

#013

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH

Membership of the Council

The Council of the North is comprised of the Bishops of the nine northern Dioceses plus the Bishop of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition, acting as full members of the Council, National Staff personnel have provided expertise relating to program resource, coordination and administration services.

Meeting twice a year, this core membership has met each winter, while the functioning membership of the fall meeting is expanded to include one additional member from each diocese.

The current core membership includes:

Dioceses of: Arctic Bishop Chris Williams
 Bishop Paul Idlout

Athabasca Bishop John Clark

Brandon Bishop Malcolm Harding

Caledonia Bishop John Hannen

Cariboo Bishop Jim Cruickshank (Chair)

Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador
 Bishop Don Harvey (Vice Chair)

Keewatin Bishop Gordon Beardy

Moosonee Bishop Caleb Lawrence

Saskatchewan Bishop Anthony Burton (Secretary)
 Bishop Charles Arthurson

Yukon Bishop Terry Buckle

Staff: Archdeacon Jim Boyles, General Secretary, Jim Cullen, Treasurer

The Officers for the next triennium are: Bishop Don Harvey, Chair; Bishop John Clark,

Vice Chair; Bishop Anthony Burton, Secretary.

Purpose of the Council

The Council meets to provide an opportunity for the bishops to give and receive support and accountability. At each meeting members share their concerns particularly around the unique situations they are facing due to the number of small communities and the distances between them. 15% of Anglicans live in 85% of the land mass of Canada. Bishops also share concerns about personnel and personnel policy. New positions are agreed upon by all the bishops. Particular problems or issues are discussed and support offered.

The Council developed a common reporting form for dioceses as a basis to consider decisions involving the support grant from the national church. This allows the maximum of transparency and accountability within the Council. The form helps in identifying diocesan income from all sources. The bishops of the Council are committed to find ways in which the council dioceses can become more financially responsible.

The bishops share information about new initiatives and progress in areas such as stewardship, training for ministry, and exploration of new models of ministry.

. The Council has kept the goals of the national Strategic Plan before it in all its discussions.

Educational Events

Two workshops were conducted by John Robertson of the national staff on stewardship and planned giving, helping the Council work toward the goal of the strategic plan which held up movement toward self sufficiency as one of its aims.

The yearly meetings with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples have been important aspects of the Council's continuing education with regard to understanding the Covenant and its implications for our ministry. As well, the Council has come to understand more fully the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Donna Bomberry and Catherine Morrison of the national staff have been most helpful in this process.

Archbishop Douglas Hambidge was invited to attend one Council meeting to share his insights about the early history of the Council and to help us examine our mission and share various scenarios as to how we might move towards greater financial responsibility.

Support Grants

The level of the support grants from the national church has remained constant since 1995. This, in fact, means a decrease since the costs of ministry, including stipends, allowances and benefits have increased by the cost of living. The cuts in 1994 led to significant rethinking about the provision of ministry in northern areas. As a result new models of ministry are emerging in some dioceses.

Historically the support grants have been related to the number of full time stipends required in the diocese. A recent decision of the Council altered this formula so that grants currently are available for all diocesan ministry. A major issue facing the Council in the future is the development of a formula for division of the support grant. This relates to a review of the goals and objectives in providing ministry in the north, and will include the need to develop objective criteria and standards for administering the grants. A three-year plan will be helpful in working towards this goal.

Relationship with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples

A highlight of this triennium has been the close relationship with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples. The Council has met three times during the triennium with ACIP, and the members have shared at a deep level their concerns and hopes regarding the Church's wrestling with the Covenant and its call for self-determination.

At the first meeting, facilitated by Dr. Stan McKay, past Moderator of the United Church, there was deep sharing, and in the context of worship, discussion and sharing, participants from both Councils committed themselves to walking together to discover what the Covenant means for our Church. The journey has not been easy, as more discussions on more specific implications of the Covenant have revealed different understandings. The commitment continues, however, and we are open to go where the Spirit will lead us.

Both groups have agreed to continue this series of joint annual meetings.

Stewardship and Planned Giving

Several dioceses have taken strong initiatives in stewardship education and action. They are reporting increases in giving at the parish level. Ownership at the diocesan level has been critical in this increased stewardship awareness. It is recognized that there is a great deal of work yet to be done.

Several dioceses have made planned giving a part of their diocesan program with the support of national staff and its pilot project with regional planned giving officers.

Telling Our Story

At each meeting, members of the Council are available to preach in local parishes. This has happened at Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg. More work is needed in this interpretative task. New and creative ways are required. One hope is that a video will be produced in the next triennium to help tell the story of the Church in the North and its critical and extensive ministry. The bishops have agreed to spend up to two weeks a year in southern dioceses for doing deputation work and supporting the Anglican Appeal. Invitations to do this are welcome.

Appreciation

The Council of the North bishops continue to appreciate and support the Anglican Appeal and the help it provides to the national budget. Approximately one third of the national budget enables ministry in the North to continue.

In 1893, General Synod was formed with the primary task of supporting mission work in the West and the North of Canada. This mission continues today. Those who labour in the north are aware that they are ministering on behalf of the whole church and appreciate the prayerful and financial support that makes this work possible.

Bishop Jim Cruickshank
Chair