

After General Synod July 2014: reporting back

Women Bishops

On 14 July the General Synod voted to give final approval to permit the ordination of women as bishops, by passing the "Draft Bishops and Priests (Ordination and Consecration of Women) Measure (GS 1925B)" A two-thirds majority was required in each House of the Synod for it to pass and this was achieved. The voting was:

House of Bishops: 37 for; 2 against; 1 abstention.

House of Clergy: 162 for; 25 against; 4 abstentions.

House of Laity: 152 for; 45 against; 5 abstentions.

I voted in favour. I explained my reasons in my speech to the Synod.
The text of my speech is attached.

In my speech I referred to my membership of the "Catholic Group of General Synod". This means Anglo-Catholic Anglicans, not Roman Catholic! I am also a member of the Evangelical Group on General Synod. I also refer to the Five Principles in the House of Bishops' Declaration.
I attach the full Declaration.

Those principles are:

- Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;
- Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;
- Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;
- Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and
- Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.

After the vote, the Guildford Diocese communications team invited each General Synod member from the Guildford Diocese to provide a statement on the outcome. This was mine:

The passing by the General Synod of the Measure to enable the ordination of women as bishops will be a matter of relief, affirmation and joy for the majority in our Church. For a substantial minority their feelings about the outcome will be the opposite. I spoke in the Synod debate and am publishing the text of my speech on my website which explains my decision for voting in favour of this package. The new package included a commitment to the "mutual flourishing" of all traditions in the Church of England. I am committed to do all that I can to make that promise a reality.

The statements from the other representatives are on the Guildford Diocesan website: <http://www.cofguildford.org.uk/news/story/1385/>

Clergy Robes

The motion to draw up legislation to amend Canon B8 to make the wearing of robes by a priest at Holy Communion optional, was passed. (I voted against because I did not want this sacramental act to be reduced in seriousness or symbolism).

Additional Texts for Holy Baptism

Synod voted that the "Additional texts for Holy Baptism be considered for revision in committee." I voted in favour and subsequently sent in a submission to the Revision Committee where I proposed an amendment to the draft.

I attach my submission.

Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure (GS 1952) Draft Amending Canon No. 34 (GS 1953)

I voted for the draft legislation to tighten up safeguarding procedures to proceed to the next stage, which is to go to a revision committee. The motion was passed. I subsequently sent in a submission to the Revision Committee where I proposed amendments to the draft.

I attach my submission.

The Common Good (GS 1956)

The Revd Jim Wallis gave a presentation which included ten personal decisions you can make to help foster the common good.

1. If you are a father or a mother, make your children the most important priority in your life and build your other commitments around them. If you are not a parent, look for children who could benefit from your investment in their lives.
2. If you are married, be faithful to your spouse. Demonstrate your commitment with both your fidelity and your love. If you are single, measure your relationships by their integrity, not their usefulness.
3. If you are a person of faith, focus not just on what you believe but on how you act on those beliefs. If you love God, ask God how to love your neighbour.
4. Take the place you live seriously. Make the context of your life and work the parish that you take responsibility for.
5. Seek to develop a vocation and not just a career. Discern your gifts as a child of God, not just your talents, and listen for your calling rather than just looking for opportunities. Remember that your personal good always relates to the common good.
6. Make choices by distinguishing between wants and needs. Choose what is enough, rather than what is possible to get. Replace appetites with values, teach your children the same, and model those values for all who are in your life.

7. Look at the business, company, or organization where you work from an ethical perspective. Ask what its vocation is, too. Challenge whatever is dishonest or exploitative and help your place of work to do well by doing good.
8. Ask yourself what in the world today most breaks your heart and offends your sense of justice. Decide to help change that and join with others who are committed to transforming that injustice.
9. Get to know who your political representatives are at both the local and national level. Study their policy decisions and examine their moral compass and public leadership. Make your public convictions and commitments known to them and choose to hold them accountable.
10. Since the difference between events and movements is sacrifice, which is also the true meaning of religion and what makes for social change, ask yourself what is important enough to give your life to and for.

In the debate which followed the Bishop of Manchester recounted the case of a church that had set up various initiatives, but on each occasion they would peter out after about eight months. They subsequently had an away day to discuss what was going wrong, and the church members explained that their main service for the common good was in their working lives. What they needed was support from the church in their witness in work, rather than the church taking them away from that to push them into church branded activities.

Draft Amending Canon No. 35 (GS 1964 & GS 1964X).

This draft legislation would allow children who have not been confirmed to distribute the Holy Sacrament; and to remove the requirement for names of such sacramental ministers to be sent to the Bishop for approval. The Synod voted for the legislation to proceed to the next stage which is to go to a revision committee. I subsequently sent in a submission to the Revision Committee where I proposed an amendment. My amendment is attached.

Parish investments

I attended a lunchtime fringe meeting from CCLA. They said that charities on average have 40% of their funds on cash deposit; whereas churches average 60%. The result is that a parish finances are eroded over time because the deposit interest does not even keep pace with inflation. They encouraged church treasurers to discuss with them the possibility of increasing the proportion that is invested, by for example moving some money out of the CBF Deposit Fund and putting it into the CBF Investment Fund, which tends to have a higher rate of return whilst having a relatively cautious investing approach.

Before General Synod July 2014: inviting your views

All the documents for the 11-15 July 2014 General Synod are on the Church of England website: <http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/agendas-and-papers/july-2014-group-of-sessions.aspx> There are around twenty different matters to be debated, the following are some of the more substantial.

Women Bishops (GS 1925-6Z, GS 1951, GS 1925B, GS 1926B, GS 1926C, GS 1934A, GS Misc 1076, GS Misc 1077, GS Misc 1079).

The new package is coming for the final approval vote. I intend to vote in favour for the reasons I gave in my November 2013 report ([click here for link](#)), that I consider the House of Bishops' Declaration (GS Misc 1076) which is part of the package, commits the Church to provisions which, if implemented and stuck to, should be just enough to enable traditionalists (anglo-catholics and conservative evangelicals) to remain in the Church of England with theological integrity once women are ordained as bishops. I am confident that the legislation will be passed.

Clergy Robes (GS 1944A, GS 1944B)

This was to be debated at the last session but Synod ran out of time.

Additional Texts for Holy Baptism (GS 1958)

This originated in February 2011 when the Synod passed a motion calling for "...material to supplement the Common Worship Initiation provision... expressed in accessible language". The Liturgical Commission has now produced a text, which has attracted recent media attention, as some have criticised it for deleting reference to the devil, and called it a sanitised, dumbed down liturgy. Personally I don't think it's that bad and would be interested to receive your views on the draft.

The Synod will be asked to vote that the texts "be considered for revision in committee". If passed, Synod members will have until 15 August to write in suggesting amendments. My current intention is to request an amendment to page 6, line 23.

Archbishops' Council 2015 Budget (GS 1959)

Page 4 explains that the budget of the National Church Institutions will go up by 3.4%, but they are only asking for a 1.3% increase from dioceses, due to use of reserves and other funds. Each diocese pays a different amount according to their situation. The table on page 41 shows that the Guildford Diocese will be asked to pay a 1.5% increase.

The Church Commissioners Annual Report 2013

Page 6 reports that the Church Commissioners investments grew by 15.9% last year. Page 25 explains their unintentional investment in Wonga. Page 43 summarises expenditure.

Magna Carta (GS 1945A and GS 1945B)

This is the Guildford Diocesan Synod motion, to be moved by Keith Malcouronne. It encourages churches to make full use of the opportunity of the 800th Anniversary, on 15 June 2015, of the sealing of the Magna Carta at Runnymede.

Speech on the *Draft Bishops and Priests (Ordination and Consecration of Women) Measure (GS 1925B)* final approval debate, Church of England General Synod, 14 July 2014.

“Adrian Vincent, Guildford, 320.

The majority of those who elected me want me to vote for women bishops.

My reading of the Bible - where Jesus appointed 12 male apostles, and the Early Church who followed that example - is that the Church does not have the right to make this change.

But I accept that others interpret the Bible differently, so I said to those who elected me, that I will vote for women bishops if there is enough provision for traditionalists to enable them to remain in the Church of England with theological integrity.

The November 2012 package did not have that and I voted against.

This draft, with the Five Principles and the House of Bishops' Declaration has just about enough provision.

However, I also represent the minority, for whom this change is wrong, and who say that I should vote according to my conscience. I am a member of the Catholic Group of General Synod, and, as the journal *New Directions* says this month:

"To vote in favour of the Measure is not a Catholic option and would betray the trust of this constituency."

So what do I do? I could abstain. That may be an honourable choice for some, but personally, I would see it as a cowardly way out for me.

Perhaps I am in a 1 Samuel chapter 8 situation. The people of Israel demanded that Samuel appoint for them a king. Samuel says to God, 'but that's not right'. God replies, 'it's not right, but give the people what they are demanding.' Samuel does so, and God is merciful, He calls people as kings and blesses Israel through them.

So I shall be voting in favour today. By doing so I am betraying what I believe, and I am betraying those who trusted in me.

I hope that the promised commitment to "mutual flourishing" is not a commitment that will run out of steam in a few years; but is a commitment that will continue for fifty, and a hundred years."

GENERAL SYNOD

WOMEN IN THE EPISCOPATE

House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests

I attach a copy of the Declaration agreed by the House of Bishops on 19 May.

William Fittall
Secretary General
June 2014

House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests

Introduction

1. The character and calling of the Church of England are set out in the Preface to the Declaration of Assent, which all clergy are required to make at ordination and subsequently on admission to any office. As part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church it is called to proclaim afresh in each generation the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds.
2. Those who serve the Church of England in holy orders are required to affirm their loyalty to this 'inheritance of faith' and bring 'the grace and truth of Christ to this generation.' Bishops have a particular responsibility to gather God's people and build up the Body of Christ. We have each promised at our consecration to promote peace and reconciliation in the Church and to seek to unite its members in a holy fellowship of truth and love.
3. The opening of all orders of ministry equally to women and men is a significant moment in the long history of this part of the Church Catholic. It brings with it new opportunities for building up the Body of Christ and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom.
4. It also brings with it a particular responsibility for us, as a House of Bishops. As well as seeking to channel and nurture the energy and renewal that will flow from this development we have a duty to ensure that the welfare of the whole Church of England is sustained in all its theological depth and breadth. We accordingly commend this declaration to all members of the Church of England so that the good gifts that God has given to all His people may be used to His glory.

Statement of guiding principles

5. The House reaffirms the five guiding principles which it first commended in May 2013 when submitting legislative proposals to the General Synod for the consecration of women to the episcopate and which the Synod welcomed in its resolution of 20 November 2013. They need to be read one with the other and held together in tension, rather than being applied selectively:
 - **Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;**

- **Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;**
- **Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;**
- **Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and**
- **Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.**

Simplicity, reciprocity and mutuality

6. The House believes that the outworking of these principles needs to be accompanied by **simplicity, reciprocity and mutuality**.
7. The **simplicity** of the legislation now agreed by the General Synod is reflected in the fact that it makes no changes to the structures of the Church of England, leaves unaltered the position of each diocesan bishop as Ordinary and preserves the historic requirement for canonical obedience to the diocesan bishop ‘in all things lawful and honest’ and for the taking of oaths acknowledging this duty¹.

¹ Canon C 1.3 provides that “*According to the ancient law and usage of this Church and Realm of England, the priests and deacons who have received authority to minister in any diocese owe canonical obedience in all things lawful and honest to the bishop of the same ...*”. By way of acknowledgement of that duty, under Canon C 14 clergy are required on various occasions to make or reaffirm the Oath of Canonical Obedience to their diocesan bishop. But we are advised that, in the light of the decision of the Privy Council in *Long v Bishop of Capetown* (1863), the duty of obedience does not require the cleric to comply with any and every direction given by the bishop; rather, it requires the cleric to obey such directions as the diocesan bishop is authorised by law to give.

8. The practical arrangements to be made for parishes which, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the priestly or episcopal ministry of women need to be made with the same principle of simplicity in mind.
9. **Reciprocity** means that everyone, notwithstanding differences of conviction on this issue, will accept that they can rejoice in each other's partnership in the Gospel and cooperate to the maximum possible extent in mission and ministry. There will need to be an acknowledgement that the differences of view which persist stem from an underlying divergence of theological conviction.
10. In particular reciprocity will mean that those of differing conviction will do all within their power to avoid giving offence to each other. There will need to be sensitivity to the feelings of vulnerability that some will have that their position within the Church of England will gradually be eroded and that others will have because not everyone will receive their ministry.
11. Now that the Church of England has admitted women to the episcopate there should within each diocese be at least one serving bishop, whether the diocesan or a suffragan, who ordains women to the priesthood. This has a bearing on the considerations that the Crown Nominations Commission and diocesan bishops will need to take into account when considering diocesan and suffragan appointments.
12. In addition, dioceses are entitled to express a view, in the statement of needs prepared during a vacancy in see, as to whether the diocesan bishop should be someone who will or will not ordain women. In dioceses where the diocesan bishop does not ordain women he should ensure that a bishop who is fully committed to the ordained ministry of women is given a role across the whole diocese for providing support for female clergy and their ministry.
13. All bishops have a shared responsibility for the welfare of the whole Church of England. It will be important that senior leadership roles within dioceses continue to be filled by people from across the range of traditions.
14. **Mutuality** reflects the Church of England's wider commitment to sustaining diversity. It means that those of differing conviction will be committed to making it possible for each other to flourish. All should play a full part in the lives of the deaneries and dioceses and be prepared to engage with the diocesan bishop whoever he or she is.
15. Equal treatment, for example in relation to resource issues and the discerning of vocations to the ordained ministry, is essential irrespective of convictions in relation to gender and ministry. In discerning vocations bishops will continue not to discriminate on the grounds of a candidate's theological conviction on his issue. In addition, ordination services for deacons and priests should be planned

and conducted in a way that is consistent with the five guiding principles set out in paragraph 5 above.

Arrangements for parishes

16. The House is committed to enabling parishes in one part of the country to receive broadly comparable and consistent arrangements to those provided in another, notwithstanding differences in the culture and ethos of particular dioceses or the approach of the relevant diocesan bishop.
17. The practical outworking of the arrangements may vary according to local circumstances but the approach commended in the following paragraphs will, in the view of the House, enable all dioceses and parishes to act consistently with the guiding principles set out above and the requirements of the law, including the Equality Act 2010.
18. The responsibility for signalling that a parish wishes to take advantage of arrangements available to those whose theological conviction leads them to seek the priestly or episcopal ministry of men rests with the relevant parochial church council ('PCC').²
19. A meeting of a PCC to consider a motion seeking arrangements of this kind should either be one held under section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 or one for which the secretary of the PCC has given members at least four weeks' notice of the place and time of the meeting and the motion to be considered. Given the importance of the issue such a motion should have been passed either (a) by a majority of those present at a meeting at which at least two-thirds of the members of the PCC who are entitled to attend are present or (b) by a majority of all the members of the PCC.
20. The recommended form of the resolution to be passed by the PCC is as follows: ***"This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests."*** A PCC which has passed a resolution should send a copy of it to the diocesan bishop, archdeacon, diocesan registrar and registered patron.
21. Parishes which have passed a resolution may rescind it at any time. The same procedures as are set out in paragraphs 18-19 should apply in relation to a PCC meeting which is to consider a motion rescinding a resolution. Parishes which

² In the case of a guild church designated and established under section 4 of the City of London (Guild Churches) Act 1952 the responsibility rests with the guild church council and what is said in paragraphs 16 to 29 applies to guild churches and guild church councils as it applies to parishes and PCCs, with the necessary modifications.

have passed a resolution should review it from time to time, especially when a vacancy in a benefice arises.

22. The House recognises that the nature of the theological conviction on the ordained ministry of women which underlies a decision to pass such a resolution will vary according to the tradition of the parish concerned. Where a resolution has been passed, and before clergy are appointed to the parish or a bishop chosen by the diocesan bishop to provide oversight, there will, therefore, need to be consultation between bishop and parish to ascertain the nature of that conviction so that the resolution can be implemented effectively. The House will provide guidance for bishops and parishes to help facilitate these conversations.
23. Anyone involved in making appointments to ordained parochial roles, whether of incumbents, priests in charge or assistant curates, or in exercising the power conferred by Canon C 8.2(a) to allow occasional ministry in a parish, should do everything possible to achieve an outcome that does not conflict with the nature of the conviction on this issue underlying the PCC's resolution. Where a clerk in holy orders is the registered patron of a benefice in right of his or her office, he or she should not limit his or her selection of candidates to those of a particular sex except in circumstances where a parish has passed a resolution.
24. In the event that any difficulties arise between a patron and a parish following the passing of a PCC resolution, the diocesan bishop should do all in his or her power to achieve an outcome that respects the declared view of the parish and protects the parish representatives from having to resort to their own power of veto under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986. The archbishop of the province should also seek to achieve such an outcome in the event of the right of presentation lapsing to him or her under the 1986 Measure.
25. In the case of multi-parish benefices the needs of parishes in the benefice that have not passed a resolution should be weighed alongside those of any parish that has when decisions are taken about appointments to the benefice.
26. The choice of a bishop to undertake ministry in respect of a parish which has passed a resolution is for the relevant diocesan bishop to make, again with a view to avoiding conflict with the theological conviction on this issue underlying its resolution. In all cases the choice should be made from among the male bishops who are members of the House of Bishops of the diocesan synod of that or another diocese of the Church of England.
27. As noted in paragraph 16, parishes which pass a resolution in one part of the country are entitled to expect equivalent treatment to that provided in another. In all cases the diocesan bishop should seek to ensure that pastoral and

sacramental ministry is provided in accordance with the guiding principles set out in paragraph 5 above.

28. In addition the diocesan bishop and the bishop invited to minister to the parish should explore how they can best cooperate in a variety of ways to contribute to its welfare, resourcing and mission and in its relationship with the diocese.
29. The precise extent of the ministry entrusted to the bishop is for the diocesan to determine and is likely, for practical reasons to vary according to the pattern of episcopal ministry in that diocese and the extent of the bishop's other commitments. But the expectation is that there will be many similarities with the range of responsibilities carried by any suffragan bishop within a diocese.

The College of Bishops

30. The House affirms the importance of there continuing to be consecrations of bishops within the Church of England to enable such ministry to be provided. The fact that the sees of Ebbsfleet and Richborough in the diocese of Canterbury and Beverley in the diocese of York remain in existence will provide one of a range of means by which the Archbishops will ensure that a suitable supply of bishops continues where it would not be secured in other ways. The House also accepts that the presence in the College of Bishops of at least one bishop who takes the Conservative Evangelical view on headship is important for sustaining the necessary climate of trust.

Arrangements in relation to other places of worship

31. The cathedral is the seat of the bishop, who has the right to officiate there in accordance with the cathedral's constitution and statutes. It is for this reason that, while some cathedrals are also parish churches, the House does not believe that the arrangements set out in the preceding paragraphs for the passing of resolutions can apply to cathedrals.
32. The House does not believe that gender or theological conviction in relation to the ordained ministry of women should be an obstacle to appointment as dean or cathedral canon. What matters is that all appointed to cathedral ministry are willing to work together in close partnership and with the highest possible degree of communion in the interests of the institution that they serve.
33. Given the great variety of non-parochial places in which regular worship and ministry take place it is not sensible to try and generalise about the arrangements that should be made in relation to them beyond affirming that the guiding principles set out in paragraph 5 above are of as much relevance to them as to the rest of the Church of England.

Oaths

34. At ordination and on taking up any office in the Church of England priests and deacons are required under Canon C 14 to swear or affirm that they will “*pay true and canonical obedience to the Lord Bishop of C and his successors in all things lawful and honest.*” Bishops are similarly required to take an oath of due obedience to the archbishop of the province. Clergy and bishops also take an Oath of Allegiance to the Queen and make the Declaration of Assent.
35. These Oaths and the Declaration are important because they each involve recognition that a person does not exercise ministry in isolation or on their own authority but within a framework of relationship with others and within the tradition of faith as the Church of England has received it. The House acknowledges that the taking of the oath to the diocesan bishop or the oath of due obedience to the archbishop may, in future, raise issues for those who, for theological reasons, remain committed to a male episcopate and priesthood.
36. Nevertheless, the House believes that all ministers of the Church of England will be able, in good conscience, to take the oath. Doing so adds nothing legally to the duty of canonical obedience, which already exists in law. Rather, it is a recognition of the pattern of relationships which underpins the exercise of ministry by those who make and receive the oath. It follows from the guiding principles set out in paragraph 5 above, and the spectrum of Anglican teaching and tradition which they acknowledge, that the giving and receiving of the oath does not entail acting contrary to theological conviction.

Grievances and mediation

37. Canon C 29 requires the House to make Regulations prescribing a procedure for the resolution of disputes arising from the arrangements for which this declaration makes provision. In accordance with that requirement the House has made the Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (Resolution of Disputes Procedure) Regulations 201-, the text of which is set out in the Annex to this declaration. Participation in the procedure is mandatory for those clerical office holders against whom a grievance may be brought under it.

Providing assurance

38. This declaration has been prepared in connection with legislation to admit women to the episcopate, proposals for which have been the subject of extensive debate in the Church of England over a number of years. It flows from the House’s desire to establish a climate of trust within which there can be

mutual flourishing, notwithstanding the differences of conviction which will continue to exist on this issue.

39. The present members of the House, like the members of the General Synod, cannot give binding commitments which would prevent their successors from considering matters afresh in the light of experience and new developments. Nevertheless, the House accepts its responsibility for creating and sustaining the necessary confidence that the arrangements set out in this declaration can be relied on and will prove durable.
40. Adjustments may prove necessary in the light of experience and be uncontentious. But the House undertakes that, should it be minded to propose changes to this declaration, it will consult the General Synod and will not proceed with its proposals unless they command two-thirds majorities in all three Houses.

Transitional provisions

41. The intention is that the repeal of the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 and the rescinding of the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 will have effect on the day that Amending Canon No 33 is promulgated – from that day PCCs will no longer be able to pass resolutions A or B or petition for extended episcopal ministry under the 1993 Act of Synod.
42. Instead, it will be open to PCCs to pass resolutions under the terms of this Declaration. Since such resolutions are not made under legislation, PCCs do not have to wait for the coming into force of the Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and Amending Canon No 33 before passing them: they can do so from the point at which this Declaration is made. However, as the new arrangements will not take effect until the Amending Canon is promulgated, any resolution will not be acted upon until the Canon is promulgated; and, similarly, any resolutions under the 1993 Measure or Act of Synod will continue in force until that point.
43. Additionally, the House of Bishops acknowledges that PCCs may want some time to consider the options open to them. To allow for an orderly transition the House has agreed, therefore, that resolutions passed under the 1993 Measure or petitions made under the 1993 Act of Synod should be treated for two years after the date on which the Amending Canon is promulgated as if they were resolutions passed under paragraph 20.

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20 July 2014

To: The Clerk to the Synod (by email)

Submission to the Revision Committee on Additional Texts for Holy Baptism (GS 1958).

Page 21 of the Agenda for the July Group of Sessions invites proposals for amendment to be submitted to the Revision Committee by 15 August. I have one request for amendment for the Committee to consider. My concern is with page 6 of GS 1958, Payer over the Water, line 23:

22 "At his baptism in the River Jordan
23 **you poured your Spirit on him.**"

This implies that God imparted his Spirit on Jesus in the pouring of the water on him. However, this is not what the biblical accounts of Jesus' baptism say.

Matthew 3: 16-17:

"And when Jesus had been baptised, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'"

International Critical Commentary on Matthew 3:16:

"Jesus' emerging from the water and climbing the bank – which connects the heavenly vision and voice not with an action of John but with an action of Jesus"¹
"The significance of the vision of the Spirit is found in this phrase: the Spirit comes upon Jesus. This cannot, of course, mean any sort of adoption, for already at his birth Jesus was of the Holy Spirit (1.18-25). It does however serve to reveal or confirm Jesus' already existing status and worthiness as the eschatological bearer of God's Spirit"²

Mark 1:9-11:

"In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.'"

The New International Biblical Commentary on Mark 1:9:

"The descent of the Spirit of God upon Jesus like a dove shows that Jesus is commissioned by God."³

¹ *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to John*, W. D. Davies and Dale C Allison, Vol. 1, T&T Clark, 1988, page 328.

² as above, page 334-5.

³ *Mark*, New International Biblical Commentary, Larry W. Hurtado, Hendrickson, 1989, page 19.

Luke 3: 21-22:

“Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’”

TPI New Testament Commentary on Luke 3:21:

“The descent of the Spirit is no longer coincident with Jesus’ emergence from the waters of baptism (Mark 1:10; Matt 3:16), but with his subsequent prayer.”⁴

So, it was after the water had been poured, that God gave his message to Jesus and to all present, by the Spirit descending on Jesus in the form of a dove accompanied by the words from heaven. This was not of a giving of the Spirit for the first time; but was rather a public act of heavenly acknowledgment of Jesus’ already divine status.

I therefore suggest a rewording of line 23 to bring it closer to the biblical account. Something along the lines of:

22 “At his baptism in the River Jordan
23 **you showed that he is your Beloved Son”**

Yours faithfully,

Adrian Vincent
Member of General Synod: Guildford 320.

⁴ *Saint Luke*, TPI New Testament Commentary, C.F.Evans, SCM Press 1990, page 247.

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10 August 2014

To: The Clerk to the Synod (by email)

Submission to the Revision Committee on the draft Amending Canon No. 34 (GS 1953).

Page 17 of the Agenda for the July General Synod says that proposals for amendment to the revision committee should be sent to the Clerk to the Synod by 15 August.

I am writing to propose that amendments be made to ensure that readers and licensed lay workers against whom a safeguarding accusation is made, are treated as fairly as priests are to be treated when an accusation is made against them.

When a bishop receives a safeguarding accusation against a **priest or deacon** (who is not on a barred list and who has not been arrested):

GS 1952 section 6(1) would amend section 36 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 to enable a priest or deacon to be suspended pending determination of an application.

Paragraphs 6(1)(4) and (5) include the safeguard for the priest/deacon that before suspending, “the bishop must refer the matter to the registrar” who then provides written advice to the bishop, and the bishop must “have regard to the registrar’s report”

When a bishop receives a safeguarding accusation against a **lay office holder** (who is not on a barred list and who has not been arrested):

GS 1953 section 5(2) would amend Canon E6 to enable a reader to be suspended pending a decision on whether to revoke the licence.¹

GS 1953 section 6(2) would amend Canon E8 to enable a licensed lay worker to be suspended pending a decision on whether to revoke the licence.²

However, unlike the amendments for priests and deacons, the amendments for readers and licensed lay workers do not include a clause requiring the bishop to first refer the matter to the registrar and to have regard to the registrar’s report.

I cannot see any justifiable reason why there should be fewer safeguards for readers and licensed lay workers than there are proposed to be for priests and deacons.

It has been suggested that because Canons E6.3 and E8.5 currently permit a bishop to summarily revoke the license of a reader or a licensed lay worker, without the bishop being

¹ It is stated that the amendment would be “after paragraph 3B”, but I cannot find a paragraph 3B in the Canons.

² It is stated that the amendment would be “after paragraph 5B”, but I cannot find a paragraph 5B in the Canons.

first required to take advice from the registrar, it would be unbalanced to require the bishop to first take advice prior to the lesser step of suspension. It seems to me however, that this is looking at the issue the wrong way round. If a bishop should take advice before suspending a priest; a bishop should also take advice before suspending a reader or licensed lay worker; and a bishop should also take advice before revoking the license of a reader or licensed lay worker.

I therefore propose:

- 1.) The amendments to Canon E6 and E8 to have an additional clause to match that of GS 1953 section 6(1)(4) and (5), such that before a bishop suspends a reader or licensed lay worker, “the bishop must refer the matter to the registrar” who then provides written advice to the bishop, and the bishop must “have regard to the registrar’s report”.**
- 2.) An amendment is also made to Canons E6.3 and E8.5 to include a matching requirement for the bishop to take advice before revoking the license of a reader or licensed lay worker.**

Yours sincerely,

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9 August 2014

To: The Clerk to the Synod (by email)

July General Synod Item 522: Draft Amending Canon No. 35 (GS 1964 & GS 1964X).

Page 18 of the Agenda for the July General Synod says that proposals for amendment to the revision committee should be sent to the Clerk to the Synod by 15 August. Paragraph 6 of GS 1964X says that comments on the illustrative draft regulations should be directed to the Legal Office.

The draft amending canon would amend Canon B12(3) to pave the way for new regulations which would bring about what was called for in the Synod motion passed in November 2012:

- 1.) Allow children who have not been confirmed (but who have been admitted to Holy Communion in accordance with the Admission of Baptized Children to Holy Communion Regulations 2006) to distribute the Holy Sacrament.
- 2.) Remove the requirement for names to be sent to the Bishop for approval.

In relation to the first point. Those given the role of distributing the Holy Sacrament are in some sense in a leadership or representative role. It follows therefore that they should be those who have completed the journey of initiation, which in the Church of England is marked by confirmation. The current "Regulations on the administration of Holy Communion" (page 191 of the Canons) require that those who distribute the sacrament be "1(1) ... "a baptized and confirmed person". However these regulations are proposed to be replaced by the draft regulations in GS 1964X, paragraph 3(3) of which would permit children who have not been confirmed to perform that office. **I would like the paragraph 3(3) of the draft regulations to be replaced by a wording retaining the current rules - that those in that role must be those who have been confirmed.**

In relation to the second point. Paragraph 2 of the draft regulations would remove the current arrangements where individual names have to be sent to the bishop. I support that in the interests of efficiency. **I therefore support paragraph 2 of the draft regulations.**

GS 1964X states that comments on the draft regulations will be considered by the Legal Office. However, I doubt that the Legal Office would consider that they have the unilateral authority to change paragraph 3(3) in the way that I am requesting. I think that this is more likely to be a policy matter for the Revision Committee to consider. The Synod passed a single motion from the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham which had the two elements in it. I invite the Revision Committee to reconsider that first element. If they think it would be going too far to change it, perhaps when returning the matter to Synod they could structure it to enable the Synod to vote separately on the two points, so that we can move to the more efficient process of no longer requiring names to be sent to the bishop, but reflect again on the importance of confirmation for those carrying out a representative function in the Church.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Vincent

Member of General Synod: Guildford 320.