

GENERAL SYNOD

February 2006 Group of Sessions

Report by the Business Committee

1. The Business Committee met on 14 December 2005 to agree the Synod Agenda for the February Group of Sessions 2006, and the forecast of future General Synod business, and to consider the correspondence received following the November Group of Sessions. Correspondence received following the November Group of Sessions was light in volume and generally appreciative of the arrangements made for the induction day and the subsequent meeting of the new Synod, including the arrangements for the Inauguration itself. Other correspondence included comments on aspects of the chairing of certain sessions (which have been referred to the Panel of Chairs), the early start time on the Wednesday morning, and the desirability of feedback to the Synod on the progress of matters previously debated by it. The Committee also received appreciative comments from the representatives of Deaf Anglicans Together and the sign language interpreters (present at the November Synod for the first time).

Venue and timing of the February Synod

2. The February Group of Sessions will take place in Church House, Westminster from 3 pm on Monday, 6 February to 5.30 pm on Thursday, 9 February. The Synod will be preceded by meetings of the Convocations at 2 pm on the Monday.

Overview of the Agenda

3. The Agenda for the February Synod is very varied, with a wide range of debates. Many, such as Rural Affairs and the Church of England, Hospital Chaplaincy, Church Colleges/Universities, the Bicentenary of the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and the Human Genome, are outward facing. However, the most substantial debate will be on the Guildford Report on Women in the Episcopate. This will be taken in three stages: a presentation on the ecumenical responses to the Rochester Report on the afternoon of Monday 6 February, a take note debate on the Guildford Report on the morning of Tuesday, 7 February, and a debate on the substantive, following motion on the afternoon of Wednesday, 8 February.
4. The February Synod also includes a major debate on the Church's built heritage and the repair of church buildings, based on a report from the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division. This encompasses the subject matter of the Private

Member's Motion from Mr Roy Thompson on the Repair of Church Buildings, and the Diocesan Synod Motion from Lincoln, on the Church's Built Heritage.

5. The Agenda includes no less than one other Private Member's Motion (from Mr Nigel Holmes, on Reader Ministry), and two other Diocesan Synod Motions (a motion from Southwark on the Bicentenary of the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and a motion from Guildford on the Human Genome).
6. The Agenda also provides for a presentation on pensions issues, to set a context for future consideration by the Synod of this subject. This presentation will also continue the process of induction and the pattern of seminar presentation, which featured both at the Induction Seminar before the November Synod and at the Seminar on the Episcopate during the November Group of Sessions.
7. The February Synod has relatively little legislative business and no liturgical business. There is one item of business of an ecumenical nature, being a report of the Conversations between the Church of England and the Baptist Union of Great Britain.
8. There is one item of contingency business, being the Southwark Diocesan Synod Motion on Carbon Emissions. No other Private Members' Motions

are listed as contingency business because, apart from the motions from Mr Thompson and Mr Holmes, none has attracted more than 100 signatures, which the Business Committee considers is a reasonable threshold for debate.

Security

9. Members are asked to wear their Church House passes at all times and to study the security notice which will be circulated in a notice paper.

Worship

10. A service of Holy Communion will take place in the Assembly Hall at 9.30 am on Tuesday, 7 February. A time of prayer and worship will take place at the commencement of the morning sittings at 9.30 am on Wednesday and Thursday. Outline information about services in the Church House Chapel is given on the inside front cover of the Agenda.

Order of Business

11. 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.

12. If there is no such outstanding business and an unexpected gap opens in the Synod Agenda, then unless the adjournment is carried, the Business Committee has decided that the next item to be taken, as contingency business, will be the Southwark Diocesan Synod Motion on Carbon Dioxide Emissions. Members are 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

13. Private Members' Motions are contained in Special Agenda III. Notices of any new Private Members' Motions will be published in a notice paper, and they will be available at the February Group of Sessions for signature by members (to indicate their support for a debate on them), but only if they are received no later than 5.30 pm on Monday 6 February.

Content of Business

The appointment of Chairs of the Business Committee and the Appointments Committee

14. The Synod is asked to approve the appointments of the Chairs of the Business Committee and the Appointments Committee. The Chair of the Business Committee is appointed by the Archbishops' Council after consultation with the Appointments Committee from among the six members of the Council directly elected by the General Synod; the appointment and the term of office is subject to confirmation by resolution of the General Synod. The Chair of the Appointments Committee is appointed by the Archbishops after consultation with the Archbishops' Council and the Appointments Committee; the appointment and the term of office is confirmed by resolution of the Synod.

Report by the Business Committee

15. This will provide the customary opportunity for members to raise points about content and shape of the Agenda for this Group of Sessions, or about the Synod's business generally. The Synod will also be asked to approve the proposed dates for the July Group of Sessions and the contingent dates for the November Group of Sessions in 2008. The remaining dates for 2008 could not be settled until the dates of the 2008 Lambeth Conference were

known. (The Lambeth Conference will take place from 16 July to 3 August 2008.)

Women in the Episcopate: Ecumenical Response to the Rochester Report

16. Our ecumenical partners were invited to respond to the Rochester Report, *Women Bishops in the Church of England*. This presentation will provide the Synod with the opportunity of hearing from representatives of the three churches who have made responses to the Report (the Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and the United Reformed Church), as set out in GS Misc 807. The presentation will be introduced by the Revd Preb Dr Paul Avis (General Secretary of the Council for Christian Unity), and will be followed by short contributions from representatives of the three churches, and a comment from the Bishop of Rochester. There will then be time for questions and short comments from Synod members, followed by concluding remarks from the three representatives, and from Dr Avis.

Presentation on Pensions Issues

17. Synod members will be aware from press coverage that much is happening in the pensions world at the present time and some difficult issues confront employers who currently sponsor defined benefit schemes. This presentation provides an

opportunity for the Secretary of the Pensions Board (Mr Shaun Farrell) to update the Synod on recent developments and their implications for the Clergy Pension Scheme.

Ethical Investment

18. Mr John Reynolds will address the Synod at the invitation of the Presidents under Standing Order 112. He will speak about the present and future work of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG), from his perspective as the newly appointed Chair of the Group. In particular, he will speak about the impact that the EIAG can have on corporate behaviour through constructive engagement, and how the EIAG might take the process of engagement with companies further. The Bishop of Worcester will move the take-note motion formally and respond to the debate, which will be informed by a short paper which the EIAG has produced (GS 1604).

Women in the Episcopate: Guildford Report: Take Note Debate (Tuesday, 7 February)

19. In July 2005, the Synod voted by majorities in each House for setting in train the process for removing the legal obstacles to the ordination of women to the episcopate. It asked the House of Bishops to complete by January 2006 the assessment which it was already making of the issues about relevant options. It also instructed the

Business Committee to make sufficient time available in February 2006 for a further Synod debate with a view to possible decisions.

20. The working group established by the House and chaired by the Bishop of Guildford has completed its assessment, and the House has agreed the publication of its report. It is being circulated to members of Synod as GS 1605.
21. This debate provides an opportunity for Synod to consider and take note of the Guildford Report, before moving on to debate the consequential motion, taking forward its recommendation, on the Thursday morning.

Rural Affairs and the Church of England

22. Rural England is a changing place. It has a growing and ageing population and patterns of living and working that have changed rapidly over the last generation with the decline in farming. Throughout this period rural churches have continued to make a significant and valued contribution to rural community life. This important contribution is often not recognised or understood by all levels of Government. It also needs to be valued and understood by other parts of the Church.
23. This debate focuses on the contribution of rural churches to rural community development and asks

the Synod to ensure that rural churches are adequately resourced by dioceses to enable a continuing effective Christian presence in rural areas. It asks that Government recognise this contribution in practical ways. The debate is supported by a short background paper from the Mission and Public Affairs Council (GS 1606) and *Seeds in Holy Ground* (GS Misc 803), a workbook for rural churches on rural mission and ministry. The Bishop of Exeter, Chair of the Rural Affairs Committee of the Mission and Public Affairs Council, will lead the debate.

Anglican/Baptist Conversations

24. In accordance with the Council for Christian Unity's policy of 'all-round and every-level ecumenism', the CCU and the Baptist Union of Great Britain held informal, exploratory conversations in two phases between 1992 and 2005, with reports to the sponsoring bodies and a fresh mandate in 1999. Compared with other ecumenical agreed statements, the report of these conversations (GS Misc 801) strikes out in a fresh way: it does not express a doctrinal agreement or propose a formal new relationship between our churches. Instead, it explores unexpected convergences in the deeper patterns of Christian initiation and pastoral oversight. It offers some searching questions to both churches in these areas and points the way to closer practical collaboration in mission between Anglicans and Baptists.

25. At the same time, the report sets the discussion in the context of a long history of Anglican-Baptist interaction, some of it polemical, some irenic. The issues that arise when Baptists and Anglicans work together in Local Ecumenical Partnerships are considered. The report ends with parallel presentations of what each church looks for in order to be able to recognise the apostolicity of another church. The Synod is invited to commend the report for a process of study and response throughout the Church of England.

Church Colleges/Universities and the Church of England: Mutual Expectations

26. Much has changed since the last report to the General Synod on the church colleges, *An Excellent Enterprise*, in 1994. Both the Dearing review of church schools in 2001 and the Hind review of ministerial formation in 2003 mentioned the importance, realised or potential, of the church colleges to the Church. The place of the church colleges within the diverse system of higher education in England has also changed. More than half of the church colleges have become universities in their own right. The Board of Education decided to ask whether these developments altered the fundamental relationship.

27. A Board of Education working group has considered the mutual friendship and great

expectations that the Church of England has or should have of these higher education institutions (HEIs) and the HEIs have or should have of the Church of their foundation. It has concluded that they have much to contribute to each other and should thus expect much of each other. The report is circulated as GS 1601.

Legislative Business (Wednesday, 8 February)

28. Unusually, there will be very little legislative business at this Group of Sessions. In essence, it will be restricted to giving Final Approval to the Holy Communion (Admission of Baptised Persons to Holy Communion) Regulations, following their consideration by the House of Bishops.

Reader Ministry: Private Member's Motion
Mr Nigel Holmes

29. Mr Holmes' Private Member's Motion is set in the context of a growing number of different categories of minister, both ordained and lay, and a sense that Readers are under-used in the service of the Church. Mr Holmes points to the absence of a debate on Reader ministry in the General Synod in recent years. He refers to a substantial fall in the number of Readers in training.
30. The motion does not seek to prejudge the outcome of any study which follows this debate, but raises a number of questions, including whether some

Readers should move to other expressions of ministry and how this should be facilitated. These are set out in a background paper from Mr Holmes (GS Misc 812A). The Ministry Division has also produced a background paper (GS Misc 812B).

Into the New Quinquennium

31. At the beginning of this year, the Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops agreed to establish a small group to help the two bodies work together in preparing for the new quinquennium. The group consisted of the Bishops of Gloucester and Peterborough and, from the Council, Mrs Anne Sloman and the Revd Dr Richard Turnbull.

32. At the recommendation of the group, the House and Council agreed that there would be value in pulling together in a single, relatively short and readable document, an account of the work programme which the Synod itself, and the National Church Institutions, are going to set out to deliver over the next five years.

33. The group had thought, at an earlier stage, that it might be possible to marshal the material around the various, powerful messages embodied in the Archbishop's presidential statement to the November Synod. The group ultimately concluded that it was more sensible to set out the various areas of work by organisation and subject area, but the document is framed within the context

of the Presidential Address, the text of which is circulated as part of the document (GS 1607).

34. The document is published with the endorsement of the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops. The Synod is invited to welcome the work programme set out therein.

Guildford Diocesan Synod Motion: Human Genome

35. The Guildford Diocesan Synod passed a motion on the Human Genome in November 2004. Since then the motion has been subject to some revision agreed between the Guildford Diocese and the Synod Office. The motion invites the Synod to consider that the human genome is gifted by God to each individual and, as such, should not be patentable; it calls for strict control on the availability of human genetic data, and whilst recognising the need for appropriate intellectual property protection, regrets that EU Directive 1998/44 makes legal provision for the patenting of genetic material of human origin. The Diocese of Guildford is circulating a background paper (GS Misc 813).

Southwark Diocesan Synod Motion: Bicentenary of the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade

36. The motion before the Synod acknowledges the sensitivities and opportunities surrounding this

commemoration. The first part of the resolution recognises the opportunities for churches to make the most of the bicentenary in terms of their evangelistic and social outreach into their communities.

37. The second part acknowledges the unfinished nature of ridding the world of the scourge of slavery. It invites churches and individuals to consider where and how pressure might be applied to bringing about an end to modern slaveries (whilst acknowledging the historic stories of capture and release), and to support agencies that are in a position to give voice to the release of those held captive.
38. The third part of the motion asks the churches to seize opportunities to protest against human trafficking in all its forms; to request the Government to provide resources to those released from bonded labour by funding personal and emotional support to those rescued from bondage, and to encourage co-ordinated thinking and action with member nations of the European Community; and finally, requests the Archbishops' Council to resource the churches in their proclamation of the stories of release and redemption in such ways that make a difference to their communication of the Gospel story.
39. A background paper from the Southwark Diocese (GS Misc 808) was circulated for the November

Synod (when the motion was listed as contingency business), and it is being re-circulated. It describes the action which is already being taken by Churches Together in England in relation to the 2007 Bicentenary Project.

Hospital and Health Care Chaplaincy

40. The National Health Service is something with which all engage at some point in their lives, whether as users, visitors or members of staff. The founding principles of the NHS were conceived prior to and during the Second World War, coming to fruition in 1948. Much has changed since then and the range of treatments available has become ever more complex and costly. However, the fundamental aim of caring in a holistic way for all who use the NHS remains.
41. Healthcare chaplains make up a tiny proportion of the total NHS staffing, yet they have access throughout the service and meet staff, in particular, in parts of the hospital which are rarely visited by others. Chaplains have specialist ministries within units or hospitals, which cover maternity, paediatrics, mental health, acute and elderly care. They work in Primary Care Trusts as well as palliative care hospices (which are mainly charities).
42. There has been a history of ambivalence between the Church and sector ministry, which has made

some chaplains (not only in healthcare) feel that their ministry, carried out as employees of secular institutions, has not received the recognition and value that it might have. This debate is an opportunity to re-engage the dialogue between healthcare chaplains and the Church.

43. The motion accordingly affirms chaplaincy and spiritual healthcare, encourages healthcare chaplains and volunteers in their work in the NHS and in all places of healing care, and requests the Government, NHS Trusts and other healthcare bodies to ensure the continuing and adequate provision of chaplaincy and spiritual care.

Women in the Episcopate: Guildford Report:
Following Motion (Thursday, 9 February)

44. The Guildford Report considers three main options: a ‘Single Clause’ Measure, a Third Province, and Transferred Episcopal Arrangements (TEA), and concludes that TEA is an option which merits further consideration by the General Synod, as representing the most realistic way forward.
45. The House of Bishops welcomes the assessment of the options in the Guildford Report, and considers that an approach along the lines of TEA, expressed in a Measure and associated Code of Practice, merits further exploration as a basis for proceeding in a way that will maintain the highest possible degree of communion in the Church of England.

46. The Synod is therefore being asked (by the House of Bishops) (a) to invite the House to produce for the July 2006 Group of Sessions a statement on the theological, ecumenical and canonical implications of this approach, and a detailed legislative timetable; and (b) to instruct the Business Committee to make sufficient time available in July to determine, in the light of advice from the House, the next steps, including a possible timetable for legislation.

The Church's Built Heritage and the Repair of Church Buildings

47. This motion combines the motion from Mr Roy Thompson with the complementary motion from the Lincoln Diocesan Synod, which supports the recommendations of the Church Heritage Forum's report *Building Faith in Our Future* issued in October 2004, and encourages work at national and diocesan level to take forward discussion of its recommendations. These are aimed at achieving a greater understanding of the contribution church buildings make to society beyond the worshipping congregation, drawing attention to the fragility of that achievement, and calling for greater partnership to sustain them for the future.

48. A wider debate on the broader buildings agenda in February Synod is particularly timely, not just because of the Comprehensive Spending Review which the Government will be undertaking in 2007,

but also because of the growing political interest in the *Building Faith in Our Future* agenda, for which a Government response is now in preparation; a Department for Culture Media and Sport Select Committee inquiry into the priorities for heritage and heritage funding, which is now inviting submissions and likely to be taking oral evidence in February/March 2006; current consultation on future priorities for heritage funding; and the preparation of a White Paper on heritage protection legislation, due to be issued in around May 2006.

49. The specifically financial issues, which are the focus of Mr Thompson's motion, are as follows:
- a. that grants from English Heritage and Heritage Lottery Fund for listed church repairs, welcome though they are, have remained static for several years at approximately £25 million (apart from one good year, 2003/4, when the amount offered went up to over £28 million, immediately after Mr Thompson's similar Private Member's Motion debated in February 2003), thus declining in real terms;
 - b. costs of outstanding repair work are now estimated at £373 million, £323 million for listed churches. This does not take account of the additional costs arising from other legislation (for example, the Disability Discrimination Act).

50. Once approved, it will provide a point of reference against which the Archbishops' Council can monitor progress in pursuance of its statutory mandate to 'co-ordinate, promote, aid and further the work and mission' of the Church. The debate is resourced by a background paper from the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division (GS 1610). Papers from Mr Thompson (GS 1610A) and the Diocese of Lincoln (GS 1610B) are also being circulated.

Questions

51. Under SO 105, members may address Questions to the Secretary General, the Clerk to the Synod, the Chairman of the Archbishops' Council, the Chair of any body answerable to the Synod through the Archbishops' Council (including Boards and Councils), the Chair of any Church of England body on which the Synod is represented, the Chair of each of the three Houses of Synod, the Church Estates Commissioners, and the Chair of the Pensions Board. Anyone wishing to ask a question must give notice of it to reach the Clerk to the Synod by 5.30 pm on Wednesday, 25 January 2006. The Questions notice paper will be distributed at the beginning of the Group of Sessions.

52. Members are entitled to ask up to two questions. '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 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.

Contingency business:
Southwark Diocesan Synod Motion: Carbon Dioxide Emissions

53. This Diocesan Synod Motion has had to be held back in the list because a wide-ranging debate on the environment (which encompassed this issue), under the title *Sharing God's Planet*, took place in February 2005. Under Standing Order 24, the matter could not ordinarily be reconsidered by the Synod for at least eleven months, so this would be (if taken) the first opportunity for it to be debated since then. The Synod was apprised of the Southwark Diocesan Synod Motion when it debated the Environment in February. Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss moved an amendment, asking the Mission and Public Affairs Council to investigate and recommend how church members can contribute to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 60% (of 1990 levels) by 2050, in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, but this was lost. The Diocese of

Southwark has nevertheless indicated that it still wishes its Diocesan Synod Motion to be the subject of a substantive debate in the General Synod.

Prorogation

54. The Synod will be prorogued no later than 5.30 pm and the closing ceremonies will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

On behalf of the Business Committee

Alan Hawker

January 2006

**Membership of the Business Committee
(as at 15 January 2006)**

Chair

Vacant

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Revd Trevor Willmott, Bishop of Basingstoke

Elected by the House of Clergy

The Ven Alan Hawker, Archdeacon of Malmesbury (Bristol) –
Acting Chair

The Revd Sue Booy (Oxford)

The Ven Alistair Magowan, Archdeacon of Dorset (Salisbury)

Elected by the House of Laity

Miss Rosalind Fuller (London)

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich)

Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester)

Two members of the Archbishops' Council

Professor Peter Toyne (Appointed)

Vacancy

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

GENERAL SYNOD

Forecast of future General Synod business

One or more Private Members' Motions and Diocesan Synod Motions are customarily included in each Group of Sessions.

July 2006

Presidential Address
Budget
Archbishops' Council Annual Report

Legislation Draft Pastoral and Dioceses Measure,
Amending Canon No 27 and
Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment)
Regulation – Revision Stage
Clergy Terms of Service legislation – First
Consideration
Marriage legislation – First Consideration
Care of Cathedrals Rules [deemed?]
Parsonages Measure (Amendment) Rules
[deemed?]
Legal Aid (Amendment) Rules
Church Accounting (Amendment) Regulations
[re PCC accounting]
Usual Fees Orders
Clergy Discipline (Channel Islands (Guernsey))
Order
Diocese in Europe Measure Amending Scheme
[deemed?]

Reports Commission on Urban Life and Faith report
The Dearing Report: five years on
?Further Education issues

?Follow-up to Finance Reviews
?Report from Church of England delegation to
the WCC Assembly (Brazil, February 2006)
?Church Music Report
?Called to Act Justly: Follow-up report

14 December 2005