

Archbishop H.K. Mowl, “President’s Address to Synod,” *Summary of Proceedings of the General Synod of the Dioceses in Australia and Tasmania. Session 1950, Sydney, 1951, pp. 19-22*¹

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO SYNOD.

Most Reverend, Right Reverend, Reverend Brethren and Brethren of the Laity,

I bid you welcome to the 1950 Session of the General Synod of the Dioceses of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania.

Our General Synod this year will be for ever memorable by the presence with us, for the first time in history, of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England. His coming has been an occasion for men of goodwill throughout Australia to demonstrate their sense of the value of the things of the Spirit. His addresses have been an inspiration to all who have heard them. He has radiated friendship and goodwill wherever he has gone. This has made his tour a triumphant success. We are grateful to Mrs. Fisher for accompanying him. Her outstanding gifts as a speaker, her charm and wisdom, have created a deep impression, especially on the women of the Church whom she has addressed. Their presence among us has helped all to realise more vividly the reality of the historic Church and the world wide fellowship to which we belong as members of the Anglican Communion. The visit is another reminder of the ease and speed of modern communications. It is a tribute also to Australia's responsibilities and

¹ Cited in *Anglicanism in Australia. A History* (B.N. Kaye ed; Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002) p. 213 & 338 n. 59.

importance in the world of today which we share uniquely as members of this ancient Church of the British people.

Since our last session we have lost our former Primate, the Most Rev. Henry Frewen Le Fanu, Archbishop of Perth and Metropolitan of the Province of Western Australia. With his long experience of the Church in Australia he has presided with knowledge and ability over two sessions of our General Synod. We also record the death of the Right Reverend John Oliver Feetham, the Bishop of North Queensland. His 34 years as Bishop had made him, at the time of his death, one of the senior Diocesan Bishops of the whole Anglican Communion. His vivid personality and devoted service will be long remembered. The Right Reverend Charles Herbert Murray, the Bishop of Riverina, has only recently been taken from us under tragic circumstances. In his short episcopate he had made an increasingly valuable contribution to the Australian Church, and great expectations for his future had been aroused. We also mourn the loss of the Right Reverend William Wynn Jones, Bishop of Central Tanganyika, who, during a brief episcopate, had been made a Fellow of the Australian College of Theology, and had won the confidence and affection of Africans, missionaries and Government officials alike.

The Right Reverend William Elsey, the Bishop of Kalgoorlie, who, as senior Australian Bishop, presided at the election of a Primate in 1947, has retired after an episcopate of 31 years, as also the Right Reverend Stephen Harris Davies, the Bishop of Carpentaria, after an arduous episcopate of 28 years in his large and exacting diocese. The Right Reverend Melville Charles James, the first Bishop of St. Arnaud, has also resigned after 74

years as Diocesan Bishop. He was responsible for the establishment of that Diocese and faced its difficult problems with courage and perseverance. He did so in a manner which won the esteem of all. The Right Reverend Fortescue Leo Ash, the Bishop of [20] Rockhampton, has also resigned after an episcopate of 19 years, in order to become the Commissioner for the Australian Board of Missions' Centenary Appeal, through which £54,000 has already been raised.

We welcome in their places the Most Reverend R.W.H. Moline, Archbishop of Perth; the Right Reverend Wilfrid Bernard Belcher, Bishop of North Queensland; the Right Reverend James Alan George Housden, Bishop of Rockhampton; and the Right Reverend Christopher Evelyn Storrs, Bishop of Grafton, who, subsequent to the last General Synod, was elected to the Bishopric; the Right Reverend John David McKie, M.A., was appointed Bishop of Geelong, and the Right Reverend Geoffrey David Hand, M.A., as Bishop Coadjutor of New Guinea.

We welcome also the Rev. Cecil Emerson Barron Muschamp, Bishop-elect of Kalgoorlie, and the Ven. Hector Gordon Robinson, Bishop elect of Riverina.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has appointed the Ven. Alfred Stanway, of Melbourne, and Nairobi, as Bishop of Central Tanganyika.

Amongst the clerical and lay representatives who have passed on are Archdeacon S.M. Johnstone, of Sydney, the Hon. Secretary of the General Synod Standing Committee; Canon Langford Smith and Mr. W.J.G. Mann,

of Sydney, members of the General Synod for twenty five years and thirty-three years respectively, both taking a prominent part in its debates, and in the Constitutional Committee; the Ven. Archdeacon S.J. Houison, of Adelaide; the Rev. L.J. Hobbs, of Brisbane; the Hon. F.A. Cooper, of Brisbane, Lieut.-Governor of Queensland and Chairman of the Church Army in Australia; Mr. G.E. Gall, of Brisbane; Sir John Peden, of Sydney, the Architect of the Draft Constitution; Captain Pike, of Grafton; Mr. Ransome T. Wyatt, of Goulburn; Canons Baglin and Dewhurst, of Melbourne; Dr. E. Griffith, of Melbourne; Canon Corvan, of Tasmania. To the relatives of all we extend our sincere sympathy.

We shall miss from our Synod, Archdeacon R.P. Hewgill, Archdeacon A.E. Weston and the Rev. Frank Weston, all of Adelaide; Archdeacon N.D. Herring, of Bendigo; Archdeacon Morgan Paylor, of Ballarat; Canon C.A. Dickens, of Armidale; the Rev. S.C. O'B. Ball, of Bathurst; Canon Perry, of Brisbane; Archdeacon West, of Goulburn; Dean Langley, of Melbourne; Dean Moore and Archdeacon Parry, of Perth; Canon Edwards, of Canberra; and Mr. J.O. Fisher, of Perth.

For the first time for many years Bishop G.H. Cranswick, formerly Bishop of Gippsland and Chairman of the A.B.M., and Archdeacon H. A. Woodd, of Newcastle, the son of one of Bishop Broughton's Clergy, will also be absent.

It is fitting that I should make reference to our sense of loss at the absence in the flesh of those who have served with us in years gone by, for,

in the difficulties and changes of the world of to-day, happy personal relationships are the foundation of effective action and spiritual advance.

Since the last session of General Synod, another Lambeth Conference has been held, the World Council of Churches has been [21] inaugurated at Amsterdam, and Church Union in South India has been consummated. Communism has spread its tentacles throughout Asia — especially in China — and a general feeling of tension exists in the countries of the Pacific. These conditions add to the significance of the Bangkok, Colombo and Suva Conferences recently held. Australia, as air travel defeats time and space, has gained immense significance in both imperial and world affairs — as an advertisement in the Cambridge Review puts it. A unique opportunity has been given to us, as representatives of the British way of life and of the Christian faith, to influence 1160 million of the world's population living in close proximity to our shores. The fact that most Australians do not appreciate the significance of this and do not find it easy to understand the viewpoint of those who have been brought so close to us by air communication, makes the responsibility of the Church all the greater. I could wish that our usual Church problems could be relegated to a subordinate place and that we might arouse ourselves and, through us, the members of the Church, to the challenge of these days for our witness and service to the world around us. We need to influence public opinion in Australia and call for action while the way is open to us. There are many avenues of Christian service in these Pacific lands.

The younger Churches of East Asia, at Bangkok, asked for our fellowship in the things of the Spirit. They long to be free to control their

own affairs. When they realise that we are offering friendship and not wishing for domination, they are eager to receive such friendship. Australia has so much to give. If we give generously our horizon will be broadened and our own economy strengthened. We cannot, however, take our part in a world-wide fellowship of Churches or in the larger life of the nations without our own standards and way of life being subjected to the closest scrutiny.

We are thankful for the continued material prosperity of Australia, but we have to face the grim fact that we are allowing our nation's life to be built on an insecure foundation, such as on the assumption that a man need not do a full day's work to receive a full day's pay. A Christian cannot tolerate such an assumption. To express his service to God through the work he does requires him to do it with all his might. There is a deplorable lack of Christian principle manifested in the lives of so many of our fellow-countrymen. Behind it is a long story of distrust of man in his fellow-man and a determination to see that he himself is not exploited at the expense of others. In such an atmosphere selfishness and laziness develop quickly. We, as a Church, have a solemn responsibility to make all men see that the Christian life can be lived both by individuals and by a communion. We look forward to the visit of the Archbishop of York next October and November, to speak on the relevance of the Christian faith to modern life, and to the mission which Bishop Stephen Neill will hold next April and May in our Universities, both of which are part of an Australian-wide campaign of Christian witness. We cannot bear witness effectively to Christ unless our own devotion to Him is evident in our personal actions. Our ministrations lose their power unless through them, He is revealed. Around

us in Australia there are 70% of the population who are completely out of touch with any of the Churches. The call comes to us all to face the task of bringing them into the life of the Church and [22] to win them for Christ and His service, showing by our own attitude and actions the reality of our Christian faith.

May our Synod be long remembered for its largeness of outlook, for an increasing manifestation of brotherliness amongst its members and for hands of friendship stretched out to help other branches of the Church. Above all and through all may we have an abiding sense of the Presence of the Living Christ in our midst, “Whose we are and Whom we serve.”

I commend you and your deliberations to the blessing and guidance of God.