

GENERAL SYNOD

CHALLENGES FOR THE NEW QUINQUENNIUM – NEXT STEPS

1. **‘Three main themes have emerged with absolute clarity. We are called –**
 - i) **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;**
 - ii) **To re-shape or reimagine 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**
 - iii) **To focus our resources where there is both greatest need and greatest opportunity.’**
2. Those words from the Presidential Address to the new Synod in November 2010 shaped the report which the Archbishops’ Council and House of Bishops brought to the Synod for debate in February – *Challenges for the New Quinquennium (GS 1815)*. The report was well received in a take note debate, but a number of speakers asked: ‘now what?’
3. In March we spent time with the House of Bishops Standing Committee and some members of the Archbishops’ Council to discuss how to carry matters forward. It was agreed that GS 1815 had provided a helpful overarching framework, giving a useful account of various strands of work either underway or in prospect, and flagged up particular areas requiring further attention. The need was, therefore, not for a further document that surveyed all that was already happening but for the identification of a small number of proposals that had the potential to make a real difference over the next five years.
4. The Council and the House of Bishops are clear that these three areas of work- contributing to the common good, promoting spiritual and numerical growth and reimagining ministry are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. There is no hierarchy between them. Each is indispensable to the effective pursuit of the three objectives set out in the November Presidential Statement. All flow from faithful discipleship.
5. At meetings in May and June the Archbishops’ Council and House of Bishops, together with its Standing Committee, spent time identifying with greater sharpness the goals, policies and resources needed if work done at the national level was to help dioceses and parishes achieve more in each of these three areas.
6. Attached to this covering note is a distillation of the proposals that have emerged from those discussions. The brevity is potentially deceptive. What is envisaged here is a substantial programme of work. While some of it builds on activity already under way, some will involve the establishment of significant new projects. It will not be possible for all of the work to start immediately.
7. Nevertheless, the Council and the House of Bishops believe that, taken together, this programme has the potential to make a real difference over the next few years. The Council and the House commit themselves to reporting on progress regularly to the Synod.

Contributing to the Common Good

A declared goal

To promote resourceful communities infused with the values of God's kingdom and, particularly at a time of economic hardship in society, to enhance the capacity and commitment of the Church both to stand alongside people facing unemployment and financial insecurity.

Policies for achieving that goal

1. Gather existing theological reflection from across the Christian traditions on what makes for human wellbeing and a good society, and illustrate with case studies showing how churches can most effectively seek the welfare of their local community.
2. Facilitate the sharing of stories of where and how local church communities are already engaged in helping those facing hardship.
3. Develop a wider literacy in public agencies about the church's contribution to civil society.

Means and resources for implementation and evaluation

1. The Archbishops Council and Mission and Public Affairs Division to support dioceses, deaneries and parishes by sharing templates drawn from recent research.
2. The House of Bishops to consider what is happening across dioceses and in the light of that to consider what more can be done by the Church both by local action and national lobbying.
3. The Communications Office, working with diocesan communications teams, to help shape key messages.
4. The Mission and Public Affairs Division, with the Research and Statistics Department, to develop, consistent with the principles of subsidiarity, benchmarks and ways of measuring the Church's contribution.

Going for Growth

A declared goal

To seek sustained numerical and spiritual growth in the Church of England over the next quinquennium and beyond.

Policies for achieving that goal

- (1) Stimulate a more intentional and prayerful approach across the Church of England to: engaging with those who have not yet heard or accepted the Christian story; nurturing the faith of enquirers and new believers; and deepening the discipleship of all.
- (2) Ensure that sound theological underpinning of approaches to mission and evangelism is complemented by a greater evidence base both about what works and about why people join and leave the church.
- (3) Release energy by simplifying the church's internal structures and processes.

Means and resources for implementation and evaluation

- (1) The Archbishops Council and Commissioners to target the additional resources available over next three years for research, evaluation and development to increase knowledge base, help dioceses test out mission action planning and other approaches to church growth in areas of need and opportunity- especially among young people and young adults, assess lessons of Fresh Expressions movement for the inherited church and research impact of church schools on church growth. Regular engagement with House of Bishops over emerging results.
- (2) The Archbishops Council, in partnership with the House of Bishops, to develop a small number of national projects, building on lessons learned from the weddings project, to provide usable and fresh resources to dioceses, deaneries and parishes for enhancing the Church's outreach, including through its ministry to new parents, those getting married and those who are bereaved.

- (3) The Archbishops' Council to establish a working group to identify specific indicators of church growth.
- (4) The House of Bishops to commission, new national resources on the teaching of the Church of England, discipleship and the Christian way of life.
- (5) The Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops to establish a small task group to produce initial assessment within twelve months of credible options (including as necessary ones that would require legislation) for reducing the time spent by clergy and church members on the management of structures and processes.

Reimagining Ministry

A declared goal

To reshape, re-imagine and re-energise ministry in the Church of England so that it is equipped both to grow the church in every community and contribute to 'the common good'.

Policies for achieving this goal

1. Reassess current policy and resourcing for the recruitment, training, deployment and development of new clergy and authorised lay ministers with a view to sustaining and growing a Christian presence in every community and attracting more and younger ordinands from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds.
2. Place increased emphasis in programmes of continuous ministerial development for clergy and lay ministers on ways of equipping and empowering all Church members in active Christian witness and service.

Means and resources for implementation and evaluation

1. The House of Bishops to consider (in May 2012) a draft vision document on ministry, lay and ordained, prepared by the bishops on the Ministry Council and identifying a framework of necessary gifts and competencies for pursuing growth and contributing to the common good.
2. In parallel, the Ministry Council to establish a small working party to produce by autumn 2012 an assessment for the Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops of the strengths and weaknesses of the present national policies and resource framework bearing on the recruitment, training, deployment and development of clergy and lay ministers.
3. The Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops then to propose ways of achieving more flexibility between initial clergy training and lifelong learning, attracting more young clergy and clergy from minority ethnic backgrounds and equipping clergy with leadership and change (including conflict) management skills and ability to do mission action planning.