

The Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago

137th Annual Meeting of Synod

May 13th – May 16th 2009

THEME: *The Parish: A Community of Hope - Part II*

Report to the Parish of All Saints

Opening Service

The 137th Synod opened on Wednesday 13th May 2009 at 6:00 pm with Mass conducted at the St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Scarborough, by His Lordship, Bishop Calvin Bess. In delivering the Sermon, His Lordship opted to review the past year and present a continuation of the 2008 Bishop's Charge, *The Parish: A Community of Hope - Part II*.

Bishop's Charge / Year in Review

Most of the work undertaken in 2008 was as a direct result of resolutions previously passed in the years 2007 and 2008. Bishop Bess focused on the following areas:

1. Unemployment and Food Production – A team headed by Dr. Carlyle Pemberton acquired the support of the Ministries of Agriculture, Science, Technology and Tertiary Education. The high point of this initiative was that the St. Michaels School for Boys re-introduced Agriculture as part of its curriculum.
2. Environment - The Environment Action Team (EAT), led by Ms. Patricia Ruddell and Father David Harrison was appointed and prepared a Policy for caring for the environment.
3. OSHA - The OSH Committee under Mr. Stephen Rowan, prepared a Safety Policy, which was adopted by the Diocese.
4. Youth - With the appointment of a Youth Director, there were a number of new initiatives and reactivation of others. These were supported by the Christian Education Committee, Anglican Education Board of Management, Family Life Commission, Mothers Union and ACMS.
5. Crime - A Training Programme was being developed through collaboration with the Ministry of National Security and the Council of Prisons Chaplains & Ministers. A call was made for interested clergy and lay ministers to contact Father Jeff Elder. The Caribbean Umbrella Body for Restorative Behaviour (CURB), a Committee involved with rehabilitation of prisoners, was contacted to lend support to victims of crime and domestic violence and a mentoring programme.
6. Infrastructure – Works conducted on the general infrastructure of the Diocese were categorized as follows:
 - Works Completed – Renovations works at the Mission to Seamen; New Parish Hall at Good Shepherd
 - Construction Projects commencing in 2009 – Retreat House in Tortuga; Ascension Church Eccles Village; Diocese Office Hayes Court, St. Bartholomew Church Mayaro
 - Long Term Projects – New Parish Halls for St. Margarets, Belmont; St. Mary's Tacarigua; Holy Cross, Marabella

Delegates were reminded that under OSHA it is a requirement of the Diocese to provide safe places of worship and employment.

7. Reporting - There was some improvement in the accuracy and timeliness of reports from parishes to the Diocesan Office.
8. Communication – There is a need to improve communication throughout the diocese. The Bishop proposed the appointment of three (3) Regional Administrators in this regard.

9. Ministry

- During the year 2008, the Diocese lost two (2) members of clergy. Canon Griffith died in June 2008, and Father Aguwa, returned to Africa.
- Brother Derek and Father Chatfield are scheduled to return to the US and UK, respectively.
- The Diploma in Theology can now be attained in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Canon Berkley and his team developed terms of reference (TOR) for a project for Building Capacity within the Church. This will be referred to a consultant for further development and an implementation plan.

In conclusion, Bishop Bess reminded those gathered that “... **Churches can and have lost their vision and mission**”. He recommended that “*we come together to undertake the task of discerning God’s purpose for us and for his Church.*”

Progress Reports on Past Resolutions

Resolution 1 2008 – Youth

- A Youth Director, Ms. Jessie Williams, was appointed during Synod 2008.
- A team was appointed to work towards the revitalization of the Youth Regional Councils.
- The Commission on Youth was constituted and was working strategically with the Youth Department.
- Regional Youth Coordinators had not yet been conferred pending an assessment of the effectiveness of working through the Presidents of the Regions’ Youth Councils.

Resolution 2 2008 – Panel of Attorneys / Buildings and Lands

- The 8 member Panel of Attorneys, from whom the Regions can seek advice, had been identified.
- The Chairman of the Diocesan Building and Lands Committee advised of the need to have parishes more involved in the decisions related to the use and/or disposal of property within their parish. Canon Berkley commended this new approach taken by the Building and Lands Committee and expressed hope that it would result in better understanding of the “Guardianship of the Vestry” vs. the “Role of the Trustees” so as to preserve and protect the Anglican Heritage and the property of the Church.

Resolution 5 2008 – Early Childhood Centre (ECC)

- There were no firm applications or decisions in this area. Parishes were urged to mobilize themselves as the window of opportunity was closing.

Resolution 6 2008 – HIV/AIDS

- The Collaborative HIV/AIDS management Project (CHAMP) was among the many programmes established in response to this issue.

Resolution 7 2008 – Self Insurance

- This becomes effective January 2010.

Resolution 8 2008 – Shortage of Priests/Vocations Programme

- The Diocese of Chelmsford has promised assistance within the third quarter of 2009. Parishes were reminded of their responsibility for nurturing and fostering prospective candidates.

Resolution 9 2008 – Ministry of Education

- This is on-going

Report from the Board of Finance

The major issues raised were as follows:

Financial Statements

- Gross income had increased by 17% from \$3.6M to \$4.27M
- Assessments: As at 31/12/08, there were arrears of \$541,000, of which \$231,000 were from prior years.
- Expenses had increased 20% from \$4.08M to \$4.86M, which corresponded with the increase in Clergy salaries and stipends.
- Total Assets had increased by .5% or \$441,000.
- The church's core business reflected a net loss of \$591,000. However, a Profit of \$910,000, from Couva Shopping Complex resulted in an overall profit of \$318,000.

Other

- Salary Reviews – It was agreed that all church personnel were underpaid. However, in spite of financial challenges, a total remuneration package – e.g. car loans, group benefits etc. will be taken to Diocesan Council for approval.
- There was poor Accounting information and inconsistencies in treating with transactions from parishes, which showed the need for more accounting seminars, which will be arranged. There will also be Internal Audits of parishes to review all records and to provide assistance as necessary.

Recommendations

The Diocese had suffered losses over the past 5 years and the following recommendations were made to reverse the situation.

- Increase Assessments by 20 - 25%, except for Grace Church, effective October 1, 2009, after review by Council.
- Establishment of an Annual Diocese Gift Day similar to Provincial Day of \$200 per person.
- More timely remittance of funds from Parishes.
- Better utilization of Property
- Other Fundraising activities.

Delegates also recommended the following:

- Increase in Tithing,
- Re-branding of the Anglican Faith,
- Greater commitment from the Clergy, which will redound to larger congregations and increased stewardship returns.
- Overall review of expenses at Parish level and Diocesan level.

Self Insurance (All Risks such as Fire, etc. except Theft)

- This should take effect from January 1, 2010 and will cover all property owned by the Diocese, (except schools which are covered under the MOU that was signed with Government) as well as all contents which are owned by the Diocese and that of its residents.
- Parishes will be free to take extra cover, from traditional insurers, if they considered that they were not adequately covered under the self-insurance.
- Reimbursement for claims made within the first 3 years will be limited to the value of premiums paid plus % interest earned.
- Total losses will be limited to 25% year 1, 30% year 2 and 40% year 3.

Synod Reports and Cluster Discussions

One of the main highlights of the first two days of the Synod was the discussions surrounding the status reports submitted by the different committees in preparation for this meeting. All delegates were pre-assigned to specific Cluster groups each with a designated leader. Each group was responsible for analyzing the reports submitted, proposing any strategies and resolutions for discussion later in the Synod. A summary of the discussions are outlined below:

CLUSTER 1

ACMS / Males in Crisis/ St Michael's School for Boys

ACMS / Males in Crisis

- It was recommended that the ACMS should seek out new marketing strategies to increase their membership and priests should become more actively involved.
- The males in crisis problem, which was prevalent throughout society, was the result of poor self esteem & spiritual values as well as a lack of parenting role models and skills. As a result intervention should be at Diocesan level rather than at Parish level.

St Michael's School for Boys

- Concern was expressed over the non-availability of a full transition programme, inclusive of accommodation, for boys leaving the home.
- There is a high turnover of staff at the Primary school level because of the specialist skills needed and it was recommended that the Board of Education should attempt to have the school status changed to that of a special school.

CLUSTER 2

Mothers Union / Diocesan Communications Committee

Mothers Union

- The mandate that members of the MU must be involved with families who approach the church for Baptisms, Confirmations & Marriage ceremonies has not yet been fully implemented.
- Establishment of a group called "Friends of the Mothers Union" to provide support was recommended.

Diocesan Communications Committee

- There is a need to increase circulation and advertising to ensure survival. Full support was given to the plan to involve the participation of our Secondary schools, as the school network will be a good distribution target.
- It was suggested that the circulation of the Outlook should not be limited to the Anglican community and that there was a need to encourage participation of young people & children through adding more articles for their interest & education

CLUSTER 3

Schools- Trinity College / Trinity Junior School / Bishop's Junior School

It was recommended that strategies be put in place to encourage young Anglicans to take up teaching as the Anglican Board of Education and Management was having difficulty in finding suitable Anglicans for employment at Primary and Secondary School levels.

Recommendations

- The Anglican Church should become involved with Trainees at the Teachers' Colleges so that the Anglican Board of Education and Management can become their place of choice, on graduation.
- There are dedicated Anglican Teachers who are employed in non-Anglican Schools and attempts should be made to reach out to them
- The Children's Church should acquire some Radio time so that the Anglican message can be communicated to Anglican Schools, in a similar way to that of the School Broadcasting Programme.

CLUSTER 4

Pastoral Care / Family Life Commission / St Mary's Children's Home

The work being done in these areas was acknowledged and the following recommendations made:

- A mechanism should be put in place to ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired from the training programmes are disseminated throughout the Parish and the Diocese.
- The pool of facilitators at the Family Life Commission should be extended.
- Each parish can develop a Family Life Programme which can be shared with the Commission and by extension other parishes.

It was however noted that information on the services provided by the Pastoral Care Center and Family Life Commission is not widely known.

A status report on the land issue related to Goya Farm Lands was requested. The Trustees advised that they had received \$1m from the HDC and that there was a further \$2M outstanding. The transfer of the parcel of land to be used by the St Mary's Home for the farming project had not yet been finalized.

CLUSTER 5

Regional Councils

It was noted that there were attendance problems at Council Meetings as well as limited relationships between the various Councils and other groups eg Mothers Union.

Recommendations

- Regular meetings be held by the Chairpersons of Councils to share ideas, information and results.
- Councils should become more involved in their communities by undertaking projects that can make a difference in people's lives.

Reference was made to the land issues facing the church as well as the disrepair of several church properties.

Canon Berkley raised the following issues:

- Non-Accommodation for Regional Councils, which makes the availability of valuable archival information difficult if not impossible.
- Role and functions of Wardens and Vergers, which he suggested should be appended to the Regulations. He advised that the NWRC would take responsibility for circulating a draft for comment and final approval by the Diocesan Council.
- He suggested that Regulation 1B (relative to the retirement age of the Bishop) should be reviewed. The meeting agreed that it was intended that this would have been deleted when the Regulation to increase the retirement age to 72 of the Bishop was passed. Bishop Bess, as Chairman, confirmed that this was the intention and he would liaise with the Registrar and Chancellor so that the correction can be made.

CLUSTER 6

Buildings and Lands / OSHA / Environment

The Buildings and Lands Committee was commended on their approach to improving the communication to Parishes on related issues and urged that they continue along that line.

CLUSTER 7

Diocesan Council / Status of Synod Resolutions

Clarification was sought as to the purpose and status of the Endowment Fund. The Trustees responded that the fund was created to assist with benefits for clergy particularly retirement and that the balance stood at \$19M.

Recommendations

- Immediate implementation of the proposed Diocesan Gift Day.
- Training for the Youth Director
- That the Diocese should be informed of the status of the Provincial Hymnal

CLUSTER 8

Board of Finance

The Cluster recommended the adoption of the Report from the Board of Finance and added that:

- There should be a review of the formula used in determining assessments.
- Urgent attention should be given to completing the Clergy Remuneration Package review.
- More marketing was needed to sell the Self Insurance Programme to parishes while they must be clearly informed of penalties for default in premium.
- Region Councils should be required to submit financial reports to Diocese.

Canon Forrester and Dr. Knolly Clarke suggested that there should be concerted efforts to increase church attendance / membership, through evangelism or our financial situation will continue to deteriorate.

CLUSTER 9

Youth / Children's Ministry / Christian Education

The cluster commended these Ministries on their success to date and recommended the adoption of the Policy Document and formal training for personnel involved in these ministries.

Dr Knolly Clarke offered his service as a resource person to the groups.

CLUSTER 10

Clergy Council / Commission on Ministry / Lay Ministry

Clergy Council

Recommendations

- There should be follow-up counseling sessions for couples, after the Sacrament of Marriage in an attempt to reduce the separation / divorce rate.
- The Worship Committee should be provided with clear terms of reference.
- Time must be taken before each service or church activity to provide attendees of Safety Procedures to ensure compliance with OSH
- Some parishes will require financial assistance to ensure compliance with OSH
- Time should be allotted within the service, for persons with special needs to receive prayer.

- A salary scale must be established for all clergy.
- There should be a clear definition of full-time and part-time employment and an appropriate salary allocation to each.

Commission on Ministry:

Recommendations :

- Guidelines should be circulated so that all can be aware of the requirements.
- Greater nurturing and support must be provided for aspirants
- There should be opportunities for training & growth after Ordination.
- Parishes should be required to contribute towards the support of students in training.
- Candidates who are interviewed should be provided with timely feedback .

Lay Ministry

- There must be greater adherence to licensing and renewal procedures of Lay Ministers.

Election of Officers and Appointment of Auditors

The following persons were elected to the Diocesan Councils and the Board of Finance.

Diocesan Council (Clergy)	Diocesan Council (Lay Persons)	Board of Finance
Canon Claude Berkley	Ms. Ermine Ross	Mr. Clarry Benn
Rev. Father Hilton Bonas	Ms. Edwina Peters	Mrs. Marcia King-Urquhart
Canon Francis Caesar	Mr. Adriel Benjamin	Mr. Ramon Marks
Father David Harrison	Mr. Ricardo Gray	Mrs. Beverly Holford-Jack
Rev. Beverly Hoyte	Ms. Phyllis Armstrong	Ms. Carolyn John
Alternates	Alternates	
Rev. Shelly-Ann Tenia	Ms. Launa Rose	
Canon Winston Mulcare	Ms. Tara Lutchman	

Re-appointment of Auditors

On the recommendation of the Trustees, the Meeting agreed to the re-appointment of Panel Kerr Foster as Auditors for the Fiscal Year 2009.

Resolutions Passed based on Cluster Discussions

RESOLUTION 1- Environmental Action

WHEREAS the 135th Synod of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago, passed a Resolution to address the Diocesan response to Environmental issues

AND WHEREAS Synod mandated the Bishop in Council to appoint a team to deal with environmental issues

AND WHEREAS the Environmental Action Team (EAT) has been formed and has formulated a Diocesan draft policy document

BE IT RESOLVED that Synod adopt as policy the document as presented

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Bishop in Council takes immediate steps to distribute said policy for action at all levels of the Diocese

RESOLUTION 2: Buildings and Lands Policy

WHEREAS the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago is in possession of very valuable lands and buildings which form a significant part of its asset base

And WHEREAS the Church recognises these properties as God's gifts to be used for the work of the Church

And WHEREAS the returns from the Church's property both in financial and social terms fall short of their potential

And WHEREAS there are several urgent needs which have the potential to be met, wholly or partially by the more prudent management of these assets

And WHEREAS there exists a prevailing and debilitating perception that the Church needs to speak within itself and to its constituents with one voice regarding the determination of Building and Land Matters

And WHEREAS the Church recognises that its failure to act expeditiously will further place its properties at risk of acquisition by strangers, legally or otherwise

And WHEREAS this Synod generally agrees that there is need to take action based on common core values to unify the church

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the indicative proposals of the Diocesan Building and Land Committee be adopted via the following action plan:-

That a document which sets out the Diocese's philosophy and core values related to the ownership and use of property be prepared by the BLC and circulated before the end of August 2009 for comments from each region to the BLC by the end of October 31st 2009.

That the preparation of a policy for the use of the church's property, based on the aforementioned agreement be prepared by the end of December 31st 2009, and circulated to all parishes for comment and modification

That the preparation of procedures with recommendations for appropriate structures, based on the aforementioned, be prepared by the BLC for circulation and comment by the end of March 31st 2010

That the Buildings and Lands Committee submit its final policy statement to the Bishop in Council for adoption at Synod 2010.

RESOLUTION 3: (OSHA) Regional Council Representation (Amendment to the Regulations)

WHEREAS Synod 2007 unanimously approved a resolution which states inter alia that the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago take the necessary actions to:

- Train and update clergy and selected Vestry members on relevant aspects of OSHA;
- Ensure the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago becomes OSH compliant in all aspects;
- Identify and train persons within the parishes to be responsible for ensuring that each parish becomes and remains OSHA compliant.

AND WHEREAS the Diocesan Council in order to implement Synod's resolution appointed an OSH Management Committee

AND WHEREAS the said Committee submitted an OSH Management structure to the Diocesan Council with relevant duties and responsibilities; and the Council approved the OSH Management structure with the recommendation that Regulation 8A be amended;

BE IT RESOLVED that Regulation 8A be amended to include the following:

Section 2a iii - The Chairperson of the OSH Regional Supervisory Team shall become ex-officio a member of the Regional Council.

RESOLUTION 4: Review of the Method of Assessment

WHEREAS the Diocese has not reviewed the method or level of assessment for at least seven years

AND WHEREAS the non-payment of assessment by some parishes continues to be a concern of the Diocese

AND WHEREAS there is a growing sentiment that the method used in determining the assessment is not transparent or equitable

BE IT RESOLVED that Synod mandates that a complete review of the method of assessment be undertaken by Diocesan Council and recommendations be put before Synod 2010

RESOLUTION 5: Establishment of Group Insurance

WHEREAS the Diocese is considering new ways to increase and diversify its sources of revenue

AND WHEREAS there is an urgent need to raise revenue in sustainable ways to carry out the mission of the Church

BE IT RESOLVED that a feasibility study be undertaken by the Board of Finance regarding the merits of establishing a group insurance product as part of the Church stewardship, the proceeds of which would be to the benefit of the Church and the parishioners

Resolutions Withdrawn

(a) St Michael's School for Boys

WHEREAS there appears to be a gap between the residents of the St. Michael School for Boys as they come to the end of their time at the Institution and their re entering into the wider society;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Synod devises and implements an action plan involving the use of church lands to build a Transition Home for boys leaving the home, as well as a Mentoring Programme incorporating the Heads of the St. Michael Home listed in the reports, to enhance the link between church and home allowing the boys to enjoy a healthy movement into the church and wider community as we seek to uphold the theme '*The Parish/Church a Community of Hope*'.

(b) Let Our Voice Be Heard

WHEREAS the Anglican National Community look to the Leaders of our church for guidance on many issues of national interest occurring in Trinidad & Tobago.

AND WHEREAS the BKCP Pg. 448, charges priests to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord, to teach and to admonish the Lord's family and to guide them through the confusion of this world's temptation

BE IT RESOLVED that this Synod agree to the establishment of a Committee consisting of persons with sound theological backgrounds who in consultation with the Bishop will respond publicly in a timely manner on matters of national interest.

OTHER

The following Presentations were made:

1. Financial Management

Ms. Sharon Christopher, Assistant CEO of First Citizens Bank, provided Synod with a brief outline of the world economy, the reasons for the economic decline and resulting loss of confidence in Financial Institutions. Against the world economic backdrop Trinidad and Tobago is still politically and financially stable. However people of varying social and academic backgrounds which could negatively impact Church revenues.

Recommendations for the Church (to boost / stabilize its income and assist its communities)

- Be innovative with fund raising
- Diversify investment portfolio
- Establish Social Outreach and Education Programmes

2. The Environment

We were reminded that the earth and all its resources belonged to God and that the Bible compels us to take care of it and use its resources rightly, not as an option but as a witness to our faith.

Synod was advised that their Policy document was guided by the Policy from the Diocese of Manchester with significant modifications to suit our local needs. It referred to "Caring for God's Creation – Witnessing to our Faith. Also the deterioration of God's creation – how should we respond".

The Bible was filled with scripture that will remind us that the Earth is the Lord's (God's creation) and noted that there is no end to the journey of preserving our environment (to be green) and that the first step related to our awareness & commitment (Eco-Theology) was to promote a broad understanding of environmental challenges

They recommended the following areas for immediate consideration and action:

- Conservation of energy and water
- Waste – Recycle , including greater use of electronics
- Material and Resources
- Natural and Built Environment
- Less Travel – use phones and video conferencing
- Disaster Preparedness – be aware of the threats and take steps to mitigate their effects on the safety of person and property

Action Plan for the Diocese

- Stage 1 - Implementation of the Policy Document
- Environment Audit
- Special Prayers and Environment Bible study.
- Diocesan Green Fair
- Diocesan Office, Regional Councils, Parish & individuals to identify action items from those recommended in the Appendix.

- Policy to be distributed to all schools and organizations in the Parish.
- Environment or Creation Sunday June 7 (nearest to June 5 since this is World Environmental Day)

The next steps

Before Synod 2010, all groups / parishes must assess & document their movement through the process to determine achievements, failures and ways to improve.

There was a suggestion for a Catechism for the Environment.

Respectfully submitted,

All Saints' Delegates to Synod 2009

Mrs. Tressa Lawrence

Ms. Louella Edwards