

GENERAL SYNOD

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

July 2001 Group of Sessions

Report by the Business Committee

1. Effective business management and planning are at the heart of the Business Committee's work and, with this in mind, the newly elected Committee has been taking a fresh look at the handling of the Synod's business. It is currently considering a number of practical changes, which it is hoped will improve the flow of business and the effectiveness of the debates. A joint group of the Business Committee and the Standing Orders Committee will be looking at the handling of liturgical business, with particular reference to the Standing Orders. Both Committees will also be considering ways of making question time more productive and will be reflecting generally on the handling of Diocesan Synod Motions. In addition, the Business Committee is also considering whether some business could be considered in parallel sessions of the Synod, on a formal or informal basis, particularly where material is essentially for presentation (as, for example, in November 2000, when the Synod adjourned from plenary session for members to attend one of four induction presentations).
2. The Committee is also looking at ways of regulating the flow of paperwork for the Synod and of making documents easier to read and to access, for example, by

exploring possibilities for electronic transmission. It has also been seeking to improve the forward planning of Synod business, and in this context has drawn up a possible legislative programme for the quinquennium 2000 to 2005, a summary of which is attached.

3. The responsibilities of the Business Committee are mainly concerned with managing the business of the Synod, and are set out fully in Standing Order (SO) 115. The Committee is always ready to consider comments from members about the business content of recent Groups of Sessions or about Synod's procedures, including the areas highlighted in paragraph 1. Such comments should be addressed to the Clerk to the Synod.

4. The Committee has reflected on the implications of the decision by the Presidents not to proceed with a February Group of Sessions in 2001. The reasons for that decision were set out by Philip Mawer in a note to members (SecGen(2000)8) and in brief were consistent with the policy laid down by the Synod, originally in July 1992, that Synod should normally meet twice rather than three times a year, only meeting in February if there was urgent (usually legislative or liturgical) business to transact. The Committee was aware that the decision had caused concern among some members, especially those anxious that a newly elected Synod should have a further opportunity to meet early in its life to assist the process of forming its sense of corporate identity. The Committee recognised the additional value of the Synod meeting for the first February Group of Sessions in each quinquennium because of the potential benefit to the appointments process and the induction of Synod members generally.

5. The Committee believes that it would not be appropriate to abandon the policy adopted in 1992 but that to focus solely on the relative urgency of potential business before the Synod is to take into account only one of two relevant considerations. The other concerns the flow of business before the Synod over a longer period than a single Group of Sessions. The key question here is on how many days and at what intervals does the Synod need to meet to ensure the most effective and efficient discharge of the totality of the business before it. (Moreover, as indicated in paragraph 2, the Committee is seeking to plan prospective business over a longer period, indeed, where possible, over the quinquennium as a whole, although the uncertain nature of much business makes this not straightforward.) The Committee, therefore, intends that in future, when it advises the Presidents on the requirement or otherwise for a February Group of Sessions, this factor as well as the relative urgency of the prospective business should inform the advice it gives.

Venue and Timing

6. The July meeting of the General Synod will take place at the University of York from 4 pm on Friday 6 July to 12.45 pm on Tuesday 10 July. The earlier start to the Sessions has been necessitated by the weight of business on this occasion, and the Business Committee wishes to indicate that this will not happen again in the future unless absolutely necessary.

Overview of the Agenda

7. The agenda for the July 2001 Group of Sessions is very diverse and includes several major debates on the Church's engagement with society, including presentations and debates on the subjects of international aid, and the health of the poor in this country (which both offer challenges to the Church in seeking ways to help eradicate poverty). There are also debates on issues facing the rural church at this time, and on the Private Member's Motion from the Revd David Houlding on the Reform of the House of Lords. Other major debates include the report of the Review of the Crown Appointments Commission and the second report from the Follow-up Group to the Review of Synodical Government, which addresses important questions relating to the size and composition of the General Synod.

8. A whole morning has been set aside for the Archbishops' Council's annual report and financial business which the Council is bringing before Synod. Other items include a morning of legislative and related business, and a presentation by the Council for Christian Unity on ecumenical issues, which is intended to provide Synod with background information for debates on specific ecumenical matters later in the quinquennium. The Business Committee has also sought to progress Private Members' Motions and Diocesan Synod Motions by providing time for two of each to be discussed at the July Group of Sessions. Altogether, the July Synod offers a very full and lively agenda, with several major items of business that are likely to attract public interest.

Days and Hours of Sitting

9. The times of the Sessions are set out on the front of the Agenda (GS 1410). The notes on transport, accommodation, etc supplied to members who are coming to York include a timetable which also shows the times of services and meals.

Ecumenical Representatives

10. There are three new ecumenical representatives amongst the eight representatives who regularly join the sessions of the General Synod: the Revd Douglas McBain (Baptist Union), Mr Dudley Coates (Methodist Church) and the Revd Anthony Barratt (Roman Catholic Church). In addition, Synod will have the opportunity to welcome as observers:

Revd Mrs dr A C H Berlis (Dutch Old Catholic Church)

Pasteur Francois Clavairoly (French Lutheran & Reformed Churches)

Revd Canon R D Harmon (Church of Ireland)

Rt Revd Sigurd Osbert (Church of Norway)

Shortly after the opening of the Synod, a message of greeting will be given by Pasteur Francois Clavairoly of the French Reformed Church, which will be a fitting prelude to the signing of the Reully Agreement.

11. Young Anglican adult observers will also be present in York as in previous years and will no doubt welcome the opportunity, outside the formal proceedings, to meet as many Synod members as possible. The young adult

observers will also be involved in the Synod worship in the Central Hall.

Synod Worship

12. There will be a number of changes to the arrangements for worship at York Synod this year. It is intended that there should be a clear strand of worship throughout the Synod, and there will therefore be a short act of worship immediately before the morning sessions on Monday and Tuesday. There will also be an exposition of Scripture by Professor John Barton (member of Synod, and Oriel and Laing Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford University) on the Saturday morning. The worship will also take up some of the themes of business before Synod.

13. Holy Communion and Evensong will take place daily at Heslington Parish Church, with the exception of:
 - Evening worship on Saturday 8 July. This will be at 6.20 pm in the Central Hall of the University of York, and will be centred around the theme of world mission.

 - A sung Eucharist in York Minister at 10 am on Sunday 8 July, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury will preach and the Archbishop of York will preside.

 - Evening worship on Sunday 9 July. This will be at 6.20 pm in the Central Hall of the University and will focus on the rural church and the farming community.

Full details of worship are given in a booklet which will be distributed to members at York. The provision of Holy Communion only, rather than Morning Prayer followed by Holy Communion, at the beginning of the day on Saturday, Monday and Tuesday, is intended to provide one unhurried reflective act of worship.

14. Arrangements for transport to the Minster on the Sunday will be announced in a separate notice to be circulated later. A special coach service will be provided, tickets for which will be on sale from the information desk in the concourse of the Central Hall. As there will not be enough places for everyone on the coaches, it is hoped that some members will walk or use their car and take passengers. There is usually plenty of vacant space on Sunday mornings in the car parks near the city centre (for which a fee may be charged).

Voting Procedures

15. Members are reminded that particular voting procedures on a division apply at York. The Business Committee has decided to alternate (in successive years) the practice at York of ascending and descending the stairs in order to vote. Therefore, this year clergy and laity wishing to vote 'yes' will vote by descending and leaving the Hall through the exits to the concourse; those wishing to vote 'no' will ascend the stairways and leave via the doors to the balcony. Members who have difficulty in ascending or descending the steps in order to vote are reminded that they may remain in their seats and have their vote taken by a member of the staff who will pass it on to the registrar.

Order of Business

16. 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. 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 if at any time within the Group of Sessions an unexpected gap opens in the Synod's agenda, business earlier in the agenda, which has not been reached or completed within the period allotted, can be called by the Chairman, unless other provision has already been made for it. If there is no such outstanding business and an unexpected gap opens in the Synod's agenda, then unless the adjournment is carried, the Business Committee has decided that the next item will be the Diocesan Synod Motion standing next in the order in Special Agenda IV, from the Leicester Diocesan Synod on Resolution B. (This is in order to help reduce the substantial backlog of Diocesan Synod Motions.) 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

17. Notice of Private Members' Motions received is contained in Special Agenda III. Any future notices of Private Members' Motions will be published in notice

papers and will be available for signature at the July Group of Sessions only if they are received not later than 5.30 pm on Friday 6 July.

Questions

18. The Saturday evening of the Synod will end with Questions. As an experiment, Question time has been located slightly later than usual in the Synod timetable, in order to give members more time to study the 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 Wednesday 27 June**. The Questions notice paper will be distributed in the Central Hall at the beginning of the Group of Sessions.

19. 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.

Reuilly Agreement (Friday 8 July)

20. The Reuilly Common Statement, approved by General Synod in November 1999, brought French Lutheran and Reformed Churches and the Anglican Churches of Great Britain and Ireland into closer fellowship. The formal signing of the Declaration will take place in Canterbury on 16 June and in Paris on 1 July. The Synod will then be asked to nominate the French Churches to be brought within the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988, thus making it possible for the Archbishops to extend the provisions of the relevant Ecumenical Canons to them.

Ethical Investment Advisory Group

21. The Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group presents its Fifth Annual Report *Striking the Right Balance* (GS 1415) to Synod, in which a year of continued progress is outlined. The Group undertook three substantive reviews in the year to 31 March 2001, on defence investment, media ethics and weekly home collected credit. The major review of defence investment, the first for fifteen years, resulted in new investment criteria being adopted in October by the three central Church investment bodies. Work on the other two reviews had not been concluded by the end of March, and it continues. The report also outlines the establishment of a dedicated Ethical Research Unit at CCLA to service the work of the EIAG with its research and secretariat needs, and discusses the wider context of socially responsible investment of which the Church is a part.

Reform of the House of Lords

22. The subject of the Reform of the House of Lords was to have been considered by the Synod at the July 2000 Group of Sessions, but could not be taken for lack of time. This would have given members an opportunity to reflect on the report of the Wakeham Commission (Cmnd 453). (The complete text of the Commission's report can be consulted at <http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm45/4534/4534.htm>. We have a few copies of the summary version of the report, which includes a CD-Rom of the full report. Please let us know if you would like a copy.) The issues for the Churches in general and the Church of England in particular which are raised by the Report were sketched out in GS 1385, copies of which are also available on request.
23. The Private Member's Motion by the Revd David Houlding brings the subject back before Synod, but on the basis that the existing provision in the House of Lords for 26 Bishops should be retained. A short background paper will be circulated (GS Misc 648).
24. The Business Committee is considering the best way of inviting Synod to examine other constitutional developments. In particular, the subject of regionalisation has been included in the forecast of business for a future Group of Sessions, and the Board for Social Responsibility will be taking the lead in producing a report for debate.

Legislative Business (Saturday, 7 July)

25. The legislative business for this Group of Sessions will be found in Special Agenda I. The draft Synodical Government (Amendment) Measure, which forms the first tranche of the legislation to implement some of the recommendations of the Bridge Report on Synodical Government, will return to the Synod for its Final Drafting and Final Approval stages. A new draft Measure will also be before the Synod for First Consideration – the Church of England (Pensions) Measure, which would extend the duration of the Church Commissioners’ power to spend capital to help meet the cost of pensions and lump sums in respect of service before the Pensions Measure 1997. At the same time, the draft Measure contains a number of other amendments to the Church’s pensions legislation. (Matters relating to the actuarial valuation of the funded clergy pension scheme, and other related financial issues, will be included in the presentation on Financial Issues Facing the Church on Monday morning – see paragraph 36 – and that is the appropriate occasion for members to raise any concerns about the actuarial valuation.)
26. In addition, Special Agenda I includes the usual orders in relation to (a) the fees of ecclesiastical judges, legal officers and others, (b) legal officers’ annual fees, and (c) parochial fees. These orders will be taken on the deemed approval procedure, unless any member of the Synod requests a debate on either order or proposes an amendment to the ecclesiastical judges etc order in accordance with SO 69.

Care of Cathedrals Measure Review

27. The Synod will be invited to approve the recommendations in the report of the Care of Cathedrals Measure Review Group (GS 1417), and to instruct the Business Committee to introduce a draft Measure to give effect to those recommendations which require legislation. The Group, under the chairmanship of Mrs Janet Atkinson (Durham) was set up by the Archbishops' Council, and after extensive consultation it concluded that in general, the Care of Cathedrals Measure 1990 was working effectively. However, its report - which also takes account of the recommendations on fabric matters in *Heritage and Renewal* (the report of the Archbishops' Commission on Cathedrals) - recommends a number of amendments to the detailed provisions of the Measure. It also includes recommendations as to good practice and proposals for reducing the areas of 'dual control', where permission is needed both under the Measure and from the secular authorities.

Presentation by Christian Aid/ International Development

28. Preceding the international development debate on Saturday afternoon there will be two 15-minute presentations respectively by Dr Daleep Mukarji, the Director of Christian Aid, and the Rt Revd Bernard Ntahoturi, the Bishop of Matana in Burundi, who is a partner of Christian Aid. The aim of these presentations is to strengthen the Synod's understanding of the work of Christian Aid and of its new campaign on trade, while at

the same time encouraging General Synod members to engage with a 'southern voice'.

29. The aim of the following General Synod debate is to affirm the Church's commitment to international development following the closure of the Jubilee 2000 coalition. To facilitate this process, the BSR has produced a collection of essays, *Development Matters: Christian Perspectives on Globalisation* (GS Misc 634), which mirrors the structure and format of last year's Second White Paper on international development, *Globalisation: Making it Work For the World's Poor*. The essays touch on a broad range of international development concerns such as the environment, trade and HIV/Aids. The BSR has also produced a ten page GS paper, *Global View 2001 - An Emerging Agenda* (GS 1413), which sets out a number of key international policy commitments that the General Synod is being asked to endorse. Both papers seek a stronger commitment throughout the Church to the urgent task of eradicating world poverty.

Third World Debt

30. The Private Member's Motion by Mr Roger Godin (Southwark) follows on naturally from the debate on international development issues. It seeks to hasten progress towards the relief of the Third World debt burden, and encourages the Government to continue to press for urgent action by the more affluent nations to cut debt. A background paper by BSR (GS Misc 640) will be circulated.

Crown Appointments Commission (Sunday, 8 July)

31. *Working with the Spirit: Choosing Diocesan Bishops* (GS 1405) is the report of a review of the operation of the Crown Appointments Commission and related matters, undertaken at the request of the Synod. Under SO 112, the Chairman of the Review Group, Baroness Perry of Southwark, will address the Synod. The Synod will then be invited to take note of the Report and to instruct the Appointments Committee to appoint a follow-up group to take forward the Group's recommendations in consultation with interested parties. A separate note by the Business Committee (GS Misc 644) gives further details of the process which is envisaged. Many of the most important recommendations which the Synod will be invited to debate in general and in principle at this Group of Sessions will also require specific detailed approval by the Synod (in the form of amendments to SO 122 and a revised Vacancy in See Committees Regulation) in due course.

Presentation on ecumenical issues

32. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council for Christian Unity (the Bishop of Peterborough and Mrs Elizabeth Fisher), the Chairman of the Faith and Order Advisory Group (the Bishop of Chichester), and the General Secretary of the Council for Christian Unity (Prebendary Paul Avis) will provide an overview of the broad spectrum of the work of the Council in supporting the Church of England's vision for the full visible unity of the Christian Church. The purpose of the presentation will be to induct Synod members into the Church of

England's ecumenical relations and commitments, and explain the main areas of work in which CCU will be involved in the quinquennium. The presentation will be followed by an opportunity for responses and questions. A short report (GS 1425), giving a synopsis of the presentation, will be circulated and the text of the presentation will be made available to Synod members afterwards on request.

Renewing Faith in the Countryside

33. The debate on rural affairs on Sunday evening was originally intended to mark developments in rural ministry and mission in the tenth anniversary year of the publication of the report *Faith in the Countryside*. The debate will still mark that event and affirm the work of the rural church. However, it will inevitably be set in the context of the foot and mouth epidemic, which has raised the priority and profile of the countryside dramatically, and which will clearly have a long term effect on farming communities and the rural economy. A paper by the Board of Mission (GS 1418), supplemented by the May issue of *Country Way*, will inform the debate, which will need to take account of both the publication of the Government's Rural White Paper in November 2000 and the Churches' response to it.

Archbishops' Council Report and Accounts for 2000 (Monday, 9 July)

34. The Archbishops' Council will present its second annual report to Synod (GS 1414) at the beginning of Monday's business, and it will be followed by several items of financial business which the Council is putting before

Synod for consideration and debate. The annual report sets out the work achieved by and under the aegis of the Council in 2000, with some comment on current and future initiatives. The accounts and financial statements of the Council for the same year are also included. The report focuses on the Council's agreed themes and its developing work programme, which is modelled on the themes. In indicating an intention to contribute to the debate on the Council's annual report, members of Synod are asked to specify to which section of the report they will be referring. Members may raise points relating to the work of those bodies (including the Boards and Councils) that answer to the Synod through the Archbishops' Council.

Audit Committee Report

35. The Council's Audit Committee will present its second annual report to the Synod. The report will be introduced by the Chairman of the Committee (Mr Ian McNeil) who will address the Synod under SO 112.

Financial Issues Facing the Church

36. 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 the presentation is to provide General Synod members with an overview of the main financial issues facing the Church at the present time, particularly in the light of the recent actuarial valuation of the funded clergy pensions scheme and the resulting substantial increase in the contribution rate (from 21.9% to 29.1% of pensionable

stipend). The presentation will have been informed by the discussions at the Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum on 15 May. The presentation will provide the broader context for the debates on the Allocations and Apportionment Review report (see para 37) and the Archbishops' Council's Budget (see para 38). There will be an opportunity for questions after the presentation.

Allocations and Apportionment Review

37. Diocesan consultation on the final report of the Allocations and Apportionment Review Group, chaired by Mr Stewart Darlow (Chester), concluded with a discussion at the Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum. Thereafter the report will have been discussed at the House of Bishops meeting in June, and is referred to the General Synod for consideration as GS 1420. The Archbishops' Council will be asked to reach a final decision on the proposals, in the light of the General Synod's debate and the other discussions, at its September meeting. Any changes to the central apportionment formula will need the approval of General Synod, but decisions relating to the distribution of stipend support lie with the Council under the National Institutions Measure.

Archbishops' Council's Budget for 2002

38. The budget is presented to the General Synod as GS 1421. The budget exercise this year has been heavily influenced by the outcome of the actuarial review of the funded clergy pensions scheme. In recognition of the general financial situation, the Council has decided to freeze central administrative costs in 2002, and to seek to

maintain such a freeze in 2003 and 2004. (Similar action is being taken by the Church Commissioners.) The Synod is invited to endorse this approach. A supplementary report will be submitted to Synod in November, indicating more precisely how the required savings in expenditure in 2002 will be achieved.

Health of the Poor

39. At the invitation of the Presidents, this debate on Monday afternoon will be prefaced by an address by Sir Donald Acheson. Sir Donald was Chief Medical Officer to the Government, Chairman of the Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health, and Chairman of the International Centre for Health and Security at University College, London. The following debate will be wide-ranging and derives from the debate in the Oxford Diocesan Synod (in March 1999), which considered three independent reports on the extent of poverty in Great Britain. One of those reports *Low Cost but Just*, by Professor Nicholas Sagovsky is being circulated to General Synod members, together with a background paper for the debate from the Oxford Diocese (GS Misc 647), which sets out some of the information shared with the Diocesan Synod in 1999, and some of the changes which have taken place since then. The aim of the debate is similar to the debate on international development issues, and seeks a stronger commitment throughout the Church to the task of eliminating poverty in this country.

Additional Collects: Wakefield Diocesan Synod Motion

40. This motion seeks the production of suitable collects for each Sunday and Feast Day, additional to those published in *Common Worship*, to reflect modern language usage. Background papers from the Wakefield Diocese (GS Misc 645) and the Liturgical Commission (GS Misc 646) will be circulated.

Church Commissioners' Annual Report

41. The Business Committee's practice is to make it possible for the Annual Report of the Church Commissioners to be debated at the request of the Church Commissioners, and this customarily follows a biennial pattern, although because of pressure of other business in July 2000, the Report has not been debated since 1998. The debate will provide Synod members with an opportunity to raise points on the wide spectrum of the Commissioners' work, with particular reference to the year 2000. This includes the Commissioners' key objective to increase the support they give to parish ministry in areas of need and opportunity, in line with their legal duty to make "additional provision for the cure of souls in parishes where such assistance is most required".
42. If, among other matters, members wish to raise points on matters relating to the Octavia Hill Estates (which have been the subject of public interest), this debate will provide an opportunity for them to do so, although there will also have been a fringe meeting, organised by the Church Commissioners on the Saturday evening, to provide members with a specific opportunity to engage with the issues.

Review of Synodical Government (Tuesday, 10 July)

43. Members of Synod will have received the Second Report from the Follow-up Group (chaired by the Venerable Judith Rose), appointed to take forward the recommendations in *Synodical Government in the Church of England* (the Bridge Report) (GS 1252), which was debated in General Synod in November 1997. A number of that Report's recommendations have already been incorporated in legislation which is due for Final Approval at this Group of Sessions (namely, the draft Synodical Government (Amendment) Measure). The Follow-up Group's Second Report (GS 1412) focuses primarily on the constitution and membership of the General Synod itself, including its special constituencies. If the Synod takes note of the Report, it will then be invited to ask the Business Committee to put in hand the legislative process to give effect to the recommendations in paragraph 81 of the Report. Synod will therefore have an opportunity to express its general approval of these recommendations. If, however, any member wishes to ask Synod that a particular recommendation should not be proceeded with, they should submit an amendment to this motion specifying the particular recommendation. The Follow-up Group also set up a Deaneries Sub-Group, which has now produced a report on Deaneries (GS Misc 639), following on from points made in the original debate on the Bridge Report in 1997. This is being circulated to dioceses and deaneries to stimulate discussion by them.

Concluding business

44. Following the customary farewells, the Synod is expected to conclude at around 12.45 pm. The closing ceremonies will be conducted by the Archbishop of York.

On behalf of the Committee
Michael Perham

June 2001

Annex A

Members of the Business Committee

The Very Revd Michael Perham (Dean of Derby) - Acting
Chairman

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd Jonathan Bailey, Bishop of Derby

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Ven Alan Hawker, Archdeacon of Malmesbury

The Revd Prebendary Sam Philpott (Exeter)

The Revd Simon Pothen (London)

Elected by the House of Laity

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich)

Mr Frank Knaggs (Newcastle)

Mr Mike Tyrrell (Coventry)

Two members of the Archbishops' Council

Mr Brian McHenry (Southwark)

Mrs Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield)

(The Secretary to the Committee is David Williams and the
Assistant Secretary is Malcolm Taylor.)