

General Synod: summary of major issues of debate 2010 onwards

There are many issues debated by the General Synod. Click on the above 'Agenda' tab to see the issues debated at each session of the General Synod and my views on each of them.

This page gives you short summary of some of the more high profile current issues: the first two being the most active and current.

1. Unity with the Methodist Church

Now that the Church of England has women bishops a major barrier to unity with the Methodist Church has been removed. In November 2014 the General Synod endorsed a report:

We recommend that the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England and the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church work together to bring forward proposals for

- i. the Methodist Church to consider afresh expressing the Conference's ministry of oversight in a personal form of connexional, episcopal ministry and the Church of England to recognise that ministry in the Methodist Church as a sign of continuity in faith, worship and mission in a church that is in the apostolic succession.
- ii. the Church of England and the Methodist Church to address the question of reconciling, with integrity, the existing presbyteral and diaconal ministries of our two churches, which would lead to the interchangeability of ministries.

Over-simplifying, it basically means that the Methodist Church in England should get bishops and the Church of England should get permanent deacons so that our Church ministries get into line so as to be able to merge. Some Methodist Churches around the world already have bishops, and we do have some permanent deacons in the Church of England, so this should not be a major problem.

A helpful document is the 2014 publication from the Anglican-Methodist International Commission for Unity in Mission called "*Into All the World: Being and Becoming Apostolic Churches*". It is available to download or purchase here:

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/relationships/ecumenical-dialogues/methodist.aspx>

The document draws together previous ecumenical reports and urges the two churches to move on to "full visible unity." It gives examples of other countries where this has been achieved or where they are further down the road than in England (e.g. pages 61-65 examples of the Church of North India, and the Church of Ireland) Pages 65-67 summarises the situation in England. Pages 83 onwards has "Tool Kits for Anglican-Methodist Conversations".

Things won't happen very fast in this area - they never do with ecumenical relationships - but there is no reason not to make real progress and achieve unity with the Methodist Church.

2. Human Sexuality

The major theological report was in 2003 "Some Issues in Human Sexuality: A Guide to the Debate" which may be purchased from this link:

<http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/books/9780715138687/some-issues-in-human-sexuality>

This page of the Church of England website has a helpful summary of the issues and links to the key reports: <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/marriage-family-and-sexuality-issues/human-sexuality.aspx> It includes a link to the November 2013 report of the House of

Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality, chaired by Sir Joseph Pilling, 'The Pilling Report.' My submission to that Working Group is on my website ([click here for the link](#)).

In February 2014, the House of Bishops issued a "Statement of Pastoral Guidance on Same Sex Marriage" which is on this page of the Church of England website:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2014/02/house-of-bishops-pastoral-guidance-on-same-sex-marriage.aspx>

The Church has now entered a period of 'facilitated conversations', before any policy decisions are made. On the website www.sharedconversations.org you can download the official resource documents "Grace and disagreement", they can also be purchased from the Church House bookshop: <http://www.chbookshop.co.uk/books/9786000008277/grace-and-disagreement-part-1-thinking-through-the-process->

and <http://www.chbookshop.co.uk/books/9786000008284/grace-and-disagreement-part-2-a-reader---writings-to-resource-conversation>

My former colleague, Dr Martin Davie has written a critique of those resources:

<http://www.ceec.info/critique-of-shared-conversations.html>

There is also from the Evangelical Group on General Synod a 70 page resources document

<http://www.eggscofe.org.uk/general-resources.html>

3. Women Bishops

I have written a summary of the theological arguments for and against the ordination of women as bishops, together with a reading list for more information.

The document is attached.

In December 2012 I wrote an assessment looking back at the failure of the draft women bishops legislation, and looking forward to the future.

The document is attached.

In July 2014 I voted in favour of the new package ([this link takes you to my report on that meeting](#)) to enable the ordination of women as bishops whilst being committed to the "mutual flourishing" of all traditions in the Church. There is a House of Bishops' Declaration setting out the provisions for traditionalists

The document is attached.

which is based on a foundation of five principles:

- 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.

In November 2014 the General Synod passed concluded the last piece of formal process to legally permit the ordination of women as bishops (see my report on that meeting) and on 17 December 2014 the appointment of the first woman bishop - Revd Libby Lane to be Bishop of Stockport - was announced.

4. The Anglican Covenant

John Goldingay writes:

Like a number of denominations, the Anglican/Episcopal church to which I belong is in a mess because different parts of the world and different groups in the same parts of the world hold conflicting views about the real nature of Christian faith and discipleship. The fracas focuses on same-sex marriage but involves other issues, such as women's ministry, and questions that lie behind those issues, such as the authority of Scripture, the authority of the church's tradition, the way we relate to the cultures we belong to, and the way one might expect different parts of the church to come to shared decisions about such questions.

'Joshua, Judges and Ruth for Everyone' SPCK, 2011, page 79.

The Anglican Covenant is an attempt to keep the Anglican Communion together. Each Province of the Anglican Communion is being invited to adopt the Covenant.

Attached is my views on the Anglican Covenant that I wrote in November 2010.

Also on my website is my speech and report on the Guildford Diocesan Synod debate on the Covenant in March 2012.

The Anglican Covenant failed to be approved by sufficient Diocesan Synods and therefore cannot be approved by the Church of England

Attached is the report on the voting figures.

Whether that means the Covenant is now 'dead' is not yet known.

Women bishops: summary of the arguments

Adrian Vincent www.adrianvincent.org.uk March 2011

(Source: especially 136-182 of *Women Bishops in the Church of England?* – see p4 below)

Liberal / Affirming Catholic / Mainstream Evangelical	Conservative Evangelical	Anglo Catholic
<p>The Church needs to be led by the Holy Spirit. The Bible doesn't openly condemn slavery, but over time the Spirit showed the Church it is wrong. In the same way the Spirit has shown us that withholding ordained ministry from women is wrong.</p>	<p>Scripture is the Word of God and its authority is supreme. Whilst women have an important ministry in the Church, female headship goes against the Bible.</p>	<p>It is wrong to change the Church's tradition to respond to the beliefs of contemporary society. For 2,000 years the Church followed Jesus' example of 12 male apostles, and we have no authority to change it.</p>
<p>The ordination of women is supported by scripture. E.g.: Galatians 3:28; John 20:18; Romans 16:1 & 7; Philippians 4:3.</p>	<p>Gal 3:28 is about our unity in baptism. It is not about the ordained ministry. Romans 16:1 Phoebe was a deacon. The ordination of women to the diaconate is OK (deacons aren't priests and don't have headship). John 20:18 & Rom 16:7 Mary Magdalene and Junia were only 'apostles' in the meaning of evangelists, not in the meaning of that order of ministry. This is shown by Acts 1:15-26, Judas was replaced by Matthias, restoring the number of apostles to twelve. Bishops are to be the successors of those apostles and therefore must be male.</p>	
<p>The headship passages are specific to some particular church situations Paul was writing to (e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:34 cannot be a blanket ban on women speaking in church, because in 11:5 he accepts women prophesying). Jesus only chose 12 male apostles because women apostles would not have been accepted in those days.</p>	<p>Scripture says there should only be male headship in the Church: 1 Corinthians 11.12-16, 14.34-38, 1 Timothy 2.11-15, Ephesians 5.21.</p>	<p>Jesus chose 12 male apostles and this was followed by the early Church. Jesus could have chosen women apostles as there are many examples where Jesus ignored the cultural norms of his day (and in any case, pagan priestesses were common, so the bound by culture argument doesn't hold water anyway).</p>
<p>Men and women were created with equal roles: Genesis 1:27. The ruling of man over woman in Genesis 3:16 was the punishment of the Fall. The work of Christ restores us to a new creation, and the original equality of Genesis 1 & 2.</p>	<p>In Genesis 2 Adam had headship over Eve. The fall comes in Genesis 3 when Adam refuses to accept responsibility and headship (when he becomes subordinate to Eve in accepting the apple from her). We need to restore the biblical headship of Genesis 2, where men and women are equal in status, but have different roles. For example, the three persons of the Trinity are equal, Jesus submits to the Father but this doesn't mean that Jesus is inferior.</p>	

Liberal & others	Conservative Evangelical	Anglo Catholic
The Queen is Head of the Church of England and she's a woman so women bishops must be OK.	The Queen is advised by her ministers, she is not head of the Church in the sense of being its decision maker.	The Queen is a lay woman. This has nothing to do with the question of whether women can be priests or bishops.
When God became incarnate in Jesus, he took upon himself human nature in all its fullness. The ordained ministry needs to include women to represent that fullness. Otherwise women might be seen as outside of salvation.	We don't like the idea of priests at all – they get in the way of a direct relationship between us and God. The Greek word is presbyters. Our ordained ministers are rectors / ministers etc, not priests.	At the altar, the priest represents Christ the bridegroom. This sacramental sign is lost when the celebrant is female.
There were women priests and bishops in the early Church (see Ute Eisen, <i>Women Office Holders in Early Christianity</i>). And in any case, tradition should develop and not be static.	There were no women priests and bishops in the early Church, they only existed amongst heretical sects such as Marcionites, Gnostics and Montanists.	
The ordination of women to the episcopate will remove a major barrier to reunion between the Anglican and Methodist Churches.	The Church is made up of those who believe in Jesus. Denominations aren't an issue. Your denomination is just the most convenient boat for you from which to be "fishers of men".	The ordination of women to the priesthood erected a barrier to unity between the Anglican and Roman Catholic & Orthodox Churches. The ordination of women to the episcopate will be the final nail in the coffin of any chance of reunion.
The Roman Catholic Church will one day ordain women too – there are already many supporters with that Church and a new Pope might change things.	We wouldn't want to unite with the Roman Catholic Church with all their unbiblical doctrines.	The Roman Catholic Church has stated unequivocally it has no authority to ordain women. They don't do u-turns.
The ordination of women bishops will bring many new gifts into the episcopate, make the church more representative, give the church greater credibility and therefore make mission more effective.	The same was said before the ordination of women to the priesthood, but the change resulted in declining church attendance.	
The ordination of women has been proved to be God's work as can be seen by its spiritual fruit. The 'period of reception' by which the rightness of the decision was to be tested is therefore over.	We don't like the idea of 'reception'. The meaning of scripture is clear and it must be obeyed.	When the ordination of women to the priesthood was introduced it was said that we would be in a period of reception that will only be complete when the decision it is accepted by the universal

		Church. We were told that there were two equal 'integrities' on this issue and this has enabled us to remain within the CofE. To ordain women bishops and close down the period of reception would break that promise.
Liberal & others	Conservative Evangelical	Anglo Catholic
Women priests and bishops are truly priests and bishops and Canon A4 says this must be acknowledged by all. And even if someone did have doubts about women's orders, Article 26 of the 39 Articles says "Of the unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments."	We focus on God's free offer of salvation to those who believe. We are suspicious of 'sacraments' which might be unbiblical additions getting in the way of our direct relationship with Christ.	Holy Orders, by their continuity in time and faith, offer assurance of the authenticity of the sacraments they mediate. The ordination of women breaks that continuity and introduces sacramental doubt. When it comes to sacraments, we are duty bound to take the least doubtful course.
Women bishops must be bishops on the same terms as male bishops. Therefore there must be no provisions for those opposed which would put that in doubt by allowing people to reject their ministry. We must have a single united Church and not allow schism by letting those opposed form a 'church within a church' free from contact with women.	We don't like liberal male bishops and are happy to reject their ministry because of their unscriptural beliefs. In the same way, we would reject the ministry of women bishops too because it goes against the scriptural requirement of male headship.	Bishops are to be a "focus of unity". A woman bishop cannot be a focus of unity, because she will have in her dioceses some who cannot recognise her as a bishop. Women bishops will also divide the communion of bishops because there will now be bishops who are unable to be in communion with each other.
Once you have women priests you must have women bishops. Diaconate, priesthood and episcopate are three parts of a single order of ministry.	It might be OK to have a woman priest in a team ministry under the headship of a male team rector. But to have a woman bishop goes against the scripture of male headship.	Yes, once you have women priests there is no theological reason not to have women bishops. Therefore we should either reverse the decision on women priests, or introduce women bishops whilst allowing those opposed to be under a traditionalist bishop with who is not in communion with women bishops: e.g. via a new non-geographic province/dioceses; or under bishops of a new religious society.

Further reading

- 1.) *“Women Bishops in the Church of England?: A report of the House of Bishops’ Working Party on Women in the Episcopate”* Church House Publishing, 2004, ISBN 0 7151 4037 X <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/38523/gsl557.pdf>

This is the official Church of England report (289 pages), which sets out all the arguments for and against. It is sometimes called ‘The Rochester Report’ after the Bishop of Rochester who chaired the working party that wrote it.

- 2.) *“Consecrated Women”* edited by Jonathan Baker, Canterbury Press, 2004, ISBN 1 85311 509 6

This is the main report (291 pages) from traditionalist group Forward in Faith. It argues against having women bishops and calls for a Third/New Province for those opposed if women are made bishops and sets out draft legislation of what such a Province would look like.

- 3.) *“Women Bishops?”* John Pitchford, Tufton Books, 2008. ISBN 978 0 85191 323 0

An easy read booklet of 42 pages setting out the traditionalist arguments against the ordination of women to the episcopate – handy for those who don’t have time to read *Consecrated Women*. Available from www.additionalcurates.co.uk/churchunion5.html

- 4.) *“The Call for Women Bishops”* edited by Harriet Harris and Jane Shaw, SPCK, 2004. ISBN 0281 05621 8

This is the main report (196 pages) of essays putting the case in favour, mainly from members of Women and the Church (WATCH). It argues for having women bishops with no formal provisions for those opposed.

- 5.) *“Women as Bishops”* edited by James Rigney, Mowbray, 2008. ISBN 978 0 567 03224 9

This is the main report (200 pages) of essays from the group Affirming Catholicism, in favour of the ordination of women. (It was previously published in 2006 under the title “Women and the Episcopate: Affirming Catholicism – the Journal”).

- 6.) *“Countering the Claims of Evangelical Feminism: Biblical Responses to the Key Questions”* Wayne Grudem, Multnomah Publishers, 2006. ISBN 1 59052 518 3

This sets out the conservative evangelical position. The back cover states, “Wayne Grudem offers more than forty biblical responses...showing God’s equal value in men and women and why their roles are complementary, not interchangeable.” (314 pages).

Books 1, 2, 4 and 5 are available from Church House Bookshop, 31 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN, Tel. 020 7799 4064 www.chbookshop.co.uk

Meeting of the laity of the Guildford Diocese: 11 December 2012 Personal statement from Adrian Vincent, member of General Synod.

1.) Looking back – what went wrong?

The failure of the *Draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure* to achieve the required two-thirds majority in the General Synod House of Laity on 20 November 2012 has caused a great deal of shock, hurt and anger both within and outside the Church.

Different explanations are given as to why 74 members of the House of Laity, including myself, voted against. The media assumes that it was pure sexism. However, given that half of those who voted against were women, including several campaigners for the ordination of women as bishops, that can't be the reason.

Within the Church there are two completely opposite explanations of what went wrong, depending on who you listen to. Take for example these two opposing examples:

Opposite accounts	
<p><i>Canon Andrew Dow, letter in The Church Times, 30 November 2012</i></p> <p>“When I first joined the General Synod in 1995, the then Bishop of Chester, the Rt Revd Michael Baughen, gave me a rule of thumb for approaching Synod motions and debates.”If you go for gold,” he said (in other words, the most that you want, the very best as you see it), “you are likely to lose all. However, if you go for silver (not your ideal, but a step in the right direction), you are more likely to gain.”</p> <p>Never has his dictum proved more true than in the result of last week's debate on women bishops. As I witnessed first hand over a long period, the supporters of women bishops pressed for their "gold" with a scorched-earth policy towards their opponents which voted down amendment after amendment that, if passed, could have enabled conservatives and traditionalists to come on board.</p> <p>[...] Their understandable distress is very sad for the Church; but ultimately it is they who are responsible.”</p>	<p><i>WATCH (Women and the Church) statement 4 December 2012</i> http://www.womenandthechurch.org/home</p> <p>“Years have been spent in trying to make legal provision that would satisfy those opposed.</p> <p>[...] The draft Measure represented the furthest possible compromise for those in favour. It was not enough for those opposed. After all these years of discussion, debate, and drafting it is clear that that there is no legal settlement that can be devised that will allow women to be bishops whilst satisfying the demands of those opposed.</p> <p>[...] It is now time to go for the simplest possible legislation - a single clause measure.</p> <p>[...] Those opposed do not want women bishops. They do not want resolution of the issue but to extend the decision-making process as long as possible. We cannot see how further conversation will result in any proposals that have not been tested and rejected before. They will simply prolong the process.”</p>

The above two accounts illustrate the two ends of the debate. Personally, I do not agree with Mr Dow that the proponents of the legislation had a “scorched-earth policy” towards traditionalists. Nor do I agree with WATCH (Women and the Church) that “there is no legal settlement that can be devised that will allow women to be bishops whilst satisfying the demands of those opposed.”

My own account of the history is as follows. In summarising I am inevitably picking out the points that I think are most significant, and consequently my view may not be objective, but I have provided footnote references to the documents themselves so that you can read the source material for yourself and form your own judgment.

November 2004: The report of the Bishop of Rochester’s working group, “Women Bishops in the Church of England?” was published¹ (I was the minute taker for that working group). Chapter 5 set out the theological arguments for and against the ordination of women to the episcopate.

February 2006: the General Synod debated a report from the Bishop of Guildford’s working group² (I was the minute taker), which set out proposals that would enable the ordination of women as bishops, whilst providing for those who in theological conscience could not receive that ministry. The provisions would be “transferred episcopal arrangements” (TEA), whereby a parish could ask to receive ministry from a male bishop. That male bishop would be provided with certain episcopal functions that would be transferred to them from the woman diocesan bishop by operation of law. It was essential that the provision of the male bishop was via *transfer* rather than *delegation*. This is because if you are a conservative evangelical who believes in biblical male headship, or an anglo-catholic who believes in apostolic succession and sacramental assurance, then a male bishop who is a *delegate* of a woman bishop cannot meet your theological needs.

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.”³

The voting was 348 in favour and 1 against.⁴

July 2006 General Synod passed the motion that “...admitting women to the episcopate in the Church of England is consonant with the faith of the Church” and endorsed “Resolution 111.2 of the Lambeth Conference 1998 “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””⁵

¹ Church House Publishing, GS 1557, ISBN 071514037X. The report can be downloaded from the CofE website: <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/38523/gs1557.pdf>

² <http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2006/01/pr0606.aspx>

³ General Synod Report of Proceedings, February 2006, Volume 37 No. 1. page 268.

⁴ General Synod Report of Proceedings, February 2006, Volume 37 No. 1. page 308.

⁵ <http://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/women-bishops.aspx>

July 2008: the General Synod was presented with a range of options to give a steer to the legislative drafting group. The debate was structured such that the starting point of the motion was a statutory code of practice (whereby the provision would be by *delegation*), to which 10 different amendments to test the mind of Synod would be offered, from no provision at all, through statutory transfer (TEA) in the middle, up to a third province at the far end, and variations in between. With all that choice splitting the vote it is no surprise that no single option to increase provision secured a majority. Consequently, the Bishop of Guildford's transferred episcopal arrangements proposal was taken no further.⁶

July 2010: the draft legislation was debated by the Synod. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, aware that the provisions via *delegation* were inadequate for traditionalists, proposed an amendment that would mean that the provision for traditionalists would be via "*coordinate jurisdiction*". This should meet the needs of traditionalist parishes because the male bishop serving traditionalists would be at the same level as the female diocesan bishop. It should also meet the needs of those who wanted to be sure that women bishops had no loss of authority, because no functions would be transferred from the woman bishop, it would simply be two bishops working jointly together with overlapping authority.

216 voted in favour of the Archbishops' amendment, 191 voted against:

Bishops: 25 for, 15 against.

Clergy: 85 for, 90 against, 5 abstentions.

Laity: 106 in favour, 86 against, 4 abstentions.

However, because the amendment needed a majority in each House (it only needed a simple majority, not two-thirds, because it was not final approval debate), and was 5 votes short in the clergy, the amendment was lost.⁷

September 2010-2011: the draft legislation was referred to the dioceses. Dioceses were not permitted to amend the legislation but could only vote for or against it. Inevitably for many it became in reality a vote for or against women bishops. 42 out of 44 dioceses voted in favour. However, of the 42 dioceses who voted in favour, 11 dioceses also passed following motions, most calling for the draft legislation to be amended in a similar manner to that proposed in the Archbishops' amendment.⁸

February 2012: the General Synod debated the need for the House of Bishops to amend the legislation to better provide for the needs of traditionalists. The difficulty was that any

⁶General Synod Report of Proceedings, February 2008, Volume 39 No. 2. pages 350-362.

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/40991/ropjuly2008.pdf>

⁷General Synod Report of Proceedings, July 2010, page 168.

[http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1155179/july%202010%20consolidated%20with%20index%20\(with%20full%20bookmarks\).pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1155179/july%202010%20consolidated%20with%20index%20(with%20full%20bookmarks).pdf)

⁸Report by the Business Committee on the Reference to the Dioceses, GS 1847,

[http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1379450/gs%201847%20\(women%20bishops%20-%20business%20committee%20report\).pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1379450/gs%201847%20(women%20bishops%20-%20business%20committee%20report).pdf)

In the Guildford Diocesan Synod meeting of 25 June 2011 the following motion calling for "amendments to the draft...Measure to ensure that those unable on theological grounds to accept the ministry of women bishops are able to receive Episcopal oversight with a bishop with authority (i.e. ordinary jurisdiction) conferred by the Measure rather than by delegation from a Diocesan Bishop" 40 voted in favour, 54 against and 3 abstained.

<http://www.adrianvincent.org.uk/25%20june%202011%20report%20of%20guildford%20diocesan%20synod%20women%20bishops%20debate.html>

substantial amendment would mean the legislation having to go back to the dioceses, and further delay. Synod were careful to vote that any amendment should not be ‘substantial’.⁹

July 2012: Between February and July, the House of Bishops made an amendment to clause 5(1)c of the draft legislation, that gave a little more provision for traditionalists, but not so much as to be deemed ‘substantial’. The text of the amendment said that the Code of Practice, to be drawn up to accompany the legislation, should give guidance on:

"the selection of male bishops or male priests the exercise of ministry by whom is consistent with the theological convictions as to the consecration and ordination of women on grounds of which parochial church councils have issued Letters of Request under Section 3."

In the General Synod debate in July, some argued that this new clause to help traditionalists amounted to too much provision for them. There was particular objection to the phrase “theological convictions”, because some felt that it would put in legislation official recognition of the theological views of traditionalists. They therefore called for the debate to be adjourned so as to ask the House of Bishops to remove that provision. However, the Revd Simon Killwick, leader of the Catholic Group in General Synod, said in his speech:

“What the bishops have done is just enough to ensure that the Measure passes. Adjourn it, send it back, take the amendments out and Synod would guarantee that it will not pass.”¹⁰

Nevertheless, the adjournment motion was passed and the House of Bishops invited people to write in with their suggestions on what do with that clause. The submission from WATCH said that the provision should be removed. They wrote, "we remain unconvinced by the Jeremiahs who inform us that, without this clause, the legislation cannot achieve the required majorities in General Synod."¹¹

November 2012: The House of Bishops, as requested, replaced the 5(1)c with a weaker clause, which removed the reference to the “theological convictions” of traditionalists. The motion “That the Measure entitled *Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure* be finally approved.” was lost, because it did not achieve a two-thirds majority in the House of Laity.¹²

Bishops	44 ayes	3 noes	2 abstentions
Clergy	148 ayes	45 noes	0 abstentions
Laity	132 ayes	74 noes	0 abstentions

⁹ General Synod, Business Done, February 2010, pages 12-13.

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1403798/consolidated%20bd%20feb%202012.pdf>

¹⁰ General Synod Report of Proceedings, July 2012, page 233.

[http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1527142/july%202012%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1527142/july%202012%20(2).pdf)

¹¹ <http://thinkinganglicans.org.uk/uploads/watch-gsmisc1033.html>

¹² General Synod, Business Done, November 2012, page 4.

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1589265/consolidated%20bd%20nov%202012.pdf>

2.) Looking forward – two options

Option A – fight it out

For each side to wait for the 2015 General Synod elections and try and get more members of their view elected. I have heard that WATCH are confident that they can make gains. I have also heard that large conservative evangelical churches, who previously took little interest in General Synod have been encouraged by the November vote and are expecting to increase the number of their representatives in 2015.

My own view is that there is no guarantee that new elections will result in a different composition of General Synod. The percentage of the Church who hold traditionalist theological views has remained largely unchanged since the ordination of women to the priesthood 20 years ago (in 1992 just under a third of the House of Laity voted against). A 2012 survey conducted by Christian Research of church members found that 31% either disagree with the ordination of women to the episcopate, or disagree with the ordination of women as bishops when there is not a consensus among all other Churches. 75% of respondents affirmed that those opposed to women bishops were “faithful Anglicans who should not be forced out of the C of E”.¹³ It is by no means certain that in 2015 even with a new House of Laity, that more than 66% of them would vote for legislation that does not sufficiently provide for traditionalists.

Option B – the main parties to talk outside of the Synod process, determined to reach a mutually acceptable provision

This is not as hard as it sounds. The fact that in 2006, 348 voted in favour and 1 against the Bishop of Guildford’s proposal for ‘transferred episcopal arrangements’ indicates that a way forward that the main parties can agree on is possible. It will require the leaders of the main groups (e.g. WATCH, Forward in Faith, Reform) to move away from lobbying and trying to win by pressure of votes; and instead to enter talks seriously determined to reach an agreement, even though it will mean painful compromise.

On 15 June 2012, The Church Times published a letter from the Revd 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

¹³ The Church Times, 20 June 2012. Full results on pages 24-26 of November 2012 issue of ‘New Directions’ <http://www.forwardinfaith.com/news/new-directions-archive.html>
1,080 people answered the survey (Q.1a), 88.3% were members of the Church of England (see Q.1b), 90.4% were lay people (Q.18).

Q. 9, "Having carefully considered the issue as best you can, which of the following statements most closely match your opinion? I would like to see the consecration of female bishops in the Church of England... As soon as possible (47.6%); Within the next 5-10 years (21.5%); When a consensus is reached amongst all other churches (15.4%); Never (15.5%)"

Q.10, "Please indicate which of the following most closely represents your view. I believe that those opposed to the ordination of women..."

Have no business being in the Church of England any longer (1.6%); Have had adequate time to get used to the idea (16.4%); Are faithful Anglicans who should not be forced out of the Church of England because they cannot accept women bishops as a matter of conscience (44.3%); Should be enabled to stay in the Church of England by means of some form of provision which meets their position of conscience (30.6%); Should have the right to veto the introduction of women bishops (7.2%)."

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”

The November Synod vote has demonstrated that the synodical process has not resulted in reconciliation. It is time for the groups to re-start their talks.

The Church Times editorial of 30 November 2012 stated:

“It is too soon to know what a solution might look like; but we can describe how the solvers might appear. First, the traditionalists and conservative Evangelicals need to think seriously about backing the sort of provision that they might realistically expect in the present climate. Second, the supporters of women bishops ought not to be satisfied with engineering a few more votes here or there. [...] theological conversation is essential (as once attempted by the Rochester group), covering such issues as sacramental assurance and biblical views of gender, and simple justice, with an awareness of the social and cultural influences at play. Too many discussions of late have failed to rise above the level of politics; so there is little wonder that hearts have hardened. Theology need not be slow, although it does require a depth of engagement that we have failed to see in recent months. The worst thing that could happen now is for the opposing sides to retire to lick their wounds, vowing to fight harder in the next elections.”

When I stood for election to General Synod in October 2010, my election address stated:

“I will encourage people to move beyond campaigning from their own ‘camp’ and instead to seek a deeper appreciation of the views of those with whom they disagree. We need to respect other people’s theological integrity. Only then will we find a way to introduce the ordination of women to the episcopate without splitting the Church.”¹⁴

In my speech in the November 2012 Synod debate I said:

“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

¹⁴ <http://www.adrianvincent.org.uk/electionaddress.html>

two-thirds majority, and the Church will be able to ordain women as bishops on the basis of some genuine unity.”¹⁵

If/when legislation comes back to Synod that meets the theological needs of traditionalists, I will vote in favour, as will many others who voted against in November, and a two-thirds majority will not be a problem.

Enclosures:

Printouts from my website. Before each Synod meeting I put on my website the issues coming up at General Synod, I say what my voting intentions are and invite people to send me their views. After Synod I publish what happened, how I voted and why.

15

<http://www.adrianvincent.org.uk/Adrian%20Vincent%2020%20Nov%202012%20General%20Synod%20speech%20women%20bishops%20as%20delivered.pdf>

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 promulged – 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 promulged, any resolution will not be acted upon until the Canon is promulged; 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 promulged as if they were resolutions passed under paragraph 20.

The Anglican Covenant

Comments by Adrian Vincent 11 Nov 2010

At the November 2010 General Synod we will be asked to vote "That the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Covenant be considered." The draft Act of Synod itself, GS 1809, <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1150766/gs1809.pdf> is a one page document in which the General Synod would pass a resolution that: "The Church of England hereby enters into and adopts the Anglican Communion Covenant as set out in Annex 1 to GS Misc 966..."

This can't happen until 2012 at the earliest, because if the General Synod approves the motion in November, it will then go to the dioceses for approval before coming back to the General Synod for final approval.

The document that is worth reading is GS Misc 966, the briefing paper by the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission on The Anglican Covenant, particularly Annex 1 which is the text of the Covenant itself:

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1150796/gsmisc966.pdf>

This process began in 2003 after a bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada authorised a public Rite of Blessing for same sex unions; and The Episcopal Church (USA) consecrated as a bishop "a divorced man openly acknowledged to be living in a sexually active and committed same sex relationship" (*The Windsor Report 2004*, paragraph 27). Both these actions took place against the request and resolutions of what are called 'the four instruments of unity' of the Anglican Communion: the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Some traditionalist Provinces reacted to these actions of the liberal Provinces:

"...Some Archbishops from elsewhere in the Communion have...entered parts of the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada and exercised episcopal functions without the consent of the relevant diocesan bishop...all these developments have now contributed materially to a tit-for-tat stand-off in which, tragically in line with analogous political disasters in the wider world, each side now accuses the other of atrocities, and blames the other for the need to react further in turn." (*The Windsor Report 2004*, paragraphs 29-30).

The Anglican Church did what it always does in a crisis. It set up a committee to write a report. This was *The Windsor Report*, it is a good and significant report that is well worth reading. It can be bought as a book (ISBN 6-00000005-7), and is also on-line: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/windsor2004/index.cfm>

The committee was called 'The Lambeth Commission' and they were asked, among other things,

"...to make recommendations to the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council, as to the exceptional circumstances and conditions under which, and the means by which, it would be appropriate for the Archbishop of Canterbury to exercise an extraordinary ministry of episcopate (pastoral oversight), support and reconciliation with regard to the internal affairs of a province other than his own for the sake of maintaining communion with the said province and between the

said province and the rest of the Anglican Communion.” (*The Windsor Report 2004*, paragraph 3).

The Commission were under massive pressure to report quickly, particularly by the Provinces of ‘the Global South’ who were fed up with what they considered to be being fobbed-off for years by new commissions and reports being written and no action ever being taken to discipline liberal provinces whom they considered had departed from Scripture. They said they weren’t prepared to wait much longer

The Commission reported relatively quickly and recommended:

“...the adoption by the churches of the Communion of a common Anglican Covenant which would make explicit and forceful the loyalty and bonds of affection which govern the relationships between the churches of the Communion. The Covenant could deal with: the acknowledgement of common identity; the relationships of communion; the commitments of communion; the exercise of autonomy in communion; and the management of communion affairs (including disputes). A possible draft appears in Appendix Two.” (*The Windsor Report 2004*, paragraph 118).

When I read this paragraph in 2004 I wrote in the margin, “but what if they pass this document and then ignore it – taking unilateral action on communion wide issues. Is it enforceable? Later in the paragraph the answer is no – no binding authority, so is it worth the paper it’s written on?”

Six years and several drafts later, we now have the final text of the Covenant which we are asked to approve. I can’t help thinking that this is too little too late.

Too late, because in the last few years the breaches on both sides have continued and the Provinces of the Global South have largely given up on the Anglican Communion ever taking effective action and have set up their own body “GAFCON”

<http://www.gafcon.org/> a “fellowship of confessing Anglicans”. More than 200 bishops chose not to attend the 2008 Lambeth Conference, and instead met in Jerusalem and produced their own statement of faith, “The Jerusalem Declaration”

http://fca.net/resources/the_jerusalem_declaration/

A parallel, traditionalist, Anglican Church in North America has also been formed

<http://www.anglicanchurch.net/?/main/page/about#history>

Too little? Some actually say it is too much. For example, groups such as Inclusive Church and Modern Church (MCU) object to the Covenant, saying that it would make the Anglican Church more centralised, authoritarian, restrict diversity and stifle developments from the Holy Spirit.

<http://www.inclusivechurch2.net/Anglican-Covenant-and-Communion-755dd12>

I disagree, let’s look at what the text of the Covenant actually says (Annex 1 of GS Misc 966) <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1150796/gsmisc966.pdf>

1.) It assumes a starting place where we are not at

Paragraph 5 says the purpose of the Covenant is “so that the bonds of affection which hold us together may be re-affirmed and intensified.” Some (though I would completely disagree) consider The Episcopal Church (USA) has so far departed from Scripture that they are heretical and therefore ‘true’ Christians cannot be in communion with them at all. “Strengthening bonds of affection” assumes that there are existing bonds to strengthen.

2.) It is likely to be ignored

Section 1 sets out the traditional basis of faith of the Anglican Communion that all signatory Churches are to affirm. It is a good summary based on the foundation documents of the Anglican Church. However, in the absence of specific reference to sexual ethics or the crossing of diocesan boundaries, signatory Churches who go against traditional Anglican beliefs and practices in these areas are likely to argue that they haven’t broken the faith basis of the Covenant. They are also likely to argue that they have not broken the ‘communion’ basis of the Covenant either.

Section 3.2.4-7 says that signatory Churches should:

“seek a shared mind with other Churches, through the Communion’s councils ... [and]... undertake wide consultation with the other Churches of the Anglican Communion and with the Instruments and Commissions of the Communion. ...in situations of conflict, to participate in mediated conversations, which involve face to face meetings, agreed parameters and a willingness to see such processes through. ...to have in mind that our bonds of affection and the love of Christ compel us always to uphold the highest degree of communion possible.”

No doubt signatories will say they have gone through all that consultation process and at the end of the process have concluded that it is still right to ordain practising gay bishops or cross diocesan boundaries etc.

3.) Discipline is not likely to happen

The Covenant says:

“4.1.3. Such mutual commitment does not represent submission to any external ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Nothing in this Covenant of itself shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion, or to limit its autonomy of governance. The Covenant does not grant to any one Church or any agency of the Communion control or direction over any Church of the Anglican Communion.”

“4.2.2. The Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion, responsible to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates’ Meeting, shall monitor the functioning of the Covenant in the life of the Anglican Communion on behalf of the Instruments.”

“4.2.5. The Standing Committee may request a Church to defer a controversial action. If a Church declines to defer such action, the Standing Committee may recommend to any Instrument of Communion relational consequences which may specify a provisional limitation of

GENERAL SYNOD

THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION COVENANT: DRAFT ACT OF SYNOD

REPORT BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE
ON THE REFERENCE TO THE DIOCESES**Introduction**

1. Article 8 of the General Synod's Constitution states that 'a scheme for a constitutional union or a permanent and substantial change of relationship between the Church of England and another Christian body, being a body a substantial number of whose members reside in Great Britain' shall not be finally approved by the General Synod unless, at a stage determined by the Archbishops, the scheme, or the substance of the proposals embodied therein, has been approved by the majority of the dioceses at meetings of their diocesan synods (or, in the case of the Diocese in Europe, of the bishop's council and standing committee of that diocese). This requirement was held to apply to the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant on the basis that it provided for a permanent and substantial change in the relationships between the Church of England and the Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopal Church respectively.
2. In December 2010 the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant was referred to the dioceses under cover of GS Misc 971.

Voting on the draft legislation

3. Diocesan synods were asked to consider and vote on this motion (without amendment and as a single motion):

'That this Synod approve the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant.'
4. The results of the voting in the diocesan synods and in the bishop's council and standing committee of the Diocese in Europe are set out in the table overleaf.
5. Under Rule 34(1)(h) of the Church Representation Rules, if the votes of the houses of clergy and laity of a diocesan synod are in favour of a matter referred under the provisions of Article 8, the matter shall be deemed to have been approved for the purposes of that Article. (Similar provision is made in relation to the bishop's council and standing committee of the Diocese in Europe by s.3(2) Diocese in Europe Measure 1980.) It should also be noted that, for a motion to be carried in any house, the majority of those present and voting must have voted in favour. (An abstention from voting is not a vote, and if the numbers voting for and against a motion are equal, a majority has not voted in favour.)
6. The draft Act of Synod was approved in eighteen dioceses and not approved in twenty-six dioceses. *Thus the draft Act of Synod was not approved by a majority of the dioceses and it therefore cannot be presented to the General Synod for Final Approval.* For the record, there is nothing in the Synod's Constitution or Standing Orders that would preclude the process being started over again, whether in the lifetime of this Synod or subsequently, by another draft Instrument to the same effect being brought forward for consideration by the General Synod before being referred to the dioceses under Article 8. The Business Committee is not, however, aware of a proposal to re-start the process in this way.

**REFERENCE OF THE DRAFT ACT OF SYNOD TO THE DIOCESES:
VOTING FIGURES**

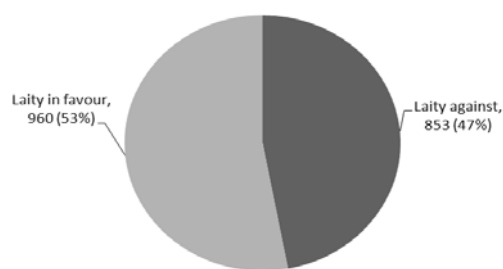
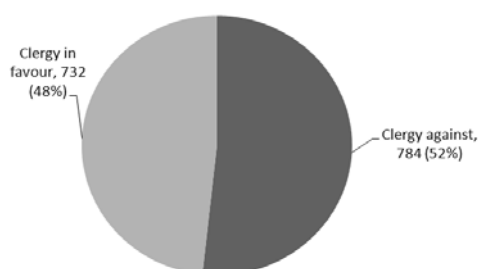
DIOCESE	BISHOPS			CLERGY			LAITY			*
	Aye	No	Abs	Aye	No	Abs	Aye	No	Abs	
Bath and Wells	0	1	1	17	22	1	18	23	4	L
Birmingham	1	0	0	17	17	1	12	25	1	L
Blackburn	2	0	0	33	16	1	40	7	1	C
Bradford	1	0	0	15	9	2	16	15	3	C
Bristol	2	0	0	14	9	1	17	3	3	C
Canterbury	1	0	0	26	14	0	39	13	0	C
Carlisle	2	0	0	19	13	2	33	17	0	C
Chelmsford	2	1	1	27	29	7	31	30	3	L
Chester	3	0	0	22	14	5	26	23	5	C
Chichester	2	0	0	29	9	0	39	25	1	C
Coventry	2	0	0	22	7	0	26	2	0	C
Derby	0	1	0	1	21	2	2	24	1	L
Durham	1	0	0	22	12	1	41	14	4	C
Ely	1	0	1	16	23	1	19	19	0	L
Europe	2	0	0	13	0	1	9	0	1	C
Exeter	3	0	0	28	8	1	30	20	2	C
Gloucester	1	0	1	16	28	1	14	28	6	L
Guildford	2	0	0	14	22	1	23	18	2	L
Hereford	2	0	0	15	15	1	21	22	1	L
Leicester	2	0	0	15	21	3	21	14	4	L
Lichfield	4	0	0	39	11	1	57	9	1	C
Lincoln	0	3	0	6	28	3	2	34	2	L
Liverpool	0	2	0	10	26	1	8	28	5	L
London	2	1	0	17	32	1	26	33	2	L
Manchester	1	2	0	15	25	0	12	23	7	L
Newcastle	2	0	0	8	18	1	14	15	0	L
Norwich	3	0	0	26	10	1	19	15	1	C
Oxford	3	1	0	15	37	2	34	27	3	L
Peterborough	2	0	0	22	19	1	28	13	7	C
Portsmouth	1	0	0	12	17	0	13	17	2	L
Ripon & Leeds	2	0	0	12	22	1	8	17	2	L
Rochester	1	0	0	8	30	3	14	26	7	L
St Albans	2	0	0	21	31	0	17	44	0	L
St Eds and Ips	2	0	0	9	29	4	8	33	9	L
Salisbury	1	1	0	11	20	2	19	27	0	L
Sheffield	2	0	0	16	6	1	31	9	2	C
Sodor and Man	1	0	0	5	12	0	21	15	1	L
Southwark	1	0	1	10	27	2	21	32	0	L
S'well & N'gham	2	0	0	15	5	0	31	6	1	C
Truro	0	1	0	5	18	3	8	28	3	L
Wakefield	2	0	0	16	17	1	10	23	0	L
Winchester	3	0	0	22	11	4	38	10	2	C
Worcester	2	0	0	5	19	0	6	22	0	L
York	4	0	0	26	5	0	38	5	1	C
TOTALS	75	14	5	732	784	64	960	853	100	

*C=Carried L=Lost

7. The voting by Houses was as follows:

	House of Bishops		House of Clergy		House of Laity		overall	
	Carried	Lost	Carried	Lost	Carried	Lost	C	L
Province of Canterbury	25	5	10	20	14	16	10	20
Province of York	12	2	8	6	9	5	8	6
Church of England	37	7	18	26	23	21	18	26

8. Thus, while a narrow majority of Houses of Laity (and a much larger majority of Houses of Bishops) voted in favour only 18 of 44 Houses of Clergy voted in favour, with two thirds of the House of Clergy in the Southern Province voting ‘no’.
9. It will be seen from the table opposite that the majorities within individual dioceses varied greatly. In some, the draft Act of Synod adopting the Covenant was either approved or rejected by substantial majorities. In others the voting in the House of Laity or House of Clergy or both of the houses was very close. Thus, in eleven dioceses which did not approve the Act of Synod,¹ it would have been approved if between two and eight individuals had voted in favour rather than against. Conversely, in fifteen dioceses which did approve the Act of Synod,² it would not have been approved if between one and eight individuals had voted against rather than in favour.
10. The point can be illustrated in another way by noting that, if a total of just seventeen individuals spread across five particular dioceses had voted to support the Covenant rather than oppose it, a bare majority of dioceses would have approved the Covenant, whereas, if a total of just ten across five other dioceses had voted against instead of in favour, the diocesan voting against the Covenant would have been much greater at 31-13.
11. Overall, of the 1516 members of houses of clergy who voted, 732 (48%) voted in favour and 784 (52%) voted against. Of the 1813 members of houses of laity who voted, 960 (53%) voted in favour and 853 (47%) voted against.



¹ Chelmsford (2), Hereford (2), Leicester (3) Sodor and Man (4), Ely (5), Guildford (5), Bath and Wells (6), Portsmouth (6), Newcastle (7), Birmingham (8), Wakefield (8).

² Bradford (1), Chester (2), Norwich (2), Peterborough (2), Bristol (3), Carlisle (3), Durham (5), Europe (5), Exeter (5), Sheffield (5), Southwell and Nottingham (5), Canterbury (6), Winchester (6), Chichester (7), Coventry (8).

12. Under Rule 34(1)(j) of the Church Representation Rules, the diocesan bishop has the right to require that his opinion on any question shall be recorded in the minutes of the diocesan synod. The Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Chester and the Bishop of Sodor and Man exercised that right. As required by Standing Order 91(b), their statements are set out in **Annex A**.

Following Motions

14. GS Misc 971 recognized that it would be open to diocesan synods to consider motions arising out of the draft Act of Synod, in addition to the motion required to indicate whether they approved it; a number did so. The motions considered by the diocesan synods, and the voting upon them, as reported to the Clerk to the Synod, are set out in **Annex B**.

Deanery Synods

15. In GS Misc 971 the Business Committee encouraged dioceses to consult the deanery synods about the draft legislation. The extent to which diocesan synods did this varied. The Business Committee considers it inappropriate, therefore, to include the results of voting in deanery synods in this report, because a table of results could be both misleading and misinterpreted.

The Armed Forces Synod

16. The Armed Forces are not a diocese and consideration of the draft Act of Synod by the Armed Forces Synod (formerly the Forces Synodical Council) is therefore not relevant to the requirement of Article 8 that it must have been approved ‘by the majority of the dioceses’ before it can receive Final Approval. The Armed Forces Synod did consider the draft legislation, however. The Armed Forces Synod voted on the draft legislation as follows:

	BISHOPS			CLERGY			LAITY			
	Aye	No	Abs	Aye	No	Abs	Aye	No	Abs	C/L
Armed Forces	1	0	0	6	0	0	10	0	0	C

On behalf of the Committee

JULIAN HENDERSON
Chair

25 May 2012

RECORDED OPINIONS OF DIOCESAN BISHOPS

The Archbishop of York

Members of Synod, as this is Article 8 Business under General Synod Standing Order 90(b)(iv), I am exercising my right as Diocesan Bishop to record the following distinct opinion.

I am surprised by the arguments of the ‘No’ Campaign who have said, for example, that the Covenant is about ‘Imperialism’ and will lead to the exclusion of some Anglicans. My reading of the Covenant differs from that Group’s reading. If the Anglican Communion is to say No to the current proposal, then what? The opponents to the Covenant need to come up with an answer.

If I may respectfully suggest, there is a widespread lack of understanding that exists in the Church of England about the nature and importance of the conciliar principle of Church governance. There seems to be almost no understanding that the traditional ecclesiology of Anglicanism, as reflected in the Anglican Covenant, is an expression of a tradition of governing the Church by means of Councils that goes back to the New Testament itself – the Council at Jerusalem and the Council’s Letter to the Gentile Believers in Acts 15.

As Alexander Schmemmann has said, ‘Before we understand the place and the function of the Council *in* the Church, we must, therefore, see the *Church herself, as a Council*’ (‘Towards a Theology of Councils’ in *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, Crestwood, NY, 1979) p.163. The new study by Paul Valliere, *Conciliarism: A History of Decision-Making in the Church* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2012), is essential reading.

The Trust Deed of the Church of England in the Preface to the Declaration of Assent ought to be instructive. It says:

‘The Church of England is Part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit’. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the *Book of Common Prayer* and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. In the declaration you are about to make, will you affirm your loyalty to this inheritance of faith as your inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making him known to those in your care?’

This Preface to the Declaration of Assent is not a universal Trust Deed in the rest of the Anglican Communion and some Provinces do not regard the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion as their Trust Deed nor the Lambeth – Chicago Quadrilateral. Something akin to our Preface to the Declaration of Assent is urgently needed throughout the Anglican Communion and the Anglican Covenant bridges this deficit.

For me, the Covenant is a blueprint for the way forward globally, which will create a mechanism for building relationships and communication allowing the Churches of the Anglican Communion to stay in communion both nationally and internationally. There remains room for local freedom with connectedness to the whole Anglican Communion.

I believe the Anglican Covenant is ‘necessary’ for Anglicans ‘in recalling us to ourselves’. The Covenant must be considered on the basis of its ability to help Anglicans recover their true vocation within God’s One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. This includes growing more fully into the life of ‘mutual resourcing, responsibility and interdependence’ which the 1963 Toronto Congress identified and from which the Communion has since drifted.

The Anglican Communion, and not just some Provinces, was able to stand in solidarity with South Africa during the dark days of apartheid. When Archbishop Desmond Tutu was put under house arrest, Archbishop Robert Runcie sent Bishop Keith Sutton with a clear message: ‘Anyone who touches you, touches us.’ The murder of Archbishop Janani Luwum in 1977 received a similar Anglican Communion response. And now, more so with South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zimbabwe.

The Covenant would be an effective vehicle for expressing more fully the Anglican theological method – which is neither the Confessional statements of Geneva nor the Magisterium of Rome, but an invitation to participate in the Death and Resurrection of Christ. For it is *in Christ* and *in Christ* alone do we know God, human nature and ourselves as we truly are. Therefore, the Anglican Communion’s self-understanding must be *in Christ* and *in Christ* alone and the truth of his Gospel. This is where we meet, live, grow and then infect the world with God’s goodness. Unity is a given. And the failure to live in communion first and then engage in honest, respectful theological discernment is threatening our worldwide Anglican Communion.

Therefore it is a mistake to focus too narrowly either on the disagreements around human sexuality, or on seeking legally or structurally based solutions to current Anglican Communion difficulties.

The identity of the Anglican Communion’s member churches should not principally be conveyed through legal frameworks, whether of some form of centralising authority, or of the Provinces’ Constitutions and Canon Law which must be *safeguarded* from external interference.

The Covenant would ensure that the Anglican Communion would not rest content with the sort of *autonomous* ecclesial units that favour unilateralism but would nurture organic interdependence that would make it possible for us to live together as the Body of Christ. This would enable us to take the Communion beyond the contexts in which current difficulties have arisen and help us to heal the breach that has sadly soured and fractured our fellowship as members of one body.

By recognising the reality of human fallibility and the redeeming power of the Gospel, the Anglican Communion should look to the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh, and put our trust in him, rather than appearing to seek structural or legal solutions to our difficulties.

The Covenant is a means – a tool - for doing this, since it places God’s summons to the Church of Jesus Christ to ‘*seek first God’s Kingdom*’ and to put God’s world at the centre of all things; living this mission as our ultimate and overriding context and calling. The provisions of the Covenant – which neither create new structures nor interfere in the day to day life of each Province (though firmly connected to the See of Canterbury) – should be understood in terms of ‘the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus’ (Romans 8. 2). Covenanting together does not mean legal restrictions, but rather maintaining the bond of peace by constraining ourselves through the same mutuality of love, as St Paul wrote: ‘all things are lawful but not all things are beneficial – all things are lawful but not all things build up’ (1 Corinthians 10. 23).

May I encourage all of us who are daunted by the challenge of living together in Christ by noting that St Paul is under no illusion that this is difficult.

In the Anglican Communion none of us should ever say, “I have no need of you” (1 Corinthians 12. 21). Together, as partners in the Gospel covenanting to go forward in newness of life, we are ‘indispensable’ (v. 22) for ‘building each other up until all of us come to the Unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ’ (Ephesians 4. 12-13). And, in our own faithful obedience to what we believe is God’s vocation for all Anglicans, and ultimately towards the fullness of Life in God’s One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Our Link Dioceses and Province of Southern Africa voted to adopt the Covenant and Archbishop Thabo wrote to us encouraging us to do the same. The Archbishop of Canterbury in the DVD we have just watched has corrected the misleading statements that some have made about the Covenant. And I gladly urged you to vote yes for the covenant.

I am grateful to all members of this Synod for voting to approve the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant.

The Bishop of Chester

Who is an Anglican? This is a deceptively simple question, which is becoming increasingly difficult to answer. It seems to me to be inevitable that some sort of Anglican marker, ideally incorporated into the canon law of the Church concerned, is necessary. I regard the present proposals for the Covenant as a sensible move in a direction which might be regarded as inevitable.

Is the Anglican Communion a Church, a united fellowship of Churches, or merely a federation of otherwise ecclesially separate Churches? The trend in recent decades has been towards the Communion regarding itself as primarily an autonomous fellowship of Churches, and perhaps merely a federation. The extensive refusal by bishops of the Archbishop of Canterbury's invitation to the last Lambeth Conference, and the subsequent inability of the Primates to enjoy Eucharistic fellowship when they meet, illustrate this. I have also observed a tendency of some Churches of the Anglican Communion towards regarding themselves as separate denominations in a loose Anglican fellowship.

Does the Anglican Communion wish to retain any sense of being a 'Church', alongside the legal reality that its constituent Provinces/Churches are self-governing? It seems clear to me that if it *does* wish to retain a substantial degree of theological and ecclesial coherence as a distinct communion of Churches, then something like the Anglican Covenant needs to be adopted by its constituent Provinces/Churches.

When the Anglican Communion first emerged, its underlying theological unity was promoted and secured by a largely common canon law, liturgy and hymnody. Over time, these have increasingly diverged, for mainly good reasons of inculturation. The Covenant would put down a marker, that a proper diversity should not lead to the disunity of denominationalism.

What of the (perhaps too considerable) detail? I have just two comments.

Firstly, I do not see the present text as predominantly disciplinary in intent. It recognises the eventual need for boundaries, but envisages lengthy processes of discussion and discernment before any degree of formal restriction on the recognition of a member Province/Church would take place. Primarily, I see the Covenant as providing an agreed process for deliberation when controversial and divisive issues arise among us.

Secondly, I do share a concern that the ACC, and the joint Standing Committee of the ACC and the Primates, are not best equipped to offer advice to the 'Instruments of Communion' in the particularly contentious situations which might potentially arise. In these circumstances, I would prefer matters to rest with the Primates themselves, although I recognise that the Provinces concerned vary greatly in size, which may distort the dynamics of the Primates' Meeting.

The role in all of this of the Archbishop of Canterbury remains too opaque. While recognising that there has not been a ready desire to see the Archbishop as an 'Anglican Patriarch', there needs to be a clearer recognition of his role. That the Archbishop has the responsibility to decide which bishops are to be invited to the Lambeth Conference is very significant, in the context of the proposed Covenant and its underlying questions about Anglican identity.

Notwithstanding these qualifications and questions, I would anticipate confidently voting for the motion before the Synod today.

The Bishop of Sodor and Man

My first reason for supporting the Covenant is the privilege I have had of experiencing the Churches of the Anglican Communion in various parts of the world: in several African nations, in the United States where I was seconded as a curate, in the Philippines, in Europe, in South America, in the other Celtic Churches of these Islands and in our ecumenical relationships; during the last decade I convened the Steering Group of the Primates' Working Group on Theological Education (TEAC). When a community, a family, a communion has members who do not understand that 'there is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak' (Ecclesiastes 3. 7), a framework for our common life has to be developed. I think the Anglican Covenant is a reasonable instrument to achieve this.

I acknowledge that the Covenant is not perfect and that there are elements – particularly section 4 – which may seem to us in a society with a very liberal tradition to be more restrictive than we may prefer; however, I am convinced that this section is seriously mis-read – notice such words as 'may', 'recommend', 'advice' and 'refer to', with which it is peppered – so I simply do not recognise some of the criticisms made of it. It is too easy for us to forget the need for a framework for an international, culturally-diverse common life. The frameworks we have developed to date have worked satisfactorily, but, unfortunately, we have reached a point when opinions can be shared so easily, with too little thought for others, and actions taken which have unforeseen consequences elsewhere. The decision to act unilaterally in one place can have deeply serious effects in another. So, as a necessary means of requiring us to respect on another across the Communion, I will vote for the Covenant.

Finally, I affirm what Archbishop Rowan wrote in his 2011 Advent pastoral letter:

'In spite of many assurances, some Anglicans evidently still think that the Covenant changes the structure of our Communion – or that it gives some sort of absolute power of "excommunication" to some undemocratic or unrepresentative body. With all respect to those who have raised these concerns, I must repeat that I do not see the Covenant in this light at all. It sets out an understanding of our common life and common faith and in the light of that proposes making a mutual promise to consult and attend to each other, freely undertaken. It recognizes that **not** doing this damages our relations profoundly. It outlines a procedure, such as we urgently need, for attempting reconciliation and for indicating the sorts of consequences that might result from a failure to be fully reconciled.'

Without the Covenant as a means of negotiating differences, I fear for the future of the Communion.

FOLLOWING MOTIONS

I: Diocesan Synod Motions

1. A motion for debate by the General Synod was considered in thirteen dioceses. In eleven, it was moved in the following form:
‘That this Synod:
 - (a) rejoice in the fellowship of the world-wide Anglican Communion, which is rooted in our shared worship and held together by bonds of affection and our common appeal to Scripture, tradition and reason;
 - (b) thank the Archbishop of Canterbury for his tireless efforts throughout the Communion to sustain and strengthen unity in difficult times; and
 - (c) call on the House of Bishops:
 - (i) to find ways to maintain and reinforce strong links across the world-wide Anglican Communion and to deepen the Church of England’s involvement with the existing Communion ministries and networks (especially the continuing Indaba process);
 - (ii) to publicise and promote this work within the dioceses of the Church of England in order to broaden understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the Anglican Communion; and
 - (iii) to encourage a wide understanding of, and support for, the next Lambeth Conference.’
2. It was carried in this form by the Diocesan Synods of nine dioceses: Bath and Wells, Chelmsford, Lincoln, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford, St Albans and Worcester.
3. The motion was also carried in the Diocese of Southwark, with the addition at the end of paragraph (a) of the following words: ‘all as set out in Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the draft Anglican Communion Covenant’.
4. The motion was also carried in the Diocese of Guildford with the words ‘especially the continuing Indaba process’ in paragraph (c) (i) deleted.
5. The motion was lost in the Chichester and Exeter diocesan synods.
6. The voting on the motion is set out in the table opposite.

II: Motion passed by the Ely Diocesan Synod

7. The following resolution was passed by the Ely diocesan synod (by majority vote, with one abstention):
‘That this Synod rejoices in being part of the worldwide Anglican Communion as an expression of the life of the Trinity and commits itself to the ongoing wellbeing of that Communion.’

DIOCESAN SYNOD MOTIONS FOR DEBATE IN THE GENERAL SYNOD													
	Whole Synod			By Houses									
DIOCESE	Aye	No	Abs	BISHOPS			CLERGY			LAITY			
				Aye	No	Abs	Aye	No	Abs	Aye	No	Abs	*
Bath & Wells	<i>Carried by a large majority on a show of hands (3 against; 1 abstention)</i>												C
Chelmsford	<i>Carried by a large majority on a show of hands</i>												C
Chichester	42	45	15										L
Exeter				0	0	3	25	8	2	42	7	1	L
Guildford	43	18	10										C
Lincoln				3	0	0	36	0	2	37	0	1	C
London	<i>Carried nem con, with 3 abstentions</i>												C
Manchester	70	3	22										C
Newcastle	41	6	6										C
Oxford	89	0	15										C
St Albans	106	0	9										C
Southwark	<i>Carried by a large majority on a show of hands</i>												C
Worcester	<i>Carried unanimously</i>												C

* C = Carried L = Lost

III: Motion Considered but not Passed by the Chester Diocesan Synod

8. The following motion was debated by the Chester diocesan synod:

‘That this Synod

- (i) rejoicing in the fellowship of the Anglican Communion which is rooted in our shared worship, and held together by bonds of affection and our common appeal to Scripture, Tradition and Reason, thanks the Archbishop of Canterbury for his tireless efforts throughout the Communion to sustain and strengthen unity in difficult times; and calls on the House of Bishops:
 - (a) to find ways to deepen in the Church of England’s involvement with the existing Anglican Communion Ministries and Networks and especially the continuing Indaba process,
 - (b) to publicise and promote this work within the dioceses of the Church of England in order to broaden understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the world-wide Anglican Communion, and
 - (c) to encourage a wide understanding of, and support for, the next Lambeth Conference; and

- (ii) requests that the Church of England seek amendment to the proposed Covenant such that there be a modification of the processes of dealing with complaints in order to provide
 - (a) a twelve-month period for the Anglican Consultative Council to commission a theological reflection on any complaint prior to any decision by the Standing Committee,
 - (b) that there be introduced a just process of appeal in regard to a decision of the Standing Committee following upon a complaint; and
 - (c) that any approval by General Synod of the Covenant be held in abeyance until these requirements are met.’

The motion was lost:

For: 36; Against: 49; Abstentions: 17.