

ANGLICAN MEN'S SOCIETY

The National Council in Australia

NEWSLETTER

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FROM BISHOP JOHN STEAD - AMS National Chairman

Dear Brothers in Christ,

The gathering in Western Australia, at the St John of God Retreat Centre at Shoalwater, was a great time of camaraderie between those members of the Anglican Men's Society who were able to be there. This sense of unity extended to the spouses that were able to accompany their husbands. For many this was extended by participation in the organised excursions to the Margaret River Region before the National Council Gathering or to New Norcia after its conclusion.

The building of community by members of the AMS, most particularly the building of a Christian Community, is an important endeavour; not merely at the national level but at the Diocesan and local level also. Christian Community is not just built upon those things that we hold in common but is also founded upon the diversity that exists within that community – in background, interests, experience, personality, age, and so forth. True Christian Community is a microcosm of society; it is a reflection of society bounded together by faith in God through Jesus the Christ.

We are all very aware that the membership of AMS does not fully reflect the diversity of society. We could easily throw our hands in the air in despair; that is hardly a constructive approach, even though it may be understandable. I am by nature a 'half glass full person' rather than a 'half glass empty' one; I am an optimist, I hope not a pie-eyed optimist. We can move forward, with the human resource which are at our disposal, with the enthusiasm that members have demonstrated as an organisation that lives its mission.

'We seek to bring men to faith in Christ in the fellowship of the Anglican Church.'

Each of us can act in ways that fulfill that mission, it requires that we are confident in Christ, acknowledging that Christ companions us as we act and speak in ways that will bring men to faith.

As we journey toward Advent, the season of preparation for the great feast of Christmas tide, we can each identify someone who we know who is not a church attendee, either one who has never attended or one who used to attend but doesn't attend anymore. We can pray for them, that we become aware of what it is that prevents them from accepting the faith in their lives and for us then to pray that the thing that is preventing engagement may be torn down. We can then invite that person to join us at church or at an AMS gathering that is focussed upon being a welcoming community of faith. Those individuals may accept the invitation, they may not – and that is ok, success is extending the invitation, the bonus is acceptance of that invitation. If they accept the invitation, then arrange to pick them up and return them home – build the relationship.

If your local congregation is using Connect2Church then take advantage of the material that is available or access the material online, the website address is: <http://connect2church.org.au/>. There is particular material for Connect@Christmas.

We have ourselves and each other. We are the greatest resource that we have and can ever have. A Christian man, in this case, speaking to another man and inviting them to a genuine community a community of genuine camaraderie. And, in time bringing them to Christ.

Blessings

Bishop John Stead

AN IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT A SCAM BY PHONE OR E-MAIL.

If you are contacted by a foreign sound gent who claims to be an Anglican Bishop from South Africa and a personal friend of our Chairman - beware. He is seeking money and in particular \$975 for a flight from Manila to South Africa. Do not give any money as this is a scam as the perpetrator has been accessing information from the AMS Web Site. All those members listed with a phone number have been advised of this scam.

NATIONAL COUNCIL PERTH – 31st August, 2013.

The council meeting and activities were divided between three centres.

1. For four days before the Council meeting a party of 17 toured the South west based at the Legacy Camp at Busselton. **The Rev'd Keith Wheeler** as leader drove the bus and **Pauline** of the Kwinana Parish was the caterer extraordinaire. Keith as Chaplain passed the job to a new member each day. The party visited wineries, a chocolate factory, a lighthouse etc from Busselton to the Leeuwin Estate. The four days enabled us to get to know each other better and share in the Bible readings and enjoy this wonderful part of Australia.

2. The Council meeting was based at The St. John of God Retreat Centre , Shoalwater Bay where the amenities and catering were first class.

On Friday after dinner, our newly appointed National Chairman, **Bishop John Stead** spoke of his call to the ministry, his career, and his latest appointment as Bishop of the vast Willochra Diocese in S.A. He had brought along **The Rev'd David McDougall** from a coastal parish on the York Peninsula. At the Monday morning Eucharist Bishop John was inducted into his office by the Rector of Warnbro (also Chaplain to Perth AMS) and this was followed by the admission of David as an AMS member. Three speakers addressed the Council Meeting which had delegates from Brisbane, Newcastle, Melbourne, Tasmania, Perth and Willochra Dioceses.

A. The first speaker was **The Rev'd Stuart Fenner**, parish of Swan Valley, Perth diocese. He spoke of growing up in the absence of his father and relying on the Church and the priest as a father figure. He developed an interest in youth work, Scouting and teaching and helping children at risk. He drifted away from the church and returned after marriage and the birth of three sons. As a priest he has developed and runs men and boys camps in a rural setting with Peter Harrison of Southern Cross. In Australian culture there is no initiation to mark the transition from boy to manhood and he structures the camps to mark this transition. With an emphasis on the **Inner Journey**. courage and perseverance and encouragement. With the older men he teaches about life, successes and failures and how men handle these events. 'Life is not about me' but boys and men are part of a greater creation and the Christian life.

B. The second speaker was **The Rev'd David McDougall**, parish priest of the Copper coast with three centres, in the Diocese of Willochra. After speaking about his early life and coming to the priesthood, he spoke on HERO (Jesus is the only real hero) with Christians in community giving themselves away. He notes 14 and 15 year-olds have "blossoming" brain cells which are lost unless challenged.

Real men do not compete with children(or with women); after 40 it should not be about me but being for others, putting aside ego, growing graciously, AMS purpose is MISSIONAL, (God's mission) otherwise members 'dry up' and expend themselves.

NEEDS (not ours, but society) + GIFTS (us, resources) = MINISTRY. The Church can be well resourced but also pessimistic (we're too old, tired, useless). In his parish he has men restoring a boat and developing a community garden.

The next theme was **we are all one in Christ**. The need to see God all around us in the world. "Our young men have had the rug pulled from under them, they are in crisis", so young men need initiation, otherwise they will grow up with false "Transcendence"; they need to encounter something authentic; let the young take risks. Real transcendence is LOVE.

Concluding, he referred to the New Zealand film "Once Were Warriors" and the Road to Emmaus experience (Luke 24)

C. Bishop Michael Challen and **Dr. Ian Illico** are in the middle of a review of both CEBS and AMS in Australia. His address took the form of a work in progress report.

After lunch **Bishop Michael Challen** gave us a well considered account of where men are in the world today and reasons why they are not often seen in churches. He concluded with the following statement.

Recommended actions.

Jesus did call and presumably still calls men to be apostles or disciples. The Gospel is for all males, young and old as well as females. Christ leaves us no option but to move forward, leaving past glories and short comings behind. We will need to commit ourselves to this male ministry even if society at large is suspicious of those men, and women, who wish to assist the development of boys and young men. We need to pursue this mission even if many of our Bishops at the best are indifferent and at the worst are opposed to such ministries.

Some principles to be observed are:-

1. Assist men and boys to own and express both their masculinity and femininity.
2. Commit ourselves to clear, defined goals being agents of Christ's mission and not a self-serving introverted club.
3. Assist men to identify, enjoy and be directed by transcendental/numinous.
4. Meet in a manner which resonates with local culture.
5. Create an external support structure which enables members to experience the wider world and the wider Church, which provides support for those individual groups and is a reservoir of ideas concerning the what and the how of men's ministry
6. Ensure that all meetings are purposeful, innovative, crisply run, leads to action and confers tasks on the majority of members. Office-bearers to rotate bi-annually.

+Michael B. Challen

Following the Conference Dinner **Archbishop Roger Herft** spoke to the delegates and wives about his attendance that day at a coastal parish in the Perth Diocese. The local parishioners were against the formation of an Anglican Community school in their area. The Archbishop said he was a little confused and disappointed with the parishioners attitude.

He followed this with a talk on Ephesians 6:10 where Paul instructs the Ephesians to "Put on the whole armour of God". A very impressive talk as the Archbishop spoke without any notes.

Following dinner on the Sunday evening delegates and wives formed into state-based teams for Trivial Pursuit with **Geoff. Leiper**, as the quiz master. A clergy based team also competed and staged withering burst in the final rounds to take the honours.

The post council meeting retreat was held at the Benedictine Monastery, New Norcia, 120km north of Perth, from Monday 2nd September to Wednesday 4th September, with 16 people present. **The Rev'd**

Keith Wheeler was again in charge of the bus and the retreat chaplain, and provided the Monday picnic lunch. Travelling north from Shoalwater Bay stops were made at Booragoon to admire the Hollett's garden, King's Park to see the wild flower display, Middle Swan for lunch at All Saints' 1841 church and Bindoon for afternoon tea.

Monday at New Norcia was informal, the monks having a day off from offices and a refectory dinner after a week-long retreat. On Tuesday, New Norcia resumed its full daily programme, with us attending 7.30am Mass and some of the daily offices. **The Rev'd Keith** introduced us to ideas from "Silence and Honey Cakes" by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. For Jesus the Cross equalled MY LOVE (our sins second). Let go of things - be healed. Don't detach ourselves from events and people, as "our life and death are with our neighbour". Learn to love God and people; our whole purpose is to win people for God; "never judge them at all". Neighbours need acceptance. Don't intrude between God and other people. Instead of giving to people, show them what/ who you are.

Silence is foundational. We must be healed of our wounds; then we can heal other people. For the second session The Rev'd Keith asked each person to select a small rock or stone, "A Bondy", and meditate on its significance and meaning and report at the evening session.

Each participant (including the ladies) had the opportunity to eat with the monks (only 9 monks there now) in the refectory.

On Wednesday a bus tour of the New Norcia township was good for photographs and the afternoon was spent retracing our steps to Perth Airport and Perth drop offs.

*The editor's thanks go to Perth member, **Paul Duncan**, for reporting on the Council programme.*

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

With a surfeit of guest speakers the business session was reduced to 90 minutes. The Secretary commented on the growing importance of the Web page as a mean of connecting with the younger generation. This year the site resulted in two new members joining the Anglican Men's Network from Whangarei, NZ. They have started a men's group in the Whangarei parish. Similarly at St. Luke's, Toowoomba a men's group has been formed as a result contact via the Web Site. It is important to keep the Site relevant and up to date with branch programs, contact person details, and photos.

It was decided to continue our support for the Amani Centre in Tanzania with some funds directed to an Orphanage in Dodoma. This orphanage support was recommended by Ivan & Val Peters of Laidley, Qld who have been involved in this project for many years. Delegates voted for a donation of \$500 to go via Hearts for Africa in Brisbane.

Constitutional matters were discussed - Junior members, Admission of ladies, rules for membership. It was agreed that the Constitution should be reviewed (last update was 1999) are a committee of the National Chairman, S. Humphreys, T. Cowell and The Rev'd G. Varvell are to undertake this review.

The AMS diaries for 2014 are now available at a subsidised cost of \$4 each. For 2015 the diaries will cost \$6 each which reflects the actual cost. It was decided purchase and sell the 2015 diaries on this basis. It was recommended that the Revised AMS Service be added to the 2015 Diaries Affiliation Fees for 2015 are unchanged at \$15 per member.

Aid to Refugees - A. Oosting brought to the meeting the need to assist refugees as AMS had been very active after WW2 in assisting migrants to settle in a new country. The community is facing the same problem and only the name has changed - Refugees in place of Migrants.

Future National conferences for 2014 it is hoped that the Clare County Club, Clare SA could be available (a tentative booking has been made 29th Aug to 1st Sept.). In 2015 Newcastle to be considered. The frequency of the National Council meetings is to be part of the Constitutional review.

BISHOP APPOINTED TO THE DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

The Rt. Reverend Greg Thompson, Bishop of Northern Territory has been appointed as the new Bishop of the Newcastle Diocese. He will be installed as Bishop at Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle on 2nd February, 2014.

IDEAS FROM RON HOLLETT - Perth Diocese

How do you expect to find ways of defining regeneration?

You have to be able to understand what you stand for, your strengths and weaknesses. You need to identify your preparedness to be challenged and know what this will actually involve in resources. You also need to be prepared to say you will or will not become committed.

Commitment is what living is all about.

We know A.M.S. has a history of successful ministry. It truly belongs in the past. We have a wonderful bond of friendship and personal commitment. We can magnify our strengths with a willingness to take large strides – yes, a big movement forward.

There will always be ideas and when we cease to listen, to evaluate and be responsive, we become static. This is recognised in the theory of evolution of a living species to be the beginning of the end. Our time is now if we are to breathe new life into A.M.S.

One such idea for consideration is the concept of sheds on wheels.

There are thousands of grey nomads out there on the road. They may be full time or part time. There are also young families working along the road. Some have taken leave from work for various periods of time. They will all have varying experiences with church.

Consider the potential of church families who could respond to invitations to come together to “Witness, Fellowship and Service”.

What can we offer?

In the immediate now time, a national conference rally with the emphasis on establishing outreach – a mission where Christians can share their sense of belonging in this present time.

For A.M.S. to launch into outreach providing the stimuli, challenges and programmes that will revitalize our mission and will be seen as “Not for Ourselves Alone” is essential.

It should be clearly understood that the concept is not to become another club – we should be a complimentary provider, a value added contributor, where people of faith can celebrate and establish a communion from this common ground and can grow an abundant harvest.

Finally it is not intended in launching this challenge, that “sheds on wheels” will be the basic essential, far from this – they are add-ons. What is essential is OUR MISSION to reach outside our present catchment and to identify an example of a resource waiting to be recognised. What is going to be essential is identifying locations, accommodation for residential living or alternative accommodation, eating and meeting spaces. Caravan parks or showgrounds have the potential to offer numerous facilities.

Can you recall the hymn “What will you do for Jesus - when the call comes?”

PRAYER & PRAISE

I have promised 'In the power of the Holy Spirit to pray to God every day, to be a faithful communicant and by active witness, fellowship and service, to help forward the Kingdom of Christ'.

We give thanks for the safe travel involved with the National Council Meeting, the planning and care that went into the activities of the tours and the Council meeting. We pray for all members and families on the sick list and their carers.

Please pray for: Bishop Tom Wilmot, Pam Leiper, Stan Boreham, Max Robinson, The Rev'd Keith Wheeler mourning his brother.

AN EASY APPLE SLICE

2 cups SR flour, 1 Cup Sugar, 1 beaten Egg, 3 Apples peeled and sliced, 4 ozs melted Butter

Mix ingredients by hand in a bowl. Place a layer of apple in a lined oven tray then add mixture. Add further layer(s) to use all the apple. Sprinkle with Cinnamon Sugar and place in oven 180° for 30 minutes. *This recipe looks a bit short on! but it has been road tested by the Editor several times and it does work!!*

BOOK REVIEWS

Speechless – A Year in My Father's Business by James Button published by Melbourne University Press in 2012. James Button the son of John Button works for a year in Canberra as a speech writer for Kevin Rudd when PM (mark 1). A very interesting description of the workings of the Commonwealth Public Service as against the role of Politicians and their advisors (often called the spin doctors). A very interesting and well written book.

Henry Lawson – A Stranger on the Darling by Alan Barton & Robyn Burrows – Published by Angus and Robertson 1996 A very well researched book about Henry Lawson's days as a rouseabout in shearing sheds along the Darling River and his days in Bourke (1890 - 1892)

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AN ARTICLE BY OUR NEWEST MEMBER

The Rev'd David McDougall (Willochra Diocese) was inducted as a member of AMS at the Perth Council meeting. He has written an article about his impressions of the National Council Meeting. This can be found on the **AMS WEB PAGE:** www.amsnational.org.au

GREETINGS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Bishop John Stead, Bishop Tom Wilmot and members of the National Executive send their greetings and best wishes to all AMS members and families for this year's Advent and Christmas seasons.
