

On Wednesday afternoon this week I attended a consultation session at St. Mark's Camberwell, arranged by the Archbishop. The purpose of the session was to discuss how the actual content of the Diocesan Vision and Directions statement was being received and (hopefully) enacted throughout the Diocese.

The session was chaired by Bishop Genieve, and she had organised a number of presentations which demonstrated ways in which parishes in the Marningatha Episcopate were embodying the Diocesan Vision in their own context. I would like to give you just a flavour of a few of these.

St. Timothy's, Bulleen, was a small, struggling, mono-cultural parish in 2014 when their new Vicar, Rev. Ben Wong, was appointed. The remaining parishioners, numbering around 20, were open to Ben's ministry with them, but also keen for him to engage with the Chinese population living in Bulleen. Unlike (in my experience) many congregations who wish to retain their own identity at all costs, they were prepared to begin a bi-lingual service immediately. Ben judged that this would not work, and instigated two separate services. However, the cross-over between the two services is now very obvious, with young Chinese musicians often providing music at the "English service", and the connection between Anglo and Chinese parishioners strong.

The Venerable Greg Allinson, Vicar of St. Mark's Camberwell, outlined how the parish has used a number of different evangelistic programs in order to introduce people to the faith. These include "Introducing Christianity", "The Case for Christ", and the well-known "Alpha" course. In fact, we gathered on Wednesday around tables which were still in place from the Alpha dinner and session that had been held on Tuesday evening! It was good to hear the stories of these successful programs.

The South Sudanese women of the Box Hill region began a *learn to sew* program over ten years ago now. This has now grown into a sewing organisation called "Dreamstitchers", that caters to over 50 women a week, in a large room housing 35 sewing machines! Not only do these women learn a great skill, but they now provide liturgical vestments and linen (altar cloths, corporals, clergy shirts, stoles and chasubles) to a number of parishes and clergy around the Diocese.

Our story of Covenant relationship with CCSY was also presented, and was well received. Bishop Genieve made the point that such discussions, relationships, and partnerships were important at every level, and encouraged more parishes to share their resources and ideas, especially in this time of dwindling supply.

May Alban, John the Baptist, and all the Saints walk with you this week...

*Sam*