

# **GENERAL SYNOD**

## **BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

### **February 2003 Group of Sessions**

#### **Report by the Business Committee**

##### Introduction and Overview of the Agenda

1. The agenda for the February Group of Sessions will be relatively short and confined to three days. This is because the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury will be taking place on 27 February. The Agenda is nevertheless varied and full, with an outward mission and social responsibility focus, as well as a substantial element of liturgical and legislative business. Two debates (Choosing Diocesan Bishops and Parliamentary Democracy) continue work undertaken at the November Group of Sessions. Time will also be allowed for one diocesan synod motion and one private member's motion.
  
2. Principal debates at the February Synod include:
  - Voices from Africa: a debate sponsored by the Partnership and World Mission
  - Mental health
  - Employment arrangements for the clergy
  - Cathedral entrance charges (private member's motion)
  - Liturgical business: including Daily Prayer and Additional Collects

- Legislative business: including the work of the Synodical Government Legislative Drafting Group
  - Choosing diocesan bishops (resumed debate)
  - Parliamentary democracy (resumed debate)
3. The Business Committee has included in the agenda the next Diocesan Synod Motion (on Gender Neutral Titles, from the Birmingham Diocesan Synod) and the Private Member's Motion (on Cathedral Entrance Charges, from Mr Tom Sutcliffe), which was next listed on the Order Paper as contingency business at the November Group of Sessions. The two diocesan synod motions which appear in Special Agenda IV ahead of the Birmingham Motion (Representation of the Retired Clergy, from the Manchester Diocesan Synod, and Elections to Deanery Synods, from the Lincoln Diocesan Synod) have been 'parked' by the Business Committee because the Synodical Government Legislative Drafting Group has addressed these two subjects in the draft legislation which is to receive First Consideration at the February Synod.
  4. The Business Committee has listed one item of contingency business for the February Group of Sessions, namely the next Diocesan Synod Motion (on Pastoral Care, from the Lichfield Diocesan Synod).
  5. The Committee has looked at a provisional forecast of Synod business for July 2003, and for February and July 2004. It has taken the view that there is not sufficient pressure of business to propose to the Presidents that there should be a November 2003 Group of Sessions, and members are therefore advised that the

contingency dates for November 2003 will not be required.

6. In looking at the forecast of business, the Committee notes that a number of diocesan synod motions and private members' motions relate to matters which are the subject of studies or reviews which have been initiated by the General Synod or the Archbishops' Council. The general policy of the Business Committee is to 'park' such motions, pending consideration of the particular study or review by the General Synod (and their eventual outcome if, for example, legislative process is involved). It will, of course, be open to the movers of the motions to contribute to the respective Synod debates and, if desired, to put down amendments or following motions, as appropriate.

#### Venue and Timing

7. The February meeting of the General Synod will take place at Church House, Westminster, from 2 pm on Monday, 24 February to 5.30 pm on Wednesday, 26 February.

#### Security

8. Members are asked to wear their Church House passes at all times and to study the security notice which will be circulated on a Notice Paper.

#### Synod Worship

9. Outline information about services in the Church House Chapel is given on the inside front cover of the Agenda.

There will be a service of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall on Tuesday, and a short act of worship at the beginning of the morning session on Wednesday; materials for these will be given to members during the sessions.

### Order of Business

10. 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 Lichfield Diocesan Synod, on Pastoral Care. 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.

### Private Members' Motions

11. 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 February Group of Sessions only if they are received not later than 5.30 pm on 24 February.

### Content of Business

#### **Monday, 24 February**

##### Introductions

12. There will be the customary introduction of new members.

##### Prayers and Introductory Greetings by the Archbishop of Canterbury

13. The Archbishop of Canterbury will be present on Monday 24 February up to 5 pm, and will be leading the Synod in prayer and giving Synod his introductory greetings.

##### Report by the Business Committee

14. This is the customary report on the Synod's Agenda (GS 1483).

##### Employment Arrangements for the Clergy

15. Section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999 gave the Government the power to confer certain statutory employment rights on people who are not technically employees or 'workers'. These rights include in particular the right to appeal against unfair dismissal

and the right to a written statement of terms and conditions of work. Answers to Questions in the House of Commons confirmed the intention of the Government to consider, after consultation, the inclusion of clergy within the scope of the legislation. A discussion document was issued by the Department of Trade and Industry in July 2002, to which responses were required by 11 December.

16. The Archbishops' Council discussed the response it wished to make in October and December. The final text is attached to GS 1488. In the response, the Council announced the setting up of a review group under the chairmanship of Professor David McClean to address firstly questions of security of tenure for unbeneficed clergy and secondly, broader questions of clergy conditions of service, including their rights and responsibilities, and freehold. The debate by the General Synod is intended to give members the opportunity to comment on the Council's response and the scope of the work being undertaken by the review group.

### Liturgical Business

#### *Extended Authorisation of Series One Marriage and Burial Services: Final Approval*

17. In November, the Synod gave first consideration to extension of the authorisation of the Series One Marriage and Burial Services 'until further resolution of the Synod'. The reasons why this is proposed were set out in the House of Bishops' report GS 1477/1478. The House now returns these two items of business to the

Synod for Final Approval, and the further reports of the House are circulated as GS 1477A and GS 1478A. A two-thirds majority in each House is required.

### Questions

18. 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 Estates Commissioners. Anyone wishing to ask a question must give notice of it to reach the Clerk to the Synod **by 5.30 pm on Thursday 13 February**. The Questions notice paper will be distributed in the Assembly 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.

## Tuesday, 25 February

### Voices from Africa

20. The *Voices from Africa* anthology is an attempt to enable us to listen to what Christians in Africa have to say about their mission in a context where, so often, they find themselves marginalised. The debate will, on the one hand, offer the opportunity to ‘take note’ of what they are saying and to listen to their voices. On the other hand, it will give us the chance to look at our own mission, through the lens of what our African sisters and brothers are saying, and to debate how we can not only listen to but also be resourced by them.
  
21. The debate is due to take place just prior to the enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury and it is likely that a number of African Primates will be in Britain for the service, and some of them may wish to attend the debate. The debate on *Voices from Africa* will be preceded by a service of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall and the worship will be linked with the ensuing debate. One of the authors of the anthology, Dr Esther Mombo, a Kenyan theologian who is a member of the Anglican Communion Doctrine Commission, will address the Synod at the invitation of the Presidents under SO 112, and the Bishop of Birmingham will then introduce the debate on the take note and following motions.



### Gender Neutral Titles (Birmingham Diocesan Synod Motion)

22. The motion requests the introduction of legislation to amend various pieces of legislation, to remove gender specific titles in favour of gender neutral language. A background note from the Birmingham Diocese has been circulated (GS Misc 704A), together with a background note from the Legal Office (GS Misc 704B).

### Cathedral Entrance Charges (Private Member's Motion: Mr Tom Sutcliffe, Southwark)

23. The motion requests the introduction of legislation seeking to establish free access for visitors to cathedrals. A background note by Mr Sutcliffe (GS Misc 705A) was circulated at the November Synod. A background paper from the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England has been updated and is being circulated as GS Misc 705B; a financial comment from the Finance Division is being re-circulated on a Notice Paper.

### Choosing Diocesan Bishops

24. At the November Group of Sessions, the Synod debated *Choosing Diocesan Bishops* (GS 1465), the report of the Steering Group established to follow up the recommendations of *Working with the Spirit*. After it had completed its consideration of the Report and the arrangements which did not require Synodical action, the Synod began to consider motions to amend Standing Order 122. In the event, consideration of the

first amending motion took up all the time available. That motion, to amend that part of the Standing Order which concerns the name of the Commission, was moved; an amendment to that motion, concerning the number of diocesan members to be elected to the Commission, was carried, but debate on the item as amended was then adjourned. The Business Committee has decided that that debate should be resumed at this Group of Sessions. The remaining motions were not moved, and time has also been made for consideration of them at this Group of Sessions. A further report by the Steering Group is being circulated (GS 706).

### Liturgical Business

#### *Additional Collects: First Consideration*

25. In July 2001, the Synod passed a resolution calling on the House of Bishops to commission 'additional collects... in a worthy contemporary idiom'. A set of such collects is now presented to the Synod for First Consideration.

#### *Daily Prayer*

26. The Preliminary Edition of *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* was circulated to all members of the Synod in January 2002. It included a questionnaire, inviting comments. The Synod is now invited to consider a report by the Liturgical Commission, indicating how it proposes to revise the text in the light of the comments already received. Since the contents of *Daily Prayer* comply with the rubrics and notes of A Service of the Word (an authorised service), the contents of the book do not require authorisation.

27. This debate gives the Synod an opportunity for comment both on the contents of the Preliminary Edition and on how it should be revised. It is anticipated that the House of Bishops will then request the Commission to proceed to publish a definitive edition of *Daily Prayer* in the light of the debate and further comments received thereafter. It would be helpful if any further comments could be sent to the Secretary of the Liturgical Commission (Dr Colin Podmore) by the end of April.

### **Wednesday, 26 February**

#### Legislative Business

28. The Care of Cathedrals (Amendment) Measure returns to the Synod for Final Drafting and Final Approval. In its report, the Steering Committee for the Measure will be recommending, as did the Revision Committee, that the Care of Cathedrals Measure 1990 (as amended by the current draft Measure) and the Care of Cathedrals (Supplementary Provisions) Measure 1994 should be consolidated.
29. As regards new items of business, the Synod will be asked to give First Consideration to legislation giving effect to the proposals made by the Bridge Follow-up Group for the reform of Synodical government, as amended following the debates in the Synod in July 2001 and July 2002. This will comprise a number of different pieces of legislation - an amending Canon and resolutions amending the Church Representation Rules, the Clergy Representation Rules and the Religious

Communities (Lay Representation) Rules. The resolution amending the Church Representation Rules will also make a number of miscellaneous changes.

30. Finally, the Synod will also be asked to approve the Churches Conservation Trust Funding Order 2003, which will implement the proposals for the funding of the Churches Conservation Trust approved by the Synod at the November 2002 Group of Sessions.

### Parliamentary Democracy

31. This debate was adjourned from the November Synod (through want of time). It is resourced by a report from the Board for Social Responsibility (GS 1470), which was previously circulated.

### Mental Health

32. The Government has carried out a review of the 1983 Mental Health legislation and, following a White Paper in 2000, is planning to bring a Mental Health Bill to Parliament in the near future. There is also continuing interest in the relationship of religion and mental health (especially in the area of spirituality) and in the work of mental health chaplains and voluntary groups. This is the first debate on the subject of mental health since a private member's motion in 1994. The debate will provide an important opportunity for the Church to comment on the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of society, and to argue for the new legislation to strike an appropriate balance between individual rights and the common good. It will be resourced by a

report from the Board for Social Responsibility (GS 1491).

### Farewells and Prorogation

33. Following the customary farewells, the Synod will be prorogued, no later than 5.30 pm. The closing ceremonies will be conducted by the Archbishop of York.

On behalf of the Committee

Michael Perham  
January 2003

## **Members of the Business Committee**

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

*Elected by the House of Bishops*

The Rt Revd George Cassidy, Bishop of Southwell

*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)

Mrs Maryon Jagers (Europe)

*Two members of the Archbishops' Council*

Mr Brian McHenry (Southwark)

Professor Peter Toyne (Appointed)

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