

The Lambeth Conference 2022

# Living Moments of Disagreement Well

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The Lambeth Conference in 2022 was an important moment in the life of the Anglican Communion. It could not but be so. From the 165 countries where the Anglican Communion is present around the world, bishops traveled to Canterbury to pray, study the Scriptures, discuss together how to address global challenges, and discern how to respond to God over the next ten years.

The first Lambeth Conference was in 1867 and has been held almost every ten years since then. Lambeth 2022 was the fifteenth. It had been postponed from 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, taking place in the context of various emergencies, especially the climate crisis, war, and world poverty. Its theme, *God's Church for God's World*, was highly topical and reflected the turn towards mission that has taken place throughout the Church.

In addition to studying the First Letter of Peter in an atmosphere of deep prayer, the bishops participated in wide-ranging discussions on the challenges of today's world and the understanding of scientific progress, Christian unity, and interreligious relations. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave three keynote speeches, on God's world, God's Church, and how the Church can tend to the needs of the 21st Century world.

An important element of the Conference was the presence of wives and, for a growing number of women bishops, husbands. They had their own program, meeting to pray and study the Bible, and support one another in their ministries. And bishops, wives and husbands visited Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, together.

Central to the Conference were the "appeals" asking the Churches of Communion to take note and act on various issues to be considered. These will be brought by bishops to their dioceses, where they will be reflected upon in prayer and acted upon in their various local contexts.

Despite the importance of the topic of sexual ethics, which for the media seemed almost the singular topic of interest, many important issues were discussed. But perhaps the most striking thing is that, despite strong contrasts, the Anglican Communion remains a family of Churches that love one another and want to continue walking together. It is in unity that light is given, and therefore, as we seek together the vision of God in Christ, it is always vital to live moments of disagreement well.

In his closing speech, the Archbishop of Canterbury invited everyone to go into the world with love. Citing the words of Cardinal Tagle in his address to the Conference the previous day, he said that our being sent by God is at the heart of being Christian. To illustrate this call, he referred to five marks of mission, the last of which urges us to care for creation, for our common home entrusted to us by God.