

**Sermon Summary**  
**1<sup>st</sup> in Lent**  
**26<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

- How many covenants does God make in the Bible? 2 or 3.
- The covenant with Noah based on creation (the Creation Mandate)
- The covenant with Abraham ( the Faith Mandate)
- The New covenant in Jesus Christ which some view as new and others as the perfecting of the Faith mandate.
- So, 2 or 3, depending on your view of the last...
- In Genesis 9, the Creation Mandate is God's promise that he will not destroy his creation.
- As Christians we are called to share in this. For many, this is the foundation of mission or church work which focuses on the environment and issues of justice and peace. These are not optional: the nature of the covenant demands our response and agreement. They are the basis of our prophetic ministry to speak and act on social and political issues as well as environmental.
- Our attention has been diverted recently by a leadership struggle within the ALP. It is not appropriate to comment here on the fitness of either candidate.
- It is however appropriate to speak prophetically about the way that this has had an adverse impact on the job of government.
- A struggle of this type, decided by a caucus or political elite, raises questions about our exercise of democratic process. In other places, an attempt by an ex-PM to regain that office through a leadership contest within the ruling party might well be described as subverting the democratic process. We have lost our edge to speak justly and prophetically; just as some African politicians questioned how "bishops for life" might demand limited terms of office for Presidents.
- Attention has also been diverted from major global forums and the contributions that our nation might make there on major issues of justice and economy to an internal wrangle.
- If we have any contribution to make to this debate: it is to remind our political leaders that we deplore the priorities which shape their political life, and, by extension, diminish the true business of government both at home and abroad.

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