

# Argyll & The Isles



## News and Views from around the Diocese

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### Zanzibar Anglican Cathedral and the Slave Trade

The Archbishop of Canterbury recently visited Zanzibar during his tour of Africa and the conferences dealing with the various issues confronting the Anglican Church today. I believe he went to Zanzibar partly to draw attention in a sermon in the Cathedral to the desperate need for the Cathedral to be restored. As many will know, Bishop Douglas Toto died in February 2006 and the speech of welcome was given by the Vicar General, an extract of which (sent by retired Bishop John Ramadhani) follows:

"We would like to ask Your Grace to help us in our appeal to the whole communion and all our well-wishers in the world to assist us in the restoration of this cathedral.

In the United Kingdom and in other developed countries, ancient Cathedrals are among the valued buildings which are taken care of by the state when they are in danger. Such understanding does not exist in other parts of the world, like Zanzibar, where Christians are in a small minority.

Of ourselves, we have insufficient resources to tackle the huge task of renovating our beloved cathedral as well as forging ahead with the work in hand . . .

Your Grace, we see our immediate task as the renovation of our Cathedral, lest it fall into total disrepair in our time. We appeal to you and to your office, as well as our sister churches, to join us in the immense task beyond our own capabilities.

May God bless your visit in Tanzania."

In this context, although very much retired, I thought it might be an idea to provide an update on the restoration position as far as I know it.

The survey carried out by Tom Gray in 2000 under the Twinning programme with Argyll & The Isles Diocese, with its approximate price tag of £500k, is still awaiting a catalyst to take the restoration further. A copy of this report has been supplied to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who advises that he is considering in what way he could best be of help.

In discussion it has been realised that the best chance of success might lie in the setting up of a UK style Cathedral Workshop in the grounds. The aim would be to train artisans to carry out the work and a local director to take over, thus ensuring an ongoing maintenance programme after the Restoration was complete and a training programme for more artisans. The supply of trained artisans would thus provide a resource to aid the local economy and, more particularly, as skilled conservationists, to work on the Stone Town Restoration programme. (Stone Town is a World Heritage Site Designate and work has been being progressed for several years but always needs more input).

One way forward could be firstly to seek a Director from a UK Cathedral Workshop, who was either nearing retirement, or otherwise wishing to undertake such a two year project, to set up and manage a Workshop in Zanzibar. Secondly, as part of their Overseas Mission, UK Cathedrals might be encouraged under an exchange scheme, to supply a qualified or experienced craftsman on perhaps a six month rota basis to train the local artisans. A small team of such craftsmen could provide a valuable contribution to the project. Trainee artisans from Zanzibar might gain further experience by working for a short time in a UK Cathedral Workshop.

The bottom line is of course the funding of the whole project and its financial management. Provided they are supplied with a researched, formal project proposal, there exists a number of potentially major sources of finance. The creation of the project proposal is however the key to progress.

I have made contact with a Charitable Organisation called Christian Engineers in Development. They have a great deal of experience of small scale development projects worldwide. At present they are completing a project with the Anglican Church to supply water for 9,000 people in Southern Tanzania. The Directors have seen the 2000 report and are currently considering how best a project might be implemented. A small step in the whole scheme of things, but fundamental to any further progress of the project.

Regarding the Slave Trade, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York also narrated a short video clip on the slave trade relics at the Cathedral – which was built on the site of the slave market, the altar being constructed on the whipping post. The clip is well worth viewing and can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBTErUDlcz8>

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