

From paternalism towards partnership

Introduction

This document sets out to discuss ABM's journey to prioritising partnership in its relationships.

Like many mission agencies, the Anglican Board of Mission used to send missionaries overseas. Many of the early missionaries left the comforts of home for an uncertain, and often harsh, future. For example, one of the pioneers of the Anglican Church in New Guinea, the Rev Albert Maclaren, died of malaria six months after arrival. A companion, the Rev Copland King, struggled with malaria for the rest of his long life. The early missionaries were essentially evangelists, working without an established local church structure to support them. Their mission stations were usually the only Christian witness in a particular area.

Later missionaries were supported by local church structures as dioceses and parishes became established, and although blessed by antibiotics they could still become sick, suffer from harsh weather and the lack of a healthy diet. Such missionaries often went to do a specific job. Some were teachers, some nurses, some priests. They lived out their faith among the people they served, evangelising by actions and words. They accepted, as did the people they served, the difficulties that arose. This model continued to be dominant until the 1960s.

Many missionaries, including ABM's, often had a holistic ideal. They wanted to help people, not only spiritually but practically through healthcare and education. They were products of their times and there were aspects of their ministry or activities that we would reject today.

Colonialism began to be challenged as countries became independent. This meant the Anglican presences in various countries became self-governing, ensuring that local people were involved in all aspects of decision making. The Church of Melanesia and the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea are examples of this.

This self-governing shift coincided with a change in missiological understanding: mission was no longer viewed by many as ours but God's. Mission had been seen to be primarily about the Church going out to the Gentiles, or an individual being saved. Now it was increasingly being viewed as the *missio Dei* – God's mission in the world, modelled by Jesus, powered by the Spirit. However, older understandings and models of mission persisted. This led to confused expectations and a degree of tension both in Australia and overseas, which continues today.

Despite this degree of tension between older and newer models, the church has been called since the 1960s to be missional and see that expressed in partnerships where there is mutual encouragement, prayer, personnel exchange and sometimes funding to do the work of Christ in each respective community. Each partner regards itself as being able to both give and receive from each other. This is why the days of missionaries being sent from the West to the developing world are a declining practice.

Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence (MRI)

A Communion-wide programme to encourage mutual participation and support in the mission of the church, known as *Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ*, was issued just before the 1963 Pan-Anglican Congress in Toronto, attended by some 16,000 Anglicans. Its goal was to assess the needs for human and other resources across the Communion and then to collect and distribute resources to meet those needs. A press statement at the time noted –

We are aware that such a programme as we propose, if it is seen in its true size and accepted, will mean the death of much that is familiar about our churches now. It will mean radical change in our priorities – even leading us to share with others as much as we spend on ourselves. It means the death of old isolations and inherited attitudes. It means a willingness to forgo many desirable things, in every church.

In substance what we are really asking is the rebirth of the Anglican Communion, which means the death of many old things but – infinitely more – the birth of entirely new relationships. We regard this as the essential task before the churches of the Anglican Communion now. ¹

MRI laid a challenge to the church to move past colonialism to equality, to abandon a ‘funding only’ mentality and to take on one marked by sharing personnel and ideas about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Established churches were asked to create a fund of £5,000,000² to assist the newer provinces of the Communion in the subsequent five years. There were three distinct areas which the funds would be put towards: theological education, church construction and institutional strengthening of the newer churches.

The established churches were told that this was not –

*... a once-in-a-lifetime appeal. It is no more than a first step forward, without reference to the longer-range needs. A strong, sustained and expanding pattern of giving is required, if our churches' work, born of the devotion of countless faithful Christians, is to survive.*³

Despite being a response to a colonial world being swept over by independence movements, MRI suffered from being far too focussed on cash and not enough on mutual relationships and encouragement. The materially poorer churches were asked to register projects with the Anglican Communion Office in London. Thus the materially richer churches were presented with a catalogue of needs, which they could agree – or not - to meet. Nobody prompted the materially poorer churches to consider that they might have something to offer. Because of the power imbalance, interdependent and mutual relationships struggled to form. Nonetheless, MRI was a significant initiative because it drove the Anglican Communion towards greater mutuality.

Despite the limitations of MRI, one of its long-term results has been the formation of companion diocese links (these began out of the Episcopal Church in the 1950s) which encourage mutual prayer, information exchange and face-to-face visits at a diocesan level across the Anglican Communion.

¹ Press release issued by the Toronto Anglican Congress, 1963 – see http://anglicanhistory.org/canada/toronto_mutual1963.html

² = about AUD 202,511,270 in today's (16 July 2015) dollars

³ Press release issued by the Toronto Anglican Congress, 1963 – see http://anglicanhistory.org/canada/toronto_mutual1963.html.

Partners-in-Mission (PIM)

The Partners-in-Mission process was an attempt to overcome the limitations of the MRI. It encouraged a more expansive appreciation of partnership to be embraced. It came out of the first two meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council in Limuru, Kenya (1971) and Dublin (1973). The report of the Dublin meeting remains important to the Communion. In part it says –

The oneness of the missionary task throughout the world has been emphasised in recent years in all parts of the Christian Church. The emergence everywhere of autonomous churches in independent nations has challenged our inherited idea of mission as a movement from 'Christendom' in the West to the 'non-Christian' world. In its place has come the conviction that there is but one mission in all the world, and that this one mission is shared by the world-wide Christian community. The responsibility for mission in any place belongs primarily to the church in that place. However, the universality of the gospel and the oneness of God's mission mean also that this mission must be shared in each and every place with fellow-Christians from each and every part of the world with their distinctive insights and contributions. If we once acted as though there were only givers who had nothing to receive and receivers who had nothing to give, the oneness of the missionary task must now make us all both givers and receivers.⁴

The catalogue of needs model was replaced by a framework where each church was to participate in planning its own mission strategy with input and assistance of partner churches. The Partners-in-Mission or PIM process was born.

In 1977 ABM appointed Canon Robert Butterss as its Chairman. For six years he led ABM as the church in Australia began to embrace partnership. One of his first overseas trips was to attend a conference in the USA which was focussed on Partners-in-Mission.

Bringing together large numbers of independent dioceses to create a Communion-wide partnership scheme was difficult. Consultations were arranged to help each national church to set its priorities and assess how much assistance it needed from outside sources. Such consultations happened regularly around the world in the 1970s and 1980s.

Australia hosted one such consultation in 1978. Eight partners came to assist the Anglican Church of Australia to discuss what mission meant for the contemporary church. Butterss reported –

To me, one of the most important features was that the partners from Japan, Africa, the Pacific and Asia – regions we have supported for many years – were present in an entirely new status. They were not here to raise funds for their respective churches, they were not here to be taught how to do their job. They were here because we needed them and because we recognize that there is one mission and we are all partners in it.⁵

The last consultation, concerning churches in West Africa, was held in Ghana in 1997.

The consultations were designed to help the established churches move away from paternalism and to make mission more central to the life of the church by having churches linking with churches, rather than mission societies linking with churches.

Churches in the developing world (the 'Global South') hosted most of the consultations, usually inviting those with whom they had prior funding and missionary staff arrangements. Sometimes the donor churches had rather too much influence on partners' strategy, but the PIM process helped the 'Global North' churches (those in developed countries) to set mission budgets and priorities.

⁴ Report of ACC-2, Dublin, 1973, p.53

⁵ *Church Scene*, 18 May 1978, p.14

Despite difficulties, the PIM consultation process attempted to move from paternalism to partnership from the early 1970s to the late 1990s.

The PIM process was of importance because –

1. It assisted churches to focus on their call to work for God's mission;
2. It provided a means of mutual partnership that extended beyond the historic boards and agencies of the 'Global North' churches, without disregarding them;
3. It allowed people to gain experience with churches other than their own and to take that experience back to their own synods and other meetings;
4. It permitted the boards and agencies of the 'Global North' churches to focus on their own priorities;
5. It made the language of partnership, mutuality and relational reciprocity more common throughout the Communion;
6. It stimulated widespread face-to-face meeting;
7. It facilitated a more effective sharing of prayer, people and financial resources, and emphasised the significance of non-tangible expressions of Christian experience;
8. It created the expectation that organisations, dioceses and provinces, when planning for the future, would involve their partners.

More recently, the PIM consultations appear to have come to a halt for a number of reasons:

1. Consultations have become difficult to organise because of the growth in size and number of provinces and dioceses: they have become costly and unwieldy;
2. Today's church leaders were not part of PIM's formation and have less attachment to it;
3. A number of dioceses are now self-reliant and this has lessened the overall urgency for the PIM process
4. Attention was diverted from the PIM process to the 'Decade of Evangelism' in 1998 and more ACC staff time was focussed on it than PIM.

Nonetheless, the important principles and practical lessons which PIM taught the Communion need to be remembered and built upon in the context of today.

What is happening today?

Even though the PIM consultations have ended, Anglican conversations about mission have continued. Each year there are a number of roundtable discussions that ABM takes part in where a church will call together each of its partners to meet and learn from each other. Successes are celebrated, problems are ironed out, plans are made to help the relationships that the church has flourish in the future. In 2015 ABM is involved in three roundtable meetings around the Anglican Communion.

Since the PIM consultations ended the Anglican Communion has come up with a set of agreed principles for partnership. They include the priority of the local church (that is, that the local church knows its own needs and strengths best), solidarity, transparency and responsible stewardship.

ABM and Partnership Today

ABM believes that God's mission is to transform humanity in its entirety. Therefore, we take a holistic view and believe that God calls the church to help others to grow in every dimension of their lives. We use the Five Marks of Mission as a way of focussing our work. The marks describe five different, but related, missional paths. They are:

- Witness to Christ's saving, forgiving and reconciling love for all people
- Build welcoming, transforming communities of faith
- Stand in solidarity with the poor and needy
- Challenge violence, injustice and oppression, and work for peace and reconciliation
- Protect, care for and renew life on our planet

Using these five marks as our guide, we help the Anglican Church and the wider community realise and respond to the invitation for all to be a part of God's hope for the world. ABM helps the Anglican Church of Australia to connect with partners around the world so that 'bonds of affection' become stronger and more tangible. Therefore, we work with Anglican Church partners and others to see lives empowered and transformed spiritually, materially and socially. We work hard to ensure that our relationships are based on mutual respect. Anything else falls short of what is a true partnership. In short, ABM's modality of mission is the building and maintaining of healthy and respectful partner relationships which are focussed around connecting missional engagement locally and globally.

In our booklet, *Some Suggested Guidelines for Successful Partnerships*, you can read about the ways in which ABM can help dioceses, parishes, schools and other Anglican entities to get the 'machinery of partnership' up and running.

Who are our Partners?

ABM's partnerships are often longstanding with the length of many of these relationships measured in decades. ABM relates to partners in a number of different ways:

Activity Partnerships are those where ABM and a partner work together on an activity. We have such arrangements with some of our Church Partners and all of our Development Partners. Activity Partnerships involve funding arrangements. Much of ABM's daily work revolves around Activity Partnerships. Our Development Partners are usually the development arm of particular Church Partners. Depending on their size, they can be a development desk or department within the Church, or a separately incorporated entity (in the same way that church agencies are separately incorporated from the church itself in Australia).

ABM's Church Partners
Church Activity Partnerships
The Anglican Church of Kenya
The Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM)
Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea
The Church of the Province of Central Africa – <i>where we work with the Zambia Anglican Council which governs the Anglican work in Zambia</i>
The Church of the Province of Myanmar (Burma)
The Episcopal Church in the Philippines
The Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East – <i>where in the Diocese of Egypt we work with the church itself and with the Episcopocare agency</i>

ABM's Development Partners
Development Activity Partnerships
ADS-Eastern, a branch of the Anglican Church of Kenya's Anglican Development Services
The Anglican Church of Melanesia's Board of Mission
Anglicare-PNG, a community development organization of the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea
The Zambia Anglican Council's Outreach Program
The Church of the Province of Myanmar's development desk, and the diocesan development desks
E-CARE, a community development organization of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines
The Diocese of Jerusalem's development desk. The Rev Roger Kay and Bishop Grant LeMarquand (Area Bishop for Ethiopia)
The Amity Foundation, China (an expression of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China)
TOPIK – the Towards Peace in Korea Initiative of the Anglican Church of Korea, the <i>Daehan Song Gong Hoe</i> .
VIMROD – the Visayas Mindanao Regional Office for Development of the <i>Iglesia Filipina Independiente</i> , the Philippines Independent Church.
The Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan's Health Commission, the Education Commission, and the Development and Relief Agency (SUDRA)

Some of ABM's Activity Partnerships are guided by an accord called a Partnership Agreement. This is the highest level of Activity Partnership framework. Other of ABM's Activity Partnerships are guided by a framework involving memorandums of understanding.

Relational Partnerships are those where ABM and a partner are bound together by mutual ties of affection, but there are no current joint activities. We have such arrangements with some of our Church Partners. We try to inform the Church in Australia about these Church Partners, encourage prayer for them and host visits when such Church Partners travel to Australia.

Church Relational Partnerships
The Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia
The Anglican Church of Hong Kong, the <i>Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui</i>
The Anglican Church of Japan, the <i>Nippon Sei Ko Kai</i>
The Anglican Church of Korea, the <i>Daehan Seong Gong Hoe</i>
The Church of Bangladesh
The Church of Ceylon
The Church of North India

The Church of Pakistan
The Church of South India
The Church of the Province of South East Asia (there are three dioceses in Malaysia and the Diocese of Singapore)
The Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan
The <i>Iglesia Filipina Independiente</i> , the Philippines Independent Church

Networking Partnerships have formed between ABM and other Anglican mission agencies, pan-Anglican organisations and ecumenical development agencies. Such partnerships can be those where ABM shares and gains knowledge from other partners (such as between ABM and other mission agencies). They can also be those where ABM and a partner share a mutual interest. For example, if ABM and another agency both work with the same Development Partner, it makes sense to work together to ensure that the engagement with the Development Partner is coordinated – so that time, effort and funds are neither duplicated nor wasted.

Networking Partnerships
Other overseas Anglican agencies
Episcopal Relief and Development (USA)
The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (Canada)
Us (UK and Ireland)
Pan-Anglican organizations
Anglican Alliance for Development, Relief and Advocacy
Anglican Witness – the Anglican Church Growth Initiative
CAPA, the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa
The Mothers' Union

Church Agencies' Network – <i>made up of those agencies which are both development agencies of Christian Church denominations in Australia (or of the National Council of Churches in Australia) and members of the Australian Council for International Development, ACFID</i>
Act for Peace (the National Council of Churches)
Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Australia
Anglican Overseas Aid
Australian Lutheran World Service
Caritas Australia (Catholic Church)
Global Mission Partners (Churches of Christ)
Quaker Service Australia
The Salvation Army
Transform Aid International (Baptist World Aid Australia)
UnitingWorld