

In Faith – Join Hands – Inspire Hope

With this motto the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund celebrates its 50th anniversary. Arising out of the Springhill N.S. mining disaster in 1958, the PWRDF was formally established by General Synod in 1959 for Canadian Anglicans to share God's abundant gifts in a world broken by unshared bread.

In Faith – Join Hands – Inspire Hope: This motto describes well the incredibly rich experience of my visit to Kenya on behalf of PWRDF. As a way of taking stock and planning for the future, PWRDF is meeting this year with its global partners in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Canada's North. I was part of the Africa roundtable in Kenya. Around the table sat nine partners from South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Burundi and Kenya together with staff from our national office, a Board representative, our Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, and I as a diocesan coordinator.

In faith we gathered and shared our kinship in God's family. We reflected on theological bases of our work in partnership. Bishop Pie Ntukamazina of Burundi spoke about the meeting between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. They meet as strangers; indeed, the woman, a Samaritan, expects to be treated with disdain. Instead, each give and receive life giving water. Charles and Sophia suggested the images light and salt of the earth as descriptive images of our partnership work: light as one of the essential conditions for life, and salt as the purifying and preserving agent. Archbishop Fred Hiltz put forward the image of the body of Christ, all members carrying out God's work, and He will perfect it.

We witnessed a vibrant church when we worshipped in two suburban churches. Each serves about 1000 attendants every Sunday, among them 300-400 youth! On our field trip to see several programs of the Christian Community Service, a partner of PWRDF, we saw how the Anglican Diocese of Mount Kenya serves the most vulnerable and marginalized people in a densely populated rural area of 3 million. I was particularly struck by the significant role of lay leaders and how their personal relationship with Christ is reflected and practiced in their relationships with one another.

We Joined Hands at the roundtable dialogue on the first three days and shared our experiences, expectations and challenges as we all try to work together as partners in the Primate's Fund. Listening was not always easy, understanding someone else's situational, historical and cultural context was even more challenging; yet struggling for work in partnership in what is not an equal power relationship is possible because of shared values and faith. "If one hurts, all hurt" in the body of Christ.

Inspire Hope: We may pray and trust that the work of PWRDF inspires hope. We certainly saw plenty of that: I am thinking of Ruth and Ruben and their three children whose lives are sustained from the produce grown on one quarter acre of land. Thanks to the introduction of dairy goats and selling some of the milk they make enough cash to replace their mud house with a "modern" house, join a water cooperative to connect to piped water, and cover educational expenses for the children.

Or the 20 women and 10 men who, after being abandoned by their families as PLWHAs (People living with HIV/AIDS), support each other, raise chickens and grow vegetables in "millennium

gardens”, thus regaining relative health; without essential nutrients, ARV drugs would kill rather than control AIDS related diseases.

Or marveling at Elizeta’s report of the micro-financing cooperative in Northern Mozambique with 3,000 women members. The repayment rate is 100%! One woman now employs 17 staff in her business. Others have formed a group farming chickens. The availability of eggs and meat has not only improved the local diet, but the chickens are also marketed to the capital, Maputu which previously imported them from Brazil.

But inspiring hope is not a one-way effect. Meeting Ruben and Ruth and Mercy and Damaris and seeing their determination and caring for one another certainly inspired hope in us: hope that through God’s grace the tiniest mustard seed offered by Canadian Anglicans through PWRDF as a token of sharing can grow into a mighty tree; hope that God will perfect our work; hope that we may be inspired and enabled to change our lifestyle so that it may be more reflective of knowing that everything we have is God’s. Hope also that we can be inspired by the Holy Spirit to become instruments of God’s justice and peace and joy.

Doris M’Timkulu
PWRDF Coordinator,
Anglican Church of Canada
Diocese of Niagara