

REPORT TO IAWN
Anglican Peace & Justice Network Meeting
Geneva, Switzerland, 13 – 20 March 2010

The Anglican Peace and Justice Network (APJN) met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 13-20 March. Members of the Network were joined by the Revd Canon Kenneth Kearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion and the Revd Terrie Robinson, Networks Coordinator for the Anglican Communion. Representatives of other Anglican Communion Networks were also invited to attend, including Ann Skamp (Australia), who represented the International Anglican Women's Network.

The meeting was facilitated by the Anglican UN office in Geneva in a programme designed to help participants learn more about effective interaction with the UN system in Geneva in their work on peace and justice issues across the Communion and the world.

A communiqué released from the meeting can be found at <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2010/3/30/ACNS4695>.

This report documents matters from the meeting that relate to the work of the IAWN.

Kenneth Kearon challenged us to see that the many changes in the world can be opportunities to ask: What is the Church for? What are we doing? What should we be doing? Or are we only about maintenance?

And that our answers must be in terms of mission. Not What is the mission of the Church? But What is God's mission? What is God's vision for the world today and into the future? How does the Church fit into that mission? What does God want done in the world?

The work of justice and peace is central to our role in God's mission. When we understand "justice" to mean 'righteousness' we ask What is the proper relationship we should have with God? with each other? with our environment – the context of God's mission?

The 2008 Lambeth Conference and the 14th Anglican Consultative Council meeting (ACC-14) in 2009 raised the profile of God's mission in the world and our role in it. God's desire for justice and peace is the responsibility of everyone but especially so for Networks. Networks are a vital practical expression of God's mission and are at the forefront of the Church's mission. Recognition of this has led to the appointment of the Revd Terrie Robinson as the Anglican Communion Networks Coordinator and the inclusion of Networks presentations at ACC-14.

Kenneth Kearon also outlined the proposed Global Anglican Relief and Development Alliance (currently known as GARDA) and its role in enhancing the Anglican Communion's role in advocacy, strategy and emergency response. He also informed the meeting of the newly instigated Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order and the proposal from the Church of Canada for a 6th Mark of Mission based on reconciliation.

Terrie Robinson spoke about the place and role of the 12 official Networks of the Anglican Communion and how the Networks represent the mission of the Church at grassroots level. In her role as Networks Coordinator, Terrie raises the profile of Networks at each meeting of the 'Instruments of Communion' as in many ways the Networks are the lifeblood of the Communion and its mission.

Funding for Networks is a major issue and each Network needs to review its funding processes. Networks themselves can gain a great deal from better communication with each other and there is also a need to strengthen relationships between the Networks and the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations (ACOUN) both in New York and Geneva. This would provide more effective and improved advocacy on issues raised by Networks.

The work of all Networks must be theologically underpinned. Terrie has initiated conversations that hopefully will increase this support.

Each meeting day had a theme for the day with **Wednesday 17 March** having "Human Rights of Women, Right to Health" as its theme.

The **Bible study** that day led by the Revd Priscilla Singh (World Lutheran Federation) and the Revd Maree Wilson (Holy Trinity Church, Geneva) was based on Women and Health.

The passages studied were:

Mark 7:24-34

The Syrophenician Woman's Faith

Matthew 15:21-28

The Canaanite Woman's Faith

The questions for consideration were:

What are the cries for help that you hear from women in your context?

How does power operate or how is it exercised in determining who receives care?

Presentations from UN and civil society representatives working at the UN in Geneva all encouraged us to be actively involved in the work of the UN and find ways of being influential in UN policies and programmes.

Some insights for IAWN

Rachel Brett (Quaker UN office in Geneva) - instrumental in raising the issue of child soldiers in Uganda.

- a small group with a specific focus can make a difference
- be clear and concise about your work so you can prioritise strategies, meetings, etc.
- be organised in advocacy work
- have well researched statements and presentations
- have the knowledge you need to use the UN system in an effective way
- case studies are a good way to raise issues so that the real cause of an issue is highlighted
- form partnerships with people on the ground and have as many effective partners as possible

Priscilla Hayner (International Centre for Transitional Justice) spoke of transitional justice as necessary because it is no longer acceptable to not respond to atrocities. There are currently 7 operating truth-seeking Truth Commissions responding to victims and their needs.

Leila Baker, (UN Fund for Population, UNFPA) –

- UNFPA promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity.
- It supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.
- Reproductive health needs to be based in informed and responsible choice and accessibility to quality services.

Panel discussion on gender-based violence: What can and do faith-based organisations do?

Prevention activities include awareness-raising, strengthening community support for victims.

Response activities include medical services, psycho-social support, access to justice, protection and security.

Priority issues include engaging men and boys, sexual exploitation, the connection between violence and abuse and HIV/AIDS, survival sex as a coping mechanism. Advocate Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace And Security.

Fulata Mbanjo-Moyo, (World Council of Churches) –

Gender justice is necessary for a culture of peace – creating space for women to reclaim their power by living and sharing their spiritualities of resilience, healing and wholeness.

This needs to involve men in gender awareness and advocacy.

3 strategies –

- training of “movers” for gender justice for peace
- building public discourse through “midwives” for gender justice
- Lenten resources and video project for awareness raising for positive masculinity

Contextual Bible Studies (CBS) methodology information can be found at www.ukzn.ac.za/sorat/ujamaa/resources.htm

Maria Chavez Quispe (Focus Point for Indigenous Rights) highlighted issues for indigenous peoples: 375 million worldwide, majority in Asia, among the most marginalised people in the world.

Defined as having historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed in their territories. Indigenous people consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in these territories.

Partnerships between UN and religious organisations

Many of the speakers expressed the desire to work in partnership with the Anglican Communion and its various groups. The reasons being:

- Unlike UN agencies, the Church has an extensive grassroots presence and so has the ability to convey messages in locally appropriate ways with appropriate connections.
- Original human rights texts are often based on faith traditions and values, and so we share a value system with the United Nations agencies working in the area of justice and peace.
- The Church has credibility because we bring a value-based perspective that does not have a nationalistic political agenda.
- The Church is not single-issue focussed but brings a broader context than many other groups.
- The Church is also seen as holding a strategic vision that it has the ability to follow and implement.

The caution was that we must be aware that we are not part of unrealistic projects and not be complicit with others so that we do not speak out about issues.

Recommendations

1. IAWN to review the priority areas it has identified and break the issues down into focussed areas to be worked on.
2. IAWN tracks and alerts Provincial Links when their country/Province is programmed to have its Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations and

so have appropriate input. We would need to work with the ACOUN to be trained to do this effectively and produce focussed recommendations.

3. In its advocacy work, IAWN offers positive alternatives and seeks out examples of best practice.
4. IAWN seeks out theological resources to address What is healthy sexuality? What does it mean to be a man?
5. IAWN is more proactive in communication and sharing with other Anglican Networks.

The overall challenge for IAWN is to understand our role in God's mission throughout the world.

Ann Skamp
(Australia)
IAWN Steering Group member

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