

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC WITNESS FOR SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COMMITTEE TO GENERAL SYNOD 2019

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I. Background

The Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice (PWSEJ) Coordinating Committee is responsible for facilitating engagement on issues of social and ecological concern across the whole church in Canada and supporting the Anglican Church of Canada in understanding and participating in God's mission in the world. The PWSEJ Coordinating committee collaborates with ecumenical and interfaith networks, as well as with other committees and departments of the General Synod, in order to increase the effectiveness of the Church's witness.

Members of PWSEJ 2016-2019

The Rt. Rev. Jane Alexander (Edmonton)
Capt. The Rev. Rebecca Bates (Military Ordinariate)
The Rev. David Burrows (Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador)
Ms. Nancy Harvey, Chair (Huron)
Ms. Barbara Henshall (British Columbia)
Ms. Audrey Lawrence (Ottawa)

Staff

Dr. Ryan Weston, Lead Animator for Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice (from March 2017)

Primary Areas of Work This Triennium

Social and ecological concerns of the church include a wide variety of issues, and so part of the work of the Coordinating Committee is to discern the particular issues on which the church can sustain engagement and have the greatest impact. The PWSEJ Coordinating Committee has identified six primary areas for ongoing focus for their work, while also considering other issues that arise and require attention over the course of the triennium. For the 2016-2019 triennium, these primary areas of work were as follows (highlights of each area are discussed in more detail under "Items for Information" in this report):

- Care for Creation
- Homelessness and Affordable Housing

- Responsible Resource Extraction
- Justice and Corrections
- Human Trafficking
- Peace and Conflict

The PWSEJ Coordinating Committee is committed to bringing the lens of reconciliation and right relations with Indigenous Peoples to their analysis in all areas of their work, grounded in the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The committee is especially grateful for the support and expertise of Church House staff in Indigenous Ministries and the Reconciliation Animator in these efforts.

II. Reflections from the Chair of PWSEJ

After the initial disbelief over getting a phone call from the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada asking if I would consider serving as chair of the PWSEJ Coordinating Committee, I prayed. I prayed for God's guidance to somehow meet the needs of my church.

I discovered that lessons learned at the diocesan level, as a lay person co-chairing justice-based committees with clergy, gave me a foundation for taking on this work.

I knew that I would find like-hearted Anglicans with a passion for social and ecological justice. That is exactly what I experienced and I feel truly blessed to have connected to the members of the PWSEJ Coordinating Committee. Each brought their own passion and experience and together we grew in our understanding of what it means to live the 4th and 5th Marks of Mission in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Faithfully submitted with gratitude for the past triennium,

Nancy Harvey, Chair

III. Items for Information

1. Care for Creation

The Creation Matters Working Group (CMWG) continues to be a primary vehicle for engagement on issues of ecological justice for the Anglican Church of Canada. For the 2016-2019 triennium, this active working group has been co-chaired by the Very Rev. Ken Gray (Territory of the People) and Ms. Nancy Harvey (Huron) and currently has representatives from 12 dioceses, with outreach continuing to increase participation.

The CMWG has given particular attention this triennium to promoting engagement with the Season of Creation, a global ecumenical movement for the care of Creation observed annually from September 1-October 4. Working group members prepared a variety of resources for use by parishes and dioceses interested in participating in the Season of Creation, and disseminated resources from other parts of the Anglican Communion and wider ecumenical networks.

A small group of CMWG members has also been exploring changes to the Greening Anglican Spaces/Green Audits program to better incorporate local and regional incentives and resources, rather than focusing on a nationally-administered program. Local pilot studies have been ongoing in the Diocese of Kootenay and the Diocese of Fredericton in order to identify key issues for consideration. Updated program recommendations will be developed in the coming triennium.

Another key connection for the CMWG has been to the Anglican Communion Environmental Network. After several years of service, the Very Rev. Ken Gray has stepped down from his role as the Anglican Church of Canada representative to this network. Ms. Bev Eert (Brandon) has been appointed as the new representative to the ACEN.

In addition to the work of the CMWG, several Anglican leaders including the Primate, the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, the Bishop of Toronto, the Lead Animator for Public Witness, and the Diocese of Toronto's Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant, joined other Christian faith leaders in a meeting with The Hon. Catherine McKenna, federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, for discussions about how faith communities might continue to engage the issue of climate change in our congregations.

The Primate and the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) continued their practice of releasing joint annual statements on Earth Day in 2017 and 2018, and in 2019 both participated in an ecumenical Earth Day video project on the need to respond to climate change.

2. Homelessness and Affordable Housing

Homelessness and affordable housing continues to be a significant priority for the Anglican Church of Canada following on the 2013 Joint Declaration with the ELCIC. As part of a focus on nurturing local capacity and leadership for housing-focused ministry, the General Synod has funded the participation of Anglicans in the annual National Conference on Ending Homelessness. In 2017 three individuals from the Diocese of Rupert's Land joined the Lead Animator for Public Witness at the conference in Winnipeg, and in 2018 four individuals from the Diocese of Niagara joined the Lead Animator at the conference in Hamilton. These participants were selected by their bishops with the expectation that they would share their learning with their wider dioceses and communities upon their return.

In 2018 the National Youth Project launched "Welcome Home" as their focus for the next two years. PWSEJ has been actively encouraging engagement with and participation in this initiative through our networks.

As part of the expression of our full communion commitment to this issue, the Primate and National Bishop of the ELCIC continued their practice of releasing joint annual statements to

mark National Housing Day. In 2018 both churches also signed on to an open letter calling for a legislated right to housing in Canada.

3. Responsible Resource Extraction

Responsible resource extraction is another issue identified in the 2013 Joint Declaration with the ELCIC as an ongoing priority issue for the public witness work of the General Synod. Part of this full communion engagement has been ongoing advocacy, in partnership with ecumenical and civil society partners, for the establishment of an ombudsperson for the Canadian extractive sector. This ombudsperson was appointed in April 2019 and we will continue to monitor the work of this office in curtailing abuses by Canadian companies operating abroad.

Following a resolution from General Synod 2016 (A171-R2), the Council of General Synod established a Responsible Investing Task Force in the fall of 2016. The mandate of this task force was to review the current General Synod and General Synod Pension Plan investment portfolios and policies with respect to environmental, social and governance (ESG) concerns, and to make recommendations for improved practice in this area. The Responsible Investing Task Force submitted recommendations to the Council of General Synod at the June 2018 meeting, and in November submitted a resource tool (“Investing with a Mission) for diocesan and parish funds that may also be interested in increasing their attention to ESG issues for their own funds. Both the final report of the task force and the resource document are included in the appendices of this report.

4. Justice and Corrections

The ecumenical Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC) continues to be a primary partner for policy and community engagement related to ministry within the justice and corrections systems in Canada. After several years as the Anglican Church of Canada representative to the board, the Rev. Deacon Sharon Dunlop (Ontario) has completed her appointment and we give thanks for her leadership in this ministry. Ms. Pamela Dillon (Montreal) accepted an appointment as the new Anglican Church of Canada representative to the CCJC board beginning in August 2018.

5. Human Trafficking

In June of 2017 the Council of General Synod passed a motion endorsing Resolution 15:10 on the trafficking in persons from the 2012 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council and committing the Anglican Church of Canada to increase engagement on issues of human trafficking and modern slavery in Canada and abroad. Following consultation with a national reference group of Anglicans and partners involved in ministry related to these issues, a two-year strategy of engagement was developed, focused particularly on issues of forced sexual exploitation, the vulnerabilities of migrant workers and temporary foreign workers in Canada and abroad, and the particular realities and impacts of trafficking and exploitation for Indigenous communities.

As part of this strategy of engagement, the Public Witness and Global Relations ministries of the General Synod developed and led a series of four regional Engage Freedom! gatherings designed to equip lay and clerical leadership on issues of human trafficking and modern slavery at the diocesan and parish levels. A gathering was held in each of the four ecclesiastical provinces, with participation from a total of more than 60 Anglican leaders representing nearly every diocese in the country. Participants in these gatherings heard the stories of survivors, engaged with a range of organizations serving trafficked and exploited communities, and spent time thinking together about how they might best bring what they learned back to their home dioceses and ministry contexts. Participating presenting organizations have included the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking, KAIROS Canada, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, The Action Coalition Against Trafficking Alberta, Safe Harbour Outreach Project, and many others.

In addition to these gatherings, the Public Witness and Global Relations ministries have collaborated with Anglican Video to produce a short documentary on issues of trafficking and modern slavery, available on the Anglican Church of Canada website. The General Synod has also signed on to recent letters to both government and industry calling for greater transparency in supply chains across sectors in order to identify and eliminate the use of forced labour, including child labour.

Finally, for several years the Anglican Church of Canada has participated in the Canadian Council of Churches Working Group on Sexual Exploitation, which has produced resources for education and prayer and facilitated key connections with ecumenical partners. The Rev. Carolyn Seabrook (Ottawa) concluded her term as the Anglican Church of Canada representative to the working group in the spring of 2018. The Rev. Gregor Sneddon (Ottawa) accepted an appointment to this working group in September of 2018.

6. Peace and Conflict

As a sponsoring church of Project Ploughshares, the Anglican Church of Canada provides input and support to their longstanding efforts to reduce violence and conflict around the world. Ms. Debbie Grisdale (Ottawa) completed her term as the Anglican Church of Canada representative to the Governing Committee in 2017, and we thank her for her leadership. Mr. Dwayne Hodgson (Ottawa) accepted an appointment to the Governing Committee in April 2017.

7. Ecumenical and Interfaith Engagements

A number of ongoing ecumenical and interfaith relationships that have not already been mentioned above are also very important components of the ongoing work of the PWSEJ Coordinating Committee and the witness of the General Synod. In particular, the full communion relationship with the ELCIC has resulted in frequent contact and collaboration between staff around shared areas of work related to a variety of key social and ecological justice issues.

As longstanding members of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, the Anglican Church of Canada continues to be actively engaged in many aspects of their work. Since 2017 the Rev. Leigh Kern (Toronto) has been the Anglican Church of Canada representative to the KAIROS steering committee, and a number of Anglicans serve on the various KAIROS Circles.

The Anglican Church of Canada also continues to be active in the work of the Commission on Justice and Peace of the Canadian Council of churches, engaging in important dialogue and reflection around key justice priorities with a variety of ecumenical interlocutors. The Lead Animator for Public Witness currently serves as vice-chair of this commission.

IV. Appendices (posted separately)

1. Final Report of the Responsible Investing Task Force
2. Investing with a Mission: A Guide to Responsible Investment and Church Funds