

Returning to the Church

Catholicity, Ecclesiology and the Mission
of the Church of England

A Conference presented by St
Stephen's House, Oxford and the
Centre of Theology and
Philosophy, Nottingham

5-7 January 2009
St Stephen's House Oxford

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Purpose

The Church of England finds itself at a decisive moment. Just as the tensions which tear at the fabric of the Anglican Communion are being replicated close at hand, it faces pressing questions of its own: not least, the place of the Church in public life, and the willingness of the public to find a place in the life of the Church. The mood of the Church is low and yet, within theology, there has been an unprecedented acknowledgement over the last century of the significance of the Church. Theologians of all traditions have come to stress the communal dimension of salvation and the centrality of incorporation into the body of Christ.

After the Lambeth Conference the question is asked 'where is the Church going?' Returning to the Church will address this question by first asking a deeper one: 'what is the Church?' It seeks to revive ecclesiology; to bring the renewed confidence in the Church found within theology into the life and practices of the Church of England, for the renewal of parish life, education, spirituality and ecumenism.

Returning to the Church seeks to reconnect with the traditions of the past as the basis for an openness to future renewal. It will value orthodoxy and open-mindedness. Through papers, panels and discussions it will address:

- Lay vocation and education
- Social Justice, Politics and the Church in Public Life
- The Organisation of the Church
- The Anglican Communion and Ecumenism
- Doctrine and Liturgy in the Church of England
- Religious Life and Movements

The conference is chiefly focused upon the Church of England, but with the conviction that its mission and identity are only truly to be understood as part of the universal Church. Here too, attention to theology is helpful: at the end of a century that saw ecumenism born and then wane, one of its most striking successes is in academic theology, which is now a thoroughly ecumenical endeavour. In the face of divisions among catholic-minded Anglicans, the conference is for all who identify the roots and future of the Church in its catholicity.

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Speakers

John Milbank, Professor of Religion, Politics and Ethics, University of Nottingham *What is the Church?*

Alison Milbank, Associate Professor, University of Nottingham *The Parish*

Stephen Platten, The Bishop of Wakefield *General Synod, The Lambeth Conference and Catholicity*

Graham Ward, Professor of Contextual Theology and Ethics, University of Manchester *Spirituality, Analogy and Desire*

Alister McGrath, Professor of Theology, Ministry and Education, King's College, London, *The Church as a Visionary Community: Ecclesiology and Intellectual, Aesthetic, and Moral Discernment*

Michael Northcott, Professor of Ethics, University of Edinburgh

Paul Richardson, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Newcastle *Christian Witness And The Myth Of The Naked Public Square.*

Jeremy Morris, Dean and Fellow, Trinity Hall, Cambridge *FD Maurice and Anglo-Catholic Social Action*

Simon Oliver, Senior Lecturer in Theology, University of Wales, Lampeter

Edmund Newey, Vicar of St Andrew's, Handsworth *Returning to the Anglican Divines*

Andrew Davison, Tutor in Doctrine, St Stephen's House *Mediation and Mission-Shaped Church*

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Booking

The conference starts at 2 p.m. on Monday 5 January and runs until tea on Wednesday 7 January.

Full-board, including the conference banquet on Monday night

£225 in a single room

£205 sharing in a twin room

Conference fee, including all meals and the conference banquet

£165

Click [here](#) for a booking form.

A Longer Stay in Oxford

Bed and Breakfast accommodation is available before and after the conference at the rate of £30 per night. Please contact the Assistant Bursar, Hannah Redfearn (hannah.redfearn@ssho.ox.ac.uk).

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Location

St Stephen's House is in East Oxford, a quarter of an hour's walk from the centre of the city, or five minutes on one of the frequent buses. Click **here** for a map in PDF format.

By Train

Number five buses run frequently from Oxford Railway Station across Oxford to Cowley Road. On Cowley Road, disembark at the James Street stop.

By Coach

Two services run from London about every ten minutes during the day, leaving from Victoria Station, Marble Arch, Notting Hill, Shepherd's Bush and Hillingdon. In Oxford, disembark at the St Clement's stop (see map for precise location).

By Car

There is ample secure parking. For the code to the car park, contact Fr Andrew. An map showing the location of St Stephen's House can be found on the web site:
www.ssho.ox.ac.uk

