

THE BISHOP'S CHARGE
128TH SESSION OF THE SYNOD OF
THE DIOCESE OF OTTAWA

Anglican Church of Canada

October 22 – 24, 2009 AD

“Let Justice Roll down Like Waters, and Righteousness Like an Ever-flowing Stream” (Amos 5:24)

(The following is an excerpt; Bishop John Chapman's Charge in its entirety can be found at

http://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/Charge_to_Synod_2009.html)

Regarding Child Poverty

In the Diocese of Ottawa, we are immensely proud of our community ministries. The work that we do through them is an invaluable expression of the gospel, and is the envy of many. I am grateful to those who serve, and I am thankful for those we serve, each embodying the fullness of Christ in their brokenness.

As I become increasingly aware of all the work that is done locally, through the congregations in neighbourhood or ecumenical coalitions, I am always filled with pride when I hear stories of

outreach through homework clubs, food banks, seniors work, youth centers, or the many and varied ways, and there are too many to mention, by which we serve God's world. We have been challenged to find new ways of serving God's world and God's people by our strategic plan. We are asked to identify and develop new ministries, on both the parochial and diocesan level. Many parishes are already doing this, and I want to both congratulate and encourage them. Many more parishes have projects in development and from what I have seen; our communities will be better and stronger as a result.

Through the ongoing ministry of a dedicated group of our retired clergy, it has come to my attention that child poverty in our community has reached critical proportions. One of our local agencies, which provide childcare programmes and meals, has 800 children currently on the waiting list. This is a matter that must be addressed by our Diocese. Nurture and care for our children is clearly demanded of us by Jesus. Our community ministries now address men and women living on the streets with food, accommodation, counseling and a variety of support activities. It is time for this Synod to take the matter of child poverty in hand. I will ask our new Community Ministries Development Committee to take this challenge in hand and make a recommendation to Synod 2010 as to how we as a Diocese can respond to this deep need. I believe that this matter deserves our very best attention.

On a related matter, Citizens for Public Justice and Canada Without Poverty has launched a campaign for a Poverty-Free Canada. One

hundred and fifty-five organizations have endorsed the project including the Anglican Church of Canada. I would welcome a motion from this Synod authorizing the Diocese of Ottawa to endorse and participate in this campaign.

Our attention to both of these projects will further our ongoing attention to the United Nation's Millennium Development goals; specifically, numbers one and four – Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and Reduce child mortality.