



## The Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

---

The Right Reverend Clifton Daniel, 3<sup>rd</sup>, D.D., Bishop

August 14, 2008

Dear Friends,

I am glad to be home after a month away attending the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England. I thank you for your prayers and assure you of my prayers for you and our diocese.

It is my eager desire to share with all of you something of my experiences and learnings from this summer's Lambeth Conference.

One way of sharing this rich experience is through the enclosed Pastoral Letter which is being sent to each congregation in the Diocese. In accord with Canon III.12.3.b (2006), this Pastoral Letter should be communicated to the congregation within two weeks of receiving it in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) It may be read aloud at all Sunday services.
- (b) It may be duplicated and included in your parish newsletter or Sunday bulletin.
- (c) It may be posted on your parish web page.

Second, some of my experiences and reflections can be found on my "Lambeth Blog" which can be found at the following internet address: [www.diocese-eastcarolina.org](http://www.diocese-eastcarolina.org)

A third way is my happy willingness to come to any parish in the diocese in order to speak directly with you and interested parishioners about the Lambeth Conference and what it accomplished. If you would like me to come to your parish to meet with parishioners, please call my secretary, Bonnie Holton, at 252-5522-0885 x229 to schedule a time.

With all prayers and best wishes, I remain,

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clifton Daniel, 3rd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Bishop of East Carolina

## **Pastoral Letter from the Bishop – August 2008**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (I Corinthians 1:3)

Since 1867 the Lambeth Conference has been held once every ten years for the bishops of the Anglican Communion at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The 2008 Lambeth Conference was held July 16 - August 3 2008 in Canterbury. Over the course of the Conference, approximately 650 bishops and many of their spouses lived together as a community on the campus of the University of Kent, located about a mile outside the Town of Canterbury. During the three weeks of the Conference, we listened and talked to one another, learned from one another, laughed and cried with one another, ate and traveled together. We told stories of life and ministry in our own context and heard others tell their stories. We were addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Dias representing the Vatican, Metropolitan Kallistos, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Chief Rabbi of England, Prime Minister Gordon Brown, among others, and were entertained at a Garden Party hosted by the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

The Conference gathered in at least some degree of anxiety, and for some of us who had attended the 1998 Lambeth Conference, some hard and painful memories. By gathering and talking in our usual Anglican way, we learned about faithful ministry in difficult circumstances, about the cost and worth of reconciliation, about the life and death matters that face many members of the Anglican Communion on a daily basis (hunger, disease, lack of education). I came to know and treasure Api, my friend and fellow bishop from Fiji who travels on his boat a day and a night to make a parish visitation. I learned about the seven members of the Melanesian Brotherhood who, in attempting to serve and reconcile two warring clans, were martyred on Easter Sunday 2004. (I wish we had heard more about this costly work of reconciliation carried out by the Melanesian Brotherhood as an example of the work our Lord calls us to in healing the divisions of the world.)

This is the way of what it means to be a Communion: to hear the widest range of voices, to listen and to learn from one another, to walk with one another, and to continue to read Scripture and gather together around God's Table. With all the difficulties the Communion faces in these days, the Lambeth Conference is a part of the process of healing and reconciliation. In our walking, studying God's Word, worshiping and praying together, we both heard and told once again the great story of Jesus and his reconciling love.

Thankfully, the Conference made no grand pronouncements, passed no resolutions, issued no stirring declarations. We took steps towards one another, and steps toward becoming a more effective Communion gathered and empowered for mission. The Lambeth Conference is, after all, a conference, not a legislative body. One English bishop, David Rosedale, "rejoiced that we did not go down the path of resolutions, which give only fossilized remains without conversational tissue. For example," he says, "Resolution 67 from the 1908 Lambeth Conference states clearly, 'We desire earnestly to warn members of our Communion against contracting marriages with Roman Catholics...'" The 1920 Lambeth Conference passed a resolution advising against the use of birth control as unchristian, only to be reversed by another resolution passed at the 1948 Lambeth Conference. I suppose the moral for me is that what passes for any era's "orthodox" position sometimes becomes just cold potatoes in light of the Gospel meeting the realities of life and being applied generously and lovingly to life as it is lived.

Thankfully, Jesus does not demand of his followers that we must be right about everything. If Jesus gave up on us as his followers as easily as we seem to give up on one another, we'd be in a terrible mess. That's why it's so important to keep on showing up to talk with one another, to gather around the Altar and to keep on walking with one another even when our disagreements are most intense. This traditional Anglican way has served us well in the past and will serve us well in the present it we will but trust it.

The Anglican Communion, as I think about it in the light of my experiences at the 1998 and 2008 Lambeth Conferences, is struggling to grow into a new level of maturity by rethinking what it means to be a global Communion with structures and patterns of relating to one another that need renewing. That being said, and lest we get too caught up in ecclesiastical navel-gazing and religious self-absorption, I hasten to remind myself and all of us that the quest for Christian unity is not an end in itself. For the Church universal and for the Anglican Communion, for a diocese or for a congregation, unity serves only as a foundation for mission. The only goal in seeking unity among the churches and traditions of Christendom or within the Anglican Communion or within a parish family must be broader and more energetic efforts at mission in healing the hurts of the world in the name of Jesus.

Mission means that every Christian, every Church, every Tradition is called by Jesus to get on the side of peace, justice, and reconciliation in the here and now of life in this broken world. As Brian McLaren (“A Generous Orthodoxy”) said in addressing the Conference on evangelism: “Do we see the church as a ministry where people are warehoused until we can be shipped off to heaven? Or do we see the church as a society that creates disciples of Jesus who are called to make heaven on earth? Jesus did say in addressing his Father and ours, after all, ‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ We either gather in church on Sunday as followers of Jesus in order to be empowered in our work of being peacemakers, seekers of justice for all, reconcilers; or we’re just gathering in church to get our ticket to heaven punched once again.”

If I had to summarize the Conference in as brief a manner as possible, my summary would go something like this: One night at dinner, someone quoted a line written by Antonio Machado, a Spanish poet: “Caminante, no hay camino. Se hace camino al andar.” (“Traveler, there is no road. The road is made by walking.”) For three weeks the bishops gathered for the 2008 Lambeth Conference made a road by walking together, talking together, praying together, telling our stories and opening our hearts to one another. All in all, I believe that the Lambeth Conference 2008 was about practicing our future as the Anglican Communion, learning what it means to be a reformed catholic tradition meeting the demands and challenges of life in this world at the beginning of the third millennium. As a conference of bishops gathered, we prayed and talked our way a few steps down the road of the future and the mission to which God is calling us.

As a Conference, we did not resolve all the issues facing our Anglican Communion, nor did we attempt it. What we did, I believe, was more important. We modeled a way of faithful, purposeful, prayerful and direct conversation as a way ahead in our common life and steeped that conversation in prayer, worship and Bible Study. We took steps toward one another, making ourselves vulnerable to one another as we did so and recommitted ourselves to life together as a Communion. In our life together, we confirmed our trust in God’s intentions for the continuing and maturing life of the Anglican Communion. Through our life together as the bishops of the Communion gathered, we reaffirmed our commitment to living as faithful witnesses to the Good News of Jesus. We demonstrated our resolve to become more effective stewards of God’s bounty for all people and as the caretakers of “this fragile earth, our island home.” We reconfirmed our resolve to share God’s abundance by committing ourselves and our dioceses to work toward cutting global poverty in half by 2015, working to eradicate hunger and preventable disease, and toward insuring equitable distribution of the world’s economic and natural resources and lifting the oppressed from their bondage.

As a parish, as a diocese, in our life as a constituent member of the Anglican Communion and as communicants of The Episcopal Church, I pray that these resolves take firm hold in our hearts and steel our will as Jesus’ disciples as we pursue the mission and ministry God has called us to through our Baptism.

God bless you, and with prayers for Godspeed in the days ahead, I remain,

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clifton Daniel, 3rd". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
VII Bishop of East Carolina