



UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

"The unexamined faith is probably not worth believing."

**A monthly forum on the third *Saturday* of each month from 6:30 to 7:30 P.M.
following Evening Prayer at 6;
forums are usually with Canon Richard T. Nolan.**

retired philosophy & religion professor, editor of www.philosophy-religion.org

***TOPIC: "WHAT MEANING DOES THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE HAVE
FOR US ORDINARY CHURCHGOERS?"***

The Lambeth Conference (July 16 - August 3, 2008) takes place every ten years at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is the one occasion when all bishops of the global Anglican Communion meet for worship, study and conversation. This year some bishops boycotted Lambeth over issues of authority, biblical interpretation, sexual ethics, and the growing roles of women in some of the Anglican Churches.

Bishop Gene Robinson was not invited, nor were a few other bishops. However, Bishop Robinson was accessible to everyone during the Conference. At our St. Andrew's forum we will learn what he accomplished and whether there is any growing clarity, especially on matters of sexuality and gender. And - we shall explore whether it makes any difference to us.

A Prayer To Be Said In Unison

Almighty God, who has committed to your holy Church the care and nurture of all the faithful; Enlighten with your wisdom those who teach and those who learn, that, rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, they may worship and serve you from generation to generation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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I. THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

WHAT IS THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION?

The Anglican Communion, of which the Episcopal Church in the United States is one of 44 regional and national member churches around the globe in over 160 countries, is (especially in Western regions) committed to pastoral care as well as sound academic research and scholarship. As such, *traditional* Anglicans embrace the creative tensions between members who prefer that the Church remain unchanged and those who, as the result of thorough study, propose revisions. On the one hand, if we were unchangeable, we would eliminate ongoing clarifications, new information, and inspired insights derived from our ongoing corporate experience. On the other hand, if we were to uphold every new well-conceived proposal, we would lack stability and leap from one view to another.

Regions (such as, most of Africa and the so-called “Global South”) were evangelized by very conservative missionaries of the Church of England; converts were not informed about modern methods of biblical studies and the legitimate pluralism in Anglicanism from its inception. This neglect of tradition created millions of Anglican Christians who continue to embrace a fundamentalist-like understanding of the heritage. Moreover, in many (perhaps most) of those cultures, engrained values continue to limit seriously most evolving studies in ethical issues now illuminated by the sciences.

There is no ecclesiastical body called the “Anglican Church.” Instead, the notion of “bonds of affection” interrelates the autonomous Churches - while they hold the Archbishop of Canterbury in common as the honorary spiritual leader.

As an illustration of autonomy, when individuals are ordained as deacons, priests, and bishops in the Episcopal Church in the United States, no reference is made to the Anglican Communion or the Archbishop of Canterbury – who has no jurisdictional or canonical authority beyond the Church of England – itself one of the “provinces” as the regional/churches have unfortunately been called in recent decades. It is “unfortunate,” because “province” wrongly suggests to many people that there is an actual institutional relationship to other Anglican Churches.

Upholding the centrality of Scripture and honoring tradition, the “Anglican Way” is to reason carefully, proceed cautiously and prayerfully, and agree to differ - within doctrinal and moral boundaries. *Our fundamental unity is experienced in our common Baptism and corporate acts of worship, particularly the Holy Eucharist.* We believe that this model of unity has profound implications for Christian Unity in general.

Among today's controversial issues within (and beyond) the Anglican Communion are: the doctrinal and moral boundaries of the Faith; the ministry and person of Jesus Christ; whether certain biblical passages are to be understood literally or metaphorically; whether certain teachings (such as the Trinity) need reformulation; the authority and roles of ordained and lay people; ethical issues in medicine, sexuality, and the workplace; and, the stewardship of our financial and environmental resources.

Official website www.anglicancommunion.org

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Anglicanism/Articles

Encarta: http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761579285/Anglican_Communion.html

For London Times online coverage, see

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/system/topicRoot/Lambeth_Conference_2008/

LAMBETH: AN IRISH VIEW Tuesday, 12 August 2008

The *Church of Ireland Gazette* has an editorial in its issue of 15 August, which is titled “Anglican Governance.”

It concludes with this:

“... It is also important to emphasize that the Anglican Communion is not, as Dr Williams did at least suggest in his statement, a Church. It is a communion of autonomous Churches. If the Lambeth Conference were empowered to speak for the Anglican Communion as a whole, it would have been astounding that, at its recent two and a half week meeting - at a cost of some £5m - it did not issue any resolution and was reportedly boycotted by between one-fifth and one-quarter of its members.

“However, as a conference, it is appropriate not to have resolutions, and members of a conference are free to attend or not to attend or to ‘boycott’, as they wish. If one has a role in governance, however, one does not have that choice.

“Certain current proposals in the Anglican Communion would tend to lead towards a ‘global Church’ model. However, any such proposals will need to be the subject of very careful consideration and scrutiny, and cognisance will need to be taken of the fact that, according to our Preamble and Declaration, the General Synod is the chief legislative and administrative body in the Church of Ireland (BCP, p.777, Section IV). It should remain so.

LAMBETH DIGEST, DAY 3 EPISCOPAL LIFE ONLINE

Canon Richard T. Nolan • West Palm Beach, Florida

Retired Uganda Bishop Christopher Senyonjo's reference to the episcopate as "the highest order" of ministry is highly questionable. By our common baptism, we are members of the "highest order" of ministry, although I am uneasy about ranking orders of ministry. I do hope that as the Lambeth Conference discusses the episcopate, the bishops will reduce, even eliminate an elitist understanding of the Episcopal order and affirm an equal regard for the ministries of the laity, deacons, priests, and bishops. A hierarchical polity too often exaggerates the role of one order over the others.

TIME TO RETIRE THE NOMENCLATURE OF CHURCHES AS PROVINCES 8/03/2008

Mark Harris - Episcopal Priest, Diocese of Delaware; Canon, The Episcopal Church in the Philippines; D. Min., EDS; Member: Executive Council (2006-2012); General Convention's House of Deputies (2003, 06, 09); blog <http://anglicanfuture.blogspot.com/>

The definition of the Anglican Communion, dating from the 1930's is that it is "a Fellowship within the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted Dioceses, Provinces, and regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer." (The form used here is that found in the Constitution of the Episcopal Church.)

The whole business of using the word "provinces" is increasingly problematic. The word implies that there is a larger something - a nation, a church, a social grouping - that is the reality and that there are subsections of that exist here and there with approval of the whole. The idea is that Provinces exist at the pleasure of the whole and that they are under the authority of the whole. It is an matter of governance.

Until fairly recently this is not the way that Anglican national and regional churches thought of themselves. Churches that grew from other churches and took up a life of their own, separate from their "mother" church did so with full autonomy not as subgroups of the larger entity, but as full independent churches. Their inclusion in wider Anglican Communion life was really defined by invitation to Lambeth and recognition by the Archbishop of Canterbury as churches with which the Church of England was in communion.

The notion that a new province might apply for inclusion in the life of one of the "instruments of communion," namely the Anglican Consultative Council, and by that be somehow "approved" as a member of other Anglican bodies - the Primates Meeting, the invitation list to Lambeth, etc, is all a post World War II phenomena closely aligned with the rapid expansion of Provinces as the colonial period was coming to a close.

But now, regrettably, the notion of Province has become all important. The Anglican Communion has come to mean that world wide conglomeration of decision makers who determine if a Province is in or out of the Communion. That is, the Anglican Communion has come to assume that being a Province is more important than being a national or regional church in an autonomous relation with the See of Canterbury.

This is a mess and likely to get messier. So in the interest of clarity, I would like to propose that we drop the use of the word "Province" and use some other phrase, the easiest being "autonomous national or regional churches." Using either, the definition of the Anglican Communion would read,

"...a Fellowship within the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted Dioceses, and autonomous national or regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer."

On that criteria the Archbishop of Canterbury's list is the working list of the Anglican Communion. Churches make some effort to convince him that this or that church ought not be part of the Communion, or

use the ploy that a particular church might break communion with Canterbury if he did not break with someone else. They might even suggest that the Anglican Communion defined this way was simply unbearably colonial, giving the list over to some white guy appointed by the Crown, etc. But so long as that definition held the matter would be simple. If you are in Communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury you are in. If you are not you are not.

More, there would be no shame in not being in communion with the ABC. There might be regret, but that's a different matter. This is because the beginning premise is that the churches are indeed autonomous and the Communion is not a Church of which the Provinces are members.

I have read what the Archbishop said today in his closing Presidential Address. He made a plea for catholicity in pushing for a communion wide covenant, display of restraint, etc. I think he is profoundly mistaken. It is not catholicity that he is arguing for, it is the sense that the churches of the Anglican Communion first think of themselves as part of the whole, and not as autonomous churches. The ABC understands exactly what a Province is. It is a part of a whole whose life is greater than the parts. In a broken Christendom, catholicity is defined otherwise than by inclusion in a world wide church itself out of communion with the big three - Rome, Constantinople and Geneva.

So let's correct our misuse of the word. It is a word of governance, one which got misapplied to the churches of the Anglican Communion and continues a patriarchal model that fits no one well.

Let it go. We are not a Province of anything. We are a church in communion with the see of Canterbury and hope to remain so. If either of us chooses not to be it will be part of the broken pot of Christianity, or perhaps a sign of the limp of Jacob Israel. But for God's sake and the sake of the Gospel, let's stop worrying about what happens if we are not bound by subservient relationship as a province, conquered or otherwise. There is no reason for us to be instruments of our own oppression, or of others.

POLICY FORMATION IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH/USA

Major policies for the Episcopal Church/USA are formed by the triennial General Convention. In many other Churches of the Anglican Communion, only the Archbishops/Bishops develops policy.

“The national legislative body of the Episcopal Church. It consists of a House of Bishops, which includes all active and retired bishops, and a House of Deputies, which includes four lay persons and four clergy from each diocese, each area mission, and the Convocation of the American Churches in Europe. The Convention meets every three years. The Houses meet and act separately, and both must concur to adopt legislation. The General Convention alone has authority to amend the Prayer Book and the church's Constitution, to amend the canons (laws) of the church, and to determine the program and budget of the General Convention, including the missionary, educational, and social programs it authorizes. A majority of bishops may request the Presiding Bishop to call a Special General Convention. Special General Conventions met in 1821 and in 1969. The General Convention elects twenty of the forty members of the Executive Council, which administers policy and program between the triennial meetings of the General Convention.”

http://www.dfms.org/19625_14403_ENG_HTM.htm

THE HISTORY OF THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE

by Christopher L. Webber

From Times Online July 11, 2008

For 140 years, the bishops of the Anglican Communion have come together every ten years or so and for most of that time the gathering has been the only visible evidence of the unity of the Communion. This summer it will provide evidence as well of disunity; as many as a quarter of the bishops have declined their invitations from the archbishop of Canterbury, refusing to sit down with other bishops whose theology they have condemned.

When the first invitations were sent out, in 1867, it was the pious hope of the archbishop of Canterbury that nothing like that would happen. He had yielded reluctantly to pleas from the Canadian Church which was concerned by recent decisions of the Privy Council and felt a need to clarify their status. But archbishop Longley wanted it understood, "That at this meeting no declaration of faith shall be made, and no decision come to which shall affect generally the interests of the Church, but that we shall meet together for brotherly counsel and encouragement.”

In the event, a bare majority (76 of 144) bishops came to meet with archbishop Longley, in Lambeth Palace. Even the archbishop of York stayed home, doubtful of the value of such a gathering. Archbishop Gray of South Africa attempted to rattle the tea cups with a request that the conference affirm his deposition of the Bishop of Natal, John Williams Colenso, whose free-thinking ways had led Gray to attempt to replace him with someone more orthodox. The Conference in its wisdom referred the matter to a committee and went home after three and a half days without waiting for the committee to report back.

But the bishops had enjoyed their meeting and met again eleven years later, still with a limited agenda. By 1888, however, they were beginning to feel that they should use the opportunity to come to a common mind on significant issues. They endorsed a recent statement of the American Episcopal Church setting forth four essential elements in any ecumenical relationships: Bible, Creeds, Sacraments, and Bishops.

This “Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral” remains a central definition of Anglican identity. The bishops also responded negatively to questions from missionaries in Africa about the possibility of baptizing polygamists. The wives might be baptized, said the bishops, if the local community would accept it, but not the husband. It was the first significant statement they had made about sexual issues and, like many of the others, would eventually, one hundred years later, be reversed.

With the twentieth century, issues of marriage and family life were concerning the bishops.

They deplored the growing “disregard of the sanctity of marriage” and agreed that those who were divorced could not be remarried in the church. Birth control, abortion, and the opium trade were also condemned.

Although the 1908 conference had rejoiced in the “increasing willingness to settle difficulties among nations by peaceful methods” the next gathering had to be postponed because of World War I. In 1920 the bishops continued to condemn birth control and linked it with prostitution, calling on governments to end “the open or secret sale of contraceptives, and the continued existence of brothels.” They agreed that women (who had just been given the right to vote in Great Britain and the United States) could be admitted to any office in which a layman might serve. Nevertheless, it was nearly fifty years before the American Episcopal Church agreed that women might serve on vestries and be elected as deputies to its General Convention. Lambeth conferences can pass resolutions but the separate national churches are free to disregard them.

The 1940 conference was postponed because of the Second World War and the first post-war conference, in 1948, broke no new ground. In 1958 the bishops took a positive look at marriage in a statement that said marriage is a “vocation to holiness” and the idea of the family is “rooted in the Godhead.” “Consequently, the bishops agreed, “all problems of sex relations, the procreation of children, and the organisation of family life must be related, consciously and directly, to the creative, redemptive, and sanctifying power of God.” Family planning, they now believed, is “a right and important factor in Christian family life,” which meant either that they had been wrong in 1920 or that the times had changed; perhaps both were true. They were not ready to think about ordaining women but resolved, paternally, that “fuller use should be made of trained and qualified women, and that spheres of progressive responsibility and greater security should be planned for them.”

When the bishops gathered in 1968 they found that the pope had condemned birth control and took the occasion to suggest that the pope was mistaken. That meant, of course, that they had been mistaken themselves 48 years earlier, but Anglican bishops have the right to be wrong and to reverse themselves if need be.

The 1978 conference, unable to reach a common mind on the ordination of women which had already taken place in several places, pleaded for “patience and sensitivity.” They also called for “for deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality, which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research.” But the Lambeth conference cannot compel the churches to act and the lack of “deep and dispassionate study” of sexual issues, combined with a rapidly increasing representation from conservative third world churches led to increasingly angry debate and a resolution at the 1998 conference that they could not “advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions.” They called for a “Listening Process,” but some churches moved ahead anyway while others, refusing to listen, began to come together in opposition to any change.

The 2008 Lambeth conference comes less than two months after a gathering of over 200 Anglican bishops in Jordan and Jerusalem, many of whom will not be at Lambeth on principle. Not since the first

conference have so many refused to attend and, once again, the archbishop of Canterbury is hoping that resolutions can be avoided. The Book of Revelation tells us that the faithful will be united hereafter in worship; lacking central authority or a doctrinal statement, the churches of the Anglican Communion have attempted to make that vision a present reality. Whether the Anglican bishops have sufficient faith and love to accomplish that remains to be seen.

— Christopher L. Webber is a priest of the American Episcopal Church currently serving in the Diocese of Connecticut. He is the author of numerous books including *Give Us Grace; an Anthology of Anglican Prayer and Beyond Beowulf, a modern sequel to the Anglo-Saxon saga.*

II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE 2008

OFFICIAL DIGESTS OF LAMBETH OUTCOMES are available at
<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/temp/Lambethspdigestedsproundspup.pdf>
<http://www.lambethconference.org/reflections/document.cfm>

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LAMBETH 2008

CONTENTS OF THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN INSERTS FOR AUGUST 17 and 24, 2008 –
 provided by The Episcopal Church at http://www.dfms.org/95270_ENG_HTM.htm

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, in his August 3 final presidential address to the Lambeth Conference 2008, appealed to bishops to make a prophetic choice and embrace a “covenantal commitment [with] ... the potential to make us more of a church.”

Such a global church “understands its ministry and service and sacraments as united and inter-dependent throughout the world. The global horizon of the church matters because churches without this are always in danger of slowly surrendering to the culture around them and losing sight of their calling to challenge that culture,” he said.

On the last afternoon of the every-decade gathering, bishops met in a final plenary session where each received a copy of reflections compiled from the conference indaba group discussions.

At a news conference afterwards, Williams said the communion “longs to stay together,” but told reporters that continued blessing of same-sex unions would further imperil already-strained relationships.

Indaba groups also pleaded “for continuing moratoria” on the blessing of same-sex unions and ordination of partnered gay bishops, as well as unwelcome incursions from outside bishops, Williams said.

A covenant is “emphatically not about forcing others to conform,” Williams said. He told reporters he hoped to finalize the text within the next 12 months and to gain provincial approval as soon as possible.

Williams said, “We have not overcome our problems or reinvented our structures.” He outlined as future goals the creation of a pastoral forum to support those with minority viewpoints and an examination of how the Instruments of Communion will best work, prior to the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in May 2009.

He told reporters he plans to send a pastoral letter to the Anglican Communion, soliciting feedback from bishops who boycotted the conference and those who attended the July 22-29 Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON).

“Much in the GAFCON documents is consonant with much of what we have sought to say and do and we need to look for the best ways of building bridges here,” he said.

He will also include the perspectives of the “various groups looking at the Covenant and the Windsor process, as well as the design group for this conference,” he said. Their efforts will help inform a special meeting in November of the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates and the ACC.

“We may not have put an end to all our problems — but the pieces are on the board,” he said. He outlined other goals, including creation of a “pastoral forum to support minorities, a strong consensus on the need to examine how the Instruments of Communion will best work, and a recognition — though still with many questions — that a covenant is needed.”

A STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE:

Many bishops came to this gathering in fear and trembling, expecting either a distasteful encounter between those of vastly different opinions, or the cold shoulder from those who disagree. The overwhelming reality has been just the opposite. We have prayed, cried, learned, and laughed together, and discovered something deeper about the body of Christ. We know more of the deeply faithful ministry of those in vastly differing contexts, and we have heard repeatedly of the life and death matters confronting vast swaths of the Communion: hunger, disease, lack of education and employment, climate change, war and violence. We have remembered that together we may be the largest network on the planet — able to respond to those life and death issues if we tend to the links, connections, and bonds between us. We have not resolved the differences among us, but have seen the deep need to maintain relationships, even in the face of significant disagreement and discomfort. The Anglican Communion is suffering the birth pangs of something new, which none of us can yet fully appreciate or understand, yet we know that the Spirit continues to work in our midst. At the same time patience is being urged from many quarters, that all may more fully know the leading of the Spirit. God is faithful. May we be faithful as well.

As the 2008 Lambeth Conference drew to a close in early August, did the every-decade gathering of bishops from across the Anglican Communion deliver as promised? Do bishops feel better equipped for leadership in mission?

From July 16 to August 3, days began and ended in worship. The conference started with two and a-half days of retreat led by Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams in Canterbury Cathedral. Then, there were two weeks of themed sessions on such topics as evangelism, social justice, the environment, interfaith and ecumenical relations, Scripture and human sexuality. A papal envoy and an American evangelist led evening plenary sessions. Williams opened and closed the meeting with presidential addresses. There were also daily Bible study and “indaba” discussion groups, a joint session with spouses on abuse of power and even a little social activism, with a ‘walk of witness’ in London against poverty. There was the traditional tea with the monarch at Buckingham Palace.

From Angola to New York, Melanesia to Maryland, Colombia to the Philippines, a diversity of bishops said the regular rhythm of Bible study, prayer, and indaba discussion groups created community, enriched their lives and broadened their ministries.

Bishop Daniel Sarfo of Kumasi, Ghana said he wasn't the least bit surprised by the reactions because indaba is a tool “used in all of Africa. If anything happens in a family, the heads of the family will call the people together to ask the family how to resolve” the situation.

For Bishop Andre Soares of Angola, the Bible studies, “were very important, to share our difficulties and our hopes.”

‘Equal partners’ in cross-cultural ministry

Bishop Prince Singh of Rochester, N.Y. said the conference equipped bishops in organic ways, paving the way for future shared ministries.

Singh, a human rights advocate for the Dalit, the outcast in India, said for some developing nations “the issues of poverty and HIV/AIDS are huge. Survival is one suction pump, which takes a lot of your energy.

On top of that there's the environment — the poor are left out in so many ways. The hope is we can be engaged in helping redeem some of that.” He said he made connections with bishops about possible future relationships.

Bishop Henry Parsley of Alabama likened the conference to a “cheese soufflé — it's cooking away and whether it rises or not, well, we'll just have to see, but it'll be good.”

Lambeth 2008 was “clearly a conference centered in conversation, mutual encouragement and resourcing for our ministries. I have a deeper understanding of different bishops and their churches, which vary enormously. We're one in so many ways but we're also a communion of difference, which is beautiful.”

A 'wider' church

Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves of El Camino Real in northern California said “one of the identity pieces of being a bishop is you represent your local church to the wider church and vice versa. I definitely feel more equipped to represent the wider church.”

Of Lambeth she said: “It's been an exercise to try and speak of our context [about] what's happening in The Episcopal Church. I definitely feel more seasoned.”

Gray-Reeves, who was consecrated in November 2007, says she's really thankful for "the tremendous gift to get to begin my episcopacy by attending the Lambeth Conference as part of the process."

An essential part of the conference, according to Bishop Francisco Duque-Gomez of Colombia, speaking through an interpreter, "is to get to know all the cultures of the Anglican Communion and to know that there are brothers and sisters in territories in far away places, praying for us and doing evangelistic work as we do it."

WHAT THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE ACCOMPLISHED

by Steve Waring, *The Living Church* posted on: August 3, 2008

<http://www.livingchurch.org/news/news-updates/2008/8/3/what-the-lambeth-conference-accomplished>

The Lambeth Conference accomplished some very important work, but in the closing press conference on Aug. 3, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams said if the North American churches do not accept the need for a moratorium on same-sex blessings and the consecration of additional partnered gay bishops, then the Anglican Communion is no further forward.

Archbishop Williams listed three accomplishments for the 20-day Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops in Canterbury, England:

1. Bishops proved they could speak to each other respectfully and prayerfully.
2. They expressed a strong commitment to remain unified.
3. The Millennium Development Goals demonstration in London on July 24 proved that even "in its current rather wobbly state," the Anglican Communion was capable of accomplishing significant action and witness.

On the other hand, the idea of moratorium was apparently not taken seriously by many bishops from The Episcopal Church. Bishops Jon Bruno of Los Angeles and Marc Andrus of California already have said they would not attempt to stop the blessing of gay relationships in their dioceses, and in the Diocese of Massachusetts on Aug. 2, two priests participated in civil same-sex marriages for two couples inside Episcopal churches.

"The current policy, well, I wouldn't say policy of the American church, but some of the practices of dioceses, or certain dioceses, in the American church continues to put our relations as a Communion under strain and some problems won't be resolved while those practices continue," Archbishop Williams said. "I might just add, perhaps a note here. One complication in discussing all this is that assumption, readily made, that the blessing of a same-sex union and/or the ordination of someone in an active same-sex relationship is simply a matter of human rights ... That's an assumption I can't accept because I think the issues about what conditions the church lays down for the blessing of unions has to be shaped by its own thinking, its own praying."

Archbishop Williams was asked what was meant by the Windsor Continuation Group's recommendation for a moratorium on public rites for same-sex blessings. Different parts of the world define public rites of blessing in different ways, adding to the confusion, according to Archbishop Williams. A primates' communiqué following a meeting in Brazil in 2003 noted that in some places private prayers were said, but that was not intended to include public liturgies.

"There are those in the U.S.A. who would say 'pastoral response.' Well, it's a blessing and I'm not very happy about that," he said.

Innovations to church teaching on homosexuality in North America caused roughly 280 of the 880 invited bishops of the Anglican Communion to boycott the Lambeth Conference. According to registration information provided to *The Living Church* and *Church of England Newspaper*, the total number of Anglican bishops who pre-registered was only 617, and not all of them were present. The two largest provinces – Nigeria and Uganda – did not send any bishops. There was one bishop registered from Rwanda and five from Kenya. Conference organizers included all of the ecumenical bishops in attendance to arrive at the total of 670 present when registration closed on July 21.

Many of the bishops who were absent and a number who did attend the Lambeth Conference attended the Global Anglican Fellowship Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem in June. GAFCON and the absence of more than 30 percent of the bishops of the Communion were frequently mentioned during the conference. The

absence of so many bishops from the Global South increased the proportional representation of bishops from The Episcopal Church to nearly a quarter of the overall total.

For various reasons the conference will probably run a deficit of at least \$2 million. A document titled “Lambeth Conference Finances” dated January 2008 estimated that the bishops’ conference would cost about \$9 million with the spouses’ conference adding another \$2.5 million. The document notes that more than 40 percent of conference participants would require some sort of financial assistance in order to pay the \$8,000 conference fee. During the closing press conference Archbishop Williams said conference organizers were studying various ways to cover the probable shortfall.

“We knew this would be difficult,” he said. “I don’t think I can go into details because I don’t have direct management of the question ... I’m rather concerned about that.”

III. VARIOUS COMMENTARIES

THE COLLAPSE OF ANGLICANISM

Albert Mohler

In addition to being one of Salem’s nationally syndicated radio talk show hosts, R. Albert Mohler, Jr. is the president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Tuesday, August 12, 2008

In the aftermath of the most recent Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church, Albert Mohler interviewed Rev. Canon George Conger. He is an Episcopalian Priest with the Diocese of Central Florida and the Chief Correspondent of “The Church of England Newspaper.”

Albert Mohler: Every 10 years the bishops of the Anglican Communion gather for what is known as the Lambeth Conference named for the palace across the Thames River from Central London which is the traditional and historic home of the Archbishop of Canterbury who is the leader of the Anglican movement worldwide. The Archbishop of Canterbury is now Rowan Williams. As the bishops gathered, there was much controversy that had been boiling for some years, but the focus of the controversy is the issue of local authority. The specific exploding point here—or the fuse on this bomb—is the issue of human sexuality and homosexuality, and the catalyst for all of this was what happened five years ago.

Five years ago in Minneapolis, the Episcopal Church, U.S. confirmed Jean Robinson as the first openly gay bishop of any Anglican Communion—and that set the stage for what happened and didn’t happen in London at the Lambeth Conference. What didn’t happen is that all the bishops attended. Jean Robinson was there and he was not invited to participate in the conference. There were others who were not invited. Over 200 conservative bishops met earlier and then boycotted, more or less, the Lambeth meeting out of their frustration with the fact that pro-homosexual bishops, especially of North America, would be attending.

The Archbishop of Canterbury decided before the meeting began, and made the announcement, that there would be no resolutions and no votes to avoid division, but rather discussion groups. As the Lambeth Conference came to an end it released a document—I hold that document in my hand—entitled, “Reflections Upon the Lambeth Conference 2008.” It calls for what is described as a “season of gracious restraint.” Included in this are three moratoria: the first moratorium most significantly is a moratorium on Episcopal ordinations of partnered homosexual people and also the elections of bishops included within that.

We are very glad to have today as our guest, the Rev. Canon George Conger.... Can you tell us what in the world happened at the Lambeth Conference?

George Conger: Well, there was about three weeks of talk and talk and talk, and that’s all that happened. No decisions were taken, no actions were taken. Nothing authoritative or prescriptive was done at this meeting.

Mohler: Now, let me ask you. As you look at this particular document It says the moratoria covers three separate issues: the Episcopal ordinations of partnered homosexual people, the blessing of same-sex unions, cross-border incursions by bishops. It goes on to say there is widespread support for the moratoria. The Archbishop of Canterbury has conceded that if the North American churches, in particular the Episcopal Church, U.S., continues with these movements towards the normalization of homosexuality, that the

communion is likely to break apart. Do you see the North American churches, do you see the Episcopal Church, U.S. adopting and accepting this moratorium?

Conger: No, I do not. I think one thing needs to be kept in mind. The “Reflections” document is designed to capture all the points of view expressed at the conference. It does not—it is not a document that speaks to what the bishops *want* to do. Rather the bishops were asked at the end, “Do you see your voice in this document?”

So, it’s not—the moratorium is just a suggestion by some of the bishops. It has no force it has no authority. It is just a request.

Mohler: And it is a request that is very personal isn’t it? I’m looking at especially the coverage in the British Press, and it looks like at least the British Press is suggesting that it was more or less the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams himself, who said, “Just please do this.”

Conger: Yes, because that’s all there is. It’s a gentlemen’s agreement that not everybody—the bishops didn’t vote on it, they were not asked to sign up to it. It’s just as it is described—a reflection of views at the conference. It has no force. It has no authority. And because of that, bishops in Los Angeles and San Francisco have already said ... Well, they’re going to continue what they’re going to—continue allowing clergy to bless same-sex unions, to support gay clergy becoming bishops in the Episcopal Church if that should arise. They’re not going to back away.

Mohler: I’m looking here at an article from the Times of London that has to do with the bishop, the Episcopal bishop of Washington, D.C., John Bryson Chane, in which he condemns the conservatives as demonic and says they are going in the wrong direction, and that his church, his diocese, will not be going in that direction.

Conger: Yes, for the conference Bishop Chane took great exception to attacks from African leaders, especially the Archbishop of Nigeria, Peter Akinola, for demonizing the American church. Bishop Chane believes that God has given a special mission to the Episcopal Church to lead on this particular issue of justice for gays and lesbians in the church. The attacks by those who hold a more traditional, biblical view Bishop Chane has dismissed as demonizing attacks upon the American exceptionalism on this issue—that America has a charge to lead the world in normalizing or removing homosexuality from the sin column moving it to a blessing column.

Mohler: It is fascinating to watch this. But as a non-Episcopalian Christian observing this I just have to believe this is a moratorium that doesn’t really mean anything and will not restrain anyone from doing what they intend to do.

Conger: Yes, that’s perfectly clear. You don’t have to be a non-Episcopalian to see that. Before the ink was dry, those whom it would apply to—the liberals in the United States, and African bishops who support American conservatives—both said that they are not going to stand back from the course they’ve taken.

Mohler: Let me ask you to rewind. Ten years ago, in 1998 the Lambeth Conference made a very clear statement about the essential sinfulness of homosexuality.

Conger: Yes ... Sexual relations in a Christian understanding were confined to that between of a married man and a woman, husband and wife. Outside of that, including adultery, fornication and homosexuality was contrary to God’s will, and specifically homosexuality could not be reconciled with the scriptures as being a good or morally positively thing. Therefore, the church could not bless it, the church could not support it, it could not put forward men or women who had same-sex attractions and who acted upon them as leaders of the church.

Mohler: Now that was 10 years ago...

Conger: That was quite clear in 1998.

Mohler: Yes, and it was voted on. In fact I just looked that up to be sure and I find out that wasn’t binding either.

Conger: It wasn’t binding either—in a legal, juridical sense, no, it’s not binding. But it did speak to the position of the communion—and it had the force of moral authority. But it was not a legal document.

Mohler: It is very interesting to look at what is going on here. I’m looking at Times magazine’s coverage. It has here a statement from the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, U.S., Katharine Jefferts

Schori. She said the Anglican Communion “Is suffering the birth pangs of something new.” Now, I’m familiar with her. I’ve covered her for some time. This is the presiding bishop who clearly believes that history is in the direction of normalizing all homosexuality, and that eventually the Church is just going to have to go along.

Conger: Yes, that’s how she thinks. She believes that the science—the revelation is unfolding, and that the Church in this day and age has a new revelation conditioned by scientific discoveries, and new moral insights that allow the Episcopal Church and other denominations to affirm homosexuality as being a morally good thing.

Mohler: You also have bishops who would just as clearly make absolutely transparent their opposition to homosexuality based upon the clear teachings of scripture. So I ask you to fast forward to 2018. Let’s imagine the Anglican Communion meeting together, the bishops in the Lambeth Conference of 2018, is there going to be an Anglican Communion to be represented together at a conference like that 10 years from now?

Conger: No, and I don’t think there will be one within a year’s time. Right now the Anglican Communion is already broken—it’s fractured. And the clearest sign of that is that its leaders will not sit down and receive Holy Communion together. They are unable to receive the Eucharist—or the sacraments—at the same service, because they do not hold the same beliefs. Some believe that Jesus is *a* way, that there are many ways to salvation, that theirs is Christianity, Christianity is their way and that’s good. But they believe that other faiths may lead to salvation. Well, the vast majority of bishops say that Jesus is the *only* way to salvation.

That is just one issue, but there is a tremendous division on all sorts of issues—Christology and moral issues, and doctrinal issues, and the basic words of the Nicene Creed that are not commonly shared. The Communion is already broken and this meeting did nothing to fix that. And in fact, it just solidified the position of the two sides.

Mohler: Where do you see this leaving the Episcopal Church, U.S.?

Conger: I see it in the law courts over the next 10 years, frankly, as Evangelical parishes or Anglo-Catholic parishes who are the traditionally-minded members of the Episcopal Church either pull out and join new denominations, or take shelter and refuge under the leadership of bishops from overseas churches.

This is going to spark litigations over property, and who gets to call themselves an Episcopalian, who’s an Anglican. It’s a mess, and there is no short-term solution that I see to fix this problem save for one side giving up and going away.

Mohler: Now you are affiliated with and a priest of the Diocese of Central Florida, that’s known as more of the conservative of the regions of the Episcopal Church. I would compare that to San Francisco, or Washington, or Los Angeles. In what sense are you really part of one church at this point?

Conger: We’re not part of one church in the sense that I could not function... A priest from, say, San Francisco who was a gay man or had been divorced and remarried, for example, could not come to where I am near Orlando and function as an Episcopal Priest. I could not get a job or license because of my theological views in many parts of the Episcopal Church. There is no interchangeability of clergy. It’s become Balkanized along doctrinal and theological views.

LAMBETH JOURNAL ONLINE

ACNSlist, published by Anglican Communion News Service, London, is distributed to more than 8,000 journalists and other readers around the world.

ACNS: <http://aco.org/acns/news.cfm/2008/8/6/ACNS4513>

Lambeth Conference video journals available for viewing at <http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/welcome/?lambeth>

also available on the Lambeth daily section of our website either: www.aco.org/daily or www.lambethconference.org/daily

A series of 10 video journals featuring more than 30 bishops from around the world attending the 2008 Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion are now available for viewing at Trinity Wall Street's website, www.trinitywallstreet.org. Produced for the Lambeth Conference by Trinity Wall Street, the video journals were shown at the outset of each conference day, introducing participants to the daily thematic focus. The journals portray the personal experiences of bishops and spouses as they relate to that day's theme and include segments which capture the life of conference.

The videos run approximately five minutes in length and address topics ranging from evangelism, social justice and the environment to engagement in a multi-faith world and the abuse of power. Bishops in the videos include Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury; Daniel Deng Bul Yak, Archbishop of Sudan; Miguel Tamayo, Bishop of Uruguay; Edward Malecndan, Bishop of Northern Philippines; David Beetge, Bishop of Highveld, South Africa; Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand; Alexander John Malik, Bishop of Lahore, Pakistan; and Mark Sisk, Bishop of New York, USA.

**LAMBETH NOTES FROM BISHOP LEO FRADE, August 5, 2008
WAS LAMBETH WORTH IT?**

When I arrived at the home of my British cousin in High Barnett, London, he asked me if the three weeks Diana and I had spent at the Lambeth Conference were “worth it.”

He had been reading the *Times of London*, *The Guardian* and other British newspapers that were reporting extensively on our deliberations. He was utterly confused, and I don’t blame him, because most of the news that had come out at the beginning was very discouraging and predicted that a major fight among the bishops would take place. Then a couple of days before the end of the conference the *Times of London* had a surprisingly hopeful editorial praising the Archbishop of Canterbury for having managed to keep the Anglican Communion together.

But what about gay bishops? What about the blessing of same-sex unions? What about the pirate bishops invading other jurisdictions without the approval of the diocesan? Did we come out with a “final answer?”

More on that in a moment, but first, to answer my cousin’s question: Yes, it was absolutely worth our time to be there. I feel blessed to have been part of the 2008 Lambeth Conference, functioning as one of the Instruments of Unity that has gathered all Anglican bishops, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, every decade since 1868.

Was it a perfect meeting? No, it was not, because one of the bishops of the Episcopal Church, the bishop of New Hampshire, was not there because he was not invited; and also because most of the bishops from Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya and Rwanda opted not to attend because the Archbishop of Canterbury also had invited American bishops.

But it was almost perfect: 670 bishops—four out of five bishops of the Anglican Communion—were present, demonstrating their willingness to be in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury. More important, they were willing to be in communion with each other, regardless of any theological differences that they may have.

No, the conference did not end up with a definite answer on the issue of the possible consecration of gay bishops living in a committed relationship, or the blessing of same-sex unions or the intrusion of pirate bishops into other jurisdictions without permission. There was no definite answer, because that was not our purpose—the conference was following the Indaba model, an African mode of discussion that seeks consensus among the participants.

At the beginning it was difficult for me to fully accept that system considering that I come from a parliamentary form of seeking a final decision. Indaba is a process that doesn’t create winners and losers, but instead seeks the consensus of the community involved. I know that it may sound confusing for a Western mind; but believe me, it actually worked. I found that only those on the extreme fringes to the right or to the left were frustrated with this process, because there was no bloodshed, as the press had prognosticated, and no side on any issue could declare victory.

Of course, all of this means that it is up to each of the 38 Anglican Provinces to continue their work through their own constitutional structures, the Windsor Continuation Process and the proposed Anglican Covenant. It will take a few years—or indeed the lifetimes of some of us—to come to final decisions on the deep disagreements that confront us. But for the vast majority of the bishops leaving Lambeth there is no question of our commitment to continue our walk together to seek a final consensus on these very difficult questions.

We have been specifically asked to extend the moratoria (on blessing of same-sex unions and the consecration of “any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church”) that we

accepted, after long and difficult debate, at our last General Convention. It will be up to the 2009 General Convention to make that decision.

Therefore, we have to wait for our response as The Episcopal Church (TEC), as well as for the answers from the other 37 provinces.

You may ask what my decision will be. I can only tell you that I will follow what our Lord God requires of us: “Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.” As we ponder our response to all of our sisters and brothers throughout the Anglican Communion, I encourage all the Episcopalians in our Diocese of Southeast Florida to do the same.

Blessings, +Leo

FINAL INTEGRITY STATEMENT FROM LAMBETH 2008:

**The *coup d'état* has failed. It's time to get on with the Kingdom.
The Reverend Susan Russell, President, Integrity USA, August 3, 2008**

In spite of extraordinary pressure to do otherwise, the Archbishop of Canterbury has managed to achieve his stated goal of a Lambeth Conference of reflection rather than resolutions. The long predicted *coup d'état* that was going to emerge from this Lambeth Conference and vote the Americans and Canadians out of the Anglican Communion failed to materialize. There is much to be grateful for in that.

In his July 29th presidential address, Rowan Williams clearly set the theological and biblical perspectives of those who embrace an inclusive gospel within the container of Anglican comprehensiveness. That in itself is a tremendous step forward for the Anglican Communion. It should signal that it is time for the conversations to cease about whether those who hold an inclusive perspective are still Anglicans – much less Christians. It is time to move on to how we, as a diverse community of faith, are going to move forward in God's mission in spite of our differences.

The 43 page “Lambeth Indaba: Capturing Conversations and Reflections ” provides a snapshot of the diversity of opinion and perspective held throughout the global communion and resists the temptation to offer – much less insist – on the means to reconcile the differences that challenge us. We call on our bishops to resist the temptation of those who will try to turn this descriptive document into a proscriptive edict.

This is particularly critical in the language around moratoria. The inclusion in this set of descriptions of the conversations in the bishops' Indaba groups of the “desire to enforce a moratoria” on further consecrations of bishops who are gay or lesbian and on the blessing and celebration of same sex unions is an accurate reflection of how some in the communion would prefer we moved forward.

So is the reflection about “the positive effects in parts of [the Communion] when homosexual people are accepted as God's children, are treated with dignity and choose to give their lives to Christ and to live in the community of faith as disciples of Jesus Christ with fidelity and commitment.”

And while the Archbishop of Canterbury in his concluding address expressed his own preference for moratoria as a way forward, we are reminded that we are, as Anglicans, bound together in bonds of affection rather than authority. We believe we are called to find that way forward not only within the bonds of affection to our Anglican siblings but within the parameters of the polity and practice of an Episcopal Church forged in the crucible of the American Revolution.

With Lambeth Conference 2008 and the failed *coup d'état* behind us, Integrity calls on our bishops to lead us all forward in faith and in God's mission: to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, and to let the oppressed go free.

We challenge them to partner with the House of Deputies to break the cycle of being bullied into bigotry and distracted from mission and ministry by those who would exclude us because of our commitment to the full inclusion of all the baptized in the Body of Christ. We look forward to General Convention 2009 and the opportunities we will have there to move the church further forward on the journey toward full inclusion.

We pray that our bishops will build on the relationships they have developed here in Canterbury with bishops from around the Communion to enable the witness of the Good News of God in Christ Jesus made present in

the lives, relationships and vocations of LGBT Episcopalians to be shared more widely throughout our Anglican family of faith. We stand ready to resource and support that work going forward.

We remind our bishops that we cannot live up to our baptismal vows to respect the dignity of every human being if we tell some of them that they are good enough to arrange our flowers, play our organs, direct our choirs, teach our Sunday Schools and lead our worship – but not good enough to have their vocations affirmed and their relationships blessed. There is nothing “generous” about asking the LGBT faithful to bear the burden of unity of the Anglican Communion on their shoulders and there is no theological defense for sacrificing a minority of the baptized to the will of a majority.

We give thanks for the extraordinary privilege it has been to be part of the cloud of witnesses who have offered to this Lambeth Conference incarnational opportunities to engage with brother and sister Anglicans from all over the globe. We pray that our witness, along with our Inclusive Church allies, will continue to grow as we partner together to proclaim God’s justice and to live God’s love.

Finally, we recognize with deep regret that the exclusion of the Bishop of New Hampshire from this gathering of his peer bishops in the Church of God has sent a signal to LGBT people around the world that the Anglican Communion still considers them “strangers at the gate.” We commit ourselves to continue in the struggle until our church and our communion live up to the high calling to be the Body of Christ in the world where all members are truly welcome, valued, loved, included and challenged.

RAISING ISSUES OF RACE IN ANGLICAN RIFT

Conservatives' Links to Africans Questioned by Black U.S. Bishops

By Daniel Burke Religion News Service Saturday, August 9, 2008; B07

CANTERBURY, England -- For five years, conservative Episcopalians eager to escape their liberal U.S. church have been building ties with African Anglicans half a world away.

But they have few connections with black Americans in their own back yard, said black Episcopal bishops who gathered here for a once-a-decade meeting of Anglican prelates.

"It's something that I like to point out," said Bishop Eugene T. Sutton, the first black Episcopal bishop in Maryland, "the historical anomaly of dioceses that have nothing to do with the black community going all the way to Africa to make these relationships."

Moreover, Sutton and other black bishops at the meeting said the use of Scripture to reject homosexuality in the Anglican Communion evokes previous eras' biblically based arguments in support of slavery and racism. African prelates, however, reject that argument, and U.S. conservatives said it is shared theology that motivates their alliances.

"This is just another revisionist attempt to use anything to undermine the orthodox position of the church and spread the agenda of inclusiveness," said the Right Rev. Peter Beckwith, the conservative bishop of Springfield, Ill.

Although the eight black Episcopal bishops at the meeting favor gay rights in their church, most Africans from the Anglican Communion disagree. That conflict forms part of the larger split running through the Lambeth Conference, a gathering of 650 bishops from around the world that ended Sunday. The meeting came as the Anglican Communion, and its U.S. branch, the Episcopal Church, are bitterly divided over whether to allow gay clergy and bless same-sex relationships.

In the small discussion groups that formed the backbone of the conference, some black Episcopal bishops said they have framed their support for gay rights within the context of a long struggle to include blacks and women in the church and in society at large.

"As a person who knows what it means to be oppressed, I refuse to allow my brothers and sisters in the faith to be discriminated against," said Suffragan Bishop Gayle E. Harris of Massachusetts.

But Bishop Sitembela Mzamane of South Africa, who says he is also "the victim of oppression," said it's "very inappropriate to equate the struggle of blacks in Africa or in the diaspora" with those of gays.

"They are not victims of human rights at all," Mzamane said.

Bishop Bernard Ntahoturi of Burundi also disavowed comparisons between abolition and gay rights. "You cannot compare slavery with homosexuality. Slavery is a sin. Homosexuality is not about rights, it's about how God created you," he said.

More than 200 bishops, mainly from Africa, boycotted the Lambeth Conference, saying they wouldn't meet with North American bishops who preach a "false gospel" that condones homosexuality.

The boycotting bishops, who say homosexual acts violate biblical morality, are incensed that the Episcopal Church allows same-sex blessings and elected an openly gay priest, V. Gene Robinson, as bishop of New Hampshire in 2003.

U.S. conservatives, who are mainly white, have reached out to African archbishops from Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Nigeria, urging them to cross traditional church borders by adopting parishes and appointing bishops in the United States.

"They're looking for black faces to give them legitimacy," Sutton said of U.S. conservatives, "because they can't find them at home."

Harris said that the bonds between Africans and U.S. conservatives are a "political expediency" and that "connections made for the time being will not last across the huge gulf of understanding" between the groups. But Beckwith, who is white and a member of the Global Anglican Future Conference, a conservative movement led by African prelates, said conservatives have the most important thing in common. "We are united and ground in the same faith," he said.

Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland: "The great struggle before us at this (Lambeth) conference is defining what it means to be the Church, and how can we remain in communion with each other despite deep theological differences. I have argued here strongly for an inclusive Church that does not exclude anyone of my brothers and sisters in Christ because of their differences. To be a Christian is not to give intellectual assent to a body of doctrine, no matter how passionately the institutional Church has held on to them. To be a Christian is to follow a living Christ who continues to lead us to places where we do not want to go, and calling us to love and embrace those whom we would rather be more like us in every way. The traditions of the Church ground us, but we cannot become slaves to tradition if they have caused us to limit the scope of the reach of Christ in our day. Such has been the unfortunate history of the Church whenever it has found itself on the wrong side of scientific revelations, and on the wrong side of using biblical and theological interpretations that have resulted in the subjugation of people who cry out for justice. Have we not been here before when the Church used Holy Scripture to justify human slavery? Of keeping women in their place? Of persecuting left-handed people? (I'm not kidding here...this was very common.) How many times must our children's children have to apologize for the mistakes and oppressions their leaders in the faith have committed in the name of Christ?"

August 7, 2008

NEW LIGHT ON ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S VIEW ON HOMOSEXUALITY

by Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent – London Times

Theology students at Cambridge in the 1980s remember their lecturer and tutor Rowan Williams, now 58, as a deeply spiritual, holy and compassionate man. They also remember the hostility with which he was viewed by the growing number of evangelicals gaining admission to one of the nation's two top seats of learning.

The battles played out among Christian students in the sanctums of Cambridge colleges mirror the war being waged today in the Anglican Communion. Dr Williams left academia, by all accounts reluctantly, as none could match him for intellect and spirituality in the ivory towers of Oxford and Cambridge.

He went to Wales, first as Bishop of Monmouth, then Archbishop of the province, his home country but also a see that fitted perfectly his increasingly liberal Anglo-Catholicism.

Deborah Pitt, a psychiatrist in Wales, wrote twice to him about homosexuality, describing his own intellectual journey on the issue. "Until about 1980, I fully shared the traditional ethical understanding of

homosexuality as a condition of (at best) some sort of ‘privation’, the practice of which was strictly forbidden to Christians by Scripture and tradition,” he wrote.

His letters were written in 2000 and 2001. Three years earlier, he was considered for Bishop of Southwark. His name was about to be submitted to the Prime Minister when Lord Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury, summoned him to Lambeth and quizzed him about his writings on sexuality.

Lord Carey is said to have asked if he would sign up to the Church of England bishops' statement, *Issues in Human Sexuality*, a notorious document that permits active gay relationships for laity but bans them for clergy. Dr Williams said he could not. He agreed, under pressure from Lord Carey, to withdraw from Southwark. Lord Carey, whose preferred successor at Canterbury was Michael Nazir-Ali, Bishop of Rochester, was furious when Dr Williams was appointed instead.

Tony Blair was said to be equally angry that Dr Williams had lost Southwark and was keen to have him at Canterbury.

Amid this web of loyalties, the internally conflicted views of Dr Williams himself became lost. He was assumed to be a liberal on sexuality. Little account was taken of his conservative view of leadership, requiring him to put church unity before his own views.

His letters to Dr Pitt, before he was appointed to Canterbury but after the Southwark debacle, show how he was already working out how to reconcile his private theological view with his public persona.

But for liberals in the late 1990s, Dr Williams was the great Welsh hope who would turn back the clock on the famous Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, that reinforced the strictly Biblical line that all gay sex was wrong. They drew their confidence from the foreword he wrote in 1988 to the book, *Speaking Love's Name*, when he argued strongly for the liberal position. The next year, in his essay *The Body's Grace*, Dr Williams continued the liberal theme.

He argued: “If we are looking for a sexual ethic that can be seriously informed by our Bible, there is a good deal to steer us away from assuming that reproductive sex is a norm, however important and theologically significant it may be ... in a church which accepts the legitimacy of contraception, the absolute condemnation of same-sex relations of intimacy must rely either on an abstract fundamentalist deployment of a number of very ambiguous texts, or on a problematic and non-scriptural theory about natural complementarity, applied narrowly and crudely to physical differentiation without regard to psychological structures.”

It was in the midst of the liberal versus conservative warfare over homosexuality at Lambeth ten years ago, that the lobbying to have Dr Williams succeed George Carey as Archbishop began in earnest.

Dr Williams, nearly always in the black shirts of his Anglo-Catholic brethren rather than liberal pink or evangelical bluish-purple, seemed a willing object of this discreet and very Anglican campaign. Observers reckoned just one other English bishop, another favourite for Canterbury, managed to get to as many parties.

Amid the charged atmosphere his name was leaked to *The Times* as the first choice of the Crown Appointments Commission, before the future Archbishop himself knew. The resulting fracas left him uncertain as to whether he should take the job. He was persuaded to accept by a senior bishop who believed that only he had the political and theological skills to hold the Anglican Communion together.

A year after his enthronement, the Bishop of Oxford nominated the celibate but openly-gay cleric Jeffrey John as his suffragan in Reading. Dr Williams at first approved the appointment. The subsequent furore among evangelicals in Oxford led to the establishment of Anglican Mainstream, now a key player in evangelical politics of the Global South conservative provinces.

Mainstream lobbied hard against Dr John and the Archbishop bowed to the pressure, persuading him to withdraw in a fraught meeting at Lambeth Palace. Afterwards he knelt before the man whose pro-gay essay *Permanent, Faithful, Stable* was such an influence on his own liberal views, and asked for his blessing.

Dr John was subsequently appointed Dean of St Albans. The liberal lobby has struggled to forgive Dr Williams for what is still regarded as a betrayal. But he was vindicated when the Episcopal Church elected and consecrated Gene Robinson in 2003, and the diocese of New Westminster in Canada authorised same-sex blessings. The consequence was the “tear in the fabric” of the Anglican Communion his advisers had warned of.

The consequences still reverberate around the Communion. Conservative bishops of Africa and Asia now meet regularly; evangelicals from the Global South, the US and Britain have set up the Global Anglican Future Conference as a rival Lambeth Conference with a strategy of takeover from within.

There is speculation that the Episcopal Church in the US might be prepared to secede from the Communion in order to pursue an agenda that a majority of bishops, clergy and laity believe is the only credible way forward.

The latest moves were played out at the Lambeth Conference. Dr Williams repeatedly made clear that there could be no going back on the strictly Biblical line against gay sex. In his final press conference, elated at having avoided an explosive schism, he appeared to lay blame for the rifts at the door of the liberals of the US.

And in the end, a question mark hangs over whether it will all have been worth it. For conservatives, there can be no compromise on an issue that has become the touchstone of orthodoxy. It is possible that history will recognise the two wings of Anglicanism are as irreconcilable as, in the end, Dr Williams's own divided heart.

ACADEMICS WHO INFLUENCED HIM:

JEFFREY JOHN: Liberal thinker from South Wales

Like Rowan Williams, Jeffrey John is from South Wales and his liberal Catholicism is similar in many respects to that of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr John inspires similar loyalty among those who have experienced his teaching and pastoral ministry. He also provokes hostility among those who find his views on gay sex unacceptable.

Dr Williams names Dr John's essay *Permanent, Faithful, Stable* as an influence on him in liberalising his views on this issue. In the pamphlet, first published in 1993 and again in 2000, Dr John presents a powerful argument for the blessing of gay relationships by the Church, provided that they are like Christian marriage in terms of covenanted fidelity.

Along with Dr Williams, in 1990 he founded *Affirming Catholicism*, a movement to bring about liberal reforms in line with traditional theology in the Church of England.

After his abortive appointment as Bishop of Reading in 2003, he was made Dean of St Albans, where he inspires passionate loyalty among members of the cathedral congregation, many of whom remain outraged at the humiliation he suffered when persuaded by Dr Williams to withdraw from Reading.

PETER COLEMAN: Pilot through the stormy waters

The second academic to influence Rowan Williams's liberal views is Peter Coleman. In 1980 his book *Christian Attitudes to Homosexuality* examined from an objective viewpoint the biblical, legal and other arguments for and against homosexuality. In 1989 *Gay Christians - a Moral Dilemma* continued to explore the arguments for and against gay relationships.

Coleman, a former Bishop Suffragan of Crediton, who was killed in a car accident aged 73 in 2002, was active on the Church of England's General Synod, where he achieved a reputation as one of the nicest and most genuinely intellectual men in the Church. He was typical of the Anglican gentlemen bishops of his generation, as epitomised by Archbishop Robert Runcie. He was even married to an Austrian princess. His was the era when many believed that God was dead and the Church soon would be. Several bishops - although not him - saw themselves as being in the business of managing decline. He and others of his time would be astonished by the revival of religious debate at the start of the 21st century. His death was a tragedy, not least because he was one of the few men who could advise Dr Williams on how to steer the Church through the present stormy waters.

ADDING TO DIVISION THE TENSIONS WITHIN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION ARE A REFLECTION OF THE GLOBAL CULTURE WARS. *From the Los Angeles Times August 9, 2008*

Bishops of the Anglican Communion, a confederation of churches with roots in the Church of England, held their once-a-decade meeting recently and managed to avert a long-predicted schism over homosexuality. Although 200 conservative bishops boycotted the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England, other conservatives showed up and joined their liberal counterparts in soul-searching sessions inspired by the Zulu

indaba, or tribal conference.

Still, tensions were evident between liberal bishops from North America and conservative ones from the "Global South." The archbishop of Sudan demanded the resignation of Gene Robinson, the openly gay New Hampshire bishop whose ordination in 2003 was the *casus belli* of the crisis. A female bishop from the United States suggested that "many of our bishops come from places where it is culturally accepted to beat your wife."

That Anglicans remain uneasily united is a victory for Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury who has been engaged in shuttle diplomacy between the two wings of the communion. Williams has been pleading with liberals in North America to refrain from ordaining gays and lesbians or blessing same-sex unions, and with conservative bishops in the Global South to stop meddling in liberal dioceses. But, lacking the authority of the pope, Williams can't order the two sides to exercise restraint, and some in both camps are likely to defy him.

The dispute among Anglicans may seem a strictly religious argument, turning on whether biblical prohibitions of homosexuality should be interpreted literally or softened, as scriptural condemnations of divorce have been without much protest from conservatives. But like the movement for women's equality, the campaign for recognition of the personhood of gays and lesbians is broader than the church; witness the gay rights movement that achieved its most important victory in the legalization of same-sex civil marriage in Massachusetts and California.

Sexual orientation isn't the only issue to resonate outside the Anglican fold. Societies like those from which some conservative bishops come are coping with a Western culture that seems to mock traditional notions of faith and family, a consequence of globalization. And tensions between the West and Islam underlie the complaint by African bishops that an endorsement of homosexuality by Western churches puts Christians at a disadvantage with Muslims -- and at risk of physical violence -- in areas where the two faiths compete for adherents.

You don't have to be an Anglican -- or even a Christian -- to find these conflicts familiar. In the culture wars, there is no separation of church and state.

BISHOP DAVID'S BLOG - thoughts from the Bishop of Grimsby

If resolution 1.10 is important, what about resolution 19?

The more I read the final Lambeth Document, "Capturing Conversations and Reflections", the more I rejoice that we did not go down the road of resolutions and votes. To have a 'snapshot' of the engagement between the Bishops is probably of far more worth, than adding to the fossilised remains of earlier conferences, which leave skeletal resolutions disconnected from the tissue of conversation lying behind them as some sort of guide to the heart and mind of the church.

Much has been made of Resolution 1.10 from the 1998 Conference, as though this is an enduring and unerring piece of truth. It has become almost a test for orthodoxy. But if this resolution has such enduring status, then all resolutions of the Lambeth Conference must be given the same status. So what about Resolution 67 from 1908? Very importantly it states

"We desire earnestly to warn members of our Communion against contracting marriages with Roman Catholics under the conditions imposed by modern Roman canon law, especially as these conditions involve the performance of the marriage ceremony without any prayer or invocation of the divine blessing, and also a promise to have their children brought up in a religious system which they cannot themselves accept."

I am also concerned that there is not enough campaigning with regard to Resolution 6.f from 1888:

"That the most careful regard should be had to the danger of any encroachment upon the rest which, on this day, is the right of servants as well as their masters, and of the working classes as well as their employers."

and what has been done about Resolution 36 from 1908?

"The Conference, having regard to the uncertainty which exists as to the permanence of the practice commended by St. James (5.14), and having regard to the history of the practice which professes to be based

upon that commendation, does not recommend the sanctioning of the anointing of the sick as a rite of the Church.

It does not, however, advise the prohibition of all anointing, if anointing be earnestly desired by the sick person. In all such cases the parish priest should seek the counsel of the bishop of the diocese. Care must be taken that no return be made to the later custom of anointing as a preparation for death.”

But most urgently of all, how do we reconcile Resolution 19 from 1897 with 1.10 from 1998?

“That it is important that, so far as possible, the Church should be adapted to local circumstances, and the people brought to feel in all ways that no burdens in the way of foreign customs are laid upon them, and nothing is required of them but what is of the essence of the faith, and belongs to the due order of the Catholic Church.”

As I heard the conversations between Bishops from very different context explaining how issues in sexuality affected their mission within their context, social norms and cultural inheritance - Resolution 19 sounded very modern. It addresses the crux of these matters - what is the essence of faith and of order? The conversations of which I was part were really about ‘foreign customs’ being forced upon radically different parts of the Communion - and some of those radically different parts were contained within the same province!

So I am starting a campaign for Resolution 19 and it will become my ‘litmus test’ for orthodoxy.

**TWO BLOG ENTRIES FROM BISHOP V. GENE ROBINSON
CANTERBURY TALES FROM THE FRINGE [Bishop Robinson’s Lambeth Blog]**

Friday, August 1, 2008 “Goodbye, Canterbury; Hello, Scotland!”

We left Canterbury yesterday afternoon as the Bishops struggled with the notion of an Anglican Covenant.

Wednesday evening’s session with other bishops again went very well. Good attendance, and rich discussion. One particular Indian bishop especially moved me with his own testimony. He rose to speak, dressed in his long white garments. Without any rancor, anger or blame in his voice or on his face, he described the difficulty my election and consecration presented for his life and ministry. It was a beautiful moment of truth telling. He spoke of our very different contexts which made my election seem all right in America and terribly wrong in India. I apologized to him for whatever harm had been done to his ministry by our actions. I told him that I really didn’t have the answer to this problem. I longed to talk further with him, and it made me realize again what I was missing by not being included in the conference. I told him that what I DID know was that he must continue being the Church in his context and that we must continue being the Church in ours. And how that plays itself out must be left in God’s hands. In the meantime, we must hold onto one another as best we can.

I also told him that my own life and ministry would be profoundly changed by listening to him. I will carry his pain and life-made-more-difficult with me in my own ministry. Surely this kind of honest exchange is at the heart of whatever Communion means. Not that we have all the answers, but that we bear each other’s pain. I have heard things like this before, but the miracle of his words were that they were said with love, absent of rancor and blame. Just a description of what is. Afterwards, he came up and thanked me, patted me on the arm, and assured me of his prayers. Surely, if Communion means anything, it includes this.

The kids from Western Michigan put on a stunning performance of “Seven Passages” on Thursday night. Every word spoken came either from the Bible or from interviews held with countless people who have struggled with those seven passages which seem to condemn homosexuality and struggled with a Church that uses them to denounce and degrade gay people. The passion and commitment of these kids to a new vision of the Church came through both in their performances and in the Q & A afterwards. I had sent them a “break a leg” bouquet of flowers for their opening. One last round of group photos ended a sublime evening. Another holy moment.

It was hard to say goodbye to the Franciscan brothers, after one last cup of tea following Friday morning prayers. These kind and gentle souls had provided me with a spiritual home during my stay in Canterbury.

Their peace contrasted so dramatically with the anxiety of the conference. These too, I will carry in my heart: Austin, the burly linebacker-looking head of the Household, with a voice and manner so gentle it defies description; Colin, a walking-talking hospitality machine, always eager to welcome any traveler; Reg, whom we had feted the day before on the occasion of his 55th anniversary of becoming a brother, who is still writing music in his late 80's; and Max, the novice from Berkeley, California, young and fresh and soaking up the wisdom of his older brothers. I shall miss them all terribly, and will be forever grateful to them for making a space in their chapel, their home and their hearts for me.

Lots of people, including journalists, were asking what I thought the Lambeth Conference had accomplished. Most of them, I suspect, thought the answer is “nothing!” But I disagree. I have said all along, publicly and privately, that this is the part that the Archbishop of Canterbury got exactly right. That while the Conference would produce no legislation, no definitive statements and no decisions, its real “product” would be the deepening of the bonds of affection that MAKE us the Anglican Communion. That won't be enough for those who want to bring all this difficulty to a rapid conclusion, declaring winners on one side and losers on the other. That won't satisfy those who seek a way to punish those who are pushing the boundaries of God's inclusive love. But it's enough for me.

I have frequently recalled Desmond Tutu's simple and wise description of the Anglican Communion. “We meet,” he said. Full stop. That's what we do. We hold a common belief and hope in the Risen Christ, and because we care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, we meet. We meet, and let God's Holy Spirit work among us, to allow us to see our common humanity, and to discover the Christ in “the other.” While that might not look like much to the rest of the world, it is an amazing “product.” It is precisely what we need during this difficult time. We don't need – perhaps cannot possibly discern – the answers right now. What we DO need and CAN discern, is that we are all in this together. That God IS working God's purposes out, even if we can't always see it. Even if we are in the midst of conflict and pain.

I am not an optimist – because being an optimist seems to me to be putting our faith in the works of humankind. The evidence is that we're not doing a very good job of it. But being a person of HOPE, means we put our faith in the love of God, and GOD'S ability to bring this to its rightful conclusion, in God's own time. I leave this Lambeth Conference as a person of hope.

I was also asked by several people whether or not my own witness, and that of other gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, had been “worth it,” and “effective.” If I've learned anything over the last five years, it is that I am not responsible for how my words and actions are received and whether or not they make a difference. I can only be responsible for (and judge myself by) the faithfulness with which I make my witness to the love of God working in my own life. I am proud to have stood with the people of Integrity, Claiming the Blessing, the Chicago Consultation, Inclusive Church and Changing Attitudes, as we all have made that witness, loud and clear. It was VERY interesting to me to look at the faces of those at the conference – many, many of which were somber, sad and tense. In contrast, the faces of lgbt people and our allies, looked joyful, happy, even radiant. I wondered, which vision of the church are people drawn to? That which produces a solemn and morose countenance, or one which produces joy and radiance? Gay and lesbian Christians KNOW what it is like to be rescued from shame and guilt, and to walk in the light of God's redeeming love, and seem to show it in every moment. That's the church I want to be in, don't you?

Upon our arrival back in London, our happy little band of travelers (pictured above) had to say goodbye to our driver. We've dubbed ourselves the “Fab Four,” and I must say we have become a real community. Richard, our driver, is one of the perkier, happiest cherubs ever to walk the planet. With his Cockney accent and effervescent sense of humor, he added so much to our little band of men. He (and we) were nearly in tears as we said goodbye yesterday. Terry, my security person, is a big, football-lineman looking sort of guy, but a big teddy bear of a guy inside. This, I think, has been a real eye-opening experience for him. He's new to this “gay thing.” He's had a crash course in this side of culture and the oppression we experience from the world and the Church, and he shakes his head and says, “I just don't understand all the hatred toward you guys.” He has taken such good care of me, and I am indebted to him for putting himself at risk for me. Mike, my

press person, has been the purveyor of good news interviews and media connections. He has helped get our story out to the world. His cell phone is nearly permanently glued to his ear, and he has worked tirelessly to field, screen and help me choose the best venues for getting the word about God's love out to the world. What a funny little band of men we are. Even here, God's love has worked to change each of us. None of us is worthy of such a community of love, and yet, there it is. We will be brothers for life.

Now, we're off to Scotland. I will be preaching and celebrating at the Cathedral in Glasgow on Sunday morning. Scotland, the Dean/Provost is eager to tell me, is NOT England! If I didn't believe that already, it was confirmed when he said he would not be able to meet us at the train station, because he was doing a same-sex blessing in the Cathedral at the time of our arrival. Dorothy, I guess we're not in Kansas anymore!

I leave Canterbury and journey to Scotland believing that our witness in Canterbury was worthwhile and holy. I came to do two things: to witness to the joy that is in me because of God in my life, and to be a quiet reminder to those gathered that every bishop worldwide has gay and lesbian people in their pews and they dare not forget that they have taken vows to serve ALL their people, not just some. I think we accomplished both of those things. We'll leave the results up to God.

 Saturday, August 9, 2008

LAST THOUGHTS OF HOPE AND THANKS



It's 4:30am, and I'm sitting on the screen porch at home, back in my beloved New Hampshire, with gentle rain falling outside. Late Thursday night, after a 21 hour day of travel, I arrived at the Manchester, NH, airport (two hours late), to be greeted and surprised by 30 or so clergy and laity from New Hampshire, waving signs, holding balloons and flowers, and singing "I sing a song of the saints of God." Some came from over two hours away, and would get home long after midnight. One of my favorite signs read: "Medium rare after your grilling at Lambeth? No, WELL DONE!!" Can anyone doubt why I love my diocese so much?!

Scotland was exhausting, but a real joy! The welcome at the Cathedral in Glasgow (pictured above) was phenomenal, with a packed church, despite a few protesters outside. The Edinburgh Festival of Spirituality and Peace, beneath the castle that dominates the city, is a remarkable offering by St. John's Church and the Interfaith Council. It was my privilege to speak at its opening event, and then address a packed audience of 300+ on the first evening. Numerous other events and interviews filled up my time, but it was a wholly welcoming and warm atmosphere. Scotland was a wonderful place to once again celebrate the eucharist, something denied me in England for three weeks -- the same Church who gave America its first bishops, when the English bishops refused to do so. The Scots reminded me that, in doing so, THEY, not the English, created the Anglican Communion!

The morning we left Edinburgh, the headlines in the London Times announced the publication of letters sent by +Rowan Williams several years ago, in response to a conservative evangelical, in which he says that after many years of study and prayer, he has concluded that faithful, life-long-intentioned, monogamous love between two people of the same sex is NOT prohibited by scripture -- and that scripture simply does not address this new phenomenon. Precisely what I and others have been saying all along.

I have two reactions to this revelation: Yes, of course this is what +Rowan thinks. We knew that all along from his writing and speaking, which is why we were dancing in the streets at his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. But I think +Rowan is getting a bad rap for this from the conservatives, since he has steadfastly done what he has said he would do: set his own personal understandings aside and take a centrist stance "for the good of the whole Church." This is not news, folks! But it is indeed sad.

+Rowan, in my opinion, has not only taken a centrist stance, he has virtually abandoned those who would argue for a more inclusive church. While meeting often with the most extreme conservatives in the Communion (Bishop Iker of Ft. Worth writes recently in a letter to his diocese that he met with the Archbishop right before Lambeth), +Rowan has consistently refused to meet with me and others who argue for inclusion. He has consistently failed to criticize publicly those primates who say vile and hateful things about gay and lesbian Christians. He has bent over backwards to accommodate those who seem intent upon splitting this beloved Church. He has sided with those who say that our interpretation of scripture is outside the realm of reasonable and faithful interpretation -- while at the same time having come to the same conclusions himself! How does he sleep at night?!

My second thought is that, at the very least, it demonstrates that Americans and Canadians are not the only thoughtful, faithful Christians who can come to such conclusions. It puts the lie to the notion that we are revisionist, faithless crazies who simply disregard the Holy Scriptures in favor of a secularist, world-following agenda. If one of the great intellects and faithful theologians of our time can come to these same conclusions, how can we be accused of being mindless in our pandering to the culture and so over-the-edge of orthodoxy?!

As for the "results" of the Lambeth Conference, first let us give thanks for the Archbishop's sticking to his original plan to make this a conference for conversation, relationship-building, and deepening of the bonds of affection. Those who would have brought this to a "tidy" end were disappointed. No votes were taken; no conclusions were reached.

On the other hand, +Rowan did weigh in during his last address, and he might rightly be accused of short-circuiting the process with his own assessment: that the only way forward was to commit ourselves to three moratoria: no more gay, partnered bishops, no more blessing of same sex unions, and no more border crossings by bishops/primates into other jurisdictions. While the focus still seems to be on the American and Canadian churches, one has to wonder if the Archbishop intends to stop same sex unions in his OWN diocese, where they occur on a regular -- and public -- basis. One of the documents coming out of Lambeth seems to indicate that even the ordination to the priesthood of gay and lesbian people is not to be tolerated -- and one has to wonder about all the gay and lesbian clergy now serving in +Rowan's own diocese (including those he, himself, has ordained).

As for the proposed Covenant, many bishops (I am told) -- and not all of them from The Episcopal Church -- expressed their difficulty with any Covenant which would create a centralized authority for the Communion, and which had more to do with punishing any Province for "coloring outside the lines" of belief and practice, than with mission.

Clearly, the value of the Conference was the sharing of stories among the bishops about how they are trying to live out the Gospel in their contexts, and how the actions of one Province affect the life and ministry of another. My diocese and I were denied that experience, and so I can only learn from the stories of those conversations from others. But this, it seems to me, is the essence of Communion. To stay independent enough to be able to follow God's will as best we can discern it, in OUR context, while staying connected and caring deeply about how that plays out across the Communion.

General Convention 2009 will be significant for the Episcopal Church. Here's what I hope for: When the Church gathers -- and remember, our Church gathers ONLY when laity, clergy AND bishops meet together -- I hope we will declare ourselves, claiming a piece of Gospel ground and standing on it.

Through the actions of our General Convention, I hope we will say to the Communion, "You know, we have listened carefully to what you have had to say to us. We deeply regret that our actions cause you distress, even a diminishment of your ability to evangelize in your context. But we must minister in and to our OWN context, as best we can discern God's will for us. We will no longer observe (or pretend to observe) the moratoria on consecrations and blessings. We will abide by our own canons which (in two different places) bar discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and if and when a partnered gay or lesbian person is

elected by the clergy and laity of a diocese, we will consider them for consent as we would any other. And we will proceed to ask the Standing Liturgical Commission, over the next triennium, to develop authorized rites for the blessing of same sex unions, to be brought back to the 2012 General Convention. This will necessarily involve our articulation of the theology of blessing which underlies this action, which you have asked for. We will no longer sacrifice the faithful gay and lesbian members of this Church for the sake of a unity we seem unable to define." That is my hope, and that is the work we have to do in preparation for the 2009 General Convention.

I went to Lambeth to do two things: to witness to the joy and Light of Christ in me, by virtue of my redemption at the hands of a loving God, and to be a gentle reminder to all those present that they have gay and lesbian members sitting in the pews of every church in every province of the Communion, and that bishops have taken vows to serve ALL (not just some) given to their care. I feel that I (and the many lgbt people present from all over the world) were able to do just that. The ways in which we failed are our responsibility; the ways in which we succeeded can only be attributed to God, who sustained and nourished us in our witness.

I cannot begin to find the words adequate to thanking all of you for your constant prayers. Your messages and good wishes have all been read by me, on a daily basis, and they have been like manna in the desert. I simply could not have done this without you. I wish that I could write to each one of you, expressing my deep appreciation, but time and energy simply will not permit it. After all, I have a "day job," and I now gladly give up being the "gay bishop," and return to simply being "the bishop" of this wonderful diocese.

I am profoundly tired, as I'm sure all the bishops are. But I return to my work in the diocese, knowing that God is working in and through us to bring about God's reign. I do not know what the future will bring for the Episcopal Church or for the Anglican Communion. What I DO know is that we are told repeatedly in scripture, including this coming Sunday's gospel, "Be not afraid." If we could but do that one thing, we would be in good shape to receive whatever God has in mind for us.

CAST OUT, BUT AT THE CENTER OF THE STORM By JOHN F. BURNS NEW YORK TIMES 8/3, 2008
 Canterbury, England For a man at the heart of a bitter dispute that threatens to sunder the Anglican communion, Bishop Gene Robinson seems more relaxed than almost any of the 650 bishops and archbishops gathered for the Lambeth Conference, the once-a-decade assembly that brings together the leaders of an estimated 80 million Anglicans worldwide.

The easy demeanor and constant smile of this openly gay 61-year-old Episcopalian bishop of New Hampshire, when we meet at the Falstaff Hotel just down the street from Canterbury Cathedral, are all the more remarkable for the fact that he is the only man among the many wearing the Anglican bishop's purple on Canterbury's streets these past two weeks who wasn't invited to the conference. Indeed, since the conference first met in 1867, he was the only Anglican bishop anywhere, except those disgraced for disputed legitimacy, malfeasance or criminality, to be told - in his case, by the Most Rev. Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury - that there was no seat for him at the Lambeth table.

Not that being the ghost at the banquet has inhibited Bishop Robinson. He may, in fact, have been the busiest prelate in town other than Archbishop Williams and in some ways the most popular, since he decided to carve out an off-stage role for himself here while on a tour that included delivering sermons in London and Glasgow.

On Canterbury's gabled streets, he has been greeted on almost every block by well-wishers. "Good for you, bishop!" a man in his 20s with fashionably blond-streaked hair shouted as the American passed on his way to the 13th-century Franciscan friary where he is staying. "Thank you, thank you," responded the bishop, beaming.

At a birthday gathering at the friary, among monks he has joined at prayer at 7 a.m. every day, everyone seemed keen to have themselves photographed with the genial man from Concord, N.H.

Bishop Robinson is used to being a standout; elected in 2003, he is the only acknowledged gay man, in an open partnership with another man, ever to serve as an Anglican bishop. That's lit a slow-burning fuse within the Anglican fold that has crept ever closer to the dynamite that could blow the worldwide communion apart. Lambeth's achievement this time, if there is one, will lie simply in the fact that Archbishop Williams - by

reworking the conference rules and procedures and abandoning any resolutions or votes so as to avoid an open showdown over homosexuality, and by keeping Bishop Robinson from entering the tent, has managed to put off, though surely not to quash altogether, the threat of open schism.

Shortly before the bishops gathered here two weeks ago, a group of traditionalist and evangelical bishops, many from Africa but some from the United States, Australia and other developed countries, met in Jerusalem to establish the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans. They resolved never to accept open homosexuality among clergy or bishops, and also rejected the notion of the archbishop of Canterbury as the communion's supreme voice.

Though the Jerusalem group denied the characterization, their group, inevitably, was seen by other Anglicans as the nascent form of a separate Anglican Communion. Their stand was followed by a boycott of Lambeth, with at least 220 bishops and primates among the 880 invited choosing to stay away. That, in itself, seemed like a defeat for Archbishop Williams, whose strategy for the conference has rested on drawing as many of the disaffected conservatives as possible to Canterbury, and drawing them into a cloistered, no-press-admitted dialogue with liberals and reformers that would foster a mood of compromise on the issue of gays and lesbians in the clergy. In effect, shutting the door on Bishop Robinson, in a letter dispatched 14 months before Lambeth convened, did little to placate the conservatives, but much that made a platform for the American.

In negotiations between Archbishop Williams's staff and three American bishops designated by Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, the consolation offered to the American for not being seated was an opportunity to be interviewed, at a conference session, by a BBC reporter. Bishop Robinson said he rejected that as falling short of the "substantive and meaningful" role he wanted, but said he had urged other Episcopalian bishops, at a meeting this spring in Navasota, Tex., not to boycott Lambeth on his behalf. In the end, 150 American bishops came, led by Bishop Jefferts Schori.

Bishop Robinson characterized the role he fashioned for himself here as nonconfrontational. "I think the leadership here expected me to show up, and protest, and try to wrestle the microphone from Archbishop Rowan, or try to get into meetings to which I wasn't invited, and I've done none of these things," he said. Instead, he said, what he had sought with his gadfly presence was "to bear witness to the love of God I know as a follower of Jesus Christ, and to be a constant reminder to the bishops gathered here that there are gay and lesbian Christians sitting in the pews in every one of their churches, and that they have taken vows to serve all in their flock."

Talking in the courtyard of the Falstaff, founded as a 15th-century pilgrims' inn, it seemed natural to ask whether he saw himself in the mold of Thomas à Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury who was martyred in the cathedral a slingshot away. "Heavens no!" he said, chuckling, "I have no aspirations of that kind at all, only to be a good bishop." To make the point, he gestured to a burly British Army veteran seated close by, hired as his security companion for the tour, and cited the fact that he and his partner, Mark Andrew, wore bulletproof vests at his consecration five years ago.

By Bishop Robinson's estimate, at least some countries represented at the Lambeth meeting have the death penalty for homosexuality, while about 25 others make same-sex relationships punishable by imprisonment. But he said that at least some conservative bishops seemed open to dialogue. American bishops have held two evening sessions to introduce Bishop Robinson to non-Americans at the conference; these have drawn about 200 bishops and their spouses, including some from African provinces that have been strongly hostile to compromise on homosexuality.

"A goodly number of the bishops took a considerable risk by being there," the bishop said. "There were those among them who spoke very movingly, and without rancor, of the problems my consecration has posed for them. Afterwards, they told me they would pray for me, and asked me to pray for them."

If there was any edge to the bishop's feelings, and it was only fleeting, it came in his references to Archbishop Williams. As an Oxford-and-Cambridge educated theologian, the 58-year-old archbishop gained a reputation as a deep-thinking liberal, strongly sympathetic to gay rights, and underscored that as archbishop of Wales by appointing openly gay men to the clergy. "We were dancing in the streets when Archbishop Rowan was appointed," Bishop Robinson said of the prelate's elevation to the Canterbury seat in 2003. But then came the archbishop's efforts to placate the conservatives, and his denial of a Lambeth invitation to Bishop Robinson.

The two men have met only once, in 2005, and that meeting, Bishop Robinson said, was held at the deanery of St. Paul's Cathedral, not at Lambeth Palace, to avoid any chance of it being noticed by the British press. He said he sympathized with the archbishop, who had been placed in "an impossible position" by the uncompromising attitude that hard-line conservatives in the communion had taken on homosexuality. But by excluding him, the American said, the archbishop had made a strategic miscalculation. "In the end, the conservatives didn't come to the conference anyway, only proving that bullies never get enough," he said. "They always come back for more."

from Series: FACE TO FAITH

The needs of young people brought up in homonegative faiths are being neglected, says Bernard Ratigan
The Guardian, Saturday August 9 2008

· Dr Bernard Ratigan is a member of the Roman Catholic caucus of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement and of the International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy.

The Lambeth conference has come and gone. Some bishops never even came and some who came were very angry that "the gay issue" had monopolised the media coverage. Some bishops wanted to distance their churches from being labelled soft on homosexuality, as they feared it would make their situations back home (even) more difficult. It was even said that because there is an openly gay - democratically elected - bishop in the US and some dioceses bless same-sex relationships, the Anglican communion risked being called "a gay church". Cynically, the Vatican, which does not even recognise that Anglican orders are valid, stoked the flames of homonegativity by warning that the Anglicans were putting themselves even further from the one true church.

From a psychotherapeutic point of view, one of the risk factors for mental health difficulties among gay and lesbian people is growing up, and remaining, in one of the toxic versions of the monotheistic religions. The Abrahamic faiths - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - all have early texts that can be read as forbidding same-sex sexual activities, although the Hebrew Bible does have some notable male/male and female/female relationships.

In my clinical work, I am often struck by how some gay and lesbian patients from these backgrounds seem to home in and have a detailed grasp of relatively few lines of admonitions, and a much less extensive understanding of the overall message of their scriptures. Religious professionals sometimes reflect this narrow focus in a preoccupation with aspects of genital - usually anal - sexuality. As usual, it is a preoccupation by male religious professionals with what they see as transgressive male sexuality; the experience of lesbians' sexuality is still largely ignored.

Psychoanalysis can be seen as the fruit of the first two of these Abrahamic faiths, albeit it in secular raiment, and has had to make its own adjustments to the development of its doctrines, especially about sexuality. Freud came out of a 19th-century science that saw sex as the product of biology and evolution: primarily, the sexual drive and coitus were only for procreation. It was not until psychoanalysts like Klein, Fairbairn and Winnicott that a "relational turn" was taken, seeing human beings as relationship-seeking creatures. Gradually, psychoanalysis has had to come to terms with Freud's radical, disturbing ideas on sexuality such as the continuum between heterosexuality and homosexuality (universal bisexuality), and the capacity of the human infant and adult to be sexually excited by almost anything in their universe (polymorphous perversity). Although many of Freud's ideas have been disseminated into western culture, there seems some way to go to helping those trapped in the grip of a narrow reading of the problematic texts in the Hebrew, Greek and Arabic scriptures to move, as psychoanalysis is having to do, to deeper understandings that start from observation rather than dogma.

In Leicester, where I work, it is not unusual for sexual-minority teenagers and young adults from the black and ethnic minority communities to seek consultations after getting little satisfaction from their religious professionals and GPs. The web is an invaluable aid for young adults, helping them find confidential sources that will take their concerns seriously without making judgments. A frequently posed question is: if my faith is wrong about my sexuality, where does this leave me?

Perhaps the government's communities initiative needs to start addressing the needs of sexual-minority young people from homonegative faith backgrounds and stop pandering to the frank homophobia exposed by some of the religious professionals and community spokespersons of all the Abrahamic faiths.

Lambeth Conference



Grown to this: Dr Carey (centre) with the participants of Lambeth '98

many subjects. Some of the observations now seem to be period pieces: and perhaps not many people ever read all the 446 pages of *History of the Lambeth Conferences*, published as early as 1920, or can remember all the resolutions collected in a volume of 1992. But it has surely been right to show awareness of contemporary problems. Would that all bishops' councils in the past had had their feet on the earth!

SOME of the problems have more or less defeated the bishops, very understandably. In 1930, it was agreed that "war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ;" yet no Conference has corporately embraced pacifism, or even nuclear pacifism. But the bishops have gone on hoping, as they did

when they declared that "men's minds are more and more set towards the spiritual" — six years before the First World War.

Sometimes moral teaching has been clarified or changed in ways that can be understood by the public. The classic example is provided by contraceptives. In 1908, these were thought to produce "nervous enfeeblement", possibly even "insanity". In 1920, they were "incentives to vice". But in 1930 their use became a matter for each couple to decide for themselves, "as in the sight of God". The bishops who said that officially were saying something that, at that date, was bold.

Sometimes, Christian morality has been upheld in some tension with the powers that be, to whom, as history shows, bishops can be attracted. It is impressive to see how consistent has been the denunciation of racism, even

'Some problems have defeated the bishops, understandably'

in the days when the British Empire was at its height; and (partly for this reason) the bishops could record with satisfaction "the extent, the power and the influence of the great Anglican Communion" (in 1888).

For obviously good reasons, much attention has been paid to difficult questions about the internal organisation and the ecumenical role of the Communion itself, now global. As the Canadians had to be told in 1867 that no Lambeth Conference could silence the liberals in the C of E, so there could be no English prohibition of the ordination of women as priests and bishops after initiatives taken in North America.

As a balance to their display of diversity (they were divided over the Church of South India's reunion long before they were divided over the ordination of women), they have set

an example in praying and living together; and the best thing they have ever done was their "Appeal to All Christian People" for the unity of a Bible-based and reality-big Catholic Church in 1920.

Both the 1978 and the 1988 Conferences showed the great value of having more time for prayer, Bible study, and human fellowship by meeting in the University of Kent at Canterbury, instead of having to travel to and from somewhat parliamentary proceedings in the centre of London. Both Conferences had to deal with the deep division caused by the actions of some Anglican provinces in admitting women to the priesthood.

Neither Conference could look to the Church of England for confident

Continued overleaf

complying with law — acceptance of its value, threats of sanction, or inertia — law-compliant acts are not fully Christian unless performed with a proper inner disposition (the pneumatology of canon law).

It might be said, then, that a Church without law is a Church without action, and so laws often become a *habitus mentis*.

Lambeth 2008 could be informed by these ideas and experiences: law is a pervasive, natural, and flexible instrument for action in the mission of the Church.

4. Laws facilitate and order communion and mission. Each Anglican Church is itself a communion of its faithful (in parish, diocese, and province). While life is sustained by the Spirit, law provides the facilities and minimal conditions under which this personal communion is worked out.

This points perhaps to the sacramental quality of law. In turn, facility and order are key concepts used by synods to shape law, in the form of rights and duties, principles and rules. Law provides facilities for the mutual relations of the faithful to serve God and the world; it gives meaning to these facilities by (for example) assigning tasks, conferring jurisdiction, and defining relationships — what we owe each other. It enables us to practise communion. As it is binding upon us through commitments, so it binds us together in our common Christian calling.

At the same time, law is also an instrument of ecclesial order, organisation, and discipline: it exists to serve the integrity of the faith, sacraments and mission, to promote Christian values (including the dignity of persons), and to prevent and resolve conflict.

In these senses the law has an educative, pastoral, and protective function, but it does not replace faith, grace, and charity. It is no accident that some describe church polity as covenantal — as a consensual compact.

A Church without law (and the will and means to enforce it) is a Church without order; and denying a Church its authority is tantamount to repudiation of the rule of law.

Doubtless Lambeth 2008 will bring these ideas to its own discussions of canon law and covenant: the global Anglican Communion is, after all, something of a macrocosm of the local church. The canon-law principles and the proposed Covenant merely seek similar facilities and order at the global level of the Communion.

Likewise, the instruments of other global ecclesial communities, such as the constitutions of the Lutheran World Federation and World Alliance of Reformed Churches, seek unity, honour autonomy, and enable common action in their respective fellowships.

5. Laws sharpen an understanding of Anglican identity, and thus assist ecumenical dialogue. On the one hand, law is essential for the self-understanding of a Church (its ecclesiality). The law actually spells out the character of a Church — its view of its institutional organisation, ministry, ritual, and so on.

Indeed, it could be said that it is to the law-book of a Church that we must turn for an understanding of its sociality, apostolicity, and catholicity. The law defines all these.

The bishops at Lambeth 2008 might approach the canon-law principles and Covenant similarly —

they also aim to spell out Anglicanism at its global level. Consequently, both the canonical principles and proposed covenant would provide an aid for ecumenical partners seeking a global understanding of Anglicanism beyond doctrine or belief and into the realm of action.

Consulting the texts reveals a host of insights into Anglicanism. Who knows? The principles project might even offer a model for the wider ecumenical enterprise. Comparing laws ecumenically would reveal many shared experiences and values, and thus, despite differences in doctrine, reveal practical avenues for greater visible unity.

AT LAMBETH 2008, then, the bishops will reflect theologically — in the light of scripture, tradition, and

reason — on the statement of principles of canon law common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion and the proposed Anglican Covenant.

The canon-law principles and the draft Covenant are similar to provincial laws in nature (consensual), form (now textual), basis (theology), subject-matter (ministry, doctrine, liturgy, and governance), and purpose (communion and mission). The difference is that only provincial laws are currently enforceable juridically.

Lambeth 2008 is an opportunity to look internationally at the canonical principles and the Covenant in the light of the five key marks of the local law in each Church listed above: the law-book is a central text in the life of the Church; church law implements

theology; law is about action; law seeks to facilitate and order communion and mission; and law articulates identity and, as such, assists mutual understanding for ecumenical advancement.

Above all, law is the servant of the Church. But without it, provinces would be less than Churches.

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