

Address by +Idris Jones to the Diocesan Council of the United Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway, September 2008

Members of Diocesan Council,

The majority of this Report will be concerned with my personal Reflections on the Lambeth Conference. This seems only right to me since so much time and energy and finance has gone into the making of Lambeth 2008. I shall as always be happy to take any questions about the report - it might in some ways be easier to convey information when I know what information is required,

But I do want to say thank you to those who have carried the business of the Diocese forward during my absence both at Conference and then on holiday these past weeks.

The Office Staff and Secretary and Treasurer are always first in line and the Dean who was appointed as Commissary in my absence has led the Diocese with his usual good-will and diligence. So I am grateful for all of this which means I hope that in this Diocese the church is a collaborative effort in which in number of people are sharing and I believe that this is vital for the future life of the church.

Having now had the benefit of speaking with Bishops from all over the world and hearing about how the Anglican Church is moving in mission there are common features that are easily spotted. One is that patterns we have inherited, in particular the idea of a charge in every community and each charge living a totally independent life with its own dedicated priest, has got to change. Congregations need to be able to see themselves as colleagues in mission and not fight tooth and nail to preserve what they see as their "territory". Territory it may be, but it won't be part of any kingdom of God that I can discern I

So the second and inevitable feature is that we have to learn to manage change effectively and constructively. Congregations that live *just* to resist change have no future, and however long suffering a Diocese may be they become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Now I say this particularly because in dialogue with other bishops from around the world these conclusions are unavoidable - it is a common feature across the life of our church but we in Scotland are not immune from the process entirely!

I would like to take this opportunity just to mention several changes in the clergy in the Diocese.

We are all disappointed that after only a few months the Revd Rosemary Logue is returning to Ireland for family reasons. This is a severe blow to the congregations at Cambuslang and Uddingston. The Revd Stephen Barrett who has served very faithfully in the Diocese has now been granted early retirement on the grounds of ill health. Stephen and Carol will remain in the Diocese we hope and Stephen will still be able to carry out some ministry but not make regular commitments. The Revd Christian Okeke has been licensed to The Good Shepherd at Hillington and also agreed to take on duties as Youth Chaplain in the Diocese, Christian has experience of youth work in his previous Diocese and brings a new and refreshing attitude to ministry. I hope that he will receive the support of all the charges where we have young people present and involved.

The Report is usually about what has happened but I should just report formally that there is to be an Ordination in the Diocese in the next few weeks. The Revd John Macleod will be made priest and Moira Jamieson will be ordained Deacon, I am pleased to report to Council that as I had hoped we now have a number of candidates for ministry training who are due to begin their formation this September. This is excellent news and I am grateful to the Revd

David Mungavin who acts as Diocesan Director of Ordinands. Not only is David a wise and caring adviser but the amount of paper work that has to accompany each candidate as they progress through discernment increases year on year. It is a demanding role and the Diocese is well served by David in it.

Now I should like to turn to the Lambeth Conference 2008 ,

The Lambeth event began well before the convening of the conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion with our own Communion celebration. I express the gratitude of our guests and the Diocese to those who offered hospitality, gave transport, arranged events around the Diocese in which friendships were made and mutual support in prayer and understanding was founded. This indeed is what the Anglican Communion is really all about at its best.

Our journey to Canterbury became almost a pilgrimage with its own particular version of the Canterbury Tales! Our guests were very gracious about the complete shambles that the coach trip became describing it as an opportunity to "bond". A later presentation from the Chief Rabbi introduced us to the concept of 'covenant of fate' - it certainly felt like it.

Recovering from the journey, the Bishops went immediately into a Retreat Phase. The Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral closed the church to all visitors except for the bishops so that for two whole days we had the entire precinct to ourselves. Addresses from the Archbishop of Canterbury and worship led in part by the choir gave us inspiration and a renewed understanding of the call to serve as Bishop in the Church of God. That ended on Saturday lunch time and we then launched into the Conference proper. At the same time the Spouses conference began and the spouses will report on that separate and parallel event. We were able to share worship together and also some of the main Plenary Sessions which for the most part were stimulating and encouraging.

A look through the Conference programme will give an idea of the spread of material that we considered together but the way in which this was carried through was significant. Each day began with a Eucharist led by a different province. There followed a small group Bible study based on passages from St John's Gospel and the way in which Jesus is given to describe himself as "I am" by the writer. What meaning did these passages have for us in our ministry and mission today? In addition we met in 'indaba' groups for purposeful discussion on the theme of each day. These I will describe in a moment.. It was a new way of convening the conference and had the promise of real achievement in it. My own view is that the difference that it made will not be known for some time yet, for what difference has the meeting of Bishops made within the life of the Communion on any occasion in the last hundred years? It was clear to me from the beginning that this conference however good it was and however cleverly constructed could not and would not provide an answer to all the stress and strain felt at the moment. What we did hear from ecumenical and inter-faith friends was that the value of the Communion was too great to be easily cast to one side. Difference is not a reason to be apart and the task that has been defined is to find a way to stay together. Two thirds of the way through the Conference most bishops were agreed on what we ought to do ; but no one had the spark of imagination to fire us up with how to get there. Two schools of thought emerged among those who favoured the development of a covenant of some sort. One convinced that we should build on what we have in common; the other that we should begin by owning our differences and committing to stay together as we work through them. There has been no resolution of that at the time I write this report. My own view which I was able to express at one point when I was feeling particularly frustrated is that in one sense the Anglican Communion is dead. By this I mean that what we have now, and shall have in the future will be very different from concepts of communion derived from earlier decades. After death comes resurrection, so I am anticipating that a new way of relating across and within the Communion is needed and is likely to begin to emerge in the next few years. Most of us

agreed that the idea of a "quick fix" - though it still appealed to others - is not a realistic expectation. What is required in return is a large measure of patience and also the courage to continue to layout where we feel the communion should be going. Strong and contrary opinions will be voiced - but we hope with a degree of respect and courtesy.

Two occasions when we left the university campus will remain in mind. The London day when we walked in support of the Millennium Goals, were given lunch at Lambeth Palace and addressed by the Prime Minister. Then in the afternoon the Queen gave a Garden Party just for the Bishops and Spouses. It was a day full of colour and a lot of standing - and of memories.

Within the Conference itself the opening service in Canterbury Cathedral was by definition something that only occurs infrequently. It was a service of great dignity and colour expressing the multi-cultural and multi-lingual nature of the Communion. But it would have been even better to have translation facility in the Cathedral as well as on the campus for it has to be said that anyone whose first language was not English was at a serious disadvantage.

It was a great treat to share in one event in which the Provincial Youth Network had a part. Alison and I were able to join some of the other Scottish Bishops and Spouses to walk the Labyrinth in the Crypt of the Cathedral set up and guided by young members of our own church. We also had the special time of sharing with them in a barbeque back at their H. Q. in the Youth Hostel at Canterbury. We came back with a message loud and clear from our young Episcopalians and what was "make room for us- let us in to the church so that we can share the enterprise".

One of the memories of Lambeth 2008 will certainly be the weather which turned out to be scorchingly hot for most of the time we were there. I visited and preached at a country church on the edge of the Diocese in Benenden on the middle Sunday and we also met up with some mends whose marriage I had assisted at over twenty years ago but not seen since. They are both in ordained ministry near to Canterbury, and minor Canons of the Cathedral.

The programme was certainly tight and finely controlled. In the event the controversial issues of the Covenant and the Communion, together with issues around human sexuality were left until the last few days. The hope was that the relationships built before we took these issues would help us stick together as we came to confront the differences that still divide the communion. The general opinion was that this did happen. Bishops listened more attentively and heard the different reactions from around the communion and did so in a calm and measured way. That is not to say that no passion was expressed about deeply held convictions.

My experience was to be part of a series of meetings in which it became dear that different situations demanded different responses and there was mutual respect shown for these various positions. They were basically irreconcilable and remained so yet the determination to stay in dialogue and to go on working with these dashing positions was what marked out the potential of our Communion as distinctive.

There is dearly more work to be done but with some hope of a way forward. The fact is that neither of the extreme positions if I can call them that can be expected to give up what they believe God has called them to witness to as part of the life of their Province. There may be a way through but it is not dear yet where it would take us - meanwhile we hold to the position that we are in pending further provision in the Communion to take account of the need for some enlarged thinking. Whether the proposed Pastoral Forum to take over the care of congregations that have chosen to renounce the leadership of their Diocesan Bishop can have any place in this process I personally doubt.

It seems to me that the issue is not that we lack structure but that the structure has failed to address the situation and when it has attempted to do so Provinces have simply continued to do what they wanted to do and ignored the proposals put forward by the Instruments of Unity. I do have an unease that at the heart of our Communion there is a lack of evenhanded dealing. It was almost as if we were trapped into a game of "my pain is bigger than your pain". The approach of the Church of Canada about which we were able to learn so much more this year and which was praised for its theological method was completely ignored and brushed aside for example whilst and the interference of another Province in Canada where proper and full provision had been made for congregations who felt alienated remained un-rebuked in spite of it having been forbidden by the recent Primates meeting.

The Canadian Anglican church has a long and strong history of fidelity and development - it gave the Communion A YP A for example - and has been not accorded the respect that it should have. There is more than one way of destroying a Communion but injustice is high on the list of how to achieve it.

We heard much about the need to support churches in other parts of the world; but very little of the vulnerability of the church where society has moved ahead of the game in its provisions which is the position that we find ourselves in along with other churches in the developed world.

The experience was a good one and I want to express the thanks of both Alison and myself for the generosity of the Diocese which allowed us to be part of this special Anglican occasion. As I have said there remains much work to do across the Communion but this Lambeth was a step along the way.

I went in order to return better equipped as a bishop and I have to say that I feel that I do return better equipped in a number of ways. The sharing of Bible Study, prayer and worship with other bishops and hearing their insights and how they meet the challenges of their world was a time of strengthening. Whilst we were asked to talk about Anglican identity we actually experienced it by listening to each other and learning about the experience that is our common heritage it seems no matter what part of the world we work in ministry.

We knew that the Conference could not produce any kind of quick fix to the issues in the Communion - what it has done is demonstrate the possibilities and enabled a much wider sharing of views from bishops than we have had hitherto. It may well be that the process of development which the Communion must now begin will take at least thirty years or so to achieve. But I end with a comment made by a group of young Anglicans who were helping with the logistics of the event - "There will be an Anglican Communion in thirty years time and we shall be here to prove it - some of us as participants"