



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

**SALISBURY DIOCESAN SYNOD
MINUTES OF THE 100th SESSION OF THE SYNOD HELD AT
ST NICHOLAS CHURCH CORFE MULLEN ON SATURDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2010**

1. Opening Worship and Presidential Address

Members took part in the Liturgy of the Word and the Bishop delivered the Presidential Address. He considered the themes of mission, social commitment and the common good and pondered the links between what people believe and how they act.

The Bishop also launched an appeal in support of the refurbishment and expansion of Bishop Gwynne College in the Sudan. To raise the £66,000 required for this project would, he said, be the best farewell gift the diocese could give him.

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 that item 6, regarding Poole Deanery Motion, had been deferred. She also reported that Canon Richard Franklin had been elected to the General Synod to replace the Ven Alistair Magowan.

Canon Jane LLoyd welcomed Bishop Moses Deng from the Sudan to the meeting and then reported on the link which has now been operating for 18 months between Poole Hospital and Wau Hospital in Sudan. Medical personnel from Poole had made two working visits to Wau and a third was planned. Medical equipment was also being provided. Canon LLoyd asked for prayers and any financial support that people felt able to provide.

Apologies were received from 18 clergy and 18 laity.

3 The DAC Awards

The DAC awards recognise exceptional quality, presentation and results in applications that come before the Committee. The Chairman DAC presented awards to representatives from:

- Lyme Regis St Michael the Archangel for a new organ case.
- Pimperne St Peter for a new parish room built on the side of the church.
- Semley St Leonard for a bronze statue created to replace one stolen from the churchyard.

The Chairman thanked the DAC Secretary, Mrs Sue Cannings, and her assistant, Mr Richard Wainwright. He strongly encouraged parishes to involve the DAC in their plans at the earliest stage possible.

4. Bringing Mission and Social Commitment Together

The Archdeacon of Sherborne described this item as relating to the diocese's ability to "walk the walk" as well as "talk the talk". He introduced Ms Ann Morisy as a community theologian who combined practical action with theological reflection.

Ms Morisy set the context for the group discussions planned for later in the day. She spoke of the interplay between social action and witnessing to the salvation that Jesus brings. She asked that people should pay more attention to the way in which Jesus lived his life,

because there is a tendency to just focus on his death and resurrection. She asked that people should take seriously the commitment to struggle. She talked about discipleship being “venturesome love” and she emphasised the need for authenticity in our actions and responses. What do churches produce and distribute? Are they focussed on binding social capital (the good of the group) or bonding social capital (a commitment to working for the social wellbeing of a wider group than one’s own)?

Synod then divided into discussion groups to consider a series of questions around these themes.

5. Greeting from Bishop Moses

Bishop Moses briefly addressed Synod and described something of the situation in the Sudan at the moment. He thanked the Diocese of Salisbury for its prayers and practical support over the years. Synod noted that Bishop David will shortly be attending Bishop Moses’ enthronement in Wau.

5. Social Justice and the Common Good (cont)

The discussion groups reported back to Synod. The questions the groups considered are set out below together with a flavour of the feedback and responses.

5.1 How does the church help to build and maintain good local communities in our towns and villages?

- Being part of existing networks
- Recognising links that might otherwise go unnoticed
- Empowering people so that they feel they can contribute
- Using major festivals as bridging points to the wider community
- Actively seeking to identify local needs
- Valuing schools as partners in the community
- Avoiding being seen as an exclusive club

5.2 Ann Morisy reminds us of the importance of struggle to humanity; is she right and if so what does this mean for us?

- A lack of struggle can lead to complacency and apathy and we can lose our sense of urgency about mission
- It can lead to wonderfully creative solutions
- There is an issue about being in projects for the long term
- There are internal and external aspects to struggle
- It can be destructive if not channelled and controlled

5.3 How might we express “venturesome love” more fully? What might be the consequences for church life?

- Going where we do not normally go to engage in ways we do not normally engage. For example, engagement with the gypsy community
- Engagement can be seen as a catalyst for changing self and community
- Listening to people and engaging in conversation
- Generosity of spirit
- A motivation to be transformed by the Gospel
- Going beyond safety and seeing threat as an opportunity
- Encourage an “I will if you will” mindset in our churches
- Measure success not just by church attendance – take church out to where the people are
- Be realistic about the cost of changing things because there is a danger also of a new approach alienating some existing church members

5.4 Ann Morisy says Christians have something worth sharing; what do you think this is? How effective are we in doing this? What might we do that we’re not doing?

- The love and care that we have for one another

- However, it's a pity that love and generosity are not always reflected in all aspects of the Anglican Communion – we could all do better
- Offer a life-changing liturgy
- Reflect God in our actions
- Share our time, be truly attentive and form real relationships
- Encourage the involvement of individuals within our churches and identify people's talents - time and talents often achieve more than money
- Encourage church twinning with other countries
- Local social workers and police sometimes involve the church in casework with families and this is a good model

5.5 What ought the phrase “the common good” to mean for Christian communities? What might we do as a consequence?

- Looking outside Church structures and seeing things in the wider context
- Recognising that everyone has a place at the table and that they should be valued and given dignity
- Stepping outside the church and engaging with the wider community
- Making the church premises available, for example in partnership with social help groups
- Becoming involved in the Transition Towns movement

5.6 Ann Morisy says that important for Christians is “the mysterious part which those who are poor and marginalised have in the purposes of God”; what does this mean for you? What should be our response?

- Poverty comes in many different forms, not just material
- Churches can't do everything but should strive to be alongside those in need
- They should be a voice for the voiceless
- They should allow people to express for themselves what they actually need and this may involve giving-up pre-conceptions
- Tap into the huge potential of volunteers and the difference they can make
- It's not just a matter of what we can do for the poor, but also what they can do for us.

In her response to the feedback Ms Morisy spoke of the Sudan as a potential catalyst for the diocese's outreach and social commitment.

The Archdeacon of Sherborne, on behalf of Bishop's Council, then moved that:

“A working group is set up to take forward the discussion from today's Synod to consider possible structures for more effective diocesan engagement with and coordination of social responsibility as a key expression of mission. The working party will consist of the existing group appointed by Bishop's Council (Archdeacon of Sherborne, Canon Paul Richardson, Sue Chandler and Bridget Trump) plus the Archdeacon of Wilts. The group is asked to produce a report that will come to Synod in June 2010.”

Various Synod members asked that in due course issues such as resources, timescales and the flexibility of structures be considered. The Motion was then carried nem con.

The detailed notes were submitted by group spokespersons and will be passed to the working group.

6. **Re-discovering our Parish Churches**

The Archdeacon of Wilts, Chairman of the steering group, introduced a report on the pilot project which had been running in Heytesbury and Sherborne deaneries. This is about enabling mission by looking at what can be done to turn our church buildings into an asset for congregations and the wider community. The pilot had been a valuable learning opportunity where not everything had gone smoothly and problems could be resolved. Lessons learnt included:

- It is not a programme to just hand over; it involves engagement by people with people
- One size does not fit all
- How to engage locally very quickly

Mr Michael Keatinge reported from Sherborne Deanery that it had been a long process and that it was important to identify local need and encourage local initiative. The process has unlocked ideas but it is important to fire local enthusiasm. It would be good to advertise what others have done in order to provide inspiration.

Ms Suzie Bell reported from Upton Scudamore in Heytesbury Deanery. The process had revived a previous project which had been poorly thought-out and abandoned. This time, they had consulted properly through a community audit. Some of the results had challenged their preconceptions. The process actually begins with rediscovering your parish rather than your church. They have made small beginnings, but it is definitely bringing the community together.

Colin Brady, Social Responsibility Officer for Dorset, reported that, in addition to English Heritage, help had come from Community First, Dorset Community Action, Mr Richard Munro and the Revd Kate Sax. The process meant that there were now tools for conversations that can be used with churches to help analyse, plan and develop for the future. It is also about developing local leadership in our congregations.

The Archdeacon of Wilts acknowledged that the Motion did not use the word “mission” but commented that the process was a tool to help the local engage in mission. The Chairman of Sherborne Deanery, in support of the Motion, said that it was a good exercise that was still continuing and encouraged other deaneries to now take part. The Archdeacon of Wilts then moved on behalf of Bishop’s Council that:

“This Synod welcomes the report from the steering group recognizing that the pilot project has produced a methodology to assist deaneries in determining the social, spiritual, historical and architectural significance of the churches in their area.

This Synod agrees that this methodology is extended to two other deaneries during 2010 and to further deaneries in future years – the project management costs, such as staff time, travel expenses, materials and booking venues to be absorbed into existing diocesan budget lines.”

The Motion was carried nem con.

9. Reports to note

Synod noted the finance report for 31 December 2009.

10. Questions

There were no questions.

11. Dates of Next Meetings

Synod will next meet from 6 pm to 9 pm on Tuesday 22 June at St Paul’s Church, Salisbury. Any Motions, proposals for business or other matters should be with the Diocesan Secretary by 15 May.

12. Liturgy of the Eucharist

Synod closed with the Liturgy of the Eucharist.