

# Institute for *New Anglicanism* – an Introduction

A strategic initiative of Bishopdale Theological College and the Diocese of Nelson

## 1. Vision: *‘to pave the way for the next generation of Anglicans, locally and globally’*

It is one thing to affirm that we are ‘Anglican’. The key (and urgent) question for the present time is ‘what sort of Anglican?’ If Anglicanism is to continue into the next generation in any significant way, a new paradigm of Anglican ministry is needed.

In brief, *New Anglicanism* is an intentionally ‘**missional**’ mode of conceiving Anglican ministry for a new age and era, drawing on but re-contextualising distinctive Anglican ‘DNA’ that characterised and shaped the original Anglican innovations.

*New Anglicanism* is grounded in four core principles:

- ◆ it is ‘**evangelical**’ in conviction (in the gospel affirming sense of the word)
- ◆ it is a mindset that has a **missional priority** (understood within the overarching biblical mission of God)
- ◆ it recognises the reality of **profound paradigm shifts** in our present ministry context (post-Christendom, post-colonial, post-modern)
- ◆ it is **Anglican in ecclesiology** in identifying with the ‘Church catholic’ and the radical spirit of ‘considered innovation’ that characterised the early formation of Anglicanism

## 2. Rationale for the ‘Institute’

The *Institute for New Anglicanism* will be the primary instrument by which BTC addresses its part within the Bishop’s Strategic Plan for the Diocese of Nelson. At the same time, the *Institute* will be a strategic point of contact and engagement with like-minded Anglicans nationally and globally.

It is to be the research and training unit in Anglican ministry formation within Bishopdale Theological College, and will be the focus for ‘Anglican specific’ dimensions to the College’s activities. Its main purpose is in promoting excellence and missional innovation in Anglican ministry.

The *Institute for New Anglicanism* is a way of bringing a critical focus to this paradigm shift in ministry. It will provide a platform for a range of initiatives, with a priority in leadership formation, theological considerations and resource development. It will be a strategic catalyst for the culture change that is needed in stimulating new initiatives and fresh ways of approaching ‘being Anglican’ and associated ministries.

### **3. The structure and shape of the 'Institute'**

Patron:	Bishop Richard Ellena, Bishop of Nelson
Panel of advisors:	a balance of local and national advisors
Director:	Dean
Honorary Secretary:	Tony Andrews
Ministry Officers:	those conducting activities under the aegis of the <i>Institute</i>
Research associates:	
Ministry associates:	

### **4. Functions**

The purpose of the *Institute for New Anglicanism* is to:

- ◆ facilitate research (theology and practice)
- ◆ explore 'best practice' New Anglicanism nationally and globally
- ◆ provide training in leadership for both clergy and those involved in lay ministry
- ◆ develop a qualification in Anglican Ministry Formation (in association with Laidlaw College) and integrated avenues or placements for practical training
- ◆ gather resources
- ◆ operate a website and facilitate the publication of occasional papers and research reports
- ◆ organise special events such as seminars, workshops & conferences
- ◆ develop partnerships with similar entities further afield
- ◆ participate in collaborative initiatives where appropriate and feasible
- ◆ encourage peer group clusters focussed on NA ministry

### **5. Key relationships beyond the Diocese of Nelson**

The *INA* will be a primary point of contact between BTC and evangelical Anglicans further afield (including the AFFIRM network within ACANZP). It will seek to establish a closer working relationship with Ridley College, Melbourne, and especially the Ridley College Anglican Institute. The *INA* will also seek to strengthen ties with Nelson Diocesan companion Dioceses: the Diocese of Singapore (and especially Trinity Theological College); and the Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa (and especially The Alexandria School of Theology).

## 6. 'New Anglicanism'

It is helpful to consider 'New Anglicanism' in terms of a fundamental paradigm shift (while acknowledging the use of broad generalisations)

Old paradigm	New paradigm
Title and office shaped leadership	Relational leadership
Authoritarian	Consultative and devolved authority
Ministry essentially 'to conduct public worship and undertake pastoral visitation'	Gathered worship as community event and shared pastoral care as part of a wider range of initiatives
Operates within pre-existing community	Needs to gather and build community
Solo ministry (clergy orientated)	Shared ministries (team orientated)
Characterised by uniformity	Characterised by diversity
Ethos of maintaining & upholding traditional practices, shaped by the preferences of the existing community (inward orientation)	Ethos of innovation and missional thinking to engage wider community (outward focus)
Ministry maintained through a culture of duty and responsibility	Ministry built on a culture of value and purpose
Operates out of a recognised and established position in society	Recognises need to establish respect and place within wider society
Relatively high levels of identification and participation in church by wider community and continuity from one generation to the next	Minimal identification and participation in church by wider society, and little continuity from one generation to the next.
<b><i>Missional context:</i></b>	<b><i>Missional context:</i></b>
Culturally close to wider society	Significant cultural distance between church and wider society
Well-connected with wider community, with shared values and worldview	Profoundly different worldview and values
Established points of contact and relational networks	Few points of contact and relational bridges
Modernist and Christendom context	Post-modern and post-Christendom
Associated with British Empire ethos & culture	Post-colonial

This calls for a related paradigm shift in our thinking in what we conceive of as Anglican ministry. The shifts in missional context and associated modes of church and ministry call for a **significant change in mindset** by all those engaged in or embarking upon ministry in an Anglican context. New skills are called for and leadership training needs to address the paradigm shifts we now move within. A clearly 'missional' mindset drawing on a wider range of skill-sets is vital for the future of ministry in an Anglican context.

New Anglicanism will be asking different questions compared to the old paradigm. It will grapple with different challenges and develop different strategies. Although there is no single 'blueprint' or expression of New Anglicanism, this new paradigm mindset is likely to result in a much more diverse landscape for Anglican ministry. Some may end up looking much like the old paradigm—but for clearly missional reasons. Others will need to emerge that are very different culturally and structurally, but informed by the best qualities of an Anglican DNA.

There is much learned wisdom to be gained in these areas, and building partner relationships and networks more broadly, especially among other like-minded 'New Anglicans', will be advantageous for Nelson as a diocese. This is an area in which we may both contribute and take a lead in appropriate avenues.

A starting point will be to identify distinctive Anglican 'DNA' and to explore how these qualities may be expressed in the context of the new paradigm. Seeking out 'best practice' New Anglicanism will inspire and serve to stand as case studies, not only of what such ministries might look like, but more importantly what line of questioning and thought led to such initiatives. *It is the mindset behind New Anglicanism that is as significant as any 'how to' considerations.*

#### NOTES:

None of this is new by any means, but attempts to gather together a range of thinking and initiatives in recent times. Significant exploratory consideration and experience in this direction was stimulated by the Decade of Evangelism (especially in the Church of England), and is largely conveyed by the term 'fresh expressions'.

There are two points to note in this regard:

1. The 'fresh-expressions' project (essentially referring to fresh expressions of 'being church') is increasingly used more loosely and with less missional focus, and has accrued an 'if you are into that sort of thing' type of perception. It is our intention to adopt a 'fresh-expressions' approach, but on a more broadly-based basis.
2. Much of the initiative and momentum that emerged out of the 'Decade of Evangelism' (1990-1999), culminating in the 'mission-shaped church' initiative, has been overwhelmed by Anglican Communion traumas and events. It is my belief that it is now time (and for a relatively brief window of time) to recapture that vision and give it fresh impetus and a broader profile as 'New Anglicanism'. I have no doubt that many others share a similar passion and vision, however it may be termed.