

**Archbishop P.N.W. Strong, “Presidential Address,” *Proceedings of the Second General Synod 1966. Official Report*, Sydney, 1966, pp. 14-35<sup>1</sup>**

## **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS<sup>2</sup>**

My Brethren of the Episcopate, of the Clergy and of the Laity; I bid you welcome to the Second Session of the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia.

The responsibility of presiding over the opening stages of this General Synod has fallen upon me, and I beg in advance for your indulgence and co-operation, for I know myself to be inadequately equipped for such a role; and I would express my gratitude for the prayerful help and understanding that I have received from many directions since I was called upon so suddenly and unexpectedly to accept the responsibilities of being Acting Primate, and my gratitude to Archdeacon Gordon Begbie, the Honorary General Secretary of the General Synod, to Archdeacon G. R. Delbridge, formerly chaplain to the Primate, who so kindly consented to be honorary senior chaplain to the Acting Primate, and to the staff of the primatial and diocesan office for their unfailing courtesy and invaluable help: and here too I would on your behalf express to the Archbishop and staff of the Diocese of Sydney our grateful thanks for allowing us to meet here and for all the admirable arrangements they have made for our meeting and for the hospitality and provision for General Synod members from other Dioceses. I trust that we shall work together in this General Synod for the Glory of God and the good of His Church in our nation. We must together make this

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in *Anglicanism in Australia. A History* (B.N. Kaye ed.; Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002) p. 124 & 327 n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Presidential Address was delivered on Tuesday, 20 September, 1966 [Ed.].

General Synod an effective agent and medium for the triumph of the cause of Christ in this our generation.

This is only the second General Synod of our autonomous National Church under its new constitution, and in many ways it should prove to be a more important, momentous and historic one than the First General Synod. The First Session was, of [15] necessity, largely occupied with drawing up the machinery to make the Constitution work. Though we have not yet the machinery for the election of a Primate, and this is one of the deficiencies in our Constitution that this General Synod will be asked to make good, yet we have the machinery for the general working of our Constitution. It is our task to make it continue to work, and to work in such a way that the Church can better fulfil its total mission to our nation and to the world.

The Constitution welded the Church in Australia which had hitherto consisted of some 25 autonomous dioceses into one National Church. This it is today, at any rate in theory; and indeed we can thank God that in the last four years this has become more real. But it is up to us and succeeding generations to live as one Church. We can only do so if we can maintain a spirit of Christian charity, which is the foundation of harmony, unity and peace.

The new Constitution which bound our dioceses together into one autonomous whole is not unlike marriage. The success of marriage depends not only on the initial act of union, but on a lifetime of successive decisions in which two separate minds and wills must continually find their unity by mutual giving and receiving. In the case of our National Church it is the

minds and wills of our 25 dioceses, making together in General Synod decisions which affect the life of each and all, and finding a growing unity through mutual giving and receiving. In the forming of these decisions there is a great need for patience as well as enthusiasm.

We have been told by many that this will be a difficult General Synod. No doubt it will be. There are many major issues coming before us, such as the Primacy, Prayer Book Revision, Ecumenical Affairs, and Church unity. Matters concerning M.R.I. and a proposed new Diocese of the Northern Territory; new constitutions for the Australian Board of Missions, the Australian College of Theology and for the Diocese of New Guinea; and provision for Long Service Leave for Clergy. Some of these may well prove to be controversial issues in which there may be, and almost certainly will be, divided opinions. My hope and prayer is — and I am sure yours is too — that whilst every viewpoint on all these questions must be allowed full rein of expression, we shall be able to receive [16] each one (however much it differs from our own) in a spirit of charity and understanding; and that by taking counsel together and sharing with complete frankness and sincerity our differing opinions, we may be brought through the Holy Spirit of unity to a common mind; and that these issues will not in the end prove to be divisive, but to weld us more and more into one. Let us have faith to believe that this will be so, and let us determine that it shall be so.

It is not too idealistic to expect it when we think of the wonderful things that God has been doing before our eyes in the last two decades in the wider Church, as well as in our own branch of the Church in this land. When, for instance, we think of the changed climate that has come about in

the relationship of our own Church to the Roman Catholic Church; the Orthodox Churches, as well as the non-Episcopal Churches — and with the closer relationships and deeper understanding that has been developing between the dioceses of our own Australian Church. Surely we have been privileged to see in a quite miraculous way in our own generation an answer not only to our Blessed Lord's own Prayer for unity, but to the prayers of our own Church at every celebration of the Holy Communion, as well as at other times, that He would “inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord”; and that He would grant that all they that do confess His Holy Name may agree in the truth of His Holy Word and live in unity and godly love.

We are still a long way from that complete agreement of which the Prayer for the Church speaks, but at least we are seeing an answer to prayer as differing Christian bodies and our own (and our own within itself), are learning more and more to live and work together in unity and godly love. May we not say anything or do anything at this General Synod to mar this or to set it back, whether within our own ranks or in relationship with other Christian bodies.

My first plea then is that we shall seek to advance together in unity. And I would ask you to bear in mind: first, — that the unity of the Church is a unity with, and a reflection of, the unity within God Himself. Our Lord prayed for His people, “That they may be one, as Thou Father art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may [17] believe that Thou hast sent me.” It is then we can conclude, that UNITY more than anything else will convince the world that Christ is indeed the Son of God.

Then secondly: the unity for which our Lord prayed is not confined to the Church alone, or to Christian people. It embraces the whole of human life. It is a fulfilment in Christ of all that God has created man to be. It includes this all-embracing thought as expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a sermon preached at Geneva in March this year, on “The reconciliation of races”. “No aspect,” he said, “of the common life or of the culture of Christian people, is outside the work of unity.”

Then thirdly: the Second Vatican Council in Constitution *Dei Ecclesia*, described the Church as the Sacrament or instrumental sign of intimate union with God and of unity for the whole human race. We surely then are committed to the quest for that unity which is established in Christ, but which is still imperfectly manifested in the Church and in humanity at large.

Fourthly: the primary task of the Church is the proclamation of the Gospel which is the truth concerning God and man as revealed in Jesus Christ. Witness to the truth, however, calls for a commitment to unity; for the spirit of truth is also the spirit of unity. Truth and love provide the standards by which such endeavours are to be judged.

What better advice and exhortation, my brethren, could we have as we gather together in General Synod, than the noble, exhilarating, stirring and stimulating words of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians, written when he was a prisoner in bonds in Rome. “I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all

lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” The Apostle Paul did not allow captivity, restriction, restraint, immobility — which must have been such a great trial to such an active and ardent man — to cloud his spiritual vision, to dull his sense of mission, depress his courage, narrow his insight, or weaken his faith — [18] because he was not merely a prisoner of the Roman soldiers, but first and foremost the prisoner of the Lord, wholly surrendered to him in captivity of every thought to the obedience of Christ as Christ's bond slave. Would that we could see more of that spirit in the Church, and in Christians generally today, as we face so many difficulties and uncertainties and trials and tribulations — so that wholly given to Christ, nothing! nothing at all, will daunt the heart, dim the faith, or quench the fire of love and of the spirit. So that “neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

His words, “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” apply to all Christians, clergy and laity alike, as well as to those who have been called to special vocations and work. We can well feel that they apply to us, who by virtue of our office or by election or appointment, are called to be members of this General Synod. S. Paul suggests a dedication at least as complete as that which is demanded by a man's trade or profession. May we so respond to His special call to us in this General Synod.

May we too keep before us the sevenfold bond for the fellowship of the Christian family which he gives us. LOWLINESS — that is a modest estimate of ourselves. MEEKNESS — that is humility in action, the opposite of arrogance and insistence on our rights. LONGSUFFERING — that is reluctance to judge other people, the opposite of the censorious spirit. FORBEARANCE — that is the same quality in action. LOVE — the true motive for forbearance. TOLERATION may be the result of mere slackness or lack of strong conviction; but true tolerance is the outcome of love. UNITY IN THE BOND OF PEACE — not as something already assured, but as something that needs effort; it must be maintained and kept by earnest striving: the dominant note in his words is unity. This I feel too should be the dominant mark of our General Synod and the endeavour of all who are privileged to belong to it.

The purpose of a Synod is not to divide, but to unite. It was so from the very earliest days when the Apostolic Church was in danger of splitting into a Jewish and Gentile section over [19] the circumcision question. It was at the Council of Jerusalem as we read in the fifteenth Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the first Church Synod we might say ever to meet, that out of divergence of opinions a wonderful unity was achieved. Saint James, who presided over the Synod, did not command the unity of a lot of 'yes men'. There were present the strong personalities of Peter and Paul who entered the Synod with opposing views — but because they knew that their calling was to endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, they found that unity.

Our vocation as synodsmen is in itself a bond of unity. We are men of different experiences, of different ideas; but to S. Paul unity was not static, it was not a mechanical sameness. It comprehended all the rich diversity of the spirit and the rich experiences of the work of the spirit in human lives; and it brought all these into a harmony of peace and goodwill and mutual understanding.

The collective vocation of a General Synod is a very great one, and in so far as it collectively fulfils that vocation, it can have far-reaching effects for good upon the Church and nation. The Church in England never sank to so low a level in spiritual life and witness as in the 133 years when the Convocations of Canterbury and York (the Synods of the English Church) were suppressed by Parliament. Wakeman in his 'History of the Church of England', speaking of the Convocations as the legislative bodies of the Church said that for eleven centuries since the days of Archbishop Theodore, the synodical action of the English Church had been regular and efficient; in great crises of her history it had been singularly wise. Speaking of the effects of the suppression he said, "As a result of the suppression, not only the distinctive interests of the Church but the general interests of religion suffered at a time when expansion was taking place on all sides; when the responsibility for the moral and religious welfare of millions was increasing beyond all experience; when it was specially incumbent in civilised, to say nothing of Christian Governments, to safeguard the religious and moral interests of their subjects in their eternal warfare with the demon of greed; to protect the child-like races of the world under their influence from Western vice and Western brutality; when the development of mining industries at home was beginning to bring all the moral and social problems



which [20] haunted teeming populations — the most powerful religious body in England was paralysed by the destruction of her accustomed modes of action.” Except for the out-dated term “child-like races”, Wakeman might almost have been describing this present time. Incidentally, we must remember it was during that period that the Church of England lost the followers of John Wesley, and Methodism, as much the fault of the Church of England as of Wesley and his followers, and some Congregational sects, were separated from the English Church because there were no Synods to endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace — and so no one cared.

It is significant that in that period the revival of synodical government began here in the southern hemisphere, through the initiative of the first Bishop and Apostle of New Zealand, Bishop George Augustus Selwyn. Through his influence with the five Australian bishops of that time, it soon spread to Australia. One hundred years ago it was he who saw that synods should consist not only of Bishops and Clergy, but of the Laity also. He said that he believed that synodical government had been suspended because of the forgetfulness of the spiritual character of such assemblies. May it not be so with this generation? We have synods — but synods themselves may turn inwards and so be paralysed to make the Church effective in bringing its influence to bear powerfully on the world. This will only be so if the synods forget that they are spiritual assemblies. It is even more significant that today in this centenary year of the beginning of synodical government in Australia the English Church is beginning to plan for the establishment in its different dioceses of full synodical government, such as we have known in Australia for many years.

But my brethren, though our first need may be indeed to deepen the unity in our own ranks, our endeavours at unity are not to be confined to this, nor to our own Anglican Communion. They must be more and more also on an ecumenical level. The call to Christian unity was never more insistent than it is now. Its need was never more essential as it faces a world divided by contradictory loyalties and ideologies. We say in the Creed, “I believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church”. The New Testament knows of only one Church. We know, however, that history has played havoc with this conception so far as reality is concerned.

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In a divided Church the Church of England pursued for many years its own special course combining Catholic and Reformation elements in a particular amalgam. It was a particular Church in a particular way, until the missionary expansion of recent centuries produced the world-wide fellowship of Anglican Churches, which we can call today the Anglican Communion. Thank God, through the World Council of Churches, there has been during the last half century a wonderful gathering together and united action of our Church and many other Churches, in a venture of co-operation towards greater unity. And now miraculously we have seen through the Vatican Council, a new quest for unity in the Roman Church, as well as a radical and forward-looking appraisal of the task of the Christian Church in modern times — and perhaps even more wonderful, a new appreciation and realisation of the Christian Churches and bodies separated from it.

All this stirring of the waters has to be looked on as evidence that the scattered sections of Christ's flock have never quite lost their coherence in

Him. In spite of all divisions and separations, they have maintained their faith in the One Lord; their common heritage in the Christian Scriptures; their use of the Christian Sacraments — even if differently interpreted: and have valued in almost all cases some kind of ordained Ministry, while differing widely as to how its services are to be authorised and validated. So disunity stands rooted in unity — and unity in disunity.

We in this General Synod are to be called upon to consider whether we should respond in a practical way to the resolutions passed by the representatives of the member churches of the Australian Council of Churches in February, 1964 — that positive steps should be taken towards negotiations for unity and that a date when it is hoped this might be achieved should be set. Some may feel we cannot set dates for what must be a movement of the Spirit of God. Some may feel that there must be a deeper unity in our own ranks before we can contemplate uniting positively and definitely with other Churches. Many feel that there must be a deeper desire shown in the lay-members of the congregations of our Churches and that these matters cannot be decided by the leaders of the Churches only. Whatever the view that we may take, whatever our ultimate decisions may be — I am sure that we shall all desire to see a [22] great increase of dialogue between the various Christian bodies, as a step towards discovering a *modus vivendi* [sic], which will be in itself a step in the direction of a more comprehensive unity.

It is a help to concentrate Christian thought more on points of agreement than upon the varying traditions which separate. Uniformity, it may be said, is neither possible nor desirable; and yet if there is ultimately to

be organic unity, even if it is not uniformity, there must be concentration also on the things which differ as well as on the things which unite, so that we may understand the varying traditions which have separated us in the past. Even when we do understand, we cannot lightly cast aside any fact of the truth which we believe has been entrusted to us to hold ultimately for the enrichment of a fully united Church. As we realise that the gifts of the spirit are as various as human experience is varied, so it may well be that in the providence of God, through such dialogue and through doing together many things we have hitherto done separately, a harmony can be achieved and variety will only add to its richness. We continually pray for unity, and we shall go on praying until not only is there ONE Church, but that one Church is wholly Catholic and Apostolic. We may well pray that this twentieth century, so full of hope and terror for mankind, may mark (as it would seem to be doing already) the turning tide which so far as unity is concerned, has been running so adversely for a thousand years.

In St. Paul's grand passage that I have quoted, we are reminded of the fundamental unity of the one Body of Christ, His Church. One in spite of all differences of class, nation, race, and even religious denominations. But as I have already said, the unity for which we seek is not a unity of Churches only, but of all mankind. St. Paul's description of the Church as One Body animated by the one spirit, believing in and baptised in the One Lord, finds its climax as he speaks of the "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all".

Our quest for unity finds its inspiration in the unity of the Triune God. As we think of the words OVER ALL, we can well dwell on the thought of

the transcendence of God; ruling over not only the Church, but the world: who cannot ultimately be thwarted or defeated. And of the words THROUGH ALL [23] of His activities working in and through the Person of the Divine Son, the Logos, in all the issues and events of life and history. And IN YOU ALL of his immanence dwelling in us; and not only in us, but in our fellow-men — so giving us not only the realisation of inward strength, but a new reverence and respect for others.

The simple fact we lay hold on in these words, is that God IS the universal Father of mankind. These words then, are a trumpet call to the Church in its relation to the world. It is our summons and encouragement in our Mission to the world, that not only fellow-Christians and Christians of other Churches, but Jews and Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists and Animists, people of different races and nations, classes and colours, ALL MEN, may come to know their ONENESS through the One God, the Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.

I want now to say a word about what I feel to be the greatest danger within the Church today, and that is: dwelling on our weaknesses and publicising them to such an extent that a spirit of defeatism is being bred. This is not only so in Australia, but I believe even more so in England. Indeed it is from England that this has emanated, springing out of what is called 'The New Theology' and 'The New Morality'. I can see a parallel in Europe in the 1930's when the smaller nations were so overwhelmed with the thought of their weakness in comparison with the growing might of Nazi Germany, that one by one they became defeatist in their attitude, and their will to resist was undermined and sapped, so that when the crisis came they

fell almost without a fight. There was, of course, no doubt of the truth of the physical strength of Nazi Germany, but faith and moral and spiritual strength have triumphed over material power many times over in history and could have done so then. Defeat comes only when this is undermined from within by a kind of fifth column, and compromise and appeasement is resorted to which leads to a downward path.

There is danger of this same kind of fifth column activity in the Church today, and it is all the more dangerous because it is often grounded in good intentions. Confronted by the growing strength of agnosticism and humanistic secularism, as well as by widespread lowering of moral standards, and if not open rejection of Christian Faith, ignorance of it and indifference to- [24] wards it. There are those who seek to bridge the gulf between the Church and the masses separated from it by watering down and explaining away tenets of the Christian Faith, and advocating a lower standard of teaching and morals and persuading themselves that in doing so they are opening the doors to a wider acceptance of Christianity in this modern world. How mistaken they are! Certainly we have to interpret the Christian Faith into modern language, to proclaim the Eternal Gospel to man in a changing society; but we must never forget it is the eternal Gospel and not a changing one we must proclaim. Our problem lies in the intelligible and faithful communication of the Christian message — to make it intelligible to this modern age, and yet in doing so to be faithful to its inherent truth and eternal nature. To do this we must enlarge our understanding and self-expression.

We do not confront this problem of communication in our own land alone, but all over the world. It is a problem which confronts the world mission of the Church, and of Christianity. We have come to see that in the missionary work of the Church in the past, Christian communication has been too often, and too much, wrapped up in man-made foreignness. Christianity has been for centuries the distinctive faith of western civilisation and the basis of European culture. European Missions have taken it to Africa and Asia, clothed too often in western thought and ways of living. What once appeared to be one of its strongest assets, as a universal religion, is today almost its heaviest liability. Africans and Asians will for the most part no longer accept it in that form, for many of them have been brought to think of Christ Himself as a white man. If it is to become a universal religion, it must be presented without its western apparatus. Yet it cannot live disembodied; it must learn, and it is learning, how to embody itself in manifold indigenous forms of culture.

We may ask, “Will it then still be recognisable as the same thing?” Perhaps we can answer that best by asking, “Is a picture still the same picture in a different frame?” In this connection a very telling image has been used by D.T. Niles. He says that Evangelism is like offering cold water to a thirsty soul. We may offer this cold water in a coconut shell, or a glass tumbler manufactured in the West — the cup may be indigenous or foreign; the content has to be true. The form in which the con- [25] tent is conveyed may be anything which is meaningful to those in the environment where this communication is taking place, but we have to be sure that the content is not betrayed or compromised. This is the vital thing, and this is the thing that I am most concerned about: for this problem of Christian communication

applies equally in our own land as it does in Africa and Asia, though here, of course, in a different way as it seeks to be interpreted in a way in which the modern age can understand it.

There is a real danger that the content of that interpretation may be betrayed or compromised, and to use a colloquialism, “the baby may be thrown out with the bath water”. We hear much about religionless Christianity — and as a strange paradox religion without God has its powerful advocates today, self-contradictory though they may seem to be. Can there be belief in God without religion, or in Christianity without either belief in God or religion? A recent article in an English paper recalled that Dr. McIntyre has maintained that the basic fact about some recent utterances emanating from the Christian side is that they are essentially atheistic. The word 'God' is kept, but what is really meant by it, following Tillich, is that which concerns us ultimately. Though professedly talking about God, they are therefore in fact talking about man. In the end then, religionless Christianity is not centrally something about God, but something about man and his nature.

It is, of course, incalculably important that the faith and liturgy of the Church should be understood and presented in terms of the actual situation, for if Christianity is true at all it is not merely the truth about religion, but it is the truth about life itself. This is surely inherent in the Incarnation, and if it is not so presented it shrinks into an escapist pietism. Christianity as we have received it is at once supernatural and historical, about One, Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was made man. It



starts not from man but from God. It comes into history, not out of it. This is the central point at issue.

The fifth columnist or white-anting tendency in the Church today is to obliterate from the Christian faith the supernatural; but the supernatural is so fundamental to Christian faith and life, that Christianity cannot survive without it. It is part of the field of reality and truth which derives from God and depends upon Him and is central to the whole Bible. But the God of the Bible and of Christianity is very much more than the ground of being, which is as far as some modern theologians will go today. He is a personal and living God, and therefore a self-revealing God, who does things and reveals Himself to the world through what He does. The richest heritage we possess is the faith once delivered to the saints. In all our efforts in communication to this modern age, as well as Prayer Book Revision, to meet the contemporary situations we must hold fast to this heritage, and not water it down or compromise or weaken it. For this heritage is the Faith which overcometh the world.

Let me now briefly review the period since our last General Synod, and speak of some of the main events that have taken place in Church and State, and changes of personnel.

In 1963 we were privileged to have the second visit of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh to Australia. Since that time the Queen Mother has paid a visit to parts of Australia and we have rejoiced in the fact that Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, as part of his educational training for his future destiny, has had a period in a

Church School in Australia. During the time, he paid a visit as a member of the School to New Guinea, under the aegis of the Church and worshipped in the great Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul at Dogura, and shared a palm leaf garden-house with boys of the Martyrs' Memorial School at Agenehambo. In days when the continuance of the monarchy, which has hitherto been a focus of unity as well as loyalty for the whole Commonwealth is being questioned by some, it remains to many of us an inspiration to see the deep sense of dedication to the service of her people that ever animates our Sovereign Lady the Queen. As we remember the heavy load of responsibility which she continually bears, and the difficulties that often beset her in doing so, we shall, I am sure, realise more than ever her need of our prayers for herself and her family, both in the Services of the Church as provided in the Prayer Book, and in private.

Lord de L'Isle, who spoke at our last General Synod as Her Majesty's representative as Governor General of Australia, as well also as a prominent Anglican, and gave then a fine testimony to his faith and to his loyalty to the Church, has resigned and it has given general satisfaction to all that an Australian in the person of Lord Casey has been appointed to succeed him as Governor General.

The resignation of Sir Robert Menzies as Prime Minister of Australia, marked in a sense the closing of an era; for he had led our nation as such for a longer continuous period than any previous Prime Minister.

It is sometimes said that every nation has the rulers and Governments it deserves. Certainly in a democracy such as ours we have the government

which the greater number of electors choose at a particular time; but Christians can bring more than the exercise of a vote and their influence in the moulding of public opinion to bear on the course of events and policies of Governments. They can bring their prayers. And the offering in public and private alike, of regular and sustained and earnest intercession for God's guidance to those who bear the responsibility of government, and for His over-ruling of the course of events, will certainly be more effective than any of the other means open to us; and will bring the influence of the Spirit of God to bear upon our use of those other means.

The comparative era of peace we were enjoying at the time of our last General Synod has, alas, been broken. Australia in the meantime became involved in conflict with other nations, more particularly in Vietnam and in Malaysia. We can thank God that the latter has been short lived and that a new and happier relationship now exists between Indonesia and this country, and we must hope and pray that this may continue and grow; and that Indonesia under its new rulers will take up again its membership of the United Nations, and that it will in due course honour its solemn pledge in regard to a plebiscite for the peoples of West New Guinea. The conflict in Vietnam, however, continues and seems to be increasing in intensity. We all greatly desire peace and to be able to live in peace with our neighbours and other nations, and we pray and must pray constantly for this, and work for it in any way we can. The Church twice every day prays, "Give peace in our time, O Lord." The response to this versicle in the 1928 Prayer Books is: "Because there is none other that rulest the world, but only Thou, O God", and I cannot help feeling that this is preferable to the response in the 1662 Prayer Book, which is: [28] "Because there is none other that fighteth for us,

but only Thou, O God.” For the latter seems to assume that we have a monopoly of the Divine aid, that our cause is always God's cause, and in many cases we cannot be sure that it is so. The 1928 response recognises the over-ruling Providence of God, not in regard to ONE nation only, but to all the world.

In striving for peace we need to realise that peace is POSITIVE, not just negative. It is not just freedom from war and conflict at all costs and at any price. A peace of that kind may be a travesty of true peace and open the door to slavery, oppression and the reign of evil in the world. Striving for real peace in the world may, and does at times, involve conflict, and conflict at the right time and in the right place may save the cause of ultimate world peace.

The present situation, however, that faces us is an agonising one and fills us with forebodings and uncertainties. Whatever our views may be on the causes, policies and ends underlying the war in which our nation is engaged at present in Vietnam, our hearts cannot fail to be riven by the sufferings which it is bringing to God's children, both in North and South Vietnam. As we pray daily for peace, and that God will turn the hearts of the rulers of the nations concerned against an escalation of the conflict which could lead to a world war, and will hasten the time when both sides can lay down their arms and come to the Conference table, we must also earnestly and constantly pray for those who are suffering. We must stand too behind the men of the Australian Forces on active service, and a very definite responsibility rests upon us as Church people to remember them constantly in our prayers, and also their homes and families and loved ones.

It would seem too to be our Christian duty to urge and support all constructive efforts of succour for the future rehabilitation of the peoples of that sorely tried and distressed part of South East Asia. And if we are in earnest in desiring to play our part constructively and peacefully in regard to South East Asia, it may well be that we should broaden our Immigration Policy and show our friendship and identification with them by a less exclusive policy than that which we have at present, which would make it possible for some of them to be identified with us in our own country.

The unprecedented and widespread drought throughout Australia last year brought much suffering, loss and distress. In the [29] providence of God the drought seems now to have been relieved and refreshing rains have fallen in almost all parts of Australia this year. I cannot help feeling that the severity of the drought was meant to teach us a spiritual lesson; for under the advance of modern science, man has become so self-sufficient that he tends to think himself less and less dependent upon God. But there we were confronted with one way in which he is not independent of God — for so far, it does seem that no power of man can prevent droughts or control the forces of nature that bring wet and dry — and we must hope that in many directions a new realisation of our dependence upon God may have been born out of this trouble. On the other hand, we must remember that some of the worst effects of the drought could have been averted if there had been a more intelligent use of the gift of foresight that God has given to us, in laying up store for such a time beforehand; in the way of less overstocking, and better water conservation.

I would speak now of two outstanding events in the life of the Church since our last General Synod. The first was the Toronto Anglican Congress in 1963 which was attended by 56 official Delegates from the Australian Church, of whom 12 were Diocesan Bishops, one a Coadjutor Bishop, 25 Clergy and 18 Laymen. Much has been said and written about it. I do not intend to say more now, except that it has had perhaps a greater influence on the life of the Anglican Communion than any previous gathering. This has been due to the Call which issued forth from Toronto of Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ. Because of its revolutionary nature it had in the early stages a somewhat mixed and critical reception in parts of the Anglican Communion, but the fundamental truths that it has set out have since that time come to be accepted by all parts of the Anglican Communion, and to be felt to present a challenge to a new way of life in regard to the Churches which make up the Anglican Communion in their relationship one with another, and with themselves. It has transformed our thinking in regard to the Mission of the Church.

Our Primate was imbued with a great sense of urgency and importance of the challenge, and with great earnestness of purpose presented it to the Bishops at their first meeting after the Toronto Congress, and through them to the whole Australian Church. Led by the Primate, the Bishops called upon the Church [30] first for a time of spiritual renewal which began with the issue of a Pastoral Letter on Advent Sunday 1963. The Standing Committee of General Synod was asked to undertake the presenting of this Appeal to the Church as a whole, and a special M.R.1. Committee known as “The Primate's M.R.I. Committee” was formed, of which Bishop Sambell, Bishop Coadjutor of Melbourne, was appointed to be

Director. We owe much to Bishop Sambell for his work in connection with the presentation of this Appeal to all parts of the Australian Church. It has been a means of bringing many groups of people together in different dioceses and parishes to study the Christian Faith and the import of this challenge for the whole Church and for themselves in their own particular local area. It may be that the response here, as in other parts of the Anglican Communion, has fallen far short of what it was hoped it might be; but nonetheless the preparatory work has been done and Bishop Sambell will, in due course, be presenting to the General Synod proposals for the next stage — for this challenge and appeal is not a temporary one, or a flash in the pan; it is something which must be continuous and must grow in intensity and in depth as the years go on.

Here let me say how much the whole Anglican Communion owes to the Canadian Church who were not only the hosts for the Toronto Congress, but were responsible for all its organisation and finances, and provided a wonderful hospitality for the delegates who came from all parts of the world. It is a very special pleasure to us that we should have had as our preacher at the opening service of this General Synod, and as our guest at this Session, the Right Reverend George Luxton, Bishop of Huron, whose See town is London, Ontario, where the meeting of the Lambeth Advisory Council on Mission Strategy that drew up the M.R.I. Document took place, attended by the Metropolitans of the Anglican Communion and Missionary Executives and which the Primate, Canon Coaldrake and I attended, and in which Bishop Luxton himself had no small part. We rejoice to have him with us as a Bishop of the Canadian Church and a Representative of the Anglican Communion. I do extend to him a most hearty welcome, and I reciprocate the greetings of the Canadian Church he gave in his address.

Here I would say that the term of office as Anglican Executive Officer of Bishop Stephen Bayne of the U.S.A. who was with us at our last General Synod and preached the Sermon, [31] came to an end after the Toronto Congress and his place has been taken by a bishop of the Canadian Church, the Right Reverend Ralph Dean, Bishop of Cariboo. I hope Bishop Dean will be able to visit the Australian Church next October.

I also take this opportunity of welcoming to our opening Service this morning and to our session this afternoon, the representatives of other Churches. We thank them for sharing with us in the fellowship of the Gospel by coming, and we rejoice to have them with us as brethren and fellow-workers in Christ.

The other noteworthy event in the life of our Church was the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury last year, which brought great inspiration to all and made a great spiritual impact upon the whole Church; besides being, as I know it was, a great satisfaction and joy to him to be able to get to know us and to have this closer link with us. And now we are looking forward to a visit shortly from the Archbishop of York, who is coming to Australia in March in connection with the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Society to which our own Church and almost every other Church owes so much. Those of us who have served in the mission field have specially benefitted from its generosity in printing and providing the Scriptures in different languages.



I would speak now of the losses and gains that we have had in the leadership of the Church in these last four years. The greatest loss we have sustained has been that of our Primate, the Most Reverend Hugh Gough, Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of the Province of N.S.W. whose resignation last May on account of ill-health, came as a great shock and grief to us all. I am sure we are all grateful for the vigorous leadership that he gave to the Australian Church during his seven years as Primate. As such he travelled indefatigably and extensively throughout the Commonwealth, visiting I think, every diocese except that of New Guinea which he was hoping to visit later. He took a vital and practical interest in the progress and problems of the Church in every diocese. He paid special visits to the Diocese of North West Australia and to the Northern Territory, to assess the special needs and problems there.

Archbishop Gough was a man who had the courage of his convictions and spoke out his mind on moral and spiritual issues. Though he was often criticised (as any leader must expect to be) [32] all admired his courage and sincerity, and very many agreed with him and welcomed the Christian witness that he gave on matters of national import and questions that affected the life of the community today. He had a largeness of heart and breadth of understanding and vision, which enabled him to understand others of different traditions and churchmanship to his own. He brought in quite a wonderful way, a new unifying influence to the Australian Church; so that those who were associated with him in the House of Bishops and in other conferences and consultations in the life of the Church, felt that there was no barrier to a true Christian fellowship with him. He was a wonderful host and chairman of the Bishops' Meetings, presiding over them with a gaiety of

spirit and a sense of humour, and a kindliness and courtesy which was deeply appreciated by all. Perhaps the biggest contribution he made to the Australian Church was that to which I have already referred, the way in which he endeavoured to rally the Church to respond to the call of the Toronto Congress. His spiritual leadership in this in the Australian Church reached, I feel, a very high level indeed and showed vision and conviction. We had fully expected that he would be presiding over this General Synod, as he did so ably over the last one. We had hoped that he might have remained as Primate for a number of years yet to come. God grant that he may in due course be fully restored to health and strength again.

In his place as Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of the Province of N.S.W. we do most warmly welcome the Most Reverend Marcus Loane formerly Bishop Coadjutor, whom we have known and admired for so many years for his spiritual depth and missionary zeal, and who is our host at this General Synod.

Here let me say how delighted we in the Anglican Church were when early in 1965 the Most Reverend Frank Woods, Archbishop of Melbourne, was elected as President of the Australian Council of Churches, and we appreciate deeply the Christian and spiritual lead he is giving in the Australian and World Council of Churches.

I think there must have been an unprecedented number of changes in the Episcopate in the last four years. Ten out of the 25 Sees have new occupants today, and these include three out of the four Metropolitan Sees. These changes have been brought about in three cases by death, in five by

resignation, and in two by translation. Besides the Metropolitan See of Sydney, there have [33] been changes also in Perth and Brisbane. The Most Reverend Robert William Haines Moline, after a long and devoted Archbishopate in Perth, resigned in 1963. His place was filled by the consecration of the Most Reverend George Appleton whom we welcome for the first time to our General Synod, and who brings to the Australian Church an unprecedented knowledge of South East Asia. where he served for so many years in the Diocese of Rangoon. The Metropolitan See of Brisbane fell vacant with the death of the Most Reverend Reginald Halse, a greatly beloved figure in the Australian Church for some four decades. His place was filled by my translation from New Guinea, and that of New Guinea was filled by the translation of the Bishop Coadjutor of that Diocese, the Right Reverend David Hand, who had been my faithful helper for some fifteen years and who was elected by the Australian Bishops as Diocesan on the day that I was enthroned. He was himself enthroned in the Cathedral at Dogura on St. Peter's Day 1963.

The Sees of Wangaratta and Riverina became vacant through the death of their Bishops, both deeply loved and revered as pastoral Bishops, the Right Reverend Thomas Makison Armour and the Right Reverend Hector Gordon Robinson. The See of Wangaratta was filled by the translation from Rockhampton of the Right Reverend Theodore Bruce McCall and his place at Rockhampton filled by the Consecration of the Right Reverend Donald Shearman, and of Riverina by the consecration recently of the Right Reverend John Grindrod, both of whom we welcome to this General Synod as new members of the House of Bishops.

A long and devoted Missionary Episcopate came to an end with the resignation of the Right Reverend John Frewer as Bishop of North West Australia, and we welcome in his place today the Right Reverend Howell Arthur John Witt. The Right Reverend Geoffrey Cranswick, who had exercised a valuable influence in the Councils of the Church, resigned the See of Tasmania shortly after our last General Synod, and was succeeded by the Assistant Bishop of Newcastle, the Right Reverend Robert Edward Davies. Another who had exercised a much valued role for many years in the councils of the Church who has resigned, is the Right Reverend John Moyes whose contributions at General Synod we shall greatly miss. His place in the Diocese of Armidale has been filled by the Right Reverend Ronald Clive Kerle, Bishop Coadjutor of Sydney.

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Three Coadjutor Bishops have resigned: Bishop Freeth of Perth, Bishop Redding of Melbourne and Bishop Goodwin Hudson of Sydney. Those who have been consecrated as Bishops Coadjutor or as Assistant Bishops have been Bishop Leslie Stibbard as Assistant Bishop of Newcastle, Bishop John Chisholm, Assistant Bishop of New Guinea; Bishop Brian Macdonald, Bishop Coadjutor of Perth; Bishop Arthur John Dain, Bishop Coadjutor of Sydney; Bishop Cecil Allen Warren, Assistant Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn. Bishop Francis Oag Hulme-Moir has come from the See of Nelson in New Zealand to be Bishop Coadjutor of Sydney.

Other deaths that have occurred have been those of the Most Reverend Joseph John Booth, C.M.G., M.C., E.D., B.A., B.D., formerly Archbishop of Melbourne and Metropolitan of Victoria, and the Right Reverend William Rothwell Barrett, who for so many years was a member

of the Standing Committee and formerly Assistant Bishop of Tasmania, and the Right Reverend Horace Henry Dixon, M.A., formerly Bishop Coadjutor of Brisbane. Among the clerical and lay members of Synod who have died, we remember especially the late Mr R. Clive Teece, Q.C., of Sydney, and Mr Fred Cross of Brisbane.

The Agenda for this General Synod is a formidable one, and will require our prolonged and concentrated attention. Some twenty or more draft canons will come before us — perhaps half of these are of a largely procedural or machinery nature, replacing determinations under the old Constitution with canons brought up to date and applicable to the modern situation under our new Constitution. Others will bring before us some of the big questions I mentioned earlier and will concern the Church's total Mission, both in Australia and in the wider world. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on them now, but I am confident that when they come before you, you will consider them with a deep sense of responsibility that is laid upon us to make our National Church a real vehicle for the carrying out of God's Will and for the building up of His Kingdom.

You are certain to be faced with the need of a budget involving increased expenditure. This will no doubt be distasteful to some, if not all; but I hope we shall face the need of this squarely, for increased opportunities at home and overseas involve increased responsibilities, and I am sure that we would wish to take [35] our part with the rest of the Anglican Communion in the great endeavours of our time. The Churches of Canada and the United States of America have given a wonderful and generous lead in this, and my earnest hope is that the Church in Australia will not lag

behind in responding to the needs to the best of its ability, and in accordance with its resources. We have to endeavour to raise our sights to the great role of service to which God is calling His Church today, and not to bewail the hardness of the times and the impossibility of meeting the many demands made upon it — but rather to rejoice that we are living in a generation when God **IS** calling us to do the impossible, because all things are possible to Him and through Him. May we respond to His call, not with a 'non possumus' — “We are not able” — but rather in the spirit of St. Paul's grand words, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

The immediate reaction of the disciples when faced with thousands of hungry people, and our Lord's question, “Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?” was perhaps quite naturally, “It is impossible and altogether beyond our capacity and slender resources.” But He did not speak of any external aid, as men ask today for Government intervention, He enquired, “How many loaves have ye?” He looked at the situation itself, and saw the inner spiritual resources that were available if they would put themselves and their meagre resources at His disposal.

The Church today is faced with a hungry multitude: half the population of the world is literally and physically hungry, and here the achievements of Inter-Church Aid are already one of the epics of Christian History. But there are millions at home and overseas who are spiritually starving and destitute. How can we satisfy these men with bread? The call would be frightening and the task impossible, if it were not the Church of Jesus Christ in which we serve and a world which is God's world, of which Christ is the King.

My brethren, may He be with us and guide us with His Holy Spirit in this General Synod as we go now about the King's business.