

TRUMPET 1 from the First Anglican Encounter in the South - 5 February 1994, Limuru, Kenya

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TRUMPET I

Anglican Encounter in the South

5 February 1994

1. Introduction

"We who are many are one body..." (Rom. 12:5)

BY THE GRACE of God, seventy-two of us gathered from 22 countries and 23 Provinces of the Anglican Communion in the South, have met at Limuru, Kenya. The first meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council took place here in 1971; and here, twenty-three years later, we have shared in another important step in the pilgrimage of Anglicans worldwide along the road of faithfulness to our Lord.

This Encounter was conceived at the 1986 Brisbane meeting of mission agencies, to give Anglican Provinces in the South the opportunity to listen to God and one another, to share their joys and pains, and to express their hopes and aspirations.

It has been an enriching time for us, and we acknowledge with deep gratitude the generosity of our partners in the North, whose support has made this Encounter possible. We have been graciously welcomed by Archbishop Manasses Kuria and the Church of the Province of Kenya. We express our thanks to them for welcoming us into their midst at the time that they happened to be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the coming of Anglican Christianity to their country. This statement, and the insights and commitments it contains, are part of our thank-offering to God and the wider Communion.

2. Concerns

We have experienced both the joys and the tensions of coming from widely different cultures, socio-political contexts, and theological perspectives. It has truly been an encounter! It has been a time to pause on the road and to listen to one another as fellow pilgrims. That listening has not always been easy. Some have spoken with enthusiasm of what God is doing in their regions, of signs and wonders, of new Christians made and new churches planted. Others have spoken with deep pain of the brutal realities of the world in which they live, and of the scandal of the institutional Church collaborating with systems of bondage; they wonder how genuine mission can be done in such situation.

Such differences have tested our fellowship, communion, solidarity (koinonia) in Christ, and invited each of us to broaden our vision of what the Spirit is doing among us, through us, and sometimes in spite of us, in God's world.

Among the questions we brought from our various contexts, two were prominent:

- i) How can we be Anglican while also true to our cultural contexts?
- ii) How can we be more effectively used for God's mission in the world in the power of the Holy Spirit?

At the end of our time together, we are able to identify core convictions which unite us, some questions which need further reflection and prayer, and a number of practical steps – we see them as aspirations – which we hope will flow from this Encounter.

3. Convictions

3.1 God's call to mission. The Church exists for the sake of God's mission. God invites us to be his Church – people who experience God's salvation and bear witness to God's love, mercy, compassion, justice, peace and forgiveness for all people, revealed finally and fully in Jesus Christ. We anticipate the consummation of God's kingdom. We share in God's mission by proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to the whole person, and seeking the

enabling power of the Holy Spirit. While our different contexts lead us to adopt a variety of mission emphases, we are one in believing that God's mission is one whole and must not be fragmented.

3.2 The local church in mission. Each church in its local context is the primary agent of mission, and has the responsibility to discern God's call to mission and to respond in faith, hope and love. But we also recognize that some ecclesial attitudes and structures hinder God's mission. We are discovering new ways of being the church-in-mission; and in particular we affirm smaller structures (such as base ecclesial communities, house fellowships and cell groups) within the parish context as one of the most effective ways of being a missionary church in our various contexts. We want to encourage our Provinces to give urgent attention to the creation of a 'grassroots' church, made up of vibrant communities which are deeply involved in their neighbourhoods.

3.3 The whole people of God. Our conviction and experience is that the whole people of God are called because of our baptism to share in worship, ministry, mission and stewardship. All gifts need to be released for the extension of God's kingdom. However, authoritarian models of ministry are a major hindrance to setting God's people free for ministry and mission. We feel that recognition of the particular needs and gifts of women, young people and children is both vital and urgent.

Ordained leaders, however, need to be encouraged and helped to be what they are called to be: enablers and equippers of the people of God, and leaders in mission. Deeper commitment on the part of the laity, and multiple models of theological education for all have, in our experience, been important.

3.4 The witness of churches of the South. We in the South believe that God has given us distinctive gifts to offer the Communion. Prime among them is our commitment to God's mission, a dynamic commitment forged in our experience of suffering, poverty, pluralism, violence, marginalisation, opposition and oppression – but also in our rich cultural diversity. Just as we were once the objects of mission, so now we wish to offer ourselves to the Communion. We urge a return to the message of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation and to apostolic patterns of ministry. In view of the fact that many of our people live in the North as students, migrant workers, etc, we urge the churches of the South to engage in mission and ministry to these people.

3.5 Commitment to seeking justice. The whole Church, not just the Church leadership, is God's voice to society, for conversion, conviction, correction and guidance; and God's instrument for effecting kingdom values. We acknowledge the prophetic ministry of various churches in their own contexts, seeking political and ecclesiastical justice. We urge the Communion to stand in solidarity with those churches which face particular pressure of any kind.

We have noted the continuing effects of colonialist exploitation on some economies, and believe that the economies of the North – and the churches which are part of them – have a responsibility to make some restitution. We recognize that many of our partners in the North have accepted their responsibility. Some of our churches express their anguish over the foreign debt which is crippling their nations' economies; and we appeal to the churches in the North to sensitise their respective governments to the plight of the South.

3.6 Self-reliance and interdependence

3.6.1 Self-reliance. Recognising that some churches in the South still need help to begin achieving self-reliance, the Encounter has brought home to us our need for it without negating the biblical notion of *koinonia*. For too long we have been too dependent on funds and other resources from the North to keep our churches going. We confess that we have often preferred partners from the North over those from the South at our PIM consultations, primarily for the money we hope they can offer. We wish to commit ourselves to simpler ways of being the Church, to learning to live within our means, and to transparency and accountability to our own members and our partners. We have noted the need to identify and properly use idle assets and resources. Some of us tell vivid stories of how tithing has transformed our local churches, and urge that it be taught as a minimum requirement for Christian giving.

3.6.2 *Sharing of resources*. We in the South have as great a wealth of resources in our people, and in the materials, strategies and processes we have developed as does the North. One joy of the Encounter has been the discovery of each other's gifts, and the recognition that we have so much to offer one another. We need to find ways of sharing these resources with one another and with the churches of the North.

3.6.3 *Anglican identity in the South*. How can we be Anglicans in our various contexts without imitating Anglo-Saxon ways? In the South we express our Anglican identity in a great variety of ways, with varying degrees of attachment to 'traditional Anglicanism'. While we value our traditions, we have often allowed them to harden into inflexible and unchangeable ideologies. The result has usually been the development of clericalism and a maintenance mentality. We seek to change those structures and processes which hinder God's mission. But we also recognize that 'being Anglican' is not our final goal; rather it is to work towards greater unity with other Christians for the sake of the kingdom of God.

4. Other concerns

The Encounter has not adequately dealt with a number of issues, while others have emerged as needing further reflection and prayer. They include the following:

4.1 *Different experiences of mission and colonial powers*. The histories of peoples in the South have some similarities, but also reflect marked differences. Some suffered grievously in the process of imperialist invasion and domination – a process which coincided with the arrival of Western missionaries. Others are deeply thankful to the first bearers of the gospel to their people because, in their view, the missionaries brought great benefits. Between those two experiences lie the rest, for whom the results of Christian mission during that period were more ambiguous. We recognize that such diverse historical experiences lead to a variety of attitudes towards the churches of the North, which inevitably colour our relationships with them and one another. We have begun to understand this during the Encounter.

4.2 Understandings of mission. Our different histories and theological traditions, and our varied contexts, have an effect on our understanding of how we share in God's mission. We have recognized that among us we emphasise different dimensions of and strategies for mission. While we are committed to the whole mission of God (3.1 above), we see the need for further dialogue among ourselves about our understandings of mission. In the meantime we affirm the integrity of our respective emphases, which have been forged in our particular contexts and experiences.

4.3 Living and witnessing to the uniqueness of Christ in pluralistic contexts. One vital dimension of mission which has emerged during this Encounter has been the reality of living and witnessing among people of other faiths. We have not been able to give it the attention it deserves. This is one of those issues that calls for further study and listening to God in prayer on how to witness to the uniqueness of Christ in our contexts.

4.4 The ministry of women. While we dissociate ourselves from divisive sexism and feminism, we affirm the integrity of each person as made by God and the equal importance of their unique roles in the Church.

4.5 Young people – today's Church. Youth representatives at the Encounter were concerned about the effect of the mass media – especially television – on the lives of young people. They called for people with vision and foresight to provide Christian alternatives. In addition the young people brought the following recommendations to our attention:

- Provincial youth policies should be developed and recognized by all dioceses and parishes, so that youth can freely serve in the Church.
- Each diocese should have a fulltime youth worker.
- Church leaders should be trained to be able to work with youth.
- Youth leadership training courses should be made available.
- A youth communication network is needed.
- Youth ministry should emphasise Christian commitment before it emphasizes denominational identity.
- There is a need to develop inter-generational programmes, especially in this international Year of the Family.
- We need to encourage youth in their ministries in the social and economic spheres.
- We need to encourage youth participation in worship.
- We need to include youth in the planning committee for the next South-South conference.

4.6 Use of technology. We have noted some concern about technologies such as computer networks, with questions raised about their control, appropriateness and cost. We encourage regions to explore computer applications for administration, communications, etc., and to see QUEST in particular as a tool for enhancing the ministry of the Church in the South. We urge that more awareness-raising and training in cost-effective computer applications be offered to churches in the South.

5. The way forward

The Church is 'a community of anticipation.' This Encounter is just the beginning of a process; and we recognize, with anticipation, that much remains to be done. To ensure the continuation of the South-to-South Encounter process, we commit ourselves to the following steps with a view to taking the Encounter further:

5.1 We appoint the following persons as **unpaid** secretaries to co-ordinate the follow-up of South-to-South relations:

The Ven James Wong (Asia) – Follow-up and Programmes Secretary

Mr Sergio Laurenti (Latin America) – Communications Secretary (Occasional Prayer/News Letter Editor)

The Revd Mike McCoy (Africa) – Theological and Mission Secretary

5.2 We urge each Province to appoint an existing staff person as South-to-South link person.

5.3 We call for the holding of regional Encounters which are to be self-financed.

5.4 We encourage the South-to-South linking of companion dioceses.

5.5. We encourage exchange visits between South dioceses involving lay and ordained people, and an emphasis on South-South Partners-in-Mission relationships.

5.6 We encourage the planning of a further 'Encounter in the South' before Lambeth 1998, which should include some North and ecumenical participants, and send a specific message to Lambeth.

5.7 We welcome the creation of a commission (known as 'Missio') to help the churches of the Communion 'to move more rapidly from maintenance to mission.' We anticipate that the South's participation will bring valuable input to Anglican mission-in-unity.

5.8 We support the formation of a South-to-South women's prayer network with a contact person in each Province, to encourage women's ministry, bearing in mind their calling and gifts, with particular emphasis on prayer, evangelism and holiness.

5.9 We support the proposal of young people at this Encounter to hold an Anglican Encounter in the South for young people in SE Asia in mid-1995.

5.10 We commit ourselves to having women and young people involved in the planning and implementation of any future Encounter.

5.11 We encourage the inculturation of our worship and liturgy in the South, and commend the findings of the 1993 consultation on liturgy in the African context, held in Kenya, for further study.

5.12 We wish to give urgent attention to including young people and children in worship, ministry and mission.

5.13 We encourage churches to use Whitsunday (or other locally suitable times) as Anglican Communion Day, with an emphasis on mission in the South and the strengthening of ties. (In the South collections, love offerings, diocesan tithes, etc., could go to our ACC account for the support of further work for South-to-South Encounter).

5.14 We call for a biblical and theological re-examination of the issue of economic justice.

5.15 We urge the inclusion of South input in the planning of Lambeth and other Communion-wide meetings or events.

5.16 We encourage a thorough re-examination of ministerial formation in the South with special reference to the following:

- contextual theology
- educational methods
- the exchange of theological students and staff
- writing and publishing our own texts
- encouraging publishers in the North to establish publishing arms for writers from the South
- founding a South-to-South journal to encourage theological reflection
- multi-media libraries and resource centers
- education of ministers' spouses

6. Conclusion

We commend the pastoral letter to the Anglican Communion, signed on our behalf by the Encounter chairperson, and we ask the prayers of all who read this as we continue the process of the South-to-South Encounter.