

Fr Hoyal Writes

Lambeth and Manchester

The first Lambeth Conference was held in 1867, a year before the founding of All Saints. It is self-evidently a very different world and a very different Anglican Communion that the 2008 conference from 16 July to 4 August finds itself considering.

Every conference has had its controversies. But there is no doubting that matters are more explosive than ever they have been in previous decades. For 30 years or so sex and gender issues have increasingly distracted us from effective evangelism and comprehensive Christian service in the world. Regrettably, very little has been resolved overall.

Those who take the church papers will be dismayed at the secessions and expulsions that are so fracturing Anglican unity, particularly in North America though by no means solely there. The sight of bishops and clergy taking each other to court in struggles for jurisdiction and property rights is especially sorrowing.

And whatever people's views on current bones of theological contention, most of us will be disappointed that perhaps as many as a quarter of Anglican bishops are declining to accept the Archbishop of Canterbury's invitation to this year's conference. We are unlikely to see any Ugandan bishops in Bristol diocese this year, for example, despite our special links with Ugandan dioceses. That is sad, not least for those who may sympathise with Ugandan thinking in some measure.

Will the ageing miracle glue hold, I wonder, or must we now accept the passing of the traditional Anglican genius for the holding-together of contraries with generosity and forbearance?

Must we accept increasingly impaired degrees of communion between fellow Anglicans as inevitable? Is all that can be salvaged a loose – flaccid, even – Anglican federation of related but independent churches with contradictory structures? Are we facing the break-up of the Communion

into two or even three smaller, tighter entities that will have little to do with each other. I hope not.

One suggested way forward is the idea of an officially-binding Anglican Covenant which defines the essentials that churches need to be happy about if they are to be accepted as fully part of the Communion.

Attempts have lately been made to draw such a covenant, and discussions are continuing. Do visit the Church of England website cofe.anglican.org and search *Anglican Covenant* if you want to know where things have got to. The trouble, of course, is getting different kinds of Anglican animal to agree what the essentials really are and how they should be expressed in words that will be binding on all. I wish the enterprise good fortune, but I have to admit that I am doubtful of much success.

In earlier days, of course, we were all glad to play lip-service at least to the so-called Lambeth Quadrilateral dating back to the Third Lambeth Conference, held in 1888.

As a basis for promoting unity and reunion between all Christians the conference bishops approved the following quartet or *quadrilateral* of essentials:

- (a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as “containing all things necessary to salvation,” and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
- (b) The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
- (c) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself — Baptism and the Supper of the Lord — ministered with unfailing use of Christ's Words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.
- (d) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.

It was well meant, and it is still a document worth reflecting on. But its broad terms admit of violently different interpretations and stances in regard to virtually all the matters so hotly disputed among Anglicans.

Introducing tighter definitions, however, will inevitably lead to a unity document less susceptible of general acceptance.

Amid all this, I call only point you to our Lord's advice in Luke 18 that we "ought always to pray, and not to faint." And even if you sit loose to the wider troubles of the Anglican Communion, for us in England this advice remains equally pertinent now that the Manchester Report on Women in the Episcopate has just been published for consideration, first by the House of Bishops this May, and then by the July General Synod.

This long-awaited report doesn't plump for one solution of the seemingly intractable problem of how to have both women bishops, and church-people unable to accept their ministrations, within one and the same Church of England. Rather, the report invites consideration of various possibilities. (Go to cofe.anglican.org and search *Manchester Report 28 April 2008* if you want to see the report for yourself.)

You may or may not have particular views, particular hopes, particular fears. You may or may not feel that you personally have a contribution to make to the debate, at some level or other. But in any event do pray, and don't faint.

Above all, do pray for faith and hope *and* charity for all with responsibilities, whether nationally or internationally, amid the controversies of our day. Pray with special fervour for the Archbishop of Canterbury in a supremely unenviable position. And pray with equal charity both for bishops who will be attending Lambeth and those who won't, both for church players you sympathise with and for those you don't.

No doubt, on all fronts we are in for lengthy discussions and hard-nosed negotiations, and I for one would not care to predict what the eventual outcomes will be.

But as regards Manchester, please be hopeful of an adequately "happy issue out of all our afflictions". Not everyone has always behaved well or wisely, but by and large I am greatly encouraged by the restrained and generally respectful attitudes that have prevailed in this country (and indeed in this

parish) as compared with bitter North American experiences, say. Forbearance and patience are great virtues, and are not to be abandoned now.

Richard Hoyle



***MAY FESTIVAL in honour of
MARY,
OUR LADY OF***

WALSINGHAM Wednesday 7th May

Holy Nativity, Knowle

**7.30 pm SOLEMN MASS & Procession of Our
Lady**

Refreshments afterwards

GLASTONBURY 2008 Saturday 21 June

We hope once again to share transport with All Hallows Easton for this year's Glastonbury Pilgrimage.

We warmly invite families and children and newer church members to join our stalwarts for what is a most enjoyable day.

We shall be at Glastonbury in good time for children to participate in special young people's activities at 11 before the

great midday Procession through the town that precedes the Festival Mass in the ancient Abbey grounds.

We picnic in the grounds afterwards, and then there is time to relax or look round the town before Pilgrim Prayers and Benediction at 3.30 pm close the day in time for us to be back in Bristol by 6 pm or so.

Please add your name to the porch list without delay. All collections will again go to support WaterAid's vital work of providing African communities with safe water.

FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

*Day of Thanksgiving for Christ's Institution of
the Holy Eucharist*



THURSDAY 22nd MAY

7.30 & 10.30 am Mass (said)

7.30 pm SOLEMN MASS & SACRAMENT PROCESSION

Guest Preacher **The Revd Mark Pilgrim**

Vicar of Henleaze & Area Dean

Party afterwards

Our Christmas giving for the Barnabas Trust's work for Christians facing hostility and persecution raised £1,093. Our thanks to Sainsbury's of Clifton Down, who helped by kindly supplying the oranges for our Christingle service.

IN THIS MONTH MAY 1984

ROGER DURBIN

This month we welcome Roger Durbin, who is training for the Non-Stipendiary Ordained Ministry. Roger has been recommended for training by A.C.C.M. and will be with us for about three months, to be involved in all areas of our Church life. He hopes to commit himself fully to All Saints for the duration of his placement, and so we should have an opportunity to get to know him. He has sketched a brief outline of his background:

I come to you from the Parish of Bedminster. It is now a Team Ministry which came into being some eight years ago when four churches, S Aldhelm, S Dunstan, S Francis and S Paul, which served under the Bedminster, Ashton and Southville area, were united into one parish. W.D. & H.O. Wills Cigar factory and Bristol City Football Club are both situated within the parish.

I have worshipped in Bedminster for thirty years, having done most of the usual jobs from Altar Server to Sunday School Teacher, PCC Secretary, Deanery Synod Treasurer, and, since 1976, as a Licensed Reader.

From what I have said you will see that most of my life and experience has been in one place. I come to All Saints' to share in your life and worship and to broaden that experience; to learn something of your problems; your successes and your hopes for the

future. At the same time I hope you will help me to discover my own strengths and weaknesses.

I look forward to meeting and talking with you, and please, if I seem slow to come to you, come to me and give me a good kick (But not too hard!)

OUR LADY

Mother of God! No lady thou;
Common woman of common earth;
'Our Lady' ladies call thee no,
But Christ was never of gentle birth;
A common man of the common earth.

For God's ways are not as our ways;
The noblest lady in the land
Would have given up half her days,
Would have cut off her right hand,
To bear the child that was God of the land.

Never a lady did He choose,
Only a maid of low degree,
So humble she might not refuse
The carpenter of Galilee:
A daughter of the people, she.

Out she sang the song of her heart.
Never a lady so had sung.
She knew no letters, had no art;
To all mankind, in woman's tongue,
Hath Israelitish Mary sung.

And still for men to come she sings,
Nor shall her singing pass away.
'He hath filled the hungry with good things' –
O listen, lords and ladies gay! –
'And the rich He hath sent empty away'.

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge

Pentecost Sunday, May 11th: Ecumenical outdoor celebration!

Arranged by churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland.

It's to begin at 4.30pm for a bring-your-own (and share) picnic, followed by a short service at 5.30pm (probably half-an-hour).

The service will consist of just a small number of Pentecost-theme hymns/songs, readings and responses and prayers, and a final 'balloon release'.

Attendees should gather behind the water tower (the other side from Stoke Road) at 4.30pm.

In the event of rain, the event will be held at Redland Park URC (again from 4.30pm).

AT OUR SISTER
CHURCH

GENERATIONS

All Hallows' Easton

Poems with Music

for every age and everyone

read by the Birdcombe Poetry Group

FRIDAY 30 MAY

7.30 pm

Tickets £8 (£6 concessions;

£1 children under 16) to include buffet,

ON SALE AT ALL SAINTS'

AFTER MASS on

11th, 18th and 25th MAY

Proceeds in aid of All Hallows' Restoration Appeal
All Hallows' Church, All Hallows Road, Easton, BS5 0HH

What love? Such love?

Sermon preached by Fr James, Maundy Thursday 2008

It couldn't fail to move. It was Tuesday afternoon at South Bristol Crematorium. Simply and gently he played the guitar, and sang. Cat Steven's song, Father and Son. Played by a son. To honour his father. Why his father had killed himself, no one really knows. But experience suggests that those who do, do so out of a sense of worthlessness. Feeling that those that they leave behind will actually be better off, happier, without them. In those final moments, what love did he feel. The seats were full. People were standing against the walls, three or four deep. Mourning and grieving. What his father felt, intended, contemplated, we don't know. But that afternoon, such love was being shown.

Tonight, we have begun a journey of love. It's a journey which will last three days. Perhaps you've not noticed before. Perhaps you have. Tonight, Fr Richard started the mass in the usual way. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and then the opening greeting of The Lord be with you. Hang on to those words, because it will be a while before you hear them again. You won't hear them together tomorrow. And you won't hear them on Saturday evening at the Easter Vigil. Speaking of which, it is the highlight, the culmination of the Church's year. And if you have never been you should. And if you can come, you ought.

And just as you won't hear that greeting again, tonight, you won't hear the words of the blessing. Nor tomorrow. You'll have to wait until Saturday. No more greetings? No blessing until Saturday? Why? Because tonight we begin one ceremony, spread over three days. A journey. A journey from an upper room, to a garden, to a palace, to a square, to a place of execution, to a tomb. A journey of love. What love? They had followed him for years. He had called each one by name, and they answered. Leaving the familiar. Setting

off into the unknown. Trusting. And as the days and the months and the years passed, what encounters they had had, what things they had seen. Signs, wonders, and miracles. Water into wine. Thousands fed. Healings. Exorcisms. Walking on water. Calming storms. The transfiguration. Forgiveness. What love? Great stories and parables had they heard. The beatitudes. Transforming teaching. Blessed are the meek, those who mourn, the poor, those who hunger, the peacemakers, the persecuted. Those without sin, cast the first stone. Go and sin no more. What love? Such love. Such love for all humanity. For the ugly. The marred. The outcast. The sinful. The dross. The despised. Such love.

What love? For them. For those who had followed him. For those who had gone out, with the 72. To teach and heal. For those he met. For all. Such love. To take the lowest place. To debase himself. To tie a towel around his body. As they lay there, facing a low table. With their feet facing away, to remove himself from their number. Their backs to him. To circle around them, brushing off the sand and the dust. Wiping the stains. Enduring the fragrance of sweat and grime. Becoming the servant of all.

What love? "I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me." They each asked him in turn. "Not I surely." Judas asked him in turn, "Not I Rabbi, surely." Such love.

What love? Jesus said to them, "You will all lose faith in me this night." At this Peter said, "Though all lose faith in you, I will never lose faith." At that moment, the cock crew, and Peter remembered what Jesus had said. And he went outside and wept bitterly. Such love.

What love? "Wait here and keep awake with me". Such love. He found them asleep.

What love? "My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by." Such love. "Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it."

What love? "Not I rabbi, surely." Such love. "So he went straight up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi" and kissed him. Such love? Nails. And a kiss.

What love? If we need an answer, surely it is in this night. What love? The love of Christ for his Father. The love of Christ for his friends. But more than that, his love for us. For in this night, he acts not just for those he knew, but for us, for you and for me, for all who come after them. For us, he shows them what true love and charity are. For us, he submits himself. Such love. The Word was made flesh. He dwelt among us.

He emptied himself. But that is not enough. For that love, it's simply not enough emptying. There must be more. His divinity is cast aside to take on humanity. A humanity, human-ness, not to reign, and rule, but to serve and to suffer. As the Benedictine Sebastian Moore so chillingly puts it: he offers a seemingly impossible example: that of the willing victim who lets us kill him and returns to us, unaccusing, inviting us into his body that we have entered violently to murder. God says to a violent world: Do it to me, and I'll show you who I am. Welcome." Such love.

What love? This is no surrender. This is no scape-goat. This actor walks boldly on and takes his place - centre stage. This is a sacrifice. But it is his sacrifice. It is his choice. He walks boldly to give us life. Do this, in remembrance of me. Such love. Oh, such love.

What love? Tonight, will you but watch with me one hour?