



Welcome to this edition of the Ely General Synod Digest.

Mental Health

In an interesting debate, watched by a group of psychiatrists and other health care professionals in the gallery, a motion was passed that this Synod:

- a) affirm the vital necessity of improving services, in hospitals and in the community, for the care and treatment of people with mental health problems;
- b) welcome the acceptance by Her Majesty's Government during the passage of the Mental Health Act 2007 of amendments to protect the liberty and interests of those subject to compulsory detention and treatment for mental disorder, and express the hope that the operation of the Act will be carefully monitored;
- c) call attention to the acute needs of people with mental disorders in the criminal justice system and request effective measures to divert them, where appropriate, from prison; and
- d) welcome the recognition within mental health services of the significance of spirituality for assessment and treatment, and encourage parishes to ensure that the care of people with mental health problems is a key priority for the Church's ministry.

Eucharistic Prayers where a significant number of children are present



The Synod passed a motion to 'ask the House of Bishops to ask the Liturgical Commission to produce Eucharistic prayers suitable for use when there are a significant number of children present'. If this sounds a rather contorted way of going about things, it was pointed out that it is. Nevertheless, this is a welcome development for it is a need which has long been expressed. The motion came from Durham diocesan synod, where it had been agreed that the need for such prayers was acute, especially in church primary schools where the Eucharist is regularly celebrated. Common Worship provides for great flexibility in the use of texts, even in celebrations of the Eucharist. While the shape and order of the service is given, the only four points at which a prescribed text is required are the collect, confession (and this can be with 'Kyries') the absolution and the Eucharistic prayer after the preface. Another irony of the wording of the motion is that the Liturgical Commission is already eager to get on with the job but cannot do so until asked by the House of Bishops! Watch this space for some prayers coming your way in the next year or two.

An important debate on fees for funerals and weddings etc was adjourned to allow more time for reflection and research. Hopefully this will be discussed in July.

The Latest on the Anglican Covenant

For the second time Synod discussed the proposal to draw up a 'Covenant', aimed both at defining more clearly what holds the Anglican Communion together and at providing a mechanism to deal with disputes. The second draft was definitely an improvement on the first, being better worded and more theologically inclusive. However, despite reassurances from the Archbishop of York that this was not a method of ejecting some Provinces from the Communion, the suspicion remained that this was, in fact, its central purpose. There remain many unanswered questions, including what will happen if, when the final version is agreed, several provinces do not sign up to it. Will they automatically be excluded? The subject will be high on the agenda of the Lambeth Bishops conference this summer. Let us keep in our prayers Archbishop Rowan and all those who are seeking to tread the painful path of holding the communion together at a time when the 'bonds of affection' seem strained to the limit.

Electronic Voting

This was the first session of Synod to use electronic voting. Voting by hands was still used for the majority of votes but whenever a debate seemed to be of wider public interest voting was recorded electronically, saving time. How each member voted will be recorded on the Synod website at some stage.

Anglican- Roman Catholic Relations

The following motion was passed. This Synod, welcoming the Agreed Statement of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission and endorsing its stated aim of closer collaboration in unity and mission between our two communions:

- note the assessment of the agreed statement in GS 1673 as a contribution to the further development of the text
- affirm that further growing together in unity and mission will depend on common witness and the exchange of spiritual gifts, as well as clarity between areas where doctrinal agreement has been achieved and areas that require further work; and
- encourage Anglicans to implement, with Roman Catholics, the practical initiatives for bishops and people proposed in Part 2 of the statement. (see the General Synod website for more information about the statement)

Detention without Charge



The final debate of this session was the Synod's attempt to encourage the Government to think more carefully about the fine balance between liberty and security when it comes to detaining potential criminals without charge. There was clear endorsement of a call **not** to the increase the period of detention without charge from 28 to 42 days. We wait to see how the Government responds.

Bible Availability in Every Church

Synod agreed to recommend that the Bible be made readily available for people to use on entering church. A wide selection of Bibles were endorsed and dioceses were asked to encourage parishes to ensure Bibles are easily available in every Anglican church in the land.

Clergy Terms of Service

The debate on clergy terms of service was the longest I (Alan) have ever attended, occupying most of Tuesday morning & afternoon. At stake is the replacement of Freehold with 'Common Tenure', designed to address government concern about the employment rights of those without freehold and to ensure parity of rights and treatment for all clergy. We are now at the stage of legislation being considered clause by clause, with over 20 amendments tabled. Most concern centred around transferring 'ownership' of the vicarage from the Incumbent to the Diocesan Parsonage Board. Bankruptcy of a Diocese in Canada, because of litigation over child abuse, made many worry that vicarages, as part of the dioceses' assets, could be vulnerable if something similar were to happen here. In the end, clergy houses were removed entirely from the legislation, leaving them, technically, as the property of the vicar. With some other minor amendments the legislation moved on to the next stage of revision. We are not quite there yet, but it looks as if Common Tenure is here to stay.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and Sharia Law

The Presidential Address began this time with a minute's standing ovation for the Archbishop which might have gone on for longer if the Archbishop hadn't stopped it. It was a clear sign of the overwhelming support Synod has for its leader despite press suggestions to the contrary. Following the recent Press furore, the Archbishop defended the right of Church leaders to speak about the concerns of other Faith groups in the UK, though he regretted that his recent speech had lacked clarity at points. Commenting on the Anglican Communion and the forthcoming Lambeth Conference, he emphasised the importance of national Churches appealing to sister Churches for support in situations of crisis, as in Kenya. He also said the Lambeth Conference would spend more time praying and listening, than struggling to agree on too many Resolutions. He commented that it was sad that Christians are often better at talking *about* one another than *with* each other.

General Synod

next meets from the 4th-8th July in York. If you would like a question asked or to visit please let us know.

Do you have a question you are burning to ask?

Contact your synod reps. who can table it for you.

It must be a question of fact, not a hypothetical question, on the subject of the Church of England nationally.



How does this session of Synod Business impact on the Diocese of Ely?

- Incumbents get to keep some control over their vicarages when a change is proposed
- Life will be more straight forward soon for Local Ecumenical Partnerships in Ely
- In the next year or two Eucharistic prayers for when a significant number of children are present will be emerging
- We will be encouraged to ensure there are more Bibles available in our churches
- Greater informal Anglican- Roman Catholic links will be encouraged.

Code of Practice Synod approved the Code of Practice for Mission Initiatives. This will give guidance for various forms of mission including Fresh Expressions.

Synod heard from the **Archbishop of York** about the situation in Kenya and how this has affected the church there. Prayers are needed.

Casinos

Synod expressed grave concerns about the rise in the spending on gaming; endorsed opposition to large casinos; supported programmes which aim to check problem gambling; and called on the government to seek an international framework for a code of conduct on internet gambling. The Mission and Public Affairs Council will report back in 2009 on the measures taken by churches to combat the detrimental effects of gambling.

Please pray for:

- The Archbishop of Canterbury in the midst of many unfair press reports
- Muslim communities in Britain
- The legislative drafting group still thinking about the best way forward on Women Bishops
- Those addicted to gambling that they may receive the help they need
- Those involved in appointing the next Bishop of Huntingdon

Crown Appointments

As a result of the decision of the Prime Minister last year no longer to exercise a deciding vote on senior church appointments, Synod discussed how it should tackle such appointments and what place the crown should play, if any. It was widely agreed that senior clergy have an important public role in our country and that the Prime Minister's appointment's advisor had made an excellent contribution in helping the church to respond to this. Some felt we should be 'mature enough' to 'go it alone'. The majority view was, however, that we should continue to work with the government on senior appointments. We have yet to find out, however, how the government will respond to our proposals.



How to contact us

Mrs Gill Ambrose
gill.ambrose@ely.anglican.org
 01223 511717
 Ven. John Beer
Archdeacon.cambridge@ely.anglican.org 01223 350424
 Revd Duncan Dormor
Did28@cam.ac.uk 01223 338633
 Canon Alan Hargrave
alan.hargrave@cathedral.ely.anglican.org 01353 660304
 Dr Peter Harland 01223 243525
 Revd. Rhiannon Jones
rhiannon.jones@ely.anglican.org
 01223 880337
 Dr Elaine Storkey
Elaine@storkey.com

Revising Canon 28



Canon 28

Remember that! This was the motion taken to General Synod by Ely Diocese, asking that the requirement for Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) to have an Anglican Communion service at each major festival be repealed. The legislation has now been drawn up so that LEPs will be treated in the same way as multi-parish benefices, where it is clearly impossible to guarantee that every parish have a communion service on every major festival. You will be glad to know that it was approved for final consideration in July, with only 3 people voting against. However, it will then need a 2/3rds majority in each house to become law, and there are some who would just love to wreck it. So here's hoping - and praying...!

If you want to know more about anything you've read here: check out the General Synod Website at www.cofe.anglican.org/news, beg, borrow or steal a copy of the church press or give one of us a ring. See above.



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND