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LAMBETH 2008

Towards a new missionary future

Bishop Francis Park, Primate of Korea, reflects on some of the issues raised at the Lambeth Conference



Seoul Diocesan Mothers' Union Choir after the opening Eucharist at the Lambeth Conference, with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs Williams, the Primate of Korea and the Bishop-elect of Seoul.

About 650 Bishops out of a possible 880 from 38 Provinces joined in the historic 14th Lambeth Conference which began with a 3 day retreat in the ancient Canterbury Cathedral. The first Sunday evening of the Conference was unforgettable as the Korean Mothers' Union Choir gave a splendid performance celebrating their longings for peace as the curtainraiser for the Conference. It is impossible to express how beautifully the Choir's colourful national dress (*hanboks*) evoked the feelings of our Korean culture. A deep hush fell over nearly 600 Bishops as they sat listening to the clear, beautiful songs. From beginning to end the Korean Anglican Church's Mothers' Union Concert for Peace was a great success

The next morning in the big tent the Lambeth Conference began with a special opening Eucharist. Graciously it had fallen to me to preside and preach at this service and the Mothers' Union Choir's beautifully peaceful songs, in harmony with their flowing *hanboks*, combined to accentuate the atmosphere of prayer. At this Holy Communion service the Japanese Primate, Bishop Uematsu, asked to lead a special prayer. He prayed for peace and asked that God would forgive the long history of harm and hurt the Japanese had inflicted on Korea and that they would work hard for the opening of a new future relationship between the two churches. Coming at the beginning of the Lambeth conference this prayer for the reconciliation of the Japanese and Korean churches was a deeply moving thing. Many Bishops, especially those from Africa who were still caught up in their deep controversies asked whether such reconciliation was really possible and gave thanks that the Anglican Communion's crisis of separation might have been shown a future way of reconciliation. At that morning's Bible studies this reconciling spirit and the Korean Communion service was very much to the fore in conversations. Some Bishops were so overcome that they were in tears.

