

Bishop's Charge to Synod

Picton: October 2013

*E te Atua to matou kai-hanga,
Ka tiaho te maramatanga me te ora, i au kupu korero
Ka timata au mahi, ka mau te tika me te aroha; meatia kia
u tonu ki a matou
Tou aroha i roto i tenei huihuinga.
Whakakii a matou whakaaro a matou mahi katoa
E tou Wairua Tapu
Amine*

*God our Creator,
When you speak there is light and life
When you act there is justice and love;
Grant that your love may be present in our meeting,
So that what we say and what we do
May be filled with your Holy Spirit.*



Greetings:

I am trying to do something just a little bit different this year.

Over the past few years I have given two addresses to Synod. Firstly the Synod sermon which provided us (hopefully) with a biblical foundation or challenge, and secondly the 'Bishop's Charge' which has attempted to cast a more practical vision for the year ahead which would, in turn, influence our practices and our structures – and maybe the decisions we make at Synod.

This year I want the sermon from last evening to be the focal point for the year ahead as the Diocese of Nelson. This Charge therefore teases out the spiritual challenge facing us as we consider *how* we do *what* we do – particularly in respect of the many challenges that face us as a Diocese.

Consequently I have printed out this year's Charge and have circulated it to all members prior to this Synod rather than spending time reading it through. I am trusting that you will have already done that. I am simply going to give a 15 minute introduction and then open it for discussion.

Sabbatical:

Hilary and I were deeply grateful for the opportunity to take Sabbatical this year. We had, of course planned to go last year, but health issues meant that we had to postpone. It was a very special three months, in which we tried to balance, retreat, study and recreation.

Our retreat was done at the beginning – at the Anglican centre in Rome with Archbishop David Moxon and then on to a Turkey for a guided tour around the churches of Revelation. This was a deeply moving experience – especially the visit to Ephesus.

We then moved on to Oxford, to stay with Bishop John and Wendy Pritchard who were wonderfully generous and welcoming hosts. I spent most days in the library at Wycliffe Hall researching and writing the book I have been mulling over for some years now. It is simply called 'Balance'. A quote from the introduction might help to explain what it is all about:

'.....Divisions within the church are as old as Christianity itself; they certainly provided motivational material for the authors of the New Testament epistles.

It is certainly not the intention of this book to reflect upon each and every division that has occurred (or is occurring) within the church, although I am deeply saddened by the rapidity and ease in which Christians seem to split apart for the most innocuous of reasons. Every single time this happens, the mission of the Church is scarred.

What I am pleading for is integrity in the consideration of key biblical concepts that form, what I want to call, a 'balanced' faith or 'balanced' spirituality – a balance that creates unity where there is currently diversity.

In the Bible there are many words or concepts that appear in conjunction with another word or concept – they are used almost in the same breath and are meant to be understood together: Words such as 'Grace and Truth' or 'Justice and Righteousness.' For the purpose of this book I want to call them 'word-pairs' - although this term doesn't adequately define all of the words I have chosen to reflect on. Some of them such as 'immanence and transcendence' are not even found within the Bible in the way that Justice and Righteousness are. But they are key biblical concepts in our understanding of God, and therefore need to be considered within the content of this book.

It is in the 'balancing' of these word pairs that we discover a deep and powerful expression of faith – which is why I like to consider this book to be about a balanced 'spirituality'. But, far too often, we separate these word pairs and, in some instances, form whole new denominations or movements out of one to the neglect of the other.

As we look at the person of Jesus we see this balance incarnated and my hope and prayer is that we might reclaim the balance in our lives and in the life of our churches and communities of faith.'

I had really only planned to get the research done while I was there, but the environment and opportunity were certainly there to begin writing. It was a privilege to have Bishop John read through the draft of the first stages and affirm the concept and the style while making some very constructive comments. It may never be published – but I will have written it!

It was a joy to have a time of recreation on the way home, staying with our daughter and son-in-law in Washington DC – although they did take us on a week-long trip down to Savannah and then across into the Blue Ridge mountains where Hilary and I managed to get tickets for the annual 'Mountain Folk Music and Dance Festival' - indigenous bluegrass and square dance. It was fantastic!

It is great to be home and I am sincerely grateful to those who took an extra load to enable this Sabbatical to happen; particularly to Tim Mora who, as Vicar General,

made so many trips from Cobden to Nelson during those months. David Hollingsworth as my chaplain also shouldered a lot of extra responsibility and I know his pastoral care is respected by so many of you. Anita is a gift and kept the Bishop's routine running. But it was all overseen by Ian Pask who is a tremendous asset to this Diocese. My sincere thanks to each one of you – but also to all the Bishop's Ministry Team.

Vision:

It was something of a culture shock to return from this three month Sabbatical only to head straight into Synod. Although the central part of this Sabbatical was based in a library in Oxford I did spend a great deal of time visiting churches in different parts of the world and talking to Bishops and clergy in a variety of different situations. I visited Anglican churches that are firing on all cylinders – parish churches that are having a huge impact on the communities within which they've been planted. And I visited churches that are dead in the water.

The difference is summed up in two words: **vision** and **mission**.

The churches that are floundering have no discernible vision that is enthusiastically owned by all who worship there. The clergy go through the motions providing what the handful of worshippers still expects. They feel secure in a world that has passed them by.

In the flourishing churches it is, not surprisingly, the very opposite. There is a clearly articulated vision that every committed member can refer you to. And invariably it is a vision that is entirely missional. They know who they are and why they are.

A few months ago we had Dr Chris Wright out here for a day to kick off our focus on mission. We based it loosely on his book 'The Mission of God's People.' Although I have underlined so much of this book in my journey through it, one particular passage jumped out at me because it is a missional vision.

Wright (who is an Old Testament scholar) describes how the church, in and through Christ, is the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, accomplishing God's purpose to solve, not only the problem of Genesis 3 (human fallenness and sin), but also of Genesis 11 (racial dividedness and confusion).

'This is why, says Wright, it is so important to recognise that the church by its very nature is part of the gospel for its existence, for as a community of redeemed sinners from all races it demonstrates the gospel's transforming power. Two realities from all of this inform our theology of mission: first, the presence of the Holy Spirit making available to the people of God the same transforming power that energised the life and ministry of Jesus and raised him from the dead; and second, the existence of the church itself as the missional community of those who have responded to, and entered, the kingdom of God by repentance and faith in Christ, and who now seek to live as a transformed and transforming community of reconciliation and blessing to the world.'

I am convinced that one of the major dilemmas facing the Anglican Church – particularly in the West – is the lack of a convincing vision that grabs the imagination of its members; it is one of the major reasons for the notable decline in church attendance.

However, there *are* signs of real life. The appointment of Archbishop Justin Welby as the new Archbishop of Canterbury for example, was an inspired move. He is a man with a deep and renewed faith. He radiates both integrity and humility and refuses to let himself, or the church, get side-tracked from its focus on Jesus by the issues that have been preoccupying the church internationally and at home.

Here in Nelson we have a very clear vision – to be ‘vibrant, Christ-centred, communities of faith’. Three short comments about this vision:

1. ‘Vibrant’ is an interesting word to use in a vision statement because it is hard to define and to quantify or qualify. The Collins dictionary has it ‘exhibiting vigour and activity’. It is the word within our vision that denotes life – and not just on Sundays
2. ‘Christ-centred’ is the critical dimension within this Diocese. We make no apologies for the fact the Jesus *is* the reason we are who we are. I had a late night debate with a friend while we were in the UK. I had asked him, at some stage in the conversation we were having, what Christianity was all about to him – in a nutshell. And he answered with ‘the golden rule.’ I told him that this was all very nice and should reflect the way we behave as Christians, but that the essence for Christianity for me is Jesus – the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord. He couldn’t get it – he thought I was being exclusive while he was being inclusive. Here in this Diocese we are unashamedly Christ-centred - we celebrate Jesus Christ as Lord. It’s what defines us.
3. The word ‘communities’ places the emphasis on each parish and congregation as the centre of the vision – not the Diocese. And, as I have said several times over the past few years, this puts us somewhat out of step with the wider Anglican Communion where the ‘local church’ refers to the Diocese (not the parish). I believe that having the focus where we have it is missional.

We have a clear vision and we have a strategic plan to accompany that vision. It is titled ‘Toward a 20/20 vision.’ I certainly won’t be Bishop in 2020 but it does give us a sense of direction and focus for the next six or seven years – something that I am very keen to have for my own ministry. But we also chose the title for this strategic plan because of its reference to 20/20 eyesight. 20/20 vision refers to good eyesight that enables us to see what is right in front of us but also what is in the distance. This seemed very appropriate for a strategic vision for the Diocese.

I am very grateful to the members of the Bishop’s Ministry Team who spent a great deal of time revising this strategic plan while I was away.¹

¹ *Parts 1 & 2 of this plan are attached as an appendix to this Charge.*

Three changes have been made in this revision of the Strategic plan:

1. The priority of prayer has been included as part of the vision and as one of our aims.
2. We have teased out our Diocesan vision to define what a 'vibrant, Christ-centred, community of faith' looks like.
3. We have amended our aims and strategic priorities to reflect where we believe we need to focus our energies in order to achieve our vision.

I'd like to take a few moments to tease out the five characteristics that help us define our vision.

- *To become mature people of prayer, realising our need of and dependence upon God, to seek him, wait upon him, and to be open to the guidance and anointing of the Holy Spirit as we seek to do his will.*

As mentioned a few moments ago, the Bishop's Ministry Team added this to both our vision and our aims. It recognises the reality that our vision will not be realised unless it is undergirded and inspired by prayer. And yet prayer seems, at times, almost perfunctory in the gathered worship of the church – it doesn't reflect a vibrancy of life; a trust that God is listening and will answer. Whereas it can be, as I mentioned last evening, one of our most effective missional tools – I have never had anyone decline when I have asked them if I can pray with them.

Michael Green noted when studying Acts that *'when people pray, the Spirit comes, the place where they pray is shaken, prison doors break open and people dare to die with radiance.'*

- *To glorify God through worship that is corporate and personal; culturally relevant and transcendent; self denying and life-giving; yet always biblical.*
- *To preach and teach in such a way that lives are transformed and people grow in discipleship.*

I was thrilled that this year's School of Theology' was based on the theme of 'Determined Worship.' The papers presented by those taking part were challenging, inspiring and enlightening all at the same time. I encourage members of Synod to make use of the videos that were taken at this event – available through Bishopdale Theological College.

Rev Mike Hawke (of the Anglican Missions Board) has a pithy saying that he has used at seminars in this Diocese – that 'we win or lose on Sunday morning.' He is suggesting (from his own experience and as he has travelled around the country) that the Sunday worship of the church has the power to inspire and empower the believer and attract the unbeliever or it does the very opposite. There is no middle ground. We win or we lose on Sunday morning.

I think that this aim speaks for itself!

- *To be a missional church, reaching out beyond ourselves (both at home and overseas) with acts of loving service and proclamation that radiate our commitment to Jesus.*

I devoted my synod sermon to this topic – specifically ‘as they were walking.’ It remains a very clear aim to move the church from one that is institutionally focussed on maintaining its existence, to a church that is passionate about being Christ and proclaiming Christ within our local communities.

We need also to reflect on the fact that a missional church by its very nature will also be a prophetic church, speaking into (and being involved in) situations and issues that have an impact upon our communities. We seemed to have dropped the ball on this one. We can all quote John 3:16 – a quintessential verse in our theology. But we seem to have put all our focus on the second half of the verse and very little on the first half – ‘*For God so loved the world, he gave his one and only Son....*’ The evangelicals of the 19th century had no such dilemma in being involved in issues out in the wider community and society that they saw as grieving the heart of God: Issues such as the slave trade and child labour. The Bishops of our Church have identified Prison Reform as one such issue today - something we might speak together on as a symbol of our unity. After several months working in the prisons early in my ministry and seeing the increasingly retributive nature of our society, I endorse this initiative and draw your attention to a small booklet that has been prepared by our Social Justice Commission for reflection and study during the week 13th – 19th October. The booklet can be downloaded from the following website <http://www.justice.net.nz>

- *To model ‘authentic’ community and be a church of grace that embraces and values people of all ages and circumstances in the redeeming love of Christ.*

In many respects this characteristic is closely linked to the last one because a missional church will always be a welcoming church. This is a church that doesn’t mind whether a toddler makes a noise during an inappropriate moment, or whether someone’s hearing aid whistles all the way through the sermon, or whether the teenager is texting someone during the prayers. In a church of grace every person is recognised as someone who is loved by God.

This is a church that doesn’t reject anyone because of their race, or age, or gender, or mental ability or sexual orientation. It is a church that simply welcomes so that the grace of God in Christ might be experienced.

Some question the inclusion of the words ‘modelling authentic community’ in the 5th characteristic but I’m not so sure. I was talking to a young professional woman who moved here to Nelson a year or so ago. She is Christian and she is gifted. She has made attempts to integrate with two local churches (Anglican) but has found it really hard. Her comment to me was ‘that the conversations are so superficial!’ She is looking for authentic community.

Some years ago at Willow Creek Church I met their director of Small Group Ministries, Dr Bill Donahue. He used to describe 'authentic community' as having four dimensions:

1. To know and to be known
2. To love and to be loved
3. To serve and to be served
4. To celebrate and to be celebrated.

While this is catchy and helpful, the Epistles of Paul contain even deeper insights into the roots of authentic community. At the very heart of it is a Trinitarian theology that understands that God is a 'community of oneness' and our desire for community grows from this reality. A congregation that meets together on Sunday and has a nice polite cuppa afterwards, but who have no contact at all throughout the week, or deeper awareness of what is going on for each individual within that congregation, is not modelling authentic community.

Flowing out of this vision is a series of strategic priorities that provide focus for our Diocesan ministries in the realisation of our vision. I just want to touch on one of these briefly even though they form the foundation of our strategic plan.

Developing Leaders:

Our dream is to 'develop confident, creative, physically and spiritually healthy leaders across the diocese with a clear understanding of the gospel, discipleship and ministry as participating in the mission of God, reflecting a diversity of leadership styles and modes as appropriate to a range of ministry contexts, challenges and needs.'

Coming home after spending three months away gives you a deeper appreciation for things that you tend to take for granted. I don't think I take them for granted, but I know that I don't acknowledge often enough the gifts and talents and dedication of the clergy of this Diocese. I know I've said it before, but I'm so privileged and proud to serve as your Bishop. I am grateful for the way that you responded to my request that you commit yourselves to 10 days throughout the year to focus on the theme of mission.

It is really interesting that both the Diocesan Secretary and the Diocesan Finance team have commented that the financial health of our parishes has never been stronger. Every single parish has its financial challenges – we don't want to ignore that. But the reality is that when many other places are closing down parishes or moving to non-stipendiary alternatives, we are able to sustain stipendiary ministry throughout the Diocese. Of course it is made possible by three or four parishes that are only sustaining three-quarter stipend. But the financial situation is certainly one indicator of parish health.

I particularly want to take a few moments to single out Dawn Daunauda who, together with her husband Sana, has led the Awatere parish through the aftermath of the recent earthquakes – earthquakes that are still continuing. The parish

continues to be in the prayers of the Diocese and we also seek more practical ways to respond to what is happening.

In the on-going aim to be more effective for Christ in our ministries there are two developments that I want to see implemented over the next year.

The first is a renewed 'ministry appraisal.' The time spent with clergy on the first round of ministry appraisals has been, without a doubt, the most rewarding investment of my time both personally and as Bishop. But I believe that it needs a new form (but keeping the same process) that asks questions more directly related to the specific ministry that is being exercised – something that reflects a missional focus and teases out the parish vision and ministry. I am also asking that all clergy provide a video recording of two of their sermons – I don't often get to hear my clergy preach (but in the last month I have dropped in unannounced at two parishes and on both occasions heard a superb sermon – by the Vicar.

Already some are putting these sermons online. Tim Mora records his via a webcam onto his computer. Owen Haring does his with an iPhone. We have the technology now to make this possible as part of the appraisal. I will be the guinea pig for the new appraisal and have asked one of the Bishops in New Zealand to meet with me for a morning and take me through an appraisal using the new form.

The second development, has already been hinted at over the past couple of years, and is the development of the Peer Support Groups for all clergy. It will be an expectation for all clergy to belong to one of these groups. They are designed to do two things. To read something together in the weeks between meetings and then discuss it together when they gather. And then to bring any issues that they may be facing in ministry to the table and to welcome the corporate wisdom and experience of the group in reflecting on these issues.

This form of professional development is mandatory in many professions and I believe that it is something we need to do. The first attempt to direct people into specific groups met with quite some resistance so the makeup of the groups will be in the hands of clergy. There will be no more than six in a group and there does not need to be an identifiable leader – the group agenda may set by the group. Early in 2014 all clergy will be contacted to ask which group they are meeting with and when (and how often) they meet. This will mean a consequential change to the way Regional Deaneries function and may involve a reframing of the role of the Regional Dean.

I also want to acknowledge the gift of Bishopdale College and their role in the training and equipping of a new generation of leaders and the on-going development of our existing leaders - particularly Rev Canon Graham O'Brien as Diocesan Ministry Educator based within the College. Graham offers some superb opportunities for pastoral and leadership development throughout the year and I commend them to all clergy as great opportunities to grow, personally and professionally.

Finally, expressed within this aim is the intention of ordaining people to a ministry that will not be within the existing church frameworks but who will exercise an ordained ministry pioneering new expressions of church. This excites me, but of course it won't be without its challenges. Already we have young people seeking to take part in this new model.

That is all about vision.

But beneath all of this are issues that seek to derail us from the outworking of this vision. Key amongst these is the issue of same-gender sexuality and the Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

General reflections:

This is of course the issue that is defining so much of the time and energy of our national church at the current point of time – and will continue to do so as we head into the General Synod of the Church in 2014 and receive the report of the Ma Whea Commission. However, one thing that really concerns me is the way in which our preoccupation with this issue has completely overshadowed other vitally important issues within our local communities. But then, I shouldn't be surprised given that we are living in a highly sexualised society!

Some people within the Church are looking to the Ma Whea Commission as the group of eminent people who are going to suggest to us what decision we should make as a church. But, as I understand it, that is not their brief. They are to advise the church as to a possible way ahead that enables us to remain in communion while holding totally different positions on the issue of sexuality.

That in itself will be no mean feat. On one hand we have those who believe that unity in diversity is possible and that some sort of Diocesan autonomy in determining how we respond to some of the issues regarding same-gender sexuality is a possible model for our future together.

But there are also those, on the other hand, who point to the fact that we are a synodical church and decisions on the ordination of people in same sex relationships, and the blessing of people in same sex relationships and, indeed (after our recent law change) on the redefinition of marriage, must be made by the representative body (that is General Synod) to whom we are accountable (under the Canons of our church).

The problem that I have with this latter scenario is the non-representative nature of General Synod. While those representing a more biblically orthodox Anglicanism (whether evangelical or charismatic) comprise by far the larger parishes throughout the Province it is not reflected numerically in those who have been elected to General Synod. And secondly, I don't have a lot of confidence in the decision making process of General Synod which engages in emotional rhetoric and very little hard theology which has always been the mark of the decision making processes of the Anglican Church.

We will not have another Synod prior to next year's General Synod and so this Synod must give some direction to its General Synod representatives as to our perspectives on the way ahead, otherwise it will be the role of Standing Committee to provide that direction. The Bishops will be meeting with the Ma Whea Commission early next month and it will be clearer then as to whether there is a common mind developing that enables us to hold our Diocesan position with integrity.

Several submissions were made to the Ma Whea Commission from individuals within the Diocese and from Standing Committee on behalf of the Diocese. To give an indication of what other Dioceses are thinking, Bishop Victoria Matthews (our next-door-neighbour) made the following observations at her Synod a few weeks ago:

'Another big issue coming before the 2014 General Synod is the definition of marriage. Aotearoa New Zealand has changed the definition of marriage to include any two persons of the age of discretion. The Anglican Church remains committed to marriage being between a man and a woman. The problem is we have not done our theological homework on this question so I will be very opposed if any resolution is presented to General Synod before all the theological and Biblical work is done. This would mean a change of the doctrine of marriage. We can change doctrine in the Anglican Church, but only after careful and long debate..... I personally hope that no resolution will be put to General Synod before 2018 or 2020, thus allowing for appropriate theological consideration.'

This is a Communion dividing issue and so in addition to the question of marriage, we need to carefully consider questions of ecclesiology before we make decisions. The St Michael Report by the Primate's Theological Commission of the Anglican Church of Canada poses the ecclesiological question this way:

'Is it theologically and doctrinally responsible for one member church in the Communion to approve a course of action which it has reason to believe may be destructive to the unity of the Communion?'

Is it theologically and doctrinally responsible to accept unity as the value which transcends all others, and therefore for a member church of the Communion to refrain from making a decision when it believes it has an urgent gospel mandate to proceed?'

We therefore need not only to do the necessary Biblical and theological work on the doctrine of marriage but also on ecclesiology or the theology of the church.'

Amen!!

On the issues themselves:

1. The ordination of people in same-sex relationships.

Earlier this year the Diocese of Auckland was taken to court over a decision not to proceed with the ordination of someone who is in a same-sex relationship. The judge presiding over the case reserved his decision and, at the time of writing, has still not released that decision. In essence it brings our human rights legislation into direct conflict with the Bill of Rights which guarantees religious freedom in the practical outworking of our faith. This

decision could have huge implications for the church – not just on this issue, but on many other issues across all denominations.

My own approach is that sexual orientation, gender, physical impairment etc are *not* barriers to ordination. But neither should anyone expect to be ordained as of right because they wish to promote an agenda other than that of Christ. Ordination involves the submission of our will to the will of God - it's the call to a life of sacrifice and it is that sacrificial, servant heart that we are looking for in the discernment process that leads to ordination.

2. The blessing of same-sex relationships.

The focus of this motion in front of General Synod and the Ma Whea Commission has changed somewhat with the amendment to the marriage act earlier this year which has in essence redefined marriage to include those who are in same-sex relationships.

And already one Diocese has signalled strongly that they want to embrace society's understanding of marriage within the Canons of the Church. There is some resistance to this however and it may be that affirming the blessing of relationships is seen as political way of moving a little further without redefining our definition of marriage. There are however all sorts of 'hooks and splinters' in this sort of politicking! I would be hesitant in developing liturgies that bless *specific* relationships but could see a way of affirming the blessing of 'relationships' – without any reference to sexuality.

The debate continues and we find ourselves in the lonely position of constantly defending our orthodox position that is both biblical and theological, while remaining pastorally sensitive. It is disappointing that this issue will pre-occupy so much time and energy in the year that we are celebrating 200 years of the gospel in Aotearoa / New Zealand.

In the midst of all this there is GAFCON! In a couple of weeks time Rev Dr Andrew Burgess and I will fly to Nairobi to take part in the second GAFCON (Global Anglican Futures Conference). It is the gathering of evangelical/orthodox Anglicans from all around the world and follows on from the first GAFCON in 2008 attended by Archdeacon Robin Kingston on our behalf.

I was encouraged by Archbishop Peter Jensen to try and find fifteen leaders from throughout the Aotearoa/New Zealand to attend this conference and we have done exactly that.

Many from the more revisionist dimension of our church are deeply sceptical about GAFCON but we have found it to be a highly liberating and inspiring forum. There is a misconception that this is the Anglican anti-gay conference when the reality is so different. There is also a conspiracy theory that those attending are somehow planning strategies for possible scenarios here in Aotearoa/New Zealand should General Synod move in a way that challenges our biblical and theological foundations. No doubt we will talk – but that is not the agenda.

The theme of this year's conference which will be attended by 1200 delegates from around the world is 'Making Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.' Why would you *not* want to attend a conference like that!

Andrew and I look forward to reporting back.

Unfortunately it coincides with a special meeting of the Bishops to consider a way ahead on the issue of human sexuality. But the Bishops know where this Diocese stands. We will have already met with Ma Whea together and I will be at that meeting.

I think it's time to move beyond this issue and focus on our vision for the Anglican Church in this part of Aotearoa/New Zealand and that is the point of this Charge.

We have a clear Diocesan vision that is exactly that – a Diocesan vision. It is an 'umbrella' vision under which every parish will develop its own strategic plan, or mission action plan – the two are synonymous. But they will reflect the vision and priorities laid out in the Diocesan plan.

And in doing so we might bring honour to Jesus who prayed *'My prayer is not for them (the disciples) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.'*

May God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us.

Amen.

Diocese of Nelson: Toward a 2020 Strategic Plan

'Where there is no vision, the people perish' ²
'Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed' ³
*'We are his house built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.
And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself'* ⁴

Part One: Introduction

Our purpose and our Vision

Why the Diocese of Nelson exists

The Diocese of Nelson exists to bring glory to God through vibrant, Christ-centred, Anglican communities of faith.

What we do

We build local communities of faith that radiate Christ through worship; fellowship; service and witness in such a way that lives are transformed. We minister with one another, in partnership as a diocese and regionally through deaneries.

Our Vision

1. To become mature people of prayer, realising our need of and dependence upon God, to seek him, wait upon him, and to be open to the guidance and anointing of the Holy Spirit as we seek to do his will.
2. To glorify God through worship that is corporate *and* personal; culturally relevant *and* transcendent; self denying *and* life-giving; yet always biblical.
3. To preach and teach in such a way that lives are transformed and people grow in discipleship.
4. To be a missional church, reaching out beyond ourselves (both at home and overseas) with acts of loving service and proclamation that radiate our commitment to Jesus.
5. To model 'authentic' community and be a church of grace that embraces and values people of all ages and circumstances in the redeeming love of Christ.

² Proverbs 29:18

³ Proverbs 16:3

⁴ Ephesians 2:19-22

Part Two: Strategic Aims and Priorities:

(to facilitate our vision – previous page)

1. To actively model and encourage the power of prayer.

- ***Strategic Intent (ideal)***

To become mature people of prayer, realising our need of and dependence upon God, to seek him, wait upon him, and to be open to the guidance and anointing of the Holy Spirit as we seek to do his will.

- ***Strategic Outcome (measurable)***

Encouragement of teaching and mentoring on prayer and prayer methods. The promotion and coordination of diocesan wide prayer days. Encouraging and equipping of intercessors in parishes – networking with intercessors across the diocese.

2. To encourage and evaluate the worship and discipleship of the Diocese.

- ***Strategic Intent***

To create a culture within our churches that encourages and models a selfless and obedient lifestyle amongst those who follow Christ.

- ***Strategic Outcome***

A greater commitment to and involvement in the ministry and mission of the church and increasing evidence of Christ like character.

3. Developing Leaders who can outwork the Diocesan vision.

- ***Strategic Intent:***

To develop confident, creative and spiritually healthy leaders across the diocese with a clear understanding of the gospel, discipleship and ministry as participating in the mission of God, reflecting a diversity of leadership styles and modes as appropriate to a range of ministry contexts, challenges and needs.

- ***Strategic Outcome:***

The identification, nurture and formation of a new generation of leaders (both lay and ordained) for fresh and reinvigorating ministry initiatives. To see existing leaders actively embracing opportunities to grow professionally for ministry with a clear sense of mission and outreach.

4. To actively engage and involve children, youth and families in the full life of the church

- ***Strategic Intent:***

Ensure that every parish is aware of the unique spirituality of children, youth and young adults, and looks for appropriate and strategic ways of responding.

- ***Strategic Outcome:***

To have key ministries to children, youth and young adults in each of our four regions that serve as a resource to the rest of the parishes in that region; ministry *to* and ministry *of* the children, youth and young adults.

5. To liberate the ministry gifts of older people.

- ***Strategic Intent***

To respect and value each older member of the church caring for those who can't care for themselves and encouraging every single member to discover where God is calling them to ministry involvement.

- ***Strategic Outcome:***

To have our older members discovering an outlet for their wisdom and energy

6. To be catalysts in moving from maintenance to mission.

- ***Strategic Intent:***

To ensure that every ministry unit is thinking and responding missionally.

- ***Strategic Outcome:***

To have new parish based and collaborative projects established in each deanery and to have a Diocesan budget that reflects the call of a missional church.