

Apprenticed for Mission

□ Bishop's Cathedral Convention explores discipleship

By Lewis Hitchick

Keynote speaker at the Bishop's Cathedral Convention in Goulburn on Saturday May 16, Dr Alison Morgan, issued a strong challenge to the 450-strong gathering, to take seriously the role they have been called to as disciples.

Bishop Ian Palmer and a few others from Bathurst Diocese attended the convention.

The UK-based Dr Morgan, who has developed a discipleship program entitled *Rooted in Jesus* for use in African countries, presented three sessions at the one-day convention.

In welcoming the large crowd to St Saviour's Cathedral on Saturday morning, Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn Stuart Robinson also welcomed the Bishop of Riverina, Rob Gillion, Bishop of Bathurst Ian Palmer and the Primate, Archbishop Philip Freier.

Speaking on the theme, *Apprenticed for Mission*, Dr Morgan compared discipleship to an apprenticeship, where through on-the-job training the apprentice learns to become like the teacher.

"Jesus didn't teach his disciples in a classroom, he taught them in an apprenticeship style," she said in her first session, 'Called as disciples of Jesus'. "It's about making disciples, not just being disciples."

However, she stressed that this was not an individual process, but a community one: "You cannot be a disciple alone ... discipleship is about relationship."

She pointed out that while the first three Gospels refer to disciples, the word is not used in the writings of John, Paul, James or Peter. However, they do use the word *ecclesia* – which we translate as 'church', and which she described as a collective noun referring to "the called out".

"The plural of disciple is church," she said, referring to the title of her most recent book which explores this concept in detail.



DISCIPLE OR VOLUNTEER? *Dr Alison Morgan challenged her audience when she said 'Jesus is not looking for volunteers; he's looking for disciples'.*

Quoting former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, she said that church was not a collection of individuals meeting once a week, but was "what happens when people encounter the Risen Jesus and commit themselves to sustaining and deepening that encounter in their encounter with each other".

Dr Morgan said, "Jesus starts by saying to us, 'Come' - but he ends by saying 'Go' - sending us out with a purpose: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit ..."

She cautioned that disciples "also need to embrace the possibility of pain". "Jesus said, 'Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me'."

"Many church members have problems because they have not yet decided to follow Jesus," she suggested, and illustrated this with a story of a woman she encountered at a parish mission planning meeting.

When presented with an outline of the workload that would be associated with

the mission, this woman had said: "We are only volunteers, you know."

Dr Morgan said she had responded, "The problem is, Jesus is not looking for volunteers; he's looking for disciples."

She concluded her first session with a question: "Do you see yourselves as volunteers, or disciples?"

In her second session at the Convention, 'Living in God's story', Dr Morgan suggested that "we live in a world that is like a television story", and we each try to find our own part in that story in an attempt to make sense of life.

She pointed out that throughout history, every culture has told its own story in an attempt to "define the values, priorities and assumptions that shape the lives of those who live within that story".

"But then the Bible, too, tells a story, with rather different assumptions, values and priorities – and we'd like to find our part in that story too."

She said that one of the biggest problems that disciples of Jesus face, is that the world's story and the Bible's story are not the same.

(continued on page 3)

Marriage: a vital building block in social structure

An open letter to Mark Coulton MP, Member for Parkes, from the Rt Revd Ian Palmer, Bishop of Bathurst and Rector of Dubbo

Dear Mark,

I'm taking the liberty of writing to you since a website about Marriage Equality says that you are one of the members of Parliament who are undecided on this issue.

An Anglican bishop writing about marriage needs to be careful, after all in 16th Century England our church broke away from the Roman church because of King Henry VIII – a man with six wives!

Of course, the church does not own marriage. Marriage, of a man and a woman in a life-long relationship is a pre-Christian, pre-political institution. It has been a building block of society down the centuries and across the world. Even civilisations that have had strong homosexual relationships, like ancient Greece, have kept marriage for a man and a woman.

In fact one of the challenges we face in Australia is that our country is host to people from around 200 different countries, most of which do not support same-sex marriage. These include many thousands of vulnerable people who don't have much of a voice. Those advocating marriage equality conveniently forget that of the 193 countries represented in the United Nations only 19 have agreed to same-sex marriage.

The catch-cry "marriage equality" has an immediate appeal to it. Justice demands that I treat people fairly, but not always the same. Difference is also important. I do not march on ANZAC Day because I've never served with the ADF nor been a cadet. However, I'm no less an Australian citizen than they are, with similar privileges and responsibilities but our lives have taken different routes.

The church teaches that every person is unique and special, created in the image of God and loved by God. Therefore, I oppose intolerance, unfairness, bigotry, homophobia or vilification of any kind. I support people in same-sex relationships having the same rights and privileges as those who are married. My concern is that marriage is different to other relationships: like a bolt is different to a nail but no less useful.

In Australia, the 1961 Marriage Act did not define marriage because everyone knew what marriage is. In 2004 when the definition "the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life" was inserted into the Act, no Member of Parliament voted against it. Marriage has been an institution in a wide variety of cultures, not because it describes a love-relationship between a man and a woman, but because it protects vulnerable people, especially women and children.

As a marriage celebrant I've taken the weddings of hundreds of couples, very many of whom have lived together for years. But when children have been planned or born, the couples come wanting to marry so that their children have a family unit to belong to – it's for the child's well-being and protection.

Despite what is so often said, there is overwhelming evidence that children fare best when raised in a loving relationship by their natural parents.

That's what marriage is about. Despite what is so often said, there is overwhelming evidence that children fare best when raised in a loving relationship by their natural parents. Children, growing up, want a father and a mother.

People say that, "if two people love each other they should be allowed to marry." It sounds fair but it is not the reason for marriage. The word "love" does not appear as a prerequisite in the Marriage Act! In the Anglican Marriage Service the couple do not express love but rather make a legal and binding commitment to each other for the good of society and the benefit of their children.

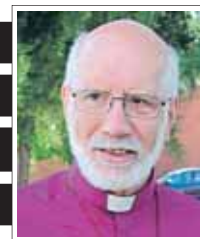
That's what marriage is about; it's about connecting things that are often fragmented: sex and love, male and female, sex and babies, parents and children. The teaching of the Old Testament, Jesus and St Paul, that in marriage two "opposites" become "one flesh" is profoundly true and not confined to Christianity.

BY

BISHOP

IAN

PALMER



In some ways, it's a pity I need to write to you about this matter because on the surface there are far more pressing matters, like employment security in regional Australia, the recognition of indigenous people or the treatment of refugees and children in detention.

However, this issue is important because a redefinition of marriage will change our society's understanding of family and relationships. In addition, it will put the church in a difficult place because, while we have always supported marriage, we may have to discriminate about which marriages we support. Instead of being an advocate for marriage the church may be seen as a 'spoiler'.

Perhaps more dangerously, 'marriage equality' has been heralded as a move towards tolerance and respect. Despite assurances to the contrary, in countries where gay people are allowed to marry, those who, on grounds of conscience, refuse to supply services for same-sex weddings are already being discriminated against and vilified.

The word 'marriage' has a very long history with a particular meaning. Friendships are essential for our welfare but they are different. Marriage is a covenant between a husband and wife to live exclusively with each other and provide a place of security where children can be born and nurtured.

I trust that this is helpful.

With every good wish,

+ Ian Bathurst.

—Anglican—

e-News

A newsletter for the western NSW Anglican Diocese of Bathurst

Editor:

Lew Hitchcock 62 6331 1722

email:

anglican.news@bathurstanglican.org.au

Web:

http://www.bathurstanglican.org.au/

Disclaimer:

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Apprenticed for mission (continued from page 1)

The world's story, she claimed, is told by the media, in regular news bulletins – to the extent that social philosopher Allain de Botton suggests that “the news has become our bible”.

However, this ‘bible’ is constantly interrupted by commercial breaks, “which broadcast, rather subtly, the same rather particular set of values which underpins the news stories – the values of consumerism”.

“The religion of western society is best described, one theologian suggests, is ‘theo-capitalism’.”

Citing the ease with which we can post comment on online news reports, or tell our own stories through social media sites, Alison Morgan said that we “live in a world characterised by an unprecedented explosion of connectivity”.

Kathleen Richardson, an academic whose research focuses on the use of social media, has said: “Experience - a thought, a feeling, an image – is steadily being reduced to data that can be posted online.”

In this way, according to Kathleen Richardson, “real life becomes mere material for the creation of a digital performance”.

However, Dr Morgan said her experience in African societies had shown her a very different cultural story, and this was in part what had caused her to “look so hard at our own western story”.

She highlighted three problems which the western story creates:

1. A crisis of purpose. She quoted journalist Clifford Longley, who wrote: ‘Having constructed a society of unprecedented sophistication, convenience and prosperity, nobody can remember what it was supposed to be for. Just enjoying it doesn't seem to be enough. Indeed, enjoyment as an end in itself quickly turns to ashes in the mouth. Not only is it boringly bland, it is even more Brinell purposeless. There is more to human life than comfort, entertainment and the avoidance of suffering.’

“Our story provides no coherent answer to the question, What is life all about?” she said.

2. A crisis of spirituality. Dr Morgan pointed out that in Australia there are more churches than schools, but she had been told that church attendance has declined by 48% in the last 10 years. The main reason people give for not attending, is that “church is not relevant to my



STRONG ATTENDANCE: An attendance of around 450 at the Bishop's Cathedral Convention saw most of the seating filled in Goulburn's St Saviour's Cathedral.

life”. She said that statistical research showed that people do still ask spiritual questions, but “they're no longer looking to find answers to them in church”.

3. A crisis in happiness. “For many people, daily life fails to deliver satisfaction,” she claimed. “People are realising that what they thought would make them happy, doesn't.” She said that our whole governance was based on the assumption that economic growth was the answer to everything, that happiness was directly linked to prosperity.

‘Countless surveys show that money, beyond a minimal level, has no bearing whatsoever on well-being.’

“But countless surveys show that money, beyond a minimal level, has no bearing whatsoever on well-being,” she said. “Indeed, it seems that far from being a solution, money is in fact part of the problem.”

Alison Morgan said we should not be seduced into the values of the society we live in – it is not our story; it is different from the story God has invited us to live in.

This is the Bible story – “the story of the people of God; it's your story”.

She said that Jesus had invited the ordinary men and women he met to step out of the familiar story they'd

grown up in, to change the direction of their lives and take an active part in the story of God.

“As we read the Gospels, we find a constant tension between the cultural story and the Kingdom story,” she observed. “But in his letter to the Philippians, Paul comes up with a new way of explaining the tension we experience as we try to live as Kingdom communities within the narrative of our culture. He reminds them that as followers of Jesus we may live here on Earth, but our true citizenship is in Heaven.

“But perhaps it's in Peter that we find the most helpful description of the difference between the two stories or two kingdoms: ‘Now that we have been reconciled to God, we live here as aliens and exiles’.”

We have only one life – and the choice of how we are going to live it must be our own choice, and not the one we let the world make for us.

CLERGY MOVES & APPOINTMENTS

◆ **Michelle Watterson** will be ordained Deacon in St George's Church, Parkes, on Saturday June 20, in a service commencing at 11.00am. All welcome.

Taking time out to 'smell the roses'

The Dean of All Saints' Cathedral, Anne Wentzl, last month spent several weeks exploring significant Christian historical sites in Scotland. She has written this brief reflection on her experience:

It was time to rekindle my imagination ... Reality often swamps us and paralyses our imagination.

Sometimes we need to hit the pause button.

We need to find time to let the mind play, relax, regenerate and give our souls a treat.

After two years without a lengthy holiday, I needed to find sanctuary. Close my eyes. Shut out the real world. Let my mind create its own. Enjoy the trip.

I found myself on the northern tip of Scotland at John O'Groats, boarding a ferry for the Orkney Islands. It was a very rough crossing with red plastic buckets supplied.

Walked the Ring of Brodgar – 36 pre-historic standing stones, by way of mud and ditches, but an exciting experience as the wind buffeted each walker from stone to stone, mysteriously emerging in a near perfect circle.

Time spent at St Magnus Cathedral in the main town of Kirkwall, Britain's most northerly Cathedral with a wedding underway! Despite minus temperature, the wedding party and guests all wore summer clothes. The cathedral was built



HISTORIC: A tour of Celtic Christianity sites would not be complete without a visit to the historic Isle of Iona, off the west coast of Scotland.

from red and yellow sandstone and dated back to 1137.

Enjoyed an Orkney Brewery and of course tasted the local ale and visited the fascinating remains of a 5,000 year old Neolithic Village.

Isle after isle, many ferry trips, breathtakingly wild and unspoiled scenery, miles of yellow sandy beaches and mountain after mountain. All rounded off with a traditional meal of Fish 'n' Chips in the quaint fishing port of Ullapool.

Many have travelled to the Isle of Skye and know its unending beauty, with its white houses perched on grassy slopes and let's not forget the sheep and lambs and more and more sheep and hundreds of lambs, blocking the road, running the wrong way, bleating for lost mother or baby.

Next was the Isle of Mull with its striking landscapes, weird rock formations and dramatic waterfalls

and gorges.

And the trip would not be complete without the beautiful Isle of Iona with its abbey and religious settlement. A perfect, warm (14 degrees), sunny day with no wind. As we left, nine coachloads of people arrived on the island. Our time spent there was short but moving in its natural silence.

Finally, no one can 'see' Scotland without a castle or two, or four or five, and a wonderful Falconry display – and let's not forget the Clan battles and Bonnie Prince Charlie.

On Pentecost Sunday, I attended Saint Columba's Scottish Episcopal Church, Largs for a Sung Eucharist, Baptism and Confirmation by the Rt Rev'd Dr Gregor Duncan, Bishop of Glasgow and Gallowan. I was the only person in the congregation wearing red!

On Trinity Sunday, I visited St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham in the Diocese of Peterborough. There was a small choir and organist, and 20 people. Despite no heating, I was warmly welcomed by Rev'd Carole.

So my holiday came to an end, having met many people and visited friends. I implore all clergy to take time out to 'smell the roses'. It is a restoring and life-giving time and we all need it – God knows we need it!



TOP END: John O'Groats, the northern tip of Scotland.

Anglicare opens new Regional Office

Reprinted from *This Week in Anglicare*

Local media, including a camera crew, were on hand to see the Anglican Bishop of Bathurst, Ian Palmer, bless Anglicare's new regional office in Orange which was officially opened on June 4.

The new office on Byng Street is more than triple the size of the previous location, providing space for the new programs to support families and their children.

Anglicare CEO Jeremy Halcrow says it is the next step in Anglicare's plan to create a major service hub for the Central West region.

A five year Federal Government Department of Social Services funding grant will enable Anglicare to deliver children and parenting initiatives focusing on improving children's development and wellbeing through services such as supported playgroups, parenting skills programs and through school readiness programs.

The expansion into community services programs provides very important early intervention and prevention opportunities to complement Anglicare's current delivery of Foster Care and for other Out of Home Care services for children and young people at risk.

Community Services Business Manager, Danielle Davis said Anglicare is committed to providing the Orange community with early intervention and prevention services to support families and help ensure their sustained well-being and



COLLABORATION: Bishop Ian Palmer, Anglicare CEO Jeremy Halcrow, Anglicare Community Services Regional Director Simon Bennett, Anglicare Western Manager Danielle Davis and Church and Community Development Manager Ian Coutts at the opening of the Orange office. (Photo courtesy Anglicare).

positive involvement in the community.

"Parenting in early childhood can be a time of great stress for parents, especially if they are also struggling with a range of other complex difficulties such as financial stress, health care or mental health issues or family violence," Mrs Davis said.

"Research tells us that providing support early on to parents combined with high quality early childhood education options in the first five years, is the most effective way of

increasing opportunity for all within our community."

Anglicare's community services focus in Orange is based on a Sustainable Living Hub model providing support for individuals and families during times of crisis and thereafter giving people the right personal support and development opportunities to increase their skills in different areas of their life such as finances, parenting, family relationships and educational and work mentoring.

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For further information & registration contact:

Sue West, phone 6331-1722; e-mail anglicare@ix.net.au

70 attend Cumnock confirmation

From the parish

Seventy people came to worship at St Matthew's Church Cumnock on Sunday on May 24, for a service of Holy Communion and Confirmation led by Bishop Ian Palmer.

It was a happy and joyous occasion as friends and relatives witnessed Alani and Raymond Nepe's Confirmation.

Bishop Ian spoke on the fruits of the Spirit; appropriate for Pentecost Sunday and Confirmation.

Afterwards the congregation gathered in the parish hall for a very enjoyable finger food luncheon.

CONGRATULATIONS: *Bishop Ian, Alani and Raymond Nepe and Rev'd Thel Maunder, about to partake of lunch in the parish hall after the confirmation service.*



Helping IN HARD PLACES

There was nothing safe about Jesus' life. It was risky in every way. He was consistently found among people who were on the margins. His ministry of friendship expressed the value and dignity of all. This example continues to inspire those who walk in his path.

Many find it hard to accept what Jesus may ask of us. Frankly, it is hard to be a disciple. Some, however, have accepted the call to serve in hard places. They continue, year after year, to give of themselves in the face of enormous challenges. They remain faithful in their task, and are inspired by the way Jesus loves and affirms all people.

Many of Anglican Overseas Aid's partners are examples of this kind of faithfulness. Their stories show that new life and hope can grow in hard places.

A donation to Anglican Overseas Aid's "Helping in Hard Places" appeal will support the work of our Anglican and like-minded partners as they work in hard places in Africa, India, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific.

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