

Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting

28th April 1:30pm by Zoom (online)



Attendance

Affiliates:

Rev. Andrew Allan-Johns (SOMA), Rev. Andrew Burgess (Bishopdale Theological College),
Rev. David Clancy (Latimer Society), Capt. Monika Clark (Church Army),
Rev. Fraser McDermott (ACM), Rev. Simon Martin (Nelson Diocese),
Rev. Rosie Fyfe (NZCMS), and Mrs Anna Pickersgill-Brown (Nelson Diocese).

AFFIRM Groups:

Rev. Ian Hardcastle (Auckland) Chair of AFFIRM, Rev. Rodney Dunlop (Taranaki)

Associate Parish:

Rev. Warren Watson (Cedar Centre, Birkdale-Beach Haven)

Individual Associates:

Rev. David Hall, Rev. Bruce Nicholls.

Non-voting:

Rev. Sister Lorraine Lloyd (Executive Officer), Capt. Peter Lloyd (Network Officer), Michael Ng (Administrator).

Guest speaker:

Bishop Steve Maina (Bishop of Nelson)

Apologies

1. Rev. Mark Hood of Latimer Society
2. Rev. Thomas Brauer (ACM)
3. Rosie Fyfe excused herself at 2:37pm.

Welcome:

Ian noted that AGM and council meeting have normally been held on the same day. However, due to the COVID framework setting at the time (RED light), the Executive decided against the idea of being in the same boardroom for the whole day. AFFIRM is required to have an AGM in March or April so the AGM is being held by Zoom and the date for the in-person council meeting will be determined at the end of the meeting.

Ian welcomed everyone, particularly associates to AFFIRM. The split of AGM and Council meeting has meant that associates are also able to join in. Ian asked Michael to attach the Financial Report to the Zoom chat for the associates who did not receive the email that was sent out earlier.

David Hall confirmed that he is here as an individual associate and not representing a ministry.

Devotion and Prayer - Ian Hardcastle

Ian led a devotion from **Luke 24:33-53**.

Verse 47 gives a clear statement of the forgiveness of sins in Christ's name: "...repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in [Christ's] name to all nations..." Here from the Lord's own words is the mandate to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations. The Affiliate societies are all involved in a variety of ways with that commission. We believe in the importance of that message, it motivates us and it is the reason for our existence.

This passage contains encouraging illustrations of five out of six of the statements of belief in The AFFIRM Covenant which declares that we uphold the creedal beliefs of the Anglican Church, and affirm especially:

- (a) The love of God as the source and motive of our life and mission;
- (b) The Lordship of Jesus Christ over the church and the world;
- (c) The authority of the Bible as God's living word to individuals and communities;
- (d) The Holy Spirit's gifting of all Christian women and men for their varied ministries;
- (e) The centrality of evangelism within the whole mission of the church;
- (f) The need for continuing renewal of local congregations as living communities of faith and love;
- (g) The priority of prayer and worship as undergirding all Christian life and action.

Jesus' promise is: "Surely I am with you always ["everyday" - N.T. Wright] to the very end of the age." We are sent on a mission and he has promised to be with us every day. Be encouraged, be sure that the Lord will never leave you or forsake you. Keep on with the commission he has given you.

Address by Bishop Steve Maina

Bishop Steve shared his reflection on Romans 16. The key points were:

1) Connected communities

The idea of linking and networking online is not new. The early church has been highly networked/connected as show in Paul's letters as he mentioned 28 individuals in the church in Rome, a city he had not visited. New Testament scholar, Richard Bauckham, said that there is extensive evidence that the early church movement was not isolated or introverted communities but a network of communities in constant communication with each other.

He prayed that we would work harder to figure out what it would look like to be able to connect and serve each other as Paul were connected and served those people in Rome. God wants to use us in our movement to grow His Kingdom.

2) Valuing of ordinary people.

The apostle Paul took time to speak warmly and to celebrate and appreciate ordinary Christians serving in the church. A lot of ordinary people through this COVID season have done the heavy lifting and Bishop Steve encouraged everyone to acknowledge those who have done hard work during these times such as caring for people, pastoral care visits, etc.

3) The value of innovation especially small groups.

Romans was addressed to several house churches. They had suffered persecution, they probably were not planted by one of the apostles but they had adapted and were effective.

As we look back at what has happened in the last two and a half years through COVID, are we aware of how God has been at work in our communities growing his kingdom?

Recently, Steve visited a small place called Linkwater in the Marlborough Sounds. Who would have thought that during COVID two families would begin to gather there and now they have a regular Sunday gathering of 40 people?

God is at work using ordinary people who are innovative and who have been asking the question “How can we do things differently?”. “How can we respond to what God is doing?”.

Bishop Steve encouraged everyone to keep their eyes open to notice where God is at work and how He might be leading them into new ways of growing His kingdom.

4) Value of truth and obedience to the truth.

Towards the end of the chapter in verse 17-19 Paul says:

“I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.”

During COVID, there were a number of conspiracy theories where Bible was used for all kinds of reasons. The church had significant challenges in our country and all over the world during COVID where communities which were united before were divided. This is heart breaking to see.

We are called to develop a culture within our church communities where the gospel is central where the Bible is central and where we can actually go back to the Bible and ask the Lord for wisdom where we can call out bad behaviour and we can resolve conflict using the biblical mandate and example from Matthew 18.

No matter what the media or people say about Christianity. No matter what challenges we face, we must never forget that God is on the throne, Jesus is the saviour, the Holy Spirit empowers us, and the Church will endure.

Chairman’s Report – Ian Hardcastle

Purpose

It may be wondered what the purpose of AFFIRM is now that the crisis of General Synod 2018 is passed and the Anglican Community of St Mark has been launched. Surely the answer is that our purpose is unchanged. AFFIRM was founded on 27th August 1993 as “a movement comprising societies, fellowships, groups and individuals which exists to enhance the life and further the mission of the Anglican Church in particular by calling the Church to biblical faith, the life of prayer, spiritual renewal and effective mission.”

The voluntary societies which are AFFIRM Affiliates made a covenant together around commonly held beliefs and committed:

- (a) to meet together at least twice a year to continue to seek God’s will,
- (b) to publish a quality magazine to challenge and edify the Church,
- (c) to initiate appropriate local or national programmes or events,
- (d) to relate as appropriate to the authorities of the wider church.

That was in 1993, when the recent issue was only a distant cloud on the horizon. AFFIRM was formed to help Evangelical (or more broadly ECCO - Evangelical, Conservative, Charismatic and Orthodox) Mission agencies and ministry units and individuals to work together to best effect and to support each other in the broad common calling of the Gospel.

The Constitution charges the Council with a co-ordinating role between Affiliates to maximise co-operation and avoid clashes of events and only lastly to monitor theological and other developments in the Anglican Church and make submissions as appropriate and assist any affiliate if requested.

The view that AFFIRM has no purpose now puts all the emphasis on one clause of the Constitution and ignores all the other purposes for which it was formed. Admittedly, that aspect has dominated the business of the AFFIRM Council for the last decade but with a change of times, there can be a restoration of balance and rechanneling of energy into positive mission rather than a defensive stance.

Assaults against Biblical Christianity are not over; we may have a breathing space for a while, but there will be other challenges to come. Therefore, AFFIRM has as much reason to exist now as it had in 1993. The Gospel imperative is as strong as ever and the Church if anything is in more need of being “recalled to biblical faith, the life of prayer, spiritual renewal and effective mission.”

Actions in 2021

The new development in 2021 was the AFFIRM Hub. This was conceived to be a way to make the specialist skills and knowledge of the AFFIRM Affiliates available in training. It was triggered by the restrictions imposed due to COVID19 which limited much of the normal activity of our agencies. For very few, it was business as usual, for many they were labouring under protections which hampered normal mission activities and for some all outreach was prevented.

The AFFIRM Hub is a way to reach interested individuals and ministry units offering particular training and encouragement in mission and ministry skills through Zoom sessions which could go on regardless of the lockdowns. In the first year, we were able to offer six courses:

- “The Big Story of the Bible” from Bishopdale College;
- “Prayer and walking in the Spirit” from SOMA;
- “Worldviews and Communicating across Cultures” from Bishopdale College and NZCMS;
- “Sharing the faith in Practice” from Church Army;
- “Prayer Ministry in the Spirit’s Power” with SOMA;
- “Confidence in the Bible” from Bishopdale College and Latimer Fellowship.

Already in 2022, Bishopdale Course has offered a three session Bible study on the Kingdom of God during Lent under the AFFIRM Hub umbrella with more planned to follow.

This has been a year of changeover: we were sad to farewell both our previous long-serving Chairman the Revd Paul Williamson and our administrator the Revd Eric Etwell. In April 2021, I was elected Chairman and after the December Council meeting the Executive agreed to appoint our new administrator, Michael Ng.

Last year, I rewrote the website, transferring it to a more user-friendly environment to make it easier to update with new information. Michael has resolved several significant technical IT issues with emails and the website which has been a huge help. He is also getting to grips with the administrative role. Initially, a surprising amount of time has been involved in updating the office holders with the bank, IRD and Charities Commission.

A Constitutional function of AFFIRM is “to monitor theological and other developments within the Church, to make submissions or representations to synods or bishops or other clergy as judged appropriate, and to provide assistance to an Affiliate in any respect, if so requested by that Affiliate.”

We had such an occasion during the year where ACM asked for support as they raised a theological issue with the Archbishops. This concerned the Archbishop’s submission to the Justice Select Committee published on the *Taonga* website which not only supported the Conversion Therapies Bill but argued for a harder line. ACM wanted AFFIRM’s support in protesting to the Archbishops that

their submission did not reflect the “two integrities” resolution of General Synod. A special Council meeting was called to consider what support AFFIRM might offer. The Council resolved to support ACM in principle and gave feedback and counsel to ACM on their approach to the Archbishops.

Motion: That the Chairman’s report be received.

Andrew Allan-Johns, Anna Pickersgill-Brown – Agreed

Bishop Steve excused himself at 2:13pm.

Ian expressed his appreciation to the Bishop for his attendance and his address.

Executive Officer’s and Network Coordinator’s report

Lorraine started with a report on last year's AFFIRM hub series was encouraging at three levels:

- 1) It was the first time that the Affiliates have worked together to share the rich skills and expertise that each Affiliate has in communicating the gospel. A huge thank you to each of the Affiliates for the time and commitment made to this series. For example, CMS have so much to teach us in cross-cultural communication and a growing multicultural community in New Zealand and they look forward to their input again this year.
- 2) They are grateful to Bishopdale Theological College, particularly to Andrew and to Dr Kate Tyler. It is their equipment and their Zoom recording facilities that have enabled us to achieve what we have now- a growing number of resources available to groups anywhere in the world.

Their main aim is to give the opportunity for the lay members of the church and especially those isolated from solid biblical teaching to grow in their theological knowledge and to be trained and equipped in witness and in mission.

Their secondary aim is to promote Bishopdale College and to make their courses more widely known. They see Bishopdale as embracing and harnessing an approach to mission which is totally in accordance with our understanding of AFFIRM's goals and values. Much of the material that has been recorded can be explored and continued further by attending the college as a student physically or online.

- 3) There were approximately 180 online registrations last year across the six courses. Some registered but did not attend but many registrations also represented groups.

Actions in 2022

AFFIRM series is continuing in this coming year. The first of the AFFIRM training hub, a three-week Lenten study series entitled “Every Good Thing in Christ: The Complete King in the Complete Kingdom.”

They had 71 individual online registrations for the first series. One of the encouraging signs they have seen this year is that there were several churches that signed up for this; some were not AFFIRM associates or affiliates. These sessions were recorded, and many took the opportunity to use the recorded versions with their home groups.

They gave an example of a Kiwi woman living in Japan, amongst a sea of unbelievers. She is finding these series life-giving for her, encouraging and helpful. She is doing this with her mother who is a member of St Peter's, Katikati but she described this as a “stream in the desert.”

Peter continued with the report by saying that this year’s series is titled “Crossroads: When World and Gospel Meet.” The gospel and worship are the two things which are unique to Christians. Crossroads are also where we meet. We are called to live in the world while being distinctive within the world. It is also where we get buffeted by other ideas other ideologies put towards us and then

as we know from within the church itself there is the reality of people who are trying to take us in different directions.

COVID has continued to restrict their face-to-face visits in the past few months but with the move to orange, they are anticipating movement again. Many churches are trying to rebuild the congregations having to deal with all new forms of technology and still move forward.

They are pleased to share that the AFFIRM churches have reached out to them for support in preaching and celebrating if the need has arisen. They are delighted to do so and see this is a way of strengthening the network. They are always pleased when approached for prayer, for ministry and personal support.

They are supporting ACM with Fraser as the chairman. Peter is on the standing committee and Lorraine is the acting secretary at the moment. ACM has just received the sufficient finance to appoint an administrator.

ACM is planning a conference in 2023 which they see AFFIRM as giving its full support too.

They are also exploring the possibility of holding an AFFIRM conference in 2024 and looking forward to the council's input.

Motion: That the Executive Officers' report from the Lloyds be received.

Andrew Burgess, David Clancy – Agreed

Financial Report (Michael Ng)

Michael sent out the financial and the admin report to the affiliates two days before hand. He also attached the reports in the ZOOM session made available for everyone, including the associates who were present.

A few key points were mentioned:

- The financial report shows a net deficit of \$550.03 in 2021.
- ACM's affiliation payment was not received last financial year.
- Gifts totalled \$600 for the previous chair and administrator.
- The financial report has not yet been peer reviewed.

Michael moved on to the admin report. He introduced himself as started the role in January 2022. He is a parishioner at St Stephens'. He is from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and has been in New Zealand for over 22 years.

Rosie Fyfe excused herself at 2:37pm.

Anna asked whether Michael has sorted out the signing authorities for Kiwibank. Michael confirmed this has been completed.

Monika asked if the affiliates will be receiving this year's invoice. Ian said Michael will send out the invoices later in the year.

Ian is still waiting for Eric to confirm whether Todd Stevenson would be willing to be the peer reviewer of AFFIRM's accounts again.

Motion: That the financial report is received subject to it being peer reviewed.

Andrew Burgess, Anna Pickersgill-Brown – Agreed

Constitutional Changes

None proposed.

Confirm date of Council meeting.

After a few deliberations, it was generally agreed that the council meeting is held on 2nd June subject to confirmation from CMS regarding the use of their boardroom and facilities.

Any Other Business

1. ACM

Fraser thanked the AFFIRM board for pulling together a last-minute meeting and for the Council's wisdom on how to respond to the archbishops' submission to the Bill prohibiting conversion therapy.

He and Peter Lloyd had a face-to-face meeting on 28/4/22 with Archbishop Philip in Auckland and via Zoom was Archbishop Don Tamihere in Gisborne. It was an exercise to reveal ACM's desire to work with the Archbishops in the success of the Anglican Church in this country.

The archbishops discussed their reasoning for their stance. They were unapologetic as Archbishop Philip has made 18 submissions in the last 10 years. Fraser expressed that it created a ripple effect amongst the conservatives who are feeling that their ground is fairly thin at the moment. However, they did express their commitment to support ACM as a legitimate community, one of which that they would consult or at least informed us ahead of time.

The archbishops assured ACM that should it be challenged in its non-coercive ministry to anybody who is struggling with gender issues, it would have their complete support.

It ended with a positive note and he felt they understood that we are not the enemy and we are here to stay and have a voice in this Church. They appreciated the fact that they sought discussion rather than a knee jerk reaction.

Generally, ACM churches are feeling rather beaten up by the COVID crisis. Looking to build a suite of training programme to help build churches that grow. Planning a conference for 2023. Hopes ACM can encourage conservative clergy to have confidence in the gospel.

2. AFFIRM Associates

Ian concluded the meeting by thanking the three associates who joined the meeting. He emphasised that associates have a right to attend, to speak and vote at the AGM.

3. CCA

Andrew Burgess expressed his pleasure that AFFIRM has a good relationship with CCA (Church of Confessing Anglicans). It is encouraging to see good partnership and communications between Bishop Steve and Bishop Jay.

Ian added that the Bishop of Nelson, the Bishop of CCAANZ, and the Chairs of ACM and AFFIRM intend to continue to meet once a year.

Ian declared the meeting closed at 3:03pm.

Minutes approved by the AFFIRM Council Meeting. _____ Chairman

16/6/2022 Date