

Notice of Motion for ADoM Synod 2019

Next Steps for Reconciliation

Mover: The Reverend Dr Garry Deverell, Vicar of St Agnes', Black Rock

Seconder: The Reverend Glenn Loughrey, Vicar of St Oswald's, Glen Iris

Motion:

1. That Archbishop in Council make a considered formal response to: (a) the review of the diocesan Reconciliation Action Plan tabled by the RAP Working Group on Feb 20, 2018; and (b) the Statement to Provincial Leadership tabled by the Aboriginal Council of the Anglican Province of Victoria in November, 2018.
2. That Archbishop in Council make an interim report of its responses by electronic communication to all Synod members by May 31, 2020, to be followed by a full report of its responses to the Diocesan Synod of 2020.

Rationale

At its meeting on December 14, 2017, the Archbishop's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group decided to review the current Reconciliation Action Plan. Garry Deverell was tasked with producing a draft report, which was modified and adopted by the RAP group at its meeting on Feb 1, 2018. This report (attached to this motion, below) was immediately forwarded to the Archbishop's office for a response.

Glenn Loughrey and Garry Deverell met with the Archbishop to discuss the contents of the report on March 22, 2018, where the case for change – as outlined in the report – was again put. To date, the RAP Working Group has not received any formal response from Archbishop in Council, which means that the RAP process has come to a grinding halt. Our work cannot continue until we have a response.

Partly because of the uncertainty we felt in the wake of these events, the Aboriginal clergy of the Province of Victoria convened a meeting at Bishops Court on August 14 and 15, 2018. We invited the National Aboriginal Bishop, the Right Reverend Chris McLeod, to chair the meeting. There were two significant outcomes: (1) the establishment of the Aboriginal Council of the Anglican Province of Victoria (ACAPV) and (2) the drafting of a Statement to the Provincial Leadership, which was presented by Glenn Loughrey to the Provincial Bishop's meeting in November 2018 (also attached below).

To date ACAPV has received formal responses to our Statement from the dioceses of Wangaratta, Bendigo and Gippsland. Ballarat and Melbourne have not, to date, chosen to respond.

If a conversation about reconciliation is to continue in this diocese, it would seem important that Archbishop in Council respond to these two crucial documents and report back to the next Synod.

Report on the ADOM Innovate RAP 2015-2017 to Archbishop in Council

Introduction

At its meeting on Dec 14, 2017, the RAP Working Group met to discuss the merits of proceeding from the 'Innovate' RAP of 2015-2017 into the next stage of Reconciliation Australia's recommended process, the 'Stretch' RAP. Those present agreed that the diocese was not ready to do so, since most of the action towards reconciliation outlined in the Innovate RAP remains undone.

The Working Group agreed that a different approach is required to address this failure, an approach more in keeping with the realities of Anglican 'DNA' and the resources we actually have at our disposal.

This brief report will outline the Working Group's review of the Innovate RAP and make just two recommendations to the Archbishop in Council for a more fruitful way forward. At the outset, the Working Group would like to offer an apology to the diocese for producing a RAP that was essentially undoable with the resources we have.

Review of the Innovate RAP 2015-2017

The seeds of its undoing may be located in the Innovate RAP's preamble. In outlining the history of the Diocese of Melbourne there is no mention at all of the specific ways in which the Anglican Church, or prominent Anglican Christians, contributed to the removal of Kulin nations from their land or the wholesale destruction of Aboriginal families, culture and wellbeing. The section on 'Commencing the RAP' leaves the reader with the impression that the diocese has enjoyed relatively good and positive relationships with local Aboriginal people. While the preamble certainly admits that there have been (unspecified) 'ways in which we have contributed to [the] ongoing disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people', and that these may be rightly called 'failures', the report claims that these failures (whatever they may be) have been effectively dealt with via formal expressions of sorrow. It then congratulates the diocese for 'bravely and boldly' moving forward toward 'true reconciliation and a full and fair future for all Australians'. One wonders, in the light of this rather romantic account, why reconciliation might be necessary at all.

Not surprisingly, given this rosy account of Anglican engagement with local Aboriginal people, there is a distinct lack of 'repentance' or 'amendment of life' language in the explicitly theological section on the 'Meaning of Reconciliation'. There is much sound material here about reconciliation as a primary descriptor of the mission of God toward the world, and of the church in its imitation of Christ the reconciler. But the language is general and overwhelmingly optimistic in tone, failing to elaborate on the Christian practices of truth-telling, repentance and amendment of life as crucial stages in any concrete reconciliation process. It therefore fails to identify the heart of the matter of reconciliation as a real, communal, discipline that is intimately related to following Christ through the baptismal passage of his life, death, resurrection and exaltation.

The section on 'Developing the RAP' correctly identifies the education of non-Aboriginal people concerning the realities of ATSI life as its key goal, with a view to encouraging greater respect for First Nations people throughout the church. It also acknowledges that making that educational opportunity available throughout the dispersed structures of the diocese will be very challenging. This has indeed proven to be the case! What is missing here, again, is a comprehensive account of precisely what is to

be communicated in the educational process – namely that process of truth-telling and a call to repentance and amendment of life - and who, precisely, will take responsibility for facilitating that process. The only person specifically named is the Archbishop, as the ‘Champion’ of reconciliation. ‘Lighthouse’ parishes and ‘RAP Champions’ are invoked as concepts, but no parish or person is specifically named. Without specific naming, it seems to us, responsibility remains ethereal rather than concrete; which means, in the end, that no person, parish or agency is finally accountable for actioning the work of reconciliation.

One of the biggest challenges to progressing the RAP is the voluntary nature of the Working Group. So much remains undone simply because the members of the RAP group have little time or energy left over after the jobs they are actually employed to do have been honoured. This reality also explains the high turn-over in group membership.

If we move on to the Innovate RAP itself, and the section entitled ‘Relationships’ we must sadly conclude that much of the engagement with groups external to the diocese has been sporadic at best. New members have been added to the RAP group, but it has struggled to maintain a continuity of membership and meeting. An Aboriginal Liaison officer was engaged for only part of the period 2015-2017, and she quickly found that the tasks laid at her feet were far too onerous given the far-from-adequate time, authority and resource given her to address those tasks. While clergy tours to the Northern Territory have certainly been organised, the RAP Working Group really questions the usefulness of these to a local process of reconciliation. What happened here, in the south-eastern part of the continent, is very different to what happened in the Northern Territory, in WA or even in northern Queensland. The contemporary experience of Aboriginal people here, in the south-east, is also, therefore, very different. The people we, as a diocese, are called to engage with first, surely, are those who are already amongst and alongside us.

Under the section entitled ‘Respect’, it is clear that many clergy as well as most Anglicans remain completely unaware of the Diocesan RAP. The materials related to the RAP are difficult to find on the ADOM website, and they are poorly presented as well. Liturgical events around Sorry Day, Mabo Day, as well as NAIDOC and National Reconciliation weeks, have been sporadically attended to and poorly promoted. Notices in the *Ad Clerum* are clearly ineffective, as enquiries responding to that medium remain almost non-existent. (The recent launch of a dedicated Facebook page for ADOM Reconciliation may be more effective in getting the word out there). While we are aware of some parishes that are pursuing their own reconciliation processes, their stories are not widely circulated. Certainly the Working Group cannot claim to be across what is happening or not happening in this regard. Local groups clearly feel no obligation to communicate with the Working Group about what they are doing. While acknowledgement of country is catching on here and there – largely as a consequence of determined action by government – it remains largely absent from local parish gatherings. As a Working Group we are not unaware of the tragic irony in the vast majority of acknowledgements: ‘We acknowledge this is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander country but we will now go on to behave as though it isn’t’.

Under the heading ‘Opportunities’, we note that (as far as we are aware) there have been no additional ATSI people employed by the diocese. There is no longer an Aboriginal Liaison Officer and the current Working Group remains very luke-warm concerning the job description for a new (part-time) Resource Worker. Indeed, we would prefer that the plans for this position be axed all-together as essentially undoable. More about that below. It was pleasing to see that reconciliation got something of a guernsey at the recent diocesan conference in the shape of Bishop Mark MacDonald’s talks. We remain underwhelmed, however, by the lack of invited ATSI input into the shape and content of the conference theme, the choice of speakers, and the means by which ATSI voices might be heard within the conference community.

Proposals

In the light of the plainly incomplete nature of the Innovate RAP of 2015-17, the current Working Group makes the following recommendations to the Archbishop.

It is recommended that:

1. THE INNOVATE RAP BE RE-WRITTEN DURING 2018, WITH A VIEW TO RESUMING THE PROCESS IN THE PERIOD 2019-2021.

Rationale: As this review of the current RAP makes clear, our RAP is too unfocussed with regard to an overall theological rationale, too ambitious and vague with regard to specific objectives, and far too resource-poor in terms of time, people and money. A rewritten RAP needs to regain a sense of focus and energy and be realistic with regard to the people and other resources it might concretely rely on.

2. THE DIOCESE ENGAGE A FULL-TIME INDIGENOUS BISHOP OR ARCHDEACON WHOSE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD BE TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS LEADERS AND CALL ANGLICAN PARISHES, AGENCIES AND SCHOOLS INTO A CONCRETE PRACTICE OF RECONCILIATION

Rationale: The key role of the Indigenous Liaison Worker, under the current RAP, disintegrated for three reasons: (1) There was simply too much work to do in the allocated time; (2) the role was task-focussed rather than relationship-orientated, which contradicts both the movement of the gospel and the modes of ATSI relating; (3) the role sat outside of the DNA of historical Anglican authority structures, which meant that the Liaison Worker was never able to enjoy the freedom to minister according to a clear mandate and responsibility given by Christ via the church's orders of ministry. Anglicans understand the authority and ministry of a bishop or archdeacon. Similarly, ATSI people understand the authority of an Elder. But neither group really understands what the authority and vocation of a 'Liaison Officer' or 'Resource Worker' might be. In order to clearly and unambiguously indicate how important the work of reconciliation is to the fortunes of the gospel in our part of the world, both symbolically and actually, the Archbishop should ordain an Indigenous bishop, or (at the very least) collate an Indigenous archdeacon. The current RAP Working Group might then be morphed into a Reference Group to support that bishop or archdeacon in her or his work.

It should be understood, from the outset, that an Indigenous bishop or archdeacon cannot be expected to represent the views of all Indigenous people any more than an ATSI Elder can be expected to do so. Elders within the ATSI community know that they must manage a diversity of views and experiences within their own constituencies, even as they seek to advocate for that constituency within the wider Australian conversation. So it is with regular ecclesial bishops, archdeacons and even local vicars. A key priority for any prospective Indigenous bishop or archdeacon would therefore be to facilitate the kinds of conversations Indigenous Anglicans need to have with each other, as well as inviting the wider church into the complex and really rather *difficult* conversation that is necessary to our healing as a church and a nation.

Dr Joanna Cruickshank
The Reverend Glenn Loughrey
Ms Beth Senn

The Reverend Dr Garry Worete Deverell
Mr Philip Nicholls
The Reverend Shannon Smith

Archbishop's RAP Working Group
Feb 20, 2018

STATEMENT OF ABORIGINAL COUNCIL TO PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP

We the *Aboriginal Council of the Anglican Province of Victoria* represent a sovereign and free people who continue in our ancient responsibility to nurture this country and its peoples.

We invite you, the bishops of the Province, to join us in attending to the unfinished business between the First and Second peoples of our church. We invite you to walk with us the costly pilgrimage of truth-telling, repentance, reparation and justice. We invite you to join with us in composing a new hymn, a songline that will lead, one day, to the signing of a *makarrata* or covenant that inaugurates a more just settlement and relationship between us.

We therefore ask for a seat at the table in the councils of the Province, and the dioceses therein, so that the aspirations of our people toward self-determination in matters of faith, worship and spirituality may be clearly heard and honoured. Let us take counsel together that the redemption won for us in Christ Jesus may find a home in our common work for justice and for peace in this ancient land.

Below you will find a list of our aspirations as a Provincial Aboriginal Council with the Anglican Church. For us, these aspirations give expression to our longing for a more just settlement between the First and Second Peoples of the church. We ask for your commitment to an ongoing and comprehensive conversation about ways in which these aspirations might be transformed into an agreement that is able to effect a real and lasting reconciliation.

1. That a First Nations bishop be appointed for the Province, and that a First Nations archdeacon be appointed in each diocese of the Province wherever possible. These sisters and brothers would sit on the key policy-making committees of our church as a VOICE for our people. They would also be evangelists for gospel TRUTH, JUSTICE and RECONCILIATION in the congregations, schools and agencies of the Province.
2. That each of the Anglican service agencies, theological colleges and schools be encouraged to appoint a local First Nations person to their governing boards as a VOICE and advocate for our people.
3. That the two Melbourne theological colleges be encouraged to collaborate in appointing at least one First Nations academic who would be tasked with teaching theology from the perspective of our people, and that every theological student on an ordination track be required to study with that academic as part of their core curriculum.
4. That every Anglican school be encouraged to hire at least one First Nations teacher who would be tasked with teaching First Peoples history, language and culture, and that such learning be undertaken by every student as part of their core curriculum
5. Where First Nations people are encouraged to take up study in Anglican schools and colleges, that high levels of pastoral and cultural support are put in place to help our people succeed. Wherever possible, this support would be delivered by our own people.
6. That every Anglican organisation in the Province be encouraged to commit itself to employing and supporting First Nations people to the tune of 5% or more of each organisation's total workforce.

7. That the learning of First Nations history, theology and culture be designated a core part of the professional development curriculum for all Anglican clergy, teachers, administrators, and welfare workers.
8. That all properties granted the Church by government (without fee) be made available for First Nations access and use: and, in the case of such properties being disposed of, that First Nations groups with a traditional claim to such properties be granted title without fee.
9. That 15% of proceeds from the sale of any other church properties be given over to First Nations people – 10% into a Trust Fund to be divested to traditional owners on the completion of a process of treaty and 5% into a Provincial fund set aside for resourcing the Anglican ministries outlined in this document; this as a fundamental act of REPARATION for past acts of thievery.
10. That all local parishes and congregations in the diocese be encouraged to pay an annual rent of 5% or more to either a local First Peoples organisation or else into a Fund held in the Province for resourcing the ministries outlined in this document.
11. That First Nations liturgical rites, including those already produced by clergy within this Province, be authorized for use throughout the Province.
12. That each local church or agency be encouraged to consider raising a memorial to commemorate all who lost their lives in the local Frontier Wars.
13. That each Anglican congregation, school or agency be encouraged – in partnership with this Council and with diocesan bishops – to form respectful relationships with local Aboriginal nations, including a commitment to support them as they take part in the process of treaty-making with the Victorian government.
14. That the bishops of this province commit themselves to working, locally with us, as well as nationally with NATSIAC, towards TREATIES with First Nations that enshrine these and other important aspirations of our people as a matter of gospel JUSTICE. To our mind, any such treaty would also encode the ways in which we are accountable to each other in realizing and reviewing the ongoing work of the gospel to which the treaties commit us.

Please be assured of our prayers as you consider our invitation.

Yours in faith,

The Reverend Phyllis Andy
The Reverend Dr Garry Worete Deverell
The Reverend Glenn Loughrey
The Rt Reverend Chris McLeod
The Reverend Grace Reynolds
The Reverend Shannon Smith
The Reverend Janet Turpie-Johnstone

Aboriginal Council of the Anglican Province of Victoria

November 2018