

*Intervention by Bishop Terry Brown, Bishop of Malaita, Church of the Province of Melanesia, in Hearing on Lambeth Reflections Draft, Lambeth Conference, July 30, 2008*

I was confirmed in The Episcopal Church, by a black bishop of Massachusetts.

I was made deacon and ordained a priest in the Anglican Church of Canada, in the diocese of Fredericton, a Loyalist diocese, by a bishop whose ancestors ran away from the American Revolution because they distrusted liberalism, political and otherwise.

I was consecrated a bishop in the Church of the Province of Melanesia, a global south diocese, where all the Millennium Development Goals score about 3 out of 10, even though we are great dancers.

And to make matters worse, my own sexuality is "dodgy".

I live in and am a part of all four worlds -- The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Church of Melanesia and the pained world of gay and lesbian laity, deacons, priests and bishops.

Yet I am a bishop of a diocese that is full of life and has had much growth. In my last 12 years as bishop, I have confirmed 10,000 candidates. The diocese is deeply involved in evangelism, education, medical work, liturgy and peace and reconciliation.

My life as a bishop in all four worlds is possible only because of my faith in Jesus Christ. I had a conversion experience in which I felt deeply loved by God. That, the Eucharist, the life of Christian friendship and community, and Scripture, have sustained me through thick and thin.

From my perspective, do I have any suggestions for the text of the final Reflection?

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you". There are many other competing kingdoms, do not bow to them.

As much as is in you, try to maintain communion and friendship with all, whether inside or outside the church, however deep the disagreement.

Reject the Puritan option. We are Anglicans, not Puritans.

Exercise restraint and urge others to do so, whether locally or globally. Not everything has to be said or written about.

Be very careful in using typologies to classify people, theologies and churches. We are all the children of God, redeemed, with all of creation, by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If you have not done so, accept all the gay and lesbian people in your midst, in all their complexity, pain and celebration.

Finally, let the conversations (even debate) continue. Television has finally come to the Solomon Islands, so we now have the privilege of seeing BBC interview both Gene Robinson and Greg Venables. In our case, I do not think the church will thereby collapse. But in other situations, that may not be the case, and the endless talking to the media of both may be destructive. That is my final suggestion -- remember that whatever you say publicly in this wired age, will go to every corner of the world. Honesty and prudence are *both* Christian virtues. We need to learn to balance them.

Thank you.