

Diocese of Auckland

SUMMARY OF SYNOD 2015

The Third Session of the 54th Synod of the Diocese of Auckland was held at Auckland Cathedral of the Holy Trinity from Thursday 3rd to Saturday 5th September 2015.

It began with a Eucharist in St Mary's-in-Holy Trinity at which the Preacher was Archbishop Philip.

Bishops' Charge

The Bishops' Charge was presented jointly by Bishop Ross and Bishop Jim. Greetings were extended to all, especially those new to Synod, while former members who had died in the past year were remembered.

At Synod 2014, the Bishops had proposed the introduction of an Indaba process where triads of ministry units would share ministry, dialogue and hospitality on a reciprocal basis. Feedback had been very positive and many groups were planning to continue the process in the coming year. A challenge offered was how this might be extended to neighbouring ministry units, Tikanga partners and possibly overseas dioceses.

The Indaba process had provided a greater understanding of local shared ministry units which formed one fifth of the total ministry units in the Diocese. The success of this form of ministry was celebrated while challenges ahead were acknowledged. It was noted that an overall decline in church numbers could place some small rural units at risk and future debate may be needed about how the Diocese might avoid 'shrinking around the centre'.

Reference was made to the Clergy Review and Ministry Unit reviews on which the Bishops were working. Work had been undertaken to develop a quality instrument to help clergy grow in their ministry and it is expected this will be trialled soon. Bishop Ross also spoke about his recent sabbatical leave and shared aspects of his recent review.

The Bishops spoke of the challenges of climate change, especially as these affected Tikanga Polynesia and highlighted some of the items of business that Synod would consider.

Copies of the Bishops' Charge can be found on the Diocesan website.

Motions

Thirteen motions were considered. These covered assents to decisions of General Synod as well as a wide range of other issues.

Refugee Quota

A motion recognising both the urgent need to provide support for the refugee crisis in Europe as well as to increase the annual quota was passed. This called on the Government to double the annual quota to 1500 and urged the Government to facilitate an immediate and urgent increase in this year's quota. Parishes and individuals were encouraged to write to the Prime Minister, Minister of Immigration and local Member of Parliament urging these actions. In addition, all were asked to consider how they might be involved in the support of refugees and asylum seekers in their respective communities.

Housing

Another motion passed was one expressing concern about current policies relating to state housing. This called on the Government to take responsibility for maintaining an appropriate number of state houses to meet need and to remain the major provider of public housing. It also emphasized the need for all state houses to be maintained to a suitable standard.

Income Inequality

A motion concerning growing income gaps in our society and the increasing prevalence of insecure employment was passed. The motion also expressed concerns about 'zero hour contracts' and confirmed a commitment to working towards a Living Wage for all.

Motion 30 of General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui

In their Charge the Bishops noted two motions presented Synod with the conundrum of potentially voting 'yes' to resolutions with differing views regarding same gender relationships, issues still being worked on by General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui. Prior discussion with the promoters of both motions resulted in an agreement that the matters would be debated but that no vote would be taken on either. This was done in conference mode with a frequent message being the desire to 'stay together' despite differences.

Missions Conference

Advent this year would see the start of a Decade of Mission. It was brought to the attention of Synod that preparatory to this, a national Missions Conference would be held at King's College from 6 to 9 October. The motion, which encouraged each ministry unit to send at least five representatives, was passed.

Synod Membership and Participation

Discussion took place regarding how lay membership could be more equitably represented, particularly across different age ranges. One suggestion was to increase the number of youth representatives (with speaking and voting rights) from the current four to perhaps twenty. The motion passed asked Diocesan Council to form a small working group to consider this matter as well as ways in which Synod might be structured differently.

Overseas Missions

This motion sought to encourage ministry units to continue to form and maintain links with mission partners and projects, while also commending the principle of giving 5% of income towards the work of the Church overseas. In particular, encouragement was given to considering how the Decade of Mission could be supported while the importance of including an overseas mission experience as preparation for ordination was also endorsed.

Other motions

Three motions sought assent for decisions made previously by General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui. Two of these were supported, but assent for the third (concerning the placement of a baptism service within the Eucharist) was withheld.

The remaining motion concerned changes to the Constitution of the Selwyn Foundation. All of the changes sought were approved with the exception of the clause that proposed that responsibility for such changes should be transferred from Synod to Diocesan Council. As a result, this clause was withdrawn with further consideration to be given to the matter.

Bills

Three bills were passed. One concerned the role of Ministry Enablers while another updated regulations regarding housing for stipendiary ordained ministers. The third provided for the introduction of a consolidated accounting system, a move driven by regulatory changes in the financial sector. While it was clear most ministry units would gain from such a system, some with more complex systems (mostly larger ministry units) were concerned it may not suit their needs. However, an amendment to the bill before Synod considered it addressed this matter and the bill was passed without any further amendments.

Reports

Mission and Ministry Oversight Group

The report outlined 'current priorities and goals in the mission of God'. As well as describing the Diocese, these related to children and young people, 'new ways of being church', empowering local leadership, increased collaboration and interaction with other Tikanga. A questionnaire would shortly be sent to all ministry units and it was hoped all would contribute their responses.

Cathedral

Dean Jo noted that 8 November would mark twenty years of worship in the Cathedral nave. She outlined ministry work being provided by the Cathedral while Richard Adams and Bruce Gray gave an update of progress on the Selwyn's Vision project. The cost of the project had risen from initial estimates and was now expected to be \$14.5 million, of which \$14.25 million had been pledged. Hence it was expected all proposed work would be completed. It was anticipated that worship would be held in the Bishop Selwyn Chapel by Easter 2016 while consecration of the Cathedral was expected to take place in late 2017.

Diocesan Communication

The new Diocesan intranet was introduced and ways in which it could be used effectively were outlined.

Visitor

The Reverend Canon Robert Kereopa, Executive Officer of the Anglican Missions Board addressed Synod regarding the work of the Board in many countries.

Synod closed with a vote of thanks to all involved in the leadership and organisation of the Synod.