



BEING BLUEPRINT BEING ANGLICAN

*A BASIC GUIDE TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
ANGLICAN CHURCH AND WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU.*

PREFACE / A THEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

The Church in The West and New Zealand is in decline. For several years now The Church has been hemorrhaging and failing to draw the next generation to faith. There is a disconnection between The Church and culture, and many of us are unsure how to articulate 'The Good News' to our families and communities.

As the oldest denomination in New Zealand, The Anglican Church is the first to feel the effects of this. A clear reality faces it, that in 20 years there is no coming generation to continue it. While this is bleak, it is important to realise this is not just an Anglican issue, but a whole Church issue which will ultimately affect all Christians.

The theologian, Phyllis Tickle, argues that a strange phenomena has occurred in Church history. So she says, every 500 years the Church has an identity crisis. We realise that we've started to look a little too much like the culture and that we've left behind some of the beautiful cultural practices that defined us as a holy and unique people. She argues that we are in one of those 500 year seasons right now where we must look to our ancient history to renew ourselves for the future.

Throughout history the Church has successfully renewed ourselves again and again through small groups of passionate people who seek to re-find our holy strangeness, peculiarity and difference from the culture around us. In a time of excess The Franciscans rose up and took a vow of poverty, In a time where the Church had become complicit with the Roman Empire The Desert Fathers retreated to pray and intercede for the world. In the same way, The Church today awaits small groups of people who can explore our old and ancient ways as God's people and refashion them into the future of faith for the world. The Church needs 'Prototypes' who will respect the old while being fluent in the language of the new.

OUR JOURNEY

In 2009 one of our good friends, Cindy Ruakere, visited Blueprint. Cindy is strongly prophetic and has reliably brought words to our community that have been true and hugely influential in our journey. On this occasion she brought us the picture of Blueprint as a 'prototype'.

A prototype is a model or a 'Blueprint' for a future form. We had long believed that Blueprint has something special and unique to offer to our city, but had not often considered what we may have to offer to The Church of Aotearoa.

The realisation as we prayed and thought about this word over the coming year was that Blueprint had no connection to the wider Church from which to model or influence. We also realised that our independence had sometimes stopped us from listening to the wisdom of others who could help us to become who we are meant to become.

After much prayer and consideration of other movements we chose The Anglican Church as home. We have a signed agreement with the Wellington Diocese as a Pioneer Mission Unit. The process for this sees three periods of short-term commitment over five years before considering whether we will join for good. There are two one year commitments followed by a third three year commitment. We are currently in year two.

There are two key reasons for our connection.

i. A prototype is meant to be a prototype 'to something'. It is to be replicated, to be influential and to be challenging. A prototype in isolation is just a lost blueprint for change. Our connection here allows us to begin to influence a core expression of Christianity in recasting and renewing its future form.

ii. Blueprint has historically struggled with a lack of direction and stability. Our vision and sense of call has often drifted with new books we read or new ideas we are discussing. As a church primarily made up of only one generation it is important to be planted into a wider expression of God's family and to be connected to traditions and practices that outdate our changes of mood or temperament. This wider family also connects us with mentors and leaders who can develop our people in their faith too.

WHY ANGLICAN?

There are several reasons for our decision to walk with the Anglican Diocese of Wellington. Three particularly cool ones are:

The Common Life

Blueprint has long been proud of being an all-week church community. Many of us live together, work together and do ministry together. Some of our houses pray together every day and we all eat together...a lot! At the heart of Anglicanism is the belief in a 'Common Life', the belief that life and faith should be intimately shared through prayer, fellowship and sacrament. At its heart Anglicanism has held the values of committed community for centuries. This is not the same in modern Pentecostal expressions and we think it is a profoundly counter-cultural statement in an increasingly individualised society.

Bi-culturalism

No other denomination has had such a strong and proactive posture towards cultural reconciliation. Through the three Tikanga model, The Anglican Church has a really positive relationship with Maori and Pasifika congregations, while also allowing full autonomy to practice faith in a culturally appropriate way. Blueprint has been on a journey of cultural reconciliation for some years now and we think this is a justice issue we should be partnered with others on.

Unity In Diversity

The Anglican Church holds an enormous breadth of belief within it yet has been able to hold together as a family unified around who Christ is. This means we try to hold our family together at all costs, even if we can't understand how someone has come to different conclusions to us on ideas of faith. Blueprint has always been theologically diverse too and we value the ability to disagree and express our experience and opinion. This means that even as ideas or Bishops change there is still a place for Blueprint to offer our unique contribution to this family.

People We Like

The Anglican Diocese of Wellington has some great friends of ours involved in it who have spoken many times at Blueprint. Ngatiawa River Monastery (where many of us go for retreats) are part of Urban Vision, a monastic order of the Anglican Church. Our long-time friend, Mark Johnson, is an Anglican Priest who leads St Thomas' church in Newtown. And of course Justin Duckworth, a long-time supporter of ours, is Bishop. This is just to name three.

HOW DO I ANGLICAN?

The next question many will ask is what this means practically to your day to day faith as a Blueprinter. 'How do I Anglican?' you may be asking. Currently, our connection is felt at three levels:

Leadership

Blueprint leadership now receive a greater level of support and guidance than we ever have before. We have access to incredibly experienced leaders and amazing theologians who are helping to form who Blueprint is in the future without trying to change us.

Culture

Blueprint is accessing traditions and spiritual practices from Anglicanism that we are weaving into our DNA in ways appropriate to the culture of our community. This means finding ways to nurture that 'common life', it means treating communion more and more as a sacred and special moment of reflection, it means learning how to grow and mature as a church beyond our previous state as only one age-group and demographic.

Day-to-Day

Blueprint now has access to a number of really practical training and support tools. We have mentors throughout the diocese who we have connected to Blueprinters seeking support, a young leaders incubator group runs monthly to train young adults, the Radical Tea Party provides an environment for young adult discussion around costly discipleship, and we do an annual trip to Melbourne in March/April to visit expressions of missional community. These are just a few connection points but there are many more.

HOW CAN I START?

Already Blueprint has had an enormous influence on the Wellington Diocese since signing our initial covenant two years ago. We have weekly visits from other Anglican Parishes seeking to encourage us and be inspired for their own contexts. At key moments in the Anglican calendar we are often told how local congregations have picked up Blueprint resources and ideas to apply them to their communities. While we may not always feel that we are individually contributing to the relationship, the bigger picture is that Blueprint is part of monumental shift happening in the Anglican Church. That being said, we understand that many people just want to get stuck in and know how to participate first-hand. Here are some ideas.

Join one our chapter communities weekday evenings for prayers from The Anglican Prayer Book, a beautiful taonga/treasure of our movement. You could also begin a prayer rhythm yourself at your home or flat.

Join the young adults leadership incubator with Justin and Jenny Duckworth

Request that Blueprint set you up in a mentoring relationship with someone wise in another part of the diocese

Visit other congregations who do things differently to us such as St Barnabus, a high Anglican church in Mount Victoria that does incense and robes. Visiting other congregations is a great way to get to know our wider whanau of all ages and expressions.

Come along to key moments in the Anglican calendar such as Hui. Blueprint will make you aware of these as they're coming up.

We are happy to meet up with anyone and discuss in more detail different ways you can be involved. We hope this document has helped to better frame Blueprint's relationship with the Anglican Diocese. Our journey together is one of mutual respect and open discussion, so we welcome questions along the way and suggestions about how we can better express this part of our identity.