

## After General Synod November 2012: reporting back

The Church of England website <http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/agendas-and-papers/november-2012-group-of-sessions.aspx> has copies of all the reports debated at the General Synod. The document "**Business Done**" lists which motions were passed and what the voting was.

A transcript of the debates will appear in the Report of Proceedings section in due course:

<http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/reports-of-proceedings.aspx>

The audio files of the debate are available via this page of the Church of England website:

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/media-library/general-synod-audio-files.aspx?sni=qbno%7d>

### Women Bishops (GS 1708D, GS 1709C, GS 1709E, GS 1708-09ZZZ) (updated 21 December)

The *Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure* was rejected by the General Synod, because it failed to get a two thirds majority in the House of Laity.

Whilst more than two thirds voted for the legislation in both the House of Bishops (44-03) and the House of Clergy (148-45), the vote in favour of the legislation in the House of Laity was less than two-thirds (132-74).

The audio files of the debate are available via this page of the Church of England website:

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/media-library/general-synod-audio-files.aspx?sni=qbno%7d> The audio files are 20 November, Item 501 Morning and Afternoon Sessions.

I voted against the draft legislation, not as a vote against the ordination of women to the episcopate, but as a vote against the provisions for anglo-catholics and conservative evangelicals in the legislation.

The text of my speech is attached.

Reactions:

I attach extracts from the first ten emails that I received which illustrate the range of reactions.

Next steps:

I attach the Bishop of Guildford's letter of 22 November inviting clergy to a discussion meeting on 29 November, and laity to a discussion meeting on 11 December.

I remain committed that I will vote for future women bishops legislation that includes provision that meets the theological needs of traditionalists. One of the emails that I have received has asked me, "Now that you've voted against the measure, what concrete actions are you personally pursuing to sort out the mess that's been created?"

On 21 November I sent preliminary thoughts to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the General Synod House of Laity. I sent a further email on 21 December. Those documents are attached.

I attach the Joint Press Statement from the Chairmen of the Catholic Group and Reform in General Synod of 28 November 2012.

I attach the Church of England Press Release of 28 November 2012.

### **Those authorised to distribute Holy Communion (GS 1881A, GS 1881B)**

The Synod voted for rules to be changed so that children who have not been confirmed may be authorised to distribute the sacrament of bread and wine at Holy Communion. I voted against because I believe that this official role should be undertaken by those who have been confirmed.

The motion that was passed read:

"That this Synod request that Canon B 12 and the Regulations taking effect under it be amended so that:

(a) the Holy Sacrament may be distributed by any authorised regular communicant (including children admitted to the Holy Communion under the Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Regulations 2006);

(b) if the diocesan bishop agrees, the necessary authorisation may be given in relation to any parish by the incumbent, priest in charge or (during a vacancy) rural dean;

(c) no person shall be authorised to distribute the Holy Sacrament without the support of the parochial church council of the parish or, where the Holy Communion is celebrated in a school and the person concerned is a child, of the head teacher of the school; and

(d) the authorisation given in relation to any parish is required to be kept under regular review in accordance with guidelines issued by the diocesan bishop."

### **The Living Wage (GS 1882A, GS 1882B)**

I voted in favour of the motion and it was passed by an overwhelming majority:

"That this Synod, recognising that the widening gap between rich and poor harms all of society and that paying a "Living Wage" lifts people out of poverty:

(a) affirm the Christian values inherent in the concept of the "Living Wage"; and

(b) strongly encourage all Church of England institutions to pay at least the "Living Wage"."

### **Youth Unemployment (GS 1883)**

I voted in favour of the motion and it was passed by an overwhelming majority:

“That this Synod, mindful of the corrosive effect of unemployment on young people, their future prospects and social integration, and recognising that economic policy solutions alone cannot tackle the problems without strong networks and initiatives in the community at large:

(a) encourage parishes and church groups to listen to the voices of unemployed young people, both locally and through reports such as “I Am One in a Million”, and

(b) commend and encourage the multiplication of church and community initiatives which can provide training and other support to assist young people into work and help them manage the experience of unemployment without despair.”

I also attended a fringe meeting on the subject where we received the resource pack from the Frontier Youth Trust to help churches and community groups explore and confront youth unemployment. It may be downloaded from their website: <http://www.fyt.org.uk/content/product/pdf-downloads/one-million-resource-pack-churches-and-community-groups>

There is also a very helpful Church of England website on Resourcing Community Action <http://www.how2help.net/>

## Farewells

The farewells included two former colleagues of mine: Judith Gracias who has worked as part of the Synod’s Secretariat for 39 years; and Dr Colin Podmore, Clerk to the Synod, who has been a member of the Synod’s staff for 24 years. Both have been unfailingly kind to me and have served the Church of England with the highest integrity.

There were also farewells to the Archbishop of Canterbury, we gave him more than one standing ovation and passed the motion:

“That this Synod record its deep gratitude for the Archbishop of Canterbury’s outstanding ministry to Church and Nation, and offer him and Mrs Williams its very best wishes for the future.”

I agree with Bishop Justin Welby who on 9 November said that Rowan Williams “will be recognised as one of the greatest Archbishops of Canterbury.”

## Before General Synod November 2012: inviting your views

All the documents for the 19-21 November 2012 General Synod are on the Church of England website: <http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/agendas-and-papers/november-2012-group-of-sessions.aspx>

### Women Bishops (GS 1708D, GS 1709C, GS 1709E, GS 1708-09ZZZ)

Following the July Synod vote to adjourn, asking the House of Bishops to reconsider clause 5(1)c of the draft legislation, Synod members were sent a paper (GS Misc 1033) inviting them to give their views on that particular clause. 120 people sent in submissions. The submissions of those who gave permission for publication are available on the CofE

website: <http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/legislation/inprogress.aspx>

My submission is number C28 of that bundle.

I attach it.

Some Synod members wrote in saying that the clause 5(1)c gave provisions to traditionalists that were a bare minimum and should be retained, others wrote that it gave provisions that were too great and should be removed. The Bishops did what was probably the only thing they realistically could do and took a middle line by amending 5(1)c, weakening its provisions without removing them altogether.

The task now before the General Synod in November is to vote either 'yes' or 'no' to what is now the final draft legislation. The text of legislation is in the Synod paper GS 1708D. A two-thirds majority of each of the three 'Houses' of Synod: bishops, clergy and laity, is required for the legislation to pass. The House of Bishops and House of Clergy are expected to easily pass it, but whether two-thirds of House of Laity vote for it we will only find out in the afternoon of 20 November when the vote is taken.

The legislation has two purposes: to permit the ordination of women as bishops; and to make provisions for the traditionalists (anglo-catholics and conservative evangelicals) who have theological objections.

Those in favour of ordination of women as bishops say that the provisions in the legislation are sufficient provision for traditionalists. Traditionalists who would be on the receiving end of those provisions say that they are insufficient.

My own assessment is that the provisions are not sufficient for traditionalists. The provision in the draft legislation is for those parishes who so request, to be allowed to have some sacramental and pastoral ministry from a male bishop who has been delegated to them by the woman diocesan bishop. The fact that the male bishop would be working under the delegation of the woman bishop does not meet the sacramental assurance needs of anglo-catholics, or the biblical headship needs of conservative evangelicals.

I therefore intend to vote against the legislation. This is a real shame, because there have been so many other offers and options on the table over the last few years, that would have met the needs of traditionalists (third province; non-geographic diocese; transferred episcopal arrangements; society model; co-ordinate jurisdiction) and I would have voted for women bishops legislation with any of those options.

The reason we have got to where we are is that none of the options that traditionalists offered gained enough votes in the General Synod to become the final draft legislation. This is because those who want women bishops make up more than half the Synod and they have voted down every option that the minority have said would be sufficient provision for them. The consequence now is that the minority are likely to vote against and they might muster the third of votes sufficient to block the legislation.

Almost everyone is saying that if the legislation fails it will be an unmitigated disaster for the CofE. I agree that, if it does fail, it is a disaster that it has had to come to this. I have however tried to suggest a positive way forward should that happen. In my **submission** on the clause 5(1)c, I included my suggestion of what should happen next if the legislation were to fail in November:

"...the debates about what should be in the draft legislation has meant that Synod members have out of necessity become entrenched in the Synod politics of lobbying and fighting the battles over what should be in the draft, so as to seek to achieve the best outcome for their own constituency.

However, if the legislation fails at final approval, a fresh approach should be initiated of discussions outside of formal Synod meetings.

...If WATCH [in favour of women bishops], Reform [conservative evangelicals], and the Catholic Group [anglo-catholics] in cross-party talks could agree together on a scheme that each group could live with, then the resulting legislative synodical process would be much easier and swifter, because Synod would be working on a foundation of agreement and the need for entrenched lobbying would disappear. The eventual outcome would be much happier and more united Church of England."

### **Those authorised to distribute Holy Communion** (GS 1881A, GS 1881B)

The General Synod will be debating a motion submitted by Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. If the motion is passed it would change the Church's rules (Canon B12 and the associated regulations) and allow children who are not confirmed to be authorised to distribute the sacrament of bread and wine at communion. The motion would also mean that parishes would no longer need to send a list of names to the bishop for authorisation.

My own view is that those who are in an official authorised role distributing the sacrament of Jesus' body and blood in the Holy Communion, should be those who have received full initiation into the Church having made their declaration of faith at confirmation. I therefore do not agree with the proposed change. I do however agree with the other part of the motion which would remove the bureaucracy of submitting names to the bishop. If someone is confirmed and authorised by their parish priest I think that should be sufficient without the bishop needing to see a list of names.

### **The Living Wage** (GS 1882A, GS 1882B)

This private members motion states:

"That this Synod, recognising that the widening gap between rich and poor harms all of society and that paying a "Living Wage" lifts people out of poverty:

- (a) affirm the Christian values inherent in the concept of the "Living Wage"; and
- (b) strongly encourage all Church of England institutions to pay at least the "Living Wage"."

The National Minimum Wage is set by the Government following advice from the Low Pay Commission and, at the time of writing, is currently £6.19 an hour. The Living Wage is set by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough

University and is currently £7.20 an hour. The Greater London Authority recommends a Living Wage of £8.30 an hour in London.

I support the motion that all employers, including churches, should pay people a living wage and therefore intend to vote for the motion.

It is a shame that the country has the duplication and confusion of two different measures. The ideal would be for the National Minimum Wage to be set at what is a living wage and there would then be no need to have a different 'Living Wage' figure. The motion does not call for that to happen, but I doubt the Government would take any notice even if it did!

### Youth Unemployment (GS 1883)

This motion asks the Synod to:

"...(a) encourage parishes and church groups to listen to the voices of unemployed young people, both locally and through reports such as "I Am One in a Million", and  
(b) commend and encourage the multiplication of church and community initiatives which can provide training and other support to assist young people into work and help them manage the experience of unemployment without despair."

The report "I am one in a million: young people's experiences of unemployment" can be downloaded from the Church Urban Fund website <http://www.cuf.org.uk/research/one-in-a-million>

It is a good report, based on focus groups with 100 young people who have direct experience of unemployment. Personally, I think that the report might have been further improved if the researchers had also spoken to employers. For example, chapter 6 says what young people think employers need to do to maximise employment opportunities for young people. The researchers didn't then ask employers for tips on what young people might do to help to enhance their employment prospects.

I particularly commend the recommendations in paragraph 8.5 of the report, which lists things that churches might consider doing, including:

- set up a mentoring scheme
- offer voluntary or paid work experience
- set up a work club, see: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/work-club-guide.pdf> and [www.gbjobclubs.org](http://www.gbjobclubs.org)

### Standing Orders Committee Report (GS 1884)

At the February Synod I kept to my election promise to press for increasing openness in the Church, and submitted the following question:

"Has the Standing Orders Committee considered whether revision committees, to which legislative and liturgical business are committed, should be required, or encouraged, normally to meet in public, in the same way that public bill committees of the House of Commons examining legislation at committee stage do; and if not will it do so now?"

The Standing Orders Committee addresses this matter in their report, paragraph 32 of which states:

"...the Committee has concluded that the Standing Orders should not be amended so as to require a revision committee to meet in public but that any such committee should be encouraged at its first meeting to consider the possibility of sitting in public, in the light of the circumstances surrounding the particular business with which it is concerned."

This does not go as far as I would have liked, but I welcome it as an encouraging step forward.

**Speech on the *Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure* final approval debate, Church of England General Synod, 20 November 2012.**

“Adrian Vincent, Guildford, 320.

I have always said to those who elected me that I would vote for women bishops legislation if it provides provision that meets the theological needs of traditionalists.

Ministry provided under the delegation of a woman bishop, cannot, by definition, meet the biblical headship needs of conservative evangelicals, or the sacramental assurance needs of anglo-catholics.

There are plenty of options that would meet those needs:

- I would have voted for women bishops and a third province.
- I would have voted for women bishops and a non-geographic diocese.
- I would have voted for the Bishop of Guildford’s Transferred Episcopal Arrangements scheme.
- I would have voted for the Bishop of Gloucester’s Special Episcopal Arrangements scheme.
- I would have voted for women bishops with the Society model.
- I would have voted for the Archbishops’ Coordinate Jurisdiction proposal.
- And, against my better judgment - because it didn’t really meet the needs - I would probably even have voted for the legislation in July with the original clause 5(1)c.

I am not being the awkward squad.

But when the phrase “theological convictions” has to be deleted from the Measure because some didn’t want those theological views to be given official recognition in legislation. Do we really expect traditionalists to sign up to that? To expect them to agree that their theological convictions have to become the new “love that dare not speak its name”?

It has been said that this draft legislation represents a compromise on all sides. The dictionary defines the word “compromise” as “a joint agreement made by contending parties.” Now, of our main contending parties – WATCH; Forward in Faith; and Reform - two out of the three of them oppose this draft legislation. So there is no joint agreement.

Synod speeches and Synod votes have failed as a method of dispute resolution.

Regretfully we need to vote against this legislation. There will be much justifiable anger, and we will need to channel that anger and impatience into a new process that begins outside of the politics of Synod.

The first step will be for the leaders of WATCH, Forward in Faith and Reform to meet with a mediator and ecclesiastical law expert, such as Mark Hill QC, to agree a scheme together that the three of them can live with.

When our three lobby groups recommend that scheme, and it comes to Synod, the voting will be far more than a two-thirds majority, and the Church will be able to ordain women as bishops on the basis of some genuine unity. Please vote against the motion.”

**Anonymised extracts from 10 emails sent to Adrian Vincent between 22-23 November 2012 commenting on my voting against the *Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure***

“I am ashamed to be part of an institution that tolerates legal discrimination against women. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the designate, and virtually all the Dioceses supported Women Bishops and for it to be defeated by a small minority is tragic. Any arguments about the inadequacy of the legislation are secondary against the greater good of the removal of discrimination and prejudice.”

“Whilst I respect your view point I think the Church of England should be ashamed of itself today. What a sad day when we cannot welcome Women into the Church like Jesus did. I honestly think history will show this is a dark day in the life of the church. The significant few have made the Churches (Christ’s) mission almost impossible. To accept women priests and then say no to Bishops is just a nonsense and part of the mess that only the Church can get itself into. WWJD?”

“I like what you wrote: "Ministry provided under the delegation of a woman bishop, cannot, by definition, meet the biblical headship needs of conservative evangelicals, or the sacramental assurance needs of anglo-catholics". I would count myself as a conservative evangelical and support the view of someone like George Curry who I heard interviewed on Premier radio yesterday. I am glad you voted against”

“Thank you for... the clarity with which you set out your reasons for voting against the draft legislation. While the House of Laity is understandably getting all the flack I have always understood that the seeds of Tuesday night’s outcome lay in the House of Clergy’s refusal to accept the proposals of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to cater for those who felt unable to accept women bishops – I think that vote was a great shame and the Clergy members of General Synod should accept some responsibility for our current position.”

“What really surprises me about yesterday's voting is that the G Synod lay members do not seem to feel a duty of representation.”

“Well done on taking the responsibility of this difficult position.”

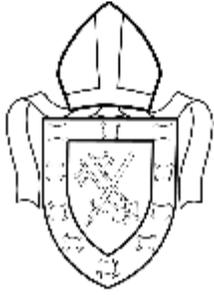
“Reconciliation is Justin's strong point ..I pray for those feeling bruised and upset this morning and hope they would be doing the same for people like me if the vote had gone the other way. Many thanks from me and many of my friends for doing what is right for the long term.”

“After all these years I still naively believed that when we were all asked to love and support each other after the vote, that applied to both sides; I now know that this only applied if the proponents of women bishops won and we were the losers. Now that the proposals have been rejected, I can't recall before such an unpleasant reaction to a group who stood by their beliefs. Thanks once again for the courage to stand up and be counted.”

“Whilst I am not opposed to women’s ministry... I have been dismayed by the rhetoric used by those commenting on the vote in the media and in communications since the result has been known. I am sad to hear that as someone with a traditional and orthodox view of the Bible, I am labelled as ‘narrow-minded’ and a ‘fundamentalist’ by those who do not look at

the Bible in that way. ...As a Christian who is called to be 'in the world but not of the world' I expect conflict from a secular organisation and an increasingly secular society, but the response to and language used by those who have written and spoken of their disappointment and anger at the way the vote went, makes me concerned that those who hold to an orthodox view of scripture are no longer welcome even in the Church of England."

"Now that you've voted against the measure, what concrete actions are you personally pursuing to sort out the mess that's been created?"



Diocese of Guildford

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November, 2012

Ad Clerum et Laicum : Women Bishops' Vote

**AD CLERUM ET LAICUM – post General Synod**

You will already know that the General Synod, on Tuesday evening, just before 7pm, failed to reach the required majority in the House of Laity on the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate. This was, in spite of an overall two thirds, and strong majorities in the other Houses, not least overwhelming support in the House of Bishops. Some may feel relieved. Most of us, including your two bishops, are feeling deep pain, frustration, and even desperation. I have already received many anguished emails, as has Bishop Ian, who joins me in this letter. The psalms at Morning Prayer on the morning after spoke for many: *“You have counted my groaning; put my tears into your bottle: are they not written in your book.”*

We look forward to meeting any clergy who wish to join us, other senior colleagues and your General Synod clergy on Thursday, 29 November at 12.45 at Holy Trinity, Guildford. We also invite all laity who wish to express their views to us to come to a similar gathering on Tuesday, 11 December at 7.30 pm, at St Mary's, Quarry Street, Guildford. On the 11<sup>th</sup> I shall be returning from a two day meeting of the House of Bishops. We are devoting the meeting to this matter and an assessment of our present situation, and possible ways forward. There is a determination in the House of Bishops to continue to work with this urgent matter and not simply to wring our hands. That was certainly also the very definite feeling of the General Synod, in spite of the fact that by the vote in the House of Laity, the one clear obvious way of going forward, with provision, was to say yes to the Measure.

For the moment, following an informal early meeting of the House of Bishops' on Wednesday morning, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's address to Synod following that morning, I offer the following reflections:

At the moment we must brace ourselves for understandable anger – bishops spoke about the household china to be thrown around. Polarisation frankly, in General Synod is now much greater than I have ever seen it. Even so, recriminations will do nothing to help to find a way forward. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of holding to account the number of offers from those who argued against the Measure to enter into immediate discussions. These must be taken up. Synod, however, decided not to meet officially as General Synod in February. This is not a matter of a lack of urgency. Rather it will be for General Synod members to use the time set aside in other ways: for example, discussion in small groups and listening to each other to begin to seek a way forward. To revert immediately to quasi parliamentary mode with votes *yes* and *no* would simply

polarise matters further. The Archbishop of Canterbury wisely warned against much unrealistic expectation about any new simple solution. I can add my own weight to this from my own experience as Vice Chairman of the Rochester Commission, Chairman of the Guildford Group, and working with its successor, the Guildford and Gloucester Report, as well as my work in the House of Bishops as the Revision Committee took the matter forward through Synod in terms of the now dead Measure. All this amounts to well over twelve years of detailed working in terms of theology and practical ways forward. For me, I do not see further avenues in which we are likely to achieve agreement. If we go for a long term solution, in accordance with the clearly stated substantial majority of church people, the likelihood for the future is *less* structural provision, if any, for those who cannot accept women priests and bishops. That might have to wait until a new Synod but a considerable number of permutations and variations have been looked at and argued one way or the other. I hope I can be proved wrong on this because we have now what is amounting to a scandal in an increasing proportion of the priests of the Church of England being ineligible for discernment in relation to the episcopate. Having said the above, those who cannot accept this development will be aware that I have also worked for provision and sincerely believe that what was in the Measure would have provided what they needed. If a solution is to be found, other than the simplicity of a one clause Measure, I shall be surprised if it does not in fact amount to something quite close to that which we have just rejected. But it must be clear that no provision would be acceptable which creates two Churches and two Episcopates. There was also a groundswell of opinion in General Synod clamouring to hear from the middle of the Church as well as from those who understand themselves to be traditionalist catholics or conservative evangelicals. In the end, however, clergy and laity vote for those they wish to represent them.

At the moment, above all we have the duty to respond to the widespread public perception that the Church of England has dissolved itself and abandoned its mission to the nation. This perception is not wholly journalistic hyperbole. The shock and tears seen on television and in the Synod chamber are shared by many members of the public. Like me, you will all have encountered many ordinary people, church members or not, expressing incredulity over what has happened.

While it is right that our synodical system erects a high hurdle in each House, bishops, clergy and laity for important change, PCCs, deaneries and congregations and above all, women and men in the street will find our decision hard indeed to understand and still less, sympathise with. For the moment we must all reaffirm our faith that God is still all in all, and that Sunday by Sunday and day by day our parishes will be preaching the Gospel, celebrating the sacraments and offering pastoral care to God's people. All this goes on in our parishes and it will not be altered, even by the General Synod's decision. But of course, much of this will happen because of the women priests in our diocese. To them I particularly want to say that Bishop Ian and I value your priestly ministry highly and we share your shock and dismay.

Should you wish to continue this conversation, please come to the relevant meetings already noted above.

Yours sincerely, but also in a state of shock.

Bishop Christopher      Bishop Ian

**Emails from Adrian Vincent to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity of the General Synod who wrote to lay members of the General Synod on 21 November:**

**“As you go back to your diocese and engage with others and seek to explain what has happened over the Women in the Episcopate Legislation, we suspect that many good ideas will come forward. Please help us as a House to be able to reap this harvest by emailing us with any such feedback.”**

21 December 2012 email sent by Adrian Vincent to Dr Philip Giddings and Mr Tim Hind.

“Dear Philip and Tim,

In the below email to you of 22 November, I referred to a meeting of laity in the Guildford Diocese that would be taking place on 11 December, and that I would write to you again with any ideas that came out of that meeting.

About 300 people attended that meeting, and about 50 attendees spoke. There was a 1 minute speech limit in force, so it was not the sort of gathering at which ideas could be discussed and developed. Therefore most comments were on how people felt about the vote rather than ideas for the future. On one side there were some calls for a Single Clause Measure, and on the other side there were some calls for 'proper provision'. The one comment that was by way of a fresh idea (which the individual concerned had already written to me in an email) was a suggestion that petitioning parishes should apply to be Archbishop's Peculiars, those parishes would come under the direct oversight of the Archbishop without the need for an additional male bishop to be provided. I make no comment on these views, I am simply passing them on.

Finally, in my below email I wrote, "when Synod subsequently voted on the Guildford report, that something along the lines of TEA be drawn up, it got almost unanimous support in terms of voting (I would have to dig up the exact voting figures)." I have now dug them up:

In February 2006, the General Synod voted that: “an approach along the lines of ‘transferred episcopal arrangements’, expressed in a Measure with an 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.” (General Synod Report of Proceedings, February 2006, Volume 37 No. 1. page 268.) The voting was 348 in favour and 1 against. (General Synod Report of Proceedings, February 2006, Volume 37 No. 1. page 308).

I am not writing in to say that TEA is definitely the way forward, the new working group and any subsequent discussion groups should have a free hand to explore all options old and new. But the 2006 TEA vote is an important reminder to those who say that any provision for traditionalists must be by 'delegation' and not 'transfer'. 'Transfer' as a principle for a way forward had almost full support (including by those most strongly campaigning for women bishops) only 6 years ago. The mood subsequently shifted and a model of provision by 'delegation' was taken forward. The failure of the legislation on a model of provision by 'delegation' means that the model of provision by 'transfer' should once again be explored alongside other possibilities.

kind regards,

Adrian

22 November 2012 email sent by Adrian Vincent to Dr Philip Giddings and Mr Tim Hind.

“Dear Philip and Tim,

Thank you for your letter of 21 November inviting us to feedback ideas that come from our diocese for moving forward following what happened over the Women in the Episcopate legislation. The Bishop of Guildford is organising a meeting on 11 December for laity in the diocese to express their views, and I hope to be able to come back to you with some fruits from that meeting. In the meantime I have some thoughts on my own account which I hope is OK for me to pass on:

I believe that legislation to introduce women to the episcopate, even with the present Synod make-up in terms of voting preferences, can be introduced in a way that can meet the needs of both sides.

The fundamental issue is that ...

a.) provision that is based upon delegation by a woman diocesan bishop is theologically unworkable for conservative evangelicals and anglo-catholics (the argument about the male bishop's authority coming from their ordination whilst helpful, isn't sufficient to solve it).

but,

b.) provision that is based upon statutory transfer which should work for traditionalists, does not work for those in favour of women bishops. Partly because they feel it would weaken the authority of women bishops and somehow make them 'second class' (the argument that male diocesans now don't have full authority e.g. don't have oversight over Royal Peculiars in their diocese, whilst helpful, has not persuaded). But principally because they think it would give official sanction to allow people to doubt the orders of women priests and bishops.

I think that a potential way forward is to revisit the Eames Report which dealt specifically with these matters, and addressed them with the theological concept of an open process of reception. That 'squares the circle' by saying that it is not permitting people to doubt the orders of any woman priest or bishop; but it does allow legitimate space to doubt the rightness of the Church's decision. [...]

When in 2006, the Bishop of Guildford's group produced the Transferred Episcopal Arrangements proposal:

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2006/01/pr0606.aspx> the chapter of the '*Women Bishops in the Church of England*' Rochester report which referred to the theological concept of reception was still fairly fresh in people's minds. So, when Synod subsequently voted on the Guildford report, that something along the lines of TEA be drawn up, it got almost unanimous support in terms of voting (I would have to dig up the exact voting figures). It was only later when Synod had the rather strange voting arrangement to instruct the legislative drafting group, which started with a default position of few provisions but with a range of amendments to strengthen it, and none of those amendments got passed, that TEA fell by the wayside.

Since then, the theological concept of reception has been largely forgotten, and if we simply tried to resurrect TEA now without that background it is unlikely to gain sufficient support because views have hardened against the concept of 'transfer' over time. But I think it is possible to re-soften views by re-discussing Eames and reception, getting some buy-in to that. Out of that background a resurrected TEA could achieve majority support.

TEA had almost universal support 6 years ago, and in a new context where legislation based on 'delegation' has been shown cannot pass with the present composition of Synod (and there is no guarantee that the elections in 3 years time will change those proportions), with the right theological preparation of Eames, it could again be accepted as the way forward. It would have the advantage that we already have something 'off the shelf' ready and that new legislation to ordain women as bishops would take less time than if we started entirely from scratch.

kind regards,

Adrian Vincent”

## **Joint Press Statement From The Chairmen Of The Catholic Group And Reform In General Synod. November 28th, 2012**

### **Women Bishops - The Way Ahead**

The Chairmen of the Catholic Group in General Synod and the conservative Evangelical group Reform, who called for talks to break the deadlock over legislation to enable the consecration of women as bishops, have received acknowledgement of their request from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Canon Simon Killwick (Catholic Group) and Prebendary Rod Thomas (Reform) have today further pledged themselves to do everything they can to ensure the speedy and safe passage of fresh legislation through the General Synod.

They said, "If agreement can be reached at round-table talks on fresh legislation which provides clearly and fairly for all members of the Church of England, there is no reason why fresh legislation should not be fast-tracked through the Synod before the next elections in 2015."

The Synod's Standing Orders only prevent the reconsideration of the same legislation during this period.

"It has never been our intention to prevent the consecration of women as bishops; our concern has always been for legislation which also made clear and fair provision for the substantial minority," the Chairmen concluded.

The legislation which failed last week in the Synod would have had devastating consequences for the diversity and mission of the Church of England, had it been passed. We want the Church of England to continue to be a broad and comprehensive national Church.

Canon Simon Killwick  
Prebendary Rod Thomas

(Chairman of the Catholic Group in General Synod) (Chairman of Reform)

28th November 2012

# **NEWS from the Church of England**

**PR 152.12**

28/11/2012

**For immediate release**

## **Statement on the Conclusion of the Meeting of the Archbishops' Council November 2012**

“The Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England met on November 27-28th to consider a wide ranging agenda. A substantial amount of time was given over to the discussion of the recent vote by General Synod on Women in the Episcopate.

“As part of their reflections, many council members commented on the deep degree of sadness and shock that they had felt as a result of the vote and also of the need to affirm all women serving the church – both lay and ordained – in their ministries.

“In its discussions the Council decided that a process to admit women to the episcopate needed to be restarted at the next meeting of the General Synod in July 2013. There was agreement that the Church of England had to resolve this matter through its own processes as a matter of urgency. The Council therefore recommended that the House of Bishops, during its meeting in a fortnight’s time, put in place a clear process for discussions in the New Year with a view to bringing legislative proposals before the Synod in July.”

**ends**

### **Notes to Editors**

The Archbishops Council is a body of 19 members which acts as the standing committee of the General Synod and has a number of other responsibilities as a trustee body.

The members of the council include the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the chairs of the House of Clergy and the Chairs of the House of Laity. Full membership of the groups is available here: <http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/archbishops-council/members.aspx>

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Mr William Fittall  
Secretary General  
by email: [william.fittall@churchofengland.org](mailto:william.fittall@churchofengland.org)

24 August 2012

Dear William,

Comments on GS Misc 1033 “Women in the Episcopate – the Final Legislative Lap”

### 1.) Introduction

I am grateful for the helpful paper and the invitation on paragraph 95 to send you comments by 24 August. The paper formed the basis of a constructive meeting that the Bishop of Guildford chaired with five out of the nine General Synod members from the Guildford Diocese (those could not attend sent in comments), together with the Bishop of Dorking. Bishop Christopher has submitted a note of that meeting to you and I will not duplicate its contents. I wish to particularly record my gratitude to Bishop Christopher who interrupted his holiday to host the meeting.

### 2.) The potential to reach agreement in November

Sufficient agreement is likely to only be possible in November if we can expose and address the fundamental difference in understanding that has been at the root of the different views on clause 5(1)c:

- Those who object to the current 5(1)c do so on the grounds that specific acceptance in the Measure of the legitimacy of the theological convictions of traditionalists would be wrong because it would give official sanction to discrimination against women bishops.
- Those who support the current 5(1)c do so on the grounds that specific acknowledgment of the theological convictions in the Measure is necessary in order to put into practise the 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution III.2, "that those who dissent from, as well as those who assent to the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate are both loyal Anglicans."

I suggest that the fundamental difference in understanding could be resolved by reference to and **recirculation of the Eames report**: “*Women in the Anglican Episcopate: Theology, Guidelines and Practice: the Eames Commission and the Monitoring Group reports*” Anglican Book Centre, 1998, ISBN 1551262142. (I think that the report is currently out of print, and permission may need to be obtained to print further copies for Synod members).

I summarise how the Eames Report resolves the fundamental disagreement that is at the root of the disagreements on the options for 5(1)c.

In 1988 the Lambeth Conference established a commission under Archbishop Robin Eames to address how the Anglican Communion should remain together once the first women were ordained to the episcopate. The Commission reported in 1989 with updates in 1993 and 1997. The Report was endorsed by the Anglican Primates in 1989 and the Anglican Consultative Council in 1993.

The Eames Report took the theological concept of an open process of reception, already present in ecumenical dialogue, and applied it to this issue. This said that when a province consecrates women bishops, both views on the rightness of that decision must still be given space in an open process until the Church, both within the Anglican Communion and ecumenically, comes to a common mind:

*Paragraph 178, “Once a decision has been reached by a Province of the Anglican Communion...All would be committed to remaining together in the continuing process, whereby the truth of what has been decided at provincial level may be discerned within the wider fellowship and communion of the Church around the world.”*

*Paragraph 192, “we need each other precisely in our differences, and because reception belongs to the whole Church we welcome the engagement of our ecumenical partners in the reception process.”*

The Commission ‘squared the circle’ of: on the one hand the consecration of women bishops starting an open process of reception in the worldwide Church where the ultimate decision could go either way; with on the other hand staying true to Canon A4 that all those ordained as bishops must be accepted as lawfully consecrated and truly bishops. It did this by stating that all must recognise that women bishops have been truly consecrated, and what the process of reception is about is the correctness of the decision.

*Paragraph 147, “Those who have reservations about the ordinations of a woman bishop should at least acknowledge that in such ordinations the correct canonical procedures have been followed. Furthermore, they are asked to acknowledge that such provinces, in using their respective ordinals, have publicly declared their intention of consecrating a woman as ‘a bishop in the Church of God’ and admitting her to the fullness of the three-fold order of apostolic ministry.”*

The report is clear that the consecration of women as bishops begins (not ends) the process of reception. Paragraph 64 requires that once women have been consecrated as bishops:

*“Both sides would have to acknowledge that the other’s position might, in the long run, prove to be the mind of the Church.”*

The objections to 5(1)c have at their root the fact that a significant number of Synod members object to anything in the Measure that would give official recognition to the

legitimacy of an opposing theological view on this issue. This is seen as objectionable because it is felt that it would ‘institutionalise’ discrimination. However, the Eames Report - which has a strong case for being the official Anglican position given that it was approved by the Primates and the ACC - says that the consecration of women to the episcopate should initiate an open process of reception. **For the process of reception to be genuinely open it is therefore necessary to have official recognition in the Measure of the theological legitimacy of more than one view.** Therefore clause 5(1)c needs to specifically state and safeguard the continuing legitimacy within the Church of England of theological convictions that disagree with the decision to consecrate women to the episcopate.

I therefore argue for the retention of 5(1)c as previously drafted, but this will only have the chance of taking Synod with it if the Eames Report is circulated which provides the rationale.

### 3.) The potential to reach agreement in the future if the legislation should fail in November

Whatever option for 5(1)c is brought to Synod in November, there is the chance that the legislation could fail to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority. Some thought should therefore be given as to what the next steps might be should that be the outcome.

The General Synod members from the Guildford Diocese who met with Bishop Christopher included people with views across the theological spectrum and the openness and genuine engagement we had with each other was very helpful and constructive. This is in marked contrast to the last few years of Synodical debate at General and Diocesan Synod levels. This is nobody’s fault, it is simply because the debates about what should be in the draft legislation has meant that Synod members have out of necessity become entrenched in the Synod politics of lobbying and fighting the battles over what should be in the draft, so as to seek to achieve the best outcome for their own constituency.

However, if the legislation fails at final approval, a fresh approach should be initiated of discussions outside of formal Synod meetings.

On 15 June, *The Church Times* published a letter from Canon Simon Killwick:

“...I and two senior colleagues from the Catholic Group in General Synod attended a one-day meeting last December with mediators at the Centre for Reconciliation in Coventry, together with senior conservative Evangelicals, and representatives of WATCH. It was a useful meeting, and a further meeting was planned for January this year.

Unfortunately, WATCH later decided not to participate in any further meetings, stating that they preferred to follow the processes of the General Synod instead; so the January meeting was cancelled.

The problem is that the General Synod itself is too big and unwieldy for the kinds of conversation that lead to reconciliation; members end up talking at each other, with prepared speeches, rather than to each other in genuine dialogue.”

On 22 June, *The Church Times* published the reply from Professor Anthony Berry and Christine McMullen:

“...We were there as individual members, not as representatives of WATCH.  
...As the broader synodical process concerning women bishops had been in motion for more than five years, it seemed best to the WATCH conveners that we should await the outcome of that process.  
...Unlike Canon Killwick, we see the synodical processes of conversations and debates as carrying reconciliation”

If the legislation should fail in November, these meetings, or similar, should begin. If WATCH, Reform, and the Catholic Group in cross-party talks could agree together on a scheme that each group could live with, then the resulting legislative synodical process would be much easier and swifter, because Synod would be working on a foundation of agreement and the need for entrenched lobbying would disappear. The eventual outcome would be much happier and more united Church of England.

I suggest that the Revd Rachel Weir (chair of WATCH), the Revd Simon Killwick (chairman of the Catholic Group), and the Revd Rod Thomas (chairman of Reform), should meet with Mark Hill QC, ecclesiastical lawyer and accredited mediator. The three leaders, focused with determination on the goal of agreement, in the context of professional mediation, and in a new atmosphere where the Church of England cannot face the idea of years more fighting on this issue, would be able to find a scheme that all three groups can accept. Those three people reaching an agreement and recommending it to their members would produce the breakthrough that legislative working groups and major General Synod debates has failed to achieve.

yours sincerely

Adrian Vincent