

Summary of General Synod, February 2010

Shorter version for use in parish magazines etc

645 words

The General Synod met in London from February 8th to 12th. Among other matters, it discussed:

Children and young people

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

Mission

Synod considered research from the Mission and Public Affairs Council into the growth of the 'mixed-economy Church', and carried a motion encouraging further development of pioneer ministers and the making of Bishops' Mission Orders. The Rt Revd Graham Cray, Archbishops' Missioner and Fresh Expressions Team Leader, gave a presentation on Fresh Expressions.

TV coverage of religion and ethics

The Synod carried a motion 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.

Legislation

Synod completed several items of legislative business – including approving 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 that will apply to clergy holding office under 'Common Tenure' when that is introduced early next year.

Clergy pensions

Synod approved changes to the Clergy Pensions Scheme, subject to the necessary statutory consultation with members, and approved the recommendations of a report on changes to ill-health retirement provision. Synod also carried a motion requesting changes to the pension scheme's rules to remove the remaining differences between the pension benefits for surviving civil partners and surviving spouses.

Science and religious belief

Synod carried a motion urging the House of Bishops to promote a better public understanding of the compatibility of science and Christian belief.

Church buildings

The Synod carried a motion calling on government for a substantial increase in the amount of money available for the repair of listed church buildings, including a commitment to continue the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

Relations with the Anglican Church in North America

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.

Other Private Members Motions and Diocesan Synod Motions

Synod carried a motion expressing concern about the potentially damaging effects on 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.

Synod also carried a motion requesting dioceses, deaneries and parishes to undertake initiatives to celebrate and teach the Bible to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Version.

Women bishops

The Bishop of Manchester 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. It is anticipated that such material will be prepared in time for debate at the July Synod.

Other addresses

The Synod heard from:

- The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, who gave a Presidential Address on the nature of human freedom.
- The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd David Gamble and Dr Richard Vautrey.
- The most senior chaplains representing each of the Armed Forces, who gave a joint presentation on the role of chaplains in military operations overseas.

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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