

# **Report of Proceedings 2010**

## **General Synod November Group of Sessions**

**Volume 41 No. 3**

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## Full Synod: First Day **Tuesday 23 November 2010**

### Abbey Service

The Houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity and the Representatives of other Churches proceeded into the Collegiate Church of St Peter in Westminster (Westminster Abbey) for a service of Holy Communion at 10.30 a.m. His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams) was the Celebrant, His Grace the Lord Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu) the Gospeller, and the Secretary General (Mr William Fittall) the Epistoler. Dame Mary Tanner preached the Sermon.

### Opening Ceremony

At 12.25 pm Her Majesty The Queen, escorted by the Joint Presidents, entered the Assembly Hall and took her seat on the platform.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams):* Your Majesty, we welcome you and His Royal Highness to the inauguration of the Ninth General Synod of the Church of England.

This is the first occasion when we have no members who served on the inaugural Synod of 1970 or on its predecessor, the Church Assembly. It is entirely fitting, therefore, that continuity should be provided by the one who assumed the responsibilities of Supreme Governor during the primacy of Archbishops Fisher and Garbett, was welcomed by Archbishops Ramsey and Coggan to the newly created Synod and has accepted the invitation of each of their successors to be present at the start of a new quinquennium.

So, Ma'am, we are profoundly grateful that you have joined us both at our celebration of Holy Communion at the Abbey and in this hall, newly reordered since 2005, where, as the General Synod of the Church of England, we shall meet to deliberate, legislate and exercise our responsibility for the welfare and mission of the established Church. We thank God for the consistent example that you have set in your Christian service and for the support that you give in so many ways, not least to those of us who carry responsibilities of leadership in this Church. We value your wisdom and understanding, your care and concern, and your manifest devotion to our Church.

I hope, Ma'am, that you will excuse the introduction of a personal note if I say that I am sure I speak for everyone here in expressing our delight at the family news announced last week. (*Applause*) His Royal Highness Prince William and Miss Middleton will be very much in our thoughts and prayers in the months to come, and we know that you and the rest of the family will be supporting them with prayer and wisdom and love, as we shall be trying to do.

This is a time of both challenge and opportunity for the Church of England as our society struggles with the economic and social consequences of financial crisis. The Church's calling to be a Christian presence in every community and its determination to work selflessly for the common good are going to be tested in new ways over the

next few years. Large numbers continue to offer themselves for ordained ministry in our Church and a great host of committed laypeople work unceasingly in a variety of ways to sustain the life, worship and service of 13,000 parishes and to make the most creative use of our 16,000 church buildings, notwithstanding the increased administrative burden of an age more and more wedded to regulation. We draw strength and encouragement from our partnership of communion and witness with fellow Christians, at home and overseas, both within the Anglican Communion and with those other Churches and fellowships represented here today. Such partnership was, of course, dramatically evidenced in the recent visit to our country of His Holiness Pope Benedict, and we are still exploring the positive consequences of that visit for our witness to the gospel here. We rejoice too at our close relations and our shared service with members of many other faiths, some of whom are present with us in the gallery today. There is much we can and must do together, for the sake of sustaining a just and generous society.

In the face of much change, the unchanging truth of God's revelation in Christ remains the rock on which stands all that we seek to be and to do as the Church of England, and we wish to thank you, Your Majesty, for your steadfast support and prayers for our endeavours in this calling.

I now call the Joint Registrar of the Provinces of Canterbury and York and the Secretary General to make their Returns, after which I hope that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to address us.

*The Registrar* made his Return to the Archbishops and the *Secretary General* made his Return to Their Graces in respect of the House of Laity.

### **The Queen's Speech**

Your Graces, the Convocations of Canterbury and York, duly called together in obedience to Our Royal Writs, are on this day joined together, in accordance with the Synodical Government Measure 1969, and the House of Laity is added to them in accordance with that Measure, so as to constitute the Ninth General Synod of the Church of England.

Those who serve the Church of England in its public ministry are required to affirm their loyalty to its inheritance of faith as their inspiration and guidance under God. They also declare their commitment to bringing the grace and truth of Christ, and making him known, to those in their care.

The opening of a new Synod is a moment when we can all give thanks for the witness of those who have gone before, and pray for wisdom as you seek to balance change and continuity in the decisions that lie ahead of you.

Next year will see two important anniversaries. It will be 400 years since the publication of the Authorized Version of the Bible commissioned by King James and 200 years since the foundation of the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. Both developments have had a lasting impact on the life of the Church and nation. The Authorized Version has remained one of the defining elements of our heritage. Similarly, the Church of England's initiative in building new schools at the

beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century created a momentum which led eventually to Parliament's establishing a universal right to education.

In our more diverse and secular society, the place of religion has come to be a matter of lively discussion. It is rightly acknowledged that people of faith have no monopoly of virtue and that the well-being and prosperity of the nation depend on the contribution of individuals and groups of all faiths and of none. Yet, as the recent visit of His Holiness the Pope reminded us, Churches and the other great faith traditions retain the potential to inspire great enthusiasm, loyalty and a concern for the common good.

The new Synod will have many issues to resolve to ensure that the Church of England remains equipped for the effective pursuit of its mission and ministry. Some will, no doubt, involve difficult, even painful, choices; but Christian history suggests that times of growth and spiritual vigour have often coincided with periods of challenge and testing. What matters is holding firmly to the need to communicate the gospel with joy and conviction in our society, for at the heart of our faith stand not a preoccupation with our own welfare and comfort but the concepts of service and of sacrifice, as shown in the life and teachings of the One who made himself nothing, taking the very form of a servant.

A report to the last Synod concluded with St Paul's encouragement to the Ephesian Church to 'lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'.

Archbishops and members of the Synod, the five years ahead will not always be straightforward but I am confident that, with the encouragement of those words of St Paul and the certainty of the love of God, you will find the strength and the vision to work together to succeed. May the Lord's blessing be on you as you embark on your important deliberations. (*Applause*)

*The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu):* Your Majesty, it is my great privilege and pleasure to thank you most warmly on behalf of the whole Synod and of all our guests and visitors today for your presence with us and for your gracious words.

On behalf of all Synod members, I formally welcome our ecumenical guests and our friends in the gallery from other religious traditions who have been able to join us on this important occasion. I also want to place on record the Synod's thanks to Dame Mary Tanner, formerly our Secretary for Christian Unity and now a President of the World Council of Churches, for her sermon to us in the Abbey. (*Applause*) In a few moments you will hear echoes of what she said, and this afternoon you will hear further echoes, and I can assure you we have not stolen her sermon.

For more than one third of Synod members today this is a new experience. I can remember the first time that I arrived in this hall as a newly elected member 25 years ago, when I was Vicar of Tulse Hill, south London. It seemed a very strange place, and some of the people seemed even stranger! Coming to this place as a newly elected member of the House of Laity, House of Clergy or House of Bishops can be an unnerving experience. To the 160 or so of you who are here today for the first time I

want to say that it is not quite like this every day. I also want to encourage you to persevere while some of our procedures remain unfamiliar. Yesterday's induction day will have introduced you to some of the basics. You will soon find that, even with complex debates, Synod has a way of working that is collaborative and respectful even when there are sharp differences of view on the issues under discussion.

One of our constant challenges is to strike the right balance between attending to the internal business of the Church and considering wider issues touching on human flourishing and the well-being of our world and indeed of our nation, so it is good that this afternoon one of our first items of business will be to consider the implications of the emphasis placed by Your Majesty's new Government on what they are now calling 'the Big Society'. Your Majesty, for as long as you are with us, we are duty bound to refrain from any comment of a controversial kind, but I do not think it is controversial to record that the Church of Jesus Christ has been active in building and nurturing the big society for over 2,000 years. (*Applause*) Today churchgoers in England, overall, contribute 23.2 million hours of voluntary service each month in their local communities outside the Church. The Church of England, over which, by divine providence, you are Supreme Governor, provides activities outside church worship in the local community for 407,000 children and young people up to 16 years old and for 32,900 young people between the ages of 16 and 25. More than 116,000 volunteers and an additional 4,900 employed adults run children/young people activity groups sponsored by the Church of England outside church worship.

Church of England congregations give more than £51.7 million each year to other charities, and in this 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the publication of *Faith in the City: a call for Action by Church and Nation*, the Church of England is still present and engaged in urban priority areas, seeking to address the challenges of fabric decay, economic decline and social disintegration identified in that report.

So the vision of the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Our Lord Jesus Christ is one where there is a place for everyone, where much is expected of those to whom much has been given, where everyone is our neighbour, where it is better to give than to receive, and where people love justice, show mercy and walk humbly with their God. We are charged with a great commission – to make disciples of all nations – and a great commandment, that we should love as God has first loved us in Christ. That is the vision that we need to keep before us, not only in this afternoon's debate but in all the business we have to transact over the next five years. If we do, then it may just be possible for us to conduct the more difficult discussions that await us in the right spirit and with a proper sense of perspective. We may disagree over which issues are essential and require clarity and which are inessential and permit liberty, but we can also at least be agreed that in all things there should be Christian charity and virtue. We must learn to disagree Christianly and attentively listen.

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, we are deeply grateful to you for making this a memorable occasion for all of us, whether new members or old. Please accept our heartfelt thanks and devotion. God save the Queen!

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* On behalf of the Archbishop of York and myself, I direct the members of the General Synod to assemble this afternoon at 2.45 p.m. to begin consideration of the business before you.



*Her Majesty The Queen, accompanied by the Presidents, then withdrew.*

*(Adjournment)*

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams)* took the Chair at 2.45 p.m.

*The Chairman* led the Synod in prayer.

*The Chairman:* Before I embark on formal welcomes, I would just like to note for your prayers the serious illness of the Dean of Southwark, Colin Slee. I know that members of the diocese will be holding him very much in their prayers at the moment, and I hope we can let him know that the whole of Synod will be joining in those prayers in the coming days.

### **Introductions and Welcomes**

*The Chairman:* It is my pleasure to welcome all the newly elected members of the Synod and because I think it would take rather a long time to read out all their names I wonder if they would just stand? *(Applause)* I know you would want me to congratulate them on their election and assure them of our corporate willingness to support them and help them through the intricacies of the procedures we are about to undergo.

I would like to welcome two new diocesan bishops: the Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell) and the Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd James Langstaff). *(Applause)*

There are also four bishops attending during a vacancy in See: the Bishop of Huntingdon (Rt Revd David Thomson), the Bishop of Jarrow (Rt Revd Mark Bryant), the Bishop of Kingston (Rt Revd Richard Cheetham) and the Bishop of Ramsbury – though not for much longer (Rt Revd Stephen Conway). We are delighted to see them with us. *(Applause)* I remind you that those who are attending during a diocesan vacancy in See have speaking but not voting rights in the Synod and, as they are not members of the Synod, they do not count towards the quorum for the House of Bishops!

We have a new ecumenical representative, Revd Jan Mullin, representing the Moravian Church. *(Applause)* We greet her very warmly, along with the seven other ecumenical representatives continuing from the last Synod.

There is at the moment a vacancy in one of the three places for representatives of the Church of England Youth Council, for a very good reason, which is that Robert Hurley has been elected to Synod as a lay member for Oxford diocese. That leaves Charlotte Cook and Edward Keene continuing as representatives of the CEYC pending the appointment of a new team of representatives for February and beyond.

There are three new representatives of Deaf Anglicans Together. I would like them to stand and remain standing so that we may greet them. *(Applause)*

Among many welcome visitors we have with us the Secretary General and other senior officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, who are making a visit to us in these days. They are in the gallery; please greet them. (*Applause*)

Finally, we have a number of representatives of other faiths who are present in the gallery for part of this afternoon's session, including the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, and we are delighted to see them here also. (*Applause*)

### **Progress of Measures and Statutory Instruments**

*The Chairman:* I report that the remaining provisions of the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2010, except for section 8, came into force on 1 September 2010; subsections (1), (2) and (3) of section 11 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009 came into force on 27 September 2010; it is intended that the Crown Benefices (Parish Representatives) Measure 2010 and section 2 of the Vacancies in Suffragan Sees and Other Ecclesiastical Offices Measure 2010 should come into force on 1 January 2011; the Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2010, the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2010, the Parochial Fees Order 2010, the Church of England Pensions (Amendment) Regulations 2010, the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Directions 2010 and the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 have been laid before Parliament and will come into force on 1 January 2011; the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and draft Amending Canon No 30 have been referred to diocesan synods under Article 8 of the Constitution of the General Synod; and, the Ecclesiastical Committee having been reconstituted for the present Parliament, the Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure, the Mission and Pastoral Measure and the Care of Cathedrals Measure have been committed to the Ecclesiastical Committee.

For the convenience of members who just might not remember all the details I have just shared with you, the matters that I have reported will be set out in a notice paper.

THE CHAIR *Canon Margaret Swinson (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 2.52 p.m.

### **Presidential Address**

*The Chairman:* Under SO 111, I invite the Archbishop of Canterbury to give a presidential address.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* John Wesley began his great sermon on 'The Catholic Spirit' with a text from 2 Kings 10.15: 'He greeted him and said, "Is your heart true to mine, as my heart is to yours?" Jehonadab replied, "Yes." "If so," Jehu said, "give me your hand."' As so often with wonderful texts from Scripture, the context makes you scratch your head a little (look it up). However – as I suspect all serious readers of Scripture would agree – one of the striking things about scriptural texts is that they grow beyond their context in the light of the Spirit's work of interpretation, and Jehu's question is one that we should hear the Holy Spirit putting to us every time we meet as a Synod, because our hope must be that the loyalty of heart to heart in

Christian community will constantly enable us to join hands in the work set before us for the sake of the gospel.

That work has been explored and reflected upon a good deal in the past couple of years by an Archbishops' Task Group looking at the use of our resources and through discussion in the House of Bishops, especially in their Standing Committee. Three main themes have emerged with absolute clarity. We are called, first, to take forward the spiritual and numerical growth of the Church of England, including the growth of its capacity to serve the whole community of this country; second, to reshape or re-imagine the Church's ministry for the century coming so as to make sure that there is a growing and sustainable Christian witness in every local community; and, third, to focus our resources where there is both greatest need and greatest opportunity.

In a way, everything else I have to say will be quite insignificant compared with those agreed priorities and with the exhortation from Scripture about our hearts being true to each other. However, that does not mean you can stop listening yet. John Wesley in the same sermon is painfully realistic about the fact that we 'cannot all think alike, and in consequence ... cannot all walk alike'. The greatness of this particular sermon of his is to challenge us to recognize that what he calls the catholic spirit is neither a climate of imposed universal agreement nor a free-for-all held together by mutual tolerance ('Observe this, you who know not what spirit ye are of: who call yourselves men of a catholic spirit, only because you are of a muddy understanding'). Wesley wants us to be settled in the basics of our faith. In his phrase, he wants us to be 'fixed as the sun' in our allegiance to the creed and the doctrine of a free and God-given atonement for sin.

However, this is consistent with two things that might strike us as unexpected in their context. First, it is consistent with readiness to hear arguments against what we believe without panic; and, second, it is consistent with acknowledging that opinions vary even where doctrines are shared. How do we know that something is an opinion and not a doctrine? An opinion, for Wesley, is something 'compatible with a love to Christ and a work of grace', as he writes in a letter; something which visibly grows out of the basic commitment to a divine Saviour yet which can be denied without undermining that commitment. As he writes to a nephew who had embraced Roman Catholicism, what we need in our discussion is a fierce eagerness to clarify and explore the unfathomable wonders of what it is to be an adopted child of God through the Holy Spirit; and if we then have any energy left or nothing better to do, then, he says, we can argue about purgatory or whatever.

If we are to flesh out the vision which has been defined for us, of growth, ministerial effectiveness and the concentration of resources where there is need and opportunity, we are going to need some of Wesley's catholic spirit. How eager are we to explore what it means to believe in a divine Saviour as a priority for our work in this Synod? How far do we yield to the temptation to postpone this until we have sorted out everything else? What I have sometimes called the 'real' rather than the 'virtual' Church seems often to live at this level; and at the moment our society is calling out to the real Church with a new and real urgency. We are going to be discussing the language of the Big Society in this group of sessions, and if such language means anything, as I believe it does, it looks to an ideal that Wesley would have recognized easily: men and women determined to enhance each others' lives by building up their

freedom to shape their future and their communal life with fairness and generosity, people for whom responsibility is not a grim and repressive word but a joyful acknowledgement of what we owe to each other.

This will, of course, be in many areas a task to share with our friends of other denominations and other faiths and, as I have said, I am specially glad to be able to welcome the representatives of other communities of faith here today as guests and observers, along with our ecumenical friends. However, that should not take away from the fact that, if we are going to be both positive and critical partners in this process, we need some of that settledness that Wesley speaks of, some degree of freedom from the clash of opinion that will enable us to join hands.

It may help us too to be reminded that the Church's growth has always been in some ways haphazard and diverse. God gives increase in unexpected places and, by his grace, such growth is already going on in unexpected places in our Church, both in 'inherited' forms of Church life and in Fresh Expressions. For God's sake, do not let us waste time and energy talking or behaving as if there were competition going on here. The truth is that this diversity offers an opportunity for exactly the shared exploring of our common gift that Wesley writes about. 'In both ways, whether with false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed, and for that I am happy,' says St Paul (Philippians 1.18) – and there is another text that we might well hang on our walls for the coming quinquennium.

You see, what I should really love to see in the life of this Synod is all of us disappointing expectations. What plenty of people expect – people in the media, people in the pews and perhaps even some of us – is that a Synod elected in the middle of several tough political rows in the Church is going to be a body consistently pulled away from the hope of joined hands, let alone joined-up thinking, a body in which the catholic spirit is invisible. So I am urging you to surprise those who are looking on, to surprise them by your loyalty to each other: 'Is your heart true to mine?' That loyalty grows and flourishes when we spend time together exploring what has brought us together, which is God. It happens when we pledge ourselves to seek out those we disagree with and work till it hurts on finding ways of sharing prayer and fellowship with them in and around the life of the Synod. It may mean something as trivial as not always sitting with your friends and allies or something as long term as a prayer partnership. If our hearts are true to each other, different things become possible; and I think there is a certain urgency about getting this right at the very beginning of the life of a Synod.

Part of what that means too is (remembering Wesley yet again) the willingness to hear the arguments. I do not think I am alone in feeling some anxiety about the degree to which strongly worded exchanges outside this Synod, and the zero-sum atmosphere of campaigning and pamphleteering, can feed a climate in which people are almost expected to arrive in Synod with minds made up on everything, even with a feeling of party lines being defined and voting packages created. I do not think we are doing the job for which God has called us here if we reproduce the worst aspects of secular partisanship. It ought to be possible for us to arrive here ready to discover something rather than simply determined to win.

That requires us also to be ready to look at how we ‘do’ Synod. For all the enthusiasm of many members, there is also a widespread unease about some aspects of our practice, an unease shared by a lot of people in our Church. It has something to do with the way in which a packed legislative programme leaves us less time than we need to think together, to do theology together; and the effect of that is to reinforce the tribal tendencies which always crop up in bodies like this. When I hear people saying after a debate ‘That was Synod at its best’, it is usually after a session in which people have spoken out of their experience and expertise, when we have not felt driven towards closure on a matter we need to approach reflectively and when there has been a manifest willingness to learn on all sides. Happily there are a good many such moments, but we could do with a few more, and I hope that in this quinquennium we continue to look at ways of relaxing our rhythms a bit to allow more of this. I should add that, after a good deal of work on the patterns of meetings for the House and College of Bishops, the same questions about the frequency and character of meetings of the Archbishops’ Council are now under discussion so that we can somehow find the reflective time we need in those bodies.

All this is relevant to how we approach the most sensitive areas of our decision-making. As we proceed towards a decision about the ordination of women as bishops, it is important that, here and in the dioceses, we should not be afraid of discussions that clarify the theological issues. It will be a great pity if we come to our final decision without having confidently articulated why women bishops would be theologically in tune with our deepest commitments. As I have said more than once before, I believe that the ARCIC Agreed Statement on ordained ministry offers a clear basis for argument and a clear common ground on which we can continue discussion with our ecumenical partners, whatever the tensions. Those like me who believe women bishops to be a development both good and timely for the Church and wholly consistent with its mainstream understanding of ministry and sacraments should be ready to make the argument in the strong theological terms in which it *can* be made; and those who do not share these convictions have both the right and the responsibility to articulate the theology of the Church and its authority which makes them hesitate, because listening to these points is a necessary part of the whole body’s discernment.

It is, of course, a matter of real sorrow that some have already decided that they cannot in conscience continue this discussion within the Church of England. They remain in our prayers and we continue to give thanks for the ministry they have offered all of us. I must add that, despite continuing sensationalism about the effect of this on the main work of ecumenical relations, the next round of ARCIC has been developing constructively. I can tell you that membership has been identified on both sides and that plans are now under way for the first meeting of that new Commission. The remit of this next Commission is, appropriately, to look at exactly this question of the authority belonging to the local Church and its relation to the universal Church and to look also at the implications for corporate discernment and decision on ethical questions in particular.

The other issue, still bitterly divisive in the Communion, is that of our approach to same-sex unions. It is inevitable that, whether in open debate or in general discussion, this will be around during the lifetime of this Synod. I shall make only a brief comment here, having said a fair amount on the subject last year and in other settings.

It is this that has become a cardinal example of how we avoid theological debate. The need for some thoughtful engagement that will help us understand how people who read the same Bible and share the same baptism can come to strongly diverse conclusions is getting more urgent, because I sense that in the past few years the debate on sexuality has not really moved much. It is unthinkingly treated by some as almost the sole test of biblical fidelity or doctrinal orthodoxy; it is unthinkingly regarded by others as one of those matters on which the Church must be brought inexorably into line with what our culture can make sense of. Neither side always has the opportunity of clarifying how they see the focal theological issues, how one or other position relates to our belief in a divine Saviour; and, if we are not to be purely tribal about this, we need the chance for some sort of discussion that is not dominated by the need to make an instant decision or to react to developments and pressures elsewhere.

Let me be clear. I do not in the least mean to say that there is a lack of theological work on either side of the debate. Comments I made on this subject in communications with the Communion, where I stressed that what had to make up our minds should be theology, not social convention, have been interpreted as ignoring or dismissing the quantity and quality of existing theological work, but that is not at all my point. Of course, there is a formidable literature in this area, with much theological sophistication, but in the debates we involve ourselves in, in and out of Synod, here and elsewhere in the Communion, the prevailing tone is often a bit different. If you think that there is no respectable debate to be had, or if you think that the debate is entirely over, it is unlikely that there will be a useful exchange; but this means that our disagreement will too easily become just that familiar struggle to win leverage rather than to arrive at shared understanding.

I am told fairly often that the lack of advance in nurturing this debate properly is a serious failure in the leadership of the Church and the Communion. I am bound to accept my share of reproach, but I would want to invite you all to help me do better by working with me to create the ambience where better understanding may happen. I hope that Synod will not be averse to thinking about how we can take this forward, without the pressure of feeling we have some single and all-important decision to make. Happily we can point to the methods that are currently being developed in the 'continuing indaba' project, with its success in creating many such spaces for face-to-face discussion across cultures. This project, which is considering a wide range of actually and potentially divisive matters, has been pursued, I must say, with heroic energy and imagination by many people of profoundly diverse convictions in the Communion, and it needs our prayer and our support.

This in turn takes us to one of the more sensitive areas we have to look at: how we handle the Covenant proposals. One or two things need saying here. This is by no means the first time we have discussed the Covenant in Synod or in the Church of England. Our input as the Church of England into the process has been considerable, and it has come from theologians of widely divergent views. The Covenant text itself represents work done by theologians of similarly diverse views, including several from North America. It does not invent a new orthodoxy or a new system of doctrinal policing or a centralized authority, quite explicitly declaring that it does not seek to override any province's canonical autonomy. After such a number of discussions and

revisions, it is dispiriting to see the Covenant still being represented as a tool of exclusion and tyranny.

The truth is, however, that it does mark the seriousness of the current situation. It is an illusion to think that without some changes the Communion will carry on as usual, and a greater illusion to think that the Church of England can somehow derail the entire process. The unpalatable fact is that certain decisions in any province affect all. We may think they should not, but they simply do. If we ignore this, we ignore what is already a real danger: the piece-by-piece dissolution of the Communion and the emergence of new structures in which relation to the Church of England, and the See of Canterbury, are likely not to figure very significantly. All very well, you may say; but among the potential casualties are all those areas of interaction and exchange that are part of the lifeblood of our Church and of many often quite vulnerable Churches elsewhere. These relations are remarkably robust, given the institutional tensions at the moment, and, as I have often said, many will survive further disruption; but they will be complicated and weakened if what we face is a process of major fracture and realignment.

What the Covenant offers is the possibility of a voluntary promise to consult, and it also recognizes that, even after consultation, there may still be disagreement, conscientious disagreement, that such disagreement may result in rupture of some aspects of communion, and that this needs to be managed in a careful and orderly way. The risk and the reality of such rupture is already there, make no mistake. The question is whether we are able to make an intelligent decision about how we deal with it. To say Yes to the Covenant is not to tie our hands but it is to recognize that we have the option of tying our hands if we judge, after consultation, that the divisive effects of some step are too costly. The question is how far we feel able to go in making our decisions in such a way as to keep the trust of our fellow-Anglicans in other contexts. If we decide that this is not the kind of relationship we want with other Anglicans, well and good; but it has consequences.

Whatever happens, with or without the Covenant, the Communion will not simply stay the same. Historic allegiances cannot be taken for granted. They will survive and develop only if we can build up durable and adult bonds of fellowship. In this respect, the Church of England is bound to engage in this process as one member of the Communion among others. The fact is simply that the mutual loyalty of the Communion needs work, and the Covenant proposals are at the moment the only sign of the kind of work that has to be done.

Back to Wesley: he knew quite well that in a world of theological confusion, political manoeuvring and historical memories Christian divisions are going to happen and they are going to persist. He himself was quite clear why he thought Baptists and Calvinists seriously wrong and why he could not join them in visible unity until things had been sorted out; I am sorry to say that he thought Calvinism a grave problem in effective evangelization. What, however, he is concerned to safeguard is what he calls 'heart being true to heart'. There may be divisions, old and new, and no Christian should be complacent about that or step back from the hard work of visible reconciliation. Yet there is a kind of mutual loyalty that allows mutual respect to underpin even these separations, and that is the loyalty that comes from recognizing in the other Christ's loyalty, Christ's faithfulness, to *them*.

I want to encourage this Synod as forcefully as I can to maintain that kind, that level of loyalty to each other - the loyalty which comes from recognizing Christ's loyalty to my neighbour – loyalty to each other and loyalty to the whole Anglican family because, if the three great priorities earlier identified are the right ones, we are called on to be loyal in Christ's name to the whole society in which he has called us to serve. That is a society which, at the moment, finds trust difficult, a society in which there is a widespread sense that other people and institutions and classes cannot be relied on to be faithful to the common good. We have the extraordinary opportunity of showing what a faithful community might be, a community in which no one is forgotten: that is our version of 'Big Society' language; but we shall be set free for this if our mutual faithfulness here in this part of Christ's Body that is the General Synod becomes a daily reality. 'Let all these things stand by', says Wesley; 'we will talk of them.' However, the question which cannot wait until we have 'talked of them' remains, and I end by quoting it as Wesley does in the language of the King James Bible, and repeating it as the agenda for this Synod's life and work: 'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?'

THE CHAIR *The Archdeacon of Colchester (Ven. Annette Cooper) (Chelmsford)* took the Chair at 3.22 p.m.

### **Report by the Business Committee (GS 1803)**

*The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Trevor Willmott)*: I beg to move:

'That the Synod do take note of this Report.'

I am sure that many people in the Synod this afternoon, particularly those who are new to Synod, will be wondering, 'Is this agenda set before us typical of a General Synod group of sessions? Is it always as demanding as this? Are we always going to be faced with lots of legislative business?'

An inaugural group of sessions, as the Archbishop of York pointed out earlier today, is always atypical, not only because it is contained within two days but because this group of sessions acts as a sort of hinge between the last group of sessions of the last quinquennium and this new one. It is always demanding because there is inevitably some challenging business to deal with and, as we know, Synod is a legislating chamber, so in almost every group of sessions there will be at least some legislation, though the amount varies a lot from meeting to meeting. Perhaps I am not alone in hoping that this quinquennium may be slightly lighter in legislation than the last one.

What we do have in this group of sessions, however, are some significant items which flow from business undertaken by the Synod in the last quinquennium. In that Synod, as Archbishop Rowan has already noted, several debates took place regarding preparation of the draft Anglican Communion Covenant. Now it falls to us, this new Synod, to decide whether to initiate the process of adopting the Covenant, which was sent out to provinces last December. I say 'initiate' because, like so much other formal business, it is not something we can deal with in one go (and indeed we ought not to). Final approval will be possible only if the majority of dioceses give their consent under the Article 8 procedure, and there will also be the opportunity for the Convocations and the House of Laity to claim references under Article 7.



Three other items of business on the agenda tomorrow also have their origins in decisions taken by the last Synod. First, there are the two final instalments in a long series of legislative instruments relating to clergy terms of service. As those of us who were in the last Synod will know, we worked hard on that legislation, and tomorrow's business will clear the way for the introduction of common tenure early in 2011. Second, there is the Clergy Discipline Measure Amending Code of Practice, which reflects the process of adjusting the clergy discipline arrangements in the light of the responses to the Clergy Discipline Commission's consultation exercise. Third, there is a piece of legislation giving effect to the Ripon and Leeds Diocesan Synod Motion carried at the July group of sessions. This will enable someone with a qualifying connection with a particular parish to marry in any other parish of the same multi-parish benefice or, where benefices are held in plurality, of any such benefice, provided the bishop has made an appropriate direction.

I probably ought to say a word of reminder about the one item of legislative business which is not here but which is very much in people's thoughts and, I hope, prayers at present. Again, Archbishop Rowan has referred to this. Following the July group of sessions, the draft legislation on women in the episcopate was referred to diocesan synods under the Article 8 procedure in September. Diocesan synods have until 14 November next year to consider that legislation and make their response. If a majority of the dioceses approve the legislation, the way will be clear for Synod to move to final approval, sometime in 2012, once the final drafting stage and Article 7 procedures have been completed. The House of Bishops has also indicated that it wants to bring to the Synod a draft of the Code of Practice required under that Measure before the Measure itself is put to Synod for final approval, although, as many (I hope, all) will know, that Code itself cannot come to the Synod for final approval until and unless the Measure has secured final approval and the Royal Assent.

Synod, however, is not just a legislative body. In this group of sessions we have heard already the Archbishop's presidential address, and we shall follow this current debate with a major outward-facing debate on the topical subject of the Big Society. Here let me say that I hope this will not be the only time in this quinquennium that we address this subject, again an opportunity but one we must hold within the overall frame of our agenda. This should provide Synod with an opportunity to engage with some issues which are of very current interest and concern, not only in our Church but equally and perhaps more importantly in society as a whole. We also have a wide range of Synod Questions, dealing not only with the Church's ordering and governance but also with issues touching on the Church's engagement with wider society.

In less than three months' time there will be another group of sessions – I am sure we all cannot wait! – the business of which is likely to include a greater number of deliberative debates. There will probably be one or more Diocesan Synod Motions and perhaps a Private Members' Motion or two, though that depends on whether any of the new Private Members' Motions attract more than 100 signatures during this group of sessions.

Members will see from our report that our Committee is continuing to look at ways in which the conduct of the Synod's business can be made more efficient and effective.

We are experimenting – let me repeat the word ‘experimenting’ – with the idea of circulating more material electronically, so that for this group of sessions we have circulated the full report on the Big Society, which is the document which will be the subject of the ‘take note’ debate, electronically, while providing members with a printed copy of a shorter note on the background to that report. Let me add that this decision was guided very much by decisions taken by the Synod in the past, expressing the hope that we would be more expeditious in the way we do our business, that we would be more careful with our resources and that we would move away from having a welter of paper to deal with. As I say, however, this is a way of trialling a new approach to the circulation of more substantial documents, and we want to hear members’ views on the experiment while asking them, please, not to judge the experiment on one piece.

We are also trying out making Synod notice papers and Order Papers more clearly available in racks outside the Assembly Hall, in preference to the more cumbersome approach of putting the papers round on seats before sittings begin and then waiting for one of our staff to pick up all the rest of them at the end.

One other change at this group of sessions is that we have agreed that the media be allowed, for the first time, to film us in any voting, but let me note that they will not look exactly at that stage as to which button members have pressed or which hand they have raised (though, of course, very shortly after a group of sessions that evidence will be there for everybody to see).

The new Business Committee, yet to come into being, will, I hope, be looking at ways in which Synod’s business can be further streamlined, and it will be able to draw upon the fruits of the comprehensive survey of the members of the last Synod; but we are keen to hear of any thoughts that members of this Synod may have about potential improvements, particularly those insights which newly elected members will bring to us. Here, we would welcome feedback, comment, reflection, improvement, on the induction seminar of yesterday. Please send comments to David Williams, Clerk to the Synod, who sits with me at the table behind, and they will be communicated to the Business Committee in due course. The Committee wants to know what members find helpful and also what they find frustrating. The Committee seeks to listen and respond, and it is important that it has a two-way communication with Synod members. Lest Synod thinks that the Archbishop and I have already shared our speeches with each other – we have not – let me end by saying that we need to work together to make Synod more effective.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Mr Philip French (Rochester)*: Paragraph 35 of the report draws attention to the fact that GS 1804, the paper on the Big Society, is circulated in electronic form, with a short printed summary. I very much welcome the Synod moving to digital means but perhaps not now and not for this business. It is the first session of the new Synod; it is not the time to be scrabbling for a paper, particularly for new members. This is public-facing business of political significance. We have a careful report that bears reading in full; and, I would suggest, a rather short précis that does not, for example, contain any financial information, and does not contain much on the annex to the report, entitled *Near Neighbours*.

The Bishop referred to husbanding our resources. We do not husband our resources well if we each print the document at home; we will be less efficient in electricity, in toner cartridges – I see that Question No 4 in the name of Mr Presland refers to the cost of printer ink – and so on, if we each print the whole document. So if we move to digital delivery we have to be able to be effective in dealing with the digital medium. I suggest that that means we need both very carefully structured précis in the summary papers and to give some thought to the design of our documentation for consumption in digital form directly, so we need to think about indexing, short web links, for example, the way graphics are produced, so they could be easily used on hand-held devices in Synod if people wanted to work like that.

I am not suggesting that we give up on this; it is a welcome move; I am just surprised that we chose this report for this debate on the Big Society in which to test it; and I would ask the Business Committee, when it is elected, to look at some wider implications. Perhaps the best thing that would drive digital consumption in Synod (slightly tongue in cheek) is to find a sponsor to give us all i-pads.

*Mr John Ward (London):* I am afraid that, in my submission, the Business Committee got it wrong this time in including the first consideration of the Act of Synod on the Anglican Covenant in this group of sessions. As the Archbishop said, I do not want a debate on this subject in the context of the need to make an instant decision.

First, we do not know each other yet. The Covenant is serious business, if it is to have any effect at all, and in my view we could benefit from a meeting in July first, where we could have Bible study and discussion groups. We need to get to know one another first and to join hands before we get into the debate. Second, we need a prior policy on how we should be adopting the Anglican Covenant into the law and rules of the Church of England. How do we best make use of the Covenant to make our hearts true to one another? In my opinion, for what it is worth, the approach that is being adopted by Act of Synod is unlawful sub-delegation – perhaps I would say that; I am a lawyer – but that is something that we should be discussing; and if I am wrong about that, why are we not considering a Measure? Why is Parliament not being involved? Why is it being bypassed? Alternatively, why is a resolution of the House of Bishops not considered the appropriate method of adopting the Covenant into the rules of the Church of England? Most important, this is all about how we best achieve buy-ins. How do we best change the way we are a Church and a Communion? Is this an opportunity for settledness, or is it going to be a matter for stagnation? In my view, the Business Committee should first have tabled a number of debates of this type in order to look at these issues.

Third, we need a debate on each of the sections. A lot of us consider that sections 1-3 are ‘motherhood and apple pie’: you know, some mothers, some fathers, make apple pie slightly better than others; some add raisins, lemon zest or cinnamon; and I want a great Anglican bake-off, frankly, on this issue to see what the importance of the 39 Articles is for a layperson.

Fourth, we are potentially competing for space on diocesan synod agendas, given the matters which have been referred in relation to women bishops.

In conclusion, I feel bounced by the approach of the Business Committee. I know that is not what is intended, but it is how I feel. I think the management deserves better from us and from our agenda.

*Mr John Freeman (Chester):* I would like briefly to go back to paragraph 35. I, for some strange reason, was singled out not to receive this report on the Big Society, either electronically or in any other form. Who knows why? So we need a process in the system so that, if papers do not get where they ought to get to, you know at the centre and can do something about it. I have been told not to carry on with my Luddite behaviour: I have got through my working life and an active retirement without even a mobile phone; but I am encouraged to get out of this bad habit. I do not mind getting stuff electronically to read, but, if I do not get it, it is a bit of a problem. I would support the earlier speaker who suggested that we might all be issued with i-pads to make life easier, because one of my new colleagues says that this is the way forward, and I believe him.

*Revd Prebendary David Houlding (London):* I hope I may crave your indulgence just a little, Chair, precisely because this does not appear on our agenda. I feel that it is very significant that we should raise it and acknowledge what has been a very remarkable visit to this country in September of Pope Benedict XVI. I feel that, as a General Synod, now newly elected, we should recall our gratitude for that visit, for all that it achieved and, in particular, thank His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury for his part in making it so successful.

It seems to me that three particular things stand out: the witness to the beauty of holiness, the witness to the splendour of the truth of the Christian faith and the witness to the joy and freedom born from a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Seeing the Pope in Westminster Hall was a remarkable sight; Peter in Peter's Abbey, for those of us who were present, was an unparalleled experience. As the Archbishop himself has said in various contexts, it was as if people were given freedom to express their faith in an unparalleled way and to celebrate it publicly. The Christian gospel has been greatly served by the Holy Father's visit to our land and I hope that the Synod could ask the Archbishop to pass on its appreciation to the Vatican and that we can indeed express our grateful thanks for all that his visit has achieved.

*Ms Susan Cooper (London):* I too am speaking to something that is not on the agenda this time although it has been referred to by both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Dover. I am responding to something that the Archbishop said five years ago –

*The Chairman:* Susan, is this something that *should* be on the agenda? I think Prebendary Houlding was speaking about something that should have been included. Is this something that should be there?

*Ms Susan Cooper (London):* I think that this is something that can be shared with Synod.

*The Chairman:* Go on then!

*Ms Susan Cooper (London):* I would like to share with Synod members my experience of finding a prayer partner who feels differently from me on the matter of women bishops. Five years ago Archbishop Rowan mused about the challenges facing the Anglican Communion and the Church of England, and he also pointed us in the direction in which he is strong, that of listening to others, especially those with whom we disagree; and he has said that again this afternoon. He suggested that we find a prayer partner who thought differently from ourselves about women bishops. Being naturally obedient to my Archbishop's suggestion – most of the time – I immediately started considering who would make, for me, an appropriate prayer partner. A priest with good spiritual qualities who had impressed me when he had preached in my church a few years earlier seemed to fit the bill. I sought him out straightaway and, with only minimal hesitation, he accepted my proposition. We worked only 10 minutes' walk away from each other and, for four years, we met about twice a year. We got on very well as long as we avoided the topic in question. In the past year, the circumstances have changed, the physical distance between us has changed but I now feel more in contact than I had done previously.

What have I learnt over those five years? Our reasons for and against the matter were not the opposite of each other; we were coming at it from different angles. I was also surprised when he described to me how uncomfortable he felt when he was unable to receive sacraments from women colleagues. It was strange to me that this articulate and able man should have felt reason to feel so uncomfortable. Sadly, the time when I felt the gap between us was greatest was during a celebration of the Eucharist.

Where does it leave me? I have not changed my views but I do feel the need to talk to and get to know people who have different views from me and, wherever possible, to affirm those individuals and their ministries.

*Revd Prebendary Stephen Lynas (Bath and Wells):* I am conscious of what John Freeman said about not receiving the papers for the electronic version. I have heard that tale from another member. I know it is not strictly a Business Committee issue and may be a Synod staff issue; but perhaps that does need double-checking, unless of course, knowing Mr Freeman's propensity for closing debates in the last quinquennium, it may be they just decided to cut out the middleman and not send him the stuff!

More seriously, two very quick points for the acting chairman of the Business Committee. First of all, we welcome the sense of openness which he has given us about the agenda and feedback, and I would encourage people to do as I have done over the past quinquennium and talk to members of the Business Committee. They do actually listen, and it does make a difference. Specifically, the Bishop mentioned racks for the Order Papers. Certainly as I came into this session we were scrabbling around in cardboard boxes, which clearly will cause a queue. If racks were intended, it would be great if they were actually present, or, at the very least, something more efficient than cardboard boxes.

To go back to paragraph 35 and the business of the electronic big reports, I just wonder if we could have a bit more clarity from the acting chairman as to how the feedback is going to be taken. Is the Business Committee simply waiting for us to say 'I do' or 'I don't like printing the thing off myself'? One of the issues, it seems to me

– and I will be honest here and put my hand up in that I have not downloaded the big one nor read it – is that the Business Committee needs to know in some way what the take-up is, whether it can be done by counting hits on the website or some other way. May we have a bit more detail on how it is intended to check whether or not this new system is working? Otherwise it would be very simple just to get on with it, to the detriment of good debate.

*Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark):* I want to raise the issue represented by this proposed sale of the Zurburán paintings which I hoped we might have had some chance to talk about in the agenda. It seems to me that we have no chance to discuss this issue of the Church Commissioners' plans to sell these paintings in Auckland Castle. Abandoning the Church's responsibility for part of the national patrimony, including bishops' palaces and castles, sends out a bad message to people, as if we are closing down. High-quality replicas would not do. Is it the time to dispose of yet more family silver? Do we want to alienate Durham people? Religious art in the hands of the Church speaks in a unique way.

We have a very meaty agenda ahead of us from the word go. However, with regard to the draft Act of Synod (Articles 7 and 8 business) scheduled for tomorrow morning, I need to be persuaded that this Synod, new-born today, will somehow have reached the age of consent by tomorrow. This is our chance to debate the current wording of the Anglican Communion Covenant and I think we are going to find many questions emerging, some of which we have already heard. I suspect that a motion for adjournment may be moved after there has been a decent discussion - I hope there *is* a decent discussion – perhaps proposing resumption sometime next year. I hope that 'next business' is not carried since it would throw a spanner in the works as far as the Church of England's role is concerned in Archbishop Rowan's sterling, thankless efforts to keep a fractious Anglican Communion in some degree of unity and tolerance.

As for the issue – it is very important that it has been raised – in the report from the Business Committee of how we receive our material, we do need to consider going properly electronic. We do need somehow to find a way of making it possible for us to receive these large documents in a way which does not cost an enormous amount of postage.

*Revd Canon Simon Killwick (Manchester):* I would just like to enter the fray over the electronic reports. It seems to me that circulating a weighty report like this only electronically will produce only three possibilities. The first is that people do not actually read it, and those who do not have access to the internet cannot read it; the second is that we use up all our ink cartridges printing it out; the third is that we damage our eyesight by trying to read pages and pages of it on-screen. The first possibility, that people will not read it, is a great pity because it is a very important report, and unfortunately the paper summary is so short as to be not very helpful. On the second possibility, that of printing it out for ourselves, the point has already been made, that it will cost more than if the report is printed centrally. On the third possibility, that of people trying to read pages and pages on-screen, it will cost us our eyesight and expensive opticians' bills for new glasses.

I believe that this policy is one which inconveniences members of the Synod in carrying out our duties in reading these documents and potentially puts us out of pocket. We do not have that many perks, as members of the Synod, but one of them used to be that we got free copies of all the major reports. Even if we did not want to read every single one ourselves, we could always pass the copy on to somebody else in the diocese who would be interested in reading it. The justification given in the Business Committee's report for moving to this is that it is improving 'the form and presentation', and I cannot see how a document which is available only electronically is improved in form and presentation. The policy can mean only that reports will be read by fewer people, both within the Synod and in the wider Church, and I do not think that that is really what we want. I would like to ask that, at the very least, paper copies are made available on request to members of the Synod.

*Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield):* May I draw the attention of members of Synod to page 7 of the Business Committee's report and to the forecast of future Synod business? I want to thank the Business Committee for their work but register the concern that there is nothing in this forecast of future business about promoting evangelism or the growth of the Church. I was really heartened a few minutes ago by the Archbishop of Canterbury's stated first priority for this quinquennium, to take forward the numerical and spiritual growth of the Church of England, yet, reading this forecast of business over the next few years, you would not think this was an organization that had been in inexorable numerical decline for the past 60 years or more. Or maybe you would, because one of the features of organizations in decline is that they are in denial and refuse to address the issue. If, however, we are to be faithful to our mandate from the Lord to make new disciples, as Archbishop Sentamu reminded us earlier today, and if we are also to be faithful in playing our full part in the Big Society debate, if as Avery Dulles has put it, the Church is called to be a sign, agent and foretaste of the kingdom of God, then we need a strong and healthy Church in order to make a real impact for the kingdom of God.

Decline does not have to be inevitable. My experience over 26 years as a parish priest has been that growth can happen – the Holy Spirit is at work, drawing people to himself – but growth does need both sustained prayer and intentional action. That is where mission action planning has been a useful tool for many parishes across the country in keeping the main thing the main thing, when too often everything else squeezes in to try to take us away from our fulfilment of the Great Commission. Over one-third of dioceses have now devised some form of strategy for growth or a mission action plan. Surely the time is now right for the Archbishops' Council and the national Church to develop a national mission action plan, to take forward the numerical and spiritual growth of the Church of England.

*Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford):* – from the Olympic Diocese of Chelmsford! I have a new number too and I think it is 84. I shall remember it because in 1984 the Great Britain field hockey team won bronze and, four years later, gold. Here's to going for gold in 2012!

I want to speak not about computers or electronics but about our confidence in the Scriptures, which we voted on unanimously in the February sessions this year, and in praise of marriage, a possible omission from this agenda and a possible enrichment of it. I am grateful to Her Majesty for referring to next year as, in effect, the year of the

Bible, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Authorized Version. It was at her Coronation service that she was given a Bible – I am sure it was an Authorized Version – with the words ‘This is the most precious gift that this world affords’. I was present, not as a member, in the gallery in February this year when the motion on the Bible, wonderfully summarized as ‘confidence in the Bible’, was unanimously adopted. It was a truly unanimous vote as there was not a single vote against or even abstention. That is a rare thing, I should think, in Synod. However, on the eve of the year of the Bible, 2011, we appear to have nothing on the agenda apart from a Question. We appear to be leaving our confidence in the Bible on the eve of 2011 up to the new £2 coin or to the next new set of stamps. *Quel dommage.*

Maybe something could be done about this in February, when the year has started, which will reflect and again publicly, in the year of the Bible, articulate our confidence in the Bible. The new Bible Sunday has passed – it was on 24 October – but, if you believe in the old money, Advent II is still Bible Sunday and we can make amends outside Synod.

Marriage does appear on the agenda, but I wonder if we can enrich it when we come to the February group of sessions, which actually take place during National Marriage Week, 7–14 February. May I suggest that we try to find some way as a Synod to speak in praise of marriage on that occasion and therefore enrich our agenda to deal with more than simply qualifying connections?

*Mrs Zahida Mallard (Bradford):* On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

*This motion was put and carried.*

*The Bishop of Dover,* in reply: I thank Synod for all the comments which have been made. As I said in my own report, all that we offer together we shall work on together. Perhaps I may pick out not every speech but the themes which have emerged.

First, may I thank Philip French and those who have asked questions about the new way in which reports and papers are being sent out? It is our hope particularly to continue to work at what he described, rightly I think, as a structured précis of a report. Secondly, we will be seeking a way – perhaps, dare I say, electronically – to discover what people think about the new process. Thirdly, paper copies of the reports are available here for anybody who wishes to ask for one. That is worth bearing in mind. Perhaps I may gently tease Canon Killwick by saying, ‘There is no such thing as a free copy’, because the Church pays for all of our work together; so the local church is paying.

Turning to the Covenant questions, those who have spoken have perhaps given a foretaste of the debates and arguments we shall hear tomorrow. However, I would like to make two points. First, the House of Bishops asked that we should bring this business to this group of sessions and we deemed it appropriate to do so. Secondly, thinking back again to John Ward, one of the ways we get to know each other is by working at very particular issues together, but bearing in mind what the Archbishop



referred to, namely that how we do our business could help us to get into those deeper issues. Thirdly, as I said in my report, this is the first go at initiating that process of consultation across the whole Church. The Covenant does not change the law of the Church of England and therefore in this place a Measure is not appropriate.

I pick up one more comment about our papers and say to Stephen Lynas that it is our intention to have some racks outside. This is the first go at making agenda papers available, and there is much to be learnt from it.

Finally, turning to Mark Ireland's comments, I would hope that all of our work promoted the spiritual and numerical growth of the Church. Page 7 of the report is illustrative and not determinative of our work over the next five years. It really is up to people to make certain that the issues they want discussed emerge on the agendas. Therefore, use the Private Members' Motions; use the Diocesan Synod Motions; use our boards and councils to bring that material here.

I would make the same comment to David Banting. I hope that the Bible does inform all of our debates, particularly today and tomorrow. Again, the Archbishop has referred to that. In Synod in July it is our normal practice to have some group Bible study. Subject to what Synod may want to say, I for one hope that we may do that each July. It is a real opportunity for us to gather round the Scriptures together.

Unless the two Davids think that I cannot tell one from the other, I do hope that all of us would welcome what Prebendary Houlding said about His Holiness's visit to England. It was referred to by both the Sovereign in her speech and by Archbishop Rowan, and I hope that Synod will note very warmly all that Prebendary Houlding said about the visit; and, more than a visit, the gift that His Holiness brought to us. With those thoughts and comments, I invite Synod to take note of the report.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chairman:* I call again on the Bishop of Dover, because he has an announcement to make regarding a variation in the order of business.

### **Variation in the Order of Business**

*The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Trevor Willmott):* As I have tried to indicate, the Business Committee is there to help Synod in its work. For the first time in our sessions, however, I come to seek a variation, this time in the timing of our business.

When the Business Committee put together the agenda for these two days, our reflection on the Big Society debate was clearly governed by the fact that we hoped it would not be the first or only time that Synod would debate these issues together. Therefore, at that stage we hoped that that debate would be contained within a certain length of time. Eagle-eyed members of Synod will have seen from the papers this afternoon that there are already two following motions down for debate. If we do not limit the debate on the Big Society, we will squeeze out Question time. I would be the last person to suggest to Synod that we take that opportunity away from us. I therefore seek the permission of Synod to add a rubric to our agenda, 'That Questions begin not later than 5.45 p.m.'. It will then be up to the Chair and Synod in the debate that

follows on the Big Society item to determine when or if to move from that general debate into any debate on the following motions.

*The Chairman:* Having heard what the Bishop of Dover has said, I am minded as Chair to make that variation in business but I need to see the thinking of Synod. (*Agreed*) The variation in business is agreed and that rubric is therefore added.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Michael Perham)* took the Chair at 4.05 p.m.

### **[The Big Society: Report by the Mission and Public Affairs Council \(GS 1804\)](#)**

*The Bishop of Leicester (Rt Revd Timothy Stevens):* I beg to move:

‘That the Synod do take note of this Report.’

On Sunday afternoon, at the beginning of Inter-faith Week in Leicester, I attended an event sponsored by the local, small Jewish community for Mitzvah Day, the day on which traditionally the Jewish community do good works. They had chosen to collect toiletries for distribution to four projects supporting the victims of domestic violence. Through the good relations established over the years in the city through the work of the St Philip’s Centre, we had been able to encourage other faiths, including the Muslim community, to support this initiative. In the foyer of Asda, scarved and veiled Muslim women were standing alongside Jewish ladies and asking shoppers for practical help for the victims of violence. It might have been a vision of the Kingdom on the feast of Christ the King, and certainly was a glimpse of the Big Society. For that reason, it has been a great joy to see colleagues from other faiths in the public gallery today.

It was also good to see the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government with us earlier, since he has recently said that the time has come for communities of faith to be no longer seen as part of the problem but part of the solution for our society. If we as the Church of England are to rise to this vision, it suggests to me that there are two significant challenges facing us.

First, the challenge to explore how far the Big Society reflects a Christian understanding of being human. We share a vision of society as a rich network in which our autonomy is dependent on our relationship with God and with each other, yet we know from our own ministries that we have moved closer and closer to becoming a society of strangers. Successive recent reports have focused on the costs of the excessive individualism of our culture: the Good Childhood report examined the damaging effects on children’s well-being; the Carnegie Commission explored the atomization of civil society and what we might do to repair it; the *Faithful Cities* report described powerfully the potential of Churches to create bridging and bonding social capital; and Wilkinson and Pickett’s book *The Spirit Level* has shown the demoralizing effects, both for the rich and for the poor, of the widening inequalities in

this country. How can we as a Church do the public theology which responds to these challenges?

There is a second challenge here. We have a responsibility to stand in critical solidarity with people in power. That remains acutely important at a time of such dramatic and rapid economic and social change. In *The Tablet* last week Clifford Longley warned of the possible unintended consequences of a radical Government programme which is leaving no stone unturned, no reform uninitiated. It is, of course, too early to say what the consequences of the Government's programme will be, but not too early for us as a Church to be put on warning of our need to be watchful and attentive, especially to the unintended consequences for the most vulnerable.

It is now clear that much of the Big Society narrative suggests that there are indeed those in Government who are looking for richer ways to think about our society. The dominant feature of the political landscape is of course the financial crisis and the Chancellor's austerity response. Nevertheless, we are dealing with some serious politicians who have used the Opposition years to think creatively about what a better society might look like and for whom re-balancing the settlement between the State and the individual is a good to be pursued, whatever the economic circumstances. They are putting a good deal of their political capital on the line. We have a duty to examine their ideas and to judge what we can see of the gospel in them.

Let us consider what the Big Society is not. It is not a project or a pot of money for good causes, nor is it just an endorsement of what is already happening. Of course we are right when we say that the Church has been doing Big Society for centuries, but societies change. The question for us now, and the question which I think the Big Society seeks to respond to, is how to reverse the drift away from the neighbourliness of which I spoke.

We need to recognize that there is a great deal more to a good society than welfare delivery. The Prime Minister has spoken of three strands to this agenda: social action, public service reform and community empowerment. All of this requires the strengthening of the intermediate institutions which enrich human communities without subsuming everything into the State. The State can overreach itself when it forgets that people find identity and belonging in smaller communities, localities, workplaces, trade unions, educational establishments and churches. If people are to find their full human identity in such communities, the State must know its limits. In that sense, I suggest, the Big Society need not be about the State abandoning its responsibilities but about recognizing that good government requires that there are real limits to its remit, whether in times of austerity or of prosperity.

What then might the practical outworkings of this look like? The annexe to GS1804 outlines a proposal currently on the table at the Department of Communities and Local Government. We have not yet heard whether, following the Spending Review, the department's budget will find the money for this work; but, whether it happens or not, *Near Neighbours* is a good example of what I think the Big Society might mean for us.

Crucially, *Near Neighbours* is not about replacing State welfare. It is about recognizing the Church of England's particular potential to pursue the common good of all. In conversations with ministers, we have agreed that religious differences cannot be managed from an assumed position of neutrality. Contrary to what some claim, secularism does not equal neutrality. Back in July, Synod debated the report *Sharing the Gospel of Salvation*, which showed how owning a commitment to a specific faith is not a barrier to co-working with other faiths but, rather, a prerequisite for it.

We have seen lately how the Big Society has begun to unleash a wave of energy in the Churches for practical social action. Much of that energy is coming from the Pentecostal, Black-led and independent evangelical movements. The old anxiety that social action implies salvation by works seems to have moved towards a theology in which faithful discipleship involves practical neighbourliness to bring the Kingdom closer in the communities around us.

I therefore hope that we are on the threshold of a similar resurgence of Christian social witness and action in the Church of England and that those who read the records of our proceedings in this Synod during the next quinquennium will recognize a Church seriously concerned for the society in which it is set and not just for its own security.

I hope that debate today, as well as rehearsing what we are already doing, will provide an opportunity for many views to be expressed, including those from parishes and dioceses, to help us think through together what the Church can and might do in the future; what may be constraining us now; and how we might engage with Government to witness more effectively as the Church of England to the good of the people of England in the days ahead. It may be that we want to put more flesh on that, Mr Chairman, if you determine that there is time for Gavin Oldham's following motion in due course.

On Sunday, many of us will either have been preaching, as I was, about the feast of Christ the King or will have been hearing sermons about it. The Gospel for the day presented us with the dying criminal saying to Jesus, 'Remember me when you come into your kingdom.' That picture of a condemned man grasping at the Kingdom of Jesus Christ perhaps providing a place even for him is no bad starting point for this debate. It is for the coming of God's Kingdom on earth as in heaven that we pray each day. It must be appropriate for a new Synod to begin its work with a practical debate about what being a sign, instrument and foretaste of that Kingdom may mean for us in our day.

*Revd Dr Dagmar Winter (Newcastle):* Last week I watched a clip from *Yes, Prime Minister* in the early 1980s. The Prime Minister has to deal with a vacancy in see and is faced with a choice for bishop between an anti-establishment candidate and an agnostic candidate. Sir Humphrey's advice to the Prime Minister is very clear. 'The Queen is an inseparable part of the Church of England. God is what is called an optional extra'!

In the 1980s I also remember being in fervent discussions about a God of the gaps theology: that everyone has a God-shaped hole in them and, until it is filled, your life

is just not right. I was never very keen on that kind of theology. Granted, according to this, God was not, as for Sir Humphrey, an optional extra – but still an extra, just not a necessary one.

It is our role to do theology and better theology than the God of the gaps. While we should welcome opportunities further to support the common good, further strengthen community life, further work in partnership with others, it is important that we do not rejoice simplistically and retreat into activism, into a God-shaped or Church-shaped or charity-shaped hole. Rather – and there are many good things to say about this report and the report expresses this – let that good work stand in the wider framework of a vision for this country and this world. We therefore welcome the overseas aid that our Government is supporting but we also look, for instance, for the theological grounding of our understanding of taxation. We need that wider vision.

When we look at biblical teaching we see reflected the social teaching of antiquity, whereby charitable giving is a duty for the wealthy. The dignity of those who are poor and in need, it seems to me, is a particular theme of Jesus' teaching. Jesus' teaching therefore demonstrates a transfer of values. The values of gracious, generous giving, traditionally associated with the upper strata of society, are transferred to the people of little or no means, thus transforming them from being passive recipients to becoming active givers; lifting them up, raising them; then – always the question – engaging them, as we like to say. Again and again, Jesus asks people he encounters and who are in need, 'What do you want?' It is what we would call 'stakeholder engagement'. It is important and necessary, however, and maybe it is something we also need to support in the current climate, that we ask people 'What is it you need?' and work with them. Whatever you call it, it is about taking seriously people who are poor and in need, acknowledging their dignity as children of God, as we are.

Finally, a word from the rural officer. We quite rightly focus on the large, urban, deprived areas of our country, but I would urge us not to forget the rural areas, where so often poverty is much less visible. The most sparsely populated rural areas have a higher-than-average dependency on public sector jobs. It would be misguided to assume that we do not need to worry about those areas. The words 'access poverty' carry meaning beyond the jargon: huge distances to JobCentres and even bigger distances to appropriate courses. There are examples of people having to attend courses and the only ones that are anywhere near accessible are literacy courses, which they do not necessarily need. Even getting to such courses eats into benefit payments. Rural poverty therefore has its specific problems even if we call them 'challenges', and I would ask the Rural Affairs Group also to consider our response to this. I commend the report.

*Canon Dr Paula Gooder (Birmingham):* I am standing to express my enormous enthusiasm for being invited to talk about Big Society. Many members of Synod will know that I drone on interminably about the importance of community and why community is a thing that transforms us. As we read the biblical tradition, throughout its pages we can see how important community is.

The Government's ideas about Big Society, as Bishop Tim reminded us, are a narrative. We will all of us feel differently about the small stories that fall into the greater narrative. Some of the small stories of Big Society we will greet with

enthusiasm; others we will greet with somewhat less enthusiasm. Yet I think we are being offered an enormous opportunity here, which we need to grasp with enthusiasm and with passion. We are offered the opportunity to talk about what it means to be a society. What does it look like to be a society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? As the Archbishop of York said so well this morning, we have very long experience of being a Big Society; but, as Bishop Tim said earlier, we do need to ask that question again. What does it look like to be a society today? What does community look and feel like? How can we be confident that we are living community to the best of our capacity? It seems to me that, as Christians, we must take up the opportunity to engage in the debate about what community really is. If we do not seize this opportunity, we are passing up something that is vitally important for the whole of the society in which we live.

What kind of reflections about community might we want to offer, therefore, as we begin to reflect on the importance of Big Society? There are lots, of course, but let me restrict myself to two. The first is that anybody who has ever been in a church will tell you that community is not all that easy to do. You cannot just shove 20, 80 or 150 people together in one space and say 'Go!' because it does not work that way. We know that being community is a long journey. You work your way towards community. You cannot just begin community by saying, 'We're going to do it.'

It strikes me that the gospel tradition offers us a very important theological insight into this idea. The problem with community, the problem that dogs pretty much all communities, is that somehow we manage to make community by excluding people. What happens all the time is that we form groups by shoving other people out. It seems to me that what the gospel reminds us to do is that, whenever we begin or continue the task of community, we need to ask 'Where are the people who have gone missing from our communities? Where are the outcasts? Where are the excluded ones?' and we can be pretty confident that, where they are, there we will find Jesus.

It seems to me that one of the things we can offer in a discussion about Big Society is the importance of the recognition of the outcast and the excluded and to ask the important question in our society today, 'Who is being excluded? How are they being excluded? How do we begin to work that through?' Right at the heart of our Christian communities is this question about how we recognize who is not there.

One of the most important texts on community is I Corinthians. Over and over again, it contains the question of exclusion; most of all in I Corinthians 11, where there are reflections on the Lord's Supper and the observation that in the Lord's Supper we must constantly be asking 'Who is not here?'

The other significant question is that, as we all know to our great cost in churches, good community, the very best of community, does not save money; it is very expensive. The early Christians could tell us that. They were invited to give *everything* in order to safeguard the early Christian communities. We therefore need to be very careful when exploring the nature of community to recognize that true community cannot be a cost-cutting exercise and we need to be very cautious about how we set about these issues. However, I welcome the debate about Big Society and hope that Synod will greet it with the same enthusiasm as I do.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams):* My first point is to echo and amplify something that Paula has just said and something that the Bishop of Leicester also said in his introductory remarks. That is, in approaching issues around the Big Society we are drawing on a long tradition of Christian reflection on what a good community looks like but, not only that, a long tradition of reflection on what Christian character is like.

In the last couple of years, in the wake of the financial crisis, the question that has been raised in a very wide assortment of settings is how do we recover language about the virtues? I believe that it is a very important part of our response as a Church to the Big Society agenda to clarify and deepen our understanding of what a coherent Christian character is like; why it is that Christians live, or attempt to live or think they ought to live, according to the standards of generosity and self-forgetting that Paula has just been mentioning.

My first point, therefore, is about that need to quarry our resources for a better understanding of what a life well lived looks like, understanding that a life well lived for us is a life lived in explicit relationship to the generosity and self-giving of our Creator and Redeemer.

The second point I would like to make is about what we are practically likely to be looking for, especially in the next six to nine months. Of course, particularly in the wake of the Spending Review, what we shall be looking for is very likely a set of clarifications about how capacity is being built. As has been said, the Big Society cannot ever simply be a cost-cutting exercise. We know that cost-cutting is an essential duty laid on our Government at this point, but we also need to know with more clarity what kinds of capacity-building are likely to be going forward.

There have been some useful conversations quite recently about the proposals for a Big Society Bank, touched on in the paper before us. I believe that in the spring of next year we are very likely to see more detail about that set of proposals, which I believe could be extremely important for building confidence in the building of capacity. I believe that in that area we again have a number of things to say from our experience of micro-finance and micro-credit in Church-related organizations, which could bear significantly on how the Big Society Bank may develop.

The capacity question is larger than simply that of banking, however; it is also about capacity-building in education at every level. Although I do not wish to sound too discordant a note, I believe that some of the anxiety that is around the future of higher education in this country has something to do with the sense that there is an area where the building of capacity is urgent, and that it is rather hard to see how that will go forward as most of us would like to see it go forward, given the stringent future that there seems to be for HE administration.

My third point touches on something that has already been raised by Dagmar, namely that the principles of the Big Society as applied within our own national life are principles that apply to global realities as well. I should not like us to be focusing so much on what we can do in our own society that we forget that the same imperatives, the same challenges, apply globally. If it is right in our society that local communities should have freedom and capacity to shape the circumstances in which they live, if it

is right in our own society that citizens should be encouraged to profound generosity towards one another, what does that say about a global Big Society? It is indeed very good news that the Government has preserved its levels of aid to developing economies. I believe that we need to fill that out further by applying in the international sphere some of those principles that we are encouraged to think about here.

I welcome the document before us. I welcome very profoundly the language that is around about the Big Society. In recent weeks, I have occasionally been asked whether I am at all cynical about the Big Society in relation to its contemporaneity with the cost-cutting exercise. The answer is that I am not. What I am is not cynical but opportunistic. Whether or not the Big Society is indeed an absolutely innocent creation of pure political vision or whether it has some elements in it of expediency, never mind: it has given us an extraordinary opportunity for raising in public questions about character and virtue, questions about generosity and justice, and of course a whole set of quite uncomfortable questions addressed to ourselves about our willingness to step up to the plate and respond.

*Mr Ian Fletcher (Bradford):* I welcome what the Archbishop has just said about capacity. One of my concerns is that, while the Church is excellent at social outreach and there are some of our parishes that are really good at it, we also have a bit of a patchy record on it and some of our parishes struggle a little in this area. We perhaps do not have the consistency that a chain of stores may have. We need to address that disparity of ability and to help those parishes most in need of assistance, whether that be financial or otherwise. In that respect, I particularly welcome the *Near Neighbours* proposals as set out in the annex to GS1804 and I look for a speedy implementation of them.

In Bradford we have Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity, which do similar work to that which we have heard that St Philip's do in Leicester. We are also very grateful for the work of the Church Urban Fund. I am pleased to note their proposed involvement in the *Near Neighbours* programme, not particularly because of the finance but because of the extra input that their experience enables them to give to our parishes.

I am conscious that many people have connected, as the Archbishop has referred to, the Big Society with the spending cuts that the Government has had to introduce. I would prefer us to see those two things as distinct from one another. As a Church we have a duty to hold Government accountable and, when cuts affect the most vulnerable, we must fight to protect those who need a Government subsidy. At the same time, the Government should seek to achieve a sustainable future for everyone. Whatever happens with their Big Society initiative, therefore, we must not lose the ability to hold Government accountable. We must not compromise our position by accepting monies to do work that we do not see as an imperative, and we must not create expectations that we cannot meet. We must be aware of the danger that our reputation can be damaged by close association with a particular Government policy.

I feel that Big Society fits with our existing mission and it is a tremendous opportunity for us to do more of what we are called by Jesus to do in loving our neighbours. In places like Bradford, these proposals give a particular opportunity.



*Near Neighbours* calls for us to work more with other faiths and to empower people to achieve real and sustainable change in those communities.

I welcome this paper and look for a real partnership that can work. I believe that this needs the kind of input that a body like the Church Urban Fund can give to help us to get our act together; if not the Church Urban Fund, then the input will be required from some other body.

*Revd Amanda Ford (Leicester)*: I welcome the analysis set out in this paper, not only because it points to the opportunities and challenges of the Government's policy but also because it recognizes that, as a Church, we have learnt from our experiences over the last 20 years.

As a former Link Officer for the Church Urban Fund – so I am the next bit of the cheerleaders for CUF – and someone who has worked in deprived urban areas for all of my ministry, I want to pay tribute to the life-enhancing work done by Churches in the past, especially in partnership with both Government and the voluntary sector. I want to pay tribute to the numerous clergy who have been instrumental in bringing funding, empowerment and new life into their communities. We are fortunate to have clergy who have developed real expertise in this area. However, echoing some of what Dagmar was saying, we also know the pitfalls. We know of clergy who spend more time with other professional community workers than they do with local residents and of vibrant community centres attached to dying churches. Getting the right balance between service and Christian identity is a real challenge.

For this reason, I wholeheartedly support the emphasis in this report on the distinctiveness of the Church of England's mission to every locality and on the special charism of the Church as a builder of community. It shows a way forward that avoids the pitfalls of the past. It reminds us that it is important that we are not seduced into a false sense of our own importance or an unrealistic assessment of our own resources by the Government's desire to outsource social services.

We are being given the opportunity to do what we do best and to do it in partnership with some real experts. It is a great opportunity to build on good practice, to enhance the capacity of some of our most vulnerable churches and to put Christian love into action at local level.

As we meet today, in my own parish our partly Church Urban Fund project worker is supporting a group of isolated older people, developing their social skills and meeting with very young parents who need confidence-building so that they can connect with local organizations. He is doing this in an area which is not only deprived of work, of educational attainment and of a sense of neighbourhood identity, but also one of racial and cultural diversity.

The caveat which affects each one of us is that, wherever we live and whatever our church looks like, we must do this work with integrity and recognize the costs of this opportunity. If we are to align ourselves to this movement of community-building in neighbourhoods with diverse populations, we must take seriously the need to embody this in the Church. As Paula says, we have a biblical imperative to consider ourselves part of a single body and, in order to model this, we have to be prepared to develop a

greater understanding between the rural and the urban, between resource-rich churches and communities and resource-poor ones. If we genuinely take note of this report, it will have an impact on the mission of the Church and on the way we employ our resources; but by modelling strong communal bonds, fostered by genuine understanding and empathy in our Church life, I believe we have a real contribution to make to the Big Society.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Bishop of Knaresborough (Rt Revd James Bell): Faith in Rural Communities: Contributions of Social Capital to Community Vibrancy*, published in 2006, was based on research by Coventry University. It showed that rural churches are doing the Big Society throughout the land. Rural churches contribute a great deal to community rural life, through building bridges between different social groups and creating a place where all can meet on equal terms, as well as serving old and young in a variety of ways in the community.

The contributions of congregation members to community life are of various types. I quote: 'Daily village living; networks with other churchgoers; formal worship opportunities; community activities organized through the Church; activities organized through other village groups; and networks created through family, friendships, work and community service of one kind and another, including work with voluntary organizations and the parish council.' In many places, therefore, the rural church is already doing the Big Society and will have more to offer.

Tim Gibson pointed out, in an excellent paper at the Faith in the Future of the Countryside conference, that what the Cameron idea of the Big Society lacks is a motivating factor to move people from self-interest to caring for others. That, of course, is precisely what the Christian faith provides in the commandment and grace to love God and one's neighbour as oneself. The Big Society, Gibson argued, lacks an adequate anthropology and that is what Christian theology supplies. We discover what it is to be human in relationship to the divine and to fellow humanity – a point made by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Of course, rural churches, like others, will always have further to go in response to the radical call of the gospel, but their very location means that they are well placed to develop their contribution. The Rural Affairs Group, working with the National Rural Officer, will seek to encourage rural churches to grasp the opportunities of Big Society and to be recognized both for their contribution and their potential. The group will also bear in mind Dagmar's point about giving attention to poverty in rural communities.

*Mr Mark Russell (Archbishops' Council):* I want to begin by thanking the Mission and Public Affairs division for a very helpful paper. I did download it and I read it all. We as a Church can be thankful for the very expert staff who work for us, not just in MPA but across the NCIs. The beginning of a new quinquennium is a good chance for this Synod to say thank you to all who serve us in our National Church bodies.  
(*Applause*)

For some time many of us have felt that the Church and Christians more generally have not been taken seriously enough by successive Governments of all colours. In fact, in some cases ministers try to airbrush Church out of the public square altogether. They assume that we are, at best, bonkers or useless or, worse, that we are just bad and mad.

Just after the Good Friday Agreement – yes, I am from Northern Ireland – there was a major conference focusing on young people in Belfast. Those who know me well will not be surprised that I blagged myself a seat. I kept trying to make the point continuously that, across Northern Ireland, 20,000 volunteers were running Christian youth groups. Most provision for young people across Northern Ireland would have stopped without the Church. The then Secretary of State Dr Mo Mowlam pooh-pooed me. She said that the focus should be on the statutory State service. She went on to imply that the Christian youth service perpetuated the ancient divide between faiths in Northern Ireland. In other words, the Church was the problem. Then the guest speaker showed up – Hillary Rodham Clinton. Unbeknown to the Secretary of State or to me, the First Lady had heard my plea and, in the middle of her address, turned to the crowd and said that if it had not been for her Church youth group in America she would never have discovered the value in herself or had the confidence to go to law school. She said that the Church changed her life and she wanted the Church to do more changing lives across Northern Ireland. I wanted to yell at Mo Mowlam, ‘Put that in your pipe and smoke it’!

I welcome the Big Society initiative, as the paper suggests. I believe it offers a new narrative to engage Government in conversation about our vision as a Church for the society around us. I believe that the Prime Minister is right; I believe that he is sincere in what he is saying; but there are many others in the Government who perhaps see it as a smokescreen for swingeing Government cuts.

What we must also be careful of is that it does not become a postcode lottery; that in areas that are richer more people can volunteer than in those that are poorer – and I would say that the divide could increase. If Big Society is an initiative to encourage people to love more, care more, take more initiative, then across the country the Church is doing that. It is helping disadvantaged young people, helping the elderly, taking graffiti off walls. As CEO of Church Army, my guys are doing it and had been doing it long before the Government showed up.

The Church of England has a presence in every community in our land. We have a network of people committed to bettering the lives of others. We have a network of buildings that we need to use much better than we do. Let us therefore welcome Big Society but recognize that this is the day-to-day business of our Church, because changing the lives of people is the business of our God. We do not do it because it is the latest Government fad; we do it because it is our calling, our great commission, to bring the Kingdom in. Let us have that conversation with our Government and let us tell our story with passion and with enthusiasm.

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Richard Chartres):* In his history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, A.J.P. Taylor says that in 1914 – and I remember it well! – ‘a sensible, law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the state, beyond the post office and policeman.’ The massive expansion of State provision in

the 20<sup>th</sup> century subsequent to that happened for very good reasons. Charity provision was unevenly spread and it was gradually accepted that basic services, like health, could best be provided on a universal basis. That is a principle we ought not to forget. As we have heard, however, there is now a need to rebalance the contribution of the State and civil society. That is not simply a matter of removing regulation; it is a matter of empowering community action.

Members of Synod will be aware of the Big Society proposal to establish 5,000 community organizers to assist people to establish and run neighbourhood groups, and the Church is obviously well placed to co-operate with that programme. There is a suggestion, however, that these organizers will be part-time and responsible for fund-raising to raise at least a part of their salaries. We have had experience, as many other dioceses have, of the fruitful work of community organizers, energizing and giving confidence to volunteers and to local residents to take action and get involved in their local communities; but part of our experience is that there is a cost to volunteering and the Church's charities cannot simply expand their volunteering without also expanding the infrastructure to provide support, advice, training and, crucially, management of volunteers. In the evaluation we have done of scores of projects over the past ten years, failures in management are the most common cause of ineffectiveness.

Where State support is crucial – and I am addressing the point made by the Archbishop about capacity – it is in assistance to build infrastructure. It is precisely the area where fund-raising and giving are so problematical. As Muhammad Yunus has argued in *Building Social Business*, the key is in uniting framework with goodwill and passion, because goodwill and passion alone are not sufficient.

Declaring an interest as chairman of the Church Buildings Division and echoing something that Mark has said, my last point is on our buildings. There are 16,000 churches throughout England, constituting a countrywide network that endures in the inner cities and in the rural areas. Places of public assembly and service in some of those areas are in very short supply. There are now more parish churches than post offices, and indeed already about 20 post offices which operate from church buildings. Members of Synod can help the Church Buildings Division enormously with spreading the message that one of our great contributions to the Big Society is making sure that, more and more, our churches, in addition to their primary focus as centres of the worship of God, are community hubs, properly equipped for new work.

*Revd Mark Beach (Coventry):* I speak as the chair of the trustees of Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action, otherwise known as CAVA, which I hope you will agree is a suitably fizzy title!

CAVA is an amalgamation of the council's voluntary service across Warwickshire. Examples of our effectiveness in supporting the work of charities are that we have brought £1.5 million into the voluntary sector over the last 12 months; we have seen a 160 per cent increase in the number of people beginning work as volunteers; and we actively build community within the voluntary sector by means of forums in each of our districts.

When during the election campaign it became clear that the Big Society would feature strongly in future policy, our board discussed whether we thought that this was a threat or an opportunity. Predictably, the answer was a bit of both. Let me explain why.

First, there is the recognition that the voluntary sector in general and CVSs in particular have been about the business of the creation of the Big Society for years, along with faith communities as we have already heard. Examples of this are seen in our society in national pieces of work, many of which have become household names but which started life as small, local charities serving a particular community.

If the Big Society is about enabling local people to fulfil their aspirations, I am all for it. If what is achieved is a real shift of power away from Whitehall, which reduces red tape and allows people to get on with it, then all well and good. However, we are already seeing that that other big agenda item on the Government's books, that of reducing the deficit, is having an impact on our capacity to support the voluntary sector. Indeed, it is also attacking the grant aid to those very small local groups which are committed to the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. If I had time, I would tell Synod about cuts to a youth group called the Bradby Club in Rugby, an excellent example of youth work.

Philanthropy and charitable giving may fill this gap, but do we not as a society have a responsibility to ensure that excellent voluntary work and so many other activities have a chance of surviving and therefore receive some level of central Government support? What I fear is that, as the tide of central Government funding retreats, many in the community and voluntary sector will be left high and dry on the beach.

My own commitment to the sector comes because I believe that, as a Church, we are a voluntary sector organization and that we have a role to play in its organization and development. Many of our churches are already engaged with local communities. In Coventry diocese we speak of 'transforming communities'. Simply by encouraging our people to be good neighbours – a principle with a good pedigree, I think Synod will agree – we are building relationships that can transform our way of life.

*Mrs Anne Martin (Guildford):* I welcome this report and I appreciate the uniqueness of the parish system of the Church of England, but I would not want us just to be thinking in terms of the Church of England's responsibility in this field and the contribution we make. I would want us to think in terms of a Christian contribution, of which the Church of England is part.

I come from a large village community of 3,000 where the three Churches – the Baptists, the Church of England and the Catholics – work together within the village for the good of the community, including a Good Neighbours Scheme and a coffee bar run for young mothers. We share our resources; we share our Christianity; and I think that our credibility as Christians is improved because we work together.

*The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Nicholas Reade):* In a way, it is all win-win: a new culture of volunteerism; opening up public services to new providers like charities, social enterprises and private companies; the decentralization agenda – 'Nothing is real until it is local' and all that; the Big Society Bank, referred to by the Archbishop;

and, most important of all, community empowerment – and so it goes on. However, we are told that reducing the deficit must take absolute precedence.

Up our way, that is pretty clear, as three weeks ago we read of the scrapping of a multimillion-pound scheme to transform thousands of rundown houses in East Lancashire, the end of a 15-year plan four years before it was due to be completed, to deal with 21,000 houses rated ‘unfit’ by Government standards. The next day we read that between 6,000 and 10,000 jobs will be put at risk in the area served by Blackburn and Darwen Council, as £48 million will have to be cut from a £137 million budget.

Second, relationships between Church and State must be bilateral. If partnership is requested, it should be respected. In crude terms, that means Churches not simply being seen as casualty stations for those wounded by political and economic fallout but as reservoirs of carefully developed faith, which condition our hope and help to needy individuals and communities.

We have had the tabloid victimization stories. We have heard about the benefits scroungers. Now we need good news for the most vulnerable. We have had the excuses for the bankers’ bonus culture. Now we need initiatives to reduce widening inequalities. We have had the sharp surgery. Now we need creative compassion to balance genuine need with adequate provision, and to turn a damaged past into a hopeful future. Otherwise, the Big Society will remain just another advertising gimmick, detached from the realities of our communities and the priorities of faith, hope, and love which the Church is called upon to enact and to require of its partners in social justice.

*Mr John Freeman (Chester):* I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

*This motion was put and carried.*

*The Bishop of Leicester,* in reply: The Archbishop in his Presidential Address made reference to the way in which we, at our best, speak out of a nationwide network of those who are trying to apply their faith in practical ways to the challenges of the day, and I think we have heard a good example of the Synod doing precisely that this afternoon.

There has been a welcome expressed for the concept of the Big Society, enthusiasm for its application in localities, a recognition that this is an enormous opportunity for the Church but also, quite properly, a set of rigorous questions raised that we need to attend to. Perhaps one of the most significant questions is how we seize this opportunity while at the same time living with a dramatic deficit reduction programme, which could, as Mark Russell pointed out, have the consequence of creating a postcode lottery, depending on the capacity of local communities to respond.

I shall not comment on all the contributions but just one or two of the most critical ones. Paula Gooder reminded us about the nature of community as that which goes looking for the outcast and the excluded, and that good community which does that is an expensive commodity. We need to ensure that we argue the case for capacity-

building for the professional voluntary sector with whom we are often in partnership. I have been associated with the Children's Society for many years. There are the Citizens Advice Bureaux, Age Concern, and many other organizations. Unless these are capacitated, we will not have strong networks of volunteers giving their time freely to serve the most needy.

I was therefore pleased that the Archbishop of Canterbury said that we would be looking for clarifications about how capacity is to be built and what the effects of the Big Society Bank might be. He also reminded us that if this vision is a vision that sits naturally with the gospel, then it must have global dimensions as well as local and national ones.

Ian Fletcher warned us against raising expectations we cannot easily meet. A proper warning, but let us not set our sights low. I say that because a couple of years ago in Leicester an opportunity to do something for the whole community arrived, in the form of the local grammar school adjoining the cathedral coming on the market. We decided to pitch for that, even though it was going to cost us millions of pounds, as an example of practical Christianity serving the whole city. The generosity of donors poured in because they sensed that this was precisely what the Christian Churches should do. Let us be ambitious, therefore, but realistic.

Mandy Ford quite properly invited us to consider, out of her considerable experience of working in UPAs, the balance between service of the community and Christian identity – an absolutely critical point – and getting an understanding in rural and urban areas of what all this means for us.

The Bishop of London reminded us of the challenge of a national network of community organizers. I think that there are real questions for the Church to ask here. If the Big Society is about a transfer of power from the centre to the local, then the question of to whom these community organizers will be accountable and what it means for community organizers to be sponsored by Government will be something that we will need to keep a careful eye on in the days ahead.

There have been many other extremely valuable contributions this afternoon. I read that the head of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organizations said recently, 'The Big Society is like the Holy Trinity: if you're asking questions about what it means, you don't understand it.' We need to ask questions about what it means. We have been doing that this afternoon. I think we are beginning to understand it and I think that Synod should feel properly proud of itself in rising to the challenge put before it this afternoon.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* I beg to move:

'That this Synod, in recognition of the Coalition Government's interest in partnering with voluntary organizations in building local communities and the Church of England's successful existing partnership role in the provision of education throughout England, request the Archbishops' Council to:

- (a) acknowledge and celebrate all those within the Church who are currently involved in building better neighbourhoods, in either diocesan, deanery or parish bodies, other agencies or an individual capacity, and request their support in the development of new partnerships with Government;
- (b) establish a dialogue with the Government and other Churches to explore the potential for new partnerships in a variety of respects, affirming the work already undertaken in this respect as set out in GS 1804;
- (c) undertake a feasibility study with benefactor funding and in association with other Churches and Christian agencies prepare business templates for various options which could be used by dioceses and others who choose to make such partnerships a reality in their local area without delaying while progress with *Near Neighbours* is assessed, in view of the severe economic circumstances and the Government's need for action; and
- (d) report to General Synod as soon as such a feasibility study has been completed or during 2012, whichever is sooner.'

I was delighted to see the Big Society on our Agenda for this very short opening group of sessions, and the take note debate has been a really good introduction to this issue. But two things have concerned me: first, that the opportunity is here, now, and urgent – and needs a substantive resolution for action, and second, that if we wait to determine the progress with *Near Neighbours* – as proposed in GS 1804 – we will already be halfway through this Parliament and the main opportunity may be lost. This cannot be a sequential set of initiatives, as suggested in paragraph 66 of GS 1804 – it must be in parallel.

My approach does not advocate jumping in at the deep end. I am proposing a properly constructed feasibility study, resulting in alternative approaches which can be considered by dioceses and other parts of the Church – and other Churches. The study, which will be externally funded and not therefore a burden on the Archbishops' Council budget, will be run under the auspices of Mission and Public Affairs, whose input to my motion has been invaluable. MPA will enable a single point of co-ordination for negotiation with Government: a key part of maintaining our coherence, while appreciating that the practical implementation in local areas will depend on local preferences.

The Church has always risen to the challenge of Christ's call to love our neighbours as ourselves and, as we have heard, there are many specific initiatives all over the country which respond directly to this calling. However, the depth of the Church's involvement in community support reduced sharply just after the Second World War, when the welfare state was formed. In contrast to education, where the Church continued to play a major role, we left the welfare field as the Government's provision of social security became deeper and deeper. The 1948 Lambeth Conference resolved: 'We believe that the State is under the moral law of God, and is intended by Him to be an instrument for human welfare. We therefore welcome the



growing concern and care of the modern state for its citizens and call upon Church members to accept their own political responsibility and to co-operate with the State and its officers in their work.’

With the benefit of hindsight, we can now see that this provision of State welfare has become more and more secular; a job rather than a vocation. Now, for the first time in 60 years, there is a Government that positively wants voluntary organizations with a vocation to work in partnership with it. It wants this to be a reality at the local level, and appears to be well-tuned to the risks and challenges of such partnerships, both for the Government and the voluntary organizations themselves. A speech given by Mr Cameron in November 2005 sets out the principles behind this approach in some detail, showing how trusting people and sharing responsibility should lead to the Government recognizing when to let go, more fairness in the treatment of the voluntary sector as a partner, more trust in the judgement and discretion of the voluntary sector, and more long-term thinking.

Of course there are many who will be sceptical of their interest, particularly after the impact of the crushing benefit reductions, and the opening sections of GS 1804 are threaded through with words of caution. But whatever reservations there may be, however, our focus should be on the opportunity to carry out our Lord’s second commandment – to love our neighbours as ourselves. So our resolution should be constructive and focused on this aim.

The Church’s involvement in State education provides a strong basis from which to start. It is diocesan-based and therefore local. It is already trusted by Government, its shared responsibility having a long track record of success. Its funding arrangements are secure. It has developed alternative levels of commitment – voluntary-aided and voluntary-controlled – which can respond to local needs as appropriate. And it has staying power. The Church is one of the few voluntary organizations with a country-wide establishment, capable of responding on the scale necessary. And I am not speaking here only of the Church of England itself but of many agencies and other Churches, which together can really make a difference. The ecumenical aspect is important.

It may be that not all dioceses will wish to respond and certainly not in the same way, but the scale of the opportunity means developing a model which will allow us to speak with Government on a coherent, rather than a piecemeal, basis. Hence my substantive motion calling for action by the Archbishops’ Council.

First, it acknowledges and celebrates what is already going on. A key early part of the feasibility study will be to build a ‘best-practice’ knowledge base of what is already happening. For example, a recent report has been published called *Building Better Neighbourhoods*, describing the contribution of faith communities to life in Oxfordshire. This discovered a mass of action, including a food bank, a credit union, street pastors, initiatives to tackle loneliness and depression, and re-introducing a sense of community, responding strongly to the needs of young and old. That report speaks of the huge amount of voluntary time already devoted to action, estimating nearly 150,000 hours over and above that spent in church activities, in Oxfordshire alone. Much of this work is going on alongside agencies of the State such as the police, health service and local authorities. And we have heard from the Archbishop

of York that over 23 million hours are already going on in various forms of faith-based voluntary service across England, over and above church activity.

So we need to capture information about this, talk to Government in a co-ordinated and cohesive way about how best to multiply all this good work; then reflect it back to dioceses, deaneries, parishes, agencies and other Churches, so that people at local level can choose what they want to do. The vocation comes from those who work at local level, not from the centre – this is not a top down approach.

Just because we carry out a feasibility study it does not mean that things will automatically happen: in many cases action will depend on funding being made available. In my view, there is a role for both Government and the private sector here, and the Church should not anticipate providing *both* the goodwill and much voluntary effort *and* the burden of resourcing. Part of the role of the feasibility study will be to explore these sources of funding.

In this respect, I have been in contact with the Community Foundation Network, which has county-based activities throughout England. The Church already has close links with these – Norwich, Ely, Liverpool, Wakefield, Truro, Guildford, Oxford and Lincoln are just some of the dioceses with close links. The Community Foundations raise money from both Government and private sector businesses, many of whom would find it difficult to fund faith-based initiatives directly. The Foundations then make those funds available for a wide range of community-building projects, many of which are faith-based. The chief executive of the Community Foundation Network has already confirmed to me that he would be happy to assist the feasibility study.

Finally, what about financing the study itself? Finances are tight in the Mission and Public Affairs department, as in all parts of the Archbishops' Council, so arrangements have been made to secure external benefactor funding for the study. It will not cost the Church to do this work, and it will not delay current projects, but its results will provide a valuable springboard to build on all those initiatives across the country.

I believe that this is a major opportunity for the Church of England to show God's love and care for others, and particularly the most disadvantaged, throughout the country. Just as our contribution to State education has provided that all-important witness of faith within a secular society, I believe that we can achieve the same in the field of community-building. We have an opportunity to provide a sure foundation for many who are lost in our modern society – we should not turn away at such a critical time. I hope that Synod will therefore support the following motion standing in my name.

*Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford):* I am wearing the hat of chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council. I have listened very carefully to Gavin Oldham's speech and I have read his motion several times. I think that we should be extremely grateful to him for all the work he has already put into working up this proposition.

It seems to me, if I have correctly understood it, that it very much goes with the grain of what is said in the main paper, and which a lot of people want to explore, in the development of this opportunity that is in front of us. I have therefore looked very

carefully at the key, which is the action that the motion proposes. It is in paragraph (c), the feasibility study.

As chair of MPA Council, I am acutely aware of the point made by Gavin Oldham about the tightness of funds. As a member of the Archbishops' Council, I am even more acutely aware of adhering to budgetary discipline and that good ideas which suddenly appear, however good, need to go through those disciplines. Gavin has said several times that this feasibility study is not to be funded from MPA or Archbishops' Council or indeed Church funding but is to be funded externally. I believe that. I trust that it is true. It is certainly essential if this is to happen. On the basis of the assurances that Gavin has given, I think that we can go with this. However, I want to underline that, provided the funding for the study itself is the beginning and not the end of the matter, MPA resources and other Archbishops' Council resources will be needed to support this, as we interpret the outcome of that study and seek to do what National Church Institutions are about.

I think the underlying thought in Gavin Oldham's mind is that we should make it possible, through these templates, to enable the Church at all levels to take the opportunities that people themselves identify for exploiting the opportunities of the Big Society and the mood and the need that is available in our country at the moment. What we can do at national level, given this external funding and a certain amount of resource from within the Council, is enable the Church at local, regional, diocesan and parish level, in association with other agencies and partners, to seize the opportunity to take forward community-building, which is so much needed in our society.

On behalf of myself, as chair of MPA Council – because I have not had the chance to consult other colleagues – I think that this is something that we can support, in the terms in which Gavin has moved his motion. I therefore invite Synod to support it.

*The Bishop of Guildford (Rt Revd Christopher Hill):* I rise to speak positively to one point in Mr Oldham's address. I need to declare an interest, as a vice-patron of the Surrey Community Foundation and, previously, a trustee director of that body.

I am sure he is right that there is huge goodwill within the network of Community Foundations for this kind of exploration. At this very moment, the Bishop of Guildford's Foundation, which is a very small, pump-priming, social funding foundation supported by the Churches, is in discussion with the Surrey Community Foundation about work together. The goodwill and the expertise are there; so I would want to endorse that aspect of Gavin's proposals, and I shall be voting for it.

*Mr Brian Newey (Oxford):* I want to make a financial comment under SO 98 on behalf of the Archbishops' Council and its finance committee.

Assuming that Mr Oldham takes the lead in looking to secure benefactor funding, as he has suggested, the cost of staff time supporting the feasibility study envisaged in the following motion would be below the threshold for comment. The potential cost of any other proposals for further work that may emerge from the feasibility study, which Mr Giddings has touched on, and how they might be funded cannot be clear at this stage. Details of the likely cost of options and how they might be funded would

be put before Synod for consideration with the report envisaged in section (d) of the following motion.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark):* On a point of order, under SO 33 I would like to propose the adjournment of this debate.

*The Chairman:* You have two minutes, during which you will need to make it clear whether you are proposing an adjournment indefinitely or until a particular time, and after which, the proposer of the motion will have a chance to comment.

*Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark):* I beg to move:

‘That the debate be now adjourned and resumed at the February 2011 group of sessions.’

I am proposing an adjournment until February because I think that this is a very important matter. We do need to convert our fine words into practical action, but I wonder about making a decision this afternoon on commissioning a feasibility study when we do not have a brief for the feasibility study and undertaking an unknown amount of cost for the Archbishops’ Council. I think that it needs a bit more time and, if we come back in February, the Mission and Public Affairs Council will have worked it out. It will be a thoroughly worked-out proposal and I will look forward to supporting it then.

*Mr Gavin Oldham:* This is the beginning of a process. It is certainly not a long way down it or anything like that. However, time is of the essence at the moment. That is why I brought the substantive motion in the first place.

The opportunity is here and now, as I said earlier. I believe that if one delays it by several months, it puts back considerably the whole process of getting that feasibility study done, getting answers back and templates out to the dioceses. I would therefore resist the request for an adjournment. The cost point has very much been dealt with. There is no cost of any significance that will fall to the Archbishops’ Council budget.

*The Chairman:* I do not think that you should be talking about this now. We are on the procedural motion. You will probably have a chance to reply to the debate.

*Mr Gavin Oldham:* I would just ask that Synod oppose the call for an adjournment.

*The Chairman:* I am advised that I should perhaps call two speakers on this procedural motion.

*Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich):* I would join with Gavin in asking Synod to resist this. The eyes of Government are upon us. If we fudge this now, it will be interpreted by some as that we are not really interested or that we cannot get our act together.

We have been given a very clear steer by Mr Giddings that we can rise to this challenge. This is a golden opportunity. We should show ourselves to be mature and adult.

Earlier speakers in another debate said, ‘We can’t possibly ask this new Synod to take decisions because we don’t know each other yet.’ What they are really saying is that the new 140 members do not know what they are doing. I happen to believe, as a Synod member of 11 years, that the dioceses of the Church of England have a lot of wisdom. They know about you; that is why they sent you here. I also believe that is why the Holy Spirit has drawn you here. It is time to show that we can grow up and take big decisions. Let us press on with this and with Gavin’s motion, get this thing done and show the world and our Government that we can get our act together and that we want to be part of this.

*The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu):* I too was anxious regarding part (c) of the following motion but I have been comforted by what I have heard from the chair of the MPA and I have been comforted by Gavin.

There are not many proposals where, if there is financial backing, I feel that they will actually deliver it. He has a benefactor and does not want to mention him. At this particular point in time, all that is being asked is that the Archbishops’ Council should agree to this feasibility study, which will not cost us a dime. It is almost like the Wedding Project, where there was a benefactor who gave the money and it did not cost anything to the Council. Of course, there are other staff costs but, being me, I would say please do not adjourn; let us get on with it. I would also say to Gavin, ‘It is not only the feasibility study. When it comes back with some staff costs and member costs, tell the benefactor to be even more gracious and to meet those costs as well!’ For that reason, please go for it.

*The procedural motion was put and lost.*

*Mr Graham Smith (Gloucester):* On a point of order, Mr Chairman. Would you be prepared to accept a motion for closure on Item 10?

*The Chairman:* I am prepared to test the mind of the Synod on that. The implication of passing such a motion would be that we would hear a response to this debate and then begin another that we are almost certain not to finish, but it is entirely up to members how they wish to proceed. We will hear Tim Allen and then test the mind of the Synod on closure.

*Mr Tim Allen (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich):* As I was about to say before the procedural interruptions, I have always been distinctively hostile to the idea of following motions perhaps because I have not hitherto taken the trouble to understand their purpose, but I now see in Gavin Oldham’s following motion a powerful, worthwhile device. In the earlier ‘take note’ debate we warmly endorsed the principle of the Big Society, not surprisingly since, in effect, it is our own, and welcomed the Conservatives’ change of heart in finally giving the lie to the damaging proposition that there is no such thing as society – a proposition that was always as un-Conservative as it was un-Christian. That was a necessary first step.

Gavin now proposes consequential practical steps to carry this forward. I welcome these, in particular the words in paragraph (a) that we should ‘acknowledge and celebrate all those within the Church who are currently involved in building better neighbourhoods’. I want to emphasize that we should include not only urban areas,

where the Church Urban Fund will operate, but also rural areas. Like the Bishop of Knaresborough, I would argue that the Big Society and the Church of England's contribution to it is alive and well in many small, rural village communities. As Dagmar has already suggested, they need our support too.

In these small, rural parishes the parish priest, provided he or she is not overburdened with too many parishes in a multi-parish benefice, can still know and be known by the majority of the population. When brought up to date with a lavatory, a mini-kitchen, adequate lighting and heating and space to socialize and meet, the church building can still be central to the whole village community acting as not only a spiritual resource and base for ministry and evangelistic mission but also a community social facility. In such small rural parishes the Church is still the glue that binds society together – the Big Society indeed, if little in terms of numbers of people.

In a practical way the present Government has recognized and supported this by its recent decision to continue the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, which is such a help to small rural communities that struggle to repair and maintain their parish churches. I suggest that we should welcome this as we have welcomed the Conservatives' conversion to the Big Society concepts, which are natural territory for the Church, and support Gavin Oldham's following motion.

*Mr Graham Smith (Gloucester):* On a point of order, Mr Chairman. I beg to move:

'That the question be now put.'

*This motion was put and carried.*

*Mr Gavin Oldham,* in reply: I thank members very much for their contributions this afternoon.

I am very grateful to Philip Giddings for his support and to the Bishop of Guildford for his comments on the Community Foundation. I look forward to exploring how we can connect the Community Foundation into the process, not just at the point that the feasibility study is worked through but for the funding downstream of that when it actually comes out for local initiatives.

I would like to say a quick word about the rural side, because it has been referred to on several occasions. Having studied in depth the report *Building Better Neighbourhoods*, of which Bishop Colin of Dorchester was a very central part, which points out particularly what can be done in the rural environment, coming from a rural parish myself, I look forward to some of the options that may be available from that point of view.

I acknowledge very much the help and input from quite a number of individuals, including in particular Malcolm Brown, to whom I have spoken on and off about this initiative since May or June; Philip Giddings likewise over a long period of time; Bishop Colin of Dorchester who brought the motion to the Oxford Diocesan Synod in June; and the Archbishop of York, whose recent symposium in Bishopthorpe I very much enjoyed joining – and I can tell members that there is real intellectual power behind some of the practical issues that we are discussing today, very much led by the Archbishop of York.

Finally, I would like to mention the comment made by the Bishop of London in the 'take note' debate when he called for uniting framework with passion. That is what my following motion is all about. It is about putting in place a framework and options which can then be available to the Church at large at all levels, particularly at local levels, throughout society.

I am most grateful to everyone who has contributed to this debate and indeed to the 'take note' debate.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chairman:* Before we conclude this item of business, first, we express our thanks to Mr Scowen for his work on a following motion together with our apologies that it has not been possible to debate it.

Second, probably as an out of order remark from the Chair, next time members worry about gender balance in debate, I would ask them please to note that no women can be called if none stand to speak.

That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Canon Professor Michael Clarke (Worcester)* took the Chair at 5.40 p.m.

*The Chairman:* We come now to Questions – another new experience for new members of Synod.

## Questions

Questions asked in accordance with Standing Orders 105–109 were answered as follows, those for written answer being marked with an asterisk.

### Archbishops' Council

1. *Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

What arrangements are being made to publicize the £12m Growth Research and Development budget set aside for 2011–2013, particularly with regard to how applications or proposals for grants are to be made and who will take decisions on them?

*Mr Andreas Whittam Smith (ex officio):* The Council and the Church Commissioners have agreed the allocation of £4 million per annum during the 2011–2013 period in principle, most of which will go to support frontline mission in dioceses, cathedrals and parishes, with a small amount also set aside for research and evaluation. The two bodies, the Council and the Church Commissioners, have not yet determined in detail how the money will be distributed. They will be discussing this issue again at their

next meetings over the next two or three weeks. Once there is clarity about the way forward, there can be wider communication within the Church.

*Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield):* In the Telford Deanery we are looking for partners to help put a distinctively Christian building at the heart of the new town centre. If this money is for frontline mission, could we apply to this fund for that?

*Mr Andreas Whittam Smith:* Depending on how you phrase your application, it seems to me that it would be a perfectly viable application to make.

2. *Mr Martin Dales (York)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

The Flood and Water Management Bill became law in April 2010 and amongst other things introduced a social tariff for charitable groups suffering from massive bills for surface water drainage. Since, seven months later, there is still no guidance to go with the Act, can the Council put pressure on the Government to ensure that this is made available as soon as possible so that the benefits of the Act can be felt by those affected?

*Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford):* It is true that draft guidance was published for comment in July, but no final guidance is yet available. With the support of the Church of England, the ecumenical Churches' Legislation Advisory Service, which is chaired by the Bishop of Exeter, has commented that the draft guidance is broadly acceptable given that the enabling section was permissive rather than mandatory. However, it is imperative that the final version of the guidance ensures that those utility companies that do charge for surface water drainage – and not all do – introduce adequate concessionary schemes for churches and other community groups. Not to do so risks continuing an unacceptable status quo. Together with the Churches' Legal Advisory Service, the Church of England is committed to keeping pressure on the Government to ensure that the content of the new guidance is sufficiently forceful.

3. *Dr John Dinnen (Hereford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

In these days when parishes are finding great difficulty in paying the share, what steps are the Archbishops' Council taking to reduce central expenditure?

*Dr Philip Giddings:* The sum that the Council requests from dioceses in apportionment is just over 2 per cent of total Church expenditure. As reported in GS 1731, the Council aims that apportionment increases should be at least 0.5 per cent below the rate of inflation in 2011 and 2012 and no more than inflation in the following three years.

Compared with a 'business as usual' position, savings rising to almost £1.5 million will be needed by 2015. Most savings will come from Vote 2, for National Church responsibilities. The Council has already made some difficult decisions on what work remains most effectively to be done at national level and how it should be carried out, and there will be more difficult decisions to come.



Members may be interested that the National Stewardship and Resources Officer continues to support the roll-out of *Giving for Life* to encourage dioceses and parishes in the challenge of the gospel in the area of Christian giving.

*Dr John Dinnen:* In the recent General Synod elections parishioners from multi-parish benefices raised concerns about the Church of England being top heavy. In addition to the savings mentioned, is the Archbishops' Council encouraging the Dioceses Commission to look seriously at joining dioceses together or at least diocesan officers and secular ministers?

*Dr Philip Giddings:* As far as I am aware, the Archbishops' Council is not in a position to give advice or instruction to the Dioceses Commission, but I am sure that the Dioceses Commission and others will have heard the valid point made by the member.

*Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells):* Is the Mission and Public Affairs Council aware that when we cut at the centre sometimes those jobs are still required to be done locally and therefore the cuts that are made at the centre are not fully felt by the Church as a whole, and that we need to be very careful when we say that we are not affecting things at local level?

*Dr Philip Giddings:* I am actually replying on behalf of the Archbishops' Council, but members will be glad to know that both the MPA Council and the Archbishops' Council are fully aware of that point.

4. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Given that the increase in the cost of printer ink has recently been identified by Church House as a cause of the increase in bishops' expenditure in recent years, will the Council make an estimate of the total annual cost of printer ink incurred by England's 12,600 parochial church councils; and will it consider asking the main manufacturers of printer cartridges how the actual costs of producing a printer cartridge compare with the retail price of typically over £20?

*The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James):* Being a member of the Archbishops' Council extends one's knowledge base even on printer ink, I discover! Regrettably I have to say that the Council does not have the data to estimate the annual cost of printer ink to the Church of England, but it is likely to run into millions of pounds. Members of Synod will be pleased therefore to learn that the Council is in the process of appointing a procurement officer, with the help of funds from the Church Commissioners, whose remit will be to ensure that parishes and dioceses benefit from purchasing arrangements which take full advantage of the Church's collective purchasing power. The cost of photocopiers and printer ink will inevitably fall into the category of things to be considered.

5. *Dr Edmund Marshall (St Albans)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Can consideration be given to the case for a comprehensive review of the operation of chancel repair duty within the Church of England, with a view to removing elements of unfairness and causes of bad publicity for the Church?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* Chancel repair liability arises in a variety of ways. It is the land-based variety that has recently become contentious. In most cases the liability is well known locally and the owners of the land (often a substantial property) make contributions to the upkeep of the chancel from time to time. In theory it is possible to purchase land, including residential property, which is affected by chancel repair liability without being aware of it. However, from October 2013 it will have to be registered against the title of a property for it to be binding on a purchaser. That will mean that every purchaser will then know precisely what he or she is getting into and the so-called conveyancing trap will disappear. Once we reach that point we should be in a position to discover the extent of the land-based chancel repair liability and assess the situation in the light of it.

*Dr Edmund Marshall:* I thank the bishop for his very full reply. May I also ask that consideration be given to the possibility that when a particular piece of land giving rise to chancel repair liability has been subject to significant sub-division, that sub-division should automatically cause the liability to be extinguished?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* I am sure that consideration can be given to that, but I would not like to give an opinion on what the outcome of the consideration would be.

6. *Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

In response to a Synod Question the Bishop of Norwich stated in February 2010 that monitoring of clergy ethnic diversity should become an integral part of the annual statistics of licensed ministers and expressed the hope that the next group of annual statistics may contain this information. However the recently published *Church Statistics* did not contain any such information. When will statistical information on clergy ethnicity begin to be published on an annual basis?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* Personal information regarding ordinands and serving clergy is maintained in separate confidential systems. The 2005 clergy diversity audit established ethnicity data on the main *Crockford* record system. However the integration of ordinand information is proving technically challenging. Priority is being given to this in order to facilitate closer demographic monitoring of personal information, including ethnicity. We expect that this information will be available with the release of the 2010 clergy statistics, and I regret that my earlier statement was a little too optimistic.

*Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss:* Because statistics on clergy ethnic diversity will be used as a basis for other important work, will these statistics form an integral part of every future publication of Church statistics?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* I can certainly assure Miss Gnanadoss that that is the plan to which we have already committed ourselves. There are technical difficulties and we

need to make certain that the statistics themselves are reliable. That is one of the issues.

7. *Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

In the light of the change of Government in May of this year, have there been or will there be any discussions between the Archbishops' Council and the Prime Minister on assessing the benefits and disadvantages of the previous Government's decision no longer to use the prerogative to exercise a choice in respect of the appointment of bishops?

*The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu)*: There are no plans to review the arrangements. The changes flowing from the then Prime Minister's announcement of 3 July 2007 were at the Government's initiative but in keeping with what the Synod had sought since 1974, namely that the Church should have the decisive say in episcopal appointments. The 2007 changes were not opposed at the time by any of the other major parties. These remain Crown Appointments and the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary, Sir Paul Britton, plays an important part in the process as a non-voting member of the Crown Nominations Commission, safeguarding the interests of the Crown and ensuring that the public nature of the bishop's role is fully taken into account.

*Mr Tom Sutcliffe*: Is the Archbishops' Council aware of the widespread dissatisfaction among the clergy with the present agenda-led arrangements for senior appointments based at Lambeth Palace?

*The Archbishop of York*: I am not aware. Maybe you will tell me more afterwards.

8. *\*The Archdeacon of Walsall (Ven. Christopher Sims) (Lichfield)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

What progress has been made by the Archbishops' Council in identifying sources of funding for an online library of worship resources in the light of Synod's decision in July on Richard Moy's Private Member's Motion?

*Dr Philip Giddings* replied: Mission and Public Affairs and the Communications Office, in liaison with Fresh Expressions, continue to work on this. A carefully thought-out business plan is needed so that bids to potential funders can be matched to the increasingly specific criteria which many now apply.

We are working to match potential sources of funding to a clear and persuasive case for making funds available. We expect to report fully to Synod during 2011.

9. *\*Mr John Booth (Chichester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

In view of increased transparency in financial matters, what were the amounts of the highest and lowest total annual claims made by a member of the Archbishops' Council in respect of (a) loss of earnings and (b) expenses for the last financial year?

*Mr Andreas Whittam Smith (ex officio)* replied: As set out in note 9 to the financial statements for 2009 (GS 1794), £8,670 was paid from the Council's funds in that year to 15 members in respect of travel and other expenses associated with their attendance at Council and committee meetings and on other Council business. This figure included £864 in respect of loss of earnings. The total amounts received during the year by the 15 members ranged from £32 to £1,329.

### House of Bishops

10. *Revd Professor Richard Burridge (London University)* asked the Chairman of the House of Bishops:

Further to the unanimous decision of the previous Synod in February 2010 to 'commend the King James version and other translations of the Bible as relevant and authoritative for personal and public instruction, reiterating the importance of continuing biblical translation, scholarship and teaching' as part of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the King James version of the Bible in 2011, and calling on 'dioceses, deaneries and parishes [to] undertake local initiatives to celebrate and teach the Bible both within the Church and throughout wider society' during 2011, can the House report on any progress of this initiative?

*The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Richard Chartres)*: The Synod's resolution did not mandate the staff of Church House actually to monitor and survey local initiatives in this area, but a very wide range of events has been planned to commend the reading of the Bible and teach Bible study during 2011. Details of many of these initiatives can be found on the 2011 Trust website. I would encourage members of Synod to look at the list already published and to support any in their areas. Members of Synod are also warmly encouraged to come up with any new initiatives, particularly in parts of the country where apparently nothing is being planned, and to let the 2011 Trust know about them so that they can be given publicity. I would also like to commend the work of the Bible Society in this area, which has been very active in looking forward to the anniversary next year, as has already been mentioned several times in this Synod.

11. *Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)* asked the Chairman of the House of Bishops:

In bringing forward a debate on the Anglican Communion Covenant, can the House of Bishops inform the Synod of the process by which a decision was made to propose its adoption via an Act of Synod?

*The Bishop of Bristol (Rt Revd Michael Hill)*: GS 1716, which Synod debated in February 2009, explained that since the adoption of the Covenant would not require the legislative authority of a Measure or Canon, a resolution of the Synod would suffice. Given the significance of the decision, GS 1716 noted the expectation that the resolution would be affirmed as an Act of Synod, thereby formally signalling 'the will or opinion of the Church of England as expressed by the whole body of Synod'. This was the approach adopted with the Porvoo Agreement. When agreeing in May to recommend to the Synod the adoption of the Covenant, the House of Bishops accepted the legal advice that this was the right way to proceed.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler:* Can the House of Bishops assure the Synod of its confidence that the Act of Synod proposed before us this week does not impinge on the prerogatives of either Parliament or the Crown?

*The Bishop of Bristol:* I think I can assure the Synod of that, on the basis that my understanding is that the Covenant itself does not change the law of the Church of England. Therefore, an Act of Synod as such is an adequate instrument for us here but would not affect the role of Parliament or the Crown.

*Mr John Ward (London):* Will the House of Bishops prepare a report reflecting on how it is for us to decide as a matter of domestic policy how we should best adopt the Anglican Covenant into the Church of England so that irrespective of what is said in the Covenant, if we sought to do so by Measure we could, but that the focus should not be on form but on what we are trying to achieve by the Covenant, which is a change in how we are achieving Church?

*The Bishop of Bristol:* Obviously I cannot commit the House of Bishops to a report, but I can refer the question to the House of Bishops, many members of which are here, and I am sure that it will be given some reflection.

12. *Mrs Joanna Monckton (Lichfield)* asked the Chairman of the House of Bishops:

Will the Porvoo Churches be invited to become signatories to the Covenant along with our partner provinces in the Anglican Communion?

*The Bishop of Bristol:* As paragraph 4.1.4 of the Covenant makes clear, those who are invited to become signatories to the Covenant are in the first instance the existing Churches of the Anglican Communion. However, the following paragraph of the Covenant makes provision for the Instruments of Communion to invite other Churches to adopt the Covenant. I am not aware of any plans at present to invite the Lutheran Churches that are part of the Porvoo Agreement to adopt the Covenant, and it is not clear why they would want to do so given that the Covenant is designed for Churches in the Anglican tradition and reflects this in the affirmations and commitments that it contains.

13. *Mr Adrian Vincent (Guildford)* asked the Chairman of the House of Bishops:

Noting that the Bible records the Apostles' debates (*e.g.* Acts 15) rather than simply recording decisions taken, and that the fifth of the Seven Principles of Public Life quoted in the General Synod Code of Practice (GS Misc 955) states 'Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands', what has been identified as the wider public interest justification for the full minutes of House of Bishops' meetings remaining strictly confidential and only a summary of decisions being published?

*The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu):* The outcomes of House of Bishops' meetings are already reported to the Synod and the House frequently issues explanatory material in the form of statements/GS Misc documents, but generally the

meetings are held in private under SO 14 and can involve candid and robust discussion. In my judgement bishops need to be able to ‘speak the truth in love’ (Ephesians 4.15) in the privacy of their meetings without being inhibited by the thought that a detailed account of the exchanges is to be published.

*Mr Adrian Vincent (Guildford)* – and declaring an interest as a former minute-taker of House of Bishops’ meetings: Is it still the practice of the House of Bishops to include in their meetings a private session in which the House of Bishops’ minute-takers are not permitted to be present, which has had the unintended consequence that House of Bishops’ decisions have been taken of which there is no official record?

*The Archbishop of York:* As far as those private sessions without minute-takers are concerned, if you mean officers who work for Church House, yes that happens because sometimes the meeting may also involve discussion about those particular members of staff and it would not be appropriate for them to be present. I do not think that any unintended consequences have arisen as a result of minute-takers not being present, but I am here to discover that as a reality, because it does not ring true. Since you are never at the meetings, sir, you do not know.

*Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield):* Would the House of Bishops consider an Anglican *via media* in relation to these matters – perhaps not a publication of the full minutes for the reason given by the Archbishop, but at least a somewhat fuller interpretation of what is taking place, rather than the very brief summary of decisions that is currently available, so that people can pray for and support the House of Bishops in its work?

*The Archbishop of York:* Sir, I do not know how you pray. That summary is already long enough; it tells you what the House has talked about and lists the issues and the details. If you begin to interpret you would be going into a very difficult realm. If you really want to pray for us, pray for the gift of discernment, like Superman, that you may know what we have said.

14. *Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford)* asked the Chairman of the House of Bishops:

Given that the report of the Revision Committee for the draft legislation on women in the episcopate dated 30 April ‘strongly recommend[ed] that the House of Bishops agrees now to establish a working group to develop a fresh draft of the Code [of Practice] in the light of this report and the changes we have made to the draft legislation’, why did it take until 5 October 2010 for the membership of this working group to be announced, and when will it start to work?

*The Bishop of Manchester (Rt Revd Nigel McCulloch):* Let us start from 30 April. Then the House of Bishops endorsed the Revision Committee’s recommendation when it met in May. It also accepted that it would be neither wise nor practicable to constitute the working group until after the revision stage in July, since the shape of the legislative framework was highly relevant to the group’s work. The Standing Committee of the House appointed the group at its first meeting thereafter in September and the membership was announced as soon as all those invited to serve had agreed to do so. The group will hold its first meeting this month. I understand why Mr Lee has asked the Question, but there has been no delay.

15. *Revd Hugh Lee* asked the Chairman of the House of Bishops:

Will the working group established by the House of Bishops produce at least a preliminary fresh draft of the Code of Practice in time for the diocesan synod debates on the draft legislation on women in the episcopate and, if not, why not?

*The Bishop of Manchester:* No. The timetable set by the House of Bishops is consistent with the recommendation of the Revision Committee that the House should aim to produce a draft of the code for the General Synod to consider before it comes to the final stages of the legislation in 2012. The working group has been asked to consult the House and the Steering Committee during the course of its work and to conclude its work by next autumn so that the House of Bishops can then bring draft proposals to the Synod in February 2012. It is important for members of Synod to bear in mind that the House cannot bring a code to the Synod for approval – and at that stage it would still be amendable – until the Measure itself has received final approval and Royal Assent. It would also damage the integrity of the legislative process for additional material to be sent to the dioceses part way through the Article 8 reference. Again I understand why Mr Lee has asked the Question and I hope that he will be reassured by the answer.

*Revd Hugh Lee:* Is the bishop and his colleagues aware that some of the dioceses and their bishops are proposing to draft their diocesan schemes before their diocesan synods debate this Measure so that the members of the diocesan synod are informed of what the local diocesan scheme might be, and if that were to happen, would any guidance be issued about it? It seems to me that there could be a danger of creating a conflict between the diocesan scheme as published and the Code of Practice as not yet published.

*The Bishop of Manchester:* First of all, let me assure Mr Lee that the diocese of Manchester has no intention of going along that particular route! I am helped by the fact that he has raised this as a supplementary because it gives me an opportunity to clarify exactly what the dioceses are being asked to do.

The question before the dioceses is whether they approve the legislation in its present form, including of course the requirement for a Code of Practice in a form to be proposed by the House of Bishops and then agreed by the Synod. The truth is that the consent of the dioceses is not required for the text of any particular code at all, and it would be problematic from a legal point of view for the dioceses to be invited to give that consent to the legislation on the basis of a particular form of draft Code. In that sense, I think that it could indeed be very confusing for dioceses if lots of little codes were zooming around in various debates.

I repeat that according to the timetable indicated in my previous answer it will be at least 2013 before the Code can be agreed, and both the House and the General Synod have to be very careful about not appearing to fetter their discretion now in relation to a decision that will be taken some two or three years hence.

16. *Professor Tony Berry (Chester)* asked the Chairman of the House of Bishops:

Can consideration be given to inviting the Churches of the Anglican Communion, together with other Christian Churches across the world, to sing a carol on Christmas Day at 10 a.m. local time to create a Christmas carol wave round the globe?

*The Bishop of Wakefield (Rt Revd Stephen Platten):* To follow my colleague, my immediate answer to the Question is 'No', but I should perhaps explain why. Christmas morning is a very busy time and I do not think that clergy or parishioners would appreciate a request to do something at a particular time which might not coincide with their own service arrangements. All our churches will be singing carols at some time on Christmas morning, so on every Christmas Day there already is a Christmas carol wave round the globe. Some things need to be regulated or co-ordinated at diocesan level, or even nationally or internationally, and some are best left to local decision at parish level, and what time carols are sung on Christmas morning very definitely falls into the latter category.

*Dr Elaine Storkey (Ely):* Would the House of Bishops at least think about taking a lead on this by pre-recording a choir – admittedly as a male voice choir! – to be offered for broadcasting by the BBC on Christmas Day, thereby setting a precedent that others might want to follow?

*The Bishop of Wakefield:* If we wanted to make this a positive activity, I would definitely suggest that we do not go down that road.

### Secretary General

17. *Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford)* asked the Secretary General:

In the light of the conviction this July of a priest in St Leonards, Sussex, for conducting 360 so-called sham marriages, what steps are being taken to try to ensure that the marriage service is not abused for immigration purposes anywhere in the Church of England?

*The Secretary General (Mr William Fittall):* The introduction in 2005 of the certificate of approval requirement for all non-Church of England weddings increased pressure on the Church from those wishing to contract marriages of convenience. There has been a series of discussions with the UK Border Agency, which following those discussions has helpfully run workshops at deanery level to help clergy identify potential abuses. In doubtful cases clergy are encouraged to proceed by way of common licence rather than banns so that diocesan registries can consult the Border Agency where necessary. However, it is clear from the Chichester case and from elsewhere that the resilience of our systems and our ability to respond quickly when something goes wrong in a particular parish are being sorely tested. I expect the House of Bishops to consider shortly whether more now needs to be done.

*The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds (Rt Revd John Packer):* Will the Secretary General affirm the need for a Church committed to family life not to be driven by fear into refusing marriage to those who genuinely seek it?

*The Secretary General:* That is absolutely right. The difficulty we face is that there are quite determined attempts, as one or two cases have illustrated, by criminal gangs



to exploit what is in effect a weakness in immigration control. Although some clergy have behaved very well in that situation, a case was reported in the press earlier this month of someone being prosecuted as a result of vigilance by a member of the clergy. The fact is that the sheer determination of some groups has overwhelmed the defences in some places. Therefore, I think that further advice and guidance might be helpful, but of course, as the bishop said, that needs to respect the fact that we wish to defend the right to marry those who are entitled to marry.

*Revd Mark Beach (Coventry):* Is the Secretary General aware of the considerable additional work associated with the requirement to certify that these people genuinely want to be married, and would it be possible to levy an additional fee as a result?

*The Secretary General:* That raises a very difficult question. As it happens the whole question of fees is under review at the moment. I know that the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee considered a paper only last week, which will be considered by the Archbishops' Council next month, and indeed our legislation on ecclesiastical fees is being considered by the Ecclesiastical Committee next week. Whether we want to introduce what some would see as discriminatory charges whereby non-British citizens or those subject to immigration control would be charged a higher fee I think raises quite a difficult question, but the point has been made and members of Synod will have an opportunity to return to it if they wish when the fees proposals come back.

18. *Mr Justin Brett (Chichester)* asked the Secretary General:

The Second Church Estates Commissioner recently told Parliament that 'There is no Church of England rule that prevents a celibate person in a civil partnership from being considered for appointment as a bishop. The issue is whether someone in that position could act as a focus for unity in a diocese. That would have to be considered by those responsible for making any episcopal appointment'. In the light of that statement and the recent coming into force of the Equality Act 2010, is the Secretary General aware of any guidance from those involved in episcopal appointments processes on how to approach these matters consistently with the law?

*The Secretary General:* The Legal Office stands ready to provide legal advice to those responsible for overseeing episcopal appointments exercises. The Equality Act, like the 2003 Regulations before it, permits those making appointments for the purposes of organized religion to apply a requirement related to sexual orientation so as to avoid conflicting with the strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of the religion's followers. The Church of England's policy on same-sex relationships and civil partnerships is set out in the various well known formal statements dating back to 1987, of which the most recent is the House of Bishops' pastoral statement issued in 2005 when civil partnerships were introduced. Any requests for clarification would be for the House to consider.

*Mr Justin Brett:* Within the procedure for appointing bishops, what is the understanding of what it means to be a focus of unity in a diocese?

*The Secretary General:* That is a very good question and a phrase that I think is allowed to speak for itself. It is a canonical requirement that a bishop should be a

focus for unity. In the case of a suffragan bishop it is clearly for the judgement of the diocesan bishop advised by those who support him in that process. In the case of diocesan appointments it is for the judgement of the Crown Nominations Commission, and those making appointments have to take account of a wide range of considerations, including statements made by the House of Bishops. At the end of the day it is a judgement.

19. *Mrs Christina Rees (St Albans)* asked the Secretary General:

What process will be undertaken for the appointment, if at all, of new Provincial Episcopal Visitors?

*The Secretary General:* Section 5 of the Act of Synod says that the Archbishop of Canterbury shall from time to time take steps to secure the appointment of up to two additional suffragan bishops for his diocese to act as Provincial Episcopal Visitors. The effect of section 6 is that when any vacancy arises he is expected to consult all bishops directly concerned and PEVs in either province. If he decides to fill the vacancy, the Archbishop petitions the Crown in the same way as for any other suffragan appointment.

*Ms Susan Cooper (London):* Do the job specifications for the new PEVs include the outward-facing roles of a bishop as well as the pastoral and liturgical care of particular groups of clergy and parishes?

*The Secretary General:* I am not sure whether the job specifications have yet been drawn up; the process is still at a fairly early stage. However I am sure that the Archbishop of Canterbury will have heard the point that has been made.

*Mrs Christina Rees:* Might the Archbishop consider waiting to see what happens with the Measure on women in the episcopate before making any further appointments?

*The Secretary General:* There are two or three points to be made on that. First, the Archbishop is not accountable to the Synod in the exercise of his metropolitan jurisdiction. Second, the Act of Synod remains in force until it is rescinded by this Synod, and on any basis the Synod is unlikely to reach that stage until 2013. It is a judgement for the Archbishop of Canterbury. In his statement when he announced interim arrangements involving the Bishops of Plymouth and Horsham and Bishop Lindsay Urwin the Archbishop of Canterbury said that he was 'now setting in train the process for filling the vacant sees'. I have nothing to add to that, but I am sure that members may have an opportunity to talk privately to the Archbishop in the margins of the Synod.

### [Clerk to the Synod](#)

20. *\*Revd Prebendary David Houlding (London)* asked the Clerk to the Synod:

What were the three largest and the three smallest diocesan electorates for the 2010 general elections, and how many electors in percentage terms voted in each of those constituencies?

*The Clerk to the Synod (Revd David Williams)* replied: The requested information is as follows:

<b>Diocese</b>	<b>No of clergy electors</b>	<b>% return</b>	<b>Diocese</b>	<b>No of lay electors</b>	<b>% return</b>
London	823	56.00	Lichfield	1200	42.00
Oxford	818	44.87	Oxford	1187	45.75
Southwark	591	50.50	London	1125	50.00
Bradford	171	68.00	Europe	287	45.00
Europe	151	61.00	Bradford	276	51.00
Sodor & Man	23	53.00	Sodor & Man	75	44.00
<b>Highest % return</b>					
Ely		75.00	Chelmsford		64.13
<b>Lowest % return</b>					
Bristol		43.20	Liverpool		36.30

21. \**The Archdeacon of Lincoln (Ven. Tim Barker)* asked the Clerk to the Synod:

What is the number of electors in each of the six constituencies for university proctors in convocation, and in the recent election how many candidates were there in each of the elections and how many votes were cast in each constituency?

*The Clerk to the Synod* replied: The requested information is as follows:

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Number of Places</b>	<b>Number of candidates</b>	<b>Number of electors (figures in brackets show the total number of electors, including those who opted to vote in the diocesan proctorial election rather than the university election)</b>
Oxford University	1	2	48(51)
Cambridge University	1	1	29(32)
London University	1	1	6
Durham & Newcastle Universities	1	1	13
Southern Universities	1	0	16(17)

Northern Universities	1	0	17(18)
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The only constituency in which an election was held was Oxford. Forty-eight voting papers were issued and 21 returned.

### Board of Education

22. *Mrs Alison Ruoff (London)* asked the Chairman of the Board of Education:

Is the Board aware that more and more schools, including Church of England schools, are being forced to serve halal meat in school meals, invariably without the knowledge of the school or parents, and has anything been done to publicize this practice?

*The Bishop of Lincoln (Rt Revd John Saxbee)*: The Board is aware that in a few local authorities in London some school meals providers do not offer a mixed economy of halal and non-halal meat. The London Diocesan Board for Schools investigated the issue and advised its schools that they should not opt for halal meat but rather change to a provider offering a choice. If Mrs Ruoff or any other Synod members are aware that this is an issue in other parts of the country the Board would be happy to issue the same advice to other diocesan boards of education if it is duly informed.

*Mrs Alison Ruoff*: Could the Synod be assured that this matter of halal meat and all its ramifications for society will be properly and fully discussed, given that the widespread use of halal meat is a further imposition of Sharia law on the nation, of which 71 per cent say they believe in the Christian God?

*The Bishop of Lincoln*: The Christian-Muslim Forum has just produced a statement on the subject of halal meat in general, which is shortly to be made public. I think that would give us an opportunity to respond to a statement on that subject and to take up any kind of stance that we then feel is appropriate.

### Finance Committee

23. *Mrs Mary Judkins (Wakefield)* asked the Chairman of the Finance Committee:

What discussions are taking place to address the parlous state of finances of many parishes in this country and the knock-on effects of these for the Church of England as a whole, and what radical solutions are being considered?

*Mr Brian Newey (Oxford)*: At the beginning of 2009 the Council established a monthly parish share monitoring panel of 17 representative dioceses. The results, which are shared with dioceses, suggest that in contrast to most of the charity sector, overall parish incomes continue to grow modestly thanks to the committed and generous giving of Church members. This year, as endorsed by Synod last July, the roll-out of the *Giving for Life* programme has continued. This aims to encourage dioceses and parishes in the challenge of the gospel in the area of Christian giving. We are also looking to develop other income streams, for example from legacies and, as members heard earlier, soon plan to appoint a procurement officer with the

challenge of identifying opportunities to help parishes and dioceses save £10 million per year.

*Mrs Mary Judkins:* As the Question came from a member of our deanery synod who is taking part in the *Giving for Life* programme, in which we in the Wakefield diocese are wholeheartedly involved, and as she is also aware of the legacies plan, her question again is: what radical solutions are being considered?

*Mr Brian Newey:* Christian giving in the way envisaged by *Giving for Life* has very radical implications and is working well in some places. The other points that have been mentioned this afternoon about control of costs at the centre are of great significance in terms of budget reductions which will have a bearing on what the central Church asks the dioceses to contribute. By far the greatest proportion of expenditure of course lies in the dioceses and I believe that many of them are taking quite significant steps of their own.

*Mr Robin Stevens (Chelmsford):* Will the Chairman of the Finance Committee agree that the use of Gift Aid is important and will he share with me the concern that we did not have Gift Aid envelopes available to us in the Abbey this morning?

*Mr Brian Newey:* I certainly take that point very seriously; it is a very good point well made. It might have been quite difficult to have Gift Aid envelopes for everyone in the Abbey, but it was a loss that a number of people around me noticed. Of course, as we lose some of the Gift Aid next year, concentrating on Gift Aid as we have done is of vital importance.

### Ministry Division

24. \**Canon Rosemary Lording (Hereford)* asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

What provision is made during theological training to help develop the understanding of good financial and business practice?

*The Bishop of Norwich (Rt Revd Graham James)* replied: The key objectives of pre-ordination training include deepening the life of prayer and discipleship, theological study and practical preparation to begin public ministry under supervision. This is expressed in the learning outcomes as 'administrative responsibilities appropriate to the newly ordained and those working under supervision'. In the curacy there is a greater emphasis on the practical and organizational dimensions of ministry, which would include the oversight of financial administration. This would relate to good financial and business practice either by increasing direct experience of this part of parochial life or by learning to collaborate with others who have these skills and experience. At all stages of initial ministerial education the key characteristics being looked for in the clergy in this regard are reliability and trustworthiness.

25. \**Mr Edward Keene (Church of England Youth Council)* asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

Can figures be provided on how many SSM and NSM priests the Church has had as parish incumbents over the past 10 years?

*The Bishop of Norwich* replied: Statistics on whether an incumbent is a SSM or NSM at present are not held centrally. However individual dioceses may be able to provide this information.

26. \**The Archdeacon of Buckingham (Ven. Karen Gorham) (Oxford)* asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

How many have been selected for training as Ordained Pioneer Ministers for each year since the category was introduced?

*The Bishop of Norwich* replied: The table below shows the number of Ordained Pioneer Ministers (OPM) recommended since 2005, the year this focus of ministry became part of the national selection process.

Recommended OPM candidates							
Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Number	9	18	19	29	19	23	117

One OPM candidate has yet to attend a Bishops' Advisory Panel in 2010.

27. \**Revd Christopher Hobbs (London)* asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

From GS 1781 in the academic year 2009/10 £659,776 is the cost of university fees for colleges and courses. What are the breakdown costs for these at each of the colleges and courses individually?

*The Bishop of Norwich* replied: The breakdown of costs between the individual colleges and courses is set out in the attached two tables. The total cost for the academic year 2009/10 has been £571,959. There has thus been a saving in expenditure of £87,817 against the total anticipated in the 2011 budget booklet GS 1781. This saving has resulted from new co-funding arrangements being introduced one year later than had been expected.

<b>Colleges: University fees paid outside of block grant 2009/10</b>	
	<b>£</b>
Cranmer Hall Durham	18,599
Mirfield	20,320
Oak Hill	7,135
Queen's College Birmingham	10,114
Ridley Hall Cambridge	55,265
Ripon College Cuddesdon	70,514
St John's College Nottingham	18,575
St Stephen's House	32,766
Trinity College Bristol	46,942
Westcott House Cambridge	107,097
Wycliffe Hall Oxford*	98,372
Total	485,699
<i>*NB includes retrospective fees of £28,066 re 2009/10</i>	

<b>Regional Courses: University fees paid outside of block grants 2009/10</b>	
	<b>£</b>
Bristol OLM pathway (based at Trinity College)	4,704
East Midlands Training Course	31,748
Eastern Region Ministry Course	1,616
Lincoln School of Theology	0
Lancs and Cumbria Training Partnership	0
Lindisfarne RTP	0
St Mellitus College incorporating North Thames MTC	32,345
Oxford Ministry Course	0
Southern North West Training Partnership	0
South Central RTP	0
Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme	7,482
South East Institute for Theological Education	0
South West Ministerial Training Scheme	6,615
Queen's Foundation (Course)	0
West of England Ministerial Training Course	1,750
Yorkshire Ministry Course	0
Total	86,260

28. \*Revd Christopher Hobbs (London) asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

What are the implications for the Training for Ministry Budget of the proposed increases in university tuition fees?

*The Bishop of Norwich* replied: See answer to Question 34.

29. \*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford) asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

What is the profile of current ordinands in ministerial training in terms of their age, gender and length of training at theological college expressed in terms of numbers and percentage and banded initially by age?

*The Bishop of Norwich* replied: The requested profiles of those training at theological colleges in 2010/11 are:

Age	Male	Female	Total	Age %
20 - 29	140	23	163	29%
30 - 39	170	46	216	38%
40 - 49	64	55	119	21%
50 - 59	29	30	59	10%
60+	3	7	10	2%
Total	406 (72%)	161 (28%)	567	

Length of training	Number	%
1 year	11	1.9%
2 years	310	54.7%
3 years	221	39.0%
4 years	18	3.2%
Over 4 years	7	1.2%

30. \*Revd Prebendary David Houlding (London) asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

In the light of the Bishop of Norwich's replies to Questions at the February 2010 group of sessions relating to the compliance by one of our training institutions with the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod, is the Ministry Division satisfied that the Act of Synod is being fully observed in all our training institutions?

*The Bishop of Norwich* replied: Following the replies given to the February group of sessions the Ministry Division wrote to the training institutions to remind them of the need to comply fully with the Act of Synod. This requirement is scrutinised and commented on in every inspection carried out by the bishops' inspectors.

31. Mr Edward Keene (Church of England Youth Council) asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:



Given that the Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry include, *inter alia*, the need for informed vocation (A), a developing pattern of Bible Study (C), understanding of the Christian faith (G), understanding of God's mission (H), and a commitment to engage in theological study (I), why is there no specific focus on candidates' thorough knowledge and understanding of the Bible and their consequent ability to teach it to others in a word ministry?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* The Criteria for Selection for Ministry in the Church of England outlines the criteria that candidates have to meet 'at the point of selection'. The document *Shaping the Future* published in 2006 outlined clearly the learning outcomes for ordained ministry at various stages: at the point of selection; at the point of ordination; and on completion of initial ministerial education. The expectations regarding candidates' knowledge and understanding of the Bible and their ability to teach the Bible to others are enhanced increasingly during training.

*Mr Edward Keene:* I thank the bishop for his response. However implicit in it is the assertion that essentially candidates are not required to know much about the Bible or how to teach it at recommendation –

*The Chairman:* Mr Keene, is this a question?

*Mr Edward Keene:* It is indeed.

*The Chairman:* It sounds like a statement.

*Mr Edward Keene:* In that case, Mr Chairman, I will come straight to the question. Given that we ordain principally to a Bible teaching ministry and that the main opportunity to sift out candidates unsuitable for this gospel work is at initial selection, is it not essential to assess candidates for a tried, tested and proven ability to teach the message of the Holy Scriptures?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* Frankly, no. What you need is a passion and a love for the Scriptures. What you do not expect in a candidate at the point of selection is such a thorough knowledge and ability to teach it to others; that is actually what training is all about.

32. *The Archdeacon of Buckingham (Ven. Karen Gorham) (Oxford)* asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

Can an explanation be given of the new selection arrangements for those testing a calling as Ordained Pioneer Ministers, the additional costs involved and the reason for the change?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* From June 2011 the discernment of potential for pioneer ministry will take place separately from and prior to a Bishops' Advisory Panel. Pioneer ministry discernment will consist of three interviews with people who are experienced in this area, one of whom will always be Bishop Graham Cray, Archbishops' Missioner and leader of Fresh Expressions. Interviews can be arranged for individual candidates at any point in the calendar year. Following this, Bishop Graham will write to the candidate's sponsoring bishop indicating whether the

candidate meets the criteria for pioneer ministry. The testing of the candidate's vocation to ordained ministry will then take place subsequently at a Bishops' Advisory Panel. The additional costs will be simply the travel expenses of candidates in relation to interviews. The change ensures that interviewers in pioneer ministry discernment are people who have really good knowledge and experience of pioneer ministry themselves.

*The Archdeacon of Buckingham (Ven. Karen Gorham):* Bearing in mind the need for a change and the relatively small number being called to Ordained Pioneer Ministry, has any thought been given to reviewing this category of ministry and perhaps introducing a pioneer criterion for all nationally deployable ministers in a mixed-economy Church?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* Some consideration has been given to that. However I will take your question back to the Ministry Council so that it may be considered further.

33. *Dr Peter Capon (Manchester)* asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

What action is the Ministry Division taking to assess the impact of proposed changes in university funding on ordination training and to plan the funding of training from 2012?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* The Ministry Division has set up a working group to assess the impact of the proposed changes in university funding on ordination training and to review the Church's options for training and funding more generally. It is chaired by the Bishop of Sheffield and will report to the Ministry Council in March 2011 in time for the setting of the 2012 budget next July. The terms of reference and membership of the working group are posted on the General Synod noticeboard.

*Revd Christopher Hobbs (London):* Some theological colleges and courses – for instance Oak Hill – have their degrees validated by universities rather than the ordinands being full members of the universities and therefore the fee element is greatly reduced. Will the Ministry Division encourage more ordinands to apply for places at such colleges and courses in the coming academic year?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* The Ministry Division does not encourage ordinands to go anywhere; that is a matter for the bishops rather than the Ministry Division. Of course, candidates are free to apply to whichever colleges they wish, and I do not think we would want to direct any candidates to any particular college or course simply on financial grounds alone.

34. *Dr Peter Capon (Manchester)* asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

Has any estimate been made of the cost to the Vote 1, Training for Ministry, budget of the proposed changes to university funding?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* Following the publication of the Browne report on the funding of higher education and the first indications of the Government's proposed policies, the Ministry Division has modelled some of the possible financial

implications. At the moment we are dealing with unconfirmed scenarios, but it is very likely that they will pose significant challenges to us.

On the assumptions that candidates doing full cost awards will be charged £9,000 per annum in the future and that the Church would continue to pay the entire cost of such training, at the moment this would result in an additional cost of about £450,000 per year in the context of a Vote 1 budget which currently is set at just under £12 million.

*Dr Peter Capon:* I thank the bishop for his answer and his remarks about the challenges that we face. Given that it is likely that under present Government proposals HEFCE grant funding for courses will be substantially reduced or removed, is any consideration to be given to the resulting additional cost from that loss of funding?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* We are beginning to consider it. We have some initial indications of what it might amount to, but it has to be done in the context of the Bishop of Sheffield's working group, and by next March we should be in a better position to know where we stand.

35. *Revd Charles Read (Norwich)* asked the Chairman of the Ministry Division:

Over the next 12 months at what point will the Ministry Council and Ministry Division consult with interested parties such as DDOs and theological colleges and courses concerning the areas of policy in which they are considering making significant changes?

*The Bishop of Norwich:* There will be a series of consultations with directors of ordinands and theological college and course staff during next year. This will include a conference to be chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace next month for theological educators with members of the Ministry Council and others. There will be a meeting of the theological education forum on 12 May; the DDO consultation will take place from 3 to 6 October; and there will be a joint meeting of the Ministry Council and theological educators on 3 and 4 November following the pattern of our residential consultation 10 days ago. In addition the Bishop of Sheffield's group exploring the implication of university fee increases will invite theological educators and DDOs to give evidence over two days of hearings early in the new year.

### Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee

36. *\*Revd Canon Pete Spiers (Liverpool)* asked the Chairman of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

Given that the Government has announced its proposal that there be no default retirement age, will the Archbishops' Council be discussing the implications of this proposal for clergy on whom a retirement age of 70 is imposed?

37. *The Archdeacon of Lincoln (Ven. Tim Barker)* asked the Chairman of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

Has the Council considered the implications of the compulsory retirement of Church of England clergy on reaching the age of 70 years in the current context of the trend towards the end of a default retirement age and the rising age at which the State pension is payable?

*The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds (Rt Revd John Packer):* Despite the fact that Canon Spiers does not want an oral reply, with permission I shall answer Questions 36 and 37 together.

This is a very important issue and any changes to legislation and State pension provision are considered carefully in relation to their impact on clergy. It is likely that most clergy, along with the police and the judiciary, will be exempt from the default retirement age as the majority are office holders and in our case there is also a statutory retirement age under the Ecclesiastical Offices (Age Limit) Measure 1975. Whilst clergy are obliged to relinquish freehold offices at age 70, the possibility to minister beyond that age is provided for in the current legislation and under common tenure. Retirement at a defined age provides clergy with the opportunity to lay down the burdens of administrative responsibility and yet continue with their vocational commitment to God and the Church.

38. *Revd Alan Bashforth (Truro)* asked the Chairman of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

In GS Misc 919 regarding the review of clergy housing in retirement, paragraph 4.32 offers some qualified support to the idea of offering clergy a housing allowance rather than a tied house in particular circumstances. In the light of this, will the promised review of the clergy remuneration package give any consideration to the question of what objective criteria can be employed to calculate a fair and equitable housing allowance for the various areas of our country?

*The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds:* A group has been set up under the chairmanship of Ian Jagger, the Archdeacon of Durham, to review the clergy remuneration package. It will consider the various components of the present package and identify options for change. Housing provision forms a significant component in the current remuneration package and will therefore be explored as part of the review group's work. Should the group identify a viable change in housing provision, the question of objective criteria for any allowance may require further specialist work.

The Central Stipends Authority currently provides guidance to dioceses on matters which they can take into account when calculating housing allowances. That guidance is available on the noticeboard but is always subject to each diocese's own policy decisions.

**CENTRAL STIPENDS AUTHORITY  
GUIDELINES FOR THE PAYMENT OF HOUSING ALLOWANCES TO  
STIPENDIARY CLERGY AND ASSISTANT STAFF**

**Introduction**

**1** The CSA does not recommend a figure to be paid as housing allowance. These guidelines are designed to help dioceses calculate their own allowances with reference to various costs, in accordance with individual circumstances as they see fit.

**General**

**2.1** The stipend levels recommended by the CSA for incumbents and assistant staff assume that accommodation will be provided free of rent, water rates, repairs, (building) insurance and the Council Tax.

**2.2** If incumbents and assistant staff occupy their own house with the permission of the bishop and in a location convenient for their work (thereby saving the diocese and/or parish the cost of providing official accommodation), a housing allowance may be paid.

**2.3** If a person chooses (and is allowed by the bishop) to live in his/her own house when 'official' accommodation is available, a housing allowance need not necessarily be paid. (Payment of the Council Tax will, however, be made by the DBF so long as the dwelling is the residence from which he/she performs the duty of his/her office. These payments are the liability of the DBF, even if it has been agreed that someone else should actually make them. These payments will not be construed as a taxable benefit-in-kind. See the Commissioners' Note of Guidance on the Council Tax (dated March 1993) which gives further information on this).

**2.4** In exceptional cases, where clergy cannot be held to perform the duties of their office from their place of residence the owner will be liable. If the resident member of the clergy is the owner, the diocese may wish to include the amount of Council Tax payable by him/her in the housing allowance.

**2.5** The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 provides that people must not be discriminated against in employment terms on grounds of their gender or marital status.

**2.6** Any housing allowance which is paid (including those amounts paid to the clergy to cover the Council Tax - see para 2.4 above) should be grossed up to take account of the fact that it forms part of the recipient's taxable emoluments and should not be regarded as a reimbursement of 'expenses'. This will however increase the recipient's National Insurance contributions and an element for this should also be included in the calculation of the allowance.

## Method of Payment

3

Housing allowances are payable from the Diocesan Stipends Fund and should therefore be paid as part of the recipient's normal stipend. They should however be separately directed under Fund Code 105 - DSF Housing Allowance.

## Rented Accommodation

4.1

Where accommodation occupied by clergy, deaconesses or licensed lay workers is rented, the actual costs of rent, water rates, repairs and the Council Tax should be met by the diocese or the parish as appropriate. If, as is normally preferable, the diocese or parish is able to hold a lease of the property in its own name, then tax relief on heating, lighting cleaning and garden upkeep expenditure should be available to clergy.

4.2

Similar relief for deaconesses or licensed lay workers would depend upon them holding a qualifying appointment which fulfilled all the conditions outlined below, but where this is not possible an allowance to take account of the loss of this relief should be paid.

4.3

In order to qualify for relief the following conditions must apply:

- a. the post should be equivalent to that of a curate and
- b. the appointment should be to a particular parish and
- c. the individual's responsibility should be within the parish &
- d. the provided accommodation should be situated in the parish

## Personally owned accommodation

5

The following elements should be taken into account in calculating an allowance:-

- (1) Water Rates
- (2) Repairs and external decorations
- (3) Insurance

These could be the occupant's actual costs or a diocese's average figures for a comparable property.

- (4) Loss of interest on capital

This could be based on a notional rent e.g. 5% of the average value for a comparable property as shown in a building society's index of house prices. However in relation to (1), (2), (3) and (4), if the minister chooses to live in accommodation which is larger (and more expensive) than the diocese would normally provide for the post which the minister occupies in the parish (or in the diocese e.g. as a specialist), calculation should be based on the type of accommodation normally provided for the post.

- (5) Loss of tax relief on heating, lighting and cleaning expenditure.

(6) Council Tax. In the exceptional circumstances covered under paragraph 2.4 above, this should be the exact amount payable by the individual plus spouse (where applicable). If paid as part of stipend this sum should be grossed up for tax and National Insurance.

**NOTE:** For deaconesses or licensed lay workers the conditions outlined in paragraph 4.2 would need to be fulfilled.

Church House

London SW1P 3AZ

June 1993 as revised at June 1999, August 2005, and September 2009

*Revd Alan Bashforth (Truro):* I am grateful for the bishop's reply and very glad to hear that the work of the review group has begun. However as some recent research revealed that dioceses pay between £6,000 and £15,000 in housing allowances, does that suggest that that specialist work ought actually to begin?

*The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds:* One of the issues here is that dioceses are operating within very different contexts and housing allowances are provided in a variety of different circumstances. One of the difficulties is that there are differences not only between but within dioceses in relation to what is an appropriate amount to pay as a housing allowance, depending on where the incumbent has to live. It is a complicated issue, but we will await the Jagger report and then move on that.

### Mission and Public Affairs Council

39. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chairman of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

What assessment has the Council made of the estimate that there are 13,700 faith groups in the UK, as published by the National Council for Voluntary Organizations in the *UK Civil Society Almanac 2010*, given that *Church Statistics 2008/9* indicates that there are over 12,600 Church of England parishes in England alone and that the Joint Committee on the draft Charities Bill estimated in 2000 that even the number of Christian places of worship in England and Wales that were then excepted from registration with the Charity Commission was as many as 46,000?

*Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford):* Whilst the definition of faith groups used by the NCVO is not clear, the figure cited is certainly an underestimation. The Church of England in its local presence, including parish churches, schools, chaplaincies and charitable trusts, constitutes the single most extensive network in our society. When the extensive contribution of other Christian Churches is included, the very substantial scale of the Christian contribution to the spiritual and material health and well-being of this country is evident.

40. *Mr Colin Slater (Southwell and Nottingham)* asked the Chairman of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

In view of previous indications by this Synod of its support for the principles of restorative justice, what steps does the Mission and Public Affairs Division propose to

take to encourage into effect one of the priorities of the Ministry of Justice (as stated in its Business Plan 2011–2015) to consider ‘the use of restorative justice for adult and youth crimes’ as part of its reform of sentencing and penalties?

*Dr Philip Giddings:* In three ways. First, in our response to the Green Paper on sentencing and rehabilitation due to be published in December we will certainly support the use of restorative justice. Second, we will also encourage it through our participation in the all-party parliamentary group on penal affairs’ session on 7 December and in the Churches’ Criminal Justice Forum. Third, we will continue to liaise with the Bishop to Her Majesty’s Prisons and the Prison Service chaplaincy in their championing of restorative justice and with other relevant organizations such as the newly formed Restorative Justice Council.

41. *Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich)* asked the Chairman of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Each year the United Nations calls on the world to work and pray for the eradication of HIV/AIDS on 1 December, World AIDS Day. In the Church of England:

- (a) how many dioceses organize a specific time of prayer on World AIDS Day;
- (b) how many of these events are ecumenical in nature; and
- (c) how many of these events are welcoming to people of faiths other than Christianity?

*Dr Philip Giddings:* The MPA Division and Council do not collate information about services of worship that are the primary responsibility of dioceses and parishes. The Statistics Unit of the Archbishops’ Council has not reported specifically on services for World AIDS Day. However, I am told that a website search indicates that this year nine cathedrals will host services of worship specifically related to World AIDS Day. These services are not listed as ‘ecumenical’ or ‘welcoming to people of other faiths’, but all who attend will no doubt be made welcome.

Ecumenical World AIDS Day services promoted on the World AIDS Day website are also being hosted in a number of parish churches and other cathedrals and churches may incorporate relevant prayers or reflections in their regular services on World AIDS Day.

*Revd Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich):* Will the MPA and/or the House of Bishops consider and encourage ways in which World AIDS Day will be observed in some way in every diocese every year?

*Dr Philip Giddings:* I cannot reply on behalf of the House of Bishops but I am sure that they will have heard that question. I will bring it to the attention of the MPA Council at its next meeting.

42. *\*Revd Dr John Perumbalath (Rochester)* asked the Chairman of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:



In December 2009 Palestinian Christians issued the Kairos Palestine Document, which called on the Churches of the world to ‘revisit fundamentalist theological positions that support certain unjust political options with regard to the Palestinian people’ and ‘stand alongside the oppressed and preserve the word of God as good news for all’. In the light of the further deterioration in the situation in Palestine since 2009, has the Mission and Public Affairs Council prepared any report or issued any public statement in response to our fellow Christians’ cry?

*Dr Philip Giddings* replied: The Mission and Public Affairs Council’s reflections on the Kairos Palestine Document are set out in GS Misc 953 that was circulated to the July 2010 General Synod. This report can be found on the Church of England website: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/july2010/gsmisc/gsmisc953.pdf>.

43. *Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford)* asked the Chairman of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

How many cross-parish boundary church plants are there in the Church of England that remain unquestionably Anglican on the basis that they are, as a minimum, episcopally recognized and supported?

*Dr Philip Giddings*: This Question does not lend itself to a simple answer. There are several ways in which church plants can involve crossing parish boundaries. Some are agreed initiatives to revitalize a neighbouring parish; others involve networked churches drawing people together from more than one parish. These require a Bishop’s Mission Order and therefore are episcopally recognized and supported. MPA is aware of five churches to date with Bishops’ Mission Orders and a further six in the process of applying for one. There is no central system for counting cross-parish boundary church plants; each diocese is responsible for keeping its own record.

*Revd Canon David Banting*: If after 15 years or so of church planting and there is no central body to count them and learn lessons and draw conclusions, is MPA content with this and to be so unable itself to know the numbers and therefore draw these lessons for the Church?

*Dr Philip Giddings*: MPA would always wish to encourage church planting among other ways of extending the reach of the gospel. First, we have to operate within the resources that are available to us, and I do not think that simply counting things is the best way of doing that. Second, the heart of the strategy for church planting and outreach of this kind is properly in dioceses and parishes. That is where strategies need to be evaluated and developed, and MPA stands ready to help in that process.

*Revd Canon David Banting*: I have a second supplementary, if I may?

*The Chairman*: No, I am afraid you cannot ask a second supplementary.

44. *Revd Canon David Banting* asked the Chairman of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Is there now a more or less agreed strategy for church planting across the dioceses and, if so, where can the accepted process and good guidelines that have emerged for setting them up be found?

*Dr Philip Giddings:* There are no central guidelines for church planting. It is for each diocese to issue such guidance in line with its wider mission and ministry strategies. Some of these policies can be found on diocesan websites.

### Business Committee

45. *Dr John Dinnen (Hereford)* asked the Chairman of the Business Committee:

How much does a four-day General Synod meeting London cost, including the preparation and production of documents, staff time and the travel and accommodation expenses of the members of the Synod?

*The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Trevor Willmott):* Based largely on an estimate prepared for the Business Committee in 2008, this is estimated at £400,000 at 2011 prices, £290,000 of which are additional costs met or potential income forgone by the Archbishops' Council, the Corporation of the Church House and those organizations that meet the expenses of members (mainly dioceses) and the remaining £110,000 represents the cost of staff time at national and diocesan level. The latter does not include an estimate of the time of staff outside the Central Secretariat and the Legal Office preparing documents or attending sessions of the Synod as the individuals involved and the time spent will vary considerably depending on the subject matter.

*Dr John Dinnen:* I thank the bishop for his reply. I am grateful to the Business Committee for reducing the volume of paperwork that we have received this time. What steps are being taken by the Business Committee to look at reducing the cost of bureaucracy and the legal procedures of the General Synod, even possibly considering the pros and cons of disestablishment and how that would affect the efficiency of our work?

*The Bishop of Dover:* In answer to the first part of the question I would say that the Business Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Synod transacts the business that is necessary for it to do. Therefore, producing what one might call bureaucracy is another process to enable that to happen.

With regard to Dr Dinnen's question about disestablishment, I believe that he is asking for an opinion from me which I am not equipped to give.

46. *Mrs Joanna Monckton (Lichfield)* asked the Chairman of the Business Committee:

Will the Committee be considering whether there is any case for the alteration of the qualifications for a person who wishes to stand for election to the General Synod?

47. *Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark)* asked the Chairman of the Business Committee:

Has the Business Committee any plans to study on the grounds of economy, convenience and turn-out the case for the introduction of electronic voting for General Synod elections and, if so, would it also consider arrangements for making available candidates' addresses through a Church-maintained electoral internet site?

*The Bishop of Dover:* With permission, I will answer Mrs Monckton's and Mr Sutcliffe's Questions together.

It is expected that the Business Committee will shortly establish an elections review group as it has done at the beginning of each recent previous quinquennium. The group will evaluate the experience of the 2010 Synod elections and will consider proposals for amending the election rules and procedures in the light of this.

Diocesan presiding officers will be invited to make submissions to the elections review group and Synod members will also be consulted. Mrs Monckton and Mr Sutcliffe are of course welcome to send in their specific proposals for that group's consideration.

*Mrs Joanna Monckton:* Will it be possible to alter the qualifications relating to laity so as to include those who covenant a substantial amount to their churches as well as being regular communicants but who somehow have failed to be on the electoral roll, which in rural parishes where the clergy seem to be busy seems to have been forgotten or missed out?

*The Bishop of Dover:* I refer Mrs Monckton to the answer that I have just given. If she has a specific proposal she can submit it to the review group and argue her case then.

48. *Canon Peter Smith (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich)* asked the Chairman of the Business Committee:

In answer to my Question 34 at the July 2010 group of sessions, it was stated that whereas the fourth column of the table at Appendix B to GS 1760 should read 'Number on electoral rolls 2008', the figures themselves are totally accurate.

- (i) In view of the repeal in 2004 (by rule 12(c) of the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2004) of rule 36(3) of the Church Representation Rules (CRR), what was the source of information for the 2008 electoral roll figures set out in Appendix B to GS 1760; and
- (ii) To what extent, if at all, are the figures for each diocese in Appendix B to GS 1760 based not on the actual electoral roll numbers of parishes as at their respective 2008 annual parochial church meetings but on figures derived from returns in earlier (and, if so, which) years?

*The Bishop of Dover:* The 2008 electoral roll figures used for Appendix B in GS 1760 were received from diocesan officers and directly from the 2008 parochial returns. Final figures are agreed with individual diocesan secretaries before use or release. Dioceses vary from year to year as to the response from parishes to provide

electoral roll numbers. In 2008, when neither the diocese nor the parochial return indicated an up-to-date electoral roll figure, the 2007 major revision was utilized. We are actively working with dioceses to increase parish response rates to our joint exercise to collect statistics for mission. In the case of the questioner's diocese some 10 per cent of the 2008 electoral roll required such interpolation.

49. \*Miss Fay Wilson-Rudd (*Bath and Wells*) asked the Chairman of the Business Committee:

If it has not already done so, will the Business Committee please give consideration to providing members with e-notebooks dedicated to receiving Synod papers, thereby reducing the cost of postage, paper and staff time?

*The Bishop of Dover* replied: The Business Committee is looking at a range of issues relating to Synod papers and will look at this suggestion. However, the Committee would need to make a cost-benefit assessment of the proposal and in particular would want to form a clear view of the likely take-up from Synod members.

### Crown Nominations Commission

50. Miss Rachel Beck (*Lincoln*) asked the Chairman of the Crown Nominations Commission:

Has any action been taken by the CNC in response to the media reports that appeared in July purporting to disclose details of its deliberations in relation to the Southwark vacancy in see, and will the CNC undertake to make public the full results of any investigation that it may have commissioned into the circumstances surrounding those reports?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams)*: The answer to the first part of the Question is Yes. The Archbishops commissioned an external scrutiny by Baroness Fritchie, a senior cross-bench peer, of how the CNC process around the vacancy in the see of Southwark gave rise to a number of media reports. That scrutiny has just been completed and the document will shortly be shared with the members of the Commission for Southwark. It would not be appropriate to give this a wider circulation. Any recommendations made in the report will first have to be carefully considered by the central members of the Commission, and they will be so considered.

*Miss Rachel Beck (Lincoln)*: What measures have been taken to limit the effects of the disclosure on the ministries of all those concerned?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury*: Contact has been made by me and the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments to deal with the pastoral questions arising as Miss Beck has identified them.

*Mr Robert Hammond (Chelmsford)*: What steps are being taken to reduce the time taken for each CNC and the following announcement and therefore reduce the potential for leaks of this kind?

*The Archbishop of Canterbury:* No steps are being taken at the moment. The timetable is of course not entirely in the CNC's hands on the rate of vacancies appearing in the dioceses. Every step is taken to accelerate that process, but with the quite considerable turnover that we currently have it is extremely difficult to secure the kind of rapidity we would all like.

### Liturgical Commission

51. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chairman of the Liturgical Commission:

Will the Liturgical Commission consider whether to bring forward proposals to make optional provision for Ascension Day to be celebrated additionally or alternatively on the Seventh Sunday of Easter?

*The Bishop of Wakefield (Rt Revd Stephen Platten):* Ascension Day is different from Epiphany, Candlemas and All Saints Days, which may be celebrated on the Sunday. It may be difficult to hold services on weekday evenings in the winter, but usually that does not apply in May or June! More fundamentally, the Ascension is of course 40 days after Easter following the chronology set out in the Acts of the Apostles, and celebrating it on a Sunday would lose the symbolism of those 40 days. I think that many would be concerned not to give the impression that Christianity is a Sundays-only activity that places no demands on our weekday lives. In any case the Sunday is already called the Sunday after Ascension Day, so the Ascension is not forgotten.

The Commission has no plans to propose introducing further revisions to the rules to order the Christian year into the Synod for authorization and I could not support a piece of Liturgical Business for that purpose alone.

*Mr Clive Scowen:* In view of how few people, including those who worship regularly in our churches on Sunday, actually attend Ascension Day services, would not the number of people who celebrate the Lord's Ascension and hear teaching on its significance and relevance for our discipleship be greatly increased if there was an option to celebrate Ascension Day additionally or alternatively on Sundays, and if it is good enough for the Roman Catholic Church to enable Ascension Day to be celebrated on the Seventh Sunday of Easter, why should we not –

*The Chairman:* Mr Scowen, that really counts as a second question.

*Mr Clive Scowen):* It fleshes out the first one.

*The Chairman:* I think the bishop has probably got the gist.

*The Bishop of Wakefield:* I shall look forward to further instances of Mr Scowen suggesting that we should follow the Roman Catholic Church! To try to answer the other part of his Question, I would have thought that one of our main concerns is to encourage people to think that attending church on important feast and festival days is part of our Christian discipleship, and indeed people will know that the incidence of churchgoing not on Sundays has increased. The nine days between Ascension Day and Pentecost are important too as days of prayer and preparation to celebrate the outpouring of the Spirit. Indeed Mr Scowen himself encouraged us to highlight that

provision in the annual lectionary booklets, as we have done now for the first time for 2010–2011, and what he now suggests might undermine his own initiative.

### Church Commissioners

52. *Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield)* asked the Church Commissioners:

How many staff are currently employed at Bishopthorpe, what was the equivalent figure in 2004, and how has any increase in staffing been funded?

*The Third Church Estates Commissioner (Mr Timothy Walker (ex officio))*: In 2002 the report entitled *Resourcing Archbishops* recommended that the Archbishop of York's staff be increased in line with the proposals in the Hurd report of the previous year that the Archbishop of York should be allocated substantial new national and international responsibilities; and I am sure that the Synod would want to recognize the Archbishop of York's contribution in that respect.

In 2004 there were 14 NCI staff at Bishopthorpe. In 2006 a budget was agreed for the present staffing of 16 full-time and 10 part-time NCI staff. The increase in staff has been funded by the Commissioners in recognition of the new responsibilities allocated.

53. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Church Commissioners:

Has consideration been given to amending section 3(1) of the Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972 to extend the maximum period between inspections of parsonage houses by diocesan surveyors from five years to six; and, if not, will such consideration now be given?

*The Third Church Estates Commissioner*: Amending section 3(1) of the 1972 Measure in this way has not been considered and currently there is no intention to do so.

A review of the Measure was carried out in 2001 for the Commissioners' Pastoral Committee and the Deployment, Remuneration and Clergy Terms of Service Committee of the Archbishops' Council. The length of time between inspection reports was not part of the review group's remit, but none of the diocesan responses to its questionnaire identified it as an issue.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London)*: In the light of the reality that works identified in quinquennial reports are in most cases not carried out instantly and of the improved quality of many materials – for example paint is now guaranteed for six years – could not costs be saved without diminishing the effectiveness of our care for parsonages by extending the period between inspections to six years from the previous inspection or five years after the previous quinquennial works were actually carried out, whichever is the shorter?

*The Third Church Estates Commissioner*: I am advised that such small cost savings as might be made by extending the maximum period between inspections of clergy housing from five years to six would probably be outweighed by the possible increase

in repair costs which might occur as a result of less frequent inspections. Considerable staff time would also be involved in debating this and our conclusion is that overall it would not produce significant savings.

54. *Mr Martin Dales (York)* asked the Church Commissioners:

Since the potential sale by the Commissioners of the Zurbarán paintings and Auckland Castle itself is the cause of much concern in both the local community, the Northern Province and the Church generally, can the Commissioners confirm that they will have a full consultation with concerned bodies before reaching any final decision on either or both sales?

55. *Revd Graeme Buttery (Durham)* asked the Church Commissioners:

Is it the intention of the Church Commissioners to explain to the inhabitants of the diocese of Durham the reasons for any proposed sale of the Zurbarán paintings and seek their understanding or merely to present it as a *fait accompli*?

*The First Church Estates Commissioner (Mr Andreas Whittam Smith (ex officio))*:  
With permission, I shall answer these two Questions together.

The Church Commissioners have always intended to discuss the potential sale of the paintings with local stakeholders, including the civic authorities and the local Church. The unplanned early disclosure by a third party has meant that we will be starting these discussions in the next few days. Indeed the secretary to the Commissioners will travel to the north east tomorrow for this purpose and he and I will again be there on Monday.

In answer to Mr Dales's Question, in accordance with their usual practice the Commissioners will be reviewing the suitability of Auckland Castle as a see house but not their future ownership of it. This review is entirely separate from the potential sale of the paintings.

*Revd Graeme Buttery (Durham)*: Is Mr Whittam Smith aware of the size of the task facing him when he does come north and that if he needs succour and respite St Oswald's Hartlepool will help?

*The First Church Estates Commissioner*: I would like to take this opportunity to explain a little of the background to this decision. As many members will know, the annual cost of the Church of England is just over £1 billion and of that large amount 83 per cent comes basically from giving by members of the Church – large and small, envelopes and so on – and the other 16 or 17 per cent is provided by the Church Commissioners. The Church Commissioners' large endowment is doing OK at the moment in relation to markets and other similar funds, but we are very aware that that large 83 per cent source of giving, of paying for the Church's costs, is obviously under pressure as long as this recession goes on. Giving has been buoyant, but we have to assume that it will run into some sort of weakness or that it will be harder to do. The sale of these pictures at the minimum price that we assume we shall receive, namely about £15 million, will at the rate at which our money earns dividends, rents and so on, produce about £450,000 per annum in addition to a saving on insurance

and other security costs. Therefore, we will be able to add roughly £500,000 a year to the monies that we distribute to the poorer dioceses, which in turn will be worth 10 to 12 full-time stipendiary clergy, and we believe that in the current financial crisis that is absolutely the right thing to do.

I should remind members from the diocese of Durham that the Church Commissioners support that diocese to the tune of about £2 million a year, the second largest amount that we give to any diocese, exceeded only by Chelmsford, which has a much larger population.

*Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield):* Will the First Church Estates Commissioner confirm reports that it costs £60,000 a year just to insure the said paintings and, if so, that that is more than the cost of a clergy post?

*The First Church Estates Commissioner:* In fact the cost of the insurance is a little less than that; it is about £40,000, but there are security costs too. In addition there is a perpetual risk to the paintings because from time to time Auckland Castle is used for commercial purposes when many people are present in the room in which they hang, and anyone who has seen the paintings will know that the room is far too small for them. The insurance is that amount, and certainly that is equivalent to the cost of one clergyperson.

*The Chairman* sought leave of the Synod to extend the sitting by five minutes.  
(Agreed)

56. \**Mr Adrian Vincent (Guildford)* asked the Church Commissioners:

Have the Church Commissioners identified the possible savings for the Church of England if they closed the Mission Development Fund and instead paid the money direct to the Archbishops' Council's budget (thereby reducing parish share, and giving every parish more money to spend on its mission), in terms of eliminating the administrative cost to the Church Commissioners and dioceses of running the scheme and the time spent by parishes in applying for grants?

*The First Church Estates Commissioner:* The Commissioners and Archbishops' Council believe that the mission development funding adds value to the Church's mission by providing dioceses and parishes with a dedicated stream of funding to invest in new opportunities.

The course of action Mr Vincent proposes could not in any case be supported. The Commissioners have the legal power to support the administrative costs of their own statutory functions but not those of the Archbishops' Council; their funds cannot, therefore, be directed towards the Council's budget.

### **Ethical Investment Advisory Group**

57. *Canon Dr Paula Gooder (Birmingham)* asked the Chairman of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group:



What progress has been made by the EIAG since it agreed in 2006 to investigate Synod members' concerns about the problems being experienced by farmers as a result of the buying practices of supermarkets?

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* The Ethical Investment Advisory Group published a report in 2007 entitled *Fairtrade Begins at Home*, documenting the problems in supply chain relationships between supermarkets and British farmers. We called for the creation of an independent ombudsman and for over two years pressed the Labour Government, its Opposition and then the coalition Government to establish one. We were delighted that in August this year the Government announced that it would create a groceries code adjudicator to receive complaints about interaction between supermarkets and suppliers, including farmers. As well as calling for better regulation, the Ethical Investment Advisory Group has engaged extensively with the main British supermarkets. There have been some improvements: supermarkets now typically pay premium prices for milk and there are some good examples of collaborative partnerships between supermarkets and farming suppliers. We shall continue our shareholder engagement and to ask the supermarkets for evidence of an effective contribution to the maintenance of sustainable farming communities.

*Canon Dr Paula Gooder (Birmingham):* Can Mr Oldham give the Synod the swiftest of advice on how we might be able to keep abreast of the ongoing arrangements that the Ethical Investment Advisory Group is making in this particular area?

*Mr Gavin Oldham:* Yes indeed. The Ethical Investment Advisory Group produces an annual report which is always circulated with the July Synod papers. We try to have a fringe meeting at the July group of sessions in York and we hope to have a chance to make a presentation to the full Synod in February or July 2011 as indicated in the Business Committee's report, and Synod members are always welcome to contact the Ethical Investment Advisory Group secretary, Edward Mason, who can be reached on extension 1127 at Church House.

58. *Dr Anna Thomas-Betts (Oxford)* asked the Chairman of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group:

Following the decision of the national investing bodies to disinvest from Vedanta Resources plc, can the EIAG update the Synod on subsequent events?

*Mr Gavin Oldham:* In January the Ethical Investment Advisory Group recommended that the national investing bodies should disinvest from the mining company Vedanta Resources. The recommendation was made because of the firm's failure to treat communities in the vicinity of its operations in Lanjigarh in Orissa, India, with respect and its unwillingness to engage properly with us about our concerns. The sale by the investing bodies of their shares on ethical grounds received widespread attention in the UK and internationally. Since the disinvestment the Indian Government has denied Vedanta permission to go ahead with its controversial proposal to mine in the Niyamgiri hills above Lanjigarh. It has also stopped Vedanta expanding its Lanjigarh refinery. Earlier this month Vedanta announced the appointment of a chief sustainability officer. The EIAG will be ready to resume dialogue with the company if it demonstrates a clear commitment to improving its performance on social and environmental issues.

*The Chairman:* This has been an admirable Question time. New members will have seen the importance of Questions, and I am grateful to those who have responded as succinctly as they have.

*After the closing act of worship, the Session was adjourned at 7.05 p.m.*

## Second Day

**Wednesday 24 November 2010**

THE CHAIR *Canon Margaret Swinson (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 9.30 a.m.

*Revd Tim Stratford (Liverpool)* led the Synod in prayer.

### Farewell

*The Clerk to the Synod (Revd David Williams)*: I want to refer to the *Report of Proceedings*. The General Synod is very much the Church's Parliament and the *Report of Proceedings* is our *Hansard*.

Shirley Dex – Shirley, would you like to stand up? – is in the gallery here, and she has been a presence in Synod for 30 years. She has been editor of the *Report of Proceedings* for some 20 years. She started editing the *Report* when she was a Synod member and has continued ever since. She represented Ely on the General Synod from 1980 to 1995 and served on various committees, including the Standing Orders Committee, and the Panel of Chairmen in the late 1980s. She also served on (in her words) 'some nit-picking Revision Committees' which provided invaluable experience for her being asked to edit the *Report of Proceedings* because mastery of detail is the name of the game. In 1984 she produced a paper on Synod protocols and procedures called *Speaking in the General Synod: those who want to speak and those who actually speak*. The paper was entitled *Hear, Lord, thy servant speaketh* and it has lost none of its relevance. Copies are available still on request.

So a very warm thank you to Shirley and, coupled with that, a very warm welcome to Shirley-Ann Williams – Shirley-Ann, would you like to stand up? – who is no stranger to the Synod as she served as a Synod member for Exeter from 1985 until July of this year.

I would like to express our thanks to Shirley Dex and our welcome to Shirley-Ann.  
(*Applause*)

### Loyal Address

*The Chairman*: Just for the benefit of those who are new members, I am Margaret Swinson and I am one of the members from the diocese of Liverpool. I am your guide for the morning, or at least for the first items of business, as we may not get any further than them.

The text of the Loyal Address is on the fifth notice paper which members should have picked up yesterday.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams)*: I beg to move:

'That a Loyal Address be presented to Her Majesty The Queen.'

Since 1970 it has been the custom of Synod to submit a Loyal Address at the inauguration of each new Synod. The motion before you simply invites you to agree that we should do so on this occasion. Under SO 110, the text of the address is settled by the Archbishop of York and me on your behalf, and a copy has been circulated on the fifth notice paper. The language, of course, is formal but this is a moment when formality is entirely in order. I simply invite you to approve this item and in so doing to convey to Her Majesty a message of our support and gratitude for her support.

*The motion was put and carried.*

### **Legislative Business**

### **Draft Act of Synod Adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant (GS 1809)**

### **(Article 7 and Article 8 Business)**

*The Chairman:* Let me take you through the sequence of what will happen this morning. The Business Committee have determined that the draft Act of Synod be considered under the preliminary motion procedure, for which provision is made in SO 71(a). That begins with a motion, Item 504 on your Order Paper, 'That the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant be considered'. If this item is lost, the business will finish at that point. If the item is carried, we will proceed to the other items of business set out on the Order Paper, and, at a later group of sessions and subject to completion of the Article 7 and Article 8 procedures, the draft Act of Synod will return to Synod for final approval, on a motion that the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant be approved.

Debate on Item 504 will be the most wide-ranging of the debates that we have this morning, and it is an opportunity to debate both the principle of whether the Church of England should enter into the Covenant and the terms of the Covenant. Members who wish to address the specific issues raised in the amendments at Items 505 and 506 should reserve their speeches until the debates on those items.

Due to the nature of the business and the number of new members who may be unfamiliar with it, I have decided under SO 21(c) to give the Bishop of Bristol 12 minutes rather than the normal 10 in which to introduce the item, which I hope will enable him to give a bit of background.

*The Bishop of Bristol (Rt Revd Michael Hill):* I beg to move:

'That the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant be considered.'

When I accepted the invitation to be one of the Church of England's three members of the Anglican Consultative Council, I fondly thought that this would mean travelling to rather interesting parts of the world, gaining encouragement from sharing experiences with fellow Christians around the Communion and perhaps putting my name occasionally to pieces of paper, reporting back to Synod on how we were getting on. What I have subsequently learnt is that it involves coming to Synod, as I did in February, and making speeches on behalf of the House of Bishops so that Synod members can then take a pot shot at me from a number of different directions.

Today's business comes here on behalf of the House of Bishops. In the short time available to me I want to try to answer four questions. First, why has the House of Bishops commended the Covenant to Synod for adoption? Second, why is this business that needs dealing with at this inaugural group of sessions? Third, what about the objections that have been raised? Fourth, what are the consequences of what we decide today?

First, why should the Church of England adopt the Covenant? I think we need to be honest in saying that the background to the Covenant process has made it hard for debates about the Covenant to avoid turning into proxy debates about the issue of gay people. In simple terms, those who saw the decision of the American Church to consecrate Gene Robinson as a prophetic act fear that a Covenant might impede other prophetic acts in the future or introduce some new element of coercion or punishment into Communion business. Those unhappy with the American actions, or at least concerned about their impact on the wider Communion, have generally been more open to the idea of a Covenant, though some have seen it as a necessary rather than a sufficient step.

The last Synod managed to get beyond that stand-off and consider the case for a Covenant on its merits. Yes, some were against, but in the various votes that we had in four debates on the Covenant, in addition to a separate debate on governance in the Church of England and in the Anglican Communion, there was strong support for the Covenant process and for seeking to develop the various earlier drafts that were produced. Our comments were reflected in the successive revisions of the text.

What the Covenant does is to invite member Churches to commit themselves to greater mutual accountability, consultation and the pursuit of consensus on issues which are new or controversial and may have serious relational consequences in the Communion. This is what happened with the admission of women to priestly and episcopal ministry where there was extensive consultation in the Anglican Communion from the 1960s onwards.

Paragraph 3.2.2. of the Covenant is quite explicit in respecting the constitutional autonomy of all the Churches of the Communion. Neither an individual Church nor the Communion as a whole can compel any other Church to set aside a decision that it has properly taken under its own constitution. Additionally, paragraph 4.1.3 says explicitly that the mutual commitment involved in Covenant relationship does not 'represent submission to any external ecclesiastical jurisdiction'. It goes on expressly to affirm that nothing in the Covenant alters the constitution of any Church or limits its autonomy.

Suggestions that the Church of England would be subordinating itself to an international body are, therefore simply not true. What the Covenant does do is acknowledge the relational consequences that will follow if particular Churches decide to go it alone on a contentious issue.

Second, why is this business that a new Synod needs to deal with at its first meeting? Well, of course, there is always a reason for taking more time but it is now nearly a year since the final text of the Covenant was sent to the provinces. The House of Bishops considered it in May and recommended adoption. In normal circumstances

the business would have come to the Synod in July but we had more pressing things to do at the last meeting of the old Synod. So I do not think we are rushing, but neither should we dawdle. It is for each province of the Communion within its own decision-making processes to consider whether to adopt the Covenant. Mexico has already agreed to do so. I understand that the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is also well advanced with the process.

Members have before them in GS Misc 966 a substantial briefing paper from our Faith and Order Commission, and I believe that we have all the information we need to answer the question for today, which is whether to start the formal process of adoption. If members do not believe that the Covenant is at least worthy of consideration they will want to vote against my motion. If they endorse the Covenant or at least think it is worth discussing before they finally make up their minds, then please vote in favour.

Third, let me say a few more words about the objections that have been raised. Paragraphs 25 to 63 of the briefing paper address six questions and objections, and in the course of the debate I hope members will look through those again while listening to all the speakers. One objection that I want to take head-on is the suggestion that there is something profoundly un-Anglican about the idea of a Covenant. Let us be careful about describing things as un-Anglican. The then Archbishop of York refused to attend the first Lambeth Conference in 1867 because it was not a manifestation of Anglicanism that he recognized. The creation of the Anglican Consultative Council under Archbishop Ramsey and the establishment of the Primates' Meeting under Archbishop Coggan were further developments that responded to the needs of the time. Each new initiative had its sceptics. None has proved a panacea but each has played its part. I see the Covenant as another such development.

Covenants between people and Churches are about agreements freely entered into by independent parties who wish to deepen and formalize their relationship with each other. It is the exact opposite of a power game. It is about commitment and recognition of what we need in and from each other.

So, finally, what are the consequences of today's vote? The refusal by the Church of England even to consider adopting the Covenant would undoubtedly be a serious blow to the whole process and to the Archbishop of Canterbury's efforts to keep dialogue going across the fault lines within the Communion. The effect of a Yes vote will be to send the draft Act of Synod out to diocesan synods under the Article 8 procedure. Final approval by the General Synod will not be possible unless the majority of diocesan synods have given their consent. That was the procedure that we followed with the Porvoo Agreement with the Lutheran Churches and it is the process we have already embarked on with the legislation on women in the episcopate. By agreeing to start the process today, Synod will be keeping open the option of the Church of England adopting the Covenant before the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in the latter part of 2012.

That meeting is not a deadline: the Anglican Communion does not lend itself to deadlines. However, by then it will be nearly three years since the final text of the Covenant was agreed and eight years since a proposal for a Covenant was made. In

the context of Christian history it is not very long, but in the context of most of the other things that we have to do it is not very fast either.

I urge members to make a decision on the basis of the actual words of the Covenant as set out on pages 16-27 of GS Misc 966. I shall be voting for the motion not primarily out of loyalty to Archbishop Rowan – though I am loyal – nor because I think the Faith and Order Commission have produced a good analysis – though they have – nor even because I think the Covenant is going to produce immediate healing within the Anglican Communion; nothing but the power of the Holy Spirit will do that. I am going to vote for the motion because I have read the Covenant and I cannot find anything in it that I do not agree with. In fact, I want positively to affirm it as a statement of both what I believe and how I think we should behave towards each other within a worldwide communion of autonomous Churches. I commend the motion to Synod.

*Revd Mark Beach (Coventry):* I thank you for calling me, Chair, especially so early in the debate, for reasons that you will see later on.

I am a great fan of Thinking Anglicans – well, I like to try and think myself. I imagine that Simon Sarmiento is somewhere around, although I have not seen him; so thank you, Simon, for the service you provide for the Church, but I have to say that on this occasion I am somewhat bamboozled by the extent of the coverage that you have given to the Anglican Covenant debate and by all the conflicting opinions represented. So what am I to make of the Covenant that is before us?

I start from the position that anything which can help us to hold our Communion together must be a good thing. I certainly have no desire to see the divisions which already exist become deepened. However, the more I read of the text of the Covenant the more concerned I get. Let me offer a few examples of what I mean. In paragraph 5 of the introduction we read about the ‘bonds of affection’ within the Communion. These are doubtless very real, especially between linked dioceses, but affection cannot be legislated for; we cannot instruct the provinces of the Communion to live in this way. The development must be organic and dynamic. Also, my experience of linked dioceses is that they tend to be with dioceses in the developing world – we link with Africa or India – but what of links with those parts of the Communion where theological boundaries are being stretched? Should we not be seeking to listen to, and learn from, our Anglican brothers and sisters in America and in Canada in order to understand where their developments are coming from?

Second, what of the supposed independence of each province to proclaim the gospel afresh to each generation? The glory of Anglicanism to me is the freedom to preach the gospel in ways that acknowledge the diversity of our situation. Certainly this freedom should not be at the expense of causing harm to others, but we cannot know in depth the consequences of living in these diverse environments. What offends one will delight another and vice versa. In several places the Covenant refers to the Anglican tradition, which I understand to be that careful interpretation of Scripture in the light of the tradition of the Church, its scholarship, reason and experience. There seems to be lots in the Covenant about the first two – Scripture and the tradition of the Church – but less emphasis on scholarship and reason and the role they play in the development of doctrine.

At the heart of my concerns lies the distinction made by Roman Catholic ecclesiologists between a top-down and a bottom-up ecclesiology. The former is represented by an authoritarianism which seems to me to be contrary to the spirit of Anglicanism. However, it is precisely what I see in the Covenant. The latter, the bottom-up approach, listens carefully to the local Church, to its narrative, to its culture, to see how the whole can best respond. I have already referred to the importance of listening, and acknowledge that the Covenant does indeed encourage this; but the encouragement is, in my view, outweighed by the heavy-handedness of the rest of the document.

Ursula Le Guin, the fantasy writer, has described this kind of tension as that between father tongue, the language of the assembly, of law-making and of business agreements, and mother tongue which, she says, is the language which keeps people going, keeps them talking, and which listens carefully to both sides of the debate. Archbishop Rowan has described father tongue as distancing the speaker from what is being spoken about, while the mother tongue is constantly ignored or belittled by the speakers of father tongue. I fear that we have fallen into just that trap and that, if the Communion is to survive, it will be because we have conversed in mother tongue and not because we have attempted to legislate for unity.

However, my final and most significant reservation over the Covenant is also the most pragmatic, that those provinces which are opposed to the Covenant, because they think it will limit their freedom, will not sign it, which will, quite simply, result in irrevocable division before we have even started to do controversial things. I have not yet decided how to vote on this, so I will listen very carefully to the rest of the debate and I hope to be guided.

*Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury):* I am a new member. Being a new girl is an uncomfortable position to be in, whatever the circumstances are, but I think that in this particular case it is a very welcome experience because I, like, I hope, many other new members, come without all the baggage that the Covenant debate carries. So I took what might be an unusual step – I hope not – of first reading the Covenant before reading anything else, what you might call a ‘clean’ read, and I tried to be as objective as possible.

When people come to read something that is written down on paper they can approach it in two ways: they can approach it optimistically or they can approach it very sceptically and suspiciously. If you have ever been engaged in reading, for example, a draft divorce settlement, it is often approached very suspiciously: the reason that the husband wants the dog with the bad breath is because she ruined his Brian Ferry CD collection some years ago! I asked some colleagues, lay and ordained, within our deanery to do the same thing too, read it clean, and they came back with comments like this: ‘I am a bear of very little brain and long words bother me. However, it looks to me like an honest attempt to embrace all possible points of view’. What will matter, in five or 10 years, is not what its history has been, what the process leading up to this has been; what will matter is how we have acted when we are in the Covenant, what referrals have been made, what hesitation has been exercised and of course what decisions have been taken by the Standing Committee. That is what will matter: the precedents that are set then, not the history that has gone before.



It is important that we get over some of the aspects: frankly, Nassau and St Andrews read to me like a golf tour and I am not sure that that is where we should be heading. So what will matter, I think, is how those in the covenanting relationship treat each other, whether the power is used sparingly, and the wisdom of any Standing Committee recommendations, should it ever come to that. Hooker phrased it not as a compromise for the sake of peace but a comprehension for the sake of truth, and there has been quite a lot of discussion about what the truth is that is embedded in this. However, the truth of which he speaks, I think, is about relationship and interrelationships.

I was told that one got up to speak only if one had some expertise, and I think I have a bit of expertise in relationships and interrelationships. I am one of six children and I have over a hundred first cousins by birth. (I do not think there was much else to do on those cold prairie evenings in Canada!) I was always taught that families work like this: you think about the impact and the consequences for others before you take any action. I think what we are being called to do here is to give scope to adult/adult relationships, to adults who look beyond the immediate and beyond their own priorities and take most seriously both the inculturation of the gospel and our incarnational faith. Also – and I hope members will forgive me for saying this – to remove any echoes of the Empire which may just be colouring our perspective, just as the many people of the Churches of the Covenant will need to overcome the shadow of the Empire. These discussions are going to be no easier for the Canadians or the other colonials than they are for the English.

I ask Synod to think about the consequences of not receiving and sending this to the dioceses with all despatch. When considering what impact it will have on the Church of England, I believe we ought to think about how we can be selfless and indeed sacrificial, and what it will mean to the other Churches if we do not. My understanding is that the Canadian Anglican Church is waiting to see what we will do. I heard the Archbishop of Hong Kong speak last week, and he intimated that it would have serious consequences for his province if it was not progressed in the Church of England. If we do not send this to the dioceses now, the Anglican Communion will not end with a bang – that is not the way the Church works – but I for one want no part of its ending with a whimper.

*Revd Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Durham and Newcastle Universities):* As the Archbishop of Canterbury says on page 14 of this report, GS Misc 966 – I hope he is not going to contradict himself in a moment! – it is open to us, for ‘utterly serious and prayerful’ reasons, not to seek the kind of intensification and legalization of relationships that this Covenant entails. I would suggest that we should, seriously and prayerfully, decline to use this particular structure to express our friendship and love for our brothers and sisters. My concern is with some serious underlying questions of theology that are problematic, and there are two particular areas which I would like to focus on this morning and which pick up on what the previous speaker had to say.

The first is the importance of context in doing our theology. The preamble and sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.2.4 of the Covenant text rightly emphasize the importance of our very different contexts to our mission, our theology, our reading of the Bible and our ways of being Church. For the last four years, the focus of my academic research has been on the importance of context in theology. Theology, of course, simply means

talk about God and while our changing contexts do not change God they do change the ways in which we talk about God and perhaps the ways in which God talks to us. Context is of particular importance in shaping evangelistic and apologetic theology, which are very much products of their cultures. One question of course for us to grapple with is the way in which recent developments in technology mean that we each now live in multiple contexts: the local and the global are increasingly blurred, and the potential for a clash of contexts is something we need to think seriously about. This Covenant process is to be welcomed in so far as it kick-starts and resources that conversation.

Section 3.2.1 very reasonably asks that, in making decisions in our own context, we 'have regard for the common good of the Communion' and 'endeavour to accommodate [the] recommendations' of the Instruments of Communion. The implication is surely that such accommodation would often, but not always, be possible. Yet there is a sudden and abrupt change of direction at 3.2.5 and especially in section 4. Suddenly our contexts are irrelevant. The recommendations of the Instruments of Communion and the overriding imperative to avoid any risk of controversy override local mission imperatives. Much more sustained and serious work on this area is needed, and we should quite properly refuse to be rushed.

Second, I want to challenge the use and misuse of the language of family in this document. In paragraph 38 on page 9 it suggests that the Covenant 'sets out the basis on which the Anglican family' lives together, and in paragraph 4 on page 17 of the preamble to the Covenant the language of family is again used. However, this cosy talk of families forms a stark contrast with the reality of section 4.2 of the Covenant text. Families, unless they are dysfunctional, love and support each other unconditionally; a family is the one relationship that we do not join or leave. As such, at its best the family models the constant loyalty of God to all people that the Archbishop spoke of so movingly in his presidential address yesterday. This is surely what is meant by Jesus teaching us to call God 'Father' and it is why, as a Church, we support and uphold marriage and the family in all its forms. As a university chaplain I see all too often the emotional damage done when a family put conditions on their love, on their support and on the continuation of relationship. 'Relational consequences' sounds very chilling indeed.

We are told that the Covenant sets out the framework for family relationships, but what sort of family lives by a covenant with relational consequences for breaches of the rules? In previous debates on the Covenant it has been described as a kind of pre-nuptial agreement. To me, this text sounds rather like a couple in marital difficulties deciding to ask their wider family to vote on whether they should divorce or not. I urge Synod to resist defining our family relationship with our Anglican brothers and sisters round the world in such negative and legalistic terms.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams):* I have already said a good deal in yesterday's presidential address about why I personally support the Covenant and I do not want run over the same territory again, but there are one or two points I would just like to inject into the debate at this juncture which really have to do with a point made by the Bishop of Bristol in his introductory speech. They are to do with the directions of Anglican identity and Anglican self-understanding in the past hundred years or so.

The drift of Anglican development has been towards more Instruments of Communion, that is to say more ways in which we can in some sense act with coherence together for the sake of God's mission. That has been both an internal and an external matter. Internally it has involved the development of things like the Consultative Council and externally it has been expressed in the agreed statements we have undertaken in our ecumenical dialogue. Very importantly interwoven with all that is the life of local exchange, which has already been referred to, across the Communion, which now exists in a quite different way from what was the case even 30 years ago: it is no longer sponsoring mission partners somewhere else but is genuinely sharing in mission and a mutual learning.

It is against that background that the Covenant stands before us. I hear and partly understand the anxieties just expressed by Miranda about legislating for family relationships. The fact is, though, that of course accommodation is not always possible in a complex global cluster of Christian bodies. We want to work together for mission and we want to be accountable to each other and sometimes there are crises and brick walls that we meet in that attempt. It is, I think, unduly idealistic to believe that good will alone can carry us through in the complexities of our present context, and the Covenant is an attempt to set out a structure for consent rather than a structure for discipline: consent about what kind of issues we are dealing with, consent about whether there really is anything incompatible with calling yourself an Anglican. Please do not see this solely through the lens of one or two current issues. It is that attempt to set out a structure for consent which is, I believe, what we ought to be focusing on in this discussion.

I sometimes use the phrase for the Anglican aspiration as looking towards 'consensual Catholicism', that is, a genuinely global and coherent fellowship of Churches which exists by people being willing to bind themselves to one another and to be accountable to one another rather than be subject to one central authority, and I do want to resist very strongly the suggestion that Covenant proposes or creates a central authority. The organs that attempt through the Covenant to discern the status of various questions, the seriousness of various traditions, are all of them organs that exist through election by the provinces of the Communion, including this one. So we are not suddenly creating an ecclesiastical authority in mid-air, completely separate from the ways in which local Churches, including ours, work.

Reference has been made to adult relations in this respect. I think that is a helpful peg on which to hang our reflections. We are trying to understand what it is to be properly accountable to each other. We are not ruling out innovation and we are not attempting through the Covenant to declare in advance the impossibility of this or that development; we are looking for a way of talking in an adult fashion about how we decide the level of seriousness involved. As we have been reminded, context is vastly important, but at the same time our context in the Communion is a global one, not merely a local one. Naturally the tensions between global and local are real, and they are not going to get any easier; but we do not, I think, solve our problem simply by appeal to context while forgetting the global context in which we as Anglicans here seek to be part of, responsible to, the mission of Anglicans elsewhere, as they seek to be part of and responsible to the mission we seek to exercise.

*Mr Anirban Roy (London):* Thank you, Chair. I get to do my maiden speech following the Archbishop!

When I got elected to Synod one of the members of the congregation came up to me and said, 'You're going to have to deal with this Covenant. Do you know? They're trying to make us all Methodists'. I got quite excited by this, so when the papers arrived I went straight for the Covenant and read it. Obviously (and rather disappointingly) there was nothing about Methodists but there was, as I started reading it, a lot of great stuff. Sections 1 to 3 were brilliant. I looked and thought, 'There's nothing here I disagree with'; there was stuff that I wanted to explore more but nothing I disagreed with. Do you know what? There were historic footnotes, there were biblical quotes. This is stuff that we should be about.

Then those footnotes and those quotes started disappearing in section 4; it did not feel like changing the structures of the Church but did say, 'We're going to find ways of condemning other people because we don't agree'. I thought the Bible was pretty clear: you do not condemn unless you want to be condemned yourself, and there is stuff about specks of sawdust and planks as well.

So, having read the Covenant itself, I looked at what the Archbishop had said and what the bishops said, and I realized that I was asking the wrong question because the question surely is: what would Jesus do? The story that came to me was the one about the woman caught in adultery. She has broken the law and she is dragged in front of Jesus. The law is clear: she has done the wrong thing. Jesus tells us what we should do then, and we all know the punch-line. At the end, though, Jesus did not ask her to repent (which is what the Covenant asks). He did not condone what she did either, but neither did he condemn, and the condemnation is the bit that I struggle with in this because I do not think that is what Jesus would want us to do.

I would like to touch on two other points that have come up today. What happens if we do not agree? Well, we go back to 2003 and we have declarations of impaired communion or broken communion, and do you know what? As others have said today, you cannot create bonds of affection with a piece of paper. If people say that to us or to other provinces, surely the answer is 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord and we will be here waiting for you when you are ready to come back'. It is also a fair point to say that this is the only game in town. What is the alternative? I think, in his presidential address yesterday, the Archbishop told us, so I am going to quote him: '...loyalty grows and flourishes when we spend time together exploring what has brought us together; which is God. It happens when we pledge ourselves to seek out those we disagree with and work till it hurts on finding ways of sharing prayer and fellowship with them'. What would Jesus do? I think he would work till it hurt.

*The Chairman:* I call Simon Cawdell for a maiden speech.

*Revd Simon Cawdell (Hereford):* In our diocese we have reason to celebrate our part of being in the Anglican Communion. Not only do we gain much from the connection we have with our partners in Tanzania; we also recognize that the dioceses to our West are in a different part of the Communion from us and indeed are a part from which we have received great benefit, Your Grace.

Revelation 21 gives us a vision of the city of God that is walled but with gates that are never shut. It seems to me that it is a vision of faith and community that is bounded but not limited, and it seems equally to me as I read the Covenant that that is what it is intended to provide in the concept of a community which is both defined and welcoming. As with any community, we sometimes have periods of time when we become dysfunctional. There are arguments, there are disputes that need to be worked out between us all; and the Covenant seeks to provide a way in which those disputes in our common life can be resolved in love. It is that simple to me and that clear. Yet there are times when we need to provide for how we are going to act when those first ordinary conversations are not producing the fruit we hope for.

I have also been subject – I suspect, in common with many in this chamber - to a considerable number of lobbyists and lobbying by people telling me, as one succinctly put it, that the Anglican Consultative Council ‘hath no jurisdiction here, let alone the Pope’. I found this attack extraordinary, following as it did a series of arguments about the Covenant, presented with the force of tail-feathers from a fleeing pigeon and with about as much significance, not least because it would seem to me to be fleeing from something that simply is not there.

It is a mistake to understand the Covenant in juridical terms, whereas it is intended, as Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi, so clearly put it to the Lambeth Conference, to be about an act of grace, about how we are the Body of Christ, and, yes, about how we frame that common living: grace which at times recently has seemed conspicuous by its absence and grace which by this measure we can see restored.

I believe we must face the first consideration and vote for it without strings. We have plenty of chance to amend later, should we wish to, having heard the voices of the people in the dioceses. If we vote for it, we will be voting for the greatest opportunity the Church of England has ever seen to debate in our dioceses and in parishes our position in that wider Communion which is ours. Contained in this Covenant is the clearest definition of Anglicanism in our time, and it deserves study not just in this body but out there in the dioceses and in the parishes. Alternatively, we may vote against it; but if we do, the real danger is that we will be sending a signal to our friends elsewhere that they mean less to us than I believe they do. It seems to me that that would be an act lacking the grace that I wish to display in my time on Synod. I shall vote in favour.

*Revd Professor Paul Fiddes (Ecumenical Representatives, Baptist Union):* I am truly grateful for this opportunity, as a member of another Christian communion, to offer a comment on your project of an Anglican Covenant. My worry that I may be being presumptuous in speaking about the ordering of your life is a little alleviated by the fact that my own tradition shares with some other Free Churches in placing covenant at the centre of our ecclesiology. The idea is not a novel and a strange one to us. The members of the very first Baptist and Congregational churches, at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, made covenants with God and with each other, using a form of words like this: we promise to walk together and watch over one another in ways that are known and ways that are still to be made known, that is in days to come.

There are notes being struck, then, in the present Covenant which are familiar to those in my tradition. For example, the Covenant is held together not by law and juridical

authority but by mutual loyalty and trust: for example, that the purpose of covenant is to find the mind of Christ together: for example, that covenant is a process of mutual commitment in which the future remains somewhat open and uncertain.

I want to thank the Anglican Communion for taking the concept of covenant further than we have done, we who have covenant as it were in our genes and bones. We have thought of members coming together in covenant in the local church and of Churches coming together with each other in a regional and national way. We have not so far embarked on the grand venture of a more catholic, worldwide covenant, and we look forward to seeing how the Holy Spirit will lead in this, perhaps with the hope that we might follow.

However, I do want to raise a question and perhaps a challenge. What is the theological basis for covenanting together at all? The argument, as set out in the preface to the Covenant text, seems to be that Christ calls us into communion with each other through baptism, that this communion entails responsibility and mutual commitment and that this then leads to the making of a covenant together. I suggest that we should affirm more directly that Christ calls us into covenant with each other and with the triune God. This is at the heart of my own tradition of covenant-making. The risen Christ stands in the midst of the community of disciples, calling them into a covenant which is at the same time horizontal – with each other – and vertical – with God. Theologically there can be no covenant without Christ as the covenant-mediator and -maker, mediating both the eternal covenant of grace and the covenant made here in history between each other as one covenant. A covenant, then, will not hold together unless those covenanting believe that they are being called into it by Christ here and now, that Christ is making covenant and that we are being summoned to obedience.

So I would like to hear one question being asked, among others: is Christ calling us in this time and place into covenant? Is this a moment in which we are being summoned? In answering that question the discernment is yours.

*Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford):* I did a lot of growing up in the 1970s. In 1970 I was 7; by 1980 I was 17. A major feature in my childhood and adolescence was the troubles in Northern Ireland, which were mentioned almost continually on Radio 4, which my mother had on all the time. Growing into a realization of what ‘tarred and feathered’ actually meant was something of a horror. I would have thought, back then, that the situation was irresolvable. Both sides were intractable. I bought myself a book about the causes and the arguments and I could not see a way to solve this. Nonetheless a solution came with dogged negotiation, not made easier by both sides being illegal and having to be identified. Although there are still occasional flare-ups today, the troubles are largely behind us.

The situation facing the Anglican Communion seems to be not dissimilar: two sides, both entrenched, and it does not look as though a solution can be found. This is playing out on the world scene, but there are also, in my personal experience, local echoes that are causing pain. In Northern Ireland the consequences of the troubles were that people were tortured and killed. I would say the consequences of our disputes are actually as great, if not greater, as splits in the Communion are damaging

mission and turning people away from the knowledge of the saving grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The proposed Covenant is intended to address these issues but it seems to me that the effect of section 4.2 can only be to split the Communion further and permanently. What is needed here is lengthy, patient negotiation until the sides agree, still to differ – that is inevitable – but to respect each other's views and coexist. If it can be done in Northern Ireland, surely it can be done within the Anglican Communion? This Covenant will not achieve this, not in its current form. To use a simile already made, if a relationship is in trouble the answer is not to invite a walk down the aisle and the signing of a marriage certificate; instead a trip to Relate is in order. Our Communion needs Relate, and if Relate does not exist we must create it. This Covenant, however, does not do that, and I would urge members to vote against.

*The Bishop of Bath and Wells (Rt Revd Peter Price):* The Chief Rabbi's address to the Lambeth Conference has already been referred to. In it he spoke of covenant as being about relationships, not transactions. He spoke of covenanted goods such as love and friendship, influence and trust, of shared lives, shared interests and fidelity. He spoke of a God who wants to make covenant and of human beings always wanting to make out of covenant contract. Covenants transform, he said; contracts have a tendency to make us clutch and hold on to things.

It is important to remember these distinctions as we consider the continuing process of adopting the Anglican Covenant. This is a process which has led to much heart-searching: whether to vote against or to abstain or to vote for. I chair the Anglican Communion pastoral visitors programme, and one of my visits this year has been to the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church of the United States. Later in the year the Bishop of Liverpool also visited. What we both found – to our surprise, I suggest – was a Church offering vibrant, relevant worship, engaged theology and a profound sense of mission. There was too a commitment to address differences, both forthrightly and in a considered and, to use Mike Hill's words, an adult way, committed to staying together. At the conference I attended it was also agreed that that Church would engage with the Covenant itself.

Recently the Anglican Communion visitors met in London to give consideration to the origins of the Anglican Covenant and, frankly, we were surprised by our corporate ignorance. Most of us had assumed that it had arisen from the decision to elect Gene Robinson as a bishop. We were wrong. In 1992 a report *Belonging Together* was presented to ACC-9, and it sought to establish some principles of relationship and governance within the Anglican Communion. ACC-9 in its turn commissioned the Virginia report, which presented its findings on governance in 1997, prior to the Lambeth Conference. This report more than any other laid down the foundations of a covenant process. In 2000 and 2001 irregular consecrations of bishops took place in Singapore and in Denver; in 2003 Gene Robinson was consecrated in New Hampshire; in 2004 the Windsor report was published.

The main thrust of the Windsor report was in fact governance, but sadly and, as so often, from people's desire to be helpful, a rather hurried attempt was made to draft a Covenant. It was not subject to the scrutiny usually associated with such documents, and to say that this was unfortunate is an understatement. It has coloured the whole

process whereby particularly the early drafts of section 4 were perceived as punitive and contractual rather than covenantal. Over the next five years designs and drafts have brought us to the place where we are today. The controversial section 4 has been hugely revised and clearly states that the Covenant cannot override the constitution of the canons of a province. It offers ways in which the Covenant can be amended. Its tone has shifted from the juridical to the relational. It is arguable that concerns about narrow confessionalism have been allayed, that doctrinal developments occur, issues of scriptural interpretation have been reworked and the role of the Primates downplayed.

The issue of governance will not go away. Like many, including other bishops, I struggle with this issue. At the same time, voices have been heard and have been listened to. If we stay with the process we are not committed to tablets of stone. The question for us is: how much do our relationships matter and will the Covenant process help them? Although I still have some reservations, I shall nevertheless vote in favour of this continuation of process.

*Ms Jacky Humphreys (Bristol):* I am troubled by this proposed Covenant. I am not necessarily utterly opposed in all circumstances, depending on its terms, but at the very least a Covenant sceptic. I am a lawyer and I have a background in both canon law and family law, both of which are quite relevant to the current discussions.

While I accept wholeheartedly that we must look to the impact across the Communion of our decisions here, we also need to be fully aware of how the Covenant will impact on our own rules, our Church laws and the way we do things in our own Church. That is something that troubles me, because I do not think that we have had those implications properly spelled out for us.

The concerns I have are the relationship between the Covenant, if adopted in its current form, and existing Church law, particularly with things like canonical obedience, the Clergy Discipline Measure, and those sorts of practical matter. I have deliberately sought out and spoken to other lawyers whose views I respect on this issue, who have said there is nothing to worry about; it deals purely with international matters and it is not in force as law in our Church. Obviously, I went straight back to the text and looked at it again, to see why I was concerned about it and if I had got it wrong. I therefore want to share with Synod why I think that may not be quite right.

I would take us first to 4.1.3. I will first read what the second sentence does not say and then read what it in fact does say. It does not say, 'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion.' What it says is, 'Nothing in this Covenant *of itself* shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion.' Most of the laws of the European Union do not of themselves alter English law; but, once they are ratified or adopted into our law, they then become effective in our law as though they were our law.

Let us look at 4.2.1 and the last sentence. 'Participation in the Covenant implies a recognition by each Church of those elements which must be maintained in its own life and for which it is accountable....' Not 'should' or 'ought' or 'will be encouraged



to' but '*must.*' Once we are talking the language of compulsion, of things being mandatory, then for it to mean anything it means rules and it means law.

When we have a determination of an issue by the Standing Committee of the ACC, how will that play out in the day-to-day running of our Church? What effect will it have if a clergyperson in one parish does something that does not quite fit? Are they obliged to be disciplined? Would the bishop be disciplined if they did not discipline him or her? It is a complex area but we have had no guidance on it. I think we need such guidance before we step forward into the Covenant.

I want Synod to look again at 4.2.4. I have been criticized in informal discussions for describing the Standing Committee of the ACC through the Covenant as 'sitting in judgement upon us', but that is what 4.2.4 says. 'The Standing Committee shall make every effort to facilitate agreement' – good; '...may take advice from such bodies as it deems appropriate' – good; 'to determine a view on the nature of the matter...and those relational consequences which may result.' It is a very gentle way of saying it but that is a determination of the issue; that is a judicial decision.

Those of us who have seen previous drafts of the Covenant will remember when Section 4 was much more legal and actually set out in terms what the legal processes were for the determination. It is still there; it is toned down; it is less obvious; but it has not gone away.

My second point is on the Standing Committee of the ACC. I trust that everyone in Synod, particularly those who are supportive of this, has gone away and read the recent minutes of the Standing Committee of the ACC and know what this body is that we are asking to sit in judgement on us. If members of Synod have not, then I would really encourage them to do it. It is a body of very committed, talented people, but I do not believe that it is either suited or resourced to take these sorts of important judicial decision for the entire Communion. On a political note, some of the conservative people who are trying very hard to keep on board within our Communion through this process have already resigned from it – and that is clear from the minutes. As I say, I am troubled by this process and I am sceptical of it.

*Revd Canon Gary Jenkins (Southwark):* I warmly support the Anglican Covenant. It is an attempt to square a circle and, in my opinion, it just about succeeds.

It recognizes and respects the principle of provincial autonomy. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said yesterday, the Covenant does not override canonical autonomy. I believe that those who are concerned about that matter should be reassured that provincial autonomy is entirely respected by the Covenant; yet the Covenant asks provinces and Churches to exercise their autonomy in such a way that they take into account the effect that their decisions may have on other Churches. In particular, it encourages Churches to consider the relational consequences of their decisions; that is, what effect these decisions will have on other Churches in the Communion and their relationships with them.

In this way, it gives a real cash value – if I may use that term – to the very concept of communion. It recognizes that we belong to one another as part of the Body of Christ. It recognizes that when one part of the body is hurt we all share in the pain. It

recognizes that no national Church is an island. It recognizes that provincial autonomy must always be exercised in the context of a Communion of Churches. It recognizes that the concern for the whole Body of Christ may affect the decisions that we make as local Churches. This is what I believe communion is all about. Autonomy says, 'You can do whatever you like.' Communion says, 'You may choose not to, for the sake of others.'

In the current document at 3.2.2 we read that the Covenant is designed 'to respect the constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding our mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole.' In respecting this principle of autonomy but asking Churches to exercise their autonomy with a responsible concern for the whole Communion, I believe that the Covenant is a very Anglican Covenant and it deserves our support.

*Revd Canon Anne Stevens (Southwark):* The question I want to ask this morning is how will this Covenant affect the voice of prophecy in our Church? I know that people are raising various concerns about Section 4 of the Covenant. My main concern comes in Section 3 at 3.2.5. In that section, each Church commits itself 'to act with diligence, care and caution in respect of any action which may provoke controversy', particularly that which 'could threaten the unity of the Communion and the effectiveness or credibility of its mission.'

The trouble is that the prophet's calling is to be controversial, to stir up, to unsettle, to ask awkward questions and challenge the status quo. If a prophet is not provoking controversy then he or she is not doing his or her job. If a Church embarks on a course that runs the risk of silencing its prophets then it is not doing its job. The Church would be severely limiting its capacity for reform.

The Judeo-Christian tradition has not always loved its prophets but it has always needed them, and we need them more than ever today – and I mean that genuinely – from every part of the theological spectrum. Our Church needs prophets like those in the days of Ezra, who can remind us about the Scriptures and the law of God. We need prophets like Amos, who can remind us of the justice of God. We need prophets like Third Isaiah, who can remind us about the outrageously inclusive love of God. We need to hear all these voices and, even more importantly, we need to hear the conversation between them. It is in that conversation that all of our own hardness of heart and all of the distortions and prejudices of our own particular positions are brought into the light and criticized by each other. It is that conversation that can open up the opportunity for reform and renewal in our Church.

I am not opposed to the Covenant in principle but I am struggling to see how the measures laid down in Sections 3 and 4 preserve and honour the voice of prophecy in the Church in all its diversity. Somehow we need to find procedures that can open up that conversation rather than shutting it down, which is what I fear this document does.

I am still genuinely undecided about how to vote this morning but, whatever the outcome of our vote, I hope that the Church of England will be doing all it can to keep

the conversation flowing in the Anglican Communion in ways in which everyone can join in.

*Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield):* Since 2002 it has been my privilege to represent the Church of England as the lay representative to the Anglican Consultative Council and, at ACC-14 in 2009, I was elected vice-chair of the ACC Standing Committee, which is proving to be a very challenging position at this time of serious disagreement and disharmony within some Churches in our Communion. However, I would like to assure Jacky Humphreys that the people on that Standing Committee are truly representative of the Communion. Not only do they represent the different continents upon which our Anglican Churches live but they are also representative in their opinions about many issues, including this one. We take our work very seriously.

I have often been humbled by the trust of many other Anglican Churches and the love that they have for the Church of England, even though they may be thousands of miles away from England. They still look to the Church of England for leadership on difficult issues. I hope that Synod will have the courage, even if it finds the Covenant not to be a perfect document – when has the Church ever produced a perfect document? – to find it to be one that we can work with and a process that we can work with, in order that the Anglican Communion can live together.

I have followed very closely the process by which we have come to this Anglican Covenant text and I wish to put on record my sincere thanks to the Faith and Order Commission for the report GS Misc 966. Its clarity and comprehensive coverage of the historic facts and the stages of germination will allow both new members, and I hope diocesan synods, who may have come fairly recently to the Covenant, and also those who have taken part in the past debates and consideration of the text and process, to feel fully informed and aware of the vital importance of this Covenant to the future life and mission of the Anglican Communion.

From the Windsor report in 2004 first proposing the idea of an Anglican Covenant to the final text being agreed by the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council in December 2009, five years of intensive work by eminent theologians and consultative groups have been undertaken. Texts have been circulated to the Churches in the Communion for consideration and comment. Our General Synod held debates in February 2008 and 2009 which affirmed the principle of an Anglican Covenant and noted the procedures which the Church of England would need to go through to adopt such a Covenant. Our own House of Bishops has commended the adoption of the Covenant to this Synod. Are we to be episcopally led or not? I would wholeheartedly endorse their recommendation.

To those who still see the Covenant as a disciplinary measure which will create highly centralized and un-Anglican structures I can only endorse the message of this report: that it is important to see the Covenant as a positive means of handling our diversity, not a tool for either forced control or forced division. If it changes how ‘new’ is handled and welcomed, then it is a change that is calling us to responsibility; that actions have consequences; that our brothers and sisters in Christ are affected by what we do. The Covenant is about preserving the breadth of Anglicanism with a measure of coherence. To vote against it is to vote against inclusion and true diversity.

The Church of England, the Anglican Communion and the Archbishop of Canterbury need this vote to go through overwhelmingly, so that we can be seen to give some leadership.

*The Bishop of Lincoln (Rt Revd Dr John Saxbee):* We have had some wonderful maiden speeches today and may I congratulate those who have made them? This is the final speech I shall make in this Synod, so I think it is probably the speech of a clapped-out old matron!

In relation to the Anglican Covenant I am on record as saying in this Synod that I entirely support the process, as long as it never ends. (*Laughter*) Let me explain what I mean. The Anglican Communion does not need a covenant, because Anglicanism *is* a covenant. It is a way of provinces living distinctly apart from each other while remaining a part of one another. That is a way of doing difference differently from the ways in which groups and individuals usually do difference. It is predicated on grace and good will. If there is grace and good will then a covenant will be unnecessary, and if there is no grace and good will then a covenant will be unavailing.

Listen to this quote from Hilary Mantel's book *Wolf Hall*, putting words into the mouth of my distinguished predecessor Cardinal Wolsey. 'Wolsey always said that the making of a treaty is the treaty. It does not matter what the terms are, just that there are terms. It is the goodwill that matters. When that runs out, the treaty is broken, whatever the terms may say.'

The Church of England has a bit of a history of putting in place measures in response to a particular presented issue and then discovering that the proposed cure not only has unintended consequences – and the Good Intentions Paving Company is still very much in business, I assure you – but also that the cure can actually make matters worse.

We all know that the process towards the drawing-up of this Covenant was triggered by events in the Episcopal Church, a few years ago notwithstanding, and the long preamble that was helpfully presented to us by the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Those events were by no means trivial, but to elevate them to the status of game-changers when it comes to how we deal with each other over time is stepping over a very significant mark in the sand, and I truly doubt whether it will be conducive to long-term stability.

The Covenant may of itself not be tyrannical but there are those in the Communion whose treatment of our lesbian and gay sisters and brothers has had at least a touch of the tyrannical about it. If I ever come to the conclusion that a Covenant of this kind will give them comfort, then I would be bound to resist it.

Anglicanism has been described as 'a fellowship of civilized disagreement.' I leave Synod to judge whether a two-tier Communion, with first and second division members, answers to that description of 'civilized disagreement.' Frankly, it feels like we will be sending sincere and faithful Anglicans to stand in the corner until they have seen the error of their ways and can return to the ranks of the pure and spotless.

I am grateful to Mr Roy for referring to the story of the woman taken in adultery. If we recall, Jesus first of all drew an extended circle of sinfulness, to include those who considered themselves to be more righteous than she was, and then drew an extended circle of acceptance to count her in. Synod will know the little rhyme – ‘They drew a circle that shut me out – heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But Love and I had the wit to win: we drew a circle that took them in.’

We can draw ever-tighter circles of sinfulness or we can draw ever-wider circles of acceptance, so that all provinces and not just some hear Our Lord’s injunction, ‘Go and sin no more’ but also echo his reassurance, ‘Neither do I condemn you.’

I love the Anglican Communion. I value our inter-diocesan links and I have learnt so much from visits to many provinces, but I do not love it so much that I would want it still to be a Communion but no longer Anglican. That prize is not worth the price.

I therefore leave you, Madam Chair, with the wise words of the American philosopher H.L. Mencken, with which you may be familiar. ‘For every difficult and complex problem there is a solution which is simple, straightforward and wrong.’ As an answer to a difficult and complex problem, this Covenant is simple, straightforward and, I still believe, probably wrong. There is too much religion in the world and not enough faith, and I think this Covenant seems to be more about factory-farm religion than free-range faith.

As I want the conversation to continue, I cannot vote against the motion to go on considering it and its implications, but I do think that the implications are very significant. As I ride off into the wonderful sunsets of West Wales, I wish you all well and hope and pray that, as this process continues, you will enjoy discussing the idea of a covenant and hesitate long and hard before signing up to one. (*Applause*)

*Revd Canon Simon Killwick (Manchester):* I see the Anglican Communion every Sunday when I stand in my church and look around at the congregation. There are many members from other provinces of the Anglican Communion present, from the West Indies and from a number of African provinces, and I thank God that my church is like that.

We tend to think of ourselves, dare I say it, as Anglicans before we even think of ourselves as members of the Church of England. The international dimension of our Church and our Communion is something that is vital. It is part of the New Testament vision – the Book of Revelation, ‘I saw before the throne of God people of every tribe, race and nation, worshipping the Lord together.’ It is an essential part of the Catholic vision of the Church that the gospel is for all races and all nations, all people at all times. Our Lord Jesus Christ has come to unite all people in himself, so we cannot just ignore the international dimension of the Church.

There is an initiative going round the country at the moment called Messy Church. I am one who has often believed in the Church of England as a messy Church and I have often been suspicious of people who have talked about trying to ‘tidy up’ the Church of England. However, there does come a point where untidiness becomes such a total mess that something has to be done about it. There comes a point at which, when untidiness is straining relationships, we simply cannot ignore it.

I would urge Synod to vote wholeheartedly in favour of giving consideration to the Covenant. It is about bringing a measure of coherence to the Communion but it is not about uniformity. It is a very Anglican sort of covenant. It is more like the covenant there is in marriage than like the covenant which is a legal contract. It is not about a straitjacket; it is about a framework within which Churches can relate to each other and grow in love and fellowship. It is a framework in which the member Churches of the Anglican Communion can work through difficulties and differences. It preserves the autonomy of all the member Churches but it introduces a way of expressing accountability and responsibility.

We cannot simply go back into the past; we can only go forward. We live in a global village. We are part of a Church which is essentially international. We cannot become insular, put our heads in the sand, and think it will all go away. The Covenant is the way forward and I believe that it is a prophetic thing that is calling for our support, in order to take the Anglican Communion, in love, fellowship and faith, into the future. I would urge Synod to support the Covenant wholeheartedly.

*Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark):* I am speaking in favour of the motion. I believe it is right that the Church of England should enter into and adopt the Anglican Communion Covenant. I say this as one who has sought to play a full part in the life of this Synod for the past 20 years and also as one of the many members of the Church of England who has roots in other parts of the Anglican Communion.

The Anglican Communion grew out of the Church of England mainly in association with British commercial and political imperialism. Despite these unpromising origins, we have reason to believe that God in his redemptive grace has called out the Anglican Communion to be a distinctive component of the Church of Jesus Christ.

This development of a global Communion has been accompanied by the pragmatic evolution of the structures that we now call the instruments of communion, responding to changes in the Church and in the world. I believe the Covenant to be an authentic further development of the structures of the Communion.

The introduction of the Covenant may from time to time place constraints on the pace of development in some parts of the Communion, but this is nothing new. Constraints arising from imbalances of economic and political power have long been the experience of many. As we become more and more aware that actions and decisions in one part of the Communion can have serious repercussions elsewhere, it is surely right that we put in place an orderly system to ensure that changes are made with sensitivity to the widely differing circumstances in different provinces.

*The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Nicholas Reade):* The Bishop of Sherborne, writing in one of our newspapers last week, took us back to the debate that led to the 1975 Declaration of Assent. The solution was, he said, 'an elegant middle way', to which liberal and catholic Anglicans and evangelicals could keenly subscribe.

I believe that the Anglican Communion has needed a similar solution for some time now, to enable us not least to decide which of our differences may need to divide us and which of those differences clearly do not need to divide us. As we have heard,

many Churches do have a mechanism for making such decisions but, with no Petrine ministry, no curia, no hierarchical decision-making structure, how do we do it?

What do we have instead? Perhaps only the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting, which together with the Archbishop of Canterbury make up, as we have heard, our four instruments of unity – all of which are essentially consultative. We are therefore left with a real gap and, frankly, saying that that does not matter and therefore doing nothing is just not an option.

Looking back at our history over the last 20 years, particularly the last ten, it is abundantly clear that we need something further. That something, of course, cannot be anything that will change the nature of the Anglican Communion; but if we do not have that something further, we will change the nature of the Communion because we will almost certainly find parts of the Communion re-grouping into a looser federation, and that is not the Anglican Communion.

Yes I would like the Covenant to be tighter in certain respects; but it is, as Dr Eames described it some years ago, an agenda for relationships rather than, for example, a judgement on sexuality issues. None of us wants a covenant whose main aim is policing every move every member Church makes, looking to see who is going to be expelled or downgraded next. Rather, we want something that is based on prayer, generosity and good will.

Work has been in progress for seven years. Of course it is not perfect: far from it. However, I would rather give the benefit of the doubt to all those who have worked and prayed their way through this for all those years than just to do nothing.

I believe that, like the Declaration of Assent way back in 1975, we have found that elegant middle way in this Covenant. It is a way that, as we have heard, could later be modified in the light of experience. Let us give this our keen support.

*Revd Canon Richard Franklin (Salisbury):* I want to raise two questions about the Covenant, which in a way are different from those posed by some other speakers. I have some fundamental theological problems with its ecclesiology, its way of understanding Church and Communion. It is of course true that the idea of covenant is a deeply biblical and Christian idea, but the main use of the idea of covenant in Scripture is God's graceful covenant with humans to which we are called to reciprocate. There is a long political use of the idea of covenant, however, and it is my view that, despite all the theological accoutrements, the text before us is principally a political rather than a theological document.

I said that my hesitations are concerned with ecclesiology. In my judgement, the Covenant is proposing that communion is a construct, something that has to be sustained, maintained, expressed, enabled, nurtured and fostered – all terms which one finds within the Covenant document. Surely the communion of the Church is essentially something that is given to it by God and which it retains, notwithstanding its failures and shortcomings?

It seems to me that the Covenant document employs an ecclesiology which, in 2.1.1, acknowledges communion as a gift from God but which denies this as a reality. It

implies that we and not God have to create communion. A troubling expression that has been used to describe the purpose of the Covenant is that it is ‘to make explicit and forceful’ the loyalty and bonds of affection which govern the relationships between the Churches of the Anglican Communion; but communion is not something that can be forced by human means. I appreciate that we are talking of the Anglican Communion here and not Christian communion in general. Even so, I have severe doubts about an approach to communion as a kind of constructive moral enterprise.

I am also deeply concerned that the Covenant and associated changes to the mechanisms of the Anglican Communion imply a far more centralized vision of the Church’s life than is traditional to Anglican ecclesiology, with an overemphasis on the universal at the expense of the local. Although catholicity has sometimes been defined as universality, a much more coherent definition is ‘wholeness’. This may be found in each and every local church. The Greek Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, for example, maintains that ‘Catholicity is to be found in the eucharistic gathering of the local Christian community.’

The increased power and authority for the instruments of unity tend toward the creation of universalistic structures. It carries the implication that the local church only becomes catholic, part of the whole, when under the control of the wider Church. However, the local church is, or should be, catholic in and of itself, since, as the local eucharistic community, it draws the many into the one communion. The great problem with universalizing structures is that they will impose one cultural norm – something that we have seen throughout Christian history, to the great detriment of the gospel and of our mission.

Synod may judge that the political purposes behind the Covenant are sufficient to back it, at least for consideration. I may even conclude so myself. However, I have endeavoured to flag up some difficulties and some issues, which make it hard for me to accept the document with equanimity.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*Miss Sally Muggeridge (Canterbury)*: Here I am, on the second day of my first Synod, and I have been so impressed by the speeches so far. The big question to me and to everyone else is will it work?

To set a little bit of context, my background is in large international organizations, where my job was to bring together people from across the world for a common goal and to achieve the objective. The word always was that the sum of the whole should be greater than the individual parts. There is this conundrum, on which we all have to reflect. Being with a big international organization, you had a leader and the leader would say, ‘This is what we will do’. We used to call them ‘God shots’, because they did indeed come down from on high. We need to think carefully about the leadership of our wonderful Anglican Communion and the fact that, internationally, everybody is an individual part but should be part of that greater good.

I have heard the Church and the Anglican Communion described as ‘untidy but lovable’. In my business life, I found that organizations very much needed to flow and ebb but never put in such a position – and here it may be that ‘covenant’ is not quite



the right word. A covenant is a solemn promise to engage in or refrain from a specified action.

This morning the *Guardian* talked of a piece-by-piece dissolution of the Communion. We need to think carefully about the wording. I was quite alarmed when I read 4.2.5 and 4.2.6, and indeed 4.2.7, where there is talk of ‘relational consequences’. I find those words very hard to consider. We may be asked to defer. How will things flow from a covenant? Maybe we just need to think again.

*Mr Mark Russell (Archbishops’ Council):* Leadership is a painful role. It is tough and it is frequently misunderstood. I think the Archbishop of Canterbury has the most impossible job in the history of the world – and we have a remarkable occupant in that role. (*Applause*) It is a lonely task. In the seven years that I have been a member of this Synod I have never heard Rowan ask us for our support in the way he has for this Covenant. He has appealed to us. He has asked us to back him; he has asked us to back this Covenant. He has told us that if we do not, the Communion risks unravelling. I believe him, because I trust him. Time and time again, this Synod has told him that we love him, trust him and value him. I have always believed that love is shown in trust.

I am CEO of a large organization. I make difficult decisions every day and frequently those decisions are misunderstood; but I am very sure that if the people knew the things I knew and that I cannot talk about, they might understand the decisions I make.

Comparison has already been made in this debate to Northern Ireland. With this accent, you may guess that I know something about that. Peacemaking is messy. I was part of the Ulster Unionist Party team under David Trimble in the run-up to the Good Friday Agreement and was in his constituency, trying to muster support for something that people did not support. The problems of Northern Ireland were deep-seated; there were violently different views held passionately on both sides. A Unionist problem was a Nationalist solution. Everyone saw things differently. It was a nightmare. I hate the Good Friday Agreement as a document. I dislike it immensely. I am a legally trained person. The language sucks; it is horrible – but we needed it. We could not have solved Northern Ireland without the Good Friday Agreement. It was a springboard to give permission to local people across the country to begin making new relationships at local levels. We needed the relational solution on the ground; we needed structural solutions in place too. It needed me as a youth worker to bring Protestants and Catholics together, but it also needed the politicians to produce a document that gave protection to all.

We need to be sure of what we are doing today. If we say No, not only are we voting this down but we are also not backing our Archbishop when he asks for our help. The consequences for our Communion and for our Archbishop are significant. We are not passing this today; we are voting to continue a process. I for one will back the Archbishop and give him the support that he asks for and quite honestly deserves.

*The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Michael Perham):* I am one of those who will vote for the motion with some reluctance. Reluctance because I do fear that, despite assurances, a covenant could eventually be used in a punitive manner against fellow-

Anglicans, as well as because of the more general worry that a covenant may alter the kind of Church we are. Nevertheless, I will vote for the motion for two connected reasons.

First, not to do so is to make more difficult the task of the Archbishop of Canterbury in his ministry to the Communion and I want to strengthen, not weaken, his hand. Second, the Covenant process keeps us talking and keeps us all in communion through challenging times. The process helps, even if we fear the final outcome.

What I really hope is that, when we eventually reach the point when a covenant is poised to come into force, we shall look at one another and say, 'What's this for? We have no need of it.' One of the reasons why I hope that this may be the outcome is the continuing indaba process.

At the Lambeth Conference two years ago, I felt led to try to form a triangular partnership involving my diocese and two others in very different cultures. What emerged was and is a partnership with the diocese of Western Tanganyika in Tanzania, which is what you might call black, conservative, evangelical – its bishop had also been to GAFCON – and with the diocese of El Camino Real in California, which is mainly white, though with a significant Latino minority, liberal, inclusive, fairly typical of the Episcopal Church, its bishop being one of the few women diocesans in the Communion. In the two years since, representatives of our three dioceses have spent quality time together in all three countries. We have prayed together, done *lectio divina* together, explored theological and ethical issues together, eaten together, gone on pilgrimage together.

There have been some extraordinary moments of grace. There was the reception that Bishop Mary received in an African diocese that had never seen a woman deacon, let alone a bishop; the meeting in California of African Christians with lesbian and gay people, listening, developing relationship, learning to respect and to see Christian authenticity in people whose interpretation of Scripture and tradition is different from our own. We did not set out to change opinions but change is what we have experienced: change and transformation in ourselves and in others.

Now our triangular partnership has become one of six sets of triangular partnerships participating in pilot schemes to do something similar across the Communion. The Communion's continuing indaba project has a wider intention than we have had. It is to get each set of three to explore together shared mission priorities, but at the heart of it remains the building of relationship, trust and love that can hold the Communion together and deepen our unity.

My hope is that we shall model something that will provide a pattern for such relationships, involving as many dioceses as are willing to take part. My regret is that we did not do it ten years ago. We may be too late. I pray not. I have as much confidence long term in a continuing indaba as I have in the Covenant, for which I shall vote today.

*Revd Dr John Perumbalath (Rochester):* I wonder how appropriate it is to use the word 'covenant' for this document, particularly with the judicial nature of Section 4.

The biblical texts quoted in the introduction to the Covenant are about our communion in Jesus Christ and God's invitation, furthered through covenants initiated by God in his divine grace. Section 4 of the document, however, as observed by the House of Bishops in the Province of Brazil, is closer to a contract in the modern Western provincial tradition – appropriate for the State as a form of binding political association and not a proper mutual, theological and missionary commitment. It creates new and strange relational mechanisms, which can significantly alter the ecclesiological nature of the Anglican Communion, bringing it closer to the idea of a denominational macro-structure.

I speak as someone who has roots in two overseas Churches within the Anglican Communion and having worked for seven years of my first ordained ministry in the Church of North India, serving on its General Synod. My family became Anglican just a generation ago. It was not an easy decision for my parents to leave the Oriental Orthodox Church, which was our home for 19 centuries, but we believed that we were moving from one communion to another, to a more inclusive and open communion. We were passionate about the communion and our theology and missiology were shaped in that ecclesiastical context. That may not be the case for the next generation, even for my daughter, because their Church in all probability will not be of the single and unrestricted sacramental communion as Anglicans but just bound to it by personal and historic links. This Covenant can be divisive.

Sections 1 to 3 of the Covenant text are commendable but, with Section 4 added to it, the document is ecclesologically un-Anglican, theologically bankrupt, and a potential cause for relegation of some of the Churches which are today in full communion with us. I shall vote against it and would encourage anyone who is concerned about the unity of the Anglican Communion also to vote against it.

*Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford):* We have to remind ourselves that this Covenant did not come from nowhere. While it is true that the Anglican Communion has managed so far without a covenant and we may wish that we could carry on into the future without a covenant, I think that we all recognize that circumstances have changed, that tensions have built up and that the status quo is simply not an option.

Nor do I think that anyone in this Synod could fail to recognize and be aware of the deep commitment of the Archbishop of Canterbury to finding a way to hold the Anglican Communion together. This Covenant is the outcome of a long process of detailed, finely-balanced negotiation. At the very least, we have to recognize that our Archbishop of Canterbury knows more about the dynamics and details of that process than most of us do.

I do not think that we have heard in this debate what those who oppose the Covenant see as the alternative. Perhaps we are just hoping that the problem will somehow go away, or maybe some people do not even think that there is a problem, or do some people think – as one of the speakers intimated – that the way forward is perhaps for certain groups of people just to pack their bags and go away?

I have, as some members of Synod will have heard me say before, a number of friends in the Anglican Church of Canada. At the moment they feel as though they are standing on shifting sands and they want something to hold on to. They are absolutely

desperate that we should affirm this Covenant. They are hoping and fervently praying that the Church of England will also do so. I would ask Synod to give the Anglican Communion a chance and to support this motion.

*Mrs Mary Johnston (London):* On a point of order, Madam Chairman, under SO 33, I beg to move:

‘That the debate be now adjourned and resumed at the July 2011 group of sessions.’

*The Chairman:* Mrs Johnston has moved the procedural motion that the debate now be adjourned and resumed in July 2011. Under SO 33 she has not more than two minutes to give us her reasons. I will then ask the Bishop of Bristol, as mover of the main motion, to speak for not more than two minutes. When I have heard those two speakers, I will decide in my discretion whether to allow any more debate on the procedural motion.

*Mrs Mary Johnston:* My reasoning is really about process and context rather than content. It seems to me that we are embarked upon a very serious debate, with huge implications for the whole Communion and the Church of England in particular, and that that is a very significant matter for an inaugural session of Synod.

About a third of us here are entirely new to Synod and everything about our procedures is unfamiliar. Yet we are here this morning, on our first morning of business, dealing with this hugely significant issue. All of us here, apart from the bishops – and that may be significant – have just been through an election. That is an experience that I suggest, for all laity and clergy, makes us acutely conscious of our responsibility to the Church of England. That is what our laity, our parishes, our people, elected us to represent them here for.

This particular issue has not only domestic but also international implications. That is an enormous, onerous burden on this Synod. We have heard some compelling contributions. It is clear that there is uncertainty and perplexity about the impact of a covenant on this Church.

The bishops have been much more closely involved in the Covenant process than we have. I think that we need some time for the rest of us to catch up with where the bishops are. I am suggesting that perhaps in February the Business Committee might bring forward a presentation about the implications of the Covenant, how it will work, and then we could perhaps have indaba groups to work it out. (*The Chairman rang the bell.*)

*The Bishop of Bristol:* I want to be as brief and clear as I can be in asking Synod to resist this procedural motion. Can I remind members that what we are doing today is asking for Synod to vote on a process? This is about sending it to the dioceses under Article 8. It is not the final decision. This will come back to Synod.

The last Synod debated various drafts of the Covenant on four occasions. The final text of the Covenant was published nearly a year ago. We have had a solid piece of work from the Faith and Order Commission and other people have made their own positions clear, in favour of the Covenant and against it. I do not think that there is any reason, therefore, why the new Synod cannot deal with the business before us

today. It is not the end of the adoption process; it is the beginning of a process that will require debate in the dioceses and then again in this Synod before we come to a final decision.

Let us stick with the task before us, therefore, because I think that to send a lukewarm message today will be sending not a very good message.

*The Chairman:* I am minded to take one speech either way on the adjournment. Archbishop, which way do you wish to speak? If I am taking one each way, I need to find out what your view is.

*The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu):* I want us to proceed with the motion. Our duty here is to be both legislative and deliberative. I will simply remind members again of the history and why this cannot be allowed.

The Synod debates on the Covenant were as follows. In February 2005, the Bishop of Durham led a debate on a motion on the Windsor report from the House of Bishops, and the Covenant was in there. The motion was carried on a huge show of hands. In 2007, Archbishop Drexel Gomez introduced and the Bishop of Chichester moved on behalf of the House that Synod 'affirm its willingness to engage positively with... a process to produce a covenant.' Again, all amendments were resisted and the motion was carried on a show of hands. In February 2008, on behalf of the House, I led a 'take note' debate on the Church of England's submission on the draft Covenant. It was carried by 266 votes to 20 with 19 abstentions.

Although not strictly a Covenant debate, in July 2008 there was a desire that there should be some kind of information that would help everybody, contained in a Diocesan Synod Motion from Guildford. Again, the Covenant was talked about. In February 2009, the Bishop of Rochester moved that Synod take note of the proposed Church of England response to three questions on the Covenant, sent by the Anglican Consultative Council. Again, this was carried.

We have been at it, we have moved it forward, and now you want to say, 'Wait until February.' If I were a new member of Synod, being told that I was not capable of sorting out the wood from the trees would be an insult. (*Applause*)

Any legislative body always inherits the earlier legislation. Let us be more disciplined and go for it. Incidentally, all the other amendments should fall by the wayside as well!

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I have been listening to the debate. I came here today sure that I was going to vote against, but probably may well now vote in favour. However, Mary's proposal has given me pause for thought.

She mentioned that, in terms of process, the bishops have had this longer than everything else. I have listened to the Bishop of Blackburn, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Bishop of Lincoln and the Bishop of Gloucester today, and they are all saying that there are problems; that there are holes and uncertainties in terms of the content rather than the process. I just wonder whether this opportunity of an adjournment gives Synod members a chance to reflect on that and to ask themselves

the question whether it is right to send a covenant to the Church of England as a whole without much demonstration of what those problems are. How are our people to assess the value of this Covenant without having a clear picture of some of those problems that they have admitted still remain?

By adjourning now, giving time for that indaba process and coming back in July, irrespective of the timetable and the length of the list that the Archbishop has just read out, I think that it will give us a chance to inform the Church of England much better than we might do than by simply nodding this through at our first group of sessions.

*The procedural motion was put and lost.*

*Revd Canon Dr Simon Cox (Blackburn):* On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

*This motion was put and carried.*

*Revd Stephen Coles (London):* On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I think you said that you would have electronic voting. In the light of that, could we please have a vote by Houses?

*The Chairman:* We have not yet reached that point because the Bishop of Bristol must be allowed time to reply to the debate.

*The Bishop of Bristol, in reply:* It seems a long time ago since Mark Beach made the first speech in the debate. I listened to him very carefully and found that I could disagree with very little of what he said apart from the fact that I could not see why, on the basis of what he said, he was not in favour of the Covenant. I refer him to sections 1.2.4 and 1.2.8 of the Covenant, which I think say quite a lot of what he might have wanted to hear about Scripture, reason, Church tradition and experience.

I am very grateful for Miranda Threlfall-Holmes’s emphasis on context. All I can say to her is that having brought up five children of my own, if I had allowed autonomy without any accountability I would have even less hair than I have today!

Debrah McIsaac reminded us that she is one of six children and 100 first cousins, so she has my sympathy as Christmas draws near. I appreciated her comment on coming to the Covenant as a kind of clean read; I think that is a very helpful perspective.

I am of course grateful to the Archbishop for his wisdom on the subject.

I listened very carefully to Anirban Roy. I thought that his speech was going to end up a little better than it in fact did. I was interested in his exegesis of the woman caught in adultery, which was picked up by a later speaker.

I was grateful for Simon Cawdell’s contribution. In the context of supporting this motion he said that we have an opportunity to amend the Covenant. However, I need to make it clear to Synod that that is not strictly true; we cannot amend it. We have either to adopt it or not at the end of the process.

It was rewarding to hear our ecumenical colleagues make their contributions. I thought that what Paul Fiddes said with his very sharp question about the theological basis for a Covenant was both helpful and clarifying for us.

I need to move on at high speed, just to say to Julie Dziegiel that I think Mark Russell made rather a better point than I could in relation to her comparison with Northern Ireland.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells spoke well and summed up what many members are clearly thinking.

I need to give time to my colleague from the Bristol diocese, Jacky Humphreys, who is troubled by this, simply to say that I am not sure the parallel with European law carries, because I am advised that this is not really an appropriate parallel. By acceding to the Treaty of Rome this country agreed to submit itself to the jurisdiction of the European Court in Luxembourg and to allow European law to have direct effect in this country. The Covenant does not create Anglican Communion law. There is no principle of direct effect, no international court and no body with any coercive authority. The point is that the ACC will not be making judicial decisions; it will make recommendations.

I am grateful to Gary Jenkins for his support.

Anne Stevens raised a concern shared by many here about whether this Covenant will kill the voice of prophecy. I do not have a vast experience of prophets but my limited experience according to what I have heard and seen tells me that gagging prophets is as impossible as it is undesirable.

Elizabeth Paver gave us a little kind of framework from the centre of the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council as it were, and I was grateful for her support of GS Misc 966, which was very helpful.

I think that many would have some resonance with the points made by that clapped out old matron from Bristol, the Bishop of Lincoln. I was interested in his circles of acceptance from the John 8 narrative, and I would like to hear his sermon on that subject at some point. Very early yesterday morning I read through the Covenant. I cannot say that it was a clean read for me. However, given that it is 450 or 500 years since the divines of Anglicanism were put together, I thought that it was a very Anglican piece of work and I could not quite understand why he felt that it was not.

Simon Killwick reminded us that untidiness can become a mess, and that is certainly true. I believe that the Covenant is an attempt to create for us a framework within which not to deal with our mess but certainly to keep talking about it.

Vasanth Gnanadoss and the Bishop of Blackburn made robust contributions in favour of the Covenant.

I listened very carefully to Richard Franklin's fundamental ecclesiological questions and his understanding that the text is political rather than theological. At the end of his

contribution I wondered whether this was not just a kind of idealism and whether we are where we are rather than where we would like to be.

Sally Muggeridge asked us whether it would work. If we do not adopt it today, we will never know, and I hope that she will feel able to adopt it despite her misgivings.

Mark Russell made his usual high impact performance and I was grateful for that.

With customary generosity, the Bishop of Gloucester shared with us some of his anxieties and reminded us that alongside all this some very important work is being done with the continuing *indaba* process, and I would like to commend to Synod – not that I do it myself but we are thinking seriously about it – that these tripartite consultations with a conservative diocese and a more liberal diocese are a really grown up way of pressing on.

To John Perumbalath, I think that the Covenant is trying to do exactly the opposite of what he fears and I guess that we will just have to agree to disagree on that.

Finally, thank you to Prudence Dailey. It is a very sharp point to make that if we back off this today, what is the alternative?

This Covenant is about creating a framework for ongoing conversations so that hopefully we can engage with each other as adults, and I hope that the Synod will support the motion standing in my name.

*Revd Stephen Coles (London):* On a point of order, Madam Chairman. As you have indicated that we will have electronic voting, can I therefore propose that we do it by Houses?

*The Chairman:* We can take a vote by Houses only if 25 members stand in their places. Are there 25 members standing? There are.

*The motion was put and The Chairman, pursuant to SO 36(c)(iii), ordered a division by Houses, with the following result:*

	<b>Ayes</b>	<b>Noes</b>	<b>Abstentions</b>
House of Bishops	39	0	1
House of Clergy	145	32	11
House of Laity	147	25	8

*The motion was therefore carried.*

*The Chairman:* We now move to Item 505. I am aware that one or two members are slightly confused about why we are taking amendments after we have just voted on the main motion. To clarify the matter, it is because we are not amending the main motion. What we are now considering are the amendments that relate to the text in GS 1809, and for this part of the business we will be using the 40-member procedure under SO 56.



*Mr Justin Brett (Chichester):* I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In recital (1) after “the Anglican Communion Covenant” *insert* –  
“, subject to the exception referred to below,”; and  
After “GS Misc 966” in paragraph 1, *insert* –  
“, with the exception of section 4.2,”; and  
Before “solemnly covenants” *insert* –  
“subject to that exception”.’

First, let me start by saying what this is not; it is not a wrecking attempt or an attempt to derail the process. If it was an attempt to derail the process, I would not be seeking simply to remove a part of the Covenant draft, which I believe as the Church we cannot and should not sign up to. What I am in effect trying to do is sign us up to a Covenant which I believe is a coherent whole.

I would also like to briefly take issue with something that was mentioned earlier in the debate about the fact that this is the beginning of a process and that we shall have a chance to change things later. Yes then we did, but this is now the ‘later’ when we have a chance to change things. Once it goes to the dioceses by Article 8 reference, it comes back in exactly the same form as it went and we say Yes or No – end of story. Therefore, if there are aspects with which the Synod is not happy, this is the only chance that we have to amend what is going on.

The fact that we have come this far in the debate means that we want to engage with the Covenant process and that as a Communion there is a huge amount that we can say which we have in common, but if the aim of the Anglican Communion Covenant is to keep us together, I would submit that section 4.2 of the Covenant does not belong in the agreement. Section 3.2 already sets out what we as a Communion need to do to keep together. We need to seek a shared mind with other Churches and to act with diligence, care and caution in respect of any action that may provoke controversy or threaten the unity of the Communion.

Given that that is already in the Covenant document, section 4.2 can be there only for the purposes of enforcement. It replaces what should be bonds of affection with what is in fact the language of contract. Recognition of and fidelity to the text of this Covenant enables mutual recognition and Communion. I recognize my brothers and sisters in Christ because I can see Christ in them and they, I pray, can see Christ in me. However feeble and broken my attempts might be to follow his commands, I do not expect them to produce their ACC accreditation. The question about section 4.2 is not whether it claims or is intended to be punitive but whether it can be used in that way, and I say, as others in this chamber have already said, that it can.

Let us look at sections 4.2.5 and 4.2.7, which refer to relational consequences. There is nothing in the document in front of the Synod about what a relational consequence is, but relational consequences were listed by the Covenant design group in Singapore in 2008. They include suspension or termination of voting rights in the Instruments of the Communion and removal from the ACC schedule of membership. This is in direct opposition to 4.1.3.

I know this as the language of a teacher: ‘It is up to you whether you do the prep or not, but if you fail your test next week you are in detention.’ I know it as the language of the playground: ‘If you do not do what we like, you are not our friend and we will not talk to you any more.’ We cannot sign up to a document such as that, because we do not have the legal competence to do so. That is why 4.1.3 is in there in the first place. If it was not there, the Church of England could not sign. I therefore urge Synod to excise from the document that which is contrary.

I want to end with one final thought. In the words of Bishop Alan Wilson writing recently, ‘As a sinner saved by grace through faith, I have absolutely no will to start making judgements about my sister or brother or the Churches to which they belong that would compromise my ability to sit down at the Lord’s Table with them. I am a broken sinner in a fallen world and so are you.’ (*The Chairman rang the bell.*) It is for that reason that I beg Synod to pass this amendment.

*The Bishop of Bristol:* As usual, Justin Brett speaks with a certain clarity and grace. I guess he knows that I am going to urge the Synod not to support this amendment. Section 4.4.1 of the Covenant states that the Covenant consists of the text set out in this document in the preamble sections 1–4 and the Declaration. The invitation to all 38 provinces of the Communion is to adopt the Covenant. There is no provision for adopting some parts and not others. Any suggestion that purporting to adopt the Covenant without section 4.2 would somehow be less damaging than simply refusing to adopt the Covenant will not seem like that to many of our brothers and sisters around the Communion. If members do not like the Covenant, that is a perfectly legitimate point of view, but the honest and straightforward thing to do is vote against it in your diocesan synods and when it comes back here for the final stages. We may not like the question that we have been asked, but it is the question that we have to answer. Do we adopt or not?

Finally, I want to challenge the idea that somehow this would be a better Covenant if it contained nothing about processes on how to try to resolve disputes when they arise. The Bible itself says a lot of wonderful things about the Church, but it also deals with what happens when there are disputes within the fellowship. Being prepared for the consequences of human failure and having in place some agreed processes does not mean that we are half-hearted about our commitment to each other or our dependence on God’s grace. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome he said that we belong to one another. I think that we have to work very hard on what it means to belong to one another when we disagree with each other.

*The Chairman:* The amendment proposed will continue to be debated and proceed to a vote only if 40 members stand in their places to indicate that they wish that to happen. Are there 40 members standing? There are.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu):* Why Covenant? We had a wonderful contribution from Professor Fiddes telling us that it is the Covenant of Jesus Christ. We are summoned to participate in his death and resurrection; that is the Covenant. If anyone thinks that discipline cannot be a part of it, they should read Paul saying that some people are unworthily receiving the Lord’s body; they were even dying. I am

afraid that Covenant must always have within it the possibility of discipline. Yes, grace is wonderful and always tends to make sure that the law is not hushed, but this is not cheap grace. At the heart of grace is the cross of Jesus Christ. He is the one who died and rose again and asked us to participate in his body and his blood. I want to believe that the law is not always bad. Law is good, but it is bad when we do not realize that Christ by his grace makes it good law.

Of course, there are those who want to continue the process without actually deciding this. I now represent the Church of England in the meetings of the Primates, which the Archbishop of Canterbury chairs. If I were to go to that meeting and all the other provinces had voted on section 4.2 but we had decided to delete it, it would be very difficult for the Anglican voice of the Church of England to be heard and I would be absolutely naked. I would therefore ask members to take the text to the dioceses as it is, and if it does not come back with two-thirds, well and good, but Synod should not deprive the dioceses of the possibility of seeing the entire text because we have actually neutered it somewhat. I therefore urge members to resist the amendment.

None of us is above the law. We have our canons. What happened in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral? There was a lot of debate and some thought that it was going to change the whole of Anglicanism, but it did actually save the Church. What about the Declaration of Assent and the preface to it? We know, of course, that clergy promise to use only those forms of service that are allowed by canon but that as soon as the bishop turns his back they start to use their own rites and there is no punitive effect. This is the kind of Church that we live in with canons, rules and declarations.

I urge the Synod not to deprive our dioceses of the possibility of looking at the entire document which the rest of the Communion will have decided. This went through the ACC and was amended and it is an agreed text, so I ask the Synod to allow our parishes to look at it as well.

*Revd Dr Robert Munro (Chester):* I want to share a few reflections on biblical covenants about which we were reminded by our ecumenical partners. I believe that one note missing from the debate is that covenant-making is supposed to be a joyful process in which we come together. Indeed, as the Royal covenant making is anticipated by the nation, there is a real danger in having a less than wholehearted encouragement of that process, as has been noted by at least one of our members in the House of Bishops.

At this point, therefore, I want to say that scriptural covenant-making is joyful, that it brings people together and carries with it two characteristics not to be feared but celebrated, and it seems to me that biblical covenants never come without cost or consequences. Covenant-making is a costly process.

In Scripture the sacrifices made at the point of cutting the Covenant are an ample sign of those things. We know that there is already a cost involved in this process. There has been a great cost to our partners across the world in standing together. I am privileged to serve in a church that is partnered with a number of Churches that have been directly affected by the tear in the fabric of the Communion which led to the Windsor process. For us it may cost the disdain of our culture; for them it risks their lives for the sake of the gospel in some circumstances.

This cost we all bear not grudgingly but joyfully in our fellowship in Christ. Indeed, the second characteristic of biblical covenant-making is that it always carries consequences; there are blessings and curses associated with it. Even in unconditional covenants those consequences are born at least in Christ in his sacrifice for us. This does not simply say that there are no responsibilities that come with biblical faithfulness.

A couple of years ago my sister was married and I joyfully attended her wedding. For the previous eight years she and her partner, to whom she was very committed, had been living together, and she had children. That did not mean that I went to that covenant-making with any reluctance. Indeed it was because she was taking on a degree of commitment and consequences in that relationship that brought her to it. Unfaithfulness can be involved whenever covenants are made. Those consequences are shown in Scripture in the exile and the exodus. On the other hand, there is a joy in coming together under God's grace and sharing and submitting together in this Covenant process. Let us see the joy of our Communion, not the fear of regulation as being that which binds us, and let us join together in affirming this without reservation or restriction on the result.

I encourage Synod to reject this amendment and the one that follows.

*Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford):* I want to draw Synod's attention to two points, neither of which has come up thus far in our debate this morning. The first concerns an anxiety in this chamber and elsewhere about the undesirability of punitive consequences. I think that we need to remember to apply that anxiety in other debates as well. We also need to remember that those sorts of punitive consequence have already been applied in other parts of the Communion in the debate in which we are now engaged. Dr Munro has just referred very delicately to the use of canonical and other Measures in churches in North America to exclude those like Dr James Packer who are loyal, faithful, godly, scholarly Anglicans. That that has happened is deeply regrettable, and it is part of the division and difficulty within the Communion that we have to address.

Secondly, if this section is removed from the Covenant, for many of us it would withdraw the last tiny bit of autonomy within the Communion of self-discipline which the Covenant retains. A number of members of Synod, including me, have voted for this with some reluctance because it is not a half loaf but a quarter of a loaf, and part of it not well baked, but we have nevertheless gone with it for some of the powerful reasons that have been explained. If this goes, what will we have that will make any difference to resolving the issues in front of the Communion? The Archbishop of York has said that without this kind of Covenant he will have nothing with which to play.

I therefore urge the Synod to reject this amendment.

*Professor Helen Leathard (Blackburn):* In worship this morning we had references to the Kingdom of God and to Christ the King. We have a Covenant given to us by Jesus Christ in the New Testament, and if that is not sufficient to keep us together as Anglicans or Christians throughout the world, I am not convinced that any particular form of words will do it, and I am especially not convinced that a form of words

which hints at exclusion will do it. I am therefore minded to support this amendment, not because I do not understand what was explained about the fact that at the end of the day we have to vote for it or against it but because I believe that we need to think carefully through the possible relational consequences.

As I read the papers for this Synod I was preparing a sermon on Zacchæus, as I am sure many of us were at about that time, and I think that section 4.2 risks putting us with the grumbling outsiders rather than going into Zacchæus's house with Jesus and working until transformation comes. What I would like to see by way of relational consequences is perhaps the imposition of an interminable indaba between those who disagree rather than exclusion from Instruments.

*Mrs Christina Rees (St Albans):* I think that we have had an absolutely stunning debate and I have been greatly impressed with the quality of all the contributions. What has emerged from this is that we all want to stay together and carry on in the Anglican Communion. If we pause for a moment and not concentrate on quarter loaves half baked but on the things that we all have indicated we absolutely want to do, we surely know that we are part of a Communion, that we want to remain part of that Communion and that we are passionately committed to it.

However, concerns have been raised about certain aspects of it, and the Bishop of Gloucester certainly gave us one model to work with, because one of the questions is: if we do not pass it as it stands, what will we do? Well, we could do worse than carry on those triangulated conversations that he and many other bishops seem to be having across the Communion. There are models that we could explore rather than resorting to section 4, which has caused the greatest problem. Section 2.1.1 refers to Communion as a gift of God, yet it is said in section 4.2.1 that only by mutual recognition will we have Communion. I simply do not believe that; I do not believe it as a Christian or as an Anglican.

I thought that our response to the Bishop of Lincoln was not just because this happens to be his final speech and he is retiring, but he managed to convey in his speech a disease that we all have about section 4, and I would urge Synod to ask what we would be left with if we omitted section 4. What would it leave us with? It would leave us with the three sections that we can all join with together and the relationships that we are passionate about continuing. We want to carry on and talk and we want to solve some of the difficulties, but I think there is a sense that the framework of solving the difficulties set out in section 4 is not necessarily the best way forward.

I do not have the answers nor do I have a plan that I prepared earlier for getting rid of section 4 and inserting a new one, but let us have the trust, maturity, hopefulness and faith that perhaps sections 1, 2 and 3 are enough for us as a Communion of people who love each other to carry on together.

*Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark):* On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

*This motion was put and carried.*

*A member:* On a point of order, Madam Chairman. May we have a division of the whole Synod?

*The Chairman:* That would require 25 members to stand. Are there 25 standing in support of a division of the whole Synod? There are not.

*The amendment was put and lost.*

*Dr Brian Walker (Winchester):* I beg to move as an amendment:

*‘Insert as new recital (3) –*

*“The Church of England understands the Anglican Communion Covenant as a means for maintaining continuous inclusive relationships between all covenanting Churches.”; and*

*At the beginning of paragraph 1, insert –*

*“Subject to paragraph 2,”; and*

*After paragraph 1, insert –*

*“2. The Church of England will not participate in or support any limitations or suspensions of the kind provided for in section 4.2.5 or sanctions effected under section 4.2.7.”.’*

This amendment addressing clauses 4.2.5 and 4.2.7 on page 26 will allow us to accept the Anglican Communion Covenant while avoiding what Archbishop Rowan in his message last year sought to avoid, namely a procedure for punishments and sanctions.

When we last discussed it, I welcomed the proposed Covenant. However, I raised concern about the section that sets out what happens when a Church chooses not to adopt requests of the Instruments of Communion and there is a relinquishment by that Church of the Covenant’s purpose until they re-establish their Covenant with the other member Churches. This did not sound like the Christian family values of patience, forgiveness and love.

Thankfully, the text of the Covenant before us no longer speaks of relinquishment or of the need for them to re-establish their Covenant with us. Indeed, the briefing paper concludes with the Archbishop of Canterbury’s words to the Lambeth Conference: ‘A Covenant should not be thought of as a means for excluding the difficult or rebellious but as an intensification – for those who so choose – of relations that already exist’. Sadly, when we turn to the details of the Covenant we find that the final version is not as strong on intensification of relationships in times of disputes but focuses instead on the imposition of relational consequences – see page 26.

Section 4.2.5 allows the Standing Committee to recommend to any Instrument of Communion relational consequences for a Church failing to defer a controversial action. The possible consequences specifically include limitation of their participation in or indeed suspension from that Instrument while advice is sought. Surely, this is not the time to suspend Communion from any Instruments of the Anglican Communion but is the very time to intensify those relationships and to remain in deep Communion

with that Church to enable us to explore together ways to develop enduring reconciliation?

Once an action or decision is declared incompatible with the Covenant, the Standing Committee has to make further recommendations as to the relational consequences which flow from that action. While the clause does not spell out these relationships, it requires the Standing Committee to address the extent of the impairment and, taking the context of clause 4.2.5, it is likely that they will include suspension or perhaps even exclusion. As Paul explains, the reality of the Church as the Body of Christ means that we cannot say to another member of the body 'We have no need of you'.

Passing this amendment will allow us to enter into and adopt the Covenant and if necessary declare how and why an action is incompatible. Meanwhile, if our intention is to maintain relationships with all covenanting Churches by not participating in or supporting limitations or suspensions prescribed or sanctions effected under clause 4.2.7, I think that that should be sufficient for us to be able to continue with our discussions and rebuild those relationships.

*The Bishop of Bristol*, in reply: Madam Chairman, I will try to be brief; I know that you are anxious about the time.

Members will obviously have guessed by now that I am going to encourage them to resist Dr Walker's amendment. Some of the points that I made about Justin Brett's amendment apply to this amendment as well. The simple question that we are being asked is whether we are prepared to adopt the Covenant. As soon as we start to insert declarations about what we might or might not do in certain hypothetical situations we will introduce uncertainty and hesitation.

In addition, I have some difficulty with the implication that here there are no circumstances at all in which we would want there to be relational consequences as a result of what another Church in the Communion had decided to do. For instance suppose another Church in the Communion really did become, as a document recently mentioned, neo-Puritan and decided to abandon the historic episcopate, are we saying that we should have no consequences at all? Suppose the leadership of a particular province of the Communion became so corrupt and allied to an authoritarian regime that it endorsed the theory of racial supremacy or gave encouragement to ethnic cleansing. Are we saying that there should be no possibility of relational consequences then?

I urge the Synod not to support this amendment.

*The Chairman*: In order for the debate to continue to a vote on this item, 40 members need to stand. Are there 40 members standing? There are not. The amendment therefore lapses.

That concludes the debate on the draft Act of Synod as such. As I indicated at the beginning of the debate, provided the procedures under Articles 7 and 8 of the Synod's Constitution are completed successfully, at a later date the Synod will have an opportunity to vote on whether or not to finally approve the Act of Synod.

We therefore come to Item 507, the following motion in the name of Revd Canon Robert Cotton. This canvasses various issues relating to the next stage of the process and in particular the referral of the draft Act of Synod to the dioceses under Article 8.

*Revd Canon Robert Cotton (Guildford)*: I beg to move as a following motion:

‘That this Synod, recognizing and affirming the difficult issues addressed by the Anglican Communion Covenant:

- (a) request that the date determined by the Presidents for the reference of the draft Act of Synod to the dioceses under Article 8 should be no earlier than November 2011;
- (b) direct the Business Committee to ensure that the documents circulated to diocesan synods for the purposes of the Article 8 reference include a range of briefing material, properly reflecting the diversity of views on the Covenant within the Church of England; and
- (c) invite the House of Bishops to encourage in the dioceses a process of widespread education about, and engagement with, the substance and text of the Covenant.’

We have committed ourselves to asking the dioceses the questions, and that is good. Now the key question becomes: in what ways will the Covenant strengthen the Anglican Communion?

My motion asks for three things, the most important of which is the first. It asks to delay the Article 8 reference until we have dealt with the Article 8 reference on women bishops. I know that the Bishop of Bristol will say that there is a pressing timetable in relation to the ACC meeting in 2012, but does their timetable trump ours? Members will know that it has taken a great deal of work to get the Church of England to this stage on the matter of women bishops, and much still needs to be done with that Article 8 reference.

Within the network of clergy chairs we are currently advising each other on how to handle this matter in diocesan synods, and many dioceses seem to be following the pattern that has been commended – that of allocating one diocesan synod next year to deepen theological understanding and then to have a debate which could be divisive in a following synod. For them, once the process of discussing diocesan budgets has been added in, that will be the 2011 timetable full. There could be all sorts of resentment and misunderstandings if our two Article 8 references overlap.

Today we have already sent out a very clear signal to the rest of the Anglican Communion that we support further discussion of the Covenant. The first part of my motion respectfully requests that we finish our current business before allocating proper time for discussing the Covenant further, and that is what paragraphs (b) and (c) ask for; they are relatively uncontentious. It is because ignorance about the Covenant to some extent in some places of our Church matches a lack of interest in the Covenant. It is dangerous to put on the statute book something that we do not understand and are not sure we want.



Therefore, asking for good briefing material is not about asking for documents that urge us to vote Yes or No, but it is educational; it is about answering the question ‘In what ways will the Covenant strengthen the life of the Anglican Communion?’ For example the Archbishop has said that this is not about creating an external authority. I believe him, but why does it feel like that to many, and should those many be blamed for that feeling? Let us have more material explaining it.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells said that the usual scrutiny was not applied early in the process and that we are still catching up, and that is what my motion asks for – catch-up material so that we can understand. This following motion is essentially about seeking to turn what could be grudging, half-hearted ignorance into endorsement with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

*The Chairman* sought leave of the Synod to extend the sitting by 10 minutes.  
(Agreed)

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Bishop of Bristol:* To ring the changes, I have to speak from a different place. However, I am sorry to say that, as Robert Cotton has implied, I am not going to ring the changes in the advice that I give to Synod. I want to urge the Synod not to support this following motion.

I think that paragraphs (b) and (c) are unnecessary and that paragraph (a) is positively unhelpful in the light of what we talked about earlier. Working from the bottom up, paragraph (c) is unnecessary because I cannot believe that we will have anything other than a process of engagement in dioceses. I would have thought that the experience of this morning demonstrates fairly clearly that people understand what the issues are. Indeed, engaging with the text itself would be a very good thing.

On paragraph (b), I am happy to trust the good sense and judgement of the Business Committee. The Business Committee has always represented a wide range of views across the Synod and I believe that it is well able to ensure that the material sent out gives us what we need to work with. I also suspect that it will be supplemented by all sorts of useful briefing papers from those who hold particular views on the subject.

My main problem is with paragraph (a). The next meeting with the ACC will take place towards the end of 2012. I do not know whether we shall have been able to reach the final approval stage by then, but if we do not start the diocesan referrals until November next year we shall not even know whether a majority of dioceses is prepared to support the Covenant. By letting the process take its course now in the normal way, by the time of the next ACC we shall have had either the final approval vote or at the very least achieved much greater clarity over opinion within the Church of England towards the Covenant. I believe that we owe it to our Communion partners and to ourselves to get on with the process, have the debate and come to a conclusion.

As to whether dioceses can cope with two controversial items of business at the same time, the Article 8 reference on women bishops started in September and is already under way. Nothing that we do in relation to the Covenant will delay or cut across that process. I believe that many months ago diocesan secretaries were alerted to the

possibility of two Article 8 references running in parallel with each other. I am sure that when it meets next month the Business Committee will want to think quite carefully about the return date for the Article 8 reference decision on the Covenant so that dioceses can have the time that they need to come to a conclusion, but I urge that we do not put the whole thing on ice for a year.

*Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells):* Something must be done. This is something, therefore it must be done. Yes, we are in the middle of a process but I think that we need to understand where we are in the process. Many members here today voted in favour of us going forward on this, not because they necessarily will vote in favour of it later but because they want to continue the dialogue and the process, so let us not assume that we are in a one-size-fits-all situation. I believe that some things are still missing in terms of what we need to do, and that is why I would like to support Robert Cotton's motion, because the point about education is very important.

I want to talk about integrity, context and grace. At the beginning of this group of sessions a speaker said that we had lighter paperwork this time round, and that is true. However, the import of that paperwork has been quite extensive. I think that this has been quite an historic Synod. We have not talked about women bishops but we have talked about the Big Society and about the Anglican Covenant, and there is a sense in which our decision making has to have integrity about it. Does the touch and feel of what we decide have the same effect across all those three? The answer is that probably it can, and still come to different conclusions provided that the context is understood. The context of each of the three is different. The Archbishop of Canterbury talked about it being unrealistic that for example this can be done just by good will, yet many people spoke about the need to understand the grace. One of my favourite hymns is about the wideness in God's mercy and understanding that some things are carried out by our organizations 'with a zeal he will not own' and that 'there's a place for all God's people'; and we need to be aware of that.

Let us also remember that we are not the Orthodox Church. If we were, we would not be discussing this. Since the Orthodox Church was formed all forms of innovation, including papacy and others, have come to the point at which we are today. Innovation has allowed the Church of England to be the way it is and the Anglican Communion to have diversity.

I therefore urge the Synod to take on board Robert Cotton's suggestion to take a little time out so that we can deal with the reference on women bishops and ensure that there is good quality education in the dioceses before we make the decision.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* On a point of order, Madam Chairman. Would you be prepared to accept a motion for closure after the next speaker?

*The Chairman:* I will accept a motion for closure after the next speaker and the Archbishop of York.

*Revd Professor Richard Burridge (University of London):* I have just flown back from North America. Twelve hours ago I was in Atlanta, home of Martin Luther King and Jimmy Carter, with Tom Wright and others at the Society of Biblical Literature and the Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars. If members have missed Tom

Wright's voice here today, be in no doubt that we heard plenty of it over last weekend.

I met colleagues from Africa, Australia, New Zealand, North America, Canada and so on, trying to pursue what it means to understand the Scriptures, and in particular we had parallel meetings about the project on which many of us are engaged on the Bible in the life of the Anglican Communion. When I said that I was leaving the conference to fly back to the debate in this Synod about the Covenant, enormous and deep anxiety was expressed to me from across the globe and the traditions.

I have listened to this morning's debate through my jet lag and I was delighted that Dr Munro reminded us that covenant is a joyful biblical idea. I have seen no sign of joy today. Rather I have heard deep anxiety about this topic from speakers saying that we must go forward and keep up the process because it is the only thing in town, but that there are many reservations about it. We were told that we must keep with the process, but now we are being told that it cannot be changed or amended and that we cannot stop.

Canon Cotton's amendment gives us a chance to reflect further and think carefully about what all this means. Many of us have been involved in this for many years. For five or six years I chaired a group for the Bishop of Southwark across a whole range of areas in the diocese. We looked at lots of different versions of the Covenant and wrote notes for the Archbishop of York to take to the debates. We also tried to decide what the key question was. If this is to have teeth, what is the mechanism for exclusion? Is it the Archbishop of Canterbury? Is it the Pope? Is it the Lambeth Conference? Is it the Vatican Council? Is it the Primates? Are they the curia? Is it the ACC? At least the latter involves laypeople and clergy. Now we are told that it is a Standing Committee.

This reference will give us a chance to have further discussion on what is referred to in paragraph (c) as 'a process of widespread education'. If we want a Covenant to be joyful and about furthering bonds of affection rather than about punishment and making an unbiblical decision of the Body of Christ, saying 'We have no need of you', where party strife is a work of the flesh, where we are told to accept one another as Christ accepted us, we need this time to engage with that process of widespread education and reflect further on this before we are rushed into it, important though the process is.

I hope that Synod will support Canon Cotton's motion.

*The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu):* It is always best to send Article 8 business to the dioceses with a very clear decision; it is almost like a referendum. This kind of delaying mechanism should really be discussed by the Presidents with a view to establishing what needs to happen. It should not tie the hands of the Presidents. When we passed the legislation on the consecration of women bishops and sent it to the dioceses, there was then an attempt to do something similar to what this motion seeks, and I resisted it because I thought that the dioceses should have a very clear date and time and discuss the matter. Of course there is always the possibility of a following motion from any diocese in the light of a particular decision taken.

With regard to delaying until November 2011, as far as the diocese of York is concerned, the papers on the legislation concerning women bishops have been sent out and we are trying to have that matter debated and discussed. For the life of me I cannot say that because that document has been sent down it will cause confusion or be unclear or that there will be two elephants in the room.

I want to suggest that 2011 will be too late, for two reasons. First, it is intended that there will be a meeting of the Primates in January and already some provinces are on the way to adopting the Covenant, so the question to the Church of England will be: 'Sections 1, 2 and 3 look very much like your Declaration of Assent. What is the problem now?' and I will then have to try to explain why we are having a delay. Second, the Business Committee has issued the necessary Explanatory Memorandum relating to the Article 8 business, which will go out again. In addition the House of Bishops is encouraging this process of widespread education; the bishops are hearing it. Every one of them, after all, is supposed to be a teacher of the faith. If they do not do the teaching properly, there is little that this motion can do.

For all those reasons, friends, I think that this is an untidy attachment to what we have already passed. I say that we should allow it to stand as it is and people can always come back and talk about it. Incidentally, if Item 508 is reached and debated, I believe that it too should be resisted, because in the end on that particular day we can vote by Houses.

*Mr John Wilson (Lichfield):* On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

'That the question be now put.'

*This motion was put and carried.*

*Revd Canon Robert Cotton, in reply:* The process of handling a following motion is not straightforward, but I was told that it could not be tabled in the form of an amendment, rather as a following motion. I was puzzled about why the Bishop of Bristol was sitting down there, but at least it gave me the chance to have an officer whisper in my ear, 'Friend, come up higher', which is why I am here now rather than down below.

Reference has been made to the motion asking for things that we do naturally, but that is one of the ways that Synod motions are actually handled. Naturally we will engage in education and the bishops will encourage that, but one of the things that we do in General Synod is submit motions to make sure that what is good happens. That is why paragraphs (b) and (c) are worded as they are.

I think it was very helpful to have your comment about paragraph (a) and the return date. It may be that the reference does not need to wait until November 2011, but I would urge those responsible to give us sufficient time so that the return date is not rushed. Of course, diocesan synod processes need to be clear and handled practically, but if this lands on our agenda within the next six to nine months we may well have to organize additional diocesan synods. I leave it to the wisdom of those who have to make the decision on that, but I urge them to give us time and possibly hold off that return date.

Synod may not support the motion – so be it – but what is important is the action that we take. What we all need to do now is study this further in a non-tribal way. We need to respect the energy that is still needed for the Article 8 reference on women bishops, and then let us turn to this issue with enthusiasm.

*The motion was put and lost.*

*The Chairman:* The time is now one o'clock. Following motions may be taken only if time is available and we do not have time, even with the extension, to address properly the issues contained in Item 508. The remainder of the scheduled Legislative Business will therefore be taken at 2.30 p.m.

*(Adjournment)*

THE CHAIR *The Archdeacon of Colchester (Ven. Annette Cooper) (Chelmsford)* took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

### **Variation in the Order of Business**

*The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Trevor Willmott):* It will not have escaped members' notice that we have about an hour and three minutes before we come to timed business and so I need to move a variation in the order of business, with your consent, Chair. First, if I may, a word of clarification about the two following motions which were listed for debate but not reached: they were from Clive Scowen on the Big Society and from John Ward to continue our debate on the Anglican Communion Covenant. Under SO 8, following motions which are not moved lapse unless the Business Committee direct otherwise. I am very happy to undertake that, at their December meeting, the Business Committee will consider whether and, if so, when one or both of these motions might return to Synod.

There are also three items of legislative business which were scheduled for debate this morning: two items concerning the clergy terms of service legislation and the amending Code of Practice under the Clergy Discipline Measure. There is also the draft Church of England Marriage (Amendment) Measure scheduled for this afternoon. I would like to propose the following variation in order of business so that we start this afternoon with Items 501 and 502, the Ecclesiastical Offices Regulations and the Ecclesiastical Offices (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Order because they are the most time-critical of all our legislative items. When that is finished, I would then like us to move to Item 500, the draft Church of England Marriage (Amendment) Measure and then, if time permits, we will come to Item 503, the Amending Code of Practice under the Clergy Discipline Measure.

This variation requires your consent, Chair, and that of the Synod. *(Agreed)*

**The Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2010 (GS 1806)**  
**Regulations made under section 2 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2010 for Approval**

*The Chairman:* I draw members' attention to a financial comment on this item in paragraphs 10-12 of the financial memorandum on the seventh notice paper.

*The Bishop of Hull (Rt Revd Richard Frith):* I beg to move:

'That the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2010 be approved.'

The two instruments before Synod this afternoon represent the final stages of a long legislative process which will, we hope, come to fruition in the early part of next year with the implementation of common tenure. For the benefit of new members, I should like to explain briefly the history of this legislation in order to set today's debates in their context.

The law has traditionally regarded parochial clergy in the Church of England and those serving in cathedrals and in senior appointments as office holders rather than employees. This reflects the autonomy that clergy enjoy in exercising their day-to-day ministry. However, because clergy terms of service are not regulated as employees' are, there is at present a disparity between the position of licensed clergy, who can in principle have their licence revoked at any time, and those holding a freehold office, who have considerable security but lack a corresponding framework of proper accountability.

In 2002 the Archbishops' Council established a review group under the chairmanship of Professor David McClean which brought to Synod proposals for a new framework of conditions of service to be known as common tenure. The underlying principle of common tenure is that clergy who are office holders should retain that status but should serve under a common set of terms and conditions which confer rights and responsibilities akin to those that apply to employees under the general law.

Following approval of those proposals, draft legislation in the form of a Measure, supporting Regulations and an amending Canon was introduced into Synod in 2007. After thorough synodical scrutiny and revision, the Measure completed its parliamentary passage and received the Royal Assent in 2009. The amending Canon has also received the Royal Licence and Assent and was promulgated in July last year, when Synod also approved the Regulations made under the Measure which set out the detailed terms on which clergy subject to common tenure will hold office.

It is expected that the legislation will be brought into force in the early part of next year, at which point those within its ambit who serve under a licence will transfer automatically to common tenure, as will the two archbishops. Others who hold a freehold office on the appointed day will have the opportunity to opt into common tenure but will not be obliged to do so while they remain in the post they hold at the appointed day.

Turning now to the first of the two instruments before Synod today, the draft Ecclesiastical Offices (Amendment) (No2) Regulations 2010 are intended to clarify the position of a particular category of clergy: those who are not currently office holders under the general law but who exercise their ministry under a contract of employment coupled with a licence from the bishop. There are many clergy in the Church of England who work on this basis, for example, as chaplains in hospitals, prisons, schools and universities, as well as in a variety of diocesan appointments.

As the explanatory memorandum GS 1806X explains, employed clergy will fall within the ambit of common tenure because they exercise their ministry in accordance with a licence from the diocesan bishop. Indeed, the 2009 Measure confers significant protection on these clergy because section 3 provides that the licence which they receive cannot be terminated by the bishop while the contract of employment lasts, except as a result of disciplinary proceedings under the CDM.

However, a difficulty arises in relation to the 2009 Regulations. As I have explained, these Regulations are intended to confer on clergy certain rights and responsibilities in those cases where employment law does not already apply to their ministry; but clergy who exercise their ministry under a contract already have such rights and responsibilities by virtue of their employed status. So paragraph 2 of the draft before Synod makes the position clear by specifically disapplying the 2009 Regulations to employed clergy to the extent that they exercise their ministry in pursuance of a contract of employment.

The qualification is important. We are aware that many chaplains and other employed clergy also minister in parishes, sometimes serving where there would otherwise not be a minister. In such cases the bishop is free to make the parish ministry the subject of a separate licence, with the result that the Regulations will apply to that ministry in full but not to the ministry under the contract. If the two elements of a person's ministry effectively make up a package, so that it is appropriate for the parish ministry to come to an end when the contract does, this can be achieved by linking the two licences together under Regulation 29(1)(g).

Finally, there is one area where the Regulations confer rights on clergy holding office under common tenure which go beyond the scope of employment law. This is the provision of ministerial development review and continuing ministerial education conferred by Regulations 18 and 19. As GS 1806X records, the implementation panel discussed at some length whether that provision ought also to apply to employed clergy. We came to the conclusion that to impose a requirement on employed clergy to participate in, and on bishops to provide, MDR and CME in all cases, regardless of the particular circumstances of the clergy or of the diocese concerned, would be unduly onerous and prescriptive, given that some chaplains, for example, already have a full programme of accredited training and appraisal provided under their contract. However, we endorse the recommendation in the Archbishops' Council's guidance that employed clergy should, wherever practicable, be offered the opportunity to take part in ministerial development review, an opportunity that we know many already value.

*The Archdeacon of Lewisham (Ven. Christine Hardman) (Southwark):* As many archdeacons have discovered, we have become far more familiar with the detail of

this terms of service legislation than we might have wished and, as the person charged with heading up the implementation of this legislation in Southwark diocese, I entirely share my brothers' and sisters' views on this.

What we have discovered is that, in the detail of the legislation, things are not always quite as we had expected them to be, and there have been lots of complications. I want to say straightaway that I really value this particular amendment to the Regulations and entirely support it. It is very helpful that, where a priest is employed, it is clear that the employment contract and that particular status trumps common tenure and that we are not trying to deal with two separate kinds of conditions of service. However, Bishop Richard, in his very clear explanation, did say that, where clergy are office-holders rather than being employed, it is the intention that that status of office holder should be retained. We are discovering that, for some clergy, there is in the advice we are receiving pressure to move clergy in some circumstances from being office holders to being employed. For example, a diocesan director of ordinands, who at the moment holds that position, may be employed, but if they are not, they would be an office holder and their whole understanding of their vocation is that that work is being done vocationally, as an office holder, accountable to the bishop, not employed, not as an employee. We are now under pressure to say that such a person should be shifted to employee status.

It gets even more complicated if, as in Southwark diocese, your DDO office is linked to a residentiary canonry in the cathedral. Residentiary canons on a fixed term will transfer automatically to common tenure, but for 100 per cent diocesan canons it is being suggested – perhaps we have got it wrong; we are resisting the suggestion – that there should be a licence under common tenure for the residentiary canonry and then an employment contract for the DDO part of the work. This is fragmenting the understanding of the office holder of what they do and who they are called to be in God's service; and I hope we shall have some clarification on this. I also sincerely hope that we will not be pressured to turn office holders into employees where they do not wish it and that the tail of this legislation will not wag the dog of our sense of calling as priests in the church of God.

*Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford)*: I too thoroughly welcome this amendment to the legislation. I am speaking as the presiding moderator of CHRISM, an acronym for Christians in Secular Ministry, which is effectively the national association of ministers in secular employment. We are in secular employment and we knew about this all along, that we have a contract of employment with our secular employer, and we have a licence from our bishop for our ordained ministry. It seems to me entirely sensible that those should be separated in the right circumstances. I agree with what Christine Hardman has just said, that when they are the same job they should not be separated, but when you have a definite contract of employment from, say, a hospital or a prison or whatever, that clearly is a contract of employment; but you also to my mind need a licence from your bishop, as has always happened, with which comes common tenure because that person is effectively a non-stipendiary minister in their parish or whatever other ministry outside their employed work they are undertaking.

I am a little disturbed by the phrase in the final paragraph of this explanatory memorandum which talks about 'a peripheral ministry'. I know – or at least I hope I know – what was intended by that, but some of us have only a very small amount of



parochial ministry which may not be worthy, so to speak, of a licence because it is so – I do not want to say ‘peripheral’ – small; but for most people in employment – and that is whether they are in some sort of Church employment, chaplaincy employment or secular employment – it is sensible for them to have some sort of definite licence, with all the things that now go with common tenure - working agreements, statements of particulars and so on - so that it is quite clear that that is what they are doing in their ordained ministry. It would be great – and it will be in most cases – that for those who have secular employment their statement of particulars or their working agreement will state very clearly what sort of ministry they are exercising in their secular work as well as what sort of ministry they are exercising in their parish or diocese or deanery or whatever it is; but it is very important that that other ministry, as well as their employed ministry, is recognized and part of common tenure and not regarded as peripheral.

*The Bishop of Hull*, in reply: Christine Hardman referred to pressure on clergy to become employees rather than office holders. It really is not a question of pressure; it is a matter of fact that there is no recognized office, for example, as a DDO. However, I am entirely happy with the way she was explaining how they were addressing the issue.

With regard to Hugh Lee’s comments, I am grateful to him for them and I entirely take the point about peripheral ministry. The word ‘peripheral’ is only true in a technical sense, and I would want to do all I can to affirm the ministry of people in that situation.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chairman*: The Regulations will now be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

**[The Ecclesiastical Offices \(Terms of Service\) \(Consequential and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2010 \(GS 1807\)](#)**  
**[Order made under section 11 of the Ecclesiastical Offices \(Terms of Service\) Measure 2010 for Approval](#)**

*The Bishop of Hull*: I beg to move:

‘That the Ecclesiastical offices (Terms of Service) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Order 2010 be approved.’

I do not intend to detain Synod long in relation to this draft Order. As its title suggests, it makes a number of consequential and transitional provisions needed to facilitate the implementation of common tenure. The effect of these various provisions is explained in GS 1807X.

I should, however, like to make reference in particular to paragraph 1 of Schedule I of the Order, because this provision addresses a concern raised by Fr Stephen Trott and others at a previous group of sessions. As I have already explained, those who hold a freehold office when the terms of service legislation comes into force will not transfer automatically to common tenure but will have the right to retain their existing terms

of service for so long as they remain in that post. The transitional provision in this order preserves that right where a freeholder who has not opted into common tenure is transferred to another equivalent post by virtue of a scheme or order made under the Pastoral Measure 1983. In this way we ensure that the office holder is not inadvertently forced on to common tenure against his or her will. The Church Commissioners already have policy constraints in place which guard against such an eventuality but we felt it appropriate that legislation should put the matter beyond doubt.

*Revd Stephen France (Chichester)*: Little did I imagine when I was elected to Synod that my maiden speech would be on a matter of ecclesiastical law, but I am moved to commend the Archbishops' Council for this Statutory Instrument. I should perhaps at this point declare a personal interest because, as a freehold incumbent, I am shortly to be faced with a pastoral scheme over which I am in agreement but which, without this consequential amendment, would mean my giving up the freehold and moving on to common tenure. So I fully support the intention of the amendment.

However, I wonder why the default position as drafted will be to retain freehold and only move on to common tenure by election rather than the reverse, as the original freehold will lapse as part of the process. It seems to me that the default position could be common tenure unless an election is made. This would have the same overall effect but would be more in line with the scope of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009 which sets out to create, as I understand it, common tenure as the standard position by its implementation.

*The Bishop of Hull*, in reply: I am grateful for Stephen France's support for the amendment. I think the thinking behind the way things are being proposed is to make it absolutely clear that there is no pressure on people to go on to common tenure and to leave people in his sort of situation in exactly the same position as others on freehold.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chairman*: This Order will now be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Michael Perham)* took the Chair at 2.50 p.m.

### [Legislative Business](#)

### [Draft Church of England Marriage \(Amendment\) Measure \(GS 1805\)](#)

### [Draft Measure for First Consideration](#)

*Chancellor Timothy Briden (Vicar General of Canterbury (ex officio))*: I beg to move:

'That the Measure entitled "Church of England Marriage (Amendment) Measure" be considered for revision in committee.'

I am pleased to bring before Synod this draft Measure as a small offspring of the Church of England Marriage Measure 2008. It is intended by this legislation to give effect to some further clarification of marriage law. It is perhaps, as you will have perceived already, one of the intricacies of Synod to which the Archbishop of Canterbury made reference yesterday afternoon.

Going first to clause 1, I need to give Synod a little bit of background. Before the Church of England Marriage Measure 2008 came into force, the general rule was that a marriage had to be solemnized either in the church of a parish where one or both of the parties resided or in a church or chapel where one or both of them usually worshipped; so the law imposed a residence requirement or a worshipping requirement.

To this, the 2008 Measure added what is known as a qualifying connection, the effect of which is to extend the choice of the parties to other churches in respect of which one or both of them has some close link, usually a personal or family connection. There was a good deal of debate in Synod before the 2008 Measure was passed as to what should or should not amount to a qualifying connection in those circumstances.

Uncertainties unfortunately have been expressed as to how the test of qualifying connection should apply in respect of benefices containing more than one parish or benefices which are held in plurality.

Dealing with the more common case of the multi-parish benefice, section 23 of the Marriage Act 1949, as extended by paragraph 14, schedule 3 of the Pastoral Measure 1983, coupled with the appropriate direction from the diocesan bishop, enables any church or chapel in a multi-parish benefice to be used for a wedding if there was a residential or worshipping connection with one of the other churches or places of worship in the benefice. Thus the entitlement to marry became portable within the confines of the benefice as a whole.

Now we have this third element, 'qualifying connection'. If there is a qualifying connection with one of the churches in the benefice, is that connection portable between the other churches or other places of worship in the same benefice? It certainly ought to be. Common sense and fairness both dictate that there should be a parity of approach in operating all these tests of residence, worship and qualifying connection. Because of the uncertainties which have been expressed in law, however, an inconsistency of practice has already arisen, with the result that some couples entitled to rely upon the qualifying connection have been refused the right to marry in an associated church. This causes obvious disappointment and hardship to them.

It was no doubt because of that that the matter was brought to General Synod in July 2010 by a Diocesan Synod Motion from the diocese of Ripon and Leeds. It called for legislation to rectify what the bishop of that diocese described as 'an unfair anomaly', and the proposal for legislation was warmly received by Synod in July.

The purpose of clause 1(1), therefore, is to put beyond any doubt whatsoever that the qualifying connection counts in exactly the same way as residence or usual worship in enabling the marriage to take place in a place of worship in the benefice as a whole,

and exactly the same considerations under that clause will apply to benefices held in plurality.

Clause 1(2) provides a parallel provision, to align the law about qualifying connection with that of residence and usual worship in the case of a right to marry in a parish church or chapel being rebuilt or repaired. Section 18 of the Marriage Act 1949 includes provision for a right in those circumstances to a couple to be married in other places, including most importantly an adjacent parish; and that will be available under clause 1(2) to a qualifying connection with a building which is out of commission.

Clause 2 of the Measure deals with an entirely separate point. Under section 7(2) of the Marriage Act 1949, the prescribed form of banns embodied in the legislation is that given in the rubric prefixed to the marriage service in the Book of Common Prayer. The form of banns, although having legal effect, is also a matter of liturgical import. It has been discovered that the statute is now out of step with the form of banns prescribed in subsequent liturgical forms, including the *Alternative Service Book* and *Common Worship*, which we use today.

The most significant change in phraseology is that, whereas the rubric ‘cause or just impediment’ why the couple should not be married has been replaced in *Common Worship* with the expression ‘reason in law’, whichever form of words you use it still makes absolutely clear to those present that it is some substantial objection to the marriage which needs to be brought forward if it is to be halted. The fact that many marriages have taken place using the more recent form of banns, I assure Synod, does not in any way invalidate the publication of the banns; neither does it invalidate the marriage taking place on that basis.

Nonetheless, this is a convenient opportunity to bring the legislation in line with current practice and clause 2 extends the provision of the Marriage Act 1949 by enabling the form of banns used in *Common Worship* to have the same statutory effect as the form of banns appearing in the rubric to the Book of Common Prayer. Either form will be valid under this legislation and it will remain the choice of the person who is publishing the banns to decide which form to use.

I emphasize both in relation to the issue of banns and in relation to the issue of qualifying connection that the legal problems addressed by the draft Measure do not put at risk in any way the validity of any marriage. The Marriage Act 1949 contains robust provisions to protect marriages from being challenged on technical or procedural grounds where the marriage has been entered into in good faith by the parties.

*The Chairman:* The motion is now open for debate. I remind Synod that under SO 51 all speeches must be directed to the general purport of the draft Measure, rather than to points of detail. If the motion is carried, members will then have the opportunity to raise any issues on the draft Measure, including any points of detail, by submitting proposals for amendment to the Revision Committee in the way explained on page 4 of the agenda.

Could I also explain for the benefit of new members that proposals can be submitted to the Revision Committee irrespective of whether or not they have been raised in

debate today? If you have a point you wish to put to the committee, therefore, you can do so even if it is not possible for me to call you to speak today, or your point is one of detail which it would not be appropriate to raise in the debate today, or it occurs to you only as a result of the debate.

*Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough):* I would like to address the question of banns, which is section 2 of this proposed Church of England Marriage (Amendment) Measure.

I am sure members of Synod will know that we have been gradually relaxing the rules on place of residence as to qualification for being married in a parish church. It is enabling more and more couples, by means of a qualifying connection, to be married in a parish church to which they have a connection. However, the problem is that the clergy who administer the system, that is to say incumbents and priests-in-charge, are still subject to a rather archaic set of regulations and rules concerning banns of marriage, which put us in a very invidious position.

If somebody comes to my door and delivers me a notice giving me seven days' notice of their intention to marry, I am required to publish their banns of marriage and in due course, provided that there is no reason in law why they may not marry, I am required to conduct their marriage service in the parish church. This is putting many clergy in great difficulty because advantage is being taken of this situation by those who want to contract illegal marriages. Quite a number of clergy I know of have found themselves put under enormous pressure to conduct such weddings, or finding themselves even with the embarrassment of having bride and groom arrested on the way to the altar, because of the difficulty in filtering out those who are legally qualified to be married and those who are not. It is not the task of a parish priest to administer immigration law is what I am saying, to put it bluntly and briefly.

Those who have the skills, the resources and ability to do so are the civil registrars. Since these are rites that are nothing to do with what the Church is doing in marriage – which is a celebration of a sacramental act and the Church is here to prepare people for marriage and the life which that entails – we are not here to make judgements as to immigration law or any of the other rites which the State attaches to marriage. It seems to me that the appropriate place for decisions about legal preliminaries is the State itself. Banns of marriage are the general civil preliminary to marriage. If you have your banns of marriage published successfully, you are entitled to be married at the parish church.

What I would like to suggest, therefore, is that the Revision Committee should consider that, in addition to banns of marriage, whatever liturgical form is used in section 2 of this Measure, in future those who wish to marry at the parish church should also produce some form of civil licence such as a superintendent registrar's certificate, which is provided under the Marriage Act 1949, in order to ensure that the clergy do not have to filter marriage applications to make sure that they conform to immigration law and other kinds of State law and so that what we are dealing with is the Christian aspect of marriage and not the legal aspects of marriage, which over the years the Government has attached to marriage, whether it is in a parish church or in a civil register office.

To sum up very briefly, can we please have some protection for the clergy, some system brought into being whereby these decisions about what is lawful, any reason in law, are dealt with by the civil registrar before couples come to us to apply for banns of marriage.

*Revd Mark Steadman (Southwark):* I am grateful for the opportunity to express my support for the draft legislation before us. Prior to ordination, I was a lawyer specializing in ecclesiastical work and I must declare an interest, having been formerly employed in part by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Faculty Office. In many senses I am something of a gamekeeper turned poacher – or possibly preacher.

Since the passing of the Marriage Measure, even in my small, inner city parish church in Bermondsey, with its architecturally striking but far from chocolate-box 1960s church, we have had the delight and privilege of marrying several couples by virtue of their qualifying connection. The occasions have been opportunities to support and encourage marriage and to provide a welcoming ministry to couples seeking the joy and consolation of the sacrament. Indeed, it has been a delight to conduct these marriages without recourse to the electoral roll or, dare I say it, bending the rules. In part, because of the absence of this pressure, it has led to productive and enduring relationships between the couples concerned and the Church.

It has also been my delight as a surrogate for marriage licences to meet couples seeking a bishop's common licence for marriage by virtue of their qualifying connections. In seeking to clarify the law surrounding the qualifying connection further and thus resolve differences in legal opinion previously expressed in the July group of sessions, this draft Measure is to be welcomed as a further sign of the encouragement and support that the Church extends to all those who seek the honourable estate of matrimony.

In standing to support the draft Measure, I also give notice of a point that I shall hopefully be able to raise with the Revision Committee. I am grateful that in clause 2 the opportunity has been taken to make lawful the modern language version for the calling of banns contained in *Common Worship*. However, I note that in paragraph 10 of the House of Bishops' guidance issued under the Marriage Measure itself further specific wording for the calling of the banns in the qualifying connection church is also given. As this draft Measure is introduced for the purposes of clarifying the law, it seems appropriate, for the avoidance of still further doubt and to help those who publish banns, for all of these words to be consolidated in one place.

Accordingly, given the further commitment that this draft legislation represents to continuing clarity of the law relating to marriage and given that this continues to support the aims and objectives of the Marriage Measure in welcoming those seeking the office of the Church, I am pleased to support the motion to commit this draft Measure for revision in committee.

*The Dean of the Arches and Auditor (Mr Charles George QC (ex officio)):* I would like first to congratulate those in the Legal Office for bringing forward with such expedition this amending Measure, as a result of the Ripon and Leeds motion.

Secondly, I would commend them for the broad approach they have taken to their remit, by looking not merely to the matters raised by Ripon and Leeds but also to the question of the wording of the banns referred to in clause 2, a matter which has troubled ecclesiastical lawyers for some time; although I join with my friend the Vicar General of the Southern Province in saying that I do not believe there is any cause for concern about legality of marriages conducted in the interim period.

Thirdly, reviewing this matter of qualifying connections has brought up a number of other instances where I believe – and certainly the Faculty Office believes – legislative attention could properly be given to resolve additional uncertainties or, if there is not a legal uncertainty, to produce and promote positive further legislation. I refer particularly to section 6(3) of the Marriage Act 1949, section 15(2) of the same Act and section 29(3) of the Pastoral Measure 1983. I would express the hope that the Revision Committee approaches its task broadly. They now have the opportunity to resolve uncertainties and this would be the moment to take the opportunity.

Finally, I am sure that all members of Synod would share the desire of the promoters of this Measure that the Isle of Man should also take benefit from it. Unfortunately, the present way in which clause 3(3)(b) is worded will not have that effect, and that is because the Marriage Measure does not directly apply in the Isle of Man. However, I am confident that the Revision Committee will attend to that matter, so that on all these matters there is a level playing field in respect of qualifying connection, which I am sure we all desire.

*Revd Canon David Felix (Chester):* I have two very brief and quick points. My first point has already been made by a previous speaker. I certainly would ask for clarification about whether or not we now need to add the superscript ‘subject to a qualifying connection’ when it comes to reading the banns.

More importantly, may I ask that either the Steering Committee and/or the Revision Committee give some consideration as to whether or not we need to read anything out verbally, or would it not be a more effective procedure to publish banns on a notice board outside the church? When you are calling five or six banns in any Sunday service, it seems to me to be a little cumbersome and publication on a notice board would be far better. We could still ask for the prayers of the congregation for those couples separately, but perhaps the publication by public notice is a better way forward in this day and age.

*Revd Christian Selvaratnam (York):* I welcome this proposed amendment to the Marriage Measure, as I feel that it makes sense of the complexities of multi-site church at the local level. The illustration already given refers to benefices, but I want to draw Synod’s attention to other, similar scenarios which involve parish and Fresh Expressions of Church working together as one unit.

Perhaps I may give my own setting as an example. The parish where I am licensed is a multi-site church consisting of five services in the parish building but also five Fresh Expressions of Church meeting outside the building. This includes two Fresh Expressions meeting in non-church building venues and two that meet outside the parish boundary. Each of these Fresh Expressions has public worship; each is mature and each is sacramental. This combined local setting also functions as one unit, with

one vicar, one PCC, one bank account and one overarching vision. One church, therefore, but with two modes, inherited and fresh, working side by side. I am aware, of course, that not every parish and church will be as diverse as this but in many instances there is a parental parish working with one or more Fresh Expressions of public worship.

I have in mind also to write to the Revision Committee and to suggest a form of words which, if accepted, could create the possibility where a bishop might recognize where such a link does exist, either between a mission initiative or a Fresh Expression of Church and, perhaps in consultation with those parties, might agree that for the purpose of establishing a qualifying connection for marriage such a link may exist. The involvement of the bishop would also be useful in determining where that relationship was appropriate, perhaps looking to judge where it was public worship.

There is, of course, the logical option to look at the possibility of solemnizing marriage in other places where Fresh Expressions meet – in a community centre or a gym or a school – but I think that this is a more problematic and probably a much larger debate.

It is possible for a person in the Church of England today, who is involved in regular and long-standing worship in the context of a Fresh Expression or a mission initiative as their usual place of worship, to have no right to marry where they have church relationship, because their participation in worship is in a Fresh Expression and not the parish where they live and so is not currently recognized by the current Marriage Measure. One couple who recently approached me had been worshipping with a Fresh Expression of Church already referenced, and their options were either to marry in the parish where they live but where they have no local relationship or to spend the next six months changing or adding to their existing worship by attending the parish, in order simply to create a qualifying connection.

I welcome this amendment but believe that further amendment is essential, if we recognize that we are a ‘mixed economy’ of Church.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* I had no intention to speak in this debate but I want to offer a different perspective from that of Canon Felix. Many of the couples who come to my Grade I listed, mediaeval building do value the opportunity to come and hear their banns called. That provides them with an opportunity to meet the congregation, whom they may not otherwise meet if the banns were published on a notice board outside the church, and gives us a chance to make those first steps towards including and welcoming people into the life of the Church.

I would therefore ask the Revision Committee to hesitate before they take Canon Felix’s point as the only one worth hearing.

*Chancellor Timothy Briden, in reply:* Thank you very much for your contribution, Fr Trott. Certainly the question of illegal marriages is a pressing one at the moment. I gather it is something that the House of Bishops will be looking at. The clergy, I hope even at this stage, will derive help from the yellow book published by the Faculty Office and the guidance given on its website in dealing with these difficult cases.



The Dean of the Arches may be reassured that the particular constitutional position of the Isle of Man will be respected and matters will be dealt with appropriately.

As regards the other speakers who both welcomed the Measure and made suggestions for its fleshing out in the revision stage, while the Revision Committee will be very interested to receive proposals on this, please remember that what members put forward has to be within the scope and purport of the Measure itself. Certainly some of the proposals that were put forward in the speeches this afternoon may have some difficulty in getting over that hurdle. That being said, however, I am sure that the Revision Committee will look forward to receiving communications from Synod, in order to bring this particular piece of legislation forward and to bring it into useful effect.

Thank you for the supportive speeches. I invite Synod to endorse its support with a favourable vote.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Chairman:* The draft Measure is now automatically committed to a Revision Committee. As stated on page 4 of the agenda, if any member of Synod wishes to submit proposals for amendment they must send them in writing to the Clerk to the Synod so as to reach him no later than 5.30 p.m. on 28 December 2010.

THE CHAIR *The Archdeacon of Colchester (Ven. Annette Cooper) (Chelmsford)* took the Chair at 3.30 p.m.

## **Farewells**

*The Chairman:* I call upon the Archbishop of Canterbury to bid farewell to a much honoured and loved friend here in Synod, the Bishop of Lincoln.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams):* John, I think we have already had some indication of the warmth of feeling that you will carry away with you from this Synod, but I am afraid you will still have to sit through the embarrassing ordeal of being said goodbye to properly from the front.

As this morning amply indicated, there is something about John's shipshape and Bristol fashion which allows quite sharp points to be made without anybody even feeling the knife going in!

John's West Country connections go back a long way. Apart from Bristol, he has also been in the far west, in that frontier territory down in Exeter, where he served with distinction for some time before going on to another kind of frontier in Ludlow, becoming suffragan bishop there in 1994, and he has been the Bishop of Lincoln since 2001. Time was when in the Church of England if you heard the word Lincoln your heart tended to sink rather. There was rather a lot going on in Lincoln and not all of it was terribly edifying. So John stepped into a very challenging situation where much healing and consolidation was needed.

I have to say that as a consequence of spending some time in the diocese not so very long ago I can bear witness, with some strength of feeling, to just how much of that healing and consolidation has taken place in the past few years. It was rather embarrassing, because when I was in the diocese all kinds of people said to me unbidden, ‘You are not going to move him are you, or take him away from us?’ People imagine that the Archbishop of Canterbury has all sorts of liberties in this respect; in your dreams, I say! The fact that quite shortly after my visit to the diocese John decided to announce his retirement means that I feel I will not be able to show my face in the diocese of Lincoln for quite a while yet. The tributes were warm and universal.

He has not only been a wonderful leader of the diocese and made everybody enjoy being part of the diocese of Lincoln but has built a strong, cohesive team and has done everything that we were talking about yesterday in terms of building the Big Society, in terms of public engagement and communication. He has chaired the Lincoln Assembly with great effect, stepping into something of a vacuum in civic affairs – again a point that was made very forcefully to me when I was in the diocese. He has consistently brought people together from all sorts of walks of life, and his personable, relaxed approach with which we are all familiar has done wonders in that diocese. He has also enjoyed warm relationships with the cathedral – another thing that is not always the case in Lincoln – and that is a flourishing, lively community, very much part of the diocesan life.

When anyone shows signs of being an overworked, vastly popular diocesan bishop with absolutely no time to spare, the Church of England naturally finds him something else to do, so John took on the chairmanship of the Board of Education just two years ago. He had a very hard act to follow there, but that is exactly what he did. As my notes say, he went native quite quickly. He said that he had not expected to become quite so committed so quickly to the work of the Board, but the Board has benefited hugely from the way in which John has chaired it and from his reputation in Synod and the House of Lords – and in both places he makes distinctive, intelligent, challenging contributions for which everyone is very grateful.

It is a pity that we could not have had his skills in that role for a little longer, but we understand that retirement calls and, as John said this morning, specifically retirement to west Wales – a very good idea! Although I would not want to be thought, thinking of my nationalist friends back at home, to be recommending too many incomers to take up spare houses in rural west Wales, nonetheless there is something to be said for it. The welcome in the hillside is not always just a matter of the warm hearth fires that have been created in the past in some incomers, but John is going to an area with which his wife, a native, is very familiar; and of course it is only 150-odd miles away from Bristol if he wants to go to football matches.

Football: the Bishop of Grantham has said that he will never again go to a football match with the Bishop of Lincoln. Apparently there was a very difficult experience between Bristol City and Sheffield Wednesday; I do not have the details but the mind boggles. I am also told that there was another incident connecting Bristol City with Scunthorpe, but clearly that was such a trauma that I could not even find the details of it. We all know that John never hides his colours, and he has occasionally had to be held down in his seat even at football matches.

He has given of himself generously to many causes apart from football. Support for charities has been a major activity for him and he dressed as Santa Claus for a fun run last Christmas. It would be nice to have a slide show for some of these farewells! On the last night of his episcopal ministry in Lincoln he will be sleeping out overnight on one of the YWCA sleep-easies to draw attention to the plight of the homeless.

As many members will know, the diocese of Lincoln once covered vast tracts of England. The legacy of that is the role that the Bishop of Lincoln still exercises as Visitor to many ancient institutions, including Eton College and King's College Cambridge. I know personally that far from being a figurehead there or someone exercising an historic sinecure, John's pastoral care has been very real. Not long ago King's College Cambridge went through a difficult time and I heard warm tributes about the personal pastoral support that John had given to people at the college. He has brought to that his skills in mediation, problem solving and community building that have been so vital in the diocese.

We all know that he is a powerful communicator. One of the faithful in the diocese of Lincoln remarked as regards his regularity on the radio that it was very difficult to get away from him, but that is quite a good thing to be said of a bishop. A bishop who is known to be not only free and willing to engage in comment but to be relied on for intelligent and challenging comment is to be treasured.

Likes and dislikes: John has been a very committed supporter of what has been variously the Modern Churchmen's Union and the Modern Churchpeople's Union and Modern Church, and his loyalty and advocacy there have been very important in the whole balance and interweaving of the traditions of our Church. However, a little more prosaically, he is said to like fish and chips, Bruckner, *The Cause*, *EastEnders* and Lincolnshire Poacher cheese – not always simultaneously! His dislikes include meringues, reality TV, dogmatism and the *Daily Mail*. I am sure that some of that will resonate with many of us, not least of course the meringues!

We wish you well, John, in your pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the far west, and some of us might even try to come and see you there.

We have valued your friendship, your geniality, your not taking yourself or anything too seriously approach to the business of this Synod, and your building up of the Kingdom of God in the diocese and more widely in the Church of England. You have simply brought enormous human qualities to your work for us and with us in the Church of England and can certainly be described as someone who has been prepared to go the extra mile for the Kingdom of God. You have said that you hope your obituary might read, 'He meant well'. I hope that in the, please God, fairly distant future when someone has the task of doing that obituary we may say a good deal more than that and say 'By the grace of God he did well'; and if most of us could have that as an epitaph we would be very grateful.

John and Jackie, we wish you every happiness in the next chapter of your walk with one another and with the Lord and extend our warmest thanks to you from everyone in this Synod. Jackie is in the gallery. (*The Bishop was accorded a standing ovation*)

*The Chairman:* Thank you, Archbishop. I am asked to remind members that there will be meetings of the Convocations and House of Laity at the end of this day. That completes our business for this group of sessions.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury prorogued the group of sessions at 3.40 p.m.*

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