

## **“A Vision for Education – Education for a Vision”**

Zechariah 8:20-23, Luke 9:51-56

May I speak in the name of God – Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, members of Synod, distinguished guests, I greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and welcome you to the thirty-third session of the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

I extend a particular welcome to our guests – especially my dear brother from Sudan, Archbishop Daniel Deng Bull. May your time with us be one of growing and deepening communion within the Anglican / Episcopal family. A warm welcome also to Revd Dr James Cooper and Revd Canon Benjamin Museka Lubega, of Trinity Wall Street, a longstanding partner in the gospel to our Province. I also greet our ecumenical guests, our brothers and sisters within the Body of Christ.

A special welcome to Synod first-timers. I hope you will quickly feel at home among our processes and procedures, and make a full contribution.

Let me thank everyone who has helped prepare this Synod and this Charge, and who supports my ministry as Archbishop more generally. First, as always, my thanks go to Lungi and my children, who have come to expect that in the run-up to Synods, while I am present in body, there is no guarantee that I am present in mind or spirit!

Thank you also to the staff at Bishopscourt and in the Provincial Treasurer's office; to the Synod Advisory Committee, particularly Mr Henry Bennett; to the Dean of the Province; to the Bishop of Table Bay and the Cape Town Diocesan staff; and to everyone else who has contributed to this Synod.

We record particular thanks to Gail Allen, who has ensured the smooth running of more Synods than we can count, and who rightly is awarded the Order of St Simon of Cyrene. This year has brought a particularly weighty responsibility, after Revd Canon Allan Kannemeyer stepped down as PEO to return to the Diocese of Pretoria where he is now Dean. We therefore thank Revd Keith Griffiths for returning from retirement to act as Synod Manager.

I give thanks to God for the support of the Dean of the Province and the Synod of Bishops, for the collegiality we share, and for the responsibilities each bishop shoulders through the year as they lead various portfolios.

Collegiality is also shared with Bishops and Archbishops of the past, and in thanking God for them, I particularly want to pay tribute to Archbishop Philip Russell, who died in July. Last month we interred his ashes in Greytown, in a quiet but moving service, at which Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu preached, with Natal bishops, current and retired, present. Let us observe a moment's silence as we thank God for all this passionate, compassionate, unsung hero meant to, and did for, our Province.

It is always a delight to welcome new bishops to Synod – eight in all! Those of you who were here three years ago will remember me admitting I dreamed of consecrating a

woman bishop for our Province – by the grace of God, we now have two! This is also the last Synod for several bishops, and we thank God for them and their ministry.

I'd also like to express gratitude to the Revd Canon Dr Sarah Rowland Jones. She came to South Africa 11 years ago to marry Bishop Justus Marcus, and, since his death the following year, has spent a decade as Researcher to two Archbishops. Later this month she returns to Wales to take over Cardiff's city centre parish. We give thanks for her unstinting enthusiasm and hard work in serving our Province, as well as for all she continues to do for the worldwide Anglican Communion and global ecumenism. We pray God's blessing on her and her husband in their new life.

It is the hard work of these, and many others, which allows us to say, in the words of Zechariah, 'Come, let us go to entreat the favour of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts.'

So let me turn now to the substance of my Charge, for which we are blessed with two pertinent lectionary readings. Our primary purpose is indeed to meet the Lord: to seek his face, and seek his guidance. We come because the Lord calls us to be his people, whom he loves, and whom he calls to return his love, and share his love.

Zechariah writes that when our lives clearly demonstrate that we are God's people – that God is with us, and guides us – then others will be drawn to us, so they may also find God, and God's ways, and God's blessing.

Zechariah was writing at the time of the Babylonian Empire, which spanned many peoples, languages, cultures, and faiths. The Jewish people had returned to Jerusalem from exile, some 18 or 19 years earlier. 19 years ago, Southern Africa returned from the exile of apartheid's hold on South Africa and dire impact on its neighbours. In our region of many peoples, languages, cultures, and faiths, there is – as there was in Zechariah's time – a yearning for a deeper sense of identity, purpose and blessing in their lives.

We are to reflect the hope they seek – being those in whom others can recognise God's presence, and therefore say, 'let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' We too seek God's clarity for our identity and purpose, so we may be a channel of blessing, through our vision to be 'Anglicans who ACT: Anchored in the love of Christ, Committed to God's Mission, and Transformed by the Holy Spirit.'

Our gospel reading, in contrast, points out that not everyone will respond in this way. Some will reject Jesus Christ's messengers, and the good news of his gospel. Today too, some of Christ's messengers also respond inappropriately, wanting to 'command fire to come down and consume' those who reject him and us. Yet we are not to reject them in turn, says Jesus – for the love of God rejects no-one. And even if we are rejected or rebuked, we are to continue walking with Jesus, who 'set his face to go to Jerusalem.'

This is not his journey to his crucifixion, but an earlier visit to the place where the Jewish people celebrated their calling from God, and found nourishment for their faith journeys. We too must be focussed on what nurtures and

sustains our pilgrimage of faith. Our capacity to be God's people, for the sake of God's world – rooted in our baptism, and affirmed at confirmation – must be diligently fed throughout our lives. Regular, deepening, prayer, Bible-study, worship, and receiving the sacraments – none are optional if we are serious about witness and service; serious about the re-evangelisation of the Anglican communities of Southern Africa; and serious about truly being salt and light in God's world.

This is why, for me, education in all its forms is so central. This is why I have chosen as Synod's theme 'A Vision for Education – Education for a Vision', and invited three distinguished speakers to address us. We also have a special session led by Mr Henry Bennett, Provincial Registrar, to educate us in better understanding and use of our Canons, to help us live out the identity and purpose to which God calls us. Godly education can help form, inform and transform us and our church, so we – like those whom Zechariah addressed – can walking together confidently, knowing that God is with us, promising his good favour, and that therefore we need not fear whatever obstacles come our way.

Last year Provincial Standing Committee decided that 2013 should be our 'Year of Theological Education'. Well-trained leaders, clergy and laity, will help us grapple more deeply with our faith – and not merely with our heads, but inwardly digesting, so we are better able to hear and respond to God's call to us in our own contexts, within and beyond the walls of the church.

I am grateful to Revd Canon Professor Barney Pityana, Rector of the College of the Transfiguration, and to his staff, for spearheading this work. I commend to you all

their 'From Root to Branch' study series. Thank you also to Bishop Raphael Hess, HOPE Africa, and all who worked on our special Theological Education Sunday in August; and thank you to everyone who gave generously.

Prof Pityana will be our keynote speaker on how Investing in theological education is a vital step towards ensuring our Church's future. We congratulate him on moving COTT towards registration of courses with the South African Qualifications Authority. My dream is to go further, and to have an Anglican owned and run university campus, focussed on theology and the liberal arts, launched from the COTT campus. Please join me in exploring how this vision might find concrete expression.

Good education – theological and otherwise – is at the heart of our capacity to grow into our Provincial Vision, 'Anglicans Act'. This is why I am asking Synod to look particularly not only at what we hope to achieve in each priority area, but how we aim to educate our Province to what we are doing. For work at Synod is just the beginning: our responsibility is to ensure that what we do here makes a difference when we go home. As you debate and decide, keep asking yourself 'What do I want to happen, as a result of seeking God at Synod?'

From liturgy and worship to the environment, from health to young people, from leadership development to public advocacy, from finance to gender issues – in all these areas, we want to see our Lord more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow his lead more nearly – and help the rest of our Province do the same. We thank all who are involved in media and communications, for the contribution they make to this task.

I'd also like to highlight the work underway to revise our Prayer Book. I cannot overestimate the importance of the centrality of worship that draws us ever closer to our Lord and Saviour.

Earlier this year, I followed a 30-day retreat, which brought me profound new insights into how to listen to God speaking through Scripture directly into today's challenges of mission and ministry. Five years into my Archiepiscopate, it was a tremendous privilege to step back, and take stock with the Lord, and find fresh perspectives, and deeper insights. There was a new level of encounter with him, beyond what I had expected. My hope is that through theological education, we will encourage all our people to take risks in faith – letting ourselves be led beyond our comfort zones into places of unexpected grace and rich encounter.

Last year's Anglicans Ablaze conference was such a place, for me and many others. It was the largest gathering from across our whole Province anyone could remember. Everyone was there – all races; all languages; all ages; all sexes and sexualities; high church and low church; Anglo-Catholics (or Afro-Catholics!), Evangelicals and Charismatics. We all felt God's presence among us; and recognised how, in Christ, we all belonged to one another. We learnt that our common life was not threatened, but enriched, by our diversity. It was the most amazing celebration of God's life pouring through us all! It was a time of renewal, and let me stress I mean renewal in its broadest sense: with God breathing freshness into a holistic life of evangelism *and* discipleship *and* integral mission *and* social justice. I found myself confronted by a vision of the breath-taking beauty of Anglicanism, when we allow God's inspiring

love to weave a gloriously colourful cloth from our different threads! This has stayed with me: finding new vibrancy in reading my prayer book, new freedom in celebrating the sacraments, and a new liberty in speaking with honest confidence about the realities of our diversity – and the riches, as well as the challenges, this brings.

It delights me to announce there will be a second Anglicans Ablaze Conference from 2 to 5 July, next year. Furthermore, Archbishop Justin Welby, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, will be one of our speakers!

Both at Anglicans Ablaze, and in international meetings, I am increasingly appreciating that Anglicanism is a precious gift, as well as a challenge. At our best we can show the world what it means to live in creative, enriching, harmony, across diversity and difference – daring to make ourselves accountable to one another, committed to pursuing a common life that is not an ‘obligation’ but a ‘choice’ that sets us free to deepen the charism of being members together of the body of Christ. This is why I am promoting the ratification of the Anglican Covenant, which we provisionally adopted three years ago. ACSA belongs at the very heart of Anglicanism, offering our own experience of deepen bonds of affection across difference, to those who share this commitment.

That we live by grace and covenant, and not by law, is at the heart of the rejuvenation of the Canon Law Society. This, like the Anglican Covenant, is not about placing legalistic and legislative burdens upon us. Rather, it is for helping us to use Canon Law better: as our good servant, not bad master. This is also an educative task.

Both our readings spoke of God's people within wider contexts. In today's world far too often the immediate response to disagreement is to rush to litigation as the first, not last, resort: whether in politics, business, or even running football clubs! Alas, Christians often follow the same path. The amount of time and money our church has spent in the last five years in secular legal processes is shocking. It pains me deeply that legal cases have consumed significant resources that should be devoted to mission and ministry. It also distresses me to see the church falling into ungodly practices of lobbying and putting on pressure, to get our own way, or to get our own back when we can't get what we want through proper processes.

God calls us instead to wrestle with one another within the body of Christ, and together to wrestle with him, to discern his will in the complexities of our relationships in this complex world. Better understandings of Canon Law should help resource us to deal with difficult issues in more holy ways.

This is also the aim of revising disciplinary Canons: that these should bring us greater confidence and freedom in following our calling, just as the introduction of Pastoral Standards has done. God calls us to offer models of good and holy practice to the world – for those who long to find the Lord's favour, as in our first reading; and even to those who think they know better, as in our second. We must follow good governance and best practice in all that we do, where necessary revising both structures and practices. We must be good stewards of our resources, for example asking whether the expense of meetings could be better handled through having our own conference centre.

As we live before the watching world, we should not fear difference, or even disagreement, because through wrestling together – as brothers and sisters who know our unity in Christ is greater than anything that can divide us – we can be like rough stones polishing each other to become beautiful smooth gems. It is a demanding calling, but I am sure it is one to which God especially calls Anglicans, in Southern Africa and around the world.

Turning now to the education of our young people, I want to pay a particular tribute to Bishop Peter Lee and his team; and to STEP Consulting, a Christian-based company who have deployed some bright young Anglicans to help us develop our strategy. Bishop Lee has taken PSC's resolution on the Archbishop's Initiative in Education, and breathed vibrant life into it.

We made three commitments then:

- to strengthen what ACSA is already doing in education;
- to encouraging parishes in the on-going upliftment of communities through partnership with local public schools; and
- to create more excellent church schools for all.

We shall hear how all three have seen wonderful growth and development. Let me just mention that the Province now has a fully registered NPO, 'ABESA', the Anglican Board for Education in Southern Africa, working across ACSA's countries. Great educationalists on the board are bringing synergy between private and public schools. Through this initiative, and in partnership with Vuleka schools, the Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Boys' School will soon be built in Gauteng.

I am delighted to welcome Professor Mary Metcalfe as our keynote speaker on the theme of education. Ours is a continent of young people. We thank God for the work of AYSA and ASF, and all our programmes with children and youth. Within our schools, colleges and universities we aim to form fully rounded individuals, capable of analysing critically the world around us, and acting compassionately.

Indeed, our Vision priority of leadership development is designed to promote this among all our people. As Zechariah said, God's people should be those who lead communities to walk in the ways that lead to blessing. Revd Professor Bev Haddad will give our keynote address on 'Transformational leadership: building redemptive communities'.

Our world needs the combination of critical analysis and compassionate hearts. We need it in Syria, Egypt, Israel and Palestine, and Kenya. There are rarely easy answers to finding lasting peace with justice. Any attempts to find solutions through simplistic military engagement are almost certain to lead to greater violence. Prayer is the best route to wise action. Sudan and South Sudan also need this. We look forward to hearing more from you, Archbishop Daniel, about how we can best support you and your Province.

We all need to know how God's timeless principles apply in our own context – in each of our own countries, as we pray for our political leaders, especially where, as in South Africa, we are headed towards elections next year. We must also, as individuals and local congregations, learn what it means to live out the gospel within our own

communities, in our work, in family life, wherever we find ourselves.

We give thanks for the life of Nelson Mandela, Madiba, who helped us find a way forward based on gospel values. His example has been a pillar of strength to me, and to so many of us in church leadership, and to all who continue to strive for social justice. Gospel values, wisdom and compassion, living within us by the power of God's Holy Spirit, will guide our lives and direct our energies – whether in pursuing the deepening of democracy, or countering corruption in all its forms, or opposing such brute force as we saw at Marikana, or working for peace and reconciliation, or tackling gender-violence.

There is so much that we can do – and I commend the work done by the Anglican AIDS and Healthcare Trust, and by HOPE Africa, working with various partners, including Tearfund and USAID on the 16 days of Global Activism, and others.

There are a great range of topics addressed in our draft motions, and I invite you to wrestle with them as fully as you can, asking God to give you holy wisdom and insight.

Let me just mention that we continue to work towards finalising guidelines for pastoral ministry in response to Civil Unions. We all know that the matter of same gender loving has created great anguish both for those who feel called by God to this state, and those who oppose this. I long for the day when faith leaders can apologise authentically for the pain we have caused through our inept handling of pastoral realities, and our theological reflection on them. I want to add my own small voice of

apology that, in our sensitivities and fears of upsetting one another, we are still at such an undeveloped state; and I pray that we may dare to engage together more deeply in critical theological praxis and move forward together as a Church.

Yet as we look at the breadth of issues before us, it is important to remember that none of us are called to do everything. Each of us must attend to our own particular calling – as I find myself putting the spotlight on education, on water and sanitation, and on the environment. I am honoured to chair the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, and proud when Anglicans lead the world, as the Diocese of Auckland did last month, becoming the first New Zealand institution to divest from fossil fuels.

Whether in specific public walks of witness, or by the witness of our daily lives, we are to be living testaments to the Good News of Jesus Christ – and it is the Church's task to equip our people to be such leaders in the world. Education can, and should, be an evangelistic tool. We cannot nurture our children, our people, in mind, and heart, and body, without also nurturing their souls.

As I travel around our Province, I find my soul lifted by meeting Anglicans in every imaginable walk of life. It can be a tremendous joy to leave behind Synods and meetings, and the complexities of institutional life; and to spend time with people who have such pride in being Anglicans, and such joy in the Lord, in their own contexts. It teaches me that 'revelation is on-going'. God's eternal unchanging truths find fresh expression in every new circumstance. And here let me commend to you the on-going work of Growing the Church, in developing

authentically Southern African 'Fresh Expressions', that draw on our sacramental and theological traditions and our concern for social justice in promoting new congregations. Christ is indeed born anew in us, day by day – the living Word of God, active among us, challenging our staleness, and surprising us by springing up where we had not expected it.

Jesus himself, the greatest teacher of all, calls each of us to follow him, wherever we find ourselves. Our two new members of the Order of St Simon of Cyrene illustrate how broadly Christ's call can come – whether to faithful years of service in the structures of the church; or, equally, to be salt and light in a life that has gone from Robben Island to the South African Council of Churches and then to the highest echelons of our country's movers and shakers.

I come to Synod conscious of a spirit of deep thankfulness within me, for all God is and for all God does for us. For I know that, whatever our weaknesses, the fragrant aroma of God's spirit among us continues to attract people to himself, and to his mission and ministry. We know, in our heads, our hearts, our deepest selves, that he is faithful and will do this. Day by day he sends forth faithful people, men and women, young and old, who give their time, their money, their gifts and their resources, to take forward the work to which God calls the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, and to enable my own ministry, and the ministry of so many others within it.

For all our benefactors, for our ordained and lay leaders and their families, for our fellow pilgrims on the road, for all our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the ages, we give thanks to God.

Like the people of Zechariah's time, our journeying to Jerusalem to seek the Lord and entreat his favour may be difficult and daunting, with complex challenges. But let us go forward in faithfulness and confidence, sure of our identity in the one who gives us life, so we may share this life with the peoples of all the races and nations among which we find ourselves.

And to God, the source of all blessing, be the glory, now and for ever. Amen.