**Notes on Diocesan Representatives Conference, Newcastle, July 2015**

*Random explanations (?) thoughts on discussions and social life at the conference.*

* ABM does have Youth Resources for talking with children and the youth age group.
* Committee should develop a strategic plan for our diocese.
* We should make ABM stand out from other Mission Agencies – we are the National Mission Agency – so what!
* Partnership is the defining feature of ABM.
* Could or should ABM develop a job description for the Diocesan Representative?
* Use the ABM Office to send out invitations to functions, where we can nominate the postcodes it is to be sent to. Warwick and I are trialling this with information about the Martyrs’ Day commemoration.
* Because of dwindling numbers in the Auxiliary, Perth Diocese has initiated the “Friends of ABM” group. Auxiliaries have been absorbed into this group.
* This new group is given advice of regional functions.
* Many Dioceses and many parishes nationally are involved in or support projects. Should we find out which such partnerships are supported locally to make sure we do not overlap them or conversely use ABM Staff to assist them?
* Melbourne Committee is very active – conducting functions such as: Launching the Lent Appeal (with wine and cheese); Martyrs’ Day service followed by dinner; Table Twelve at Twelve (invite 10 people for lunch, including curate and spouse); Mission Box for Lent (place in the box the cost of what you give up).
* Conference in Melbourne, Feb 2016, “Life in Abundance”. I intend to advertise this through Business Manager as it is sponsored by Trinity College, University of Divinity, ABM, Anglican Overseas Aid, Anglicare, benetas, and Brotherhood of St Lawrence.
* Brisbane representative hoped that their Youth Ambassador, Jenny, would meet up with Grace Williams on the Modawa Pilgrimage leading to further correspondence and a sharing of ideas.
* Emergency Appeals – combined the appeals for Vanuatu and Nepal raised about $600000.
* Emergency appeal money is distributed through the partner if ABM has a partner in that area, eg Vanuatu; but if not (eg Nepal) it is forwarded through a fund known as Act Alliance.
* No paper Christmas cards this year as these always ran at a loss. You can utilise an electronic card which will be supplied (initially anyway) free on the ABM website.

**Rt Rev’d Peter Stewart, Assistant Bishop of Newcastle**, gave a presentation on “Exploring Some ABM Connections”.

He specifically spoke of a partnership program with Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

He listed his Principles of Mission – here below.

* *God is God of mission*
* *God’s mission is present and active*
* *We contribute to God’s mission and learn from others in God’s mission*
* *No one expression of mission should colonise other expressions of mission*
* *Our partnership in mission is essential for what we can contribute and what we can receive*
* *ABM as an agency of the ACoA is a means of this partnership which can attract others.*

There are many projects operating in the Solomon Islands.

**Vivienne For spoke on the upgraded website.**

There are many resources available on the website. Examples are the Martyrs’ Day materials and One World Wontok Conference. There are many resources archived.

Vivienne asked that information on local events could be sent to her for inclusion on the website. Eg: Grace Williams as Tasmanian Youth Ambassador.

**Robert McLean, Partnerships Coordinator**, spoke on the development of Diocese / parish/ Organisation partnerships and pitfalls that have occurred in recent times. These have mainly been due to a lack of understanding of cultural differences, and we workshopped on ideas of the cause of problems and how they may have been averted.

I have offered his worksheets and rationale to our Bishop and Business Manager, when they are available in electronic form.

Is it in our interests to know of any parish or local organisation having a partnership arrangement with a similar overseas group?

**Spreading our Message:**

Should we be using the services provided by alternative press, such as Christian Radio Stations (FM), the Christian Press, and Anglican Board of Mission U Tube Channel?

I have a note that says “Sermons for Kids”. This relates to a speaker being warned at very short notice that as well as talking to the congregation, he or she would be giving the Children’s talk. – *Moral: always carry a full toolbox!*

**What about the Social Life?**

The conference was held at Cardiff Anglican Church where a dedicated team provided morning and afternoon teas and lunches. The kitchen supremo was married to a butcher and we presume got mates rates on meat for meals. Friday lunch was roast beef with vegetables and gravy plus dessert, and on Saturday it was curried sausages on rice with some vegetables as well. She offered to provide lunch for those who would be there at lunch time on Sunday, and for those who would not but would visit before leaving she offered a packed lunch!

Morning and afternoon tea supplied scones and slices, all home-made.

The Conference dinner, was held on the Friday evening at Holy Family Anglican Church, North Belmont. A kitchen team provided three soups, lasagne, casseroles, rice, vegetables and salads followed by a selection of sweets and slices. Some local supporters were invited and I shared a table with three local ladies and an associate priest, Fr Andre. He was of Indian heritage and came to Newcastle from South Africa.

Saturday night saw most delegates go to the Foghorn Brewhouse for a meal and to try the boutique beers on offer. I saw an innovation – a paddle of beer – four small glasses of different beers carried in a small plank with holes for the glasses. Noisy but a pleasant evening.