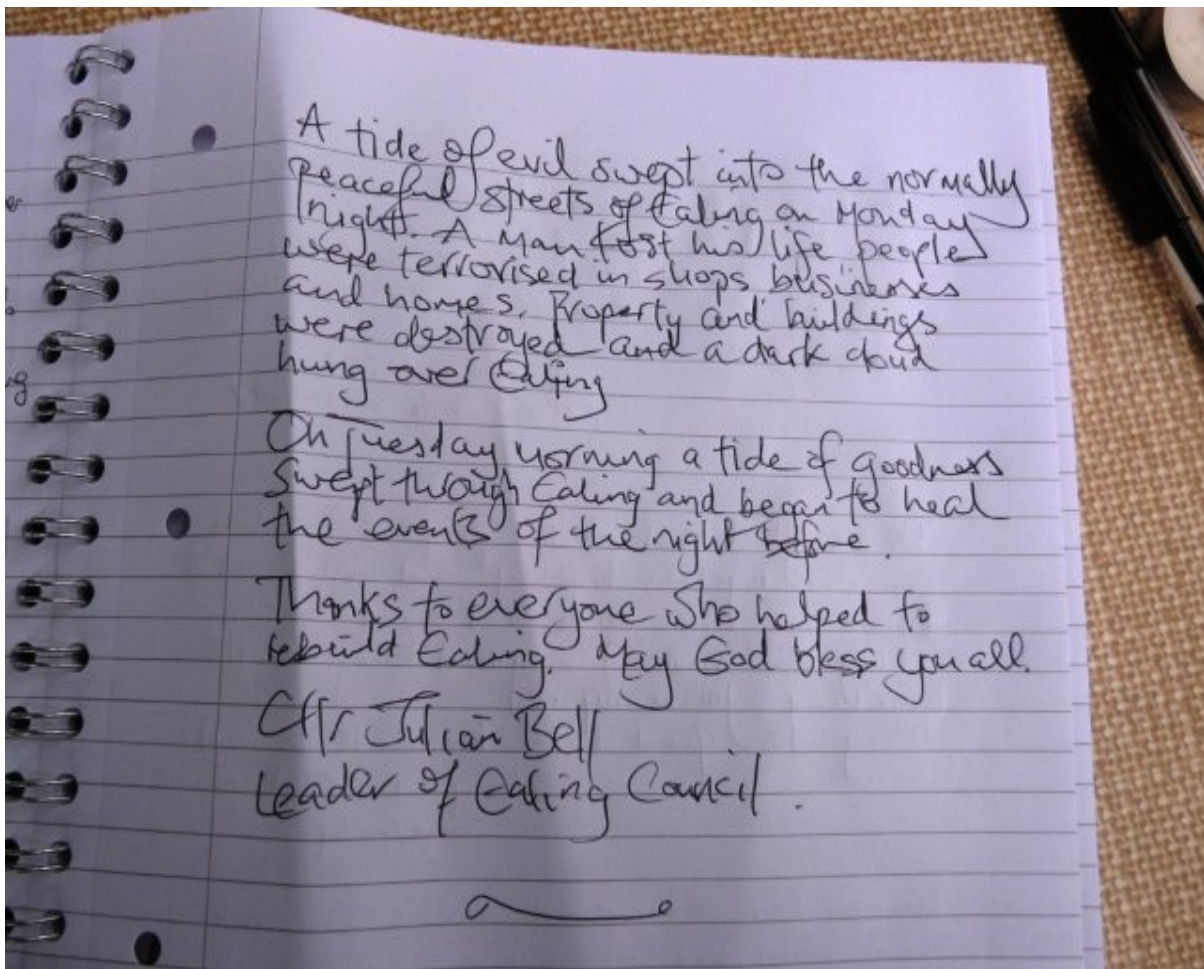


The Churches' Response to the Public Disturbances in London during August 2011



Pray Ealing Website

“A riot is the language of the unheard.”

[Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

Report written by Charmaine Odusina

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Preface | 4 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| Context and Methodology | 7 |
| Part One: Awareness of the unease prior to the riots | 8 |
| Part Two: Church involvement during the riots | 8 |
| Initial Contact | 8 |
| Social media | 9 |
| Listening ear | 9 |
| Moral Voice | 10 |
| Ecumenical meetings | 11 |
| Partnerships | 12 |
| Police Chaplains | 12 |
| Respite and care | 13 |
| The Wisdom of Solomon – no single response | 13 |
| Invaluable negotiating skills | 14 |
| Part Three: Church Response | 15 |
| Prayer response | 15 |
| Contributions | 16 |
| Tea Party in Hackney | 17 |
| The aftermath | 17 |
| Actions taken to date | 18 |
| Part Four: Reflections | 19 |
| Conclusion | 19 |
| Challenges for future consideration | 21 |
| The Archbishop of Canterbury’s New Year Message | 22 |

Appendices

Appendix 1 Letters and Statements from London Church leaders

| | |
|---|----|
| 1.1 The Bishop of London | 24 |
| 1.2 The Bishop of Southwark | 27 |
| 1.3 The Bishop of Barking | 29 |
| 1.4 Chair of the Methodist Church London District | 32 |
| 1.5 Archbishop Vincent Nichols | 33 |

Appendix 2

| | |
|--|----|
| Statistical Overview of riot-related activity in London and people arrested | 35 |
|--|----|

Appendix 3

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Background material | 38 |
|----------------------------|----|

Appendix 4

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| List of people interviewed | 39 |
|-----------------------------------|----|

Acknowledgments

This report was commissioned and funded by The London Church Leaders and Mission in London's Economy. The thanks of all those involved in the commissioning process go to Charmaine Odusina, who undertook the research and drafted the report. Thanks are also due to Andrew Davey of the Church of England's Archbishops' Council Division for Mission and Public Affairs who advised Charmaine in the early stages of the research. Charmaine holds a Masters Degree in Community Development and has a wealth of knowledge and experience as a Director and researcher working in the faith, voluntary and education sectors.

We are very grateful to all those who were interviewed and gave time to assist in identifying the key issues that are explored in detail in the report and to others who supported the report with additional information. The list of people interviewed is found in appendix 4.

Terry Drummond

Chair of the London Churches Group for Social Action

Elizabeth Simon

Executive Officer of the London Church Leaders Group

January 2012

PREFACE

Rt Revd Christopher Chessun

Bishop of Southwark & Bishop for Urban Life and Faith

The response of local churches across London to the disturbances which took place between August 6 -10 gave examples of the best kind of pastoral engagement in local communities.

The presence and visibility of the clergy and people of faith, out and about on the streets, was widely appreciated. The offering of support, secure space and refreshment to the staff of the emergency services and those who were most affected by the riots was also Christ like and commendable.

There was considerable loss of property and damage to homes and business premises. This has presented challenges around the need for reconstruction and support for those whose livelihoods have been put at risk. The Police and emergency services were put under great pressure by the dispersed nature and scale of the incidents. It was heartrending to hear the stories of those whose peace of mind, personal security and livelihoods had been violated.

The focus of this study is to describe the response of local clergy and laity to the disturbances, and ask what we can learn from the response of local clergy and ask what we can learn from their experience. In addition the research identifies possible underlying contributory causes and offers insights which can be used to inform us and underpin the ministry of the Churches for the future, particularly in engagement with young people.

As well as this there is another great challenge: to consider, in the light of the August events and the ethical concerns about our financial systems, the contribution of the Church to a wider discussion of public virtues and values. Our Gospel values, together with much accumulated community wisdom and experience, need very purposefully to be used to heal some of the divisions in society and to build communities of trust and hope.

As we minister in our communities we are called to proclaim the risen Lord. This leads us to be people of faith, of hope and of love which are the values central to the Christian life, deeply rooted in Scripture and in the core affirmations of Christian faith. They also have a resonance with and are accessible to people who are not yet involved in the life of the church.

In commending this report I do so in the knowledge that the message of the Church in London is encapsulated in these values that were at the fore front of the ministry offered to all those caught up in the riots.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Southwark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

INTRODUCTION

The riots or, as described by Local Authorities, 'Public Disturbances' (the distinction being related to the question of compensation payments) in August caught most people unawares. Many of us were on holiday - in my case in the Hebrides as far away from London as it is possible to be and still be in the UK.

Those who were in the communities most affected and those who returned to offer pastoral care and support were caught up in sharing the pressures of the displaced families and owners of businesses telling of the traumas that they experienced.

The loss of a workplace and in some cases home was a tragic outcome of the events and it is important that careful consideration is given to asking why groups of men and women were so out of control that they caused such devastation.

The London Churches in the communities that were affected offered care and in many places were catalysts in offering space for considering the outcomes and planning for the future. In many ways they could offer a safe and neutral venue that was at the heart of the community.

In the light of all that went on the London Churches Group for Social Action with the support of the London Church Leaders and Mission in London's Economy commissioned the research that is to be found on the pages that follow.

The findings of Charmaine Odusina tell a story of active commitment and of Churches and their clergy and ministers who were able to reach out and share the love of God. At a time when the potential for many people to feel despair was self evident this traditional approach of Christian ministry proved to be essential and a much needed antidote to the problems that were being addressed.

The message of pastoral care that is available to all regardless of personal faith is a reminder that it is clergy and ministers who are often the only people in a community who are able to give time because that is central to their vocation and calling.

The problems that underpin the causes of the disturbances are many and varied and in the conclusion recommendations are offered for future consideration. The work for the future is going to be more of the same, continuing pastoral care, an emphasis on prayer underpinned with a commitment to identifying the key issues that must be challenged.

The research reinforces the perspective of many young people from the BME community that Stop and Search is an underlying problem. Its use by the Police is seen to reflect a lack of respect and a stereotyping of some young people.

In addition, the regular media reports of police raids on private houses where there are suspected criminals portray a heavy handed approach that whilst appropriate on occasion may by its regular use become counter productive and itself contribute to distrust and resentment of the police among members of the public.

In meetings with the police it is reported by at least one Church leader that a conversation can be one sided with the listener being talked at and not listened to. A dialogue between anyone in authority must be a two way process to achieve a creative outcome and mutual understanding.

In planning for the future it is important that opportunities are made for Church leaders at a London wide level and local Church Leaders in the Boroughs to meet with senior representatives of the Police. The aim must be to ensure that there is mutual understanding of the communities that both are seeking to serve.

It is also important that the Churches are actively involved in further consideration of the issues that arise from the disturbances. There should be a specific emphasis on theological reflection that challenges all those with a commitment to creating healthy and safe communities. This must include serious consideration of the underlying reasons for the disturbances and how to address these.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, writing in the Guardian on December 6th following the report *Reading the Riots* stated the following:

“The Big question Reading the Riots leaves us with is whether, in our current fretful state, with unavoidable austerity ahead, we have the energy to invest what’s needed in family and neighbourhood and school to rescue those who think they have nothing to lose. We have to persuade them, simply, that we as government and civil society alike will put some intelligence and skill into giving them the stake they do not have. Without this we shall face more outbreaks of futile anarchy, in which we shall, young and old, be the losers”.

The possibility of a repeat of the events in August 2011 cannot be ruled out and unless serious consideration is given to the issues that underpin the creation of mayhem it is almost certain that there will be more of the same in the future.

The Churches in partnership with other faith communities and partners from across civil society have much to offer to the ongoing debate. It is important that they continue to take a lead both at the London wide level and across boroughs and local communities.

It is imperative that our response is based on facts that are rooted in local knowledge and on a theological understanding that recognises that a dialogue between faith and public policy is a preeminent task that cannot be ignored.

In producing this report I hope that it will contribute to the ongoing debate and stimulate action which will help to avert any further outbreaks of what the Archbishop of Canterbury calls ‘futile anarchy’.

Terry Drummond
Bishop of Southwark’s Adviser on Urban and Public Policy
Chair of London Churches Group for Social Action

CONTEXT

Between 6th and 10th August in a very short space of time, several London boroughs experienced a spate of lawlessness expressed through rampant looting, unprecedented levels of arson and rioting to the shock and horror of most of the population. The peaceful march of the family of Mark Duggan, in protest against the police response to his fatal shooting earlier in the week, seemed to be the spark from which a riot broke out in Tottenham and rapidly spread across London and further afield.

Twenty six years on from the Broadwater Farm riots, Tottenham was at the centre of a major public disturbance. As a result, British Prime Minister David Cameron returned early from his holiday in Italy and other government and opposition leaders also ended their holidays to attend to the matter. All police leave was cancelled and Parliament was recalled on 11 August to debate the situation. Such was the level of urgency given to the situation by the national leadership.

As of 15 August, about 3,100 people had been arrested, of whom more than 1,000 had been charged. Arrests, charges and court proceedings began in earnest with courts working extended hours. There were some 3,400 crimes across London linked to the disorder.

Across the country, five people died and at least 16 others were injured as a direct result of related violent acts. An estimated £300 million worth of property damage was incurred, and local economic activity was significantly compromised.

Police action was blamed for the initial riot, and the subsequent police reaction was criticised as being neither appropriate nor sufficiently effective. The riots have generated significant ongoing debate among political, social and academic figures about the causes and context in which they happened. The summaries of such debates and analysis have changed as the court cases and evaluation continue, leaving the nation still uncertain in coming to any complete understanding of what actually happened in England.

This report describes the response of the Churches in London during and after this period of unrest, with minimal focus on the possible causes of the disturbances. The information has been gathered by interviewing a number of available London clergy as well as some key figures in the Local Authority, in areas such as Tottenham, Hackney, Ealing, Brixton and Croydon.

Churches share the everyday realities of the communities in which they are solidly present, contributing to their wellbeing and wholesome living in both practical and spiritual ways. For this reason the Church is a key influential stakeholder in the life and future of our communities.

Methodology

Interviews were conducted with representative clergy, including Bishops, Archdeacons, Area Deans, Ministers, Priests and Pastors, across several key London boroughs. Each person was asked a series of set questions and their responses were recorded for accuracy. Some written information, such as press releases and clergy letters were also reviewed to help shape the report. Several church leader letters and statements are attached in Appendix 3.

PART ONE: AWARENESS OF UNEASE PRIOR TO THE DISTURBANCES

In response to this question the majority of respondents were very certain that there was no inkling of any tension or disturbance that could trigger what eventually happened. Tottenham was the only place that reported to the authorities a sense of unease in the preceding hours before the riots which was ignored by the police at the time.

One Church, in the Tottenham area, recorded that at the Thursday night Bible study, they received feedback that some sort of protest was being organised via social media but there was no clarity or certainty at that time. Another recorded that it was no surprise given the level of anxiety within the local communities which were being faced with massive cuts to their benefits, such as the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), and youth services leaving them with a bleak outlook for the future.

In Woolwich, at the Bible study on Sunday night before the rioting hit their area, the majority of young people in a discussion on events in Tottenham, did not believe that it could happen, except for a few who expressed their vexation at the way they were constantly harassed and disrespected by the police. The next night Woolwich was burning.

In Hackney clergy were aware of a deep anxiety about job losses in the public sector; the simmering anger about the use of stop and search by the police and a general sense that the community voice was not being heard and respected.

All others recorded that it was 'totally out of the blue' and 'unexpected'. None were aware that there would be rampant looting, extensive damage to property and rioting against the police in their neighbourhoods.

PART TWO: CHURCH INVOLVEMENT DURING THE RIOTS

Initial Contact

The commitment and dedication of clergy and church members during the riots gave ample evidence of the practical and spiritual presence of the Church doing mission throughout this time and still ongoing. Despite the fact that many clergy were away either on sabbatical or annual leave and one particular minister was flying out on the day the riot broke out, the priority given to responding to the crisis was not compromised or in any doubt.

Several clergy were newly in post and the Bishop of Stepney, the Rt Revd Adrian Newman had not yet been inducted, yet they played active roles in the response and their contribution was fully appreciated and acknowledged by local councillors and others interviewed. Within the clergy staff there were a number of key positions being held by 'cover' staff at the time of the riot outbreak. Despite this there was a workable system of communication which was triggered and provided an effective, coordinated and immediate response for the Church.

There was a small measure of frustration expressed in one locality where the church had not been contacted by the Emergency Services according to the procedures in place for critical incidents. This breach was quickly repaired and the general feeling was 'it could have worked better but at least there was something to work with'.

Social Media

While technology and social media helped to organise a riot, it was at the same time used to coordinate a counter response to bring calm and comfort to the community and linking those abroad to those in the thick of things. As a result of Twitter, Facebook and other social media members of the clergy were able to link up with other groups and decide the best possible actions to take during the disturbances. Much of the initial coordination by church leaders was undertaken via mobile phones and emails to disseminate information and ensure the personal safety of their congregations.

In all areas where clergy were interviewed, careful consideration was always given to personal safety issues through advice from the Police, via their GOLD group contact and Emergency Response Teams. Each local authority has a GOLD group set up to manage critical incidents in their area and to ensure that the trust and confidence of the community is maintained throughout the situation. Their key role is to provide strategic leadership and the church presence here and on other similar forums is essential to provide a full and effective response.

In some situations such as Hackney and Woolwich, the clergy decided to walk the streets to see what assistance they could provide and found this to be beneficial at the time. This firmly positioned the Church to provide a visible, calming influence to the streets as well as moral direction to be heard amidst the looting, arson and rioting frenzy on the streets. At the same time, many Roman Catholic churches positioned on the fringes of the riots reported that 'young people who would normally be on the streets were strangely nowhere to be seen'. It was surmised that they may have migrated to other areas as directed by Facebook and Twitter reports.

Twitter and Face book were also used as forums for positive community engagement, to organise the street clean-ups in Woolwich, Hackney, Lewisham, Croydon and other areas, as well as to assist in linking people together to become involved in activities of their choice, such as support for Reeves Corner, Croydon, the Tea Party, Hackney and a message board for prayers. During the riots the top Twitter trends in the world were 'Pray for London' and 'Riot Clean-Up' both of which signified the main activities of church leaders in the aftermath of the riots.

Social media is the new tool of choice for many people and provides a not to be missed opportunity for church leaders to engage with large sections of the community who may have little or no faith.

Listening ear

The clergy from a range of churches offered a listening ear to those who were in shock as they looked on, provided guidance to those who would listen and were able also to get a firsthand experience of the scale of destruction in their much loved local communities. Church leaders all commented that being on the streets was the right thing to do at the time, even though it may not have been the safest option. Many people on the streets in the Tottenham area were keen to let someone know how they felt and just talk to a sympathetic, listening ear. The presence of the church on the streets provided an alternative uniformed presence to that of the police.

‘Some people wanted to vent their anger at you; others were genuinely pleased to be able to speak to someone...’

The visibility of clergy on the street appears to have been picked up by the Local Councils and acknowledged with thanks by local traders. One such comment was ‘You were here when no one else was there’.

In the days following the riots, church leaders in Hackney continued in this mode by hosting a Listening Event facilitated by London Citizens on the Sunday following the riots. This provided a safe listening space for people to walk through their emotions and be comforted.

The role of church as a listening friend enabled communities to take the time to calmly reflect on the situation rather than react emotionally to the wave of public opinion and the negative commentary coming through the media.

Moral voice

Fr Michael Scanlon at Woolwich provided many anecdotes of his interventions with local people and of a direct ministry to a young person, roughly 16 years old, who was enquiring whether it was right to take the goods that were so close at hand with no visible restraining police presence or forceful authority figure. He gave clear guidance to turn the young man away from the temptation by explaining the full extent of the consequences of imprisonment and loss of freedom if he was caught on camera.

About 4 days later he was asked by the young person if he, the priest, would be his reference should his face be seen on camera when police came to make arrests.

Fr Scanlon had decided to walk out on the street during the riots for what he thought would be 10 minutes yet ended up spending roughly 3 hours, leaving him drained and exhausted. In that time he was police, priest, father and anything else that was needed to address the situation!

It was noted that many young people had phones in their hands as if communicating information to others; many young people were just watching and looking on as if at a spectator sport however there was very little jeering or encouragement by the crowd. One member of the clergy commented that there seemed to be groups there to rob and some there just to have a go at the police almost veering on anarchy, purposely doing damage to buildings. There were all sorts of drama being played out on the night.

The numbers of rioters far outweighed the number of police that were available. Dozens of businesses were vandalised, buildings set on fire, some shops had doors broken down and many shops were left still smouldering over the next few days. At one point it was noted that a family, including children, emerged from a shop carrying bags as if on a regular shopping trip and stuck a finger up on meeting the priest at the door.



Great Harry Pub Woolwich



Reeves Building Croydon (Getty Images)

In the Sydenham area, the Chair of the Lewisham Ecumenical Borough Deans was out on the streets with members of a Community church and a Street Pastor, who was in uniform, when they were faced with a group of youths who were smashing the windows of the local Cost Cutter store. The Street Pastor spoke with a loud voice of authority commanding them to stop and return home, which, to the group's relief, they did. The Church members then spent the rest of the evening with the employees defending the shop from any further looting and offering practical assistance with transportation home to stranded passengers who were hoping for a bus or train to appear.

Ecumenical meetings

The riots spread through London over a period of 4 days and the Church was very active in this time arranging meetings with other nearby colleagues from Church of England, United Reformed Church, Methodist, Roman Catholic and independent churches to discuss practicalities. Churches Together in Tottenham met at the Holy Trinity Church, arranged to visit the Duggan family and to plan their actions going forward.

Churches, faith groups, youth workers, councillors and other key community leaders attended their borough GOLD meetings where the clergy were able to advise and influence important decisions to coordinate the immediate response. There was similar clergy representation in Ealing and other affected areas on Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) and Police and Community Groups.

On Monday 8th August, around 200 people of all faiths gathered together to pray at St Mary's Church, Tottenham before walking to the High Road for a public Vigil of Hope. This was attended by the Anglican Bishop of Edmonton, Peter Wheatley, Sister Eugenia from St Ignatius Roman Catholic Church, Rev Dr Valentin Dedji, Minister of St Mark's Methodist Church, people from the United Reformed Church and Pentecostalist and Independent churches; David Lammy, MP for Tottenham, and the Leader of Haringey Council, Claire Kober were also present.

Partnerships

All those interviewed commented that the leadership of their boroughs by the local authority was excellent. The information shared through these meetings and forums was then disseminated to various congregations on the following Sunday along with messages of encouragement from Bishops and other church leaders across London. Local churches were able to work ecumenically, making soundly-based and right decisions on their particular response to the riots based on the feedback from attending such meetings.

Ecumenical Borough Deans were also on the streets and were invaluable for the legwork they did as the bridge between the church, the local authority and the police to fill gaps and meet the needs of those who were affected. The Borough Deans of Haringey organised meetings to coordinate the Christian response to local need and identified where resources were most needed.

In Croydon, the local authority responded by providing financial support for businesses, such as £1000 grants, interest free loans and help with insurance claims. In Woolwich and in Croydon, church leaders were invited to meetings where the plans for the area were outlined and which they could then disseminate as part of their pastoral care in the community. In the short period before funds and advice points were set up, the church and local authority worked closely in partnership to meet immediate community needs by referring families in distress to Christ Church, Croydon.

In Ealing and Hackney it was noted that the church was most effective in drawing on its partnerships because of the relationships that had been nurtured over the years. In Hackney, senior executives from a local business offered to deliver a team building exercise, in a deprived housing estate which was previously resistant to similar invitations by church leaders.

Church leaders described their links with their local primary and secondary schools in their roles as chaplains and governors. At the beginning of the school term, it was noted that most schools responded to the riots by setting up structured ways to discuss information about the riots which would limit its being the main topic of conversation on returning to school. Partnerships within schools enable the church to be visible and accessible to communities of other faiths or no faith and to stimulate regular reflections on issues that affect young people.

In the days following the riots, it was noted that churches, involving both buildings and personnel, were being invited by the local authority, business and community groups, to spearhead several community engagement and consultation events. This appeared to reflect a greater trust and credibility that communities had given to the Church because of its presence and the individual care shown in the midst of the turmoil.

Police Chaplains

The use of Police chaplains was also mentioned in the Tottenham and Willesden areas, while not being unique to these areas, but highlighted as being extremely important in the communication chain that is triggered during times of critical incidents, such as the riots. Police chaplains can be an important resource in supporting an effective church response. It is important to ensure that contact information is up to date as well as accessible and that

key relationships are established and continuously maintained on the ground. This may be an area to assess further.

Respite and care

Several churches became centres of refuge and respite during the riots and for some time afterwards. These include, Christ the Saviour, Ealing Broadway; St John's West Ealing; Christ Church, Sumner Road, Croydon and St Mary the Virgin on Lansdowne Road, Tottenham. At St Mary's hot drinks and meals were distributed and residents were offered phone charging services to keep in touch with loved ones. Christ Church Sumner Road West Croydon provided much needed respite to the Emergency Services who were working extremely long shifts and could not get back to base or home to have a short break. Croydon Mosque and Islamic Centre also opened to offer food and shelter to those affected by the riots.

The Bishop of Barking highlighted in a statement, (see Appendix 1) that the Welcome Centre at St Mary's Walthamstow was also opened two hours after a request from the local MP and had provided a café and respite centre for Waltham Forest Police for the week. This followed the closure of Police Canteens in the Borough because of cuts. At its peak the centre served 240 meals in an evening and provided overnight accommodation for Police on long shifts. Ironically the initiative was organised on Twitter and brought volunteers from all over London to assist including many who were not church members. The Bishop commented "Twitter for good and ill"!

While churches were focusing on offering support to those affected by the riots, one church was simultaneously dealing with a hate murder crime which happened directly opposite its building, unconnected to the riots, but requiring the resources and personnel from the church. This was a reminder that despite all the intensity of activity surrounding the riots, churches had calmly to continue to engage with their mission in the community and attempt to maintain normality.

The wisdom of Solomon – no single response

It was evident through the interviews that the local churches did not all respond to the riots in the same way nor was there any expectation that they had to do so. One clergy member commented that 'the wisdom of Solomon' was needed to know the best way to respond and decisions could only be made with local knowledge based on direct experience or provided through key relationships and sound guidance from church leadership. Response was also determined by the geographical location of the church in relation to the rioting and looting. Churches located on the fringes were largely unaffected and their main involvement was through feedback to forums and consultation groups.

The initial response by local church leaders in the midst of the activities was mainly an individual one, supporting members of the congregation, sharing information and ensuring that all were safe and accounted for. A more collective response was coordinated in the following days through the safe reflective spaces of prayer walks and vigils in the community.

In the Anglican Diocese of Southwark, the Bishop of Southwark and the Bishop of Kingston, along with Archdeacons from each Episcopal Area visited those places affected by the disturbances and met people from across the Diocese, who were most affected by the events. The Bishop of Southwark also hosted a meeting where clergy could reflect on the events and share their experiences as well as discussing how the Church should be involved in the rebuilding process.

In a letter (See appendix 1) read out in the churches of Southwark Diocese on Sunday 14 August, the Bishop of Southwark said: "I have visited many of those places most deeply affected and been aware of the shock and pain that is still keenly felt as well as the support and help being provided by many of our clergy and churches."

Street Pastors from Crofton Park Baptist Church in Brockley walked through Lewisham town centre offering support and guidance to those affected and similar involvement was reported in the Hackney area.

In some areas where damage was minimal, local churches sought to provide assistance to their neighbouring churches and remained alert to any members of their own congregation who might be affected by rioting in other areas.

Many church leaders shared that on going out on the streets, they generally had no idea what to expect and what their response would be, but they did know for a certainty that it was the right place to be and the right thing to do.

Invaluable negotiating skills

Clergy also needed to exercise their invaluable negotiation skills through the turmoil of emotional tensions that invariably emerge between different groups with sometimes inward looking agendas, cultural approaches deemed acceptable by some groups but not by others and racial tensions in areas where gangs were predominant.

Inevitably, individuals and groups had a variety of priorities and effort was needed to secure an outcome for the good of the whole community rather than for the good of the individual or single group. This reasoning was generally heard and acted on. Many of these stories cannot be directly reported owing to sensitivities. As part of the restoration process in the coming months, church leaders should make a priority of identifying rifts that may have occurred and rebuilding bridges.

It was recorded that in certain streets, local businessmen took the stance of physically defending their businesses and places of worship, making it clear that they would not tolerate damage to their properties. This resulted in a reduction in looting and criminality.

Over the immediate days following the riots, churches on the frontline became engaged in arranging and conducting prayer walks, prayer vigils and organising for the collection and distribution of donations from the public. Churches Together groupings were used in many areas to organise prayers and to provide updates to large sections of the community spiralling through all the faith networks.



Holy Cross Tottenham

PART THREE: CHURCH RESPONSE

Prayer Response

All areas engaged in an ecumenical and, in some cases, multi-faith approach to prayer in the days following. Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, independent church, Jewish and Muslim leaders joined in prayers at Tottenham. Phil Rosenberg, interfaith officer from the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said seeing London's faith communities coming together gave hope that "a city so dear to us all" could be rebuilt. Local churches gathered together to support those who were on the frontline of the damage and strengthen those who were in need.

As previously mentioned, the Bishop of Edmonton attended a prayer vigil for peace in Tottenham on Monday 8th August along with other Christian leaders and local politicians.

Several churches shone as the light upon the hill by opening for regular prayer meetings, open air services and communion services as occurred at churches in Ealing, Croydon Minster, Southwark and Tottenham to name a few.

Southwark Service for Peace at All Saints Peckham was organised and involved churches from all over the borough.

Pray Ealing, born out of the Haven Green Baptist Church, organised a service to pray for the streets of Ealing and the welfare of the Street Pastors.

An ecumenical prayer meeting involving 9 local churches was organised in the Lewisham area.

Church leaders attended an afternoon of prayer held by Premier Radio in Westminster Central Hall attended by up to 1000 people. This was followed a week later by interviews with Nigel Desborough, Chair of Lewisham Ecumenical Borough Deans, Rev Nims Obunge, Haringey Peace Alliance and Eustace Constance of Street Pastors, based in Hackney.

Several members of the clergy spoke of specific prayer support for the police, such as the Borough Commanders, which was warmly welcomed and received.

The Evangelical Alliance held a prayer meeting on 9th August in Kilburn and Steve Clifford, General Director, called for Christians everywhere to pray continuously for the nation. Key prayer points and practical guidance on ways Christians could help in their neighbourhood

were posted on the EA website and included suggestions such as baking for the respite centres; befriending and buying from your local shop to encourage local traders.

The London District of the Methodist Church called for prayer at 8am and 8pm daily, while the Evangelical Alliance called for prayer at 7pm every night in the first week of the riots. Without realising it, Christians were collectively praying on purpose for peace, healing and restoration throughout the days following the riots.

Contributions

Church leadership across the denominations made small grants available. Clergy from the Diocese of London and ministers from the London District of the Methodist Church had access to such funds to help families with their immediate and practical needs.

Financial contributions were received from many sources, including past parishioners now living as far afield as Australia, America and Germany along with letters of support and encouragement.

Save SIVA campaign in Hackney also collected cash donations to help rebuild and restock a local shop in Tottenham which was the heart and soul of a small community. The shopkeeper had no means of reopening his shop after it was totally raided and damaged in the rioting and looting and planned to close down. Local people determined that this would not happen and began donating cash to begin the process of reopening the shop.

The Church in Hackney responded to the immense wave of generosity from the public by setting up responsible systems for the collection and distribution of all money received to ensure accountability and transparency. This included the Save Siva Campaign for the local shop in the Hackney area.

Contributions of store vouchers were also received from the general public.

Tesco and Ikea also contributed goods for distribution.

Large amounts of clothing and household equipment were collected at the identified Crisis Centres such as at the Tottenham Leisure Centre, and Christ Church in Croydon.

Many members of the local congregations and other faith groups willingly volunteered their time to assist in the distribution of clothing, food and other practical support at crisis centres and other community initiatives.

The Church Life Survey 2001 states that more people volunteer for church organisations than any other organisation and this was visibly seen and noted in this period. Church volunteers served hot drinks and refreshments to the public at the Tea Party organised at Tottenham. Many were also involved in the sweep up to clean the streets in the days after the riots where it was safe to do so.

Church buildings, mosques and other central community centres were also fully utilised by those of all faiths and of no faith as places for safety, for prayer, civic discussions and to meet people's needs wherever possible.

Tea Party in Hackney

The community in Hackney decided to have a different type of gathering one week on from the destructive whirlwind of the previous week. A tea party was organised with contributions from Marks & Spencers and the invaluable time of church volunteers. Roads were closed and a time of healing and comfort was offered to local residents. It was described by Vastiana Belfon in the September Reflections bulletin as 'one of the most incredible days' and showed her 'the power of God in action' in the midst of 'the wonderfully creative and caring community' of Hackney.

The Aftermath

The following comments convey some of the sentiment and possible future direction for the Church in the aftermath of the riots.

'I am encouraged by the unity of prayer and soul searching among leaders that I've not seen for quite awhile'. (Phil Stokes)

The visibility of the church has increased in certain areas since the riots and is evidenced by the fact that the Local Authority and other strategic boards are calling on church leaders to help. This is happening slowly but surely in Lambeth and in Hackney.

The hope is to use this to reawaken the sense of social responsibility for some and to take it to the next level for others.

The church is here for the long haul; not here to stop a riot!

On reflection this highlights the importance of the church having good relationships with the community as well as seeking out those at strategic levels of influence.

It is important that the church continues to engage through the parish systems which connect with the community.

I will use this swift introduction to the community to build and develop relationships into areas that were tightly closed before. The links made in two days would normally have taken six months.

Actions taken to date

Applications have been sent in from the Ealing area to Emergency4London to support five youth focused activities including youth worker training and a range of other projects in the coming months

A need was expressed to be prepared to support ex offenders as they leave prison and assist in their rehabilitation. There is a depth of pain, shock and trauma in the experiences of young people and their families, who were imprisoned for stealing vacuum cleaners, Capri Sun drinks and mobile phones. This would mean developing links with the Probation Services and other key players, such as PECAN, XLP and similar Christian and other projects.

Clergy members, particularly in Hackney and Tottenham areas, are exploring ways of delivering Citizenship type educational projects, particularly in faith primary schools that will develop a sense of moral values and act as a powerful preventative measure for the future. A greater visibility of church leaders in schools allows students who are not church members opportunities to enquire and observe faith in action.

Mentoring and the promotion of positive role models were also suggested in Woolwich. This has also been highlighted by the Bishop of Barking (see Appendix 1) calling for a generation of male Christian role models to be raised up to support the younger generations.

A Listening Project has been set up in the Hackney area to support those families who have been traumatised by the disturbances and seeing much loved local places vandalised and destroyed. There is also an awareness of mental health issues emerging amongst young people in particular.

A 12 week course: Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities will be run in the Hackney area in New Year.

Regular pastoral care is still required by those who lost their homes as several have been rehoused in 'strange' places which they would not have chosen themselves.

Bible Study at St Mark's Methodist Church in Tottenham, has offered discussion groups to support healing and restoration and attendance has increased since the riots. A look at Proverbs Chapter 1 produced stimulating and transforming discussion amongst families at one study. The minister was asked for additional copies of the study notes so that parents could share them with non church members.

Members of the clergy continue to engage actively in dialogue with the community through several newly emerging local committees and forums offering support to local businesses and schools.

Churches also plan to raise awareness and promote the role of Street Pastors across London.

An annual essay competition entitled, 'Unity in the Community' which aims to build the minds of young people, has been launched for primary and secondary schools in the Haringey area. The essays will be judged by church leaders of the Churches Together in Haringey.

PART FOUR: REFLECTIONS

Conclusion

The interviews have highlighted the role of those churches that were on the frontline of the riots and the response as positive, substantial and effective within the local communities. Feedback from local councillors and written letters of support acknowledge the care through prayer and practical assistance that the church provided when others were not positioned and ready to do so. At a grassroots and parish level the church is alive and well in most areas and laying firm foundations through continuously building relationships at every level and in many sectors. The challenge now is to determine how the church can play a leadership role in any of the issues raised, particularly addressing the lack of regard for society and those in authority expressed by a largely young group in the communities.

Key points to note:

- Communication within the church generally appeared to work well. There is however reluctance from many members of the clergy to speak to the media for fear of being misunderstood and taken out of context. Despite this, the riots present an opportunity for the church to communicate a consistent message of hope and encouragement to those in the community who do not attend church or other linked activity, to hear the gospel.
- The messages read out to the congregations from the Bishops and other church leaders provided a sure anchor for many at Sunday service to get through their week and could serve a similar purpose for moral guidance and encouragement to the wider community as well. There is a role to be explored that involves raising the moral voice of the church to speak with authority and care to those of other faiths and no faith. One local person shared that, despite not attending church, they held memories of their time spent in church youth groups as being the one place where they would see and experience positive, caring relationships and be encouraged to make the right choices.
- The response of the church to the riots could include a strategy for greater communication of the goodwill that does exist, by consistently highlighting details of the many positive human stories that are held within the local communities. It would form a message of encouragement to those who did not decide to engage in the riots. Their voice for good works also too often goes unheard.
- It is hoped that the twin strand work of prayer and practical ministry that has developed in partnerships with local churches and other faith groups continues to expand and finds different expressions to meet common needs in certain areas.
- The analysis of those arrested (Appendix 2, points 2, 6) for riot related offences and taken for sentencing has shown the high percentage of young people involved as well as their often poor educational achievements. Young people were faced with making a decision about right and wrong in the midst of all the drama being played out and the reasons for their choices should form an interesting study for clergy members and for society at large:

- How many young people arrested after the riots had been through a faith school?
 - How are faith schools meeting the needs of young people that informs their decision making process?
- Several church leaders reflected that there was a need to analyse and understand community relations with the police as well as the methods used during the riots. Young people appear to be harbouring a quiet resentment against the police which is largely fuelled by negative experiences of stop and search. A press statement on 9 August from the Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs, Churches Together in England, called for the police and IPCC 'to become more responsive over critical incidences. At critical moments urgency must be shown in provision of information responding to the concerns of families and the community.'
- Church leaders expressed concern regarding the levels of poverty amongst young people who are directly affected by cuts to youth services and welfare benefits such as the Educational Maintenance Allowance.

The church should harness its experience in the riots and build on the local relationships made to strengthen its contribution to individual and community needs. It has a unique ability to transform lives individually and collectively in every neighbourhood in the country. It should continue to speak out both for the deprived and alienated who rioted and for the much larger group who often despite many obstacles seek to be good parents, good children and good citizens

Challenges for future consideration:

- ❖ Training for clergy and ministers in how to be prepared for and how to respond to future urban disturbances
- ❖ Education- exploration of ways to increase involvement and raise the visibility of local church leaders and ministers in the educational sector; conduct research to identify whether and to what extent young people educated in faith schools were involved in the disorder, and consider the implications;
- ❖ Policing – consideration of building respect between local communities and the police – at both the London wide level and across local communities; in particular re-establishing the annual meeting of London Church Leaders with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police
- ❖ Emphasis on family life – support for families who are at most risk from the problems associated with:
 - Lack of positive male role models
 - Marital breakdown
 - Limited parenting skills
 - Chaotic family life
- ❖ Development and promotion of mentoring schemes – by identifying appropriate volunteers to be mentors, such as Christian men in particular.
- ❖ Greater development and encouragement of restorative justice to help both victims and offenders and to help re-integrate offenders in a positive way into the community.
- ❖ Recovery of detached and other innovative models of youth work.
- ❖ Build on and broaden existing patterns of church pastoral contact to strengthen engagement with the wider community

Charmaine Odusina

Community Development Research

The report was being completed at the end of 2011. On New Year's Day the Archbishop of Canterbury gave his New Year Message on BBC1. We have reprinted it below with permission because we believe that it adds to the report and offers a very important afterword that affirms the fact that the riots were not a reflection of the realities of how young people behave in our society.

Terry Drummond

Elizabeth Simon

The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year's Message 2012

Quite a lot of the images we're likely to remember from the footage of the riots in the summer will be of young people out of control in the streets, walking off with looted property from shops, noisily confronting police and so on. It all feeds into the national habit of being suspicious and hostile when we see groups of youngsters on street corners or outside shops and bus shelters. We walk a bit more quickly and hope we can pass without some sort of confrontation.

The events of the summer were certainly horrific. They showed us a face of our society we don't like to think about – angry, destructive, lawless. But it's crucial to remember that what we saw on the streets in August was just one facet of a bigger and much more heartbreaking problem. The youngsters out on the streets may have looked like a big crowd, but they are a minority of their generation – the minority whose way of dealing with their frustrations was by way of random destructiveness and irresponsibility. Most people of their own age strongly shared the general feeling of dismay at this behaviour.

I've come to visit the charity Kids Company in London where today a lot of young people are joining together to pack food parcels for needy families in the neighbourhood. When you have a chance of talking to young people like this you really get a sense of how they feel about the society they're in and the challenges they face.

We have to ask, what kind of society is it that lets down so many of its young people? That doesn't provide enough good role models and drives youngsters further into unhappiness and anxiety by only showing them suspicion and negativity. When you see the gifts they can offer, the energy that can be released when they feel safe and loved, you see what a tragedy we so often allow to happen. Look at the work done by groups like the Children's Society or by the astonishing network of Kids Company here in London, and you see what can be done to wake up that energy and let it flourish for everyone's good.

One of the unique things in the Christian faith, one of its great contributions to our moral vision, is the way it has spoken about children and young people. Whether it's Jesus blessing children, or St Paul encouraging a young church leader, saying, 'Don't let people look down on you because you're young', or St Benedict in his rule for monks saying that you need to pay attention to the youngest as well as the oldest – Christian faith has underlined the essential importance of giving young people the respect they deserve.

Of course they're not infallible; of course they have a lot to learn. So do we all. But being grown-up doesn't mean forgetting about the young. And a good New Year's Resolution might be to think what you can do locally to support facilities for young people, to support opportunities for counselling and learning and enjoyment in a safe environment. And above all, perhaps we should just be asking how we make friends with our younger fellow citizens – for the sake of our happiness as well as theirs. A very happy and blessed New Year to you all.

(The Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams)

APPENDIX 1 Letters and Statements from London Church leaders

1.1 From the Bishop of London

11 August 2011

Dear Friends

I have just returned from visiting Enfield and Tottenham to see something of the wreckage left behind by the riots and to meet policemen and women who are in the front line of protecting our communities.

It is obviously vital not to stigmatise a whole generation. There are huge numbers of hopeful and high achieving young people in London but we do have a problem with a minority. Behind the opportunists who joined in the disturbances there is the reality of a criminal gang culture.

One of the difficulties for the police has been dealing with street violence, while under the cover of the disturbances and the arson, which could so easily have cost lives, highly mobile groups of looters have been on the rampage.

What has occurred should be condemned unequivocally and as the first of those arrested appear before magistrates and as stolen property is already being recovered, it is right to pay tribute to the bravery of the police who have regained control of our streets.

I am also immensely proud of the response of the church. In Edmonton and Stepney under the leadership of Bishop Peter and Bishop Adrian [who has had a challenging start to his ministry in the Area], the church has played a large part in reclaiming the streets for the overwhelming majority of responsible citizens by prayer vigils and public demonstrations of solidarity with other Christians and community groups.

At the same time our network of parish churches – real community hubs – has once again proved its worth. I visited St Mary's Lansdowne Road which has been open fifteen hours a day with volunteers from the parish helping local residents who have lost their homes and serving refreshments to the police and council workers who are clearing up the mess in Tottenham High Street.

Opposite St Mary's there is a block of flats reduced to rubble after being torched. One of the most appalling aspects of what has happened is the utter disregard for life and livelihoods shown by a minority of those who went on the rampage. They seem to lack the restraint and the moral compass which comes from clear teaching about right and wrong communicated through nourishing relationships. The background to the riots is family breakdown and the absence of strong and positive role models.

This once again underlines the vital importance of the work that the church has been doing through its schools where we share the responsibility for educating 50,000 young Londoners a day. In recent years there has also been an increase in youth provision in a number of our parishes including especially testing work with hard-to-reach youngsters. I have mentioned the work of the Christian charity [XLP](#) in many parts of London in this connection but I was especially glad on my visit to meet Charlie who operates from St Ann's Tottenham. He is an ordinand and an ex-Marine whose gym classes on various housing estates are one of the ways in which he is offering a strong and positive role model through which Jesus Christ is touching the lives of alienated young people. The police spontaneously expressed their admiration of what he and other church based workers were doing.

Clearly we need to get the situation under control but after the guilty have been sentenced there is a long road ahead in creating hope for people subject to financial and emotional poverty and educational failure.

I know that many of you have been praying with renewed fervour for peace on our streets and "that we may honour one another and seek the common good". Prayer is always at the heart of any Christian response to challenging situations. The Facebook page [Pray4London](#) created by two of our young clergy, Gavin Cooper and Richard Bastable, already has over 3,200 followers committed to pray and there are a number of prayer vigils which have taken place or which are happening over the coming days.

In addition to many special services, this Sunday 14 August at 6pm, the Eucharist will be celebrated at St Paul's Cathedral with a special intention for peace and justice in London and the other towns and cities affected.

In addition to the churches and parishes in the eye of the storm there have been many encouraging examples across the Diocese of churches wanting to support them. Thanks to the generosity of a City donor we have been able to make £15,000 immediately available to Area Bishops to enable frontline parishes to respond to immediate needs without having to worry about finance.

A number of churchwardens and individual parishioners have been in touch wanting to give and have suggested retiring collections this Sunday. Any who wish to respond in this or other ways are asked to claim Gift Aid locally and send a cheque payable to 'London Diocesan Fund' for the gross amount to Diocesan House marked 'Emergency4London'. This money will be used for immediate contingencies as well as to help parishes in reaching out to young people, and making the love of Christ visible especially to those caught up in gang culture. We are a people of hope and we want our children and young people to grow up with a sense of hope for themselves and for our world.

I have been deeply impressed by the vibrancy and generosity of some of our 'poorest' parishes and not least those in Edmonton and Stepney I have visited recently. By standing

together as a Diocese and by mutual support and encouragement we can have a presence in every street in our eighteen boroughs and at every level in the life of London. One of the lessons of recent events for example has been the importance of the developing network of police chaplaincies under the leadership of the newly appointed Chaplain to the Met. Jonathan Osborne. We can all have a share in this work by prayer and generosity through the Common Fund.

I am so grateful for the many clergy and believers who have helped those in pain, bewilderment and loss over the past few days. It is our calling to be salt and light in London and I am proud of our church for responding to mostly mindless anarchy by lighting candles rather than torching buildings and by offering loving, practical help in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanks for our partnership in the Gospel

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Richard Chartres KCVO DD FSA

1.2 The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the Gospels Jesus wept over Jerusalem as indeed he wept over the grave of Lazarus, his friend, where he sheds tears of loss, of grief and of pain. Over the past week many have wept over our cities. There have been tears of anguish and loss, tears of frustration and rage, tears of disbelief and pain.

It is now time to be of good courage, to pray and work together for the healing of our communities, the Lord being our helper.

The events on our streets have left several people dead and many more without homes and having lost livelihoods. They have presented us with events of wanton destruction, theft and a blatant disregard for lawful, peaceable living. They have left many in our communities bewildered and frightened, questioning the fabric of our society and prompting what will be a long hard look at our nation, our communities and ourselves.

Those caught up in these events as victims and perpetrators come from many different backgrounds, generations and groups in our society. The causes of these disturbances are already being recognised as diverse and complex. I hope that we will all reflect carefully on these events, eager to learn the lessons for our work and ministry, committed to the rebuilding of the physical, social and spiritual well-being of our society and slow to make quick empty statements and to apportion blame.

I have visited many of those places most deeply affected and been aware of the shock and pain that is still keenly felt as well as the support and help being provided by many of our clergy and churches. Bishop Richard and the archdeacons have also been fully engaged in the Episcopal areas of the Diocese, meeting and listening and giving encouragement. I am confident that our parishes will continue to offer hope, love and practical support in the name of Christ as communities are re-built and renewed in every way. This renewing and rebuilding needs to be in partnership with our ecumenical and interfaith partners as well as civic and other charitable agencies.

Yet as well as tears of pain this week, there have also been tears of hope. We have seen and been moved by the mobilisation onto our streets of a flood of charity and community pride as people have stepped forward to help clean, clear up and declare the places they know and love are built on foundations of tolerance, peace and harmony.

We have truly seen both the best and the worst of our country this week. The Church is in the business of healing and we declare with confidence that all are welcomed, all are loved and all have a dignity before God. Undoubtedly there is much we can do to play our part in the rebuilding of our communities and in the rebuilding of trust. We have a part to play in the national and local debate that will follow and in practical acts of loving service.

For now there are two things we can do. Firstly, we can continue to live our everyday lives, using our community facilities, taking time to engage in conversations with those we meet on our streets, supporting local traders and those who seek to get back on their feet. We must not be afraid, but rather trust in the goodness that exists, seeking and recognising Christ in our midst and in each other. Secondly, but crucially, we continue to pray. Pray for those who have lost life and loved ones, those who have lost homes and livelihoods, those who are fearful, anxious and bewildered. Pray for our cities and our country, our political

leaders and police service. Pray for those who work with young people and families. Pray for trust. Pray for forgiveness, healing and renewal.

This morning's gospel reading finds Jesus ministering on the margins of his society, encountering a woman of considerable tenacity. May we follow in service to those on the edge of our society and show the same perseverance in faith and work.

May God bless you in his service; fill our hearts and minds with faith, hope and love, that we may be renewed in strength and courage to meet the challenges ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Southwark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

+Christopher Southwark

**1.3 To all Clergy, Readers, Churchwardens, Lay Workers
and The Barking Team:
Responses to the August Riots from the Bishop of Barking,
Rt Revd David Hawkins**

18th August 2011

Thank you to all of you who have responded in numerous ways during this past fortnight of riots and their aftermath. Although the Barking Area has been spared the worst examples of rioting and looting, where it has happened it has been devastating to those who have been injured and experienced damage to their businesses.

As well as being shocking the events of this past fortnight has also been inspiring and heart-warming. I refer to the instinctive response of the majority of the population who have demonstrated kindness, generosity and voluntary service to their stricken communities. It has been evident that in many cases our Church and faith communities have been at the forefront of this neighbourliness. One example has been the Welcome Centre at St Mary's Walthamstow which opened two hours after a request from our local MP and has provided a café and respite centre for Waltham Forest Police for the past week. This follows the closure of Police Canteens in the Borough because of cuts. At its peak the centre served 240 meals in an evening and provided overnight accommodation for Police on long shifts. Ironically the initiative was organised on Twitter and brought volunteers from all over London to assist including many who were not church members. Twitter for good and ill.

There are of many underlying causes for the behaviour we have witnessed not least the escalating gap between the rich and poor which successive governments have been unable or unwilling to address.

However, it is important for the Church to identify some of the particular causes which we can address. The riots, and the public outrage they have caused, provide our churches with a greater opportunity than ever to do what we do well.

Prayer

Prayer vigils, walks and events have to be the bedrock of all our reflection and social action. To that end I encourage you to sign up for the National Leaders Prayer Summit at Wembley on the 17th September.

Male Role Models

There is a growing need to raise a generation of Christian male role models who see it as their vocation to mentor young people and demonstrate an alternative life style to the one they have chosen or has been chosen for them.

The majority of those caught up in the riots were teenager boys and young men. Many are likely to be from the 25% of young people growing up in families where a father figure is absent. They will have had few male role models in primary school and their GP and psychologist are likely to be female.

The church is the largest provider of youth services in the country in spite of losing one million young people from our churches during the Decade of Evangelism. We have a responsibility to care for and encourage our youth workers both paid and voluntary and to foster a vocation among young men to consider becoming school mentors, street pastors, politicians, teachers or youth and community workers. We have the opportunity to demonstrate an alternative to a society which has become defined and consumed by consumerism. Is it surprising that young people have gone on a looting spree when they are out of work and unable to buy what the rich buy without noticing the cost? What makes human beings distinct from the rest of creation is that we have a built in need for *purpose, meaning and self-worth*. Without these in place animal instincts will out.

A faith in Jesus Christ provides purpose, meaning and self-worth and a church community can nurture these qualities that no amount of money can buy. Evangelism through mentoring, friendship and example has to be the greatest and most effective response we can make.

Morals and Values

Once we have a sense of purpose, meaning and self-worth, living by a set of moral values becomes a natural way of life. Without them morality makes little sense and is therefore difficult to cultivate. This is why evangelism needs to precede morality. When young people see the very people who they should look up to 'on the make' is it any wonder that they have followed suit. They watch bankers continuing to be paid huge bonuses, MP's claiming made up expenses and police being paid by newspapers. They see hands grabbing all they can among the respected institutions of society. It is not surprising that, given half the chance, they will grab too. Of course the Church is not unscathed, either, where there are examples of the grabbing hands of child abuse.

Distinctive Responses

All this reinforces for me the need for our churches to seize the opportunity and make the distinctive responses that are the core values of the gospel

- To pray for all those affected by the riots – the victims and the perpetrators.
- To raise up role models – especially young men.
- To support our Youth Workers.
- To nurture the vocation of young men.
- To evangelise through mentoring, friendship and example.

- To show people that purpose, meaning and self-worth is priceless because it cannot be bought.
- To provide courses on parenting and marriage support.

With my appreciation for your ministry and prayers for us all as we make our distinctive response.

Frank Barmig

1.4 Statement on the London Riots by Chair of the Methodist Church London

District:

Revd Jenny Impey

9 August, 2011

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. The churches within the London District have been doing this together with our ecumenical partners and other community groups over many years and will continue to do so long after the riots and looting have ceased to be headline news.

I have today contacted each circuit and heard of meetings which are happening in many places as Methodist ministers and members seek to meet with ecumenical, other faith, community and council leaders in order to respond in a united way to the destructive events on our streets. A number of our people live close to the hot spots and have spoken of their shock at what they have witnessed, but are responding in positive ways by helping with clean up operations, calling together people for prayer and positive action and contacting church members to ensure that they are OK.

Many people across London and elsewhere are counting the cost of the destruction on our streets. Our churches, which are at the heart of the communities affected, want to play their part in partnership with others to bring healing and peace to those areas, and demonstrate that this city is a place of peaceful, diverse and vibrant communities.

The London District is making small grants available to those churches and circuits seeking to respond with local initiatives and is calling on the people in our churches and circuits to pray wherever they are at 8am and 8pm daily for all who are caught up in and affected by what is happening on our streets and to pray for peace and healing.

1.5 SCHOOL MESSAGE:

Archbishop Vincent Nichols

2 September 2011

Today I want to speak to you, to each student in our secondary schools, as you begin this new school year.

I hope you have had a good summer. Some of you may have been on a family holiday. Some of you will have got your exam results. Some of you may have had a difficult time. It's not always easy being a teenager, knowing what to do or who to follow. All of you will have known about the riots in our city.

Now you come back to the patterns of school and college life with the demands they make and the opportunities they carry.

Here you learn again about being part of a community that is far wider than your family. Central to what you learn is the need to show respect for each other and have some responsibility for each other if you are going to make the best of the opportunities given to you here.

These lessons of mutual respect and responsibility went out of the window for those few days of rioting and looting. I know that many of you were upset at what you saw.

Since then much has been said about young people today. But I am confident that you do understand the issues involved: that we owe respect to others in every circumstance; that theft is wrong; that we are easily tempted in the spur of a moment; that the actions we take always have their consequences.

But it is a deeper truth that I want to stress, one that underlines all these other points. It is this: the respect we have for each other is rooted in the respect we have for ourselves. Your respect for yourself is so important. Self-respect is what helps to set the standards by which you live.

That might sound simple. But profound and true self-respect is difficult to achieve. So many influences can sway you this way and that making you feel confused about who you really are and what you really want.

Self-respect is something you grow into gradually, as you come to accept and appreciate the abilities and character you have been given. You learn of it through those who love you. You can lose sight of it when you feel dejected or misunderstood.

When you truly respect yourself then you set yourself high standards of behaviour especially in the company of your own age group. You are not afraid to be different. When you truly respect yourself you also have high achievement targets. You want to do your best and be your best.

As you get older, you come to understand for yourself the differences between right and wrong. You learn how to be generous with what is right and how to say 'no' to what is wrong. Gradually you seek and find true and lasting values, not just those promoted by fashion or celebrity. Gradually you acquire the habits and routines of good behaviour, so that you know how to behave well even when no-one is watching.

But what is the deepest foundation of this self-respect?

When you look at yourself in the mirror who do you really see? A child of your parents, certainly. A person liked by their friends. And a face anxious about its appearance. But you see someone more.

What you see is someone expressed in this truth, on which you can rely: 'Before you were born God called you. From your mother's womb God pronounced your name.' (Jer.49.1)

There it is. You are a child of God. That is who you see each morning in the mirror. It is God's life that is within you, the supreme gift that you have received. When you understand this, everything changes. This is why you have such respect for yourself, in every aspect of your being, and in your future. This is also why you have respect for your family and for every other human being for they too have the same dignity as you, as sons and daughters of one heavenly Father. We share one life together.

This truth lies at the heart of the life of your school community. I trust that in this coming year you will continue to learn more about the greatness of human living and achievement, about your faith in God made visible in Jesus Christ who is your friend and companion, about your own abilities and true potential. I hope that as you grow and learn you will see the importance of giving good leadership to others around you and the importance of contributing to your local community to build a just and compassionate society. What you give, the service you offer, helps others around you, but it really helps you to grow in self-respect as well.

Thank you for listening to me. I ask that you take a copy of this message home to your parents and talk about it with them, too.

One last thought. All your actions are carried out in the presence of God. You can be sure that God never lets you out of sight because God loves you so much that He can never take His eyes off you. God wants to watch as you prosper and truly flourish. You are loved so much. Please remember this in the term ahead.

(The Most Revd Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster)

APPENDIX 2

Statistical Overview of riot-related activity in London and people arrested

Note: The statistics which follow are for London unless otherwise indicated. They are mainly taken from a Home Office report, '**AN OVERVIEW OF RECORDED CRIMES AND ARRESTS RESULTING FROM DISORDER EVENTS IN AUGUST 2011**' published in October 2011. Some are taken from a report published by the Ministry of Justice on 24 October 2011 '**STATISTICAL BULLETIN ON THE PUBLIC DISORDER OF 6TH TO 9TH AUGUST 2011 OCTOBER UPDATE**' and this is indicated in the text.

1) LOCATION

Across the ten principally affected police force areas nationally, disorder-related crimes were recorded in 66 local authority areas. Many of these local authorities are amongst the higher crime and/or most deprived areas in the country, although some local authorities experiencing disorder have relatively low levels of deprivation (e.g. Bromley). Conversely, many high crime and high-deprivation areas around the country did not experience incidents of disorder.

Within London, the boroughs of Croydon (430), Southwark (314), Haringey (303), and Ealing (279) recorded the highest number of crimes

| Lower Tier Local Authority | Total crimes recorded (=100%) |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Croydon | 430 |
| Manchester | 386 |
| Birmingham | 363 |
| Southwark | 314 |
| Haringey | 303 |
| Ealing | 279 |
| Lewisham | 213 |
| Lambeth | 209 |
| Enfield | 182 |
| Hackney | 172 |
| Greenwich | 156 |
| Newham | 152 |
| Wandsworth | 150 |
| Liverpool | 146 |

2) DEMOGRAPHICS

Across all areas, the vast majority of those arrested were male (88% in London).

Thirty-eight per cent of those arrested in London were aged 18 to 24, and just under one-quarter (23%) were juveniles (aged 10 to 17). The proportion arrested who were juveniles varied across the forces, ranging from 23 per cent (Metropolitan Police Service) to 44 per cent (in West Yorkshire).

In London, thirty-two per cent of all those arrested described their ethnicity as White, 37 per cent as Black, 11 per cent as from a Mixed ethnic background, eight per cent as Asian and two per cent from some other ethnic background.

The Ministry of Justice bulletin notes that the proportion of black and mixed race young people appearing before the courts was high compared with the ethnic composition of all pupils in maintained secondary schools. In London, the proportion of black 10 to 17 year olds appearing before the courts (41%) was twice as high as the proportion of black pupils attending maintained secondary schools in London (21%). The proportion of Asian young people appearing before the courts was low compared with all Asian pupils in maintained secondary schools.

3) GANG AFFILIATION

19 per cent of those arrested (337) were reported to be affiliated to a gang (this was a higher proportion than in other parts of the country, for which the average overall was 13%).

In terms of the role gangs played in the disorder, in most cases police perception was that where gang members were involved, they generally did not play a pivotal role.

4) PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS

Nearly three-quarters (72%) had a previous caution or conviction, including a significant proportion (25%) with more than ten previous offences. (Ministry of Justice bulletin)

5) DEPRIVATION INDICATORS (from Ministry of Justice bulletin)

Compared to all young people (aged 10 to 17), those brought before the courts for riot related offences were much more likely to be in receipt of free school meals, to have had special educational needs, poorer educational achievement, to have been absent from school and to have a criminal history.

Nationally, 64 per cent of those young people lived in one of the most deprived areas in the country – only three per cent lived in one of the 20 least deprived areas. However there were notable differences between the English regions. For example, while in the North West 68% of 10 – 17 year olds arrested lived in the most deprived areas, compared to 28% of all secondary school pupils in the region, in London the difference was less stark (64% for offenders and 50% for all secondary school pupils.) Nationally, 35 per cent of adult defendants were claiming out-of-work benefits (compared to 12 per cent of the working age population).

In London, 40 per cent of young people brought before the courts were receiving free school meals (compared to 26% of all pupils in maintained secondary school).

6) EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS (from Ministry of Justice bulletin)

Nationally, two-thirds of the young people in court were classed as having some form of special educational need, compared to 21% of all pupils in maintained secondary schools.

Nationally, more than a third of young people who were involved in the riots had been excluded from school during 2009-10 - this compares with Department for Education records showing 6% exclusions for all Year 11 pupils

Nationally, young people appearing before courts were thirty times more likely to have been permanently excluded – 3% compared to 0.1% among all those aged 15.

7) TYPE OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Arrests for acquisitive crimes accounted for the largest share of all arrests, regardless of whether the person arrested was a juvenile or an adult.

Males arrested were more likely than females to be arrested for disorder offences while females were more likely to be arrested for acquisitive crimes.

However, adults were more likely to be arrested for acquisitive crimes than juveniles (68% compared with 59%).

By contrast, juveniles were more likely than adults to be arrested for criminal damage (5% compared with 3%) and disorder offences (24% compared with 15%)

APPENDIX 3 After the Riots/Public disturbances - Background material

The August Riots in England Understanding the involvement of young people

By Gareth Morell, Sara Scott, Di McNeish and Stephen Webster

Prepared for the Cabinet Office October 2011

Out of the Ashes

David Lammy

Guardian Books

An Overview of Recorded Crimes and Arrests Resulting From Disorder Events in August 2011

Home Office October 2011

Statistical bulletin on the public disorder of 6th to 9th August 2011

Ministry of Justice Statistics bulletins

September 15th and October 24th 2011

Response to the Riot Communities and Victims Panel

Faith to Engage

October 2011

London's Local Councils:

Responding to the riots and promoting safe, resilient communities

November 2011

Operation Kirkin Strategic Review, Interim Report

The Metropolitan Police Service report

December 2011

Policing Large Scale Disorder: lessons from the disturbances of August 2011

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee

December 2011

Reading The Riots – investigating England's summer of disorder

The Guardian and the London School of Economics

First stage report published December 2011

APPENDIX 4 Names of contributors to the report

| |
|--|
| Fr Michael Scanlon, St Peter the Apostle, Woolwich |
| Ven Luke Miller Archdeacon of Hampstead |
| Andrew Corsie Assistant Archdeacon, Ealing |
| Felicity Scroggie Area Dean, Brent |
| Ian Rathbone Councillor Elim Minister, Hackney |
| Rev Valentin Dedji St Mark's Methodist Church, Tottenham |
| Jivko Hristov Croydon Council |
| Fr Sichel Area Dean Lambeth St Matthew with St Jude, Brixton |
| Barry Goodwin Acting Archdeacon of Croydon |
| Nigel Desborough Chair Lewisham Ecumenical Borough Deans |
| Fr Paschal Ryan, Episcopal Vicar Stoke Newington, Hackney |
| Rob Wickham Rector of Hackney |
| Betsy Blatchley (Hackney) |
| Rev Segun Johnson Liberty Church, Tottenham |
| Interviews (conducted by Andrew Davey) |
| Bishop of Stepney, Rt Revd Adrian Newman |
| Rev Jonathan Mortimer All Saints Church, Peckham |
| Rev Paul Perkin St Marks, Battersea Rise, Clapham |
| Rev Simon Morris St Mary's Tottenham |
| Rev Bunmi Fagbeni Holy Trinity, Tottenham |
| |

Published by:

London Churches Group for Social action

Westminster Central Hall

Storey's Gate

LONDON

SW1H 9NH

Tel: 020 7222 0281

www.londonchurchesgroup.org.uk