

BISHOP'S CHARGE DIOCESAN SYNOD 2018

The Most Reverend Philip Richardson

Kia whakakorōria ki te Atua i runga rawa, kia mau te rongō ki runga ki te whenua, kia pai te whakaaro ki nga tangata katoa.

Hōnore ki te Arikinui te Kingi ko Tūheitia. Ki te kāhui ariki katoa, ma te Atua rātou e manaaki e tiaki i nga wā katoa. Ki te waka Tainui tēnā koutou. Ki te iwi o Ngāti Maniapoto, tēnā koutou. Ki te Pīhopatanga o Aotearoa ki te Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke, tēnā koutou.

E te maungatapu e tū ra, ko Taranaki, tēnā koe: ki te waka Tokomaru, te waka Aotea, te waka Kurahaupō, tēnā koutou. Nga mihi nui ki te Pīhopatanga o Aotearoa ki te Amorangi ki te Upoko o Te Ika.

We have glorified God with the first language of this country.

We have honoured Kīngi Tuheitia and his household, we have greeted the Tainui tribal confederation, including Ngāti Maniapoto, as well as our partners in mission from the Maori Bishopric of Te Manawa o Te Wheke.

We have acknowledged the presence of the sacred mountain of Taranaki. We have acknowledged the Taranaki tribes as well as our partners in mission from the Maori Bishopric of Te Upoko O Te Ika.

Thanks

Thanks to all of you who gather for this synod – you have had two synods this year – which is probably one too many!! However, this is my fourth Synod and my fourth Charge. I want to thank my very good friend and colleague Jeremy Johnson who is the acting Chancellor for this Synod. Jeremy is the Chancellor of the Diocese of Christchurch and one of my two Primatial legal advisors. Jeremy has, more than anyone I know, worked tirelessly to assist the Church to address the challenge of facing into the realities of identity in Christ and human sexuality. He has brought grace, dignity, intelligence and experience. I am in his debt, the Church is in his debt. He is a passionate disciple of Jesus and an inspiration to me.

My thanks particularly to the senior leadership team of this Diocese who have carried significant additional demands and workload since the beginning of this year. You are absolute stars and it is a genuine privilege to call you my colleagues

I want to acknowledge Belinda and our children who have been so patient and kind in the face of my absences. I love you more than I can find adequate words to express.

In Memoriam

For those who have served the Diocese, and this Synod in particular, who have died during this last year we give thanks to God. And we also hold the many others known to each of us here tonight in this moment of thanksgiving. ***The names of those notified to the Bishops office will be included in the final version of this Charge for the record of the Diocese. They include; the Reverend Geoff Ginevar, Mr Ian Mitchell.***

Please stand. *May they rest in peace and rise in glory*

Artirikona Tikituterangi Raumati

Archdeacon Tiki could trace his whakapapa back over 1,000 years. They say every great preacher really only has one sermon and many ways of saying the same thing! Tiki had three sermons: "The truth shall set you free", "peace at all costs", "he tangata, he tangata, he tangata". Rooted in whakapapa and whenua, - Gospel driven proclamation.

These simple Gospel messages straddle the fault lines between Maori and Pakeha in Church and Society. In the end we will all, in the prophetic words of Te Whiti o Rongomai, be speckled potatoes, we will all be of mixed whakapapa Maori and Pakeha, all that might divide us from our past and present will be drawn together – so honestly face the past and we will be liberated for a new future, a society based on peace, truth, justice and right-relationship.

Much to the consternation of many, Tikituterangi – great, great grandson of Te Whiti o Rongomai - asked to be buried in the churchyard at St Mary's New Plymouth; a conflicted and difficult space, especially for Maori. This Church stood on one side of the war that saw the illegal confiscation of all land from Taranaki Maori. In death he wanted to build bridges, to help us face into our history in order to build a future for our children and their children. That was his life's work. We are all into this together. For him this was the message of the cross, the message of the Gospel. This was the focus of his discipleship of Jesus. So he asked to lie next to the soldiers and the Crown agents who took the land of his people. ***Reconciliation is the Gospel:*** It cost the life of the son of God. Reconciliation is almost unknown - we have peace in many places but that is not reconciliation. That deep God-given gift: that takes time, sacrifice, perseverance, honesty, it is costly – it cost the life of the son of God. Presence is essential in reconciliation. You have to be there it is intergenerational work.

Manawa o te Wheke and Upoko o te Ika

The past year has seen considerable deepening of our relationships with nga Amorangi o te Manawa o te Wheke me te Upoko o te Ika. This has been at a local level and at a Diocesan level. In particular it is wonderful to welcome our partner in mission the Reverend Ngira Simmonds. Ngira you are highly respected and you are among family. Your role as Manutaki is demanding and wide ranging. Whatever we can do to support your ministry we will try to do. We need to address our common mission collaboratively and distinctively. We will seek to be good partners. Thank you for being here.

Repeating the heart of it:

Over the years, in successive Bishop's Charges, we have repeatedly identified that there are three intersecting priorities in the proclamation of the Gospel, three points of focus:

**worship / prayer / thanksgiving; discipleship/ formation / education;
commitment to community / service / outreach -evangelism.**

To repeat the heart of it: *the Gospel that Jesus and all the New Testament writers proclaimed was simply "the present availability of life in the Kingdom of God to everyone through trusting Jesus"*. It's the good news that you can begin a new kind of life with God right now by placing your trust in Jesus and his words. It's an invitation to participate now in the life of God, joining him in what he's doing right now on Earth. Life under God's rule is available to anyone who wants it, and we enter that life by trusting Jesus (which is what "believing in" him means). That's the good news Jesus and the apostles preached.

As we live out and incarnate this gospel, we also need to be ready to "give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have" (1 Peter 3: 15). We need to be ready to tell someone the good news when the opportunity arises, with gentleness and respect, of course, but also with clarity and boldness. But there's a challenge for us here: When was the last time someone asked you to give the reason for the hope (or faith or love) you have? It's easy to become consumed by coming up with answers to questions that nobody is asking, rather than focusing on living authentically faithful lives in close enough proximity to people who might actually ask us some questions about the hope we have!

State of the Diocese:

Let me talk a little about the state of the Diocese. The Road Map presentation tomorrow will provide the third update on the work that has been undertaken by many people to address the serious financial, governance and management challenges we have had to face in the Diocese. We **are** facing squarely into some up-hill challenges.

Our congregations are growing older, there is decline in attendances and traditional congregational life is tough. It is hard to make traditional congregational life work in the midst of significant social trends that have been going on for decades. This is especially true if we wish to remain embedded in particular communities, serving the whole community. "Gathered" congregations are sustainable especially in large urban areas.. Bishop Helen-Ann and I detailed these social trends in the Synod Charge last year, based largely on the research work of Dr Kevin Ward over the past 40 years. So much of this will not to be addressed by 'doing what we have always done harder or better'.

Here is the key message from last year: ***belonging needs to happen before believing can occur.*** And this is the key question: *How do our churches become the kinds of communities to which those completely outside the Church may make come kind of connection, and therefore might possibly someday end up belonging, and so eventually come to believe?*

All of that said, it has been my privilege to visit many communities across the Diocese and indeed across the country where this 'place to belong' has been very evident. Those visits have shown me some remarkable examples of "mission against the odds". Just to mention two. I had a great visit to Katikati earlier this year. The Reverend Brendon Gibbs has been there as Vicar for as long as I have been a bishop in the Diocese. It is a strong, diverse, positive congregation with a varied range of ministries and responses to the local town and district. In no small part this is due to Brendon's leadership. It was abundantly clear to me just how embedded in that community he is. His intimate knowledge of the people and their lives, his clear delight in them and the way his life is woven with theirs. This is the heart of ordained ministry, faithful, deliberate, dealing with the ordinary stuff. Ordinary - extraordinary ministry!

Another visit that touched me was a recent visit to St Mark's Nawton, to Joel and Suzanne Rowse. They kept telling me how ordinary their ministry is, how they were doing nothing particularly innovative. Well I am not sure I agree! Again what I witnessed is a deep commitment to that community and its people, faithful, resilient, surprised by how God won't let them leave. People clearly have a place to belong. This was deeply sacrificial ministry.

There is great strength and courage in these types of ministries and I honour them. I am delighted in all sorts of signs of God's faithfulness in the Diocese. The way God honours our endeavours. Here is a list of many but let me highlight a few:

- **23 younger people (in their 20's and 30's) offering themselves for ministry across the Diocese over past 3 years:**
- Food Together
- **Marfell Community Housing Opportunity**
- Recycle a Bicycle and Red Cross relationship
- **Waitara Community: Jared and Jess Dixon – sacrificial, intentional engagement with those on the edge.**
- New Youth Programmes in Waikato and Taranaki
- **Seasons for Growth in Hamilton**
- Collaboration with Auckland and Waiapu over discernment
- **Collaboration with Te Manawa o Te Wheke (25 years+)**
- Kuching Exchange resulting in increased collaboration and new youth exchanges
- Hamilton Urban Deanery
- Missional collaboration in Hamilton: Anglican Action plus Claudelands
- Lay Leader of a Cooperating Parish: Heather Major
- **LiFT Programme: technology, educational quality, 160 people over two years aged from under 10 to over 80**
- Two new PhD students in theology for Diocesan Clergy
- Funding for new narrative web portal
- **Funding for new youth Catechesis resource.**
- Funding for Provincial App with significant Waikato and Taranaki input: eKarakia
- **Introduction of Good Soil Collective (3DM) to Diocese**
- **EfM made available for up to 120 people**
- New regular online communication FREE
- New regular Bishop's Training Days for clergy
- New stewardship resource made available

- Formal exploration and promotion of Parish Nursing
- Normalised use of online feedback and registration tools
- New community Garden at St David's and St George's (Dinsdale) directly benefitting school children and families
- **Two new Selwyn Centres (Chartwell and Dinsdale)**
- Collaboration with Te Rautini providing significant income to Dinsdale, refurbished interior, and youth worker(s)
- New lay Deans in North Taranaki with the "Workshop" project underway
- Archdeacons with portfolios: demonstrating delegation and experimentation

I want to pay tribute to the leadership of the Diocesan Manager and the small Diocesan administration team and the greater interdependence which is growing with the Bishop's Staff team.

1. Diocesan Staff:
 - a. Additional staff capacity within the Diocesan Office within existing budgets
 - b. Increasingly vibrant office environment
 - c. Rhythm of annual staff reviews introduced
2. Finances:
 - a. Balanced 2019 operating budget
 - b. Revised Parish Accounting fee structure using assessment formula and continuing to be subsidised
3. Refreshed Finance and Audit and MMRS committees operating
4. Developing partnership with Manawa o Te Wheke including prospect of co-location with Rev Ngira Simmonds.
5. Growing policy and guidelines portfolio addressing key issues
6. Growing understanding of the management requirements for the future of the Diocese

I want to also affirm:

1. Trust Management are providing up to date, easy to access and robust financial reporting and analysis and we are developing an increasingly positive and proactive relationship;
2. Diocesan team have responded to changes and additions really well and continue to embrace new challenges and opportunities;
3. Stephen Black for his enthusiasm for exploring what might be in his role as Director of Vocations;
4. Robin Brockie as Executive Financial Governor for his continuing insight and analysis over financial matters across the entire Diocesan structure;
5. Bishop's Staff for engaging on a journey about their growing leadership role
6. Standing Committee for working with a new management approach and allowing time to test this

Embedded Communities

The bishops spoke last year about a major initiative to develop a range of self-sustaining embedded communities.

Small communities of Christians, embedded in our towns and suburbs, living out a rule of life with a focus on

- Prayer - a daily rhythm of prayer
- Discipleship – lifelong commitment to growing into Christ and intentional discipling of others
- Service – particularly of those most vulnerable and marginalized in our society

What might these look like? (from the 2017 Bishops' Charge)

- A group of families and individuals living in their own homes who gather together for prayer and eucharist, intentional reflection on what it means to be disciples, and committed in their local context to serving the last, the lost and the least
- A couple of houses in the Catalyst housing initiative which Simon Cayley will speak about tomorrow, one house could be home to a family who commit to that community long term while the other house is for others to come for shorter periods of time to be part of the ministry of that place.
- A retreat centre with a focus on healing and education, spiritual formation and refuge. Again with a small community of hosts at it's heart offering hospitality and committed to prayer, discipleship and service.
- A social enterprise such as a cafe with a couple of families owning and running it, as a means of income and community connection.
- A social enterprise responding to employment among young men run by members of one of the embedded communities.
- An embedded community offering support to young people in one of our smaller towns where there is little for young people to do and where gang culture is strongly determinative.
- What would it look like if an embedded community of young adults was linked to one of our schools and involved in the provision and training of Chaplaincy.
- Or a community associated with the life and ministry of our Cathedrals?
- There are some exciting possibilities for partnership with Manawa o te Wheke and Upoko o te Ika in a number of our communities.
- A current discussion is taking place about what a relationship between some of these embedded communities and our Theological College St John's College might look like. Perhaps with students living in one of the embedded communities within our Diocese while continuing with their studies. So for a period, say a year, their theological training and education will be from within the context of this disciplined life of prayer, intentional discipleship and service.

So this new mode of being, which is as old as our faith, might be that, instead of the vicar in the vicarage, the local expression of ministry and mission could be a small community of Christians living in a way that commends the gospel to the wider community in which they are set. It is not hard to imagine that this way of being church would also have an impact on how we might gather the local Christian community together for Sunday worship. We are seeing the establishment of such communities in a number of places in the Diocese. By next year Synod we will have some of these speaking for themselves.

Bishops staff team:

I want to particularly acknowledge the Bishop's Staff team: Archdeacons, Deans, Diocesan Manager and Director of Vocations. My goodness you have stepped up. To the Reverend Sue Burns, thank you so much for working with us at each meeting, helping us to build a healthy culture, and to help us reflect carefully and strategically.

Archdeaconry developments:

I signalled at our special Synod in January that I believed smaller clusters of parishes was important to foster closer relationships, inter-dependence in mission and mutual support. I have been deeply grateful for the hard work of Trevor Harrison, Christine Scott, Paul Weeding, Joyce Marcon, Val Riches and Malcolm French. In Waikato Archdeaconry the model of co-Archdeacons seems to be working well with Paul and Joyce supporting each other while also having particular ministry units they give particular attention to individually. In Piako we are moving to splitting that large and spread out Archdeaconry into two. This will happen immediately following this Synod after final consultation with ministry units about where the line will fall. Archdeacon Malcolm will be responsible for the southern part of Piako. Val Riches has served this Diocese at the most senior level throughout her ministry career. She has been an archdeacon in two archdeaconries and Vicar General for an extended period. She brings wisdom, compassion and an extraordinarily generous spirit to everything she does. Val has indicated to me that she wishes to step down as Archdeacon and while I am sad about that, and will miss her experience and knowledge of the Diocese from Bishop's Staff, I have had to agree that the time is right in order for her to be able give greater focus to some exciting ministry developments. I am very pleased to announce that the Reverend Terry Ellis has accepted my invitation to serve the northern part of Piako as Archdeacon. Terry has served as a priest throughout the Diocese and in Paeroa for a significant period of time. He also shared his considerable passion and skill as part time diocesan children and family worker for a number of years. Terry brings a humble, pastoral heart to the Bishop's staff team and I am looking forward to his perspective and his wisdom.

Archdeacons are also picking up specific portfolios and I am grateful that Val will continue to chair Boards of Nomination in the Waikato.

Episcopal leadership going forward

In 1997 this Synod agreed to the amalgamation of the northern parishes of the Diocese of Wellington into the Diocese of Waikato. At the same Synod final agreement was reached on the establishment of a second Bishop for the Diocese. At General Synod in 1998 these developments were approved and on the 14th of February 1999 at Stratford in Taranaki an electoral college of the Diocese elected me as the first bishop in Taranaki. In 2008 the General Synod made the necessary constitutional changes to enable two bishops to share the one position of Diocesan bishop. A first for the Anglican Communion. Dual Episcopacy in that formal sense has lasted for a decade. With the resignation of Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley and the recognition that funding from the Episcopal endowment had not been enough to cover the costs of the Bishops for some years we resolved on the 20th of January this year that I would be the sole bishop in the

Diocese. It was agreed that each subsequent synod would receive a report on progress towards resolving matters in a way that would allow consideration of a second bishop. More will be said about financial realities in the “Road Map” update tomorrow. But in short income from the endowment has shrunk, and despite significant cost cutting over the years and especially with only one bishop, we still are not breaking even. Steps are being taken to address that which will be described tomorrow, however I can say that three years ago I wrote a paper for the SJCTB setting out an argument for St John’s funding for the ministry of Bishops. This, after extensive consultation has been approved and from 2019 some funding will be available. This will allow our current structure of one bishop to be fully funded next year and to provide support for those who carry the load of shared leadership.

However I need to say as clearly as I can that the point made by Bishop David Moxon in 1997 that this large and diverse Diocese cannot be adequately led in mission by one bishop remains true. A bishop has unique missional opportunities across Church and Society. Such leadership is necessary in both Waikato *and* Taranaki. Setting aside the matter of funding we need to urgently address the shape of leadership going forward.

To this end I am intending to appoint a small commission to explore all options. This Commission will be made up of up-to three commissioners from outside the Diocese but will be supported by an advisory group drawn from Standing Committee and Bishop’s Staff.

I will announce further details within the month.

Primacy

It is true this has been a demanding period to be Primate of the Church in some way a perfect storm. Not only an unprecedented number of changes in episcopal leadership across the province but also generational shifts in leadership of the other two Tikanga which has on several occasions left me feeling as though I was the ‘last primate standing’. We have also had an unprecedented number of complaints to deal with and my small office has been under constant pressure as a result. One of the many reasons I am so grateful to Jeremy Johnson is because of some work he and a colleague are doing for us which will provide a strong and consistent way of addressing complaints.

The passing of Motion 7 at General Synod marked a significant decision point in a process which has been in train since the first Commission on Human sexuality in 1976. The need to facilitate and support processes, especially in the Diocese of Christchurch to support those individuals wishing to disaffiliate, has been demanding and time consuming the fact that this coincided with an episcopal vacancy in that Diocese added to the challenges. I am grateful for the leadership Archbishop David Moxon provided through the electoral process in Christchurch and the role other bishop will provide in the upcoming Episcopal vacancy in Nelson.

All that said the opportunity to lead this Church at a critical time has been a profound privilege and I am grateful for the support of colleagues and the Grace of our loving God.

Kuching

Finally a word about the relationship with the Diocese of Kuching. This has spanned more than 25 years and is a fruitful as it has ever been. The Bishop of Kuching, bishop Danald and Julita have just left the Diocese with a strong commitment to deepen the partnership and to widen it to include our brothers and sisters in Manawa o te Wheke.

Remember the three points of focus we have had before us over the last 5 years in different forms: **worship / prayer / thanksgiving**; **discipleship/ formation / education**; **commitment to community / service / outreach -evangelism**.

Can I leave you with a ***simple vision that can guide us over the next year:***

*As the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki we are **family**,
we are **disciples**, we are **servants**.*