

APPENDIX N

**STATEMENT FROM ANGLICAN PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES’
CONFERENCE**

MEETING IN JOHANNESBURG – 26th August to 2nd September 2004

The Provincial Secretaries of the Anglican Communion met in Johannesburg from 26 August to 2 September 2004. This was the fifth conference in a series started in the 1980s and the first to be held in Africa. The conference, like those before it, was an informal meeting designed to assist Provincial Secretaries – the chief administrators for each province – in their professional development, to increase knowledge and experience of the challenges facing provinces and to strengthen bonds within the Anglican Communion.

Attendance exceeded that achieved at the previous conference at Toronto in 2000. Representatives came from thirty two provinces (see below), together with representatives of the Churches of Cuba and Sri Lanka and the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA). In addition, two Provincial Secretaries had to send last minute apologies as a result of illness.

The Provincial Secretaries received a letter of greetings from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Dr Rowan Williams. They were welcomed to South Africa by the Primate of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndugane, and by the Bishop of the Diocese of the Highveld and Dean of the Province, the Right Reverend David Beetge. Archbishop Njongonkulu reminded the conference of the importance of ‘ubhuntu’ – ‘I am, because we are together.’

The conference heard presentations and held workshops on a range of practical matters including communications, fundraising, financial sustainability, church governance and the role Provincial Secretaries can have in fostering unity. Time was spent considering general organisational issues within the Anglican Communion. The conference also considered some of the big social and economic issues of our time, in particular, poverty, fair trade, HIV and AIDS, and the important contribution to tackling them which partnership among churches of the Communion is achieving.

A session of the conference was devoted to discussing current issues of division in the Anglican Communion and the particular role which Provincial Secretaries have to play in promoting dialogue and manifesting a bias towards unity for the sake of the Church’s mission to the world. There was a shared recognition of the importance at this present time of seeking to find ways to maintain unity within the Communion.

The Provincial Secretaries each reported on their own provinces. Moving stories were told of courage and perseverance in situations where Christians continue to experience discrimination and persecution for their faith and are denied full freedom to proclaim openly the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There was also much encouragement from the sharing of examples of effective mission and evangelism.

Standing Committee – Report 2005

Through presentations, Sunday worship in churches in the Diocese of the Highveld and visits to Soweto, the Apartheid Museum and several church supported projects in the East Rand, the Provincial Secretaries learned much about the huge process of change still taking place in South Africa. It was brought home to them how much more remained to be done to overcome the grievous legacy of apartheid and in particular to ensure that political freedom is accompanied by greater economic and social justice.

The conference spent time focusing on the enormous and growing threat which the HIV and AIDS epidemic poses to the fabric of society in sub-Saharan Africa. Provincial Secretaries learned with sorrow that South Africa, with all the other challenges it faces, is thought to have the largest number of people living with HIV (5.4 million) of any nation in the world, and by 2010 faces a drop in life expectancy to 43 (17 years less than it would have been before the epidemic). Provincial Secretaries committed themselves to promoting within their provinces the continuing, vital importance of effective, well resourced HIV and AIDS programmes.

All who attended were greatly encouraged and supported in their own Christian discipleship through the times of worship, fellowship, frank discussion and the gift of unity experienced. There was unanimous endorsement of the value of these meetings and agreement that planning should be put in hand for the next in the series in 2007.

Anglican Provinces represented: Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia; Australia; Bangladesh; Brazil; Burundi; Canada; Central American Region; England; Hong Kong; Indian Ocean; Ireland; Japan; Kenya; Korea; Melanesia; Mexico; Myanmar; North India; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Rwanda; Scotland; South India; Southern Africa; Southern Cone of America; Sudan; Tanzania; USA; Wales; West Africa; West Indies. Congo and Jerusalem and the Middle East sent last minute apologies because of sickness. Of the 32 Provincial representatives, three were bishops, eleven clergy and eighteen lay. Five were female. The Cuba, Sri Lanka and CAPA representatives were lay, one of them female.