

**The 36th Triennial Session OF THE Provincial Synod
Of the
Church in the Province of the West Indies
St. John's, Antigua**

THE COMMUNIQUE`

The 36th Triennial Session of the Provincial Synod of the Church in the Province of the West Indies meeting in Antigua, in the Diocese of the North East Caribbean and Aruba, November 24 – 29, 2007 in the Providence of God and under the Presidency of the Archbishop of the West Indies, the Most Rev'd Drexel Gomez, sends its greetings in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Synod opened with a Solemn Eucharist in the Cathedral Church of St John the Divine in the See City of the Diocese, St John's, Antigua, with the Archbishop presiding and the Bishops of the Province as Con-celebrants.

The Archbishop delivered a thought-provoking and stirring sermon taking as his text from Matthew 14: 23-27.

In his sermon the Archbishop noted that the Church is being challenged to work and witness in an increasingly secular environment that is diametrically opposed to the truth of the Gospel. He observed that in all the territories of the region when the Church attempts to bring a faith perspective in the public domain, she is usually greeted with hostility and disdain. He expressed grave worry that there is a tacit convention that public affairs are no business of God and so God is kept at a safe distance of private opinion and voluntary associations.

He exhorted the Province to assess its missional task in light of the current consensus, which seriously impairs the wholeness of life in our society. He then called on the Church to face the future with confidence and hope rooted not in our ingenuity but grounded in the Lord of the Church.

Violence in the region. Recognising that there is no clear correlation between crime and violence and poverty, the Synod saw, however, that the issue of deportees is a contributing factor. Synod noted that the services of Law Enforcement and Judicial systems need to be brought up to modern standards especially when the criminal element takes full advantage of delays, thereby compromising public confidence in the Judicial system. Synod calls upon the heads of Government of CARICOM to deal expeditiously with the scourge of organized crime and violence and to urgently convene a regional summit which would include all relevant stakeholders, with a view of formulating a regional plan to address the matter.

We looked at the serious threat of the spread of HIV and the AIDS virus and committed ourselves to issue a Policy Manual that would help to diffuse the stigmatization of the affected, and to establish a system of pastoral care and support for the infected and the affected.

The Synod looked at issues concerning Ministry and Mission of the Church. A number of resolutions were passed to further equip both Clergy and Laity towards the exercising of their ministry and the wider mission to society.

The Synod in re-committing its support for the official position of the Anglican community concerning gay and lesbian relationships mandates the Standing Committee to commission a teaching manual on human sexuality for use in each diocese.

We endorsed the Resolution to establish a separate and distinct Provincial Commission on Family Life. We also recommended that the work of Diocesan Organizations such as the Mothers' Union, Men's Fellowship, Youth Groups, which are directly engaged in family life, be incorporated into the responsibilities of the Provincial Commission on Family Life.

The Synod gave its commitment to the draft Anglican Covenant in the hope that if accepted by all the Provinces it will set a new framework for mutual accountability in communion within our interdependent life.

We wish to express our deep gratitude to the Bishop, Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba for the generous hospitality that which was obviously expended in making the preparations.

The Synod recognized the important contributions of the Archbishop, the Most Rev'd Drexel Gomez in these difficult times within the Anglican Communion. In light of the fact that this proves to be the last Provincial Synod over which he will have presided we wish to place on record our appreciation for his leadership since 1998 to the present as the Archbishop of the West Indies.