



# ACL News

Newsletter of the Anglican Church League

[www.acl.asn.au](http://www.acl.asn.au)

October–November 2001

## What's really important

John Chapman keeps us on track



**With the Gospel, there is never time to relax.**

I have just returned from the funeral of a friend who was also a clergyman. He is, in every way, Mr. Valiant-for-Truth. He preached with clarity and passion about the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He urged people to 'turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the coming wrath'.

He could be trusted to do this whenever you heard him. However, he also worked hard for the *defence* of that gospel. He was determined that he would take whatever steps were necessary to see that the gospel was available when another generation came along.

Have you ever noticed, as you have read the messages which the Glorified Christ gives to the Seven Churches in the Revelation, that by the close of the Apostolic Age many of them have lost or forgotten the gospel message? Some are on the brink of extinction. Some are warned by the Risen Christ that if they do not repent they will be abandoned by Him! It is an easy thing to 'let the gospel slip through our fingers'.

We are in a period of change. Peter Jensen has become our Archbishop. The ACL has a new President, Zac Veron. This is a time to recommit ourselves to the preaching and preservation of the gospel.

From a denominational point of view we may be happy and have a feeling that 'all is well'. However it is to the world around us that we need to look.

We need, as never before, to be trying with every means at our disposal to get the gospel out to our city and country. At a time when God has brought the nations to us, our opportunities seem limitless.

**"There never was a time when gospelling was more important."**

As I thought about his life and witness, I thought about the ACL. Its members are dedicated to see that, to the best of their ability, the gospel will be known and passed on to generations yet to come.

Much of the League's work could be described as 'behind the scenes' work. They help us by finding committed Christians, who know and understand the gospel, to serve on the many councils and committees which comprise the working groups in our Diocesan life.

There never was a time when gospelling was more important. Freedom of speech and freedom to assemble, unknown in many countries of the world, we take for granted. Do not assume that this will last. It is a great privilege and carries with it a great responsibility.

**Nothing matters more than that a person should come to know Christ!**

*John C Chapman.*

Sydney Synod members –  
 Misplaced your dinner invitation?  
 Here's a copy...

The Anglican Church League  
 invites you to the  
**ACL Synod Dinner**

**Friday, 26th October, 5:45pm**  
or when Synod rises

**Town Hall Square Food Court**  
 Square Level – St. Andrew's House  
 (Please enter via Town Hall Square)



Hear  
**Phillip Jensen**

Rector of Centennial Park  
 and Chaplain to the  
 University of NSW  
 speak on

**'An Evangelical Agenda'**

**Tickets only \$15 each**  
 Pay at the door, but **bookings essential**

**R.S.V.P. Monday 22nd October**

**To book in –**

- call Elisabeth on 9247 3941
- or send an e-mail with the details below to [dinner@acl.asn.au](mailto:dinner@acl.asn.au)
- or fax this reply to 9252 1083.

I am coming to the Synod Dinner on Friday 26th October

Name/s .....

Parish .....

Phone .....

[www.acl.asn.au](http://www.acl.asn.au)

**ACL News is published by the Anglican Church League, Sydney. © 2001**

**Address** P.O. R746, Royal Exchange NSW 1225  
**President** Zac Veron, [zac@stjamescarlton.org.au](mailto:zac@stjamescarlton.org.au)  
**Chairman** Robert Tong, [RobertTong@bigpond.com](mailto:RobertTong@bigpond.com)  
**Secretary** Andrew Dircks, [andrew.dircks@moore.edu.au](mailto:andrew.dircks@moore.edu.au)  
**Editor** Colin Mackellar, [cam@acl.asn.au](mailto:cam@acl.asn.au)  
**Website** [www.acl.asn.au](http://www.acl.asn.au)

Articles express the opinions of the authors, and not necessarily those of the ACL. Articles may be reprinted provided permission of authors is obtained. Acknowledgement of ACL appreciated.

## Taskforces to focus ACL's work

With the full support of ACL Council, new ACL President Zac Veron has set in place a number of Taskforces to assist in focussing on the ACL's policy objectives.

In outline, they are –

- **Elections** – to review and make suggestions for people for vacancies on diocesan committees.
- **Regional meetings** – The ACL believes it is vital to consult with its members – even more so in light of the regionalisation of Sydney Diocese and the strengthening of regional councils.

With the triennial Synod elections approaching in 2002, the ACL Council plans to use this taskforce to receive suggestions for nominations from a broad base of membership across the diocese.

- **Gospel truth** – to “defend gospel truth” by organising conferences on topical issues, through publishing helpful material in the ACL News and on the website.
- **Strategic ministries** – to “support gospel growth” by helping equip people and churches through a variety of initiatives
- **Media** – including *ACL News* and the website. It is planned to produce four issues of the newsletter per year for members.
- **Legislation** – to review and advise on proposed legislation coming before Synod.
- **Membership contributions** – because the ACL relies on the contributions of its members to fund newsletters, mailings and the like.
- **Recruitment** – because the ACL is only as strong as its base.
- **Synod dinner** – to organise our annual dinner! Members of the ACL value your prayers as they seek to serve the Lord Jesus in this way.

See our website at

**[www.acl.asn.au](http://www.acl.asn.au)**

for resources and news

and information about joining the ACL.

# The next chapter

Newly elected ACL President, Zac Veron, outlines his vision for the ACL

---



**It is a great honour and privilege for me to be the newly elected president of the Anglican Church League. I pray that godly and effective leadership on my part, and from my fellow councillors, will match the confidence**

**shown in us by the League's members at the Annual General Meeting.**

It is 'business as usual' at the ACL. We have a new Council containing some fresh faces, but also more than a handful of the experienced warriors who have served us well over many years. Together, we make a formidable team to serve our members and our Diocese as we seek to defend gospel truth and support gospel growth.

During the next year, I hope we will concentrate our efforts in three areas –

## **Our Core Business:**

Supporting our Sydney Diocese's evangelical heritage by suggesting suitable candidates to fill positions on diocesan bodies.

## **Preserving and developing evangelical Christianity:**

Adding further value to our members through our web site and printed publications.

## **Setting the scene for the next generation:**

Those who capably serve our Diocese in and through its synodical structures predominantly come from one generation.

We will seek to prepare the emerging generation to promote and defend evangelical Christianity in their parish, at Synod and throughout the world. Continuing to increase our membership base will be a crucial aspect of this objective.

As the League approaches its centenary at the end of this decade, the ACL Council and I value your support as we together enjoy and build upon the evangelical heritage with which we have been entrusted.

*Zac Veron*

ACL President

(see also below and page 2)

---

## **The ACL's Policy Objectives**

**As an evangelical fellowship the Anglican Church League commits itself to the following policy objectives –**

- To defend and advance the protestant and reformed principles of the Anglican Church based on Holy Scripture and as set out in the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty Nine Articles.
- To uphold and promote the local church as the fundamental sphere of Christian ministry, teaching and fellowship.
- To promote the ministry of lay men and women to strengthen the outreach of the gospel within the churches and the community.
- To support the training of godly, competent and biblical committed pastors and teachers to equip the churches to serve Christ through loving obedience to his Word.
- To uphold the supremacy of the Synod in the governing of the Diocese, subject to the Scriptures, and to affirm the need for diocesan committees and organisations to be accountable to the Synod which established them.
- To reform the structures and practices of the Diocese to increase their effectiveness in assisting local church-based evangelism and ministry.

# Presidential Address 2001



**Delivering his last Presidential address, retiring ACL President Bruce Ballantine-Jones calls on evangelical Christians not to lose sight of the “main game”.**

## **This is my last Annual General Meeting as President of the ACL.**

It has been a seven year run which is long enough, perhaps too long, for anyone to hold this position. I consider it a privilege to have been able to serve our League for that time and I trust that, on balance, my contribution as President has been for the good.

Moore College, successive archbishops, a strong independent synod and, in recent decades, a financially strong diocese, owe much to the vigilance, dedication and focussed work of the ACL over many years.

It is important that this continues. My hope is that there will be a significant shift of leadership in the ACL with a new generation of evangelicals

**“Already he has indicated that gospel outreach is his number one priority. I hope and pray that we in the ACL, as well as the whole diocese, will give him our complete support for this great task.”**

I joined the ACL Council in 1970. I think I was the youngest member of the Council back then and the leadership of the League was in the hands of people like D.B. Knox and Dr. Allan Bryson, supported by many other notables of that period.

When I joined the League, it was with a burning conviction that evangelicalism was the most authentic expression of Christianity there is and its ascendancy in our diocese and the Anglican Church was necessary if our church was to survive and grow. Thirty one years in the ministry and my experience of wider church affairs has only strengthened this conviction.

The place of the ACL in securing the evangelical ascendancy has been central. For most of last century the League was instrumental in identifying and commending evangelical leaders in our diocese and through its educational activities it helped to create a climate of support for evangelical truth.

The blessings that many in our diocese enjoy today and even take for granted are, to a large extent, the result of this work and I believe that, under God, the ACL has been the most important single factor in preserving the evangelical character of this diocese. Other factors, such as

taking the baton from many of those who have been running the race for many years.

I would say just this to those who might be elected to the Council –

Never lose sight of the main game, which is the growth in the influence of biblical Christianity in our church, both in local churches and in the diocesan machinery. Don't let personal ambition get in the way of your commitment to this cause. Never give up the struggle. People will criticise you, misrepresent you, and attack you. Never give up! You serve a cause that is greater than any of us and these are a small price to pay for such high stakes.

Now to some contemporary matters –

## **New Archbishop**

It was a great joy to many to witness the election of Peter Jensen as our new Archbishop.

His task is an immense one. Already he has indicated that gospel outreach is his number one priority. I hope and pray that we in the ACL, as well as the whole diocese, will give him our complete support for this great task. I believe we could be at the beginning of an exciting new era for our diocese and church. If the resources of this diocese, both human and material, could be harnessed for

sustained and strategically driven gospel work, not only Sydney, and Australia, but other parts of the world, could be reached for Christ in ways not seen before.

## **The Anglican Church of Australia**

Many of us recently participated in the General Synod meeting in Brisbane. Overall, it was a disappointing occasion to me because little was done to address the deep problems that afflict our denomination.

Liberalism still holds sway at the General Synod even though it appears that, in the local churches, evangelicals are growing in number. What this liberal domination means is that the Anglican Church will continue to drift away from its reformation roots and structurally will continue to

ways which do not impinge on the others. Diocesan borders will diminish in importance and the General Synod itself will be more clearly seen for what it actually is, a place for discussion and minimal leadership. The dioceses and their churches will be where Anglicanism will thrive or die. We may all retain the name 'Anglican', but that will be a term so comprehensive that it will mean little more than the word 'orthodox' does to describe the family of churches in the eastern tradition.

I believe these developments are inevitable. We should welcome them as opening up new opportunities for evangelism and growth. Maybe in the future our denomination as a whole will rediscover its biblical and reformation roots and our structures will once again express a unity

**“It is my view that the shape of the Anglican Church of Australia in ten years will be vastly different from what it is today.”**

decline. National Church Life Survey findings from the 1991 and 1996 surveys indicate that, outside of Sydney, the attendance in Anglican Churches declined by 2%p.a. Nothing happened at Brisbane that is likely to reverse this trend.

I said to the Synod that it is clear that within our denomination there are now two churches – the evangelical church and the liberal church and they are like continental plates drifting apart.

The evangelical agenda is evangelism and reform of our church to more closely reflect biblical models. The liberal agenda is focussed on accommodating to issues like homosexuality, feminism and to reshape the church according to postmodern criteria.

I sensed that more and more people at General Synod see these differences as irreconcilable. My suggestion that we should recognise this and seek ways to redefine the nature of our association to avoid continual conflict found more acceptance that I dared to hope.

It is my view that the shape of the Anglican Church of Australia in ten years will be vastly different from what it is today.

It will be looser, more diverse, with the catholic, liberal and evangelical groups doing their thing in

based on truth. But until that occurs, those who are committed to the eternal gospel of Christ should not allow a natural hankering for denominationalism to inhibit them from doing what has to be done to advance the kingdom of God through effective gospel proclamation.

## **The future**

Finally a few words about the future of the ACL.

For the ACL to be successful, it has to be true to its own cause of promoting, and where necessary, defending the evangelical faith. Should it ever see that as negotiable, in the interests of denominational unity or institutional strength, it will have lost its reason for being and deserve to be discarded.

We must always remember that, like a pyramid, we are only as strong as our base.

Unlike other organisations, which have a narrow support base or trade on the saleability of a few prominent people, we are an organisation which exists to give expression to the views of the vast majority of evangelically minded Anglicans in our diocese. •



# What if *Elijah* came to Synod?

Bruce Ballantine-Jones comments

**E**lijah was a direct man who called it as he saw it. If the 'great ones' didn't like it – too bad! He owed his allegiance to God. What he said ruffled feathers and disturbed the refined atmosphere of the court.

No doubt people hissed at his direct, honest style.

People like Elijah do not sit well with the establishment. No doubt the establishment would have been happier if he moderated his tone, been less direct, used the language of diplomacy, didn't remind them of uncomfortable things like God's word and their rejection of it.

As we read the stories about Elijah and his struggles no doubt we quietly cheer him on. "Good on you Elijah give it to them!"

But what if Elijah came to Synod? Would we be so enthusiastic?

An incident occurred at General Synod recently that got me thinking about this. Not a lot of publicity has been given to it but, for many who were there, it was very disturbing.

It is customary for the General Synod to allocate a place for honoured guests from other denominations. Sometimes they are invited to give a greeting to the Synod on behalf of their church or organisation. This is all very friendly, very ecumenical.

One such visitor in Brisbane was Bishop Suriel (pictured above) of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

He is a tall man, resplendent in his long black robes. For five days he sat there observing the Synod, listening to the debates. Because he had to leave on the Wednesday, he asked if he could address the gathering. "Of course", was the reply.

Unfortunately, for the General Synod, they did not realise that there was a bit of Elijah in Suriel!

## The Speech

In his speech he took issue on the question of women bishops, which he said was contrary to the teaching of Scripture as well as the tradition of the Church.

Also he expressed the view that the Scripture is clear in its teaching on homosexuality, that it is an abomination, something detested by God, unnatural and indeed a sin. He said that the Church should help people with homosexual orientation to repent and to seek medical and psychological help to overcome their lifestyle.

In making these comments on matters which had been debated at the Synod, he mentioned a number of the participants in the debates by name – in some cases approvingly and in one case not. His speech was received by some at the Synod with great hostility.

At the reception held by the Queensland Premier for Synod members, straight afterward, he was audibly hissed by some when the Premier welcomed him. This response deeply hurt the bishop who subsequently said that in quoting several members in his speech, whether male or female, there was no intention to harm or offend anyone. He was simply attempting to give an orthodox perspective on issues raised in the Synod which he felt they needed to hear.

## The "Apology"

The bishop left for Melbourne. The next day the Primate made a statement to the General Synod in which he said that the bishop was unfamiliar with the expectations that are part of Anglican Church life. He had been expected only to say a general short and pastorally sensitive word of encouragement.

He said that Bishop Suriel now deeply regretted he caused great hurt to many and he appreciated

his words were both hurtful and profoundly unfair. Also, Archbishop Carnley said of the Bishop that he deeply regretted the hospitality of the Synod had been abused in ways both hurtful and unfair.

Nevertheless, the Primate indicated he had apologised to the Bishop for the fact that some hissed when his name was announced at the public reception.

## The Fallout

The problem was that, when the Bishop heard about the Primate's statement, he issued his own statement which said, in part –

"I was deeply shocked and offended to hear the comments made by the Primate of The Anglican Church of Australia, His Grace Archbishop Peter Carnley, in today's statement to the General Synod in Brisbane concerning the discussion between myself and Bishop Huggins and Bishop Herft at the Premier's reception last night.

what people did not want to hear, then it is time for the members of the General Synod to be receptive to other people's opinions even if it differs from their own – this is what ecumenism is about. This is what I stated in my speech – that we should be committed to our ecumenical journey together.

Even though I have been hurt and offended at what has happened, yet I am obliged to follow the command of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to work for Christian unity. The Coptic Orthodox Church is totally committed to the pursuance of Christian unity – but not at the expense of the true faith which is spelt out in the Scriptures and the tradition of the Church."

In what seemed like a well meant attempt at damage control, the Primate successfully asked the Synod to pass a resolution of apology, and then a resolution expressing support for the Coptic Church in Egypt in their troubles was also passed. But, in my view, it was all too late – the damage had been done.

## "How would we cope if Elijah, or John the Baptist, or somebody like St. Paul, who withstood Peter to his face over a gospel issue, came into our meetings?"

This statement made to the General Synod was both incorrect and misleading. This statement was made without my knowledge and without my consent and therefore cannot be held as a statement which I made. I did not even see this document before it was read to the Synod and do not accept it.

The statement also purposely neglected to inform the Synod that I had demanded a public apology from the Synod for the humiliation I suffered when I was hissed during a public reception given by the Premier of Queensland on Wednesday night and by members of the General Synod who came to abuse me after my speech."

and further he said:

"I will not make any public apology as I felt justified for what I said as this is in line with the teaching of the Holy Bible and in no way did I attack anyone at the Synod. In fact I demand a public apology from the Synod for the treatment I have received from them which has been both humiliating and degrading.

"In the statement issued by the Primate, he stated in point 3 that I abused the hospitality of the Synod in ways which were 'hurtful and unfair'.

This statement is itself debased on any truth and is an attack on me personally. The comments which I made were with the permission of the Primate and, if this is

There is no doubt that this was a major embarrassment to the Anglican Church and the matter was very badly handled. However it raised the question in my mind; what is it about gatherings like this which permits people only to use 'church speak' and not to engage in frank and open exchanges?

How would we cope if Elijah or John the Baptist or somebody like St. Paul, who withstood Peter to his face over a gospel issue, came into our meetings? Would they be condemned for not playing by the rules? Is it alright to speak only so long as there is no substance in what one says and only as long as there is no actual engagement with people on the issues?

So what would *we* do if Elijah came to our Synod?

*Canon Bruce Ballantine-Jones is the Rector of Jannali and also a Vice President of the ACL. He is a long-time Sydney representative on the General Synod.*

## Who's on ACL Council?

### President

The Rev. Zac Veron

### Chairman

Mr. Robert Tong

### Secretary

The Rev. Andrew Dircks

### Treasurer

Dr. Laurie Scandrett

### Vice-presidents

Canon Bruce Ballantine-Jones OAM

Mr. Clive Ellis

Dr. Kim Hawtrey

The Rev. Silas Horton

The Most Rev. Dr. Peter Jensen

Mr. Richard Lambert

The Rev. Colin Mackellar

Dr. Barry Newman

Mr. Malcolm Purvis

The Rev. Canon Jim Ramsay

Mr. Bruce Robinson

The Rev. Dr. Mark Thompson

### Councillors

Mr. Marshall Ballantine-Jones

Mr. Con Campbell

Mrs. Lyndel Chardon

The Rev. Dane Courtney

Mr. John Colquhoun

Mr. James Flavin

Mr. Nigel Fortescue

The Rev. Stephen Gibson

The Rev. John Gray

The Rev. Philip Griffin

The Rev. Tom Halls

Dr. Rod James

The Rev. Ivan Lee

The Rev. Neil Macken

Mr. Adrian McComb

Mr. Andrew Mitchell

Mr. Greg Nelson

The Rev. Craig Roberts

The Rev. Gordon Robinson

Ms. Karin Sowada

The Rev. Geoff Taylor

The Rev. Murray Wale

Miss Joanna Warren

The Rev. Ian Wood

The Rev. Dr. John Woodhouse

### Emeritus Vice-presidents

The Rt. Rev. Paul Barnett

The Rev. Canon Allan Blanch

The Rev. Canon John Chapman

The Rt. Rev. Dudley Foord

The Rt. Rev. Harry Goodhew

The Rev. Phillip Jensen

The Rev. Tony Lamb

The Rev. Dr. Peter O'Brien

The Rt. Rev. Reg Piper

The Rev. Dr. Vic Roberts

The Rt. Rev. Ray Smith

Mr. Duncan Whitson

Mr. Gordon Worthy



## Editorial – telling the gospel

**The tragic events of the terrorist attacks in recent weeks – and the fear of where all this might lead – is a powerful incentive for all Christian people to refocus on the gospel.**

These events remind us of four realities –

### Evil

The stark evil shown in the attacks – and the callous disregard for human life – has shocked many people. While we ought to be horrified, Christians should not be surprised to see such evil unveiled. The deep-seated evil of the human heart might have been disregarded by many in our world – but it has not gone away.

### Justice

The calls for justice following the attacks are rightly placed. We long for justice in our world – and should work for it where we are able. But ultimate justice will only be done before the judgment seat of Christ. That is where *all* wrongs will be set right. It is on Christ's return that our hope must be set for full justice to be done.

### The shortness of life

So many lives were abruptly ended on September 11, yet countless more die every day for other reasons as well. Many give no thought to their eternal destination. Where will they be without Jesus?

### The need for salvation

It is only the saving message of Jesus Christ that makes sense of our fallen and broken world – and it is only the gospel that offers any real hope.

Whatever Sydney Synod does at its meeting this month, it must resist the temptation to be sidetracked into activity that does not promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men and women everywhere urgently need to hear of the Saviour, and it is our privilege as Christians to lovingly share that with them.

It is not enough to simply applaud Archbishop Peter Jensen as he puts evangelism top of his list of priorities. It is up to each of us not only to support him, but also to do the same.

In addition to our mailing to ACL members, this issue of ACL News is going out to all members of Sydney Synod with our best wishes.

### In our next issue

In the next issue, to be sent to ACL members, we plan to publish a fascinating interview with Dr. Ashley Null, regarded by many as the expert on the author of the Prayer Book, Thomas Cranmer.