

## Reflection on the Indaba Process Used at the AFRECS Conference on October 21-22, 2016

The AFRECS conference was an important occurrence. I say that because our world, and indeed our nation is Balkanized, torn in the fabric, and dis-engaged from the other. It is manifested in our politics and the way in which fact-less aspersions are thrown around. It has become too easy to mudsling in our world.

The Indaba Process, engaging with the other in deep dialogue, is a critical way of seeing the Christ in the other. I wholeheartedly commend the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Rich Jones, and the work of the Rev. Canon Phil Groves, for having the foresight to engage the AFRECS discussion leaders and participants in the important work of Indaba, for the sake of the Gospel and peace in South Sudan.

I had the opportunity to facilitate two discussion groups, and found that participants were present and engaged in the work of God that was before them. There was a commitment and deep love for the country of South Sudan and its people, brothers and sisters who are in the midst of terrible turmoil. At the same time, we witnessed to the Christ in the other person. This is not to say that these were not hard conversations - because in fact they were difficult conversations - but the Indaba Process helped participants engage in a way that was constructive and I think, life-giving. I was particularly moved by members of the Sudanese diaspora. A portion of the narrative that has been shared about this prolonged conflict has been an intransigence around ethnicity. While there was some truth to that, there were moments of breakthrough, of recognizing the dignity of the other, before other identities came to the fore. That was clearly on display in our group, and it lifted up for me, the gift of intentional Indaba, one that was not predicated on wiping away conflict, but on engaging these difficulties with the eyes of Christ, with the eyes of seeing the Beloved in the other person.

The truth is that the issues that we all delved into at the AFRECS conference are incredibly complex, and the South Sudanese, are deeply invested in the outcome. As friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudans, we too, are invested in seeing this new country grow and flourish to the depths of its potential.

The question for me following the conference, then becomes, as Christians, as Episcopalians, how can we continue to hold up the dignity of the other and to see the face of Christ in the midst of incredible political turmoil?

How do we take this Indaba Process and move it forward?

With much respect,

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