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 noted. “The pre-Lambeth design group decided every sector...” Please see Plenary page 3.

Jubilee 2000 vision ‘for rich as well as poor’

by David Skidmore

A n Somerset-Budd ngumbu N dounge 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 N dounge urged the bishops to follow the Gospel injunction to “bring good news to the poor” by supporting the Jubilee 2000 campaign for canceling $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 N dounge, who chairs Section One (Called to Fullness of Life), which is studying international debt, among other topics.

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

Panelists included Bishop Renato Abibico (Northern Luzon, Philippines); Bishop Geralyn Wolf (Rhode Island, US); Samuel Arap Ny’g’ryen, an Anglican Consultative Council member from Kenya; and Bishop Nideon Engwala.

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 must bring them.

Please see London Day page 3.

Floods crippling local economies

Page 4
Daily Quote
"International debt affects all of us who have become too dependent on credit cards." 
Archbishop Ngongkulu Mtungane of South Africa

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 want 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's take the love from here to their people to say: "You are not forgotten."

The Daily welcomes letters from its readers. Prior to publication, letters may be acted upon to conform with space requirements. Submissions are collected to publication, letters may be edited to conform with the nature of the relationships they have experienced with Islam. For 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 will have a presentation from Pakistan, 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 organization Jamaat-e-Islami 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."

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 season of the Conference. They expressed an own struggle 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 Rimal of the United Church of Pakistan said. "Asia is 45% 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 M. N. J. Sabina 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 Azariah, who with Bishops M. N., Karam M. J. Math (Dhah), Church of North India, and Samuel M. Thar (Mahanadi), both 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 in Tune" going 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 20th hymn "Saramai Sarasmi." No mention has been made of the humble Tamil poet of my diocese who composed it. The compiler had said that the hymn was translated into Panjabi melody. The tune and the words were that of this divine truth — those in affliction are given, those in need are helped."

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

Bishop Nathaniel Umetatu (Nppelin 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 Ilkurak (Sorot, Sorot, Uganda) "If I'm borrowed money to buy goods 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 Galatians 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 Lambeth Daily is kindly donated by Robert Horne Paper Company Ltd.
Bishop’s task to rebuild her people’s self-image

by Jane Gitau

She claps 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.

“I 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 a very busy trip here, and we had a stop at the United States Navy in the West coast, a visit to an island in the United States Navy, and a visit to the United States Navy in the Middle East,” she says rather too calmly.

Her dream for Lambeth is to have people understand, accommodate and tolerant each other. “Watching things change is stimulating. I love to watch churches and congregations grow. I think they should be and how God is changing them to become more alive and joyful,” Bishop Knudsen says.

Roundtable: Continued from page 1

T IMETABLE
9am Depart university campus by coach for Lambeth Palace (Please wear your Conference badge during the day). Lunch following the Prime Minister’s address by Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair.
6.25pm Depart Lambeth Palace for Buckingham Palace.
6pm Coach arrive at Buckingham Palace. (Please bring your ticket and remember cameras are not allowed in the Palace or Gardens)
6.45pm Coach arrive at Buckingham Palace for Festival Pier.
6.30pm Embark on Bateaux Mouches for boat trip on the river Thames. Optional bus back to Canterbury.
9.30pm Depart Barrier Pier for University Campuses.

Daily Events Tomorrow
Tuesday July 28 • London Day
7.00 am Eucharist (Province of 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 Festival Pier
3.00 pm Coaches arrive at Buckingham Palace
3.30 pm Coaches depart Buckingham Palace for Festival Pier (Please bring your ticket and remember cameras are not allowed in the Palace or Gardens)
6.30 pm Up to 15 coaches arrive at Festival Pier and embarkation on Bateaux Mouches
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
Floods rage, crippling local economies

in Armidale Diocese, Australia

Rural areas of north-west, New South Wales in Australia are experiencing severe flooding along the N amoi River, 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 devasting drought. The crops will be ruined.

"Our rural industry is already seriously affected by world free-trade policies. For instance, today's smallest and some so little? Yet, he agreed with the video's message: "To characterize 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 M r. Wolfsensohn, said that the World Bank 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.

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," he said. "I'm upset. I'm upset because it paints a picture of our institution, which is quite simply wrong," said Mr. Wolfensohn.

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Everyday people are 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 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."