

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.
E te whanau a te Karaiti.
Naumai, haeremai, haeremai.

I welcome you all to this third session of our fiftieth Synod, especially those of you who are here for the first time. As we meet together let us remember that although we are members of the Body of Christ, He, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the head of the Church.

We are here to listen respectfully to one another and to discern His will for our Church. That will mean listening carefully. It will mean sometimes setting aside our own preferences and agendas. It will mean sensitivity to God the Holy Spirit and to one another. It will mean treating each other with loving respect as sisters and brothers in Christ. May we come to that place where we can say with the early Christians "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us".

We have a number of visitors among us whom I want to acknowledge and warmly welcome. The multi-racial youth team from the Diocese of St. Mark, South Africa. Last year Canon Richard Ellena led a SOMA team to South Africa and this is a return visit. We look forward to their leading our morning and evening worship sessions and our Synod Retreat. No doubt you will see them around the diocese during their time with us.

Once again we welcome Canon Ron Taylor, the General Secretary of the newly constituted Anglican Missions Board. Ron needs no introduction and is well known to us all.

Most importantly we welcome those from our sister churches and denominations in this city and region. As always their presence reminds us that we together are called to bring people to a living faith in God through Jesus Christ. The task belongs to us all and it can only be accomplished as we work together in love and unity.

LAMBETH AND US

The Lambeth Conference of Bishops only happens once every ten years and is therefore, for many bishops, a once in a life-time experience. Between conferences this diocese sets aside finance to allow the bishop and his spouse to attend. Such a commitment is not received lightly by Alice or myself. We wish to thank you for the opportunity to attend Lambeth 1998.

Taking that into account, this year I want to do something different with my Presidential Address. I will endeavour to reflect on Lambeth as I feel it impinges upon our diocese. Hopefully there will be future occasions when other significant Lambeth issues can be discussed.

I will admit having been somewhat apprehensive about Lambeth and wondered whether I wanted to attend. The present shape of the Church in our country can from time to time lead orthodox and evangelical Christians to feel somewhat marginalised and pushing against the tide.

Experiencing fellowship and encounter with seven hundred and fifty bishops from 167 countries led me to understand that my own personal spiritual journey and that of our diocese was much more main-stream than I had been led to believe.

Generally speaking, the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia, at least its Pakeha dioceses, finds itself moving in the more liberal stream of Christianity rather than in the orthodox. At least that is my perception.

Since returning in 1984 from nearly twenty years in North Africa and the Middle East, I have felt increasingly isolated from the rest of the Anglican Communion, partly no doubt because of our geographical location. This mitigates against meeting and sharing with Anglican leaders in other parts of the world.

Lambeth was for me and for many others a shot in the arm, a breath of fresh air and a real encouragement as I found that by far the majority of Anglican Bishops desire to be orthodox, upholding traditional biblical beliefs and standards of morality and most important, having an enthusiasm for proclaiming the Gospel and seeing the Church grow.

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There are a number of things that need to be understood about the Lambeth Conference. Its key purpose is not achieved only, or even primarily, by formal reports and resolutions. More significant were the friendships made and the challenges that took place in our daily living, as we studied, talked and mingled with each other. It is a fact that more time was spent at Lambeth, in Bible Study, prayer and worship than any other single pursuit.

It is one thing to know intellectually that we are part of an eighty million strong, world-wide church, it is quite another thing to experience it. The personal stories heard were almost overwhelming. A bishop from the Sudan grieving the death of his wife killed by a land mine in that country's terrible civil war. Those who have had children abducted across borders to be trained as terrorists. The bishop of the tiny Anglican Church in Iran, consecrated in secret, cast into prison after sudden arrest with nobody being notified and there discovering the presence of the living Christ. A woman bishop from the United States diagnosed with cancer just days after her consecration, describing how she worked through her critical time in hope and consultation with the people of her diocese. Japanese bishops expressing in a most moving communion service, their apology for the implication of their church in the Japanese military machine of World War II. A Congolese bishop, in my Bible Study group, whose war scarred diocese is twice the size of the South Island and where none of his clergy receive salaries. He himself has no vehicle and has to hitch a ride on trucks around his diocese. His family never knowing when he will return and those whom he is visiting, not knowing when he is going to turn up. With no material resources that diocese is growing rapidly.

The story of the Nigerian church, not really going anywhere ten years ago but taking on board the Decade of Evangelism declared at the previous Lambeth. In 1990 the Archbishop of Nigeria consecrated nine new missionary bishops, gave each of them a bicycle, linked them up with a parish in Lagos, the capital and sent them off, not to plant a church but to plant dioceses in the Muslim north of that country. They did it with no assistance from the materially richer western Churches. The suffering and the phenomenal growth experienced are a challenge to what often appears to be a dying church in the west. These stories could be multiplied many times over.

Lambeth a Meeting Place for Bishops

Until this Lambeth, the agendas have usually been dominated by the churches of the UK and North America. That will no longer be the case in the years to come. The fulcrum of world mission and evangelism, of growing churches, of the pulsating spiritual life now being evidenced in many parts of the two-thirds world will make for many changes in the years that lie ahead, changes I believe that will be for the better.

Those of us from the west may not always enjoy this. We may feel that we are losing control, but this bishop feels very encouraged. There is still plenty of life in the Anglican Communion. I believe the best days are yet to come. As I have said before, it may not always be evidenced in places like New Zealand, Australia, the UK and North America, but taken globally we are a church on the move.

Are we mature enough to accept with grace that the leadership of our Communion is moving in a direction one might never have guessed ten to fifteen years ago?

Before talking specifically about some of the issues debated at Lambeth let me share two lasting impressions:

Firstly, as I have already intimated, it is clear that the balance of influence in the Anglican world has moved. For many years the leadership was firmly within the Church of England. It then went on to be shared with the United States, but now Africa is the new dominant force in Anglicanism, together also with the vibrant dioceses of South East Asia and South America. This is not just about numbers, though that is where Anglican Christians are multiplying faster than anywhere else in the world, but it also has to do with the emergence of a new generation of well educated, confident, Bible believing leaders. The fruit of Anglican Mission Societies over the past 150 years is now very evident. God the Holy Spirit is at work in exciting ways. The support of Mission agencies is still important.

The other deep impression has to do with a pronounced emphasis on the authority of Scripture. There is being reflected a real need for a clear basis for doctrine and morality. It is my belief that this Lambeth Conference will go down in history as one that called the Church back to its strong biblical foundations.

What does all this mean for the Diocese of Nelson? May be it is a little too early to tell but I would want to say this. The Nelson diocese might be viewed by some outside its boundaries as being conservative in its view of the Scriptures and with a strong

evangelistic and growth orientation. It may sometimes be seen as out of step in some areas with the rest of the Anglican Church in our nation. But I want to assure you that from a world perspective we find ourselves within the main stream, upholding strong biblical and orthodox beliefs and behaviour.

I LAMBETH AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

Lambeth Resolutions and the Tikanga Pakeha Commission's Report on Human Sexuality

The thing that amazed many of us at Lambeth was the incredible number of bishops who stood for biblical orthodoxy. By now you will have heard the result of the sexuality debate. If one was to go by the media we could be forgiven for thinking that was the only subject on the Lambeth agenda. BBC and the newspapers were full of it, trying to make out that the Communion was about to be rent asunder over the issue.

The debate and subsequent voting on the resolution showed just how committed the Anglican Communion is to upholding traditional views of sexuality and marriage in the Anglican Church world-wide.

As I reported in my Lambeth letter there was some debate, not so much against the motion but as to its wording. Wishing to make the statements of the resolution even stronger, bishops, principally from the two thirds world, proposed a number of changes. They led the way in advocating orthodoxy and fidelity to the Scriptures.

The Lambeth Resolution

I think its important that we hear very clearly what Lambeth resolution 1:10 on human sexuality says. Here it is:

“This Conference:

- a. commends to the church the subsection report on Human Sexuality;
- b. in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in life-long union and believes that abstinence is right for those not called to marriage;
- c. recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care and moral direction of the Church and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ;
- d. while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all, irrespective of sexual orientation, and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex;

- e. cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions;
- f. requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us;
- g. notes the significance of the "Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality," and the concerns expressed in resolution IV.26, V.1, V.10, V.23 and V.35 on the authority of Scripture in matters of marriage and of sexuality and asks the Primates and the ACC to include them in their monitoring process."

The vote was an overwhelming 526 for, 70 against, with 45 abstentions.

The Times, arguably the UK's leading newspaper, headlined on its front page the following: "Liberal bishops routed on vote on homosexuals, Anglicans return to traditional morality." The media was caught out and surprised. "The Lambeth Conference last night delivered a resounding blow to the liberal tendency in the Anglican church with a dramatic swing back to traditional conservative values on homosexuality and marriage."

So said The Times, although I would have to say that it was not a dramatic swing back to traditional conservative values. In my understanding they have always been there but they have never been reported on. It is usually the smaller liberal wing of the church promoting controversial standards that catches the attention of the media.

Letter to the Gay Community

Many of you will have heard that following the dramatic vote, passing resolution 1.10, a statement addressed to Lesbian and Gay Anglicans was issued and signed by 146 bishops, including 16 from Australia and New Zealand. (All the pakeha bishops signed with the exception of Brian Carrell and myself.) If the truth be known, the letter was not offered to me to sign. However, had it been offered I could not, in all conscience, have added my signature to the document.

In many ways this letter expressed strong doubt about the Lambeth resolution passed so resoundingly by more than six out of every seven bishops. The letter states "within the limitations of this conference it has not been possible to hear adequately your voices and we apologise for any sense of rejection that has occurred because of this reality we pledge that we will continue to reflect, pray and work for your full inclusion in the life of the church. You deserve a more thorough hearing than you received over the past three weeks. We will work to make that so."

Footnote: Italicised words denote amendments to the original motion that passed.

It is rather sad that such a letter was felt necessary, as the Lambeth resolution on sexuality, although rightly stating homosexual practice as being incompatible with Scripture "calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all, irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals....." (ie homophobia)

As to not hearing the voice of the Anglican gay and lesbian community, I find that incredibly hard to believe. Literature was available and members of that group were present at Lambeth every day and they were to be seen in discussion with bishops and urging their case. If it is true that the voice of the gay community was not heard, then it is even more true that the voice of those who have a gay orientation but have vowed celibacy and those who are healed or recovering homosexuals was also not heard.

The Commission's Report in the light of the Resolution

In the light of Lambeth and the resolutions adopted there, how are we to view our own Tikanga Commission's report on sexuality? For that report recommends "that the IDC continues to monitor the debate on sexuality following the Lambeth Conference to ensure ongoing dialogue, in the light of the Lambeth Conference response." This recommendation was endorsed by the IDC in May of this year and noted with approval by the General Synod.

This could cause some embarrassment for our church, for if I read that recommendation correctly, then any on-going dialogue must take into account the decisions of Lambeth.

Bishop Brian Carrell, assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Wellington has produced an excellent occasional paper for Latimer on revisiting the Sexuality Commission's report in the light of Lambeth.

I believe there are a number of ways in which the Lambeth resolution could be helpful to the church in New Zealand as it continues to look at issues of human sexuality.

1. Where does the authority lie in deciding such issues?

The Lambeth resolution, you will note, appeals to Scripture as the source of the Church's authority when it battles with theological and ethical questions such as those raised in the Church of the west today to do with human sexuality.

We also need to be aware that the Lambeth Conference passed two other resolutions which help us when matters of faith and practice are being discussed. These two resolutions have to do with the authority of Scripture (Resolution 111.5) and the Bible. (Resolution 111.1). They have of course, a much broader application than that of human sexuality, but they do speak to it. These resolutions to my mind are sensational and they remind us that Anglicanism is based squarely on the authority of Scripture.

Here they are:

Resolution 111.5. The Authority of Holy Scripture:

"This conference:

- a. affirms that our Creator God, transcendent as well as imminent communicates with us authoritatively through the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and
- b. in the agreement with the Lambeth Quadrilateral and in solidarity with the Lambeth Conference in 1888, affirms that these Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation and are for us the rule and ultimate standard of faith and practice."

That could not be put more clearly.

Resolution 111.1. The Bible:

"This conference, recognising the need in our Communion for fuller agreement on how to interpret and apply the message of the Bible in a world of rapid change and widespread cultural interaction,

- a. reaffirms the primary authority of the Scriptures, according to their testimony and supported by our own historic formularies;
- b. urges that the Biblical text should be handled respectfully, coherently, and consistently, building upon our best traditions and scholarship believing that the Scriptural revelation must continue to illuminate, challenge and transform cultures, structures and ways of thinking, especially those that predominate today: and
- c. invites our provinces, as we open ourselves afresh to a vision of a church full of the Word and full of the Spirit, to promote at every level, Biblical study programmes which can inform and nourish the life of dioceses, congregations, seminaries, communities, and members of all ages."

This is exciting stuff and reinforces the traditional Anglican stance of the priority of Scripture as the determining factor in matters of faith and practice. Bishop Carrell points out that even in the Commission's sexuality report there is a preference for reason and experience in settling these matters rather than the priority of Scripture. "Some protagonists for this point of view give the impression that it is Scripture that needs to be assessed in the light of reason and experience, rather than reason and experience that needs to be critiqued in the light Scripture."

2. Sexual Ethics and the World-Wide Church

The Liberal wing of our Church, mainly found in what is called the North (western nations) has, according to Rev. Dr. Peter Moore of Trinity Episcopal School of Ministry, "been operating in naive and blissful isolation from the rest of the world-wide church: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Independent and even main line Protestant, nearly all of whom have officially endorsed biblical, sexual ethics."

Bishop Michael Nazir Ali, Bishop of Rochester, who visited New Zealand several years ago, has said, "While we value diversity, we also need criteria for limiting that diversity. Scripture defines tradition and we only know what is authoritative about the tradition of the Church by appeal to Scripture."

3. Claims and Counter Claims

Bishop Spong said that "Today's minority will be, in ten years time, tomorrow's majority." He also claims that the church in Africa is well behind in the modern scientific revolution and may see it differently in years to come. Even worse, there are

those who claim that the African church was bought off or bribed to vote the way they did. Brian Carrell points out “At worst such sentiments disparaging the outcomes of Lambeth and demeaning the integrity of a majority of fellow bishops is arrogant. At best, it is simply a forgivable letting off of frustrated steam.”

Even if the Lambeth Conference has no legislative power, the voting patterns at Lambeth are helpful to us, as they reflect the mind of those who have been chosen or elected and then ordained bishops, because they are discerned to have leadership qualities.

If some are worried about two-thirds world leadership in the Church, remember many of these African and Asian leaders are not only well trained but hold degrees from very prestigious western universities and Theological colleges. It is an insult to say that they are one step away from witchcraft, as Bishop Spong was alleged to have said.

The enormous weight of Anglican opinion in the area of sexuality, as shown by the voting patterns of Lambeth, must not be overlooked as this Church in NZ continues its discussions. Lambeth must count!

4. Biblical and Traditional Boundaries

Here again I am indebted to Bishop Carrell’s clear analysis of the Lambeth resolution vis a vis the Sexuality Commission’s report.

Three things need to be said:

- a) The Lambeth resolution upholds the biblical standard and the value of “faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in life long union”. This needs to be put alongside the suggestion, by way of innuendo in the Commission’s report, that all is not well with the traditional institution of marriage, and that something different is now needed. (see page 6, guidelines 3 and 4, where there is no reference to the joy and strength of many traditional marriage relationships).
- b) Again the Lambeth Resolution upholds the biblical standard that “abstinence is the right course for those not called to marriage”. The report of the Commission however, suggests that many would see it as unrealistic to expect older single persons, divorced persons and widowed persons to refrain from sex.
- c) The Lambeth resolution gives no support to the “legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions.” The Commission’s report leaves these possibilities wide open, (page 17 last paragraph, and page 14 second paragraph)”

These findings of Lambeth ought to be the starting point for any on-going discussion in our Church if the Lambeth resolutions are to mean anything at all. **IDC, endorsed by the General Synod, has insisted that any further discussion should take place in the light of the Lambeth Conference response.**

5. What of the Future?

The Tikanga Pakeha Commission’s Report and a number of its advocates seem to be shepherding us as a church, towards acceptance of alternative and I believe

unscriptural ways of relating sexually. We are also being encouraged to think that unless we are sexually active we can not be fulfilled persons. (a totally fallacious assumption that strikes at the heart of Biblical Christianity). It is claimed by some, that our church in NZ is pioneering a trail with the United States in this area. I believe these are dangerous suppositions.

Other things could be said about the differences contained in the Commission's report and the Lambeth resolution but we shall leave that for another day. However, it would be remiss not to mention where the two are actually in agreement.

The first is the recognition that there are homosexual persons in our church and society today and both resolution and report say that we must relate to them in a caring, pastoral manner. We must recognise that all people, regardless of sexual orientation, are loved by God. In recognising this we must be open to listening. Both the Lambeth resolution and the Commission's report make a commitment to do this. I personally believe that this is right. The Bible tells us to love and care for all people. However, to be open and to listen, does not mean that we have to agree with every aspect of a persons life-style.

Secondly, both condemn what the Commission refers to as 'homophobia' and what Lambeth terms 'irrational fear of homosexuals.' Such behaviour is unjust and not Christian. The Lambeth resolution goes further not only to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, but also to condemn "violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex". But again, to express the view that homosexual practice is morally and biblically unacceptable is not to be equated with homophobia and the Gay community must be challenged when they accuse us of such. In reality we are simply disagreeing with a chosen lifestyle. Homophobic behaviour in response to this issue, is of course totally unacceptable and not in keeping with the Scriptural requirements of compassion and love for all people.

Archbishop George Carey, speaking towards the end of the debate said, "I stand whole heartedly with traditional Anglican orthodoxy. I see no room in Scripture or Christian tradition for any sexual activity outside of matrimony, husband and wife."

As your bishop I need to report to you that I voted in favour of the Lambeth resolution. It would be my hope that the Diocese of Nelson might feel that it could whole-heartedly endorse resolution 1:10 of the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops.

Let me close this section of my address by making two statements which I hope will put this matter in its right context.

I believe that the crisis of our Church today is not a question of sexuality ... it is a crisis of authority. The question is, are the Scriptures our authority or not?

And, in acknowledging that, let me say that there is another crisis, again it's not a question of human sexuality, but far more important, it is a crisis of reaching the next generation.

II LAMBETH AND YOUTH: REACHING THE NEXT GENERATION

The Lambeth Conference also identified the importance of young people and children.

There is absolutely no doubt that the church in New Zealand must come to grips with reaching out to young people, not only those within the Christian community but also those who have never darkened the doors of our churches. Many heart searching questions could be asked like, "Why should young people come to our church?" "What is there there for them?" I am not sure whether I have any real answers at this stage but I do believe that unless we get serious about our children and young people there will be no future.

I know I have made this plea a number of times over the years and we all agree that something must be done. But that is rarely reflected in our strategies and budgets both at parish and diocesan level.

It is not enough to appoint youth workers in the diocese and in parishes and leave it to them. We must all get under this burden and work for and encourage our youth. This support can be reflected in giving, praying and spending time with young people. There are a myriad of different ways of expressing our love and care for the next generation of leaders and adults.

We need transformation within our congregations to meet the challenge of young people. We need to create a sense of belonging in our churches for them; to give them reasons for faith and hope by clear relevant teaching. Above all, if we are serious in our commitment to our young people we need to engage in ministry partnership with them, sharing our joy in Christ and serving Him together.

Youth ministry already exists in our church and diocese and there is diversity in types and styles of ministry. In our denomination relatively few of our young people keep their link with the church beyond their early teens. In many of our congregations they are conspicuous by their absence. Not all of them have a lapse in their faith, quite a number move off to other churches.

Youth Cultures

At Lambeth I was, along with 180 other bishops in Section II "Called To Live and Proclaim the Good News". A significant proportion of our time was spent listening to young people and researching areas to do with the youth of our nations.

It is a known fact that youth cultures around the world have been moving away from linear to non linear thinking, from rational thought to feeling responses, from intellectual pondering to action based efforts to change things. If we are going to cut any ice with this young generation the church must seek to understand this shift and find new and positive ways to use this understanding in communicating the Good

News to those young people who have never heard it. In a nut shell what worked for us yesterday, may not work today or tomorrow.

I really believe our future is at stake here. I'm most grateful to God for the growth that we have seen throughout our diocese over a number of years. A proportion of that growth has been people reconnecting with the church after some years of absence and that is wonderful.. But what about the young generation that has never been part of our congregations?

We must engage young people as members of the Church now, not just the Church of the future. Our young people should be involved creatively in all aspects of church life, in services, in decision making and in the many forms of ministry to others. They have the energy and I think the desire. They are often more open to the challenges and the cost of discipleship than many of us older folk.

Change

We must create an atmosphere in our churches in which children and young people feel comfortable and welcome and not made to feel like aliens. Too often they have been regarded as a complex problem rather than a God given asset for the enrichment and revitalisation of the Church.

We were able to spend time speaking with young people from around the world who, for various reasons, were present at Lambeth. They want to be accepted, respected and given their rightful place within the life of the congregation.

If this is to happen as I believe it must, then it will require far more of us. Flexibility, changed attitudes and a generosity of spirit, especially among older parishioners who can sometimes feel that church is their domain, hands off! It will definitely require alternative styles of worship and ministry, and perhaps in some cases even alternative congregations. It will involve recognising their genuine search for spirituality, albeit expressed in ways foreign to many of us. It will mean creating opportunities for them to take greater responsibility in the life of the church and allowing them to make their mistakes as we make ours. It will mean being open to young people in need and who sometimes seem to us like misfits. It will mean encouraging and supporting the ministry of young people to other young people.

Are we ready? Will we be open to change some things for the sake of our young? Do we love and value our young people? There are strong indications around the world that the next move of God the Holy Spirit will be among youth..

Lambeth took youth very seriously. In fact it devoted one whole plenary session to youth where we were able to hear from them and I can assure you it was a powerful experience.

The Lambeth conference passed this resolution with regard to young people. I want to read it to you, please listen carefully. There is good theology and practice here.

“This conference:

- a) recognises and celebrates the dynamic work of God among young people and their infinite value in the human family. They are for us in the church, as they were for Jesus, signs of the Kingdom of God among us. Their presence in ministry in the church is essential for the whole family of God to be complete. As adults we confess with deep humility and sorrow that the adult world has created children of war, children abused by neglect and sexual exploitation, and children who are victims of aggressive advertising. In joyful obedience to God we reaffirm our apostolic commitment to all young people everywhere.
- b) recognises the faithful and creative work by many church members in ministry with children both within and beyond the churches borders
- c) resolves for the health and welfare of the whole church:
 - 1) that the bishops of the Anglican Communion will commit themselves and will give leadership in their diocese to ensure that the church is a safe, healthy, and spiritually enriching community for children and young people:
 - 2) that the bishops will give more attention to the furtherance of ministry to children as a recognition of their importance to God and as a foundation for all future ministry:
 - 3) that the bishops will commit themselves to give significant time over the next twelve months to meet with young people in their dioceses, listening to them, praying with them, searching the Scriptures and breaking bread together with them, and providing ways for them to be trained in leadership skills and to exercise that leadership in the life and mission of the church:
 - 4) That such meetings should open out into attempts to meet and hear young people who have not yet been touched by the Gospel:
 - 5) that teams of adults and young people in as many congregations as possible be trained for holistic ministry to young people outside the church so as speak of God's love in Christ in ways that can be heard and that Christian young people will be equipped in the power of the Holy Spirit for service in church and community;
 - 6) that young people should be helped to find or maintain their spiritual home in the Anglican church paying particular attention to matters of liturgy including the use of music and silence and
 - 7) that urgent consideration be given to how best international Anglican networks of young people may be strengthened and serviced by the structures of the communion".

Footnote: Underlining - my emphasis.

I was deeply moved by this resolution, which as you would expect was passed resoundingly.

But where to from here? My prayer would be that we will in the coming months be able to find an appropriate forum to discuss the needs of our young people and also find ways spiritually and materially to help in this vital ministry.

It is a known fact that more people find faith in Christ in their teens and as children than at any other stage in life, yet fewer of our resources are spent in this area..

Things to Note

We have to take on board the fact that encounter with young people today is an experience in cross cultural mission within our societies and our churches. Their perceived world is quite different from most of ours.

The rate of change in youth culture is becoming ever more rapid according to the specialists who addressed us at Lambeth. One way of looking at it, that I found particularly helpful, was the notion that we all live both in a background (what is usually taken for granted) and a foreground (that which requires choices).

Young people today live with little background and with a huge foreground - they take little for granted and in the foreground they see the myths of the market media telling them that self-fulfilment, self gratification and self development are to be their highest goals. Analyse the television commercials and programmes of today and it becomes obvious.

I believe we must address this foreground of fantasy with the eternal realities of the Kingdom of God. We must speak with relevance into today's youth culture and not appear to be talking about things that seem to them to be so alien. We must learn to discern when the Kingdom of God affirms and embraces. But we must also learn to recognise when the Kingdom of God would show a better way and confront what is ugly and self-destructive in that culture. And here I'm talking about not insisting on our own middle or old aged preferences and desires. We need the help of Christian young people in exercising this discernment. It will be critical for evangelism and reaching out to the youth of today.

Another factor that needs to be taken into account is that youth culture is now a global culture because of electronic communication. In the cities around the world, youth culture is marked by African rhythms, Asian symbols and a recognition of the hugeness of the cosmos.

Christians in Africa have grown from sixty million to 330 million since the end of the colonial era in 1960, over half the population of some African countries is now under sixteen. In Latin America most of the members of churches are under the age of forty. In those places the youth are the nation and the Christian youth are the Church. Is there something for us to learn there? Perhaps we need to look and to sift what the church is doing with its youth in the developing world.

In some cultures and especially in ours, Christian young people may be isolated from the main-stream of church life. As such, they can find themselves struggling to survive in an alien context.

Evangelisation of our young people is an exercise in introducing them to Jesus Christ as leader and friend and to a family that seeks to live out His teaching. We must not be timid about this, but we must not be involved in abuse and manipulation. We must have the highest standards in our ministry to youth and children.

We also need to remember that there are plenty of others who have no qualms about seeking to influence the minds and affections of our young people. Extreme examples from around the world would be children being drawn into fighting for revolutionary causes and others being drawn into prostitution. Yet we fail to see in our

own nation that our young people are being bombarded increasingly by a globalised, materialistic culture which seeks to seduce their minds through TV, video, internet and so on.

Secular society around us appears to be hostile toward a church that seeks to influence young people for good. It sometimes succeeds in making us feel guilty and narrow minded about things such as commitment to a loving Heavenly Father as revealed in Jesus Christ or commitment to a life style out of kilter with its own. But if we fail our young people in this respect, then what else will come flooding in to these young lives? We do not live in value neutral societies. Whether we realise it or not there is a battle going on for the minds, hearts and the very lives of our young people.

How do we cope with this? Will we cope with this? Will we allow the necessary changes needed in Church life to reach this generation of young people? We will be uncomfortable if we do. We will be doomed if we don't.

In my thinking, this battle for the young of our nation is perhaps our greatest challenge.

III LAMBETH, INTERNATIONAL DEBT AND THE HIKOI OF HOPE

The Archbishop of Cape Town put international debt and economic justice centre stage at Lambeth by calling for cancellation of the debt of developing nations. During a three hour plenary session he urged all bishops to follow the Gospel injunction to "bring Good News to the poor" by supporting the "Jubilee 2000" campaign for cancelling \$US 214 billion in debt burdening developing countries.

"Jubilee 2000" was inspired by the Leviticus account of holding a year of Jubilee every 50 years. A coalition of Christian churches is campaigning for the cancellation of the debt of the world's poorest nations by the year 2000. This was to become one of the major emphases of Lambeth.

It was a call with a strong biblical basis. A vision to see the poor released from the prison of indebtedness and dependent poverty. It is a vision where God's people have all that is necessary to live life.

The World Bank, seen by some as an offender rather than a helper, reported that in 1995,

- 1.3 billion people in the developing world had to survive on less than one US dollar a day. That is a quarter of the world's population.
- Every year eight million children die of diseases linked with impure water and air pollution.
- Fifty million children are mentally and physically damaged because of poor nutrition.
- 130 million children, 80% of them girls, are denied the chance of schooling.

These are just some of the disparities between the rich and the poor in our world today. Archbishop George Carey has gone on record as saying: "The people of debtor nations are engulfed in a form of slavery no less real than the terrible Atlantic slave trade of the early 19th century."

It is a fact that one fifth of the world's population enjoys 85% of the world's income. For each dollar given as a loan to a debtor nation, they must pay back eleven dollars simply to service that debt. And that is not even paying the debt off.

The two and a half page resolution of World Debt Cancellation was the longest of the resolutions passed by the Lambeth Conference. It urges government, business and Church leaders to support a range of objectives aimed at improving accountability for lending decisions, disciplining those who corruptly divert funds and ensuring fair trade between debtor and creditor nations. The resolution also calls on all Primates of our church "to challenge their dioceses to fund international development programmes recognised by Provinces at a level of at least 0.7 % of annual diocesan income."

The mammoth issue of world poverty and international debt is overwhelming and in one sense, for me at least, somehow puts our own struggles and budgeting difficulties into perspective.

Perhaps it is easier to relate to the growing gap between the rich and poor in our own nation..

The Hikoi of Hope

Many of you walked on the Hikoi of Hope as I did. A Hikoi called by the General Synod of our Church and joined by other churches. I want to thank Peter Carrell, Graeme Grennell and Robin Kingston for their work in coordinating the Hikoi in their respective regions. It became something much larger and time consuming than anticipated but I believe it was worth it.

The Hikoi had a theme, "Walk for a Change." To my mind it was to be not just a challenge to leaders in government, but a challenge to every New Zealander. We are all culpable for the state of our nation to a lesser or greater degree. We must learn to care for each other and to fight those insidious tendencies inherent in all of us toward greed and grabbing for ourselves, whether we have a lot or a little.

The final stage of the Hikoi was a call to members of Parliament, on the steps of the Beehive for a change in policies affecting five areas of our national life. These became the five planks for which the people walked.

- Real jobs.
- A health system we can trust.
- Benefit and wage levels that move people out of and away from poverty.
- Accessible education for all children and young people.
- Affordable housing for all.

With regard to the last, local media in Nelson and Blenheim drew attention to the fact that the Anglican Church in New Zealand, along with city councils and others have been involved in land leases which are causing some grief.

It needs to be understood that when the lease system was introduced years ago it was to allow people in real need to build their own homes, keeping the costs right down. It was to aid those who were disadvantaged.

Unfortunately, our economy, years later, with periods of high inflation has acted to disadvantage lease holders.

The Church has moved to assist those with leases to buy their sections. The Trust Board has endeavoured to do this in two ways. Offering discounts on the value of the land and also by offering easy terms for purchase.

I am told that of the forty leases in Blenheim, once owned by the church, only nine remain and I believe that discussion continues with those who are finding it difficult, but the original intention of those leases was to help.

As we call upon Government leaders for changes in economic and social policy I believe its absolutely imperative that we look into our own lives and resources. We must do it corporately as churches and as organisations involved in caring. We must put our own house in order..

It is startling to realise that only 7% of the tax cuts in 1996 and in 1998 go to the poorest 20% of the population, and that 60% benefit the wealthier 40%. We also need to take note that our nation recorded the fastest growing gap between rich and poor for any OECD country in the first half of this decade.

The number of households with two or more families living in one house increased by 96% in the decade between 1986 and 1996. The Salvation Army reports a 22% increase in the use of food banks in the first quarter of this year compared to last year. Church agencies are in daily contact with communities where unemployment is the norm.

Tuberculosis and childhood diseases which we had almost eliminated are now making an alarming re-appearance. These diseases are all poverty related.

These and many other facts of inequity and injustice caused around forty thousand people throughout New Zealand to walk on the Hikoi.

As Christians we need to ask the question, "What is God saying to me, about my neighbour, my community, my nation? Do I really care? It's time to stop assigning blame and to do something positive. The Hikoi was just a beginning.

Stories of poverty and suffering were collected on the walk and presented to parliamentary leaders. Further discussions will be taking place in the future as we seek positive ways forward.

Whether its world debt or the ever widening gap in our own nation between the haves and the have nots, I believe we all share in the responsibility to transform those current systems which destroy hope, which promote inequality, which marginalise sections of our community and depress many, throwing them into a spiral of despair.

As a committed Christian I believe God has a bias for those who suffer, that's part of the Gospel.

At Lambeth I met a Sudanese Bishop who has suffered terribly through war, famine and unjust structures. He said some words that I will never forget. "Empty bellies have no ears" and that is true. Words are not enough. We are the hands of God to the poor, to the alienated and the suffering. Love is an action, not just a feeling.

The way forward is not only the job of government but of us all.

IV REVISIONING OUR DIOCESE

Where to now?

Do we still have a vision, a vision of spiritual and numerical growth? As clergy and lay leaders, for that's what we are, some of us do and some of us are struggling in situations where there seems to be very little real hope because of shrinking economies and church communities.

Have we a coherent diocesan vision? I know some Church Growth gurus say it can be suicide to go broader than ones own patch. Hence we don't always bleed for a struggling neighbouring parish. Everything focuses on me and my immediate environment. That perhaps is OK for a while but in the long run it could lead to spiritual suicide. We need to take on board the parable of the Good Samaritan and perhaps the story of the Nigerian Church which I referred to earlier in this address.

Here in New Zealand, we tend to look to the west for our models, to the US and to the UK. But Lambeth causes me to pause a moment and to reflect on whether we might be looking in the wrong direction. Few, as far as I am aware, seem to be looking to the two-thirds world where the real growth is to be seen and where it is definitely Anglican. We look west because we are culturally similar. But could there not be lessons to be learned elsewhere? If we want to look at large and growing churches within our own Communion, it is to Africa, South East Asia and parts of South America we must look.

Next year, in our Companion Diocese of Singapore, there is to be an Anglican Church Leaders' conference preparing the Church for the future. Some of us might consider going.

Vision , Commitment and the Future

"The future is waiting to be created" I heard more than one African Bishop say.

There is really only one way to create purpose and meaning and that is through commitment. We know that is true in our personal lives, don't we? It is God, through Christ, who makes sense of our being. Who we are, what we are, what real life is all about. This too, I believe, is true for the Church, the body of Christ.

Commitments are the essence of our corporate life together as the Church. Without commitments we are hollow, and made of straw, blown to and fro by the winds of circumstance and the latest fads of society or the Christian community.

Someone said, (Kenneth Keneston) - "The problem of our age is we have a generation of uncommitted people". Commitment means that every one of us must decide what it is that has ultimate significance for eternity.

So what are we as individuals committed to, Clergy, lay people and bishop? What is it that really motivates us? Is it of eternal worth? Is it Christ-like? Is it for others? These are Gospel imperatives. Which leads on to the question: What are we as parishes committed to? What are we as a diocese committed to?

Stocktaking

Over the past nine years we have seen a monumental turn around in our diocese. Some of you know that on being elected bishop of Nelson, I was asked, "What is it like to be elected the last bishop to preside over this diocese?" This was the perception of a number outside our diocese.

During the 80's we sustained a 20% loss of worshippers across our congregations, reflecting much of what was happening in the Anglican Church in New Zealand. In the 90's, until last year we grew more than 40%. We became one of the fastest growing dioceses in the western World. The total number of paid staffing positions in the diocese, supported through sustentation, has increased more than 25% in less than ten years and that does not include the paid youth and children's workers in a number of our parishes. It is also good to note that during the same period the income from parishes for sustentation has increased 43.4%. For all of this we give thanks to our Lord.

However, numerical growth has now slowed down, in fact it has almost stopped. The easy gains are past. We need a second wind. We need stamina, spiritual stamina. I believe it's time to revisit the Diocesan Vision, our vision. Not necessarily to rewrite it but to see how to accomplish it. Have you read it lately? It's time to blow the dust off it. Is it still relevant at the end of the decade and as we embark on a new millennium?

Here it is - listen again carefully:

The Diocesan Vision

As the Diocese of Nelson we rejoice in the Mission God has given us. As Anglicans in Aotearoa/New Zealand we hold to Scripture and the Historic Faith, we seek to exalt Jesus as Lord of the Church and our lives, and we join in the whole Community of God's people throughout the world in seizing the great possibilities that lie before us.

1. To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom.
2. To teach, baptise and nurture all believers.
3. To respond to human need by loving service.
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society.
5. To care for the earth and its resources.

Therefore, under the guidance and empowering of God the Holy Spirit we believe God is calling our Diocese:

1. To see every parish using relevant means of evangelism to reach the peoples of their communities and to see increasing numbers involved in the life of the church.
Comment: "Every parish", to me that implies having a broader vision than our own patch. Help others, be a missionary, be a missionary parish.

2. To see every parish providing relevant worship which glorifies God and is suited to the types of people in their community.
Comment: I believe we have made significant progress here. Let us not stop. What about the youth?

3. To see every parish nurturing all its members; equipping and supporting them for their ministry so that the church can fulfil its calling.

4. To see Christians in our parishes enthusiastic about their faith and growing spiritually; with a desire to share, serve and follow the Lord in costly discipleship so that the mission of the Church can be accomplished in our local communities, in our nation and overseas.

Comment: Four of our clergy couples have served, or are serving in our Companion Dioceses not to mention a number of our lay people working overseas with mission agencies both Anglican and interdenominational, long term and short term.

1. To see every parish giving love, healing and caring within their communities in such a way that human needs are met, injustices challenged and creation resources faithfully stewarded.

Comment: The number of pastoral carers serving God faithfully through our parishes is quite significant. Others serve within and outside church structures confronting injustice.

2. To see, where appropriate, the creation of new congregations and new parishes to more effectively reach the peoples of the Diocese.

3. To see our Diocesan family continually built up through mutual support and the right use of resources so that every parish is encouraged in its mission, adequately staffed and able to demonstrate the love and power of God through harmonious relationships.

Comment: Some parishes are tackling serious questions of stewardship. Giving in most parishes has risen tremendously over the past nine years. It is gratifying to see that almost 80% of our parishes have kept well ahead of inflation. Nevertheless, more staffing, new initiatives and economic hardship in some areas of our diocese means we continue to struggle.

"The right use of resources", I believe this impinges upon the sale of Bishopdale. The poverty and economic struggle in a number of our parishes and regions only serves to challenge the Church and individual Christians as to the appropriateness of the Bishop living at Bishopdale when there is so much need.

Leaders, clergy and laity, I urge you to take this vision once again to your vestries and people.

Our Future: What do we hope for?

I believe there is a necessity for all of us to rekindle hope ...People without hope, die, and that is true of parishes and dioceses as well.

Sometimes I think the church has listened too much to the social scientists and taken on board too much of that philosophy thus allowing ourselves to be robbed of hope.

A recent study (Hans Eisenach) showed that if you are really messed up and you go to a psychoanalyst there is a 44% probability that you will be all right in a year. If you go to see a psychotherapist there is a 51% chance that you will probably be well in one year. If you go to see a psychiatrist there is a 53% probability that you will be well in a year.

So obviously psychiatry is best, but are you ready for the clincher?
If you go to see no one at all, the research says there is a 74% probability you will be well in a year.

Perhaps in our personal lives we give too much emphasis to the past. Can an analogy be drawn for the Church?

What's going on here?

Don't misread me, I believe those involved in the healing and care of the mind are important and, as a church we can learn from the past. But we must understand one thing, there is a faulty concept that believes that what we are is determined only by the past. That what has happened in our past, (our background, our childhood, our socialisation) is what determines what we are today.

There may be some truth in that. But as I read my Bible and as I study the history of God's Church, that can be a council of despair and it can become a trap, not only for an individual but for a parish or for a diocese.

What do I mean by that? I mean this: What we are, is not so much determined by what we have been, as it is determined by what we hope to become.

A boy plays with a rugby ball, kicking and kicking, or a girl shoots a ball by the hour through the hoop on the garage wall. Why? Because they've been conditioned like Pavlov's dog to do so ...No! not at all!

Here's the truth. They do it because in autumn they want to be selected for the team. What they do through Summer is determined by what they hope will happen in Winter. The future determines who we are. Can we see that?

I once heard a young people's councillor say something like this: "I have kids coming in to see me and they are completely messed up. They come for counselling but I never talk to them about their toilet training ... because I know this. There is only one thing that will straighten out that kid and it's not worrying about where he's been but where he's going!"

He went on to say: "If we can define goals and purposes for the future, that young person gets turned around immediately".

How many times have you seen people's lives changed because they have got a goal and a purpose and a dream? The future determines who we are!

What is true for the individual is true for the church. Isn't it? That's the wonder of Scripture. The Bible says: "And when the old people no longer dream dreams and the young people have lost their vision the people perish."

There's something here for all of us in this Synod Hall this morning. The Scriptures tell us that we will psychologically and spiritually die when we no longer dream dreams, when we have lost our Vision. Why? Because who we are at this very moment, is determined by what we expect to be in the future.

I trust we can see that truth, even if the world around us doesn't.

What is our Future?

Can we dream for the next millennium?

Can we re-vision ourselves by setting goals through careful deliberation and earnest prayer.

Ultimately, the future is not determined by finance, important though that might be. Why is it that where the Church is growing fastest in our Communion it is where they have the least materially?

No, the future is determined by a God-given vision and by people filled with hope.

Biblical truth upheld; passion and concern shown

Time does not allow us to go into any other areas of Lambeth. I have endeavoured to cover those which have received international media coverage and where I believe they touch our life here.

It is not only in areas of human sexuality, remission of world debt and the challenge of our youth where Lambeth came through with a clear will. There were other important areas where orthodox biblical views were upheld.

I hope our Church in New Zealand will avoid trivialising some of the Lambeth resolutions that were passed simply because they run counter to modern western morality and philosophy. For example, the two-thirds world bishops were virtually unanimous in their support of the sexuality resolution. This was not because of cultural taboos about homosexuality, but because they saw Scripture as teaching

plainly that God has intended sexual relations to be exercised only in marriage. They expressed similar concern for Scripture when the Conference passed the resolution reaffirming the primary authority of the Bible.

We need to be assured that this is no more than mere Anglicanism. The first Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, made clear in our Articles of Religion (article 20) that “the Church has no authority to legislate anything contrary to God’s Word written”. The Lambeth Quadrilateral, holds up Scripture “as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith”. What I think makes Lambeth 1998 historic, is the fact that the modern Western Church had confronted the wider Anglican Communion with an agenda that simply could not be justified from Scripture and the Communion said in effect, “No, we will not go outside God’s Word”.

Let us not forget that behind Lambeth were a multitude of intercessors, not only physically present at Canterbury but around the world.

A cause for Hope.

In saying this, the spiritual unity of the Anglican Communion has been maintained. Of course, since Lambeth has no legislative authority, it does not change anything in our Church here in Aotearoa New Zealand. Nevertheless, I hope it may, God willing, cause some to rethink their stance in a number of areas and I trust it will be an encouragement to many “rank and file” Anglicans faithfully worshipping in our churches Sunday by Sunday, who worry about the ultimate direction of this Church.

Above all though, our confidence lies in the Living God whom we serve. We will need to understand that the power and the glory belong to Him alone.

Living the Message.

Looking at the next century we will need to see in our Church and in our own lives a passion, not only for growth, but for holiness. Not with its secular negative connotations but with its positive Christ-likeness.

No movement that claims to stand for truth in the Christian sense will have credibility if it isn’t backed by holiness of life. We must not fall victim to the secular idea that the truest path of human life is the path of self-discovery and self-expression. The Gospel speaks differently, it speaks of a Christ who changes, renews and enthuses us.

Christians are not called to be the nicest people in the society of which they are a part, living according to the changing ideals and standards which that society has set for itself. We are called to be different and we are called to be holy.

If our Church is to proclaim the Gospel successfully, now and on into the 21st century, we cannot expect to be exempted from living the Gospel (Philippians 1:27).

Be encouraged and take heart, the Anglican Church is Bible based and Christ centred in its founding documents, make no mistake about that. It has produced saints, social reformers, pastors, evangelists, missionaries and scholars. We may not always agree on everything. There is a diverse richness in our Anglican heritage which shies

away from crass and unthinking fundamentalism, but never-the-less, if it is faithful to its foundations, it works within biblical parameters.

As we approach the new millennium, I trust that we will continue to feel that we can serve God within the Anglican Communion without shame, knowing that this heritage is as good and as biblical as any. It is something to be grateful to the Living God for.

However, we will also need to believe in miracles because the task of bringing our nation back to God and a world to Christ calls for mountains to be removed and the powers of darkness to be rolled back. We will need to see that the way toward blessing and success doesn't really begin in a committee room or even on this Synod floor but in the place where weeping people pray.

E to whanau.

Kia kaha. Be courageous.

Kia ora ano tato! God be with us.