

## ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL (ACC17) MEETING

The seventeenth Anglican Consultative Council (ACC17) meeting was held in Hong Kong from 28 April to 5 May 2019. The ACC consists of elected representatives from the forty two Anglican provinces (Australia counts as one province for this purpose), along with representatives of the Primates' Meeting and the Archbishop of Canterbury. A number of ecumenical representatives are also invited to be present. Most of the Anglican Communion Office staff also attend to present on their work. Representatives of the Anglican Communion Networks also attend part of the meeting to present on work their network is undertaking. The staff preparing for the Lambeth Conference were also present on this occasion. This council meeting was aligned with a meeting of Provincial Secretaries, who joined the ACC for the last three days and then stayed on for their own meeting.

Representatives from three provinces, Nigeria, Uganda and Rwanda, chose not to attend the meeting. The representatives from all other provinces were present, including for the first time, representatives from the new Province of Chile.

The Australian representatives were Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy (first ACC meeting as a Bishop), The Ven Arthur Copeman (second ACC meeting) and Mr Garth Blake (third ACC meeting). The Australian Primate at the time, Archbishop Philip Freier, was also present, representing the Primates' Meeting. The Rev'd Heidin Kunoo, from the Diocese of Melbourne, was present as a full member, representing youth. Marilyn Redlich, as a consultant to the Anglican Communion's Safe Church Commission, came to the meeting to present, with Garth Blake, on Safe Church procedures and policies for the Communion. Anne Hywood was present for the last three days as the Australian Provincial Secretary.

The Revd Desmond Cox, an Australian Anglican Priest who has been in Hong Kong for nineteen years, was a member of the chaplaincy team.

For the plenary sessions members of the ACC, along with ecumenical representatives, are placed at designated tables and remain at the same table for the entire week. Each plenary presentation is discussed within the table groups and that discussion reported back to the entire ACC.

The major theme for this ACC was Intentional Discipleship. That theme had been launched at ACC16. Since ACC16 a significant amount of work has been undertaken on this theme around the Anglican Communion. The major thrust of this work has been to encourage Anglican Churches throughout the Communion to see themselves as places where people are formed to become disciples of Jesus. There were many encouraging stories from around the Communion of Anglicans taking disciple making more seriously. Further information and resources on this theme may be found at:

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/intentional-discipleship.aspx>.

One outcome of the focus on Intentional Discipleship has been the development of 'Thy Kingdom Come'. This is a season of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost to pray that God's Holy Spirit would bring people to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. Further information and resources for this can be found at <https://www.thykingdomcome.global>.

There was a presentation on the ongoing work that the Anglican Communion Office is leading in terms of combatting gender violence and gender inequality across the globe.

A presentation was given on the current status of a number of ecumenical conversations, such as ARCIC, with the adoption of a procedure to endorse agreed statements from these conversations in the future.

Garth Blake and Marilyn Redlich led a major presentation in a plenary session on 'Guidelines to enhance the safety of all persons – especially children, young people and vulnerable adults – within the provinces of the Anglican Communion'. These guidelines had been developed by the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission at the request of ACC-16. The Council approved the guidelines, requested each province to take a number of steps including the implementation of the guidelines, and requested the Secretary General to reconstitute the commission with revised terms of reference, focusing on developing resources and providing training. It was encouraging to see that the conversation about safe churches had moved forward around the Communion in the previous three years.

There were presentations by Anglican networks focused on women, the environment, liturgy, family, youth, indigenous, peace and justice, colleges and universities, French speaking Anglicans and Portuguese speaking Anglicans. New networks were launched on health and church planting.

Resolutions of the ACC are largely dealt with at the end of the meeting. There was a Resolutions Committee, which was chaired by our Primate, which received resolutions from members during the week. This Committee endeavoured to put the resolutions in a format which would most assist the ACC. The reformatted resolutions were then made available to members, who then may submit amendments. The resolutions passed by the ACC are available at:

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/instruments-of-communion/acc/acc-17/resolutions.aspx>.

The resolution which caused most discussion was one which, in its preamble, called for the full inclusion in the life of the Communion of those marginalised for their sexuality (with words coming from Lambeth 98 1.10). This resolution called for an enhanced listening process across the Communion for those marginalised in this way and for a report back on this to the next ACC meeting. After much discussion, there was an amendment which removed the entire text of the original resolution and changed it to a resolution requesting the Archbishop of Canterbury to commence a listening process for those marginalised for their sexuality, to gather information from this listening process and to present the information so gathered to the next ACC.

In presenting the revised resolution the Archbishop of Canterbury issued two apologies. He apologised to those associated with GAFCON that invitations to them to the Lambeth Conference had been given in a manner which had caused them offence. He then apologised that the manner in which spouses of bishops had been invited and uninvited had caused great offence. He took personal responsibility for these mistakes.

One major issue which came to the forefront at this ACC was the diversity of languages spoken by ACC members. Some members had been invited to bring translators with them. Others struggled when presenters spoke quickly in English or found it very tiring when they were spending an entire day translating in their heads. Arthur Copeman was the only person at his table whose first language was English. This diversity led to some misunderstandings of process and outcomes.

The province of Hong Kong were very generous hosts of the ACC meeting. The time in Hong Kong included occasions to see the work of the Province. Although Anglicans make up only one percent of the population of Hong Kong, the Anglican churches there have regular contact through their programmes with one million of the seven million citizens.

The next meeting of the ACC was originally scheduled to be in Ghana in January 2022. This has been deferred for at least twelve months as a result of the Covid pandemic, which may also result in the meeting not taking place in Ghana. The Standing Committee in 2021 elected

Justice Debra Mullins as the Australian Provincial lay representative to replace Garth Blake at the next three Consultative Council Meetings.