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Wednesday 23 July '08

We are pleased to bring you today's thoughts and information to guide your prayers over the proceedings at the 2008 Lambeth Conference.

A large area of the Canterbury campus is designated '**The Market Place**'. Here a kaleidoscope of organisations and pressure groups have their stands and mingle with the bishops.

The 60 stalls are a mixture of commercial and charitable organisations. Need some Holy Socks; a new Mitre; more theology books?

[SOMA UK](#) has such a base (their allocated space is a bit on the edge and gets very hot when the sun shines).

Some of the African bishops attending Lambeth have been a bit dismayed by the preponderance of stalls advocating homosexuality and other questionable matters. However, the varied fringe activities are not confined to the Market Place.

Most days, there is an array of evening options to choose from. We ask you to remember these events in your prayers also.

Today, delegates could take part in:

A candle-lit pilgrimage round the cathedral.

A reception by the Bishop of London, on behalf of the Prayer Book Society.

An award winning documentary in which gay and lesbian Anglicans tell their stories.

Contemplation in Quiet Gardens.

A conversation with Bishop Gene Robinson.

An introduction to the ALPHA course.

And much more.

We hope these descriptions give you a flavour of Lambeth.

As for the main programme, on Thursday, there is a break from the Indabas - when the bishops have a Day in London. This will include coach transfer to the capital; a March of Witness from Whitehall to Lambeth Palace, followed by a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace with the Queen.

Pray that the bishops, and spouses, get some sleep amid this busy daily programme!

Thank you again for your prayers and [feedback](#).

John Simons (on behalf of the team)



Today in Lambeth

■ Wednesday's Agenda:

Here is today's agenda. **HINT!** - If the image is not displaying below, you may need to 'right click' to download the graphic, or check your email software settings. Click 'Print Version' above to print the Prayer Bulletin.

Wednesday 23rd July 2008

ORDINARY DAY 3: TRANSFORMING SOCIETY: THE BISHOP AND SOCIAL JUSTICE			
TIME	EVENT	DETAILS	LOCATION
06:30	Morning Prayer	With the Chaplaincy Team	Prayer Place
07:15	Morning Worship	Eucharist: Iglesia episcopal de Cuba with other Spanish-speaking Bishops	Big Top
08:15	Breakfast		Eliot/Rutherford Dining Rooms
09:15	Bible Study Groups	John 8 : 1 – 20 Again Jesus spoke to them saying, 'I am the light of the world'	Allocated Bible Study Rooms in Eliot
10:30	Tea		Keynes Lobby
11:00	Indaba Groups	Transforming Society – The Bishop and Social Justice	Keynes Building
13:00	Lunch		Eliot/Rutherford Dining Rooms and other outlets
14:00	Hearings	Windsor Continuation Group	Spouses' Main Venue
Free Time			
15:30	Tea		Keynes Lobby
16:00	Self-Select Sessions	See details on pages 24 – 41	Various
17:45	Evening Worship	Jerusalem and the Middle East	Big Top
19:00	Evening Meal		Eliot/Rutherford Dining Rooms
Free Evening – Fringe Events – See pages 83 – 91			
21:45	Night Prayer		Prayer Place

Pray: Please feel free to use the agenda in whatever way you like to prompt your prayer cover over the day's proceedings. Click the more link to the right to find more information from the main Lambeth Conference website.

[More:](#)

■ Understanding Anglican mathematical mysteries (and other enigmas)

It is now widely recognised that a seismic shift is taking place in global Christianity. The numerical heartlands of the Christian Church are no longer in the West, but in Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia. The recent [Gafcon](#) (Global Anglican Future Conference) may well be an indicator of this. It represented nearly one half of the Anglican Communion with bishops and church leaders from the majority world leading the way. Hence it seems very regrettable that most of this constituency has boycotted Lambeth 2008 (though one understands the reasons for their stance).

They claim that this conference signals a move towards a post-colonial world where the Archbishop of Canterbury is not the only arbiter of what it means to be Anglican. Many of these churches display a vitality, joy and dynamism that we are not used to in the Church of England. Perhaps they also model a joy in worship, a dependency on God and a gratitude for daily life that are lost in our corporate memory. The typical media stereotype of the dwindling Church of England would perhaps be an elderly woman dressed soberly. In fact, believe it or not, the average Anglican on this planet today is black, female and in her late teens or early twenties!

The 650 plus bishops at Canterbury represent a mere 15 million Anglicans worldwide. England, the US and Canada have the most bishops present - and the most liberals - but representing only 4% of the Anglican Communion! By contrast, the earlier GAFCON alternative conference in Jerusalem (the evangelical dissenting group) had 303 bishops attending, but who represented 75% of the Anglican Communion's 55 million members. Because of the absence of the GAFCON leaders, Liberal voices (although a minority) are likely to be loudest at the Indaba tables over the next twelve days.

I write as an Englishman, with many American friends, and who has enjoyed the hospitality one experiences in that warm nation. I know that many American Christians are distressed by the liberal developments in [TEC \(The Episcopal Church\)](#). I hope I can avoid over-generalizations. However, although the USA (and Canada) represent such a tiny proportion of world Anglicanism, they have a wildly disproportionate number of bishops - over 100 are at Canterbury. Around the world, many archdeacons have larger numerical responsibilities than the multiplied American bishops who have small dioceses. At home, their leaders seek to drive out conservative Bible-loyal clergy and congregations; at Lambeth they come well-organised to influence the outcome of the Conference in a liberal direction. Apparently, all TEC bishops have been centrally briefed as to how to stay 'on message' – and they have even been issued with UK mobile phones so as to confer as to how to shape proceedings as Lambeth unfolds.

Their core theme of 'celebrating both unity and diversity' seems unexceptionable. However, when unpacked, it means that on our respective journeys of faith, we are not called to agree, but to love, live and let live, and be tolerant. "All you need is love", as the Beatles sang. TEC's leadership is advocating not a form of communion but a form of federation joined by affection, even love, but not by mutually recognized forms of belief and practice, based on Scripture. TEC's gospel message is not in the first instance one about the saving power of Christ's death and resurrection but about a moral responsibility for the ills of the world. One's concern is that in TEC's rendition of the gospel, the tail is wagging the dog and not the dog the tail. The implication is that the mission of the church has nothing to do with the matters that now so divide the Communion—that we can do mission while in fundamental disagreement about the content of the Christian gospel. This half-truth equates the Christian gospel with a moral agenda of peace and justice – but is as false as it would be to say that the Christian gospel has nothing to do with peace and justice. They view their enlightenment as a release and emancipation from the narrow out-moded beliefs, and ethical practices of evangelicals in the west and the naive and primitive outlook of third world Christian leaders – which, given time and a shove at Lambeth, will sooner or later yield to their liberal revisions.

In [Bulletin 04](#), reference was made to a picture of a wonky shopping trolley, with one wheel severely warped. Such trolleys are difficult to steer - and are frustrating. This was likened to a 25% loss of the founding 'Lambeth Quadrilateral'. (This image had a ready affinity with Tom Wright's analogy of an impending Anglican slow-motion train crash).



Much of the feedback we have received from around the Anglican world, has been very positive about this analogy.

However, one reader comments, reasonably, that the Lambeth Quad is 'not an adequate description of Anglicanism.' He argues that the LQ makes no mention of tradition, which is wider than the creeds, nor of reason. Neither does it include key human qualities - tolerance, openness, and humility before the truth (though I would say that such qualities are also both implicit and explicit in the Bible narratives). Such Internet responses illustrate the kind of discussions that will take place around the Indaba tables as the bishops talk together in groups of forty for the next twelve days.

I hope that recipients of [praylambeth bulletins](#) will accept that our standpoint is not at all anti-American, but pro-Gospel - we believe that the faith has been delivered to the saints, and that we are to guard the treasure entrusted to us (2 Tim 1:14). We do not want a wheel of the Anglican trolley to be chopped off - we want it mended and re-aligned with the Word of God. As Jesus said to all of his followers: (Matt 6:22) 'if the light that is in you is actually darkness, how great is that darkness'.

This background article is indebted to contributions from the Anglican Communion Institute (Enlightened American Episcopalianism, which can be viewed at <http://anglicancommunioninstitute.com/content/view/154/1/>). The over-view of the TEC's theological agenda and strategy for Lambeth can be navigated to at <http://anglicancommunioninstitute.com/content/view/155/1/>

Pray: for all concerned that they may 'test all things and hold fast to what is good', with the help of the Holy Spirit, and for the welfare of God's people in their pastoral care.

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From the Conference...

■ Eleven Questions and a Primate - but no funeral pyre for the Anglican family as yet

Yesterday, those linked with [praylambeth](#) were asked to pray for the media who are covering Lambeth 2008. The first Press Briefing has now taken place.

The Archbishop gained praise from the journalists for not dodging any questions.

Asked about the Indaba (see [Bulletin 05](#)) he said that the old methods had not worked. It was worth the chance to try something new that would reflect every person's understanding. "We must have unity that is formed not by coercion but by consent".

Asked why the gay Bishop Gene Robinson was not invited but his consecrators were, Rowan replied: "I faced that question squarely. Some of his consecrators have expressed sorrow and asked for forgiveness; some have retired. The American church through their house of Bishops asked for forgiveness and I sent their letter to each Primate. Just over 50% felt it was an adequate response, as did the Joint Standing Committee. So, they were invited."

To view the eleven questions, and the replies, please [click here](#). You can also read his Presidential Address at the same address.

Pray:

Pray for Rowan Williams and his wife Jane.

Pray for Rowan in his vocation as first among equals, in the Anglican leadership.

Pray that he may have wisdom and discernment in his relations with colleagues, synods; the secular press, the monarch and the government.

Pray for him as a Christian apologist and theologian, that he may be faithful to the faith once delivered to the saints.

Pray that he may be an instrument of peace and a channel of truth.

Pray for Rowan as a family man, with his wife Jane and their children.

Pray for health and protection for the whole family - and enough energy to run the race set before them.

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