



Good morning. What I have been asked to do this morning is to report on where we are at this point of time in the Anglican Communion. It's a fairly complicated picture so I hope I will be given the gift of clarity as I talk to you about this. Since the last time I reported to Synod on these matters, six things have happened. I want to delineate those six things and comment on them and then conclude by talking about a situation which at the moment is absolutely no threat to the Uganda Link but is a potential cause of difficulty in relation to our relationships with the Church of Uganda.

So, the first thing is that the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) met in Jamaica in May 2009.

Second, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the USA (TEC), which meets every 3 years, met this year in June 2009.

Third, the formal setting up of an alternative to TEC in the USA, known as the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA) was formally set up with its own Bishops, some of whom were consecrated outside the province of TEC to act extra-provincially within TEC.

Fourth, the setting up of a network, described not as a separate network but a parallel network, of traditionalist churches known as the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (FCA).

Fifth, the forthcoming consecration of traditionalist bishops in the Anglican Church of Canada, to provide an alternative episcopal oversight for traditionalist parishes that don't like the way the Church of Canada is going.

Finally, the outcomes of the 2008 Lambeth Conference, largely focusing on something that is called rather cryptically the 'continuing *indaba* process'. *Indaba* is an African cultural approach to dealing with disputes which involves huge participation, large amounts of listening and then trying to work towards a consensus.

So first, the ACC meeting in Jamaica in May 2009 applied the bulk of its time to the so called Anglican Covenant. This is the instrument which has largely been driven by our own Archbishop, who I think has fairly clearly concluded that within the Communion, the traditional bonds of affection that are expressed in the Lambeth Quadrilateral, are no longer enough to hold the Communion together and to deal with the Communion's problems. That in itself the very fact of a covenant is relatively controversial in the wider Anglican Communion, not least here in the UK, where certainly a number of colleagues think that it changes the nature of the Anglican Communion from being a relational gathering to being a confessional gathering.

Much time at the ACC was focused on the controversial section 4 of the Covenant, that is the section that attempts to deal with Provinces within the Anglican Communion that won't sign the Covenant. At the moment it is up in the air what would happen to a province that didn't sign up. There has been what I would call general talk about the membership of the province being slightly down-graded but nobody knows what that would look like. I think the big problem for the Covenant will be getting any agreement on what sanction will be applied. The other controversial thing about the Covenant is that the wording of it, as it is, would imply that kind of alternative jurisdictions in other Provinces might be eligible to apply for membership of the Anglican Communion. Of course that is a huge offence to those Provinces where an alternative network has already been set up.

What has happened as a result of the ACC is that Section 4 has been sent back to the Provinces for further scrutiny and further work and the Archbishop has set up a small group to deal with that.

The second thing was the General Convention of TEC in June 2009. This, slightly surprisingly in one way, voted to go ahead with the consecration of gay and lesbian people as bishops, assuming that they can get through the rather complicated electoral process in the USA. Since I gave this report to the Bishop's Council, there has been an election in the States of a Diocesan Bishop. There was a lesbian woman up for election, who was not elected in this particular case. With reference to TEC, the Lambeth view is that they pass these resolutions and the next thing is that the words in the resolutions don't actually appear to mean exactly what anybody else would think they mean. So there is this kind of dialogue of trying to get definition of exactly what the General Convention of the Episcopal Church has actually meant by the resolutions that it has passed.

The third thing is the formal setting up of an alternative to TEC known as the Anglican Church of North America. I can't say much about ACNA other than the fact that my experience earlier this year was visiting the Episcopal Conference Centre in Kanuga, North Carolina. It's an absolutely stunning place in the Blue Mountains and I was speaking to a conference of Episcopalian Christians who incline to a more conservative view of the issues that at the moment are in the forefront of the life of the Communion but who are determined not to leave the Episcopal Church. You can imagine what a difficult place they are in at the moment because their conservative friends are trying to persuade them to leave TEC and join ACNA and the liberals are pleading with them to stay and have nothing to do with it. I think they are in the middle of a rather uncomfortable sandwich and together with the TEC in the States does need our prayers.

Fourthly, the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans. This is not the same as ACNA in the sense that certainly the intention is made clear that it is a parallel group rather than an alternative group as such although some of you will be thinking in practice what's the difference between the two. I can't answer that question, I guess only time will tell what that actually looks like as things develop or don't develop within the Church.

I have a great anxiety which I have shared with you before that it seems to me that the wrong way to deal with our differences is to be forming alternative groups. The reason I say that and have repeated it time and time again is that my great anxiety is that at the moment issues of human sexuality, issues about women bishops, are not the only potentially divisive things within our Church. In effect what we are doing is, we are giving anybody who falls out with the Diocesan Bishop for whatever reason a kind of quick escape route out of the mainline life of the CofE. I can't think that in that context anybody ever grows up.

So I am nervous of this though it has to be said that a lot of people who I respect greatly have aligned themselves with some of these networks. It is not my own intention to do so for what's its worth.

Fifthly, the consecration of bishops in the Anglican Church of Canada to act extra-provincially is going ahead.

Finally, the outcomes of the 2008 Lambeth Conference, largely focusing on the continuing *indaba* process. You may recall that this got off to a rather bad start because some misinformation was put out by one of the campaign groups implying that the funding of this post had come from a group that were very sold-out to the full participation of gay and lesbian people in the USA. Actually I am assured that is not the picture at all but it certainly did set the process back a little bit. You can imagine who would be made suspicious by that kind of misinformation.

So the Indaba process goes on. It is being handled by the Anglican Communion Office and is the work of a man Philip Groves who goes round the world and sits and listens and deduces what's going on. Quite a lot of his work has focused on Africa and I had lunch with him about two weeks ago. He thought, on the whole, the process was a good process and that people were actually saying what they thought, rather than what their Archbishop thought in various Provinces of the Communion. I have to say that in the negotiation of all of

this, it really raises the question for me of what is the theology and ecclesiology of a Province to make decisions. Most Anglican governances throughout the Communion mean that a Province can sign up to something but of course individual Diocesan Bishops can do exactly what they like – and frequently do apparently.

So that is where we are, those are the facts, and I hope I have not skewed them too much. It has certainly not been my intention. What I just want to inform Synod of is a development in Uganda which is not a church development as such. A Private Members Motion for an Anti-Homosexuality Bill has arisen that will come before the Ugandan Parliament sponsored by a Member of Parliament in Uganda called David Bahati.

Whatever view we take of the issues on the Human Sexuality debate, this piece of legislation is so pernicious and so unpleasant, that I hope that Christians on both sides of the debate would stand as one and say that this is unacceptable. I think, for example, the application of capital punishment to gay and lesbian people is wholly, totally and bizarrely unacceptable. Now there is some debate as to whether this Bill, as it is at the moment, will get into the Ugandan Parliament in the immediate future. We have been working in the background, Chris Dobson, has been doing some sterling work trying to find out exactly what is going on here and we think that the Ugandan Church would oppose the legislation partly on the basis that in former times they have disassociated themselves from capital punishment. You don't need me to sketch in that if the law allows that kind of thing then it will just legitimise violence against gay and lesbian people. Whichever side of the debate, we must stand together in the face of that and resist that.

Now, our assumption is that the Ugandan Church will not go down this route and support the legislation, though there are aspects of the legislation which previous statements of the Ugandan House of Bishops would appear to support. My view is that I hope they will oppose it lock, stock and barrel rather than purely the capital punishment clause in it. So we have been trying to contact the Archbishop, who has been in the Karamajong of late and not contactable. They put out an interim statement which is partly good that it ratified their view that capital punishment was unacceptable to Christians. But it did contain a quotation that I would think would be inflammatory, because there was no evidence supplied with it, attributed to the Archbishop that says something like, 'I am horrified to learn that homosexuals are trying to convert people to homosexuality in our schools'. I hope that, in our own diocese, those of us who take a more conservative line on this will be extremely careful in the kind of language which we use. Because the language we use can be used by some people to legitimise violence against lesbian and gay people. As Christians if we can't stand up against violence then we need to think again.

So there is a rather complicated situation. That is where we are and what we are working with and we regard your prayers as really important in all of this. I was at the Uganda Link Committee meeting recently. It was a great, encouraging meeting with a lot of energy and a lot of enthusiasm and at this stage I think it is fair to say that the hope and prayer and effort of everybody in the Uganda Link Committee would be placed in the area of making sure that, if we can, our link is maintained and is in good shape.