

A sacrament of love: our continuing testimony of grace.

Love has been perfected in us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4.18-19)

1. This third consultation among Canadian, American and African bishops (June 4-7, 2012 in Toronto, Canada) took place in the context of worship, prayer and the breaking of bread. Through the presentation of papers, continuing conversation, and growing relationships we engaged in dialogue both in sessions and over meals. Our meeting set out to explore two themes. The first of these was our shared participation in the mission of God in and for the world. The second was the question of if and how the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant might hold us together as a Communion in our participation in that mission.
2. We were delighted to discover that the depth of our previous encounters could continue after we had been apart for over one year, and even as other bishops joined us for the first time. It is by grace that we are able to continue to build on the foundation of understanding and trust that had grown over our previous two meetings and to abide in the characteristic Anglican gift of unity in diversity.
3. We affirm that mission is a meeting-place with God and with others. Mission isn't something we do to another, but a way of being together in the presence of God as God transforms and reconciles the world to himself. To be in mission is to assume a listening stance – listening for how God is at work in the world, for how others are responding to and participating in that work, and for how we might offer ourselves and our gifts into partnership in that work.
4. We began to experience, as bishops together, the key challenge and opportunity that meet us: “How can we support and assist our fellow-bishops in the mission decisions that they make in their context and from their perspective?” We noted those times when we have judged our fellow-servants without taking time to understand the context and perspective that informed their decisions and actions. As we move forward we commit ourselves to consider deeply the impact of our decisions and actions – informed by our own context and perspectives – on the life and ministry of the church in other contexts.
5. We heard descriptions of a variety of mission settings in Africa and Canada expressing the Marks of Mission.¹ We acknowledged that God is at work in each of those settings, and that the local church's vocation is to join God's contextual mission engagement in the world.
6. We affirm that the Church, gathered around the mystery of redemption, fosters and nurtures a specific response to particular mission imperatives, by restoring our human capacity to discern God's initiative and joining our lives to it. We recognized that mission partnerships are not about shifting resources from a context of abundance to one of scarcity, but rather about combining a

range of resources – such as knowledge, trust, experience, discernment, and material wealth – to participate in God’s redemptive work in the world.

7. We heard very clearly that authentic Christian mission does not make of one community a project for another. Instead, authentic mission invites communities to gather and pool resources for collaboration in activity that transforms them both even as it changes the world.
8. We noted that a significant dimension of our engagement in God’s care for the world involves the work of healing and reconciliation, for example in Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, South Africa, Kenya, Canada and the United States of America. As we share in this critical work, three questions emerge for us:
 - a. Where are we engaged in the work of healing and reconciliation?
 - b. What do we know, what have we learned about God’s work of healing and reconciliation?
 - c. How can we share our knowledge of God’s work of healing and reconciliation and apply that to the various forms of brokenness in the world?
9. We acknowledge that both in Africa and in Canada, there are voices that need to be heard as we seek to discern God’s will for the world. We affirm that it is critical for all these voices to be heard.
10. We acknowledge that the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant is an attempt to guard and foster the unity of the Anglican Communion. We are deeply committed to its intention although not all of us are persuaded that it is the necessary way forward to achieve this. In the first three sections of the document, we recognize an elaboration of Anglican self-understanding that can enhance our capacity for mutual recognition as partners in God’s mission. However, we are not of one mind with the content of the fourth section, though our differences are held respectfully. While a document such as the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant can be a focus of such conversation at this time, it cannot replace a willingness to engage one another prayerfully and with respect in the presence of the God of mission. We believe that the best way for honouring communion is prayerful face-to-face respectful engagement. Whatever becomes of the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant, the process in which it plays a vital role has caused us to engage in difficult, holy, important, and hopeful conversations that have deepened our friendship in Christ and our commitment to support one another.
11. We observe that in recent years some Anglican gatherings have tended to be meetings of strangers, with the predictable outcomes of disappointment, distrust, frustration, anger, and factionalism. In this third meeting together, we delight in what God has been doing among us to re-introduce us to one another as beloved children who share a common baptism and who serve in a common mission. At times during the meeting, we have continued to be surprised by new understandings, and we commit ourselves to continuing to grow in careful listening, clear

speaking, and mutual understanding, as we offer ourselves to God as partners in God's mission in the world.

12. As a community of bishops, we are a work-in-progress. It has taken time for us to develop confidence in one another and in our conversations. It has taken time for us to tell and hear the stories of how God is at work in us and in the contexts in which we serve. Living in and into the partnership that God desires of us and for us requires – and will continue to require – patience and commitment from us. We are a microcosm of the Anglican Communion, which has not yet arrived at its fullest expression of Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence (MRI), Partnership in Mission (PIM), or in companion relations among local communities, dioceses and Provinces. We are a Communion “in the making”, still being shaped and formed in the hands of God, who desires of us and for us the fullness of partnership that comes out of attentiveness, prayer, and love.
13. Given the experience that we have undergone in our consultation, and aware of other initiatives, we encourage bishops, clergy and laity to develop similar opportunities to meet and engage one another as we all work to a common goal of maintaining the unity and the witness of the Anglican Communion.
14. We are grateful to the dioceses from which we have come for cooperating to fund and enable our gathering, and for additional funding from: The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, The Diocese of Toronto, The Diocese of Niagara, The Diocese of New Westminster, The Diocese of Colorado, The Diocese of Virginia, The Episcopal Church USA, The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf, and Trinity Church Wall Street. It is by grace and their stewardship that we have been able to gather. And we thank the staff of the Manresa Retreat Centre for offering us hospitality in a place of prayer and community. We are thankful for the gracious work of the Coordinator for Dialogue and the General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Canada, the staff from Trinity Wall Street and The Episcopal Church who have provided support, and the communications team of the Anglican Church of Canada.
15. We acknowledge with gratitude the time the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, The Most Rev'd Fred Hiltz, spent with us, as well as his kind and encouraging words.
16. We give thanks for the ministry of The Most Rev'd and Rt. Hon. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, under whose leadership and encouragement the 2008 Lambeth Conference embodied for the Anglican Communion a new pattern of prayerful conversation and mission partnership.

“May [our] lives together be a sacrament of your love to this broken world, so that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy overcome despair.” (From the rite for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, Book of Alternative Services, Canada)

1. The Rt. Rev'd Jane Alexander – Diocese of Edmonton, Canada

2. The Rt. Rev'd Johannes Angela - Diocese Bondo, Kenya
3. The Rt. Rev'd Michael Bird – Diocese of Niagara, Canada
4. The Most Rev'd Albert Chama – Diocese of Northern Zambia & Primate of Central Africa, Zambia
5. The Rt. Rev'd Garth Counsell – Diocese of Cape Town, South Africa
6. The Rt. Rev'd Michael Ingham – Diocese of New Westminster, Canada
7. The Most Rev'd Colin Johnson – Toronto & Metropolitan of Ontario
8. The Rt. Rev'd Julius Kalu – Diocese of Mombasa, Kenya
9. The Rt. Rev'd Sixbert Macumi – Diocese of Buye, Burundi
10. The Rt. Rev'd Mdimi Mhogolo – Diocese of Central Tanganyika, Tanzania
11. The Rt. Rev'd Trevor Musonda Mwamba – Diocese of Botswana, Botswana
12. The Rt. Rev'd David Njovu – Diocese of Lusaka, Zambia
13. The Most Rev'd Bernard Ntahoturi- Diocese of Matana & Primate of Burundi, Burundi
14. The Rt. Rev'd Robert O'Neill – Diocese of Colorado, USA
15. The Rt. Rev'd Anthony Poggo – Diocese of Kajo Keji, Sudan
16. The Rt. Rev'd Daniel Sarfo – Diocese of Kumasi, Ghana
17. The Rt. Rev'd James Tengatenga – Diocese of Southern Malawi, Malawi

ⁱ **THE MARKS OF MISSION:**

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

To teach, baptize and nurture new believers

To respond to human need by loving service

To seek to transform unjust structures of society

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth