

## Summary of General Synod, February 2010

1,322 words

Debates on how the Church engages with children and young people and how it is developing fresh expressions of church featured alongside discussions on science and faith, religious broadcasting, clergy pensions and relations with the Anglican Church in North America, among other topics, in the week-long group of sessions of the General Synod, which met at Church House, Westminster, from February 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Children and young people

Synod took note of the report *Going for Growth*, the Board of Education's strategy for children and young people, which offers both a theological framework and identifies priorities for practical action at diocesan and parish level.

Download *Going for Growth* (PDF format):

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/education/goingforgrowth.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1021.wax>

### Mission

New research from the Mission and Public Affairs Council into the growth of the 'mixed-economy Church', following up the 2004 Synod debate on 'Mission-shaped Church', was considered by the Synod. A motion was carried encouraging further development of the training and deployment of pioneer ministers, including the making of Bishops' Mission Orders. The Rt Revd Graham Cray, Archbishops' Missioner and Fresh Expressions Team Leader, gave a presentation on the current programme and future plans for Fresh Expressions.

Read the follow-up report to *Mission-Shaped Church*:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1761.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1010.wax>

Listen to Bishop Graham's presentation:

<http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1018.wax>

### TV coverage of religion and ethics

A Private Member's Motion introduced by Mr Nigel Holmes (Carlisle) was carried by the Synod, expressing appreciation of the vital role played by those engaged in communicating religious belief and practice through the media, while also articulating deep concern about the overall reduction in religious broadcasting across British television in recent years. The motion called upon mainstream broadcasters to produce high quality religious content, particularly material that imaginatively marks major festivals and portrays acts of worship.

Read Nigel Holmes' background paper:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/g1762a.pdf>

Read the background paper from the Archbishops' Council's Communications Office:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/g1762b.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/feb1011.wax>

### **Legislation**

Synod completed several items of legislative business – including the Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure, which introduces a new framework for the making of orders for parochial fees. Synod also approved two codes of practice setting out the capability and grievance procedures which will apply to clergy holding office under the 'Common Tenure' when it is introduced early next year.

Read the Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/g1715b.pdf>

Read the Explanatory Memorandum on the Codes of Practice:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/g1774-5x.pdf>

Listen to debates on Amending Canon 29, Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure, and the Codes of Practice: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/feb1004.wax>

Listen to debates giving final approval to the Mission and Pastoral Measure and the Care of Cathedrals Measure:

<http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/feb1023.wax>

### **Clergy pensions**

Subject to statutory consultation with scheme members, Synod approved changes to the Clergy Pensions Scheme, including increasing the pension age for future service to 68 and increasing the accrual period for future service to 43 years. Synod also

approved the recommendations of a report on changes proposed in relation to ill-health retirement. Separately, Synod carried a Private Member's Motion from the Revd Mark Bratton (Coventry) which asks the Archbishops' Council and the Pensions Board to bring forward changes to the pension scheme's rules, to remove the remaining differences between pension benefits for surviving civil partners and surviving spouses.

Read the report from the Archbishops' Council on proposed scheme changes:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1758.pdf>

Listen to first part of the debate:

<http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1006.wax>

Listen to the second part: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1007.wax>

Read the report from the Archbishops' Council on ill-health retirement:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1759.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1008.wax>

Read Mark Bratton's background paper on parity of pension provision for surviving civil partners:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1770a.pdf>

Read the Archbishops' Council's background paper:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1770b.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1022.wax>

### **Science and religious belief**

Synod debated a Diocesan Synod Motion from Manchester, expressing concern at the perceived need to choose between the claims of science and belief in God; the carried motion urges the House of Bishops to promote a better public understanding of the compatibility of science and Christian belief.

Read the background paper from the Diocese of Manchester:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1772a.pdf>

Read the background paper from the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1772b.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1025.wax>

### **Church buildings**

The Cathedrals and Church Buildings Division gave a presentation on what the Division has achieved since the publication five years ago of *Building Faith in our Future*, and the challenges that cathedrals and church buildings face today. This prefaced a debate on a motion brought by the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds, which Synod carried, calling on government for a substantial increase in the amount of money available for the repair of listed church buildings and a commitment to continue the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme beyond March 2011.

Listen to the presentation: <http://audio.cofemedial.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1019.wax>

Read the background paper from the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/g1768.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedial.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1020.wax>

### **Relations with the Anglican Church in North America**

In debating a Private Member's Motion from Mrs Lorna Ashworth (Chichester), the Synod carried a motion expressing its awareness of the distress caused by recent divisions within the Anglican churches of the United States of America and Canada, and recognising and affirming the desire of those who have formed the Anglican Church in North America to remain within the Anglican family. The motion asks the Archbishops to report back to the Synod on the issue in 2011.

Read Lorna Ashworth's background paper:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/g1764a.pdf>

Read the Secretary General of the Archbishops' Council's background paper:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/g1764b.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedial.org.uk/synod/feb2010/Feb1013.wax>

### **Other Private Members Motions and Diocesan Synod Motions**

Synod carried a motion following a Private Members' Motion from Mr Tom Benyon (Oxford), expressing concern about the potentially desensitising and damaging effects on children and young people of computer games containing violent and sexual content, congratulating the government on the action it has taken in this area and calling upon it to continue to keep under review the regulatory system for advertising video games.

Read Tom Benyon's background paper:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/g1771a.pdf>

Read the Mission and Public Affairs Council's background paper:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1771b.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/feb1024.wax>

Synod also carried a motion from the Diocese of Chelmsford requesting dioceses, deaneries and parishes to undertake local initiatives to celebrate and teach the Bible, both within the Church and throughout wider society, to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the King James Version.

Read the Diocese of Chelmsford's background paper:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1765a.pdf>

Read a background paper on the Church of England's view of Scripture, prepared by the House of Bishops' theological consultant:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/gspapers/gs1765b.pdf>

Listen to the debate: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/feb1026.wax>

### **Women bishops**

The Bishop of Manchester, the Rt Revd Nigel McCulloch, updated the Synod on the work of the Revision Committee on Women in the Episcopate, explaining that having undertaken a considerable amount of work, the Committee was not yet at a position to bring forward revised draft legislation for consideration. It is anticipated that such material will be prepared in time for debate at the July Synod.

Listen to the bishop's statement (following introductory notices):

<http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/manchester.mp3>

### **Other business**

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, gave a Presidential Address which reflected on the nature of human freedom, and balancing rights and benefits which may stand in tension.

Read the address: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/2752>

Listen to the address: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/feb1005.wax>

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference (the Revd David Gamble and Dr Richard Vautrey) addressed the Synod, as an expression of the

Covenant relationship between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, followed by questions and contributions from Members.

Listen to the session: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/meth.mp3>

The most senior chaplains representing each of the Armed Forces gave a joint presentation on the role of forces chaplains in the current military operations overseas.

Listen to the presentation: <http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/feb1014.wax>

There was also a debate on the Revision Stage of the Additional Weekday Lectionary, after which this liturgical material was recommitted for revision.

Listen to the first part of the debate:

<http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/feb1015.wax>

Listen to the second part of the debate:

<http://audio.cofemedia.org.uk/synod/feb2010/feb1016.wax>

Background papers for each debate, alongside links to an audio archive of each session, are available at:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2010/index.html>

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