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Creating Space

‘I would want to invite you all to help me do better by working with me to create the ambience where better understanding may happen. I hope that Synod will not be averse to thinking about how we can take this forward, without the pressure of feeling we have some single and all-important decision to make. Happily we can point to the methods currently being developed in the 'Continuing Indaba' project, with its success in creating many such spaces for face-to-face discussion across cultures. This project, which is considering a wide range of actually and potentially divisive matters, has been pursued with heroic energy and imagination by many people of profoundly diverse convictions in the Communion and needs prayer and support.’

With these words the Archbishop of Canterbury called the General Synod of the Church of England to enter into theological debate on sensitive issues. For the Church of England these were issues such as the consecration of women bishops and the blessing of same sex unions. He rightly identified that the resources being developed by the Continuing Indaba project are intended to be applicable to a wide range of actually and potentially divisive matters.

The Anglican Communion is made up of churches in 38 Provinces spread around the globe. Some Provinces are single nation churches, such as the Anglican Church of Kenya and the Anglican Church of Canada. Others are made up of dioceses in a number of countries such as the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, with dioceses in Mozambique and Namibia as well as

1 www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/3056
South Africa. The Episcopal Church may have the majority of its dioceses in the USA, but it has dioceses in 14 other nations with Spanish, French and Mandarin all major languages.

**The trans-cultural nature of our Communion is a glory and a burden**

In 1956 Max Warren, the General Secretary of CMS, said ‘Only the whole world knows the whole truth’. In 2009 Alfred Reid, the Bishop of Jamaica, said ‘Even in this global village of instant electronic communication, it is easy to become isolated, insular and introverted. We have to work intentionally to overcome this tendency’. The delight of discovering that God is the God of the whole world is central to the joy of being a part of a global Communion.

It is true that all mission is global mission, but it is also true that all mission is local. The tension between local and global became clear early on in the life of the Church. The focus was on the relationship between the Jewish Christians with their commitment to faithfulness to their traditions renewed by their commitment to Christ, and the Gentile Christians seeking to live out their obedience to Christ as Gentiles – opposing any imposition of legalism on their lives.

In this context Paul wrote these words in his letter to the Ephesians:

> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far
away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.’ Eph2:14-22 NIV

The 1963 Anglican Congress marked the ‘Anglican Turning Point’ when the Communion began the long road from a colonial institution to a communion of equals. Those who heralded the change did not expect the kinds of confrontations that soon emerged. By 1976 the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) recognised that our life together would not be an easy one. They said this:

Christian partnership did not then mean that the partners, although united in their missionary goals, were always in accord on how they were to carry out his mission - witness the disagreement between Peter and Paul in Galatians 2. Rather they were asked to face each other, and the roots of their disagreement and agreement, so openly that both could go forward in mutual love and respect into further creative activity.

They continued:

As in the first century, we can expect the Holy Spirit to press us to listen to each other, to state new insights frankly, and to accept implications of the gospel new to us, whether painful or exhilarating. (ACC 3 p55)
Creating space for conversation

Continuing Indaba is concerned with creating the space for these conversations to take place. The project has involved discovering resources to guide how we relate to one another from within the Scriptures as understood in our diverse cultures and contexts.

The models we have used in the past have let us down. Confrontational debate where protagonists seek to score points in order to win is not the best way to discern the mind of God. Neither is the internet: while it is a wonderful tool for communication it can be used to manipulate the way news is read, and some bloggers feel they can comment on others without knowing them.

Other forms of human interaction from within values well known in many non-western cultures - that resonate with the biblical witness - are required if we are to imitate Jesus who walked alongside the despairing disciples as they walked to Emmaus. Indaba – a Zulu word describing processes of communal discernment common to many African cultures – is used here to signify this more biblical way of living together.

This book is about Creating Space. The essays are concerned with setting out how we might talk to one another across diversity and difference in ways that draw upon the Scriptures.
How to use this Book

This book is a collection of works put together with the aim of assisting you to Create Space for theological dialogue across all kinds of divides. Our Communion by our differing cultures, our histories that define us as low or high church, economic differences, gender differences and differences of in access to technology and education, to name just a few.

All the papers are Anglican. They conform to the Anglican Way of discerning the Mind of God set out in the Virginia Report:

> The characteristic Anglican way of living with a constant dynamic interplay of Scripture, tradition and reason means that the mind of God has constantly to be discerned afresh, not only in every age, but in each and every context. Virginia Report 3.11

Use this page to select the chapters that interest you.

**Section 1. Introduction**

1. Jonathan Draper gives a contextual overview of Continuing Indaba.

2. Evie Vernon offers a Bible Study on a cross cultural encounter.

3. Phil Groves offers a Model for Mission Partnership developed from Philippians.

4. Emily Onyango considers listening to God in the context of running away and returning.

5. Bishop Alfred Reid considers the significance of being part of a global Communion for local mission.
Section 2 Indaba

6. Bishop Ebenezer Ntlali gives further consideration to Indaba from South Africa.

7. Archbishop Thabo of Cape Town gives an introduction to his understanding of Indaba emerging from the South African context and considers how it can be applied in the Anglican Context.


10. Stuart Burns contextualises the Baraza call for a Western context.

11. Ndungu’ Ikenye – a Kikuyu elder and Christian theologian – reflects on how the Anglican Communion can learn from Kikuyu systems for conversation and healing in the community.

12. Sammy Githuku offers further reflections from a Kikuyu perspective.

13. Sushma Ramswami shows how the concepts of Indaba are not new to India.

14. Frankie Lee introduces the Chinese concept of ‘He’ (和) can inform our Indaba.

15. Wendy Fletcher gives a Canadian case study for the post colonial world.
Section 3. The Bible and Indaba

16. CB Peters looks at seven biblical models for conflict resolution.

17. Zebedi Muga considers models of conflict resolution from the Pentateuch.

Section 4. Indaba in Context

18. Kevin David and Tony Lawrence consider how young people can be included in continuing Indaba.

Section 1: Introduction

Continuing Indaba developed from the ‘Listening Process’ called for by the Windsor Report - a call that was echoed in the communiqués of successive Primates’ Meetings and the Resolutions of the Anglican Consultative Councils of 2005 and 2009. Jonathan Draper sets the project in historical and theological context. This is followed by a Bible Study by Evie Vernon. This study gives the reader the opportunity to engage in a trans-cultural experience as they relate to the characters in the biblical text. Jonathan and Evie act as theological consultants to the project.

Phil Groves, the Project Director, looked to develop a model for partnership from the relationship between Paul and his community in Rome and the Christian community in Philippi. Here he sets out the seven elements of the model as a basis for understanding any mission partnership.

The present difficulties in the Communion have led some into flight and Emily Onyango offers a theological reflection on Hagar and Sarah. Hagar’s flight led her to an encounter with God and ultimately a return. The story and reflection has profound meanings for all of us.

Finally in this section, in 2009 Bishop Alfred Reid reminded the Anglican Consultative Council that without one another we are tempted in to be introverted, insular and isolated when he welcomed them to Jamaica. His introduction to the record of the meeting is repeated here.
Continuing Indaba:  
Seeking Reconciliation in the Anglican Communion

The Rev. Canon Jonathan Draper is Canon Theologian of York Minster, UK

The Anglican Communion

The Anglican Communion is made up of more than 80 million members in 44 autonomous and self-governing regional and national churches, spread through more than 160 countries. Historically, the growth of Anglican churches throughout the world went hand-in-hand with two major movements: the development and expansion of the British Empire from the 17th century onwards, and the great missionary movements of the 18th and 19th centuries. When one quarter of the globe was under British colonial rule, churches were established that began their lives looking a lot like the Church of England of the colonial power. Churches were often established by one of the two great Anglican Mission Societies – CMS and USPG\(^2\) – both of which worked hard with local people to give these growing churches a more indigenous feel, and even, eventually, indigenous leadership. Today, of course, this colonial past can be a difficult and complex set of issues that surface in different ways in any controversial matter, especially when the churches of the north are seen to be differing from the churches of the south.

Because of that colonial and missionary past, the churches of the Anglican Communion today operate in an astonishingly wide range of cultural, political, social and economic contexts, and these different contexts have given rise to churches with

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\(^2\) CMS: The Church Missionary Society (founded in 1799); USPG The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (founded in 1701 as SPG).
significantly different approaches to and understandings of both the shared faith of Anglicans and local mission priorities. It is not surprising that the real life context for mission in, say, West Africa and Canada or the United States provides different emphases and priorities in mission. These differing priorities have led to conflict which has become well-known for its depth and intractability. For the past 30 years or so, the world-wide Anglican Communion has been torn apart by issues to do with the authority and interpretation of Scripture, the place and role of women within ordained ministry, and issues of human sexuality, especially homosexuality and same-sex relationships.

That conflict has taken place in parallel with a growing sense of independence on the part of the churches that were once colonial and which used to be called ‘missionary churches’. Growth in strength and numbers, and a loosening of political and cultural ties to the ‘mother church’ and the ‘mother land’ has led to calls for the end of what has come to be seen as western hegemony and power in the Anglican Communion. While there has always been and remains a genuine respect and affection for the Archbishops of Canterbury and their role in the Communion, an English or even Western agenda is no longer seen as determinative of the Communion’s life and action.

While this change of dynamics has been taking place, every ten years the bishops of the Anglican Communion have been gathering together in Canterbury for a three week conference. The Bishops have been meeting like this, with some

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3 The Bishops no longer meet at Lambeth Palace, the London home of the Archbishop of Canterbury as there is no longer room for them all. Instead they meet in Canterbury – the spiritual home of the Anglican Communion – using both Canterbury Cathedral and the facilities of the University of Kent.
interruptions for war, since 1867, and the most recent meeting was in 2008. The first meeting in 1867 was convened, in part, to address controversies surrounding the church Natal in South Africa, and was very exercised by how to ensure that the missionary churches, as they were called, didn’t stray too far from the doctrine and norms of, what was called at the time, the ‘Mother Church’, the Church of England⁴.

From 1867 to 1998 the form of the Lambeth Conference was more or less the same: a parliamentary style of meeting where reports and papers were prepared ahead of time, resolutions were proposed and debated, and the results were published to the whole Communion in the form of a Pastoral Letter. In terms of the two main areas of controversy at the moment – women in ministry and homosexuality – the first time these began to appear on the agenda of the Lambeth Conference was really in 1968, albeit briefly. Here, in terms of sexuality, the concern was about polygamy; and in terms of women in ministry, the conference concluded that the arguments for ordaining women were ‘inconclusive’⁵.

By the time of the Lambeth Conference of 1978 the pressures for the ordination of women had burst: four provinces were ordaining them with another eight about to do so. This was causing some difficulty. In terms of human sexuality the climate had changed enough that the conference felt moved to pass a

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⁴ There is a nice irony that the first Lambeth Conference was called, in part, to decide whether or not the Bishop of Natal, John Colenso, had gone too far in accommodating Zulu culture and the fact that the most recent Lambeth Conference met in Indaba groups – a Zulu form of meeting.

⁵ 1968 Lambeth Conference (www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1968), Resolution 34.
motion re-affirming heterosexuality as the Scriptural norm\(^6\), but also agreed that the question of homosexuality needed serious study and that there should be ‘dialogue’ with homosexuals. The cracks were beginning to show, and the Communion made two kinds of response that have become important to this story. On the one hand, with regard to homosexuality, a proper call for study and thought was made in order to help the Communion move forward together. On the other hand, with regard to the ordination of women, while noting that there might be ‘pain and distress’ caused by these ordinations, the Provinces were encouraged to continue in communion with each other, make provision for those who found it difficult and to keep talking. They also acknowledged that while the ‘variety of doctrine and practice’ within the Anglican Communion might disappoint the leaders of other Christian churches, the Conference also made it clear that ‘the holding together of diversity within a unity of faith and worship is a part of the Anglican heritage’\(^7\).

In the ten years to the Lambeth Conference of 1988, things had moved on dramatically and the controversies were becoming deeper and sharper. Resolution 18 of the 1988 Conference spoke of ‘impaired communion’ as the present state of play over the issue of women ordained as bishops\(^8\). Resolution 64 urged ‘deep and dispassionate’ study of homosexuality and recognises that there are different attitudes towards homosexuality developing in different Provinces, and calls for proper pastoral care for homosexual people\(^9\). Resolution 22 tried to draw a sharp distinction between the Gospel and all

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\(^7\) Ibid, Resolution 21.


\(^9\) Ibid., Resolution 64.
human cultures, while at the same time, and without any acknowledgement of the irony, acknowledging that human culture provides the way in which people have their identity and through which mission and evangelism have their relevance\textsuperscript{10}. In Resolution 72 a new problem is acknowledged and addressed – one that will become sharper over the next ten years: the bishops are urged to respect each others’ jurisdiction and asked not to interfere in any other Diocese and its life\textsuperscript{11}. The Lambeth Conference of 1988 saw all the major fault lines exposed: some dioceses were acting in ways that were seen to be unscriptural and ahead of the mind of the Communion by some, and as faithfulness to the leading of the Spirit by others; some bishops were acting outside their own jurisdiction in order to meet the needs of those who would not accept the authority of their own bishop; restraint, study, calm, faithfulness to the Gospel were urged on all sides, concluding, in the words of Resolution 7, by saying,

*With the number of issues that could threaten our unity it seems fair that we should speak of our mutual respect for one another, and the positions we hold, that serves as a sign of our unity*\textsuperscript{12}.

The fault lines exposed here and which were seen as a threat to Anglican unity, became a chasm by the time and through the workings of the 1998 Conference.

By the time of the 1998 Lambeth Conference the trenches of the opposing sides in the great Anglican conflict were very deep indeed. Separate meetings of bishops and others were taking place; new organisations were being formed to promote one

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., Resolution 22.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., Resolution 72.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
side of the debate or the other. The divisions became deep and were about to become more bitter.

The lasting legacy of the 1998 Lambeth Conference was Resolution 1.10 on human sexuality\textsuperscript{13}. Resolution 1.10 called for care and compassion for those who ‘experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation’, and committed the Conference to listen to the experience of homosexual people; at the same time it rejected homosexual practice as ‘incompatible with Scripture’ and could not allow the blessing of same-sex unions\textsuperscript{14}. Within five years the Episcopal Church in the United States had ordained an openly gay man in a committed same-sex relationship as Bishop of New Hampshire, Bishops from what had come to be called ‘the Global South’ were consecrating new bishops within the jurisdiction of others, parishes were suing each other over property, Bishops were refusing to talk to each other: the Anglican Communion was tearing itself apart. As the time for the 2008 Lambeth Conference approached many were wondering whether it could take place at all.

**The Indaba Process of Lambeth 2008**

The parliamentary style of working, which had characterised all of the Lambeth Conferences up to 1998, was a particularly Western way of working and seemed natural to the assembled bishops since they had been, throughout most of the Communion’s history, Western men. By the time preparations for the 2008 Lambeth Conference were being made, it became clear that this parliamentary style of working was not going to help heal the divisions of the Anglican Communion, but only


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
make things worse. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who invites the Bishops of the Communion to the Conference, felt that a different way of working was required: one that would enable what the summary paper issued at the end of the Conference called ‘respectful listening’\textsuperscript{15}. The Conference that followed was quite unlike any other before it.

The Conference, which had as its main themes – ‘Equipping Bishops for Mission’ and ‘Strengthening Anglican Identity’ – began with a three day retreat held in Canterbury Cathedral and led by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The addresses were based mainly on the letters of St Paul and, in the words of the Conference reflections\textsuperscript{16},

Invited the bishops to think about what it meant for the bishop to be a person in whom God revealed Jesus.

Following the retreat the bishops met in a context of regular worship and prayer and daily Bible study in small groups. The significant feature of each day, however, was the Indaba groups; groups of about 40 or so meeting in what is essentially a Zulu style and method of conflict resolution. In his brief paper setting out what Indaba is and how it works, The Most Rev Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town and a member of the Lambeth Conference Design Group, described Indaba in the following way\textsuperscript{17}:

\textbf{Indaba is a Zulu word for a gathering for purposeful discussion. It is both a process and a method of}


\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Lambeth Indaba} (\url{http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/2008/}), para.10, p5.

\textsuperscript{17} Thabo Makgoba, \textit{The Essence of Indaba}, \url{http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/continuingindaba/resources/pdf/h0p3.pdf}. 
engagement as we listen to one another concerning challenges that face our community and by extension the Anglican Communion.

An Indaba first and foremost acknowledges that there are issues that need to be addressed effectively to foster on-going communal living. Originally, in the Zulu context, these might be stock theft [or] poor service delivery, but in the case of the Anglican Communion it might be questions related to the way we handle the Bible, sexuality, post colonialism, autonomy concerns and the many missional challenges. It is these issues that need to be brought to the “table”.

In Indaba, we must be aware of these challenges (issues) without immediately trying to resolve them one way or the other. We meet and converse, ensuring that everybody has a voice, and contributes (in our case, praying that it might be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit) and that the issues at hand are fully defined and understood by all.

The purpose of the discussion is to find out the deeper convergences that might hold people together in difference and come to a deeper understanding of the topic or issue discussed. This will be achieved by seeking to understand exactly the thinking behind positions other than my own.

The report of these Indaba conversations, published at the end of the Conference, indicated that those who participated, the 700 or so bishops from around the world, were changed by the process. They reported a new depth of encounter and understanding, a new and renewed sense of how much they need each other; ‘at a time when many in our global society are seeking just the sort of international community that we already have’, the Conference Report concluded, ‘we would be foolish
to let such a gift fall apart’.\(^1\) The bishops left with a renewed sense of purpose, but also a very clear understanding there was still a great deal of work to do, many bridges to be built if the momentum towards division was to be reversed and if the scars of thirty years of increasingly bitter argument were to heal. Speaking of those bishops who refused to come to the Conference, the Report states\(^2\),

> We have been diminished by their absence. We shall seek ways in which they may be drawn into our deliberations and held in communion. Our concern now is to rebuild bridges, to look for opportunities to share with them the experience we have had in Canterbury and to find ways of moving forward together in our witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is that sense of unfinished business and the need to keep the conversation going that led to the creation of the Continuing Indaba Project as a tool for reconciliation in the Anglican Communion.

**The Continuing Indaba Project**

The Continuing Indaba Project aims to try to make the kind of experience the bishops had at the Lambeth Conference available to others. The Project has three strands:

- Intensifying relationships across the Communion
- Energising local and global mission
- Enabling genuine conversation across difference.

The work of the Project falls into three parts as well. Since 2008, and as the first part of the process, there have been a number of consultations around the world in which theologians, pastors and church leaders from across the theological

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\(^2\) Ibid., para.4, p.4.
spectrum have been invited to think together about the kinds of theological, pastoral and spiritual resources, from their culture and experience, that might be helpful to further Indaba Conversations. As Canon Phil Groves who leads the Project for the Communion put it\textsuperscript{20}, the aim of the Resources Hubs, as they have come to be called, is to

Develop theological resources to inform the process of seeking a common mind by the utilisation of theologians around the world reflecting on Scripture and the traditions of the church in the context of diverse cultures, with an emphasis on non-western cultures and to publish them in culturally appropriate forms. [And to] develop and publish training materials for the convening and facilitation of Anglican Indaba processes.

So there have been resource hubs in India, the USA, the West Indies, South Africa, East Africa and Hong Kong. Contributions from those hubs are being collated and published as contributions to future discussion, and they can be viewed on the Anglican Communion web site\textsuperscript{21}.

The second part of the process is what have come to be called Pilot Conversations. Typically these will be Indaba style conversations where the process can be tested and where the resources can be assessed. The plan is to run

Five pilot conversations of typically three dioceses meeting across diversity. The focus will be upon on the primary mission issues in each context and will not avoid hard questions – not only related to sexuality, but also to the authority of Scripture,

\textsuperscript{20} \url{http://www.anglicancommunion.org/listening/continuing_indaba/description.cfm}.
\textsuperscript{21} \url{http://www.anglicancommunion.org}. 

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faithfulness to tradition and the respect for the dignity of all. The hope will be that the result of the conversations will be a depth of agreement and the clarification of disagreement resulting in positive missional relationships.\(^{22}\)

It is further hoped that from these conversations a sort of template for Indaba will be developed that will enable others to benefit from this style of work. The first of these conversations have begun.

The third part of this process, when it is refined by experience and reflection, is to make it a standard way of working in the Anglican Communion. To make deep and respectful listening, to make understanding of agreement and disagreement clear, to begin from the position of believing the other person has as deep a commitment to Christ and the Gospel as you do, to enable a process of moving together to confront the great issues of our world in Christ’s name. It is because of this potential that there has also been an ecumenical Observer Group following with close interest how the project develops to see if there are ways in which it can have a wider application among other churches.

**Indaba and Reconciliation**

In his memoir of his time as Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair wrote a long chapter about the peace process in Northern Ireland that led to what came to be called the ‘Good Friday Agreement’, and the continuing, if difficult, process of establishing a new set of relationships between Unionists and Nationalists, between Protestants and Catholics. After relating a great deal of detail about the negotiations, about how close they

\(^{22}\) [http://www.anglicancommunion.org/listening/continuing_indaba/description.cfm.](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/listening/continuing_indaba/description.cfm)
came to failure, and about what eventually they agreed on, Mr Blair writes about ten principles he feels are important generalisations about conflict resolution. In the context of thinking and writing about the continuing Indaba project, I was struck by a bit of what he called his third principle: ‘In conflict resolution, small things can be big things’. He writes,

This is ... about putting aside your view of what is important in favour of theirs. ...The small things matter because in the minds of the key parties they often loom large with a perspective that we can’t always grasp.23

Here he is writing as a broker, the one who stands between divided parties and tries to come up with a solution. You have to think your way into their mind, he argues, in order to know what is important. You have to put aside your own take on it and hear properly what they are saying, what their deepest thoughts are, what really matters, whatever the presenting issue might be.

In the great conflicts that grip the Anglican Communion there is no one who stands in the position of broker. We have no pope to decide, no international legal processes to which we all subscribe, no court to which we can appeal. We are not yet a confessional church: we have no Westminster or Augsburg confession, no founding documents to which we can bring our disputes. Anglicans have always understood themselves to simply be a part of the ‘one, holy, catholic and apostolic church’, giving due weight to the early counsels of the church, giving pride of place to Scripture, but valuing human reason as applied to both. No one, not even the Archbishop of Canterbury, stands outside of the Anglican family in a position to adjudicate: how we resolve our disputes is down to us.

Like the mighty divisions in Northern Ireland, the issues that are of most significance in the Anglican Communion are not necessarily the ones over which the most noise is made. The Indaba process, as a process of ‘respectful listening’, is an attempt to get behind the noise and hear what really matters to other people. That includes my noise. I must learn to listen, to put aside my take on what is important and hear what you hold dear and what drives and motivates you. I must stop marshalling my arguments, stop digging up my proof-texts, stop defending my territory long enough to see what territory you think is worth defending and why. Indaba is another way of walking a mile in another person’s shoes.

In June of this year, the Bishop of Gloucester in the Church of England and two other bishops wrote a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury reflecting on the Partnership developed between his Diocese of Gloucester, and the Dioceses of El Camino Real in the USA, and Western Tanganyika in Tanzania. This is a long-standing partnership between these dioceses, but it is also one of the pilot conversations of the Continuing Indaba Project. In the letter the bishops write not so much about Indaba, but about ‘safari’, as it is understood in Tanzania, and not quite in the same ways as a tourist might think of it. In Tanzania a ‘safari’ is not so much about seeing wild animals as it is about a shared journey, ‘even a pilgrimage’ which is characterised by how they have listened to God and to each other on their journey; and by how their journey has been structured around prayer and the Eucharist and their study of Scripture. The Bishops write,

We have celebrated our diversity, but this has not been through a blurring of our differences, by ‘simply

24 The letter can be found at http://gloucester.anglican.org/ministry/bishop/, and is also printed in this volume.
accepting that we are different’. Our conversations have been characterised by love and honesty, and we have been careful to hold each other to account to say what we truly mean – and to share what we truly feel. We have been diligent in identifying and facing hard issues on which we disagree. We have recognised in one another a common commitment to scripture, whilst admitting that we profoundly disagree on some areas of interpretation. We have listened, more determined to understand than to change each others’ minds, though ready to change our own. Above all, we have been able to accept one another within the Body of Christ; as our African brother and sister Christians reported when they visited the Diocese of El Camino Real in California, ‘I see Christians’.

This is a powerful testimony to the processes of reconciliation that the Continuing Indaba Project hopes to replicate throughout the Anglican Communion and beyond.

Reflection on the Process

In reflecting on this process I would like briefly to draw our thinking towards two portions of Scripture: the first is the story found in both Mark and Matthew25 of Jesus’ encounter with the Syro-Phonecian woman; and the second is the story found in Acts – and then throughout the letters of Paul – about the admission of the Gentiles into the Church. The story of Jesus and the Syro-Phonecian woman is an example from Jesus’ life and ministry of how listening led to change; the Admission of the Gentiles is about how listening across diversity and conflict can lead to a new openness to the working of God’s Spirit and to new possibilities.

25 Mark 7. 24-30; Matthew 15. 21-28.
The encounter between Jesus and the Syro-Phonecian woman will be familiar. Jesus has just finished an intense time of teaching, healing and arguing with the Pharisees, and there has been little time for him to simply think and pray. He is in Southern Lebanon looking for a little time on his own with his disciples. Instead Jesus is confronted by a Gentile woman who begs help from him for her daughter. The disciples try to send her away, but she becomes more persistent and the disciples come to Jesus and ask him to get rid of her. Jesus is not inclined to speak to her and says he has come only for the lost sheep of Israel. In fact Jesus calls her a dog, saying that it is not right to give the children’s food to the dogs. She is not deterred by this and says, that may be true, but even the dogs get to eat the crumbs that fall from the table.

I think Jesus is surprised by this reply: it’s one of those moments, as we say in England, when the light dawns, or that cartoon light bulb comes on in your head, when you have a moment of understanding and things become clear. Mark is pretty matter of fact about it, but it’s a dramatic moment in Matthew: ‘Woman, great is your faith!’ You can hear the admiration in his voice; his irritation turns to a recognition that he has just experienced something important, that he is seeing God at work in this woman, from whom he was expecting nothing.

In this story Jesus has done what we might call ‘deep listening’. Through all the arguments going through his tired mind, he hears the woman’s faith and her need, and her great love for her child ringing through. This was not about whether she was Gentile or Jewish or of the household of faith or a foreigner; this was not a theological argument in any conventional sense. Here we see Jesus become aware of the deeper story, of the
fact that his ministry is for the whole world, as symbolised by this woman. Jesus hears differently in this story and is changed by this encounter; the important issues have surfaced and real understanding has taken place.

The other story is also familiar. As the earliest Christian communities began to move out from Jerusalem and into a more Gentile context, so the question of how to treat and even understand the Gentiles who wanted to follow Jesus became more urgent. In the Jewish context in which the Christian church was born there was nothing more traditional than looking down on and despising everything that came out of a Gentile context, including the Gentiles themselves. Gentiles did not worship the one true God, they did not accept or obey any of the many laws that distinguished God’s people from everyone else; the first Christians, as Jews, continued that tradition. Then, early on, the unthinkable happened: God, it seems, was pleased to accept Gentiles into the household of faith without so much as a dietary law in sight. This was not only a surprise, it was a crisis.

The great story here is St Peter’s vision as told in the Acts of the Apostles, in which a great sheet is lowered to him from heaven with a whole host of unclean animals in it; he is commanded by God to kill and eat, and he refuses on the basis that nothing unclean has ever passed his lips. After Peter is told three times by God not to call unclean what God calls clean, Peter understands that this is about the Gentiles and that God is working in the Gentiles in the same new way – through Christ – as he is working in them. In obedience to God, Peter then begins to baptise them and accept them into the Christian fold. (24.48)

When word of this reaches Jerusalem, St Peter is summoned to explain himself to a council of the church. He does this in a moving account of his vision and ends by saying, ‘God gave them no less a gift than he gave us when we came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. How could I stand in God’s way?’ The account in Acts says that when the Council heard this they were silenced and then praised God.

In this story, three things drive change in the church. The first is that people started to understand that God goes before them in mission: the Spirit of God will not be contained by our traditions, our theology, or our ideas of what is right. The second is that it was the mission imperative that drove Peter to do and believe things that were radically different from his natural inclination. Third, the Council of the Church, divided as it was, was able to hear deeply how God had moved in a new way and were able to react, even if it was a difficult choice which they knew would put a theological and cultural distance between themselves and their Jewish forebears.

The process that led to the acceptance of the Gentiles began as a confrontation. Those who saw their Jewish heritage as a defining element of the newly born Christian faith, criticized Peter, asking why he had gone to uncircumcised men and eaten with them. The Indaba-like act of the Council is that once they had raised the problem, Peter was allowed to say what had happened; as Acts 11.4 puts it, ‘Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step’.

In these two brief stories, really listening to what the other is saying is of crucial importance to hearing and understanding the will and ways of God. This is not just about being intellectually convinced by another person’s argument; it is about properly
hearing and internalising their concerns and point of view, which can lead to real change, real understanding. This is something of what the Continuing Indaba project of the Anglican Communion is trying to promote: a sense of listening to God by listening to each other.

It is in this listening, I think, that we come to understand what a commitment to truth and service mean. If we are committed to the truth, to really hearing what is God’s agenda and not just ours, or merely our interpretation of it, then we will be open to other people and to learning from them; if we are really committed to serving people in God’s name, then we will need to be open to God at work in them. The Continuing Indaba Project will not be the last or only word in conflict resolution, but it does offer us a journey, a movement away from self and towards the other: both of which are crucial if we are to be at peace with God and with each other.
‘Who You Calling Dawg?’
A Bible Study on Mark 7: 24-30

Dr Evie Vernon

Context

Dr Evie Vernon is a lay theologian from Jamaica and Director of the Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies.

The approach to Bible study that she uses here she calls ‘participative Nannyish Theology’, borrowing from Dr Anthony Reddie and Dr Marjorie Lewis. In “Is God Colour-blind”, Reddie speaks of Christians getting involved in people’s learning to change things – an activist, liberationist approach – while Lewis speaks of Nannyish Theology as a Liberation theology coming out of the experience of Jamaican women, named after Nanny, a Jamaican freedom fighter.

In this approach, the Bible is not a neutral text, and we do not read it in neutral ways. We use the text as a tool for liberation.

This Bible Study is best done in a small group taking time to reflect on the questions.

Mark 7:24-30

All of us, staff - George Wauchope, priest and freedom fighter from South Africa, Joshva Raja, scholar from South India, Robert Bruce, former mission partner from Scotland; and students from all the regions of the world- Africa, Asia, The Caribbean, the Pacific, North America, come with a weight of experience of churches, agencies and individuals coming into our spaces to ‘help’ us.

No-one could have been more bright-eyed and bushy-tailed than I was at 16 except for me when I turned 25, as I went
about ‘helping’ the ‘less-fortunate’ - men, women and children to better themselves.

Only by God’s grace and their graciousness did I survive, as I tried too often to get them to do things I thought were good for them without finding out what they felt about it.

Let’s look at the relative social places of Jesus and the foreign woman.

Jesus was in a position of relative privilege. He was an educated male Jew (he was invited to read in the synagogue), who was leading a significant movement.

His privilege was not, however, absolute, because he was the subject of a colonising Roman power.

The woman, by contrast, was near the bottom of the society. She was a woman and a foreigner, classed by even the Jewish oppressed as a ‘pagan’.

It’s not easy to define one’s place in society. At home in Jamaica, for instance, I am a well educated person, which puts me up the scale, but I’m not wealthy, which puts me down, and I am a woman, which doesn’t help – and in terms of my church, I’m not a priest. In the UK, I’m a foreign black woman, which definitely lowers my place on the scale. I teach in a theological college, but it’s not a really big and famous one.

1. What place do you occupy in your society, in your family/work place/community?
2. What place do you occupy in your church community?
3. How does your position relative to others influence your behaviour towards them?
Now we’re going to try to enter into the world of the foreign woman.

I’ve allowed you the option of intellectualising the exercise, so the questions are asking you to think how some un-named person would feel in this situation.

1. How would it feel to ask for help and be refused?
2. How would it feel to have to surrender your dignity to get help?
3. How might this happen in mission?

Now we try to enter Jesus’ mind.

Let us forget all the clever arguments about why he may have said what he said and only look at this: he said one thing; the lady said something else; Jesus adjusted his statement as a result of what she said. I read that as Jesus being humble enough to publicly change his mind.

1. How do we respond when we are challenged?
2. How do we learn to listen to people's needs?

Let me tell you a story. I love stories. The names have been changed to protect the innocent and the not-so innocent.

A young American from the Southern US, let’s say Atlanta, came to do mission among the black people of the Caribbean.

A Caribbean colleague looked at him and asked, “So do you work with the Black churches in Atlanta? How many black people come to your home church?”

The young man hung his head and didn’t answer, whereupon his Caribbean colleague said, “So why are you trying to do here
what you can’t do at home? Try taking the plank out of your own eye before you tackle the speck in mine.”

Recently I was at a mission meeting in the UK and it was notable that of about twenty-four of us, only 3 were people of colour, and none of us were British-born. Think about who is absent from the committees of power in your churches.

1. Where are the Syro-Phoenician women among you?
2. What does it say about you mission if they are not here in meaningful numbers?

Let us hear the words of the foreign woman:

Who you calling Dawg?
Yes, you, preacher man.

I hear you is a healer,
So I push me way through this crowd
Of laughing, taunting men
Who see all like me as dirt;
Bitch and foreign bitch to boot

I snarl and growl me way through
I don’t mind them
I would do anything for me daughter

I force me way to you
And tell you me need
And you look on me and call me ‘Dawg.’
I bark right back,
“An Dawg an all eat the scrapses from Massa table”

And you look me in the eye
An you laugh and say
“You right. You daughter heal.”

An is true.
And I thank you
and I follow you.

But I still don’t understand
Why you had was to call we “dawg.”
But I glad you tell me I right
Before de crowd of dem.

Suggested Readings


The Philippian Model
Rev. Dr. Canon Phil Groves

The Anglican Communion has understood mission relationships across the world to be ‘partnership’ relationships. However, it has been rarely asked what partnership is and what partnerships look like. Often relationships have been defined by donor/receiver models of wealthy provinces giving to poor provinces where mission takes place.

The following model was developed by from a detailed academic study of the relationship between Paul and his community in Rome and the community of Christians in Philippi. The model is abstracted for application in the present.

1. Partners have a common purpose

From the Bible

For Paul and the Philippians the task which defines the partnership is the gospel, not only in its living out, but more importantly in its proclamation of Jesus as Lord. Others would be in fellowship with Paul and share his beliefs and values, but he is willing and eager to share with the Philippians in the task that he so categorically defined as his own in Corinth. The partnership was in danger if Paul was not able to fulfil his part, but Paul assures them that his work continues and even, surprisingly, had widened and strengthened. He exhorts the Philippians to keep on track with their part of the contract, potentially hindered by division, and much of the teaching is aimed at this.

Conclusion

A partnership depends upon a clear, common task in which all partners can be involved. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: what is the purpose of the
partnership? Are the parties involved able to play their role in achieving the goal?

2. Partners are of equal status

From the Bible

In 1 Corinthians Paul marks himself as apostle in order to call the divided communities to rediscover the victory of the cross. He redefines authority in weakness and opposes forms of verbal coercion. In this manner the common relationships of the use of power legitimised by charismatic authority are challenged. As long as the Corinthian communities expect a relationship defined by dependency, partnership is not possible.

Paul recognises the Philippians’ maturity, and assumes equality of status in the relationship. He shows a level of respect and mutual equality for the Philippian church that is rarely equalled in the rest of his letters. He, Timothy and the whole church of Philippi, including the overseers and deacons, are of equal status within the partnership. All are slaves of Christ and owe obedience to Christ alone. Power exists and flows in both directions without one side dominating the other.

Conclusion

In a partnership both partners must have equality of status. There must be mutual respect. Partnership cannot work where there are feelings of inferiority or superiority on either side. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: are all ready to forego feelings of superiority? Do all have confidence to know they are as important as those with whom they are in partnership?
3. Partners have a common basis of belief

From the Bible

The Philippians shared Paul’s basic understanding of the gospel. They are at one on the basics fundamental to their task. They share the common ground in assenting to the Christological hymn in Chapter 2. However, there is room for contextual differences in how these fundamentals are worked out in their lives both corporately and individually. There is room for cultural differences.

Conclusion

Absolute theological parity is not a requisite for partnership, but a common basis of belief and a shared theological language within which to discuss our relationship in partnership is of vital importance. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: do all have a basis of shared values and beliefs? Do all have a shared theological language with which to discuss both unity and diversity?

4. Partners have a concern for unity in one another’s community

From the Bible

The Philippian church does not show evidence of fundamental division. It does not have the scale of problems of disunity displayed by the Corinthian church, but there are minor divisions. Unity is such a vital point for the continuation of the partnership that Paul sees it necessary to emphasise its value at the heart of the letter. The disunity within his own community is something that he regrets, but again it is not of
the order of the proud disunity of the Corinthians. At least he has Timothy. The path to unity is through humility in the footsteps of Jesus and his way of servant hood. Reconciliation is not achieved by judging who is right and wrong, but by the facilitation of dialogue between the divided people.

Conclusion

Partnership between two groups depends upon each group being united. Unity is forged by humility. Without unity the partnership will be between parties within one or both of the groups, and will encourage division. It is the responsibility of each partner to encourage unity in the other, and, when appropriate, to offer services of reconciliation and not judgement. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: is each partner prepared to seek the way of humility to unity? Are all committed to unity their partner community?

5. Partners are eager to communicate and to be with one another

From the Bible

Eagerness to send letters and to visit transcend the problems of travel and communication, and are even more important for Paul than an early end to his life which will see him united with Christ (the best thing he can think of). In contrast to 1 Corinthians, he is eager to be with them, and the expected visits are for their joy and for Paul’s. Letters are no substitute for personal visits, and even trusted representatives such as Timothy are no substitute for the real thing. Communication, the joyful expectancy of the letters and visits, is an important feature of the relationship between Paul and the Philippians.
Conclusion

Partners will seek ways to be in communication, using whatever means are available, but never neglecting personal visits. The purpose of the visits is for mutual encouragement and to discover how the partnership is proceeding. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: is each community able to put in the resources of finance, time, and effort into visiting their partners and welcoming them into their homes and churches? Are all prepared to maintain the links by using all forms of communication available?

6. Partners share complementary resources and skills

From the Bible

The sharing of resources is vital to the furtherance of partnership. Money is a significant part of the sharing, but it can only be offered and received in the context of reciprocal exchanges and must not dominate the exchange. The danger of money is that it leaves a debt that needs to be repaid. If it is not given as part of a mutual relationship then the donor can become the master, a contradiction of the Lordship of Jesus and thus of the gospel. Any gifts are for the gospel and given to God. The relationship is fluid and it is not always clear what one side will have to offer the other as the partnership starts out.

Conclusion

Partners will have complementary gifts and resources to share. Money will often be part of this, but money cannot dominate the relationship. Other gifts are required from both parties. The richer party must be prepared to offer more than
money and neither side can take power over the other by the giving of gifts. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: how can money be placed in its correct context? How are the riches of the variety of gifts of all to be shared?

7. Partners share in one another’s struggles and victories

From the Bible

The Corinthian church was prepared to pay for services rendered and to engage in reciprocity, paying for Paul's preaching. However, they were not prepared to enter into suffering for him and showed no interest in sharing the credit for their own victories. In contrast, the Philippian Church demonstrated solidarity with Paul through being prepared to face poverty and economic disadvantage, and being prepared to offer sacrificial giving for the sake of the partnership. The acceptance of liability is fundamental to a partnership relationship, but so is the sharing in profit. Neither partner was to profit in terms of wealth or status, the conventional measures of their age. Credit with God is regarded by Paul as a more valuable reward.

Conclusion

Partners will be prepared to share in liability and rejoice in one another’s success. Partnership requires commitment that may, at times, lead to suffering in solidarity. It requires the ability to rejoice in the partner’s success. When entering a partnership the questions must be asked: is each prepared to share in the suffering of the other? Are all prepared to share delight in victories?
Listening to God is the foundation and starting point of all listening processes. As we listen to God, we have an opportunity for self-reflection and evaluation, and also listen to others. In Genesis 16, we reflect on the story between Sarah and Hagar. Hagar is fleeing from a conflict situation, and in the process she encounters the angel of the Lord. In this encounter between God and Hagar, God listens to Hagar. Hagar also listens to what God has to say about her situation as she reflects on the way forward. This story is very useful in reflecting on the situation within the Anglican Communion. Several issues are raised within the text which is similar.

First, the text presents Hagar fleeing from the conflict situation. Maybe, she thinks that by fleeing the problem will be solved. In the Anglican Church, the different groups seem to be in flight. There is a great worry over imminent division within the Church. Flight in this case is seen as trying to escape the problem. However, in the text Hagar’s flight leads her into a situation of listening to God and also reflecting on the issues at stake. This is quiet similar to the experience of the Luo people of Kenya. Flight plays a very important role in conflict resolution and is always the spring board of self-reflection and also listening to others. In the genealogy stories, Ramogi, the great ancestor of

27 The angel of the Lord always refers to God himself appearing in human form.
the Luo people had two sons. They had a major conflict which forced them to part ways. But parting ways gave them opportunity to reflect and reconcile and also realize that their destiny is bound together. In Luo marriages, when a marriage is at the point of breaking, there is always flight from one of the parties, which gives an opportunity to each of them to reflect and then, in the presence of a few people listen to each other and reconcile.

Second it is evident that pregnancy and contempt is not the only issue but it can be described as the final straw on the horse’s back. There are several historical issues between the two and even between their societies. There are historical issues in their personal relationships, for example the issue of slavery. The history of their countries is also characterized by cultural and religious conflict. Hence, historical issues of gender, ethnicity and race are also in play. Focusing on the pregnancy and contempt might not capture the whole issue. In the Anglican Communion there are also historical factors in play.

Third major issue in the conflict between the two women is power relationship. Sarah, is in a position of power, she is a matriarch in Israel, which gives her a very special position in the chosen nation, and also a privileged position in the sight of God. Sarah is also married and in Israel, position of a married woman is tied to property ownership (Lacocque, 1990:11) and also gives social security. Sarah is also a free-born. However, despite Sarah’s position, there are aspects which also make her powerless. Sarah is barren and has no child and in Israel motherhood is greatly respected, and reproduction is key to the survival of the society. In this particular context having a child
was very critical as a child was key to the fulfilment of the covenant.

Hagar on the other hand is powerless; she is an Egyptian and therefore a gentile with no rights in this context. Hagar is also single and is a slave, which implies both poverty and low social status. However, Hagar has a point of strength because she is young and fertile. In this particular context, this really mattered. Both Hagar and Sarah share one point of powerlessness; they are both disadvantaged due to their gender. In the Anglican Communion power relations is a major issue. But as we learn from this passage no one person is completely powerful or powerless.

Fourth, another issue to reflect on is the role of culture in the conflict. God had made a covenant with Abraham and promised to bless him with an heir and greatly multiply his descendants. This was a divine promise, but Sarah and Abraham resort to culture to fulfil the divine promise. There were acceptable ways in the culture to deal with the issue of childlessness. First, this was through adoption, and it is believed that Abraham had already adopted Eliezer as an heir. Secondly, according to the laws of Hammurapi, a wife could present one of her slave girls to her husband to bear a son (Baldwin, 1986:58). Sarah followed this route which was culturally acceptable. Sarah, takes initiative to deal with her humiliation, and fulfil her promise, she is not straight forward but resorts to culture (Wallace, 1981:53). Sarah herself had already confessed that it is God who gives a Child.

Sarah and Abraham, in resorting to go the cultural way use a very exploitative method. Hagar is being used as an object to build up a family for Sarah. Sarah has the agenda but Hagar is
just an object being used. This results in several tensions and conflicts. Employing the use of culture led to contradiction in two major divine principles. First, was the fulfilment of the covenant between God and Israel which had to come through the ancestors. Israelites had to be faithful to the covenant and to the ancestors who were to fulfil it. Secondly, God is a just God who sees the plight of the oppressed. In this case an oppressive way was being used by Sarah and Abraham to fulfil God’s promises. In the Anglican Church, this plays out when it seems that there is a contradiction between issues that are biblical and issues which deal with justice in the Church.

Hagar becomes pregnant with Abraham’s child and holds Sarah in contempt. Hagar now felt that she was above her mistress; the pregnancy gave Hagar new status and also hope in life. She boasts at the prospect of bringing up a son for Abraham, an heir to the master. It is interesting that even the legislation within the culture did not crush her spirit. According to culture, the official wife and not the mother of the child had jurisdiction over the Child and the right of inheritance is only assured when the son had been legally adopted (Baldwin, 1986:58). In conceiving Hagar has the opportunity to contribute to Sarah’s recovery of well being by giving them a child. The result would be that she would also enjoy enhanced status. Instead Hagar sees this as an opportunity to gain personal and social victory over the mistress (Janzen, 1993:43). The question posed is that do we use the opportunity we get to bless others as we also progress or we prefer personal victory?

Sarah responds by holding Abraham accountable for Hagar’s behaviour. Abraham on his part refuses to take responsibility but permits Sarah to do whatever she wants. Each one is passing the buck. Sarah is determined to put Hagar in her
place, and therefore decides to mistreat Hagar, which is not justifiable. It is interesting that in this passage, the people in conflict are actually not facing each other. Abraham also decides to sit in the fence, and let events take their course, but encourage Sarah to do whatever she wants. None of the parties can claim innocence in this situation.

Hagar felt afflicted and decides to flee, in the process God appears to her and listens to her. God calls Hagar both by her name, and also refers to her as maid of Sarah. God therefore acknowledges her individuality and personal identity. God affirms her as a person, but by also referring to her in relation with Sarah, God also underlines her identity with Sarah. God asks Hagar where she is coming from and where she is going. She is therefore forced to reflect both on her past and her destiny. Hagar responds that she is fleeing from her mistress. However, God forces Hagar to reflect on the root of the problem and think more seriously on the future and her destiny. Hagar seems to be evading the only way into a tolerable future. In her flight, she might not have seriously weighed her options. Culturally, the child she was carrying could only be an heir to Abraham he was born in the knees of Sarah, and legally adopted. Hagar is therefore ordered to go back to her mistress. She is also not innocent and has wronged Sarah, both had wronged each other, and the flight was not helping but alienating them. However, after encountering and listening to God Hagar returned to her mistress.

Flight, therefore becomes an opportunity to meet God, listen to God and to obey the instructions of God. Listening to God becomes a spring board for self reflection and also to return. God corrects Hagar but also affirms her and gives her hope.
“The experience of a lifetime.” I never believed that I would live to meet, see, hear and inter-act with the Archbishop of Canterbury”; “Words cannot express.” These are samples of the way in which many of the faithful in Jamaica have talked about the impact of ACC XIV held in Jamaica in May 2009.

I, personally, feel privileged and honoured to have been the Bishop at that particular time. The Diocese, itself, has been greatly encouraged and inspired by the fellowship we have enjoyed with our brothers and sisters from around the Globe. It is not automatic or easy for dioceses located in small and far flung Islands to experience the vastness of this unique worldwide Community of faith known as Anglicanism. Even in this global village of instant electronic communication, it is easy to become isolated, insular and introverted. We have to work intentionally to overcome this tendency. However, an opportunity to enjoy the fellowship and to see the cultural and even the spiritual diversity of our Church will contribute much to this process. We recognize that this tremendous diversity is a challenge that could lead to an intensification of divisions and alienation, but it could also lead to a wonderful mutual enrichment. Our own poet, Professor Mervyn Morris, in a hymn written specifically for the Opening Service, affirms the source of our diversity in God Himself. He wrote:

“Lord of our diversity
unite us all we pray;
welcome us to fellowship
in your inclusive way
Teach us that opinions which at first may seem quite strange may reflect the Glory of Your great creative range.”

We are grateful that the ACC generously made time for the local Church. Firstly, to open up their Opening Service into a Provincial/Diocesan Service and, secondly, by taking time out to visit as many as forty of our Congregations. All of these visits were successful. Links and lasting connections were made at grassroots level. Who would have believed that the Archbishop of Wales, on his visit to St. David’s, Yallahs, would have bonded with the people to the extent of co-signing their petition to the Government asking for improvement to the roads leading to Llandewey.

Another highlight of these visits was the visit of Bishop Samson Mwaluda of Kenya to St. Paul’s, Moore Town, our chief Maroon Church. The Maroons are the original anti-slavery crusaders who refused to be enslaved and retreated to the most inaccessible hills of the country where they have maintained many features of their African heritage. The Missionaries who founded St. Paul’s from as far back as 1804 discouraged any manifestation of African culture. However, on May 10, 2009, when the Maroons of Moore Town learnt that they were to be visited by a real African Bishop, they were overjoyed. The Maroon Council, led by their Colonel, Mr. Wallace Sterling, came with traditional dancers and drummers and, of course, the Abeng. The Colonel led the team in a welcome dance, song and words spoken in Kromanti, based on the Twi language of West Africa.
Stories like these abound. We, ourselves, did not realise how connected we are with one another. Mention must be made of the impact of His Grace The Archbishop of Canterbury for his accessibility, his gracious demeanour, his wisdom and kindness. His great stature as a world leader was, in no way, diminished by his willingness to share himself with the humble people of his flock.

It is our prayer that ACC and, by extension, the Communion will have been as blessed as we have been by this coming together and that our present serious controversies may ultimately result in deeper understanding and wider fellowship.
Section 2: Indaba

*Take Indaba and baptize it. Make it your own in your own cultural context* - Archbishop Thabo Makgoba

Indaba originates in South African culture and was offered to the Anglican Communion by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba as a way of moving beyond the confrontational use of the resolutions at Lambeth Conferences. Indaba was born in South Africa, but if it is to be used across the Anglican Communion it requires baptizing.

There are two parts to this baptism, firstly, an encounter with Scripture and then an encounter with other cultural insights. This section begins in South Africa and then goes on a journey firstly to Kenya and then to England, China, India and Canada. In each place the concept is developed and enriched. The journey mirrors the development of theological consultations, or theological hubs that took place in 2009 to 2011 in various parts of the Communion.

The first paper by Bishop Ntlali of Grahamstown describes Indaba. This is followed by the Archbishop Thabo’s reflections on how the concept can be adopted within the Communion.

Janet Trisk, also from South Africa, looks at how Indaba has been used by the African National Congress (ANC) and others in South Africa. She offers a reminder that power issues are of vital importance if we are to adopt the concept.

The Kenyan theological hubs took place in 2009. The theologians gathered were still painfully aware of the divisions in their own country following the post election violence where
Kenyan turned on Kenyan based on ethnicity. The coming together of Luo and Kikuyu in calling for ‘Baraza’ (the Kiswahili word for Indaba) was present in that first consultation. There were times when the group stopped to pray for reconciliation in the nation. The divisions in the Communion were always in our minds, but other, more pressing issues placed them in context.

The dialogue between Luo and Kikuyu here is a significant mark of the power of Christ to break down the walls that divide community from community. You may wish to look back to the text by Emily Onyango, who was also at the hub: The hope for the future comes out of the pain of the present.

Ndugu’ Ikenye and Sammy Githkuru reflect on Kikuyu systems and their work is followed by a passionate plea for Baraza by John Mark Odour. His work in turn is taken up by an English theologian Stuart Burns.

From there two Asian essays take us further. Sushma Ramswami shows how the concepts of Indaba are not new to India and challenge her church to consider if they are genuinely listening. Frankie Lee developed his paper with a group of Hong Kong based theologians. He helps us to understand how the Chinese concept of ‘He’ (和) that is inadequately translated as ‘harmony’ can inform our Indaba.

The final paper in this section is by Wendy Fletcher who argues that it is distinctively Anglican to ensure that theology must be contextual as well as biblical. She argues that Anglican theology from Hooker moves ‘from the particular to the general’. She follows this with a case study from Canada and offers hope for reconciliation where others may say ‘there is nothing to be done; nothing to be done.’

In this section Indaba is baptized.
Indaba - A Southern African Concept
The Rt Rev Ebenezer Ntlali, Bishop of Grahamstown

In November 2009 Canon Phil Groves consulted with a group of Church leaders and theologians in order to gain a fuller concept of Indaba. I was deeply touched when after long discussions he just sat down and, in a hopeless manner said “please I need your help.” That night when I did my night Prayers it came to me that I need to help him and the rest of the group on what I personally believe as an African concerning Indaba. This is the reflection I gave to answer Phil’s request and for the rest of the group.

Indaba and Ubuntu concepts are part of a philosophy or a system that is working in Africa. These concepts seem to be universal models though they are called in different ways, in different contexts in Africa. For example the concept “indaba” is a Zulu notion and it is called “Imbizo” in Xhosa having the same meaning.

According to Prof. Mtuze, Imbizo is a traditional meeting or gathering called by a chief or headman for listening to the news or concerns that affect individuals or community and also to discuss matters of common interest, e.g. to inform the community of rising levels of crime in the neighbourhood, or to inform them about the chief’s son impending marriage for which they have to make “lobola” contributions. Women, in traditional society, are excluded from Imbizo except those who are directly affected. Only female regents and chiefs are allowed to attend. These concepts work easily and are understood in their indigenous background and communal system. The concept “Indaba” is a Zulu word which is synonymous with “Imbizo” as it is defined in the word “Imbizo”. There is also a modern
equivalent called “intlanganiso” which is a councillors meeting. Everyone is allowed to attend. This does not mean that “intlanganiso” can take the place of “Imbizo”. We can, however, use the term of “Imbizo” in spite of its traditional or cultural baggage to refer to a modern get together.

Prof Mtuze in his book “Introduction To Xhosa Culture” suggests that Ubuntu has wholeness as one of its pillars. It has foundations in a culture that regards life as a seamless garment that is so great and inclusive that there is no effective difference between the Spiritual and the Natural (1991:108).

Prof. Mtuze argues further that in this kind of existence, one persons’ personhood and identity is fulfilled and complemented by the other person’s personhood. Each person is because the other person is (1991:108). He believes that Ubuntu or ‘Botho’ in Sotho, ‘Vuthu’ etc is like the English personhood, an abstract term; it manifests its self through various visible human acts in different social situations.

He believes that Ubuntu is manifested in every human act which has community building as its objective orientation. Any act that destroys the community, any anti-social behaviour can not in any way be described as Ubuntu (1991:108).

He argues further that community building is one of the many spinoffs or faces of Ubuntu. He believes that Ubuntu should not be confused with generosity (ububele) and philanthropy. It is something deeper than those activities good as they are. It involves sharing yourself, your humanity with the other person first, and then the rest will follow suit. One can see that there is a sense in which the primary purpose is person building which will automatically dovetail into community building (1991:108).
On the practical manifestation of Ubuntu, Prof Mtuze shares the following:

- The philosophy of Ubuntu manifests itself in the lives of the people. It is not merely a theory but a way of life. The Chief is expected to practice Ubuntu in his or her governance. He or she has to care for his or her subjects, show compassion for their plight, address their needs and feed them during times of starvation. Many Chiefs lost their positions purely because they lacked Ubuntu.

- When a head of a household had finished tilling his own fields he would order his helpers to go and plough the destitute neighbours and widows in his vicinity there by showing Ubuntu to the less privileged.

- A stranger knew very well that if he or she broke his or her journey and sought shelter from one or other homestead along his way, he or she would not be turned away, he or she would be welcomed warmly and given hospitality for a number of days, until he or she was ready to resume his or her journey.

- Those who are well to do offer at least one heard of cattle to the poor members of the community, normally a cow, to milk and provide for their children until it had given birth to a calf which they could keep when the original owner fetched the ‘inqoma’ (borrowed cow). He could not fetch it until it had given birth to a calf and the calf had grown up to reach calving stage.

- Ubuntu ensured egalitarian treatment of all people in society. It was a guiding principle in all efforts aimed at strengthening each person in society so that he or she could take his or her place as a proud and productive member of society (1991: 109-110).
In a nutshell one can understand that Ubuntu in a communal system is lived out by people who say I exist because you are, your pain is my pain, your loss is my loss, if a person dies having nobody to bury him or her then the community takes responsibility to bury that person. Therefore, persons who are born and lived in a context where these concepts i.e. Ubuntu, Indaba, Imbizo, are lived have no problem about them at all and I think those who have not lived or not been part of the practice of these concepts will be lost and be in a situation where one does not understand their “value”, “worth” and their “assistance” and one cannot blame them.

My proposal is that these concepts are not absolute; we can learn from other concepts, from other cultures that will be of assistance in the model of conversation. Let us adopt Indaba as a model of dialogue in the Anglican Communion and further research about it in the knowledge that it has been tested and worked at the Lambeth Conference of 2008. Let it be used in a context of Spirituality, in what holds our Anglican Communion together e.g. Scripture, Worship, Anglican Communion and God’s mission. These are the ingredients that hold us together in the divinity and humanity of Christ.

And lastly let us adopt the cluster model that will enable the three selected Dioceses’ in the Anglican Communion across the world that would share their concerns using the concept of Indaba in their dialogue to achieve a deeper understanding of their lives and the challenges that they are facing and start to journey together over coming those challenges in doing God’s mission and so as to influence the whole of the Anglican Communion.

In conclusion, Indaba concept as a system for dialogue is used in a forum in which people would share their concerns either in an institution, church, government, chiefdoms or any other group of people that want to listen and share their concerns.
Secondly it can be used by a group of women or a male group or youth groups or inclusive of male and females to share their concerns together especially in a political forum.

We pray that God may pour his Grace on us in the Anglican Communion to continue our dialogue and find our common ground in the divinity and the humanity of Christ which is God’s love. We hope Phil this little contribution will be of help in your search as we look together in the continuation of the of “Indaba” process.

**Bibliography**

An Anglican Microcosm

The Most Rev Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town

Southern Africa is not only a global microcosm in socio-economic, political and geographical terms. Our Province is also something of a microcosm of the Anglican Communion. Alongside huge diversities in race, language and culture, we are high church and low church; those who call themselves Anglo-Catholics and ‘Afro-Catholics’ and Evangelicals; and those whose passion is Christ’s ‘good news for the poor’ pursued through political and social justice alongside evangelistic outreach.

While geographically, and in other ways besides, we are part of the Global South, that is not the whole story. We do take our membership of the Global South very seriously, and fully share the mission priorities identified in April’s Fourth Anglican Global South to South Encounter. We face the same concerns over poverty, hunger and sickness, and the breadth of human consequences of injustice and failure in our economic systems. We too are challenged by crime, violence, corruption, and the weaknesses – even instabilities – of our political life; and by the problems and threats of natural disasters, climate change and ecological fragility. Alongside the rest of the Global South, we too are committed to prioritising the pastoral needs of the laity, especially professionals, women and young people, and resourcing them for witnessing to our faith, as so many do, at the cutting edges of mission.

28 Adapted from Archbishop Thabo Makgoba’s address to the 2010 USPG conference. The talk in its entirety can be found here: http://archbishop.anglicanchurchsa.org/2010/06/addressing-anglican-differences-spirit.html
But we are not typical of the Global South. We also have many congregations that are wealthy and westernised, people who are much more typical of the Global North – and, let me say also, with all the breadth of churchmanship that is found in the North!

Nonetheless, we still hold together – and are managing to do so over human sexuality.

It is well-known that within our Province, and within our Synod of Bishops itself, one can find pretty much the whole range of views on human sexuality that are found within the global Anglican family. This ranges from seeing Mary Glasspool’s longstanding lesbian relationship as no impediment to her suitability for consecration, through to membership of the Fellowship of Confession Anglicans.

This is a live issue within our Province also, since South Africa now allows for civil partnerships between people of the same gender. In response, and though we are by no means of a single mind, we continue to affirm that the marriage of Christians is between a man and a woman, and that clergy who are not married should be celibate; and we do not allow clergy to officiate at civil unions or to bless them.

We are also considering pastoral guidelines for the consequences and questions that civil partnerships raise for ministry within our parishes. Do we welcome people in such partnerships in our congregations? Should their children attend Sunday School? What if they seek baptism for their children? What if those children in their teens seek baptism and confirmation for themselves? And what do we say to the
parents of those who enter civil unions, who may be overwhelmed by confusion and conflicting emotions?

These questions also prompt us to think more deeply about the essence of marriage. It is not solely the legitimating of genital acts, but sometimes our discussions of polygamy and of same sex relationships seem to reduce it to little more than this. Therefore all this is no light or easy matter to us.

When we meet – as, for example, the Bishops do twice yearly – we feel sharp, sharp, pains and great distress when, as inevitably is the case, we are called to consider developments around these issues. But we are united in this: that none of us feels called to turn to another and say ‘I no longer consider you a Christian, a brother in Christ, a member of the body of Christ’. None of us says ‘I am no longer in communion with you.’

The sharing of our pain has in fact left us feeling more closely bound to one another. Reflecting on this has brought me to conclude that, it is as if we see the marks of the living Christ, who is also the suffering Christ, in one another and in our common life, as we await together the power of the resurrection within our painful circumstances.

Now, it is true that in the past, the Church in Southern Africa, by the grace of God, held together against all odds, under the pressures of apartheid. To some degree, shared opposition to apartheid helped forge a common identity. Even so, it was a very hard won unity, since there was little agreement about how best to oppose apartheid: about sanctions or the armed struggle or army chaplains. But a shared enemy – and one now
in the past – is not a reliable foundation for going forward together. Today we are having to revisit the question of common identity, vision and mission, expressed authentically in the diversity of our contexts. This we shall do at Provincial Synod in September.

Yet it is not skilful use of vision-building techniques that truly holds us together. Rather it is God at work among us, calling us together as the body of Christ, to share in mission, in witness, for the sake of God’s broken and hurting world.

**Jesus Christ, his Crucifixion and Resurrection**

Sometimes it seems to me that God does this by working through, rather than in spite of, our own brokenness and pain. In this we find two important messages for the world. First, the way God deals with us, his people, demonstrates how he desires to deal with the world around us. Second, our readiness – or otherwise – to receive his ministering to us, can also be a powerful testimony – for good or ill – to the on-looking world.

The heart of God’s ministering is through the Spirit making real to us our baptism: that is, our participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. The question before the Anglican Communion is whether we really are prepared fully to participate in Christ’s death and resurrection in this way.

What this might mean was brought home to me vividly in April, which saw the twentieth anniversary of the letter-bombing of Fr Michael Lapsley SSM by the agents of the apartheid regime. Some of you may know his story. He lost one eye and both
hands. To watch him preside at the Eucharist, holding the bread between articulated metal claws as he repeats Christ’s words ‘This is my body, broken for you’ is to be challenged to a deeper appreciation of the cross, and of its cost, and what it means to share in it, without which we cannot share in resurrection.

But resurrection comes. Fr Michael invited us to a service of thanksgiving: not only that his life was spared; but that out of the great evil perpetrated against him, God by his grace is bringing a far greater and more lasting good. For Fr Michael set up and runs the Institute for the Healing of Memories which conducts significant work among victims of violence and torture all around the world. As he says himself, this ‘is not to say that I will not always grieve what I’ve lost … Yet I believe I’ve gained through this experience. I realise that I can be more of a priest with no hands than with two hands.’ Fr Michael is a living embodiment that walking the path of Jesus Christ opens the possibility for God to take all that is destructive or broken, and transform and transfigure it, and bring a good that is far greater than what went before.

This is the redemption that we seek for our Communion. Therefore we must go forward, unafraid to bear our pain honestly as we keep journeying with Christ, and seeking his mind for us at each step of the way. This is our experience in Southern Africa. Looking back, we see God’s grace in the painful struggle against apartheid, that not only threatened to divide the church, but was for many a life and death matter. Against those experiences we find it hard to understand how human sexuality has become such a touchstone of faith, and mark of fellowship or enmity within the Anglican Communion.
Yet today, especially in what I have experienced within our Synod of Bishops, what counts is not the past we shared in adversity; but rather it is the continuing sensing of Christ in and among us, in the pain of our divisions, which holds us together, through our suffering – confident in the resurrection. And so we dare to join together in the prayer of St Paul, who said ‘I want to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in death if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead’ (Phil 3:10,11).

**Another Anglican Microcosm**

I would even go so far as to say we see parallels between ourselves as a Synod, and Archbishop Rowan Williams himself. In the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury, as a focus of unity for the whole Communion – a role not of his choosing, but a heart-rending gift of the Communion as we constitute ourselves – Archbishop Rowan is in some senses called to bear the strains of the whole worldwide Communion within himself. We can only imagine, from our own experiences, the considerable personal cost this is to him, as he continues to ‘hold on’ as long as this call to do so is laid upon him. We in Southern Africa carry him in our heartfelt prayers, as he too awaits the outworking of resurrection in our suffering.

All this goes back to what I said earlier about Jesus being our standard. If in our Synod of Bishops we did not see Christ in one another – and if we did not agree on the central issues of who Jesus is and of the salvation that he brings – it would be another matter. But we do. And so our differing views on human sexuality therefore take second place alongside the strength of this overpowering conviction of Christ among us. As long as we know unity in Christ in this way, human sexuality is not, and cannot be, a church dividing issue.
This is why our Synod of Bishops said last September ‘we remain committed to upholding the bonds of unity with one another, as we journey together through the difficult questions that confront the worldwide Anglican Communion. Differences of opinion are inevitable, schism is not.’ Therefore our heartfelt prayer is that the Anglican Communion will also find ways of continuing to journey, even in pain, together – sharing in both suffering and resurrection hope.

**Renewal in the Spirit**

For us, keeping talking together, and, more importantly, worshipping together, reading Scripture together, praying together – in shared openness and vulnerability to God and to each other – has been the key to continuing to see Christ in one another. The possibility of continuing to share fellowship in Christ is the strength of the proposals of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Pentecost letter, ‘Renewal in the Spirit’. Though these acknowledge the brokenness in our common life, and our damaged relationships – especially in our engagement with the wider ecumenical world – they nonetheless exclude no-one from our common counsels and our common life.

I firmly believe this is how it should be. Exclusion, severing ties and breaking contact can never be the best way forward. Surely we can never give up on each other – for God never gives up on any of us. This is assuredly the message of the penitent thief on the cross. To our last breath, God holds the door open to us – as individuals, and together as his people.

Archbishop Rowan speaks of us as not having yet fully received the Pentecost gift of mutual understanding for common mission.
The Spirit’s gift of understanding is not only about each of us grasping God’s call on our own lives, it is also about recognising God at work in one another in our authentic mission work in differing contexts.

St Paul refers to this in writing in Chapter 12 of his First Letter to the Corinthians, about what it is to be the body of Christ. Considerable legitimate diversity under Christ is to be expected. ‘There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of service but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone’ (1 Cor 12:4-6). But this diversity can be hard to handle, as St Paul goes on to illustrate. The eye cannot comprehend what it is for the ear to hear, nor can the ear comprehend sight – but the one Spirit holds the different parts together, and enables them to work in harmony.

It is as if the breath of the Spirit has the capacity to translate the gospel of the Word made flesh, not only into the different languages of the first day of Pentecost, and all the languages of our twenty-first century world; the Spirit can also translate into every culture of our world – and between the inculturation of the gospel in different cultures. So, when we cannot understand each other, we must be sure that we have listened carefully to the still small voice of the Spirit. Is the Spirit speaking to each of us? Can we recognise the presence of Christ, which is the touchstone, the standard, of the true Spirit of God?

I am convinced that in our current situation within the Communion neither have we done, nor are we continuing to do, enough of this sort of listening to one another. We do not understand one another and one another’s contexts well
enough, and we are not sufficiently sensitive to one another in the way we act. Autonomy has gone too far. I do not mean that we should seek a greater uniformity – I hope it is clear I am saying nothing of the sort. But we risk acting in ways that are so independent of one another that it becomes hard for us, and for outsiders, to recognise either a committed interdependent mutuality or a common Christian, Anglican, DNA running through our appropriately contextualised and differentiated ways of being.

So now I want to return, for the final section of my reflections, to the question of how the Spirit helps us critique, and baptise, culture.

**Gospel Light on Cultural Practices of Handling Difference**

Earlier today I talked

- about how all our various cultures must be open to both the judgement and the hope which the gospel brings;
- about how some cultural practices may more easily be aligned with the gospel than others;
- and about how nonetheless, all need to be ‘baptised’ and find new life within the perspectives of Jesus, his incarnation, cross and resurrection.

Let me now apply these principles to how we handle difference, and set limits of acceptable diversity, within our Communion.

I want to suggest that we have not adequately grasped how following the practices of parliaments and international organisations can exacerbate polarisation, adversarial attitudes, and ‘winner versus looser’ mindsets. What do I mean? When we propose motions, people are generally invited to speak ‘for’ and ‘against’. Of course, in debate people can range more widely and offer amendments; but a prior shape is imposed on
our discourse both by the terms of the motion itself, and by our need to vote, yes or no – with the outcome being ‘success or defeat’.

Now, I am not saying we should completely stop doing this. But we should be far more aware of how polarising and oppositional such practices are; and how all of this feeds destructive attitudes of competitiveness, dominance and power, over and against one another, that then run through our common life.

Furthermore, I hope it is not too cynical to say it sometimes seems that the popularity of successive drafts of the Covenant has ebbed and flowed, among various groups, in ways that correlate closely with their expectation of whether a particular text can be used to deliver their preferred outcomes around human sexuality – and not because it will best help us all live the far broader life of witness and mission to which God calls us. Of course, no text will be perfect, because we are not perfect, but I think what we have is ‘good enough for now’. It is now up to us to trust God and trust each other, and cooperate in making it work well. Remember, we do have the opportunity to amend and improve it. And it does not exist in isolation, but sits alongside the Instruments of Communion with all their diffused responsibilities and structures that help shape our decisions. I do not see it as intended to centralise power or impose uniformity; and these should not be our goals, either.

When I read my Bible, competitiveness, dominance, power, polarisation and adversarial attitudes are not what I think of first when St Paul writes that ‘we have the mind of Christ’ when it comes to making spiritual judgements (1 Cor 2:16). I’m also conscious of our Godhead as Trinity being an amazing example
of mutually enhancing diversity in unity – rather than difference becoming the first step to oppositional thinking.

Faced with all this, my reason for introducing the concept of Indaba into the Anglican Communion (and yes, I was the guilty party on the Lambeth Design Group!) was to help us reconnect with more gospel-shaped approaches, that better reflect theologies around the work of the Spirit, and the body of Christ. I believe it can powerfully enhance our traditional ways of doing business.

**Indaba**

Indaba is not about trying to make everyone into Amazulu, nor about transplanting elements from one culture into a completely foreign and inappropriate context. I also know that Indaba is far from perfect – it is not always conducted inclusively, and it can be abused by leaders intent on getting their own way. But at its best, there is a great deal that is readily susceptible to the sort of ‘baptism’ of which I spoke earlier. Let me explain:

- Scripture speaks of us living as the Body of Christ, as one, but with many different members (1 Cor 12:12).
- Indaba calls community members together to share news of developments or discuss concerns that affect the life of the community or individuals within it.
- Scripture says that God has so arranged the body that the members may have ‘the same care for one another’ (1 Cor 12:25).
- Indaba is predicated upon a strong sense of shared well-being, experienced on a reciprocal and mutually supportive basis.
- Scripture says that when one part of the body suffers, ‘all suffer with it’ (1 Cor 12:26).
Indaba necessarily entails a degree of acknowledged interdependence, even vulnerability, towards one another.

Scripture says that the members of the body that are ‘weaker are indispensable’ (1 Cor 12:22).

Indaba says leaders must work for the well-being of the entire community, especially those in greatest need, and the ‘haves’ must provide for the ‘have nots’.

Scripture says that the less respectable should be treated with greater respect (1 Cor 12:23).

Indaba promotes an egalitarian ethos, in which everyone should be encouraged to grow into a productive and contributing member of the community.

Scripture says that to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1 Cor 12:7).

Indaba says debate is conducted through everyone being allowed to have their say, contributing their own perspective, so that the fullest picture can be drawn, and from it an outcome that is as consensual, and as ‘win-win’ as possible, can emerge.

Scripture says that, notwithstanding all this diversity, when living as God intends, there need not, there should not, be dissension (1 Cor 12:25).

So, I hope you can see why I felt that there was much within Indaba that can help us – as the best of a cultural practice, appropriately baptised. Part of such baptism is the contextualisation within the kingdom of God. For Christians, it is a matter of relating and listening not just to one another, but individually and together to the empowering Spirit – the Spirit of wisdom, understanding and discernment. Perhaps a similar sort of listening was what happened at the Council in Jerusalem in
Acts 15, after which the apostles and elders wrote to the Gentile believers ‘it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us …’ (Acts 15:28). Let me add one further point.

Indaba is not an interminable talking shop. Indaba can and does impose sanctions, including the ultimate sanction of expulsion, on those who transgress the life of the community – but only after every other possible option is fully explored.

I hope you will see why I have drawn on indaba in my search for a more gospel-shaped space, a safer environment, for bringing and sharing concerns and differences, which we can use alongside the more adversarial cultures of debate which we have inherited and adopted, perhaps too unthinkingly. Engaging this way will help us get to that deeper level of mutual engagement, opening ourselves to recognise Christ at work within us, meeting in our pain at the foot of his cross, as we await the redemption of his resurrection hope.

And for this reason, the Continuing Indaba, together with the Bible in the Life of the Church project, and other shared Anglican initiatives must continue. This is the way to help us re-find one another, within the body of Christ to which we are called, and in which we are empowered, each as we need to be, by the Spirit, for our life of witness and mission.

May God bless us as we seek faithfully to follow his calling, and may he make us a blessing to others – for the building of his kingdom, and for the glory of his holy name. Amen.
Introduction: The Church and Power

Douglas John Hall in his book, *The Cross in our Context: Jesus and the Suffering World* argues that triumphalism, which presents itself as a “full and complete account of reality” and which excludes the possibility of error or difference of opinion is a characteristic of the church in our time.\(^{29}\) He contrasts this with the theology of the cross, first fully articulated by Luther, but more recently explored by Jurgen Moltmann in his, *The Crucified God*.

The theology of the cross is a theology rooted in paradox: the paradox that God is revealed not in glory and power but in weakness and shame. As Luther noted in his twentieth thesis; “He (sic) deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross.”\(^{30}\) In other words, God is revealed, according to Luther, not through reason, but through the passion of Christ. The key texts (though by no means the only texts) underlying this theology are the linked ideas of Isaiah 45:15: “truly you are a hidden God” and 1 Cor. 1:18-35, namely that the message of the cross is foolishness. For Luther the *theologia gloriae* (which is the much better loved theology) results, ironically, in confusion because it presents God’s revelation in a straightforward, authoritarian way. At best,

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according to Luther, we catch glimpses of the reverse side of the hidden-ness of God in the cross.

Hall suggests that the choice between triumphalism and the theology of the cross is not simply a question for academic debate. As he asks, provocatively:

is the violence in which a religion is involved… coincidental, perhaps even accidental, or can it be traced to core beliefs or unthinking presuppositions of the faith in question?....What must be asked is whether a religion directly or indirectly courts [the use of violence]…whether its foundational teaching and tone render it open to misuse or whether…it manifests any clear checks and balances against co-optation by such mentalities 31

This is not the place to discuss fully the theology of the cross. However, Hall’s comments on ecclesial triumphalism should be sufficient to alert us to the dangers of a theology of glory, particularly when we are discussing the inner workings of an institutionally hierarchical church, because, as Maggie Ross points out:

The heart of Christianity is the self-emptying, kenotic humility of God ... It is from this authority, this ground ... that all discussions ... that are termed to be ‘Christian’ must proceed.32

It is in the light of these brief introductory remarks that I wish to consider the adoption of the indaba process in the Anglican Communion.

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31 Hall The cross in our context
32 Maggie Ross (1988) Pillars of flame: Power, priesthood and spiritual maturity
London: SCM, xvi
Indaba and power

Thanks to the 2008 Lambeth Conference the concept of indaba (or imbizo or lekgotla in some of the other Southern African languages) is, in some of its aspects, quite well known in the Anglican Communion. The indaba format was also used at ACC 17 in Kingston in 2009. The process is more conversational than the traditional formal debating procedure which has been followed in meetings and synods in the Communion over the past 150 years. It has met with acclaim from participants in both the Lambeth and ACC meetings (though reportedly, there seems to have been a degree of scepticism prior to the meetings which adopted the indaba method).

There is a danger though, of romantically assuming that this “new” model of conversation and decision making provides all the answers. An uncritical adoption of the indaba process runs the risk of the very thing it is supposed to obviate, that is, the exclusion of some voices. In traditional Southern African communities an indaba is called by the chief (usually on the advice of the elders) to discuss an issue which concerns the community – such as the stealing of cattle, or threats posed by a drought. Usually only men participate in the meeting and in communities where male circumcision is practiced, only circumcised men may participate (for example amongst the clans of the amaXhosa). Only members of the clan are invited.

In rural village life one can see the logic of these rules of participation. Rural village life is structured on patriarchal lines and there are seldom, if ever, community members from another clan or tribe. One cannot however, simply transpose this rural village model onto an international institution, particularly one which is trying to be more inclusive in its
decision making structures. Many women, in particular, would feel sceptical about the adoption of the *indaba* process. This is just another way of excluding their voices: culture and religion working on concert to perpetuate patriarchal power.

The village *indaba* model can too easily be uncritically adopted into already hierarchical ecclesial structures with devastating consequences for those on the margins. Some questions which illustrate the dangers of bias and the exclusion of certain voices are:

- Who decides what issue is to be discussed? What is of concern to a bishop for example, may not also be of concern to a single mother, or someone excluded from ordained ministry in a particular diocese. Similarly, what is of concern to one bishop may not be seen as an issue at all by another.

- Who is called to the conversation? If it is “the elders” who are invited to converse, those who discuss the issue may well not be those directly involved. For example, much of the conversation in some quarters of the Communion at present is *about* LGBTI people rather than with them. Furthermore one might ask: Who are “the elders” in the Anglican Communion? Some would say it is the Primates; others, the Standing Committee of ACC, or ACC itself. Others would point out however, that all these groups exclude millions of “ordinary” Anglicans – children, Sunday school teachers, Mothers’ Union members and so on.

- At what “level” is a matter to be discussed? This is of course already an issue in the Anglican Communion. Are the invitees to an *indaba* to be
people from one Province, or from the whole communion? Who decides this?

These questions should not be seen as a total rejection of *indaba*, which has much to recommend it. However, like any other process *indaba* can be used both to challenge but also consolidate power.

**Conclusions**

*Indaba*, if by this we mean discussion involving many participants, brought together to share concerns and opinions, without necessarily needing to reach firm conclusions, is a way of questioning the “full and complete account of reality” of which Hall speaks. If the process is to be used to allow Anglicans from different Provinces and backgrounds to learn more about one another, to listen and to ask questions, it is to be celebrated. If however, it is simply another way of allowing those with power to make decisions for the church, then whatever name we give it, the process is only “more of the same” and will not help us heal our divisions.
Exploring the Baraza Model for Conflict Resolution:  
The Luo Drumbeat

Rev John Mark Oduor is minister in-charge of pastoral and sacramental ministries at All Saints Cathedral, Nairobi, Kenya

Introduction
A common African saying goes that, ‘everyone dances to a certain drumbeat.’ Carl Henry calls it “go-go generation,” pointing out that, “we are becoming nomads in the world of ideas and values no less than in the world of space and time” 33 Many dance to the drumbeat of wealth and prosperity, business and success, and others yet to football and or some other sports, their lives are often controlled by the drumbeat in their life. But there is a drumbeat that is significantly becoming louder by the day and is hard to ignore. It demands all our attention and our hearts palpitate with a rhythm that makes many of us uncomfortable. We try to ignore it, brush it aside, push it to the periphery but it has refused to go away. It is the painful drumbeat of fear conflict, tension, beaten by the spears of war and turmoil, accompanied by the Kayamba that sheds blood and whistles that cause death.

Drumbeat of fear and conflict
In our present African context, the drum beat of conflict is so loud in our ears that we no longer can hear any other beat. The vibrations and echo of this drumbeat, mingled with some other beats from elsewhere increasingly threatens to engulf every

33 Carl F. H. Henry New strides of Faith  pg 7
corner of the globe, from Europe to Asia, Middle East to East Timor, China to Mexico, Colombia to Indonesia, and Afghanistan to Iraq. But the continent that beats them all is Africa; which bears the mark of conflict from Zimbabwe to Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo to Uganda. Kenya became the latest entrant, when conflict broke out after a democratic election turned sour. When Kenyans burnt each other in January 2008, one CNN reporter loudly said “another African State is on fire.” As said in the movie *Hotel Rwanda*[^34], Kenya’s case is just another “TIA” meaning “This Is Africa” The drum beat of war and conflict has unfortunately become synonymous with Africa’s existence.

The drumbeat of terror, fear, conflict, tension and shedding of blood has become part of the African life over the last few decades that it is almost hard to image that there can be any other way to ‘be Africa.’ The most unfortunate thing is that the church too has been so caught up in dancing to the drum beat of all sorts of conflict to the point of forgetting which drumbeat ought to be danced to and whose music should be listening to. Worse still, the church far from being the light and guide to the confused is no longer sure of which drum beat to play. This paper addresses the problem that the church has forgotten the drumbeat to which we should be dancing. The church has become so muddled that we have gotten what it means to be different, the society point of moral reference or the ‘salt and the light’ as the church should be. The church stopped being different and became like everyone else, and this is a key problem.

[^34]: Hotel Rwanda, Terry George, 2004
The second problem has been the desire by everyone to change the drumbeat such that the church has ended up hearing less of substance and more of the noise. The church has continued to dance to several beats and not all of these beats are godly or even helpful. The crisis has gotten so bad yet the church has failed to see or realize the magnitude of the ‘emptiness, and the destructive power of the conflicting beats. As Carl Henry says, this is a spiritual, moral, social and intellectual crisis, which “in short touches the whole of humanity and the whole man. The soul of modern man has been sucked dry by temporary concerns that eclipse the eternal world.”

Efforts have been made, on several fronts, to offer solutions to silence or at least reduce the drumbeat of conflict. Unfortunately even the best of most spirited solutions, in or outside the church, has only managed temporary solutions, treating symptoms and signs but not the real disease. The cry for justice has not been much with ‘drumbeats’ of justice.

Let me highlight some of the temporary solutions that the world around us has tried to offer. In the case of the Kenyan 2007 post-election conflict there were those who opted for instant justice or mob justice. Most took the law into their hands to address a situation of injustice. Others have tried to change the drumbeat with ‘instant injustice, (read, mob-justice, the Kenyan way) because they have felt that the official system and the powers that be will not serve them well enough.

Many who have felt that the legal system isn’t working for them have opted not to trust it and so have opted that they would

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35Carl F. H. Henry New strides of Faith  pg 61
rather not waste any time or money in the system. A common sentiment goes that, ‘nothing will be done by the law enforcing agencies and so it will be right to take the law into own hands and personally administer some form of justice. This unfortunate situation brings temporary satisfaction to some but creates more victims. Neither does it deal with the problem. It just creates another drumbeat of conflict, tension and bloodshed and the cycle continues. The hurt continue to harbour revenge, anger and bitterness. This only perpetuates the cycle of violence and the drumbeat of confusion and conflict continues on. There are different drumbeats and different players, and the consequence is the same: our ears continue to hurt and our bodies ache with pain and fear, and our hearts bleed.

Drumbeat of Silence

Some survivors opted to use the same drum beat that made HIV and AIDS the worst killer in this continent – the drumbeat of silence, which can kill slowly but painfully. Carlos Falconi\textsuperscript{36} in his book, “The silence of Pope Pius XII” identifies two major reasons why silence became an option during the Second World War atrocities that it is useless to speak as speech alone cannot do a thing and that sometimes talking about such issues endangers the victims and the one speaking. Many who find themselves helpless would rather be silent as they ask the pregnant question, who will fight for us and who will stand up for us? They resign to a state of solitude and abandonment with nothing to look forward to. They see the future like a little boy sailing in the sea who wakes up early in the morning to see how far they are to go before they get to the land and when asked by the parents what he sees; he sadly stoops down and says

\textsuperscript{36}Carlos Falconi, p. 74, 80
“nothing.” This drum beat will not change things and it speaks so loud we need to ask why we let it to hurt our ears. Some keep hoping that someone or something will remove the conflict, the fear, the tension away but they don’t go away. Nothing happens.

Drumbeat of Blame

Another drumbeat that has echoed through the corridors of our land is the blame game, accusations and political rhetoric. Everyone seems to know who was responsible and who should be penalized and who should be arrested and imprisoned but nobody does a thing or owns up and admits, “I’m responsible”. Such drumbeats breed a “culture of impunity.” Many in Africa pray, hope and wish that someone would raise up and say “we are tired of everybody blaming everyone else but nobody doing anything about it. It’s like the words of an acapella song “everyone said that anybody could do the important thing that somebody should do….. But this important thing is what nobody did.” With ‘it is not me but the other’ has kept the drumbeat going.

Growing up in rural Kenya, I had an interesting experience, seeing a different kind of drumbeat practiced among the women folk of my area. This is the drum beat of mock fights, trading insults and war mongering. This drumbeat was practiced by people who on their own could not fight but could engage the enemy in an emotional and psychological bringing out the ‘fighting spirit’ in everyone. They would make faces, throw their arms in the air, call names, and tell you what they could do if you dared them. Tauntingly they would draw a line on the ground and ask you dare cross it and see what they would do to you. This drumbeat has not changed, today in the political
arena; the mock fighters claim to speak on their people’s behalf. Words such as “we are being finished but we won’t take it lying down” or another typical Kenyan line, “money has been poured to finish us” “our people are being marginalized” are all part of the drumbeat of ethnic conflict. Most of this rhetoric is selfish and someone needs to initiate a different drumbeat. The battle cry only gives false security.

Another drumbeat that East Africa and especially Kenya has recently been treated to and seem now to have heard loud and clear is the salsa dance beat that basically is about: ‘someone else will do it for you.’ In the Kenyan case, the cry for justice in the wake of the 2007 post-election violence is: ‘Get the perpetrators to another man’s court and let the International Criminal Court at The Hague punish them.’ I call it a salsa dance because like salsa it is foreign but we think it will give us justice. This drum beat might look like a nice outfit but are we dancing to the right beat? Could this drumbeat provide false hope to the survivors of a deafening beats of a killer drum?

One other drumbeat needs to be mentioned. This is the drum beat of faith that hopes for divine intervention and a spiritual solution. Many curse and hope their curses will have generational effect. They curse the perpetrators and wish their children and families will live to regret all their days or may be doomed in the land they or their parents, grabbed, stole or acquired through dubious and illegal means. They call on God to “fix” their enemies. They conveniently quote the psalmist, “let God arise and his enemies be scattered. …Let them run in seven different directions” (Psalm 68:1). They cannot any more depend on human help. Their favourite bible verse is often, “cursed is the man who puts his trust in man” (Jeremiah 17:5). But like the saints of old they too struggle with the same old
existential question, “why do the wicked prosper?” why do the unjust seem to have it easy?” how come they trample down the poor and the innocent and nobody does a thing? (See, Psalm 78). Their hope of God unleashing wrath on the unjust seems to fade away because they do not see God’s decisive intervention. The situation often turns into despair, hopelessness, resignation and ultimately death of the spirit, heart and rejection of God.

We conclude none of the above drumbeats are a solution to our myriad problems. Even the best of them only provide a false sense of hope, false security or temporary solutions.

**What drumbeat, and what drum?**

A key question needs to be asked, ‘could we be listening to the wrong drumbeat, or could we actually be playing on the wrong drum?’ I want to suggest to we need to review the beat we have been playing for far too long. Africa is known for her drums. The Asante Kingdom of Ghana was known for their talking drums. Again growing up in the rural Kenya, I would know what occasion or event is announced by what drumbeat. On a Sunday, for example, the church verger would beat the drum to announce the start of a church service. This particular drumbeat said, ‘it was time for God.’ Similarly there were other distinctive drumbeats that would announce a funeral, a wedding or the village meeting (*Baraza*). None could mistake a wedding drumbeat for a funeral or a church drumbeat for a drumbeat that announces a political rally. Each drumbeat is unique because each drum is unique by the way it is made.
Remaking the Drum

I want to suggest a new drumbeat and a new drum from a faith perspective. We need to ask several fundamental questions and get answers so that as a people of faith we must have a solution. There is need to go back to the foundation upon which our faith and mission is based.

What is our drum made of? Is it made of crocodile skin that symbolizes careless rhetoric, or the hippo skin that represents revenge? Could it have been made of genuine leather of love, forgiveness and grace? Are we looking for a beautiful outfit like a snake’s skin that symbolizes deceit or are we looking for real buffalo skin of endurance? We need to re-examine what the ‘church’s drum’ is made of. Jesus’ model which I liken to the Baraza drumbeat may be here helpful.

To make the drum we would need a wooden trunk: This trunk becomes the defining material that gives the drum the shape, size, and ultimately its unique type of sound. The trunk is Christ. He defines who we are and what we do. Our message, our philosophy and agenda must be based on Christ alone. Like Christ the trunk comes hollow with no hidden agenda but to be inculturated and contextualized in the context of the community of faith yet remaining the defining component of us our faith and mission. Jesus not only defines our mission but gives us a model of life based on love:

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants;
for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. 37

As Paul exhorts the Corinthians, “We have been given the ministry of reconciliation”. 38 This is definitive of ‘our skin.’ Our skin is our mission. Our mission is what makes us sound different when we play the drum. The type of skin defines the type of sound. Our mission is that of reconciliation, which is “to bring together those who are separated by conflict.”

The construction of a drum cannot be complete without strings to thread the skins together over the hollow trunk to cover the two open ends of the drum. The strings are usually made of the same substance as the skin but are thicker and stronger. We may liken the strings to Jesus’ call and commission: ‘To call people together.’ The Luo traditional drums usually had five strings. These five strings pulled the skin together covering the whole of the drum. One familiar drumbeat was that of the call to Baraza. Baraza is a Kiswahili word for a meeting or an assembly. People know and harkened to the call of a Baraza drumbeat. It was in this local assembly as was typical of the Luo people in the rural western Kenya, that the agenda of the community was discussed. Just as people would know and tell the dream beat of a funeral, a new born child celebration or

37 John 14:12-17 King James Version
38 2 Corinthians.5:18 King James Version
political meeting they could also tell of the agenda of a Baraza. The drumbeat brought the people together as a community.

In the fashion of the Baraza drumbeat, Jesus calls us. Every note from the five strings distinctively communicates Jesus’ agenda:

- **Relationship:** There was a relationship between the members of the community. They stood together with one another in all circumstances. This is seen in the way Jesus talks to his disciples: “I have loved you….” “You are not servants but friends” (John.15:15). Prophet Amos says “two cannot walk together unless they agree.” 39 A prerequisite to understanding the community and dealing with its issues was in being part of the community, to be in relationship. Through word and liturgy, in unison response to Jesus’ drumbeat of ‘relationship,’ the church can build ‘togetherness.’

- **Conversation:** The community appreciated the diversity within itself. They expected people to hold different opinions but everyone was allowed to talk and share their ideas. There was room for everyone. In conflict resolution Jesus allowed the survivor and the perpetrator to talk to each other. Jesus taught his disciples “If your brother has anything against you go talk to him first” Matthew 18). Isaiah says, “Come let us reason together.” 40 With conversation comes discernment and with discernment comes understanding.

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39 Amos 3:3  
40 Isaiah 1:18
Fellowship: This is a forum where people who shared common values met to share ideas and experiences. The Baraza created a forum for Fellowship for the community. This meeting took place at the foot of a particular tree. Fernado Domingues calls it The Tree of meeting. Among the Luo the word fellowship has several meanings. It is translated as One or Oneness. In Luo the words fellowship is lalruok which also means something that goes round in cycles around one thing and attaches itself tightly to it. Fellowship is a forum in which people as friends, brothers and sisters share about their life experiences. It is here where people share one another’s burdens, weaknesses, strengths and encouragements. Like in the Baraza, this forum creates an opportunity for the community to be one.

Appreciation of our uniqueness: We are all different and have various talents and gifts. The community allowed members to use their best quality and skills, talent to enrich the life of the community. The church as a community of believers must uphold the basic principle that binds them together: The love factor. Jesus taught that without love it would be impossible to identify them. Stanley Grenz puts it this way, “In a word, such community life is the life of ‘love.’ And love is simply life-in-and-with-community.” Among the Luo one’s identity was not based on individual name or individuality as such, but tied to the identity of the whole community.

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41 Theology and the Transformation of Africa Various Authors pg 46
42 Grenz S. The Moral Quest: Foundations for Christian Ethics. Pg 124
Forgiveness and belonging: This was, and is, the hardest part of community life yet the best. Richard Gehman says, “Forgiveness is costly and difficult. True forgiveness is the hardest thing in the universe, our idea of justice pull the other way.” 43 He goes further to say “God’s forgiveness should motivate us to forgive others” This would be the only evidence that there was a conflict resolved. The Luo called forgiveness wena, which literally translated means, ‘Leave me’ or ‘let me go’. It gave the victim the prerogative or the final say after or during forgiveness has taken place. After forgiveness the community encouraged that victim and the aggressor to ‘walk together,’ as a demonstration of ‘belonging together.’ William Barclay44 in his book Turning to God identifies the following as the obligation of the church: teaching, strengthening, admonishing and encouraging people to live together after forgiveness or conversion. Jesus best showed this by choosing Peter to be the Chief of the Apostles even after Peter denied him. In spite of his failing he was accepted back.

**Conclusion: A Baraza Drumbeat**

Stephen Covey45 says that leadership is not position but influence. The church can show leadership in reconciliation, healing, peace-building and conflict resolution through the above model that we may call the Baraza drumbeat Theology. Baraza is the gathering of the community that includes all from the leadership to the least of the community members, to

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43 Richard Gehman *Learning to lead: The Making of a Christian Leaders in Africa* pg 67
44 William Barclay *Turning to God* pg 82-87
45 Stephen Covey, *The 8th Habit* 28
participate in the decisions of the community. Like making the drum, one needs to personalize the process of conflict resolution.

Baraza like the church (ecclesia) is about fellowship of ‘togetherness.’ In the monastic tradition when the monks sat down to business, it was the least of the monks whose opinion would be heard first. One was considered the least either because of being the newest recruit, or youngest, or recently recovered from an experience, habit or an addiction. Traditionally among the Luo when someone had a complaint against another and you were brought to the Baraza, it was the more difficult for a man if his accuser was a woman. Tradition has it that the woman be heard first and her story, unlike that of the man needs not collaborated by witnesses.

The church in the past has used councils (read Baraza) to address theological challenges. Such drumbeat of ‘conversation’ needs to be enhanced.

If you watch a drum marker at work, you realize that every part of the body is involved. The legs hold some part in place, the hands and the senses intensely engage as the whole body vibrated with each motion. Everyone and every part are important. Let the church make a new drum to produce the beat that creates a Baraza theology one that is all inclusive, allows all to talk, share and feel they belong and have a role to play.

The Kenyan church honestly is not known for bringing people together to talk and sort out issues. The church has danced to any and every drumbeat and this needs to change. The
drumbeat, the drum and the drum-player are all equally important. In the traditional Luo culture, the drum player was not any ordinary person but a special person. Today the church is that special person to beat the special drum that summons the community to a Baraza, under the tree of meeting; the Cross of Christ, for the healing, reconciliation, and unity of the community and the world.
The Drum and the Radio: An Emerging Conversation
Stuart Burns Bishop’s Adviser for Continuing Ministerial Education, Diocese of Leicester, England

Rev John Mark Oduor’s paper on Conflict Resolution written for the ‘Continuing Indaba Limuru Hub’ drew strongly from the image of the Asanti Talking Drum. This paper reminded me strongly of a tool that we are using in Leicester Diocese, to enable our Curates and Training Incumbents to reflect and engage with each other. The tool and image we are using, is that of a Radio Receiver.

In what follows, I draw from John Oduor’s paper, and add my own image. Although the drum and the radio draw from two different areas – Conflict Resolution, and Curate Training - within two different cultures, I hope that the issues that arise, and the opportunities that they present, will be useful tools for Continuing Indaba, and for locating ourselves and our conversations, as we talk to each other around the world.

The Drum
John Oduor highlights three drumbeats that currently dominate the air within his homeland of Kenya: the Drumbeats of Fear and Conflict, of Silence, and of Blame. He asks a key question – ‘Could it be that we are not just listening to the wrong Drumbeat, could we actually be listening to the wrong drum?’ Using the model of the Asante Talking Drum he calls for a remaking of the drum with the correct materials to enable the asking of fundamental questions, within the foundation of our faith.

46 See previous paper
Within the remaking of the Drum, Oduor focuses upon the skin, the trunk, and the strings, before moving to the question of conflict resolution, in relation to the Baraza drumbeat. He identifies the following elements of the drum that are to be present in new instrument.

- The Skin is our mission, particularly in his context, of reconciliation.
- The Trunk is Christ.
- The Strings are the Commission and Mandate of Christ to the Church.

Oduor further identifies five strings that are integral to the drum – the strings of relationship, conversation, fellowship, appreciation of our uniqueness, walking together after forgiveness.

**The Radio**

The reflection image that we use in Leicester is that of a Radio. This has elements and materials that need to be in the right place, but in contrast to the drum, the image is not of making or construction, but primarily of use.

Any radio needs to be tuned. A radio will not receive a signal without repeated tuning and fine tuning. Signals change in strength and regularity. Sometimes they move purposefully. They respond to pressures in the atmosphere. Rarely will a signal stay the same place in the same strength for any length of time. Anyone who has sought to find the ‘BBC World Service’ knows this is a skill to be learnt!

The Radio has several elements that can help us reflect and converse, but the original signal is vital. In Leicester we use our experience as the initial event. Often a single event is broadcast
by different stations. For example, the coming World Cup Final will be broadcast by the BBC, Kenyan Radio and the South African Broadcasting Service. The same event will be reported, but with very different emphasis. The event experience for us may be a pastoral situation that requires thought and reflection before action. It may be a sermon that has been preached, or a decision that has been made. It may be a disagreement, or an encouragement. It may be church growth and new mission opportunities. The issue is not what the experience or event is, but what we do with it. In the use of the radio image we recognise that we can tune to different stations, and thus pick up different questions and interpretations of the same experience.

Radios are made to be tuned, and the task we face as users, is to tune the radio so that the experience can be reflected upon, and conversations about our learning and ministry can occur. We take the experience, and tune to a station that will bring a clear conversation.

We identify three radio stations that we tune to whenever we consider our practice and mission. They are ‘Effective Practice’, ‘Reflective Practice’ and ‘Critically Reflective Practice’.

Effective Practice is where the conversation focuses upon the immediate responses. How did we do? What needs to be done now? Did I perform that ministry well? What did I do wrong? If I was to do the same thing again, how would I do it better? Effective Practice lets us hear the surface questions.

Reflective Practice is where the conversation focuses upon questions of development and self awareness. If I was to do the same thing again, what would I change? How did I react in this situation? How do we respond to similar situations in the future, without making the same mistakes? Reflective Practice lets us hear the strategic questions.
Critically Reflective Practice is where the conversation focuses upon more unsettling questions. Why did I respond in that way? Who is being more privileged by this? Whose voices are not being heard? Who are we ignoring and why? What unsettles me in this experience? Critically Reflective Practice lets us hear the deep questions.

Within the use of the image of the Radio, we have recognised that assumptions are easily made between two people who want to listen to the same event, but on different stations. For example, a curate considering a sermon they have preached may be listening to the ‘Effective Practice’ station, will become confused if they are having a conversation with their training Incumbent who is listening to the ‘Critically Reflective Practice’ station. One is looking for immediate affirmation; the other is trying to give significant feedback. Misunderstandings arise easily. There has to be an intentional agreement that the participants in the conversation are listening to the same station, for the learning and development to be most useful, honest, and developmental. We must move the Event Experience Dial, to locate the station that will bring the best quality conversation for those who are gathered.
Assumptions within Theological Reflection

Any reflective practice within a Christian context involves an element of theological reflection, whether the event is locally based, parish based, diocesan based, or globally based. Any theological reflection between groups requires that the cultures and assumptions of each group be brought into the foreground, rather than living solely in the background.

It is important to identify the different kinds of theology that play in the background of any conversations.

These are:

- The theology that a group speaks (Lived, or Espoused theology)
- The theology that a group practices (Practiced or Operant theology)
- The theology that the groups ‘professional’ theologians speak (Taught or Formal theology)
- The theology that the Church holds as normal – including official church statements, creeds, and scripture (Expressed or Normative theology)

Much of the dialogue within continuing indaba requires these theologies to be identified. If Odours’ call for a new drumbeat is to be heard then the different theologies that we bring to the conversation need to be identified. Similarly, within our more localised experience of Curate / Incumbent training relationships there is often a conversation that begins ‘What you do, and what you say you do, aren’t the same’ – in other words, the theology that you speak, and the theology that you operate, clash, or cause dissonance. To take the radio reflection metaphor further – these four theologies fill the atmosphere through which any event experience travels before it reaches the radio reflection receiver.
When the atmospheric elements are unexpressed, or assumed, the potential for static interference increases. Neither the Drum nor the Radio will create honest dialogue, Continuing Indaba, or even honest conversations. Used well, however, they will however, reveal static and counter rhythms, and allow opportunity for honest community reflection to occur.

**The Drum and the Radio**

The images of the Drum and of the Radio combine to reveal boundaries and practical suggestions for Continuing Indaba, and other conversations. With the Drum we must recognise that the component parts are vital for the correct rhythm and meaning to be conveyed. For the Radio, we have to be aware of our own preferences and stations. We have to agree the questions we are asking, not assume that we are on the same wavelength.

Odour’s paper is an example of tuning into the Critically Reflective Station. His paper asks questions as to the identity
and prevailing rhythm of the drumbeat. He challenges the ‘salsa’ beat of ‘someone else will do it’, and reveals the deeper challenge of spiritual invocation and curse. He points towards freedom and reconciliation, as a result of his reflection.

Our own experience of using the image of a Radio has shown us that we must be clear in our assumptions and expectations when we gather together. We must develop our skills in tuning to the relevant station. We must challenge our preferences of only listening to one station, all of the time. We must be aware of the atmospheric conditions that can cause interference or static. We must take the time to retune, to find the station when the wavelength has changed, to search and to listen. To do this within a Christian community requires both gift and grace.

One station is not better than any other – it is only more appropriate for the event. As Indaba groups meet, and Diocese connect, we may use the images of Drum and Radio to surface some of our assumptions, to challenge our expectations, to identify the wrong rhythms we are listening to. As images and metaphors they are from different contexts, and have been used in different ways. Yet when combined their strengths are enhanced, and they bring opportunity.

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Njung’wa Theology
A Kikuyu System for Conversation and Healing of Community

Ven. Dr. Ndung’u Ikenye, Senior Lecturer, Pastoral Theology,
St Paul’s University, Limuru, Kenya

Introduction

Njung’wa is a four-legged Kikuyu stool which was traditionally used by Kikuyu male elders. Each elder took his stool to the elders’ meeting, “carried by important elders.”

The stool represented ethnic and cultural authority and respect given to the elders. It was also a symbol of integrity. The stool was a permanent mark or feature of serious discussions, and associated with leadership, and indicative of actions by individuals, families, kinship and community at large. There are many other Kenyan communities such as the Luo, Pokot, Turkana and the Maasai who use similar kinds of traditional stools and attach similar kinds of importance to it. These ethnic communities use a three or two-legged stool, but the significance and seriousness of the conversations or dialogue are the same. I use this notion of Njung’wa to bring out and appreciate the Kikuyu sense of holding dialogue, with regard to their systems of listening and responding to serious issues that affected their common life.

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Kenyatta affirms that, there were two councils of elders for which Njung’wa was used by male elders. These were the Kiama kia mataathi, the council of peace and kiama kia maturanguru, which was a council charged with sacrifices and other religious matters.48 To be a member of these two councils, “the man and his wife (or wives) are sworn to keep the secrets of the kiama, and never to reveal it to anyone who is not ritually initiated into the kiama.”49 The elders ceremoniously greeted each other, “wanyuwakine”, meaning, “my equals.” This meant that, members of these two councils were politically, religiously and socially equals.

The council would normally sit in a circle, men on the Njung’wa and women on the soft skin. The meeting always began with a prayer, beseeching God to give the council members blessing, peace, wisdom and prosperity. When the elders came to the meeting, they also brought “muthegi, staff of office and mataathi, a bunch of sacred leaves.”50 Both male and female in the Kiama kia Mataathi as elders had the responsibility of carrying these two elements, which symbolized peace, and a reminder to them of their duty as peacemakers in the community. The members also pledged to be calm and peaceful during the deliberations. They were expected to be guided by reason and wisdom in every matter of dispute, in light of their commitment to keep peace.

49 Ibid, p. 202
50 Ibid, p.203
Basic Patterns in Conducting Dialogue and Conversation among the Agikuyu

First, speakers, both male and female had authority, given by the community. To be an elder among the Kikuyu, “muthuri wa kiama,” meant that you have given several goats to the council of elders and that you have been qualified by the council. You must also have demonstrated that you are good at listening carefully and that; you care for the well-being of the community.

You must be a Mumenyi, meaning that you are well-informed, knowledgeable, skilled and good at solving problems.\(^{51}\) This quality of understanding, intelligence, intellect, and ability to know was required for all persons who qualify to sit on the Njung’wa; or its equivalent for the women who sat on a soft skin, mutumia ngatha, when the council is in session. They also had to have similar kind of qualities to be able to participate. Every member ascends to a Mumenyereri, status meaning, being a guardian of the community.\(^{52}\) Guardianship was bestowed upon the elders, male and female, as persons who were going to be not only skillful, but also careful, thrift and watchful. This quality or act was geared towards ensuring quality participation from all participants, especially ensuring that persons with right skills took lead in issues that required their expertise.

Second, the rules of engagement were called ndeto cia ndereti, meaning that, they engaged in conversation and discussions for effective management of the affairs, matters, and decisions of significance.\(^{53}\) They exchanged views with the goal of reaching a consensus, which was the end-goal of every dialogue.

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\(^{51}\) S.V. Kikuyu-English Dictionary, “Mumenyi.”

\(^{52}\) S.V. “Mumenyereri.”

\(^{53}\) S.V. “Ndereti;” “Ndeto.”
Third, the purpose of voice in the dialogue was highly valued and every contribution was given weighty consideration all for the purpose of fairness and the promotion of communal good. Men and women who participated in the dialogue had equal opportunity to voice their concerns and positions. Matters generally transcended individual agendas and reflected on greater concerns of the community’s greater good within the reality of their historical narratives and extended kinship relations.

Fourth, the ethos of Njung’wa model, like any Kikuyu conversation is the reconstruction and transformation by promotion of understanding. The conversation brings a new vision, obligation, creating a new environment and re-hearing and re-consideration of important narratives. In the final analysis, a new sense of belonging together, participating together, relating together creates a renewed soul. This new community invokes the presence and participation of the living, the living-dead, spirits and the Supreme Being, God.

Fifth, the conversations in community bring friendship, trust and a sense of justice and enjoyment of security within the community. Use of proverbs becomes part of cultural reinforcement of desired ethos. For example, *ndeto njega ni iria njirane*, which means, ‘good words are those spoken of common accord’ becomes part of the communities’ collective wisdom and the philosophical basis for the Njung’wa model of conflict resolution. Conversations build meaningful relationships among the ethnic and kinship communities. Similarly a proverb such as *Ndigure: Konyu kegura ni koimiria ikwa*, that is,

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“humble yourself like the inhabitants of Konyu who were able to grow the yams after humbling themselves.” The moral of this proverb is that, ‘he who makes a good of words, makes a good peace also, and that humility is key to success.’ The people of Konyu, who had been at war with their neighbours in Mathira, both from Kikuyu land, ceased to raid each other, and settled down to tilling their fields in peace, only by embracing humility and submission.

Sixth, the conversations were held with rules that marked clear boundaries. There was no competition in the conversations, and no one was hurried in the dialogue. The spirit of each conversation was guided by such proverbs as: *ndaya ikinyia*; which means ‘the long road arrives at the intended goal,’ comparable to the philosophy, “fair and softly goes far in a day; a long but sure way is better than a short but dangerous one.” The long road in conversations, the elders would agree, will involve remembering, differentiation, search of the heart, and a commitment to development. The conversation was always a process, and hardly a onetime event.

**Implications for the Indaba Project:**
**Listening Process from a Kikuyu Perspective**

Anglican leaders are community leaders. They are, to use a Kikuyu parallel, authorized and qualified by both their communities of embeddedness as well as the Christian community itself. Whether male or female, these leaders are respected as the voice of the people and charged with the responsibility to look after the welfare of the community.

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55 Ibid., p. 81
The caveat with that, their personal interests and agendas must be put aside for the sake of the community. For the Agikuyu, the interest and well-being of the community took precedence over anything else. This is also biblical, in that, we can learn from the council of Jerusalem. They met, talked and decided and laid down an important principle; that of the inclusive nature of the church (Acts.15); what I would call a Njung’wa model of doing theology, addressing pastoral concerns and mapping mission strategies.

Christian leaders must also be serious and intentional to discuss within and beyond their communities, hold dialogues and gather enough data on issues at hand, and before agreeing or disagreeing on these issues, each party must be allowed to reach the depth of what the issues entail. The two Kikuyu councils, *kiama kia matathi* (peace council) and *kiama kiamaturanguru* (the council of religious affairs) spent days, weeks, and months to discuss the issues and to hear various points of view. These elaborate discussions were held in trust and confidence and in a safe context where every voice is accorded opportunity to be heard. The Anglican Communion could adopt the Njung’wa model of conflict resolution, where there should be no theological arm-twisting, theological imperialism, economic imperialism, or the paternalistic attitude that undermines the inclusive nature of dialogue.

The conversations must be based on Kingdom values of love and genuine concerns for one another, respect of diversity, and quality conversational engagements, not talking to each other at cross purposes. One of the things that have destroyed the quality of discussions on matters such as human sexuality has
been the condescending attitudes being exchanged across tables and continents. Such trading of insults and disrespect would mean automatic disqualification from the Kikuyu councils. We need the patience of *Njung’wa* approach before we may reach such stage of ‘disqualification’ or ‘expulsion.’

Anglican leaders, informed by the Kikuyu ethos such as ‘making decision only from the point of view of sufficient knowledge on the matter at hand,’ could learn a thing or two from this model in addressing current issues of conflict. There is also a place for Church Tradition as handed down, and practiced within the Christian fraternity and Anglicanism. As I study the “Documents of the Church,” and the Catechism, I have also found useful resources. There is a place for ‘reasoning together reasonably’ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As was the case in all Kikuyu meetings, prayer, is for the church as a primary resource for ‘sobriety’ and has the power to lead one to that place for listening to the antagonists of any viewpoint.

The Agikuyu gave voice to every person in their council of elders, on the basis of each elder’s commitment to the common good. The present debate has produced persons who are antagonizing, demonizing, looking down, devaluing and excommunication, or breaking down communication and relationships. For the Agikuyu, debate was debate, with the goal of increasing knowledge to inform decision-making.

Equality on the table remains a bit problematic in our times. Equality is hard to see in a context where the chains of colonialism still hang over the shoulders of many, and with others enjoying the status of their former colonial masters at the expense of others, and still others have become the ‘new masters’ as neo-colonialists. These dynamics undermine any
healthy discussions. As ‘one’ in the ‘one Body of Christ,’ Anglican leaders and theologians should cherish ‘equality’ and engage one another in the context of respect and in reflection, remembrance, care, love living in togetherness in communion and with a commitment and loyalty to Christ.

The councils of the Agikuyu were guarded by a commitment to relationships, despite of disagreements that may arise in the discussions. This commitment spoke to the fact that, leaders were the guardians of the community. Where us conformity, justice and consensus were important, maintenance of the community was a core value. In the context of the Anglican conflict, there may not be conformity or consensus especially with regard to interpretation of Scripture and the implications for our common life, but justice in hearing one another and a commitment to maintaining the unity of Anglican Communion is more important than the differences.

The scope of this dialogue is that, the lines are drawn between liberals and evangelicals, and their viewpoints are clear. What can be achieved, agreed upon and sought is living together in relationship, in unity and diversity. The “Covenant” that we have in common should help in coming to terms with our common life. Anglicans in this sense need to learn to live ‘in a creative tension,’ which among other things demands tolerance restraint and refraining from hurting one another with words and actions. The goals of increasing understanding of issues and mutual knowledge about each other in the contexts of cultural differences and diversity need to be given priority to allow discovery.

We live in a divided world, conflicted and hurting in many areas. This situation has been created by distrust as people drive their
agendas home. Exploitation and abuse has been a legacy of the last century. The Anglican fraternity has to work hard against these vices. Mutual openness, loyalty and trust to the Anglican mission and identity, in the context of meaningful relationships will hold the dialogical process in check. Building and supporting one another will increase understanding and knowledge and bear the fruits of spiritual peace and happiness for all sides.

The contexts, attitude and atmosphere of this listening process should be safe enough for all involved. All persons in the discussion must be given space and equal voice without intimidation or fear of rejection. All persons must be allowed and encouraged to express themselves and their viewpoints with courage, love, and acceptance of one another.

In doing some reading in preparation of this presentation, and after listening to the various viewpoints and eloquent presentations on the issues at hand, ‘fusion of horizons’ may be our new paradigm of doing Anglican theology. Anglicans may need to consider ontological issues, against the back-drop of methodology and hermeneutics as a science of interpretation. The fundamental basis of the Anglican identity and mission will be founded, not on interpretation, but the apprehensions of the Holy Spirit in the ways of being, as new beings in Christ. Paulos Gregorios reminds the Christian communities that, they are the new humanity, “invisibly united with God in Christ, the new community is a mediating humanity – a humanity that reconciles and unites God and the world, (and I add, humanity and humanity).}


Conclusion

In conclusion, the Agikuyu accepted the notion of natural unity and diversity to accommodate various apprehensions and viewpoints. The core purpose of communal dialogue was to build and maintain community. As Anglicans engage in dialogue and conversations around issues that divide them, the maintenance of Anglican identity and mission, and the ‘togetherness’ as a Communion that define our life must be kept in focus. Submission to the love and grace of Christ will bring meaning, reconstruction and transformation in our shared and common life. The ethos of incorporation of a new vision and obligation must remain an aspect of the dialogue. The African religious ontology where the sacred and secular will fuse for a better life in community should be given a chance to inform our listening processes.
Definition: What is conflict?

A Sotho proverb says, “Human blood is heavy, and hinders the one who has shed it from fleeing.” Different cultures manage conflicts differently. If we respect each others’ culture and filter every cultural conflict management method through the Gospel, we will have an adequate basis from which we can draw great insight. In this paper I examine how the Agĩkũyũ managed conflict and in the most humane way. First let us define conflict.

To be in conflict is to be in a state of disagreement or opposition. As a noun, the word conflict means fighting, struggle or quarrel. Conflicts can take many forms. They can be domestic, racial, religious, political, ethnic, economic and social. Participants in a conflict vary depending on the nature of the conflict. Conflicts can be an open dispute or clash between two opposing individuals, communities, groups or Nations.

In the traditional African culture, conflict is part of spirituality. In African culture, the relationship between God and human being is not divided into sacred and secular. The divine will is sought in every human activity including conflict. Raids for example were carried out under strict ritual rules. Participants are ritually cleansed and Ngai (God) is consulted before any raid is undertaken. Since the era of colonialism, the Agĩkũyũ like many other African communities have adopted foreign and sometimes cruel methods of conflict management. This is clearly seen in
modern conflicts in Africa today, where use of force has become a way of solving conflicts.

**History and Nature of conflicts**

Conflict is as old as human history. In the Old Testament, the word sin is mentioned for the first time in the context of a conflict of the first two brothers, Cain and Abel (Gen 4: 7). Further conflict between individuals, clans and nations make a substantial part of Old Testament history. The nature of conflict was sometimes very inhuman. King David carried out massacres against those who engaged him in a conflict (1Sam 30:17). Amasias killed 10,000 prisoners of war (2Chro 25:12). Our own times are not any different. During the British colonial conflict in Kenya, for example, the Agĩkũyũ witnessed unprecedented inhuman treatment at hands of the British colonialists. Massacres were carried out, women and innocent children were not spared (Caroline, 2005: 72, 7, 88, and 219). Africans who were employed as home guards carried out these atrocities in league with their employers. These inhuman treatments of people engaged in a conflict is a common feature of human history. In Canada, for example, some of the first Nations in the land were decimated by invading European powers in the 19th century (Richardson, 1992: 267).

Conflict is not new to Africa. Long before the continent was colonized by the western world, different communities were involved in conflicts. Historians call these conflicts ‘tribal wars.’ These primitive conflicts were carried under tribal guidance of warfare and their destructive effects were minimal judged by today’s standard. These conflicts live on. In the recent years we have witnessed internal conflicts in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, Somalia, and more recently in Kenya too.
These conflicts have led to civil wars of a magnitude never witnessed before in any African community. Untold atrocities, like amputations of limps, torture, indiscriminate killings and millions of both internal and external refuges has become a mark of this continent. The loss and human suffering encountered in these conflicts are beyond words. The following paragraph gives the reader a glimpse of the Kenyan post election crisis in late 2007 and early 2008.

**Kenyan Post General Election 2007 Conflict**

Immediately the disputed General elections results were announced, Kenya was engulfed in a crisis. What started as an election dispute soon escalated to domestic, community, regional and ethnic conflicts. Communities abandoned their traditional methods of crises management and employed what they had experienced during the era of colonialism or what they had heard from other conflicts in the world. No peace terms were sought. One community sought to annihilate the other. The traditions laws of conflict were not observed. Shopping centres, homes were burned and reduced to rubbles. Property left behind was plundered and animals taken away as booty. The dead were stripped off everything the attackers thought was valuable. The murder, rape and pillage seemed to bring joy to the attackers. Captured women and children were treated barbarously. In one ugly incident children and women were burned is a Church in Eldoret.

Different communities were displaced and many found themselves in the most inhuman conditions ever. This conflict was of nature and magnitude that was foreign to many

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58 Individuals who had married from different communities were engaged in domestic disputes either among themselves or with communities they lived with.
‘participating’ communities in Kenya. It was aimed at annihilating the “enemy” community. New unknown terms such as “tribal cleansing” and “mandoadoa” (the spotted ones) were developed. Everything that was identified with the “enemy” was destroyed. Not even churches were spared.

The consequences of this conflict were enormous: Food productivity went down. Unending suspicion and mistrust between different communities was created. Minor historical differences that existed between the some communities were deepened. Above all a lot of government energy and resources that would have been used to further development is being spent on the management of this conflict. This conflict will remain one of the most important obstacles to efforts in reducing poverty, upholding human rights and achieving sustainable development in Kenya for a long time to come. The government and the churches have an uphill task to reconcile communities involved in this conflict. The destructive nature of this conflict is ‘foreign’ to many Kenya communities’ approach to conflict management. In the following paragraphs, we shall examine some aspects of this conflict through the lens of the Agĩkũyũ approaches to conflict management. Hopefully in the current trend of reviving lost useful African cultural values these will help us address future conflicts.

**Conflict is inevitable**

Like many other communities in the world the Agĩkũyũ were aware of the inevitability of human conflict. In our daily lives since time immemorial there has always been conflict and there will always be disagreement about what is fair and best for all of us. Through their history the Agĩkũyũ had learnt that conflict is not only inevitable but also could turn destructive and threaten the survival of the whole community. Accepting this inevitability of conflict therefore, the Agĩkũyũ developed rules and
regulations to ensure that conflict is minimized and controlled, to ensure that, in cases where it is unavoidable, it did not threaten the whole group.

Conflict was never seen as a means to solve anything but categorized as ‘a problem.’ It was never used as a means to render extinct one’s enemies. Conflicts were always managed in such a way that, reconciliation was sought beyond conflict. Such beliefs as sacredness of life guided principles of conflict resolution and reconciliation. Whether the conflict was domestic, regional or national, the Agĩkũyũ found a civilized way of dealing with it. Anger or blind rage was tamed by a set off taboos. Today this heritage has been forsaken and we are exterminating one other.

**Common Responses to Conflict**

Conflicts are an expensive undertaking. How an individual, a community, a group or a Nation responds to conflict and the behaviour towards the situation determines how destructive the results of that conflict will be. When faced with a conflict, the Agĩkũyũ commonly employ one or a combination of methods to control conflict. The bottom line is to solve the conflict with minimal cost and human injury as much as possible. We briefly consider three methods of managing conflict: withdrawal, surrendering and fighting.

**Withdrawal**

The Agĩkũyũ were aware that conflict deepens differences. It is believed that, if a person engages in a conflict, it may lead to irresponsible behaviour such as getting into a fight. They therefore developed a ritual required of people engaged in a
conflict. This ritual gave the opportunity to either party to pull out of the conflict and seek a peaceful solution to it. If one party chose pull out, the other party respected the decision and did not take the advantage. This art was instilled early during childhood conflicts. Let us illustrate this with an example: Two boys engaged in a dispute would not normally jump into fighting after a disagreement. An okay to fighting as means of solving the conflict was sought. This is how it was done: A “star” mark was put in the hand of one of the aggressors who was willing to fight. He then asked his counterpart in the conflict to disrupt it. If he did, then the two joined in a physical combat to settle the dispute. If one of the parties to the conflict felt that he was not strong enough, or it was not wise to engage in a fight, he would choose to give up his demands and walk away. This way the conflict was settled peacefully without potential physical injuries.

Surrendering

Conflicts are expensive. They may take too much energy and sometimes yield no gains. The Agĩkũyũ had a philosophy called “njũra na ago” (inevitable loss through witchdoctor”). This involved surrendering and giving up something. It was another way of dealing with conflict. This may involve an individual or a community giving up claim to some rights. This may seem cowardly but it was less expensive than engaging in fighting. Life is sacred and it is not cowardly to protect it.

Sometimes the Agĩkũyũ and Maasai raiding warriors came face to face. One raiding party with the booty of girls and animals may be caught up with by their pursuers. In such circumstances the two parties did not jump into bloody battle. The two conflicting parties stood against each other. The captors asked their pursuers to bring forward their hero to challenge the hero
from their opponent’s side. The two representative warriors fought each other as the conflicting warriors watched. The party whose warrior lost in the fight owned the defeat, surrendered and left in peace with only one casualty. These actions may be mistaken as cowardice, but it is not. It is part of the Agĩkũyũ prudence to manage conflict.

**Fighting**

One of the irresponsible behaviours that conflict produced is fighting. Whether started by one side, both parties are involved and both met the cost. ‘Fight’ as a response to conflict may be deemed appropriate when there is a legal point which must be made, when a crucial moral issue is at stake, or when having a clear winner and loser will not cause long-term damage to an ongoing relationship. Let us now examine how each of this was applied in different context of conflicts.

**Domestic Conflict**

Domestic conflict between members of the family is not unusual. Some of these conflicts arise from the breach of moral values, disagreements or psychological problems. The Agĩkũyũ people managed and regulated these conflicts so that sanctity of life was respected and preserved. This was done using a number of taboos. It was forbidden, for example to violently shed blood of mūndū wa rurira (a relative). Any such person would be contaminated with thahu. Furthermore, a husband, who hit his wife and drew blood or the *vice versa* becomes contaminate with thahu. Thahu was so dreaded that it deterred relatives from engaging in physical conflicts lest a member is injured. A convicted individual and his relatives had to meet the cost of purification.
Conflict with a Neighbour

Conflicts can arise between neighbours. If they are not properly managed they can deepen and produce irresponsible behaviour. This can obstruct cooperation in times of need between neighbours. Normally, a conflict between neighbours was settled through the council of elder. It was forbidden for neighbours in conflict to engage one another in anger. It was customary among the Agĩkũyũ to express one’s wish in a conflict by use if a ritual. This involved violently breaking a pot (the traditional pot was made of clay) in the neighbour’s house. Symbolically, the ritual meant wishing death to the neighbour and all members of his family. Such an act is potential of furthering conflict and may result in a bloody confrontation. This was against the Agĩkũyũ ethics of conflict management. It was completely forbidden. The seriousness of this offence allowed the offended party to report the case to the council of elder without first paying the customary fee. The aggressor was heavily punished and ritually cleansed.

Clan Conflicts

While the Agĩkũyũ accommodated and managed conflict so that sanctity of life was respected and preserved, fighting was sometimes allowed as a means of managing conflict. Different Agĩkũyũ clans had territorial units. These territories were held in common by the members of a given clan. Sometimes borderlines between these territories were ill-defined. Disputes over borderlines, pasture and domestic animals were not uncommon. In the struggle for control of land and resources, conflict often emerged. It could also be possible that two

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adjacent clans have historically bad blood between them. Normally such disputes were settled by a council of elders from both clans. Either side of the conflict may disagree with the ruling of the council of elders. In such circumstances, it was not unusual for such conflicts to result into an inter-clan fighting. If such fighting broke out it was refereed by the elders of both sides (Leakey, 1970: 1073). Each warrior participating in the fight was attired with distinctive marks so the elders could identify him. In such fights Agĩkũyũ was not allowed to kill a fellow Agĩkũyũ. If he did he would have to pay for his blood. Such inter-clan fights did not cause permanent enmity. It did not take long before the warriors were in fellowship again.

External Conflict

Geographically, Agĩkũyũ and the Maasai were neighbours. There is no historical record that the two communities were engaged in tribal wars with one another. However, tribal conflicts over resources existed with different neighbouring groups. This resulted in frequent raids of cattle, sheep and goats on either side.

These raids were not seen as war or an act of aggression as such. They were not driven by hate and pleasure to kill. In their execution, these raids were guided by strict rules. Every action was censured by taboos. Sanctity of life was observed, respected and preserved. The primary purpose was to help the individual or the community to acquire some wealth from the other. The raids were not an opportunity to kill, rape and wantonly destroy property. On returning from a raid in Maasai country, for example, a warrior who had not killed a Maasai during the raid was happily received by family members. As a gesture of appreciation, the sword untied, received together
with the spear by his mother. A warrior who had killed during the raid did not receive this gesture and was not allowed in the homestead. He was withdrawn from the community and could not touch or greet any person until he was purified. Killing during a raid or even a war was tabooed. It was expensive when it occurred.

In any given conflict, women and children are the most venerable because they cannot defend themselves. When the Agĩkũyũ warriors carried raid in Maasai country, they were forbidden from killing women and children. Such an act it was believed could defile the warrior and jeopardize the raid. The conflict would in turn threaten the whole group. According to Leakey\(^60\) no Agĩkũyũ warrior should blood his spear on a Masai woman, girl or child. Any warrior who did this received no honour.

### A Girl taken as a Prisoner of War Became a ‘Sister’ to the Captor

On the occasion when the Agĩkũyũ warriors successfully raided Masai country, Agĩkũyũ warriors captured girls and young women as “prisoners of war.” It was a taboo for a warrior to have sexual contact, with these girls, and women during the journey back to kikuyu country. Once the warrior had brought a prisoner home to his parent, he was required to treat her as his own sister. Any sexual contact would be counted as incest. It was believed that a girl captured becomes a “sister” or a child of the captor.\(^61\) The captor was required to send message to the Maasai country through women traders asking for ransom. If the Maasai wanted to rescue the girl, they would safely come to Kikuyu land and negotiate the return of their child by paying a ransom. If this was not fourth

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\(^{60}\) Ibid, p.1067  
\(^{61}\) Ibid, p.1068
coming, the captive became as member of the family. Never did she ever become a concubine of her captor. It is worthwhile noting that these conflicts involved warriors only. They did not destroy other business between the communities.

Sometimes the Agĩkũyũ warriors raided at opportune times when the Maasai morans were partying. In these parties, Maasai warriors were usually accompanied by their girl friends. If an Agĩkũyũ band of warriors attacked such a party and in the event captured a girl, they were forbidden from killing any Maasai warrior present at the party. This was a serious taboo. The Agĩkũyũ understanding was that the captured girl became the captor’s sister, and if the captor killed any Maasai warrior present at the party, he might have killed his “sister’s” lover or brother.

**Asylum**

One of the most devastating incidents in the Kenyan post election violence of 2007/2008 was the burning of sanctuaries. The climax was the burning of a Church with those taking refuge in it at Kiambaa in Eldoret area. Such an act is a taboo to the Agĩkũyũ. The Agĩkũyũ did not normally kill murderers. However, habitual murderers would be sentences to death and be sought by the community police. If such a person under the pursuit of the community police sought refuge at the sacred tree called the Mugumo, or at a grave yard, his life was spare. The murderer was asked to leave the Agĩkũyũ country. The community police escorted him out of the country. He was expected to go away and seek asylum elsewhere. Such a person left his community and migrated to another “country” and never to return.
Conclusion

Laws and taboos are often broken. This is the nature of human beings. The Agĩkũyũ traditional approach to conflict management may be transgressed or neglected like any other human law. In such cases, the Agĩkũyũ had several methods of conflict resolution. This included local courts, peacemaking processes of conflict resolution generally included negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and humane systems of punishing offenders. These approaches always allowed dialogue, reason and protected the weak. Conflict was not an avenue for the strong to ruthlessly devastate and humiliate the weak in conflict. While conflict was inevitable, ruthlessness, savagery and massacres were tabooed. We could learn ‘new rules of the game’ from such traditional methods of conflict management, and our treatment of each other, even in the bitterest of conflicts may become not only humane but also godly, and fruitful for a transformed relationships and partnerships in mission.
“Kulta, nalayak, kahan ka paap hai yeh” (stupid, idiot, blot on the family, whose sin is it?). These were the screams coming out of a house in Ratanjuli Cluster situated 34 kilometres away from Tezpur in Assam, a state in the northeast of India.

People from the area, including both Hindus and Christians, surrounded the house to find out what the matter was. On probe it was found that Anjali, a member of the family, had locked herself in a room and had not come out of it for two days. On probing further, the villagers found that she had been carrying a child for six months. Since being an unwed mother bears a stigma, the boy she had been seeing had taken her for an abortion. As the baby was six months old, the doctor refused to perform the procedure, so they went to a private pharmacy, where she was given a medicine that caused the baby to die inside her womb. Terrible pain and shame forced her to remain inside the room.

In the evening, as is customary, the male members of the village gathered under a banyan tree to discuss matters pertaining to the good of the village. Anjali’s matter was discussed at length, and it was decided that some of the elders from the village would approach the boy, who was working in a neighboring tea garden. When he did not listen to them they complained to the garden’s manager and asked him to suspend the boy. After hearing the story the manager took immediate action and suspended the culprit. Necessary arrangements for the girl’s treatment in the civil hospital were also made.
The matter did not end here, for the villagers were concerned about the future of Anjali. A meeting of the villagers was called to finalize the matter with the panchayat (local governance committee), labor union of the garden and local leaders. After discussing the matter thoroughly the villagers exhorted the boy to accept the girl as his wife and to arrange for proper treatment until she completely recovered. They also told the boy that if they found negligence in the treatment or anything else a legal action would be taken against him. Also, once the girl recovered the boy had to have the marriage performed legally and produce a copy of the marriage certificate to the villagers. The guardian of the boy also accepted the resolution put by the villagers. Thus a life which could have been destroyed by fighting a case in court was settled through discussion under a banyan tree. This is an example of Indian Indaba.

**Forums for Consultation and Decision-Making in India**
The word “Indaba” is new in the Indian context, but for the African context it is not. In southern Africa it is a familiar term and a popular concept. It communicates a mode of interaction with sense and sensitivity.

When we try to unfold the nature of Indaba, we discover that it resembles several models of group interaction in the Indian context. In Bengal, for instance, addaa designates an informal discussion in a group. Students in universities sometimes have felt included in deliberations only if they were in an addaa, which may have a less formalized agenda than an indaba. In other parts of the country, however, an addaa has the connotation of a drinking society.

In Punjab, in the northwest of India, people often gather on manji, or rope cots, under a banyan tree to discuss matters of common interest. There the meeting is called manji, and there
are similar gatherings in other areas of the country, though under different names. Such meetings are often male-dominated. While the men are meeting and discussing issues pertaining to individuals, families and the community at large, the women folk are expected to be doing their family chores, cooking and the like. In the central Indian state of Maharashtra, however, women also participate.

In Maharashtra, sabha is another important model of group deliberation and decision-making, but it has a much more formal and legislative connotation. For instance, the two houses of Parliament in India are called the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha (similar to the House of Commons and House of Lords in Britain). At the local level, the panchayat, or village council of elders and other leaders, typically has a similarly formal decision-making function. Of late, women have emerged as winners in panchayat elections and often hold decision-making positions.

The Nature of Indaba
There seems to be no formal term in English that can communicate the meaning and message of Indaba. Although the term Indaba may be alien to the Indian context, its concept and sense are not, and in the Indian context we can understand what it is about.

Indaba is:
• Sharing on a topic/and or an issue in an informal get-together, where age and sex, and even number hardly matter.
• Encouraging and sometimes instigating others to take part in the sharing or discussion, so that gradually everyone shares and/or talks.
• Giving up the initial hesitation to talk, and gathering momentum to be part of the whole discussion.
• Honoring others' views more than one's own.
• Finding time to reflect retrospectively, which often leads to confession and paves the way for reconciliation and growth.
• Inspiring people to develop the skill of listening and learning from each other.
• Developing an understanding of where there is agreement and where there is disagreement.
• Drawing no formal conclusion or resolution of the sharing/reflection/discussion, and yet finding everyone satisfied.

Seventy-five percent of India is rural, and the concept behind Indaba exists in the form of meetings under the banyan tree where matters pertaining to the lives of people living in the area are discussed. Such gatherings have the spirit and the value of cooperation and trust to take decisions collectively and resolve conflicts between communities. This is evident in the stories below, which illustrate how such gatherings inculcate feelings of togetherness and trust that can bring healing.

The Nanegaon Dalits’ Fight for Their Graveyard
The life of India’s outcastes, commonly called Dalits, is full of struggle. Typically they work hard at very low wages to make ends meet in order to ensure their survival. In this instance, Dalits who were Christian converts also had to struggle to ensure that after death too they could rest in peace, possible only if they could be buried with dignity in the land that was theirs. A socio-economically weaker group of people had to fight to reclaim their land, which was being encroached upon by the dominating class.

Nanegaon is a small village in Jalna district, about 52 kilometres from Aurangabad in Maharashtra. Nanegaon houses about 100 Dalit Christian families who come from the Maatan, or Maang, community, which has been residing in the
area for three generations. Historically, the Maatan were looked down as outcastes and were forced to do lowly jobs like sweeping and scavenging. They also supported themselves by broom-making and rope-weaving.

Today the picture has not changed much, for the Maatan Dalits still live in poor conditions, deprived of many amenities. They are landless laborers who earn daily wages by working in neighboring farms and factories. When work opportunities decline in their villages, many are forced to migrate to towns and cities in search of livelihood. Due to the apathy of the government and its policies, such communities have remained at the periphery of society. Yet in spite of all hardships, these communities have remained devout in their faith and have pulled together in facing the challenges of life.

Some 150 years ago, the missionaries who started work in the Nanegaon area bought a piece of land, out of which 3.5 acres was kept as a burial ground. Over time its ownership passed to the local Dalit Christian community. A couple of years back the dominating classes in the village started impinging on the property and gradually grabbed most of the land, for there was no boundary wall. The Dalits were left with a mere one acre of land, and that too was being eyed by others. The Dalits found it difficult to protest, because they depended on the the influential higher-caste people for their livelihoods, and they could not match their power.

The Dalit Christian community sat together and discussed various options to solve the problem. They realized that socio-economically they were at a disadvantage, for their livelihoods depended on the upper-caste people. They also believed that confrontation would not be effective because they were few in number. So with a rights-based perspective, they went into a
thoughtful process of uniting and sensitizing the entire community, creating awareness of the right to a dignified life. Members were encouraged to wage a peaceful protest against the oppression and anarchy they were experiencing.

This community organization resulted in mobilizing a movement for the common cause. To claim back their land that had been forcibly taken, all Dalits together approached the local government machinery. They procured copies of government records and other documents that designated the exact area and proved their ownership of the land. Proceeding in a legal manner, they succeeded in ending the encroachment on their land. They also managed to get an official order to construct a boundary wall, as this would protect their land from further encroachment.

The results were not quick and the process was not easy, but over a period of time their Do No Harm approach enabled them to reclaim their land. Head-on clashes would not have yielded results, but a series of talks to convince the encroachers to give back land bore positive fruit. The community took the legal route to prove their ownership over the said area and made the dominating class realize that their demand was just. Thus they managed to maintain good relations with the other class and safeguard their livelihood.

**Restoring the Pannasi Water Supply**
A long time back in the Bhandara District of Maharashtra, in central India, in an area included in the CNI Diocese of Nagpur, Pannasi village was carved out of Minsi village. It houses all Shende families, and they are Mali (horticulturists) by caste and occupation. In the beginning, a couple of families relocated themselves from Minsi and started residing on a hillside, cultivating the land for floriculture. As time passed, more
families joined them, and gradually the number of families reached fifty. It was then that it became the separate entity known as Pannasi, for in Marathi, pannas means fifty.

Including Pannasi, there are three villages under Minsi Gram Panchayat, and they all get their water supply from Minsi. (A gram panchayat serves at the village level whereas a nagar panchayat serves a city.) In May 2008, Pannasi’s water was stopped. Some of the villagers went to the gram panchayat and enquired about it. They were told that the pipeline was closed for maintenance and that the supply would resume soon. Months passed, but nothing was done and the severity of the water problem increased. Women from Pannasi walked daily a distance of 3-4 kilometers to fetch the pots of water they needed for their households. Some the villagers used bullock-carts, bicycles and mobikes to transport water.

In March 2009, Manav Haqq Sangharsh Samiti (MHSS, meaning Human Rights Committee) a people’s organization and partner of the Nagpur Diocesan Board of Social Services in the Church of North India, started its intervention in the area. While interacting with the community members, the MHSS members realized the acute water problem that people were facing for months at a time. When they tried to find the root cause of this problem, they learned that the water supply was deliberately cut by Minsi because it felt the Minsi locals were not getting enough supply. MHSS tried to reason and solve the problem amicably by bringing together communities from both villages, but it did not work out.

The representatives from Pannasi in Minsi’s gram panchayat could not do much to restart the supply. The local governing system had a strong hold of Teli (oil merchants) and Kunbi (landlords) communities which are considered to be high
castes. They dominated the proceedings in the general meeting and sidelined the Pannasi issue.

MHSS mobilized the community in Pannasi and empowered them to unite to acquire their right to water. There were some people in Pannasi who were indifferent to the process, and their involvement was casual. They thought they would benefit even if they did not participate actively in the struggle. But the MHSS brought the Pannasi residents together and led them in their struggle, guiding them to take this matter to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Bhandara District. The villagers in large numbers went to the District Office. The CEO promptly responded to the people's appeal and asked the concerned department to take necessary action. Minsi Gram Panchayat was also directed to cooperate.

In the first week of July 2009, mechanized crews reached Pannasi village and began the maintenance work on the water system. Within a month the water supply was restored. In order to strengthen the village's position in the gram panchayat, Pannasi village plans to prepare more Mali members to serve as their representatives in the local governance system. To establish a bond with other villagers they plan to have common celebrations of religious festivals, initiate and organize cultural programmes and build trust so that they can participate in each other's social and political struggles. It is also thought that one common water scheme for all the villages would maintain harmony.
With the help of the elders at the sabha, the community in Pannasi was empowered to unite to acquire their right to water.  

**Indaba in the Bible**

If people getting together to share joys and sorrows, excitement and frustration, memories of yesteryear and plans for the tomorrow are the main focus of Indaba, then there are ample references to Indaba-type consultations in the Bible. Certain biblical narratives can be considered in the category of Indaba if examined carefully. For example, the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) provides us evidence for a kind of Indaba. Genesis 11:1-4 suggests that the people of the whole world were part of an Indaba as they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens." They moved together, they talked together, they planned together and then they took a decision together for what they considered their wellbeing. This “good” was to retain their name and identity: "Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

There is a trace of another Indaba in the succeeding verses, Genesis 11:5-7. Here we find God in a divine Indaba in which God speaks as a plural person: "Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." Here God, depicted as a plurality, talked and took a decision against the human Indaba. In this story the divine Indaba can be identified as a counter-Indaba to that of the humans. The divine Indaba superseded the human Indaba, and thus the human Indaba faltered (Genesis 11:8-9).

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62 Case studies in this essay are drawn from the experience of the CNI Synodical Board of Social Services.
The New Testament provides examples of people coming together in sorting out issues. Acts 15 provides the story of the Jerusalem Council, which was held chiefly because Christian Hellenists in Antioch had baptized uncircumcised Gentiles, and because other Christians, the mainly Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, believed that was wrong. But the disagreement was not only about circumcision. They were debating whether Gentiles had to adopt Jewish customs before being baptized. Jewish Christians believed it was right to impose their own customs and culture on the Gentile Christians. This is a mistake which some missionaries of all nations have made and are still making.

Another example is found in the various accounts of Jesus' last night with his disciples in the four gospels. The act of giving and serving is stressed. Jesus is the leader, but he acts in vulnerability: he offers his body and blood for the disciples and for the life of the world. He lets Judas go, although he knows betrayal is at hand. He washes the disciples' feet. Jesus shares his anguish with the disciples in various ways. They confer about who the betrayer might be, and Peter professes his undying loyalty. Jesus prays for the disciples. Was this Indaba successful? Well, it certainly bequeathed to us the Eucharist that is at the heart of our worship life, and Jesus’ prayer is a permanent gift about what it means to be “in Christ”. On the other hand, it did not prevent the disciples from scattering shortly thereafter. Like any Indaba, its record was mixed!

The Listening Cell in the Church of North India
The Indian analogues to Indaba that have been cited arise from the historic rural context of life in India. Yet India is becoming increasingly urban, with Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai qualifying as megapolises on a global scale and many smaller
cities having several million inhabitants. In this environment it is important that urban Christians develop patterns of common life that both draw on traditional patterns and respond to urban realities.

On the above premise, after becoming Moderator of the Church of North India in 2006 the Most. Revd. Joel V. Mal presented his address at the first CNI Executive Committee (the senior executive body of CNI), and it was received with deep appreciation. The address generated discussion and noted the following points:

That the Church Union achieved and inaugurated on 29 November 1970 is a gift from God: Despite trials and tribulations during this long united journey for 35 years it was acknowledged that the journey has been rich and vibrant with God being with us.

For the onward journey to be smooth the Church needs to get back to the basics and be always ready like soldiers in barracks, fully prepared.

Before we engage in our journey together we need to find out together what is ailing us and what it ailing others, and then find medicine for that. It is going to be difficult and painful to be honest with ourselves, others and God, but there is no other way.

The Church of North India as it is here and now should proceed to look at itself critically. This self-examination will help all to participate more fully in the church's life and work.

After much discussion it was decided to establish a "Listening Cell" at the church-wide synod level.
Salient among its terms of reference were:

- It shall endeavor to undertake a process of introspection to address issues that are hindering the growth and development of the life and work of the church.
- It shall facilitate listening to the voice of the people of the CNI and create space for understanding, fellowship and reconciliation.
- It shall examine matters of conflict in order to decide whether there is any possibility for negotiation and reconciliation.
- The Listening Cell shall function within a time frame and submit periodic reports on the outcome of its work to the Executive Committee.
- While dealing with matters pertaining to a diocese, it shall make efforts to visit the diocese involved and talk to the people concerned.\(^{63}\)

The Listening Cell had just one meeting, at which many grievances were shared by members of congregations and by one staff member of a synodical board. However, the Listening Cell did not see the light of another meeting and the effort lapsed, essentially because the criticisms that were voiced were considered too sensitive and volatile. In this situation we see that the church had the vision and courage to launch an Indaba-type effort, but it had not developed internal mechanisms of trusting response to handle what the consultation process might bring to light.

\(^{63}\) Minutes of the 77th Meeting of the CNI Executive Committee, held 7-8 February 2006.
Conclusion
This reflection has recounted several instances in which Indian Christians have activated indigenous models of consultation and decision-making in situations of personal and socio-economic conflict, both within their communities and with other communities. A particular instance of church-wide listening and consultation has also been narrated. The study has cited conceptual models from within Indian society that are analogous to the practice of Indaba, and biblical instances of Indaba-like consultations have been explored.

The challenging question before us as the Church of North India is this: Are we a listening church, or have we over time become chiefly a bureaucratic multinational organization? Seen as the mission of Christ, the church is for the people, of the people and by the people. While the Lord's command remains a top priority for members of rural congregations in India, we in the urban setup seem to be preoccupied with bureaucratic realities. If people in rural congregations can sit together and sort matters out, why cannot we at the national level have the spirit of reconciliation to try and build a just and peaceful society?
During the summer a group of Anglicans in Hong Kong, lay and ordained, were asked to consider ways in which Chinese people resolve conflicts, and by doing so, to offer ideas of resolving conflicts to the wider Communion. Over two nights of inspiring discussion at Hong Kong Ming Hua Theological College, we have learned a lot from each other, all of us having come from the three different dioceses of the Province of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSKH). All of us generally agree that there is much to be learned from the classical Chinese word/philosophy of ‘He’ (和), whose concept is heavily influenced by Confucian and Taoist teachings. While the Chinese character ‘He’ (和) has normally been translated and understood as the notion of ‘harmony’, this word/philosophy carries a much deeper and richer connotation rooted in Chinese culture.

For us, ‘He’ plays an vital part in Chinese thinking and in solving conflicts, and we have mentioned some well-known Chinese phrases, all of which include this particular Chinese character (和), so to help illustrate the profound meaning and philosophy of ‘He’ (和). For instance, we stress that “‘He’ is precious’ (以和為貴), and the need to treat everybody and everything with ‘a quiet mind and a peaceful disposition’ (心平氣和). Some of us also recall the aged-old saying that: ‘Prosperity is born out of a household in “He”/harmony’ (家和萬事興). Generally, the concept of ‘He’ speaks of the forbearance (‘Ren’, 忍) and suppression of personal goals in favour of the Common Good. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that this is not to suggest that ‘He’ is equated to conflict avoidance, or the suppression of differing views or voices to maintain peace and harmony. Rather, the classical understanding of ‘He’, heavily influenced
by Taoist and Confucian teachings, does allow room for disagreement and honest discussion. For instance, Confucius is recorded saying that: ‘the gentleman agrees with others without being mere resonance; the mean man resonates even if he does not agree.’ (The Analects Confucius quoted Zi Lu, 君子和而不同，小人同而不和。«論語·子路第十三») For Confucius, it is important and is indeed possible to maintain a peaceful and harmonious (‘He’) relationship while there are disagreements. If people only seek pragmatic and easy solution by echoing each other’s views, while secretly disagreeing, this is not true ‘He’ because misunderstandings and tension still exist.

While ‘outward’ agreement and compromise may lead to short-term peace, it is neither true peace nor a way of maintaining long-term stability and peace. Hence it is vital to seek out opposing views and to understand why there are such disagreements, while at the same time to have the ultimate goal of ‘He’ in mind. The concept of ‘He’ encourages dialogue and open discussion with people of opposing views, and this can be summed up in a short Chinese phrase, ‘Qiu Tong Cun Yi’ (求同存異): ‘While seeking the Common Good, one needs to tolerate Differences’. Rather than seeking uniformity of views, or, for the sake of avoiding tension and confrontation, to oppress differences, the classical philosophy of ‘He’ does allow rooms for disagreements and open debates. As one of the member on our Hong Kong Indaba’s Facebook has noted, ‘Qiu Tong Cun Yi’ emphasises the necessity to look for the ‘common grounds among different parties first. It is because, the common ground is more important than the differences...it is to allow the differences exist among the groups, giving spaces for the higher aim—to reach the state of harmony’.
Therefore, rather than oppressing differences and suppressing varied voices, one should approach conflicts with the goal of promoting ultimate harmony and true peace, which is ‘He’. Hence the use of ‘He’ is not regarded as merely a means but also an end in itself, driven by trust, sincerity and an honest care for others. Nevertheless, the concept of ‘He’ has often been perceived as a means to suppress disagreement because, in real life situations, it always seems to be calling upon conflicting parties to compromise for the sake of maintaining peace and harmony. It asks people to give up their personal objectives to preserve unity. This, however, is not to suggest that ‘He’ is imposing an artificial peace. Rather it seeks to the call upon the conflicting parties to ‘calm down’, to have a ‘break’, and to create some sort of a ‘quiet time’ for the conflicting parties to consider and study each other’s views, with the strong hope for them to negotiate true and long-term peace and harmony.

As such, it is vital not to regard ‘He’ as a means to exclude, to suppress differences or to silence voices. In the name of maintaining peace and harmony (‘He’), it is easy for one to choose the trouble-free option of avoiding conflicts all together. People may be persuaded to sacrifice their personal goals for the time being, for the sake of maintaining unity or temporary peace. Yet while one particular confrontation may be suppressed with either conflicting parties giving up their personal goals, tension continues to exist and eventually will lead to other confrontations. Therefore, in real life situation, ‘He’ is used both as a means and an end with the goal to pursue ultimate harmony and peace for all parties. For instance, when there is disagreement and opposing parties are in great tension, it is quite normal for the third party to step in to mediate (‘He Shi’, 和事) and to ask the conflicting parties to calm down. I will come back to the role of this mediator later, but now it is worth
stressing that the main objective of the mediator is to help the parties concerned cool down, stressing the need to be in harmonious (‘He’) relationship. As noted earlier, the famous Chinese saying, ‘Prosperity is born out of a household harmony’ (家和萬事興) will be emphasised here to persuade the conflicting parties that only when united that the ‘house’ stands in strength and prosperity.

This is a very important stage of reconciliation. While more often than not, when in conflict, people can easily turn an objective argument into personal attack, this therefore tests the skill of the mediator to keep the opposing parties away from, for example, offensive words which do more damage than good in helping to make the arguments clear. If the mediator succeeds, this will lead opposing parties from the heat, and allow them to calm down and, most importantly, to help the conflicting parties to gradually realise that it is on the issue or an argument that they disagree or dislike, not the people involved. The mediating work here is to prevent turning an ‘objective’ debate into one which involves personal insults and attacks. As has been stressed earlier, this is the first stage of reconciliation to bring along ultimate ‘He’. Furthermore, I would argue that the notion of ‘He’ goes further than recognising the other party’s concerns, it also requires one to learn to affirm the other party’s position and to learn to take upon oneself the responsibility of the issue or problem under discussion. This means that one is to be caution not to turn the discussion into a personal assault while being prepared to apologise for the possibly for hurting the other party. This does not mean that one should be without principle and compromise all the time, but it emphasises that one should learn to be both confident with one’s argument, yet also be co-operative and accommodating in his/her approach to the debate.
Hence the notion of ‘He’ is more than affirming each other’s needs, which is indeed important, but emphasises on relational harmony. This calls on the conflicting parties to show empathy and to be willing to sacrifice if required for the Common Good. ‘He’ is also related to the Chinese understanding that one should never be over-confident of his/her knowledge or status or ability, but be prepared to learn from others, including those whom one may considers of less knowledgeable, lower in status or without much talent. This is stressed by the Master Confucius himself when he says: ‘When there are two people who walk besides me, I can always see them as teacher and learn from them. I will select what is good and learn from them, and will watch out what is bad and avoid’. (The *Analects* Confucius quoted Shu Er; 三人行, 必有我師焉。擇其善者而從之, 其不善者而改之。«論語· 述而第七») Therefore it is vital to encourage conflicting parties to learn about and try to appreciate the needs and concerns of the each other.

In our discussion group in Hong Kong, we also talk about the concept of ‘Mientze’ (literally translated as ‘face’), which is usually translated to represent one’s reputation, moral standard, personal performance and status. The concept of ‘Mientze’ goes deep down in Chinese culture. In a conflict situation, it is particular important to make immediate move to soften the tension between confronting parties and prevent either side from losing ‘Mientze’. Since, if one party feels that he/she is losing ‘Mientze’ in public over an argument, one may be easily led believe and see the opposing party’s criticism as a personal attack without much difficulty. It must be emphasised that damages to ‘Mientze’, in real-life situations, are very likely to have lasting repercussions which will spill over to other future debates and deepen the tension between the opposing parties, regardless of how ‘objective’ or how well-intentioned the arguments may be.
Different actions and words carry with them varying degrees of force either to damage or to enhance one’s ‘Mientze’, and their relative power is closely related to the relationship one is in. Generally speaking, depending on the intimacy and closeness of the people concerned, their words and actions can mean very different things. The stronger one’s criticism, the more likely it is to cause the one being criticised to lose ‘Mientze’. More caution is therefore demanded and this requires more ‘politeness’ of the criticising party to the criticised, in order to create a ‘He’ environment where both parties may feel respected—both have been given enough ‘Mientze’—and hence they are more likely to listen. In our group, we call this the modern ‘culture of face-giving’ (給面子的文化). When people are in conflict, as noted earlier, a third party may act as the mediator to act between the conflicting parties to negotiate a solution to the problem. In practice, this mediator is normally a person who is has the respect of both conflicting parties, who is likely to share the same social network of both parties, and to be someone who has a higher status or authority than the parties concerned.

The mediator’s role is to separate the conflicting parties and to ensure that neither side loss ‘Mientze’. This is why this mediator is likely to have moral or formal authority over the conflicting parties and/or have the respect of the parties. The mediator normally asks the parties to give the mediator ‘Mientze’ and to quarrel no more. The mediator may stress the earlier saying which emphasises ‘He’, such as ‘Prosperity is born out of a household harmony’ (家和萬事興), and remind the conflicting parties the need to be together and united. Generally speaking, if the mediator has enough ‘Mientze’, the parties will cease the argument without each side losing ‘Mientze’. In the process of negotiation, the parties may take different ways and each side will be asking the other side to give ‘Mientze’. Normally, in order
to keep harmonious and peaceful relationship, with the help of the mediator who will provide the ‘set of steps’ (下臺階) for the parties to ‘step off the stage of battle’, the parties are likely to concede and give ‘Mientze’ to each other, and, agree to disagree.

Perhaps, it will be good to illustrate me point with a life-example. One is invited to a dinner party by a friend, who also invites other people, most of whom one does not know. While the friend is proud of his/her cooking, even if one does not find the food at all delicious, one will try to say ‘good words’ to express appreciation of the friend’s hospitality. This is not being dishonest but being courteous. Imagine how embarrassing it will be if, at the table full of other guests, one publicly criticises the food, and how easily the friend may see this as a personal attack with the intention to bring disgrace in front of others. No matter how good the advice may be, which may possibly improve the way of cooking, yet after having been criticised in front of his/her guest, it is quite unlikely that the cook will listen. Nevertheless, if one really feels giving some useful suggestions on how to have the food made better, one can choose, for example, to speak with the cook privately after the dinner party. This resonates Jesus’ advice of first speaking with the ‘believer who sins against you’ privately before bringing the argument to open discussion (Matthew 18: 15-17). I believe we should bear in mind Jesus’ advice when we are involved in disagreements with others, even when we feel we are on the right and others wrong.

This leads us to another important aspect of Chinese thinking which is about the concept of ‘Guanxi’ (關係, the closet English translation of this word is ‘relationship’ or ‘network’). The Chinese understanding of ‘He’ places more emphasis on the ‘Guanxi’ than on the individual concerns of the conflicting
parties. The traditional Chinese philosophy of ‘He’ stresses human relation, places significant emphasis on people’s ‘Guanxi’ with each other, and understands that each person has his/her place under Heaven. Thus, true peace and harmony cannot be achieved without first to have a society which is in ‘order’. It is worth mentioning here what the co-ordinator of the Hong Kong Continuing Group, Fr Samson Fan, has noted in our Group’s Facebook of another profound saying of Confucius quoted in Yu Tsz’s:

‘He’ (和) is the value of performing ‘Li’ (禮; this word/concept can loosely be translated as rite, or courtesy). Of the ways of the kings past, this is the most beautiful of matters small and great. However, there are times when this is not acceptable. When one only seeks ‘He’ for its own sake, without be regulated by ‘Li’, this does not do well. (The Analects Confucius quoted Yu Tsz)

有子曰:「禮之用，和為貴。先王之道，斯為美；小大由之。有所不行，知和而和，不以禮節之，亦不可行也。」《論語·學而第十二》

Referring to this quotation, Fr Samson points out that, while ‘He’ is a core value of Chinese value, it needs to be disciplined by ‘Li’ when one should not seek ‘He’ for its own sake. Fr Samson raises a vital question in relation to the link between ‘He’ and ‘Li’. It is worth reiterate my argument which has been noted earlier in this paper that the philosophy of ‘He’ should not be seen as either merely as a means or an end to itself. Rather it should be understood as both a way and the goal which aims to the Common Good (大同) where there is true peace and harmony. Both ‘He’ (和) and ‘Li’ (禮) are closely related concepts. ‘Li’ is normally understood as the rites which do not point to themselves but carry with them the ultimate aim of the
promotion of true harmony and peace. I would argue that there is much resonance between the Chinese notion of ‘Li’ and the Anglican Common Prayer tradition. The Prayer Book does not and should not point to itself as an end in itself yet it is within this Prayer Book tradition that we Anglicans, of different languages and cultures, have been living together for hundreds of years. For us, rites, liturgies or any Christian practices and customs, are created for the worship of God and points towards God, and they are of themselves of no value if they fail this purpose. Rites are there to help us to serve and to promote true peace and harmony, but we as humans are not there to ‘serve’ the rites.

To take a well-known example, in the Church of England’s 1662 Book of Common Prayer, both the consecrated bread and wine are not defined as either a symbol or whether they have been transubstantiated into real flesh and blood. The Communion services speaks nothing more than the core of Anglican belief that the bread is the Body of Christ, who ‘died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving’, and the wine is ‘Christ’s Blood’ which ‘was shed for thee, and be thankful’. By faith with thanksgiving, in the beauty of the Communion liturgy, it seeks to embrace people who hold different theology over the Eucharist. It is at the Lord’s Table that all are embraced and welcomed. Nevertheless, the Communion liturgy here does not point to itself, but to God and to God’s Grace for all people.

It is worth noting here that ‘Li’ is one of the classical Five Cardinal Virtue (五常), which include ‘Yen’ (仁, benevolence), ‘Yi’ (義, righteousness), ‘Li’(禮, rites and courtesy), ‘Zhi’ (智, wisdom) and ‘Shin’ (信, faithfulness). These Five Cardinal Virtues are often linked with the Three Principles (三綱), which explain the ‘rightful’ relationships of people in a hierarchal structure—namely the relationship between the emperor and
his officials; that between father and his son; and, that between husband and wife. While both the Three Principles and Five Cardinal Virtues can trace their origins to the teachings of Confucius, Mencius and the Legalist schools (法家) respectively during the later part of the Zhou dynasty (from the second half of the 8th century BC to the first half of the 5th century BC), they have been used jointly since the Han Dynasty. However, even though the Three Principles and Five Cardinal Virtues have profound impact of the thousand history of China, there is not enough space here to explain in detail what and how they influence Chinese thinking. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that both the Principles and Virtues principally set out that each person has its place under Heaven, and to act in contrary to one’s status, class or place, will disturb the ‘order of things’ which will lead to discord, disruption and damage of Harmony and Peace.

For example, the traditional reading of these Principles and Virtues speak of the duty and responsibility between ruler and his/her subjects, between parents and their children, and between older and younger people. People are defined according to their places under Heaven, and they should act according to their status and places under Heaven. This notion has, however, been abused over the centuries with, for instance, tyrant emperors oppressing their subjects by provoking their divine right from Heaven as prescribed and understood in the Three Principles. Nevertheless, an abuse of a system or a philosophy does not justify its abolition altogether. Classical Chinese concept of ‘order’ and its related belief of the interdependent nature of humans lead us to understand the philosophy dynamically rather than literally. This means that we need to see the philosophies of the Five Cardinal Virtues and the Three Principles in their own historical and cultural contexts and to understand the concept of one’s taking one’s place
under Heaven being a way and a process through which one learn to be human (to be whole). In other words, the heart of these Virtues and Principles, in close relation to ‘He’, emphasises the individual to assume his/her moral and natural obligations inherent in his/her position, and focuses on human relation above the individual.

This may sound very odd to modern ears, especially in the West, but one does wonder whether the excessive individualism and obsession of ‘human rights’ have done as much good as bad to human society. The Chinese notion of ‘He’, as noted repeatedly in this paper, places much importance on human relations, with its emphasis on maintaining harmony and peace. While ‘He’ does not suppress differing views, it does require people to respect each other and calls upon people to sacrifice their personal goals for the sake of the Common Good. One has to appreciate that, for us to grow together in an interdependent and harmonious relationship, we have to learn to ‘sacrifice our small self for the great self’ (犧牲小我，完成大我, a modern saying).

Moreover, within an interdependent relationship, one’s identity does not rest on one’s own self. One’s identity is built within a set of networks, including one’s family, friends, occupation and philosophy. In other words, one is not complete until and only when one is within the ‘great self’. This close-relatedness can be seen in the ways and words we use to describe ourselves. For example, when Chinese names are written or spoken, the family names always come before the given names, and this speaks a lot of how we understand ourselves and how our identity rests heavily on the families from which we come. Chinese parents often describe their children as their ‘bone and flesh’, and this not only displays the closeness between parents
and their children but also stresses that the children are parts of the parents and the wider family network. Hence traditional Chinese philosophy teaches that the children’s ‘hair and skin come from parents, so no damage should be done to them’ and that the ‘children should live a good and honourable life so that the children’s names can be renowned and remembered in generations to come, and by doing so, the parents will be honoured’. (Xiao Jing, a classical book about filial piety; 身體髮膚，受之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之始也；立身行道，揚名於後世，以顯父母，孝之終也。《孝經》)

In an age which stresses the rights of the individual and ‘equity’, the call for collectivity, duty and responsibility may appear very weird and one may even find it unacceptable to speak of one’s taking one’s place under Heaven. Nevertheless, it is vital to stress that, within traditional Chinese thinking, in order to achieve true ‘He’ where there will be true and long-lasting harmony and peace, one needs to learn to take upon oneself one’s responsibility in society before one even begin to talk about one’s rights—bearing in mind that one’s rights and identity can only be understood in relation to one’s place within that society. While traditional Chinese teaching stresses the duty of subjects to the emperors, and it also calls upon the emperors to live up their roles as heads and fulfil their duties to bring peace and justice to their subjects. A classic example can be found in the Great Learning (Da Xue, «大學»), when it stresses that the higher one’s position the higher one’s responsibility and moral conduct.

For me, the Chinese understanding of self finds much resemblance in St Paul’s teaching on the Church being the Body of Christ. Anglicans have always professed themselves to be part of the ‘One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church’ in communion with Christians of all ages and in all places. We also believe that we have each inherited different gifts from
God. As St Paul describes, we function like different parts of the body, each having its different function, but we need each other to be whole, under the supreme Headship of Christ our Lord. Therefore, while we pay our respect for bishops and leaders of the Church on earth, our obedience to them comes from our allegiance to God, and we believe that, regardless of one’s particular ministry (whether as verger, bishop, reader, or as a lay Christian), each one of us is equally loved by God. While we are different, we need each other because we all share the common identity being part of the Body of Christ. Since we believe that the Anglican Communion (our Family) is a gift from God, we have each need to learn to respect each other and try to appreciate each other’s views even if these views seriously challenge ours. Furthermore, if our Lord can eat with sinners and outcasts in society, to the point that He even share His Last Supper with Peter who would deny Him three times and Judas who would betrayed Him, we are encouraged to be at the same Table and share meals with those with whom we disagree. We should even be prepared to eat with our ‘enemies’ whom our Lord has commanded us to love, without whom we are never ‘whole’.

Furthermore, as has been noted earlier, classical Chinese teaching encourages us to place ourselves in the other’s shoes and try to understand how we might have felt if we were in their positions. In our Hong Kong Continuing Indaba Group, we commend the important Chinese concept that calls upon us to discipline ourselves strictly while treat others with great leniency. (律己以嚴, 待人以寬) We understand that traditional Chinese philosophy stresses self-discipline. The Analects («論語») and the Great Learning («大學»), for example, both encourage one to discipline both one’s body and mind, and keep one’s desires and impulses under control. Confucius teaches that ‘being capable to discipline oneself and observe
‘Li’ is ‘Yen’ (benevolence). (The *Analects* Confucius quoted Yan Yian; 克己復禮為仁 《論語·顏淵第十二》)

This means that one will be truly benevolent if one is a self-disciplined person who observes the rites (‘Li’). While ‘Li’ requires one to act according to one’s place under Heaven, and to perform one’s duty and responsibility as given by nature, the process and goal of being a well-balanced, self-aware and disciplined person who is capable to control his/her temper and feeling is therefore of utmost importance. This is similar to the aged-old Christian theology of the relationship between ‘faith’ and ‘good works’. While we Anglicans do not think that our salvation is not earned by our ‘good works’ by faith through Grace, we also recognise that faith cannot be without good works. Similarly, the observing of ‘Li’/rites in itself does not lead us anywhere unless we are first people of true benevolence ‘Yen’ (仁). Only because we want to do good in the first place—out of our search for ‘He’—that we will be readily put ourselves under strict discipline and to observe ‘Li’ earnestly. Our discipline and our performing of ‘Li’/rites, like the Christian ‘good works’, are not there to show off and to earn the respect of people surrounding. Rather, just like ‘good works’ are the outworking of the Christian faith (these good works are done naturally without the desire to earn praise from people), ‘Li’ is the outworking of one’s emphasis on ‘He’ and the Five Cardinal Virtues stated above.

The *Doctrine of the Mean* 《中庸》, one of the Chinese Four Classical Books (the other three are the *Analects* 《論語》, the *Great Learning* 《大學》 and the *Mencius* 《孟子》), states that: ‘The gentleman should be aware of places where he is not seen. He should be anxious and concerned in mind when he is in places where he is not being heard. Even in places where he is alone, he must be strictly disciplined, observe and live up to the standard of “Li”’. (The *Doctrine of the Mean*, first paragraph;
This suggests that we have to discipline ourselves well before we can even consider criticising or judging others. As has been noted earlier, even the Master Confucius expresses that he has things to learn from anyone who happens to walk besides him; we have more reason to be modest and have the courage to open ourselves for the challenges and admonitions given to us by others.

As Christians, we are even further called to imitate and display the humility of Christ, who speaks about loving and serving others and who warns us not to ‘judge’ others lest we ourselves be judged. When we are being criticised by others, we should learn first to forbear the criticising party and try to see them to have carried good intention when they make such criticism. Traditional Chinese philosophy speaks very much of the importance to forbear others, especially when we feel that others are criticising or offending us, or making us lose ‘Mientze’. Forbearance (‘Ren’, 忍) is one of the virtues traditional taught in Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist philosophies. A well-known Chinese saying which derives from Buddhist teaching advises that: ‘There will never be an end if people cannot learn to forgive but keep being occupied with anger, revenge and the repaying evil for evil. Far from it, we have to forgive others when we have the opportunity to do so’.

(冤冤相報何時了，得饒人處且饒人) Again, this finds much resonance in Christian theology when we are called to forgive (see, for example, Matthew 18:15-35). Our Continuing Indaba Group also cites a modern Chinese catchy phrase: ‘Forbearance for a while will clam the sea; willing to yield a few steps backwards allows one to see the wider sky and sea’.

(忍一時風平浪靜，退一步海闊天空).
To have good relationship among members of the family, each member needs to learn to forbear one another and tries to appreciate each other’s needs and concerns. In fact when one takes a few steps backward, one’s view of the world becomes much bigger and one’s horizon much widened. When one’s emphasis is on human relation and the responsibility of every person to promote harmony, and less on the rights of individuals, people will then be more willing to forbear one another, and to engage open dialogue. This is a different way of thinking, in opposition to modern Western stress on the individual, ‘rights’ and ‘equality’. This paper argues that, human relation is very complex and often talks about ‘rights’ or ‘equality’ simply do not work in real-life situations. To take an example, there are times when married couples choose to leave each other for a while when they are having an argument—perhaps with one being in the bedroom and another in the study—so that both can calm down and talk about the problem later. Often in marriage, one side may have to ‘make the first move’ and even to ‘apologise’ in order to avoid direct confrontation, or to reconcile. Good family relationship often requires more forbearance, sacrifice, communication and willingness to serve, than on the rights of the individual members of the family.

To conclude, I would like to argue that sometimes a period of separation may help to serve for future long-term union and harmony. Like the husband and wife noted in the example above, the short period of separation allows them time and space to cool down, to think deeply the issues and problems involved, and even to consider each other’s concerns while at the same time both sides do not lose ‘Mientze’/’face’. This separation may sometime be a very short period while in other times this may be longer. Sometimes we may feel reluctant to separate. Traditional Chinese philosophy emphasises on ‘He’
which places enormous importance on unity in differences and warns against light separation and division. Nevertheless, I will argue that sometimes perhaps a period of separation will change people’s previous held position. So often only when we have lost something which we have previously taken for granted that we discover we have lost so much. Separation may lead one to realise how precious it is for one to be part of the ‘big self’, and forces one to rethink whether it is really worth breaking relationship with those with whom one disagree. Furthermore, sometimes it is only after a separation, when we look back, that we realise how much we had missed out when we were in conflict with others. One classic example can be found in the present relationship between Methodists and Anglicans. While it has taken us many years to realise the sadness of the separation, we are gradually working more and more closely in our common mission for the Gospel as one Christian family. We have become more and more appreciative of each other’s differences and gifts, which I believe is a blessing from God.

While writing this paper, I have wondered whether we have sometimes lost sight and have not been putting enough trusting in the Spirit. While, of course, we need to do our best to preserve unity, as Christ has called us to be One, yet we have to acknowledge that, just as the Communion is a gift of God to us and the world, it is God who is in charge. When we have done our best, we cannot but learn to trust and rest in God. One may recall the incident in Acts 15 when St Paul and St Barnabas had to choose their separate ways of mission because of the disagreements over whether John Mark should be on the trip. While St Barnabas and St Paul must have a very close relationship as fellow Christian brothers, they eventually decided to go on separate paths. If we have stopped our reading here, we may find it sad to see these two important
Church leaders separate from each other over a ‘trivial’ matter. Nevertheless, if we continue our reading of the Biblical accounts, we realise that their separation eventually led to the furtherance of the Gospel.

It is a difficult decision to separate sometimes, but when one has sought all means to preserve unity and has failed, one can do no more than to consider a temporary separation, to put one’s trust in God and to hope that the separation is a way of leading one to reconciliation and long-term harmony and peace. I will suggest that the ‘reunion’ after separation will require the work of the mediator again. The mediator will need to find ways through which conflicting/separated parties will not lose ‘Mientze’/ face if these parties have found reasons to reunite. In Chinese culture, the mediator may invite the parties involved to dinner, and, while eating, the mediator will ask the parties to give ‘Mientze’ to the host to reunite. In this way, both parties can then state that their reunion is due to their common respect to the mediator (to give the mediator ‘Mientze’) and both parties are able to preserve their honour. Of course, during the conversation, one party may say something like, ‘I am sorry, I should not have said/done this…’, while the other party will probably reply, ‘Please, no need to say sorry, it is actually my fault…’. While these may be honest apologies as both parties recognise their mistakes, these words are more likely to have been spoken as a matter of courtesy (‘Li’) to show that they are considerable of each other’s concerns and needs, are willing to give each other ‘Mientze’, and are prepared to seek a solution that works for both parties.

I present this paper with the hope that it may provide some insights in the current situation within our beloved Communion. Nevertheless, I stress that the concept of ‘He’ and its related ideas and means of resolving conflicts have derived from a
particular Chinese cultural context. Caution is required if one is to apply the Chinese philosophy to Western context. I encourage my readers to keep ‘He’ in mind and see it as both a means and an ultimate goal where there is true harmony and peace. I stress the importance of forbearance and the willingness of one’s sacrifice for the Common Good. One should learn to be critical of both one’s own position and others, but never be judgemental of others, following the traditional Chinese teaching to keep oneself strictly disciplined while treating others with great leniency. Finally, as a Chinese Anglican, I leave my readers with the following Scriptural passage, with the hope that, when we are in tension, we may learn to cool down and listen to those with whom we disagree, and make our reply with caution and pastoral sensitivity:

Those with good sense are slow to anger; and it is their glory to overlook an offence.
Proverbs 19:11 (NRSV translation)
Living Church After the Fall:  
A Canadian Case Study

_Wendy Fletcher is Principal and Dean and Professor of Church History, Vancouver School of Theology, Canada_

Living in the aftermath of colonization poses a complex challenge for those of us who understand ourselves to be persons of faith. The legacy of colonization in the experience of the Canadian churches who participated in the residential school experiment in particular has the potential of rendering us speechless. What language can we use to talk of God and of the mission of the church? How do we begin to formulate theology- after the fall?

To speak from the location of the Anglican world about matters theological requires some _investigative contemplation._ Contrary to the current view of some within the Anglican world, we do not have the comfort of a confessional safety net which defines for us the limits of theological speculation and language. We do not have a long history with black and white declarations of thinking about that which is in and out of bounds. However, we do have a tradition which lends us a _way of thinking_ into the task of theology which is, in my view, particularly helpful for this moment in our church’s story.

**Anglican Beginnings**

It might be argued that Anglican theology from its earliest enfleshment in the Elizabethan settlement was a discourse which modelled both theological and cultural hybridity. The consensus which gave us our earliest theological texts in liturgical form were at best illustrations of theological hybridity and at worst- inconsistent compromise. But in any case- a
hybrid it was. This is not to say that by the time of the British Empire our capacity to negotiate difference had not dramatically shifted- that point will become abundantly clear in the case study which follows. However, I invite us in the first instance to return to a time before the fall....

Richard Hooker, late sixteenth century apologist of the Elizabethan settlement was the first of note to throw his hat in the ring on the matter of how Anglicans might do the work of theology. It is to several dimensions of Hooker's thought that I would like to turn as a beginning place: the purpose of theology; the forum for theology; and the nature of the community as location for theology.

First, to intention. Richard Hooker, unlike key thinkers of the Continental Reformation was not a proscriptive thinker. Coming after the major drama of the English Reformation had subsided, Hooker’s contribution to theology was largely **descriptive.** Note: this *modus operandi* becomes particularly important in the hybridity conversation today as we encounter indigenous voice and meaning-making in the genre of narrative theology.

Hooker chronicled his interpretation of events which framed the basis for the theological consensus which would later become known as Anglicanism. Hooker was well schooled in the genre of Aristotelian logic, and from that formation developed his theological voice as one who moves **from the particular to the general.** This way of thinking into theology has become foundational in the Anglican tradition. The theologian can only begin with the world **as it is.** From the encounter with our **context** and the **content** of our stories as they are, we begin to interpret and name- such is the purpose of theology.
The theological task then of describing, naming and interpreting unfolds in the context of community. As an apologist committed to an anti-Puritan discourse, Hooker was consistent in his admonitions that the work of theology could not solely reside in the individual. Uncomfortable with Puritan insistence that the individual was a sufficient location for interpreting the inspiration of the Spirit through Scripture, Hooker insisted that the community was the appropriate forum for the work of theology. In particular, the worshipping community was the location where the theology of the people of God was articulated.

In turn, Hooker’s interpretation of the community was modelled on his understanding of the Trinity. Hooker’s concept of union in the Godhead, wherein there was committed relationship (not passing) or union with the other, but also not obliteration of the personal identity of the other serves as his understanding of community. In community we live in union or communion with the other but also remain distinct. So then, the work of theological interpretation takes account of the common through the lens of respect for the particular or distinct location of the ‘other’- a helpful proscriptive for any movement toward intentional hybridity.

From these basic commitments of Hooker we see an Anglican theological world taking shape. Such a world understands theology as a work which unfolds in relation to the lived experience of the members of a community, with particularity understood in relation to the project of the whole. It fundamentally shapes theology as a practical discipline of communal life which describes and thereby anticipates ways forward, rather than as a doctrinal container which proscribes an uncompromising confessional framework for local application.
Coming on the heels of Hooker, the 17th century Anglican thinkers, known perhaps euphemistically as the Caroline Divines, developed a way of engaging the task of theology, which in turn gave birth to a way of thinking theologically in the 18th and 19th centuries dubbed as Latitudinarianism. This strain of Anglican thought then communicated an Anglican way of approaching theology which attached relatively little significance to dogmatic truth, ecclesiastical organization and liturgical practice. What is authoritative is defined over time and in context in conversation between tradition and Scripture with the studied application of reason.

We approach then the challenge of coming to the theological voice in the 21st century as ones formed in a tradition where it has long been understood that ideas and ideals must be tested in the crucible of the living; that Christians should live their faith rather than merely profess it; that one does not accept something as true simply because an authority figure has said that it is so. The paradigmatic treatment of this theological approach for Anglicans can be found in The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living by Jeremy Taylor (d.1667). In that treatise, Taylor argues that morality, or theology applied in real time, should be kept in the foreground of the Church’s attention while dogma should be “kept in the shade”. Later generations would attempt to turn such teaching into an admonition to moralisms normalized from a particular hermeneutical frame. However, that is an unfaithful reading of the text. Taylor would not have presumed in the 17th century to know what would be right living or teaching in the 21st. Rather, his thinking invites us to understand that what is central is the Hapax, or saving work of God in history. It is to a faithful articulation of that meaning that all Christians are called.
Moving ourselves from the 17th century forward, it is to the wisdom of others who have suffered that I invite us to consider a spiritual posture as necessary companion to our theological commitments as we formulate a way forward in this era of post-colonial understanding. Orthodox Rabbi Irving Greenberg, writing about meaning-making in the aftermath of the horror of the 20th century, wrote, “No statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of burning children.” Humilitas— with this wisdom the Rabbi articulates for us the necessary spiritual ground for our conversation about theology after the fall. Only with the humility born of silence in the face of the horror of which we as human beings know ourselves to be capable, only with the humility born of a history which shows us how misguided our rendition of Christian meaning can become are we able to move forward.

Herein then we find our beginning place in the quest for a post-colonial theological discourse in the Canadian Anglican world. I invite us to begin from a consideration of the crucible of the living as we have received it through the case study of the residential school experience. We then test anything we might say about God and God’s intention for the world against the backdrop of what we have learned there. From the location of that theological insight can we begin to frame our first words after the fall.

To the Case Study
The mission of the church, conceived of as a colonial undertaking, caused harm. However well intentioned, the marriage of political and economic colonization with religion formed a socialization project which led to the devastation of generations of indigenous persons from many First Nations communities across Canada. For several decades no corner of
the nation was left untouched by the colonizing reach of the residential school experiment. Despite the intention to promote well-being through the promotion of the gospel, the marriage of gospel with the imposition of culture meant the stripping away of the culture of the other. The assumption of the racial and cultural inferiority of aboriginal persons set in juxtaposition to the presumed superiority of European culture meant the practical dehumanization of the other. When Christian leaders of an earlier generation partnered with the government to promote the view that only the assimilated indigenous person was worthy of citizenship and recognition as a person under the law, a trajectory of harm unfolded, which wrapped countless children and their families in trauma and dislocation. To replace one culture with another meant that the inferior culture must be stripped away. To accomplish that goal, children were forcibly removed from their families and whole peoples were consequently severed from their kinship groups and the traditional wisdoms which had sustained them throughout their story as a people.

The structure of the residential school project meant that children taken into care by the government were subject to both structural and capricious harm. A grossly under-funded system, which often provided inadequate nutrition, housing, clothing and care, was even less likely to provide effective education. As well, under-funding by the Canadian government meant that in many circumstances poorly supervised children were left vulnerable to the abuses of violence and humiliation by their caregivers. By its very structure, the residential school system created a world in which its own objectives could never be achieved. Rather than empowering children to fully engage the opportunities of Euro-descent culture, residential schools, despite the good intentions of some, left countless children
emotionally crippled, effectively illiterate and sitting on the sidelines of Canadian society. One has to ask, given the spectacularly brutal outcomes, what was the actual goal of the project? Writing in 1967, a Canadian Anglican Bishop protested to the Department of Indian Affairs that the residential schools should be left open even as the Department prepared to close the residential schools as a failed experiment:

*We must continue our efforts among the Indians. Although there is no hope for this generation, if we persist, perhaps we will be able to raise up their grandchildren to the level of a servant class.* (Bishop of Huron to the Secretary of the DIA, 1967)

**What was our goal?**
The theology which framed the underpinning of this system was malformed. It assumed that the good news of the gospel could be shared through force and coercion. In the context of triumphalist liberal Christianity we enthusiastically embraced the social reconstruction project as a religious work. In our effort to remake the world in our own image, we fell. We know from the lessons of history that the North American colonization project is just the most recent version of a way of configuring the relationship between gospel and power which has led to acts of enormous evil perpetrated against the innocent. We know that in every instance, the use of power for forcible conversion has given way to destructive outcomes; force does not teach a gospel of love.

We are the generation born to formulate a theological language, a theory of mission and its right relation to power in such a time as this. We are the ones asked to move forward *after the fall.* Where to from here? It is my belief that new engagement between survivors and descendants of perpetrators from the residential school experience point the way. The place of
moving forward which they model is rooted in mutual release. As joint actors in the residential school drama each name their story, one of harm and the other of repentance, a stark truth becomes palpable: no justice is possible in this situation. There is no compensation which can adequately make right the loss of childhood, culture and freedom for several generations and multiple cultures. Can a childhood be given back? It cannot.

If justice then is not the equation which makes sense of moving beyond the harm of colonization, what is? Stories across denominations are surfacing which lend themselves to the motif of reconciliation woven from a genuine accounting of the harm and a sincere plea of repentance. Release of harms received by those injured is the key movement in the unfolding dance of reconciliation, as those injured literally open their arms wide in an embrace of welcome, very like the embrace of the cross. As kinship based cultures, First Nations communities prior to the assimilationist project of our government, welcomed the gospel as communities. Now as communities, indigenous persons are beginning the journey of communal forgiveness and release. There is no reason why such welcome and forgiveness should be possible. For some, it may be inconceivable to imagine, and yet the generosity of spirit expressed by many of those harmed, as they move toward the other in welcome is opening the way for a transfiguration of this old story into a new day. Perhaps if I had not experienced this opening into transfiguration, I would not understand.

On October 9th, 2008 I made my way to the Nisga’a village of Laxgalts’ap. I made the journey to attend the funeral of Bradley Martin, son of Willard Martin, VST alumnus and Nisga’a hereditary chief. Bradley had ended his own life. Over a century before, Christian missionaries had brought their own view of the world to the Nass Valley and had insisted that
suicides should be given no proper burial. The Nisga’a adopted that teaching and have continued to follow it, even as the Church changed its thinking and practice. Willard insisted on giving his son the dignity of a Christian burial and settlement feast. I went to support him in his courage and his wisdom, and to honour the life of his son. Willard, as with many of his people, has survived the trauma of the residential school experience and all of the dislocation that that has engendered for so many. I was very aware of the fact that I carried with me the weight of our history, a colonizing church, a legacy of harm. I felt shame.

When I arrived, Willard cautioned that there might be very few attending the funeral, as it was breaking with cultural practice. He then asked me to participate in the liturgy which would honour his son. To his and my surprise, hundreds of Nisga’a came. When the Eucharist was celebrated, every single person came forward to receive. When James, the Nisga’a priest, asked me to walk with him ahead of the casket to the graveside, I looked back. Ten beautiful young Nisga’a men carried their friend, refusing to put him down until the grave was reached. With tears streaming down their faces they walked and walked; behind them hundreds of Bradley’s people walked with him his last mile. We stood around the open grave and then James turned and handed me his prayer book, “You commit him to God for us,” he said. As I said the words of committal, and we all stood there suffering together, hoping together, past the stain of an incredibly wounding history, I saw that the healing of God was begun. I saw that the healing water of God’s grace was pouring out to all corners of the earth and nothing was beyond its reach.

With such moments, a beginning place is framed. By grace and the opportunity which repentance and release offers, we are
invited to reformulate our understanding of mission and its relationship to power. If we are able to deconstruct our earlier assumptions about the relationship between gospel and culture, we can begin again. While we appear to have understood that religion always reflects culture, we have not always understood that transposing our assumptions about normative culture onto the other, as a necessary dimension of transmission of the gospel, destroys the gospel's intent. If there is no space for cultural accommodation of the other, then the gospel becomes an agent of hegemonic discourse rather than the liberating word of God’s welcome and mercy.

A gospel engaged with, but not normalizing culture is an appropriate vehicle for the transmission of a unitive vision of community which empowers rather than dis-empowers the other. Richard Hooker would concur.

Perhaps in the final instance we are invited in this generation to see that the gospel we carry to the world is itself an act of mercy and reconciliation enfleshed. We are disciples of a Reconciler of who came to bind up the wounds of all those who have been hurt, perhaps firstly by those who have been hurt at the hands of those who thought they were right. A theology which will carry us forward onto new ground is neither the proclamation of any dogmatism, nor any set of moral imperatives or culturally embedded values as necessary companions to the gospel. It is not a project grounded in a notion of power over another. Rather it is the enfleshment of radical love, which by its practice gathers in rather than divides, lifts up rather than steps on, and heals rather than harms.

At a recent academic gathering which drew Anglican and Lutheran theologians together for conversations about our identities as faith communities, I posited the notion that moving
beyond colonial history was possible, based on my experience of the walk I am taking with my First Nations brothers and sisters. One Native American theologian protested strongly. He argued that any indigenous person who claimed to be able to move beyond their anger was lying to herself. He stressed that the claim by any Euro-descent person that healing was possible was a reaffirmation of colonizing harm.

I must dispute this view. While honouring that his words may in fact be true for many, they do not reflect my experience of this past decade working under the tutelage of First Nations elders. I have been taught that in the aboriginal thought world the community seeks balance and harmony. It is understood that the well being of the community is the goal of communal life and that this can be achieved through the invitation of all to move into re-balancing and re-harmonizing that which has moved into chaos. Of course to move toward balance as an expression of communal healing demands sacrifice, surrender and release of all that impedes balance and peace in the community—whatever that might be.

In keeping with this wisdom, the Anglican Church of Canada is in the midst of giving birth to drastically new ecclesiological forms. After many years of listening to and talking with our First Nations partners, the General Synod of our national Church at its recent meeting in Halifax (June 09, 2010) established Canon 22. Canon 22 is not yet fully developed but is the embryo of a new vision for a self determining indigenous ministry within the larger church. The resolution which was passed with resounding enthusiasm by the Synod provides canonical recognition for the roles of the National Indigenous Bishop (appointed in January, 2007), the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) and Sacred Circle, all key components of the existing indigenous national ministry. This canonical provision establishes, “recognition, jurisdiction and
authority within, not separate, and not parallel but truly within,” the church’s canons and constitution (Sison,p.1).

The canon crafted by the Governance Working Group of the General Synod was left intentionally open-ended lacking specific details regarding the structures and framework for this ministry, as a vehicle for allowing indigenous persons to organically develop the forms by which they will order their life as church. Effectively, this canon makes provision for a 5th ecclesiastical province in the Canadian church which is not geographic but cultural. This province would link indigenous ministry or mission areas across the country in a political unity for decision-making and action in the ecclesial landscape.

To date one new mission area has been created. In the spring of this year Lydia Mamakwa was elected as the first bishops of this first new mission area in Northern Ontario. Speaking to the Synod she called her election and the creation of the area mission, “the first step towards self-determination.”

Conversations are underway in all parts of the country with reference to the creation of further such areas, most notably in the dioceses of Keewatin and Saskatchewan but not excluding the far west.

With this movement toward a self-governing indigenous church, the Anglican Church of Canada opens itself to a new way of expressing its ecclesiology. It recognizes that Euro-descent model of church which defined power and theology in the era of the colonial imaginary is no longer an adequate representation of God’s intention for God’s church in this context. A broader and more complex vision for the ways in which the people of God order their life is our future. The leadership of the

64 “A New Vision of What the Church Can Be,” by Marites N. Sison in Anglican Journal, Vol. 136 No. 6, June 2010 (p1;6) P.6
indigenous church in the unfolding of that vision will be determinative.

As we attempt to live into new words and ways of being, I Corinthians 12:14-26 may be a suitable companion for us. Paul is a master at engaging the genre of hybridity in his writing. Cultural motifs are transposed to create new social imaginaries. With his image of the body Paul speaks to the community at Corinth drawing on an ancient wisdom of how communities configure themselves. However, Paul takes Aristotle’s image of the body and ‘turns it on its head’. In this passage he insists that the members of the body which are least honoured should be the most honoured; that the least valued be the most cherished. Such an inversion of the power images familiar in Paul’s day clarifies his intention for the early community of the followers of Jesus. The least among us, the children, will lead us.

My daughters attend high school on the university campus where we live. University Hill Secondary School is generally regarded to be a first class high school; academic standards are measured by provincial testing and student achievements are high; it is a school where recruiters from the Ivy League schools come and pitch their tents. It is the case, that I love that school. But it is not for any of the reasons I have just named.

In that high school there is a room, known by the students as Room 16. Room 16 is the room where students with learning challenges go to manage the complexity of their academic lives. In a world like UHILL it is an unlovely place. In Room 16 there are teachers and learning assistants who deal with the most significant challenges in the system. They are absolutely, unflinchingly committed to the well-being and care of the students entrusted to them. In Room 16 there are students who struggle and suffer and who support and love each other, who
believe in each other and cheer each on like nothing I have ever seen.

Also in Room 16 there is young man whom we will call Alex. He struggles with a severe case of Asperger’s syndrome. He is one of the gentlest human beings I have ever been privileged to encounter. My daughter Rachel is friends with Alex. Now Rachel is a very smart girl, winning, attractive, popular in her way. And she visits Room 16. One day after several years of walking the high school walk together, Alex said to Rachel, “Rachel can I ask you a question? Would it be okay?” “Yes Alex, please ask me what you want to.” “Rachel,” he said, “Why do you come to Room 16? You don’t look like you belong here.” “Well Alex,” said Rachel, “I can only hear with one ear, so I need to come here. I have to work harder than most people to understand what is being said to me. I might not look like I belong, but you and I, we’re Room 16 people together.” And so the story goes. Nothing is ever as it appears to be, and it is in discovering ourselves in the reflection of the other that makes new sight possible, and self-knowledge probable.

When Paul addressed the community at Corinth, his message was this radical. He transposed one cultural meaning onto another, and in so doing created a new social archetype. In the face of all of our hopes of glory, the glory the world might give, or even the church—in its own limited way—Paul speaks. And he says each member of the body is most beloved, and the least among us most beloved of all. His summons to us is that we see ourselves in a new way, not as neo-empire rebuilding wannabes, not as saviours who will fix the world or save the Church, but as committed disciples of the word of life who will love the world, who will live as love in the world by seeing, by understanding that we, beloved children of God, community of the faithful, we are Room 16, that place where all meanings are transposed across the boundaries of our expectations. Blessed
be. By a gospel of humility and compassion, and only by grace, will *Room 16* renew the world. The task of framing theology, of articulating a way forward in discourse about God and the mission of the church begins there in *Room 16*- that place where we find the other, and in our encounter with the difference which otherness implies become capable of knowing ourselves.

To be rendered mute in the face of the legacy of colonization is one, perhaps, enticing option for those of us who have lived on the domination side of theological discourse. However, the world continues to suffer and the gospel still summons us beyond the deathscapes of our own making. To remain mute, for fear of causing further harm is to create new genres of harm. There is a medieval miracle play entitled, “*The Life of Any Man.*” In this play Satan is the central character. Unlike the Hollywood version, the Satan in this play is an *ordinary man.* He wanders through every scene of 14th century life saying only one line. As he encounters the various faces of human suffering in that time of the “black death”, of poverty, famine and war Satan has only one line. He approaches those who suffer and sadly he says, “There is nothing to be done; nothing to be done.” The wisdom of our tradition encourages us to see that passivity in the face of despair is perhaps the greatest spiritual threat of all. When our despair is cracked wide open on the sharp rocks of difference and the surprise of the other, there life becomes possible.

The expansive ground of Anglican theology allows people to re-interpret meaning and re-formulate theological language. As with Anglicans in previous generations, we embark newly on the work of interpreting gospel meaning in our location for this time, keenly aware that the experience of some, in this case those harmed by earlier formulations of gospel meaning pushes us to remake our sight.
So here then we move from the silence of humiliation to our first words after the fall – what might they be? For Canadian Anglicans in this generation perhaps we might say that there is no harm which is beyond the reach of God’s healing grace, that there is no theological frame which cannot be re-thought as the saving work of God in history continues to disclose itself newly in every generation. All around us in these hours, the signs of a new world struggling to be born paint themselves in difference across the backdrop of former desolations. The saving work of God in history continues despite our past harming choices. We begin in Room 16. Perhaps it is the case that struggle is another word for hope. Mercy abounds and deliverance remakes us.
All the authors within this book take Scripture seriously. These two articles start with Scripture and seek to apply it to the world in which we live. C B Peters looks at seven biblical models that can assist us in the task of reconciliation. Zebedi Muga looks more specifically at the Pentateuch. It is often surprising to Westerners how real and immediate the Old Testament is to African Readers and Muga brings the Old Testament to life for all readers.
Peace, Not as the World Gives: Biblical Models for Conflict Resolution

C. B. Peter is senior lecturer in Old Testament Studies at Saint Paul’s University, Limuru, Kenya

Introduction

The much lamented contemporary ideological rift within the Anglican Communion is much too small compared to the greater rifts in the universal church of Christ and the continual remapping of contemporary political and economic world characterized by newer re-groupings of nations. The rift would look even smaller if viewed on a historical scale. Adam and Eve by their first blame-game in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:11-13) inaugurated the gender-rift forever. Cain and Abel became the protagonists of the hideous drama of mutual extermination of shepherds by farmers and vice versa throughout the history of Israel, the history of colonialism in the two-thirds world continents, the never-stopping bloodbaths in the Middle East, and the post election violence in Kenya in early 2008. All religions of the world have always stood divided along sectarian lines, and Christianity is no exception.


In the Anglican scenario both who fell out of the Communion and those who remained in, committed the same error—of not listening to one other. And if indeed, they did listen, perhaps their system of encoding their message to the other side, or decoding the message from the other side\(^\text{67}\) was so subjective that they went on seeing damnation and hellfire in the other camp, and thus drifting farther and farther from one another, thereby widening the rift. Against such a scenario the listening initiative launched by the \textit{Indaba} project is a very welcome step. In the present paper, I have attempted to explore and highlight seven of the Biblical models for conflict resolution.

\textbf{Model One: \textit{“As it was in the beginning...”} (The Wider-Context Model)}

Any conflict, viewed on its own, and divorced from all historical and cosmic perspectives, begins to look much larger than it really is, and causes greater despair and desperation than due. We begin to succumb to a state of “shock and disbelief.” Such succumbing may intensify our desire to fight back for self-preservation, thus accelerating conflict. The contemporary division in the Anglican Communion seems to be characterized by such a spirit of shock on both sides of the divide. They seem to be fighting back and forth in a crusade that they imagine is the first of its kind, and perhaps mark the end of the world. On the other hand, when a conflict is viewed in a wider historical context, then it would start looking smaller and smaller, fostering a feeling of greater relaxation thereby giving us better opportunities at resolution.

\(^{67}\)If I may use the premises of semiotic approach to language, as propounded by Roland Barthes, Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Peirce, Christian Metz and others, for example see, “Semiotics” in \textit{Wikipedia} \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semiotics} accessed 20 September 2009
Thus the first model for conflict-resolution that the Bible repeatedly offers is what I may call the “Wider Context” Model.”

The Bible mentions severally about such a “wider-context” model of conflict resolution. We may consider certain paradigmatic texts, from both Testaments. Jeremiah 26 records the infamous trial of the Prophet. The prophet had preached his “Temple Sermon” at the height of the Jewish political crisis caused by the obviously imminent Babylonian overrun. People had expected Jeremiah to preach hope and solace, but were instead told to brace for even tougher times since the LORD was going to make “this house [the Temple of Jerusalem] like Shiloh and this city [Jerusalem] an object of cursing among all the nations of the earth.” (Jer. 26: 6). This so much incensed the bigwigs of Judah that they recommended the death sentence for Jeremiah. At this point some elders came forward and recommended to re-look at the crisis in a wider historical context arguing that it indeed was NOT the first time that such a thing had happened.

Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. He told all the people of Judah:

This is what the LORD Almighty says,
Zion will be ploughed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
The temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.
Did Hezekiah king of Judah or anyone else put him to death? ...Now Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD; he prophesied the same

things against this city and this land as Jeremiah did... (Jeremiah 26: 17-21).

The point of the elders’ approach in their above argument seems to be that a crisis situation should be seen within a wider historical context and it will no longer look as big as it looks now. A similar approach may be noted in the speech of Gamaliel at the trial of the apostles. He also appealed to history and urged the prosecutors to take a wider look at the crisis caused by the Apostles.

Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared, claimed to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and he came to nothing. After him Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed and all his followers were scattered. (Acts 5: 35-40)

A more magnificent version of the “wider-context” model is found in Yahweh’s speech in the Book of Job (Ch 38-41). By asking the rhetorical questions “Where were you?” and “Do you know?” the LORD is reminding Job that his apparently mammoth problem of the present is actually less than atomic on a grand cosmic scale.

Jesus incorporated the element of the future to help the weeping women of Jerusalem see their present crisis in a wider context. The Way of the Cross is actually the beginning of a far more agonizing journey into a bleak future of death and mayhem. Thinking about the future can help reduce the horrors of the present. Jesus said:

Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will
come when you say, “Blessed are the barren
women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts
that never nursed!” Then, “They will say to the
mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’
For when men do these things when the tree is
green, what will happen when it is dry?” (Luke
23:28-31)

Model Two: The Self-Criticism of the Prophets
(The Radical Model)

A major reason for the conflict is in each side believing that they
alone are right. This self-righteous approach characterizes the
contemporary battle in the Anglican Communion over such a
delicate matter as human sexuality. If each side could only take
a break from the incessant drums of war and gives the other a
concession—“What if we are wrong?”—it could suddenly open
up new avenues hitherto unrecognized leading to possibilities of
resolution. The prophets in the Old Testament took this
approach even at great perils to their own life. The people of
Israel had always held onto certain given absolutes—their
election by God, their Promised Land of Canaan, their being
beneficiaries of God’s Covenant, their immortal institutions of
the Law, the Monarchy, and the Temple of Jerusalem. The
Israelites’ faith in their own invincibility had set them on a
collision course with the rest of the world.69

However, the prophets in the Old Testament boldly preached a
radical message of self criticism. According to this radical
prophetic message nothing could be taken for granted. God

69Fr. Thomas Rosica in a recent article, “The Importance of Self Criticism and
Humility” has articulately dealt with this theme. http://www.zenit.org/article-
was going to punish Israel for their self-confidence. The Israelites would lose their Promised Land and end up where their ancestors came from—Babylon, and this time round they would end up as slaves! The Temple of Jerusalem would share the same fate as that of the first shrine at Shiloh (which had been razed to the ground by the Philistines long ago, I Sam Ch 4 -7).

Obviously, such a message of doom did little to comfort the troubled Israelites and they predictably prosecuted the prophets. But it achieved a great deal in normalizing international relations to some degree as evident from the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Indeed the concession that God could be on the side of our opponents instead of ours, can help a great deal to tone down some of our overconfidence and open our ears and hearts to listen to God through hearing the story of the other side.

**Model Three: Heathen Heroes and Gentile Role Models (The Extrovert Model)**

Closely related to what I have submitted above is the stereotype perception that all good people are always on our side and all bad people are always on the other side. Such a perception only helps to add fuel to the fire of conflict.

The Bible, however, offers a radical possibility that many times, the case could be just the other way round. We learn this from the infamous story of David and Bathsheba (II Sam 11). In that story the pagan (Hittite) Uriah emerges as the hero and role-model, whereas David the anointed (messianic) king of God emerges as the lustful and murderous villain. Uriah is not just a stray instance in the Bible to support my thesis. In the Patriarchal sagas we find the good guy Jacob emerges as the
conman villain whereas the outsider Esau emerges as the innocent victim. Right towards the end of Israelite history, the pagan king Cyrus of Persia (now Iran, supposedly the bad guy too many Christians) is hailed as the “Anointed” (Christ) of Yahweh (Is 45:1).

Of the four women listed among the human ancestors of Jesus (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, see Matt 1:3, 5, 6), at least three—Tamar, Rahab and Ruth—were gentiles. Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah, was a simple Canaanite peasant girl who at least once (perhaps for the first and the last time in her life) posed as a prostitute and convinced her unsuspecting father-in-law to give her children. She committed this apparently blatant sexual outrage not because she was burning with lust, but because she was earnestly concerned about the perpetuity of her father-in-law’s lineage. And indeed for her noble motives Judah declared, “She is more righteous than I.” (Gen 38:26). Rahab was a Canaanite sex worker, and Ruth hailed from the Tribe of Moab whose ethnology was traceable to the most abominable incest between father and daughters (Gen 19:36-38, Deut 23:3). Bathsheba, the only apparently Israelite women had been earlier married to the Hittite Uriah before she was stolen by the good guy David.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan the hero according to Jesus emerges from the hated tribe of the Samaritans whereas the good guys—the priest and the Levite—are dismissed as uncaring villains (Luke 10:25-37). And when it comes to faith-heroes, according to the gospel records, Jesus publicly commended the faith of two individuals, and BOTH were heathens. To the Syro-phoenician woman hailing from the tribe of Jezebel’s infamy, Jesus declared: “Woman, you have great faith” (Matt 15:28). And in the case of the Roman centurion Jesus surpassed all praises that he would ever bestow on any
human being, “I have not found such great faith even in Israel” (Luke 7:9).

If only both sides in conflict could look for heroes on the other side, among those apparently wrong, among the most hated and the most abominable, it would bring in a new impetus for conflict resolution.

Model Four: “Turning neither to the right nor to the left” (The Moderation Model)

One major determinant of the contemporary conflict situation is the “right versus left” ideological alienation of Christians. Each camp is almost equally guilty of perpetuating this alienation by blocking their ears from listening to the other side. The rightists think that they are naturally right and the leftists think that they too are right. And so the ideological alienation goes on unabated. But the ideological history of the previous century has witnessed that neither the right nor the left could redeem the world. Whether it was the rightist Nazi Party in Germany, or the leftist Communist party in Russia, they BOTH were equally guilty of shedding innocent human blood and wreaking havoc on earth.

Even in the present times, especially in the context of the Anglican ideological alienation, while it is not difficult to blame the leftist radicals for all the Church’s woes, the self-righteous rightists cannot wholly escape responsibility. How can they, when it were their forefathers—the self-righteous scribes and

the Pharisees in the New Testament—who crucified Jesus? And before he gave his life on the crossroads of right and left, Jesus bewailed the cold, ex-cathedra parochialism of the hypocrite self-righteous rightists of his time and prophesied that such would account for the blood of all the righteous innocent—from Abel to Zechariah (Matt 23: 35-36). “Abel to Zechariah” here are not meant merely the A-Z catalogue of all innocent victims of religious Jihads until the historical time of Jesus, but all innocent human blood shed anywhere in the world, even now, in the name of God, whether by Christians, or by Muslims, or by adherents of any religion, for that matter.

In such a scenario the biblical model of moderation provides the much needed sense of succour, solace, and sobriety. Perhaps the best single biblical source to study moderation is the Book of Ecclesiastes, which I have considered elsewhere. A paradigmatic text from that book could be 7: 16:

Do not be overly righteous,
Nor be overly wise:
Why should you destroy yourself?
Do not be overly wicked,
Nor be foolish:
Why should you die before your time?

In another piece I have summarized the biblical concept of moderation in the following broad strokes: None of the existing theological camps can boast of possessing and containing the whole of God, for He is too great, too big for any single of them!

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This perhaps was the mistake that Joshua of old made when he asked the Commander of the LORD’s army in the battlefield: “Are you on our side or the side of our enemies?” (Josh 5:13).

The Commander of the LORD’s army, instead of telling Joshua on whose side he is, gives a cryptic answer, “No.” (Josh 5:14).

The Christians’ God is too great a God to take sides (Ac 10:34).

The Preacher of Old preached this holism in terms of his doctrine of moderation (Eccles 7:16, etc).

And finally, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ presented this holistic vision in his pregnant admonition of the pharisaic exclusivism in the following words, These you ought to have done without neglecting the others” (Mt 23:23).72

Metaphorically speaking, nothing helps to resolve the “right versus left” debate through the moderation model any better than the biblical cows who just went straight on the highway, turning neither to the right nor to the left (I Sa 12:6).

Model Five: The Borrowed God of the Bible
(The Universalism-3 Model)

The term “borrowed God” may sound somewhat sacrilegious since it tends to objectify God. But then is not all theology an attempt at objectifying God? Can we not say that God is the

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subject of the Bible, but the object of theology? I will point out here that another main reason of theological conflict is often the belief in a sort of a fixed stereotype theology that identifies the certain chosen God with a certain chosen people. A belief of this type may be characterized by such terms as “our God,” “The God of the Bible” “the Christian’s God” “the Lord of the Church,” and so on. Such a theology only helps to alienate the warring groups further and farther since each believes, “God is our God, and he does (or does not) want us to behave in this way or that way.”

But whose God is “our” God, for Pete’s sake? And indeed whose EXACTLY is the God of the Bible. Much as the historical critical method of the 19th century may have outlived its usefulness in our times, at least it has taught us something that is worth our consideration. We have been taught that ancient Israelites knew and adored their God by two names—Elohim and Yahweh. None of these were original Jewish deities. El was the Canaanite high-god and Yahweh was originally a Midianite deity. Twentieth century scholars of the Old Testament (See, for example, Gerhard von Rad and Albrecht Alt, among others) have argued that the “Elohim-Yahweh” type of Jewish theology of God took shape as a result of centuries of socio-spiritual interactions between ancient Israelites and other peoples.

This means that a lot of contemporary theological squabbles may be traced to a deliberate process of classifying God, and

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73 I have devoted a chapter on that topic in my forthcoming book “Weakness of God.”
what we need is a process of de-classifying him. By “Classifying God” I mean identifying God with a certain class or sect. “De-classifying God” would be the opposite process, of believing that God does NOT belong to this group or that, but all belong to him, a spiritual sentiment expressed in the opening line of the Kenyan National Anthem, “O God of all creation…” [Italics mine].

The Old Testament is clear about such a de-classified theology of God. The doctrine of Election implies that God chose Israel not to show any sectarian favour on any “chosen” race, for Israel actually never deserved such an election (Deut 7:7). But God chose Israel to be a source of blessing and a light to all nations (Gen 12:3, Is. 49:6). While in our ideological battles, we might regard certain groups as our friends and others as our enemies, in biblical realism all groups—even our perceived opponents—play an important role in God’s plan and thus serve his magnificent cosmic purposes. Thus Isaiah taught that the enemy Assyria was indeed the “rod of God’s anger” to chastise God’s chosen Israel (Is. 10:5), and the pagan king Cyrus was hailed as God’s “Christ” (Is. 45:1). The Psalmist has twice stated, in ditto terms, that both we as well as our opponents, we all belong to God:

Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim is my helmet,
Judah my sceptre.
Moab is my washbasin,
Upon Edom I toss my sandal;
Over Philistia I shout in triumph. (Ps. 60:8, 108:9)

75But just so that Assyria should not start boasting of such a grim office, the LORD finds the appointment woeful.
Such a grand vision of God can help all parties in conflict to realize their common belonging to the one and the same God and thus help in conflict-resolution. I call this model the “Universalism-3 Model.”

Model Six: “If I perish, I perish.”
(The Self-Sacrifice Model)

Yet another cause of conflict within the Anglican Communion is the identity crisis on both sides and a desperate desire for self-preservation. People are often saying, “We as true Anglicans (or true Christians, for that matter), should never identify with such and such groups.” Thus Christians contribute to the ongoing ideological debate either motivated by the desire to preserve their identity, or conversely, by the fear of losing it.

However our worst fears for losing our identity could be allayed if we took into account the biblical position that for Christians, faith actually does not entail the fight for preserving certain identity, but in fact losing it for greater good. This indeed is the position that Esther and Daniel and prophets of the Old Testament took. This indeed was what Ruth had in mind when she declared to Naomi (the other side), “Your people will be my people and your God my God” (Ruth 1:17). And because she stepped forward to lose her identity, God rewarded Ruth in preserving her identity forever as one of the earthly great grandmothers of our Lord. And indeed our Lord himself taught us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt

Salt cannot perform its cardinal function (that of flavouring the food) if it retains its own identity as a lump somewhere in the pot. Similarly, light cannot enlighten the world if it is not diffused everywhere making all things visible, while itself remaining invisible. St. Paul in I Corinthian 15 has used the analogy of the seed to illustrate his great message of the resurrection of the body. There can be no further life if the seed decides to live on just to preserve its own identity. But just because the seed dies and disappears, it brings forth life a sixty-fold and a hundredfold (Matt 13: 8).

Thus the biblical model of self-sacrifice opens up new vistas of faith for both sides in conflict by encouraging each to lose its own identity for the greater good of everyone’s reconciliation in God through Christ (II Cor 5: 18).

Model Seven: “In a glass darkly” (The Process Hermeneutic Model)

Finally, I present the seventh biblical model for conflict resolution, namely, the process hermeneutic. It would appear that the most telling cause of ideological conflict is a passionate appeal by both the warring camps, to the authority of the Bible. One camp chimes, “The Bible says…” The other camp roars back, “But the Bible also says…” And the battle rages on.

What we hardly pause to consider is the common assumption in each camp that it alone understands what the Bible means by what it says. The Bible does not contradict itself, but because we want to contradict one another to win our ideological battles,

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we choose to devise contradicting interpretations of the Biblical witness. George Bernard Shaw said, “No one thinks that the Bible means what it says; everyone thinks that the Bible says what he means.”78 Thus it would mean that the current ideological battle in the Anglican Church (and on the world religious scenario at large) is not a battle between a sincere or insincere commitment to faith; it actually is a hermeneutical battle.

In such a scenario the model of process hermeneutic can be of help. Such a model of biblical interpretation allows for inclusion and dynamism in the process of meaning-finding and it offers a forward-looking perspective. I do not intend to discuss process hermeneutics here,79 but in essence what the process theologians (Whitehead, Cobb, Pittenger, Hartshorne, among others) are saying is simply that meaning-finding in biblical narrative is a lifelong journey of ever-unfolding exciting new adventures of perception. Therefore, it is not worthwhile to continue fighting on the assumption that the way we interpret the Bible now is the only and final interpretation.

In his Great Hymn of Love (I Cor 13), St. Paul has presented a process perspective. Because our love is always incomplete, our knowledge will always remain incomplete (I Cor 13: 9-12). We cannot be sure that either side across the great divide can

78Another version of this quotation is “No man ever believes that the Bible means what it says: He is always convinced that it says what he means.” See http://thinkexist.com/quotation/no_man_ever_believes_t/169760.html accessed 12 October 2009.
claim to be perfect in love. How then can they claim to be perfect in knowledge? And if they are not yet perfect in knowledge, then how can they claim that they know correctly what the Bible means by what it says? And if they cannot know correctly what the Bible means by what it says, then the best course is to call for a ceasefire until both sides gain perfect knowledge. And perfect love is the best path to perfect knowledge.

The prophets in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New repeatedly told the people that they had never understood the Law of the LORD.\textsuperscript{80} The disciples of Jesus never understood Jesus (cf. Mk 8: 21, Lule 24:25-26). St. Paul lamented that Judaizers never understood true Christianity. \textsuperscript{81}The Psalmist came to experience God through a lifelong journey of joy and pain.\textsuperscript{82} And in his grand revelation, Yahweh demonstrated to Job that Job had never understood theology (Job 42:2-6). How then can either side in battle, claim that they understand God’s purposes any better than did the ancient Israelites, or the disciples of Jesus, or Job, or St. Paul himself who had the courage and humility to admit, “Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (I Cor 13: 12).

**Conclusion**

I have explored and discussed seven biblical models for conflict resolution. These models are: wider-context, radical, extrovert, moderation, universalism-3, self-sacrifice, and process

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\textsuperscript{80}E.g., the prophets’ critique of the cult and Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount and his debates with Jewish clergy legal experts
\textsuperscript{81}As perhaps is the case in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians.
\textsuperscript{82}Cf. the psalms of individual and communal thanksgiving and psalms of individual and communal lament
hermeneutic. The essence of my entire argument may be distilled in just one question: Is the Crusade worth it? Indeed not all my readers would agree with my interpretation of the scriptural texts cited in the present paper. On what grounds would I agree with their interpretations? Process hermeneutic teaches us to hold our horses because reaching an absolute and universalistic understanding of the scripture may require more than a lifetime.
Aspects of Pentateuchal Indaba and resolutions from selected readings.

Dr. Zebedi A. Muga, Lecturer in Biblical Studies, St. Paul’s University, Limuru, Kenya

Introduction

This paper seeks to examine aspects of resolving intra-person and inter-communal conflicts based on readings from the Pentateuch. This is intended to informing the Indaba listening process of the Anglican Communion through analysis of certain readings that is hoped will shed light on the process from the biblical perspective.

The Pentateuch is chosen by virtue of the fact that few studies have been done in it. Also its social context is deemed closer to the African pastoral and indigenous social orders and organization and ethos. This has therefore provided an area of interest to the researcher.

It can be argued that models of listening and resolving disputes in the biblical context especially the Pentateuch are closer to the African models and social systems. The Bible is significant in the faith and praxis of African Christians therefore it is hoped that it forms the basis of reason and listening for the African church and leadership, certain principles and guidelines can be garnered from the readings to help the listening process of the Anglican Communion, in bridging and bringing the various parties of the Anglican social divide together.
Methodology for study

The approach to this study will be mainly exegetical but also based on Norman Gottwald’s thesis on Class and conflict that leads to evolving new ways of achieving social equity and peace. It will also be based on Michael De Rouche’s thesis of Yahweh’s *Ryb* against Israel on the process of conflict and resolution especially in Prophetic literature. De Rouche’s study is based on Prophetic literature. The researcher will use this method in studying the process in the Pentateuchal social life and peaceful co-existence.

Passages from the Pentateuch will be read with the notion of conflict at the background and De Rouche’s notion of *Ryb* (conflict) and resolution in the foreground. The stages of the processes are followed in the Pentateuchal *Indaba* (listening) and conflict resolution. This is will enable the exegetical process in bringing out the principles of listening that emerge from the biblical readings. It will be noted, however, that both Gottwald and De Rouche are non-African therefore may be seen as irrelevant. However, since the issues they deal with are universal and biblical, it would be good to see what principles can be gained from the ANE, Pentateuch and African perspectives for the appropriate listening process such as Indaba. The researcher will attempt to view the present issue through the African view based on these two methods.

Conflicts and resolutions from the ANE

The ANE is replete with examples of conflicts and how they are resolved. A reading of J. B Pritchard’s ANET, has many examples of modes of resolving conflicts in the ANE. It will be noted that most of these are either based on ANE monarchical models which may not suit our purpose. However, the
emphasis on covenanting and making of treaties may give insights into how a resolution is arrived at (Pritchard, 1969, 202). Examples here, are the Egyptian Hittite Treaties which emphasize peace and brotherhood (Pritchard, 1969, 202). These are rooted in the notion of relatedness i.e., through marriage or other means. There is also the example of Ramses II making treaties with the Hittite states against external aggression and hostilities.

It can noted here that social set up is monarchical i.e., the suzerain versus the vassal. The Suzerain draws up treaties with the Vassal on the basis of their future relationship. The drawer, the suzerain, while the vassal, is the beneficiary. The conflicts dealt with in this situation are mainly between nations and communities. However, in all these, one notes the emphasis on good relations, mutuality of interest and protection of that interest. It is also emphasized in these treaties that the gods do not permit hostility; hence as a final resort when listening fails do they resort to war. Also note the use of envoys, which results in alliances and cooperation against common enemies.

The best are those conflict narratives of Anubis and Bata the two brothers (Pritchard, 1969:23). One accused the other of seducing his wife. The younger had been sent home to get provisions and while a Joseph – Potiphar’s wife episode occurred. After a long stand-off he says ‘ what do you (mean by) coming after me to kill (me) falsely when you would not listen to what I had to say’ (ANET, 25) it is not stated how the resolution takes place but the emphasis on listening, *indaba* is noteworthy for our purposes here. This is crystallized in the ANE legal processes where there are judges who listen to the suits cf. Legal Docs of Nuzi Akkadian cf. (ANET, 219) the case of Tarmiya who is assigned a slave disputed by his brothers as
a wife. In the ritual against a domestic quarrel describes the intervention of a priestess who engages in the process of ritual of reconciliation. It does not offer much in the process of listening and reconciliation (ANET, 351). It can be seen in the examples that there is an initial listening and a process followed in resolving the dispute.

The Process of De Rouche’s *Indaba* (Listening Process)

According to Michael De Rouche (1983), he argues that *Ryb* is a process of resolving conflict i.e., it is a lawsuit process. That *Ryb* was a process intended to situations that threaten or disrupt harmony in society. He cites Roberts are saying that there are three levels for this process i.e., the first level of resolution where the parties or individuals convince each other of the justice of their positions. This can be conducted in a calm context or heated discussion or even a fight or a combination of the three. Both sides according to Roberts can conscript others to join their sides. (De Rouche, JBL, 102/4 [1983] p. 564)

In the second level, the two parties ask a third person to act as mediator. That they must agree to allow the mediator to participate again they can enlist their friends and associate to garner support.

The third level is where they ask or appeal to a member of society who is ‘pre-acknowledged by all as umpire’ (De Rouche, p. 565). This could be a chief, tribal council, king, president or appointed representatives i.e., judges. The latter hears the case and hands down their verdict which is binding on all the parties and is respected by all those involved.
Examples of *Indaba* from the Pentateuch

There are several examples of *Ryb* in the Pentateuch. De Rouche’s work has mostly focused on the Prophetic literature where Yahweh brings a *Ryb* against his people Israel and he calls on nature as witnesses in this suit. It can however be noted that in the narratives of the Pentateuch that most *Rybs* are resolved at individual level between individuals and between individuals and groups, so they tend to resolve at the first level.

1. In the first case is the Ryb between Yahweh and Adam in Gen. 3 on the question of who ate the fruit. It is trilateral i.e., between Yahweh, Adam/Eve and the Snake. Here Yahweh has a Ryb but he acts as judge. This narrative does not bring out the trilateral process.

2. In Genesis 27 and 28, on the soured relation between Esau and Jacob. The latter steals the blessing of Esau and leaves a grieved brother. On his return he makes efforts to reach out. It interesting that Isaac does not try to arbitrate the *Ryb* but instead pronounces as another oracle subjecting Esau to his brother (Gen. 27:39 – 40). Jacob is later outwitted by Laban in his marrying off Leah and not Rachel on whom he had eyes. It is interesting to see how he backs down and serves another 7 years for his love. It appears he listens to Laban’s reasoning cf. Gen. 29:21 – 28 (\(^{21}\) Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed."

\(^{22}\) So Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.
23 But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her.

24 (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.)

25 And in the morning, behold, it was Leah; and Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?"

26 Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born.

27 Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years."

28 Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to wife.

29 (Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maid.)

30 So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.)

3. In Gen 26:12 Isaac is in conflict with the Philistines – Abimelech he is prosperous envied, the Philistines have also stopped the wells. In verse 16 he is sent away by the king, ‘go away from us you have become too powerful for us.’ First he departs i.e., withdrawing from conflict and settles in another place, seeks new pastures and opportunities. It is also interesting that he acts alone. When he is confronted again herders of Gerar, he leaves it and digs another. Later when Abimelech King of Gerar
sees that he continues to prosper despite his circumstances he asks to make a treaty with him (cf. Gen. 26.26). ‘let there be an oath between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you.’ It is noteworthy that Isaac accepts this offer and they make a feast and depart amicably. Note that Abimelech takes the first initiative to a face to face meeting, Isaac reads the situation and agrees to make peace with them and the Ryb is resolved.

4. In Genesis 13:8 Abraham contends with Lot over pasture. It is worth noting how Abraham does not insist in his position but lets Lot choose what he wants. He is aware that Lot may choose the greener pastures therefore he says if you choose ‘if you take the left I will take the right…’ (13:9).

5. In Gen 31:1ff there is narrative of the Ryb between Jacob and Laban’s sons i.e., ("Jacob has taken all that was our father's; and from what was our father's he has gained all this wealth.") and later with Laban himself. It can be noted here that he enlists support of his wives when he sees that Laban is no longer happy with him before he makes his move to leave. When later he reprimands Jacob for leaving without farewell he softens at Jacobs shrewd answer that he thought Laban would take away his daughters and grandchildren and the fact that God spoke to him the night before. The principle of mutuality and relatedness reigns supreme in verse 44 when Laban accepts that fact that what is Jacobs is his and what is his is Jacobs . later the eat a ritual of
reconciliation and depart. Once again resolution of Ryb at the first level.

**Principles of Resolution and Indaba listening**

- Face to face meetings. The subjects take the initiative to meet the other party to ventilate their feelings to one another cf. Jacob and Laban.
- They withdraw from conflict i.e., they give the other party time to arrive at a reasonable time for resolution.
- Their consciousness of mutuality and relatedness enable them not to take drastic or violent paths to the destruction of the relationships cf. Laban – Jacob, Abraham Lot etc. the relatedness as in blood relations, marriage etc.
- After participating in ritual of reconciliation (covenant meal) they eat and make a treaty and leave cf. Jacob – Laban, Isaac – Abimelek. In the African context it believed that eating erases ill will and one cannot harm the other if they share a meal.

Note the use of gathering and community. There is communal involvement the men with them. Later the gathering at the gate becomes significant forum for Indaba listening and resolution. Later they have ziqney Yisrael ‘elders of Israel’ – seasoned proven wise elders attempt a resolution. i.e., they develop trusted institutions for listening and resolving conflict. Use of laid down structures used by the community.
Section 4: Indaba in context

The final two papers in this book are different in nature. Kevin David, Youth Officer of the Province of the Indian Ocean attended the hub consultation in Southern Africa and left with a burning desire for young people not to be excluded from the project. He writes with Tony Lawrence to consider why and how young people can be included.

The final paper by William Sachs acts as a conclusion to all the papers. We are reminded of the significance of Anglicanism in basing its unity on consultation and communion. Anglicanism has found its unity in consensus that arises from gathering and common prayer. This has given Anglicanism a capacity to mediate that could be at risk in the present context.
The place of Young people in the Continuing Indaba Process: Why we need to include them and how

Kevin David and Tony Lawrence

Introduction

Some pertinent questions were raised by young people at a recent youth conference in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa during discussions on ‘Could the Youth help lead the Church?’

- Are we raising our voices and are we being heard?
- Are there “safe places” within which young people can be heard?
- We need lots more mentoring. We want to learn (about ourselves and about life) and we want to participate in the right areas.
- Why can young people not be included in decision making roles as well?
- Young people are looking for role models and authenticity from their elders.
- We want relationships that lead to unity.
- We need to discover what young people are really interested in.
- Respect is required – both ways.
- Compromise is OK – we can meet one another half way.

83 This paper has been jointly written by Tony Lawrence (Provincial Youth Coordinator of the Anglican Youth Southern Africa and Kevin David (Provincial Youth Coordinator in the Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean, Diocese of Mauritius).
What is the role of the youth in the continuing *Indaba* Process? What should the relationship between young people and older members of our Church look like? From the above issues raised by the youth, it is clear that this process is a key aspect of trying to find amicable solutions to the myriad concerns not only of the youth but also the whole church. This paper raises the sentiment that the youth would like to be more involved at various levels of consultation and decision making in the church. Along with that, the young people are looking for elders to mentor and guide them just as our shepherd Jesus Christ did with his followers.

At the *Continuing Indaba* Consultation at the College of the Transfiguration, Grahamstown in November 2009, it became quite apparent that there is very little knowledge regarding where the youth may fit in the process. We believe that it is the responsibility of the whole church, not only bishops and clergy, to allow the youth to be both heard and also to be understood. The more we clarify the role of the youth, the more they (the youth) will both appreciate and positively respond to playing their role and purpose in the Church. The discussions in Grahamstown raised many issues for us. One of the questions is, ‘why is very little said about the role that the youth ought to play in this process’ and secondly, ‘how best can this model of conversation taken from an African context be utilised for our ecclesiology bearing in mind the different issues that *Indaba* raises for young people’\textsuperscript{84}. Technology and the internet have made it easy for young people to try and find answers to the multitude of questions raised in their minds. But they are concerned about the authenticity of the answers they are

\textsuperscript{84} We are not trying to understand the Indaba concept here but only responding to question raised by a member of the consultation in Grahamstown: ‘why include young people and how?’
getting. Hence their responses to adults in the church – please supply us with authentic answers and especially answer the question of ‘why?’ It is one thing to provide the facts but another to bring meaning to them. Failure to answer the ‘why’ question usually puts the young people off, and leads to poor or lack of listening.

Why Do We Need to Include the Youth in the Continuing Indaba Process?

The answer to the why and how question is far from straightforward due to the diversity of issues facing the young people of our Communion as well as the diversity of issues affecting our Communion as a whole. There are, however, some obvious reasons why the youth should be included. Despite personal, cultural, churchmanship or even theological differences, the youth community is interconnected on a singular level: the yearning to be listened to. The two of us contributing to this paper come from two different contexts; we are different at various levels such as geographical, cultural, and economical amongst others. We have come to an understanding that there is one common denominator that brings us together, the desire of our young people to be recognised, empowered and mentored by the elders in the Church. We all believe that the church needs to change the understanding, that young people are the future leaders only, we would like to suggest that we need to think of them as present members of the church thus they are present leaders. Furthermore, if we look at scripture we are compelled to include young people at levels of consultation and decision making because we are interdependent with one another. Each and

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85 These are the words of Nonkululeko Dineka, a young person from St. John's Anglican Parish, Orlando East, Soweto who contributed to this paper.
every one has a gift and an important role to play in establishing God’s Kingdom.

We believe that we have come to a Kairos moment where church leaders and all of us in position of decision making, thus of power, needs to change our ‘one-sided’ understanding of young people as having only representative roles on the various consultation panels or at synods, to a more holistic understanding of our young people as potential partners in the mission of God on earth. We believe we have come to a particular Kairos moment in the way we view young people. We would like to call upon the leaders of our Communion to become prophetic in their approach to young people; they are important shareholders in the growth of God’s people, in fostering unity and in fulfilling the mission of God in the Anglican Communion. They can be very helpful as stewards at Lambeth Conference but if we mentor them so as they can become faithful stewards of God’s creation, they would be able to foster a greater mutual desire to pray and engage with each other so that deeper understanding may be found.

Just as the former Archbishop, his Grace the Most Reverend George Carey called for the church to be open and available to people, to stand for the message of and ministry of Jesus, to be Holy and welcoming, we would invite everyone in the

86 Having said that, we acknowledge and appreciate the effort of our provinces in including young people at a more participatory role in decision making in the leadership of the church but we think there is a lot more that could be done even at Communion level.
88 Carey George, 1989: The Church in the Market Place: How Renewal and a Spirit of Sacrificial Love Came to a City Church, Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne, pg 14
Communion at different levels; parishes, dioceses, provinces to be welcoming, open and available to young people into the *Indaba* process.

When we suggest a holistic approach to the process, we are looking at various ways that will enable the young person irrespective of age to feel welcomed in engaging with bishops, clergy and adult lay-representatives who are going to participate in the process. There is a need to nurture the potential of young people to discuss tough issues affecting them and affecting the communion and allow them to formulate their opinion in a safe space. In so doing the young person will grow to the full stature in Christ. Like it is stated in the Kairos document “the time has come”. The time has come for the church to really stand for her belief that young people are potential leaders by giving them the space to be part of such an important process that will allow each participant to discover their uniqueness in Christ but as well the beauty of being part of a diverse Communion with hundreds of years of heritage, which at times young people do not understand or fail to view as important for their identity as Anglicans due to lack of teaching and exposure to the different institutions of our Communion.

The Lambeth *Indaba* document highlights the understanding that Scripture strengthens our Anglican Identity. It postulates that as “Anglicans we acknowledge the joy of engaging with the scriptures in setting forth the authentic proclamation of God’s Word.” Following this statement we would like to suggest that

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80 Lambeth Office, 2008: *Lambeth Indaba: Capturing Conversations and Reflections from the Lambeth Conference 2008*, (para. 100)
scriptures teach us our need of interdependency with one another. When we look at 1 Corinthians 12 or Ephesians 4:11-16 we notice that all the different gifts exercised in the community of faith are intertwined with one another, this means that one cannot work without the other. This highlights the fact that each member of the body depends on the other to complete her/his work properly. Furthermore these passages remind us that we are given each, different gifts so that the community of faith would grow and become more to the stature of Christ when we use those gifts for the benefit of the community of faith.

If we translate this to our realities in the Communion, each and every one of us have different gifts that we exercised for furthering God’s love, human dignity and sharing with one another within the Communion as we carry out our God given mission to the whole world. This means that, if we exclude the full participation of our young people in this process, we are missing an opportunity to holistically mentoring them thus allowing them to grow to the full stature in Christ\textsuperscript{91}. Jesus spent time with the elders: discussing, deliberating and understanding the scripture. He listened to them and they listened to Him. The main thing is that in the process, he grew not only in stature but wisdom in favour with God and humanity (Luke 2:52). This exact picture is our vision for our young people today.

How are we going to include young people in the

\textit{Continuing Indaba Process?}

After examining why we need to include young people in the \textit{Indaba} process let us now look at how this can be done. We want to highlight that there are many suggestions and ways

\textsuperscript{91} Ephesians 4: 16
how young people could be part and parcel of the *Indaba* process.

One of the recurring cries from young people is the need for somebody to walk alongside them and to mentor them. “Let young people be guided to lead the process of listening. Young people understand that certain structures and rules are in existence and cannot be changed,” says Nonkululeko Dineka. In this way, maximum efficiency and functioning of existing structures will be established and sustained in any undertaking. Therefore, instead of excluding the youth from these structures and consultative processes, there is a need for the young people to be invited and be guided on to how to be full participants so that they can be equipped to take further responsibilities at a later stage.

The *Indaba* process requires facilitators, scribes and representatives from Dioceses. We would suggest that for each of these different roles there are young people playing an active part. For example there could be two facilitators per group whereby the one would be an elder and the other a younger person, the idea is that adults must deliberately seek to mentor (not only their own children, but) young people generally, as they step out towards adult life. Mentoring forces one to spend time listening so that one can determine in what direction a young person may go. In this case young people would have a better understanding of what Bishops at Lambeth Conference meant when they talked about fostering a deeper understanding of our Anglican Identity. This would also serve as a tool to teach the young people about the purpose of being part of a Communion which is so diverse yet one. We would also suggest that they are included in the scribing process in the same way that the facilitators work.
Young people should be part of the consultative and decision making processes. Involving them as facilitators or scribes is very good. It would further enhance the conversations if they were to be invited to be part of the eight (8) representatives from the different Dioceses involved in the Continuing Indaba Process as well. We see this process as visionary which would enhance the way that we relate to each other in the Communion but also as a stepping stone to further foster unity in the midst of diversity in our Communion. We think that there should be at least two young person’s amongst the eight representatives from each participating Diocese in the process. Young people possess lots of innovation, creativity and energy and will sometimes come up with unique ideas, often overlooked by adults that will allow further discussions in times where there might be a deadlock in the conversations.

By definition Indaba acknowledges that there are issues that impair communal living and these need to be brought to the table for consultation. In trying to use this African model for our ecclesiology we need to develop spaces where cross-generational interaction can happen. Indaba can provide great opportunities for all ages to come together and to listen and to learn from one another.

The next question would be how to recruit them for these different roles. We think that each and every province that would participate in that process has Youth Coordinators or Workers. They could be the liaison person for the recruitment of the young facilitators and young scribes for this process.\footnote{We would also suggest that this invitation be extended to provinces who are not part of the chosen dioceses and provinces for this pilot process.}
Having said this there should be a clear definition of the role of both the facilitator and the scribe and the specific relevant abilities or skills that they should possess in order to be considered.\(^3\) We suggest that curriculum vitae are requested from the interested candidates to be screened by the Anglican Communion Office or a first screening could be done by the Provincial Youth Council together with their Coordinators; then the successful candidates be sent to the Communion Office. In the case that in some provinces there are very few candidates, for example only three, then their curriculum vitae are sent straight to the Communion Office.

The selection of the two young representatives amongst the eight should be done at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop together with the Youth Council in this particular Diocese participating in the pilot process. Nevertheless the recruitment of the two representatives could also be done by choosing people that the Diocesan Youth Council deem fit. The process can also be done more democratically by asking interested young people to send their curriculum vitae together with a motivation letter showing why they want to be part of this process and how do they intend to contribute. Once back to their diocese how they will convey the outcomes to the young people at home as well as other members of the community. In the case that, Diocesan Youth leaders or any members of Diocesan Councils are amongst the candidates they should be replaced by other people in the selection panel of this Diocese.

We would also like to emphasise the importance of having a wide range of issues that would interest all age groups. Issues to be discussed in the different hubs should not be adult orientated only but geared towards young people’s interest as

\(^3\) This would preferably be prepared by the Indaba Resource Hubs.
well. This way, young people would be more inclined to participate. This process could be done by asking young people from the participating Dioceses to send the issues affecting them which they think could be discussed at the Indaba process; to their Diocesan Office which then would select issues that they think would be worthwhile taking to the Indaba Process. We would encourage that young people are involved in the Diocesan process as much as possible.

Our last suggestion is that Francophone Dioceses of the communion get the opportunity to be part of this process as well.

**Conclusion**

At the beginning of this paper we reviewed some questions and issues that young people raised at a recent youth conference, we have also looked at the reasons why we should include them in the process of listening. We saw that in the scriptures we are taught about interdependency with one another, as we look at the extracts from Ephesians and Corinthians. The contexts of these epistles might be very different from our daily context, but we believe that our communion has reached a kairos moment where our Communion is trying to foster unity and re-emphasize the need for us to relook at our Anglican Identity. In involving the different decision making components of our Communion we are making sure that our young people would be brought on board of this wonderful and important venture that the Anglican Communion is embarking on.

Remember, listening is only part of the process of developing a fully participative church that uses all its resources and abilities to
bring about God’s Kingdom here on earth. It will require the trust of the participants, an environment conducive to working together, the use of using artful questions (it does help to ask the right questions), the use of the art of listening, discernment and wisdom from the Holy Spirit, and the spirit of unity to achieve things – together. But, the first step is to be inclusive and to invite the young people to be part and parcel of the process.

Our hope and prayer is that the outcome of this process would encourage more mentoring to happen between elders of the church and the young people, there would be more sharing happening between the different dioceses of our communion and that the mission of God will be enhanced in the Anglican Church where both adult and young people will together work towards establishing human dignity, sharing, solidarity and God’s love in this world.
Anglican Dispute: What may be Lost

The Rev. William L. Sachs, Ph.D. is Executive Director of the Center for Interfaith Reconciliation in Richmond, Virginia.

The dispute over homosexuality is only the tip of the iceberg of Anglican conflict. The larger fracture concerns division over how to frame Anglican identity and mission. It is not immediately apparent, but Anglicans even differ over what the church has lost or could lose. On one side there is a perceived threat to orthodox belief among Anglicans; on the other side there is a perceived compromise of the church’s call to embody the Kingdom of God for the sake of justice for all. The contending sides both perceive challenges for which homosexuality is the defining issue. How Anglicans understand and address the church’s challenges, and whether they can agree on them, will determine the church’s nature and prospects for years to come. There is no greater sign of division. Both advocates of inclusion and exclusion of homosexual persons have made this issue definitive and fear for the church’s integrity if their position is not upheld. A sense of threat to Anglican integrity motivates both sides.

Most of the world’s Anglicans are not so motivated. Most do not stake the church’s future on one issue. Most, regardless of how they view homosexuality, see the church in a broader light. Soon after the consecration of Gene Robinson, the first openly gay bishop in 2003, it became clear that even in the Episcopal Church of the United States the majority of clergy and laity refused to be defined by their stance on homosexuality. As the issue raged, over two-thirds of Episcopalians regretted the conflict and wished it could be resolved. Most took centrist positions reflecting aspects of the fears and hopes of both sides.
of the gay issue. Above all most took a broad view of the church’s nature and ministry, presumed that the church should encompass different points of view, refused to link the church’s prospects to the one issue, and looked for effective ways to move forward together.

What has been diminished is the church’s historic middle ground, and the influential approach to mission and church life that it fostered. Broad agreement among Anglicans, the ideal of unity Anglicans have pursued, and the influence that ideal have given Anglicans have all eroded severely. Anglicans have long staked out a centrist view of themselves that has permitted significant variation. To say one is Anglican is to open a range of possibilities. This fact has not diluted the church’s witness but has empowered it. Out of their own diversity Anglicans have derived a view of mission that has embraced significant differences while being rooted in consensus about essential aspects of the faith and in common processes designed to encourage unity in the midst of diversity. Let me explain what this has meant historically and what it could mean in the midst of conflict over human sexuality.

A broad, centrist view reflects the historic mainstream of Anglicanism. Anglicans have always had activists and even eccentrics in their midst. But rarely has church life been so defined around conflict between minority, activist positions and never has division become so profound, or so threatened the church’s future. Instead Anglicans have a legacy of embracing difference and managing conflict that can arise from it. One of the most prominent and historic divisions among Anglicans has been that between so-called high and low church factions. That is, some embraced a style of worship, and the theology underlying it, reflective of the church’s Catholic heritage. Other
Anglicans embraced a basic approach to ritual while taking an evangelical stance emphasizing biblical authority and the church’s mission.

While this conflict has receded, for nearly three-hundred years tension between high and low Church parties challenged Anglican unity in England and beyond. It became a contest for the correct expression of Anglican identity, but it was one that neither party ever finally won and neither could have won, a lesson that should be learned today. Even in eighteenth-century England, and certainly by the late nineteenth century in North America, Anglicans had become too diverse for one form of belief and practice to prevail over others. The nature of Anglicanism mitigates against dominance by one or another particular faction. Yet such contests have been continuing facts of Anglican life.

In part this is because the church never developed mechanisms to create a prescribed unity, and they would have failed if the attempt had been made. The Whig hegemony of the first half of the eighteenth century in England sent high church Tories to the political margins. But the high church party endured while in political exile. This is the closest Anglicans have come to uniformity, but it was the fruit of political hegemony not religious unity, and the church has never pretended since that uniformity could be found. Activists in the conflict over homosexuality may imagine prescribed adherence to particular forms of belief and practice, but it cannot be realized. Anglicanism has been a balancing act throughout its history and Anglicanism became even more so as it expanded beyond Britain and North America.
The high church – low church fault line remains discernible, and has fuelled conflict over homosexuality. If such tension could not be erased in previous eras, it has had to be managed. In part managing such tension occurred naturally. In Britain and later in North America church parties became defined by geography and by affiliation with key institutions. Thus certain regions, cities, dioceses and even parishes became noted for their style of ritual, leadership, and interpretation of Christian tradition. Liturgy could vary noticeably, especially as Anglo-Catholicism took shape and as evangelical and charismatic influences sharpened low church identity. Even theological schools embraced the style of one or the other church party. All claimed to be Anglican and generally remained linked to one another.

The links that preserved unity amid tension have centred on form and forum. First, while at times bitterly divided, the high and low parties rarely broke from one another and the church. All claimed loyalty to the Book of Common Prayer, to the church’s English heritage, and to the see of Canterbury. Over time the Lambeth Quadrilateral also gained general assent as the closest Anglicans could approach a doctrinal confession. At the same time Anglicans generally acceded to the roles of such bodies as the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council, though the name of the latter is revealing. Anglicans sought to be in communion with one another, to consult and to honour those consultations. Such bodies never bore the authority exercised in local and diocesan and provincial settings. But authority has not been the basis of unity; consultation and communion have been. Anglican unity has never been rooted in authority, but in the consensus that arises from gathering, from being at common prayer with one another.
In this way unity and striking variety have been balanced, even in the midst of tensions that sometimes have been severe.

At times in the past Anglican unity has faltered as tension between church parties boiled over. Both individuals and groups of various sizes have broken from the church. In England the most noted fractures to date have been departures for Roman Catholicism, especially that of John Henry Newman in 1845. In the United States, Bishop George David Cummins led a small group out of the Episcopal Church in 1874 to create the Reformed Episcopal Church. Newman and Cummins represented opposed church parties; each would have feared the other if they had been on the same continent. Yet they departed the church for similar reasons. Both felt the direction of church life repudiated them and their approaches to belief and practice. Newman concluded that evangelical influence dominated his Catholic sensibilities. Cummins was an evangelical who feared that Catholic liturgy and theology had gained dominance over Episcopal life.

The high – low tension is not the only example of Anglican tension, or of the conflict that could result. In the mission field, there was recurring tension between missionaries and those whom they converted. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Africa, movements known as “Ethiopian” sought to transition Anglicanism from a colonizing church into an indigenous one. This was a natural turn in Anglican life and a necessary one if the church was to outlive empire. By the beginning of the twenty-first century the growth of Anglicanism across Africa testified to the result. Ethiopian movements were not the only route to African growth; waves of evangelical experience, especially in East Africa, have been prominent. In each case the church developed African roots and forms. In
each case there were tensions with Anglicans outside Africa as well as within.

Church growth and development has never occurred without tension. In part it is a matter of being either for or against a particular trend. In the Anglican sense it also concerns relations with other branches of the church in an extended, consensual system. The rise of Ethiopianism in Africa reflected not only opposition to colonial control but the rise of an indigenous sensibility. It produced conflict, including the summoning of a prominent African leader, James Johnson, for meetings with Church Mission Society (CMS) leaders in London. Momentarily, Johnson deferred. But his work in creating African churches deepened and the trend toward indigenous forms was not impeded. One could conclude that in the midst of Anglican tensions wider structures may falter and local forms become assertive.

Like the legacy of conflict between church parties, tensions between parts of Africa and other Anglicans have historic precedent. But now the inclination to divide has increased exponentially. As a result the stakes of the current conflict are higher. The conflict over homosexuality is personal. It concerns what people believe and who they are. Perhaps it should not be surprising, but a perception of being infringed, of being disregarded and even crowded out of church life is a major dynamic in the contemporary fracture. Of course, the opposed church parties both claim to embody authentic Anglicanism and, by extension, genuine Christianity. But both also fear being excluded or having their sensibilities trampled. Although couched in biblical and theological terms, the activism of both proponents and opponents of normalizing the gay presence in the church is a response to this perceived threat. The debate is
about the proper shape of church life and the nature of the church’s boundaries. It is a contest to decide who is in, or must be out, and what breadth the church can permit. Fear of being displaced is the most prominent feature of the situation. This reality reveals the extent of the conflict among Anglicans and the shape of what is being lost. It is the loss of consensus on how people who claim the mantel of Anglican Christianity yet differ in notable ways can live together and forge both a common confession of faith and shared ministry.

**The Capacity to Mediate**

My point is that the sort of tension Anglicans have experienced over homosexuality is not new. In a sense it is following historic patterns involving church parties and regions of the world, notably Africa and the global North. But Anglicans have changed in an ominous respect. Like a person who has become ill, the Anglican ability to ward off the infection of conflict has become compromised. The structures and processes that once largely warded off schism are less effective in doing so. The consensus that has sustained Anglicanism has become frayed. A willingness to act unilaterally without regard for wider sensibilities has become pronounced. Assurance that one’s experiences and convictions are definitive and need no wider consultation has become widespread. The consensus that has sustained Anglicanism has weakened because universal assent to church forms and processes has eroded. Confrontation is replacing discernment in church gatherings, and some Anglicans simply refuse to associate with others, and this virus is spreading. What has been lost in Anglican life, and what could suffer further loss, seem apparent: money, resources, focus on mission and acting in concert. But the deeper loss is only partially apparent. It is the Anglican ability to mediate among differences and so to be a force for reconciliation.
The Anglican capacity to embrace different parties within the church has translated into emphasis on mediation and reconciliation as essential aspects of the church’s mission. Anglicans have been noted for contributions to resolving conflict in public life. The most eminent has been Archbishop Desmond Tutu, noted not only for advocacy of justice but for the advance of reconciliation in South Africa. While his achievement may be singular, his example is not isolated. Terry Waite became known for courageous initiatives for peace in a volatile Middle East until he was abducted and held for nearly five years. Since his release nearly two decades ago, he has continued working for the public good.

Less known publicly a number of Anglicans have acted with similar intentions in every region of the globe. Anglicans have been known as peace-makers. This recognition is rooted in an unusual ability to engage difference appreciatively. For example Kenneth Cragg has charted a path to Christian-Muslim understanding. Before him Stephen Neill crafted discussion both of Christian origins and of engagement with other religions and cultures. But Neill was not the first Anglican to think in this way. As early South African bishop, Henry Callaway left notable reflections on how Anglicans could engage indigenous peoples respectfully and attentively. Callaway recognized that if the church was to be accepted by a people, it must be willing to work with them and adapt to them.

As historian Elizabeth Prevost has recently shown, Anglican women missionaries in east Africa in the late nineteenth century did just that. They developed a remarkable facility for being in community with African women: bonds of mutual respect arose. The task of conversion became multi-faceted: as the Gospel was proclaimed both African and English women were
converted. That is, they transcended roles and expectations to reach a mutual appreciation neither foresaw. The willingness of the converter and the converted to set aside assumptions was never complete. But to the extent it proceeded, the church found unity.

Anglicans have approached relations with other Christians on a similar basis. In the early twentieth century American bishop Charles Henry Brent became a pioneering advocate both of ecumenical initiative. Later William Temple, eventually Archbishop of Canterbury, was a major voice in the Faith and Order discussions that led to creation of the World Council of Churches. More recently Rowan Williams devoted doctoral study to Russian Orthodoxy. The legacy of Anglican interest in other religions and cultures has not been incidental. Anglicans have believed that God is present among all peoples and that the form of the church may in some sense be provisional. At times, some Anglicans have risked heterodox views for the sake of seeing God through different cultural lenses. One thinks of such figures as J. W. Colenso and Charles Freer Andrews among others.

Anglicans have accepted this risk for the sake of a greater vision of God and a wider unity of disparate peoples. This breadth arose as the Church of England sought a ministry that encompassed the variety of English experience. In mission, the church sought balance between faithfulness to the Gospel and receptivity to diverse contextual experiences. Anglicans gained an ability to speak across lines that divide and to pursue reconciliation. Anglicans became scholars of non-Western cultures and fostered indigenous leadership while becoming imbued with the cultures where they worked. It has been said that Channing Moore Williams, founder of the Nippon Sei Ko
Kai, spoke only in Japanese on his deathbed. More than preaching and converting, Anglicans have proclaimed the Gospel in the hope of unity.

This intention has been at the core of Anglicanism. But the breadth of mind and spirit it required has eroded. For many Anglicans now the emphasis is on *particularity*, not unity. Contending views of homosexuality insist upon particular confessional stances and discount those who differ. Weary of conflict the majority of Anglicans turn inward toward local issues without regard for wider church life. A change of heart is sweeping across the Anglican world. Emphasis on particularity and on being like-minded has become pronounced. This threatens the essence of Anglicanism: a quest for *unity*, for achieving “common prayer” without boundaries. More than money or church property, the loss of commitment to unity will be Anglicanism’s greatest loss.
Prayers

These three prayers are the beginning of what we hope will be a collection of resources to encourage each other to always bring this process and each other before God.

The Continuing Indaba Prayer:

Holy God,

As we look to the Trinity – the unity in diversity,
give us the courage to embrace Your image in each other,
forgive us the sins that tear us apart
and embolden us to work together for the sake of your mission.
This we ask through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen
Two prayers from the El Camino Real, Western Tanganyika and Gloucester partnership:

Holy God,
the companion of our pilgrimage
the goal towards which we move:
through the events that shape our journey,
through the people who walk at our side,
through the places where we sense your presence,
grant us moments of grace along the way
as you draw up to yourself;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen

Generous God,
the companion of our journey
the source of love on which we draw:
in our openness to your Spirit
and in our listening to each other,
grant us moments of grace, deepening communion
and a vision of the church you long for us to be;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen
What is Continuing Indaba?
Some Frequently asked Questions

Continuing Indaba – a journey of conversation to strengthen relationships for mission

What does Indaba mean?
It is a Zulu word for discernment by consensus common in many African cultures with parallels in many societies globally.

Why continuing?
The Indaba journey began at Lambeth the Conference in 2008. This project continues that process by exploring ways of communicating across our differences within the Anglican Communion.

What is a journey of conversation to strengthen relationships?
Good conversations strengthen and build relationships. As participants in Continuing Indaba journey together in conversations across difference for the sake of mission these relationships will be strengthened enabling active support and encouragement of each other. Each offering insight from their own context.

What does it have to do with mission?
For the Anglican Communion, God's mission is holistic, concerned for all human beings and the totality of a human person; body mind and spirit. Unfortunately sometimes we, as human beings, become focused on one or two issues that detract from this holistic vision. Conversations across our differences re-engages us with God’s holistic mission.
Who is having the conversation?

Each Continuing Indaba conversation will involve three dioceses from different Provinces in the Anglican Communion. Convened by bishops, conversations will be between men and women – both lay and ordained – who are involved in local mission. Opportunity will be given to encounter each other's Mission contexts. Through facilitated conversations they will encourage and challenge one another in order to further mission in each place. This process is still being designed and will be shaped by the Resource Hubs and the Pilot Conversations. Resources will be available to assist any diocese to participate.

What is a hub?

Each conversation partner will be resourced by a Resource Hub which will ground each conversation in its cultural contexts and provide theological processes for conversation across difference.

What is a pilot conversation?

During 2010 and 2011 we will be running and evaluation 5 pilot conversations - each one typically involving three dioceses - in order to form a replicable and affordable model open to all.

Is this the same as the Listening Process?

The Listening Process was established to facilitate listening to gay and lesbian Christians in order to learn of their experience and to help us listen to one another and the insights we bring. Continuing Indaba is concerned with mutual listening.
Creating Space is the second in a series of books to be published to support Continuing Indaba in the Anglican Communion. Continuing Indaba aims to:

- Intensify relationships across the Communion
- Energise local and global mission
- Encourage genuine conversation across difference

The first task is to create the space for theological dialogue. The focus of this book is how we listen to God.

**Listening to God is the foundation and starting point of all listening processes.**

*Emily Onyango*

The writers in this book are offering insights into how we create space to listen to God together. Wendy Fletcher shows how Anglican theology has always been contextual and communal. Archbishop Thabo recommends to the Communion the African notion of ‘Indaba.’

Alternatives to western models of decision making are challenged and other cultural models are proposed that may have deeper resonances with biblical models. The authors are not romantic about these methods and the weaknesses are examined as well as the strengths.

The result is to offer ways of Creating Space for mutual listening with the aim of listening to God and furthering mission that is local and global.