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Front cover photo:
Jerusalem. © ABM/Stephen Daughtry, 2005.

Turning towards God



Dear Friends,

The time has come for our yearly pilgrimage into the desert, the time that we remember Jesus' 40 day journey traversing the wilderness and the challenges he faced. The time is Lent.

Lent gives us the opportunity to turn towards God and examine our lives. It is a time of repentance. Repentance is a word laden with negative connotations about what

we have done, or left undone. But repentance is far more than moral correction, it stems from the Greek, *metanoia*, meaning transformation, turning around or towards God. Lent is a time of transformation, of turning our faces towards the face of God. In turning towards God we inevitably turn towards our neighbour.

Biblical scholar Christopher Wright said about mission, "it is not so much that God has a mission for his church in the world, but that God has a church for his mission in the world". Because the Church exists for this role in God's mission, we can only know what mission is by

being in relationship with God, by prayerfully discerning, in community, the way of God. Mission is inherently relational and transformative. In being in relationship with God we are in relationship with our neighbour and transformed through the engagement.

The Anglican Church of Australia is in a place of discernment regarding its identity, mission, and future. Much attention was given to this discernment at the 2014 General Synod, particularly through a report from the Viability and Structures Task Force. As we journey this Lent let us turn towards God and our neighbour in discernment, prayer, and therefore, mission. Let us particularly pray for the church and its life in God's mission.

May your Lent be a time of transformation.

The Rev John Deane

'Together Towards Life'

In October 2014, ABM participated in the Australian Association for Mission Studies Conference in Adelaide. The theme for the conference was "Mission, Margins and Diversity". The conference theme drew from the New World Council of Churches Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism – "Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes".

Women waiting to receive food, Machakos, Kenya. This food distribution was a part of ABM's East Africa emergency appeal project. © ABM/Ivy Wang, 2011.

The conference and the WCC Affirmation present questions about: Where the margins exist in mission? Who undertakes mission? Whose mission it is that the Church is called to serve? And mission to/from whom?

Understandings of mission have shifted considerably over the last 50 years. Today the strongest churches are often in places that

were once, and for some are still, seen as the recipient of the western Church's mission.

The reality is that it is not the Church's mission that matters, it is God's mission that the Church is called to serve – the Church together, in all places. This idea is captured by our Lenten theme for 2015, "Together Towards Life".

This Lent ABM invites you to get to know your neighbour in mission, to hear their story and recognise that we are connected together by God in mission.

'The history of Christian mission has been characterised by conceptions of geographical expansion from a Christian centre to "the unreached territories," to the ends of the earth. But today we are facing a radically changing ecclesial landscape... where the majority of Christians are living or have their origins in the global South and East.' Together Towards Life, paragraph 5.

Scan to explore the
New WCC Affirmation,
'Together Towards Life'.



Meet Bishop David Nyi Nyi Naing

I am David Nyi Nyi Naing. I was born in Pyin Oo Lwin Township, 42 miles from Mandalay, Myanmar. I am the third generation of Christian in my family. I completed my theological education (LTh) at St. Peter's Bible School, Toungoo, and in 2009 completed a Master of Divinity through Trinity Theological College, Singapore. My wife's name is Mary Thanda Win and my son's name is Solomon.

Tell us about your diocese...

Mandalay is one of the largest diocese of six dioceses in the Province of Myanmar, covering the whole of upper Myanmar. We have eight tribes in Mandalay Diocese, 23 Parishes and 35 Clergy, 14 Office Staff and 40 Lay ministers serving together. Buddhism is deeply rooted in Myanmar and Christians are a minority group. In Mandalay Diocese, transportation is one of the challenges for the church. It takes seven days to travel to some parishes by car, boat or ship, and walking.

What is your vision for the future of your diocese?

My vision for the future of my diocese is to proclaim the gospel by sharing, caring and serving our community. And to help believers experience abundant lives as they grow in Christ-likeness.

Things are changing in Myanmar. How do you see the change and its effect on the activities of the Church of the Province of Myanmar (CPM)?

This is a changing time for democratic society in Myanmar and the CPM is very positive about the effect of this change. The Church is participating more in social and political affairs, and is able to welcome international cooperation. It also has good contact with mission agencies. Despite this change, the church still faces many challenges and is struggling.

Tell us about the work ABM is funding in your diocese...

In Mandalay diocese, we have clean water, animal husbandry, a youth learning centre, and brick making projects. These projects are very effective for the community. Some projects are working in cooperation with local government.



Bishop David with his wife Mary Thanda Win, and their son, Solomon.
© ABM, 2014.

What message do you have for supporters of ABM?

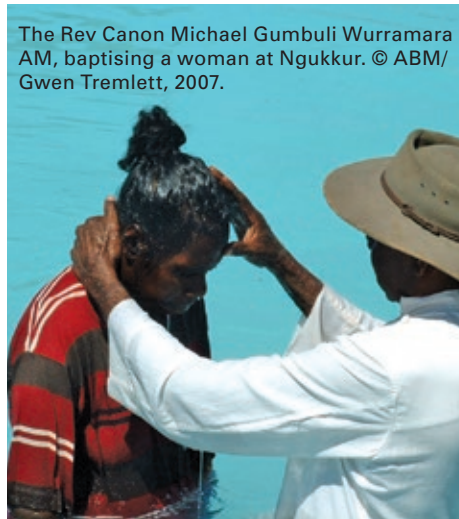
On behalf of CPM as well as my diocese, I would like to say thank you to supporters of ABM and encourage you to continue to fund projects for the Church in Myanmar. It is very helpful and effective in changing the lives of people who are in need. For nearly 50 years people have been struggling and have suffered under military government and civil war, because of this we have many challenges and people have many needs.

“...I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

John 10.10b

In the Australian context and beyond, happiness and human flourishing are buzzwords. In the search for flourishing, or abundant life, people are returning to the contemplative way, communal living, and the recognition that all of life is interrelated. This, in a nation where individualism is a hallmark, depression and anxiety are at epidemic proportions, and happiness is perceived as an elusive secret to uncover.

What does all of this have to do with mission? In John's gospel Jesus proclaims that he has come that humanity (and all creation) may have life, and have it abundantly! Jesus' words could perhaps sum up the mission of God's love in the world: that all may have life, and have it abundantly. Mission is not only about what we do and how we live, it is about the whole of life, our relationship and interconnectedness with the earth, self, neighbour and God. The more that barriers are built between people, the more that success in the workplace replaces the work of wellbeing, and the more



The Rev Canon Michael Gumbuli Wurrarama AM, baptising a woman at Ngukkur. © ABM/ Gwen Tremlett, 2007.

that money and consumerism replace the Divine, the further we move away from God's mission of life in all its fullness. Mission has suffered for this move to focus on the individual and his or her success; it has in large part become associated with the salvation of the individual rather than fullness of life for all.

The New World Council of Churches Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism, "Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes" acknowledges that Mission is

a spirituality that pervades the whole of life, and asks the Church how it is that mission might be reclaimed "as a transformative spirituality which is life-affirming?" The Affirmation also acknowledges that mission is inherently communal. This communal nature of mission is theologically grounded in the life of the Trinity, the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – the Creator, Redeemer and Giver of Life.

So, how might we as the Anglican Church of Australia, in partnership with the global Anglican Communion, reclaim mission as a transformative spirituality which is life affirming? One of the keys to answering this question is focusing on "we" rather than "I". The Church is a community, the Body of Christ in the world, called to proclaim the good news of abundant life in word and deed. The Anglican Church of Australia's identity is inextricably linked with the identity of the Anglican Church in the Philippines, Myanmar, Zambia, Kenya, the Middle East, and not only Anglican, but all denominations in every place. Together with the Church in these places we undertake mission by seeking God and God's mission in the world. For mission is, as the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams said, "finding out



2014 One World WonTok Conference, St Peter's College, Adelaide. © ABM, 2014.

what God is doing and joining in". Also integral to mission is listening to one another with openness to letting the other transform us.

It is no secret that the Anglican Church in Australia is struggling. Secular society is less interested in what the Church has to say and views us with suspicion. Whereas the Church in those parts of the world once seen as unchristian and the subject of western

mission is flourishing. What might we learn about Christian identity from listening to our neighbour in the Philippines, in Myanmar, in Kenya? What might we learn about being the Church from those around us who are searching for abundant life, who are embracing communal living, and who are yearning for a truth bigger than themselves? It is with our neighbour that we live abundantly.

"One of the marvellous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing."

– Jean Vanier



Preschool Graduation, Toungoo Diocese, Myanmar. © ABM/Lina Magallanes, 2014.

Meet the Rev Canon Katherine Bowyer



The Rev Canon Katherine Bowyer.
© ABM, 2013.

Tell us a little bit about yourself...

I'm a Novocastrian* by birth, married to David, and we have two young adult "children", Thomas and Elizabeth.

I was ordained deacon and priest in 2002, and studied at St John's Theological College, Morpeth. I'm currently Rector of the Parish of Cardiff, Canon in Charge of Missionary Affairs for the Diocese, and Diocesan Director of Formation.

Why are you an Anglican?

I am a cradle Anglican – my father is a priest. Growing up in rectories you see all sides of the church. I love the diversity of Anglicanism, and I love that whether it's a small outback church or a vast cathedral, we are one family. Someone once used the phrase "glory Anglicana" with me – to mean Anglicanism in all its glory. For me that's found wherever and however we gather, as part of a global family.

What's your involvement with ABM?

My family have been long supporters of the work of ABM. My grandmother – Julie Redden, and my Aunt – Jennifer Benson – were part of the Newcastle Auxiliary, and Jennifer part of the National Auxiliary. I've

served on the National Auxiliary for a few years, and I'm currently President of the National ABM Auxiliary.

I have recently been asked to join the ABM Partnerships Committee, which I'm excited about. I think being in partnership is a wonderful, companion experience.

What's your understanding of Christian mission?

I think it's Bishop Stephen Cottrell who describes God as a "sending God" and Rowan Williams also says, "mission is finding out what God is doing and joining in". I like the idea that we are all called and sent – this is God's mission in the world, that mission is not something we do, but we are being part of the mission of God.

I think in the past, there was a (false) idea that mission was something that happened to others, and often far away. For me, mission is transforming, changing lives, bringing people into relationship with God, so they too come to understand that we all are called and sent, part of God's mission in the world.

*Novocastrian refers to someone from Newcastle

Recipes for Easter and Beyond

Here are a few recipes from our partners that you may want to try for Easter or any time that suits you!



PAW PAW DELIGHT

Ysabel Diacece, Solomon Islands

Ingredients

1 medium pawpaw
½ cup brown sugar
2 tsp chopped ginger
Shortcrust pastry

Juice of 1 lemon
Grated coconut
Raisins or sultanas

Method: Cook the pawpaw with the sugar, lemon juice and ginger. Roll out some of the pastry and line the inside of a pie dish with it. Put the pawpaw on the pastry. Sprinkle with the raisins or sultanas and grated coconut. Cover with a layer of pastry. Bake in hot oven for about ½ an hour. Serve with coconut cream.



PNG SATAY

Anglican Church of PNG

Ingredients

600–700 g rump or topside steak
1 clove garlic or more crushed
1 tbsp soy sauce
Salt and pepper to taste (not too much)

1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp of brown sugar
1 tbsp lemon juice

Method: Cut meat into 1-inch cubes, trimming off all fat. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and put cubes of steak into the mixture for at least an hour, the longer the better.

Remove steak, then thread onto satay sticks; strips of bamboo or palm leave ribs will do (or skewers if you can't find these). Grill or barbeque as rapidly as possible to keep meat tender and moist. Serve with a peanut sauce – recipe opposite.



PEANUT SAUCE

Anglican Church of PNG

Ingredients

Approx. 40gm (½ oz) butter or margarine
1 clove garlic
2 tbsp lemon juice
¼ cup well mixed peanut butter (crunchy makes a nice texture)
½ tsp finely chopped chillies (optional)

1 small onion finely chopped
½ tsp salt (or less – go easy)
1 cup water

Method: Melt butter in saucepan and add finely chopped onion and crushed garlic. Cook gently until soft, but not brown. Stir in chopped chillies. Reduce heat and cook for a couple of minutes.

Remove from heat, add water, stir thoroughly, add peanut butter slowly, stirring all the time. Return to heat and bring it slowly to the boil, stirring constantly, until the sauce thickens and becomes smooth.

Stir in remaining ingredients and cook gently, stirring all the time, for about 5 minutes. Pour sauce over satay.



Pictured above: Graeme Dillon teaches women how to use a simple solar oven for cooking.
© ABM/Graeme Dillon, 2013.

Lent Bible Study Author, 2015: the Rev Prof William Loader

This Lent, ABM is pleased to offer 6 Bible studies based on the gospel readings for each Sunday of Lent and a Bible study based on one of the gospels set for Easter Sunday. You will find the studies in the back half of this magazine. ABM is grateful to William Loader for writing the studies.

William (Bill) Loader is Emeritus Professor of New Testament at Murdoch University, Perth. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and Head of its Religion Section, and coordinator of the International Society for New Testament Studies program to promote New Testament scholarship in the developing world. He is author of 19 books, many of which are written for a wider readership.



The Rev Professor William Loader, used with permission.

From 2005-2010 he held an Australian Research Council Professorial Fellowship as a result of which he produced 5 monographs on attitudes towards sexuality in the ancient world, primarily in Jewish literature ranging from Qumran texts to Philo and Josephus, and in the New Testament, a major resource for future scholarship. In a 6th volume, *Making Sense of Sex* (Eerdmans,

2013), he provides a summary of the findings for non-specialists. He also runs a website with weekly online commentaries on the New Testament Lectionary readings, which are widely used across the world.

Bill is a Uniting Church Minister, born in Auckland, New Zealand. He completed his doctorate in German in Mainz, West Germany, in 1972, and moved to Australia in 1978. He has had extensive involvement in Anglican contexts through clergy and lay leadership workshops, including speaking at the conference of bishops held in Perth in 2013. Bill has a strong commitment to making connections between sound scholarship and informed faith and discipleship.



Pictured from left: A woman involved in the Saving and Loans scheme, Machakos, Kenya. © ABM/Ivy Wang, 2014; Dorothy, a community member from Cape York in North Queensland is focussed on youth engagement. © ABM/Michael Begaud 2014; Parishioners who process taro to raise money for the church, Nayon Ifagao parish in the Diocese of Santiago, Philippines. © ABM/Julianne Stewart, 2014; Canterbury College, Waterford QLD, pilgrimage to Vanuatu. Here the girls are making loom bands for each other as part of a get-to-know-you afternoon at Losalava Secondary School. © ABM/Greg Henderson, 2014.

WE CAN
END POVERTY
2015 **MILLENNIUM
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

Millennium Development Goals

- 1 End Poverty and Hunger
- 2 Achieve Universal Primary Education
- 3 **Promote Gender Equality**
- 4 Reduce Child Deaths
- 5 Improve Maternal Health
- 6 Combat AIDS and Malaria
- 7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- 8 Strengthen the Global Partnership

www.un.org/millenniumgoals

UPDATES FROM 2014 PROJECTS

KENYA: INTEGRATED LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

*Based on 'Fish in a Dry Area' story
provided by Jeniffer Mutua, ADSE*

Musau Kombo is married to Alice, they have four school-age girls and live in Kalawani location in Mbooni District, Makueni County, Kenya. Until recently this was one of the poorest areas of the region. The Kenyan Anglican Development Services Eastern (ADSE) has been working with the members of the Kalawani Community Based Organisation (CBO) for the last three years, Musau and Alice are a part of this organisation.

One strategy ADSE is using to tackle poverty and drought in this community is to establish dam structures across riverbeds to provide year-long water supplies. Usually the river has no water

in the dry seasons, and there is no water for drinking, farming or care of animals. Musau's Mumbuni Water Project group (one of the groups that forms the CBO) helped build the Kwa Mutuku Sand Dam that was funded by ABM.

The water from the sand dam structures has also been used to fill large fish farm ponds in the community, and one of these is located on Musau's land.

Musau is now regularly harvesting fish and selling them at his small shop in the nearby village, this has provided him with a steady income of about \$20 per week.

The sand dams are aiding the community to alleviate poverty by enabling year round drought-resistant farming.

Community members take pride in their dam, Kalawani, Kenya.
© ABM/Beth Snedden, 2014.



PNG: CAPACITY BUILDING

The Anglican Church of PNG (ACPNG) works with local communities to provide services to men, women and children living in rural and remote areas of PNG. Developing strong, healthy, united and empowered communities is one of the goals of ACPNG.

Two activities that occurred in 2014 to build the Church's capacity to effectively deliver these services were:

1. Port Moresby Diocese

The development team of Diocesan officers from ACPNG met in Port Moresby to plan their activities – adult literacy, gender

empowerment, life skills and HIV prevention. The activities will be funded by Australian Aid through the Church Partnership Program (CPP).
Meagan Morrison, PNG Program Coordinator and Partner Liaison Officer, and Jeffrey Kaka, Anglican CPP Coordinator, led this planning meeting. By sharing their achievements and challenges from the past year's work, and working together on their joint programs, the officers were able to learn from and support each other. The team also received training on budgeting, financial acquitting and reporting.

ACPNG Planning Meeting in Port Moresby.
© ABM/Meagan Morrison, 2014.



Group work results in Popondota Diocese workshop. © ABM/Meagan Morrison, 2014.

2. Popondota Diocese

Meagan Morrison met with representatives from Popondota Diocese to discuss and learn about ways to strengthen their work with rural, remote and marginalised communities across Oro Province.

ACPNG currently works in some of the most remote parts of Oro Province where there are no government services, providing much needed, but still basic, health, education and pastoral support for these communities. With the support of ABM, the Church is seeking to work with these communities to address the high levels of illiteracy in the adult population, tackle the growing drug and alcohol problems, especially among young men, and to further improve health and education services.

CHINA: PREVENTION AND HEALTHCARE

“HIV/AIDS is not only a medical issue. It relates to politics, social work and psychology. That’s why Amity’s approach is... a holistic approach. It’s integrated with community-based HIV/AIDS prevention work.”

– He Wen, Assistant to General Secretary and Director of Project Management Centre, Amity Foundation

In 2014, Isabel Robinson, former ABM China Program Coordinator, travelled to China to meet with Amity Foundation Staff. She said about her visit:

“This year ABM is supporting a new project in China through the Amity Foundation which is focused on people living with HIV. It is in Yunnan province, western China.”

“We visited the HIV Clinic at the Fengping Township Hospital where a lot of the patients go for treatment, and where our project fund is supporting treatment of people with HIV.”

ABM helps to fund Amity’s HIV care and support groups that work with people living with HIV, building them up and enabling them to earn a proper income. The project also includes cultural training, medical check-ups, training for local health workers, and working with the general community to create more awareness of the disease and to reduce the



Amity staff Chen Ming, He Wen, Helen Zhao and Liu Chang visiting Australia for the AIDS 2014 Conference, Melbourne. © ABM/Isabel Robinson, 2014.

stigma associated with HIV.

Isabel said, “One of the women in this HIV support group, who is HIV positive, used to be a very keen dancer and performer but when she got HIV she said she felt too ashamed and she didn’t want to perform anymore. Through the group she became more confident, and the local community now know that it is okay to spend time with her.” The woman dances again!

JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

The Anglican Alliance has produced a Justice for Women briefing pack for International Women's Day and Mothering Sunday (fourth Sunday of Lent) to raise awareness around the issue of women's empowerment.

There are three main strands to Justice for Women:

LEGAL JUSTICE so women are safe at home and in the community

ECONOMIC JUSTICE so women can enjoy the fruits of their work

SOCIAL JUSTICE so women can get equal access to education, health care and other services



The briefing pack is available on the Anglican Alliance website: www.anglicanalliance.org

PHILIPPINES: COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

The Organic Mushroom-Growers of Sitio Guesang in the Philippines

"We are all mothers, mostly with young children, and that is why we chose to do the mushroom growing enterprise, so we could stay at home with our children." These words were spoken by Marly Deppas, one of a group of women from a mining community in Sitio Guesang in the mountains of northern Luzon in the Philippines, about their new community venture supported by ABM's partner, the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP). ECP's community development arm, now working under the name of E-Care, has been working with numerous communities in its six dioceses, to give them a "leg-up" out of the poverty that continues to beset many in this nation of about 100 million people.

This particular community is in an area where the local government and E-Care are working to discourage small-scale gold-mining which is both ecologically damaging and often dangerous for the miners. There is a real need for community members to begin to engage in alternative viable livelihoods.

After joining the E-Care program, Marly and her



Mushroom growers Jonia Dady-as, Soledad Toyoken and Marly Deppas. © ABM/Julianne Stewart, 2014.

fellow community members underwent training in asset-based community development. After assessing their community's existing assets, the women realised that rice straw, normally a waste product from their regular labour in the rice fields, could be used as a medium for growing organic mushrooms.

The women completed E-Care business and administration training and were then eligible for a community loan to start their successful mushroom growing enterprise. The women have grown their enterprise, including the membership of more women in the project, and in the process learned a lot about administration and the science of growing mushrooms.

Lent Bible Study: Week 1 by William Loader

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15

Mark, our earliest gospel, sets the scene for all that follows both in his gospel and in the mission of the church ever since. John the Baptist has just declared that the coming One will baptise with the Holy Spirit (1:8). Baptising with the Spirit is imagery. We could say: he will flood the world with God's Spirit. Mark goes straight on to show Jesus receiving the Spirit for that task at his baptism (1:9-11). John the Baptist declared that God was doing a new thing and called all to show their willingness to be submerged in it by letting him plunge them into the Jordan. Jesus not only embraces the challenge but emerges as the one to lead the way. The scene might remind us of our own baptism, though for most of us it lies back in our infancy in a stylised form with pouring of water rather than immersion in a river. But we also hail our baptism as our incorporation into this great body of water, our becoming sons and daughters of God. Jesus is God's Son, however, in a unique sense (1:11), such that in him we not only see ourselves, but we see God.

But what is the flood of the Spirit about? Mark's story gives us the clue. Jesus goes outback to face Satan (1:12-13). In Mark's world mission was very much seen as liberation from oppressive powers. They depicted such powers



Graduates of the Cert III Alcohol and Community Development and Cert IV Alcohol and Other Addictions Counselling, Wontulp-Bi-Buya, 2014. © Wontulp-Bi-Buya, 2014. Used with permission.

in personalised ways as spirits and demons, where today we would describe oppression in less mythological language, but oppression itself remains real. Spending 40 days in the remote outback was like Israel spending 40 years on the way to the Promised Land, a time of owning priorities or abandoning them to compromise. When Mark then has Jesus announce God's reign (1:14-15), he means flooding the world with God's Spirit which sets people free for love to rule, a promise of forgiveness, healing, belonging and social change. Jesus first enlists disciples (and us) in this. Then his first public act in Mark is one of liberation and his last, in Jerusalem, a confrontation of oppressive power.

Explore... the image of water as a way of expressing the life of God in the world: What images of water do you find helpful for thinking about faith? How does it help you explore your own personal faith? How does it help you explore your discipleship in the world? How does it help you explore the task of the church in today's world? You may want to do something creative with water or images of water which you could do with a wider group.

Lent Bible Study: Week 2 by William Loader

Gospel: Mark 8:31-38

This is a very human story. Peter, the leading disciple, had just acclaimed Jesus the Messiah (8:27-29). This is a high point, but then it all goes wrong. Jesus' understanding of messiahship means to follow God's priorities, which in his case will mean taking the challenge of the gospel of love to the seat of local power, Jerusalem, and risking death, indeed embracing it (8:31).

Peter understands God's priorities differently. God's Messiah in his view should be powerful and victorious. That should be his ambition (8:32). But Jesus saw God and God's priorities differently (8:33). The conflict repeats itself in the next chapter where we find the disciples arguing among themselves about who among them would be the greatest (9:30-35) and then in the following chapter where James and John want the top leadership positions (10:32-40). In response Jesus declares that the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve (10:45).

In this first episode Peter slips from being the hero to end up embracing the priorities of



Youth Leadership Training, Toungoo Diocese, Myanmar. © Bishop John Wilme, 2014.

Satan, echoing the temptations of Jesus (8:33). This is enough to set us all thinking about what we really mean when we confess our faith. Jesus indeed broadens the issues to all disciples. God's priorities are to govern not only Jesus' priorities but also theirs. Jesus declares the life in which we put self ahead of others and of God, which may seem to be the best way to act in one's self-interest, as in fact the opposite. True self-interest is served when we merge together: love of God, love of neighbour and love of self. Love your neighbour as you love yourself (8:34-37). This is not a demand to stop

caring about oneself or to deny one's interests or pretend to (even more dangerous). Jesus is saying that what is good for God and good for him is also good for us. Life finds its meaning not in exploiting others, whether economically or psychologically for our own interest, but in engaging in inclusive love. To round it off he puts it bluntly in an image of judgement: you want to know what counts in the end? It is precisely this way of discipleship (8:38).

Explore... the way that people's understanding of God shapes how they understand themselves and their role as Christians.

What did Peter get wrong? Talk about what you think are unhelpful or dangerous ideas about God.

What does it mean to deny oneself if we are also meant to love ourselves?

Could you put together a small skit about Jesus' conversation with Peter to share with a wider group?

Lent Bible Study: Week 3 by William Loader



Angus is a member of the community that was involved in the Church Partnership Program Poultry Project in PNG. © ABM/Ivy Wang, 2013.

Gospel: John 2:13-22

The trouble in the temple is told in all four gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke report it as one of Jesus' last acts and one which would land him in serious strife (Matt 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46). It appears likely that the author of John's gospel has deliberately relocated it to the beginning of Jesus' ministry as a way of shedding light on all that was to follow.

It is rich in symbolism but with roots in history. Historically Jesus entered the outer precincts of the temple, the size of many football fields, and performed a symbolic act of judgment. That act was not attacking the temple, which he calls "my Father's house", but its leaders. Mark reports allegations of financial exploitation (12:38-40). The temple was in effect the bank. Luke brings the parable of the Good Samaritan which depicts temple personnel ignoring human need. John's account suggests the clutter of commerce (10:30-37). People coming to the temple needed to change their money into the currency required for temple donations and needed to buy animals for sacrifice, but even necessary things can get in the road and take over. Jesus was calling for change in the system so that justice and compassion might rule. Only with that would the rites and rituals of temple service make sense.

It was dangerous to take on such powerful interests. Jesus' warning about the temple's doom was twisted into an attack on divine worship at his trial (Mark 14:56-59) and used to mock him on the cross (Mark 15:29). When half a century later John's gospel retold the story, people listening would remember the tragedy

twenty years earlier when the Romans destroyed the Jerusalem temple. Their gospel now told them that true worship was not tied to a place, but to a person. Jesus was that person (2:18-22; 4:19-24). He was the ambassador of God's love. In playful and pointed dialogue the story recalls that Jesus' daring to confront the religious authorities brought his death but by his resurrection built something new in which we can all have a part – as long as we, too, avoid the clutter and corruption which can so easily crowd out holy space.

Explore... the role Christians can have in speaking out about big issues where powerful financial and political interests are at play. Is it ever wrong to do so? Is it ever wrong to stay silent?

What are the issues you think should concern people of faith in your community, and nationally and internationally?

What are the best ways and best resources for engaging in action to bring change in society?

You may want to share your findings about resources with a wider group. Is there an initiative you want to undertake as a group on an issue that concerns you and invite others to be involved?

Gospel: John 3:14-21

A tale about recovery from poisonous snake bites by looking to a snake model made in bronze (Numb 21:4-9) inspires the image with which our passage begins. Something much more was at stake in Jesus' life and death. Some who lifted him up onto a cross saw it as the best way to get rid of him. Crucifying people was a crude mechanism for deterring criminals. It struck fear into passers by. It was the low point of human cruelty designed to humiliate, like rape and torture. In a bizarre reversal of all that such humiliation was designed to achieve, Christians turned the event into an act of defiance against hatred and cruelty. Instead, they declared, what seemed a revelation of hate was a remarkable declaration of love. Jesus had embodied God's love in his life, reaching out to the hated and despised, and even to hateful people, and had pursued the path of love to the very end. This love which sought out individuals also sought out Jerusalem and the powerful with a message of hope and change, and did not flinch or fold even when those powers turned on him and stamped on his endeavours. At stake was the life of God and the love of God who sent him on his mission, not to condemn but to offer life



Rose Chama from Chawama, Zambia participating in community education activities at St Francis Church. © ABM/Stephen Daughtry, 2011.

and healing (3:16-17). They killed the love as people do who resist change and as we can do when love invites us to new freedom, new generosity. To open oneself to be truly loved is to open oneself, to face oneself, one's truth, and for many that can be so threatening that

they ever so gently kill it off (3:19-21). The cross remains the place where we find ourselves – identified with the crucified or the crucifiers. Love is like light which can show us the way. Each encounter with love's light is a critical moment, a day of judgement, when we dare to be loved and to love or choose the comfort and conspiracy of our darkness. God so loved the world to save us from that and to be bearers of that light and love to others.

*Reflect... on the words of the song:
"Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"
Where would you place yourself in the story of
Jesus' death?*

You may want to share personally about times when you have felt like the crucified, times when you felt like the crucifiers, or times when you just stood at a distance. You may want just to talk less personally about how you see people responding to love and change and how some hate it.

How can we bring love and light into the contexts of need we know of?

You may want to put together a small skit with music in which 3 or 4 people identify roles people play when they are there in the story of Jesus' death and share it with a wider group.



Mother and child involved in the Al-Ahli Hospital Child Nutrition Program, Gaza.
© ABM/Julianne Stewart, 2013.

Lent Bible Study: Week 5 by William Loader

Gospel: John 12:20-33

It is best to skip back one verse to 12:19 where we read: “Look, the whole world has gone after him”. It sets the scene for what follows where “Greeks” come (12:20-22). “Greeks” will have been a general term to refer to foreigners. So here for the first time in the gospel the focus falls on the wider world. Philip and Andrew come from Bethsaida, across the border outside Jewish territory. Love opens us to include all peoples, all races without discrimination.

The gospel then has Jesus respond with a comment on the bigger picture. The hour of major change is at hand (12:23). Jesus will be crucified, an appalling humiliation, but to the eyes of faith this is just the beginning of what will lead Jesus not to disgrace but to the glory or returning the embrace of God. The eye of faith also knows that the dying will, like the burying of a seed, bring something new (12:24). That something new will be the gift of the Spirit and mission of the disciples to all the world bearing fruit. That fruit will include the bringing of the gospel to all peoples (12:32).

The disciples will play a key role, so Jesus models the way they are to live. If they collapse into selfish concerns they will shrivel and die. If they spurn self centeredness they will find life and bring it to others, just as Jesus did. Following Jesus brings with it the reassurance that they will follow him right through to the end – into the embrace of God and so they can

step out in confidence (12:25-26). It becomes very clear that confidence about the outcome does not mean one is exempt from hardship and suffering. For Jesus that is no different (12:27-30). He is about to be hoisted upon the cross but to the eyes of faith lifted on his way to God’s presence. This is a day of judgement and victory over the powers that thought they could crush love (12:31). Now love will flow out to all and all will be drawn in invitation to respond to that love (12:32).

Reflect... on cultural and racial diversity, including what it means to be excluded and discriminated against. Where have you experienced this – in yourself or in others? Where do you see shaming and demeaning of people happening in your world?

What does it mean for you to take risks in the name of love and justice today?

What is the difference between genuine hardship entailed in love and pain we bring upon ourselves by our own foolishness or religious intolerance? Is there some way you can represent to a wider group the rich diversity of races and cultures and how they belong together – using things like images, music, language, dress? Or do you want to undertake an initiative to reach out across diverse cultures in your community?

Lent Bible Study: Week 6 by William Loader

Gospel: Mark 11:1-11

Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and invites us to join the celebration, which we sometimes do, with our decorations and branches. History and fantasy mix richly, producing multilayered meanings. Behind it all is historical memory that when Jesus entered Jerusalem he was received, at least by some,



Episcopal Church of Liberia taking part in the relief distribution process during the Ebola crisis 2014. © Episcopal Relief and Development, 2014. Used with permission.

with enthusiasm. John tells us that the disciples did not originally see its meaning until after Easter (12:16). It will not have brought Jerusalem to a standstill; otherwise the authorities would have pounced, but would have been relatively small scale like his later symbolic act in the temple. Jesus was not engaged in heroics, but in bringing his message to the capital. That in itself was enough to land him in trouble, but reports of these events may well have reinforced the decision to lump him with those whom Rome was keen on exterminating to retain stability on its eastern flank.

Faith later saw parallels with Old Testament hopes for a king who would restore justice and hope like David (Zech 9:9). Thus we walk with the crowd of such disciples hailing lowliness and love as the way to peace. The more we play with the scene with our imagination the more we realise that being part of that crowd might mean we are also part of the crowd which would later prefer Barabbas. We might shout hosanna in the words of the psalm which welcomed pilgrims to the city (Psalm 118:25-26), but will we turn on him and drive him out again? The thought is deeply disturbing when we realise that we can all play the role of crucifier when it comes to the challenge which love and justice bring. People

most likely to remain faithful are those who need and seek change. People least likely to are those who are comfortable, do not want change and use their religion to inoculate themselves against change. Why should we be good news for the poor? Why should we care about climate change? Why should we care about world poverty? Why should we care about people who are marginalised or have marginalised themselves?

Explore... the celebration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Like the crucifixion scene this story, too, is one in which we can find ourselves. Where are you?

What is your "Jerusalem", your place where you need to bring the good news of the gospel and its challenge – in yourself and in your world?

Does your worship, your hailing of Jesus, have consequences? What pressures do you experience to change with the crowd?

There is material here for a skit where you could represent different (3 or 4) voices in the crowd and what each ended up doing. You could include suggestions about concrete action in your community?

Easter Reflection by William Loader



An open-air church service with Bishop Grant LeMarquand at Akuba Refugee Camp. © Diocese of Egypt and the Horn of Africa/Rosie Fyfe, 2014. Used with permission.

Bible Study: Mark 16:1-8

Good Friday and Easter Day take us to the climax of Jesus' story. When the last Sunday of Lent is celebrated not as Palm Sunday, but Passion Sunday, the lectionary turns to Mark's account. On Good Friday we have John's account. On Easter Day we may choose either Mark's or John's version. Despite a level of diversity between the two authors there is a common thread and both are creative reflections on historical reality. That reality is best understood as an exercise of raw pragmatic power. Like many totalitarian regimes the Romans brutally suppressed dissent, especially when they sensed that a movement planned or proclaimed an end to their reign. Niceties of careful analysis of such movements was too much to ask; so summary

assessments sufficed. Crucifixions were common to deter dissent. Jesus was accused of wanting to be a Jewish king, an aspiration espoused by others in the period, and it was deemed sufficient to remove him as leader for the movement to die out. How could you claim that God's kingdom/empire was at hand to replace Rome's and not be picked up by Rome's radar? Life was cheap. Law and order, keeping the peace, was something Rome was proud of. Some key temple authorities apparently went along with it, perhaps as John earlier reports, in the belief that singling out dissenters was a way of warding off full scale suppression, such as would occur four decades later when they destroyed the temple (11:48-50).

What was supposed to snuff the movement out instead set in motion a positive explosion

Reflect... on the callousness which almost incidentally "tidied away" Jesus as an irritant. Talk about other such acts by totalitarian regimes. Share experiences or knowledge you have of people who have been silenced by authorities.

What is it about Jesus' execution that makes us put a cross at the centre of our worship? Why is it not a symbol of hopelessness and defeat? Is it too hard because it is now just part of our décor?

Does Easter mean we consign Jesus' earthly ministry to history or does it mean we take it as our pattern for today? Does Easter mean his life was an exception in the life of God or a revelation of the way God is? How can God still be a suffering God?

Can you find a symbol or symbols which represent key elements of the story – brokenness and renewal – from your garden, from history, or contemporary experience to share with a wider group?

of profound reflections – from seeing Jesus as just like the innocent sufferers of the psalms or the persecuted prophets, to being like a temple sacrifice himself to set people right with God for all time. What triggered such creativity was the reported experiences of Peter and others, including women (1 Cor 15:3-5; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:34; John 20:11-18), that they knew Jesus was alive, most dramatically set in narrative by the various stories which tell of an empty tomb. So Jesus was not "a flop", but rather embodied God's truth, indeed, as faith would affirm, met us as God in human flesh.

Wednesday

18 What are you passionate about? Write a prayer letter to God about your intentions for Lent.

25 Pray for ABM's Emergency Relief Program.

4 Find Nungalingya College and Wontulp Bi-Buya College on a map. Pray for them.

11 Pray for ABM's partner: the Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

18 Pray for ABM's partner: the Anglican Church of Korea.

25 Ask a relative what happened in their day today.

Thursday

19 Pray for ABM's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners.

26 Choose something interesting to read and then pray about it.

5 Today speak to someone at work/school that you do not usually speak to.

12 Ask someone from a generation other than your own what their childhood was like.

19 Find out the indigenous history of your local neighbourhood and town/city.

26 Send a letter to someone you haven't seen for a long time.

Friday

20 Host a dinner party and ask everyone what their favourite childhood memory is.

27 Pray for ABM's partner: the Anglican Church of Kenya.

6 Pray for ABM's partner: the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea.

13 Pray for ABM Committees.

20 Pray for the ABM Auxiliary.

27 Pray for ABM's partner: the Philippines Independent Church.

Saturday

21 Pray for ABM's partner: The Amity Foundation, China.

28 Phone a friend you haven't spoken to for a while.

7 Today ask a person you know well to tell you their story and see if it is different to the way you would have told it.

14 What world events concern you? Share them with someone.

21 Ask someone you know what their gifts are.

28 Relate to the environment: notice the flora and fauna in your local area and give thanks for it.

Sunday

22 Ask someone at your church what they think mission means.



The Rev Gloria Shipp. © ABM/Malcom MacCallum, 2013.

MARCH

1 Learn the phrase "How are you?" in another language.



Members of the Makeni Diocese leadership team. © ABM/Julianne Stewart, 2013.

8 Ask someone you know what is important to them about their faith.



Martha tends to her multi-storey garden. © ADS-Eastern, 2013. Used with permission.

15 What gives you great joy? Share it.



Child being screened at the paediatrics cardiovascular clinic, Al-Ahli Hospital, Gaza. © Sawсан Aranki-Batato, 2014. Used with permission.

22 Pray for ABM's Encounter Program.



An Aboriginal Kamilaroi teenager pregnant with her first child represents expectant mothers who will benefit from Hope For Life. © Lesley Barklay, 2014.

29 If safe, take an Easter egg to your neighbours and ask them how they are.

Monday

23 Pray for ABM's partner: the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

2 Pray for ABM's partner: the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

9 Pray for ABM's partner: the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan.

16 Pray for ABM's partner: the Zambia Anglican Council.

23 What is important to you about your faith? Share it.

Tuesday

24 Learn about an environmental or economic issue facing the Philippines.

3 Eat lunch with someone, and ask what is important to them in life.

10 How does your story connect to the story of a person in another country?

17 How would you tell your story to someone you have just met for the first time?

24 Pray for ABM's partner: the Church of the Province of Myanmar.

For more, download the ABM Lent App: www.abmission.org/lentapp



I would like to help ABM support:

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Good Friday & Easter Gift:

- The Good Friday Gift, Jerusalem
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*There is no longer Jew or Greek,
there is no longer slave or free,
there is no longer male and female;
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

– Galatians 3.28

More Lent resources are available
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The Five Marks of Mission

- **Witness to Christ's saving, forgiving and reconciling love for all people**
- **Build welcoming, transforming communities of faith**
- **Stand in solidarity with the poor and needy**
- **Challenge violence, injustice and oppression, and work for peace and reconciliation**
- **Protect, care for and renew life on our planet**

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