



November Group of Sessions 2000

Report by the Business Committee

GS 1398



GENERAL SYNOD

November 2000 Group of Sessions

Report by the Business Committee

1. The Business Committee welcomes Synod members, new and old, to the first General Synod of the new Millennium, which will be inaugurated by Her Majesty the Queen on Tuesday, 14 November. At the inauguration, Her Majesty will be presented with a copy of the newly published Church of England services, *Common Worship*, and this is a fitting reminder of the work of liturgical revision, which occupied much of the General Synod time in the previous quinquennium. The new quinquennium brings new challenges and opportunities, and the Business Committee hopes that the General Synod will be able to reflect on a range of issues concerning the mission, ministry and financing of the Church, and the Church's engagement with society. The purpose of this report is to give background information about the subjects which feature on the agenda for the November Group of Sessions, together with information about the Synod's procedures generally, in order to help members make the most effective use of their time at Synod. The Business Committee, and its staff, are here to assist members and to be of service to them. We are always ready to consider comments

from members about the business content of recent Groups of Sessions, or about the Synod's procedures.

2. The responsibilities of the Business Committee include the management of the business of the Synod and of its meetings, and are set out fully in Standing Order (SO) 115. The Committee continues to reflect on ways in which the business of the Synod can be handled more effectively and, in consultation with the Archbishops' Council, is considering ways of developing the longer-range planning of the Synod's business. In particular it has given initial consideration to a possible legislative programme for the next Synodical quinquennium, and this will be considered further by the Council before being shared with the Synod. It has also reviewed the Synod's handling of recent liturgical business at the request of the House of Laity, and at the invitation of the Liturgical Commission, the operation of the Standing Orders for liturgical business. These matters will be looked at further by a joint sub-committee of the Business Committee and the Standing Orders Committee.

Venue and Timing

3. On the afternoon of Monday 13 November, prior to the Inauguration of the Synod on the following day, there will be an induction seminar for new members. On Tuesday 14 November, there will be a service of

Holy Communion in Westminster Abbey at 10.00 am, at which Her Majesty the Queen will be present. Detailed arrangements for this will be given in a separate notice. Following the service, at about 12.15 pm, Her Majesty will address the Synod at a brief ceremony in the Assembly Hall of Church House, Westminster. After the inauguration ceremony, the Synod will adjourn for lunch. The Synod will re-assemble at 2.30 pm and will then sit until 7.00 pm.

4. On Wednesday 15 November, the Synod will sit from 9.45 am to 1.00 pm and from 2.30 pm to 7.00 pm. On Thursday, the Synod will sit from 9.45 am until 12 noon, when members will have the opportunity of attending a choice of presentations by the Divisions of the Archbishops' Council; it will then sit from 2.30 pm to 6.00 pm. A meeting of the House of Laity will take place in the Assembly Hall at 7.00 pm. Meetings of the Convocations of Canterbury and York (in the Harvey Goodwin Suite and Room 3 respectively), followed by the House of Clergy (in the Harvey Goodwin Suite) will take place fifteen minutes after the conclusion of the Synod's business, probably at 6.15 pm. These meetings are principally to conduct hustings for the election of their officers for the quinquennium, and for the election of members of the Archbishops' Council.

Overview of the Agenda

5. In the quinquennium 1995 to 2000, the General Synod had to consider a substantial volume of liturgical business, leading to the publication of *Common Worship* in November 2000. Liturgical business will be a much less dominant element of Synod business in the quinquennium 2000-2005. There should be more space henceforth to consider, inter alia, Diocesan Synod Motions (a number of which still remain to be considered by General Synod) and other matters.

6. The agenda for the November 2000 Group of Sessions comprises a varied and significant programme of business. It includes several major debates on the Church's engagement with society, including the Church's follow-up to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the issue of Iraqi sanctions, as well as a debate on the recent Church Urban Fund Review. The customary report from the Archbishops' Council will focus on the Council's proposed Themes and Priorities, and there will also be a scene-setting presentation of forthcoming financial issues for the Church. There will also be time for two Diocesan Synod Motions (from Southwell, on the nomenclature of non-stipendiary ministers, and from Bristol, on communion before confirmation). The legislative business will include final approval of the Clergy Discipline Measure, and the revision stage of the Synodical Government

(Amendment) Measure (which takes forward the first phase of the follow-up to the work of the Synodical Government Review (Bridge Commission). The Synod will close with a presidential address by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he will share something of his vision for the future with the Synod.

Security

7. In the interest of security, members are asked to wear their Church House passes at all times. Temporary passes will be issued to Synod members before the inauguration of Synod, and permanent passes will be processed during the Group of Sessions.

Synod Worship

8. Outline information about services in the chapel in Church House is given on the inside front cover of the Agenda. Upon arrival at Church House, members will be given a worship book relating to worship in the Assembly Hall.

Order of Business

9. The business of the Synod has, as usual, been arranged by days. The business each day will follow the order set out in the daily list given in the Agenda, except where it is necessary to modify this.

10. Every effort will be made to give the Synod the longest possible notice of any variations which it is proposed to make in the timetable and to keep such changes to a minimum. Members are, however, reminded that business which has not been reached or completed within the period allotted can be called by the Chairman, with the general consent of the Synod, at any time within the same Group of Sessions. Members are also reminded that the rubric 'not later than' in the Agenda does not prevent an item coming on significantly earlier than the time stated, depending on the progress of the preceding business.

Content of Business

Private Members' Motions

11. There are no Private Members' Motions for debate, as this is the first Group of Sessions of the quinquennium following the elections to the new Synod. Any notices of Private Members' Motions will be published in notice papers, and will be available for signature at the November Group of Sessions only if they are received not later than 5.30 pm on 14 November.

Questions

12. The opening Tuesday evening of the Synod will end in the usual way with Questions. Under SO 105, members may address Questions to the Secretary General, the Clerk to the Synod, the Chairman of any body answerable to the Synod through the Archbishops' Council (including Boards and Councils), the Chairman of any Church of England body on which the Synod is represented, the Chairman of each of the three Houses of Synod, and the Church Commissioners. Anyone wishing to ask a question must give notice of it to reach the Clerk to the Synod **by 5.30 pm on 3 November 2000**. The Questions notice paper will be distributed in the Assembly Hall at the beginning of the Group of Sessions.

13. Members are reminded that 'omnibus' questions are not in order. If a member wishes to query several points, each should be the subject of a separate question. Detailed information, tables of figures, etc are better dealt with in a written answer and members are urged to be selective in matters which they raise orally at Question Time, including in any supplementaries which must be framed as a question and should be kept brief. Members should indicate clearly when submitting a Question whether it is for oral or written answer.

Report by the Business Committee (Tuesday, 14 November)

14. The customary debate on this Report by the Business Committee (GS 1398) gives Synod members an opportunity to comment on the agenda of business before Synod.

Report of the Archbishops' Council

15. The report by the Archbishops' Council (GS 1399) will focus on its proposed Themes and Priorities, which have reflected much deliberation by the Council over the past year. The House of Bishops will have considered the proposals in October and the report gives Synod as a whole an opportunity to comment on the themes and priorities, and on the prospective programme of work involved. It is hoped that it will help provide a useful scene-setting debate for the newly elected Synod. The Council's other activities since July are summarised in GS Misc 621.

Appointment of the Chairman of the Pensions Board (Wednesday, 15 November)

16. This is a formal motion, for the re-appointment of Mr Allan Bridgewater as Chairman of the Pensions Board for a term of five years.

Legislative Business

17. The legislative business for this Group of Sessions will be found in Special Agenda I. The *Clergy Discipline Measure* and *Amending Canon No 24* (GS 1347B and GS 1348B) will be before the Synod for final drafting and final approval. At the final drafting stage, amendments may only be proposed by the Steering Committee and the proposals for amendment will be found in the Steering Committee Report (GS 1347Z). When final drafting of the Measure and Canon is completed the Chairman of the Steering Committee will move the final approval motions.

18. The *Synodical Government (Amendment) Measure* (GS 1369A) will be before the Synod for revision. The Revision Stage was postponed from the February and July Groups of Sessions and, as a result, the time for tabling amendments had expired. However, the Business Committee has decided that, in view of the elections, members of the new Synod should be permitted to put in fresh amendments by 5.30 pm on Monday, 13 November, if they pertain to matters which had been raised with the Revision Committee. The amendments to be considered will be found in a notice paper. The only other item of business is the approval of the *Parsonages Measure (Amendment) Rules* (GS 1401), which are needed to bring the procedures under the Parsonages Measure

into line with the changes made by the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2000. The Business Committee considers the Rules to be uncontroversial and has agreed to them being dealt with on the deemed approval procedure under SO 69. If, however, any member wishes to debate the Rules, notice must be given in writing to the Clerk to the Synod no later than 5.30 pm on Tuesday 14 November.

Forthcoming Financial Issues

19. This will take the form of a presentation by the Chairman of the Finance Committee, Mr Michael Chamberlain, and the Financial Secretary, Mr Shaun Farrell, under SO 95A. The principal purpose of this report and presentation is to provide General Synod members with an overview of the main financial issues facing the Church at the present time and to show how they inter-relate. It is intended to help set the resource context for some important decisions which the Archbishops' Council and the General Synod will be asked to make over the next two years.

Church Urban Fund Review

20. The Review was published in July and addresses some critical issues about the longer term future of the Church Urban Fund (CUF), its relationship to the Church and the way in which it distributes grants

to and engages with dioceses. Synod members will receive the Review report itself (GS Misc 622), the CUF Trustees' written response (GS Misc 623), and advice from the Archbishops' Council about how best to progress the issues, and in particular those which most urgently need resolution (GS 1400). There will be an introductory presentation under SO 95A, including contributions by the Chairman of the Review Group, the Bishop of Bradford, and the Vice-Chairman of CUF, Mr Stephen O'Brien. This will be followed by a debate on the various reports, and in particular on the Archbishops' Council's recommendations for taking the issues forward.

Southwell Diocesan Synod Motion

21. The motion invites the Synod to ask the Archbishops' Council, in consultation with the House of Bishops, to examine the designation 'non-stipendiary ministry and ministers'. The Diocese of Southwell has prepared a background paper. The Ministry Division, which has undertaken a consultative exercise with the dioceses on this subject, will produce a paper for background information (GS Misc 624).

Bristol Diocesan Synod Motion (Thursday, 16 November)

22. The motion invites the Synod to ask the House of Bishops to consider whether the inherited practice of

confirmation before communion should remain the norm or whether communion before confirmation should become the norm for those who have been baptised. The Diocese of Bristol has prepared a background paper with a view to agreeing that there should be a national policy on the issue rather than leaving the matter to local diocesan discretion within broad guidelines, as is currently the case. The present approach is embodied in the House of Bishops' guidelines, debated by the General Synod in November 1996 and issued in March 1997 as part of the follow-up to *On the Way* (GS Misc 444) – a report on Christian Initiation published in 1995. These guidelines are reprinted as an Annex to a briefing paper by the Children's Officer of the Board of Education who has been monitoring the development of diocesan practice in this area (GS Misc 626).

Presentations by Divisions of the Archbishops' Council

23. At 12 noon on Thursday, Synod will adjourn to give members an opportunity of attending one of four presentations by Divisions of the Archbishops' Council. The presentations will be as follows:

Church and World (Assembly Hall)
Ministry (Harvey Goodwin Suite)
Communications and Central Information
Services (Convocation Hall)

Human Resources (Committee Room 3)

It is hoped to repeat such presentations during future Groups of Sessions, as time permits. It is hoped that members will find the presentations helpful as a way of getting to know something of the range of work currently undertaken in Church House, Westminster, and some of the people who undertake it.

Stephen Lawrence Inquiry

24. Bishop John Sentamu addressed the General Synod in July 1999 about the Stephen Lawrence Report and the agenda, which in his view it set for both society and the Church. His address was followed by brief speeches from Dr Philip Giddings and the Archbishop of Canterbury but there was no formal debate. In November 1999, the Archbishops' Council set out in its second report to the Synod, the first stage of an action plan for following up the Stephen Lawrence Report. A staff group has produced a progress report for the Archbishops' Council about the action plan, and the wider picture of what is happening in dioceses and elsewhere. The progress report (GS Misc 625) recommends areas of work to be prioritised in the second stage of an action plan, with a particular focus on bringing more minority ethnic Anglicans into the ministry and leadership of the Church. The Archbishops' Council has prepared a report (GS 1402) to accompany GS Misc 625. The debate will be an

opportunity for the Synod to reflect generally on the challenges of the Stephen Lawrence Report and of institutional racism, as well as the particular matters raised in the report from the Archbishops' Council and the staff progress report.

Iraqi Sanctions

25. The tenth anniversary of sanctions against Iraq has brought this issue back into the public focus, and there has been considerable correspondence inviting the Church to speak out on the issue. There was also a Private Member's Motion left unconsidered by the last Synod. The Board for Social Responsibility's International and Development Affairs Committee has undertaken work on this subject and has produced a paper entitled *Iraq: A Decade of Sanctions*, which will inform the debate (GS 1403). The report follows a senior church delegation to Iraq in 1999 and a reciprocal visit of Iraqi religious leaders to the USA and the UK.

Presidential Address

26. The Synod will conclude with a presidential address by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he will reflect on current issues facing the Church and will share something of his vision for the future. He will then prorogue the Synod at 6 pm. This will provide a fitting climax to what the Business Committee

hopes will be a stimulating introductory session of
the seventh General Synod.

On behalf of the Committee

Pete Broadbent

Chairman

October 2000

Annex A

Members of the Business Committee

The Ven Pete Broadbent (Chairman)

Mrs Janet Atkinson The Revd Canon Richard Atkinson

The Revd Richard Hanford Mr Frank Knaggs

The Bishop of Maidstone Mr Brian McHenry

The Revd Prebendary Sam Philpott Mr Mike Tyrrell

The Revd Canon Hugh Wilcox

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