

CONSULTATION ON COMPANION DIOCESE RELATIONS

MAY 14TH – 17TH 2015, DAR-ES-SALAAM TANZANIA

Introduction

The Consultation on Companion Diocese Relationships was held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania from May 14th to the 17th 2015, at the invitation of Primates Bernard Ntahoturi of Burundi and Fred Hiltz of Canada. There were twenty nine participants from eleven Dioceses representing the Provinces of West Africa, Sudan and South Sudan, Tanzania and Canada. Delegates from Burundi and Uganda were unable to attend the meeting. The Rev. John Kafwanka, Director of Mission, Anglican Communion Office, delivered the keynote address and all the bishops had the opportunity to share testimonies about mission in their dioceses.

The Consultation's objectives included:

- Meeting companions in person and giving thanks to God for the companionship among our dioceses
- Talking about serving in God's mission together.
- Reflecting on what is working well in our companionships and what may not be working well, and why
- Growing in our mutual understanding and support of one another
- Identifying opportunities for further collaboration

Participants met, worshiped and shared meals together. They also had the opportunity to visit St. Mark's College in Dar-es-Salaam, which is part of St. John's University in Dodoma. On Sunday May 17th, the group worshiped at St. Alban's Cathedral, where Archbishop Fred Hiltz preached.

Daily Notes

Thursday May 14th, 2015

“In the Spirit of the Great Commission” by Archbishop Fred Hiltz

Archbishop Hiltz welcomed participants to the Consultation. He expressed regret that delegates from Burundi including Archbishop Ntahoturi were unable to attend due to election-related violence and the closure of Burundi's borders. Archbishop Hiltz celebrated beginning the consultation on the day of Ascension “in the spirit of our Great Commission”. Locating the meeting in the context of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Hiltz traced the history of companion links to the vision of the Anglican Congress which brought resulted in the concepts of Mutual Responsibility and Interdependency and the 10 Principles of Partnership. Companion relationships have since proliferated throughout the Communion, strengthened in recent decades by the Marks of Mission. “Companions walk together side by side,” said Archbishop Hiltz.

“They share experiences and visions...and are enriched and transformed by the mutual appreciation of their gifts.”

Friday May 15th, 2015

How Companion Dioceses engage in Mission together:

Companion dioceses build their relationships through activities of mutual interest and benefit. Activities identified by the group included:

- prayers for one another and prayers together for others
- exchange visits (by the laity, clergy and bishops) to learn about one another’s mission and cultural contexts
- mutual support and work on projects of various kinds
- conversation, dialogue and communication of various kinds and by different means, to share information and deepen relationships
- mutual tithing of time and resources to support the relationship
- participation in one another’s ministries and significant events

Dreams for Companion Relationships:

Dreams for their companion relationships included:

- greater interdependence in partnership
- a more regular exchange of information to make prayers current
- using current technology better to strengthen and / or improve the relationships
- cross-cultural theological training to break down the walls of racism and misunderstandings
- greater opportunities for African partners to have their theology published
- greater use of partner languages in meetings, visits and other companion activities
- deeper development at all diocesan levels, from the bishops to the local parish
- modeling differences without acrimony
- continuing to be in loving relationships in spite of differences in values and beliefs.

Inspiring Biblical texts:

Isaiah 52:7; John 15:15; Genesis 12:1-3; John 17:21; Matthew 19; John 1:38-39; 1 Corinthians 12: 1-14; I Corinthians 12: 27ff; Luke 24:30-31

Issues to be addressed:

1. Participants agreed that face-to-face meetings and exchange visits are very important for a healthy development of companion relationships. However, African partners sometimes find it very difficult to obtain Temporary Resident Visas for Canada. There is a need to look closely at the options available for obtaining entry visas of various kinds and be intentional about sharing information on the most effective ways of securing visas for partners abroad.
2. Participants agreed effective communication is a key ingredient in the development of healthy companion relationships. However, technology sometimes fails and availability can be limited. There is a need to investigate how technology may be used to facilitate and strengthen the current relationships. There is also a need to provide access to appropriate technology for partners in remote locations and/or with limited resources.
3. Formal covenants are essential in companion relationships. They provide a road map for the development of the relationship and assist with mutual accountability. However, covenants shouldn't include a prescribed time limit. Participants agreed there should be no time limits imposed at the beginning of a companionship. Covenants should be understood as a context for accountability and include opportunities for evaluation and assessment at various intervals.
4. It was observed that Companion relationships often begin with bishops. Bishops meet and begin a personal friendship which may transform into a diocese-to-diocese companion relationship. Participants agreed companion relationships should be encouraged to develop beyond bishops and diocesan staff, to include other groups in the diocese and local parishes.
5. There needs to be intentional efforts to create and develop relationships of equal partnership and mutual respect. Partners must not presume to know what the others need or ought to be doing. There should, instead, be intentional listening to one another and paying attention to one another's values and priorities as the other articulates them. Partners have an obligation to explain clearly cultural values and practices, and whenever possible, enable opportunities for cross cultural awareness and learning.
6. Companion Diocese Relationships should be rooted in joint bible study and theological reflection. Every opportunity to do this together should be explored. Every meeting is an opportunity. Bishops, theologians, and other leaders should be invited to teach and to lead retreats for one another's leadership. Partners should be invited to Diocesan Synods and be involved in the workshops, preaching and plenary sessions of those meetings.

Keynote Address: The Rev'd John Kafwanka:

The Rev'd John Kafwanka presented on "The Joy and Opportunities of Companion Link Relationships". In his presentation, Mr. Kafwanka provided a theoretical and theological context for some of the issues identified by participants. He observed that although relations within the Anglican Communion are strained to a considerable extent, companion links have not only maintained and strengthened connections within the Communion, they have provided bridges for repairing relations. Mr. Kafwanka invited participants to embrace and celebrate diversity in companion relationships. "We are made for complementarity," he said. "We support the other in our strength and they support us in our weakness. We need to look upon the challenges of companionship as opportunities for growth and learning", adding that such opportunities enhance local and global mission. Mr. Kafwanka encouraged companion partners to locate the development of their relationship in the Five Marks of Mission; the Marks provide a very productive framework in which to build relationships and do mission together.

Companion Relationship Visions and Plans:

A number of the participants had the opportunity to meet in companion groups and to plan for the future of their relationships. Here are some of the reports from those companion group meetings:

Diocese of Montreal, Canada with Diocese of Masasi, Tanzania:

Companionship was initiated when the former bishop of Masasi, The Rt. Rev'd Patrick Mwachiko sought the advice of the Partnership Department of General Synod. The initial Companionship agreement was signed in 2008 between Bishop Patrick and The Rt. Rev'd Barry Clark, Diocese of Montreal. In 2008, a delegation of four people from Montreal attended Diocesan Synod in Masasi and joined the celebration of the 50th anniversary of one of the churches of the diocese. In 2009, two lay members made a private visit to Masasi. Later in 2009, a delegation from Montreal visited various places in Masasi including the seminary at Rondo. This delegation included the Bishop, the Executive Archdeacon, the Principal of the Montreal Diocesan Theological College, the head of the Mother's Union and the Montreal representative of PWRDF. In 2010, a lay member visited the Diocese to represent Bishop Barry at the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Cathedral in Masasi. In 2010 Bishop Patrick, his wife Emmy and the Rev. Geoffrey Mongesa, Masasi development officer, visited Montreal at the time of the house of Bishops and were welcomed in several parishes of the Diocese. In 2012, Bishop Patrick and Geoffrey Mongesa returned to Montreal to attend Synod. During that Synod, a proposal to extend the agreement for another five years was formally signed by both parties. Geoffrey Mongesa was ordained to the diaconate in one of the parish churches of the Diocese of Montreal while on that visit. Since then there have been further visits. In 2012 Bishop Barry and

the Executive Archdeacon returned to Masasi and were given an extensive tour of the whole of the diocese of Masasi. In 2013, a lay member of the Diocese of Montreal went to Masasi to attend the retirement service of Bishop Patrick. In 2014, a delegation of four visited Masasi to attend the installation of Bishop James Almasi. In 2015, two lay representatives visited Masasi and the projects funded partially by PWRDF prior to the consultation.

The partnership is beginning a new chapter. With the election of The Rt. Rev'd Mary Irwin-Gibson, Montreal, the partnership will enter the phase where both dioceses are led by bishops new to the Companionship. There will be opportunity for growth and change. This will be facilitated by the attendance of Bishop James and Canon Geoffrey at the Synod of the Diocese of Montreal in October of 2015.

Our partnership is flourishing due to regular face-to-face meetings between dioceses in both directions. The Companionship is alive in parishes and diocesan groups. Montreal and Masasi clergy have been active in each other's dioceses, including preaching, conferences and visits to local ministries.

(Report submitted by Penny and Raymond Noël, Montreal)

The Diocese of Ho, Ghana with the Diocese of Fredericton, Canada

The first item we discussed was the time tags on the relationships and how five year commitments were perceived by the two dioceses. The idea or feeling that after five years of building a relationship, making new friends and praying together, it "might" be ended was not a welcoming signal to either side. Review and evaluation s needed, and in unusual situations a cut off point, but a relationship should be longstanding and in some ways, forever. We all agreed on this.

The areas we decided to work on to improve and develop were as follows:

1. Relationship and communication between parishes, schools and groups or events. We plan to try and set up a video/media connection between the two dioceses so we can share our lives and activities visually and interact. We have a person in place in both dioceses to work on this and some funds available. We plan for this to be a portable unit so classrooms, choir groups, Mothers Union groups, clergy meetings, camps etc. can meet each other. We also hope to build relationships parish to parish. Each archdeaconry in Fredericton is already paired with a parish in Ho but this needs to be developed further.
2. Cross cultural exchanges. The diocese of Fredericton would like five or six young people from Ho (16 to 18), to visit our diocese as councillors at our church camp, Camp Medley, for six to eight weeks. There is also a choir school that they could attend at that time. Two groups of young people from Fredericton have visited Ho in the last five years and we would like to have the youth in Ho to have the same opportunity. This would be the

summer of 2016 or 2017. We would also work to having a theological student or priest exchange between the two dioceses.

These were the plans we focused on and as our visit continued in Ho several other options were discussed but this is where we will be putting our emphasis in the near future.

(Heather Miller, Fredericton)

The Diocese of Rokon, South Sudan with the Diocese of Central Newfoundland, Canada

To this point the major communication has been by email between bishops. In future, to build wider relationships, Bishop Francis will be writing something of a diary that can be shared throughout the Diocese of Central Newfoundland to help us have a fuller appreciation of the work and ministry of the Church in Rokon.

Even electronic communication is rudimentary and Diocesan Staff non-existent in Rokon so communication will be difficult between clergy and parishes but we will try to share what we can. Indeed, Rev. Cooper, the Diocesan Executive Officer has begun a regular communication with Rev. Clement, his counterpart in Rokon via Facebook and email, when available. Rev. Cooper will regularly post communication to Facebook.

Our first goal will be to arrange a substantial visit from Bishop Francis to the Diocese of Central Newfoundland. My hope would be a visit of at least three weeks. The visit would include the following components:

- Visits to each of our 6 deaneries for a variety of clergy and lay events
- Visit to Queen's College
- A visit to St. John's to visit the small Sudanese community there.

Secondly, our Diocese has been invited to participate in a project to sponsor a fishing enterprise ie. to help outfit a boat which the Diocese of Rokon already has, and to help purchase a small refrigeration unit to transport fish to market. The Diocese of Rokon is putting together a proposal and a business plan which we hope will be ready to present during the bishop's visit.

Thirdly, we would like to arrange a visit to Rokon. We would hope the Bishop and or Executive Office could be joined by a couple of lay persons to visit different parts of the Diocese. We would hope to involve a fishing couple, as our lay visitors particularly if we can get the fishing project in Rokon underway.

Our overall and overreaching goal is to build prayerful and supportive relationships between the people of our dioceses, that we can begin to understand one another's joys and trials in ministry; that we can learn to cry and to rejoice in one another's failures and successes, in proclaiming the gospel where we live.

(Report submitted by Bishop David Torrville, Central Newfoundland)

The Diocese of Rupert's Land, Canada, and Diocese of Central Buganda, Uganda

The Diocese of Rupert's Land in western Canada and Central Buganda Diocese in southern Uganda have shared a companion partnership since 1995. Since that time a formal covenant renewed at 5 year intervals and signed by both bishops has been in place and outlines a foundation for a cross-cultural diocesan relationship. This partnership is based on a mutual engagement of mission lived out through the teachings of the Gospel.

The Companion Diocese Program is focused on two core initiatives:

1. The Orphan's Program
2. The Link Parishes Program

The Rupert's Land Orphan's Program began in 2004 in response to a direct invitation from a visiting delegation from Central Buganda Diocese to help them in assisting orphan children. Due to HIV/AIDS and civil war for the better part of two decades there is a staggering number of orphans throughout Uganda who do not have adequate access to housing, food and education.

Rupert's Land Diocese in partnership with its Ugandan friends donates \$20,000.00 per year to assist 138 orphan students who enter the program at the start of primary school and complete the program once they leave secondary school. These children receive school fees, supplies, meals and room and board where necessary. This program has been extremely well administered by the diocese of Central Buganda and has seen children go on to post-secondary education, and in some cases, get married and start their own families. This progression of determined students has been a blessing to watch grow into happy, productive individuals.

The Link Parishes Program is another joint-initiative between our two dioceses that helps create relationships at the parish level. Approximately 30 parishes in Central Buganda Diocese are linked with 30 parishes in Rupert's Land Diocese. Parish representatives, both clergy and laity facilitate communication and activities with their link parish. They pray for each other, share experiences and challenges, and engage in shared project initiatives that enrich the daily and spiritual lives of all participants. A key challenge of the parish links program is to ensure communication between linked parishes is consistent thereby allowing relationships to grow and mature.

In addition to occasional personal visits of individuals, we have tried to have a team from one diocese pay an extended visit to the other diocese every 4 or 5 years. A team of 10 individuals from Central Buganda visited Rupert's Land in 2002 for a couple weeks in October, including our Diocesan Synod. A team of 19 from Rupert's Land spent 3 weeks in Central Buganda in 2007. A team of 9 from Central Buganda attempted to visit Rupert's Land in 2011 but sadly,

only 3 were successful in obtaining visas from Immigration Canada. We are now planning a visit of a team of a dozen or so to Central Buganda for early 2016.

While the relationship between Rupert's Land Diocese and Central Buganda Diocese continues to impact lives, the challenges of culture and distance remind us of the unifying force of the Gospel. The work of Christ continues to leave the "marks of mission" burning in the hearts of many. *(Report submitted by Sean Carlson, Rupert's Land)*

Diocese of Athabasca, Canada with the Diocese of Ibba, Southern Sudan

The dioceses of Ibba and Athabasca have had a partnership for the last several years. It began out of the personal relationship between the bishops, The Rt. Rev. Wilson Kamani and The Rt. Rev. Fraser Lawton, who met at the School for New Bishops in Canterbury in 2005. They made contact with one another following that conference and sought to form some sort of relationship between the dioceses. There was no discussion of a formal link, in accord with normal Communion methods, rather being founded on prayer for one another and to wait and see what God might bring out of the relationship. Over the past years, the bishops have been in regular contact, sharing news and prayer requests of both a personal nature and for events and situations in the dioceses. For the past couple of years we had been talking about arranging a visit and finding ways to deepen our relationship.

The decision to hold a Consultation in Tanzania came at a very good time, and was an excellent opportunity for us to meet together and to deepen our relationship and to give some thought to our shared future. The Bishop of Athabasca's visit to Ibba was immensely valuable in helping him understand and appreciate the Diocese of Ibba, its life, clergy, people and its vision. The Bishop of Ibba was a tremendous host and provided great insight and opportunity. Out of our visit together and various discussions we formed a general plan for the future of this relationship. There is no current plan to formalize this relationship into a written covenant or to set parameters around time or specific definitions, as we continue to rest on the foundation of prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit in what is to happen, as well as "when" and "how."

We intend to continue to hold one another in prayer and to share specific requests and events. The bishops will continue to keep in touch, and to share both personal and diocesan concerns with one another. We plan to exchange lists of parishes and clergy so that we can pray specifically for these. This also provides an opportunity to know a little bit more about one another. We would like to widen the circle of contact beyond the bishops. Already the Secretary of the Diocese of Ibba has connected with the Administrator for the Diocese of Athabasca. We hope to have a direct connection between the cathedrals of the two dioceses. The Diocesan Coordinator for the Anglican Church Women of Athabasca sent personal written greetings with the bishop to the Diocesan Mothers Union coordinator in Ibba. The Mothers Union coordinator

sent return greetings with the bishop and we anticipate a growing direct relationship between the two ministries. We hope to have further visits, though neither diocese can remotely be considered wealthy, perhaps next with a delegation from Ibba visiting Athabasca. We also look to the possibility of some sharing of resources (a copy of Athabasca's *Discipleship Training Manual* was shared with Ibba), especially in terms of programmes, ministry ideas and educational resources.

We are very thankful for the opportunity to have met together, and truly feel God's grace in the relationship we share. May the Lord direct us in growing together.

(Report submitted by Bishop Fraser Lawson, June 14th 2015)

What to Share with the Wider Church:

Participants identified what activities, ideas, challenges they will share with the wider church, including:

- Initiating a prayer cycle among participants. Nothing can be done without prayer.
- Sharing what we have learnt with other dioceses in the Communion
- Strengthening relationships that go beyond the leadership of bishops and diocesan staff
- The atmosphere between African and Canadian dioceses is positive and constructive for change
- There is hope in the way forward through growth and communication of ideas
- Greater emphasis on promoting parish links within diocesan links
- Concern about faith. How do we address the issue of declining faith? What strategies can we deploy? How do faith and history connect?
- The bishops' testimonies of hope and inspiration
- Our challenges are not unique. We are all facing similar problems.
- Companionship is about developing relationships. It is not a program to check off a box. Formal covenants are important but they should not have time limits. Theologically, covenants can only be ended by God. Let relationships develop naturally. Timing should be reconfigured and encouraged as evaluation moments
- Do not under-estimate small things. They add up to significant mission
- The challenge is to be intentional about seeking out partners for companion relationships
- Mutual responsibility. That the fullness of our faith is not realized until we share/relate with honesty, humility, joy in the Lord
- The need for cultural orientation before, throughout and following exchange and immersion experiences

Preliminary reports on the Consultation were immediately circulated through Anglican Communion News Service and the Anglican Journal:

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2015/05/anglican-communion-leaders-identify-needs-for-companion-link-relationships.aspx>

<http://www.anglicanjournal.com/articles/companion-relationships-tell-a-different-story>

A full Consultation report will be sent to all participants and funders, and will inform the ongoing review and revision of resources pertaining to Companion Diocese Relationships, including the online Handbook (2010) <http://www.anglican.ca/relationships/programs/ccdp> and opportunities of orientation for intercultural ministry.

It is noteworthy to report almost all Canadian diocesan groups planned to visit the home dioceses of their African companions either before or following the Consultation. Despite a disruption of plans for the Dioceses of Edmonton and Buye, and Qu'Appelle and Muyinga to visit Burundi, others travelled to Ghana, Southern Sudan, southern Tanzania and Uganda. The Consultation made it financially and otherwise possible for these visits to take place with less pressure upon local funding.

Thank You

Participants and organizers are sincerely grateful to Primates Bernard Ntahoturi, Fred Hiltz and Jacob Chimeledya for their invitation and permission to meet in Bujumbura, and then Dar es Salaam, for the purpose of celebrating, discussing and strengthening Companion Diocese Relationships. Collective thanks are extended to the Principal of St. Mark's College and Dean of St. Alban Cathedral, Dar es Salaam for welcoming all into their communities and ministries. We are grateful to the staff of Double Tree Hilton Oyster Bay for their excellent service with accommodations, meals, meeting room preparations and ground transportation. Participants thank Consultation staff and volunteers including Isaac Kawuki Mukasa, Claudia Alvarez, Andrea Mann, Jennifer Pring, Anne Patterson, and Robert Camara.

Participants and organizers are sincerely grateful to all funding partners for their generous support, including Ecclesiastical Insurance/AllChurches Trust UK, Ministry Investment Fund, Anglican Church of Canada, participating dioceses and individuals. The Consultation was held under budget resulting in a small surplus to be directed toward costs incurred in producing and promoting new and revised Companion Diocese Relationship resources.

Last but not least, we thank God for the constant leading of the Spirit in our midst as we met and travelled to and from Dar es Salaam. We humbly endeavour to continue to serve God's mission through companionship with one another, seeking always to discern with others God's will in our local contexts and for the good of the whole world.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Andrea Mann, Director, Global Relations

Canon Dr. Isaac Kawuki Mukasa, Africa Relations Consultant, Global Relations

June 19, 2015