

Prof. Esther Mombo  
St. Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya

The report which is entitled A Testimony of Our Journey toward Reconciliation is timely. The ministry of reconciliation, has been given to us as Paul affirms that God reconciled us through Christ and conferred upon us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), in Christ's name, and we are ambassadors of that ministry (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:20). Paul's context may have been different from ours. However, there existed divisions in his society as they exist today for different or similar reasons.

The report comes to us against the backdrop of a world in turmoil with negative implications on all in society but especially on women and children. We think of the conflicts in the Sudan, Egypt, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Central Republic of Congo; the atrocities committed in Northern Nigeria and Somalia, just to name a few places in Africa. There are many perpetrators and victims of wars and terror. In my own country, we are in a context of tension as a result of hate, intolerance, corruption and terrorism. In all these places the presence of the church is noticeable and for those who are Anglican leaders with a testimony of reconciliation are expected to practice. The divisions in the Anglican Communion, rooted in biblical and theological differences are within the context of the realities mentioned above.

It is with this background that I read the report. This dialogue is as an important process because it exemplifies how different groups can talk at the same table. It provides a window of hope that there is a willingness to listen and to talk to one another. The test of any dialogue is how it is reflected in the different contexts facing different conflict situations both at the church, political and social economic levels. The reception of this report is crucial especially in those areas where the leadership of the church has used the divisions in the Anglican Communion as an excuse to ignore issues such as gender based violence, marginalization and discrimination, which are critical in reconciliation. The ministry of reconciliation should not be used to deny people justice as it were or to cover up peoples hurt and pain.

Reconciliation is not a hasty quick fix. It is a process in which certain conditions must be met if we can come to terms with one another. In this case we acknowledge that at times we are in conflict trying to maintain legitimate interests and values and we get at loggerhead with one another.

One of the fears different groups in the Anglican Communion have is that reconciliation is not facing up to the issue of justice. This is on both sides because of the way justice is defined. When one looks at how justice has been defined by the powerful, it has been in abstract discussions. There is a preoccupation with defending God's saving acts over against human merits that do not save. Reconciliation is part of God's mission. The church exists for mission much more than anything else. This coincides with the recommendations of the Testimony. It includes reaching out to others in the effort of reconciliation even when others do not respond. Leading one another to a deeper life of faithfulness and discipleship.