

Communiqué

from the Dialogue of African and Canadian Bishops
February 24-26, 2010
St. Andrew's House, London, England



For a little over a year, five Canadian and six African dioceses have engaged in diocese-to-diocese theological dialogue on matters relating to human sexuality and to mission. With one exception, each diocese has established a theological working group to prepare papers and responses which were shared with their partner diocese on the opposite continent (see below for list of participants). Ontario and Botswana exchanged documents related to sustainability in the context of mission. These dialogues have emerged from, and are a deepening of, relationships established during the Indaba and Bible Study processes at the Lambeth Conference of 2008.

From February 24 to 26, the bishops of these dioceses met at the Anglican Communion Office, St. Andrew's House in London, England. In a context grounded by common prayer and eucharistic celebration we reflected together on our local experiences of mission and the challenges facing the Church in our diverse contexts. Though the initial exchange of papers had been related in most cases to matters of human sexuality and homosexuality in particular, our face to face theological conversation necessarily deepened to explore the relationships between the Gospel and the many particular cultural realities in which the Church is called to mission.

Over these days, we met in plenary sessions and in our dialogue pairs. On Friday February 26 we met at Lambeth Palace, where we prayed together in the Crypt Chapel and met with the Rev'd Dr. Philip Groves, who spoke with us about the Continuing Indaba project of the Communion. We were honoured with a visit from the Archbishop of Canterbury who spoke of his hopes for the Continuing Indaba process and listened as we shared insights from our time of dialogue.



Ours was an experience of holy listening as we engaged together in prayerful attentiveness to God and to each other in Christ. There is much that we celebrate from this experience of dialogue-in-community. In spite of differences, we strongly affirm our commitment to each other as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ and as members in the Anglican Communion. As we continue to learn about each other's mission contexts, cultures, values and languages, each of us grows in deeper mutual understanding of theological and ethical positions – both our own and those of our partners.



We affirm together that dialogue cannot be about trying to make someone change their position, but is about working together better to understand the fullness of our stories, affirmations and commitments. To do so requires that we meet, that we converse, that we commit to this holy listening and honest, respectful speech with openness and prayerful thanksgiving for the gift that is the other. This is the gift of communion we share in Christ: that we are one, in his body. We are empowered by our mutual listening and learning to carry on, to deepen our existing bonds of affection, and to serve God's mission with renewed hope.

It is the desire of this group to continue to meet again, and to plan other ways in which our dioceses might deepen relationship one with another. It is our hope that the process and the fruits of our theological discernment may link with the Continuing Indaba process of the Anglican Communion.

We are grateful to the staff of St. Andrew's House for their hospitality, especially to the Reverend Dr. Philips Groves and Ms. Angharad Parry-Jones; to the staff of Lambeth Palace, especially to the Reverend Canon Flora Winfield; to the Reverend Dr. Eileen Scully who served as our chaplain and recording secretary. Very special thanks are due to our facilitator, the Reverend Dr. Isaac Kawuki-Mukasa, whose

untiring work helped to bring this initiative into being, and who continues to nurture our work with skill and wisdom.

Participants

Botswana
The Right Reverend Trevor Mwanba

Ontario
The Right Reverend George Bruce

Central Tanganyika
The Right Reverend Mdimi Mhogolo

Niagara
The Right Reverend Michael Bird

Mombasa
The Right Reverend Julius Kalu

Ottawa
The Right Reverend John Chapman

Southern Malawi
The Right Reverend James Tengtenga
Represented by the Reverend Stephen Sikoti

New Westminster
The Right Reverend Michael Ingham

Tanga
The Right Reverend Philip Baji

Toronto
The Most Reverend Colin Johnson

Cape Town
The Right Reverend Garth Counsell