

Rotorua Aotearoa 2003

The member host Aotearoa has asked each delegation to be prepared to have a delegation that can focus and work on specific issues and therefore each delegation should consist of a priesthood, woman, youth, educator, and elder. The gathering will involve small groups and plenary, and each delegation should be prepared to offer a form of liturgical worship for either morning and evening that is reflective of their traditions so members can experience the liturgical diversity and gifts that each has to offer the Church.

It was also agreed upon that at least two observers would be invited from other Anglican indigenous minorities such as Taiwan , Japan , Mexico , and Belize to attend the next AIN meeting. Each of these groups would be responsible for their air expenses and for providing their own translation services.

The host for this gathering, The Rt. Rev. Whakahuihui Vercoe, in his sermon at Eucharist on the morning of the first day of business, called for the delegations to be “storytellers, value bearers, community builders and spiritual journeyers” whose voices and work more than ever needs to be heard and seen in the Anglican Communion. He implored the delegates, “This is our heritage and to act on this heritage is our ministry. It is a ministry of listening, of healing, and of caring.”

Further words of encouragement and greetings came from the Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council, the Rev. Canon John L. Peterson,

“As you reflect on how you are able to grow into the fullness of the purpose of your network, we, too, will be reflecting how we as a Communion can be more effective in our support of your ministry. Together might we be able to use our common gifts and our common spirituality ‘to transform’ the life of the Christian community.”

The Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Protestant Church of United States of America, The Rt. Rev. Frank T. Griswold, wrote, “A gift of our Anglican Communion is that we are able to come together to share in one another’s realities and contacts, and therefore have a better understanding of how Christ moved throughout the world.” He further wrote, “I hope that the time you spend together is fruitful, and that you find a strengthening of faith through community. I pray that you will all grow in your awareness of the strengths that can be found by being attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This comes with my very good wishes and blessings for you all. Yours in Christ.”

Before the delegations broke out into their representative groups, they listened to a special guest, Archdeacon Taimalelagi Tuatagaloa Matalavea, the Anglican Observer to the United Nations. She reported on the nature of her office and work and stressed that indigenous minority issues at the United Nations are one of her priorities. She also pointed out the tenuous nature of the office due to the lack of funds, but also how important the office is by letting groups like AIN know of forthcoming world gatherings like the next meeting in late May of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Peoples, whose topic is children and youth.

Among eight resolutions passed by AIN, the most encompassing one called for: The “creation of a non-geographic Province of the Anglican Communion for the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific Rim .” It was noted in the deliberations that unlike other Anglicans in the world who have sought to have their religious expression outside being in relationship and dialogue in the Communion, the membership of AIN continues to fulfill its mission statement in being “committed to the Anglican tradition while affirming our traditional spirituality. We believe that God is leading the Church to a turning point in its history and that the full partnership of indigenous peoples is essential. Therefore we pledge to work together to exercise our leadership in contributing our vision and gifts to transform the life of the Christian community.”

Each of the delegations also introduced resolutions of regional concerns for mutual support. These following resolutions were adopted:

- AIN supports the concept presented by Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa for a “Primate Leadership Team,” for the purpose of exercising collaborative leadership among the three Senior Bishops of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa , New Zealand and Polynesia.
- AIN as a formal body of the Anglican Consultative Council supports and recognizes Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Ministry as a formal body representing the needs and concerns of the indigenous peoples of the United States.
- AIN supports the establishment of a Native Hawaiian Area Mission; the establishment of an office of the co-ordinator for Native Hawaiian indigenous ministry; supports the increase of numbers of indigenous Native Hawaiian clergy; supports the training of our indigenous ministry aspirants to ministry through our Native Hawaiian Study Curriculum.
- AIN strongly supports the efforts for a true and meaningful Covenant between the Anglican Indigenous people of Australia and the Church.
- AIN express support for the position of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples in relation to the Settlement Agreement between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Federal Government of Canada.

- AIN express continual support for the Gwich'in Nation and for the establishment of a permanent natural reserve and refuge from the exploitation of natural resources.

It was also moved formally that: AIN supports the development of the Anglican Indigenous Youth Network to assist Anglican Indigenous Network in meeting and addressing the needs of the youth and young adults within the Anglican Church and our communities.

On a more informal level the groups representing woman, elders and indigenous theological educators will also continue to organize themselves and to meet before the next AIN gathering in 2005. The women and elders have indicated their interim gatherings to be in 2004 to be held in Hawaii . They also, following the call of the AIN Secretary General, found the need for dialogue between groups and this was initiated by the elders and youth with designated leaders. In this dialogue they began to explore the need for better interaction among the generations especially as means for church and community growth, with the youth calling to their elders to get more involved.

A special proposal for funding of AIN was presented by the Secretary-General for the establishment of a US\$300,000 operating endowment fund set up under the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC). It is hope that the fund will provide an annual budget of US\$15,000. Members will be asked to explore individual donors and other sources to help establish this badly needed fund. This proposal is part of the ACCs "Endowment Fund Campaign for the Anglican Communion" to ensure that the Church's programs have a secure future. Those wishing to contribute to this special fund should contact The Rev. Canon John Peterson, Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC).

Continuing the rotation of hosting AIN gatherings, the next gathering will be held in the United States of American in early Spring of 2005.