



The Revd Dr Bob
Robinson

Obituary • Bishop Maurice Goodall

Bishop Maurice Goodall, sixth Bishop of Christchurch from 1984–90, died in Christchurch on October 27 last year after a short illness. He was 82.

As a young man, Maurice had grown spiritually under the ministry of Canon William Orange in the Parish of Sumner-Heathcote and became one of the “orange-pips”—young men who were drawn from all over the city to attend the Sunday afternoon Bible class led by Canon Orange. After a university degree, ordination and ministry in St. Albans and Waikari, he became Vicar of St. Stephens, Shirley, and saw substantial church growth, especially among young families and young people; I was converted there myself as a 16 year old. Many of the things that church growth experts laboured to understand and express, Maurice did instinctively at St. Stephens: simplified liturgy, contemporary music, family-friendly worship, differing styles at each of Sunday’ three services, genuine connections with the community, the recruiting and nourishing of key leaders. At the same time, I also recall the increasing concern that Maurice had for people in need and this concern resulted in his leadership as City Missioner from 1969–76—a role that Professor Ken Daniels called “dynamic and innovative” at Maurice’s Memorial Service. Over this period the Mission, under his leadership, greatly expanded and attracted interns and others into its servant-leadership team. Maurice then developed the Community Mental Health Service for the Hospital Board and became its Director. In 1982 he became Dean of ChristChurch Cathedral and was elected Bishop in 1984.

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John Marcon was a staff member at the City Mission when Maurice began there. His summary brings out some key features: “Maurice had a natural, unassuming charisma that drew the full variety of humanity to him as one who was utterly trustworthy, totally reliable, very gentle and very strong.” He also added that Maurice was as comfortable with tough young street gang men and women, and with

groups of sole parents, as he was with church congregations and civic and community leaders. Just as significantly, this diverse community was also at ease with him. Later, as Bishop, Maurice worked against the male dominance of various Anglican boards and institutions.

At a more personal level I must add that I personally appreciated Maurice’s support for CMS during my years there and over the past 16 years. He was a frequent visitor at Bible College (now Laidlaw College), where he regularly volunteered—often around most weekdays—in our appropriately named William Orange Library. In fact, the last time I saw Maurice was at College just a few days before the illness from which he finally died.

Given that this is a Latimer publication, it’s important to note Maurice’s support for Anglican evangelicalism in general and the Latimer Fellowship in particular. As a 17 year-old when I was boarding with the Goodalls, I remember overseas visitors to the Evangelical Churchmen’s Fellowship (later the Anglican Evangelical Fellowship, and then Latimer) and the support Maurice gave to the Fellowship and its magazine and other activities. It’s not that Maurice didn’t know there are other ways of expressing the Gospel but for someone whose faith was so Biblically-rich and Christ-centred he was most at home in evangelical circles. Moreover, his was a generous orthodoxy: embracing the different forms of evangelical expression, from the utterly biblicist to the charismatically-tinged, and with a rich ecumenical spirit as well. Maurice was much more interested in affirming the centre that is Christ than in policing the boundaries of who is ‘in’ and who is not. There was hardly a week that passed at Laidlaw that Maurice wasn’t wanting to discuss with me some snippet from *Anvil* or *The Churchman*—to mention the two contrasting forms of British evangelical Anglicanism—or some newly arrived magazine, or journal, or book.

As people have talked about Maurice since his death, it’s clear that he is remembered for his gently-smiling compassion, his prayerful wisdom and his pastoral understanding: a true pastor to many.

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