

Wednesday, February 12, 2015

## **Young Anglicans share their visions for the church**

The Anglican Board of Mission has brought together young Anglicans from every state and territory in Australia to discuss their visions for the national church.

Trinity College in Melbourne hosted the group of 14 young people as they met together to pray, reflect upon the scriptures and share stories of mission from their local contexts.

The group also visited the intentional Christian community Urban Seed and spent time with the Brotherhood of St Laurence as they considered the long term legacy of Anglicans like Gerard Tucker, Frank Coaldrake and Eileen Heath.

Rowena Clark-Hansen who travelled from Tasmania to participate in the retreat said, "We came together in community to open our hearts to one another's stories and share our own. This has refreshed us for engaging in mission in our own communities and giving our lives to God by living them for others."

South Australian participant, Eric Smith said, "In previous years the church has been focused on far off places as recipients of mission, but we need to recognise that mission is about the church being actively involved in its own local communities."

According to ABM Education Missioner Brad Chapman, the retreat did not begin with any particular outcome in mind.

"Our intention was to create a space where young people within the church could listen to the stories of what God is doing in different settings within the national church. As we did that, we remained prayerfully alert to the possibility that God may be speaking to us through the insights that emerged," he said.

Among the themes that did emerge from the gathering was a powerful enthusiasm for Christian community. Questions were raised about how different groups interested in intentional Christian community might be linked together. Participants also spoke passionately about the need for churches to engage authentically with the broader community, with priority given to loving hospitality.

There was recognition of the importance of reflecting on the scriptures and praying together. The group lamented that sometimes the joy of God's presence can become muffled in the everyday activities of the church which accentuates the need to continue caring for one another and sharing the journey of discipleship together.

Many of the participants were alert to the decline of national conversations among youth in the Anglican Church of Australia, especially since the last National Anglican Youth Gathering in 2005. But despite this, a real sense of hopeful enthusiasm was present throughout the retreat. The stories shared by each of the participants resounded powerfully with the words of the prophet Joel, that Sons and Daughters will prophesy and the young shall see visions.

*The Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) is the national mission agency of the Anglican Church of Australia. For over 160 years ABM has been assisting people all over the world to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, provide health and education services, improve agricultural practices and strengthen the Church.*

# **ABM** Anglican Board of Mission - Australia **Working for Love, Hope & Justice**

ABM is keen to hear from young people who would be interested in contributing to a continuing conversation.

**ENDS**

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

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**High res photo attached for your use. Captions as follows:** Retreat participants shared stories of what God is doing across the national church as well as praying and reading the scriptures together. © ABM, 2015.

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