



Rev. Dave Clancey

Editorial

The Butterfly Effect is a theory which explains that very small inputs in a system have disproportionately large effects. The name comes from a theoretical example of the exact details of a hurricane being influenced by very minor and local disturbances in a weather system, such as the flapping of a butterfly's wings many weeks earlier and many hundreds of kilometers away. We see the principle being played out in our church at the moment.

Our General Synod, with the simple act of passing Motion 30 and clear intention to progress with the blessing of same-sex relationships, has caused significant and far-reaching effects. Anglicans up and down the country are gravely concerned that the church they love and serve appears to have plotted a course to a place outside the bounds of Scripture and church tradition. Individual Anglicans have felt compelled to leave their local churches, in good conscience unable to associate themselves with a denomination moving in such a direction. And some clergy have found themselves unable to submit to the authority of a General Synod who would move such a Motion. Rev. Michael Hewat, a member of the Latimer Fellowship's Executive and great servant of the cause of Latimer, has found himself in such a situation. With the support of the vast majority of the congregation of West Hamilton Anglican Church, Michael has had his licence removed because he cannot submit to General Synod's authority in this area. While some will differ about the exact timing of what has happened, there is little doubt that many others will follow where Michael has led should General Synod continue on the course it has indicated over the next four years. We continue to pray for Michael and the church in West Hamilton as they explore structures that will best support them in the great task of holding out Christ to the community around them. And we rejoice that our unity as Evangelical Anglicans is found not in denominational structures but in the Christ who is Lord of his church.

The principle of small inputs having large effects will also be seen in the outworking of the Way Forward Working Party that was formed by

General Synod to progress Motion 30. The work and decisions of this group, reporting back to General Synod, will significantly shape and form the future of our church. This group must uphold the clear intention of Motion 30 that requires that Evangelicals will continue to have integrity within the church. The only integrity that Evangelicals seek is that which holds all Christian thought and practice to the standard of Holy Scripture, and the freedom to call ourselves and our church to humbly submit ourselves to that standard. To put it another way, our integrity is found in affirming all that Scripture affirms, denying all that Scripture denies, living with grace in the areas where Scripture is silent, but not permitting our church to go beyond this. On the issue of our sexuality, Scripture speaks with a thoroughly consistent voice in both what it affirms and what it denies. Evangelical integrity will be maintained as we do the same, calling all Anglicans to the obedience that comes from faith.

But the greatest example that small inputs have large effects is seen in the very nature of the gospel itself – a gospel which we hold and live and proclaim. For the simple words of the gospel, the offer of forgiveness and the hope of eternal life through the substitutionary death and physical resurrection of Christ alone, have an effect far beyond the syllables uttered or the letters typed. The message of the gospel bears fruit and spreads, it grows and expands as Jesus is proclaimed and the gospel believed. The greatest impact on our church will be seen as Evangelicals commit themselves to the great task set before us – speaking the gospel over coffee, teaching our children and grandchildren the truths of Scripture, encouraging our clergy to proclaim Christ and him crucified. These small words will have an effect disproportionate to the time taken to speak them, and will result in the eternal praise and glory of Jesus himself. As you pray for the work of the Working Party and for the saints in West Hamilton, and as you encourage the work of the gospel in the Fellowship and your local church, rejoice that God is at work for his gospel, saving his people, and glorifying himself through his Son by his Spirit.