from the chaff, who will lead churches deeper into the ways of God and not simply into this or that technique.

What is it then that God would have us do in the future of Bishopdale College?
We believe that we can offer, here on the ground in our own Diocese a quality degree in theology, or a quality diploma in some cases, that is evangelical and Anglican, and that contributes to the formation of leaders who are passionate about the gospel and passionate about the Church of Jesus Christ.

What we do will necessarily be small – very small at first – but that can be seen as a great gift rather than as a weakness. A small College with a very clear focus and a limited range of subjects has the potential to invest powerfully in students and to see discipling take place hand in hand with study. We do not need leaders who are at the forefront of every new theological trend, but we do need leaders who understand the Gospel as the story of God’s covenant love revealed in Jesus Christ. A narrower range of subjects will help produce graduates who have an excellent grounding in the fundamentals of theology.

We believe that the development of Bishopdale College as an evangelical Anglican theological college is a strategic move with enormous potential to serve this Diocese and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia. We pray that God would guide us into the future and that we may be able to see God’s provision for that future in every way.
Amen.