



Communications Department update for ACC-18

I have pleasure in presenting my first departmental report to the Anglican Consultative Council since taking over as Director for Communications. Members present at ACC-17 in Hong Kong will recall a “communications double-act”, where my predecessor, Adrian Butcher, presented what had been happening before handing over to me to explain what would be happening. Since then, the world changed dramatically with the Coronavirus pandemic and near-total global lockdown.

I have prepared two communications strategies in my time as Communications Director. The first strategy, “Finding Our Voice” was put in place before the lockdowns began to happen. It set a direction of travel which we are still journeying along; but had to be revised because of the changed nature of the world since then. We are currently implementing my second communications strategy, “A shared message with many accents”, which continues that journey.

In summary, the main changes are:

- improving communications with external media organisations to tell the story of the Anglican Communion and its members through other media outlets;
- developing a network of Anglican communicators, working for dioceses, provinces and mission agencies around the world, to strengthen and support them in their work and to work towards co-ordinating media activity and campaigns on matters of shared concern; and
- combining two websites – anglicannews.org and anglicancommunion.org into a brand new Anglican Communion website which will act as a shop-window for the Anglican Communion. Positive news stories from across the Anglican Communion will ensure a free-flow of regular new content which will be the cornerstone of the new site.

Work to deliver the new strategy has been hampered by staff shortage and a focus on supporting the communications activity around the successful Lambeth Conference. I am pleased to report that a new Senior Communications Officer has been appointed. Subject to pre-employment checks, she will begin work next month. This is a new post which replaces that of the Communications Officer (Content). Lucy Cowpland, who stepped down early last year.

While the Coronavirus pandemic hampered delivery of the first of these communications strategies, it also provided opportunities for the new one: one of the things that we will do is online press conferences featuring people across the Anglican Communion. Through Zoom and similar facilities, we can now connect people who have stories to tell with journalists who want to hear those stories, without the cost and inconvenience of flying people around the world.

As promised at the last ACC meeting, we have improved our communications with you, the members of the ACC. You should all be receiving the Anglican Communion Bulletin, a frequent tool to share information with you. If you do not receive it, please let me know so that I can ensure that your email address is on our system.

Finally, I'd like to alert you to a new piece of work to look out for: the next edition of the Anglican Cycle of Prayer will be published shortly, running from Tuesday 12 September for around three years. Like the current version – "From Abu to Zululand" – the new edition will feature a different diocese each day of the year, Monday to Saturday, with a different province, on a rolling basis, each Sunday. Initially, the new edition of the Anglican Cycle of Prayer will list only the dioceses and provinces; but when the new website is launched we will have an edition linked to the database so that people can print off a version of the Anglican Cycle of Prayer with the names of the bishops of the diocese being prayed for.

Gavin Drake
Director of Communications
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