



Pray Lambeth Bulletin is Produced by SOMA UK and Crosswinds Prayer Trust

ISSUE 14

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Thursday 31 July '08

This Bulletin provides an opportunity to read, for yourself, the passionate address delivered by Archbishop Rowan Williams on Tuesday evening.

Most of the media have provided summaries, only a few honourable exceptions have done more. The primatial address is eloquent and powerful. But will it be effective?

In Bulletin 12, a comparison was made between the recent inferno at Weston's pier (icon of a seaside town) and Lambeth (icon of the global Anglican Communion). The point of the analogy was that, in both cases, there is actually much more to Weston, and to Anglicanism, than these 'flagships' (much though the icons are missed if destroyed).

As I walked past the smouldering pier on Monday, and trained binoculars on the twisted metal skeleton, I noticed that burning debris was still falling below the Victorian pillars. By then the tide was rolling in. I was struck by the spectacle that each burning ember, large or small, was instantly extinguished as it struck the sea.

There is a lot of anger at Canterbury this week - and the fall-out is unlikely to leave the Communion unscathed, unless there is repentance and reconciliation.

So this Bulletin asks intercessors to pray that the Lord will graciously send a measure of new love for one another - so that the bishops may attain to speaking truth in love, rather than parting in anger and bitterness.

If this sounds a tough call to pray for, well, nothing is too hard for the Lord. He has an ocean of love and grace, if we ask. A preventable funeral pyre of the Lambeth conference is surely worth praying for. Weston Pier, sad to record, had no sprinkler system. If we entreat the Lord in prayer, perhaps such intercessions could be the Anglican sprinkler system that will yet make a difference?

Is it not time for the Archbishop to call the whole Conference to get on its knees and pray for humility and wisdom beyond its own?

Thank you for your continued prayers and partnership with us in Pray Lambeth. [Feedback is welcome.](#)

John Simons (on behalf of the team)



Today in Lambeth

■ Thursday's Agenda:

Here is Thursday'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.

Thursday 31st July 2008

ORDINARY DAY 8 LISTENING TO GOD AND EACH OTHER: THE BISHOP AND HUMAN SEXUALITY			
TIME	EVENT	DETAILS	LOCATION
06:30	Morning Prayer	With the Chaplaincy Team	Prayer Place
07:15	Morning Worship	Eucharist: The Anglican Church of Burundi	Big Top
08:15	Breakfast		Eliot/Rutherford Dining Rooms
09:15	Bible Study Groups	John 13 : 31 – 14 : 14 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life'	Allocated Bible Study Rooms in Eliot
10:30	Tea		Keynes Lobby
11:00	Indaba Group	Listening to God and Each Other – The Bishop and human sexuality	Keynes Building
13:00	Lunch		Eliot/Rutherford Dining Rooms and other outlets
14:00	Hearings	Conference Reflections 3	Spouses' Main Venue
15:30	Tea		Keynes Lobby
16:00	Self-Select Sessions	See details on pages 24 – 41	Various
17:45	Evening Worship	Informal – Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia	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 further information from the main Lambeth Conference website.

[More:](#)

[Return to Top](#)

From the Conference...

■ The Archbishop of Canterbury Second Presidential Address to the Lambeth Conference 2008

It does not take long to read the full text of Rowan Williams' address. To relate to the feedback in this Bulletin, please read this first.

What is Lambeth '08 going to say?' is the question looming larger all the time as this final week unfolds. But before trying out any thoughts on that, I want to touch on the prior question, a question that could be expressed as 'Where is Lambeth '08 going to speak from?'. I believe if we can answer that adequately, we shall have laid some firm foundations for whatever content there will be.

And the answer, I hope, is that we speak from the centre. I don't mean speaking from the middle point between two extremes - that just creates another sort of political alignment. I mean that we should try to speak from the heart of our identity as Anglicans; and ultimately from that deepest centre which is our awareness of living in and as the Body of Christ.

We are here at all, surely, because we believe there is an Anglican identity and that it's worth investing our time and energy in it. I hope that some of the experience of this Conference will have reinforced that sense. And I hope too that we all acknowledge that the only responsible and Christian way of going on engaging with those who aren't here is by speaking from that centre in Jesus Christ where we all see our lives held and focused.

And, as I suggested in my opening address, speaking from the centre requires habits and practices and disciplines that make some demands upon everyone - not because something alien is being imposed, but because we know we shall only keep ourselves focused on the centre by attention and respect for each other - checking the natural instinct on all sides to cling to one dimension of the truth revealed. I spoke about council and covenant as the shape of the way forward as I see it. And by this I meant, first, that we needed a bit more of a structure in our international affairs to be able to give clear guidance on what would and would not be a grave and lasting divisive course of action by a local church. While at the moment the focus of this sort of question is sexual ethics, it could just as well be pressure for a new baptismal formula or the abandonment of formal reference to the Nicene Creed in a local church's formulations; it could be a degree of variance in sacramental practice - about the elements of the Eucharist or lay presidency; it could be the regular incorporation into liturgy of non-Scriptural or even non-Christian material.

Some of these questions have a pretty clear answer, but others are open for a little more discussion; and it seems obvious that a body which commands real confidence and whose authority is recognised could help us greatly. But the key points are confidence and authority. If we do develop such a capacity in our structures, we need as a Communion to agree what sort of weight its decisions will have; hence, again, the desirability of a covenantal agreement.

Some have expressed unhappiness about the 'legalism' implied in a covenant. But we should be clear that good law is about guaranteeing consistence and fairness in a community; and also that in a community like the Anglican family, it can only work when there is free acceptance. Properly understood, a covenant is an expression of mutual generosity - indeed, 'generous



love', to borrow the title of the excellent document on Inter-Faith issues which was discussed yesterday. And we might recall that powerful formulation from Rabbi Jonathan Sacks - 'Covenant is the redemption of solitude'.

Mutual generosity: part of what this means is finding out what the other person or group really means and really needs. The process of this last ten days has been designed to help us to find out something of this - so that when we do address divisive issues, we have created enough of a community for an intelligent generosity to be born. It is by no means a full agreement, but it will, I hope, have strengthened the sense that we have at least a common language, born out of the conviction that Jesus Christ remains the one unique centre.

And within that conviction, what has been heard? I want now to engage in what might be a rather presumptuous exercise - and certainly feels like a risky one. I want to imagine what people on different sides of our most painful current debate hope others have heard or are beginning to hear in our time together. I want to imagine what the main messages would be, within an atmosphere of patience and charity, from those in our Communion who hold to a clear and traditional doctrinal and moral conviction, and also from those who, starting from the same centre, find fewer problems or none with some recent innovations. Although these voices are inevitably rooted in the experience of the developing world and of North America, the division runs through many other provinces internally as well.

So first: what might the traditional believer hope others have heard? 'What we seek to do in our context is faithfully to pass on what you passed on to us - Holy Scripture, apostolic ministry, sacramental discipline. But what are we to think when all these things seem to be questioned and even overturned? We want to be pastorally caring to all, to be "inclusive" as you like to say. We want to welcome everyone. Yet the gospel and the faith you passed on to us tell us that some kinds of behaviour and relationship are not blessed by God. Our love and our welcome are unreal if we don't truthfully let others know what has shaped and directed our lives - so along with welcome, we must still challenge people to change their ways. We don't see why welcoming the gay or lesbian person with love must mean blessing what they do in the Church's name or accepting them for ordination whatever their lifestyle. We seek to love them - and, all right, we don't always make a good job of it : but we can't just say that there is nothing to challenge. Isn't it like the dilemma of the early Church - welcoming soldiers, yet seeking to get them to lay down their arms?

'But please remember also that - while you may say that what you do needn't affect us - your decisions make a vast difference to us. In this world of instant communication, our neighbours know what you do, and they see us as sharing the responsibility. Imagine what that means where those neighbours are passionately traditional Christians - and what it means for our own members, who will be drawn to leave us for a "safer", more orthodox church. Imagine what it means when those neighbours are non-Christians, delighted to find a stick to beat us with. Imagine what it is to be known as the 'gay church' in a context where that spells real contempt and danger.

'Don't misunderstand us. We're not looking for safety and comfort. Some of us know quite a lot about carrying the cross. But when that cross is laid on us by fellow-Christians, it's quite a lot harder to bear. Don't be too surprised if some of us want to be at a distance from you - or if we want to support minorities in your midst who seem to us to be suffering.

'But we are here. We've taken a risk in coming, because many who think like us feel we've betrayed them just by meeting you. But we value our Communion, we want to understand you and we want you to understand us. Can you find some way of being generous that helps us believe you care about us and about the common language and belief of the Church? Can you - in plain words - step back and let us think and pray about these things without giving us the impression that the debate is over and we've lost and that doesn't matter to you?'

And then: what might the not so traditional believer hope has been heard?

'What we seek to do in our context is to bring Jesus alive in the minds and hearts of the people of our culture. Trying to speak the language of the culture and relate honestly to where people really are doesn't have to be a betrayal of Scripture and tradition. We know we're pushing the boundaries - but don't some Christians always have to do that? Doesn't the Bible itself suggest that?

'We are often hurt, angry and bewildered at the way many others in the Communion see us and treat us these days - as if we were spiritual lepers or traitors to every aspect of Christian belief. We know that no-one is the best judge in their own case, but we see in our church life at least some marks of the Spirit's gifts. And part of that is acknowledging the gifts we've seen in gay and lesbian believers. They will certainly be likely to feel that the restraint you ask for is a betrayal. Please try to see why this is such a dilemma for many of us. You may not see it, but they're still at risk in our society, still vulnerable to murderous violence. And we have to say to some of you that we long for you to speak up for your gay and lesbian neighbours in situations where they are subject to appalling discrimination. There have been Lambeth Resolutions about that too, remember.

'A lot of the time, we feel we're being made scapegoats. Other provinces have acute moral and disciplinary problems, or else they more or less successfully refuse to admit the realities in their midst. But those of us who have faced the complex issues around gay relationships in what we feel to be an open and prayerful way are stigmatised and demonised.

'Not all of us, of course, supported or took part in the actions that have caused so much trouble. Some of us remain strongly opposed, many of us want to find ways of strengthening our bonds with you. But even those who don't stand with the majority on innovations will often feel that the life of a whole church, a life that is varied and complex but often deeply and creatively faithful to Christ and the Scriptures, is being wrongly and unjustly seen by you and some of your friends.

'We want to be generous, and we are hurt that some throw back in our faces both the experience and the resources we long to share. Can you try and see us as fellow-believers struggling to proclaim the same Christ, and to be patient with us?'

Two sets of feelings and perceptions, two appeals for generosity. For the first speaker, the cost of generosity may be accusation of compromise: you've been bought, you've been deceived by airy talk into tolerating unscriptural and unfaithful policies. For the second speaker, the cost of generosity may be accusations of sacrificing the needs of an oppressed group for the sake of a false or delusional unity, giving up a precious Anglican principle for the sake of a dangerous centralisation. But there is the challenge. If both were able to hear and to respond generously, perhaps we could have something more like a conversation of equals - even something more like a Church.

At Dar-es-Salaam, the primates tried to find a way of inviting different groups to take a step forward simultaneously towards each other. It didn't happen, and each group was content to blame the other. But the last 18 months don't suggest that this was a good outcome. Can this Conference now put the same kind of challenge? To the innovator, can we say, 'Don't isolate yourself; don't create facts on the ground that make the invitation to debate ring a bit hollow'? Can we say to the traditionalist, 'Don't invest everything in a church of pure and likeminded souls; try to understand the pastoral and human and theological issues that are urgent for those you are opposing, even if you think them deeply wrong'?

I think we perhaps can, if and only if we are captured by the vision of the true Centre, the heart of God out of which flows the impulse of an eternal generosity which creates and heals and promises. It is this generosity which sustains our mission and service in Our Lord's name. And it is this we are called to show to each other.

At the moment, we seem often to be threatening death to each other, not offering life. What some see as confused or reckless innovation in some provinces is felt as a body-blow to the integrity of mission and a matter of literal physical risk to Christians. The reaction to this is in turn felt as an annihilating judgement on a whole local church, undermining its legitimacy and pouring scorn on its witness. We need to speak life to each other; and that means change. I've made no secret of what I think that change should be - a Covenant that recognizes the need to grow towards each other (and also recognizes that not all may choose that way). I find it hard at present to see another way forward that would avoid further disintegration. But whatever your views on this, at least ask the question: 'Having heard the other person, the other group, as fully and fairly as I can, what generous initiative can I take to break through into a new and transformed relation of communion in Christ?'

Pray: that, during the remaining days of the Conference the warning that 'warring factions are threatening death to each other, not offering life' will abate.

[More:](#)

■ A small cross-section of responses to Rowan Williams' Address

Almost without exception, respondents were respectful of RW's passion and integrity. However, a high proportion questioned whether the speech would bring results.

"The Archbishop is in the position of Eli, having for too long allowed his sons to do evil, and failed to exercise restraint"

"As the old saying goes, to try and write with a broken pencil is pointless"

"Rowan still has influence, especially among the liberals, but he does not appear to be keen to use it - if he said 'this is wrong' it could yet have an effect on them?."

Rowan Williams needs to identify which kinds of behaviour and relationship are not blessed by God. Perhaps there is a parallel with King Solomon, faced with the rival mothers, and deciding to split the baby.

There is no 'via media' between liberals and evangelicals. It's not that the two "sides" share fundamentals and need to work from them to address differences over secondary matters -- rather, the two sides differ over the fundamentals themselves. Appeasement won't work. The real issue is not sexual ethics -- it is biblical authority.

The Communion is in danger of abandoning bedrock principle -- the aim seems to be to achieve the appearance of peace and harmony by any means. But a cosy consensus is not possible. The trouble with a speech built round "on the one hand" and then "on the other hand" is that the two hands don't meet.

In those days, there was no leader in Israel. Every one did as they pleased (Judges 17:6)

Those who have decided to distance themselves from Canterbury and certain of the Anglican Communion's provinces will only continue to move farther and farther away -- like stars that have escaped the gravitational pull of the larger star. If TEC leaves it will not last long without the oxygen of the wider Communion. It should prepare to become a small fish in a large pool -- in which many predators lurk.

Pray: Grant that the Archbishop, sharing the helm with his fellow-Primates, will be able to steer the foundering ship 'Anglican Communion' away from the rocks of anger, despair and breakup.

■ 'We are the Vine' a glimpse of creativity at the Spouses Conference

Linda Baines had been asked to come up with an art activity that the Spouses could do together. In order to help her thinking she had been looking at the 'I am's' from John's Gospel which were to be the basis of the Bible studies. But her holiday in Italy with her husband, Nick Baines who is the Bishop of Croydon in South London, England, brought the vines to life for her and so the idea of the vine activity for the spouses was born. Linda worked on the project with Rosemary Butler, Rebecca Cotterill and many others. Together they developed the idea and collected the materials that would be used and set it up when they arrived.

Linda made the structure for the vine which she brought to the Conference and erected in the Spouses venue and each spouse was asked to make a leaf or leaves to add to the frame throughout the Conference.

Linda had been asked to help with the art project for the spouses because she has recently finished a degree in Art for Public Space. She works part time as a health visitor in London and spends other time on her art projects and has undertaken a couple of such projects in her home diocese.

This is, she says, a 'big project' as it is something that everyone can do in one way or another and all the contributions become a whole.

Each of the tables in the Spouses venue were given a box of materials so that the people on the table could choose the materials that they wished to use for their leaf. Linda said that she had been 'amazed at the difference in what each person had made'.

Linda speaks of this as 'a different way of communicating' and the activity of leaf making gave the spouses something to do whilst sharing stories from back home. Some came back and sat all afternoon on the first day that the vine was introduced and in that way Linda says that 'the activity has met all my expectations'.

'The process and not the product is what is important' says Linda, but the vine, which is made from all recycled materials, is a beautiful focal point within the Spouses venue.

'It will live on in people's memory,' Linda says. But, just in case they want a more tangible reminder, the vine will be photographed and made into a book mark – which will also contain the Spouses conference prayer, written by Rev. Rose Hudson Wilkins. Each spouse will be given one to take home from the Conference to remind them of the spouses whom they have met and shared with during their time in Canterbury.

Pray: Thank you Lord for the originality of this venture to express oneness in Christ. Grant that the Vine will bear fruit in the years to come.

[More:](#)

Rape and the abuse of power: bringing it home to the bishops

RAPE is one of the biggest problems in Africa, including in the church, Dr Maria Akrofi, wife of the Bishop of Accra, told a press conference on Tuesday. An anaesthetist who works both in Accra and in Liverpool, she pulled no punches with a forthright declaration of the need to address abuse of power and the hidden problem of domestic violence.

Bishops and spouses set aside the whole day to reflect together on the issues, something which Jane Williams described as "a genuinely humble gesture on behalf of the Bishops Design Group." Men were reported to have been in tears after a live performance on the theme by the Riding Lights Theatre Company.

Domestic violence could be verbal, psychological, physical or spiritual – the worst form, said Dr Akrofi. "Because if it happens in the church and your husband happens to be the pastor or the bishop, you don't have anywhere else to go... You sit there and hide your brokenness."

There was no room for the attitude, "I am a priest in the Church: therefore this does not apply to me," she said. "It's important at a meeting like this to engage at a personal level for those who have a problem and on a global level to be equipped for the work we are doing. We have to ensure that power entrusted to us is not being abused."

Women themselves did not escape responsibility. As the "hands that rocked the cradle", they were the ones to influence boys at an early age: "In Africa, the girls are kept under lock and key and the boys play football and fool around as they want. Who's taught these children to do that?" she demanded. "If you want to change the environment, it's no good doing it when he's become a bishop. Change it at the level of parenting."

African wives needed to be taught about their rights, she said, and in one of the most direct comments, continued, "You feel guilty to tell the world that he is pounding you. If he finds out that you told somebody, you'll end up being beaten a bit more. Maybe you can't get out of the marriage because your children have to be looked after, your school fees have to be paid."

Rape was the biggest problem in Africa's war-torn areas, she said. "When forces come to your area, they try to rape their women in front of the men of the village. Then when they get the UN forces to come and help protect, the soldiers rape the children. Where are we?"

Dr Akrofi was seeking leadership from Anglican women, some already active in areas such as free legal advice and representation in court. In developments such as this, where the government was involved, men were "toeing the line... But still there is a lot happening that is being kept in the dark." Women needed training in advocacy and policy-making, especially around HIV/AIDS, found often to be accompanied by mental illness. "The mentally handicapped are more vulnerable to being preyed upon if they have [the virus]," she said.

Giving a full day to the issue was "an extraordinary piece of witness" for the Church, Jane Williams said. It was a day, Dr Akrofi said, that husbands would never forget. Those present gave much credit to the Spouses Conference for facilitating this exploration of a very difficult and sensitive issue.

Pray: that the open ventilation of this subject will result in remedial action, and not just silence and increased secrecy.

[More:](#)

[Return to Top](#)

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