ANGLICAN COMMUNION
SAFE CHURCH COMMISSION

Report of the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission to the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-17) at Hong Kong from 28 April to 5 May 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

The Charter

1. The Anglican Consultative Council in 2012 (at ACC-15) committed itself to promoting the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, within the member churches of the Anglican Communion, and to this end called upon all member churches to adopt and implement the *Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion* (resolution 15.09).

2. In 2016 (at ACC-16) the Anglican Consultative Council (resolution 16.26):

    - reaffirmed its commitment to promoting the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, in the provinces of the Anglican Communion through the Charter;
    - recognized that this Charter is a practical expression of walking together in the service of God in the world; and
    - requested each province of the Anglican Communion to report to ACC-17 as to the steps taken to adopt and implement the Charter.

The Protocol

3. The Anglican Consultative Council in 2016 (at ACC-16) welcomed, and requested each province of the Anglican Communion to implement, the Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion (resolution 16.27).

4. The Protocol provides for the disclosure of information and the assessment of that information where church workers (clergy and lay workers) move between provinces.

The Commission

5. The Anglican Consultative Council in 2016 (at ACC-16) requested the Secretary General to establish a Safe Church Commission, once necessary funds had been secured, upon the terms set out in the Report of the Anglican Communion Safe Church Network, including with the following terms of reference (resolution 16.25):

    - to identify policies and procedures currently in place for the safety of persons in the provinces of the Anglican Communion;

- to develop guidelines to enhance the safety of all persons especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, within the provinces of the Anglican Communion for consideration by the Anglican Consultative Council at its the next meeting, and thereafter for implementation, as far as practicable, by each province; and
- to develop resources for the effective implementation of the guidelines in the provinces.

6. The Commission was established in May 2017 through funding obtained from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Anglican Communion Fund and The Community of St Andrew Trust.

7. The Commission has a membership from different geographical regions, with a mixture of lay persons and clergy and a gender balance. It has the 14 members, who were appointed by the Secretary General in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Context

8. The work of the Commission has been undertaken in the context of a spotlight on safe church issues in the Anglican Communion and in other church traditions.

9. Safe church issues in the Anglican Communion have been prominent through:

    - government inquiries and initiatives which have had a major focus on Anglican churches;
    - public disclosures of sexual abuse in a wide range of provinces in 2017, 2018 and 2019 – including the Anglican Church of Australia, the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, the Church of Nigeria, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, and the Anglican Church of Kenya.

10. Safe church issues have also been prominent in other church traditions.

SECTION 2: PROCEEDINGS

Meetings

11. The Commission has had three face-to-face, and several online, meetings.

    - The first face-to-face meeting was held at the Anglican Communion Office in London, United Kingdom from 27 to 31 October 2017.
    - The second face-to-face meeting was held near George, South Africa, from 18 to 22 May 2018.
    - The third face-to-face meeting was held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 2 to 6 November 2018.

Regional consultations

12. Marilyn Redlich and Garth Blake had a meeting with the Most Revd Thabo Magkoba, the Archbishop of Cape Town, and members of his provincial staff on 24 May 2018 in Cape Town.

13. A more extensive regional consultation in Africa in the second half of 2018 was unable to be organised.

14. The Commission was able to hold a regional consultation in Asia through attendance at the meeting of the Council of the Church of East Asia held on 11 to 17 September 2018 at Cheon-An, South Korea.

SECTION 3: KEY TASKS

Survey

15. The Commission undertook a survey of safe church/safeguarding policies and procedures in the provinces. The survey instrument was designed to obtain basic information about the province as well as the extent to which there are policies and procedures in place which give expression to the five commitments of the Charter.

16. Responses were received from 24 provinces. A table setting out which provinces responded to the survey and a summary of the information provided by each responding province is set out in Schedule 1 of the Report.

17. The following summary observations can be made from the completed survey instruments of the participating provinces:

    - there is a range of policies and procedures, from highly developed to requiring development;
    - policies and procedures are highly developed where there has been significant society engagement regarding abuse of children and vulnerable adults.

18. The Commission valued the opportunity to gain an understanding of the current position regarding the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the provinces. It is clear that every province is on a journey in enhancing its safe church/safeguarding policies and procedures, and much remains to be done.

Theological foundations

19. As set out in the resolution endorsing the Charter, the Anglican Consultative Council has recognised and affirmed the witness of Scripture to God's love for all members of the human family and the priority given in Jesus' ministry to children and the vulnerable of society.

20. The Commission recognises that safe church/safeguarding policy and practice in the Anglican Communion must be undergirded by a theology which prioritises the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the mission of the church. This theological work should be undertaken in each province in a contextual manner.

21. To assist the Commission in its work, four theological reflections on safe church/safeguarding issues, which are set out in Schedule 2 of the Report, were prepared by:

- Revd Canon Dr Jeremy Worthen, the Secretary of The Faith and Order Commission of The Church of England;
- Right Revd Cleophas Lunga, Bishop of the Diocese of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe in The Church of the Province of Central Africa;
- Revd Canon Dr Martin Brokenleg, OSBCn, from the Diocese of British Columbia in The Anglican Church of Canada; and
- Revd Dr Eileen Scully, the Director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry of The Anglican Church of Canada.

22. These theological reflections, together with evidence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd and Right Hon Justin Welby, to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales in March 2018 which is quoted in the accompanying guidelines, are offered as examples to stimulate further theological reflection on safe church/safeguarding issues in the Anglican Communion.

Guidelines

23. The Commission's principal work has been to prepare the accompanying guidelines. They are intended to enhance the safety of all persons, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, within the provinces of the Anglican Communion. They are also intended to enhance existing provincial practices for the safety of people.

24. The guidelines provide a practical means for provinces both to prevent the occurrence of abuse by church workers and to respond to those who have been abused through the implementation of:

    - the Charter; and
    - the Protocol.

25. The guidelines have been translated into French, Spanish and Portuguese. To increase their accessibility the Commission encourages provinces to arrange for the translation of the guidelines into languages used in the province.

Liturgy

26. The Commission recognises the importance of liturgy in the formation and nurturing of God's people in all provinces of the Anglican Communion.

27. The Commission has collected liturgical resources, which are set out in Schedule 3 of the Report, and comprise:

    - orders of service, liturgies and prayers; and
    - resources with themes of domestic and gender-based violence, and gender equality.

28. The Commission encourages each province to develop liturgical resources that are culturally appropriate when ministering to those who have been abused.

Resources

29. The Commission in the available time has been unable to develop resources for the effective implementation of the guidelines in the provinces, other than the three

translations of the guidelines and the collection of liturgical resources. The Commission, if there had been available time, would have developed further resources for implementation of the guidelines, including:

- a model code of conduct; and
- template forms such as for background checking of church workers and the disclosure of information about suitability for ministry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The guidelines

30. The Commission considers that the Anglican Consultative Council should approve the accompanying guidelines and authorise the Standing Committee to amend the guidelines. Approval of the guidelines by the Anglican Consultative Council will be an important step in their reception throughout the Anglican Communion. The Commission recognises that it is likely that the guidelines will need to be amended in the light of experience. Rather than wait for the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council to make any such amendments, the Standing Committee should be authorised to approve amendments of the guidelines.

Action by provinces

31. The Commission considers that the Charter and the Protocol remain important steps in promoting the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, within the member churches of the Anglican Communion. Further, the Commission considers that the accompanying guidelines, if implemented in the provinces, will enhance the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Anglican Communion. Accountability around safe church/safeguarding practices will be promoted by each province reporting to the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-18) on the steps taken to adopt the Charter, and to implement the Protocol and the guidelines.

32. The safety of people in the Anglican Communion will be enhanced through:

- a representative from each province liaising, including meeting at regular intervals, with the Commission regarding the adoption of the Charter, implementation of the Protocol and the guidelines, and the development of recommendations for the enhancement of the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults; and
- those with safe church/safeguarding responsibilities in each province joining the Anglican Communion Safe Church Network to develop their skills through networking and the sharing of resources.

33. The Commission recommends that the Anglican Consultative Council requests each province and each national or local church which is under the direct metropolitical jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury to:

1. adopt the Charter and implement the Protocol, where it has not done so;
2. implement the accompanying guidelines, as far as practicable;

3. report to ACC-18 on the steps taken to adopt the Charter, and to implement the Protocol and guidelines;
4. appoint a representative with the responsibility of liaising with the Commission regarding the adoption of the Charter, implementation of the Protocol and the guidelines, and the development of recommendations for the enhancement of the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Anglican Communion; and
5. encourage those with safe church/safeguarding responsibilities in the province to join the Anglican Communion Safe Church Network.

Reconstitution of the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission

34. The Commission considers that it should be reconstituted with amended terms of reference so that it can facilitate the effective implementation of the guidelines in the provinces over the period of approximately six years until ACC-19. There should be an expanded membership to better represent the different regions of the Anglican Communion by the inclusion of members from the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South Asia. Further, so far as practicable, there should be a member from each of the Francophone, Hispanophone and Lusaphone language groups to assist in the development of appropriate training and resources for the parts of the Anglican Communion where these languages are spoken. The continuity of the work of the reconstituted Commission will be facilitated if the current members of the Commission, who wish to continue, are re-appointed.

35. The principal function of the Commission will be to be an advisory body for the effective implementation of the guidelines in the provinces through the development of resources, training and liaison with provincial representatives. Resources will include a model code of conduct, and template forms for implementation of the guidelines such as background checking. Training will include an international conference in England coinciding with the first annual meeting of the Commission and Lambeth 2020, and eight regional conferences. The proposed budget of the Commission is set out in Schedule 4 of the Report.

36. The Commission recommends that the Anglican Consultative Council should reconstitute the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission on the following terms:

    1. The Commission has the following terms of reference:

        a) to be an advisory body for the effective implementation of the guidelines in the provinces through the development of resources, training and liaison with provincial representatives;
        b) to review the guidelines;

        c) to work with the Anglican Communion Safe Church Network to promote safe church/safeguarding practices throughout the Anglican Communion;

        d) to examine any matters relating to safe church/safeguarding in the Anglican Communion referred by the Anglican Consultative Council or the Standing Committee, and to report to the referring body; and

e) to make recommendations to the Anglican Consultative Council or the Standing Committee on any matters relating to safe church/safeguarding in the Anglican Communion.

2. The Commission has a membership of 17 persons with recognised competence in safe church/safeguarding practices from the following regions:

a) Africa - 4	e) Europe – 2	i) Oceania – 1
b) Australia - 1	f) Middle East - 1	j) South America - 1
c) Caribbean – 1	g) North America - 2	k) South Asia – 1
d) Central America - 1	h) North East Asia -1	l) South East Asia - 1

and, as far as practicable, has:

m) a gender balance;
n) a balance between clergy and lay persons;
o) a person from each of the Francophone, Hispanophone and Lusaphone language groups; and
p) a continuity of members from the current Commission through their reappointment.

3. The members of the Commission and its chair will be appointed by the Secretary General in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

4. Up to 2 persons with recognised competence in safe church/safeguarding practices may be co-opted as members of the Commission with the approval of the Secretary General to assist the Commission in undertaking its work.

5. The term of office of the members of the Commission will expire at the end of ACC-19.

6. The Commission has an annual face-to-face meeting commencing in 2019 which at regular intervals includes a safe church/safeguarding representative from each province, and otherwise communicates by online conference and email.

7. The Commission may permit one or more observers to attend its meetings with the approval of the Secretary General.

8. The Commission develops resources for implementation of the guidelines in the provinces including:

a) a model code of conduct; and
b) template forms for implementation of the guidelines such as for background checking of church workers and the disclosure of information about suitability for ministry.

9. The Commission conducts the following international and regional training on the implementation of the guidelines over the next 6 years:

a) an international conference in England coinciding with the annual meeting of the Commission and Lambeth 2020;
b) a regional conference in Central and South Africa;
c) a regional conference in West Africa;
d) a regional conference in East Africa;
e) a regional conference in North East Asia and South East Asia;
f) a regional conference in South Asia;
g) a regional conference in Oceania;
h) a regional conference in the Caribbean;
i) a regional conference in the Middle East;
j) a regional conference in Central America and South America.

10. The Commission uses some of its members, and wherever feasible persons from the applicable region with relevant expertise, to conduct the regional training.

11. The Commission wherever feasible collaborates with:

    a) Anglican Communion bodies, including the Anglican Alliance, Council of the Anglican Provinces of Africa, Council of the Church of East Asia, the International Anglican Family Network, the International Anglican Women's Network, the Francophone Network, the Lusaphone Network, the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, and the Anglican Communion Safe Church Network; and
    b) Anglican Communion Office staff, including the Director for Theological Education in the Anglican Communion.

12. The Commission maintains a comprehensive website that includes a library of safe church resources in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages where feasible.

13. The Commission reports to ACC-18 and ACC-19 on its work together with its recommendations for the enhancement of the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Anglican Communion.

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