

Voyaging Together in Christ, in the Simplicity of the Gospel

A communique from:

Oceania Anglican Fono of Primates and General Secretaries

2-5 March 2018

Moana Anglican Services and Training (MAST) Centre

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The second Fono¹ of the Anglican Primates and General Secretaries of Oceania² was held from the 2nd – 5th of March 2018 in Suva, Fiji and was hosted by the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia (ANZ&P). The Fono, in joint collaboration with the government of Fiji, was privileged to welcome Archbishop Justin Welby in his capacity as Archbishop of Canterbury³.

This Fono heard stories from the 4 provinces, and the Diocese of Hawai'i whose Bishop was a guest, and shared successes and challenges of our Church in fulfilling its mission to remain true to the gospel and to be agents of transformation in our region.

Recognising their moral responsibility and mutual accountability, the Fono committed to take concrete action, to be champions and advocates, and to support each other in the following areas.

Climate Change

Climate Change poses an existential threat to our people of Oceania.

The Fono heard from Professor Beth Holland about the increase in number and severity of extreme weather events, storm surges and rising sea levels in the region. The Fono also focused its attention on the effects of climate change in Oceania and heard from the government of Fiji as the chair of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 23rd Conference of Parties. A Eucharist service was held on the sandbank in Suva Harbour to underline the existential threat of climate change to Oceania and to place the urgency of this threat within the Christian value of the stewardship of God's creation. The Fono is deeply grateful to the Fiji Voyagers Trust for the opportunity to sail on the Uto Ni Yalo Pacific twin hulled oceangoing Outrigger (*vaka*).

The Fono notes the success of the province of ANZP decision to divest out of fossil fuels following the General Synod 2014. The Fono therefore encourages investment into sustainable energy as a valid option for our investment funds, and encourages our various Trust Boards to consider restructuring their investments to maximise returns from such innovative ideas. Archbishop Richardson and Archbishop Takeli will actively begin a conversation with the Melanesian Mission Trust Board.

¹ The word Fono is used in different countries of Polynesia. In general, the term means councils or meetings great and small and applies to national assemblies and legislatures, as well as local village councils or any type of meeting between people.

² Members of the Anglican Fono are the Primates and General Secretaries of the Anglican Church in Australia, Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea, Anglican Church of Melanesia, and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia.

³ Archbishop of Canterbury and his delegation including Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Secretary General of Anglican Communion, Bishop Anthony Poggo, the Archbishops Adviser for the Anglican Communion, Mr Phil George, Lambeth Conference Chief Executive Officer and Ms. Gill Whiting, Anglican Communion Programme Coordinator at Lambeth Palace.

Recognising that all Provinces have Anglican schools, the Fono commits itself to encouraging the integration of climate change topics into the current curricula of the schools.

Furthermore, the Fono agreed to engage with existing action oriented campaigns such as the 'plastic-free' campaign, tree-planting campaigns, or even "rubbish picking" events to place the Fono members at the forefront of changing behaviour of our children to have greater stewardship of our environment. The Fono will continue to monitor this commitment and will encourage mutual accountability, particularly on this critical decision.

The Fono notes with great encouragement the change of perspective to emphasising greater resilience towards climate change. In this regard, the Fono will encourage each other to be climate champions.

Violence against Women & Children

The Fono noted with thanks a presentation by The House of Sarah on gender-based violence in Oceania. The Fono encourages and supports the zero tolerance for violence policy as promoted by the House of Sarah and encourages ways they may be able to share their work in other Provinces. The Fono encourages all provinces to adopt, implement the ACC 'Safe Church charter', and commits to review and respond to the guidelines coming from the International Safe Church Commission.

The Fono will further promote the message of 'Gods love for all' and offer alternative responses to violent reactions. The Fono applauds the work of Fijian Church Leaders to publicly speak out against violence.

The Fono stands in solidarity with the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea (PNG) and notes the courageous stand of Archbishop Allan Migi in addressing violence perpetrated against victims suspected of sorcery and witchcraft. The Fono notes the request for training in pastoral counselling from the Anglican Church in PNG and invites its members to respond proactively to this urgent request.

Change of leadership / capacity building

The Fono heard of the various challenges that changes in leadership brought in the installation of many new bishops and the great need for capacity building of the leadership of the church.

The Fono notes with appreciation the strengthening of relationships with Bishop-exchanges between our Provinces.

With a further commitment to share resources, and assist in leadership development, they note the following actions:

- The invitation from the Australian Province to Oceania Bishops to attend the training for new Bishops on the 9,10,11th June in Melbourne.
- Expanding the training ACOM and Diocese of Auckland are developing, for the management responsibilities of Bishops.
- Convene key leaders of theological colleges and educators together to explore collaboration, student and teacher exchanges, sharing of resources, and potentially curriculum development in areas of common concern.
- Involve lay people where possible, and offer training in the area of administration, and
- Invite General Secretaries from across the region to the Bi-annual registrars conference between Australia and ANZ&P.

Disaster relief and preparedness

The Fono noted with great encouragement the work done by young people in the province of ANZ&P in All Saints Anglican Church in Samoa and of All Saints Anglican Church in Tonga in the recent Cyclone Gita, applying the QGIS and CIVA⁴ toolkits in disaster preparedness and emergency relief.

The Fono notes with appreciation the continued partnership of the Anglican Church of ANZP together with Dr Holland in expanding the training of the churches on CIVA and QGIS. The Fono will continue to encourage and resource the roll-out of the QGIS and CIVA training through the Province of ANZ&P, and looks to future partnerships with the Anglican Alliance as a mechanism for increasing the reach of the CIVA training to Anglican Church of Melanesia and the Anglican Church of PNG.

Relationality

The Fono celebrated the diversity of the Anglican Communion, and the diversity that exists across this region in terms of culture, theology, and practice. The Fono notes the continuing conversations around human sexuality, and the ordination of women.

The Fono noted the plurality of the 3-Tikanga Church of the Anglican Church in ANZ&P and looks forward to welcoming the new Archbishop of Tikanga Maori. It welcomed the indigenous ministry of the church and celebrated the stories of ordination of indigenous priests in the wider Anglican Communion, and especially in the Diocese of Hawai'i with the ordination of the first Indigenous Hawai'ian priest. The Fono also noted with concern the decreasing number of Torres Islander priests due to retirement and other causes.

The Fono noted with appreciation the hosting of this yearly gathering, and the commitment to build partnerships, nurture friendships, and support each other.

The Fono noted with appreciation the presence of the Bishop of the Diocese of Hawaii as an 'Aiga/Ohana member of the Fono.

Fono 2019

The Fono received with gratitude the offer by the Anglican Church of Melanesia to host the Fono in 2019. The Fono also noted with appreciation the intention of the Anglican Church in PNG to host the Fono in 2020.

“The oceans don’t separate us, they unite us”

Bishop Robert Fitzpatrick, guest of the Oceania Fono.

⁴ QGIS stands for Geographical Information System (GIS) and CIVA - Community Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (CIVA)