



Westcott Seminar

Reflections on this Summer's Riots

On Monday 14 November we hosted four clergy and a youth worker who were on the 'front-line' in different parts of the country during the August riots. They met with Westcott staff for the first part of the afternoon to talk about their experiences and what lessons there were for those of us involved in the training of ordinands and on-going support for clergy development. Then the five talked about the riots and the Church's role with a group of 40 ordinands. We will be producing a summary of the main points that emerged from both these sessions, but here are the concluding remarks each of the five made at the end of the session with the ordinands.

Andrew Moughtin-Mumby, Rector of St Peter's Walworth: *Church needs to be more confident, we need to be present, we need to be engaged and work out what that means in our present context. We are doing an urgent task and we have the capacity to make a difference in our local communities. The Church has an important role in the spiritual formation of people; everyday holiness can make a difference in the lives of communities.*

Rob Wickham, Rector of St John at Hackney: *God really is in charge. Sometimes we can rely on our own efforts and own strengths and the riots were frightening but God gives us the tools to deal with what we face. When we go to areas as parish priests the constant calling is to be reminded that we work only in God's strength not our own. We can only deal with this stuff if we are working in God's strength, and God's love for the people we are working with is far greater than what we can offer them.*

Edmund Newey, Vicar of Handsworth, Birmingham: *The integrity of the C of E is found in parishes that are net receivers of the common fund. There is a direction in the Church of successful units as understood in numerical and financial terms, and if we go down that route we are losing something of our integrity. St Thomas Aquinas says that the subject matter of theology is all things in relation to God and the Church of England is about all things in relation to God not just some parts of it. Those of us working in the more dependent parishes are not simply dependent; we are contributing a massive amount in terms of the mission, ministry and integrity of the Church.*

Helen Gatenby, manager of the M13 Youth Project in Manchester: *The Spirit of God is always with us on the streets. It is important to know this in practice and to be ministered to by young people in our context as we listen and minister to them. “Go to your cell, sit in it and your cell will teach you everything” (Abba Moses). It is in sitting in the community that we have been called to, with God, that he teaches us and shapes us for ministry. The Spirit of God is found in surprising places and there is great holiness to be found out on the streets with people.*

Louise Codrington-Marshall, Priest in Charge at St Nicholas and St Luke, Deptford: *Despite the destruction, after the riots we saw people with nothing having a sense of hope that out of this disaster could come something good. We need to keep holding on to that and sowing those seeds of hope and being confident enough to stand in partnership on the front line and say “together we can do this, we can grow.”*