

## PROGRAMS TO COMPLIMENT THIS OPERATION

- A new promotional brochure promoting the Church is being developed to hand out. These brochures will also be placed around Ararat promoting our parish. Other resource material is being prepared as well as the Bishop's renewal resources.
- Special low key Eucharist service to be held on Saturday nights (6pm) once a month is being planned. This service would be low key, different and yet still very Anglican but at the same time ideal to invite new people to. It is hoped that this Eucharist might become a weekly event.
- "Anglican Treasure Tour" will be organized later in the year. This will be a series of studies and information nights educating people to the treasure of the Anglican Church
- It is hoped a new team of welcomers will be trained to work with the existing welcomers to welcome new people.
- In September/ October the Bishop will be riding around the Diocese. A special night is being organized in early October to hear the Bishop talk to us about faith and renewal. Everyone will be invited.

## BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

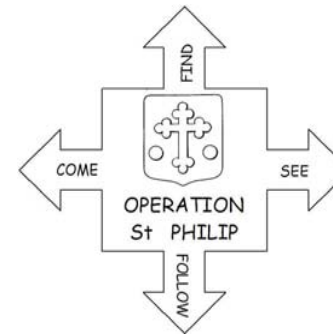
- We become a mission Church reaching out to others especially the un-churched.
- We would be inviting some people back to the church who would like to come but in the past have never been invited or felt comfortable coming. This program gives them support as they "come and see."
- This operation would hopefully Increase our numbers in church and give us hope and enthusiasm. As these people become involved they will hopefully share fully in the life of the Church.
- This operation is part of a plan of renewing and rebuilding the church for the present and future.
- Participants and nurturers will develop close life long friendships.
- We will be living out our call to mission and building up the Kingdom of God.

## ISSUES

- Are we a welcoming church? Will we welcome and care for new people?
- Are we happy to have new people in our Church and for our church to grow and take on a new form?
- Are we prepared to step out of our comfort zone to reach out to others for the sake of the Kingdom of God?
- Are we prepared to encourage our friends to come and see and to find salvation or are we going to keep it to ourselves?

## FURTHER READING ON RENEWING THE CHURCH

- Church of England Mission & Public Affairs Council THE MISSION SHAPED CHURCH 2004 Church House Publishing
- Jackson, Bob HOPE FOR THE CHURCH 2002 Church House Publishing



# OPERATION St PHILIP

A project of the  
ANGLICAN PARISH OF ARARAT

NURTURING PEOPLE BACK  
INTO THE CHURCH

COME, SEE, FIND AND FOLLOW

## BACKGROUND

The book "MISSION-SHAPED CHURCH" suggests on page 11 that:

- much of Britain's self-understanding comes from centuries of Christian faith, but many in Britain now have minimal knowledge of the Christian faith.
- The Christian story is no longer at the heart of the nation. Although people may identify themselves as "Christian" in the national census, for the majority that does not involve belonging to a worshipping community, or any inclination that it should.

**This description could also easily apply to the Australian context.**

The report goes on to suggest that the Church has got to realize its missionary responsibilities. We live in a society....which is basically second or third generation pagan...

What is the problem?

- Decline in numbers attending Church
- Church buildings threatens people
- Worship is unknown and foreign
- Church not reaching out
- Church is seen as irrelevant and hypocritical

Questions to reflect on:

- How do we reach out to the un-churched?
- How do we bring back into the fold those who have left?

## AIM OF "OPERATION St PHILIP"

To nurture and welcome lapsed members, new members and the un-churched into the Kingdom of God and our Church.

Bob Jackson in his book "HOPE FOR THE CHURCH" (page 81) suggests that the journey into faith typically starts with friendship and personal invitation, continues with exposure to Church life, teaching and worship and completed when the new disciples acts in conformity with Christian ethics and doctrine. In other words, it starts with belonging, moves onto believing and finally to behaving...

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## THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

### John 1:43-51 (NRSV)

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

God calls Philip to follow and invites him to discipleship and he follows faithfully. Philip goes out and seeks his friend Nathanael and tells him about Jesus. Philip suggests that Jesus is the fulfillment of scriptures and that Jesus is the son of Joseph of Nazareth. The truth of Jesus' origin is found in the opening of John's gospel. Jesus is from God. Nathanael offers some resistance but Philip does not argue with him. Philip invites Nathanael to come and see for himself who Jesus is. Nathanael goes to meet Jesus and is praised for accepting Philip's invitation. Jesus reveals who he is and Nathanael comes to faith because of the intimate knowledge Jesus possesses. Jesus promises Nathanael that he will see greater things.

Philip invited Nathanael to "come and see." We are asking people to "come and see," find and follow Jesus. We are inviting people to walk with us as we seek to do the will of God

Discipleship is about coming, seeing, finding and following. It involves interacting with Jesus. Being a Christian is having a relationship with Jesus.

Nathanael and Bartholomew are probably the same person. Nathanael is mentioned in John's Gospel but not in Matthew, Mark or Luke. Bartholomew is mentioned in Matthew, Mark and Luke but not John. It is thought that Nathanael is Bartholomew's first name.

## HOW "OPERATION St PHILIP" WILL WORK

Step 1: Introduce the program to the Parish. It is the responsibility of all Christians, especially Anglicans, to take seriously the call to be missionaries in our own back yard and to nurture back into the faith our friends and acquaintances. This program is for all in the Parish to take seriously and to be involved in.

Note: This program is not a fundraising activity or Stewardship program. It is an attempt to bring people back into the Church. We are wanting people to come, see, find and follow.

- Step 2: Nurturers, that is all Parish members, need to make a list of friends and potential new members (participants). Ideally each nurturer would look after an individual, family or couple.
- Mid-May 2005
- A list of who is nurturing who needs to be made so that one person is not targeted by two or more people. Names need to be given to Fr John and it is important to keep him informed about concerns and issues.
- There will be occasional meetings of nurturers to discuss progress and problems.
- Step 3: Everyone is different and there is no right or wrong way to start. We need to reflect on what is the best way to invite our friends to walk with us in seeking God's will. These friends and potential members / participants can be invited to social night / dinner party / organized by nurturers or the Church. These social events are designed to build friendship and sense of community.
- June onwards 2005
- Step 4: In time nurturers will invite participants to Church – pick them up and bring them to church or plan to meet them at the Church door, introduce them around, sit with them in Church, guide them through the liturgy, and take them into the hall for cuppa after Church.
- If there are children – encourage to be involved in kids club and Sunday School, encourage women to be involved in Anglican Ladies Fellowship, bible studies etc
- Step 5: Later on participants can be invited to be part of the "Anglican Treasure Tour" and other programs with the church.
- Step 6: Nurture them throughout the year, follow up when sick and on birthdays and anniversaries etc
- Step 7: Start the process again with a new person or couple next year while continuing to keep an eye on the existing people on program.

## WHO ARE WE TRYING TO REACH (potential new members)

- Your friends and acquaintances who currently do not attend Church.
- Lapsed Anglicans and the unchurched. We are NOT trying to reach members of other churches in our town (we are not into sheep stealing).
- People who might be interested in being involved in our Church and exploring their spirituality.
- You can reach out to an individual, family or a couple. Ideally young families would be a priority.