

## A Programme for Reform and Renewal – Post-Synod Briefing

1. At the end of the Group of Sessions last Thursday a member of the Synod asked if a briefing note could be prepared to help Synod members report back to dioceses and deaneries about the Reform and Renewal Programme and what is to happen next. This note has been prepared in response to that request. It has no formal status but can be circulated or drawn on as Synod members find helpful.

### What is the aim of the programme?

2. The programme has emerged from work undertaken by a number of Task Groups. It is designed to enable the Church of England to be better equipped for meeting the significant challenges that it faces as a result of decades of declining church attendance and an increasing age profile. As the Archbishops said in GS 1976, *‘Renewing and reforming aspects of our institutional life is a necessary but far from sufficient response to the challenges facing the Church of England.’*
3. Last week Synod members engaged with six elements of the emerging programme; a paper on **Developing Discipleship**; a report on **Resourcing Ministerial Education**; a report on **Resourcing the Future**; proposals relating to **Simplification** of the Church’s rulebook; new arrangements for **Discerning and Nurturing Senior Leaders**; and a paper on the possibility of some additional time-limited distributions from **Church Commissioner funds** to help support elements of the programme.
4. The programme will, in due course, include various other elements including what emerges from the Archbishops’ Task Group on Evangelism, which is due to report in the next few months.

### What did Synod decide in February?

5. Synod spent more than a day engaging with various strands of the programme, with presentations, questions, discussions in small groups and larger groups and four debates. Only a limited number of decisions were taken at this stage. This was partly because further development and consultations with a range of stakeholders are still needed on many of the proposals before final decisions are taken. It was also because Synod is the decision-making body on some issues – most notably those which require legislation – but not on others.
6. The texts of the four motions that Synod passed on the Wednesday afternoon is attached as an annex. In summary, the Synod:
  - Commended the ten marks for developing **Discipleship** set out in GS 1977 and invited the House of Bishops to prepare a Revised Catechism and also to identify and commission other resources;
  - Welcomed the objectives and vision in the **Resourcing Ministerial Education and Resourcing the Future reports** (see below) and invited the Archbishops’ Council and the House of Bishops to reach early decisions on the specific

recommendations in each report once the current consultation period was over, these decisions then to return to Synod for scrutiny before implementation;

- Welcomed the proposals in the **Simplification** report and, once further comments were received from dioceses and others, asked for the necessary amending legislation to be brought to the Synod for more detailed scrutiny;
  - Supported the proposal that the **Church Commissioners** should, for a limited period, release additional funds.
7. Since they were specifically welcomed in the relevant motion it is worth noting that the objective of the Resourcing the Future report is set out at paragraph 4 of GS 1978 as follows:

*‘Removing the current formula systems which provide mechanical, ineffective subsidy and replacing them with investment focussed on fulfilling dioceses’ strategic plans for growth, with a strong bias towards the poor.’*

8. The vision set out in paragraph 8 of the Resourcing Ministerial Education report and welcomed by the Synod is as follows:
- **Every minister equipped to offer collaborative leadership in mission and to be adaptable in a rapidly changing context**
  - **A cohort of candidates for ministry who are younger, more diverse and with a wider range of gifts to serve God’s mission**
  - **An increase of at least 50% in ordinations on 2013 figures sustained annually from 2020**
  - **The rapid development of lay ministries**
  - **A continued commitment to an ordained and lay ministry which serves the whole Church both geographically and in terms of church tradition.**

## **What happens next?**

9. Each of the various strands of work – and also the separate strand on ‘Optimising the Role of the National Church Institutions’ (GS Misc 1094) – has its own work plan, timescales and decision-making processes.
10. In relation to **Discipleship** the next steps at national level are for the House of Bishops to consider, in May, the proposal to set in hand the preparation of a Revised Catechism. In addition it is proposed that there should be a larger conversation among bishops and others about discipleship and ministry at the September meeting of the College of Bishops. It is also for dioceses to study and reflect on the proposals in the report with a view to developing in each diocese an action plan.
11. In relation to the **Development and Nurturing of Senior Leaders**, the Archbishops and the House of Bishops have agreed an implementation plan, as set out in GS 1982. The first programme for the mini-MBA is being held next month and arrangements are underway for identifying the participants for the Leadership Development Programme. The Archbishop’s Review Group, which has met for the first time this week, and the

House of Bishops' Development and Appointments Group will be overseeing the new arrangements.

12. The Archbishops agreed that there needed to be further reporting back to Synod and the opportunity for further engagement. A Private Member's Motion designed to give the Synod the opportunity to take note of the related Faith and Order Commission report on Senior Church Leadership has attracted sufficient signatures for debate and it will be for the Business Committee to decide whether this should be scheduled for July.
13. There will now be extensive consultation with diocesan teams in the coming months over the implications of both the **Resourcing the Future** and **Resourcing Ministerial Education** reports. In the case of the latter there will also be careful discussion with the Theological Education Institutions.
14. There are still many detailed matters to be settled about the implementation of the new funding formula for distributing resources to dioceses, the transitional arrangements and the criteria for allocating money in support of dioceses' strategic plans for growth. The intention is that these new funding arrangements would start to operate from the beginning of 2017.
15. That means the Archbishops' Council will be taking decisions late this year or early next, though precise figures would not be available until after the Commissioners' actuarial valuation in spring 2016. The most likely timing of a Synod debate to scrutinise the Council's decisions before they are implemented is, therefore, next February.
16. In the case of the **Resourcing Ministerial Education** report the expectation is that the first cohort that might be affected by the specific proposals coming out of the review would be that starting training in September 2017. That means that it would be the budget coming to the Synod in July 2016 which would be the first to be set reflecting any new agreed arrangements. Again, therefore, the likelihood is that decisions will be taken by the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops when they each meet this December, in the light of the extensive consultations over the coming months. These too would then be the subject of Synodical scrutiny next February.
17. The **Simplification** report proposes a wide range of changes to the Church's rule-book. It will be for the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops to decide in May whether to bring to Synod in July the proposed amendment of Regulation 29, to make it easier for short-term appointments to be made under Common Tenure.
18. The more wide-ranging changes proposed to the Mission and Pastoral Measure will require fresh primary legislation which cannot, in practice, be introduced until early in the life of the Synod which will meet for the first time in November. The proposals in the report will be the subject of detailed consultation over the coming months before the draft legislation is prepared.
19. In addition the Optimising the Role of the NCIs report canvassed the idea of a new enabling measure which would make it significantly easier in future to change Church legislation. The Archbishops' Council will be considering this proposal in more detail in March and is likely to issue a consultation document with a view to taking decisions in the autumn. Any such enabling measure would potentially be for introduction early in the life of the new Synod.

20. It is now for the **Church Commissioners** to consider the basis on which they might, for a period, be prepared to release additional funds over and above the normal amount which they make available for distribution. Specific requests for additional funding would need to be made by the Archbishops' Council, in consultation with the House of Bishops and the dioceses in the light of the emerging conclusions on the various elements of the reform programme.

### **How can people keep in touch with what is happening?**

21. There will, as set out above, be specific consultations on various elements of the programme. In addition, all dioceses have been offered the opportunity of an engagement event over the next few months to draw into the discussion a wider range of people than the diocesan senior team. A number of members of the Archbishops' Council have agreed to make themselves available to take part in these events. In addition there will be progress reports in advance of each group of session and in some cases further debates.

William Fittall  
Secretary General  
17 February 2015

**DISCIPLESHIP (GS 1977)**

‘That this Synod, mindful that the Church of Jesus Christ inspired by the glory and grace of God shown in the face of Jesus Christ and is called to be a community of missionary disciples and in view of its resolution of November 2013 which highlighted the priority of evangelism and making new disciples:

- (a) commend the Ten Marks for Developing Discipleship for further study and reflection with a view to the development in each diocese of an action plan for implementation at diocesan, deanery and parochial level; and
- (b) invite the House of Bishops:
  - (i) to prepare a new Revised Catechism with a view to its approval by the General Synod under Canon B 2; and
  - (ii) to identify and commission other resources to help the whole Church to live out our common discipleship.’

**RESOURCING THE FUTURE (GS 1978) AND RESOURCING MINISTERIAL EDUCATION (GS 1979)**

‘That this Synod,

welcoming the objective set out in paragraph 4 of **GS 1978** of investment focused on dioceses’ strategic plans for growth, and with a strong bias to the poor; and

the vision set out in paragraph 8 of **GS 1979**,

invite the Archbishops’ Council and the House of Bishops to reach early decisions on the specific recommendations in the two reports once the current consultation period with dioceses, theological training institutions and others is concluded and bring those decisions back to Synod for more detailed scrutiny before implementation.’

**SIMPLIFICATION (GS 1980)**

‘That this Synod, welcoming the proposals in **GS 1980** and noting the support that the Archbishops’ Council, the Church Commissioners and the House of Bishops have given them, invite the Archbishops’ Council and the Business Committee, in the light of any comments from dioceses and others, to bring the necessary amending legislation to the Synod for more detailed scrutiny.’

**CHURCH COMMISSIONERS' FUNDS AND INTER-GENERATIONAL EQUITY (GS 1981)**

‘That this Synod,

welcoming **GS 1981**; and

noting that the funds of the Church Commissioners are a permanent endowment, held in perpetuity to support the Church of England as it seeks to proclaim the faith afresh in each generation,

support the Commissioners, in consultation with the House of Bishops and the Archbishops’ Council, giving consideration to the basis on which they might, for a limited period, release additional funds in order to support changes that will equip the Church of England more effectively for sustainable mission and ministry over the coming generations.’