

## **Report of the Council of the North**

### **Policy**

The Council began the triennium by developing a strategic direction document using the *Appreciative Inquiry* method. This was conducted by Mr. Michael Shouldice of the Diocese of the Arctic.

A Comprehensive Equitable Compensation Policy was developed by Mr. Rodney Clark and Mr. Michael Lowery. This was subsequently presented to the Council of General Synod.

The Council of the North adopted a policy on the remuneration of non-stipendiary clergy, and a policy on location allowances.

The Council undertook an extensive process to update the Support Grant Allocation Formula. This will be completed early in the next triennium.

The Council was led in its response to the General Synod Framework by Mr. Vianney Carriere.

Ms. Debra Gill is currently undertaking an update of the Council Policy Manual.

### **Communication with the Wider Church**

The Council contracted with the Diocese of Keewatin to undertake a Promotions Programme. Our Promotions Coordinator, Fiona Brownlea, did an excellent job helping the wider Church understand what it was achieving in its partnership with the Council. Beginning with the General Synod, Ms. Brownlea traveled extensively across Canada to make presentations on behalf of the Council, and produced brochures and other excellent explanatory material which were distributed nationwide. A section of the General Synod website was created for the Council with the help of the Department of Communications. The Chair submitted an article for the General Synod Blog, *In Plenary*, outlining the Council's financial crisis. Ms. Brownlea worked with Saskia Rowley of the Communications Department to produce a new logo for the Council. Ms. Brownlea reported on her activities to each meeting of the Council in the triennium.

An Increased Awareness Taskforce was created to prepare a presentation on the Council for the 2007 General Synod.

## **Communication with our Partners**

Throughout the triennium, the Council was grateful for the contribution of various partners from the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, including Archdeacon Sidney Black, the Rev. Gloria Moses, the Rev. Murray Still, Ms. Donna Bomberry, and the new National Indigenous Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald. The Chair & Vice Chair, along with various other members of the Council, participated in the Fifth Sacred Circle in Pinawa, MB.

Our representative to the ACIP throughout the triennium was the Rt. Rev. Andrew Atagotaaluk. The Council also liaised with other church committees. Bishop James Njegovan represented the Council at Anti-Racism Working Group, Bishop David Ashdown at the Mission Coordination Group, and Archbishop Caleb Lawrence at the Governance Task Force.

We were grateful also to have as Council members Mr. Peter Blachford, Mr. Vianney Carriere, and his proxy Ms. Lisa Barry. We were also thankful to have visitors to our meetings, including the Primate and Archdeacon Paul Fehelley, Archdeacon John Wright of the Anglican Foundation, the Rt. Rev. Colin Johnson, Bishop of Toronto, Mr. Timothy Duke of the New England Company, and Ms. Stephanie Peddle of the Anglican Appeal.

Tataskweyak Cree Nation and the Diocese of Keewatin for hosted the Council's September 2005 meeting.

## **Financial Crisis**

The Council was very grateful for the continuing support of the General Synod, a special one time \$25,000 grant from the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, as well as financial support from the New England Company, various individual and parish donors, and the Diocese of Montreal.

The Council meets twice a year. In order to save money, the Council began to hold its winter meeting by teleconference. It has also begun to consider reducing the number of members who attend the fall meeting of the Council.

The allocation in the General Synod budget for funding the Council of the North has been steadily decreasing. In 1993 grants to the member dioceses totaled \$3,551,000. In 2006 the total is \$2,373,000 which is a decrease of \$1,178,000 or 33%. During that time the General Synod revenue decreased from \$11,361,000 to \$9,750,000, a decrease of \$1,611,678.00 or 14%. In 1993, the Council of the North grants absorbed 31.3% of the revenue of General Synod, in 2006 they will absorb only 24.3%. If the Council of the North had the same priority (31.3%) in 2006 as it did in 1993, the current grants would total \$3,052,000 or \$679,000 more than the actual current grants.

This erosion of pastoral and sacramental ministry in remote and isolated areas has not been deliberate. With changing times, there have been changing demands. As a result, priorities have unintentionally shifted. The Council of the North believes that it is time that the whole church reviewed its priorities and took a very careful look at how important the provision of this pastoral and sacramental ministry is to the mission of the church.

As part of this review, the Council of the North asks that the whole church consider the effects of this massive decrease in actual dollars and lowering of the level of priority coupled with rising costs such as soaring energy, transportation, and insurance rates:

- During the period in question, the basic stipend has gone from \$20,393.00 to \$27,628.00 an increase of \$7,235.00 or 35%. Most of this increase has been to simply keep up with the cost of living. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of paid incumbencies throughout the Council of the North at a time when there is an increasing need for full-time, well-trained clergy. This has had several effects which have been felt most severely in the isolated, mostly aboriginal communities. Non-stipendiary clergy have to take on more and more work. This has resulted in increased burnout among the clergy. In addition, a number of clergy have had to give up all or part of their secular employment in order to fulfill their priestly responsibilities. This has created a serious injustice within the church. Young people are reluctant to accept ordination because they are not prepared to accept the unreasonable sacrifices being demanded of current clergy. As a result, many ministries will have to be abandoned as those currently serving reach an age where they can no longer carry on.
- In order to maintain basic ministry, most dioceses have had to liquidate all or significant amounts of their financial reserves. This has created a financial crisis for many dioceses which may soon threaten their existence
- As the support by the General Synod has decreased there has been a corresponding decrease in diocesan programs. Lay reader training, continuing education for clergy, Christian education, stewardship, and congregational development have all been either eliminated or drastically reduced to the point where they are inadequate to the increasing needs .
- New emerging ministries cannot be undertaken. Many communities are undergoing rapid social and economic changes. Old structures and approaches are often inadequate to meet the new challenges. However, there are no resources to adapt old systems and develop new ones.
- Many member dioceses, after having eliminated program work have been forced to make significant reductions to their administrative structures. In some cases, these reductions have been so severe as to threaten to compromise the diocese's ability to fulfill its fiduciary duty to provide adequate supervision and

management. This has the potential to create significant legal as well as moral issues, not only for the dioceses concerned but for the General Synod itself.

The Council of the North believes that in order to maintain a reasonable level of sacramental and pastoral ministry believes that it is critical that we have funding strategies that provide for and maintain:

- A bishop for each diocese
- A suitable staff to assist the bishop
- A realistic number of appropriately trained clergy for aboriginal and non-aboriginal congregations with these clergy being paid stipend commensurate with those paid generally in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anthony Burton,  
Chair