

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Anvil* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_anvil\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_anvil_01.php)

STUART BUCHANAN

---

# Looking Forward to Lambeth

**One of the two main themes of the 2008 Lambeth Conference is equipping bishops as leaders in mission. In preparation for this, the Anglican Communion Office circulated a questionnaire seeking information on the nature of mission and evangelism within Provinces, as well as on the particular challenges they face and the lessons they are learning. Stuart Buchanan here gives an overview of the responses received. These paint a hugely diverse picture, yet one through which various common threads can be seen to run. In the face of such varied contexts faced by the Communion today, he begins by noting the irony that the very first Lambeth Conference was itself called as a result of concerns about appropriate local inculturation of the gospel and the risks of syncretism in mission which were little different in principle from those we face today.**

Of course, it all began with mission.

At the launch in January of the 2008 Lambeth Conference, there was the reminder from the Archbishop of Canterbury that the first Lambeth Conference in 1867 was called 'in response to a crisis about the limits of diversity allowed in the Anglican churches around the world'. That specific controversy was caused by Bishop Colenso of Natal or, depending upon how you view it, caused by the response of other bishops to Bishop Colenso. The bishop was successful in learning the Zulu language, sharing the gospel and bringing people to faith; but his missionary encounter raised some interesting and divisive issues.

First, there was polygamy. He questioned whether requiring new converts to divorce all but one of their existing wives and become monogamous was any better than accepting polygamous marriages. There was also the issue of the nature of salvation. Were the ancestors of the Zulu also saved? If not, then what sort of salvation was it that separated these people from their ancestors in the afterlife, and what would such an understanding of salvation mean for a community with such a corporate self-understanding as the Zulus? These two issues led him to look at how the Bible should be interpreted and, as a result of his writings, he was accused of being too liberal. There would also have been concerns related to his empathy with the Zulu people which led him to lend considerable support to them instead of automatically endorsing the British colonial cause. In addition to this, he also questioned the historical veracity of the Old Testament on the basis of various inconsistencies between lengths of reigns and other dates. So, the diversity began with mission and quickly led into issues of human sexuality, the nature of

salvation, the gospel, cultural identity and colonialism, and, of course, biblical interpretation.

But if diversity of opinion, in response to mission, is part of the problem, it also has biblical precedents. In Acts 10, Peter is led by the Holy Spirit to share his faith with Gentiles – Cornelius and his household – and then to baptise them. Human sexuality and colonialism may be missing from this story, but the nature of salvation, the gospel and cultural identity and biblical interpretation are all there. Although, from a first glance, the issue looks as if it is happily solved in Acts 11, we know from further reading of the New Testament that the debate would continue for many years.

Living with diversity and tensions is biblical. If the Church is to be involved in authentic mission that makes sense of the gospel within new and changing cultures and contexts, rather than trying to replicate a mono-cultural understanding of the gospel, then there will be diversity. I would go further and suggest that if there is no such diversity and tension then the Church has ceased to be like the early Church and has ceased to be biblical. If there is no diversity and difference of opinion then either the Church has ceased trying to relate the gospel to different cultures and contexts or, in its excitement with what is new and different, it has ceased trying to relate these new understandings to the traditional teaching of the Church.

The Anglican Communion celebrates its diversity and sees it as a gift of God. We need to take seriously the understanding of mission that the other person has and see how it can inform and challenge our own understanding. For Peter and the early Church it was not only the understanding of mission that was challenged by this Holy Spirit led mission activity but also the understanding of the nature of salvation and ultimately the understanding of God himself. The Anglican Communion celebrates its diversity but there is also the need to explore the limits of diversity.

## **Mission today**

In launching the official programme of the 2008 Lambeth Conference, the Archbishop of Canterbury also noted that there were two key points of focus for the conference: strengthening the sense of a shared Anglican identity among the bishops from around the world and helping to equip bishops for the role they increasingly have as leaders in mission, involved in a whole variety of ways in helping the Church grow.

I have had the privilege of helping to prepare one of the background papers that will be sent to the bishops prior to the Lambeth Conference (also available to the public on request from the Mission and Evangelism Department of the Anglican Communion Office). This paper, on mission and evangelism, is based upon the analysis of a questionnaire sent to all of the Anglican Provinces. The questionnaire reminded them of the holistic understanding of mission that Anglicanism has developed. It asked for information about not only their mission and evangelism activities but also the lessons and challenges that arise from these activities. The nature of the responses has varied, partly depending on who ultimately completed

the questionnaire, but replies have come from 80% of the Communion's 38 Provinces, providing a unique overview of the diversity of mission and evangelism within the Communion.

Within the breadth of responses it has been possible to identify *nine* key mission contexts:

- other faiths
- evangelism
- migrants, refugees and displaced people
- reconciliation
- young people
- Christian values
- HIV and AIDS
- response to emergencies
- economic viability.

In addressing all of these in turn we see that within each of these we find expressed something of the differences and diversity that exist between us in our understanding of mission.

### **Other faiths**

There are many fascinating stories from Provinces that mention their involvement in mission within an Other Faith context (Australia, Bangladesh, CNI, Egypt, Melanesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Southern Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda). Within nearly all of these the faith referred to is Islam. To some extent this reflects the Provinces that responded to the questionnaire, but this still begs the question as to why faiths other than Islam are referred to so rarely.

Many of those witnessing among Muslim majorities will agree with the comment from Egypt that 'Christianity is perceived as a Western religion creating negative feelings among those who do not like the "intrusion" of Western values'. The Western churches have commented little on mission in the Islamic context. Perhaps their sensitivity to 'the intrusion of Western values' is perceived as a barrier at this time.

The experience of being a Christian minority, against the backdrop of current world events, is taken further in a comment from Pakistan that 'evangelism in this part of the world is becoming not just difficult but fatal'. This has not stopped the Church from witnessing in these situations, but it has encouraged the Church to reflect more deeply on how it witnesses. The Church in Egypt has concluded, 'in these situations the importance of holistic mission is stressed as being vital. People need not to just hear words, but see Jesus "going around doing good"'. The diocese of Nuba Mountains in Sudan states that 'Muslims give respect to the church and church leaders when, and if, they are serious with their faith.'

Christian communities responded to the earthquake in the Diocese of Peshawar, Pakistan. Despite ever growing hostilities and hatred towards the Christian

community, it was the time when 'the church decided to come out of its cocoon'. In showing 'it is possible to cross dividing barriers when the church reaches out with love to service the afflicted / suffering' it has broken down barriers, responded to need and is growing.

Many Christians witnessing in an Islamic context will be challenged by stories from East Africa. A Tanzanian bishop tells that after the baptism of 50 Muslims he was congratulated by a Sheik and told that 'you deserve this because you show love to everyone without showing discrimination: that is why Muslims come to join you'. In Uganda over 250 people have been trained in Muslim evangelism in Kampala, Kasese, Fort Portal, Mbale and Arua and over 4,000 Muslims are mentioned as having converted to Christianity. Other denominations in Uganda as well as the Anglican Provinces in the Great Lakes region have sought training in Uganda.

Where the Church is successful in bringing those of other faiths to Christ – in Pakistan, Uganda and Nigeria – it is also addressing the needs of converts and seekers. For example, rehabilitation centres have been opened to help provide vocational skills for those disowned by their families.

### **Evangelism**

The context and motivation for evangelism make a difference to the approach used. A number of Provinces (Australia, Canada, Japan, USA and West Indies) use the word 'decline' and England, Scotland and Wales imply decline. Apart from Japan, these are all Provinces where the majority of the population were once considered Christian. Mention is made of the unchurched, referring to a generation that is no longer in touch with church, and is without an understanding of Christianity. Provinces such as England, Australia and Canada questioned whether the existing church structures are effective for the kind of evangelism that needs to be done and expressed the need for new mission strategies.

Australia, Canada and England believe that for any evangelism to be effective there is the need to change the mindset of existing congregations, and that sustained preaching from diocesan leaders is necessary for such changes to begin to occur. There are a number of important new initiatives which attempt both to attract people back to existing forms of church and also to create new forms of church. In England 'Back to Church Sunday' was pioneered in Manchester Diocese and has spread throughout the country. The hope was that in 2007, through personal invitations, 20,000 people would be brought back to church who had previously drifted away. The 'Mission 21' initiative in Scotland starts a stage further back than this. It has run congregational courses that are trying to make congregations more welcoming: if people are brought back into church then they will only stay if they feel that the congregation is welcoming them.

Wales has a 'Venturing in Mission' programme and 'Fresh Expressions' initiatives are mentioned by Australia, England and Ireland. As the name suggests, such initiatives are not about bringing people into traditional forms of church, but creating different 'expressions' of the worshipping Christian community that are appropriate for the cultural context. They are aimed at attracting both those who

are unchurched and those who have previously rejected traditional forms of church. In Australia, Canada, England and USA, the Church Army has developed a number of 'Local Mission Bases' reaching out through different forms of ministry to reach 'the least, the last and the lost'. With all such new forms of ministry, the challenge is to find, grow and develop pioneer leaders within these forms of ministry.

Process evangelism courses such as Alpha have proved to be a helpful tool not only in bringing new people to faith but also in re-igniting the faith and commitment of those who have returned to church. There are challenges now being faced in how the 'Fresh Expressions' and traditional forms of churches can co-exist and best relate to one another.

These strategies are not just used by the churches facing decline. The Alpha course is being used in Egypt, Uganda and West Africa to reach the unchurched. Other Provinces are pioneering their own fresh expressions of church to reach the unreached within their own contexts and cultures, with 'Church on the streets' in Brazil and similar urban initiatives in Kenya.

Often growth comes from replicating traditional methods and structures that have worked in the past. New dioceses have been created in Tanzania and specifically missionary dioceses in Nigeria. The latter are generally in the rural unreached areas where the gospel has not yet taken root. They are supported for their first three years by individuals or church sponsors before being expected to become self-financing. There is also 'non-geographic mission' in Nigeria to the 10 million nomadic Fulani who have not yet been reached by the gospel.

There are many other examples of evangelism, under a diversity of headings that give a hint, but no more, of the underlying methodology. References range from church planting in Brazil, Central Africa, Melanesia, Tanzania and West Africa; incarnational evangelism in Sri Lanka; a ministry of presence in Southern Africa; and evangelistic crusades in Central Africa; through to healing and deliverance ministries in Tanzania and Uganda. The key role of women in evangelism is emphasised in Central Africa and Uganda, and using the enthusiasm of youth is highlighted in Nuba Mountains, Sudan and in Tanzania.

As with the ministry in the context of other faiths, in most Provinces in the South there is the realisation that evangelism depends upon holistic mission. In Egypt 'words and deeds are required'. The Province of the Indian Ocean states that 'people always respond lovingly when authentic and generous hearts provide the resources'. In Nigeria 'people are taking the gospel and Church seriously when the church is interested in their holistic wellbeing – spiritually, socially and physically.'

Attitudes are also important in any evangelism. The Province of the Indian Ocean also goes on to comment upon the danger of paternalism within a holistic mission approach: 'However a paternalistic missionary model can easily be the norm if one is not careful: sensitivity and building trust and ownership bring about new added worthiness of the people.' DR Congo refers to a shift away from emphasising fear of hell and condemnation to a desire to communicate the different facets of the fullness, joy and hope of the gospel.

## **Migrants, refugees and displaced people**

We live in a world where there are large scale people movements. The words used may vary: Australia, Southern Africa and Tanzania all speak of refugees; Canada of immigrants; Japan of migrants; Ireland of asylum seekers; Burundi, Sri Lanka and Uganda of displaced people; Burundi also of returnees. But although the reasons for being displaced, and the contexts, differ, the situations these people face often have certain similarities. For most, there are the problems of being uprooted, marginalised and living with uncertainty and anxiety about the future.

Uganda notes that internally displaced people are traumatized, starved and dehumanized. They need counselling, support, and support for and partnership in their advocacy against war and abuse of human dignity. Uganda goes on to emphasise that the displaced will also include a high proportion of women and children who are particularly vulnerable.

When migrant families overstay their visas and remain illegally in countries they become particularly vulnerable to exploitation. In Japan the church is working closely with such vulnerable groups, challenging government policies and enabling people to remain legally. Often there is the need to help educate the receiving church to deal with difference and express a genuine welcome. In Ireland the 'Hard Gospel' initiative was developed initially to deal with sectarianism but in helping Christians deal with difference it has also become a resource for educating the Church in welcoming asylum seekers.

In all of these experiences there is the need for those responding to displaced people to be able to hear from them and learn from their experiences of God at work in their lives. Many such people have had a deep and powerful testimony of God's effective presence and exchanging stories has been one of the ways God has used to share the gospel.

## **Reconciliation**

Mention was made above to the 'Hard Gospel' initiative in Ireland as a way of addressing the issue of sectarianism arising from denominational differences. Much of the church's mission worldwide is going on within a context of reconciliation. There is openness from some Provinces to the need to deal first with the problems that they are part of, before being able to reach out to others.

Particularly, there is the realisation of the need to address past wrongs in the way that an incoming population treated an indigenous people. Australian Anglicans have apologised for their part in discriminatory government policies towards Aboriginal peoples and are recognising the need to tackle indigenous poverty. Canada mention that discriminatory attitudes towards indigenous minorities continue today and goes on to state that 'until the sin of racism within our church is fully and completely exposed, all service in God's mission is deeply flawed.' In order to address this colonial legacy they have established an anti-racism working group and appointed an indigenous bishop to foster the inclusion of indigenous peoples and of indigenous spirituality in the life and ministry of the Church. Other references to initiatives with indigenous people come from the USA and the Southern Cone.

It can and does take much time to address both past wrongs and ongoing attitudes. In Southern Africa the need to deal with 'the legacy of apartheid' is still on the agenda. Korea and Japan run a clergy exchange programme that helps mutual understanding between the two churches and nations, in an attempt to heal tensions still evident from Japan's occupation of Korea.

There are also reconciliation initiatives being taken by Christians working with other communities, in war and post-war contexts. In DR Congo evangelists were sent to the warring Lendu and Hema tribes which resulted in the reconciliation of these tribes with each other and with God. From Kenya, Melanesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Sudan we received other examples of participation in reconciliation programmes between warring parties and alienated communities. From Burundi there are also initiatives in the ongoing reconciliation in post war situations and, perhaps with the implication that older people are more entrenched in their views, mention of the specific role of young people in reconciliation.

### **Young people**

As previously mentioned, in several contexts young people can be, and have been, a valuable resource in mission. There are various examples of young people being encouraged to take on responsibility within church: Tanzania speaks of them leading services and being appointed to church positions, choir groups etc., and Central Africa of the evangelistic role of youth choirs. In Australia and England young people aged 18 to 22 are gaining short experiences of mission through Church Army GAP year programmes aimed at those taking a break either before or after college courses. The Church of North India has noted increases in young people offering for ministry.

Elsewhere the emphasis is on reaching out to young people. Generally in the West they are seen as an unchurched generation. Canada notes that 'young people are uninterested in the church ... yet interested in spirituality and life-encouraging values' where new methods of reaching them are being developed. In West Africa evangelists are being specifically trained for child evangelism and in Central Africa there are initiatives with street children. Egypt, Southern Africa and Southern Cone all mention ministry with young people. Uganda, in particular, is investing much time and money in initiatives with children and young people (with the appointment of diocesan youth officers in each diocese) as well as developing many exciting activities for young people.

### **Christian values**

In many parts of the Communion, mission and evangelism are seen as including standing up for Christian values. This is reflected in a diversity of responses. In the Philippines this includes challenging social and moral decay: drug abuse, family breakdown, loss of respect to elders, corruption and prostitution. In Lusaka, Central Africa, there is work amongst the street children who are caught up with prostitution and drugs. Tackling drug abuse is a common theme elsewhere with mention from Australia, Canada, Myanmar and USA. The Melanesian Brotherhood is trying to help resolve the current moral breakdown in society in both Papua New Guinea and Vanuata.



In Uganda the church is engaging with moral decadence arising from modern ideology and mass media. The Mothers Union and Family Life initiatives there have seen men value their women more, resulting in an increase in both Christian weddings and God-fearing families. In Melanesia there is a centre run for abused and beaten women and, related to this issue, the International Anglican Family Network recently ran a consultation on 'Violence and the Family' in Korea.

For the Church in Tanzania, the dispute on human sexuality, resulting from the position adopted by some in North America in 2003, has brought suspicion from many people about the Anglican Church, making its witness doubly difficult. In the USA the focus on areas of disagreement, rather than mission, has dissipated energy.

The move away from traditional Christian values at the national level presents challenges for western churches. For the Australian welfare organisation, Anglicare, balancing a faith-based charter with a host of employment and contractual obligations is rarely straightforward. In Canada there is also 'the challenge of secularism, conservatism and cowardice of our elected political leaders [and] the challenge of enormous far-reaching corporate agendas in public policy'. The USA acknowledges that 'a post modern and post Christian world demands new understandings and strategies', and Ireland states that 'new tools are needed for discerning trends in society'.

But the tensions of clarifying what are specifically Christian values within rapidly changing cultures and discerning how mission initiatives should be modified in a changing world is not just an issue facing the West. In Tanzania there is concern about the separation between the spiritual and the physical, and in Central Africa the concern is the separation between theological and scientific studies. Melanesia states that 'times keep changing, and so must we'. Kenya notes that 'time and contexts change but the gospel remains relevant to every age and culture' and so 'as time and contexts change, the gospel should adapt to remain relevant'. Uganda reports that 'a paradigm shift in mission requires a new mission strategy'.

## **HIV and AIDS**

Although the Church needs to take a stand on Christian values, in its work with those who are infected and/or affected by HIV and AIDS there are particular challenges of trying to deal creatively with stigma, shame and denial. The Provinces referring to HIV and AIDS work include Central Africa, Indian Ocean, Melanesia, Myanmar, Southern Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and West Indies. CAPA (the Council of the Anglican Provinces of Africa) has an HIV and AIDS programme. This states that its mission is to respect the dignity of all people by:

- securing the human rights of those infected by HIV and AIDS, and giving unconditional support;
- improving the health and prolonging the lives of infected people;
- accompanying the dying, those who mourn and those who live on;
- celebrating life;
- nurturing community and
- advocating for justice.

Common themes within the work of these Provinces, alongside dealing with stigma, shame and denial, include:

- awareness-raising;
- abstinence workshops;
- testing, treatment and counselling services;
- care, support and empowerment;
- vocational training and income generation projects;
- hope and transformation.

Malaria and TB were added to the CAPA HIV and AIDS programme in July 2004. Uganda notes that HIV and AIDS also results in an increase in the number of widows and orphans.

### **Response to emergencies**

A number of Provinces have responded to a variety of emergency situations. In Sri Lanka the response to the December 2004 tsunami included the rebuilding of people's lives and infrastructure. Melanesia responded to another tsunami through trauma counselling and helping people to come to terms with loss of life and property. Mention has already been made of the response to the earthquake in Pakistan and there was also response to an earthquake in Japan. In the USA there has been an ongoing response to Hurricane Katrina with a Church Army evangelist couple heading up one volunteer camp called 'God's Katrina Kitchen' which provides over 1,000 meals daily to both volunteers and local residents.

Flooding in Bangladesh and an extended drought in Australia have meanwhile drawn the attention of both Provinces to the issue of global warming and its consequences.

### **Economic viability**

Responses give a number of examples of mission initiatives which attempt to tackle the local problems of poverty and of churches working towards self-reliance through stewardship and income generation. Some describe income generating activities geared at funding mission.

In the Indian Ocean Province, social and community transformation is taking place through schools and rice mills. Youth are being trained in sewing, secretarial courses and hair dressing in Pakistan and West Africa. Mention is made of the key role of women in other income generating programmes in Uganda and in economic empowerment in Kenya.

The parishes near Lake Malawi, Central Africa are initiating maize mill projects and providing fishing boats and fishing nets, both to make socio-economic provision to the community as well as to fund raise to support evangelistic programmes.

### **The five marks of mission**

The above nine areas encompass the main preoccupations of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion at the beginning of the twenty-first century which they will

carry into the Lambeth Conference this summer. It is instructive to consider them against Anglicanism's 'Five Marks of Mission' which were developed through the 1980s and enunciated and affirmed in the reports *Bonds of Affection* (at the Anglican Consultative Council's sixth meeting (ACC-6) in 1984), and *Mission in a Broken World* (of ACC-8 in 1990).

The Five Marks are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Within the responses from Provinces to our questionnaire there was, as has been noted, a strong emphasis upon holistic mission. It is not surprising then that most of the stories of mission and evangelism relate to more than one of the marks of mission. For example, stories about evangelism will frequently include an element of response to human need or the transformation of unjust structures and, as unjust structures lead to human need, the response to these two marks of mission are often interlinked.

It has therefore proved difficult to allocate each story to a particular mark of mission but the 275 stories or examples of mission provided by the survey can be said to give the following breakdown:

- Proclamation – 27%
- Teaching – 21%
- Responding – 31%
- Transforming – 19%
- Safeguarding – 2%.

It is worth noting that two of the six references to striving 'to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth' were mentioned above under 'Response to emergencies' (Australia, Bangladesh) and these show a re-active, rather than pro-active, response. The link between environment, global warming and natural disasters should be clear but it appears that often it is only after disasters have happened that safeguarding the integrity of creation is seen as a mission priority.

## **Lessons to learn**

The specific lessons identified by the respondents all flowed from pursuing mission and reflecting upon the experience. They include:

### **Doing mission together**

This covered comments about working ecumenically, being concerned for mission in other countries and relating global mission to local initiatives as well as learning

from the initiatives of other churches and contextualising these to local circumstances. There is a realisation that the mission we share belongs to the whole Church of God.

### **Developing a mission mindset**

Some Provinces are beginning successfully to overcome the barriers of lack of motivation or self-belief in what God could achieve through them.

### **Holistic mission**

It is universally being recognised how compassionate deeds lead to the good news of Jesus being taken seriously, and that word and deed are, and must be, inter-linked.

### **The challenges of mission**

The pursuit of mission is particularly challenged by Other Faith contexts, as well as by other worldviews, false teaching, and paternalistic models of behaving and church structures. In response to financial challenges, there is the recognition of the need to become self-supporting as well as the observation that resources follow mission: when you get on and do mission, people will give to support it. Some Provinces feel challenged by being small but are realising that their presence within communities is significant.

### **The mission context**

Initiatives and strategies are being adapted to cope with changing needs in different parts of the Communion, although what works in one Province may not work so well in another.

### **The recipients of mission**

Mission is not a one-way process: there is learning going on from those that are being reached out to. This is true particularly of the enthusiasm and motivation of young people, but is also seen in acknowledging the way that certain indigenous people groups have been treated by the Christian majority in the past.

### **The processes of mission**

Provinces have a wide realisation of both the urgency and the ongoing nature of mission. They also recognise the need to strategize processes to find the appropriate starting point in a rapidly changing world.

### **Learning about God**

By partnering God in God's mission, new insights are being gained. The importance and power of the Holy Spirit and of anointing and healing are being recognised by churches that have not traditionally looked to such ministries. For others, the church is being recognised as a 'beacon of light' or as 'a sign of hope'. As some said, 'the future is bright' and 'God is alive and at work in unexpected ways inside and outside the church' and this is 'leading us to new ventures and vistas'.

### **Challenges**

The specific challenges identified by the respondents are based around five distinct issues, of which four often overlap with each other.

### **Financial resources**

Most Provinces mention the financial challenges that they face. Myanmar refers to its hope of becoming self-sufficient and in Central Africa parishioners are being trained in stewardship and to become self-sustaining. Reasons for the financial challenges might include poverty and unemployment due to various disasters or ongoing circumstances such as war, drought, famine, tsunami, migration, HIV and AIDS and related care for widows and orphans. Even in countries not facing any of these issues it is the case that 'shrinking and ageing congregations can present financial challenges'. This means that traditionally wealthy Provinces, facing decline of numbers, are also seeing their income reduced. Some Provinces can find it difficult to fund projects aimed at the marginalised.

### **Rapidly changing worldviews**

The challenge of shrinking and ageing congregations in the West is but one symptom of the challenge to the churches of adapting and responding to the rapidly changing worldviews that are being identified elsewhere as well as in the West. The challenge of living with other worldviews presents different types of challenges in different areas, including the proliferation of new religions and denominations and the challenge of syncretism. For some, the challenge of another worldview is an opportunity, but for others, particularly in regions where the West is not popular (as has been mentioned under the section on Other Faiths), another worldview can be a challenge that might feel quite threatening.

### **Vision and motivation**

Rapidly changing worldviews, in turn, provide challenges to those identifying and implementing the vision for mission and inspiring motivation to put new vision into practice. Financial resources also impact upon motivation with churches facing difficulties both in attracting and retaining staff for mission in more challenging areas. Ongoing war also constitutes a barrier to motivation.

### **Leadership**

Financial resources, changing worldviews and their impact upon vision, strategy and motivation all impact upon the challenges of leadership and leadership training. Challenges include finding the financial resources and/or the people for clergy and leadership training, finding entrepreneurial leaders for new forms of ministry or equipping the whole people of God for the changing tasks of mission.

### **Provincial issues**

The challenges that don't link with the others in the same way are best described as provincial issues, which tend to arise from the particular circumstances of individual Provinces. Some Provinces struggle with issues related to their size, geography, infrastructure and communication. For others there are issues related to having a common identity in the face of theological, social or political diversity.

### **Conclusion**

This reflection of the state of mission and evangelism across the Anglican Communion describes the context within which bishops at the Lambeth Conference

will meet, as they consider the theme of 'helping to equip bishops for the role they increasingly have as leaders in mission, involved in a whole variety of ways in helping the Church grow'. It is a rich and varied context, though one through which many common threads can also be seen to run.

I am sure that none of this actually 'challenges the limits of diversity' which so concerned those who gathered for the first Lambeth Conference, but I hope that it does challenge you as you reflect on mission and evangelism within your own context and what you might learn from the diversity across the Anglican Communion as a whole.

**Stuart Buchanan** is a Research and Administrative Assistant at the Anglican Communion Office

# Ridley Hall CAMBRIDGE

## Mission shaped training & resources

- ★ Sabbaticals & Study Leave
- ★ Resource & Refresh short courses for Readers
  - ★ Training for Youth Ministry
  - ★ Faith in the Workplace courses
    - ★ Low cost Lent Books for individual, small group and parish use
    - ★ Certificate in Mission & Evangelism for Independent students

**Check these out at [www.ridley.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk)**

Ridley Hall Ridley Hall Road Cambridge CB3 9HG Phone 01223 741080

A member of the Cambridge Theological Federation