



**SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD
MINUTES OF THE 97th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT
AMESBURY BAPTIST CENTRE ON SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2008**

1. Opening Worship and Presidential Address

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word and the Bishop of Ramsbury delivered the Presidential Address. With reference to the American election, he rejoiced that a ceiling of colour had been broken and believed that the USA has done more to be inclusive of people of different races than the UK. Commenting on the effects of the financial crisis he stated that churches need to be places where people are supported and where dignity is upheld. We are linked to and affected by global issues and the diocese needs to consider how it engages with global development goals. More locally, the diocese has committed itself to live by the five marks of mission. This is connected to the issue of being fully alive in Christ and to the "Fully Alive" project which would be explained to synod members later in the day.

A full copy of the presidential address is available from the web-site at www.salisbury.anglican.org or from fiona.torrance@salisbury.anglican.org at the Diocesan Office.

2. Notices, Co-options and Apologies

The Diocesan Secretary reported the sad death of synod member Ian Rea. She then announced amendments to the Vacancy in See regulations. These were made available at the staff table for synod members to view. Apologies were received from 17 clergy and 11 laity.

3 Cathedral Annual Report

Presenting the inaugural annual report, the Dean gave a presentation on activities in 2008 and aspirations for the Cathedral in the next ten years. The Cathedral is funded through the generosity of public donations and receives no funding from the diocese, national Church or public purse. A strategic plan has been put in place which seeks to develop a global commitment encompassing all who work with or for the Cathedral. The detailed objectives are published on the Cathedral web site at www.salcath.co.uk.

4. Fully Alive

The Archdeacon of Sherborne introduced the Fully Alive project to synod members. He explained that this sought to draw together the strands of our exploration of what it is to be mature Christian disciples by focussing on Formation, Vocation and Mission. It had grown from the approach to learning and creating community begun in the Cathedral which had carried out a pilot scheme. The project will start by providing tools and materials for discussion: Father Timothy Radcliffe, famous preacher, author and former Master of the world-wide Dominican order, will give a series of talks. Clergy consultations will take place and study materials will be developed primarily as a Lent course for 2010. Also, over the next two years, the Senior Staff will be visiting sixth form groups around the diocese.

Synod then watched a short film of Father Timothy Radcliffe talking on the subject of "How we come alive by believing and hoping and loving" and members were asked to encourage as many people as possible to attend Father Radcliffe's talks beginning on Ash Wednesday 2009. Detailed information will be circulated soon.

Synod then divided into groups to consider “What does it mean to be human?” and “What might it mean to be fully alive in Christ?”. Feedback from the groups included:

- People find it easy to do and much harder to be and this is all about being.
- Being fully alive means giving parishes permission to find out what is most important in life.
- Humans need to define right and wrong and there are implications of conscience.
- There is often a mismatch between rhetoric and human reality.
- The common desire to work with those in need is more than just a survival technique.
- Humanity is defined by our relationships with one another and with God.
- Being fully alive is analogous with microwaves making molecules dance to create heat!
- Humans need to be valued, part of a community and with the potential to grow.
- We are made “simply” human by enacting the great commandments.

5. Vacancy in See of Sherborne

The Bishop of Ramsbury, Chairman of the Advisory Group, reported that a consultation had taken place and, as a result of this, the decision had been taken to fill the vacancy. A very detailed profile and job description had been prepared for this role and candidates had been proposed. More than thirty names had been suggested by people within the diocese. The Advisory Group is now preparing a shortlist for the Bishop of Salisbury to consider and discuss with the Archbishop and Downing Street. The announcement of an appointment would be made in due course by the Bishop and by Downing Street with the hope that a consecration could take place on 14 May 2009.

6. Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

The Diocesan Child Protection Adviser reported on the new scheme which is likely to start in autumn 2009 and will have a five year phase-in period. It will then become illegal to appoint paid employees or volunteers who are not on the ISA-approved list to work with children or vulnerable adults. For some people this may replace the need for a CRB clearance, but much of the detail has yet to be worked-out and further information will be provided as it becomes available.

7. Clergy Terms of Service

The Archdeacon of Wilts introduced the subject of common tenure and clergy terms of service resulting from the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2008. Developments in employment law mean that employees now have greater protection than office holders, ie the clergy. Rectifying this situation means addressing the issues of:

- providing appropriate support and accountability
- protecting people’s rights
- ensuring that there is due process.

The Diocesan Secretary reported that Bishop’s Council had set up an implementation group to study the requirements and draw up a timetable. The National Church has been providing advice to dioceses and has planned training sessions for Senior Staff. It will be important for bishops and archdeacons to have access to someone qualified to give professional HR advice and, to this end, discussions are under way with a view to a group of dioceses sharing support in this area. Throughout 2009 there will be discussions and fact-finding, workshops and more training. In 2010 a second round of briefings and workshops will take place prior to full implementation of the Measure.

Mr Robert Key MP explained that, because Measures of the Church of England have the full force of statute law, parliament needs to be clear that there is no conflict with secular law. To this end there is a parliamentary committee which views new Measures and either accepts or rejects them for presentation to parliament. Details may be found at www.parliament.uk and search on “Ecclesiastical” to find the Ecclesiastical Committee.

The Archdeacon of Wilts emphasised the importance of engaging with how this new legislation is shaped in order to ensure that it will best serve the diocese. Synod then broke into small discussion groups to consider the benefits and the pitfalls of a Human Resources Strategy. More detailed written feedback from the groups was collected for consideration by the implementation group but the immediate verbal feedback included:

Benefits

- It is very encouraging that Senior Staff will be spending more time on HR management.
- Why did the Church take so long to catch up with the rest of the world?
- The changes should lead to “round pegs ending up in round holes”.
- It should be easier to address the “square peg in the round hole”.

Pitfalls

- Senior Staff will need to spend more time on HR management which will require a big cultural change in thinking and working (see also “Benefits” above).
- There will be greatly increased expectations which must be met.

More general comments included:

- Care should be taken not to over-load any new HR support person.
- One sign of a good HR policy will be how the diocese helps people who need to move on; there needs to be a good development and exit strategy.
- Parishes and interview panels should receive help in drawing up realistic profiles and making appointments properly.
- The issue of the “round peg in the round hole” also applies to many lay roles in parishes.

8. Diocesan Synod / DBF Elections 2009

The Chairman House of Laity moved on behalf of Bishop’s Council that:

- a) This Synod, in order to ensure a majority for the House of Laity and that the total membership of the Synod and Board of Finance lies between 150 and 270 members, determines that the formula for clergy members to be elected by the Houses of Clergy of the deanery synods shall be on a proportion of 20% of the membership of those Houses.
- b) It further determines that the form of voting paper to be used by the deaneries in this election and for any election to fill a casual vacancy occurring during the next ensuing three years shall be that contained in Section 7 of Appendix 1 of Church Representation Rules, which is for elections to be decided by simple majority.

No objections had been received by the due date and the Motion was therefore taken to be approved.

9. Reports to note

Synod noted the finance report for October 2008 and the report of the General Synod proceedings in July 2008. With respect to the latter Mr Mike Burbeck, General Synod member, expressed thanks to the compilers for a balanced report particularly in respect of the debate on Women Bishops and he asked that Diocesan Synod members keep in their prayers those who still feel unable to accept the ministry of women.

10. Questions

Mr Ian Hobbs, (Weymouth Deanery) asked “What effect will the current financial crisis have on the clergy pension situation in terms of the parish Share?”

The Chairman of the Board of Finance responded that the situation was serious. Investment returns have been poor and pension scheme deficits are rising. The next formal fund valuation was due to take place at the end of 2009 and any changes to contributions would normally be implemented from 2011. This may, however, be brought forward. Many dioceses have stated that they cannot afford a contribution rate above 40%. If more is required, then changes to the benefits will have to be made. There is also an issue for the lay pension scheme where the deficit has tripled. This will all be considered at the forthcoming 2010 budget meeting. It is impossible to speculate at this stage on the effect this might have on Share.

11. Dates of Next Meetings

Synod will next meet from 10 am on Saturday 7 February 2009 at St Nicholas Church Centre, Corfe Mullen. Meetings will also take place on the evening of Tuesday 23 June at St Paul's Church, Salisbury and on Saturday 7 November at Amesbury Baptist Church.

12. Close

Synod closed with ante-Communion prayer.