

Beyond Colonial Anglicanism

– or –

Where are we going, and why are we in this handbasket?

The Rev. Marilyn Baldwin

May, 2007

St. John in the Wilderness

I. *Legacy of Colonialism in the Communion* (Douglas/Kwok)

- *“Old understandings of Anglican identity based on shared Anglo-American hegemony have broken down.”*

Hegemony = domination

- *1900: 77% of Christians lived in Europe*
- *2000: 37% “ “*
- ***2025: 71% will live in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Pacific***

1800-1950 Anglican Communion

- *Dominated by UK, US, Canada, Australia*
- *Mission linked to Western imperialism*
 - *Majority of Anglican churches were territories of Britain or the U.S.*
 - *Colonialism brought cultural as well as political imperialism*
 - *Western ideas of power, reason, church & cultural practices imposed on other nations/peoples*
 - ***Hierarchy***
 - ***White male domination***
 - ***Dualistic thinking (good/bad; us/them)***
 - ***Stereotyping of the Other***

1950 on: Colonialism disappearing

- *Postmodernism/post colonialism*
- *Transition from old (control) to new (unknown)*
- *“New world order:” clash of civilizations, not ideologies*
 - ***Jihad:** religious/tribal/fundamentalism*
 - vs.
 - ***McWorld:** global/consumerist/capitalism*

Churches in the Anglican Communion

- Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia · Australia · Bangladesh · Brazil · Burundi · Canada · Central Africa · Central America · Congo · England · Hong Kong · India, North · India, South · Indian Ocean · Ireland · Japan · Jerusalem and the Middle East · Kenya · Korea · Melanesia · Mexico · Myanmar · Nigeria · Pakistan · Papua New Guinea · Philippines · Rwanda · Scotland · South East Asia · Southern Africa · Southern Cone · Sudan · Tanzania · Uganda · USA · Wales · West Africa · West Indies — extra-provincial churches
- **Churches in full communion:** Mar Thoma Syrian Church · Old Catholic Church · Philippine Independent Church

Other cultures/peoples

...can (and must) often live with multiple ways of seeing the world

- Marginalized in many countries/cultures*
 - Indigenous peoples*
 - Women*
 - Other minorities*

Central Tenets of Anglicanism

“Embrace and celebration of apostolic catholicity within vernacular moments”

- ***Embrace:** God among us (incarnational) in all times and places*
- ***Celebration:** liturgical – praying together, translated into local culture, with inclusive language*
- ***Apostolic:** continuity with apostolic faith*
- ***Catholicity:** universal community through baptism*
- ***Vernacular:** Gospel translates into all times and places, for all people*

Anglicanism is changing

“Outgrowing its Englishness, but has not yet established its own identity as a multiracial, multilingual, multicultural family” – Charles H. Long

- *Living tradition, not memorial society of 18th/19th Century English churches*
- *New conservatism in the air:*
 - *Some want “confessionalism”*
 - *Some want central Anglican government*
 - *“new curialization” more like Rome*
- *Neither is considered true to Anglican roots*

New understandings of Anglican identity are needed...

...if we are to remain in communion with each other across cultures and nationalities

- Reclaim historic contextualization for future
 - *Time/place/culture**
- Recognize that the Church of England was originally a new context of Roman church for a specific time and place
 - **“Cultural hybrid” termed the *via media***
 - England in the 16th Century**
- Be open to more inclusivity, not less*

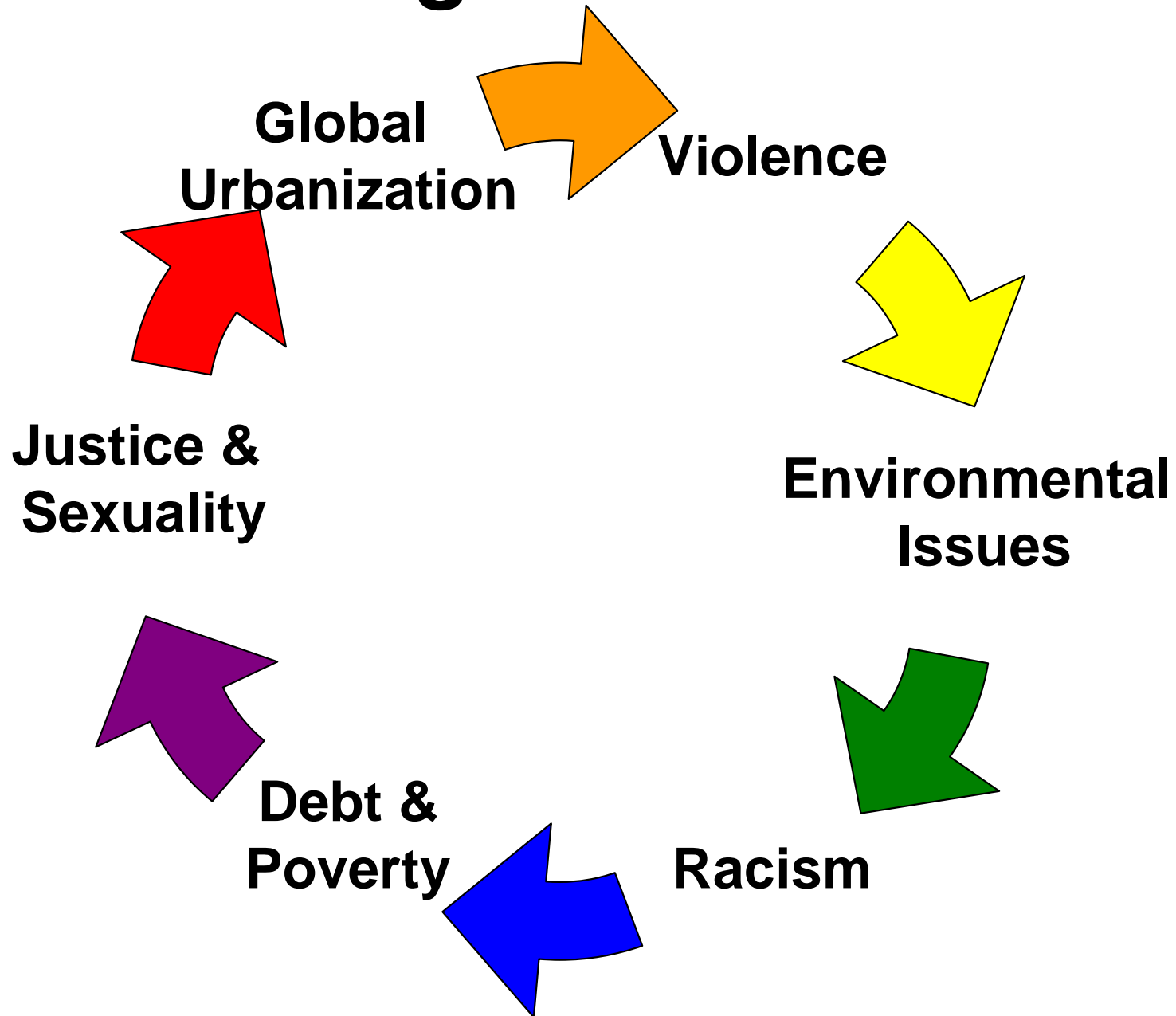
God is experienced in the “inbetweenness”:

- *Local and universal*
 - *Particular and catholic*
- *Not only our culture, not just our way*

***“It takes the whole world to know the whole
gospel.”***

-Max Warren

II. Challenges of the Present



Global issues

- Violence and the need for healing
- Racism
- Environmental issues
- Debt relief
- Justice and human sexuality
- Urbanization

5 Cultures of 2nd millennium:

1. Self-determination
2. Whiteness/Eurocentrism
3. Technology
4. Materialism
5. Dominance

5 Cultures of 2nd millennium:

1. Self-determination:

- Freedom for some, not all
- Primacy of individual over society/community (WIIFM)

2. Whiteness/Eurocentrism

- Exclusion of others
- Culture sustains its own power

3. Technology:

- Benefits: productivity, reduced labor, higher standard of living
- Costs: high unemployment, depleted resources, pollution
 - **Leaves unskilled further behind**

5 Cultures of 2nd millennium: *Continued....*

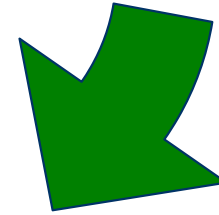
4. Materialism:

- Creates great wealth/great poverty
- “Theology of the bottom line”
 - Profits before people

5. Dominance:

- Those in charge/those ruled
- Related to missionary activity of earlier centuries

Environmental Crisis



- **Utilitarian values:**

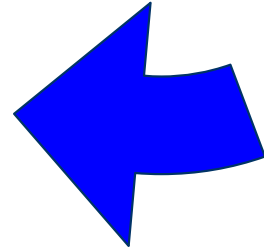
- Treating Creation as warehouse of inexhaustible resources for human consumption
- Distorts meaning and corrupts purpose of order
- Extreme: Supports domination of
 - Nature
 - Women
 - People of color
 - Indigenous peoples

Ecological Sin

- God's love manifest in the web of life
- Human destruction of the web causes estrangement from it
- Economic globalization = extension of colonialism in a new way
- Exchanging political for economic domination

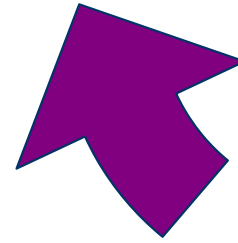


Racism



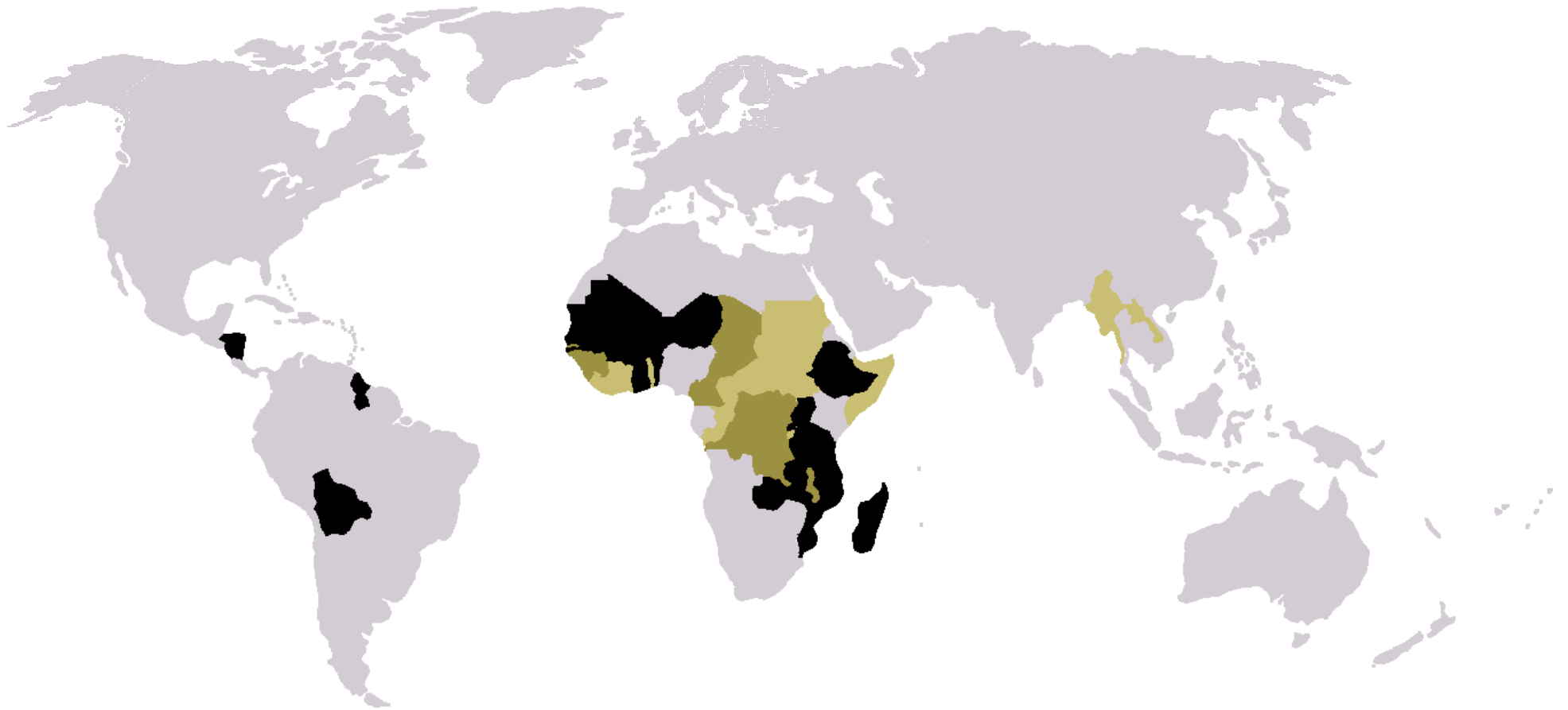
- “How easy it is to create a God in our own image”
- Prevailing culture/s contribute to its perpetuation

Debt Relief



- 40 countries worldwide spending 20-50% of export earnings on debt payment
 - Much of it services interest, not principal
 - Debt continues to grow, placing increasing burden on future
 - Low human development
 - **High infant mortality**
 - **Low school enrollment**
 - **Lowest life expectancy**
- Continued
Cycle of
Poverty**

HIPC COUNTRIES



Color Key:

Black: Countries which currently qualify for full HIPC relief.

Olive: Countries which currently qualify for partial HIPC relief.

Beige: Countries which are eligible for HIPC relief but have not yet met the necessary conditions. WIKIPEDIA

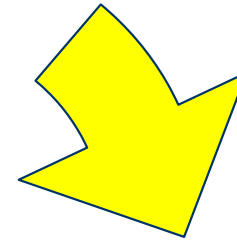
Global Economic Interconnectedness

- Transnationals bigger than many governments
 - Fed by greed, overconsumption by some, exploitation of others
- Technology driving competition up/prices down on commodities
 - Trade deficits up among poorest nations
- World Bank/IMF policies to poor nations make them choose between exports and food, education, medicine

Global Economic Interconnectedness *Continued*

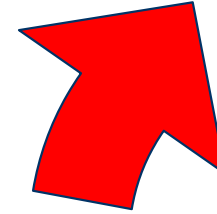
- Greater wealth for very few
- Greater poverty and exclusion by many
- Increased uncertainty for those in the middle
 - People commodified/jobs often outsourced
- Economic development thrown into reverse by debt = hopelessness – nothing left to lose
 - Increased incidence of war, fundamentalism, violence
 - New forms of oppression

Culture of Violence



- Identity vs. difference: Exclusion
 - Elimination: Get rid of those unlike us
 - Germany/Jews
 - Assimilation: Make them more like us
 - Dominance: Move subjugated to margins
 - Colonialism, apartheid
 - Abandonment: Ignore plight of marginalized
- Exclusion is always a power differential

Power and Sexuality in Church and Society



- Eurocentric/male dominant culture where racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism all thrive
 - Rejection/exclusion/ignoring those who don't fit
 - Complex web of oppression within church and society
 - Difficult to recognize/harder to change

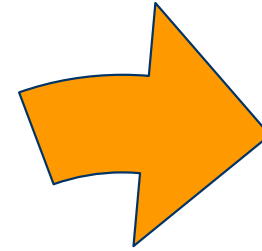
Power and Sexuality in Church and Society *continued*

- All are included in church by virtue of baptism
 - Justice requires all to be included in society
- Power/politics can be productive or destructive
 - “Tradition” – whose?
 - Need transformation, not just reform
- Discuss issues of sexuality in context of racial and gender justice

Global Urbanization

- 1950: 25% lived in towns & cities
 - 2000: 50% “
 - 2010: 75% will live in urban areas
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- 1/3 of all urban dwellers in developing world live in slums with no services
 - Highest birth rates/highest mortality
 - Leads to new conflicts, marginalization, pollution, fear, violation of the poor

Globalization



- Carries culture of dominating values
 - Commodification of resources
 - All, including people, available for a price
 - Efficiency
 - Productivity rather than innate value
 - Knowledge
 - Information, not innate wisdom
 - **Valued for what they can produce, not who they are**

III. Visions of the Future Church

- **Scripture and Authority**
- **Primacy of Baptism**
- **Leadership in a New World**
- **Postcolonial Revisioning**

Scripture and Authority in Anglicanism and Beyond

- Formal position: Scripture one source among several
 - Guide to life, not lawbook
- In practice: more weight given to Scripture
- Questions:
 - What constitutes/which scriptures?
 - What ethos for our contexts?
 - Power or liberation?
 - Who determines/how do we determine authority?
 - Which interpretation takes precedence?

Scriptural Interpretation

- Options:
 - Needs no interpretation – speaks for itself
 - Needs interpretation – 1 person/group can do it for all others
 - Should be interpreted widely in context of community
 - Many voices
 - Many experiences

Anglican Theology

- Derived from multiple sources, not just one
 - “Three-Legged Stool”
 - Scripture
 - Tradition
 - Reason
- Constantly reinterpreted in light of context and Spirit
 - Incarnational: God is with us here and now

Primacy of Baptism

- Multiple identities in all Christian churches
- Tension between control and liberation in changing world

Top down

-vs.-

Bottom up



- Authority for all Christians begins with Baptism

Authority

- Begins with God and the people God calls into Baptismal Covenant
 - Reaffirms/renews holy character of Creation
 - Shapes primary and continuing identity as Christians
 - Not to be taken for granted as 1-time initiation
 - Covenant to be lived into – lifelong
 - All Christians share identity through one Baptism
 - Christian, not Episcopalian/Lutheran/etc.
 - Overcomes all that alienates & divides us

Authority

- Recognizes and values relationships
 - Differences, otherness contribute to celebration of God's Creation
- Provides liturgical grounding for mission
 - More than worship, but worship important community event
- Authority comes from God, not humans
 - Calls for power-sharing relationships everywhere in church and society

Leadership in a New World

- Church and government:
 - Two institutions responsible for creating and sustaining marginalization of peoples
- Postcolonialism:
 - Seeks to identify and transform unjust structures and relationships

Shared Leadership

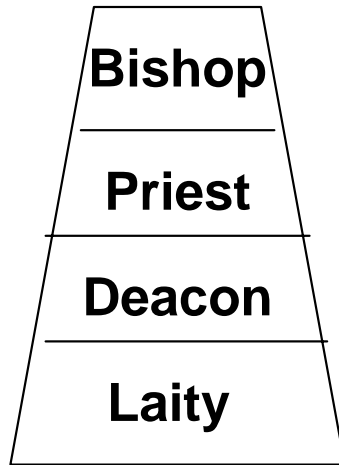
- Models generosity, not power
- Engages with humility, not avoiding issues
- Envisions a just future
 - Remembers the best of the past
 - Understands current realities

Shared Leadership

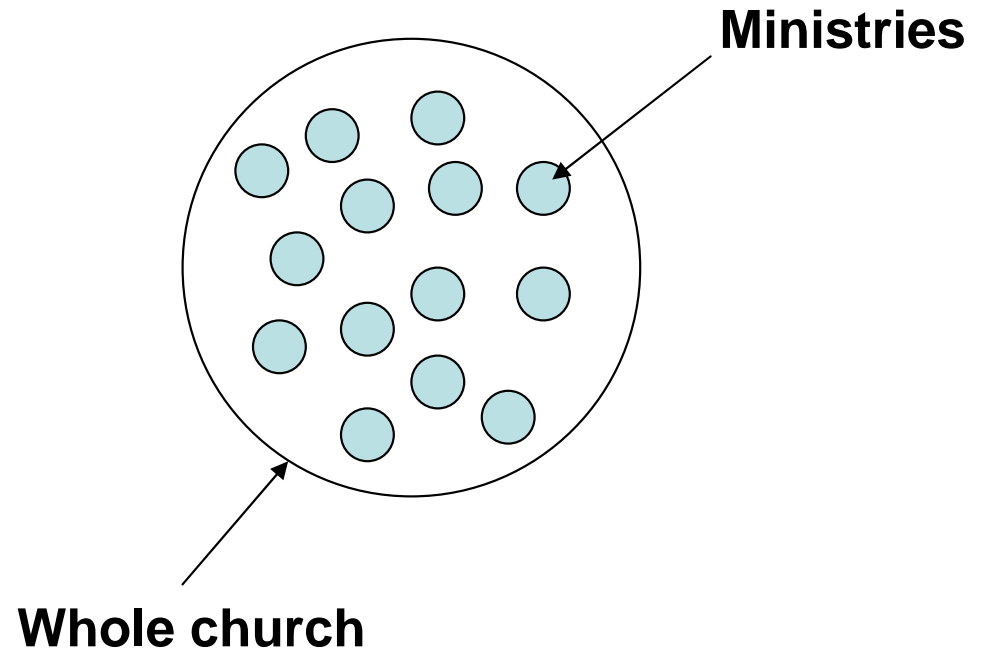
- Builds trust between ordained and laity
 - Ordained are not:
 - Hired servants
 - In power over
 - In charge/indispensable
 - Laity not lesser, but equal
- Must move away from non-transforming ministerial structures
 - All share servant ministries of the community

Leadership Models

Monarch/Chief



Shared



What Does it Mean to be Anglican...

- ...in areas that were not colonized by the English or Americans?
- ...when they don't speak English?
- ...when they don't use a form of the Book of Common Prayer?

WHERE IS THE SPIRIT LEADING?

Postcolonial Revisioning

- Decolonize imagination in Christian faith and worship
- Reconstruct world interchurch relationships
- Deconstruct monocentric power relationships
- Be aware of uncritical sharing of mindset of past
- Encourage/celebrate
 - Different logic, ways of seeing, imagining

Postcolonial Revisioning

Reject

- Either/or thinking
- Unity of sameness
- Primacy of eurocentric culture
- Unilateral power relationships

Encourage

- Both/and thinking
- Diversity/pluralism
- Local cultures and experiences
- Shared leadership

Where Do We Start?

- Reread the Gospel in a new light
 - It makes known God's transforming power
- Understand that "mission" is God's, not ours
 - Not geographical, but from within community
- Listen to the Spirit to understand what constrains and what liberates
- Do all we can to transform ourselves and our communities in this light

Bibliography

- Ian T. Douglas, Kwok Pui-Lan, ed. *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism*. New York; Church Publishing, 2001.
- *Wikipedia.com, database online, available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heavily_Indebted_Poor_Countries. Accessed 2/24/06.*