

Essence of Indaba

Indaba is a Zulu word for a gathering for purposeful discussion. It is both a process and method of 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 would include issues which affected the whole of the community. In our case it is issues which affect the whole Communion as reflected in our daily themes.

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 everyone 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 issues discussed. This will be achieved by seeking to understand exactly the thinking behind positions other than my own.

For Indaba to work, Indaba on day 1, day 2, day 3, day 4 etc should be seen as interrelated even if their themes differ. The whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts.

At the end of each Indaba session the discussion will be summarised seeking to honour each of the different voices that have been heard. These written summaries will help to shape the communications coming out of the Lambeth Conference.

The Reflections Process

When the Archbishop of Canterbury commissioned the Lambeth Design Group to develop the process for this year's Lambeth Conference, he specifically requested a conference which would enable the bishops to meet in real encounter in a way which would not be dominated by political positioning or parliamentary process. The response of the Lambeth Design Group has been to centre the Lambeth Conference on Indaba. At the same time, the Communion and the world will await with interest an account of what has transpired at this gathering of Anglican bishops.

It has been important therefore to design a process which would generate a document which is

- (a) **faithful to the process.** Indaba is not shaped to produce a Communiqué, an Encyclical Letter, or a text which resembles a series of dispositions or resolutions. Indaba is open-ended conversation, which doesn't begin by looking for results or feedback. The final document must be faithful to the indaba process: it will therefore be descriptive of the totality of the engagement which the bishops have undertaken under God.
- (b) **faithful to the bishops.** The final document must be one which reflects the views of all the bishops gathered for the Lambeth Conference. It must seek to honour the participation and contribution of every bishop, and be written in a process which is owned by them.
- (c) **faithful to the Communion.** We are all acutely aware that the Anglican Communion stands at an important point in its life. The final document must be robust enough to describe realistically and honestly

where the bishops of the Communion understand our life together to have come, and their resolve for the future.

- (d) **faithful to the Gospel.** Nevertheless, the final document will mean nothing unless it proclaims authentically the Good News of Jesus Christ, and is a message of hope and faithfulness.

With all this in mind, the Design Group have discerned a process which they believe can honour all these concerns. It is oriented towards the production of a Reflections Document, which will be a faithful account of the fruit of the 14th Lambeth Conference.

This is the process that will be adopted:

At the heart of the Lambeth Conference 2008 are the fifteen Indaba groups. After two days of meeting together, each group will be asked to nominate the member of their group whom they believe to be most capable of carrying their views and the fruit of their discussion into the reflections process in a way which expresses the aspirations outlined above. This 'Listener' will then join a Listening Group made up of all the listeners under the chairmanship of Archbishop Roger Herft of Perth. Working with the summaries of the fruit of indaba arising from each group, it will be their duty to generate a common text which reflects authentically the indaba and is loyal to the considerations set out above.

That text will be tested by the Conference through two main routes. First, preliminary drafts of the Reflections document will be circulated to the indaba groups as the work progresses at regular intervals throughout the conference. It will be possible for bishops to respond to the developing text through their listener and the discussions within the indaba groups.

Secondly, on four occasions the Listening Group will meet in open session before any bishop who wishes to attend to invite comment on and response to the developing text.

These hearings are an advertised part of the conference programme, and will take place on the Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of the second week of the conference.

It is hoped that in this way every bishop attending the conference will be given the opportunity to shape the Reflections which arise out of the conference. The hope of the Lambeth Design Group is that this process will permit the development of a Reflections Document which will meet the objectives set out for it, and be available on the last day of the conference to be received as an authentic account of the engagement of the bishops together in the service of Christ..