

The Eight Consultation
of
Anglican Bishops in Dialogue
Nairobi, Kenya
June 14-18, 2017

A Testimony of Mutual Commitment and Pulling Together – “Haraambe”

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. (John 1: 6-8)

Then the [Samaritan] woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done. He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”. They left the city and were on their way to [Jesus]. ... Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done”. So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed with them for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.” (John 4: 28-30; 39-42)

[Jesus prayed,] “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17: 20-21)

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and what we have touched with our hands concerning the word of life – this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testified to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us - we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you may also have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John: 1-3)

A Haraambe Gathering

The Eighth Consultation of Anglican Bishops in Dialogue took place in Nairobi, Kenya, June 14-18, 2017, bringing together bishops and archbishops from Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Canada, England and the United States of America. In the spirit of ‘continuing *indaba*’ this gathering continued the pattern of respectful listening, discussion, and fellowship, structured around Eucharist and morning and evening prayer, according to the Kenyan liturgy. We were nourished and challenged by the homilies and theological reflections of our chaplain, the Venerable Canon Jane Mwangangi, Archdeacon and Vicar, St. Mark’s Church Westlands, Nairobi.

We came to Kenya anticipating Jesus, Lord of the Church, would once again bless us with renewed grace, as we met together and with the people of God in the Diocese of Nairobi in the Anglican Church of Kenya. We learned about *haraambe*, a principle unique to the founding of independent Kenya yet existing in every traditional community by various names. *Haraambe* means to pull up together, join hands to build up, especially in times of community need when resources are scarce. It arose in the

context of political and social fragmentation. *Haraambe* is a collective effort in which all voluntarily participate in a commitment for the common good, creating a new identity, a new vision for community, greater opportunities when everyone's contribution is welcomed. We are grateful to Canon Francis Omondi for his guidance into the history and power and possibilities of *haraambe* as a theological framework for including all and forming community in processes of change.

Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit, Primate, graced us both in his welcome and later when he returned to speak of the Anglican Church of Kenya, with more than six million members in thirty-eight dioceses, plus the Military Episcopate. We learned that the Anglican Church in Kenya has identified a clear and focused strategic plan for the next decade to close the gap between Christian faith and Christian practice, to engage social media as a means of evangelism and disciple building, and to integrate social transformation with personal faith development. They seek to regain a role for the church as a key opinion-shaper in the public square and a convenor of public discussion of the values that support the fullness of human life to which our faith testifies: physical, spiritual, intellectual, moral.

The Primate's words found deep resonance amongst the bishops and with our prayers for the mission of the Church local and global.

New identity, new community, an expectation of what is possible and of everyone's contribution

As in previous consultations, we listened and learned about the movement of the Holy Spirit in the dioceses of two new participants.

The Diocese of Huron in the Anglican Church of Canada, in largely rural and agricultural south western Ontario, is working hard to respond to the challenges of declining congregations and a lack of a sense of mission. The theme of the 2017 diocesan synod was *One Body, One Spirit: Live a Life Worthy of Your Calling*. Parishes are beginning to develop new, strategic mission plans using the framework of the Communion's Marks of Mission.

The Diocese of Qu'Appelle in the Anglican Church of Canada, is located in the prairie lands of southern Saskatchewan, in the centre of Canada, where the Co-operative Movement (much like *haraambe* in Kenya) played a major role in the development of the Province's schools, universal health care, mutual community support and economic capacity. Today, as a result of much prayer over the past 5 years, the Diocese is coming back from a low ebb through the implementation of a Diocesan Mission Action Plan with measurable results that are seen in statistics, healthy leadership, and local, national and international engagement.

The 22 bishops present considered the cumulative experience of this consultation since it first met in London in 2010. Growing organically from 12 in the first gathering, some 49 bishops have now been involved in the process. We remain entirely committed to this vital work with one another, as we are convinced of the unique productivity and value of our gathering. We considered how our configuration could best facilitate our conversations as we look to the next Lambeth Conference. We heard a report on the evolving plans for Lambeth 2020. We identified biblical, theological and pastoral roles of testimony and how it is vital both to the life of the church and the effective proclamation of the gospel in each of our dioceses.

We recognized much we have valued in the dialogues, which have changed our ministries and our lives:

- *A new understanding of the Anglican Communion has led to renewed commitment to its flourishing.*
- *Myths and stereotypes, misunderstandings and propaganda have been broken down. It is clear we have so much more in common than the issues that divide us and threaten our unity at this time.*
- *It has been important to visit local church ministries and worship in local parishes. We have learned how others are engaged in the work of building up the church and in living the Gospel. We have learned new ways to engage mission.*

There have been surprises:

- *Listening first hand to someone is very different from reading about each other.*
- *In spite of our differences there has been mutual respect, deep friendship, hard won growth of trust and deep commitment to one another and to this dialogue.*
- *There is a personal cost in embracing the other, but much enrichment, and this has led to a fuller articulation of our own identity and stronger commitment to our common faith in Christ Jesus.*
- *In our roles as bishops, in very different contexts, we share many similar concerns.*
- *There is unity in the Anglican Communion's diversity.*
- *God brings about our own transformation through loving relationships, and this has happened to us in the course of these dialogues.*

We are intent on deeper dialogue through:

- *Faithful courage to trust and share*
- *Work in smaller groups for better sharing and greater personal contacts between meetings.*
- *Personal testimonies so a greater breadth and depth of beliefs and opinions are heard*
- *Deeper exploration into our different contexts and how context shapes theology, leadership and ministry*
- *Engagement with local parishes and communities*

We have committed to gather again next year in London, Ontario, Canada to continue the dialogue.

Asante!

We are grateful for the invitation and hospitality of Bishop Joel Waweru, Diocese of Nairobi, and his people. From London to Dar es Salaam and Toronto, to Cape Town, Coventry, Richmond and Accra, the location of our meetings has enhanced our discussions as we have recognised the Spirit's activity in the local Church.

We are grateful to Archdeacon Jane Mwangangi and the whole worship team for their prayerful leadership in our daily worship and throughout our time together. We rejoiced in joining Nairobi Anglicans in their parishes for Sunday worship where we were warmly welcomed as brothers and sisters in Christ

We are grateful to the setting and staff of the Silver Springs Hotel for daily nurture and support.

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We are grateful to Canon Dr. Isaac Kawuki Mukasa, Dr. Andrea Mann and Ms. Claudia Alvarez for their staff support both during the consultation and between meetings.

We testify to what we have seen and heard and experienced during our time together, of the power of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – to transform lives, to draw us into a life-giving relationship with him and with one another. We commit ourselves again to Christ and to “pull together” for his sake and for his Church through which his mission to reconcile the world to himself is lived out. We commit ourselves to working together as members of the Anglican Communion freely offering the gifts we have been given to share for the common good, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour so that all may believe and have life in him.

Participants

Bishop Jane Alexander: Edmonton
Bishop Johannes Angela: Bondo
Bishop Victor Reginald Atta-: Cape Coast
Bishop Paul Bayes: Liverpool
Bishop Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith: Asant-Mampong
Bishop Michael Bird: Niagara
Archbishop Albert Chama: Primate of Central Africa; Zambia
Bishop John Chapman: Ottawa
Bishop Dickson Chilongani: Central Tanganyika
Bishop Garth Counsell: Table Bay
Bishop Given Gaula: Kondo
Bishop Michael Hadifh: Zanzibar
Bishop Rob Hardwick: Qu’Appelle
Archbishop Colin Johnson: Toronto, Moosonee
Bishop Shannon Johnson: Virginia
Bishop Julius Kalu: Mobasa
Bishop Edward Konieczny: Oklahoma
Bishop Maimbo Mndolwa: Tanga
Bishop Linda Nicholls: Huron
Bishop Anthony Poggo: Lambeth Palace
Archbishop Daniel Sarfo: Primate of West Africa; Kumasi
Bishop Joel Waweru: Nairobi

Staff Support

Ms. Claudia Alvarez: Canada
Canon Dr. Isaac Kawuki Mukasa: Canada
Dr. Andrea Mann: Canada