

Third Day

Sunday 8 July 2001

THE CHAIR *Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans)* took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

The Chairman: We welcomed Richard Seabrook from Chelmsford diocese in his absence on Friday. He is with us this afternoon.

We very warmly welcome Baroness Perry of Southwark to our session today. She is currently president of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge, and was chairman of the review group whose work led to the publication of the report *Working with the Spirit*, GS 1405, which is before us this afternoon. The Presidents have invited the Baroness to address the Synod under SO 112. I do not propose that there should be questions after her address, not because she needs to be protected from the vagaries of synodical question time – I think that she might actually relish that – but because the correct course will be for questions and comments to be included in the ensuing debate.

Working with the Spirit: Choosing Diocesan Bishops (GS 1405)

Baroness Perry of Southwark: The choice of bishops is a matter of the utmost importance for the Church, and rightly the concern of all its members, so I am delighted to have this opportunity to present the report of our group to the representatives of the laity and the clergy, as well as to our present bishops, here today.

Thank you to everyone who submitted evidence to us. We received submissions from more than 160 individuals and groups, including 64 Synod members. Our quotations from those submissions are illustrative and representative, and many of them come from the evidence of senior figures, including present and former members of the Crown Appointments Commission.

May I emphasize at the outset that our terms of reference confined us to operating within the framework set by Lord Callaghan's 1976 statement. The question of whether the Prime Minister should choose between the two names submitted by the Commission or simply forward the first name to the Sovereign automatically was therefore not on our agenda. Nor was a system of democratic election. In the event, there was little enthusiasm for that in the submissions and we do not favour it either. At the one point, where Lord Callaghan's statement was more tentative, we have suggested that clarity of roles would be aided by the Church choosing the chairman when the see of Canterbury is considered – as it does already in the case of York – leaving to the Prime Minister his role of choosing between the two names whom the Church has proposed. To call for clarity of roles is not to call for disestablishment.

As our study of the practice of other Churches shows, the elements of the process by which the two names are identified are by no means unique, though of course the precise combination is. Like most of those who wrote to us, we believe that the overall shape of the system is right for our situation. However, we have to face the fact that there is widespread unease about important aspects of how the system operates. From the weighty evidence before us, we could not conclude that, even among present and former members of the CAC themselves, there is general confidence that the system is demonstrably fair, robust and effective. Our concern has therefore been to enhance confidence in the episcopate by increasing confidence in the process by which bishops are chosen, and to do so by ensuring that the process is open and transparent.

Our call for greater openness and transparency is clearly in line with current attitudes in wider society, and I make no apology for that. In considering the improvements needed, we looked at the developing practice of secular organizations, believing that the gifts which the Spirit gives include insights from the world in which he is active. We did not look uncritically, however. Insights derived from secular practice need to be tested against what we have received in Scripture and tradition. We were also very conscious of the differences in context between many secular appointments on the one hand and the discernment of vocation within the Church on the other.

Throughout our discussions, we reflected on the issues theologically. The fruits of that reflection are woven into the paragraphs and chapters of our report. We were very grateful to our theological consultant, the Bishop of Rochester, for his assistance. His essay, which refers in turn to previous reports such as the Cameron report *Episcopal Ministry*, undergirds our report and his insights illuminated our deliberations.

The concerns revealed by the evidence relate to excessive secrecy, as distinct from proper confidentiality; the quantity, quality and evenness of the information at the Commission's disposal; the amount of power which the system potentially concentrates in the hands of the Secretaries and of individual diocesan bishops; and the balance of recent appointments in terms of previous appointments, expertise and churchmanship.

Perhaps the most widely held concern, by definition amongst members of the CAC themselves, is about the information at the Commission's disposal. We do not believe that it is any longer appropriate, in preparing nominations for a major public office, to rely on selective summaries of unattributed references.

It is a matter of simple equity that the factual information which the Commission receives about candidates should be consistent, equal in its scope, sufficient to allow informed decisions to be made, and accurate. People should have a right to check the factual information, to nominate their own referees in addition to their bishop, and to submit a personal statement and a photograph. If any further information is introduced by anyone during the discussion, it should be attributed.

We considered very carefully indeed whether we should recommend the interviewing of candidates, but in the end rejected it as impractical and potentially counterproductive. We did conclude, however, that it is essential that the information and references for those candidates placed on the final shortlist are updated in the light of the job and person specification. That cannot be done without the candidates discovering that they are under consideration, although that information would be confidential to the Commission, the candidates and their referees. We did not go so far as to recommend allowing candidates to amend their personal statements about how they see themselves and their future. We did not want something which would smack of open campaigning, even on paper, and the time for the candidates to say whether or not they accept the call is when they have actually been chosen. In exceptional circumstances it should be possible for an additional name to be introduced in the light of the job and person specification which the Commission produces.

We also recommend that the present system of voting at Commission meetings should be replaced by one which is clear, which uses the single transferable vote as far as possible, and which does not require members to register a vote in favour of candidates to whose nomination they are opposed.

In the interests of transparency we recommend that the Commission's name should reflect its task more accurately. Most Crown appointments within the Church are nothing to do with the Crown Appointments Commission, and the fact that the Crown legally nominates bishops for the Church rather than actually appointing them is an important principle, which the present name obscures. Our suggested name, the Episcopal Nominations Commission, may not be perfect, but it is considerably less misleading than the present one. We also suggest that the process leading to the submission of names to the Commission should be more open.

As I have indicated, there is widespread concern about the amount of power which the system potentially concentrates in the hands of the Secretaries and of individual diocesan bishops. We are conscious that our Church exists in a wider culture in which a lack of trust of those in authority is endemic. We do not wish to reinforce such an attitude within the Church. However, does not the way the system is currently operated – with a committee so secret that its members may not tell their immediate families where they are when it meets, a committee whose files are so secret that even its own members may not see them – itself positively breed suspicion and mistrust? Is it surprising if members feel that they are not in control?

Furthermore, in evidence we received authoritative confirmation that in the Church of England it is very difficult indeed for a clergyman to become a diocesan bishop if his candidacy is not supported by his own diocesan. Is it right for any individual to have such a power of veto?

Looking at recent appointments, we noted that in the last five years 17 out of 19 chosen were already in episcopal orders. The Commission has been drawing almost

exclusively from the very narrow pool of those suffragan bishops not recently appointed or nearing retirement. Our concern about this is not just because of the indirect influence which this confers on the individual diocesans who appoint the members of that pool. Do we want to be a Church in which clergy work their way up a managerial hierarchy, from rural dean to archdeacon to suffragan to diocesan? Or do we want to be a Church whose diocesan bishops bring to their task a diversity of previous experience, including sometimes experience in some other overall leadership role, as well as a diversity of background and opinion? In saying that, I must stress that our report is not an attack on suffragan and area bishops, many of whom have gone on to be excellent diocesan bishops. We are simply saying that having been a suffragan bishop was not in the past, and should not be in the future, an almost essential qualification for the diocesan episcopate. If the result of the process is almost always the selection of someone from the same small group, it is questionable whether such an elaborate process is really necessary. At worst, it could make the system appear more open than it actually is.

In fact, we hope that significant numbers of clergy other than suffragan bishops will be chosen in future. We do not believe that it would be helpful for those on the long list for initial consideration by the Commission to be allowed to discover that they are being considered. We therefore need to find a way of establishing for all potential candidates a body of accurate information, checked by the individuals concerned, together with personal statements and references.

To avoid such material having to be gathered, stored and regularly updated for every canonically eligible priest in the Church of England, we have suggested that the existing preferment list and Fielden file should be replaced by a single senior appointments list. This would include the overwhelming majority of likely candidates, without excluding the possibility of additional candidates being considered for a specific see. If the necessary materials about those on the list are to be gathered, clearly they must know that they are on it. As long as the statistical unlikelihood of this leading to a senior appointment is made clear to the individuals concerned, being on the list can be an affirmation, not a source of disappointment.

The marked discrepancy between the numbers put on the preferment list by different diocesan bishops cannot be explained solely by the size and type of their dioceses. To overcome this unacceptable variation, it needs to be possible not only for a diocesan to be asked to reconsider his refusal to put someone on the list, but also for his veto to be overruled if necessary by the archbishop. We hope that the pool of candidates with identified talent and potential will be somewhat larger as a result. Bishops and their senior staff will, however, have to remove candidates from the list from time to time, as well as declining to nominate others.

It is right that they should have to give account for their decisions to those concerned, and we trust that they will have the courage and candour necessary to help members of the clergy gain a realistic view of their future ministry in a Church in which the

number of clergy in senior appointments amounts to only 5 per cent of the total number of stipendiary clergy. True pastoral care involves helping people to understand themselves and their gifts as well as the nature of their call to service.

In our view, a consistent system of episcopal review is crucial to the morale and development of the clergy as a whole, as well as being necessary in order to provide a secure basis for a fair, open and transparent process for choosing our bishops, and indeed making decisions about other changes in people's ministry. I emphasize that we are not suggesting a new system here but strengthening and tightening existing arrangements and making them more consistent between dioceses.

It has been suggested that these proposals would introduce a new culture into our Church; but surely that changed culture is there already, in the shape of justified expectations on the part particularly of our younger clergy and of those with recent experience of other walks of life? Our recommendations do not conflict with a proper theology of vocation – and I hope that members will have studied our reflections on that – but they do recognize that, in any vocation, a perceived internal call may have a proper part to play, even though it must in the end be subject to the external call through the Church in its processes of discernment.

These are perhaps the most significant aspects of our report. We also make a number of detailed recommendations for improvement in the processes whereby the vacant diocese's views are made known to the Commission and whereby its representatives on the Commission are elected. At the same time we recommend that the Archbishops lay before the Commission a statement that will draw attention to the needs of the Church of England as a whole. If the diocesan episcopate is to include a breadth of expertise, background and insights, those needs must also be taken into account.

As our historical material shows, from the fourth century at least there has been such an interplay in the choosing of bishops between the local and the wider Church. The need for local consent is a vital principle. After careful consideration, we have concluded that the college of canons, especially with the new provision for lay membership, is the right body to signify that. The consent of the wider Church, expressed in confirmation by or on behalf of the Metropolitan, is also important. We were not able to detect a consensus in favour of radical change to these arrangements, especially changes which would require legislation by Measure, nor do we support such changes ourselves. Our concern was in any case much more with the system for choosing our bishops than with the formal processes whereby the person nominated is made bishop of the diocese. We have suggested some modest improvement and updating in the arrangements, however.

We have concluded then that the overall shape of the Church of England's processes, both for choosing diocesan bishops and for conferring the office on the person nominated, is right. In each case, the process is one in which both the diocese and the wider Church need to be involved. We believe that if our recommendations are

implemented, these processes will be more open, transparent, known and understood than is currently the case. This would enable all to play their proper part, working with the Holy Spirit, in choosing bishops for the Church of God.

I commend our report to the Synod, and look forward to listening to your debate.

Mrs Janet Atkinson (Durham): I beg to move:

‘That the Synod do take note of this Report.’

When I was appointed vice-chairman of this review group I was rather surprised, but I did eventually twig why they made me vice-chairman. If you look at the list of participants in the review group, I am the only person without another handle to my name. So they had to give me ‘vice-chairman’ and then I did not feel I was the only person without a title. (*Several members*: Ah!)

I would like to thank Pauline Perry for her very clear exposition, getting quite a chunky read into a quarter of an hour. I hope that it has made the principles and the working practices that we are recommending clear to everybody: I am sure that it has. She has been a splendid chairman: clear and decisive, keeping the business moving forward without hustling people. We very rarely had to come to a vote; it was all done by consensus and debate. She showed enormous enthusiasm and very quickly got on top of a mass of detailed material. It is quite difficult, particularly as the outside person taking the chair, coming into a thicket of people who all know each other fairly well – generally old Synod lags who have had a canter round the course a few times and reckon that they know what is what in the Synod – and not, I venture to say, a group of shrinking violets! With charm and firmness, she kept us under control and we had two splendid residential weekends at her lovely college, Lucy Cavendish.

Pauline has said it all, and so I simply move this item formally.

Professor Michael Clarke (Worcester): I address Synod having been a CAC member as one of a diocesan four, albeit five years ago. As the Archbishops may recall, I left that process with a number of significant criticisms. Indeed, they encouraged me to write those down and I am delighted to see that this report deals with many of them.

My good friend the Bishop of Worcester will be relieved to know that those criticisms have nothing to do with the outcome but to do with the process in which we engaged. They were principally to do with issues to do with briefing, to do with apparently excessive secrecy, and about information and how it was used. Of course I can say nothing about the experience I went through; at least, I am not supposed to. I shall commit one indiscretion but, lest that lead to immediate excommunication, I propose to leave the indiscretion to the end of my remarks and make the other points first so that they are heard.

I welcome the report but, in doing so, enter three notes of caution. The three notes of caution are issues which I hope the steering group, if we choose to set it up, will take seriously.

Yesterday afternoon, in the course of the debate on globalization, we had emphasized to us the importance of distinguishing between ends and means. It is very important that in this debate, and in the discussion that the steering group will undoubtedly have afterwards, there is clarity about ends and about the principles, theological and otherwise, which should underlie the debate. I say this because this is that kind of discussion which easily becomes consumed by the detail of means.

The report we have before us is full of detailed, often very detailed, proposals. Many of those are good but many are contestable. If the steering group is to follow on from our debate, then I hope that they will rigorously judge the detail of means against the ends we seek to achieve. What we want are the best people available to be bishops, and to be appointed through a process which carries both legitimacy and credibility and, I was struck as the Archbishop was preaching this morning in the Minster, a process which is able to take risk – risk in the Spirit. I say that because, if you look at many of the detailed recommendations in the report, there is a danger that, taken together, they become sufficiently over-prescriptive to constrain the process and so to crowd out risk.

The second note of caution is to underline the tension which runs through the report's pages and which undoubtedly will run through this debate and what follows it. It is the tension between seeing the Church as yet another human but complex organization – analogous to a large private corporation or a public body, from which we can learn and import good practice – and seeing the Church as an ecclesiastical organization where human pragmatism and human determination must make way for and give space to the Spirit, and also a tension between the Church, the constraints of Establishment and the final stages of the appointment process. Whatever emerges from this debate and what follows it must fit the nature, the culture, the environment of the organization in which it is set. There will inevitably be a trade-off between the pursuit of pure excellence, defined in some secular way, and what is good for our environment.

My third point is about something which is sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit in the report. That is about how people get into the pool, as it is described, of prospective candidates: what we do to prepare and develop them to get there, and indeed what else that pool is used for, because that presumably will be the pool from which people, men and women, are appointed to other senior positions in the Church. In other words and in secular language, there are issues to do with the development of leadership; to do with career development; to do with succession planning. These issues take us beyond the terms of reference of the report, and indeed the terms of reference which the steering group will have, but they are issues to which we need to give serious attention and I hope that the steering group will be able to bear them in mind.

My experience tells me that organizations which attend only to their upper reaches only tackle part of the problem. Of course the appointment of bishops is important: it is crucial. It is only part, however, of making sure that we make the best use of the scarce human resources which the Church contains. We need to look at the appointment of bishops as part of a much bigger picture.

I now return to one particular matter of process, and this will be the point of my indiscretion. The report makes clear that the domestic arrangements within which the CAC meets are important. I have to disclose to you, colleagues, that my most striking and abiding memory of the meeting of the CAC for the appointment at Worcester was of the narrow landing of the conference house in which we met, and of seeing, after breakfast on the morning of the second day, Their Graces struggling to fold neatly the sheets from their beds. I am delighted to see that Pauline Perry and her colleagues make no recommendations to change this. Some traditions should be left undisturbed!

Canon John Hawley (Wakefield): I begin by putting you out of your misery, Chairman, along with the rest of the Synod. Unfortunately Henman has been defeated – (*Several members:* Oh!) – and England also. The worst thing of all is that Gough got a pair! But there is hope. There is hope in *Working with the Spirit*. This is a good, well-written report. It is easy to read, and those who have put it together should be congratulated on that. From my point of view, it deals with most of the issues about which many of us have been concerned for some time.

If implemented, it will show how healthy the Church is and it will help to make it more healthy by a better use of the resources we have available to us. Although there is to be a greater openness in consultation, it is very important that both the Episcopal Commission and the vacancy-in-see committees do indeed check their sources, as Lady Perry has said, so that those from whom we seek advice may well hold high office, lay or clerical, within a diocese or perhaps in another diocese. We may not know them personally and therefore it is right that we check where the information on people comes from, for many people in the Church, sadly, still have their own misplaced agendas when giving recommendations.

Secondly, I am glad that there is to be a wider range of people considered as diocesan bishops. It has been recognized in the report that not all suffragan bishops, nor even archdeacons, are necessarily the right people to be diocesans. Suffragans are often appointed to be team players. That is good, but they are there to fit in with the diocesan bishop's particular need at that time, choosing someone able, yes, but not necessarily with that strong leadership quality that is required of a diocesan. Archdeacons, we believe, are good with administration and good with drainpipes, but not always people-friendly. (*Several members:* Oh!) That is what they tell me!

Why do we always necessarily have to go for a safe pair of hands? Surely we need people in leadership who will take risks? (*Applause*)

One of the things in the report about which I am concerned is that it talks about the main list being from the age of 30 upwards. One of the things some of us are concerned about is a danger of rushing towards appointing people to senior positions in their thirties or early forties. In our Church we have many difficult parish situations, some of which are very challenging: they need proper resourcing. Would it not be a good idea if those folk who are thought to have leadership potential might be channelled into those very difficult parish situations – to be tested as if by fire and to earn their spurs in the tougher situations in our land? Then, at a later stage, when the call may well come to them, they have solid parish credentials. It will also mean that they have great integrity when they take up high office, for those in their parishes who are grappling with the everyday issues of parish life will know that they have someone in high office who is empathetic to and understanding of their needs, who does not need in any way to be patronizing.

Another point is how do you get rid of a dud archdeacon? How do you get rid of a dud dean or suffragan bishop or diocesan bishop? Does an archdeacon then become a suffragan – as it were, sidelined? What happens? I do not know. What does the system do with these people? If appointed in their forties, do we then have to endure 25 years of it? What an awful pressure on the person, on the diocese and on the family that is involved. Surely we need a flexible system? We keep shelving the idea of tackling freehold, but freehold needs to start at the top. That moves us towards the idea of licences for bishops and suffragans and senior people, in order that there can be some flexibility and that those who are perhaps past their sell-by date – or who perhaps are so jaded by the job – can, with grace, move on to something that suits them better at the time.

We are told, and we can see clearly, that there is a very flat system: something like 400 senior posts for 10,000 people, with 9,600 folk who think that they could do the job better. It is true, however, that there will be hundreds of people who are on or not on the list who could have done the job just as well, if not better. In a way that is a good thing because it means that all those who are in high office need to have a degree of humility, knowing that there are others who could do the job well. We know that that senior job of a diocesan bishop can be done only by the grace of God.

What happens to the several hundred who were on the list, or who may not have been on the list, who are in their fifties, late fifties or early sixties, who were known to be very gifted and able people and who are slowly moving towards retirement – even now wondering whether they will have a pension? The parish ministry today is a tough ministry, as the Archbishop of Canterbury said some time ago. To be a priest in the Church of God today is hard. What are we doing therefore with those in their fifties and sixties who have been passed over in some way or other? Surely we need to reinvestigate them? We need to use them. We do not want them to slip away into bitterness and resentment.

As I emphasize the need for changes in the system, as the report sets out, let us be

cautious about the younger resources of our Church. Let us be more actively concerned about those in their fifties and sixties and use them fully and properly. Let us change the culture, so that there is flexibility in appointments and mobility around the Church of England for those in senior positions.

The Archbishop of York (Dr David Hope): Along with the Archbishop of Canterbury, I wish first of all to express our immense thanks and appreciation to Lady Perry and the other members of the review group. There can be no doubt about the thoroughness and seriousness with which they have undertaken their task, in seeking to respond to a motion carried in this Synod here in York three years ago. Furthermore, and again with the endorsement of the Archbishop of Canterbury, we greatly welcome this report. Even before the original Private Member's Motion came to Synod, we were, along with our Appointments Secretary, already exploring ways in which it would be possible to ensure that the Nolan criteria for public appointments might most effectively be incorporated into our present procedures. I am glad therefore that these criteria, especially the need for openness, integrity and accountability, form the basic framework of this report.

The report affirms the present approach to the appointment of diocesan bishops. It does not suggest any radical change in the basic methodology. I entirely agree with this conclusion. However, it goes on to suggest a substantial number of specific changes: some fairly minor, others quite major. I should therefore like to make a number of comments.

First of all, as Lady Perry has already mentioned, the change in name. Is it really necessary? It seems to me that since the Commission is not responsible for all episcopal nominations, Episcopal Nominations Commission is as imprecise as Crown Appointments Commission, so why not leave well alone?

Whilst I agree that the information available to members of the Commission needs to be improved, I really do foresee considerable difficulties with the precise approach advocated in the report. It does seem to me to make very heavy weather of it all. If, for example, we were to follow the recommendations at paragraph 3.39 about information to be sent to CAC members about candidates, I am told that, assuming that there may be some 14 or so names before the Commission for consideration, the Secretary would be issuing to every member of the Commission some 180 sheets of paper – the size of the report itself.

I entirely agree that the Commission should have the benefit of information provided by the candidates themselves, together with their nominated referees, and that the Commission should have access to the complete text of any such statements and references. That seems to me to be natural justice. I am very unhappy that our present system does not provide for this, although I wish to say that I do not believe this to be in any sense a criticism of our Secretaries who, given the current system, are, I believe, scrupulously fair and objective. I believe, however, that there are simpler and more

straightforward ways of incorporating this principle and achieving it than the labyrinthine processes proposed in the report.

Under current arrangements, members of the Commission receive the diocesan statement of needs and Secretaries' memorandum before submitting names. There is no doubt, however, that the discussion of these documents at the beginning of the meeting does enrich the Commission's understanding of the needs. Note that, for each meeting for a particular vacancy in see, the Crown Appointments Commission meets as, as it were, a new commission and a whole commission. Often in the course of that exchange further names have come to mind which by then it is too late to put forward. Personally, I would therefore welcome the two-stage approach. In my view, the principle is entirely right, though again not precisely in the way that Lady Perry and her group have in mind. I am equally mindful that we need to have an eye to the time commitment of, in particular, those central members who volunteer their services to the Commission and for whom this is already quite an onerous task in terms of time.

A number of people have already expressed to me their concerns at the prospect of individuals being informed that they are on a shortlist for a vacancy in see. I have to say I share that concern, and I certainly would not have wished it for myself – but that is another question. Furthermore, I am cautious about the argument that in the secular world people get used to this sort of thing. Does that analogy really stand? We are, after all, seeking to discern the mind of Christ for his Church in the appointment of bishops and not simply managers, administrators or chief executives. There would undoubtedly be a downside and a personal cost to individuals, some of whom may already be in positions of responsibility. We have to assess, therefore, whether the perceived benefit of such a proposal would outweigh these more personal matters.

Finally, with regard to paragraphs 3.76 to 3.81 and the chairmanship of the Canterbury CAC in particular, I would question the review group's recommendation. Is not the Prime Minister's involvement so far as the see of Canterbury is concerned a potent sign of the significance of the place of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the life of the nation as a whole, and part of that delicate balance between Church and State?

Furthermore, why quote at paragraph 3.80 a former central member of the CAC whose views seem to be taken almost as gospel truth? In fact, it is possible for an archbishop to be present – I admit, it is but the Archbishop of York, not Primate of All England but Primate of England – as a member of the Commission for the see of Canterbury. Was the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary consulted to check the accuracy of this statement? I am informed, following my own enquiries, that certainly for the last two Canterbury commissions extensive consultations did take place within the Church, though perhaps now, in a changed climate, more systematic consultation may be needed.

I have spoken rather longer than I had anticipated. There are many other points I would wish to have raised, and I have not even commented on the proposals which

occasioned the original Private Member's Motion on the confirmation of election of a bishop. However, let me conclude by again thanking Lady Perry and her review group for this immensely stimulating and very welcome report, and express the hope that the Synod will overwhelmingly endorse the wisely worded motion, so that we can get on and make the necessary changes in that process in which under God we seek to discern those who are called to and entrusted with an episcopal ministry in the Church of God. It is, after all, both God's call and his gracious gift.

Revd Andrew Watson (London): There is much about this report which I too thoroughly applaud. There is no doubt but that it represents a significant evolutionary step forward, both in elucidating the gnostic mysteries of the present system of appointing diocesan bishops and in suggesting some positive developments for the future.

I appreciate the review group's thoroughness in approaching this topic and the excellent historical and theological essays which conclude the report, though I am a little disappointed that the Holy Spirit, who plays such a key role in the title, is mentioned only eight times in the report – rather fewer than the 45 references to the Prime Minister! At least that is still eight more mentions than in the average GS document.

The question I would like to address this afternoon is whether such an evolutionary approach is really appropriate or whether something a little more revolutionary is called for. This report seems to me to be strong and incisive in its insights, whilst comparatively weak and cautious in its recommendations. In particular, there are three issues to which I would draw the Synod's attention.

First, interviews. As someone who regularly employs members of a staff team, I was surprised by the rather sniffy reference in section 3.48 to interviewing as 'a normal part of the procedure for appointment to many secular positions'. In my experience, interviewing is a normal, virtually universal, practice for appointment to sacred positions. Which church would appoint a vicar without an interview? Which incumbent among us would appoint a curate or youth worker solely on the basis of his or her CV and references?

As to clergy, as section 3.51 suggests, getting fed up while being interviewed for several diocesan posts, there are ways in which this could be ameliorated. One interview with non-diocesan representatives of the Episcopal Nominations Commission, for example, followed by a series of interviews by the diocesan fours. Members of our congregations face similar situations every week of the year, as they are encouraged to apply for new posts. The fear that those who interview well might be at an unfair advantage over those who do not fails to take into account that we live in a media age and that diocesans today need to interview well, even if this ability must of course be balanced by 101 other considerations.

My second concern is over the principle of self-selection in section 2.15 – candidates

offering themselves for possible nomination on to the senior appointments list. Here I fully appreciate the review group's insights into the rather in-house nature of suffragan, and therefore diocesan, appointments. The idea of clergy writing to draw attention to their extraordinary giftedness, however, fills me with some horror. The apostles James and John – or, more charitably, their mother – tried to pull a similar stunt on Jesus! Though Jesus did not write off such a suggestion, he did spell out the cost involved in best Hugh Wilcox tradition. In the apostolic and post-apostolic age, as in some parts of the world today, persecution certainly sorted out the sheep from the goats. To become a bishop was to become a marked man, as Ignatius of Antioch or Polycarp of Smyrna so eloquently demonstrated. Outside the context of severe persecution, however, the element of self-selection seems rather hollow, even shabby. A better system would include a wider range of clergy and others – archdeacons, area deans, lay chairs, as well as bishops – having a far more consistent and significant input into the senior appointments process.

Finally, and I do know that this was outside the review group's remit, I believe that this may be the perfect time to question the State's involvement in the choice of our senior pastors: not to advocate disestablishment, which I would never do, but to suggest a modest renegotiation in our relationship with the State. Every year in my church we host renewal weekends for Norwegian and Swedish Lutheran pastors. The Swedish in particular have brilliantly renegotiated the Church–State relationship, so that the State no longer has any say in the appointment of senior Church leaders.

Today's political climate in the UK is favourable for such a development, I believe, both because of the present Government's commitment to rejecting outmoded traditionalism and because of the nation's growing apathy, even antipathy, towards the political process, which makes the Prime Minister's role in choosing bishops an increasing stumbling block to our apolitical witness to the community. To any who would mention that scary phrase, 'the slippery slope to disestablishment', could I recommend a nice holiday in Sweden, where the State still pays for clergy, cathedrals and church maintenance through the church tax, but where it has backed out of its archaic prerogative to make Church appointments.

I believe the wind of the Spirit has been at work in the review group's activities and appreciate the group's desire for greater candidness, clarity and, above all, fairness in the selection process. I will be voting enthusiastically in favour of this motion, but would love the follow-up group to reconsider interviews, self-selection and, most radically of all, the possibility of a rethink of Church–State relations in this one regard. Here endeth my maiden speech!

The Bishop of Woolwich (Rt Revd Colin Buchanan): I am the answer to the last speaker's plea at the very fine climax of his speech. You will find it on page 33 of your agenda, Item 805, where Southwark Diocesan Synod asks this Synod to 'seek a reform in the method of appointing bishops in the Church of England so as to detach the process from any involvement with Downing Street and the Monarchy

and to provide for a more participatory and open Church procedure than is currently possible’.

All those words relate to this afternoon. If there had been time available, we would have had our debate this afternoon. However, conversations with the Bishop of Southwark and myself and with the Secretary General suggested that one or other of the two would be squeezed if we tried to put it on the agenda this time. We have therefore held it back. Please note that it is there, and that what we are looking at this afternoon could properly be overtaken by the radical reform which clearly all right-minded members of this Synod want.

Although I have attended to the issue of the appointment of bishops theologically and so on, I also have a large amount of experience. My own movements – some of which were involuntary – round the Church of England have always coincided with the departure of the existing diocesan. For the last 16 years, therefore, I have served eight dioceses, four of whom are present here today, and seen the vacancy in each of four different dioceses from a senior position. I may say that none of that has given me much confidence in the methods by which new diocesans are appointed, although I have always had to say very carefully, as Bishop Tom knows very well, that, as with the woman who fell down the well and got converted, you can rejoice at the result without commending the means. (*Laughter*)

Those things said, I am ready to address the report that Lady Perry has brought forward. There are various things in it which I would like to take up and which give me grave doubt as to whether it is possible to improve the present method very much. I notice that both the Archbishop of York and the previous speaker said, ‘Yes, we are fully in favour, but ... but ... but ...’, and the thousand qualifications may mean that there is very little room to manoeuvre at all.

First of all, I entirely take the point here of the very small amount of time given by the present Crown Appointments Commission method to choosing diocesan bishops. This business of working over things at 11 o’clock on the first night they arrive sounds fairly disastrous to me. The cumbersome method of voting, which members of the Electoral Reform Society could easily have improved for them, is terrible, and it is good to see that the transferable vote is taken up in the report.

The second point I want to raise is this. If you read the statement at the back of this report, the Callaghan statement did not prescribe the content, the numbers and proportions in the Crown Appointments Commission: that was negotiated later. We do not know how the politicians would be prepared to renegotiate it, and I find no evidence of Prime Minister or leader of the Opposition giving evidence or being consulted, except through the Prime Minister’s secretary. I would have thought it well worth pressing the point that, if we are to function with the present system, we want at least six diocesan representatives. I believe that the four cannot be representative and, in most of the cases I have known, were not representative. A diocese is a very

deep, wide and complex thing, and the four persons emerge by methods which do not enable them to be a proper slate or panel to represent the diocese. I would have thought that they were always at a disadvantage compared with the other persons there, because they do not know most of the people round the rest of the country who are being named and suggested.

My next point is this: they take the dean and chapter elections seriously. This is absolutely extraordinary. I have frequently had to comment here that the Church of England lives by unreality, but this is canonizing it! The previous attempts with the dean and chapter have been to remove them, because you could not take them seriously. I wanted to retain them, because I wanted to make sure that the system looked and was totally archaic. I have compared the attempt to bring it up to date with digging up the *Mary Rose* from the bed of Portsmouth Harbour and putting an outboard motor on it to make it go! (*Laughter*)

I have been present at these things. I have voted against every Crown nominee who has come my way on these dean and chapter elections! (*Laughter*) Maybe that is confidential. I do not know! By the time the dean and chapter vote on it – even including some lay canons, how wonderful! – Mrs Future Bishop is measuring up the curtains, everybody is adjusting themselves to this person being the bishop, he has already been to staff meetings and what-have-you. It is absolutely ludicrous to call this consent. This is simply a question of whether you are loyal to Her Majesty or not, and we have never yet persuaded a dean and chapter to be disloyal.

If we were to have a diocesan consent to the appointment, then I suggest that we do that which I have myself done every time I have had the chance: I have put a motion in our diocesan synod to welcome the appointment. That is no part of the system at all at the moment. The diocesan synod may not even look at it; the Archbishops' Council may not look at it. It just happens with this extraordinarily arcane dean and chapter. Let us have a welcome, but do not let us pretend that we are consenting. That is ridiculous.

The confidentiality was what I really wanted to come to. As I understand it, all royal appointments are confidential. That is to say, you only know the person who got it. You never get a list of runners-up on the Honours List, for instance, of the people who nearly made it for an MBE or something like that. You must not know the ones who have got away. The thing has to be, as it were, a perfect system, with no suggestion that somebody did not quite make it. That is really where we are with the announcement from the Prime Minister of who is the new bishop. How can you breach the confidentiality or widen it, therefore, in the way that they have done? People are going to be told that they have been shortlisted. It might be three, four, five. Of course, you might even mention another person. They, in turn, can name two referees. So if you have four persons shortlisted, twelve persons know that name is going forward. How long will that confidentiality last? How long will people who have never been appointed to a senior post still have to say behind their hands, 'Of

course, I was twice shortlisted and I made a good run at it? Then they will be able to quote the debrief. Marvellous recommendation – the Appointments Secretary can have a debriefing. Everything will be in the debrief.

It will be something like this. Someone is told that they are not appointed. ‘Can I have a conversation?’; ‘Yes, you can have a conversation’; ‘Why wasn’t I appointed?’; ‘As a matter of fact, we put you first on the list but the Prime Minister wouldn’t have you!’ (*Laughter*) Is it seriously proposed that the Crown Appointments Commission will tell people why they were not appointed, when they themselves do not know?

Alternatively, if there is a serious reason, are they going to say, ‘As a matter of fact, the archdeacon of So-and-so, who is one of the elected persons, raised an eyebrow and sneered a bit when your name came up and said you had been rude to two friends of his!’ Will there be an honest debriefing that will help? How will it help them? Nobody will interview them for anything anyway. To have a debriefing without interviewing seems absurd. I am used to debriefing people I have interviewed, but I do not debrief people whom I have not. I really think that is a most absurd business.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Mrs Margaret Brown (Chichester): I do thank Lady Perry and her committee for this very good report. There is much in it with which I agree and that I am pleased about. It is absolutely essential that meetings of the Crown Appointments Commission should not be so secret that those who are attending its meetings cannot even tell their spouse where they are going, et cetera. This is an important point in the report.

I am also very pleased that minority constituencies are to be considered. This, to traditionalists, is very important. Without wanting to labour the point, we feel that in the past we have had rather a raw deal. Yes, I know that you will say that we have had the Bishop of London; but he was already a bishop. We have the new Bishop of Chichester; but he was in Europe, and the new Bishop of Europe was in Basingstoke – or is in Basingstoke at the moment! This is really rather a shifting-round of the furniture.

I also feel, along with many others, that the churchpeople in the diocese should be able to choose their diocesan bishop. I know that the diocesan bishop has to be a shepherd of the sheep, a guardian of the faith, and he has to be the bishop of all the diocese; but when it comes to the crunch, and push comes to shove, I think that it should be the churchpeople who choose their bishop.

I know that in Bishop Buchanan we have just had an extrovert speaking, but – and here I apologize to our bench of bishops, even though one has said to me, ‘Margaret, you say hard things but you say them nicely’, so I hope that it will be the same today! – I do want there to be room in our Church for extroverts. We have heard mention of Polycarp. I do not think that, in today’s climate, Polycarp would be chosen. What about Fisher, Garbett, Chavasse, Rawlinson, Lang, Gore, Cranmer, Latimer, et cetera?

Can we have some of those people – or people like them – people who will speak tirelessly and fearlessly for the Christian faith?

For me, there was one thing lacking in this report – and if you can tell me that it is in there I would be delighted. We see on page 38 that there are questions of what a potential candidate should be asked: education, experience, key achievements, et cetera. Whilst I am the first to say that we should have bishops who have had tough parishes because they know the nitty-gritty of urban priority areas, we must have bishops who believe in the tenets of the Christian faith; the bodily resurrection of Our Lord from the dead; the Virgin birth. Perhaps if all the bishops we had were like that, there would be no need for me to sit on a doctrine committee: we would not have to have a doctrine committee. We want to know that we have bishops who are firm on all moral issues and who will fearlessly proclaim the gospel to a nation which has lost its way and is wanting to hear the gospel. They really do want and are in need of hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

All candidates should have an extensive interview. I am saddened when I see in this report that it is now called a job, a career structure. To me, it has always been a vocation, a calling, a setting-aside for the priesthood, for the episcopacy and so on.

I have been on two vacancy-in-see committees. We were asked to put names into the hat; 16 names were put forward and not one was chosen. I may be wrong, but I did rather feel that we had been called to the meeting because the ruling was that we had to be there, but that the die had been cast for a certain candidate. I would be very grateful if the powers-that-be and the Appointments Secretaries would try to see that the matters that I have mentioned this afternoon are covered in relation to our future bishops. I believe that that would bode well for our Church of England, which we moan and groan about but which we all love.

Mr Brian McHenry (Southwark): It is a tall order to follow Bishop Colin Buchanan and Mrs Brown with a rather more serious contribution. (*Several members:* Oh!) I have been a member of the Commission since 1977, so I declare an interest.

I do welcome the report. Lady Perry and Mrs Atkinson have done a great service to the Church. They have broadly affirmed the system but have indicated areas of improvement. I just want to pick out certain points which occurred to me on reading the report.

The report urges consideration of the ways and the needs of the dioceses and of the Church of England as a whole, and taking into account minority groups. These are all sound points, but in my experience of nearly ten meetings of the Commission this is very difficult to achieve, given representation of the diocese – one-third of the Commission. They are the expert witnesses; they know the diocese in question and as to whom they believe will be appropriate and inappropriate candidates for that area. It would be even more difficult if it turned out to be six members. What is said in

paragraph 2.31, 'attention is given to the possibility of nominating someone from a minority' in the Church, I fear may be no more than a pious wish.

I also agree with what Lady Perry said about recent nominations – essentially drawing upon a pool of suffragan bishops. Again, however, given the diocese's requirements, it is very difficult to get out of that mould.

I also warmly welcome the abolition of secrecy concerning dates and venues. One former member told me that he did not tell his wife where he was going, as per instructions. He had a very trusting wife. I hope you will forgive me, but I have made an exception for my wife Liz as to when I go to these meetings. I also welcome the proposals about the process leading to the submission of names. As an ordinary member of the Commission, a central member, it is very difficult indeed to make any enquiries at present from the dioceses concerned, or indeed somebody who knows the man concerned, without giving the game away.

Nobody has really talked about the resourcing of the Commission. We are told that it will cost £23,000 to have an additional support person. Given the volume of work that we are envisaging that the Commission will carry out in the future, I have grave doubts as to whether that is enough.

Like the Archbishop of York, I am uncomfortable about telling candidates that they are being considered for the second stage. There seem to be two arguments there. First of all, there is the question about the fact that it would undoubtedly be unsettling for the individuals concerned; but it is also possible that we may lose good candidates. If someone is not accepted, and we know that they have not been accepted in several dioceses, they may well indicate to the powers-that-be that they are not prepared to be considered again. The report has brought out the fact that there have been instances where names have come before the Commission several times over and then, bingo, at last everything fits together. That person never knew that he was being considered at earlier stages.

I also have real doubts about the two-stage process envisaged in the report. Not only will this present additional demands on the two Archbishops, but the central members as well – let alone the members of the diocese. Those in full-time lay work, possibly more than full-time lay work in some cases, could well not be able to give up the time: it is difficult enough as it is. Secondly, I do fear a loss of dynamism in these meetings, over the period between teatime on one day and coffee break the next day, in not being able to consider all the relevant matters of a particular diocese in question at one single meeting.

On a small point, I still do not agree with what is said in the report about the Standing Order under which the opinions of diocesan members are sought. I still think that provision lacks substance.

Finally, the synodical history of the discussion of the election and confirmation

processes is not fully set out in Chapter 5. There is an incredibly long history in this matter, in which I have played a not insignificant part. Bishop Colin Buchanan referred to this. This includes a motion which I proposed to the General Synod in 1991 on this matter. I do not propose to reopen that debate, but I find the sentiments in paragraph 5.34 difficult to take. Of these traditions, one might have said, adapting a French marshal after the charge of the Light Brigade, '*C'est magnifique mais ce n'est pas la gloire*' – the glory of the gospel. If busy clergy and lawyers want to spend their time on ceremonies like the confirmation of election, I suppose we must let them; but I will always have profound doubts about the utility of such events.

Mrs Margaret Swinson (Liverpool): I would like to speak in support of the report but, in doing so, to highlight the change I perceive it will require in the way the role of the Secretary is exercised, particularly in the provision of information and in the servicing of vacancy-in-see committees.

Members of Synod who have served on a vacancy-in-see committee or Crown Appointments Commission will be aware that the current system places great reliance on the information provided by the Secretaries and on their knowledge of the system. Most of us serve in this way only occasionally, thank goodness, but it has left many of us feeling that the Secretaries have been in a position to exert significant influence over the process, and potentially over its outcome. As a member of the vacancy-in-see committee and even as a newly elected chairman, you currently receive nothing until a vacancy is announced. Inexperience and ignorance are therefore rife, and the information and assistance provided by the centre are crucial. Vacancy-in-see committee chairmen and members at present do not know where the boundaries lie between their rights and responsibilities and those of the Secretaries. In those circumstances it is easy to be controlled by the system rather than to be in control of it.

Because of this, I was particularly pleased to read the report's recommendations concerning the rewriting of the guidance notes and the provision of a briefing booklet. These should, I hope, ensure that members know what they are committing themselves to and how the meetings, et cetera, should be conducted, and it will enable chairmen to take the reins in a new and proper way. I look forward to receiving them at some point.

When the time comes for the nominations to be considered, it is absolutely essential that accurate and comparable information is received about each candidate in good time for the diocesan representatives to discuss it together. Otherwise they are significantly disadvantaged, because they do not know the candidates as well as the central members of the Commission will. The report acknowledges that this advance information has not been provided hitherto and that the reliance of the Commission on a summary of very varied information has been a flaw. With the best will and skill in the world, this will not provide a comparable view of each individual, because it bears the influence of the summarizer and reflects the adequacy, quantity and bias of the underlying information. Precisely because it is a summary, the receivers are often left wondering what has been kept from them and why.

The proposed system of references, although it may appear cumbersome, should ensure that there is equality of information between nominees and that any unduly biased contributions, in either direction, do not skew the process.

The changes in the briefing of vacancy-in-see committees and the nature and quantity of information provided to the Commission should change the role of the Secretaries to some degree. Whereas they have been almost the sole source of information in the diocese, the chairman of the vacancy-in-see committee will be better placed to operate the system and, where the Secretary has gathered and sifted the personal information about nominees, this should come unabridged from named third parties. The Secretary's role in these and other areas will become a more low-key and less active human resources role and, with the additional administrative tasks involved in the new system, it is likely to suggest a different kind of skill mix for the post-holders. I would hope that this greater emphasis on servicing and administering the Commission will give its members, the dioceses, and the wider Church, a confidence that the staff are not exerting influence over the resulting appointments.

The Bishop of Lichfield (Rt Revd Keith Sutton): Along with other speakers, I wholeheartedly welcome this report. I welcome particularly the reference by several speakers to the centrality of the Holy Spirit in the whole process.

I suggest that perhaps the phrase 'Working in the Spirit' is closer to New Testament usage. I reflect how our Lord spent a whole night in prayer before choosing the Twelve, but of course that followed soon after his baptism when the Spirit descended upon him.

I also greatly welcome the Bishop of Rochester's essay and welcome much of the theology of this report. I believe too that we will all welcome everything said so far, right from the start by Lady Perry, about the best possible information. I welcome too the tough reflections which have been offered to me as a diocesan bishop, and the emphasis of other speakers on openness and transparency. Could I also say, however, how much I value Professor Clarke's noting of the tension between much modern-culture managerial practice and some of the other things I have been talking about?

The mention of the Nolan report raises an early question for me, therefore, which I would like to point the steering group towards. After all that has been said, is there still anything distinctive about the call to a bishop's ministry in itself – not in kind but because of its role – a ministry to which priests are called by God but through his Church? Does the report maintain that focus throughout?

I believe that there is also a question concerning to whom this report is accountable. It was quite properly commissioned by the General Synod. The Crown Appointments Commission is itself a synodical body. The review group, however, clearly found itself led into issues which are not straightforward questions for the synodical process itself to handle or resolve. For example, some of the proposals relate to the question which

underlies the whole debate and all our business: the role of a bishop in Synod. What is the relationship of a bishop, his calling, and his responsibilities to the role and high calling of this Synod? Are there not important questions also in connection with this new appointments list? I would again encourage the steering group to wrestle with these deep questions about vocation, about the nurture of vocation; questions about the nature of priesthood itself.

Such questions cannot easily be considered under the head of administrative issues; nor can they be settled by a debate. I think again of Professor Clarke's remarks. Would it really be right to introduce an appointments list which could have the effect of putting our clergy into the form of sheep or goats? What does that do to the high and holy calling of all committed to the great work of a parish priest in the modern world? My concern is that at worst it could be a downgrading of that ministry, and that would need a lot of handling in terms of pastoral care.

Am I not right also to have reservations about the notion that priests might put their own name forward for appointments? Can I imagine Michael Ramsey doing that or Bill Vanstone? Is this not a place where secular practice may not carry the day? Such a policy would go against all historical precedent, as the very helpful and scholarly survey, for which we thank Colin Podmore, makes clear within the pages of the report itself.

This brings me to the role of the SAGE Group, which I have the privilege of currently chairing. The group is dealt with in paragraph 2.18. Many have never heard of this group, I think. We do not want secrecy about it at all and I welcome it being discussed in this document. The group is appointed by the Archbishops, who regularly change the membership so as to give a variety of bishops some encounter with the issues involved. While it is indeed a support group to the Archbishops' Appointments Secretary, a key part of it is to act as a sounding board for new thinking, and indeed to encourage our brothers where it is felt that change is needed. The report itself alludes to the fact that the Secretaries have quietly helped both Prime Ministers and Archbishops, and have helped to take things forward. The SAGE Group has an important role behind the scenes in that regard.

Finally, I hope that some bishops will be invited to work with the steering group in working and in offering constructive help for this important consultation.

Mr Ian Garden (Blackburn): As you know, I am also a central member of the CAC. It is from that perspective that I want to put forward an illustration of one of the things that Bishop Buchanan has mentioned.

Chairman, when you become a diocesan bishop you can be reassured of this. The CAC considered your name, your ministry, your personality, your strengths, your weaknesses and your potential, in just 29 minutes. It takes about 14 minutes, after that good dinner, to get you through the first session, from the long list to the short list,

and then a further 15 minutes or so the following morning to be compared with the other four or five people who were shortlisted candidates, and to get you on to the Prime Minister's list. My first point, therefore – made perhaps cheaply but, I would suggest, properly graphically – is that there is too little information, considered in too short a time.

My second point is more serious. There is a serious confusion abroad relating to the issues about confidentiality. The very fact that the Commission meets in secret, at a secret location, at a secret time, projects a sinister image of the working of the Commission and it infects the substantive work of the Commission with sinister overtones. I doubt if there is anyone in this Synod who would want to suggest that the detailed work of the Commission, as it contemplates the strengths and weaknesses of individual candidates, should be carried out in anything but a confidential way. At the same time it needs to be said that the members of the Commission and its Secretaries have never been unwilling to discuss in public its processes and its procedures in the abstract. Talking in the abstract, however, gives the impression of secrecy, when in fact it is the proper expression of confidentiality.

It seems to me that this juxtaposition of secrecy and confidentiality leads to unhelpful speculation about what may or what may not have happened. Speculation does serious damage to the reputation of the process. It does serious damage to the individuals who, it is guessed at, have been considered within the process, and it does serious damage to the public perception of the Church.

I can tell you from personal experience that it is very difficult to talk to a newspaper journalist, knowing that what he or she believes to be accurate is in fact gobbledegook and not to be able to tell that individual that it is gobbledegook. I therefore warmly endorse the recommendation that the Commission should be more open about the organization of its business, and so dilute the opportunity for speculation.

If, for example – and in an extreme case – that means that it is apparent that the Prime Minister has called for more names, I do not believe that we should be frightened that this will discredit in any way the process or the individuals considered by the process. Why am I convinced of that? If we can be confident that the Commission can reach fair and well-informed judgements, then I believe we have little to fear from an open approach to the process. When the Prime Minister, or indeed anyone else, questions the deliberate and well-informed view of the Church, that is frankly their problem. That is an entirely separate issue, and one which Bishop Buchanan no doubt would rush to take up.

Can I finish by drawing attention to a comment made by the Archbishop of York? He warned of the greater administrative, financial and personal burdens which may flow from the general thrust of the proposals in this report. A better-informed process necessarily will come at a greater cost. Greater detail from a wider variety of sources will require more time and more energy from staff and from the members. The

increased burden of administration which comes with these recommendations, however, must not be written off as an increase in bureaucracy. We are talking here of an investment in confidence, an investment in quality, and an investment in reassurance that the CAC selects fitting leaders in the Church of God.

I enjoyed reading this report and, with the vigorous judgement advocated by Professor Clarke, let us take its recommendations forward.

Revd Simon Pothén (London): I want to turn to recommendations (a), (b), (c) and (d) in paragraph 3.18, regarding whether the clergy should know if they are on a list or not. Initially I thought no, because it might affect their ministry. It might be dispiriting if there was nothing appearing on the horizon after 20 years or so of being on a list. Thinking more about it, I thought that there was a real need to know that clergy were on a list, provided that it is a private and not a public list.

The system needs to be transparent; the system needs to be sensible but, above all, it needs to treat clergy as adults. I am not sure that I know of any clergy who, having been told that they are on a list, will necessarily park a Pickford's van outside the vicarage in order to be ready to go off to another post. However, we should read between the lines of these paragraphs, and suggest a process that should be ongoing throughout a priest's life – including, dare I say, up to a bishop – and that is the process of ministerial review. This strand needs to be emphasized again and again, as the bishop expressing his authority to be the shepherd of the shepherds.

If we are expecting clergy to be professional – judging by the management-speak that we hear from time to time – then clergy ought to be treated as professionals. The treatment of clergy by bishops in the area of ministerial review needs to be handled with care, with sensitivity, and using insights from human resource management. Human resource management means that we go on a journey of human discernment: discerning the times; discerning the Spirit; discerning where a person might be going in his or her ministry. It is a time of mutual up-building and of renewal. This needs to be stressed time and again in ministerial review.

The secrecy surrounding lists is understandable, but it reminds me of parents who put off discussion with their children about sex. It also hinders, I believe, the work of the grace of God. So often we treat God like a senile millionaire, who we are frightened might give his money away to a cats' home!

Ministerial review can be a time of affirmation, of strength and of mutual up-building. I speak to the recommendations in this report, but I do urge that ministerial review takes on a far more professional outlook in those terms. I am not saying that bishops do not care about the way they minister to their clergy, but that knowledge of being on a list will need to be handled with care and professional judgement, and there needs to be built into that system the overarching theology of being a bishop – that they are indeed shepherds of the shepherds of the flock. I commend the report to this house.

Mrs Shirley-Ann Williams (Exeter): I too welcome this report, having twice been a member of the 'gang of four' from my own diocese. What has surprised me in this afternoon's discussion, however, is the absence of a mention of how prayer undergirds all the deliberations of the Crown Appointments Commission. It is a very important part of the procedure.

Mr Garden has referred to the too little time and has quoted figures of how many minutes we had per candidate. It was probably sufficient time with the information we were given, which is why I welcome the fact that more information will be made available in future.

The secrecy has been referred to. Just over 17 years ago, when I was first a member of the Commission from my diocese, not only was I not allowed to tell my husband where I was going, he was supposed not to notice that there was a blank space in the bed beside him over several nights, and I had to leave a sealed envelope containing the telephone number of where I was and, if he died, he was able to telephone me! I was also in the position of having to say to the headmistress of my school, 'I am on a committee you shouldn't know about. We're meeting on a day I can't tell you about. I can't tell you where I am going, but could I have Wednesday off?' It had improved slightly in more recent times, when we were selecting our current bishop – and let me say here that on both occasions I was extremely satisfied with the outcome – when I was allowed to tell my husband when I was going and I was allowed to pin up a note in our kitchen on which there was a number which he could see. The strange thing was that, at this secret rendezvous, we were asked to sign the visitors' book when we left. One of our diocesan officers had said to me, some time after the Commission had met, 'By the way, I have a few more things I would like to say to you. Have you met yet?' I could not say yes or no, so I listened to him in all seriousness. The following week he told me that he had been to a conference at the very same place, and the first name that he had seen in the visitors' book was mine, together with the rest of the Crown Appointments Commission. So there was my cover blown! I therefore hope that this rather arcane secrecy will fly out of the window.

The suggestion of two-stage meetings has already been referred to. One reason I have reservations about it is because it will be difficult for laypeople in particular, who are on the Crown Appointments Commission either from the diocese or the permanent one, to have even more time off from secular employment, and it will narrow the field.

On both occasions on which I was a member I was very conscious of the extreme courtesy of the Secretaries and of the members of the Commission. On the first occasion, however, the Commission had already been meeting when the four of us joined them – not to discuss what we were going to be discussing together but other matters. The dynamics of that meeting were therefore completely skewed. They had already made their group, as it were, and when we arrived – although we had been considering where we might sit, and so on – we were told where to sit. The second

time had not been quite the same, but again one is moving into a group that already had its life and its dynamic. I hope that that can be addressed in some way.

My final point relates to the families of bishops. More and more, the wife of a bishop or a bishop-to-be has a career of her own. There should possibly be more sensitivity in looking at that. I am thinking of several bishops here, where a wife has had to give up a career – a very worthwhile career, not necessarily in terms of her own promotion but what she gives to society and the name of God in her secular employment.

People do peak. The people on the lists need to be looked at every now and then, because whereas it may have been very appropriate to put someone's name forward as a diocesan bishop, for example in 1999, by 2001 they may have peaked and the moment has gone. We need either to seize the moment or to review this.

Canon Bob Baker (Norwich): Somebody in 'bootiful' Norfolk recently gave me a new definition of salt. Salt is what makes the potatoes taste horrible if you do not put it in! There is a pinch of what I want to talk about in this report, but not quite enough. May I first mention two other matters which have already been referred to?

The first is the amount of information that the CAC has. I do not need to say much about that except that I was horrified, as a member of it myself for our diocese, that we had so little. The encouraging noises from the Archbishop of York and the fact that no one else has spoken in defence of the present system suggest to me that that could change fairly quickly. I think that it could change tomorrow, and I hope it will.

The second problem that this report nails very effectively is the question of how people's names get on to the lists. The statistics at the top of page 20 illustrate the imbalance in the number of recommendations. That snapshot does not tell the whole picture. It seems to me that it is quite common now, or certainly not unusual, for diocesan bishops to be appointed in their late forties or early fifties: that means a person can be in post for 10 or 15 years. If a diocesan bishop happens to be much less of a risk-taker than another diocesan bishop, the number of names that gets on to the list from a particular diocese can be very small indeed over a long period of time. I think that is an injustice that needs to be put right. Again, it could be put right tomorrow if diocesan bishops who currently reserve this privilege to themselves involved their senior staff and other people in the process of putting names forward.

Of course, putting names forward in that way might mean that the pool of candidates grows larger. My concern is not about the size of the pool, but that those in the pool should not be out of their depth. It seems to me that we therefore need Chapter 2.5 in this report: something between somebody's name being put on a list and their being considered for a particular post – a period in which we reflect on the potential of that individual, their vocation to this particular ministry, and try to discern under God whether this individual, regardless of what post we might appoint him to, is called to be a bishop. That, after all, is what we do with vocations to the diaconate and the

priesthood. If somebody comes forward, we consider very carefully whether they would be appropriate for that kind of ministry, regardless of what post we may eventually send them to.

In my new role I attend consecrations. I am always interested to hear bishops answer that question, 'Do you feel called by God to this ministry?' They take about ten words to say yes, because it is liturgy, but they obviously believe that they are. I find myself asking when did that call come. Did it come the moment the letter dropped on the mat, saying, 'Would you like to be bishop of such-and-such a place?'. Or did it come as they reflected and prayed in the following days? If it only came at that point, how did the Church carefully reflect on whether that vocation is genuine or not? It seems to me that under the present system God is only allowed to call after the Prime Minister. We need a period between somebody's name being suggested and their being considered for a vacancy, in which we can test the reality of their vocation to this ministry.

If we did that, it seems to me that it would not much matter how somebody's name got on to the list. Whether they put themselves forward, whether they were put forward by the bishop or by their mother, would not matter too much because we would test that vocation.

I share the Bishop of Lichfield's gut feeling against people putting themselves forward. It is worth remembering, however, that from Moses to St Paul there are lots of people in Scripture who would never have been called by anybody else but were called by God to leadership amongst the people of God and, in a sense, had to put themselves forward. It seems uncomfortable; it seems wrong; but as long as that vocation is tested properly, that is okay.

I still have not reached my main point, which is how we deal with disappointment. It is that, it seems to me, which is not dealt with sufficiently in this report. There are bound to be people who are disappointed: that is inevitable. I want to nail the suggestion that under the present system that does not happen. There are plenty of disappointed people about, believe you me. Many of us will remember Dr Garry Bennett and the things that were said about him in this context, which underline that point.

There is bound to be disappointment. We need to ask ourselves, therefore, how we handle that. Ask what we do with ordinands: my understanding is that the bishops are very careful about handling disappointment with ordinands, because they know that a disappointed ordinand can cause havoc in the Church over many years.

I believe that we need to take seriously the fact that there are quite senior clergy who, in the last five or ten years of their ministry, need encouragement and affirmation, because they have been disappointed – not because they are pushy and ambitious, but because they wanted to serve God in this particular way.

Canon Dr Christina Baxter (Southwell): I want to thank the people who have prepared

this report for us. I believe it is a breath of fresh air and I welcome many of the suggestions and recommendations which I find in it. It would be untrue not to admit that I would rather have a gale of fresh air. It would be far better for the Church to nominate direct to the Crown from the Archbishops. I cannot think of any theological reasons to involve the politicians and the Prime Minister any longer.

If we are moving slowly towards a situation where I believe the Church would be more true to itself, perhaps I can help the follow-up group to move to a wind of fresh air and not just a breath of fresh air. I want to do that by speaking about the lay participation in this procedure.

First of all, I want to remind us that the ministry of the Church – the clergy and the bishops – exists for the sake of laypeople as well as for the sake of God, and mostly not for us internal laypeople but for the sake of the people outside the Church, who have yet to hear the gospel and have yet to come to faith. The question that needs to be asked about people's ministry is whether it is effective in reaching those laypeople. The best people to answer that question, it seems to me, are other laypeople. I beg us, as we look at clergy review, to include laypeople in that process.

Some laypeople would be able to assure clergy who are nervous, and bishops who were uncertain, that their ministry is welcome and effective. Why not let us tell you that, formally, through the review process and let that be part of the discerning of ministry?

Secondly, why not let us have lay nominations to this senior appointments list? Do we not have a view about whether people are appropriate pastors in the Church? We certainly do, and we ought to be part of that procedure of being able to nominate clergy who we believe under God could be exercising a broader responsibility.

What about a lay reference? I welcome the opportunity for candidates to choose their own referees. When they do that as potential ordinands going to selection conference, they have to choose a lay referee. Let that be the case for bishops too. Let it be clear that this person has the confidence of at least one layperson.

In relationship to the question of whether the longer procedure will be possible for laypeople, let me make this suggestion – not that we stick with the current short procedure, which is pressurized and does not give enough time for the better documentation that will be available. For myself, I would rather read 180 pages than deal with the kind of summary that can be so misleading, as we have found in times past. I have been on the Crown Appointments Commission for Southwell three times now.

If it is too much for the central team, let there be two central teams. I know that the Archbishops will be pressurized for time, but we could have a larger pool of people at the centre, and that might make for better, more equal discussions with the diocesan

members. It could be two separate teams or it could be 20 people and the names would go round on each occasion.

There are other ways of handling these issues than to say, 'We can't manage it.' On the whole, however, this is a really good report. I believe it could be better, and I hope that the follow-up group will make it better; and I pray for the day when the Church will cease to be shackled to the Prime Minister.

The Bishop of Sheffield (Rt Revd Jack Nicholls): My vested interests are that, first, I am a diocesan bishop; second, I am a member of the SAGE group; and, third, I am a member of Lady Perry's group; so I wear a lot of hats. The most important one, though, is that I am one of the 17 pieces of furniture moved in the past five years.

I want to say one thing briefly, and that is about encouragement and confidence and care of clergy, which we are all involved in, as I have been for many years, long before I was a bishop. It has always seemed to me that clergy are most encouraged, given most confidence, and shown most care when they are treated as big boys and girls and not patronized by people who think that they know better. It seems to me, therefore, that the whole business of ministerial review, which Simon Pothen expressed earlier on, is absolutely crucial to the process. We are not looking for uniformity between dioceses in ministerial review but we are looking for consistency in taking that matter seriously. We are also looking for treating people as adults in terms of disappointment. Of course people will be disappointed, but one of the ways in which they can be encouraged and cared for and given confidence is to be cared for through that disappointment. I usually do it at 10 o'clock at night, with a bottle of wine, with someone who has not got a senior appointment in the Church. Believe me, it works, and I do not see why it cannot be common practice.

Mr Gordon Simmonds (Chelmsford): I am grateful to the authors of the report. I am grateful because I found it not only well-written but informative. This is important to me because, as the report rightly says, there is undue secrecy, even to the extent of giving the impression of something to hide. The report almost persuades me that there is nothing to hide, but if this is really true we must, as others have said, tear away this veil and let some light in, not for no purpose but for the important purpose that it will enhance the trust that is given. Trust is a precious commodity and one that needs to be earned.

I welcome both the report and the motion. I would have liked to see rather greater movement in support of one of the directions that the review group proposes, namely that it had had more confidence in providing more formal support for the diocesan voice and involvement. It is fairly clear that it is there in the informalities; I would like to see it much more in the formalities. I would like to see specifically, in section 3.8, more – perhaps six – diocesan members on the CAC; that, in section 4.43, the nettle had been grasped and that it would really be possible to allow the vacancy-in-see committee to nominate the candidates; and, finally, that the body responsible for the

notional election of a bishop would be brought into the synodical structure. I really do not believe that the chapter can take in any sense a representational role in the diocese in today's world.

There is one further, perhaps rather detailed, point that I would like to comment on. The group talks at some length, in section 3.70, about the voting system in the CAC and how it could be improved. I would make one suggestion: if the problem is really that at the end of the process there is what amounts to a veto – one of the members could not accept the candidates – why not get that declaration of unacceptable candidates at the beginning rather than at the end? Why not cross the difficult bridge early, so that we can proceed on the journey with an expectation of reaching the destination?

Miss Anne Ashton (Portsmouth): I am very pleased to be able to contribute to this debate. It puts right something which happened some 15 or 16 years ago when I was one of the diocesan four for Portsmouth. I was very pleased to be selected but very apprehensive straightaway because the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary and the Archbishops' Appointments Secretary stressed the point of secrecy, and how you must tell no one where you were going. I had an 87-year-old father at home, whom I lived with and looked after. He was a pretty discreet chap so I am afraid that I remembered that I came from Portsmouth and that one of Portsmouth's heroes is Admiral Lord Nelson. We all know what he did when the admiral's signal bade him fly in a battle. In the words of Sir Henry Newbolt, he:

Wickedly wagged his head
He clapped the glass to his sightless eye,
And 'I'm damned if I see it,' he said.

So I felt that I was going to get round this somehow, and I did so by telling my father, who was very accepting: 'I'm going to a meeting, I'm not telling you whether it's anything to do with the Church, I'll be away for a night, and I'm leaving you the telephone number' (because I knew where it was).

I am therefore extremely pleased to see recommendation 14 of the report which does away with that and, from what has been said about that, so are many other people.

However, from looking at recommendation 14, my eye then turned to recommendation 15 which says, 'When a vacancy in a diocesan see is announced, an announcement in the diocese should name the Chairman of the Vacancy in See Committee' – very good – 'to whom the names of possible candidates should be sent by a certain date. The Chairman should forward the names of any whom he or she considers to be a serious candidate to the diocesan four and also to the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments.' He or she will, I hope, have the sense to send them all to the diocesan four, who can sift them through and will not take it on himself or herself to say who goes on the senior appointments list.

I have no difficulties with the senior appointments list and perhaps it is a good way forward at this stage, though it may not be the ultimate way forward. I say that because when we have worked the new system for some time it will throw up its own difficulties, and we should have the courage, if some things are not right, to put them right subsequently.

That brings me to my third point, which I have always felt rather strongly about – and Bishop Buchanan did it very amusingly: the election process. I have always had doubts about this since an election some time ago, about the time I was involved too, and not involving our present Bishop. My vicar was one of the honorary canons of the cathedral. He was therefore summoned to the meeting to elect the new bishop. He was conducting the parish retreat, so he said that he was not going to go. I went because at that time I was a lay canon. I took no part but I sat and listened, and I heard my vicar formally declared as contumacious because he had not come to the meeting. Whether he was contumacious or not, I do not know, but he was a very good vicar and continued as our vicar for the next 20 years.

So I welcome the report. Professor Clarke spoke much more eloquently than I can about the strictures that the working group must adhere to when they look at it and that they must bear in mind that it provides a framework and not necessarily a background that they must slavishly follow.

The Chairman: After Dr May, I propose to call the Bishop of Rochester; and to enable him, if he so wishes, to respond to any theological issues that have been raised in the debate I am prepared to allow him further time.

Dr Peter May (Winchester): We have a book with 60 recommendations and that is because of the many failings in the system. I just want to share briefly my experience of the many failings of the system, when I was involved in an appointments commission which had to meet three times, when one problem just led on to another and then to another.

We started with the problem of who we should nominate and how many. Our problem there was that we made the assumption that there would be some sort of central list of names that would already be considered and that we would be just supplementing it, in which case were there just a few local names that we wanted to put forward or did we have to go through the whole gamut? We were very surprised to find just how restricted the choices were when we arrived. We were not only disappointed with the number of names and the very limited (one and a half sides of A4) information, but that information was wonderfully ambiguous. I do not think that I am disclosing any secrets – because it reveals nothing about anyone – when I say that one of the particular phrases that came up in discussion was that the diocesan bishop had said of the candidate under consideration, ‘There’s no doubt this man will make a good bishop.’ It took the other layman from the diocese, who was a legal man, to say, ‘Mr Chairman, in my experience, “no doubt” always means that there *is* doubt. One should never use the phrase.’ So there was not much information, and what we had was ambiguous.

Then I do not think that anyone has mentioned the pressure that you are under. I am a shrinking violet and I do not find these situations easy! There was colossal pressure in a very short time to make your point. I started to criticize one of the candidates and I was immediately interrupted by someone else on the commission who, frankly, talked me down. He talked and talked. Fortunately, among the spiritual gifts that I possess is the gift of pure rudeness, so eventually, when he stopped and drew breath, I said, 'Have you finished? Because I haven't.' I then went on and made the points that I wanted to make, and it got a round of applause from the other members of the commission. There was a lot of tension, a lot of battle going on.

Then we had to decide about the names, and I was very unhappy about one of the two names that we were left with; so the diocesan four were sent outside to sort it out between us. We would still be there. We had to come back in and say, 'We're not going to agree on this. We will not agree the second name.' That threw the whole thing into confusion, so we had to meet again. Out came the diaries and the other lay member said, 'Yes, well, that particular date I am scheduled to be at a meeting in the Falkland Islands.' That ruled him out. He was not allowed to return to re-discuss the matter because it would blow the secrecy of the thing if other people in the Falkland Islands found that he was not going to turn up. How daft can you get? The whole thing got quite out of hand.

We then had to replace him. Was there a replacement procedure? I was not consulted and, as far as I know, the other members of the vacancy-in-see committee were not consulted; another member was appointed by the chairman, and he was a clergyman and not a layperson. So the vacancy-in-see committee, having appointed two clergy and two lay, now had three clergy and one lay, and I took a very dim view of that. We had a great lack of information so I had to go and do my own investigating, a little bit of travelling round the country, a few subtle enquiries, and I was at least able to come back with a bit more information to fit these names, some of which we knew absolutely nothing about.

The second meeting of the commission was much more satisfactory and we all agreed the two names, except that neither of the two names wanted to take on the job. So we had to meet a third time.

Points have been made about the secrecy of going away and not telling one's spouse, but to go away three times and not tell my wife was just ridiculous, and to think that I could handle my partners by just sloping off from more surgeries and leaving them to do the work was ridiculous too. The world does not function like that.

So we had inadequate briefing, we had a narrow pool of names, we had a lack of information about the candidates, the information was ambiguous, there was colossal pressure to conform in the discussion, there was pressure on the voting, there was no replacement procedure, the candidates did not know that their names were up for grabs, and there was this quite unrealistic and absurd secrecy – at one stage the whole thing was a disaster.

The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali): Theology so often comes last in our Church, and we are nearing the end of this debate, but thank you, Mr Chairman, for calling me. Yesterday at about this time of the day I was told that I was on no account to bring theology into the debate on development, but at least we are making some room for it in the debate on the nature of our episcopate.

The theological pretensions of this report, I have to say, are modest. Thank you for your comments on my essay but you will have noticed that it is called '*Towards a Theology for Choosing Bishops*'; it is not a final position but a developing one, which underlies this report. The fundamental principle for all ministry is that of divine calling. That has been emphasized already by several of our speakers: God calls out his servant for the work which needs to be done in the world and among his people. In Isaiah 49, for instance, the Hebrew word for calling, *qara*, is paralleled in the New Testament by the word *kaleo*, used when Jesus calls the twelve apostles. Another word that is used in the New Testament, *ek-lego*, is also used for example by St Irenaeus for the divine calling of the apostles. It is used particularly for the calling of St Paul. He is called 'a chosen vessel'; the word *ek-lego* is used there, for instance. So a calling may be direct and personal, as so many people have said, and as it was with St Paul; but it still needs to be discerned by the wider Church as authentic and for the benefit of all. If members do not believe me, let them read the tortured argument of St Paul himself in the first two chapters of the epistle to the Galatians.

Interestingly enough, reluctance to accede to the episcopal office – what we in our report rather pretentiously call *nolo episcopari* – has often led the Church to recognize someone's suitability for the office. This may be a paradox but it is really true of the history of the Church. At different times vocations have been discerned in different ways and in the case of bishops the State has, in both East and West, often played a role on the grounds that the bishop is a public figure who participates in affairs of state and it is only fair that the State should have a voice in such an appointment. That, and not the narrower point about the membership of the House of Lords, is what is at stake here.

It is important to emphasize the principle of calling and discernment but not to identify it with any particular process or institution. In fact, these processes and institutions will change as we seek to be obedient in the light of our changing circumstances. Even the great St Cyprian felt the need for consultation in the making of all appointments – see, for example, his letter to his church at Carthage – and we should be no different. I take most of the work of the Crown Appointments Commission to be about representative consultation with Church and State on the basis of which names are submitted to the Crown to nominate. Naturally such consultation should be as well-informed as possible within the bounds of confidentiality and the need not to cause unnecessary disruption in the present ministry of those being considered for episcopal office.

However calling is discerned, and whatever the means of consultation, it has been

universally acknowledged that the local Church must consent to the appointment of its chief pastor and teacher. This has taken the form of acclamation by the people of someone who is an obvious choice – vestiges of this still survive in our Ordinal – or of election by the whole body of the faithful. What excitement that used to cause in the early Church! In many cases, however, election has been delegated to a smaller body: for a very long time, in the West certainly, to the cathedral chapter, whatever you may say about it, and sometimes even to an individual, whether pope or king.

Once again, the principle of consent is what is important, though the means of securing it will vary. Neither in history nor in the contemporary Anglican Communion have populist methods of election been fortunate. They have often been accompanied by campaigning, by politics and by the parading of candidates and sometimes even their spouses.

In this report we have commended a distinction between nomination by the Crown, after due consultation with the Church, and election by the new college of canons, which includes lay as well as ordained persons. The review group considered other options, such as a diocesan synod – that has been mentioned – for obtaining the consent of the local Church, and again it is important not to confuse the principle of consent with any particular mechanism for obtaining it.

Canons 4 and 6 of the Council of Nicaea set out the need for an episcopal appointment to be confirmed by the wider Church. It is important to note that these canons establish the practice already existing early in the fourth century, where the willingness of neighbouring bishops to participate in the consecration of a new bishop was decisive. If they did not want to participate in such a consecration, a person could not become a bishop. Nicaea assigned the Metropolitan of the province a key role in determining the approval of the wider Church. Indeed, for the first time it gave the Metropolitan a veto over episcopal appointments in his province.

Once again, however an appointment is confirmed – and the report makes detailed suggestions, of course – the principle of confirmation of an episcopal election by the wider Church, with the Metropolitan playing a central part, is to be affirmed by all, unless you want to go against Nicaea (and I know that there are some here who may want to do so).

The commissioning of the new bishop is also of primary importance. My own view is that this should be done immediately after the confirmation of election, whether there is a consecration or not. As the report suggests, such a commission should draw on the statement of needs of the diocese and of the Church as a whole. Services of consecration are not the best place for the delivery of such a charge, which sets out the missionary, pastoral and teaching tasks facing a new bishop. Such a commission will come as near the job description which recent reports have suggested a diocesan bishop might have as makes no difference. It is important for such a commission to strike the right balance between kingdom concerns, in which a bishop should be

involved, and the building up of God's people, which is also central to a bishop's work.

The essential elements, then, in the choosing of diocesan bishops are those of calling and its discernment, through appropriate consultation, consent in some form by the local Church, confirmation of local processes by the wider Church, and the commissioning of the new bishop for mission and ministry. These essential arrangements can be expressed in a variety of ways. The report commends those that the review group believes to be suitable for our situation at this time.

I come to the final part of what I need to say, and this is a comment on what has been said this afternoon from a theological point of view. There are three things that we need to note, and this may form the theological part of the steering group's work. First, there is a need to hold together vocation and the guidance of the Holy Spirit with 'management procedures' such as ministry review and the availability of information and even interviews perhaps at some stage or other. Second, we must continue to regard all ministry, including episcopal ministry, as a gift of divine providence for the Church, not simply as another step in a career. Third, there must be some way of recognizing the prophetic and the apostolic, by which I mean missionary, among the candidates. Here is the theological task for the steering group.

Mrs Mary Johnston (London): My involvement in these processes has been limited to my diocesan vacancy-in-see committee, but I do have considerable knowledge of how to select and seek out individuals for positions of considerable authority and responsibility in the secular world, so I read this report with grim fascination and amazement that the system has worked as well as it has. Let us move forward with it. Reform is imperative but there are many aspects of these recommendations which still need addressing. For brevity I will turn to just two or three points.

First, the matter of references. In my experience they are not of much use in any selection process. There is an art in writing references. If your reference bishop does not possess them, you, the candidate, will lose out. We ask our friends to write references. By definition they think well of us; their references are going to say positive, supporting things. Why else do we choose them? It would, I believe, be quite wrong to request, as stated on page 46, paragraph 3.58, that references should be revised or doctored in the light of job/person specification. The overwhelming tendency will be for the referees to shape their responses to secure the job for their candidate; that is not corruption but human nature. The experienced reference writer therefore will carry undue influence. This will not help the selection process. It would probably help to send the two specifications to the reference bishop, asking purely if there is any reason why his candidate should not be considered, but amended references give ample scope for personal bias and pure speculation.

What I believe is needed in this arena is a comprehensive record of ministry. Note that I do not say 'record of achievement', but rather what has actually happened to Church

communities as a result of this candidate's life and work, and what has not happened. That standardized record should be kept on the Appointments Secretary's file and regularly updated. A specific job description and person specification can then be set alongside that factual record and tested against it.

Another point: in paragraph 4.50 it is suggested that a diocesan report be obtained from the outgoing bishop. A factual overview could be useful, but his perception is bound to be coloured by his own experiences and his own style of leadership so it will be subjective. It is important that the outgoing bishop does not influence the choice of his successor. That risks episcopal cloning which in itself would limit the diversity of views and expertise in the House of Bishops. Long interregna are the norm; continuity is neither required nor sought. The appointment of a new bishop is an opportunity for a fresh approach, for change.

I do support the need for the reforms and many of these recommendations, but I have many qualms. Where, for instance, is there space for the chosen candidate to say, 'No, not now, thank you,' without jeopardizing his future career and opportunities?

I want to refer briefly to recommendation 29 which permits the requirements of the Church of England – which in this context is the scope of the House of Bishops – to override, if necessary, the wishes of the diocesan representatives. Those four diocesan representatives represent the sheep; this process is to seek their new shepherd; the shepherd/flock model, given to us by our Lord himself, surely takes precedence over the needs of the episcopal team? Some other means must be found of bringing in minority interests and theological input, perhaps by advisers. Better still, I think, is that, in ministerial reviews, theological studies might be built into personal development plans so that we grow a resource of theologians across the Church, some of whom will reach the House of Bishops.

Mrs Penny Granger (Ely): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. I beg to move:

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

Mrs Janet Atkinson, in reply: One thing that gave me extreme pleasure a couple of weeks ago was when I was reporting to my other deanery on General Synod matters, not my home deanery of Stockton but the deanery of Sedgefield. Mr Blair does not of course sit on the deanery synod but his election agent and great friend does, so when I was introducing the subject of this report to the deanery synod I said how much it really irritated me to see remarks in the paper and on radio and television that of course the Prime Minister picks the Church of England bishops. I was able to say firmly, with the agent's complete concurrence, 'This is not true.' I then went on and got into a complicated debate about the role of the Women's Institutes, a good story but I had better not go into it now. I will tell you later.

I have been noting down some of the words that recurred over and over again. I should have been more consistent and put little extra 'ones' or had some kind of laptop that counts the words, but these are the words that came up most in the speeches this afternoon, not in any order of magnitude: risk, flexibility, information, culture, openness, justice, fairness, confidentiality, secrecy, transparency, time, pressure, tension and vocation. If we had permed any collection of those words we could have written them into several of our chapters because they are the absolute essence of what our report is about. The fact that they appeared in so many very different speeches encourages me very much in the feeling that I already have from this debate, that you, the Synod, are with us, the working party, in the general direction that we have taken.

The other word which I put in capital letters so that I do not overlook it, as it is only a short word, is of course 'but'. A lot of people, as members so graciously do, began by welcoming the report and saying that there was a lot of good stuff in it. I did say to Colin at one point, 'I feel there's a "but" coming.' Of course people have rubbing points and objections to make. Again, I take a very positive view of these. We did not think that we had got all the answers off pat. If you put any team of about a dozen people together to tackle this question you would get a roughly similar but different-in-detail set of proposals. We are not omniscient; we do not have divine guidance at every turn. We may not have got every detail absolutely right. At some of the suggestions that people made I thought 'Gosh, that's a good idea. I wouldn't be against that,' and with some of the points that people were not happy about I thought, 'Well, yes, we debated this. There were two views in the group. I can see both sides of this argument,' or 'Yes, maybe we haven't got the balance quite right here.'

On the question of people putting their own name in, which would only happen, we say, in exceptional circumstances, I can see why people have scruples about it. I can see the question of a person being disappointed – hope deferred maketh the heart sick; the last thing we want to do is disrupt the ministry of our valued senior people.

So there are quite a few points at which it is absolutely right that the steering committee start not with an entirely clean slate but with a big space in the middle of the slate with some of our recommendations still chalked in round the outside so that it has to fill in the middle of the slate itself.

The Archbishop of York described our processes as labyrinthine; I did not think that it was quite that bad. They are fiddly, some of our suggestions, and maybe we have gone into too much detail; but again a steering committee coming to it with a fresh mind can take a look at that and see if simpler but equally watertight and convincing processes could be brought in. Of course there will be an extra time implication and resource implication, but I for one think that choosing the right people for our bishops is absolutely essential. I know that everybody thinks that their own corner of the work of the Church is essential, but really, goodness me, if we do not get the right leaders we shall be in serious trouble.

I think that it is brilliant that the bishops have not been extremely defensive about the present system. I thought that you all would, fathers-in-God. It is like hospital consultants who say, 'I went through all this when I was a junior doctor. I worked every hour of the week, I had to be up three nights on the trot and it didn't do me any harm, so you lot can just go through it now.' Nobody took that line, however, which was very constructive and gracious of you.

Two people talked about the concept of sheep and goats and asked if these lists would bring in a 'sheep and goats' idea. There are already lists and there are already suggestions about who are sheep and who are goats; we are just wanting to be more open, just changing the taxonomy. You know, 'proud to be a goat' can still be a position that one takes.

I have marked down, but I am not going to have time to comment in detail about, all the points which people made that they were not happy about, but none of them were basic, intrinsic points that would destroy the general ethos of our report, so I feel that I have very little to rebut. It would be daft to go through every detail individually, but even the people who said that this or that is not right would have useful things to feed into the next stage, if we get that far. So I hope that people will forgive me if I do not try to answer everything. I thought that we might have more of a general onslaught about our direction, in which case we would have to fight back and defend our report, but we do not feel defensive; we just feel that there are suggestions that can well be taken up.

I am sorry that Christina Baxter thinks that we are not enough of a gale. When we started our work we were afraid that we would run into criticism for one of two sets of reasons. Some people would say, 'You haven't gone nearly far enough' and want to upskittle the whole Church/State relationship: 'You should have been more radical', and other people would say, 'You've been too radical. You've even looked at interviews, you're wanting open lists, a wider pool of nominations, and this is too much.' We think that we have steered a reasonable middle course and have avoided going overboard in one direction or another.

I loved Mary Johnston's remark about having read the report with grim fascination. We thought that it was a right riveting read, as they say up our way; if it is a good read, which a few people have kindly said, it is entirely due to the drafting skills of Dr Colin Podmore. (*Applause*) He was wonderfully efficient in keeping all the huge amounts of paperwork together and keeping us on top of it all, and also had great felicity with words. We only occasionally got nit-picky about the use of words in this group. I did think at lunchtime today that I was moving in a surreal society. We had a working lunch to talk about our strategy for this afternoon and vibes that people had picked up around the building about how the report was going to go down, and we ended up having a fascinating debate about human embryology and cloning. I began to wonder quite where I was.

Somebody who was going to be critical but, I am glad to say, did not speak used the

rather tasteless expression that our report was 'a bit of a damp squib, Janet'. So I thought 'Ho hum', and started thinking in pyrotechnic terms. The report is not a catherine wheel: it is not going to whiz round in circles going nowhere. It is not a rocket: it is not going to zoom off up into the sky and drop down dead shortly afterwards. It is not a Roman candle: we think that it is a very Anglican approach. It is not a banger: it is not going to jump about making a lot of noise, snapping at your heels. I think that it is a sparkler: it is safe to grasp and it will shed a little much needed light.

The motion was put and carried.

Mrs Janet Atkinson: I beg to move:

'That the Appointments Committee be instructed to appoint a steering group to follow up the recommendations contained in Chapter 7 of the report, in consultation with interested parties, and to report further to the Synod.'

As we did only drink water with our working lunch, if I have become frivolous it is with relief that you have liked our report. Now I will return to seriousness.

This motion follows up what I said in general, that we are not asking for endorsement of all our proposals at this stage but we want, and you have given us, backing in broad terms for the general direction that we have taken. Members have the note from the Business Committee, GS Misc 644, giving information about the process that people have in mind. The recommendations that we are making need to be discussed of course with the people responsible for the system and the staff who run it. If practical difficulties come up, which they probably will, we will have to go for some modification, but we thought it right that detailed practical discussion should now take place on the basis of the clear endorsement that the Synod has given to the broad thrust of our proposals.

A lot of the recommendations would require amendments to the Standing Order governing the Crown Appointments Commission, and vacancy-in-see regulation changes would need to be done separately from that. If we pass this item, the Synod will of course be given the chance to vote in detail on those changes, so members are not having their last chance of putting their oar in today. Some of the other recommendations are addressed to other individuals or bodies, for example, to Their Graces as joint chairmen of the CAC and as Metropolitans of their provinces. If we pass this item the Synod will effectively be commending these recommendations to those concerned, and the follow-up group will work with them, carrying the proposals forward, and report back to Synod, giving Synod the chance to have sight of any modifications which seemed to be necessary.

I therefore very much hope that we will now be able to support this motion.

Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘After the words “Chapter 7 of the report”, *insert* the words “except for recommendation 50, which should be modified to read: ‘Para 16.3 of the Guidance Notes should be revised to the effect that, before the committee makes nominations of candidates for election to the Commission, the committee should be encouraged to consider the need for a balance among its four representatives,’”.’

I speak from the experience of being a member of the vacancy-in-see committee that elected four white representatives from an ethnically diverse diocese. There were several unsatisfactory aspects of the whole vacancy-in-see process in that case. At the time I made representations to the highest authorities about all these aspects.

The one aspect that concerns me here was the failure adequately to follow paragraph 16.3 of the Guidance Notes. Paragraph 16.3 says, ‘That the committee should be encouraged to consider the need for a balance among its representatives.’ Recommendation 50 of this report calls for the deletion of paragraph 16.3. The grounds given are that, with the single transferable vote, there is no possibility of voters taking account of the need for balance. However, the importance of vacancy-in-see committees being aware of the need for balance remains as strong as ever. This is especially true in relation to ethnicity, as we seek to follow up the Stephen Lawrence debate that we had in November. Simply to delete paragraph 16.3 is no kind of answer. Indeed, this is a simplistic proposal that bears the hallmark of the now defunct Elections Review Group, from which we are told it originated.

The report expresses a hope that the recommended introduction of a nomination procedure in the election of the four will make a balance more likely. Surely this hope could be made more realistic by retaining the spirit of paragraph 16.3? The wording could be modified so that it applies to the nominations stage rather than to the voting stage, as at present. In other words, responsibility would be placed on individual members of the committee, when making decisions about proposing or seconding candidates, to ensure that significant elements in the diversity of the diocese were included in the field for the election of the four. This is the effect of the amendment in my name. Of course the detail may need to be changed by the steering group to be appointed.

I ask Synod to support this amendment today to ensure that a recognition of the importance of balance remains enshrined in the Guidance Notes.

Mrs Janet Atkinson: I would like to co-opt Miss Gnanadoss, after the event, on to the working party because this is absolutely what we had in mind. It is very difficult to combine balance with the system of voting that we have because you cannot see when you vote what the outcome will desirably be. That is why we suggested nominations: it was to make this aim of balance more likely to happen; and to have the aspiration of

balance written into the Guidance Notes would, I think, just make more explicit what we were trying to do. We welcome the amendment.

Mr Barry Barnes (Southwark): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and carried.

The Chairman: We return to debate on the main motion as amended.

Mr Barry Barnes (Southwark): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The motion was put and carried in the following amended form:

‘That the Appointments Committee be instructed to appoint a steering group to follow up the recommendations contained in chapter 7 of the report – except for recommendation 50, which should be modified to read, “Para 16.3 of the Guidance Notes should be revised to the effect that, before the committee makes nominations of candidates for election to the Commission, the committee should be encouraged to consider the need for a balance among its four representatives” – in consultation with interested parties, and to report further to the Synod.’

THE CHAIR *Mr James Humphery (Salisbury)* took the Chair at 5.15 p.m.

Ecumenical Issues (GS 1425)

Report by the Council for Christian Unity

The Chairman: In place of a formal debate on the report we are going to hear a presentation from the CCU under SO 95A. I hope that there will be 15 or 20 minutes for questions after the presentation but in view of the time I will be able to take only a handful of questions, so I want to give notice that when the time comes I will be looking for succinct questions which open up the topic before us; statements or speeches will not be in order.

The Bishop of Peterborough (Rt Revd Ian Cundy): I want to thank members of Synod who have the stamina to remain towards the end of a tiring afternoon.

There are several initiatives involving the Church of England that are likely to come to Synod during the quinquennium, and the purpose of this presentation is to set the scene and provide the context for future debates. Ecumenical developments tend to mature gradually, like good wine. The process of discerning the truth of new insights and of receiving them into the life of the Church does not always lend itself to formal debate. Relations between Churches need to be nurtured with sensitivity and over time.

The CCU is grateful for the opportunity to make this presentation to the General Synod. Some members may feel that it is a little overdue and would have liked more opportunities to discuss these issues, but early in the life of a new Synod seems to me the right time to set out what we have achieved and the opportunities ahead of us, and to prepare for more detailed debates in the future.

The ecumenical movement is vast and complex. The quest for unity is carried on at parochial, diocesan, regional, national and international levels, all of which benefit from CCU's support, guidance and resourcing. In the time available to us we must inevitably be rather selective. Our aim therefore is to highlight the principal aspects of ecumenism that affect the Church of England at the moment.

The paper GS 1425 gives a brief introduction to the CCU, its work and its staff. The presentation will be made by me as Chairman, Elizabeth Fisher, recently elected as vice-chairman for a second term, and the Bishop of Chichester, Chairman of the Faith and Order Advisory Group and a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, together with Dr Paul Avis, our general secretary.

Before handing the microphone to Paul, I want to take this opportunity as chairman to pay tribute to him and to the small and dedicated staff team who carry much of the responsibility for furthering our rich variety of relationships with other Churches. Their expertise and commitment is not only valued by ourselves; it is also much appreciated by our partners. It is also good to have both Flora Winfield and Charles Hill in this chamber this afternoon.

Revd Dr Paul Avis: The modern ecumenical movement is now more than a century old. Attempts to heal the wounds of division in the Body of Christ can be traced back to New Testament times, but it was not until the nineteenth century, on the mission field, that Christians generally began to be deeply troubled about their divisions. There was no doubt that separation between Churches and competition on the part of Churches and their agencies damaged the credibility of the gospel. Lack of unity undermined the Church's mission.

In 1910 the International Missionary Conference was held at Edinburgh in an attempt to grapple with the issue of unity for the sake of mission, but those concerned in that conference soon discovered that they could make little headway unless they were also able to discuss questions of faith and order, questions of doctrine, ministry and

authority. So the faith and order movement was born. In 1948 it was incorporated into the new World Council of Churches. The faith and order movement still flourishes today, as we shall shortly hear.

The classical biblical text of the ecumenical movement has always been John 17.21: 'May they all be one ... that the world may believe.' The indissoluble biblical connection between mission and unity has run like a golden thread through the ecumenical movement. Like all movements, however, it has sometimes seemed to be an end in itself or just an option for those who like that sort of thing. Ecumenism can become cosy, lazy and tired, just like everything else. However, at its heart remains a God-given vision, one that is biblically and theologically grounded. The quest for unity is neither sentimental nor pragmatic; it is a matter of obedience to the will of God revealed in Scripture.

What do we mean by unity? There are several different models to work from. The approach of the Council for Christian Unity is that of the faith and order movement as a whole; it is also that of the Lambeth Conferences, going back to the 1920 Appeal to All Christian People; and it is that of the General Synod over many years. In essence, it is this. The unity of the Church is God's gift. It is something that we humbly receive and joyfully celebrate. It is already a reality: 'There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all' (Ephesians 4).

However, as well as a gift, unity is also a task to which we are called. The grace of God in Christ always calls for a human response of acceptance and obedience. That calling is to realize more and more what God has already given us in Christ. As we do this, we play our part in fulfilling God's gracious plan. God's purpose – God's mission – is to unite or gather together all things in Christ (Ephesians 1.10). So there is, we might say, a unity dimension of mission, and a mission dimension of unity.

Christian unity is rooted in the Church's heart but it is expressed in the Church's life. Just as Jesus Christ is an embodied, visible, incarnate Saviour, so the unity of his Body must be an embodied and visible unity. The ecumenical movement has seen visible unity as having several facets, each of which is important in making united witness and shared service a reality: first, proclaiming the one gospel and confessing the one Faith; then, sharing one baptism and celebrating a common Eucharist; next, having a single, interchangeable ordained ministry; and, finally, sharing patterns of oversight that enable us to consult, decide and act together. It is work on these issues that forms the building blocks of ecumenical dialogues in which we are engaged.

Mrs Elizabeth Fisher: I would like to introduce some important developments in European ecumenism.

The Church of England is fully involved in the European scene in two main ways. The first is through a series of agreements with Lutheran and Reformed traditions. The Meissen Agreement with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Reuilly

agreement, recently signed in Canterbury cathedral and in Paris, with the French Protestant Churches, are interim agreements. On the basis of the theological agreement and a shared vision of the goal of full visible unity, we make a Common Declaration. We acknowledge each other as Churches belonging to the one Church of Christ, in which the ministry of Word, Sacrament and oversight is authentically carried out. We commit ourselves to work together in the cause of the gospel and to go on to seek visible unity, including the interchangeability of ministries.

The Porvoo Agreement with most Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches goes further than Meissen or Reuilly. On the basis of theological agreement, including agreement on episcopal oversight, and on the basis of a common order, the Porvoo Churches have entered into communion. Subject to the rules of the Churches concerned, there is interchangeability of ministries and a real experience of consultation and episcopal collegiality.

We have a map showing the location of our Porvoo partners and some photographs of the celebration and signing of the agreement.

In both Meissen and Porvoo there are all sorts of links and twinings, between parishes, dioceses and cathedrals, together with theological and mission work, all of which the Council for Christian Unity actively supports.

The Church of England is also involved in the Conference of European Churches (CEC), which has member Churches from every country in Europe. It works closely with the forum of Roman Catholic Bishops' Conferences. CEC, which is obviously non-Roman Catholic, and the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference have recently sponsored the *Carta Oecumenica* which is a manifesto for promoting good practice in inter-Church relationships in Europe. The Bishop of London is our representative on the central committee of CEC.

Speaking of ecumenical instruments, let us also recognize the work of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and Churches Together in England. These bring together a number of Churches, including Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the Baptist Union and the Methodist Church. They also provide a link with many small Christian Churches. The purpose of these instruments is to facilitate the Churches' working together, not to do their work for them. They reflect nationally the strength of Churches Together in counties and local communities where the Church of England is committed to working with partner Churches in mission and service, and this is also expressed through the participation of many bishops in Church leaders' meetings and covenants and through local ecumenical partnerships of various kinds. In support of this work, the CCU works in partnership with diocesan ecumenical officers. Staff are always ready to offer advice and share good practice in these areas.

The global ecumenical instrument is of course the World Council of Churches. Synod had a debate on the WCC two years ago and expressed its 'critical solidarity' with the

WCC. Recently a senior delegation from our Church visited the WCC in Geneva to reinforce the call made by the Synod and by the last Lambeth Conference for the WCC to continue to reform itself so that it can better serve the fellowship of Churches that comprise it. The delegation will shortly be reporting to the Archbishops' Council and the Synod through the Council for Christian Unity. However, do not be surprised if, as a Synod member, you find yourself being asked to serve on the representative gatherings of these four instruments from time to time. You have been warned!

The Bishop of Peterborough: One of the most striking features of the ecumenical movement is the burgeoning of dialogue. It sometimes seems to me that everybody is talking to everybody else. Of course Jesus did not pray that his disciples might just engage in theological dialogue; he prayed that they might be one; but dialogue, together with the experience of worshipping, witnessing and serving together, is a means to that goal. It must never become an end in itself, but it can clear away misunderstandings, set out common ground and clarify areas of difficulty.

As a Church we continue to be in dialogue with many Churches and communions. As far as formal conversations are concerned, the Church of England is currently only engaged with the Methodist Church. There are more than two centuries of history to this relationship but the present conversations stem from an approach from the Methodist Church in 1994 to engage in exploratory 'talks about talks'. These produced *Commitment to Mission and Unity*, debated by the General Synod and by the Methodist Conference. As a result the formal conversations were set up in 1997-98 to enable our Churches to take a significant step towards the goal of visible unity. They were specifically asked not to devise a unity scheme but to lay the groundwork for the future by drawing up a common statement, on the model of the Meissen Agreement with the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Fetter Lane Agreement with the Moravian Church.

The context of these conversations is unique in several ways. First, it reflects the warm and fruitful relations between Methodists and Anglicans locally, regionally and nationally. Second, the agenda could be described as unfinished business between our two Churches, especially after the failure of unity schemes in the early 1970s. Third, in spite of that failure, the previous conversations have established a common understanding of episcopacy as a 'sign and token of the unity and continuity of the Church of Jesus Christ'. That has recently been affirmed by the Methodist Conference in expressing its willingness in principle to adopt the historic episcopate in the context of steps to unity within the Church of Christ.

While the formal conversations have been in progress, we have been actively involved in encouraging the further development of relationships between local Churches and between deaneries and circuits, dioceses and districts, by stimulating Churches to think creatively and participate in this deepening relationship. Opportunities for growing together at every level of both our Churches' lives, and examples of good practice, are set out in our recent publication *Releasing Energy* (GS 599). We anticipate that the

report of the formal conversations will be published towards the end of the year and will come to the Synod next July.

In addition, through the CCU, the Church of England is engaged in various informal conversations: with the United Reformed Church (an important trilateral conversation also involving the Methodists), the Baptist Union of Great Britain, and the Church of Scotland. Through English ARC (the English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee) we relate at the national level to the Roman Catholic Church, and there are also various links with the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

As members will see from GS 1425, our relationship with the Orthodox is an area that the CCU would like to develop and strengthen in the present quinquennium, together with work with the Evangelical constituencies and the Black Majority Churches.

The Bishop of Chichester (Rt Revd John Hind): I want to bring in some of the international dialogues and to relate them to the multilateral theological work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, in which nearly all main Christian traditions are represented. It is just worth fleshing that out: the Roman Catholic Church is not part of the World Council of Churches but is fully involved as an equal partner in the Faith and Order Commission, as indeed are some Pentecostal and Evangelical groups who find difficulties with the World Council.

An important milestone of ecumenical convergence was the Lima statement of 1982 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Anglicans played a very important part in helping to shape that document, and in its turn it has helped to shape our own approach, especially to questions of the apostolic nature of the Church and the place of episcopacy in it. This has proved particularly useful in opening up some possibilities of ecumenical rapprochement between episcopal and non-episcopal Churches and, in the case of the Porvoo Churches, between episcopal Churches which understood that ministry differently.

The responses from the different Churches to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* have revealed clearly that beneath agreements and disagreements about sacraments often lie different understandings of the nature and mystery of the Church. So the Faith and Order Commission is now working on a sequel to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, which currently has the title *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* although it might be getting a slightly zappier title as it goes on; and it is hoped that it might become as valuable and useful to the ecumenical movement as *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* has. It is at a very early stage at the moment. FOAG has responded in some detail to the first draft and in due course I hope that the mature document will come to this Synod and I hope very much that it will receive the same encouraging response from Synod that *BEM* did in its day.

I wish that I had time to say something about the international dialogues between the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Churches, the Oriental Orthodox Churches,

the Lutheran World Federation and the Baptist World Alliance. I would like to be able to say something about the very stimulating and excellent agreement from the Anglican-Reformed dialogue and its report *God's Reign and our Unity* which is one of the real theological milestones of the ecumenical movement, but I have not got time for that so I will focus simply on Anglican-Roman Catholic relations.

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) is one of the longest-running and most productive of bilateral international dialogues. Its *Final Report* of 1982 is a curiously misnamed document because ARCIC is still going strong, but of course the 'final' in the title referred to the original task set for the Commission and not to the wider range of issues on which agreement would be a necessary preliminary to progress towards the agreed goal of the restoration of full communion.

Since the late 1960s representatives of the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church have worked on issues of ministry, the Eucharist, authority, justification, ecclesiology, ethics, and authority again. Our Church has responded officially to some of this material but much still remains to be reflected on and its insights evaluated. The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, which was set up following the last Lambeth Conference and on which I serve, together with the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe-designate and the general secretary of the Council for Christian Unity, is in the process of referring or, I have to say with some sadness, re-referring ARCIC material to the provinces of the Communion. IASCIER (horrible acronym) has been given the special task of scrutinizing ecumenical developments involving Anglican Churches, from the point of view of consistency.

It is quite difficult that so much material has been sent to the member Churches and so little response has actually come back. For example, the report *The Gift of Authority* is out for study and evaluation by appropriate bodies in the member Churches. English ARC has discussed this report, and FOAG hopes to issue its own study of this important document before long. The period of theological study will then be followed by one of synodical response, in which the General Synod will have its part to play.

In connection with Anglican-Roman Catholic relations worldwide, we should note several other developments. First, alongside theological dialogue there is now a new joint episcopal commission stemming from the meeting last year hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Cassidy at Mississauga, near Toronto. The Bishop of Rochester represents the Church of England on this as well as being a member of ARCIC itself. Second, there was the encouraging encyclical of Pope John Paul II in 1995 *Ut Unum Sint* in which the Pope asked other Churches and their theologians to help him understand how his universal ministry should be exercised. I said 'encouraging': it is a remarkable thing that a Pope should actually address that kind of question.

Our own House of Bishops replied, with help from FOAG, in *May They All Be One*

which both welcomed the initiative itself and most of the content of *Ut Unum Sint*, while raising, as the Pope had himself asked, questions where we feel that further clarification is needed and where we would need substantial reassurance about the actual exercise, as well as some aspects of the principles, of papal primatial authority.

Third, we do need to recognize that not everything is positive. Not many other Anglicans or other Churches have responded to *Ut Unum Sint*. That is a pity, after nearly six years, especially in the case of those who have not bothered to respond to *Ut Unum Sint* but responded very quickly and negatively to the famous document *Dominus Iesus* from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published last year, appearing alongside a note on the use of the term 'sister churches'. I have no time to go into detail about either of those documents, although it is fair to say that they have not always been quite fairly or correctly interpreted. There is an important thing for us to recognize, however. It is not a secret that the Vatican, so far from being a monolithic organization in which everyone speaks with one voice, contains a number of departments as well as individuals who take quite different positions on a number of sensitive matters. It is very important that we should actually recognize that and help evaluate what sometimes feel like slightly conflicting signals in that context. It is important for us to remember that the tone, as well as the content, of *Dominus Iesus* have received as much criticism within the Roman Catholic Church as they have from outside it.

One particularly sad consequence of the publication of *Dominus Iesus* was that it appeared just as our own response to the British and Irish Roman Catholic bishops' document *One Bread One Body* was nearing completion. As is well known, the Church of England shares a very substantial common understanding with the Roman Catholic Church of the way in which the Eucharist and the Church relate to each other, but we do draw very different conclusions indeed from the Roman Catholic Church on the implications of that for eucharistic hospitality and particularly for the spiritual and pastoral care of inter-Church families. As Synod members will be aware, the House of Bishops, again with the help of FOAG, has responded with *The Eucharist: Sacrament of Unity*; it may not often be that an ecumenical statement becomes a best-seller, but this has, and I think that that reflects the deep interest and concern with which many people in both our Churches and indeed many of our ecumenical friends follow these issues.

FOAG is hoping also to publish next year, in conjunction with the Council for Christian Unity, a major statement on ecumenical policy and method, and it is hoped that this will gather together what the General Synod has said in its positive response to various ecumenical agreements and what the House of Bishops has said in a series of statements which FOAG has helped it with. It will relate these to Scripture and to the Church of England's historic formularies. It will reflect on how we do ecumenism in the Church of England, and affirm the need for all our traditions to feel that they have a stake in this. It will take seriously the imperative of mission and do justice to the need for diversity. It will examine the goal of unity and the process by which we approach it, the stages on the way.

That brings the time allotted to this presentation to an end, but members, staff and consultants of CCU hope that you have found this interesting and perhaps illuminating (perhaps another of Janet Atkinson's sparklers) and that the General Synod will continue to support the Church of England in its commitment to the full visible unity of Christ's Church.

The Chairman: Thank you, Bishop, for that presentation. I am sure that both old and new members of Synod will have found it a very helpful prelude to issues that I am sure will find their way on to our agenda in the next four or five years or so.

I am going to take questions, and to start with I want to take them in two batches of three questions each and then see where we get to. First, I want to invite questions (not statements) on the ecumenical conversations to which the Bishop of Peterborough referred in his part of the presentation; then I want to go on and take three questions on the international and faith and order issues, to which the Bishop of Chichester spoke.

Mr Frank Knaggs (Newcastle): Ecumenical relations: I have been on the Council for Christian Unity for ten years so I have a little insight into this. The relationships between various Churches have always been a puzzle to me, and I want to get some clarification. For instance, the Reully and Meissen Agreements do not allow for interchangeability of ministers. Is this because the only ministry that we will accept is an episcopally ordained minister in the historic succession, or is it not?

Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark): Is it not particularly helpful that, in a recent meeting with a pilgrimage that I was leading to Rome, Cardinal Walter Kasper said that the intention of the secretariat in future would be to acknowledge very clearly that unity does not mean uniformity and that the Roman Catholic Church, as he put it, needs to look much more closely at the Anglican experience with lay synods?

The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds (Rt Revd John Packer): In view of the warmth of relationships between Methodists and Anglicans, to which the Bishop of Peterborough referred, and the common understanding of episcopacy of which he also spoke, could he explain why we have used the Meissen and Fetter Lane pattern for the conversations between ourselves and the Methodists rather than the Porvoo pattern?

The Chairman: Bishop, before you reply, could you hold Mr Sutcliffe's question till the next batch, when we look at the more international issues?

The Bishop of Peterborough: The Bishop of course has an advantage in that as a member of the House of Bishops he has seen the text of the Anglican-Methodist conversations, but –

The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds (Rt Revd John Packer): You said that that was the pattern, though.

The Bishop of Peterborough: Yes, I quite agree.

Unity always proceeds by stages, and it was, I think, this Synod, in debating *Commitment to Mission and Unity*, which felt that we should do so and pointed us to the Meissen Agreement as a possible way forward. The conversations have obviously taken that on, and it is important that we do not rush our fences and that we do agree carefully what we can agree together. Many of us in Synod and on CCU hope that we can proceed to the next stage, but the judgement of the Synod, I think, was that actually to promote a unity scheme that went all the way, as Porvoo might do, into full interchangeability of ministers was possibly asking too much at this stage. However, that is obviously where we are hoping to go.

Frank has been a member of CCU, as he said, for many years, and I am sorry if the result of his membership is that this point is not clear to him. Anglicans committed themselves years ago to the Anglican quadrilateral as a basis for our relationships with other Churches, and that remains the Anglican position, endorsed by successive Lambeth Conferences over many years. Again, it is very similar to what I have just said: we proceed by stages and we look forward to the day when we do have full interchangeability of ministers and we have a common structure – not uniformity (that is the next question) but unity; and it is in that light that the differences between these two conversations, Meissen and Porvoo, need to be understood. However, the basic Anglican position remains its commitment to the Lambeth quadrilateral. I do not know if the chairman of FOAG wants to add anything?

The Chairman: Could we have three questions on faith and order issues, please, to accompany Mr Sutcliffe's?

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): First, I would like to thank you very much for putting on this presentation today because I have to say that over the past five and a half years it is the first time that I can remember having an explanatory session on ecumenism, and I find that very helpful. I became a Synod member in 1995 and I have had to wait a long time for this.

I think that in ecumenism we are very long on procedure and very long on initials and very short on a crisp analysis of the problem areas. What I would like to ask is based on this. Ecumenism is not a business built for longevity; there is no pride to be taken in the ARCIC discussions being the longest-running. It is a series of projects whose success can be measured by achieving the end result. What I would like to ask for is an analysis, which maybe could be done on an Excel spreadsheet or something like that, setting out all the various bilateral discussions that we have going on, with all the faith and order issues running along the top, and actually setting out what the specific problems are with a specific relationship, so that we can contribute to sorting out those problems and not just having a long monologue of the procedures and initials.

Mrs Alison Ruoff (London): I put down a Question yesterday asking when the ARCIC

report might be debated. The answer was 'within this quinquennium'. I would like to have it debated because I think that it is important. I want to know about this length of time. Are we waiting for the Pope to die or what is the problem? Cardinal Ratzinger – as we have heard, not by name, but that there are problems – is probably one of those in the Vatican who is not in favour, regarding the Anglican Communion as a second-class citizen.

Mrs Mary Bordass (Salisbury): I wonder if there are a few minutes for the Bishop of Chichester to tell us something about the informal conversations that are taking place with the Orthodox Church, please.

The Bishop of Chichester: I cannot tell you very much about the Orthodox dialogue; it is not something that I know much about. What I can say is that, after a rather difficult period in the 1990s, there is now a real commitment on both sides to re-establishing that dialogue, and the first meeting was held quite recently. I think that things are better than they were.

Going back to Mr Sutcliffe's very helpful point, it deserves rather longer consideration. It was Pope John XXIII who talked about the importance of distinguishing between the Faith and its formulations, and there is a growing recognition that unity not only need not involve uniformity but must not involve uniformity; this is one of the greater discoveries of the ecumenical movement as we have gone along. It may actually be part of the answer to Gavin Oldham's point about the length of process. People 40 years ago had some rather dewy ideas about how quickly we could do it. Unity by 1980? There was actually a Roman Catholic book written in 1990 about unity by 2000, envisaging unity between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches by the turn of the millennium.

It may partly be that, as time goes on, we have become a bit more realistic about the timescale; we have certainly come up against some of those hard crunch issues that are just below the surface in parts of this conversation. I am very glad that you heard and put the name to Cardinal Kasper. Walter Kasper was one of the Vatican staff members at the Mississauga meeting of Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops last year. He had not met many Anglicans before, and he was one of a number of people on both sides who had their eyes really opened as they travelled together on a journey and discovered one another; it is to him that we owed that marvellous line, which I think appeared in the official report of the meeting, about one day, some time in the future, we will wake up and rub our eyes in disbelief at the wonders of what God has done with us. That is the kind of person that we have heading up the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity now. His discussions with his fellow German theologian, already mentioned, are well known and illustrate clearly the creative and live debate on these issues that is going on in the Roman Catholic Church at the moment. I am just really glad to be able to endorse and underline that.

Gavin Oldham asked for a clear spreadsheet of analyses and outcomes and so on. If I

can give just one concrete example, I think we may be able to do something about it, I do not know. As a person who some years ago put round the Synod a little series of badges for the initiation services revision committee which read 'We do it longest', I take Mr Oldham's point that longevity is not necessarily a sign of excellence, but I think that the story of ARCIC is a very illustrative one. The ARCIC process was kicked off definitively in 1968 with the Malta report. This envisaged a twin-track approach to our relationships. One was a theological dialogue to identify the areas where agreement was difficult and had to be achieved, and alongside that there was to be a commission to oversee shared life and actual growth of the Churches together. Unfortunately, only the theological dialogue was picked up, and one of the reasons why the Mississauga meeting was necessary last year was that after 30 years you discover that you can spend a lot of time talking to each other but unless you actually translate that into changed relationships people do begin to wonder what is going on. So it was a very apposite question and I hope that the CCU will be able to respond to it.

Revd Dr Paul Avis: I would just like to add a postscript to that, if I may, Chairman. There were two questions raising issues of timetable and length of time and that sort of thing. We need to look at this quite carefully because ecumenism is not simply about analysing issues and doing a sort of breakdown of questions and answers; it is something that happens in the personal dimension, and it is above all about nurturing relationships, building up trust, learning to worship together as far as we can, learning to witness and serve together and rejoice in one another's fellowship. Those things do take time to come about. Our presentation said of ARCIC that it was one of the longest-running and *most productive*, and those two things go together; to be productive you have to take time. Of course it would not do if ARCIC had been going on for 30 years and we were still where we started, but it has been productive of a whole series of reports – some of them controversial but there is no harm in that, necessarily – which the Church must grapple with.

That brings me to Mrs Ruoff's question about the exact timetable for the General Synod to tackle the backlog of ARCIC reports. I do not think that the proposals of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations have yet been published. It was discussed during the past winter. It so happens that the Bishop of Chichester, the Bishop in Europe and I are members of that so we are in the know, and we are already making preparations for the time when that timetable is published. Broadly, it falls into two parts: first of all, a process of study by appropriate groups such as our own Faith and Order Advisory Group, which already has made a flying start on this, and then a subsequent process of synodical response. It is that which enables us to feel confident in saying that that matter will be brought to the Synod during the present quinquennium.

The Chairman: I am mindful of the Bishop of Rochester's injunction earlier this afternoon not to leave theology until last, so perhaps I can move it up into third place in our running order and ask for a couple of questions on the theology of ecumenism, building on the remarks made by Dr Paul Avis in his part of the presentation.

Revd John Cook (London): I hope that it is appropriate to ask this question at this stage. When the General Synod approved the ARCIC *Final Report* in 1986, Rome did not respond, I think, until 1991. Is it the case that that was because they, as I understand it, insisted that their doctrine of the Eucharist and Mass be set out in more explicit terms and, really, wanting to re-express the Council of Trent's formulations (which gives me great concern)? If that is the case, does that not contradict not only our canon law but also our Anglican historic formularies? We need to think about that very carefully in the process and also these doctrines.

The Chairman: I did say that I was looking for questions on theology.

Mr David Warner (St Albans): I hope that this has theological implications. Is it worth reminding Synod that the Lambeth quadrilateral does not use the phrase 'apostolic succession' but 'apostolic ministry', i.e. it is the style of authority, not necessarily the unbroken literal connection?

The Bishop of Chichester: Mr Cook was told that it was not theology; I thought that it was a very theological question – although there was a bit of history there as well, and I would like to try to respond to it.

The history is wrong because the delay in the Vatican response was not for the reason that was alleged. I think that what Mr Cook is referring to is the document called *Clarifications*, about which we need to talk on another occasion; but the Vatican response was mixed. There was something of a spat going on, not for the first time, between the Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and those who are used to reading ecumenical texts can do some quite interesting investigations by going through the Vatican responses and discovering which bits are where. We all do that; this is not to say that the Roman Catholic Church is behaving differently from the way we do it because you can analyse our texts in response in exactly the same way.

Within the Roman Catholic Church, Mr Cook, there are certainly those who want to do precisely what you fear, but there are many who appreciate fully the evolving ecumenical methods to which we are all so indebted and which have so radically changed the landscape in the past decades. I want to read you just one paragraph from our response to *BEM* and *ARCIC*. (We decided that it was very important that when we responded as a Synod we responded to those two texts, the multilateral and the bilateral texts, together.)

All the dialogues look for ways of reconciling antithetical positions, avoiding the terms in which the antithesis was originally put forward. This method suggests that whatever may have been the case in the past is now no longer necessarily so. While there can be no justification in theological dialogue for glossing over differences, it is accepted that the pursuit of restatement is possible. That is, not more eirenic restatements

of where we once were, nor even restatements of where we are now in our separation, but restatements of our common Christian heritage. The dialogues, therefore, avoid controversial language and attempt to re-examine and reappropriate our common heritage offered to us in the Scriptures and tradition.

There has to be a real ecumenism of the heart, to want to learn to recognize the face of Jesus Christ in those from whom we are currently separated, and we may well discover something about our own faith that way. There are lots of pitfalls in that procedure, of course: growing is always painful and we do have to be careful to make sure that we do not throw out the baby with the bathwater; but ecumenism, the unity for which Christ prayed, will not come unless we are all prepared to change and to realize that there are things that we have to learn from one another. One of the great gains of our Reformation was the refusal to accept post-, non- or anti-biblical traditions that had built up, for the sake of returning to the fountain-head.

I would hate to see us treat our sixteenth-century formularies in the way in which our sixteenth-century reformers rejected the traditions that they had inherited, because it seems to me that for freedom we have been set free, and we are free to look again, with our ecumenical partners, at the one face of Jesus Christ and discover how we grow together. (Sorry, that is a sermon!)

The other point was about the Lambeth quadrilateral, a rich text, well over a century old now. You are correct in one sense but I think that, if you have read carefully our own report *Apostolicity and Succession*, which provided such an important part of the context in which the Porvoo Agreement was being made, and read that in the light of the work that has been done in the World Council of Churches on the nature of *episcopate* and apostolicity over the years, you will recognize that when we talk about the apostolic succession we are not talking about one thing only; we are talking about the continuity through time of the one Church of Jesus Christ, served by a number of instruments which interlock with one another. Certainly when St Irenaeus was formulating his vision of the apostolic succession, what was so important was: how can we be confident that the Church of which we are part is teaching authoritatively the one gospel of Jesus Christ? He traced it in that way. Of course, the Scriptures, you see, are part of the way in which we do it, and so a bishop cannot be in the authentic succession if he does not stand fairly in the tradition of the Scriptures because that is the apostolic faith. So in one way I think that you are right, but I think that it is too simple to put it like that; these things all interlock.

The Chairman: I am looking now for a couple of questions about the European scene on which Mrs Fisher spoke.

Revd David Griffiths (Manchester): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. Would you be prepared to accept some questions about what is happening at a local level?

The Bishop of Peterborough: I would be delighted.

The Chairman: The Bishop is ready, so I am ready. At the same time, if there is anyone who wishes to ask a question on the European scene ...?

Revd David Griffiths (Manchester): I would like to know what is happening at local level, what consultations are going on between dioceses, Methodist districts and URC regions – I think that that is the right designation – in planning and development. What consultations are going on or what are the trends in setting up local ecumenical projects?

Miss Rosalind Fuller (Winchester): Could you tell me something about the formal conversations with the Methodists: what is our common understanding of episcopacy?

The Chairman: While the Council are thinking about that one, I will ask for another question.

Revd Brian Leathers (Derby): I note with interest that the Council for Christian Unity states on page 1 in GS 1425 that it ‘facilitates informal, exploratory ... conversations with churches at home’. With the naive view of a new Synod member, I hope that this means that the CCU is visionary and proactive in working with various forms of Christian unity. Over the past couple of years I have become aware of what is to me a new form of unity which seems to be breaking out across the country. I hope that the CCU would seek to be involved, as this may be the start of a new God-given wave of unity at a local level. I have seen the work and commitment involved in –

The Chairman: Could you ask your question, please?

Revd Brian Leathers (Derby): Right. There is a concept of one church in an area, in many congregations. I believe that the CCU should be involved in this unity move as it gets going, and I am asking its members to tell me that they are already involved and that they know that it is going on.

The Bishop of Peterborough: Chairman, would I have your permission to ask Flora Winfield to say a little bit about the local scene and then Mrs Fisher could helpfully answer some of that by talking about some of the ecumenical things that are going on in theological education in which she is involved? Then Paul can deal with the one about episcopacy in the formal conversations.

Revd Flora Winfield: I would like to thank Mr Griffiths very much indeed for his question, which gives me this opportunity to share briefly with you small pieces of news about an enormous movement which is indeed happening, a change in our style of thinking and action at every level of the Church’s life, particularly in dioceses and districts and URC provinces and in deaneries and circuits, where there is almost so much new work going on that it is difficult to keep in touch with the developments as

they come in, week by week. Only tomorrow I have made an arrangement to meet people from the Northallerton area who have begun a whole range of exciting projects, bringing together the deanery and the circuit, not only sharing worship and pastoral care and service to the local community but also running an exciting and innovative IT training project to help people in isolated rural areas back into work.

So we are not just looking at united worship and prayer and at a round of churchy activities, although those church-based things are hugely important; we are also looking at practical change in the way we serve together and proclaim the gospel in its most clear and obvious expression, through our very lives as churches. I know that, in addition, a number of dioceses and districts – at least three but there may be more – are looking at working towards a new kind of relationship with one another as Anglicans and Methodists in the process of their developing relationships, in the context of the formal conversations, particularly in expressing through a covenant made with one another a new kind of commitment to share resources and to work together across their shared geographical area.

Of course there are many factors which continue to limit ways in which we can share and develop our work together. Mr Griffiths also mentioned local ecumenical partnerships; there is no time for me to go into that subject in great detail, but one of the points about LEPs is that they provide us with the opportunity to say, 'The Church's mission, God's mission, in this place is so important that we are not going to allow it to be limited by the usual constraints which shape and form our lives. We are going to live beyond those constraints but, as Anglicans, within the framework provided by the canons, the ecumenical Canons B 43 and 44. We are going to live within that framework in new and creative ways, finding some lateral thinking together and looking together for solutions to the challenges facing all of us.' Those LEPs, in making possible a creative response to mission challenges, are not only about mission in specific local areas; they also work in a whole range of things like chaplaincy, local broadcasting and other forms of witness and service.

So the answer to Mr Griffiths's question is that the range of exciting things happening at all these different levels and places in the Church's life is far too great for me to go into in detail but that there is a tremendous and encouraging wealth of enthusiastic work going on. I do encourage those of you who have come across the publication *Releasing Energy*, which came out this time last year, to respond to it by writing to us and telling us about the sorts of thing that are developing in your local situation.

Mrs Elizabeth Fisher: I just want to add a footnote and to say that we live in a time of opportunity. The Dearing report has just come out and suggested that there should be 100 more Church secondary schools. Some of those can be ecumenical, and there are examples of joint Church schools with the Roman Catholics and the Church of England, and the Methodist Church and the Church of England. Surely we should be looking at opportunities for more ecumenical schools?

However, I do not have much time so I just want to underline what we do in theological education in the training of ordained ministers in our Churches. All the non-residential courses are ecumenical to some extent. Many of the theological residential colleges are ecumenical to a certain extent, and one that I know slightly better than the others is jointly Anglican- and Methodist-sponsored and has URC candidates too. However, it is no good just expecting people to learn together and to pray together during their training; they have to be enabled to be deployed together so that they can work together in ordained ministry. So I want to ask the bishops and the chairmen of Methodist districts how we can deploy people together who have learnt their ecumenical theology together. It is by getting people to be deployed together and work together in ordained ministry that we might see the further ecumenical development on the ground that Mr Griffiths is looking for.

Revd Dr Paul Avis: I have less than one minute in which to respond to Rosalind Fuller's very interesting question. (She is a member of CCU.) First of all, we must distinguish between *episcopate* and episcopacy. They are not quite the same, although they overlap. Episcopate is the New Testament Greek word for pastoral oversight and pastoral responsibility; episcopacy as we know it is one expression or form of that. Second, there is an ecumenical consensus, built up over many decades, about the nature of *episcopate* and its possible expression in episcopacy, and the essence of that is that episcopacy is seen as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church. Finally, when the report of the formal conversations is published towards the end of the year, the extent of the agreement between the Anglican and Methodist traditions in this country will be set out. The conversations do not have to resolve this particular issue because they are only a stage, but they will point the way to the future.

The Chairman: I would like to thank the Council for Christian Unity both for its presentation and for dealing with those questions so fully.

(Adjournment)

THE CHAIR *Mrs Margaret Swinson (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 8.30 p.m.

EXTENSION OF SITTING

The Chairman: Members of the Synod will be aware that there are a large number of members wishing to speak this evening and that there are seven amendments. A warning was given earlier that a three-minute speech limit will be imposed from an early stage in order to enable as many as possible to contribute to the debate; but I would also like at this stage to extend the sitting by not more than 15 minutes in order to contribute to the time that we have available. Does that have the general consent of the Synod? *(Agreed)*

In order that as many views as possible can be heard, it is my intention, after a few speeches, to adjourn the Synod for three minutes to enable members to discuss with