



**Spouses' place
in the sun**

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TODAY'S KEY EVENTS

7.15am Eucharist
9.30 - 11.00am Morning Prayer and Bible Studies
11.30 - 12.45pm Spouses Presentation 3: The Archbishop of Canterbury
'Together in God's Mission: The Vocation of the Anglican Communion in the 21st Century'
11.30 - 1.00pm Sections
3.30 - 5.30pm Plenary Presentation: *'Muslim Christian relations and the Anglican Communion'*
5.45pm Evening Prayer
8.00pm Spouses: Mothers' Union presentation

**Bishop rebuilds
her people's
self-esteem**

Page 3

**Floods crippling
local economies**

Page 4

Islam plenary today Interfaith relations main focus

by E.T. Malone Jr.

The Lambeth plenary on Muslim-Christian relations and the Anglican Communion will look at Islam "not in isolation but rather in the context of our entire attention to interfaith relations here at the Lambeth Conference," says Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, the plenary coordinator.

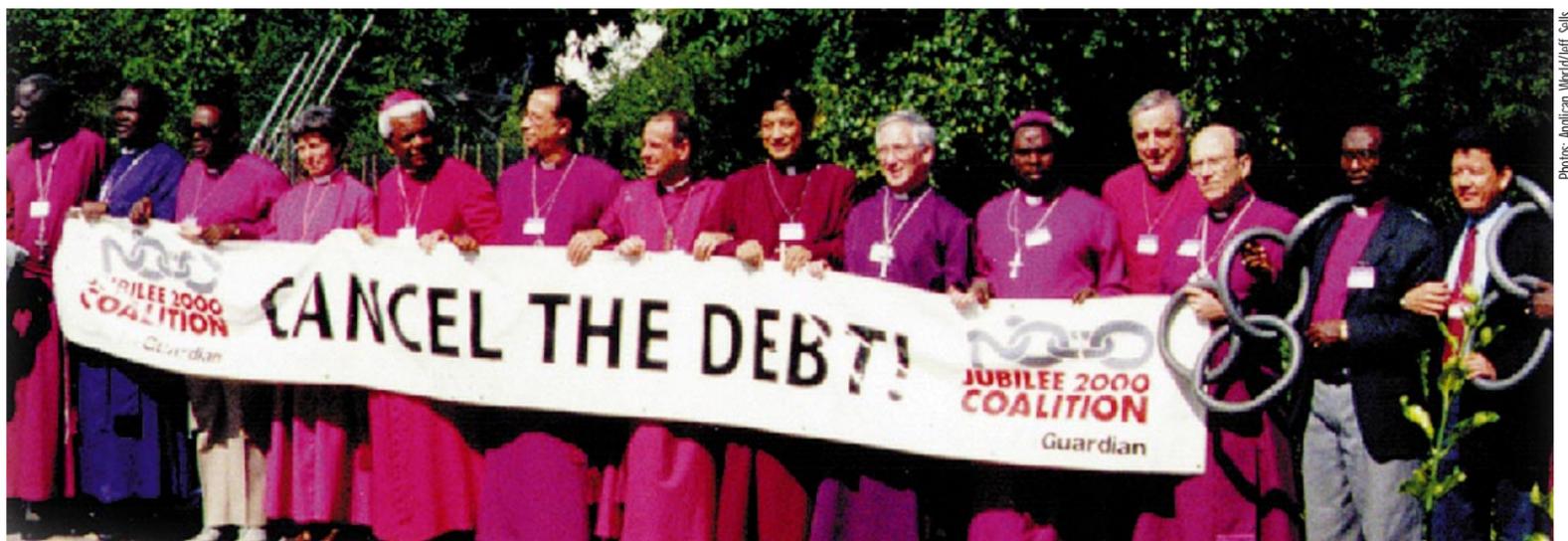
The two-hour plenary, scheduled for 3.30pm today, will present three pairs of bishops from different areas "who will speak about how they find such relations in their regions," Bishop Nazir-Ali said.

The Conference is paying special attention to Muslim-Christian relations, however, because Islam is a special case.

"The one reality is that both Islam and Christianity are missionary religions, both are operating in Africa and East Asia, so the potential for conflict between them is greater-but the need for getting along is greater. That's the crux," said Bishop Nazir-Ali, a native of Pakistan who is now Bishop of Rochester (England).

"When we designed the Conference, nearly every province said relations with other faiths was an important topic," he notes. "The pre-Lambeth design group decided every sec-

Please see **Plenary** page 2



Jubilee 2000 vision 'for rich as well as poor'

by David Skidmore

Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane of South Africa put international debt centre-stage at the Lambeth Conference on Friday by calling for cancellation of the debt of developing countries.

At a three-hour plenary session of bishops and spouses, Archbishop Ndungane urged the bishops to follow the Gospel injunction to "bring good news to the poor" by supporting the Jubilee 2000 campaign for cancelling \$214 billion in debt burdening the developing world.

Inspired by the tradition reported in Leviticus of holding a Year of Jubilee every 50 years, the coalition of churches and social outreach organisations is campaigning for cancellation of the debt of the world's poorest countries by the year 2000.

"It's a vision that releases the poor from the prison of indebtedness and dependent poverty. It's a vision where God's people have all that is necessary to live a human life," said Archbishop Ndungane, who chairs Section One (Called to Full Humanity), which is studying international debt, among other



Wolfensohn of the World Bank

topics.

His message was echoed by two other keynote speakers: Bishop Luiz Prado (Pelotas, Brazil) and Bishop Peter Selby (Worcester, England), who chaired the subsection dealing with international debt.

Panellists included Bishop Renato Abibico (Northern Luzon, Philippines); Bishop Geralyn Wolf (Rhode Island, US); Samuel Arap Ng'eny, an Anglican Consultative Council member from Kenya; and Bishop Nicodemus Engwalas-



Njongonkulu Ndungane

Okille (Bukedi, Uganda). The session was chaired by Archbishop Orland Lindsay of the West Indies.

Jubilee is a vision for rich nations as well as poor ones, Archbishop Ndungane said. The scourge of crushing debt loads is not isolated to Africa and Latin America, he noted, but is tearing the social fabric of Asian and Eurasian countries.

Please see **Debt** page 2



Sharing in Lambeth proceedings are Bishops (from left, first row) Carolyn Irish (Utah, US), Catherine Roskam (suffragan, New York), Barbara Harris (suffragan, Massachusetts, US), Chilton Knudsen (Maine, US), Jane Dixon (suffragan, Washington DC), (back row) Victoria Matthews (Edmonton, Canada), Penelope Jamieson (Dunedin, New Zealand), Catherine Waynick (Indianapolis, US), Mary Adelia McLeod (Vermont, US), Gerilyn Wolf (Rhode Island, US), Ann Tottenham (suffragan, Toronto, Canada). Bishops are making Lambeth Conference history as first women joining episcopal proceedings. See page 3 for feature on Chilton Knudsen, most recently consecrated woman.

London Day tomorrow

by Carol Barnwell

The much-anticipated London Day begins early tomorrow morning when nearly 1,600 Conference participants will journey to Lambeth Palace for lunch and an address from the Anglican British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair.

The Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace promises to be a highlight of the day and will be followed by a cruise down the river Thames.

Admittance to Buckingham Palace requires the ticket that was included in the personal invitation. All must bring their tickets.

Those who have received Royal Tea Tent Cards also must bring them.

Please be aware that cameras and

Please see **London Day** page 3

- Coaches leave colleges at 9am
- Bishops asked to wear cassocks
- Tickets are essential for Her Majesty's Garden Party

Palace meeting set on international debt

A private meeting between politicians, international financiers and economists and bishops will be held at Lambeth Palace before lunch tomorrow to discuss international debt.

This was one of the subjects which all the preparatory regional meetings asked to be discussed at the Conference. The special meeting

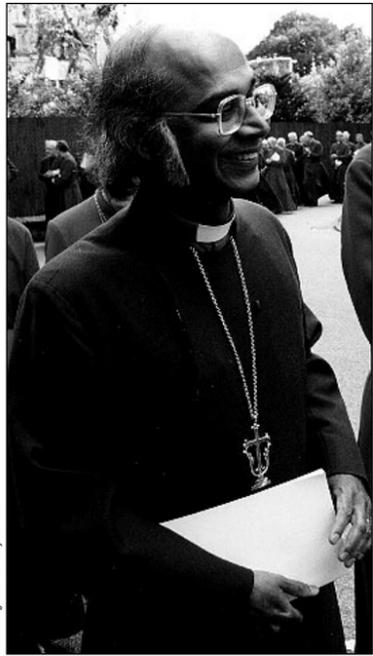
Please see **Roundtable** page 3

Plenary: Focus on interfaith relations

Continued from page 1

tion should consider the interfaith aspects of its work."

Because the Anglican Communion is worldwide, "we're in relationships with people of almost every faith," Bishop Nazir-Ali said. "There's a triangular Christian-Jewish-Muslim situation in Palestine. In India the



Michael Nazir-Ali

new government is inspired by Hindu ideals. But in the largest number of cases, the interface is between Christianity and Islam."

Setting stereotypes aside

Media images of Islam often are violent and intolerant, Bishop Nazir-Ali pointed out. "We have to ask, however, whether these are the only available images of Islam. What else can we say about a great world faith which has given rise to so many civilisations?"

He said he has taken on the task, as part of his Christian mission, to teach that Islamic law or *shari'ah* is not unchangeable, that it does have flexibility, and that the basic tenets of Islam are, in fact, democratic.

There are those who have a vested interest in arguing that the *shari'ah* does not change, he noted. "In Pakistan the blasphemy law is, in fact, profoundly un-Islamic. In the Koran there is no punishment on earth for apostasy, nor for blasphemy. The Prophet himself forgave those who insulted him. We must continue to campaign for its repeal."

Some governments, however, "such as the oppressive, ideologically

driven regime in Sudan, seem to use adherence to Islamic law as a way of legitimising government ambitions," he said.

"In Iran the *shari'ah* was seen as a way of cleansing the country of Western influences after a corrupt regime was deposed."

Asked whether Islamic law should be applied only to Muslims, or to all who reside in Muslim majority countries, Bishop Nazir-Ali said "people should be committed to fundamental freedoms wherever they are. People of all faiths should have equal rights."

But he added: "Such principles have been abandoned in Pakistan, even though it was founded on the principle that Muslims were an oppressed minority in undivided India."

Turning study into resolutions

Resolutions will have to be carefully worded to address the specific situations of particular countries. For example, he said, "we want the resolution to be one that encourages the opening up of Iran, not one that is condemnatory. We want to support those moderate Muslims who are

working to open up the country. There is a struggle there that could go either way."

The Rev Colin Chapman, Lambeth consultant and founder of an organisation called Faith to Faith, which promotes Christian-Muslim interfaith cooperation, said: "We've got so much more in common with devout Muslims than with our pagan, secular British neighbours."

His book, *Cross & Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam*, attempts to defuse the fears of many Westerners who see Islam not only as a challenge but as a threat.

At a time when Christians have privatised their faith, he said, here come Muslims "who want to bring God into the public sphere. They've actually challenged Christians this way."

Of course, it is dangerous to generalise on the basis of Christian-Muslim relations in any one country, he warned.

Mr Chapman acknowledged that, as with the attempt of such conservative groups as the Moral Majority to influence politics in the

United States, the entrance of religious groups into public enterprises may have both positive and negative consequences.

Different sides

Bishop Nazir-Ali will open the plenary by delivering a general introduction on the history of Muslim-Christian relations, good and bad. Next will come talks by the three pairs of bishops, distributed geographically and in terms of the nature of the relationships they have experienced with Islam.

"From the continent of Africa, we will have a discussion from the Gambia, where relations are quite good, and then from Nigeria, where there are some sharp issues but also some sharing," he said.

"From Asia, we'll have a presentation from Palestine, where both Christians and Muslims have struggled together for fundamental rights and some autonomy-although now the situation is deteriorating between them, primarily because of terrorism by the extreme Muslim organisation Hamas-and from Pakistan, where there is very little history of cooperation. "Finally, from Britain and North Africa, we will have additional perspectives of mixed good and bad relationships."

Daily Quote

"International debt affects all of us who have become too dependent on credit cards."

Archbishop Njongokulu Ndungane of South Africa

The Daily welcomes letters from its readers. Prior to publication, letters may be edited to conform with space requirements. Submissions are collected each day from The Daily mailboxes in near the main entrances of the dining halls in Darwin, Eliot and Rutherford colleges.

The Lambeth Conference 1998

Meeting in residence at The University of Kent, Canterbury, England

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Margaret Rodgers, Sydney

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Lynn Ross, Quebec

The LambethDaily

Tel 82 8091 Fax 82 8092

EDITOR

Robert Williams, Los Angeles

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Brian Thomas

Christchurch, New Zealand

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Marla Murphy, Los Angeles

ART DIRECTOR

Andy Day, Canterbury

SENIOR CORRESPONDENTS

Carol Barnwell, Texas • Jane Gitau, Kenya

STAFF WRITERS

David Duprey • Bob Libby

CONFERENCE NEWS TEAM

Lisa Barrowclough • Nan Cobbe • E. T. Malone, Jr

Jan Nunley • Allan Reeder • Katie Sherrod

David Skidmore

SECTION COMMUNICATORS

Nicola Currie • Randall Lee

Sarah Moore • Doug Tindal

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

William Killough • Harriet Long

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Daily Voices

Letters

Call for solidarity with refugees

We are concerned about the global refugee crises. These people are our brothers and sisters and part of our family. We are concerned about their welfare, and most importantly, we are not forgetting them. This is the time on the eve of the millennium. We don't need to wait for another 10 years for the next Lambeth Conference. Most of the bishops here are coming from refugee-producing countries. Let's give them some solidarity and hope. Let them take the love from here to their people to say: 'You are not forgotten'.

Therefore I urge the Lambeth Conference to designate one Sunday as Refugee Sunday. The United Nations has suggested the second Sunday of June. We are not concerned about the exact day or month; what we want is to see the Lambeth Conference remembering the forgotten people (the strangers). Please use the opportunity to do some good towards this very vulnerable population. People need support. Please use your good voices to raise this concern. Thank you very much for your support in advance.

(Mr) Paul Schneyu

From the campus mail

Debt's effects grip South Asia, too

from staff reporters

Four bishops from South Asia have raised concerns regarding the platform offered during the major session of the Conference. They cited an unbalanced presentation during the world debt plenary on Friday afternoon.

"South Asia, which is 1.2 billion people and classified as the poorest region of the world, even below sub-Saharan Africa, was totally ignored in the platform presentation," Bishop Mano Rumlshah (United Church of Pakistan) said. "Asia is 4/5 of humanity and we had one voice. If within our own family there is

this blind spot, God help us."

The plenary discussion needs to be enlarged beyond the African nations, Bishop Mano said in an interview.

"As the United Churches in South Asia, we feel overlooked in many ways," Bishop Sam Azariah, Moderator of the Church of Pakistan, said immediately following the presentation.

Bishop Azaria, who with Bishops Mano, Karam Masih (Delhi, Church of North India) and Samuel Sant Marih (Sialkot, Church of Pakistan) called for Conference organisers to help correct the mindset that poverty is limited to one area.

Credit for Tamil poet

I was delighted to see the 'Lambeth Praise'. It will go down in history as one of the best collections of hymns made in recent times. But I have to point out an error made regarding the 208th hymn-'Saranam Saranam.' No mention has been made of the humble Tamil poet of my diocese who composed it. The compiler had said that this hymn was a Pakistani hymn set to Panjabi melody. The tune and the words were that of

Rev Issac Yesusakayam whose brother Issac Selveratnam is now a minister in the Colombo Diocese. The poet Issac Yesusakayam left my diocese to join the Christa Seva Ashram in 1944, and served the Ashram till he died in 1970. He was one of the Tamil Christian poets of Sri Lanka who contributed much to the spiritual advancement of the Tamil people. He did not know English. Rev Dr D.P. Niles, who was enchanted by the poetry, translated this hymn

into English. I hope compilers in the future will give due recognition to this Tamil poet.

(The Rt Rev Dr)

Subrammaniam Jebanesan

Bishop-in-Jaffra, Sri Lanka

Collected essays honour Mary Tanner

An important resource for discussion of issues of Christian unity and Anglican identity—at the Lambeth Conference and beyond—has just been published by the Church of England Council for Christian Unity in honour of its General Secretary, Dr Mary Tanner, who is to retire in September.

Community-Unity-Communion: Essays in Honour of Mary Tanner contains contributions on these themes by former Primates Robert Runcie and John Habgood; leading ecumenists such as Jean Tillard and Wolfhart Pannenberg; and the following participants in the 1998 Lambeth Conference: Geoffrey Wainwright, Michael Root, Pierre Duprey, John Hind, Barry Rogerson, Eric Kemp and Christopher Hill, among others.

Of the 26 contributors, half are Anglicans and half are from other Christian traditions; half are from England and half from other countries.

The book is available from the Conference bookshop or from Church of England staff members in Section Four (300 pages, £9.95).

(Dr) Colin Podmore

Section Four Staff

Daily Question

What do you think God is saying to the Church about international debt?



Bishop Nathaniel Uematsu (Nippon Sei Ko Kai, Hokkaido, Japan)

"If we are brothers and sisters, created in the image of God, then we can't neglect those people who are afflicted."

Interviews by David Duprey, Photos by Jeff Sells



Bishop Geresom Ilukor (Soroti, Uganda)

"Idi Amin borrowed money to buy guns used to kill. Now orphans (of the dead) are paying the money back today. This is an injustice. God is calling us to speak against this."



Bishop Godwin Okpala (Nnewi, Nigeria)

"In Leviticus 25 those who are afflicted are given relief. The Church is to remind the world again of this divine truth - those in slavery are pardoned."

The paper for
The LambethDaily

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Bishop's task to rebuild her people's self-image

by Jane Gitau

She clasps her hands gently after offering me a cup of coffee, trying to make me feel comfortable. Around us is a hive of activity: Conference notices are coming up on the screen and people, mainly media staff and their "subjects," move back and forth.

We find our way to a corner of the common room where, hopefully, we can find some quiet. Then she waits for me to set the tone of the interview. An awkward silence follows because, although she is fairly lightly built, there is something overwhelming about meeting a bishop formally for the first time.

For Bishop Chilton Knudsen (Maine, United States), one of the most difficult experiences has been meeting the common assumption that the spouse of a bishop is always a wife. "Many times we have received letters addressed to Bishop

and Mrs Knudsen. My first name doesn't really say whether I am male or female. But my husband takes it well."

She is one of the 11 women making their debut as diocesan bishops at the Lambeth Conference. Ten years ago ordination of women was the one issue that earned both the Conference and the Anglican Communion acres of print in the world's newspapers. Why did it take them so long to be recognised as leaders in the Church even though regular churchgoers in most countries tend to be women?

"Women have not really been visible in public life," says the soft-spoken Bishop Knudsen. They were expected to uphold family values by marrying early, raising children and keeping the household running."

Elected as bishop in November 1997 and ordained in March this

year, she sees her role in Maine as stimulating her parishioners to rebuild their self-image and to feel good about themselves in the presence of God. They had been without a bishop for two years prior to her election and desperately needed someone they could trust.

Her dream for Lambeth is to have people understand, accommodate and tolerate each other

"Watching things change is stimulating. I love to watch churches and congregations grow. I think how they should be and how God is changing them to become more alive and joyful," Bishop Knudsen says.

Married 28 years ago to the son of a priest, Bishop Knudsen took her seminary studies as a part-time student. She was away from home only three days a week and therefore had time to look after their son, now 25.

Her husband is very supportive, seeing her vocation as he would any other profession. He was unable to come to the Lambeth Conference, however, because he was winding up his duties to move to Maine.

Does she think the Church banished women to the pews for too long, rather than elevating them to the pulpit?

"No! It is all a process of growth. The Church

changes slowly, holding on to a sacred tradition, and sees itself as guarding an Episcopal authority that comes from 2000 years ago. It could lose something that is really sacred if it changes too quickly," she believes.

Born to Episcopal parents serving the United States Navy in the West Pacific, Bishop Knudsen, her sister and two brothers saw the Church as a stabilising factor in their lives.

That close tie to religion remains although she is the only one who now keeps the Episcopal tradition. One of her brothers has converted to Judaism after marrying a Jewish woman. "But we remain very close and engage in long conversation," she says.

Her dream for Lambeth is to have people understand, accommodate and tolerate each other and agree to be together as brothers and individuals. The purpose of the Church in the world is to ensure justice. She is glad there is room for discussion of issues in the Church



Chilton Knudsen

because consensus comes only through discussion.

She encourages women, especially those hoping to be ordained in provinces that don't yet ordain women, to support each other and not get angry. "Make sure you take time to be spiritual and don't give up," she says rather too calmly.

Meanwhile, she has to keep the rule given to her by an older bishop: Learn to love people, say your prayers, and have fun.

Esther Mombo, who is studying theology in Edinburgh, thinks it will be a little longer before women bishops are universally accepted. She recalls that only this week a steward was giving book packages to bishops. One of the women bishops stretched out her hand only to be met with an apology.

"I am sorry but they are for bishops only," she was told. She had to show her name label to prove that she was indeed a Bishop!"

London Day:

Continued from page 1

mobile phones are not allowed at Buckingham Palace or the Garden. Cameras may be left in the cloakroom at the entrance of the Palace.

Hats for the women are optional, and day dress or national costume may be worn. Gloves are not necessary.

Clergy are strongly encouraged to wear cassocks but may wear suits with clerical collars. Gentlemen are asked to wear suits.

Coaches will pick up at Parkwood, Eliot, Rutherford and Darwin college bus stops at 9am and will arrive at the main gates of Lambeth Palace around 11.30am.

After lunch the coaches will depart at 2.45pm from Lambeth Palace by the gates on the river side of the garden. All are asked to board the first available coach and depart directly to Buckingham Palace.

Guests will alight just inside the gates in the Palace Forecourt. Tea will be served from 3pm, and

the Queen and other members of the Royal Family will arrive at 4pm as the national anthem is played. They will meet a pre-arranged number of guests near the Terrace Steps before taking tea in the Royal Tea Tent.

They will depart at 6pm when guests are asked to rejoin the coaches for Festival Pier.

It is hoped that all will join the boat trip, but for those who would rather return to Canterbury there will be several coaches available and stewards on hand to advise you. Supper will be available in Eliot College on arrival for guests who return early.

Commentary on the history of riverside London accompanies the boat ride, with written translations in both French and Japanese.

A licensed pay bar for alcoholic and soft drinks will be available for the duration of the boat cruise.

A boxed meal will be provided for the return journey to Canterbury, which departs from the Thames Barrier Pier at 9.30pm.

TIMETABLE

9am Depart university campus by coach for Lambeth Palace

(Please wear your Conference badge during the day).

12pm Lambeth Palace address by Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair

Lunch following the Prime Minister's address

2.45pm Depart Lambeth Palace for Buckingham Palace

3pm Coaches arrive at Buckingham Palace (Please bring your ticket and remember cameras are not allowed inside the Palace or Garden)

6pm Depart Buckingham Palace for Festival Pier

6.30pm Embark on Bateaux Mouche for boat trip on the river Thames.

Optional bus back to Canterbury

9.30pm Depart Barrier Pier for University

Briefly

Canterbury reception tonight: Ecumenical participants, bishops of churches in communion, moderators and bishops of the United Churches of South and North India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and consultants to the Lambeth Conference are invited to meet ministers and other leaders of Canterbury-area churches at 8pm at St Peter's Methodist Church. A coach will leave Eliot College car park at 7.30pm.

Canon John Peterson to sign books today: The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion will sign copies of *A Walk in Jerusalem*, a meditation on the Stations of the Cross, at the Anglican World stand in the Market Place today from 2.30 to 3.30pm. Canon Peterson was Dean of St. George's College, Jerusalem, prior to his present appointment. Copies of the book will be available for sale.

Memorial service for Archbishop Trevor Huddleston: Those bishops who are expecting to attend the memorial service for Trevor Huddleston at Westminster Abbey

on July 29 may like to know that a coach will leave Eliot College car park at 9.15am on that day and will leave the Abbey at 2.30pm to return to Canterbury.

Bishops' Conference photos now available: Prints may be purchased in the Conference Shop in Giles Lane, Complex B. Price is £14, cash; £14.25, credit cards, with presentation cases priced at £5 each. Shop manager Helen Thompson notes the prints are

being sold at cost. Spouses' and staff photos will be available for sale later this week.

Dr Tim Bradshaw and the Rev Gary Lysaght are keynote speakers for this evening's human sexuality discussion to be hosted under the auspices of the International Bishops' Conference on Faith & Order. The presentation will begin at 8pm in the Franciscan Study Centre in Giles Lane, just beyond the University Medical Centre.

Roundtable:

Continued from page 1

was called at the initiative of the Archbishop of Canterbury and will be co-chaired by the Archbishop and Baroness Chalker of Wallasey. It has been set at the midway point of the Conference so that information and views can be shared and tested to allow any final resolution to be as constructive as possible.

Attending the meeting will be: Chancellor Gordon Brown; MP Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development; Canadian High Commissioner Roy McLaren; German Ambassador Gebhardt von Moltke; Russian Ambassador Yuri

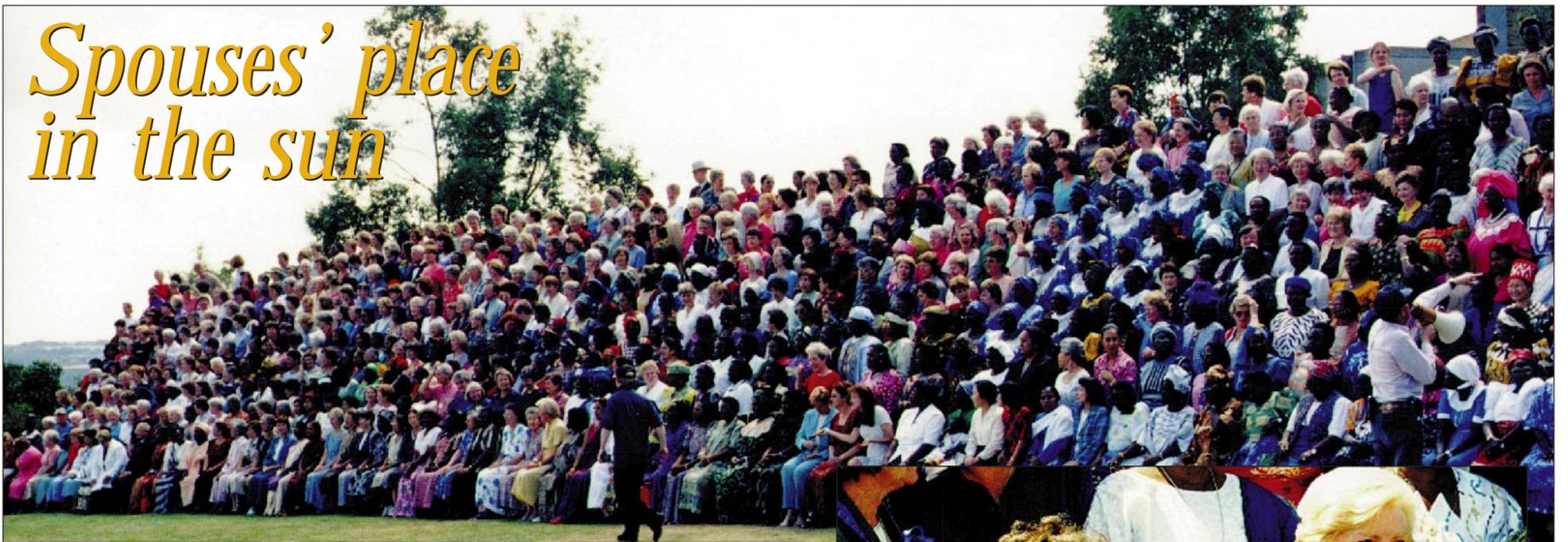
Fokine; Political Counsellor Nikita Matkovski of the Russian Federation; Michael Monderer, Director of the Office of International Debt Policy, US Treasury; Archbishop Robin Eames (Armagh and All Ireland); Archbishop Peter Hollingworth (Brisbane, Australia); Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane (Cape Town, South Africa); Archbishop Khotso Makhulu (Central Africa); Bishop Luiz Prado (Brazil); Bishop Dinis Sengulane (Lobombo, Mozambique); Bishop Peter Selby (Worcester, England); Bishop Leo Frade (Honduras); Bishop Ronald Haines (Washington, US) and representatives from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, HSBC Holdings, Barclays Bank and Standard Chartered Bank.

Daily Events Tomorrow

Tuesday July 28 • London Day

7.00 am	Eucharist (Province: The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East)
8.00 - 9.00 am	Breakfast
9.00 am	Coaches leave University campus for Lambeth Palace
12.00 pm	Lunch at Lambeth Palace
2.45 pm	Coaches depart Lambeth Palace for Buckingham Palace
3.00 pm	Coaches arrive at Buckingham Palace
c. 6.00 pm	Coaches depart Buckingham Palace for Festival Pier
c. 6.30 pm	Coaches arrive at Festival Pier and embarkation on Bateaux Mouche
6.45 - 9.30 pm	Boat trip along the Thames
9.30 pm	Coaches depart Barrier Pier for University campus
11.00 pm	Coaches arrive at University campus

Spouses' place in the sun



Adding a splash of colour to the campus: Mrs Margo Watson (above left), Mrs Roi Tawp (centre), and Mrs Catherine Plummer. Enjoying a joke at right: Mrs Eileen Carey (left), Mrs Rosemary Makhulu (centre) and Lady Eames.

Floods rage, crippling local economies

in Armidale Diocese, Australia

Rural areas of northwest New South Wales in Australia are experiencing severe flooding along the Namoi River valley, with minor flooding along other river systems. The rural towns of Wee Waa, Narrabri and Walgett are badly affected.

This devastation comes when the area was beginning to lift out of the decade-long period of drought that had crippled the local economy and the livelihood of people on the land.

"There will be no loss of life, but this will ruin many farmers," Bishop Peter Chiswell of Armidale, whose diocese includes this area, said. "They have only just been able to plant crops which might have brought them an income after devastating drought. The crops will be ruined."

"Our rural industry is already seriously affected by world free-trade policies. For instance, today's wool prices are only one-and-a-half times what they were in the 1950s, while wages in the industry are 12 times higher."

"This affects our parishes, because people have less to give."

It is estimated up to \$100 million damage has been caused to homes and roads in this NSW northwest, one of Australia's major wheat-growing areas.

by Margaret Rodgers

in Kushtia Diocese, Bangladesh

Seasonal floods reported in Bangladesh may threaten the livelihoods of farmers in his diocese of Kushtia, Bishop Michael Baroi of the United Church of Bangladesh reports.

The flooding has "become part of our lives," he said, because the riverbeds are so filled with silt that they cannot hold all the rain. "This is only the beginning," he said, given that the monsoon season has just started, bringing downpours that can last from seven to 10 days.

Bishop Baroi said he extends "every sympathy, especially to those who have lost crops." This is the time of sowing in Bangladesh, and the flooding can mean that farmers and their families will be left with nothing.

"Once the crop is lost or damaged," Bishop Baroi said, "they are under debt for life, contributing to Bangladesh's great national poverty and burden of international debt."

Bishop Baroi says he struggles with the poverty of his country, and adds that if he had the chance to ask God one question it would be: "Why have you given some so much and some so little?" Yet, Bishop Baroi says he remains hopeful: "There is God, and he will look after us. We are a poor church, but our mission is for the poorest."

by Lisa Barrowclough

Debt Continued from page 1

Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand—considered the world's "economic tigers" only a year ago—are reeling from the effects of drastic currency devaluation. Even the United States, with the world's most powerful economy, is feeling its effects.

"The crisis of international debt...is not just a matter for the poorest countries. Nor is it a matter that affects only sovereign governments," Archbishop Ndungane stressed. "It affects all of us everywhere, all who have become too dependent on credit cards."

Families in the developed world worry about making mortgage payments, about job security, and the continual erosion of their purchasing power. The sharp contrast between rich and poor in the developing world is becoming a fact in the developed world now.

In the United States, which claims the world's highest living standard, the average U.S. worker earns \$7.40 an hour while the salary of a corporate chief executive averages \$1,566 per hour, he noted. But for those in the developing world the situation is more acute.

"We all live in the grip of an economy which encourages over-lending and over-borrowing, an economy which drives relentlessly into debt. But the poorest, those with very little income to depend on, are not just in the grip of this economy," charged Archbishop Ndungane. "They are enslaved by it."

In an introduction to the speakers, Archbishop George Carey observed that "if poverty in Africa is to be turned around, there are hard decisions to be made, and great responsibilities" for everyone involved in the debt crisis.

The only discordant note came from World Bank President James Wolfensohn, who took issue with the video presentation by Christian Aid that led the session. The video, which reported on the hardships brought on by crushing debt in Jamaica and Tanzania and criticised the debt-relief efforts of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), prompted a sharp rebuke from Mr Wolfensohn.

"I am not angry about the film. I'm upset. I'm upset because it paints a picture of our institution which is quite simply wrong," said Mr Wolfensohn.

To characterise the World Bank as the villain "is neither fair nor correct," he said. On one point, though, he agreed with the video's producers: "That there is a significant and overwhelming debt burden on many countries."

Archbishop Ndungane, who spoke after Mr Wolfensohn, said the bishops had not come to Lambeth "to cast stones on anyone, but are here to reason together and to find solutions at the dawn of this millennium."

Everyone is needed on this mission, including the World Bank and the IMF, he said. But when policies are skewed in favour of the creditors, it is reasonable to raise questions.

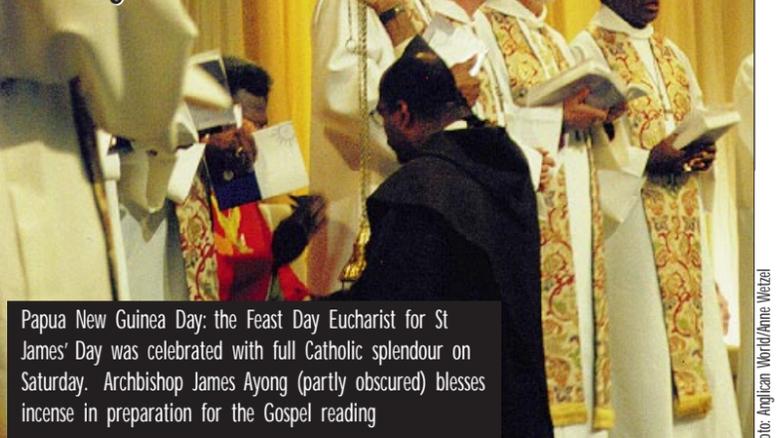
In the concluding presentation, Bishop Peter Selby, chair of the subsection addressing international debt, proclaimed: "For the sick and the orphaned and the widowed and the children who need food to see tomorrow, cancel the debt!"

Cancellation should come without restrictions, he said. "Cancel the debt uncompromisingly and unconditionally. And we do not ask for charity or generosity; we are looking for simple justice."

Bishop Selby cautioned the bishops, however, not to place blame on external institutions alone, given the shared responsibility for the debt.

"I'm not keen that this conference should pass any resolutions about world debt or anything else that calls for other people to re-examine their activities and their beliefs if we don't re-examine them ourselves."

Holy smoke



Papua New Guinea Day: the Feast Day Eucharist for St James' Day was celebrated with full Catholic splendour on Saturday. Archbishop James Ayong (partly obscured) blesses incense in preparation for the Gospel reading

Sudan offering tops £5638

The offering at yesterday's Eucharist for the Church in Sudan exceeded £5638. Those who would like to add to that figure can write a cheque to the Anglican Communion-Sudan and send it to the Finance Office in Giles Lane. If you would like to send a cheque after your return home, please send it before September 15 to: The Anglican Communion Office, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UT, ENGLAND.