

# **Residential Schools Update #8—December 20, 2000**

Archdeacon Jim Boyles, General Secretary

## **Meetings with the Federal Government**

Although the federal election slowed down our discussions, church representatives met with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Honourable Herb Gray on December 12. The Anglican Church was represented by Michael Butler and Bishop Gordon Beardy (who has been added to the negotiating team at the request of the Council of General Synod and with the appointment by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples). Other meetings with officials in Mr. Gray's office (the Residential Schools Secretariat in the Privy Council Office) had continued over the past month. We are still hopeful that we will find a way through the current difficulties that will be acceptable to the indigenous people whose lives were damaged by the residential schools, the churches and the government. We continue in discussion with the Assembly of First Nations which has a keen interest in this topic.

## **Letter Writing Campaign**

MPs have returned to their offices and are continuing to respond to Anglicans who have written to them. Many of their responses contain incorrect information fed to them by the Prime Minister's Office. We are attempting to correct such information and are urging Anglicans to continue the dialogue with their MPs. The most serious inaccuracy is the government's claim that they have named church bodies as third parties in only 14% of the cases. Our figures indicate that we are involved in over 40% of our claims because of government initiative to name us as a third party. Further information can be found at: [www.anglican.ca/rs](http://www.anglican.ca/rs)

## **The Council of General Synod**

The Council met in Mississauga in mid-November and heard full reports on the litigation and interaction with government. The Council took several actions with regard to residential schools:

- authorized the Officers to continue discussions with both the Federal government and indigenous organizations, keeping the following points in mind:
- Our commitment to increased healing and reconciliation with former residential schools students and their communities
- Our earnest desire to participate in resolution of the many lawsuits, including provision of compensation where appropriate and where it is within the capacity of the General Synod to do so, and to seek such resolution in a timely manner
- Our longstanding partnership with indigenous peoples, our support for the Covenant and our commitment to involve the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples in all aspects of ministry that concern indigenous peoples
- Our desire to find alternative ways of resolving litigation that are fair, humane and expeditious

- Our desire to find a comprehensive solution that will be applicable to all affected dioceses as well as the General Synod
- Our urgent financial situation and that of several dioceses
- asked the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee, in consultation with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples to collect, develop and make available liturgical resources to assist the Church as it deals with the legacy of residential schools and furthers the ministry of healing and reconciliation.
- approved the 2001 budget for General Synod which reflected cuts in several areas, but which increased funds available for indigenous healing and reconciliation. The amount set aside for the Healing and Reconciliation Fund is doubled, from \$100,000 this year to \$200,000 in 2001. In 2000, grants were made to 17 projects, totaling over \$113,000, made possible by generous contributions from several Anglicans, both individuals and groups. Another \$100,000 is set aside for diocesan initiatives, and a smaller sum is available for production of resources. A new staff position has been created, Coordinator of Indigenous Healing, which has been advertised, with a deadline for applications of February 1. Dioceses have indicated that for the most part they will maintain their level of giving to the national church during 2001.
- approved two consultations, one in the West and one in the East "...in order to develop a strategy for financing into the future for the Anglican Church of Canada" These will happen in January or February and a report will come to the Council meeting in March, and then will go on to General Synod

## **Litigation Update**

The trial in Vancouver involving students who attended St. George's School, Lytton continues, although some of the eight plaintiffs have reached settlement. The trial will conclude in the first week of February. A trial in Regina begins in the first week of February involving a former student at the Gordon's School who claims sexual abuse after 1969. Otherwise, legal work continues as required in the five provinces affected.

## **How General Synod is organized to respond to the residential schools issue**

There is a staff team including the Archivist, Directors of Information Resources and Partnerships, the Treasurer, Indigenous Ministries Coordinator, Indigenous Justice Coordinator and other staff from time to time.

The legal team representing General Synod and dioceses meets by teleconference once a month. Those responsible for this issue in the United, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Anglican churches meet together each month.

The Council of General Synod appointed a Residential Schools Steering Committee which has met once, and meets as needed by teleconference.

A new staff group has been formed to consider work in the areas of healing and reconciliation.

The Officers have been authorized to make any decisions regarding litigation or negotiation that arises between meetings of the Council.

The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples is involved in various ways in each step of this work.

Please share any comments or pass on any questions to:

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October 19, 2000