

Reflection for Tuesday 21st April 2020

The word **Harambee** may have varying meanings, but I am thinking of the Swahili, for 'working together in harmony'. This was the interpretation of the word by **Bishop Wilfred Wood**, the first black bishop of The Church of England, who was Bishop of Croydon from 1985 to 2003. I have been reading his book '**Keep the Faith Baby!**' (1st edition 1994 ISBN 0 7459 2965 6).

We can think of harmony as being in unison, holding hands together, being on the 'same page'. Or we can think of harmony as in a choir or an orchestra where the voices or the instruments listen to each other and respond together or separately in time and in tune with each other.

The Apostle Paul wrote in **Romans chapter 12** some words on love, which are the foundation to any working together, or living together in harmony, or being willing to honour and respect others who are different in their cultural or their credal backgrounds or who have no particular faith.



“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep our spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer..... Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink..... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”.

Pulling together is essential for those in a boat, canoeing, paddling, rowing or sculling. There is a rhythm and training that is essential, which requires everyone physically, emotionally and intellectually to be going in the same direction in harmony with each other. Nowadays mathematics, science, psychology and many other disciplines as well as physical fitness are also pulled together to achieve the most successful team...the balance needs to be as right as it can be. Looking at these rocks gives a picture of that – one out of line, putting undue pressures on the others and.....

Pulling together



balance....



A poem, which Bishop Wilfred Wood includes on p 18 of the book I've mentioned, has implications for us, whether we look back to New Testament writings, or fast forward to these days of Coronavirus. The importance of this meaning of **Harambee** is timeless:

**It's easy to sit in your carriage and counsel the man on foot.
But dismount and walk and you'll change your talk,
as you feel the nail in your boot.**

**It's easy to tell the poor man, how he should carry his pack,
but how can you rate the burden's weight,
unless it's been on your back?**

Jesus said, as recorded in **John 11: 28 – 30**:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”.

When we are Jesus's hands and feet on earth, with that word '**Harambee**', working together for harmony, then we share the load and hold each other up in love.

May God bless and strengthen you, as you support each other: Revd Gerry