

# Editorial

The appointments of Dr. George Carey as Archbishop of Canterbury and of Dr. David Hope as Bishop of London mark the beginning of a new era in the history of the Church of England. Both men are relatively young, and can look forward to presiding over their respective sees until well into the next century. In some respects that is perhaps not a long time, given the history of the Church, but these days, with compulsory retirement at 70, it is increasingly unusual to expect senior bishops to remain in their posts for more than a decade. After all, no-one is likely to go to either Canterbury or London without having been in another see, and there are no bishops under 40!

What this means for the Church is harder to judge. Dr. Carey is widely believed to be an Evangelical, though most of those who wear that label have long since recognized that it does not really apply to most of what he has been saying and doing in recent years. That does not mean, however, that he will not bring Evangelical concerns to Canterbury, particularly an emphasis on evangelism. Even more important, in the long term, is the probability that many of the senior positions in the Church bureaucracy will be filled by the new archbishop's friends, the majority of whom are likely to be Evangelicals. Over a period of time, this could lead to a change in the public face of the Church far more fundamental than anything a radical statement at General Synod could produce.

One of the new archbishop's difficulties however, will be in finding friends. It is a pity, but he seems to have an ability to offend some group or other whenever he opens his mouth in public. Anglo-Catholics have been alarmed at being called 'heretics' because of their views of the priesthood, and whatever apologies may have been made, the bad blood caused by that sort of thing is unlikely to go away quickly. Moreover, it has to be remembered that this was not an isolated remark; the new archbishop went on record in Bath and Wells as saying that Anglo-Catholics might have to reconsider their position in the Church, and there is no doubt that he is not at all sympathetic to their views.

What he will do about Evangelicals is harder to say. His desire to grow closer to Rome will not earn him many friends there, although it must be said that the likelihood of anything coming of such a desire is minimal. Quite apart from the enormous difficulties it would cause the Church of England, there is the small but important fact that Rome does not want us, and will certainly close the door once women are ordained to the priesthood. Reunion with Rome might conceivably be on the agenda again by about 2100, but that is not something we need worry too much about right now! Unfortunately though, many

Evangelicals will take offence at his pro-Roman utterances (however impractical they may turn out to be), and that is likely to set up barriers between him and his former constituency.

That leaves the Liberals, but it is hard to see Dr. Carey making many friends there either. For whatever his views may be about women and Rome, he remains a conservative on the central areas of Christian doctrine. In any case, the Liberals will not want him, and their influence is liable to decline dramatically over the next decade or so. So where does the new archbishop turn? It will be interesting to watch where the new middle ground develops in the Church, and who comes to be seen as 'archbishop's men'.

The appointment of David Hope, by contrast, seems much more clear-cut. A moderate Anglo-Catholic, he is close enough to the extremists appointed by Graham Leonard to posts in London, to be acceptable to them, but is nevertheless flexible enough to be able to handle the coming changes in the Church. He is most unlikely to be painted into a corner on women's ordination, but at the same time will probably offer hospitality to those who cannot accept it in principle, and may well refuse to ordain women priests in London during his episcopate. That should keep most people happy, and will give the conservatives time to consolidate their forces in London if they feel so inclined.

As a bishop, he will probably take a strong line on clerical indiscipline, which is rife in London, though it is hard to know what he can do, given the decentralized structure of the diocese. However, it is most improbable that there will be any softening in this area, and we can hope that he will be more courageous than his predecessor in rooting out the unsuitable. Evangelicals will probably not have much of a look-in, any more than they have up to now, but at least their consciences are unlikely to be offended in the way they have occasionally been in the past.

Both men, in their different roles, have a great deal to do, and the Church must continue to pray for them and to uphold them in their ministry. It will be right to offer criticism where criticism is due, but it should be remembered that in the late twentieth century we can no longer afford to air our dirty linen in public. The Church of England must draw closer together, achieve some kind of internal consensus based on the Word of God, and dedicate itself to mission in increasingly heathen Britain. If that can be achieved, then the terms of office of the new men will be remembered as a turning point in the history of the Gospel in this land. Let us pray that it may be so, and that we may go forward together as a Church to face the daunting task before us.

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