

## BISHOPS' CHARGE

The Right Reverend Dr Helen-Ann Hartley  
The Most Reverend Philip Richardson

## DIOCESAN SYNOD 2017

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 Hui 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 Hui 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

We wish to record our thanks to all who serve our Diocese in so many different ways and in particular the staff who work so hard to enable our ministry as Bishops.

### 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.

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

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We are a Church in crisis - thanks be to God!

When we use the word crisis today we usually use it with a deep anxiety and concern. It generally means that we think there is something to "fix".

The word *krisis* is used forty-seven times in the New Testament, almost never in the sense of our modern word "crisis." While different New Testament authors use it to mean different things, *krisis* (" judgment") unites the gospel and epistle writers around the central proclamation that, in Jesus, God was present in history offering an alternative to human notions of power and destiny and forcing a choice of allegiance. There is a clear understanding

that the world is divided into “then” and “now” by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What further unites the authors who use the word *krisis* to describe God’s intervention in history is that they greet it with *joy*. For the New Testament *Krisis* describes a permanent new state of living with one foot in the world where God’s reign is the only power to be reckoned with. This reign of God, this new community, the Kingdom of God, is the only power to be reckoned with.

All too often our proclamation of the Good News, our living out of our faith is being shaped by the needs of the church rather than by the demands of the kingdom - so we are defined by anxiety and a sense of crisis, and the need to fix things, rather than a sense of *Krisis* - God has intervened, the world is a different place, we need to live by different values and be driven by a different imperative - we are an Easter people and "Alleluia is our song"

Jesus did not send the Twelve or the Seventy to offer sermons that people would enjoy or find meaningful. “He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal” (Luke 9: 2).

What is the *character* of the Kingdom of God? What might it look like if we were to live out, and into, this character?

So here is an exercise we would encourage you to do. Go through Mark, Matthew and Luke and draw out every reference to the kingdom of God and then try and draw out the essential characteristics of the kingdom. What you will find that the lists are both similar and distinctive in character. The nuancing and emphasis is different even were some of the text is the same.

Let us show you what we mean by looking at just one Gospel that of St Matthew. Now we are not going to read out all these examples but just an indicative few:

Matthew 3: 2: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Matthew 4: 17: From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Matthew 4: 23: Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Matthew 5: 3: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5: 10: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5: 19: “Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5: 20: “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 6: 10: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6: 33: “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 7: 21: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”

Matthew 8: 11: “I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 9: 35: Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.

Matthew 10: 7: “As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’”

Matthew 11: 11: “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Matthew 11: 12: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.”

Matthew 12: 28: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you."

Matthew 13: 11: He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."

Matthew 13: 24: He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field . . ."

Matthew 13: 31: He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field . . ."

Matthew 13: 33: He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Matthew 13: 44: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

Matthew 13: 45: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Matthew 13: 47: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind . . ."

Matthew 13: 52: And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

Matthew 16: 19: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Matthew 18: 1: At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Matthew 18: 3: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18: 4: "Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18: 23: "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves . . ."

Matthew 19: 12: "For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 19: 14: "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

Matthew 19: 23: Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 19: 24: "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

Matthew 20: 1: "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard."

Matthew 21: 31: "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you."

Matthew 21: 43: "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom."

Matthew 22: 2: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son."

Matthew 23: 13: "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them."

Matthew 24: 14: "And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come."

Matthew 25: 1: "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom . . ."

Matthew 25: 34: "Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

Matthew 26: 29: "I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

We can see that for the Matthean community certain characteristics are clearly discernible, the synthesis of this list of verses might look something like this:

- The kingdom is near and/ or close to us.
- You can be inside the kingdom or outside it.
- There are behavioural expectations of the kingdom.
- The kingdom gives priority to those on the margins.
- The kingdom looks like a just society. People can be locked out or let into the kingdom.
- The kingdom requires change.
- The kingdom can be taught.
- There is rank in the kingdom, but not like rank elsewhere.
- The kingdom has a place for the persecuted.
- The kingdom is highly valuable but also highly common, ordinary.

Or we might summarise it in another way: The Kingdom of God is a topsy turvey community which believes that in the face of contemporary values with its rampant self centredness;

- loving is more important than winning
- that being vulnerable and genuinely open to others is more important than having power and
- that setting someone free to find the best in themselves is better than managing or controlling peoples lives.

Power expressed in self giving, status reflected in servant hood, paradoxical values yet the only ones on which true community can be built.

So behind all this is the simple Christian understanding that we are called to love one another, for love is of God and whoever loves is born of God and knows God. In this all people find their identity and their dignity.

Or we might also say that we need to be grounded in prayer, equipped for discipleship, and connected to community beginning with those who are the lost, the least and the last.

We are a church in *krisis* - thanks be to God. We are an Easter people and "Alleluia is our song"

Over the past three years in our charges to Synod, we have delivered an outline of our threefold episcopal vision: that grounded in prayer, we are equipped for discipleship, and connected to community. Although each year since then has had one of these themes as its focus, we have delighted in the ways in which the three strands have been woven together. It is our hope and prayer that over the next season, the strands will form a tighter weave in the tapestry of our faith; a firm foundation to continue to build on. In past charges, we have spoken of our desire to launch a discipleship course to encourage and support lay ministry in its vital contribution to our life together. Earlier this year, the Living Faith Today course was launched, with 144 participants joining in across the whole Diocese. We have been humbled and overwhelmed at the response, and have heard so many stories of how this course is enabling growth and transformation in its participants. This is a good news story of which we should all be rightly proud. We hope that LiFT will continue to grow from strength to strength each year, and we look forward to the first celebration service later in November at which all those participating will receive a Bishops' Certificate in Living Faith.

Alongside this narrative of prayer, discipleship and community connection, we have faced considerable challenges of sustainability. This is not something that will be solved overnight, but we are both hopeful and confident that we are on the right path to address critical issues. In order to address these matters, we have had to be real about where the Diocese is at. It is significant that much of the narrative of the Old Testament is about people in exile, denied a place to be, and sent journeying into an unknown. Yet God is found in both the praise as well as in the lament. This is powerfully captured in the Psalms, which cover the great narrative of Israel's story. They praise God for God's work in creation and history; they also offer expressions of communal lament, asking for God's help and expressing regret where we have fallen short. As we gather for this Synod, we may well ask ourselves: what are we thankful for? What do we lament?

One of the privileges of episcopal ministry is the opportunity to travel week by week to faith communities across our Diocese. In our visits to schools, parishes, hospitals, city council chambers, in cafés, in farm paddocks, we are constantly uplifted by stories of courage, resilience and faithfulness. God's abundant love, mercy and grace are evident in so many of the conversations that we have. So we have many reasons to praise God. Equally, we see hope in situations where difficult questions need to be asked, and hard decisions made. One of the features of this year has been the recognition that a number of ministry units in the north have found it difficult to sustain the stipend of their vicar. This has caused some deep soul searching which has not been easy. The appointment of an Archdeacon for Parish Renewal, the Rev'd Malcolm French is a sign both of the importance of resourcing this theme of sustainability, and a clear indication that this will be a dominant narrative in the years to come. The picture and pattern of ministry is being reshaped by God: do we participate in this, or simply close down the shutters and refuse to change and grow? We are very grateful to Archdeacon Malcolm's parish of Cambridge for their willingness to support him in this role on behalf of the Bishopric of Waikato, where considerable focus on this area will continue to grow in the coming months and years.

While we have many reasons to praise God, we do have cause for lament. We have seen and have experienced impatience, fear and self-centredness. Quite often the language that is used towards Diocesan staff, towards one another, and on occasions towards us as bishops has been aggressive, ungracious and unbecoming of those who call themselves disciples. There is no place for rudeness in our narrative, and we urge each one of us to reflect very carefully on how we contribute to the building up and the tearing down of our corporate identity in Christ. None of us is perfect, we are all human, but if we are all made in the image and reflection of God, then we must search our hearts for how we see in this face of one another on a daily basis.

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Those of us who attended the Gathering this year were fortunate to hear from Dr Kevin Ward who has studied trends in Church attendance and Christian commitment in New Zealand for more than 30 years. His message was both challenging and reassuring. Challenging because the figures are of steady and unrelenting decline. Reassuring because the research points to some ways forward. Here are some of his main points:

- despite the fact that the church has been experiencing serious decline, people have continued to remain overwhelmingly religious in New Zealand.

- despite declining levels of church involvement, we have not seen the gradual extinction of religious believing as the twentieth century ran into the twenty first.
- so this has created the paradox of a highly spiritual culture yet declining involvement in organised religion. It appears that people who are seeking spiritual experience and meaning in their lives are not finding it presented in what the church has continued to offer.
- this has occurred because while the values, attitudes and styles of the surrounding culture underwent a profound change beginning with the counter culture of the 60s and coming home to roost with a vengeance in the 90s, in what is now known as postmodernity, the church has continued to be shaped by a set of values, attitudes and styles that belonged to a previous era. As a consequence, whenever it has knocked on the door of the vast majority of the under 50s they have responded, “no thanks I’m shopping elsewhere”.
- In addition, detailed research into patterns of Church attendance and adherence in New Zealand provide figures which indicate a basic flaw in the logic of church growth thinking. The basic argument has been that the way to have effective churches is to look at those churches that are being successful (in terms of numerical growth) and then seek to copy what they do. However the figures show that churches that are growing are doing so by attracting the majority of that growth from other Churches.
- The problem is we have confused the growth of some churches with growth of "the" church. We have confused growing churches with being effective in mission. What has happened is merely a reconfiguration of existing church goers. Where people go to church has changed, and some churches have grown at the expense of others.
- It appears then that how we do church, and consequently how we communicate the gospel, only makes sense to those who have "church" somewhere in their history. So market for church is shrinking rather than increasing.

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

We are a Church in ***Krisis*** - We are an Easter people and alleluia is our song.

We see many examples across the Diocese of you engaging in remarkable, at times heroic ministry. Serving, caring, loving at great cost. There are some examples of strong congregational life; some large, some small.

Some congregations will continue to be strong and will function in the way congregations have for decades. But they will be relatively few in number.

We need to expand our vision of what Christian community and Christian mission will look like and we need to pursue new and creative ways of enabling this mission. This has enormous consequences for where and how we allocate resources.

It is also about recognising what God is already doing in our midst.

For example, there is a new wave of young leaders emerging and we will hear from some of them during this synod. They do not look to the Church for a career or for financial security. They are prepared to build that for themselves. They want to live lives of service to those most on the edge, they want to explore what walking closely with Christ looks like in our contemporary context, and they seek to be deeply embedded in the communities of our towns and cities.

We do need to develop a new core mode of being in the way that parishes have been our core mode of being for so many generations. While this may feel scary, risky and to be stepping out into uncharted territory, the Good News is that God is there ahead of us.

In fact this mode of being is as old as Christianity and it is the mode God chose. God became as one of us ... the central proclamation of the Christian faith is *God with us* – the incarnation.

One major initiative that may give expression to such a core mode of being is the development of a range of self sustaining embedded communities living in *Krisis*, living in the light of the resurrection.

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?

- 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 its 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.

When we delivered our first charge in this season of dual episcopacy, we talked about a need to green our leadership at every level. We have been greatly encouraged by the faithful and committed attention to children and family, and youth work. There are signs of engagement and support across the Diocese, and we hope to be able to build on these over the coming year. The work of both Mele Prescott and Darcy Perry (representing the two bishoprics) is beginning to bear fruit. We hope that by building capacity, networks and resourcing that this area will continue to develop. 2018 will be a year of focus on children and youth. We will be asking questions of our Diocesan Standing Committee, sub-committees, and every Vestry, Region and Archdeaconry as to how they are supporting and encouraging our young people in their faith journeys and development. Our schools will continue to be a focus of our energy and attention, and we will continue to support the vital and valuable ministry of our chaplains who do so much to nurture the faith of the young. Young people are not just the church of the future, they are the church of the present. Saying 'we don't have any young people' in our community is simply not acceptable. God is already at work in our communities and in the lives of all its inhabitants regardless of age or status. Our mandate is to find out where God is at work, and join in.

In order to create the momentum for mission what does "diocese" need to look like? We want to offer some broad principles or objectives:

- We need to build a culture of **collaboration**. Ideas, experience and expertise need to be shared. Networks of similar initiatives need to be formed.
- We need structures, expertise and a mind set for **innovation** and **creativity**.
- Light and lean on structure, strong intent on **Mission**; we need to reshape our governance, management and administration for mission. We must ask what do we actually need in the current context and not simply do something or provide a service because we have always done so.
- We should recognize that we need a kind of '**mixed economy**' approach with traditional parishes and congregations being but one mode of being church in our communities.
- Perhaps above all we need a culture of **grace, mutual support and affirmation**. We need to reflect the hope that is in us through Christ Jesus and not allow ourselves and our interactions with each other to be determined by the anxiety we might naturally feel as we experience so much change.

As a diocesan community we are called to be a people living in the light of the resurrection, an Easter people and Alleluia is our song.