The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh welcomed the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lambeth Conference participants for a garden party yesterday afternoon at Buckingham Palace. The Duke of York also joined in welcoming the bishops of the Anglican Communion, their spouses and other church colleagues. After receiving the Archbishop and Eileen Carey, the Queen greeted the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and then officials from Lambeth Palace and the Lambeth Conference.

The event itself, offered the Church a chance “to send a signal of openness towards people,” Britain’s Prime Minister Tony Blair told Conference participants for a garden party yesterday afternoon at Buckingham Palace. The Duke of York also joined in welcoming the bishops of the Anglican Communion, their spouses and other church colleagues. After receiving the Archbishop and Eileen Carey, the Queen greeted the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and then officials from Lambeth Palace and the Lambeth Conference.

Thereafter the Archbishop introduced to the Queen various bishops and spouses who lined a path from the Palace steps to the Royal Tea Tent, where a variety of leaders from around the Communion were assembled. A larger tent across the lawn accommodated the majority of the 2,000 guests and provided shelter during light rains. Guests took tea and toured the Palace gardens as the Bands of the Coldstream Guards and the Queen’s Division (Normanby) provided music alternately throughout the afternoon. Yeoman of the Guard held ground as the national anthem announced the arrival of the Queen and other members of the Royal Family at 4pm. Festivities concluded just before 6pm, with guests proceeding on to the Festival Pier for a cruise of the Thames.

Guests had traveled in 49 coaches from Canterbury for the London Day, which opened with lunch hosted at Lambeth Palace by Dr and Mrs Carey.

Coverage of the evening on the Thames will be included in tomorrow’s Lambeth Daily.
Debt burden intolerable, N'Gungane reminds

Archbishop Njongonkulu N'Gungane, of Cape Town, issued the following statement after a meeting at Lambeth Palace yesterday with representatives from the OECD countries:

The human cost of the international debt burden is intolerable. Its effects are evil and sinful. Leaders of different nations remain indifferent to the face of the vast human tragedy generated by unpayable debts.

At our meeting I represented to the utmost of my ability the urgency of the debt crisis.

The HIPC Initiative and other measures taken show that Western governments have not yet fully grasped the critical need for immediate action in addressing this issue.

For many of the countries represented at Lambeth, servicing their debt repayment takes priority over expenditure on health, clean water, sanitation and education. In some nations 40 percent of government budgets are immediately appropriated by creditors.

International debt is the new slavery of the 20th century. Bishops here spoke of the new economic colonialism destroying the lives of millions in their countries.

While the slow processes for agreeing on debt relief grind on inside the international financial institutions, bishops this week spoke of children dying for lack of basic health services.

They spoke of women being exploited and exported as servants and prostitutes to raise hard currency to repay debts—indeed in countries like the Philippines.

They spoke of homeless families in their dioceses living without clean water because sanitation projects have collapsed. They spoke of the ending of free primary education in some African countries.

As a follower of Jesus, committed to the health and salvation of every person, regardless of colour or creed, I cannot keep silent on this issue. It is a matter of life and death.

I am constantly being told that there is a lack of political will to write off these debts. Yet in May of this year Jubilee 2000 gathered 70,000 ordinary British people in Birmingham to put pressure on the G8 leaders.

Clearly, the people have shown the will. We want to see their leaders follow them, and take action.

Writing off odious debts

In my discussions with the British Chancellor and the German ambassador, Gebhardt von Moltke, Russian ambassador Yuri Fukine and Michael Mander, Director of International Debt Policy, U.S. Treasury, I raised the following questions. Why do Western creditors, from strong economies, refuse to offer immediate and substantial debt relief to the poorest countries, except on the basis of consensus from all creditors? Why in particular will they not write off odious debts?

South Africa did not wait for such consensus before writing off all the debt owed to her by Nambibia. In doing so, the new South African government did not ask whether we could afford to offer such relief; we did not wait to reconstruct our own economy before offering debt relief; we did not ask whether the debt was payable or unpayable.

Nor did we impose any conditions on our neighbour.

We merely declared those debts as immoral, odious debts incurred while Nambibia was occupied by the apartheid regime.

We called upon the rich countries to follow the example of the new South African government. To write off the odious loans given to dictators like Suharto of Indonesia, M arcos of the Philippines, M obutu of Zaire and to the various military regimes of Brazil and N igeria.

Western allies did this for Germany after the Second World War. Let us do it now to enable the impoverished people of debtor nations to have a fresh start, to give us hope for a new millennium.

By Brian Thomas

All 16 bishops of the Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia will put on their walking shoes after Lambeth and march to their Parliament in Wellington.

They are walking with their people to tell the Government that the level of poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia will put on their walking shoes after Lambeth and march to their Parliament in Wellington.

The Church’s General Synod—Te Hinota Whanui called for a “Hikoi Hope” when it met in May.

Synod listened solemnly as delegates told horror stories of debilitat-

The Church to hit the road in quest for justice

ing poverty, especially among Maori and Polynesian peoples.

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