

Canon Kenith Andrew DAVID, Honorary Curate 1983-95



Photo from 9 October 1992 at Holy Trinity, Geneva

Born in 1939 in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, Canon David holds British nationality (and formerly South African nationality). His early education was in South Africa, and he pursued theological training in the UK. Returning to a South African Parish, he was forced to leave in a hurry after 18 months, due to political harassment. Back in the UK he worked in Sussex and then with Christian Aid, inter-alia, before joining the World Council of Churches in Geneva (via Botswana). Hence his honorary curacy with HTC, Geneva. His final parish was in Yorkshire, UK. His career is a reflection on the South African Apartheid regime.

Early Years in South Africa

Jan 1946 – Dec 1951: Primary education at **St. Paul's Indian Mission School**

The Parish of St Paul's Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal, established in 1880 by Rev James Green, Dean of Pietermaritzburg, was a school-cum-chapel to serve the needs of the Indian community in the areas of education and social services. Later under the leadership of Revd Dr Parker Booth (tasked with establishing the first Anglican Mission for the Indians in 1885) and the assistance of Joseph Nullathumby, whom Revd Booth recruited from India in 1892, the foundation stone for a church was laid in January 1894. Celebrating 125 years in 2020, St. Paul's has played an important role in the development of the community and beyond.

Jan 1952 – Dec 1958: Secondary education at **Woodlands Indian High School, Pietermaritzburg**

The subjects he read for Matriculation (equivalent of University Entrance) were: English, Afrikaans, Biology (Botany/Zoology), Mathematics, Geography and Book-keeping.

In 1959 he entered the **University of Natal, Durban** studying for a Bachelor of Commerce degree. Before his final year, after discussions with the Bishop of Natal, he **switched to Theology**. At that time in South Africa, Anglican priests of Indian origin were a rarity!

In 1962-63, moving to the **University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg** he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Upper Second) in **Theology**. He always maintained that: *the effects of being one of the only two black students on an all-white (3,000 strong) student campus still lives with me*. While pursuing his University education, **in order to pay the university fees**, Canon David concurrently taught in Durban, at St. Michael's Indian Mission School (1960) and at Sea View Junior School (1962).

In 1964, after graduating, he continued teaching this time at the **Centenary Indian High School** in Durban, for 6 months, **in order to pay for his passage** to Britain, to pursue theological studies. Due to the political situation in South Africa at the time and his active role in the struggle against the apartheid regime, the Anglican Church helped him travel to England by sea to engage in his theological training.

Theological Training in Britain

1964-66 saw Canon David in Britain, at the **College of the Resurrection, Mirfield**, Yorkshire (Home of the Community of the Resurrection), taking General Ordination Examinations. During this period, in **1965**, he also followed a **6-week Psychiatric Hospital Course at St. Albans**.

September 1966 he was **ordained Deacon** at St. Alban's Abbey, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, and appointed **Curate** of the Parish Church of **St. Nicholas, Harpenden, Hertfordshire**

September 1967 a year later, he was ordained as a **priest**, also at St. Alban's Abbey.

<https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/Pages/Category/our-history>

Canon David's **post-ordination training** was in the **Diocese of St Albans** between 1966-1969. The Diocese of St Albans forms part of the Province of Canterbury in England and covers the counties of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and the northern part of the London Borough of Barnet. The See is in the City of St Albans, where the cathedra (bishop's seat) is located in St Albans Cathedral.

While serving his curacy in Harpenden (1966-69), Canon David undertook, inter-alia:

- a 3-year **Clinical Theology Course** (the psychiatric approach to pastoral care) in St. Albans, and
- was also in charge of the **Training for Lay Readers' Course**.

He also participated in **Ecumenical Lay Training Conferences** in Amsterdam (1966), in Hanover Kirchentag and Bad Boll, Germany (1967) and Gwatt, Switzerland (1968). Gwatt is a small village located in the canton of Bern, on the shores of Lake Thun and is known for its stunning natural beauty and tranquil atmosphere.

On 4th May 1968, he married Angelina Doris Murugen in Harpenden. They had met, ten years earlier, in 1959, on a bus in Durban taking them both to the University of Natal where he commenced his studies for a Bachelor of Commerce degree.

Return to South Africa

After serving his 3-year Curacy in Harpenden, he **returned home to South Africa in November 1969** as **Rector, Church of the Epiphany, Chatsworth, Durban**, a township Parish, inhabited by Indians in 'match-box' houses, **affected by the Group Areas Act**. Basic Community Organization and popular/political education were the planks of the parish programme. The establishment of Trade Unions for Garment Workers and Catering Service employees, were two of the significant outcomes. Unfortunately, his work here was curtailed by the Bishop, who acting on reliable information, insisted that he 'exit' the country before further harassment and torture. Hence his hasty return to the UK in April 1971.

Back in the UK

May 1971 – Nov 1972 Due to this sudden return to the UK, a stop-gap measure was found as **Priest-in-Charge**, All Souls' Church, Southwick, Sussex, where he ministered for some 18 months.

Dec 1972 – Dec 1975: Theological Education Secretary, Christian Aid, (British Council of Churches). This newly created post involved visiting all theological colleges and seminaries in the UK as well as Post-Ordination Training Courses – holding seminars, conferences, lecturing, preaching etc. The purpose was to introduce (in many cases), as well as stress and revitalise the Biblical perspectives on current social issues, particularly those concerning the 'First World-Third World' relationship. **Perhaps the most 'popular' course was one entitled 'On being Human today'**.

During this period, **(1973 – 1975)** he was also **Lecturing at the Urban Theology Unit** for a course entitled: "Urban Migration and International Cities".

Still with Christian Aid, **Jan 1976 – Aug 1981** saw him change jobs. As **Project Officer for India and Bangladesh**, he was responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with the Churches in India, and other organizations/groups (working in rural/urban areas), and the Government, assessing needs and possible solutions. Responsible for recommending grants for relief/development projects the annual budget equalled GBP 1M. The job called for close liaison with different units in the WCC and other Donor Agencies.

Dec 1972 – Sept 1981: Honorary Member of Staff, Kingston Parish Church, Diocese of Southwark, UK. The family were regular worshippers here.

1979-80: Canon David played a major role in the **BBC documentary entitled "The Politics of Compassion"** assisting in its production as well. This 90 minute film traced the development of thought within one Western donor agency **which led to the political aspect of development being taken seriously**.

A short 3 minute review of the documentary: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qauA5julBA

The full 2-part documentary (90 minutes): <https://empathymedia.org/the-politics-of-compassion/>

1980: One World Week Preacher at Westminster Abbey.

One World Week (OWW) was founded in 1978 by the NGO World Development Movement (renamed 'Global Justice Now' in 2015) out of a desire that, for one week in every year, the churches should draw the attention of their communities to the fact that the world consists of one human family which shares one planet in which all may enjoy fullness of life. OWW became an independent development education charity, early 2006, non-political and non-sectarian. Although initially OWW was held in October (the week of United Nations Day, 24 October), from 2023 OWW events are held during the European Global Education Week in mid-November.

Sept 1981 – May 1983 - Botswana

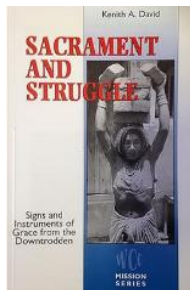
The family moved to Botswana when Canon David was appointed **Provincial Secretary of the Anglican Province of Central Africa** (Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe). This post involved coordinating and stimulating the work of the Anglican Church in these four countries. Zimbabwe featured as a priority; getting the Anglican Church to adjust to a new regime was not proving easy. He also acted as Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Botswana Christian Council. During this period he was appointed a **Canon of the Diocese of Lundi, Zimbabwe**.

May 1983 – August 1995 - Geneva, World Council of Churches

Canon David returned to Geneva in order to join the WCC in June 1983, as Coordinator of Urban Rural Mission (URM) and was naturally drawn to Holy Trinity Geneva, our city centre, Anglican Church.

Publications: Canon David authored several books as indicated below and wrote many articles, listed at the following web link.

https://isr.swisscovery.sls.ch/discovery/search?query=any,contains,Kenith%20David&tab=MyLibrary&search_scope=MyLibrary_and_CI&vid=41SLSP_RRO:WCC_TP2&offset=0



The "signs of the times" today seem overwhelmingly to speak of death, not life. In such a world, the author says, the followers of Jesus must "make known and live the reality that the God of life chooses, with passionate love, to be alongside those who have been cast aside". Drawing on his long experience with people, groups and communities who have been made poor, Kenith David explores five "visible signs of invisible grace", which illustrate the binding together with God of those who are crushed by the powers and systems of society: life, land, community, name and identity, and the vision of "the new dawn". These, he says, are *sacraments* rediscovered in struggle — realities that enable the crushed and down-trodden to make sense of their pain and to strive towards fullness of life and the reign of God.

Kenith David is an Anglican priest from South Africa. From 1983 to 1993 he was coordinator for Urban Rural Mission with the World Council of Churches.

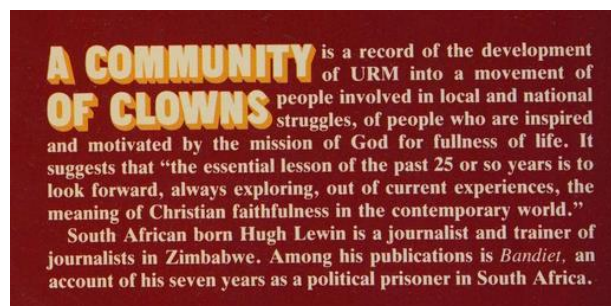
WCC Mission Series (1994): **Sacrament and Struggle: signs and instruments of grace from the down-trodden.**

An Introduction to Urban Rural Mission, WCC 1987

A decade with URM – a personal reflection WCC 1993

A Community of Clowns, Testimonies of people in Urban Rural Missions, compiled by Hugh Lewin.

As Coordinator of the WCC's Urban Rural Mission, Canon David was involved and influential in every chapter of this WCC (1987) publication. In his Foreword, on page 14, Lewin writes: *It began for me with Ken David, whom I've known for many years. When he left Botswana in 1983, Ken mentioned that he was going to Geneva to work with the World Council of Churches, with an "outfit" whose name I didn't catch. It wasn't until May 1984 when we met again in Harare, that I learnt a little more about this something called Urban Rural Mission. Interesting – to hear stories of mission in terms of human dignity and justice – somewhat in contrast to the days when my father was a missionary in East Africa.*



1983 to 1995: Honorary Curate, Holy Trinity Church, Geneva

It was during Canon David's employment with the WCC, that Holy Trinity had the privilege of having him serve the Anglicans of Geneva, while worshipping regularly at HTC with wife Angie and their two sons, Hugh and John.

January 1995 – June 2005: Vicar of All Saints, Hessle, York.

After his time in Geneva, Canon David returned to the UK, serving as the full-time Vicar of All Saints Hessle. He retired from active duty after 10 years at Hessle, and moved with Angie to Canterbury where he continued to officiate on a voluntary basis in local parishes as well as at the Canterbury Cathedral until about 2011.