

ANGLICAN MEN'S SOCIETY
The National Council in Australia
NEWSLETTER

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FROM BISHOP JOHN STEAD - AMS National Chairman

The church cannot afford to be 'above' the community and society within which it is located!

The church is located in its community and within society. The church is, after all, 'the body-of-Christ' physically present in a place and at this time. It reflects Jesus who took human flesh and lived among us and as one of us. God chose, in Jesus to come to us rather than expecting us to come to him. God chose not to be 'above' the creation but to become one with the creation.

The church needs to be in its community. It doesn't mean that it becomes identical to society, the church is in the world but not of the world. God's intention is the renewal, the transformation of the creation. It's interesting to note that in The Book of Revelation the New Jerusalem comes down from above to a renewed creation. The creation is restored. Revelation and Genesis act as 'bookends' – the Garden of Eden, the renewed earth which echoes Eden (trees for the healing of the nations, the river of life, etc.).

One of the ways we can avoid being 'above' our community is to make a habit of 'walking the community'. Taking our time, not focused on arrival but the journey, greeting the people we meet, offering a prayer for those who live in the houses we pass, who work in the businesses we frequent. being attentive to the sights, sounds, and smells. considering the needs which we, as the body-of-Christ, may be able to address. We could use that term, 'being incarnate' in the place where we are – becoming one in and with the community. Participating in its renewal and transformation.

The church needs to reflect the nature of what it means to be people of the Kingdom of God but with a deep and abiding concern for the surrounding community and society. A church reflecting the nature of 'Thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.' God sent Jesus into a time and place; he was grounded within the culture of Nazareth during a time of Roman occupation! Jesus throughout his ministry speaks into a rural community, his parables reflect that. He knew the culture from the inside out. We too are called to know the culture, the time and place where we exist as church. To speak to our culture with relevant parables, communicating the truth of the kingdom.

Peace - +John

Report on the National Council Meeting

This meeting was held at the Park Royal Hotel on 17th September last. Bishop John Stead and nine members were present with an apology from Bill Steele of Sydney. The venue is conveniently located near the Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport, which allows interstate delegates to fly-in for the meeting and then fly home.

Constitutional matters.

(a) The meeting felt that female Vicars/Rectors in a parish with an AMS branch should be able to become members of AMS. This change would entail an alteration to Clause 7 – Membership. A suitable motion to be prepared by the Secretary and be placed before the next triennial Conference in 2020.

AMS Diaries, 2020.

T. Cowell, with the Longford branch, organized the printing of these diaries which are now available. Unfortunately the Church Calendar is incorrect so a separate inset has been printed to accompany the diary with the correct calendar. The selling price is unchanged at \$6 each. Orders should be directed to the National Secretary – postage is \$2 each.

AMS Service Book and Handbook.

T. Cowell will see if parts of these books can be placed on the web site. Current stock of the Handbooks is 20 copies (in Melbourne) with some more in Toowoomba, Qld.

Affiliation Fees for 2020.

Membership Fees for 2020 to remain at \$20 per member. No fees were set for members in the Solomon Islands but Queensland Provincial Council to be the contact partner.

Secretary's Report.

The Secretary will step down from this position in December, 2019 after 16 years as the National Secretary. T. Cowell will act as the Secretary until the next National Conference.

Treasurer's Report.

The balance in the NAB cheque account at 31/12/2018 = \$7,501.76

The balance in the ADF (Melb.) account 31/12/2018 = \$8,423.49

The accounts were unaudited at the meeting date.

The frequency of audits to be reviewed at the next National Conference.

Membership.

Queensland now has ten branches with a total membership of 100. Newcastle has one Diocesan branch and a membership of 6. Victoria now has two branches plus Diocesan members for a total membership of 30. Tasmania has one branch at Longford and a total membership of 13. There are five Diocesan members in W.A.

Mission Projects. Two Mission Projects have been supported over the last few years.

(a) The Amani Development Organisation in Tanzania led by Fr. John Naumann. This is a very successful and worthwhile endeavor. It commenced with water bores, farming and cropping, and now primary schools and an Orphanage in Dodoma.

(b) Support for Bishop Daniel Deng Abot from South Sudan and an Orphanage he commenced in Uganda.

It was agreed that AMS continues to support these project in 2020.

Drought Relief. After much discussion on the current drought it was resolved to donate \$2,500 to The Company of the Good Shepherd (Bathurst Diocese) from National funds.

National Conference. This will be a triennial Conference where the Executive members are elected for the following three years. It will be held on 26th & 27th September, 2020 based at Holy Trinity, Launceston with accommodation at The Grand Chancellor Hotel which is nearby. Grahame Foster is planning a 3 day coach trip around NW Tasmania following the Conference. More details will be available in the next Newsletter.

From Tasmania:

This is actually a Report from the Longford Branch of the AMS in Tasmania it being the remaining of what has been over 120 years many thriving Branches of AMS (CEMS) and a very active State Council.

With the closing of the Moonah Branch-based at Lutana; similarly the end of a functioning Branch at Holy Trinity, Launceston and the loss via death and declining physical abilities amongst many Members Longford keeps on keeping on- albeit with small numbers.

There is one 'official' Diocesan Member –Mr. Robert Harcourt- White and Moonah keeps a 'social' group together meeting as the Spirit moves them-but kept as Members of AMS by the paying of Annual Membership Fees.

AMS Longford pays tribute to the hundreds of devoted Members who - over those 120 years, served the Church generally, their Parishes individually and the National AMS regularly. They were devoted to the AMS.

So, in the light of this reduced number what of the future?

Well, for as long as Longford members are able the AMS Motto and Pledge will be maintained – always looking out for men who might be 'moved by the Holy Spirit' to look at AMS as both a social and spiritual body of men with whom they would like to share time

However, the reality is there are many men who are followers of the carpenter of Nazareth - but very few of them are joiners.

Tasmania still has sufficient numbers of AMS-friendly men that it will put it's hand up to host the next National Conference of the Anglican Men's Society to be held in 2020. If the National Council accepts the offer the Conference will be based on Launceston -venue for a previous very successful Conference- in either early autumn or early spring

Richest Blessings to all AMS Members across Australia.

Trevor Cowell - Perth, Tas.

John Naumann writes from Tanzania

You Raise Me Up.

This might be the theme for the ministry of VIMECHIA. That is the new registered title for the ministry with former street children in Dodoma. The letters translate to 'VIABLE MEANS FOR CHILD AID'. The work is proceeding well. One of the girls, Winifreida, is at High School at Mwanza, Lake Region, completing Form VI. This is a wonderful achievement for this young woman. One of the original males, Shabani, who completed a degree in statistics and finance, was selected to be a Tanzanian Your Representative at a UNESCO sponsored conference in Poland last year. Against all expectations he was unable to gain employment in Tanzania. He is now at the University of Gent, Belgium, commencing a fully sponsored Masters Degree. I am sure he will do well.

It is a privilege to be in fellowship with the children youth and staff of VIMECHIA. The degree of dedication is an inspiration to me and to all who are personally familiar with the ministry. This year we have commenced a Cement Block Making Project at the home site. This is one aspect of a drive to create more locally generated income for the ministry. Pawpaw and onions are also produced.

Most of the children are in the care of Guardian Households in Dodoma. Earlier this year we held a gathering/party for the Dodoma children, plus the Guarding Parents who were able to be present that day. It was a truly wonderful time. We gathered the children in Nyrere Square in the city on a Saturday morning. After taking photographs of the group we distributed gifts of educational materials to the children. School was recommencing on Monday following the holidays. This was followed by a distribution of sacks of pipis (lollies), biscuits, fruit, soap – and a visit to the Ice Cream shop for ice cream and juice. It was a wonderful day, made all the better by a visit from one of the first people we had sponsored through education in Tanzania.

Netho Ndilito was a teacher at Makang'wa Primary School in 2005. He was sponsored through a Masters Degree, and then we seemed to lose contact. Ndilito has reconnected with Amani in a most positive way. He is now a District Director in the region of the Southern Tableland. That is a Presidential appointment and carries with it great responsibility. He is a keen member of the Anglican Church. Ndilito was in Dodoma on the day of the celebration in the Square. He joined in the entire day and made a financial gift which more than covered the cost of the day.

One of the truly wonderful aspects of our work with children and adults is that it is truly a partnership with the local people. Without their dedication the work could not be done. I have a great love for the women who care for the children in Dodoma. Without their love and dedication the ministry would fail. Therefore we thank you for your support and encourage you to uphold this ministry through your prayers and generosity.

Moving on. From the beginning of the work in Tanzania we have followed a policy of assisting young adults to achieve professional qualifications in a variety of fields. Godson Mgawa, the new Managing Director, has a Masters in Project Development and Finance Management. Abel Petro, the Supervisor of Amani projects has a primary degree in Community Development and a Masters in Project Development and Management. Dinna Menda has her certificate in Accountancy, and is also Bursar at the Prince of Peace English Medium School. These are the administration staff at the Amani Center. They have all been raised from situations of poverty to a place of achievement in their society. I continue to live at the Center, as a pastor and friend, rejoicing in the fellowship of these friends, and many more. A total of seventy four young adults have been raised to professional status since we commenced involvement in 2005.

We praise the Lord for His provision, and are deeply thankful for all who choose to walk with Him. That is, of course, at the heart of membership of AMS.

May God continue to pour blessings upon you.

Brother John Naumann
Amani Development Centre
Pastor, Diocese of Central Tanganyika

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Orphans with their guarding parents and John Naumann at Nyrere Square, Dodoma

MIRACLES IN A MODERN WORLD - reprint from AMS Newsletter, October, 2015.

November, 2019 marks the 30th anniversary of the Berlin Wall removal. That this event happened rather peacefully is a modern miracle and was a direct result of the work of a Lutheran Pastor, Christian Fuhrer. This is his story.

His weekly “prayers for peace” blossomed into huge demonstrations that ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall. He died in June, 2014 at the age of 71. Fuhrer became the pastor at the Leipzig’s 16th Century Lutheran Church (St. Nicholas) in 1980 at the height of the Cold War. In the GDR, although atheism was the official ideology, churches were spied upon but allowed to stay open, providing a modicum of “free space” where people could discuss things they could not discuss in public.

In 1982 Fuhrer began holding weekly prayers for peace on Monday evenings, which were tolerated by the authorities because, at a time of intense controversy in western Europe over the deployment of US Pershing missiles, it was thought to be helpful for church-based peace groups to make connections with their counterparts in the West. Few came at first, but attendance grew as the Soviet Union began the process of reform under Mikhail Gorbachev.

In February 1989, however, Fuhrer invited 50 people, who were part of the movement that advocated the right to leave East Germany, to a discussion at the church. In the event about 600 turned up and many began attending his regular prayer sessions. Over the following year the prayers and open-air vigils that followed attracted more and more people.

In May, 1989 police attempted to cut off the church by barricading the surrounding streets, an effort which backfired when even more people turned up. As word spread,

people in other East German cities began repeating the Leipzig demonstrations, meeting at city squares on Monday evenings.

On 7th October, the 40th anniversary of the founding of the GDR, St. Nicholas was closed, but some 4,000 people gathered outside and tried to march on the city's ring road. The demonstration was broken up violently by police with batons, water cannon and dogs. There were many injuries and arrests.

In preparation for the weekly vigil scheduled to take place two days later, police warned that protests would be put down "with whatever means necessary". In anticipation of violence, paratroopers were flown in and hospitals cleared for an expected influx of patients.

On the evening of 9th October what began as a few hundred gatherers at the church swelled to more than 70,000 in the streets outside. At the urging of Fuhrer and other speakers, however, the protest remained nonviolent and the crowd, clutching candles and flowers, marched through the city in a peaceful demonstration, chanting the slogan "Wir sind das Volk!" (We are the people!) as armed soldiers looked on.

Although there were some arrests, local police and political leaders, without precise orders from East Berlin, surprised by the size of the demonstration, shied away from causing a massacre. "We were ready for anything, except for candles and prayer", an East German official was quoted as saying.

The following week, 120,000 people turned up for the vigil and the week after that, 320,000. On 9th November, 2014 the Berlin Wall tumbled down.

"What I saw that evening still gives me the shivers today", Fuhrer said in an interview in 2009. "And if anything deserves the word 'miracle' at all, then this was a miracle of Biblical proportions."

"We succeeded in bringing about a revolution which achieved Germany's unity...It was a peaceful revolution after so much violence and so many wars that we, the Germans, so often started. I will never forget that day".

Christian Fuhrer was born in Leipzig and from a young age knew he wanted to follow his Lutheran pastor father into the ministry. He studied theology at what was then Karl Marx University (now the University of Leipzig), working during his vacations in a car factory and as a waiter on a train.

He worked as a pastor in Lastau and Colditz until his appointment to St. Nicholas in 1980.

After German reunification, Fuhrer threw his energies into helping to mitigate the worst effects of the economic crisis that followed the conversion of the Ostmark to the Deutschmark at a rate that forced many old East German industries to the wall. He travelled to the former West Germany to learn how churches could help the unemployed, and in 1991 started St. Nicholas Church's initiative for the jobless, helping people to find work, even just volunteer work.

Like many other former East Germans he regretted some of what unification had brought. "People here feel a real schizophrenia," he explained in 1994. "No one wants to go back to the days of dictatorship, but at the same time we're not really happy with the new system... Even those who have jobs and cars and take nice vacations are worried about what is happening to our society.

"Brutal competition and the lust for money are destroying our sense of community. Almost everyone feels a level of fear or depression or insecurity".

In 2004 he again organised Monday demonstrations against the cuts in welfare benefits introduced under German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder. The following year he shared the Augsburg Peace Prize with the former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. He stood down as pastor of St. Nicholas in 2008.

Fuhrer was awarded Germany's National Prize in 2014.

National Secretary

I have been the National Secretary and Newsletter Editor for the last 16 years and feel that for AMS to continue a younger man should now take on this important task. The Newsletter has been published three times each year and over 50 editions have contained faith stories and also secular stories. The story above about Pastor Christian Fuhrer and the Berlin Wall was quite amazing I think was worthy of a reprint. Trevor Cowell of the Longford Branch has agreed to act as the National Secretary until the Conference in Launceston in September, 2020 – thank you Trevor. Many thanks to those members who provided stories and copy over the years - every contribution builds God's community so do not cease in your endeavours.

With blessings to all AMS members.

Ivan Holt

AMS items available from the National Secretary

AMS Service Books - \$2 each AMS Handbooks - \$2 each
 2020 Pocket diaries - \$6 each (plus \$2 postage)
 AMS Car Stickers \$2.50 each

BOOK REVIEWS

Ralph Doubell by Michael Sharp published by Stoke Hill Press, 2018. A biography of Ralph Doubell and Australian middle distance athletics. His extraordinary success in winning the 800 metre race at the Mexico Olympics is not widely recognised in Australia. Based at the University of Melbourne with Franz Stampfl as coach he was a regular competitor in club athletics. He had many winning runs in competitions in America and Europe before going to Mexico. His win in the 800 final at Mexico was described by Roger Bannister as the best tactical race he had every witnessed.

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Advent and Christmas Greetings.

As the Church's year draws to a close with the Feast of Christ the King on Sunday, 24th November, Bishop John and National Executive send to all members of AMS and their extended families a blessed and fulfilling season of Advent, and a joyous celebration of Christmas.

