

Old Church Made New!



AN UN-OFFICIAL STORY

of the

First General Synod

of the

Church of England in Australia

held at St. Andrew's Cathedral and Chapter House,
Sydney — 8th-17th May, 1962

Written by the Reverend Godfrey Kircher, Vicar of St. Paul's
Church, Malvern, Victoria, and presented in appreciation of
the privilege of representing the Diocese of Melbourne.

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THE CHURCH'S NATIONAL "PARLIAMENT"

The first General Synod of the Church of England in Australia met at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, from Tuesday, May 8th, to Thursday, May 17th, 1962, adjourning sine die at 5.30 p.m.

Made up of three "Houses"—of Bishops, of the Clergy, and of the Laity—it was smaller than the old General Synods, and totalled 193 members.

The House of Bishops comprised the 25 diocesan Archbishops and Bishops.

Eighty-four elected representatives made up each of the other Houses. The House of the Clergy included eight assistant bishops, several deans and doctors, with archdeacons and canons galore. The House of the Laity boasted two Supreme Court judges, parliamentarians, loads of lawyers, doctors of medicine, registrars of dioceses, city men and farmers.

Ages seemed mostly well over the 40 mark, although there was a reasonable sprinkling of youngsters, many of whom spoke effectively.

Melbourne diocese sent a delegation of 29 (their names were listed in April "Church of England Messenger"), which included the most popular cleric and the top layman. Dr. George Bearham was elected chairman of the House of Laity, and Bishop Geoffrey Sambell topped the poll for Standing Committee.

The most impressive delegation was from the diocese of New Guinea. It comprised Bishop Philip Strong, Bishop David Hand, and three Papuans, Bishop George Ambo, Mr. John Guise, a member of the first Legislative Council of Papua and New Guinea, and Mr. Stephen Tago, a theological student. All three spoke, and were given a great ovation.

"A CATHOLIC CHURCH"

St. Andrew's Cathedral was packed for the opening act of Divine Service, made colourful by the 38 bishops and doctors in scarlet, the legal wigs and variegated hoods.

The service began with a Proclamation read by the Registrar of the diocese of Sydney. It recited the legal enactments which gave effect to the new constitution as from January 1st, 1962, ending:

"The Church of England in Australia, being a part of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, holds the Christian faith as professed by the Church of Christ from primitive times and in particular as set forth in the creeds known as the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed.

"This Church receives all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God, and containing all things necessary for salvation.

"This Church will ever obey the commands of Christ, teach His doctrine, administer His sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, follow and uphold His discipline and preserve the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons in the sacred ministry."

WITNESS, MISSION, UNITY

The Right Reverend Bishop Stephen F. Bayne, Executive Officer of the Anglican Communion, preached a moving and challenging sermon.

The future will ask three great qualities from the Church in Australia, he said:

"First, powerful and relevant witness to Christ, in the soul of the nation.

"Second, deep and costly brotherhood in Mission with the nation and churches with which we share the narrow world.

"Third, unity within our own household and nation."

The theme was powerfully echoed by the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Hugh Gough, in his presidential address to Synod at 4 p.m.

He read messages from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Arthur Michael Ramsay, Lord Fisher of Lambeth, and the Metropolitan of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. The latter reminded us that for 22 years (1814-1836) our Church in Australia was an archdeaconry within the diocese of Calcutta.

Dr. Gough made a strong and courageous call for unity, first among ourselves: "Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics must learn to live and grow together, even though quite naturally there may be some growing pains. I plead that all of us should genuinely seek to understand each other . . . because we are, in actual fact, one in Jesus Christ."

TURN IN GRAVES

Highlight of the first evening of Synod was the official courtesy visits and messages. The House of Bishops sat on a long dais in the Chapter House, facing the Houses of Clergy and Laity on the "floor."

Now they were supplemented by a striking procession of visiting Church dignitaries vested in an amazing variety of robes. History was made (and many doughty Protestants of the past turned in their graves!) as the Right Reverend Monsignor F. J. Wallace, representing Cardinal Gilroy, resplendent in Roman purple, led the other 13 representatives on to the dais.

Then came the Primate, escorting the Governor-General of the Commonwealth, Lord De L'Isle.

His Excellency delivered a short but impressive address, as representative of Her Majesty, the Queen of Australia, and as a member of the Church of England.

"As we approach the end of the Second Christian Millennium we must acknowledge with thankfulness the eternal strength and power of the Gospel committed to us by the life, the teaching, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of our Lord," he said. "It stands, as it has stood for nearly 2000 years, as the way of man's salvation."

After Bishop Bayne the Primate of New Zealand, the Most Reverend N. A. Lesser, and the Bishops of Melanesia and Polynesia, A. T. Hill and J. C. Vockler, had delivered messages, His Excellency withdrew, and the 14 visiting Church representatives came forward, one by one, to be welcomed by the Primate, and to hand him a written message for the records of Synod.

Never has the Chapter House seen such an ecumenical delegation. Seven represented "Western Churches"—Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Churches of Christ, Lutheran and Salvation Army; seven were "Easterns"—Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Antiochene Orthodox, Serbian, Roumanian and Syrian Orthodox, and Armenian. Each delegate received a great ovation from Synod.

LAWYERS' PARADISE

Once these honorific formalities had ended and the distinguished visitors had withdrawn, Synod settled down to the drudgery of routine business, which turned the next five working days (and nights) into what the clerics called "a lawyers' paradise."

Actually, the whole Church owes an immense debt of gratitude to the distinguished legal members of General Synod. They have contributed untold hours of labour to the task of drawing up the Constitution and now of getting it working.

For instance, Synod met without a body of "Standing Orders" to guide its business. The precedents of the past were a starting point, but for hours Synod worked through a draft set of Orders, line by line, word by word, comma by comma almost, until finally, on the seventh day of business, the last "i" had been dotted and the Standing Orders were accepted.

CANONS

The weightiest and most enduring enactments of the Church are by "Canon." This follows parliamentary procedure—drafting and printing of the Bill for the proposed Canon, three "readings," with meticulous examination in committee following the second reading. Finally, the Bill is passed, the Primate assents, and the Canon becomes law.

The first Canon of the newly constituted Church appointed the first Primate. It was an exhilarating hour on the third day (Thursday, May 10th). The Most Reverend Hugh Rowlands Gough, Archbishop of Sydney, was named in the Bill skilfully presented by Queen's Counsellor, A. B. Kerrigan. Standing Orders were set aside so that second reading, Committee stage, third reading and, finally, passing, might go through without delay. Dr. Gough, who had retired from the Chamber before this item came on, was requested to return. Loud and prolonged applause greeted his appearance and adequately conveyed the unanimous enthusiasm of the Synod. The Church had found a leader of outstanding courage, charm and spirituality. The Primate assented to the Bill, and the Synod adjourned for luncheon.

REJECTED

The second Canon had a very different fate. It was designed to lay down principles and methods for the election of future Primates. The Bishop of Armidale produced a rival draft. Synod was turned into conference to discuss the two. After some hours of discussion they both went into limbo; Standing Committee was asked to collect information from all over the Anglican Communion, and to make recommendations to the next General Synod in four years' time. Everyone prays that Archbishop Gough does not work himself to death before then.

Great care was given to the Canon which set up a Special Tribunal to try any bishop who might be charged with breaches of faith, ritual, ceremonial or discipline. Similarly, to the Canon which set up the court of final appeal (Appellate Tribunal). Elections by the three Houses separately resulted in the following Tribunal:—(1) Sir Edmund Francis Herring (Chief Justice of Victoria); (2) Mr. Justice Athol Rolton Richardson (Supreme Court of New South Wales); (3) Mr. Justice Charles Gray Wanstall (Supreme Court of Queensland); (4) the Hon. Sir Dudley Bruce Ross (Q.C.); (5) the Archbishop of Melbourne (the Most Reverend Frank Woods); the Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn (the Right Reverend Kenneth John Clements); and the Bishop of Gippsland (the Right Reverend David Arthur Garnsey).

General Synod sat for eight full days, with a week-end intervening, from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., 2.30 to 5.30 p.m. and 7.30 to 10 p.m. or later. In between times came meals, meetings of committees or groups, an immense amount of "back-room" work by officials, and, for ordinary members, time to study the inevitable mass of paper, to exchange views, lobby, etc. For the President, the Primate, the pressure was unrelenting.

On the Saturday morning, A.B.M. Motor Vessel "Southern Cross" was dedicated in a deluge of rain; on Saturday afternoon His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Eric Woodward, received members of General Synod and such wives as were present, at afternoon tea, in lieu of a garden party.

STANDING COMMITTEE

The main business of the Synod was to get the new Constitution working. The Constitution lays down principles; Synod had to clothe them in flesh-and-blood persons, committees, rules, declarations, forms, etc.

Most important of all was the election of a Standing Committee empowered to carry out the decisions of Synod and otherwise act on behalf of the Church of England in Australia. Its duties are defined in 11 clauses. Its members, elected by Houses, are:—

House of Bishops: K. J. Clements, J. A. G. Housden, T. T. Reed.

House of Clergy: G. T. Sambell, W. R. Barrett, R. C. Kerle, H. G. S. Begbie, J. T. R. Border, J. R. Bleby, R. E. Davies, E. W. Wetherell, T. W. Thomas.

House of Laity: A. B. Kerrigan, R. T. St. John, A. R. Richardson, N. A. Jenkyn, G. B. Bearham, W. S. Gee, G. E. H. Bleby, R. C. Wardle, H. K. Turner.

FINANCE

A select Committee, under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Melbourne, produced a most satisfying seven-page report reviewing facts and suggesting principles upon which General Synod should work towards a national budget for the corporate responsibilities of the Australian Church.

Six existing commitments, met by diocesan contributions to the central fund, were accepted as the Report was adopted:—

For the (a) Executive Officer of the Advisory Council on Missionary Strategy (Bishop Bayne); (b) Archbishopric in Jerusalem; (c) St. Augustine's College, Canterbury; (d) Australian Council of Churches; (e) World Council of Churches; (f) Federal Inter-Church Migration Committee; these six, together with annual assessment for General Synod expenses, make a total budget of c. £10,000.

Carpentaria, New Guinea and North-West Australia are designated "Missionary Dioceses." The budget is shared amongst the remaining 22 on a population basis, based, at present, on the 1954 census. Sydney's proportion is 27.6 per cent.; Melbourne's, 17.7 per cent.; Willochra's, 0.3 per cent.

Many delegates spoke strongly for a much larger allocation for General Synod, to establish a Primatial Secretariat worthy of the Australian Church. Synod was timid, and preferred, for the present at least, to lean upon the generous hospitality of Sydney Diocesan Registry. It is certain, though, that the financial demands of a National Church will increase. The Select Committee was able, without effort, to list another 11 possible claimants upon centralised funds.

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE CHURCH?

On the third day a Question was addressed to the President: "Who is authorised to speak on behalf of the Church of England in Australia?" The Primate's answer is of such importance that it is quoted in full:—

"As I understand it, no one has 'constitutional' authority to make official statements on behalf of the Church of England in Australia, but it would seem that the office of Primate contains within it the 'moral' authority to issue such statements when the need arises and there is demand from Press or public to know what the Anglican view is on any matter. On certain matters authoritative statements can be made, for example on matters of doctrine and policy, by reference to the Lambeth Conference or Anglican Congress decisions. On other matters where a variety of views are held within the Anglican Com-

munion, the alternatives are to give a comprehensive and probably too long statement, or to give the personal opinion of the spokesman, making it absolutely clear that it is a personal opinion.

"This has been my practice during the last three years and great care has been taken to see that Press and Radio clearly understand the nature of the reply, though perhaps not always successfully."

MINISTERIAL STANDARDS

One of the most important acts of Synod was the Canon which "reconstituted" the Australian College of Theology, which virtually sets the standards of theological learning for the Australian Church. The Registrar, Doctor Colin Duncan, told of the astonishing number of enquiries about A.C.T. diplomas from neighbouring countries (New Zealand, Malaya, Japan, etc.).

The new constitution given to the College will do two things:

(a) By removing the old restrictive clause, widen its scope to allow "non-Anglicans, non-Australians and non-Clerics" (Dr. Duncan) to sit for its examinations;

(b) Raise its standards to something approaching University levels; e.g., the Council may now fix minimum educational qualifications for entry; the granting of doctorates will be less lavish, whether by examination (copies of the treatise lodged with two universities or theological colleges), honours causa or ad eundem.

Victorians elected to the Council of the College (eight bishops, five priests, two laymen, plus other categories) are: Archbishop Woods, Bishop Garnsey, Dr. B. Marshall, Dr. G. Bearham and Mr. V. K. Brown.

LIMBO AGAIN

In a sporting way the main interest of the tipsters was on the Bishop of Queensland's proposed Canon for the setting up of a National Department of Promotion, which looked very much like pushing the General Board of Religious Education on to the rails. Excitement mounted until the gates went up on the seventh day. Bishop Shevill ran a gallant race, but was eventually disqualified; the Canon was withdrawn on the second reading, and a very safe motion substituted, asking the "National Council of Promotion" (1955) to "explore relationships . . . seek to explicate the theological basis . . . explore ways and means . . . begin work . . . and report to the next General Synod."

Curiously, another Queensland motion, eloquently supported, took a terrific battering, mainly from the episcopal bench. It sought to "welcome within the framework of the Church the formation of societies which endeavour to promote Christian giving such as the proposed Anglican Tithing League of Australia."

An amendment was proposed; vote by voices, then by show of hands, failed to satisfy. A division resulted in 58 for, 56 against; (one of three photo-finish divisions.) The Question was not put. Is "tithing" Christian or pre-Christian? remains unanswered.

PRAYER BOOK REVISION

Three rival motions on this subject jostled for place on the business paper by the fourth day, with yet another "hot" one (from North Queensland) about vestments. Wise counsels behind the scenes resulted in all four being withdrawn. On Day 7, an emergent motion was passed setting up a

Commission of 32 persons (with power to co-opt) to "explore the possibilities of . . . and report to the next Session of Synod." We evidently shall make haste slowly.

The Commission will consist of four bishops (R. G. Arthur, E. K. Leslie, T. B. McCall and T. T. Reed) elected by their compeers, and ten clerics and laymen chosen by the Metropolitan of New South Wales, seven by Victoria, four by Queensland, three by Western Australia, and four by the Bishops of the extra-provincial dioceses. In due course the 28 representatives will be named.

FOR THE CLERGY

Much amusement was caused by a small evangelical text which dangled from the microphone set in the midst of the large Sydney delegation of 32 (Melbourne had 28), when Archdeacon Delbridge read it aloud: "IF YOU CAN'T CONVINCE 'EM, CONFUSE 'EM." Said one delegate: "It explains a lot!"

Actually this Synod was outstanding for its spirit of harmony and the complete lack of party acrimony. Synod responded to the high standard set by the President.

Mr. R. T. St. John, Brisbane Registrar, successfully sponsored a motion asking Standing Committee to investigate, and to formulate for the next session of Synod, a scheme to provide long-service leave for clergymen. He revealed that the Methodist Church of Australia already has such a scheme in operation, and Canon Cooke, of Bunbury, told how his diocese had just started a diocesan scheme.

Incidentally, it was told that the Deputy Commissioner of Taxation in New South Wales had ruled that a clergyman is not "self-employed," nor "employed," but "employed in the service of the Church." It helps to have these things made clear!

MANY MOTIONS, ETC.

Time would fail to tell of all the important canons, motions, etc., which received meticulous scrutiny right to the last moment (nothing slipshod about our Primate!), like the smart ring-in on the last day about White Australia and Immigration. It was "not allowed." Or the admonition to the Press about the term "new church." It was "not put," but instead a most warm, appreciative motion was passed to Press, Radio and T.V. authorities for most sympathetic coverage.

A Canon gave the General Board of Religious Education a new Constitution.

St. Mark's Collegiate Library, at Canberra, was noted, and a strong committee set up (including the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Bishop of Gippsland and Dr. Barton Babbage) to report to next Synod how it may best serve the whole church.

A small Ecumenical Committee of four bishops, four priests and four laymen was appointed and given its terms of reference.

Bishop G. T. Sambell was named convener of a strong Social Questions Committee made up of 12 Victorians.

The Concordat between the Protestant Episcopal Church of U.S.A. and the Philippines Independent Catholic Church was noted, and the Ecumenical Committee asked to investigate the possibility of our making a similar Concordat.

Christian Family Year was commended: S.P.C.K., Deaconesses, Religious Orders, etc., likewise. Also Philosophy of Religion as a subject for theological study. Standing Committee is to print a consolidation of such Deter-

minations of former General Synods as are viable, with the newly made Canons, Determinations, Rules, Forms and Regulations. And in future parliamentary practice of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth Parliament (not the N.S.W. legislature) is to be the standard for General Synod (sic!).

The First General Synod of the Church of England in Australia ended at 5.30 p.m. on Thursday, 17th May, 1962, on the note of enthusiastic appreciation of the chairmanship of the Primate and the unstinted hospitality of Sydney diocese and church people.

OTHER GENERAL SYNOD ELECTIONS

THE CORPORATE TRUSTEES: Mr. W. S. Gee, Mr. G. R. H. Gill, Mr. V. C. Hughesdon, Mr. R. V. Mason.

THE STANDING COMMITTEE: **The Right Rev.** K. J. Clements, J. A. G. Housden, T. T. Reed, G. T. Sambell, W. R. Barrett, R. C. Kerle, E. E. Davies. **The Very Rev.** E. W. Wetherell, T. W. Thomas. **The Ven.** H. G. S. Begbie, J. T. R. Border, J. R. Bleby. **Dr.** G. B. Bearham. **Mr. Justice** A. R. Richardson. **Messrs.** N. A. Jenkyn, A. B. Kerrigan, R. T. St. John. W. S. Gee, G. E. H. Bleby, R. C. Wardle, H. K. Turner.

CHAIRMEN: Of the House of Clergy — **The Rt. Rev.** W. R. Barrett. Of the House of Laity — **Dr.** G. B. Bearham.

SPECIAL TRIBUNAL: Members (until next Session of Synod):—The Primate, The Metropolitans, The Bishops of Tasmania, Adelaide, Newcastle, Canberra and Goulburn, Bendigo, Rockhampton.

Board of Assessors (until next Session of Synod): **The Rt. Rev.** J. S. Moyes, E. K. Leslie, T. M. Armour, D. A. Garnsey. **The Very Rev.** J. N. Falkingham. **The Rev.** S. B. Babbage, Canon D. B. Knox, Canon I. F. Church. The Chancellors of the Dioceses of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Armidale.

APPELLATE TRIBUNAL: Members—Sir Edmund Francis Herring, President; Mr. Justice A. R. Richardson, Deputy President; **The Most Rev.** Frank Woods; **The Rt. Rev.** K. J. Clements, D. A. Garnsey; Mr. Justice C. G. Wanstall; The Hon. Sir Audley Bruce Ross.

Board of Assessors: **The Ven.** G. R. Delbridge. **The Rev. Drs.** F. R. Arnott, C. H. Duncan, S. B. Babbage, D. B. Knox, Canon I. F. Church, Canon A. P. B. Bennie.

THE COUNCIL OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY: **The Most Rev.** F. Woods. **The Rt. Rev.** R. G. Arthur, D. A. Garnsey, W. A. Hardie, J. A. G. Housden, E. K. Leslie, T. B. McCall, T. T. Reed. **The Very Rev.** J. N. Falkingham. **The Rev.** Dr. F. R. Arnott, Canon A. L. Sharwood, Dr. B. R. Marshall, Canon A. P. B. Bennie. **Dr.** G. B. Bearham. **Mr.** V. K. Brown.

THE GENERAL BOARD OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: **The Most Rev.** F. Woods. **The Rt. Rev.** D. A. Garnsey, T. T. Reed, W. R. Barrett. **The Very Rev.** T. W. Thomas. **The Ven.** J. R. Bleby, R. G. Porter. **The Rev.** D. H. W. Shand.

AUSTRALIAN CLERGY PROVIDENT FUND: **The Most Rev.** F. Woods.

ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE: **The Most Rev.** F. Woods. **The Rt. Rev.** R. G. Arthur, D. A. Garnsey, J. S. Moyes, G. T. Sambell, R. C. Kerle. **The Ven.** G. R. Delbridge. **The Rev.** Canon A. L. Sharwood. **Dr.** J. Benjamin. **Messrs.** J. E. Benson, V. K. Brown. **Miss** I. F. Jeffreys.

PRAYER BOOK COMMISSION: **The Rt. Rev.** R. G. Arthur, E. K. Leslie, T. B. McCall, T. T. Reed — and 28 representatives of Provinces and Dioceses yet to be named.