



# Anglican Network in Canada

**Office of the Bishop Coadjutor**

The Right Reverend Charles F Masters

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My dear fellow members of the Anglican Network in Canada,

At Synod 2012, a motion was passed that a Governance Task Force (GTF) be commissioned by me, the Bishop Coadjutor to address, "Anglican Polity with a special focus on the relationship between, bishops, diocesan council, synod, clergy and parishes." Accordingly, I was delighted that the Right Reverend Ron Ferris, (Chair), the Rev. Mike Stewart and the Rev. Dr. Brent Stiller accepted my invitation and so I appointed them to be a Governance Task Force (GTF) and asked them to report back to me later in the year which they have done.

The GTF consulted with many voices across the country in person and through correspondence. It reported general and widespread appreciation, admiration and support for the bishops of ANiC and for all that has been accomplished in so short a time.

The following document covers the scriptural and theological foundation for Anglican governance as it relates to structures and practices, including the role of the diocesan council, the synod and accountability of bishops. Concerns regarding the preservation of Anglican identity and maintaining the energy of the ANiC movement are also addressed.

You will see special attention is devoted to discussing the matter of incorporation of individual churches and whether or not the diocese could be weakened by church independence. The report acknowledges that general concern has been raised on the issue of incorporation, a particularly sensitive issue for churches that have lost buildings and property as the Anglican Church of Canada departed from the Faith.

Diocesan financial goals and challenges, as well as discerning the appropriate time and way the development of multiple dioceses should take place, are also discussed.

In general the report, I believe, is very encouraging and effectively suggests that in the view of the task force, which is based on their interaction with a lot of people across the country, that ANiC, in terms of its governance, seems to be generally on the right track. You will see there are a number of recommendations which are made, all of which are being addressed,

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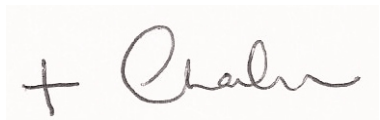
ANGLICAN CHURCH  
IN NORTH AMERICA

but in general these recommendations are wise suggestions on how to build on an already sound and good foundation.

I'm very grateful for this wonderful report. I want to thank Bishop Ron Ferris and the Rev. Mike Stewart and the Rev. Dr. Brent Stiller for their very hard work, excellent analysis and well written report. It will serve us well and I personally am greatly indebted to them for their fine work.

I commend the report to you and expect you will hear more at our Synod in Ottawa in November 2014 we will see their fruit and the benefits of this report in our life together in ANiC for many years to come.

Every blessing!

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light beige background. The signature consists of a plus sign followed by the name "Chahr" in a cursive script.

## **The Report of the Governance Task Force 2013**

### **FROM CHRIST...“THE WHOLE BODY...GROWS AND BUILDS...AS EACH PART DOES IT’S WORK” (Ephesians 4:15)**

#### **Foreword**

Following the Synod in 2012, Coadjutor Bishop Charlie Masters appointed the authors to form the Governance Task Force. Our work was to fulfill the Synod motion asking that we address, “Anglican Polity with a special focus on the relationship between, bishops, diocesan council, synod, clergy and parishes.”

The Task Force issued a call for submissions at the Regional Assemblies in April 2013 and through the ANiC website. For the sake of cost and efficiency the panel could not be a large grouping that was representative of the many geographical regions, let alone gender, ethnicity, ministries, ages, etc. But the panel members are all involved on the front lines of ANiC parish life. The lack of broad representation was balanced by the wide call for submissions, which allowed for unfettered input from all ANiC members and churches.

Submissions were welcomed from individuals, parish councils, clergy groups, or any interested cluster of ANiC members. There were approximately 25 submissions received, and over 70 pages of input. The Governance Task Force expresses profound thanks to all of those who contributed their thoughts and ideas.

Both the Bishops and Archdeacons, and the ANiC Council, set aside agenda time to be interviewed at length.

Panel members are deeply appreciative of the thoughtful submissions forwarded to us. We also are deeply appreciative of the assistance Chancellor Mike Donison has given to us over the course of our work.

The completed report will be given to the Coadjutor Bishop, who will determine how the concerns and content of the report can best be carried forward.

#### **Through What Theological Lens Should We Shape Our Structures?**

Ephesians 4:15 is summarized in the title above. This passage gives a vision of Christ uniting and gathering His Church. He infuses it with his Spirit. He is the source and end of all Christian Communion.

Of all people, members of the Anglican Network in Canada, should be profoundly aware that constitutions, canons and structures alone cannot ensure the faithful transmission of the Gospel revelation. Only a wholehearted and obedient union with Christ himself can assure the future.

Yes the Church needs a structure. But that structure must serve its familial purpose. Jesus taught, “For whoever does the will of the Father is my brother, and sister, and mother.”<sup>1</sup> Whatever governance structures have emerged, or will emerge, must subsist under the divine purpose and familial character that Christ has given his Church.

Christ came “in the flesh”. He entered our worldly reality. He left his Church with very specific and real tasks and responsibilities. As we implement those tasks, structures are unavoidable and necessary. How will we relate to one another? Who will take leadership? How do we set priorities? How do we gather together? How do we effectively extend the reach of the Gospel? How do we co-exist with the law and authority of the state?

Jesus taught that, “Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much”!<sup>2</sup> The Church is not primarily about structures and governance, but structures and governance matter!

We are blessed to be part of the heritage of the universal church going back 2000 years, and over many centuries of Anglican history. Patterns have emerged and been tested over the decades and centuries. Novel elements have been tried in the grist mill of history. Some have been incorporated into our common life, while others have been discarded. Space for innovation, consistent with Scripture, has been protected by the 39 Articles of Religion.<sup>3</sup> We have been given the blessing of both roots and wings.

### **What Is the Role of the ANiC Council?**

The present canons are completely clear that Synod is responsible for the policy, activities and resources of ANiC, and that the ANiC Council is subject to their direction.

Evolving from a predecessor movement, it was understandable that some were invested in the model of a strong National Board of Directors. The Canons make clear that the ANiC Council acts as a “Diocesan Standing Committee” as defined by the Province<sup>4</sup>. Our Council thus has a dual role. It serves as a “council of advice to the bishop”. It also manages the affairs and resources of the Diocese subject to the direction of Synod.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 12:50

<sup>2</sup> Luke 16:10

<sup>3</sup> The Book of Common Prayer, Article XXXIV, p. 711

<sup>4</sup> ANiC Diocesan Canons, Section 1, Article 1.4.1 (b) (i) (ii)

This role of “council of advice” is a primary role. Diocesan Canons must always be read subject to the Provincial Canons and are ultimately subordinate to them if there is any conflict. Provincial Canons give this as the primary role, from which other functions flow.<sup>5</sup>

In Anglican polity, the diocesan bishop is invested with authority to choose clergy, to license clergy, to authorize liturgies compatible with scripture, to evangelize, to teach, to discipline according to canon, to admonish, to gather and to lead the community. Because the whole ministry of the diocesan bishop is with and for community, the Diocesan Bishop will want the advice of the community to exercise this leadership.

Some matters will come before the ANiC Council for a decision. These will involve resources, and the program, policies, and activities of the Synod and its agencies. At other times, the Diocesan Bishop may bring before Council, matters for advice. It is important for the Diocesan Council members to understand their dual role. It is important for the Diocesan Bishop to set a collaborative tone to help complex issues find clarity and consensus.

Our geography and finances require that we do a lot with few resources. It is normative in Anglican polity for Suffragan Bishops and Archdeacons to be members of Diocesan Council. This added clergy membership is often offset by a comparable increase in lay participation. Diocesan Council often reflects the Diocesan Bishop with a balance of clergy and laity that are representative of the clergy and lay houses in a synod. Unfortunately, gathering a Diocesan Council of this size from across the expanse of Canada and New England, would be prohibitively expensive. The size of Diocesan Council must be kept proportional to our resources, and to our other mission priorities.

The structure of ANiC Council is small, eleven members<sup>6</sup>. The Diocesan Bishop may require a panel of advice far larger. It will certainly include other bishops, archdeacons, the chancellor<sup>7</sup> and other legal advisors, ANiC staff, and perhaps others invited by the Diocesan Bishop or Diocesan Council beyond their prescribed numbers. Careful scheduling has allowed this wider group to convene and work together with Council at their meetings. The Council members have the advantage of hearing from those most directly affected by their voting decisions. The Diocesan Bishop has a much broader range of opinion from which to shape consensus on matters brought for advice. There is the opportunity for much more effective decision making.

There are risks as well. Will voting members feel outnumbered when the time comes for painful or restrictive decisions? Will there be so many voices to hear from that the voting members don't feel they have the time to level with one another as they come to their decisions? On balance there is a strong advantage to having a single body working in unity.

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<sup>5</sup> ACNA Provincial Canons, Title 1, Canon 5

<sup>6</sup> See Recommendation 6 under this section

<sup>7</sup> The Chancellor attends and fully participates in all Council deliberations (but does not vote and is absent from any in camera meetings unless invited by Council to sit in on such meetings in whole or in part).

Our Canons set out a requirement that the Moderator<sup>8</sup>, with the assistance of ANiC Council, develop an Annual Plan (strategic vision), with a concrete action plan to be presented to Synod for reception each year<sup>9</sup>.

How will this dovetail with the more usual custom of a Bishop's Charge, and Response? The Charge allows the Diocesan Bishop to bring a wide variety of matters before Synod. Some will be matters requiring Synod resources, while others may not. The Response is often given by a Charge Response Committee, who reflect upon and critique the initiatives, often doing preparatory work prior to the Synod meetings.

To effectively mobilize the Synod and its parishes, the charge will often come with the support of key diocesan leaders, who have reviewed and critiqued proposed initiatives at Diocesan Council. Thus a collaborative interplay is established between the leadership initiatives advanced by the Diocesan Bishop, and the mobilization of the community to support as well as critique the way forward. An ongoing conversation is developed between Diocesan Bishop, clergy and laity. Ideas are shaped, improved and refined. Consensus develops. Clarity is achieved, and decisions are owned by the participants.

The Annual Plan seems very ambitious for the meeting schedules available. Perhaps there is a way of combining both systems. Perhaps there should be a strategic plan every three to five years incorporated into the Bishop's Charge. This would get the active planning of the ANiC Council regularly before Synod. It would also preserve the freedom of the Diocesan Bishop to bring the widest range of issues regularly before Synod. There may be international matters, social concerns, theological debates, worship styles, or a whole variety of topics that don't require the resources of Synod, but which nevertheless, are deserving of Synod's attention.

Recommendations:

1. The canonical requirement for an "Annual Plan" should be rescinded, and replaced with a Council policy for a strategic plan every few years.
2. ANiC Council should establish a clear process through which their deliberations are widely communicated promptly after each meeting.
3. ANiC Council should retain the right to hold meetings closed to all but voting members. This provision should be rarely used, to allow vigorous input from all leaders able to be present. There may be occasions when decision are required that have legal implications. There is also a range of other matters that may be confidential or sensitive in nature when closed meeting may be required. As a courtesy, closed sessions should be separately scheduled by the chair, to avoid asking non-voting leaders to leave a particular session.
4. ANiC Council should work to clarify its role and functioning policies in writing.

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<sup>8</sup> See the recommendation in the section 'Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed'

<sup>9</sup> ANiC Diocesan Canons, Article 4, I.4.1 (h),(ii)

5. Since our resources require a small Diocesan Council, it cannot truly represent the various Countries, regions, ages, etc. that comprise ANiC. This can best be addressed by diocesan structures becoming more locally based over time.
6. Members of Diocesan Council should be referred to as “Members of Diocesan Council” and not as “directors”.

### **How are Bishops Accountable?**

Many of our churches and members are coming through various degrees of past trauma related to the failure of episcopal leadership. It is natural to want to understand how this can be prevented in the future. In spite of past pain, there is a wholehearted commitment to value of the historic episcopate, and the desire to see it exercised effectively, and in obedience to scripture.

Biblical churches are up against a powerful secular belief system in North America. The cardinal value of this system is tolerance, and the fruit is unquestioning inclusion. In many ways, revealed Christianity is the author of both tolerance and inclusion. But our secular age has taken them to idolatrous extremes. They are powerfully bolstered by civil law, human rights tribunals, the media, and public opinion.

In the face of this rapidly expanding and state sanctioned belief system, bishops, synods, parishes, and individuals have all failed repeatedly to uphold the revealed truths of Christianity even within the church! Good constitutions, canons and structures will not alone forestall or abate the advance of this secular faith system. Christians need courage and holy conviction to stand against this subtle and ever advancing tide.

Canon David Short has provided us with an early copy of his essay entitled “Renewing Ministry: An Exercise in Christian Revanchism”. (We hope to see it published, perhaps on the ANiC Website). We commend this article for its wisdom, insight and biblical analysis. It addresses in some detail the theological and ideological struggle that is dividing and dissipating North American Christianity.

Our Canons themselves provide a fairly rigorous accountability on our bishops.

- In their consecration vows, bishops are sworn to uphold the constitution and canons of both the Diocese and the Province.
- They are sworn to uphold the teachings of scripture and to be guided by them.
- Provincial canons require canonical obedience to the Archbishop.

- Stringent prerequisite qualities are outlined for bishops in both Provincial Canons and Diocesan Canons.
- The election of a bishop requires 2/3 consent from the College of Bishops.
- The Provincial Canons outline a long list of ecclesiastical offences for which a bishop may be charged including: false doctrine, violation of ordination vows, or willful contravention of the canons and constitution.
- By Provincial Canon a bishop is subject to admonishment by the Archbishop.
- Under Diocesan Canons the Diocesan Bishop must call synods at stated intervals.
- Under Diocesan Canons, bishops are required, as are all clergy, to take the “Declaration of Assent” to our beliefs and teachings prior to ordination.
- All clergy in ANiC, as a condition of office, are required to confine all sexual intimacy within the bonds of marriage, to uphold the sanctity of human life, and to live an exemplary moral and ethical lifestyle.
- Diocesan Canons mirror the Provincial Canons for the discipline of a bishop. They include as an ecclesiastical offence, “conduct giving just cause for scandal or offence, including an abuse of ecclesiastical power”.
- There is a provision for a group of synod members to call a synod if there are matters of pressing concern.

In addition to all of the many provisions above, we now have the added protection of each parish being separately incorporated. The Diocese has declared it has no interest in parish properties (except by express prior agreement). Just as parishes must apply for admission to ANiC and fulfil certain requirements of membership, there is also the ability to withdraw from ANiC should leadership be persistently headed in a harmful direction. Although most would only take this action as a last resort, this provision changes the dynamics immensely. A Diocesan Bishop cannot resort to controlling property as a means to enforce authority. Unity must continually be nurtured and garnered. This was precisely the case in New Testament times for those exercising apostolic responsibilities.

All of the focus on governance needs to be balanced, of course, by stressing the priority of the role of bishops as evangelists, teachers and pastors. Anglicans view bishops as successors to the apostles. Their godly leadership, under the authority of scripture, is to serve and enable the faithful response of God’s people to all that Christ has accomplished. The administrative and governance functions of the bishops must be proportional to the main thrust of this apostolic work.

Recommendations:

1. The Diocese is intended to be a local expression of the Church and not a national body covering the vast geography of Canada and beyond.



2. The normative Anglican pattern is for a single bishop in each diocese, who acts as a focus of unity.

### **‘Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed’??**

There is an excellent 2009 report to the Church of England by Dr. Colin Podmore<sup>10</sup> giving a lucid overview of Synods in England and the Anglican Communion. It is available online and well worth reading. In section 3.21,22 he examines the above phrase both for its usefulness and for its inadequacies.

“It is often said that the Church of England is ‘episcopally led and synodically governed’. *Working as One Body* commented, ‘This useful and convenient phrase may, however, tend to conceal the fact that the bishops are part of the synod and that the leadership they give is in and to the whole synodical body’. That is in fact, only one of a number of difficulties with the phrase ‘episcopally led and synodically governed’.”

Lay people often give leadership in the Church. Synods are not separate from the Diocesan Bishop, who is a central part of Synod and who often endorses each measure before it passes. Bishops have the responsibility to make many governance decisions apart from Synod. The choosing of clergy, the appointment of senior clerics, and the exercise of discipline are some examples. But each Diocesan Bishop is required to lead and govern in a participatory manner. The Constitution and Canons lay out the minimum requirements of that participatory leadership and governance.

Quoting a prior document *Working as One Body*, Podmore notes, “synods are parliaments, (legislative and deliberative assemblies); they are not governments.”

The willing co-operation of bishop and synod are essential ingredients to a partnership that is able to advance the mission and work of Christ. The bishop is unable to force any spending or legislative measure on the Synod. A mutuality is required for Synod to work.

In the same manner, there is an inherent authority in the office of bishop that is not derived from Synod. Podmore writes, “The diocesan bishop’s powers are inherent in his office; they are not delegated by or exercised on behalf of the diocesan synod, and while there is mutual accountability in the body of Christ, the bishop is not accountable to his synod in any legal sense. (It does not, for example, have any power to give the bishop directions as to how he should exercise his ministry.)”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. Colin Podmore, *Governance in the Church of England and the Anglican Communion*, Section 3:21, 22.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*,

This willing co-operation also extends to Council. Although Council cannot direct the Diocesan Bishop, it may request. The Diocesan Bishop cannot force Council to adopt any measure that doesn't have majority support from the Diocesan Council. Should the Diocesan Bishop and Council ever come to an impasse, there are provisions for the Diocesan Bishop to call a special Synod to resolve the impasse, should the Bishop choose to do so. Synods can also be called by Council on a written request by 51% of the <sup>12</sup>parish representatives.

Anglican structures have developed ingenious provisions to allow bishops the freedom to initiate and mobilize, while also upholding the key participatory role of all clergy and laity. When bishops understand and utilize these provisions wisely, seasoned decisions with wide ownership can result. Wide collaboration in decision making should thus be normative.

Recommendations:

1. The title "Moderator" should be eliminated, as Canons are revised, and replaced with "Diocesan Bishop" for clarity and consistency of Anglican usage.

### **How Do We Preserve Anglican Identity?**

We can be thankful to the founders of our Province and Diocese that a solid foundation was laid for the continuity of Anglican life and practice. All plans were subject to the approval of the GAFCON Primates Council. The Primates gathered in Jerusalem in 2008 called our Province into being<sup>13</sup>. The Anglican Church in North America was inaugurated in June 2009.

The faith statements and declarations of both Diocese and Province are steeped in the language and idiom of the Anglican Communion. All of the key documents, faith statements, ordinals and the Book of Common Prayer, are integral to our founding. The Jerusalem Declaration further clarifies our roots and commitments.

With all of the turmoil within North American Anglicanism, it is natural for people to expect a retreat into congregationalism, and fragmentation. Many submissions from ANiC participants were apprehensive of a creeping congregationalism within our structures. It would be tempting for church leaders to put all of their efforts into local ministry, and to avoid the other aspects of Christian community.

But the remarkable reality is that that has not happened! Nearly 1000 parishes have come together willingly to form our Province. This Anglican character was seen by them as indispensable in advancing the Gospel. The average Sunday attendance of the province we have

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<sup>12</sup> Diocesan Canons, Article 4, I.4.2 (a)

<sup>13</sup> The Constitution of the Anglican Church in North America, Preamble, Paragraph 6

joined, rivals and approaches the attendance of the province our Canadians felt constrained to leave. Many Christian denominations look principally to the local expression of Church. Anglicans want to know how they connect with Christians throughout the world, how they connect with the universal Church, and with our apostolic roots. For Anglicans our ultimate ecclesiastical loyalty is never just the local church, or even Anglicanism, but rather the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, of which the parish and diocese is a local reflection. They look for healthy and stable expressions that are vigorously engaged in Christ's work.

Many of us have witnessed what our Archbishop calls, "Anglican fever". Many leaders and worshippers from other traditions have gathered with us to be part of a church that values scripture, sacraments, mission, historical roots, liturgy, and global bonds. Yes, there are always forces at work to fragment what the Spirit gathers. But we have experienced the Lord's hand in gathering and uniting us! What has been achieved in four years is not humanly possible. It is now the responsibility of all of us, to be thankful for the great gift we have received, and to ensure that this godly heritage is transmitted "unimpaired to our posterity"<sup>14</sup>.

Recommendations:

1. Our bishops are encouraged to continue promoting and developing educational opportunities for theological students, clergy and lay leaders in Anglican liturgy, polity, mission and ethos. An appointed working group might assist in facilitating and encouraging options available through existing and virtual campuses and programs, for aspiring students and ordinands.

### **How Do Synod and ANiC Council Make the Time Needed for Deliberation?**

Our Diocese developed as an ecclesiastic structure from the Essentials Movement which was its predecessor. There were joyful national rallies through which we discovered community, heard stirring speeches, and were immersed in praise. Many of us were heartened to find that we were not alone, and that we had a future.

We want to keep that celebratory praise, learning and apostolic friendship as part of the character of ANiC. But as we move to being a Diocesan church, we have some added responsibilities as well. "Synod" is the Greek word for "on the road together". We are forging a common path. We want to ensure that this common path is consistent with "the way" of Christ, trod by the apostles. To do this we need to take time to talk to one another. Just as we need time for celebration, we also need to learn through information, and to work out our path together through deliberation. Celebration, information, and deliberation are all indispensable aspects our life together.

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<sup>14</sup> A phrase from the Solemn Declaration, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. viii

Many Anglicans have suffered “battle fatigue” from prior synod experiences of endless reports, resolutions and debates. But deliberation does need to be a balanced portion of our diocesan gatherings. The family is not only about governance and decision-making. The family is about love and mission. But every family needs good decision-making. It should be done in ways that are streamlined and efficient. The details can be left to Council and staff. But it is the unavoidable responsibility of Synod to set the course.

Recommendations:

1. Synod members need to be equipped to fulfil their functions. Council should consider preparatory training through videos or webinars.
2. The agenda of synod should be comprised of celebration (Bible teaching/worship/and prayer), information and deliberation. Formal deliberation should comprise a minimum of 1/3 of the time available.
3. The Diocesan Bishop is encouraged to use Diocesan Council as a sounding board for major proposals and initiatives coming before Synod.
4. Diocesan Council should continue to meet with the widest circle of ANiC leaders possible to garner unity, to help the best decisions to be made, and to enable widespread acceptance and implementation of measures developed.
5. Major proposals and motions coming before ANiC Council should be circulated well ahead of time.
6. Synod should be given a way of selecting which private motions they wish to debate in the limited time available. This could be done by a list of motions ballot being given at registration, and the resolutions committee asking that the top 7 motions chosen by delegates be debated. Another device from the English system is to allow ‘next question’ motions from the floor to eliminate motions that don’t have interest or support.
7. Under the Synod Rules of Order, Synod motions coming with the support of Diocesan Council should have priority on the floor.
8. Budgetary provision should be made for at least 2 and perhaps 3 face-to-face meetings of Diocesan Council prescheduled each year.
9. Phone meetings should be held only occasionally to deal with urgent matters that can have clear outcomes.

### **How Do We Keep the Energy of a Movement?**

The energy and power of the Church is the Holy Spirit. ANiC cannot keep its dynamic, apart from the Lord!

As we stay true to Christ, to our founding values, and to our sense of mission, we will retain the courageous love that launched our movement. We need also to be grafted on to that same courageous love of Christ that is in our Global South partners, and across ACNA.

Our energy comes from sharing in Christ's immense vision of gathering the world to the Father.

We give thanks for the ethnic churches that are so intrinsic to our founding and vision. Particularly through the gifted leadership of Bishop Stephen Leung we are awed by the momentum of new churches and programs for Cantonese, Japanese, Filipino, Mandarin, and South Asians and developments in new areas of Alberta. In partnership with St. John's Vancouver and Archdeacon Dan Gifford, new ministries to Farsi and Sudanese have developed. In addition to ministering to specific language groups in Canada, they become doorsteps for global mission and new relationships around the world. These ministries inspire and encourage us all. We participate in the prophecy of Revelation, "After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb..."<sup>15</sup>

During the Anglican 1000 period, many new parishes have joined ANiC, and a number of new congregations have been planted. Our Bishops are often working patiently at new possibilities, long before they come to public awareness.

Artizo has been an invaluable resource for developing Bible teachers and preachers. Many have become part of a new generation of ordained leaders, undertaking remarkable ministries. St. John's Vancouver has taken an inspired leadership role over many years!

We have also welcomed totally new patterns of ministry at the Living Edge Victoria, The Table Victoria, Immanuel Vancouver, and Mountain Valley Mission in Squamish. Elsewhere across the continent, new patterns have been attempted. Our New England Deanery has been exemplary at launching satellites and developing leaders. These new patterns are deserving of support, replication, and objective study.

Of central importance to our future health and long term effective growth is the priority and resourcing we place on training future leaders for ministry, both lay and ordained. There needs to be a clear understanding in the parishes of the ordination discernment process within the Diocese. We should encourage ongoing creative ways to provide potential ordinands with ministry training and experience as well as financial aid to help with their education. A clear understanding of Anglican polity needs to be in evidence in those being considered for ministry, particularly for the Orders of Deacon and Priest.

The 'DOVE' weekends need to be reviewed regularly in order to assess their effectiveness and thoroughness. A board of advisors may be a useful way of achieving this.

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<sup>15</sup> Revelation 7:9

Most of those newly ordained in our Diocese end up in contexts where their church is unable to fund them fully and full time. This can lead to all sorts of stress and difficulty, feelings of isolation and uncertainty. Clergy families feel under a lot of pressure in such contexts. Due diligence needs to be given to fellow clergy and parishes in need of support and assistance. Of particular concern are the areas of ministry resourcing, financial aid, and emotional support. A possible ‘partnering’ of parishes could be a way forward.

For too long the historic churches have been obsessed with their governance structures, fundraising, and decaying buildings.

ANiC has been given a fresh start. We have a clean slate! Institutions frequently make the error of overextension. They take on far too much for their resources. Projects are not concluded when energy and efforts go elsewhere. Ambitions become grandiose.

Our Archbishop frequently uses a quote that “We, keep the main thing the main thing”. We don’t need to have our hand in everything. Christ called us to proclaim, to gather, to teach and to heal. It is quite straightforward if we allow it to be so. Our limitations can be our friends. They help us stay focussed on the number one task of following Jesus.

And so in matters of governance we should be minimalists. What is required so that good decisions can advance to work of Christ? Proportionality is an important principle. What proportion of our energy can we give to decision making, so that mission flourishes?

### **Is the Tithing System Sufficient?**

Tithing is an important teaching of our Province and Diocese. It is an important teaching found in scripture and the principle is embedded in our Canons<sup>16</sup>. Valuable teaching materials are available to us on this topic<sup>17</sup>.

Extending this teaching to the financial relationship between parishes and diocese, and diocese and province has many benefits.

- It creates a useful safeguard to maintain resources on the parish front lines.
- It places appropriate limitations on the important work done beyond the diocese.
- Tithes may be adequate for diocesan and provincial work, but it requires parishes take responsibility for mission outreach.
- It keeps the mission priorities close to the parishioners to set priorities overseas, etc.
- It keeps the diocese and parishes growing in tandem rather than competing for resources.

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<sup>16</sup> Anglican Church in North America, Canon 9, Section 1.

<sup>17</sup> [www.anglicannetwork.ca](http://www.anglicannetwork.ca) Resources/Videos/Biblical Stewardship/Episode 5:Tithing

In the older Anglican structures in Canada, parishes were often paying well in excess of 20% of income to a diocese. In comparing the two systems, it is important to remember that a large portion of the 20+% went to revenue sharing in the North and Overseas. If our Diocese is going to sustain and advance its important work on 10%, the parishes will need to pick up most of the mission outreach. Parishes will need to make mission support a priority, and to mobilize their members with the joy and adventure of engaging this work directly. If we can accomplish this, our members will be greatly enriched, and our parishes will be stronger for having the priority of mission constantly before them.

#### Recommendations:

1. Major financial appeals should not be launched through the clergy, but by consultation with the parishes and after deliberation by synod.
2. A brief and straightforward presentation on tithing should be incorporated into each Synod.
3. Most parishes are on the calendar year as the fiscal year. Having the diocesan year end on June 30<sup>th</sup> causes unnecessary confusion and misunderstanding. This should be reviewed if possible.
4. Diocesan initiative should involve careful assessment of proportionality. Does each initiative reflect a balanced utilization of energy between the diocesan and parish levels?
5. All parishes should be actively encouraged to enter into supportive partnerships, including financial support, to developing ANiC parish ministries and missions.

#### **Should parishes be incorporated?**

The Memorandum of Understanding by which congregations become parishes of ANiC requires that they be incorporated under Federal or Provincial law. This is a new form of structure for Anglicans, and questions have arisen as to whether this is a prudent way to proceed. The thrust of incorporation is to make the parish an entity in law. Previously, in most cases, the Diocese was the umbrella entity in law for all of its parishes.

The advantage of the old system was that the unity of the diocese was reinforced. It was presumed that the duly chosen bishop, and the duly elected synod, would be the best custodians of the constitution and values of biblical Christianity. Variations from the received revelation and tradition would likely be individual parishes, thus it was “safer” to trust the central authorities of the church.

The experience of ANiC churches has been that it wasn't “safer”. Central bodies have often moved away from the Constitution and its reliance on received revelation and tradition. Synods

have seen these as archaic, and themselves as progressive. In effect there has been a hostile takeover of many properties and assets that were given to uphold classical Christianity, and are now being used for an albeit similar, but distinctly different purpose. Because civil courts are reluctant to get into theological and moral debates between competing factions, those properties have been alienated, at a huge loss to the mission, work, and peace of congregations holding to classical Christian teachings. To incorporate locally was seen as a beneficial improvement toward preventing such losses in future.

But should churches incorporate at all, and why? Aren't they unduly submitting to state control? Aren't they making artificial divisions amongst themselves? Aren't they creating loyalty and ethical dilemmas as they develop these artificial entities in law?

Jesus taught, "Then give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's and to God the things that are God's".<sup>18</sup> The epistles remind us, "Pay to all what is due to them, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due".<sup>19</sup> Churches work in the real world. Jesus prayed, "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world..."<sup>20</sup> Worldly authorities have a God given role to create order, stability, and accountability. To co-operate with authorities fulfilling their proper function is not disloyalty to the gospel, but a requirement and expectation for followers.

Churches in a free society, act as public bodies. There are risks and liabilities to undertake. These risks are reduced by risk avoidance, insurance and incorporation. Through incorporation, liabilities are normally limited by the civil authorities, to the assets of the entity itself. The personal assets of the leaders and participants are normally shielded.

"...the members of a church corporation ordinarily are shielded from personal liability for the debts and misconduct of other members or agents of the church..."<sup>21</sup>

The same author quoting an American court says, "One court acknowledged that, a church does not lose its ecclesiastical function, and the attributes of that function, when it incorporates. It does not, by incorporating, lose its right to be governed by its own particular form of ecclesiastical government. Incorporation acts merely to create a legal entity to hold and administer the properties of the church."<sup>22</sup>

Some churches decline incorporation for fear of state control. The author advises, "In the unlikely event that an incorporated church ever does believe that it is being 'unduly controlled' by the state, it can easily and quickly rectify the problem by voluntarily terminating its corporate

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<sup>18</sup> Luke 20:25

<sup>19</sup> Romans 13:7

<sup>20</sup> John 17:15

<sup>21</sup> Richard R. Hammar, *Pastor, Church and Law*, Second Edition (Matthews, North Carolina: Christian Ministry Resources, 1991), p.275

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.276



existence.”<sup>23</sup> In free societies there are also significant protections from control of religious bodies by the state.

It would be very difficult indeed, to recruit leaders for a parish that did not avoid unnecessary risks, that did not carry insurance, or that was not incorporated. One error in judgement could result in many members losing their private and personal family assets! While it is true that many churches are unincorporated, the risks are huge and unnecessary. The civil authorities have made available to churches, the same protection, and the same limitations on liability, that other public entities enjoy. We should use them.

The legal protections offered by incorporation are extensive, and Christian mission, organization, and fellowship are not diminished by incorporating. Incorporation has been adopted by churches because it is a prudent accommodation to the pressures and realities of the external secular world. As to the argument that incorporating somehow separates us, this is not the case. Our incorporating documents testify to our accountability to common beliefs, values and community. This is much more the case than if parishes and dioceses were simply unincorporated entities.

There are advantages as well for being incorporated at the parish rather than only at the diocesan level. Parish Council (or equivalent) can provide close at hand supervision of parish activities. The members of parish councils are often themselves attendees at events. Dioceses are such complex structures, and spread over such a large geographical area, that they often provide oversight for camps, youth events, and projects that they cannot responsibly invigilate. Large diocesan structures with multiple properties, trusts and assets become targets in a litigious age such as this. Often large dioceses are devolving many of their ministries, camps, schools, and housing projects into separately incorporated bodies. This allows much closer supervision of activities, as well as increased protection for the assets attached to that specific ministry.

Both our Diocese and our Province have declared that they have no interest in the managing of properties that are for the local benefit of the parishes. This liberates them from becoming embroiled in complex local matters. It frees them to concentrate on their own specific mission priorities. There is a clear “division of labour” which can simplify and advance our work.

Carrying the willing loyalty of their clergy and members, the Diocese and Province do not want a controlling interest over local properties and assets. Our patterns of incorporation have ensured that real estate is held legally and beneficially for the corporation to which it is registered. There are no convoluted trust claims to litigate over in future!

As churches become incorporated bodies, it is important to be sufficiently broad in stating the objects so as to allow generous co-operation between the various levels and entities that are seeking to advance Anglican faith, life, and mission. This will prevent Council members feeling

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.277

strained loyalties to the different levels of the Church. Sound legal advice on framing the constitutions will be invaluable. Often each civil jurisdiction will have differing procedures and requirements.

### **Should we proceed to multiple diocese?**

The question of proceeding to multiple dioceses is beyond the mandate of the task force. This is a matter for Synod to decide in consultation with the Province.

The question is an excellent example of the need for deliberation time at Synod. It also delineates the need for resolutions, debate and due process. The open forums at the past regional assemblies exemplify patterns that can help us prepare carefully for parliamentary decision-making.

The Governance Task Force makes the following observations about the process to date.

In the Western regional assembly there seemed to be a clear consensus that we should move to multiple dioceses. When we do it, it should be done well, and with adequate resources. The West seemed ready to proceed in due course as the practicalities are resolved.

In the East, there was less consensus about moving to multiple dioceses at this time and less attention was given to the subject in their Regional Gathering.

Recommendation:

1. Synod needs to deliberate seriously on a developed plan for multiple dioceses. We look to the Bishops to consult with Diocesan Council and others to develop such a plan for consideration.

### **Conclusions**

It is clear from the submissions received, and from our consultations, that there is no widespread dissatisfaction over our provisions of governance for ANiC. In fact, there is widespread appreciation of all that has been accomplished in so short a period of time. There is admiration and support for our bishops. Our leaders display a keen enthusiasm for developing sound structures for the advance of Christ's work.

Immense gratitude is due to our founders and leaders for the Constitutions, Canons, and founding documents and the practices of both Diocese and Province.

Structures will always need some adjustment, and many of the recommendations are consistent with what we have heard, and with the best judgements of the panel members.

We now submit this Report to the Co-adjutor Bishop.

Respectfully,

The Rt. Rev. Ronald Ferris, (Chair), Assisting Bishop, Rector, Anglican Church of the Ascension, Langley, B.C.

The Rev. Mike Stewart, Rector, Saint Matthew's Anglican Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

The Rev. Dr. Brent Stiller, Rector, New Song Church, Port Perry, Ontario.