



Ad Clerum

June 2025

Number 4.25

TRINITY 2025

To the Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese and the Traditional Anglican Church (TAC) Province of Africa.

Grace and peace be with you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Reflections on the First General Synod of the Traditional Anglican Church (TAC): Saint George's Cathedral in Columbus, Georgia, USA.

It is my privilege to write to you following our recent journey to the United States of America, where our Metropolitan Archbishop Michael Gill, Bishop Stephen Smuts, and Rev Canon Mziwonke L. Mandla, represented the Church in Africa by attending the historic First General Synod of the TAC, held at Saint George's Cathedral in Columbus, Georgia, from the **19th** to the **23rd of May, 2025**. It was a really beautiful and spiritually enriching time, where the presence of God was manifest among us, uniting us in prayer, fellowship, and common purpose. We wish therefore to share with you not only the substance of our deliberations, but also the profound spiritual unity and fellowship we experienced among the faithful of the TAC gathered from across the globe, so that, together, we may give thanks to Almighty God and press forward with renewed zeal for the mission of the Church.



Delegates at the historic First General Synod of the TAC

The Schedule and Daily Rhythm

The Synod formally began on **Monday, 19 May**, with arrival and registration at the hotel in Columbus. Though the evening was open for dinner at leisure, many took the opportunity to informally meet and renew friendships. The hospitality of our hosts was generous, and the spirit among the clergy was that of anticipation and joy.

The first full day, **Tuesday, 20 May**, commenced with Morning Prayer in the Cathedral—a hallowed time of devotion where the voices of the faithful from across the world rose as one in the ancient cadences of our Anglican liturgy. The Opening Session in the Parish Hall was a time to set forth the agenda and for our Primate, Archbishop Shane B. Janzen, to deliver his charge to Synod.



TAC Primate, Archbishop Shane B. Janzen and Secretary to the College of Bishops, Archbishop Michael Gill

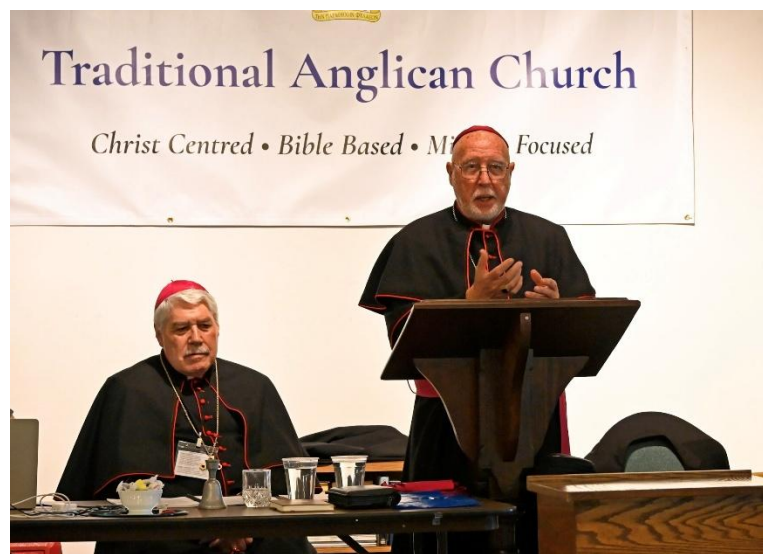
The Holy Eucharist was at midday. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist was especially significant, as it was presided over by the African delegation. Archbishop Michael celebrated, Bishop Stephen read the appointed Epistle, and Canon Mandla served at the altar with reverence and grace. It was a moment of quiet pride and solemn joy to see Africa being represented liturgically at the very outset of Synod, therein symbolising our full and active role in the global life of the Church.



The day unfolded with lunch and then resumed with the first afternoon business session, held in the Parish Hall, where a range of administrative and ecclesial matters were taken up. The tone of these sessions was orderly, constructive, Christocentric, and characterised by genuine concern for the Church and her future. Evensong brought the exciting first day to a dignified close.

Later that same evening, the **College of Bishops** gathered privately. In our sacred council, we addressed matters affecting episcopal oversight, succession, ecumenism, the future direction of various dioceses, and, in so doing, ensuring that our apostolic ministry remains steadfast and true.

Wednesday, 21 May, continued the rhythm of Morning Prayer, the Eucharist (celebrated in Spanish), and structured business sessions. Reports from the various diocese were given, constitutional matters addressed, canonical clarity sought, and plans for the future mapped out. Delegates who spoke came from Africa, Canada, Australia, South and Central America, and the United States. While our church may appear to be relatively small by world standards, our vision is large and our purpose clear: to remain steadfast in the faith once delivered unto the Saints.



Archbishop Michael Gill (Africa)



Bishop Craig Botterill (Canada)



Bishop-Elect Brian Tee and Fr Charles (Australia)



Bishop Stephen Smuts and Canon Mziwonke Mandla (South Africa)



Fr Melque Ambrósio (Diocese Anglicana do Natal – Brazil, South America)

The spiritual tenor remained high throughout, despite a full and rigorous program, with many remarking on the unmistakable presence of the Holy Ghost guiding our deliberations. Much important work was undertaken, and it was good to hear that the TAC is progressing well in global reach. The afternoon was taken for rehearsal in the Cathedral which prepared us for the climactic and sacred moment—the Synod High Mass and the Consecration of a Bishop for the Province of Australia, to take place the following day. As in previous days, Evening Prayer formed a gentle spiritual bookend to the busyness and work of the Synod.



Evensong Prayer in the Cathedral of St George

After a quiet and open morning on **Thursday, 22 May**, which allowed time for some exploration around town as well as networking amongst other delegates, it was time to head to the Cathedral of St George for the highlight of the week which was the Synod High Mass and the Consecration of Bishop Brian Tee for Australia.

The Consecration of Bishop Brian Tee (Australia)

The High Mass and Consecration of Bishop Brian Tee was a solemn occasion that will long remain etched in our hearts. The liturgy, led by the Primate and celebrated in the presence of all the bishops of the TAC, was a powerful witness to the apostolic faith we so deeply cherish. Archbishop Michael Gill preached a stirring sermon with prophetic clarity and pastoral fervour. After using the Miter as a physical analogy, his theme was Zeal of the Holy Spirit, drawing from both Psalm 69:9 read with Jesus' Cleansing of the Temple in John 2: "The zeal of thine house hath consumed me." Our Archbishop's words ignited hearts, calling us to be vessels of God's transformative power in a difficult world so desperately in need of hope. "True Christian zeal is seldom rewarded or appreciated by the world," he warned. "It may cost reputation, comfort, or even relationships, and in the case of many of the Saints... their lives." Zeal for God's House consumed Jesus, and so should it our lives. The Archbishop concluded by singing accompanied by the organ: "O Thou Who Camest from Above," by Charles Wesley. Few dry eyes were left among us.



Archbishop Michael Gill Preaching: “The Mitre is a marvellous piece of ecclesiastical dress... odd, but meaningful.”

Bishop Tee was then consecrated in succession of the late Bishop David Robarts — a faithful shepherd of God’s flock, whose life and ministry inspired many. In a deeply moving gesture, Bishop Robarts had left behind both his Episcopal Ring and Pectoral Cross, which his wife gave to be formally bestowed upon Bishop Tee at the time of his Consecration.



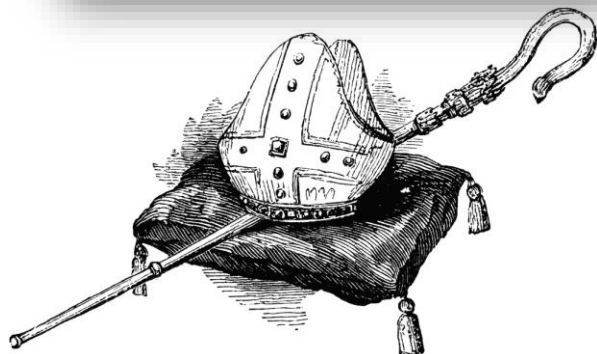
“Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands...”

“Fr Brian... you are consecrated for a holy task,” exhorted Archbishop Michael. “May the zeal of the Lord’s house consume you in your ministry as a Bishop in the Church of God, and may many men and women be converted and nourished in their faith by that holy fire burning within you!”



The Investiture of Bishop Tee

We rejoice that Australia now has another faithful and godly bishop to lead the TAC flock, and we commend Bishop Tee, a man of humility, prayer, and wisdom, to your prayers as he undertakes this sacred charge. The TAC “Down Under,” will forthwith be well shepherded once more.

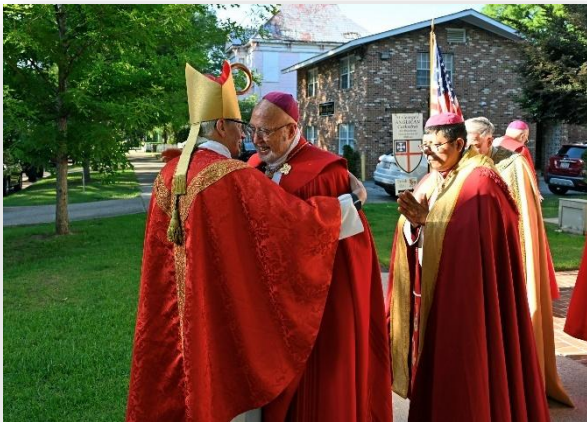




Support during the Mass



The Blessing and Dismissal by the Primate



Archbishop Michael Gill welcoming Bishop Brian Tee



Bishop Stephen Smuts being blessed by the new Bishop



TAC Bishops at the Solemn High Mass and Consecration



TAC Clergy in St George's Cathedral after the Solemn High Mass and Consecration

The day concluded with a joyous Synod Banquet at the historic Goetchius House opposite the Cathedral, where laughter and stories were shared, and friendships deepened. We gave thanks for God's provision and the blessed time spent together. The banquet was a really fitting end to a week of grace.



At the Banquet at Goetchius House



On **Friday, 23 May**, following breakfast, delegates began their journeys home. As we took leave of our brethren, we did so with renewed strength, hope, and conviction.

The warm hospitality of Saint George's Cathedral, under Bishop William Bower and his wife Sabrina, as well as the surrounding community, set the tone for a week of memorable fellowship, where bonds of faith and friendship were forged and strengthened.

Zambian Delegation

It must be noted that the **Zambian delegation** — who were unable to attend due to complications and difficulties in obtaining the necessary US Visa — was sorely missed. However, their absence did not diminish their presence in our prayers and deliberations, as their concerns and contributions were well represented by those present. So while they were not physically there, their work and witness — labouring for the Gospel — was rightly highlighted and honoured during our sessions.

Looking Forward in Faith

The First General Synod has set before us a clear path to grow the Church in Southern Africa and beyond. Let us take to heart the words of Isaiah 55:11: “So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose.” May we all carry the fire of the Holy Ghost, kindled at this Synod, by proclaiming the Gospel with courage, zeal, and love. We give thanks for the TAC and commend her to the care of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). May Almighty God bless us all abundantly as we work together for His kingdom.

A Word to Southern Africa

My beloved clergy, we returned to you as sons of Africa, full of thanksgiving that our continent was well and warmly represented. We are not isolated. We are not forgotten! We are part of the living Church—Bible-based, faithful, global: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. We are united in the Book of Common Prayer for our worship, Anglican in doctrine and in purpose.

Let us go forward with a clear vision, fervent hearts, and a steadfast commitment to the cause that is set before us. The TAC is alive, and God is at work among us. Hold fast to your calling. Tend your flocks with care. Preach the Word in season and out of season. Uphold the sacraments with reverence. Pray without ceasing. And above all, love the Lord your God zealously with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

“Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)

May the Lord bless you and keep you in His grace.

[Below you will find a **Reflective Report** on the TAC General Synod by the **Rev Canon M. Mandla**, Regional Dean — Eastern Cape.]

Yours in Christ Jesus,

+Stephen

A REFLECTIVE REPORT ON THE TAC GENERAL SYNOD

Venue – St George’s Cathedral (Columbus, Georgia USA)

Date – 19 May to 23, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Firstly, I want to thank Archbishop Michael for affording me the opportunity to be part of the Southern African TAC delegation to the General Synod. Secondly, I didn’t accept the invitation lightly and I must say I felt honoured by such a gesture from the senior leadership of the church. I grabbed this opportunity with both hands. I never thought I’ll set my foot in the USA, not in my lifetime!

ARRIVAL IN THE USA

I arrived in Atlanta airport with Bishop Stephen on Monday, 19 May 2025 @ 06:45am. We were later joined by Archbishop Michael.



On arrival in the US – 19 May 2025



In the shuttle (Mini-Bus) to car hire



The car hired by Archbishop Michael (SUV)

We then drove to the hotel we were booked into (Columbus Marriott).



The hotel – Marriot Bonvoy (Columbus)

We were warmly received, at reception, by St George's Cathedral staff/parishioners. We were given name tags, programmes, TAC lapel pins etc – well organized. I was pleasantly surprised to be served by elderly people at the reception as opposed to young people. That was the case throughout the Synod. Archbishop Michael introduced me to those delegates and bishops that were present at the hotel. We went for dinner and the Primate, Archbishop Shane Janzen, was in our midst.

THE SYNOD

The key takeaways from Synod were the following:

1. Services – Mattins, Eucharist and Evensongs were held every day and on time. Almost everything was done on time and as planned. I was impressed with that. The first Eucharist service was conducted by us (SA delegation). Archbishop Michael celebrated Mass, and I was his server. I enjoyed serving with him and that was nostalgic for me as it reminded me of my early days in the church as an Altar Server.
2. Reports – they were included in the Synod pack and that made our lives easier and that contributed to the smooth running of the Synod. Each country was given an opportunity to verbalize their reports. All of us (SA delegation) contributed effectively to the debates in the Synod. Whilst some countries were reporting a decline in membership, Southern Africa reported growth. The Synod resolved that evangelism is key to counter the effects of decline in numbers in some countries. Unity amongst like-minded Anglicans was encouraged. Whilst we are for unity as agreed upon, we stated our case about strained relationship with ++Dominic Mduyvelwa (ACC) in SA.
3. The Traditional Anglican Church is Christ Centred, Bible Based and Mission Focused. This was articulated well by the Primate in his opening remarks. I liked the way he chaired Synod proceedings. Some sections of the Constitution were amended.

4. The Consecration – The Rev Canon Tee of Australia was consecrated bishop and Archbishop Michael delivered a moving sermon.



St George's Cathedral

Most churches are over managed and under led. I feel the TAC, under the leadership of Archbishop Shane Janzen is in capable hands and so is Southern Africa. The future of our church is bright and to realize that future, we also need to attract the Youth and embrace digital spaces.

CONCLUSION

On a lighter note, I enjoyed every moment of my stay in the US. I thought OR Tambo was the biggest airport until I saw Atlanta! It's a big airport and very busy. We also took a drive to the National Infantry Museum, and I was blown away with the history of America and its wars. Archbishop Michael took the role of tour guide as we were moving from one sight to another. He knows very well the history of America. I didn't know that I was surrounded by historians because Bishop Stephen was also well versed with the ammunitions displayed in the museum. Surely, his military background, as a Chaplain, helped him a great deal in this regard.



National Infantry Museum – Fort Benning



Attending the TAC Synod was really an eye-opener for me. I have a better understanding of my Church globally and its leadership.



Respectfully submitted

Fr ML Mandla
(Eastern Cape)
17th June 2025.