

Appendix

BISHOPS IN DIALOGUE - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Various events like the "Road to Emmaus" gathering of bishops from North America and Africa in Madrid Spain in 2007 initiated by Trinity Wall Street, as well as the Lambeth Conference in 2008, provided the platform for the Consultation of Anglican Bishops in Dialogue initiative taken by the Anglican Church of Canada. At the outset it is important to note that Lambeth 2008 set in motion several such conversations and dialogues at various levels in the Communion, i.e. lest we think our gathering to be an isolated and unique event.

Archbishop of Toronto Colin Johnson's initiative, very ably supported by Canon Isaac Kawuki Mukasa's determined and dedicated footwork, gave birth to the first consultation and conversation in dialogue in 2010.

2010 - FIRST CONSULTATION: LONDON

The 1st consultation held at the Anglican Communion offices (St. Matthews House) drew together an initial group of 12 bishops from North America and Africa.

There the atmosphere was typified by a not unexpected "politeness" and an unspoken sense of reluctance, apprehension and even suspicion on the part of most participants. A good description of it would be that of two boxers cautiously sparring and "feeling each other out". For me personally, the most useful engagements and conversations happened more informally over a pint in the relaxed atmosphere of a cozy British pub!

What also emerged during this first consultation was a tentative but distinct realization, by at least some of those involved, that we were onto something that held the real possibility for meaningful conversation and transformational dialogue. This potential could be unlocked through us opening up and getting to know each other and sharing about our respective contexts in deeper conversation and dialogue.

More vitally, even in that first meeting, participants started recognizing our common call in Christ to a common mission and ministry, albeit relevant to our different and distinctive contexts across the Communion.

Notably, it was quickly recognized that this common mission reached way beyond the prevailing and pre-eminent issue of human sexuality that was hanging over the Communion like a dark cloud.

Though generally unspoken at the time, several realized that we held much more in common than the differences often emphasized so strongly.

More so, it became clear that ALL participants were open, keen and committed to the ministry and mission God has called us to.

The 2010 consultation identified some first principle needs that had to be embraced:

- Theological reflection.
- Listening to one another and especially the prompting of the Holy Spirit was imperative
 - "Holy listening" was the term used.
- Prayer and Bible Study.

These had to form the bedrock of our engagements and conversations if we were to understand and learn to appreciate the others' context and missional priorities.

Finally, due to our sensitivity about the vulnerability of some participants from Africa who would/could be ostracized back home for identifying with this group, it was agreed that NO PUBLIC STATEMENT to the Church about our time together would be offered.

The group committed to meet together again in a year's time, and that we would strive to alternate the venue of meetings between Africa and North America.

2011 – SECOND CONSULTATION: DAR ES SALAAM (Tanzania).

This second consultation convened with an added number of new participants. Much of our focus was on sharing personal experiences and stories from our cross-cultural backgrounds. The importance of continuing the dialogue was again identified despite some of the negative reactions received to our first meeting together.

The Dar es Salaam consultation produced the first of our statements released, inspirationally called "A TESTIMONY OF GRACE." Some key themes that emerged included "assuming friendship and collegiality", the need for "bridge building when we choose to turn face to face with each other" and "mutual responsibility and interdependence."

In this regard the need for humility and prayerful listening under God was emphasized. Vitality the group's focus once again shifted away from the human sexuality issue towards the call for us for us to work and witness as agents of reconciliation.

2012 – THIRD CONSULTATION: TORONTO

Once again the number of participants grew for this third gathering as did the depth of our dialogue. The positive benefits of the previous dialogues were felt acutely and encouraged deeper communication and more open conversation than before despite the presence of new participants coming on board.

Papers were presented to focus our discussions on two particular aspects, i.e. "Sharing as partners in the mission of God" and secondly a paper delivered by Bp. Michael Ingham on "The potential, or otherwise, of the proposed Anglican Covenant to hold the Communion together." The latter presentation, and the growing level of relationship and trust between us, created the opportunity to at least begin to face "the elephant in the room" - the human sexuality debate in the Communion.

The testimony that emerged out of this consultation titled "A SACRAMENT OF LOVE" declared that "mission was not something we do to one another but rather a way of being together in God's presence in the process of God's reconciling and transforming work and mission in the world". Similarly, mission in our various contexts should give expression to the Five Marks of Mission of the Communion.

Toronto saw the theme of reconciliation and healing emerging more prominently and gave rise to some critical questions being asked around what we were doing and hoping to achieve going forward. "Relationships" also surfaced as a necessary theme and focus. We recognized the need to grow our relationships across the Communion "so that we stopped meeting as strangers". The consultation concluded with a commitment to continue meeting in a year's time.

2013 – FOURTH CONSULTATION: CAPE TOWN

The consultation reconvened in the shadow of Table Mountain and "the People's Cathedral" of St. George the Martyr and continued, as usual, with worship, prayer, scriptural reflection and the Eucharist as foundational to our time together.

Once again one or two newcomers joined the core group for the first time, amongst whom was Canon David Porter who, as Director of Reconciliation at Lambeth, had been sent to participate by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The programme this time focused specifically on reconciliation. This theme was assisted by selected participants sharing from their different contexts reflecting on God's mission in the world. These included presentations on reconciliation in Burundi and the USA, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada and particularly the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa when we were privileged to be addressed by Dr. Mary Burton, one of the commissioners who served on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission alongside Abp Emeritus Desmond Tutu.

Our time together was highlighted by visits to diocesan ministry and mission locations and participation in the Sunday worship of local congregations. A particular aspect and challenge in the reconciliation ministry emerged around our role as the church to the diaspora of one another's community in order to further the reconciliation ministry we have been given.

Having agreed that the consultation should meet again in 2014, Canon David Porter extended the invitation for us to meet at Coventry Cathedral, the seat of the reconciliation ministry of the Community of the Cross of Nails. It was hoped that this would enable Archbishop Justin Welby to share in our dialogue and time together.

The Cape Town statement released after this consultation was aptly called "A TESTIMONY OF HOPE".

2014 – FIFTH CONSULTATION: COVENTRY, UNITED KINGDOM

Meeting in the Coventry Cathedral environment proved inspirational and we were delighted to be blessed by the presence and participation of ++Cantab for an entire day thanks to Canon David Porter.

The programme included inputs on reconciliation ministry from Coventry and Kenya.

Presentations were also presented on the Anglican Communion:

- i) from an African perspective (by Abp Josiah Idowu), and
- ii) from a North American perspective (by Abp. Colin Johnson).

Bishop Stacy Sauls' insightful reflection on the huge and impressive Coventry tapestry above the high altar depicting Jesus holding a pane of glass before his eyes, connecting this to the Pauline thought of "now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we shall see face...", all inspired the statement that emerged from our time together entitled "A TESTIMONY OF OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS RECONCILIATION".

The testimony emphasized our love for one another within the body of Christ as a gospel and missional imperative whilst testifying to several specifics, inter alia –

- that we are family.
- we have much in common, yet recognized that we are independent and diverse.
- we are called to acknowledge and understand our differences not ignore them.
- we remain committed to listen deeply and to learn about one another's context and cultures, including the possibility of experiencing those contexts personally.
- reconciliation is only possible between those willing to be reconciled.

The group further committed to

- being Eucharistic in our approach.
- sharing the testimonies more widely in our own situations for reflection, discussion and action.
- praying regularly for one another.
- encouraging further dialogues as well as the reconciliation work of the Cross of Nails.
- Community that we had encountered in Coventry, and challenging and correcting the

misinformation about these consultations where we encounter it.

As in the past, after review and reflection the group agreed to meet again in 2015.

2015 – SIXTH CONSULTATION: VIRGINIA USA

The consultation convened at the Richmond Hill Centre around the theme "Bearing one another's burdens"

This, once again, proved to be a meaningful and powerful experience for the group. The context, given the slave history of Richmond and its surroundings, provided us with both challenges to reflect on as well as the opportunity for focused worship and prayer, as well as time for deep listening to the local church's responses and engagement in the ministry of reconciliation.

Participants recognized how difficult it is to effectively address pains caused in the past that are still prevalent in hearts and minds today. We were powerfully reminded through this that the ministry of reconciliation involved hard work and was long term without quick fix solutions. Virginia diocese's commitment to see every congregation openly working for reconciliation was most encouraging - e.g. their call for "A year long Indaba on racism in America".

The consultation further recognized and acknowledged with humility that many in the Communion have begun looking to groups in conversation and dialogue such as this one for hope, direction and leadership in the Communion.

The final statement released, "A TESTIMONY OF LOVE" once again testified that;

- our intention was not to cause further conflict and tension in the wider church
- our desire was to assist in shepherding the flock of God placed in our care
- ours was a response to the biblical call to "bear one another's burdens..." by the empowering grace of God the Holy Spirit
- we remain committed to each other within the fellowship and bonds of affection within the Communion.
- ours is a call to servant leadership

Together we were inspired by the reference to Canon Mbiti of Kenya's statement that "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am." This was a pertinent reminder that "our true humanity is dependent on our being in fellowship, unity and communion with each other" (The Testimony of Love).

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