

# Fifth Day

## Tuesday 10 July 2001

THE CHAIR *Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans)* took the Chair at 9.30 a.m.

*The Archdeacon of Barnstaple (Ven. Trevor Lloyd)* and *Miss Jayne Ozanne* led the Synod in prayer.

*Review of Synodical Government (GS 1412)*  
Second Report by the Bridge Follow-up Group

*The Chairman:* I would like to inform Synod that when we come to the next item I intend to take the amendments in the order in which they appear on the order paper, but I propose to take Mr Webster's amendment at the beginning.

*The Archdeacon of Tonbridge (Ven. Judith Rose):* I beg to move:

'That the Synod do take note of this Report.'

Mr Chairman, I was glad to be reminded that we continue to be working with the Spirit, even this morning. I certainly need it; I am sure that we all do.

In 1993 – this is particularly for the benefit of new members of the Synod – a review of the working of synodical government was initiated under the chairmanship of Lord Bridge. For various reasons the Bridge report was not published until 1997. Many of its recommendations proved too radical for the Church of England, and it is probably fair to say that the report got a fairly rough ride when it was debated in General Synod. However, there were some very helpful recommendations in the report, and in 1998 an extensive consultation process took place.

The Follow-up Group, of which I became chairman, considered the responses received from a great many Church groups and individuals throughout England. In the first phase of our work we tackled those issues about which there was some consensus. For example, there was considerable opposition to the Bridge recommendations to abolish convocations. We noted and we agreed. There was also resistance to removing deanery synods from the structure of synodical government. The threat of absence made the heart grow much fonder. We accepted that response but we felt that, if deanery synods were to remain, guidelines were needed to help them to function as effectively as possible. Hence we have produced GS Misc 639 *Good Practice in Deaneries*. This is a compilation of ideas drawn from across the country, and I am very grateful to a member of our group, Revd Dr David Stone, and his colleagues who have produced that report.

The substantive report of our first phase of work was debated in General Synod in November 1999 and has resulted in some amendments to legislation, which received final approval on Saturday morning.

We now offer our second report and this has addressed the more controversial issues raised by Bridge. The main body of the report that we are looking at today concerns the size and membership of General Synod. Members will note that Lord Bridge recommended a very significant reduction in the size of General Synod from the present 581 right down to 390, with the abolition of almost all the special constituencies. Our recommendation is much less drastic. We recognize that there will be some benefits of a smaller governing body in terms of cost, ease of organization and enabling a higher proportion of members to engage in discussion, so we are going for a smaller General Synod; but at the same time we believe that the representative nature of Synod could be threatened if membership were reduced to the level proposed by Bridge, so we have sought to reduce the size to under 500. We recommend that there be at least three elected clergy and three laity from every diocese with the exception, as at present, of Europe and Sodor and Man.

We considered very carefully each of the special constituencies and have argued the case for either abolition, reducing the size, increasing the size, even introducing a new constituency, or retaining the constituency as at present. Should Synod be minded to retain any of the special constituencies that we recommend be abolished, the effect will of course be to increase the total membership of Synod with the consequent need to reconsider the balance within the Synod as a whole; we were also concerned about that. So if you believe in a leaner Synod, something has to give. You cannot have your cake and eat it.

I want to comment on just five of the special constituencies to which we refer, but we shall come back to this in more detail in the next motion.

First, deans and provosts: we spell out our thinking in paragraphs 18–22. We inclined to the view that the cathedral was an integral part of the diocese, and therefore we follow Bridge in recommending that deans and provosts be eligible to stand as candidates and vote in proctorial elections rather than in a separate constituency.

Second, archdeacons in paragraphs 23–27: this is the largest special constituency. To reduce its size would have been an easy way to reduce the total membership of Synod, and that was our initial reaction, in line with the Bridge proposals, but, when we tested this out in consultation, most felt that it was important that there was on Synod one archdeacon from each diocese. However, we also recommend that the alternative route whereby an archdeacon may be elected as at present, i.e. as a proctor, should no longer be available. So you might get one – you certainly would not get more – in each diocese.

Universities: this is paragraphs 37–40. We spell out why this has become an

unsatisfactory route by which to add to the theological expertise on Synod. We do recognize the immense value of those members with particular theological competence and that they have an undergirding role in Synod. We recommend that, if that expertise is missing after a new Synod has been elected, the Presidents should be able to appoint up to five such persons.

Youth representation: this is paragraphs 41–45. We are very aware of the importance to the Church of the views of younger people, but we have decided not to recommend creating a special constituency for them. Instead, we urge parishes, deaneries and dioceses to encourage younger people to make their contribution through the existing routes. In this way a number should be elected to General Synod as full voting members, and we were pleased that this happened to some extent in the elections last year. We were interested to note that plans for a Church of England youth council are being discussed. If such a body is established, serious thought should be given at that time for a number of representatives from the council to have places in the General Synod. May I recommend to members this book *PCCs Uncovered* which is being promoted down in the hall and is produced by the Young Adult Network, as a valuable contribution to encouraging young people to take part in synodical government.

The fifth constituency that I just want to refer to briefly is that of retired clergy, in paragraphs 46–49. Currently, there is a compulsory retirement age of 70 for clergy in stipendiary ministry and therefore, in practice, for the membership of this Synod. There is no such retirement age for lay members. Evidence suggests that the number of active retired clergy is growing; their ministry is valued and is much appreciated. We have therefore suggested a way for the retired clergy to be represented on the Synod and have thereby made an exception to our general principle and proposed a new special constituency consisting of six places for the retired clergy on a provincial basis, four from Canterbury and two from York.

This second report also addresses a few incidental issues that were referred to in the original Bridge proposals or have been drawn to our attention because they relate to synodical structures. They are addressed at the end of our report.

The recommendations that we now present to Synod are an attempt to slim down our numbers in the interests of economy and efficiency without losing effective representation; those two things are important: size and representation. We hope that this principle will commend itself to the dioceses at a time when serious questions are being asked about central bodies and their costs. Should not the General Synod set an example at this time of constraints? We offer this report with its recommendations for Synod's consideration.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of seven minutes.

*The Bishop of Portsmouth (Rt Revd Kenneth Stevenson)*: I have been wondering why we are having this debate. The easy answer is that the Bridge report was published and

debated and the Follow-up Group was set up to look at its recommendations in the light of the 1997 Synod debate, but there is, it seems to me, a more profound reason. Perhaps I should take the bull by the horns and say that in my view the Bridge report is managerially attractive but ecclesiologicaly flawed. Its view of the Church does not match reality, and this is shown by the way it handles – or rather does not handle – these special constituencies. The Follow-up Group has gone some way in this but not, I think, far enough. Let me explain.

If you work out a model of the Church, balancing the universal and the catholic with the local and the particular, the bishop is the sign and expression of the former and the parish of the latter. This means that the diocese is the unit of universality and the parish of locality. Of course the one shares in the other but that ultimately is where the balance lies. That view is clear, neat, credible and exactly what the Bridge report in effect expresses by getting rid of the special constituencies, but – and it is a big ‘but’ – we live in a much more complex world. We have universities, religious communities, armed forces, and in addition it could be said that the bishop has his episcopacy in relation to the local Church through archdeacons and in relation to the universal Church through the work, ministry and mission of his cathedral. All these special constituencies are vital areas both of locality and of universality. They blur the edges of the Church’s potential narrowness and they often minister to people for whom the local Church is sometimes perhaps not very inviting.

I want all these special constituencies kept electorally because we need them; they are vital aspects of our work as a Church.

I would like now to turn more specifically to one of these constituencies, the universities, and in speaking up for them I do so as someone who worked in the parochial ministry right up to the time when I was made a bishop; the university chaplaincy that I served has also a parish church, a rather strange one but still very much part of the system. There have been arguments against retaining the university constituency. There are indeed more departments of theology than there used to be, but the groupings of universities could be widened, and that would not be difficult because academics tend to know each other. Theologians are no longer invariably ordained but, if elected, they could sit in the appropriate House of Synod: lay, clergy or bishops. Theology is not the private property of scholars because it does indeed belong to the whole Church, as the whole thrust of theological education and training in recent years has shown; but we still need to retain – and, I would suggest, to nurture and develop – our relationship with these institutions, not least because our university representatives are not just here to give us theological expertise but to represent the whole academic community, which is a community with which we have had friendships going back centuries and which is a community going through considerable change at the moment.

I want finally to address the proposal by the Follow-up Group that, instead of having six elected representatives from the universities, the Archbishops and the

Appointments Committee should be able to nominate five people, not necessarily from the university world, to provide the theological expertise deemed necessary by us for the lifetime of a particular Synod. I can see that, on the surface, this is an attractive compromise and of course we would have every right to do that as a Synod, but I would urge Synod to reject it. There is an element of risk in both parts. Will the Appointments Committee get it right and what criteria will they use, on the one hand? Will people's views be vetted or will their skills be sought? On the other hand, how will the university electors vote? I just do not think that now is the time to make this kind of change. The relationship between universities and Churches in many parts of the world is sometimes a rather nervous one, and if we retain an electoral constituency we shall be sending out a significant public signal that we trust our academics and are ready where necessary to be enlightened, nourished and challenged by them.

On Saturday morning we were all edified by Professor John Barton in an outstanding exposition of wrestling Jacob which also, if I may say so, met everyone and was unlabellable except, that is, in relation to its sheer quality and depth. If I were Dr Barton I would rather deliver such an exposition to a Synod for which the electors of Oxford University had chosen me than one to which the Synod's internal procedures had somehow nominated me.

We do need to take care, particularly in a world where we are sometimes accused of being defensive and inward-looking, about where and how we set our boundaries, and while I am clear that the parish is still the fundamental unit of the Church it is not the only one. In today's world we need each other and we need each other in all our sometimes inconvenient variety.

*Miss Rosalind Fuller (Winchester)*: I would like to refer to paragraph 43 which talks about youth representation and some of the difficulties of getting elected to Synod. As a young person I would like to say that it is very difficult to get elected to Synod. Believe it or not, there are a lot of young people in the dioceses interested in and even passionate about synodical government, but at the moment they are not facilitated and enabled to get involved. In terms of my own hustings, I needed a car to get to them all because of their isolated rural locations. Information about their location was not forthcoming and it was difficult to get hold of maps and information about the style of the hustings, because they were all different. In terms of my election address, I needed to find out what content it required and in fact I had to go to the next diocese in order to find help about that. I needed a computer to write it on; I needed to find someone to help me with the funding for printing and distribution.

There also seems to be some hidden agenda about the type of people elected to Synod: for example, that you need to have some kind of degree or other professional qualification. I felt a bit stupid when I had nothing to write down in the *Church of England Year Book*.

Even if you are a young person and have not had much experience, you seem to need

to have synodical government experience already, and to know already how committees work. It also seems strange to me that a lot of the meetings involved with the Church take place in the daytime. A lot of young people are at school, at college or at work, and it is difficult for people in a first job to get time off just like that.

A lot of Synod members I have spoken to have told me that one of the reasons they are here is because someone asked them. When did you ask a young person if they were interested? Has anybody here asked a young person to be on their PCC? People have told me that their son or daughter is about my age. Have you asked them? In the worship this morning we were talking about things getting in the way. We need to get an overall balance. I am not in favour of a special constituency at the moment; I would like to give the existing routes a chance. However, it is very strange that we are talking about having a special constituency for retired clergy! (*Applause*)

I think that I will leave it at that, thank you.

*The Dean of St Albans (Very Revd Dr Christopher Lewis):* At breakfast each morning here I have been having black pudding and a fried egg. (*Members: Oh!*) I am sorry to tell you that I did not get much inspiration meditating on the black pudding but the fried egg has been more of a success. It may not be exactly biblical, but we do have tradition as well as Scripture, so I offer it to members as a model of the Church.

The egg has a good, clear, defined, committed – all those things – centre and yet very ragged edges. Having consulted the eggs, I know that they have grave difficulties knowing where their edges are when fried. That seems to me to be admirable: we need a fried egg model of the Church: firm centre, uncertain boundaries. Those working in different parts of the Church need to know that it complements the understanding of the Church represented by the ark or, dare one say it, the body; but enough of that.

First, it seems to me that the review group has started with the Synod when it should have started with the Church and with an understanding of ecclesiology; then it would have had a very different view of the special constituencies. I want to make a point complementary to that of the Bishop of Portsmouth. People working with one model of the Church badly need people who are working with a very different model, for they complement each other. You may have your model which I find too hierarchical and too exclusive of those who do not exactly fit in.

Next, people will say that the Synod needs special constituencies – and a number of people will say that this morning – for what they bring. That is right. I want to make a very different point: the special constituencies need to be in the Synod for their own good and that of the Church. How else would you tell the cathedrals to have Gift Aid envelopes in the Minster or not to charge for entry? Taking the universities, just think what Richard Burridge would be like if he did not take the wisdom of the Synod to inform his theology at King's!

Cathedrals: well, we are doing fairly well at present. Morale is high, there is a lot going on, we have good relations with the wider world, and are making new initiatives in evangelism, but there is a great temptation for us to go and play our own games and to hell with everyone else. We know what we are up to: why bother with the Synod? You play your games with bishops and pawns; we will play ours with castles. Increasingly, the group to which cathedrals refer is other cathedrals. There are now conferences for everyone under the sun, including assistant organists, bookshop managers and I do not know what else. We need the Church just as much as the Church needs us.

I have been in two very different cathedrals and I know how much needs to be done by the cathedrals to work with dioceses and parishes, but the reverse is also true: it takes two to make a relationship. So I would ask for support for the special constituencies, for otherwise they will go and play their games quite happily by themselves, and that will not be good for the Church.

*The Archdeacon of Norwich (Ven. Clifford Offer):* I would like to thank the Follow-up Group for preparing this report and for the thought which has gone into it, and particularly for the document on good practice for deaneries because I am sure that that is something that we can all use. Certainly I shall want to encourage all my rural deans to look at it and use it.

At the beginning of these sessions we talked about the House of Lords and how important it was that the House was representative of the whole nation and had a broad experience and expertise in it. This Synod can be representative of the whole nation through its democratic electoral procedures and so it is good that we have those in place; but electoral procedures do not always guarantee that you get the people with the experience that you need. There are many people whose experience we need to have as a Synod, and we cannot afford to leave it to the chance that they might be elected.

I would like to thank the group for keeping the archdeacons within a special constituency. It is important because this, after all, is a legislative assembly and the archdeacons deal with a lot of legislative matters. It is also important because, as we all know, while the bishops do all the talking it is the archdeacons who run the diocese! (Well, if your archdeacons are not running your diocese you had better look at it!)

I want to encourage us to retain the special constituencies of our deans. Cathedrals are vital parts of our work and mission as a Church and it is to our cathedrals that people are flocking in their thousands, whether as tourists, pilgrims or seekers after God. The people who lead these foci of work and mission need to be here. We need to hear their contribution and what they have to say.

I also want to encourage us to retain the Chaplain-General of Prisons. I recognize that there are people in the Synod who can speak out of an experience of prison, whatever

that may be, and, as we know, we have one former prison chaplain here; but prison chaplains in my experience move very frequently and it is not easy for them to get elected. We need the experience of the Chaplain-General in this forum, and I can think of debates when his or her experience would have been extremely valuable.

I would also like to argue for the deaf community. We heard from the Bishop of Chelmsford how the deaf community find it very difficult to access the Church. I know that from past experience of association with deaf communities, and I think that it is important for us to find some way in which they can be included and we can hear what they have to contribute.

There is one other special constituency that I wonder whether we have omitted: the retired bishops. I just wonder how this Synod will survive when the time comes and the Bishop of Woolwich is no longer with us.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr George Carey):* I just want to offer a short contribution following the young lady who ended her speech about young people with a reference to retired clergy. I want to say how much I and others value our retired clergy; they do so much for our Church. The Retired Clergy Association meets annually at Lambeth Palace and I am delighted to give them hospitality and the occasional lunch. However, I am not convinced – and I share this view with her – that it is wise to allow a certain number of places for retired clergy in Synod. I want just to offer two views on this.

First of all, we are old enough already and we should be careful about letting the past over-dominate our future mission and ministry. More important, I have seen how in other parts of the Anglican Communion, where retired clergy and retired bishops have places in the House of Clergy and House of Bishops, when you have a separation of responsibility and office you can find, in certain ways, the most unfortunate circumstances and developments. I will not expatiate on that; I am just issuing a warning that I do not think that this is a step in the right direction.

*Canon Peter Ballard (Blackburn):* By the time the Bridge report was published I had in various roles – lay, ordained, as an area dean – been a member of seven different deanery synods in five dioceses. Despite the diversity of those deaneries they all had things in common. They were a collection of people desperate to know what their role was and, when they could not find it, they were desperate to go home. In many cases they had no idea why they were there, let alone how they had managed to be elected in the first place.

Bridge gave hope to many in the parishes that at last somebody had realized that there were large groups of committed, faithful people desperate to proclaim the message of the gospel who needed releasing from the bonds of being an irrelevant piece of the synodical jigsaw. For the people in the parishes, the fact that Lord Bridge and his colleagues had recognized that gave hope. The only way I can reconcile the subsequent

decisions of this Synod is that I have simply been very unlucky and that I have been in the five deanery synods in England who were different from the way this Synod experienced them; but I have to tell members that I have been in two more since then that feel the same.

GS Misc 639 does try to offer positive guidance to help deanery synods become more effective but it assumes that there are still hundreds of people in our parishes willing to give up their time to go to meetings when, in reality, people these days are reluctant to join anything, never mind go to meetings. One way forward might be to accept that we have to have the courage to allow individual groups of Churches – Anglicans, Methodist, other faiths – to do things on our behalf, and to have the courage to accept that which one Church can do with excellence on behalf of all of us and which we do not need to meet to discuss.

Perhaps the reason why I have found deanery synods so lacking in purpose is summed up on page 12 of GS Misc 639 in the comment attributed to the Sidcup deanery in the Rochester Diocese, which states that ‘this function would only be more effective if higher calibre people were ... elected ... to ... the deanery synod.’

I understand the rationale for the reduction in the size of Synod, but reduction in many dioceses would simply have the effect of creating a Synod membership which represented pressure groups; it would squeeze out the middle ground. Moreover, do we really believe that the General Synod could be representative if it did not have a single dean of an English cathedral? The report reflects the Synod’s desire to include more young people, but the reduction in size would almost certainly make it more difficult for young people to be elected.

The most worrying thing about this report, however, is the way in which it emphasizes the disjointed way we operate. It talks about promoting ways in which young people could be more involved in the life of our Church at the very same time as our financial decisions are leading to a reduction in youth officer posts and young adult workers, together with the fact that the youth synod is in doubt now because there may be no money to support it. We have to have some joined-up thinking if we are going to promote the Faith to the next generation; it has to be radical and it has to be now.

In our debate on the appointment of bishops we declared that we wanted to see bishops who were visionaries and risk-takers. Perhaps what we need is to understand what we really mean by ‘episcopally led and synodically governed’ before we can make any real progress.

About three months ago, on the programme *Who wants to be a millionaire?* which I am sure all members watch – in fact, if we all went on it we could pay for the Synod – the question was asked in the early questions that everyone is supposed to get right: What name does the Church use to describe an archbishop? The four categories were as follows: insect, rodent, primate, marsupial. The lady being asked the question

refused to go 50:50 or ask a friend, and Synod was not meeting, so that was difficult; she actually eliminated insect and rodent, but she was stuck between primate and marsupial. Obviously, going through her mind was this vision of how she saw the Church. Was it a big, bad, vicious gorilla or was it a cuddly koala? She opted for the cuddly koala, the marsupial. (*Laughter*) She laughed too.

Our future lies not in simply turning over and having our tummy tickled, like the cuddly koala, but in regaining the ground that we have lost, like the gorilla, and claiming it for Christ. We really need to have some radical thinking about other ways of doing things. Do we really need to meet as a General Synod, or could we have annual provincial synods and a General Synod every three or five years? Should we consider the model that our local councils will have to adopt from October: a cabinet – the Archbishops' Council, the bishops – with an annual gathering of the Synod to be the policy and review committee and to advise for the future? Or should we follow central Government and move, as they have, from parliamentary democracy to prime ministerial government, with our new, visionary, risk-taking bishops leading the way?

*Canon Bob Baker (Norwich):* I had the dubious privilege of presenting the Bridge report to this Synod and coming under heavy fire from members of every special constituency because we had not counted them special enough and from everybody else because we had not counted them special at all. I want to begin by thanking the group which has taken this work forward for its painstaking and careful work, bringing us now to this vitally important question of how many deckchairs we have and what colour they are.

Let me just say that we did our work against a background in our consultations of many people, in the Synod and outside it, saying to us, 'The Synod is far too big': not just 'too big' but 'far too big'. So we needed to be fairly drastic. However, I want to resist the implication of paragraph 7 of this report which hints that we just picked an arbitrary and predetermined number and tried to squeeze everybody in. That certainly was not how we worked. We started with an empty room and we decided who we thought needed to be in it. Along the lines of the speech by the Bishop of Portsmouth, it seemed to us entirely right that every diocesan bishop should be in it because of the nature and character of our Church. It also seemed right to us, for theological reasons, that there should be a number from each diocese of clergy and laypeople: at least three of each for there to be some sense of balance, and more for the larger dioceses, although probably not as many more in each category as we have at the moment in some dioceses.

When it came to the special constituencies, we assumed that nobody ought to be here at all from a special constituency unless they were here for reasons of theological propriety, electoral justice or practical necessity. When you look at each constituency and try and assess them against those criteria – and one of the weaknesses of this report is that it does not give us some clear criteria to work from at the beginning – you come up with some interesting answers. Some of the suffragan bishops, for

example, need to be here because they have no other way of being here; they are key people in the Church but unless there is a way of their being elected they cannot either stand or vote to be members of this Synod. So for reasons of electoral justice there need to be some of them here.

When it comes to deans and provosts, you have to ask yourself if they need to be here for the concerns of cathedrals to be heard. A key point which has not been made is that a cathedral is primarily the bishop's church, so it is the bishops who primarily ought to be promoting the concerns and protecting the interests of the cathedrals. However, we also took the view that alongside them there were already likely to be quite a number of cathedral clergy and laypeople with a close interest in cathedrals who could represent that view. (In this debate already we have heard from a diocesan bishop who is involved and concerned with his cathedral; we have heard from a residentiary canon, an honorary canon, and other people who are deeply concerned about cathedrals.) So we took the view that there was no risk at all of cathedrals' concerns not being heard here.

When it came to archdeacons the case was even more wobbly, not least because there was plenty of evidence that even though they had 44 guaranteed seats the clergy still wanted to elect some of their own archdeacons to represent them as proctors: Nick Baines from Southwark was elected last time; he was only in the diocese for ten minutes and he was in the General Synod. It was pretty easy for archdeacons to get elected, it seemed to us, and certainly there were quite a number. So we felt that it was unnecessary for there to be a large constituency for archdeacons. Even if you think that there should be, this report does not justify there being 45 of them. Indeed, if you are shrinking the size of Synod – but, as this report suggests, increasing the guaranteed places for archdeacons – you are increasing their disproportionate representation. So I hope that the Synod will look favourably on Simon Killwick's amendment when it comes.

Of course the cumulative effect of all this, if you make all these people from special constituencies stand as proctors and you have fewer proctors anyway, is that there is a real risk that ordinary parochial clergy will be squeezed out by people who have a higher profile in the diocese. For that reason, and that reason alone, there is a case for a small constituency of deans and provosts and a small constituency of archdeacons; but to have a handful of suffragan bishops and perhaps a handful of deans and then to have 45 archdeacons seems to me quite unbalanced, and we need to resist that proposal. I hope that in the summing-up we will hear some more justification for that proposal from Judith Rose. What did you say your job was, Judith? (Very unfair, but I could not resist it.)

Finally, a word about universities. We resisted the argument that we needed representatives of universities to give us theological expertise. It is a pretty serious indictment of the Church if we have a hundred bishops, archdeacons and deans and yet have no theological expertise. That is not to mention the very distinguished lay

theologians that we have, including the lady to my right here. So it seemed to us quite unnecessary that we should buy it in. However, after the Bridge report was published Richard Burridge and others took me to task and said that the university constituency was not here to give theological expertise but to represent the academic community. That is a very persuasive argument and I will be interested to hear what people say about Richard's amendment, but there is just one warning: it is a pretty serious indictment of that constituency that they have been here for 30 years and none of us has actually realized yet why they are here.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

*Mr Stuart Emmason (Manchester)*: For me at least, and I think for some others, it is undoubted that the General Synod is in need of reform. The Archdeacon wants a leaner Synod. I would like to be a leaner Synod member!

One of the underlying principles of synodical government, as I understand it, is that it brings representatives of the people of God to seek and discern his will and wisdom for his Church, so it should be no surprise to us that such a system works best when it has a broad and full representation. It would not be unfair to acknowledge that we have a long way to go before we can claim that.

We have heard much at this group of sessions about the need for us, as a Synod and as a Church, to engage more meaningfully with people in our communities. Some people call them 'real' people; I think that I am a real person, but never mind. I am concerned that the report before us does not help us as a Synod really to engage with our communities. I have real concerns about the report before us and some of the reductions in the constituencies and the overall size of the Synod. Let me highlight four areas of concern: the armed forces, the Prison Service, young adults and minority ethnic Anglicans.

I warmly welcome the recommendation of three additional laypeople from the armed forces yet I would strongly caution against the reduction of the three service archdeacons for in doing so we would terminally weaken the voice and service that they offer to us. With regard to the Chaplain-General I also feel gravely concerned that in losing this unique voice from the Synod we would be a lesser body for it.

Let me now turn my attention to the issues of young adult and minority ethnic Anglican participation. Synod already struggles to attract and reach an adequate balance of minority ethnic and young members, and it will be even more difficult – nay, impossible – to do so following implementation of the overall size reductions proposed. We can ponder for a while the success of the last elections, when ten under 26 were elected (I am over that age so I am not in that number; I am no longer a young adult). It took years of hard effort and determination to reach that point by working from the observer group, the young adult network, diocesan youth officers and many of those who are concerned and are trying to encourage individuals. Similar

efforts to promote the inclusion of minority ethnic Anglicans in every level of the Church's life and decision-making have also borne fruit. We must ensure that that fruit is safeguarded and increased, not lost.

If we are not prepared to consider using positive action and want to pursue the proposed cuts in membership, we must renew our efforts to include their representation among our decision-making structures, for such a redoubling of those efforts will be needed. Let me suggest some ways of doing that.

We need to be aware and have an understanding of the rationale that underpins our Synod and our government. We need to know what we are about. We also need to encourage and strive to ensure that these groups are represented in our deaneries and dioceses. We need to be forward-looking, not holding on to our positions comfortably, because it suits us or gives us some kind of status, but encouraging others to take on our roles and mentoring them. We must look again at some of the structural elements that Rosalind highlighted to us earlier in a radical, fresh manner. I think about the electoral process, and I note that the review group leaves that to somebody else, when we must address those issues.

I want to comment on the proposed Church of England youth council. I had the privilege of working with some of the young adults who are looking at those issues, and some of us were able to hear more about it on Saturday evening. Much work is going on there to encourage that representation and work is also going on to find adequate resources to do it. I believe that we will be able to do it because it is a priority and God wants it, so it is going to happen.

As I close, I summarize my cautionary position. In reforming the Synod we have to have the goal of a more robust, more representative body. If we choose to reduce the size of the Synod we must concentrate our efforts on ensuring the increase of the broadly representative nature of our Synod, not only the four areas which I have mentioned but others which have been spoken about already. To have fewer would be a move backwards, and I encourage Synod to resist it.

*Mr Paul Dever (Winchester):* I would like to start off by apologizing because my carefully prepared speech for this morning has gone out of the window. You see, I have found out this morning that I am neither a special constituency nor really very important. (*Members: Ah!*) I am a youth worker and we are not represented in this report at all, yet there are two thousand of us working in the Church of England at the moment: that represents one in five employed by the Church. You say that you are concerned about young people leaving the Church. The *Church Times* wrote in March of this year that the Church is institutionally unfriendly to our 11-to-14-year-olds. When the *Church Times* writes that, surely we can sit up and take notice?

As a youth worker I had to stand in the lay elections, and that may be right; but I would urge you that if we are concerned about how many young people are leaving

the Church, if we are concerned about youth issues, we need to consider how we can have more youth workers who are supposed – they are not always but they are supposed – to be experts in matters relating to young people. We do not pretend always to have all the answers; we do not pretend always to speak with one voice; but we do work day in, day out with those young people that we should be caring about. We work on the streets, we work in the schools and we work in the churches.

If our Church is to grow in the future, which we want it to do, I would ask Synod to consider how more youth workers can represent our Church and our young people.

*Mrs Janet Bower (Bradford)*: I wish to speak about the representation of deaf people, which is dealt with in paragraphs 51–54, and to develop what the Archdeacon of Norwich was saying.

Historically, deaf people have developed a well-organized, separate support system from the main institutions in society, so at the turn of the century we had a trade union for deaf people. We have centres for deaf people which have developed out of the missions for the deaf which not only offer a meeting place and support but also in most cases a chapel of worship. This is not because of an unwillingness on the part of deaf people to participate in mainstream institutions but because of the lack of the necessary facilities that we require for their participation and a lack of understanding and unwillingness on the part of the rest of us to do this.

Sign language is what it says: it is a language. It is not English transcribed into signs. Many of those who are prelingually deaf develop little speech and have considerable difficulties with reading. Had you or I not heard the spoken word, would we be able to read it? So there has developed over the past 50 years or so the National Deaf Church Conference of the Church of England, to which the majority of Anglican deaf people belong. It offers a platform for deaf people within the Church of England to have their own voice, and its aims and objectives include ‘to be recognized by the General Synod as the national organization representing deaf people in the Church of England’. Possibly as a result of this, most deaf people are not even on the electoral roll of their local church. Ordinary services are incredibly inaccessible to them.

Section (xii) of GS 1412 discusses the representation of deaf people on this Synod and acknowledges that the Follow-up Group, for various reasons, could not adequately consider their representation. It also wonders if the possibility of a special constituency for deaf people would open the flood-gates for special representation from other disability constituencies. There is absolutely no doubt that, as in other major institutions, disabled people are under-represented on this Synod. This is our shame and our loss. We are not the complete body of Christ if all sections of society are not equally represented here, and we should make strenuous efforts to redress this balance.

Just this weekend, written overheads have not been read out; I am not sure if there is a lift here; the loop system is only partial in this hall and has not always been switched on.

There is no national blind Church conference, no national paraplegic Church conference, but there is a National Deaf Church Conference. Deaf people have found it necessary to have this platform within the Church of England, and we should not ignore it. We have spent much time this weekend talking about issues of justice, and this is another issue of justice. So I would ask the Business Committee, when drawing up the legislation based on the recommendations and the motions today, to take positive action regarding deaf people, and for a time-limited period have representation from the National Deaf Church Conference as a special constituency within this Synod. During the period of representation the members can work with the committee for ministry among deaf people to find ways of encouraging and enabling deaf people to have representation at all levels of our synodical structures.

As a member of Synod who is able-bodied I urge the Business Committee to undertake this small but significant piece of work alongside taking every opportunity to encourage and enable more disabled people to be members of this Synod.

*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 Archdeacon of Tonbridge,* in reply: May I thank all those who have contributed to the debate. Obviously the fundamental question is the size and then the constituent parts of the Synod, and the most appropriate level of representation from the dioceses as well as the special interest groups. So we have to decide whether we are going to reduce the size or not. I sense that most people think that probably we should but – and there is a ‘but’ – perhaps we ought not to (I think that it was Stuart Emmason who implied this). There is a fundamental question there: if we did agree to reduce the size it would send some very positive signals to our dioceses at this particular time.

Perhaps I need to make it clear that if the proposals that we are suggesting were accepted – or however they are accepted, if they are amended – they are not going to come into effect until the 2005 elections, so no one here will lose their current seat; it will take us until that time anyway, so you are speaking on behalf of your successors.

The question is: if we do reduce our size, who is for the chop? We will come to that more specifically when we look at the next item and the amendments attached to it, so I would like to respond to comments on special constituencies when we come to the specific amendments, if you will give me permission not to comment at this stage, Mr Chairman. However, I will comment on one or two of the other remarks which have been made and which are important at least to note.

Representation of the deaf has been drawn to our attention. We have a paragraph about that, and in one sense we regret that we did not have time to give enough

attention to it. So we can come back to the possibility of representatives from the National Deaf Church; that would be one way, and there is a possibility of looking at that again.

Representation from other disabled groups: we need to think very carefully about that because many of these people – and I have very limited experience of working among the deaf – do not want to see themselves as disabled. We are all disabled to some extent, and we need to be very careful. Maybe there is a special case for the deaf and perhaps for other groups, but we certainly need to look at the way we function to enable people who are not as able-bodied, in whatever way, as some of the rest of us to take part. So we have to be looking at the physical structure and the way we do things so that people whom we label disabled, rightly or wrongly, feel that they can take part and make their contribution.

The Archbishop of Canterbury touched on the subject of retired clergy. We had a lot of representations about this. We can revisit it, as we shall revisit all these things – or the next stage will – but we included the retired partly because of the numbers who are actually very active and do have an important role in many of our communities.

Somebody asked for some radical thinking, and we have heard that a lot this week: we are all for radical thinking so long as it is going the way we want it to go. What happened was that, in this particular context, the Bridge report was quite radical, and Bob Baker reminded us of that; but Synod did not like it and set up this group to try to find a middle way. Well, what do members want us to do? What sort of Synod should we have for the future? These are open questions. So radical, yes, but in which direction? We are trying to find a way through that.

I am in fact grateful to Bob Baker and indeed Stuart Emmason for reminding us of the principle behind this, and that is very useful background for when we go on to look at the specific items.

Representation of the armed forces was touched on. This is one of the constituencies where we recommend an increase. Currently there are three representatives, three service archdeacons; we are recommending an increase to seven: one service archdeacon (which I know is a problem for the forces), three elected from the House of Clergy and three elected from the House of Laity. If we are going to reduce total membership I am not sure that I would be able to support an increase from three to nine. One suggestion is that the armed forces would prefer to be represented by the Bishop to the Forces rather than by the service archdeacons, and that is a possibility, but what I think I would suggest is that representatives of the armed forces go away and come back to us with suggestions as to how they can be properly represented without increasing the number too much in relation to all the other constituencies. That is the issue that we are grappling with, and some advice from the armed forces themselves might help us to take that forward in the right way.

When we come to the next item and its amendments we will look at the other special constituencies. We do need to take an overview and decide whether a smaller Synod would be beneficial and whether special constituencies – all of which represent informed aspects of the Church's life and mission; there is no doubt about that – are best represented here by membership of this Synod. We need to remember that there are many other aspects of the Church's ministry and outreach that are not represented in that particular way. We have, for example, no special constituency for chaplains from industry, from hospitals, from schools, from higher education – unless we are talking about universities – nor for readers or for churchwardens or rural deans or youth workers or organists or flower arrangers, and so on; yet these are all important aspects of our ministry and our outreach. So we have to decide which of those we want represented as members of the Synod and that is one of the things that we are grappling with. There are many ways in which important concerns can be dealt with by the Synod without necessarily needing membership of the Synod. To change or even remove a special constituency does not mean that that area of work is not important.

The Follow-up Group offers to the Church the work that we have done so far. We ask members to take note of this report, but there is a lot more work to do.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*The Archdeacon of Tonbridge:* I beg to move:

'That this Synod instruct the Business Committee to introduce legislation based on the recommendations contained in the report.'

In moving this item we are initiating the legislative process. Our decisions today and indeed the contributions from the floor will inform that process, but we are nowhere near making any final decisions today, and I want to reassure Synod about that. I am assuming that after this the Business Committee will set up a drafting group to prepare legislation, and that group will take note of both the motions that we pass and the comments made during debate. Those draft proposals will then come back to Synod for a further opportunity for revision both in committee and on the floor of the Synod, so the final word is certainly not being declared today. We are feeling our way forward, so members' contributions will feed into that system.

That is probably all that I need to say in introducing this item.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

*Mr David Webster (Rochester):* I beg to move as an amendment:

'At the end *insert* the words "and to explore as a matter of urgency ways in which young people can have an effective voice in this Synod".'

I thought that it was going to be a case of the Lord Mayor's Show followed by the dustcart, but I am sure that it makes sense that the first amendment that we are to consider this morning is regarding those who are both the present and the future of the Church and of this Synod, such as Rosalind Fuller who spoke so effectively earlier this morning. I am not so sure that it is appropriate that one of the oldest members of the Synod should be pressing an amendment regarding the representation of young people on this body.

In paragraph 41 of her report, the Archdeacon of Tonbridge says that a year ago Synod 'requested consideration of means of securing more young members in General Synod'. In fact, I think that it did rather more than that in passing an amendment of Sue Johns of Norwich Diocese in the *Youth A Part* debate, requesting 'the Bridge Follow-up Group, in consultation with the Young Adult Network, to bring back proposals to enable young people to participate more effectively in synodical government.' Clearly the group has not been able to do so, for reasons given in paragraphs 41–45 of the report, to which the Archdeacon referred in her speech; but my amendment is to ensure that the Business Committee keeps before it the wishes of the Synod in this report as a matter of urgency.

In a short intervention in the debate on Sue Johns's amendment, the Archdeacon of Tonbridge last year told of how she had recently represented the Church of England at the Church of Scotland General Assembly where, she said, young people had made 'some valuable contributions to debates on all sorts of issues, and not just the typical young people's issues'. She continued, 'I am sure that our own young people would make equally valuable contributions.' Maybe it has become something of a Rochester perk, but this year I had the privilege of representing the Church of England at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and I too can testify to how young people in Edinburgh, their confidence strengthened by a very successful youth assembly, participated in a number of the week's debates and were able this year, for the first time, to move motions and amendments without having to seek a commissioner, i.e. a delegate, to sponsor them.

An average of some 40 young people now take part each year in the assembly. The majority of the young people stay together in a residential centre and work through the process of the assembly in a community context in, I suppose, the same way as the young adult observers do here but from a distance. This offers real scope, I was told, for discussion, sharing ideas and arguments and just spending time with people of their own age. From what I saw at first hand and heard, the young people seemed really to enjoy the experience and go away with a very positive view of the assembly.

In the same way, most of the older members of the assembly seemed to take a positive view of the contributions of the young people, although admitting that they were left at times feeling uncomfortable or indeed on occasions angry; but most seemed to look forward to the day when the young people would be given full voting rights.

When the Archdeacon reported back last year on her visit to the assembly, she said that Synod could learn much from the young people's participation. In the previous year the Secretary General, Philip Mawer, suggested that the impact made by young people at the assembly had implications for our Synod, and the year before that the Bishop of Guildford was also impressed by the participation of young people.

In the debate on the health of the poor yesterday, the Archdeacon of Buckingham, on another matter, said the general assembly did the right thing twelve months ago; it was time for the Church of England to do the same. I do not suggest that the Church of Scotland always gets it right, and in relation to the proposals on retired clergy it seemed that retired moderators of that body had an undue influence on the work and the debates of the assembly; but, while welcoming the fact that we now have ten young members on this Synod, I believe that most members of the Synod would support a similar but greater participation of young people in the life and work of the Synod, and I hope that they will support this amendment from one of its most ancient members.

*Mr Stephen Dunham (St Albans):* As one of the young people elected last October I was greatly encouraged by the strength of the support given not only by my own diocese through the diocesan youth officer, the bishops, the members of the diocesan synod, the deanery synods and everybody else in the diocese, but also by members of this General Synod. As an adult observer I was allowed to speak in the *Youth A Part* debate last year. The recommendations of that debate went a long way to giving youth an effective voice, and we ten, plus another couple that we have dug out of the woodwork this week, young people, are now contributing. Rosalind and Stuart, you may not consider yourselves young people, but by the standards of this Synod you are!

So do we always speak on youth issues? No, not necessarily. I am part of the Christian Ethical Investment Group, for instance. I will be interested to hear of any other young people who are involved in similar, non-youth-related matters. The point is that we have a voice. We could speak with authority on many issues. Colin Lea is an economist by training. I am an accountant. We should be able to encourage each other to get on with things. The young persons' council will be a very important part of the future of this Synod and I strongly endorse the possible election of two people from that body to this Synod. That forms a special constituency which the Bridge report seems to reject; that is deplorable. We have 11 people here; we should have 111. I would encourage the committee at this time to give strong consideration to that.

I am sorry for not being as eloquent as some of the other speakers, but I believe that I have got my point across.

*Mrs Anne Foreman (Guildford):* Reading the second report of the Follow-up Group really brought home to me how much the boldness of Bridge has been tempered, and it reminded me of the Archbishop of York in his sermon last year in the Minster, when he told us about the man who said that he was all in favour of change as long as it did

not make any difference. However, I understand that the Follow-up Group was working to its terms of reference, which were to take into account the comments on the Bridge report made by those individuals and groups affected by it. I wish to draw attention to two paragraphs – 42 and 43 – about youth representation.

Paragraph 43 refers to some of the difficulties cited for the election of young members and says that they apply equally to other groups. We have heard from Rosalind Fuller, and we heard last year from Dr Helen Jennings about these very issues, a speech which was received with warm applause in the debate on the report of the Business Committee. I really regret the lack of urgency in these paragraphs. Here we are, a year on, still acknowledging the need to address these issues, but with no indication of when we are going to do so. Since the new Business Committee has already demonstrated that it is prepared to do things differently, may I suggest that the Follow-up Group request the Business Committee to address these difficulties and agree some sort of timescale?

Paragraph 42 notes that 'there are a number of ways in which steps might be taken to increase youth representation in General Synod'. I got quite excited about that, and then I turned over the page and found that these steps are summed up as special publicity. I do not think that that will do it. I understand that the report might not be the place for detailed examples of the number of ways, but what sort of publicity are we talking about? What aspects of the work of the Young Adult Network can be disseminated to the dioceses? The exciting possibility of the youth council is obviously one.

May I offer one practical suggestion? Last July GS Misc 1381 *The Facts and the Future* identified some 530 young people under 25 on PCCs in 21 dioceses. Presumably there are more in the 23 dioceses which did not respond. Here is a group already participating, a group that could be targeted and encouraged to stand for deanery and diocesan synod. In addition there are the two thousand youth workers that Paul Dever mentioned. The Archdeacon of Tonbridge reminded us that none of these decisions can be implemented until 2005, but the sort of work that needs to go on, to get young people to stand for Synod, should be started now. I really think that we need to make it more apparent that we want this to happen; we cannot go on identifying what needs to be done but not doing it.

I therefore urge members to support this amendment.

*The Archdeacon of Tonbridge:* The Follow-up Group was very concerned that means be found for young people's views to be heard at all levels of synodical government but we struggled with how best to achieve this. Of course I support the sentiments in Mr Webster's amendment, and we must not lose sight of this issue (and I do not think that this Synod will let us lose sight of it). Having said that, during this group of sessions we have had significant contributions from our younger members; they are not here as a special constituency but as members in their own right, being elected from their

dioceses, however difficult it was to achieve that (and we were reminded of that earlier and must not forget it).

To reply to Stuart Emmason, less representation from a diocese does not necessarily mean that young people will not be elected. I have not done any research but in our own diocese of Rochester in the House of Clergy a younger clergyman stood, who is a curate; he was elected, and one of the sitting older clergy lost their seat; so it happens. If we get it into the blood-stream of our Church that we need young people they will, hopefully, get a significant number of votes and be here as members in their own right.

I note that Mr Webster's amendment does not ask specifically for a special constituency, and indeed during our consultations some of the young people that we spoke to were not asking for a special constituency. Let me explain a little bit of the difficulty of going down that route. It is not difficult to identify suitable candidates – that is relatively easy; the greater problem is to identify the electorate. Who would have a vote in a young people's constituency? We have to be clear about that before we can have any special constituency. If, as is being proposed, a Church of England youth council is formed with representatives from each diocese, representatives from that body could have a place on the Synod: we would have a way of doing it. I would like them to be full members with speaking and voting rights, but again that could be explored. A specific number of places from such a youth council would not necessarily tie down an individual to five years, which can be difficult for some of our young people because of the stages in their career or education.

I believe that it is quite difficult to take this issue forward until that body has been formed, so at this stage – I am reluctant to say this – I am just wondering whether it is wise to pass David Webster's amendment; but if we do not I would ask him to raise it again if we do not get the youth council in place in the relatively near future, so that we have some of this in place before the 2005 elections. In the meantime, however, we need to go on being proactive at all levels to encourage young people to contribute to the government of our Church.

*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.*

*Mr Brian McHenry (Southwark):* I beg to move as an amendment:

'At the end *insert* the words "with the exception of the recommendation in paragraph 13 of GS 1412 (suffragan bishops)".'

I have no interest to declare in this debate save that I do worship at a church in the Woolwich area in the Diocese of Southwark.

The proposal about suffragan bishops is that the reduction for York will be from three to two and for Canterbury from six to four. The reason for putting down this amendment, with due respect to Judith and her group, was that I did not see any real reason for this reduction save in the context of the proposal for an overall reduction in the size of the Synod. The report itself gives powerful reasons in support of the role of the suffragans in this Synod. Paragraph 13 says that they 'do not represent the dioceses in which they serve in quite that same sense [as diocesan bishops]: as a numerically significant body of senior clergy, they have interests and perspectives on issues which include the concerns of the dioceses in which they serve, the wider concerns of the college of bishops, and their own distinctive perspective as a body of bishops suffragan.'

The suffragans, in my submission, have always had a significant impact on the life of this Synod, not just the present body but those over the 20 years of my membership of Synod; there have been several who have played a very distinctive role, and I am concerned that the admittedly modest reduction that is proposed in the report might remove some of that expertise. In my view the best thing here is to leave well alone.

*The Bishop of Beverley (Rt Revd Martyn Jarrett):* I am grateful to Archdeacon Rose and her group for affirming that bishops suffragan should continue to have their own specific representation in this House. I am also grateful for the recognition that bishops suffragan do not only represent their respective dioceses. Members will appreciate that I speak not only as suffragan bishop in the Archdiocese of York but also as assistant bishop of Ripon and Leeds, assistant bishop of Durham, assistant bishop of Manchester, assistant bishop of Southwell, assistant bishop of Wakefield and assistant bishop of Sheffield!

Suffragan bishops do have other interests and I suspect that I speak as one of the few in the House whose main hobby is psephology. It is on the issue of how any constituency should be represented in this Synod that I would like to speak this morning. On Friday evening in the debate on the House of Lords the Bishop of Durham helpfully pointed out that 'democracy' was a slippery word. This Synod has rightly decided to organize its elections in a manner which includes minorities as well as majorities – in this way folk belonging to different traditions and viewpoints in the Church are enabled to exchange views with one another in this chamber – rather than operate on a system of winner takes all, thus leading to other groups in the Church feeling alienated.

Central to achieving this balance is the method for conducting our elections. We use the system of proportional representation known as STV or the single transferable vote. An important ingredient in making this work is the provision of an adequate number of seats in each constituency; otherwise no matter that the single transferable

vote is the basis of the election, we end up with one or two people being elected, with a very high chance indeed that such persons will always come from the proportion of the Church which at present holds the views which are those of the majority. There is no harm in this, provided that minorities can also have their voice heard in this Synod, and this can only be achieved, I repeat, if sufficient seats are provided for that to happen.

A practical example of this would be in the recently formed Assembly for Northern Ireland where Her Majesty's Government were very careful to provide generously sized multi-member constituencies so that not only would the large political groupings be included but also the small but nevertheless significant minorities. This Synod should take pride that it has conducted its own elections in this manner since its foundation.

If however we were to go down the road proposed, following the Bridge report, concerning the reduction in the number of places allocated to suffragan bishops, this fundamental principle would be in severe danger of erosion. The reduction in seats in the northern province from three to two would make it extremely difficult for those who held significant but minority views among the suffragans to gain a seat. There would be a similar if not quite as drastic result in the southern province, brought about by reducing the number from six to four.

If this Synod truly wishes to include a balanced range of views among the various constituencies that are represented in it, there is a corresponding need to protect the numerical formulae that make this possible. I admit to a little sadness that my maiden speech to the Synod should appear to be devoted to the internal politics of this assembly and to the particular needs of the constituency which I have been elected to represent, but I take comfort from the exchange between the Secretary General of the Synod and the Bishop of Woolwich in Question time on Saturday evening: both agreed that the method by which the Synod conducted its elections was a model to the wider community as it sought ways to be more fairly participatory and inclusive. While that may have been banter, it is very important that this Synod mirrors for the world a fairer way of conducting elections.

*Revd Dr Alan Hargrave (Ely):* I have to say that the two reports before us – GS 1412 and GS 639 – in my view represent a great opportunity sadly missed. We seem to be a Synod of great boldness and daring when it comes to reforming the UK Government or indeed the world but timid and self-interested and apt to tinker about at the edges when it comes to reforming ourselves. I hope therefore at the very least that we will not bow to pressure to vote for amendments which will simply produce a future Synod which is a middle-class, middle-aged, white, largely male clone of this one.

*The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds (Rt Revd John Packer):* I want to support Brian McHenry's amendment on the place of suffragan bishops and their constituency in this Synod but I also want to suggest a different possible way forward.

I realize that no one appears to have questioned the place of all diocesan bishops here and paragraph 12 makes it clear that both the Bridge report and this report wish to retain all those places, but I wonder why they want to do so. On Sunday we debated the desirable qualities in a diocesan bishop, risk-taking and visionary and all the rest of it, but I am not clear that they need to include the attribute of serving and enjoying this particular body! It might well be that in any one diocese a suffragan would be a better and more appropriate member of this Synod, and I would like consideration to be given to the bishops of a diocese choosing one of their number as a Synod member, as archdeacons do now; then seven dioceses would have their chance to appoint Martyn Jarrett as their representative bishop! This would add to the sense of collegiality between the bishops of the diocese and it is ecclesologically perfectly appropriate. However, I know that I am influenced in this view by having served in the Diocese of Sheffield under David Lunn. It is no particular secret that his presence at this Synod was resented by him and was fairly infrequent. Our diocesan episcopal contribution to the Synod was made through the Bishop of Doncaster, Bill Persson, not as a representative of the diocese but as an elected suffragan. That worked very well, and Bill had a major input to the Synod, and it certainly did not make David a less effective diocesan bishop.

If I live to my sixty-fifth birthday and if no one finds me a more useful job than being Bishop of Ripon and Leeds I shall have been on Synod over a period of 26 years, on and off but much more on than off. That is no record but it does seem to me to be too long to be good for me and surely for the Synod and for the kingdom of God. If we can get away from the assumption that diocesan bishops must be here or at least must be members of this body, whether they are here or not, thereby meaning that there is an irreducible minimum of 45 without taking account of the suffragans, we might well get a better attendance from the House of Bishops, diocesan bishops would not be compelled to be members of the Synod, for far longer in some cases than is good for us, and we could reduce the number in the House to 45 without losing the contribution of suffragans.

I hope that we may explore that possibility and maybe leave more space for young people, few of whom are bishops.

*The Archdeacon of Tonbridge:* In response to Brian McHenry's opening remark, the reason for reducing the constituency of suffragan bishops is in the light of the reduction of total membership; if we do not do that, there is no need to reduce them. Synod needs to remember that we are not abolishing suffragan bishops or their special constituency because, as was explained before, that would be to disenfranchise them.

We do in our report discuss the matter of representation of the provincial episcopal visitors and that is in paragraph 16. We request the Business Committee to initiate a separate debate on that matter. When that happens Synod will have the opportunity to decide, and could at that point increase the number of suffragans by one but with a protected place for a PEV, if that was Synod's wish. However, if there is to be a

reduction in total numbers of the House of Clergy and of the House of Laity, should this not also happen in the House of Bishops, at least marginally, because again we are not proposing anything terribly radical: a mere reduction to six instead of nine? If a PEV had a protected place that would of course increase the number to seven. We are proposing to lose only two or three members so in one sense I suppose that it is neither here nor there as far as the numbers game goes. It is up to Synod: you must decide.

I was very interested in the radical idea from Ripon and Leeds. I suspect that the House of Bishops theological group may want to reflect on that – and indeed we met with them – because I suspect that there are some theological issues there to be teased out; but if the House of Bishops would like to come back with that sort of proposal to the ongoing process that would be a very interesting way through it perhaps.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

*The Bishop of Woolwich (Rt Revd Colin Buchanan)*: I am grateful for Brian McHenry's advocacy. I was grateful to the person who wanted to put me into a retired House of Bishops; I shall leave this Synod only by retirement or death and I shall look forward in either of those cases to looking back on memories only of the Synod! So I have no personal stake in the future representation of suffragans.

I want to tell Synod an ambiguous story. It is said that Cardinal Ottaviani, a great reactionary at the Vatican II Council, was speaking about birth control, and he said, 'I am the fourteenth child of a family. Where would I be if there had been artificial birth control when my mother was breeding?' Other people said that that was the best argument for birth control that they had ever come across. I offer a hostage to my opponents: twice I was the sixth one elected in the southern suffragans. Where would I be if there had been only four?

Suffragans are getting a bad press at the moment. They live in a theological twilight where nobody knows quite what to do with them. They apparently ought not to become diocesans: Liverpool, Ely, Ripon and Leeds, Exeter, great diocesans but they should not have been made diocesan; clearly there were better people in the wings and there was prejudice in favour of these people who were suffragans. Now they are not really wanted by Judith Rose either. It is a very hard life! I want to put some bullet points in.

There is a great range of talents among the minorities, and persons who are elected value their seats far above those who are ex officio and are accountable for their participation. The House of Bishops needs some of that and they should not water it down. We take our part in the House of Bishops, which meets separately three times a year, and again you are denuding that House of what I think is really helpful talent if you try to reduce the total number in Synod in this sort of way. Please do not count in the Bishop of Dover. I had to warn Judith Rose a couple of years ago that if she was

stepping up the Bishop of Dover into the House of Bishops ex officio, that should not be counted against suffragans. He has been kicked aloft; he may not have reached the top floor but at least he has reached the mezzanine and we are still on the ground floor!

It is also very important to have suffragans around to maintain a quorum in the House of Bishops. (*Applause*) Those who are interested in statistics will notice that the reduction does not reduce the quorum; it is still the same. I have an episcopal dictum to enunciate: a sleeping suffragan is more use than an absent diocesan.

One more thing for Judith Rose: in 2005 her stuff on women bishops will have got somewhere; the first woman suffragan will be appointed about 2009 and she will need to create a special constituency or broaden the suffragan constituency in order to give that woman a place in the House of Bishops so that it no longer remains a male preserve. So, Judith, look forward with your other hat on and make sure that you have the right place for that woman bishop when she comes.

I say: retire the retired clergy for good and all, trim or tweak the tribe of archdeacons if you must, and save the suffering, sidelined suffragans.

*The amendment was put and carried.*

*The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Christopher Herbert):* I have much enjoyed in the past few weeks a book by Roger Penrose called *The Large, the Small and the Human Mind*. It is an attempt to explore the relationship between quantum physics and Newtonian physics. I know nothing about either and when I read that book I find that I can understand about two-thirds of it, but nevertheless I press on with books such as that because they stretch me absolutely to my limits. I am indebted to people like Roger Penrose and John Polkinghorne for ensuring that we never forget the scale of our universe. I think of John Polkinghorne's wonderful metaphor about clocks and clouds: clocks are those things in the universe which are absolutely steady and reliable like gravity and that heat cannot pass from a colder to a hotter body and that the bishops (according to the journalists) are always about to split; clouds are those things which refer to chaos and chance and uncertainty.

If our Church is to have any deep integrity it must somehow reflect something of the nature of almighty God and God as creator. That was a fundamental principle of the Turnbull report: that our understanding of God and our understanding of our Church structures need to be held in creative alliance. So hold on to that for a moment while I take you on a whistle-stop tour of some of our cathedrals.

In Wakefield on an annual basis the mayor turns up and he says to the Dean, 'I come that I may seek God's blessing on my year as mayor and on the city.' Think of all those services for judges, high sheriffs and chief constables. Forget all the outward stuff about wigs and tights and pomp and ceremony; those are human beings who face some

of the most difficult ethical and moral questions that our society can pose and they come to cathedrals to pray and to place themselves under the Word of God. Move to Hereford and see pastoral liturgy at work of a most unusual and deeply sensitive kind: services for those injured and for the families bereaved in road accidents. Move to Chichester and see the role of cathedrals in the creative arts: those wonderful windows by Chagall, paintings by Graham Sutherland and the tomb which gave rise to that most lovely poem by Philip Larkin. Come to York and look at scholarship in our cathedrals, about medieval history and glass and the mystery plays. Go to Guildford, see days devoted to teaching on prayer; go to Portsmouth and see continuing developments in liturgy; go to Worcester and Gloucester and Hereford again and hear music at its finest in the Three Choirs; come to St Albans and you will see 16,000 children a year coming through the educational systems offered by that lovely abbey, and come there too to see ecumenism really at work where, on a weekly or monthly basis, there are services for the Orthodox, Catholic masses, services for the Free Church and for Lutherans, and we have ecumenical chaplains. Go to Lichfield and you will see pioneering work in adult education; go to Chelmsford and you will see a smaller cathedral also working tremendously hard in adult ed. Go to St Paul's cathedral and you will join two million visitors each year; and at each major service 85 per cent of the people at worship are strangers.

That is an extraordinarily rapid overview of only some of our cathedrals, but they all offer worship and pastoral care. It is my view that our cathedrals will be more and more important in the years ahead as places of prayer and spiritual counsel, as places where Church and world can meet, because they are big enough and anonymous enough to provide shelter and big enough and anonymous enough to provide challenge; they can innovate and take risks and still be places of profound stillness.

So with such a record, with such experience, with such commitment and with such a leading role in mission, why do we want largely to deprive ourselves as a Synod of the insights and richness and beauty and edge that cathedrals can and do bring? Why do we want to do that to ourselves? I suggest an answer: because what we want is to have a small Church, neat, tidy, organized and controlled. I take members back to my starting point. A Synod which fails to want to have representation from those astonishing churches in its midst is a Synod whose God is too domestic, too tame and far too small. It will give me pleasure to move the amendment standing in my name.

*Revd Howard Such (Canterbury)*: I refer, like the Bishop of St Albans, to paragraph 22 of GS 1412 where, if they have it, members will note that the Follow-up Group confesses itself to be evenly divided. Like the Bishop of St Albans, I believe that they have jumped the wrong way in recommending the abolition of the deans and provosts constituency. Unlike the Bishop of St Albans, I do not have a very grand reading-list and so I want to tackle the argument in a slightly different way. I want to look at the previous paragraph of the report.

Paragraph 21 indicates some of the views which the group considered. View (a) – and

Archdeacon Judith has already referred to this – draws attention to the integral place of the cathedral in its diocese. That is true of course and so they should say so, but, having worked in one for seven years and served in two others a bit, I am very aware that, while they are certainly not separate, they are indeed unique, and the Bishop has spoken eloquently about that. So too did the Dean of Newcastle in another debate and, I suggest, so too did the service in the Minster on Sunday. That uniqueness must continue to be represented here by those who head up their foundations for the good of both of us.

View (b) suggests that deans will draw on their individual expertise, but that is true of all members of Synod and it is certainly true of all the other special constituencies. It is no reason to remove them. Surely a dean's individual experience and expertise is bound to include precisely the cathedral perspective which the report seems to suggest it will supplant?

View (c) – and we have heard something of this today too – leaves wholly to chance in the electoral process an adequate representation of cathedrals in this Synod. It might work. At the moment we are assured that it does; but it might not happen, and that is too haphazard. There needs to be some degree of certainty, some guarantee. It is far too important a field of the Church's ministry for there not to be. The two remaining points in paragraph 21, I think, are in favour of retaining the constituency, so I leave them to speak for themselves.

I want to turn now to the arithmetic of the thing. If you look at the proportions involved you will see how wrong this proposal is. The present constituency of deans and provosts accounts for roughly 2.5 per cent of the present Synod membership, 2.5 per cent-ish, yet the Follow-up Group's recommendation asks them to bear not 2.5 per cent of the proposed reduction of 77 seats but nearly 20 per cent of it. On that basis alone it must be wrong to abolish the constituency completely. Fortunately, as members see, the Follow-up Group itself offers an alternative: that of a reduced constituency but one that still continues. I am happy to vote first for the Bishop of St Albans's amendment and indeed I shall, but if members feel that Synod should be reduced in size and if they cannot vote for the Bishop's amendment because they believe that all constituencies should take some share of the reduction, if they believe that we should say to our deans 'We do still love you but perhaps not quite as much as we thought we did', I invite members – no, I do not; I urge members – to vote in favour of the amendment in my name, which will reduce the deans and provosts constituency but keep them in this Synod, as they should be.

*Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester):* On a point of order, Mr Chairman. Given that a number of issues that we are to be asked to vote on depend on others, would you consider voting on these amendments at the end of the debate, for instance, when we have heard arguments on the total size of the Synod?

*The Chairman:* Let me take advice.

I do not see a high degree of inter-connectivity, and I think that we would be better off as a Synod to proceed as I planned at the beginning: to go through the amendments in the order in which they strike.

I impose a three-minute speech limit.

*Mrs Margot Townsend (Winchester):* I am a member of the cathedral congregation but I am also a reader in my local parish so I do appreciate the integration of the cathedral within the diocese but also its very different ministry. We need to recognize, as someone said earlier, the dean's experience; and the thought of me representing cathedrals instead of a dean appals me. The cathedrals have an increasing area of ministry, and we need to recognize that, and we need any increasing area of ministry represented here. I am prepared, if necessary, to accept a reduced constituency, but if the deans are in with the clergy everybody knows the dean and we might get all of them or we might get none of them; I do not think that that gives us a balanced Synod.

*Revd Ian Paul (Salisbury):* In this whole process what the report asks us to do is to prune and, as any gardener knows, if there is no pruning there is no growth; but as each of us perches on our respective branch on the tree of Synod we are all aware that in theory some of us are asking to cut ourselves off from the branch on which we sit, and we are unwilling to do that. The suggestion of the report is a good one and I simply want to speak against the idea mooted earlier, that moving from having a special constituency towards being part of the electoral process is one that 'leaves the process wholly to chance'. Surely this is not the case? The process of election is actually leaving it wholly to God's people. We heard earlier of the importance of taking risks and of trusting one another. The electoral process is one that should be central as we do indeed trust each other to select those under God who have a special contribution to make to the workings of this Synod.

*The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Christopher Herbert):* I beg to move as an amendment:

'At the end *insert* the words "with the exception of the recommendations in paragraph 22 of GS 1412 for the abolition of or, failing that, a reduction in the level of representation for the special constituency of deans and provosts".'

*The Archdeacon of Tonbridge:* Yes, I agree that as a group we are not unanimous on this issue but, again, if you accept the principle of smaller membership then hard questions have to be asked of special constituencies, if you are not seriously to impair the elected representation from dioceses. We argue that although the cathedral has a distinctive role in the diocese, not least in the area of mission – we hear all that has been said, especially by the Bishop of St Albans – nevertheless it is or should be an integral part of diocesan life. If the dean or provost plays a significant part in the life of the diocese the diocesan clergy may choose to elect him or her on to Synod as well as their representatives, as the previous speaker has just mentioned.

If this were not to happen, however, then be assured that the voice of our cathedrals would not be missing. Remember that some of our bishops have previously been deans or provosts and, as Bob Baker reminded us, all our bishops have a significant concern for their cathedral. The Bishop of St Albans illustrated that point very well himself. In addition, I did an analysis of the present membership and I calculated that eleven elected proctors are residentiary canons, an additional eleven from among the archdeacons are also residentiary canons and there are a further six dioceses who could at some time in the future send an archdeacon who is also a residentiary canon (if we have any archdeacons left on Synod). Of course I recognize that residentiary canons have other responsibilities, or some of them do.

Further – and this was interesting – I did a count-up and among the current elected House of Clergy: 90 of us are non-residentiary canons or prebendaries and in the House of Laity we have at least two lay canons and others with a significant concern for their cathedral life. I recognize that an honorary canonry can be a badge of good behaviour; nevertheless, if there are 90 of us, there will be some able to speak with a lot of knowledge of cathedral life. So cathedrals will not lack representation on the Synod.

However, it is up to Synod to decide. If members want a reduced Synod, do deans and provosts warrant a protected membership? My personal position is to resist that because the tendency is always to bring things back. You must decide.

*The Bishop of Salisbury (Rt Revd David Stancliffe):* I am interested in the comment that the Archdeacon has just made, just as I was by the comment of Bob Baker earlier, about representation. My understanding is that it is not because we need representation from cathedrals in order to talk about cathedrally things that we need deans and provosts; it is because of what they bring themselves. I am thinking of the contribution, for example, of the Dean of Durham to this assembly on ecumenical matters in the past, the contribution that the Dean of Derby continues to make, and so on. It is because I think that we are muddled about the special constituencies bringing representation that I hope that people will vote for the amendment of the Bishop of St Albans.

People are not here primarily because they represent someone else. They are here elected by whatever means to form a body under God to try to discern the mind of Christ. In this kind of context we do ourselves a disservice if we talk about buying-in, as Bob Baker did, special expertise from one world or another. The more widely we are represented, the more representative we shall be, because there are lots of areas that the parochial ministry *qua* parochial ministry does not touch. If we think of ourselves primarily as a diocesan and parochial ministry, with the buying-in of odd bits of expertise, whether it is from universities or from cathedrals or from elsewhere, we fail to do justice to the understanding, which I have, certainly, of the Church of England as a national body. We are here primarily in order to express as many facets of the life of the Church as we can, and I think that we shall do that best by seeking membership as widely as we can.

I am conscious that in many areas, like, for example, the 11-to-18-year age group mentioned earlier, people do not often find themselves in parish churches. The heartland of work there is often in the secondary schools, and discovering how to be Church there may well be better and more effective and people may well be more effectively ministered to. We are not good at seeing the breadth of the life of the Church altogether. So I hope that on that basis we will seek to have as many of these constituencies as possible, and certainly I hope that we shall have our cathedral deans represented as a group here.

*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, 195 voting in favour and 158 against.*

*The Chairman:* Accordingly, Mr Such’s amendment falls, and we move on.

*Revd Simon Killwick (Manchester):* I beg to move as an amendment:

‘At the end *insert* the words “with the recommendation in paragraph 26 for the retention of the existing constituency of one archdeacon per diocese being replaced by a recommendation for a special constituency for archdeacons of the same size as the special constituency for suffragan bishops”.’

I hope that by the time I sit down I will still be able to obtain faculties in 43 dioceses of the Church of England! I have brought this amendment because I wish to retain the special constituency for archdeacons but at the same time to reform it.

At the moment in 43 dioceses when there is an election, two or three archdeacons gather together in a smoke-filled room – or at least before No Smoking policies came in – and choose one of their number to represent them. This cannot be a right way of carrying out elections in the twenty-first century, and it really does attract the name of rotten borough for 43 of them. I believe that the size of constituency for archdeacons should be the same as that for suffragan bishops. At the moment the present system suggests that archdeacons are six or seven times more important than suffragan bishops, and I do not believe that that is so. However, I would just like to add that I do believe that archdeacons are very important – (*laughter*) – but not that important.

The archdeacons form the largest of the special constituencies, and the effect of this is to cause a deep imbalance in the House of Clergy because their number forms about a quarter of the membership of the House of Clergy; the effect of that would get worse if numbers on the Synod were reduced all round.

I want to draw Synod's attention to paragraph 25 of GS 1412, which sets out the reasons of the Follow-up Group for retaining 43 archdeacons. The first is 'the close engagement of Archdeacons with the practical administration of diocesan affairs which lends value to their contributions to Synod'. If you follow the logic of this argument you will also have a special constituency for diocesan secretaries and another one for diocesan registrars; it just does not hold water. It also ignores entirely the fact that there are many good folk, lay and ordained, who are involved in the practical administration of dioceses by sitting on bodies like diocesan advisory committees, diocesan boards of finance et cetera, and many of those people are represented here among the elected representatives of both the laity and the clergy. So section (a) does not hold water.

Section (b), which is actually about a different matter, saying that archdeacons should not be able to stand for election in the House of Clergy, I agree with. Imagine an archdeacon canvassing. He rings you up. 'Yes, Archdeacon, what can I do for you? How can I help you?' The archdeacon says, 'Will you please vote for me in the election?' 'Yes, Archdeacon, of course I will.' It is very hard to say No, is it not? (*Laughter*) Archdeacons should not be able to stand, as they can at present, for election in that way.

Section (c): 'the archidiaconal perspective is coloured by the circumstances of each diocese'. I would have thought that the bishop's perspective would be coloured in some way by the circumstances of his diocese, and the same would be true of the elected clergy: their perspective surely will be coloured by that of the diocese. What about the elected laity as well? I put it to Synod that (c) is simply special pleading.

My amendment is to retain the special constituency of archdeacons but to reduce it in size so as to give archdeacons comparable representation on this Synod to that of suffragan bishops.

*The Archdeacon of Tonbridge:* Shall we all put our heads on the block? That will solve the problem of numbers. This is of course the largest constituency and so it has the greatest impact on the size of the Synod. There are three ways of dealing with archdeacons – (*laughter*) – or probably more than three. Incidentally if the archdeacon rings you up and asks you to vote you may say Yes but you still have a secret ballot. (*Members:* Oh!)

The original Bridge proposal recommended no special constituency for archdeacons; they would have to stand as proctors. The fear was that if this were the case, as has already been said, because archdeacons are known and are sometimes popular they might take up too many of the clergy places. When we went out to consultation there was considerable resistance to this proposal in the evidence that was submitted to us, so we have come back with a different recommendation.

The second way of dealing with this is the way that Mr Killwick is suggesting: by

having a limited constituency. He asks that the numbers be equivalent to that of suffragans, so where we are at the moment in the numbers game means that you would have nine for the two provinces. That would certainly reduce the number of Synod members effectively. What Mr Killwick did not indicate in his amendment or in his speech – at least, I do not think that he did in his speech; perhaps he did – is whether archdeacons would still be eligible to stand for proctor. I think he opposed that, did he not? If you are going to have a limited constituency, you may wish to reopen that. (*Members: No.*) Okay. As members will see from our report, we did discuss the possibility of a limited constituency. We did not suggest in our discussions as low a number as Mr Killwick suggests. Our suggestion was about 22: 15 from Canterbury and seven from York. If this is the way that Synod wants to go, therefore, we would need to look at the size of the constituency, but that can be done in the ongoing process.

Speaking personally, that is the way that I would have gone, but I was overruled in this by other members of the Follow-up Group and by the sort of comments that we were getting back at that point when we were in consultation. So our recommendation is for one archdeacon from each diocese without being able to stand for election through the proctorial route. That is what we offer to Synod and if it is not the way, members must say so, and that can be considered seriously in the next process. I have no personal gain in this because I retire next year anyway and I am certainly not coming back as a retired member; so you have nearly done with me. Members must indicate the way they want to go on this one and it will be looked at in the next part of the process.

*Mr John Higginbotham (Leicester):* We are seeing something of a conflict or at any rate a dichotomy emerging here between two things, and we must decide ultimately where our priorities lie. Do we need a leaner and fitter Synod – the original number suggested was 390 – or are we going to push the number back up to where it is at the moment by finding merit in every special constituency? There is an inevitable conflict here.

Like Fr Killwick I have nothing against archdeacons, generally speaking, and I would support their constituency, but do we really need to have one archdeacon from each diocese? After all, we have the diocesan bishop, the clergy, the laity, to speak for the diocese. It would be quite a simple matter for the dioceses to be grouped together, say, in twos, producing 22 archdeacons; this would give a better balance. I do not know of any other democratic procedure in the world which has an electorate of two for a post and that is including the actual candidate. Archdeacons as a category, yes, but grossly over-represented, no.

I see this not as a restriction of archdeacons' powers but as a means of sparing those who do not wish to serve on the Synod. After all, the present system often means that in a diocese like my own, with only two archdeacons, it tends to be done on the basis of Buggins's turn and most archdeacons will, sooner or later, have to do their bit, even

if they find General Synod not to their taste. We may in fact, by restricting their numbers, be relieving them of an insuperable burden.

*The Bishop of Chester (Rt Revd Peter Forster):* I would ask the Synod to resist this amendment on the grounds that it is neither fish nor fowl but the worst of all possible worlds before us. You can justify representatives of a special constituency either because it is a particular body of skills in which you want some representative members to bring those skills (the argument put forward, in part, in relation to deans and provosts), or because it is a group that would otherwise be disenfranchised (which would apply, for example, to suffragan bishops and probably to the Chaplain-General and prison chaplains, as we will come to in a moment).

The reason that we want an archdeacon for each diocese is not only because a synod is a coming together, a *syn hodos*, but so that we can go back to our dioceses in a way that is effective in putting into operation what we decide, and that is where the particular skills of archdeacons come in. Historically that has been the role of archdeacons, to be agents of that sort. When on the group we discussed this – I am one member of the group who more or less at every point defended special constituencies on the grounds of the *synodos* – it was felt that, in the case of archdeacons, if we are going to defend it, we need one for each diocese so that what we do here does not become a talking shop among ourselves but the archdeacons go out as agents for each diocese in their particular representative capacity.

The choice is either to give archdeacons simply the chance to be elected in their Houses of Clergy, as they often would be, or to have one per diocese, but not a mishmash of a selective group of archdeacons which is neither here nor there, it seems to me.

*Mr Barry Barnes:* 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.*

*Mr Brian McHenry (Southwark):* I beg to move as an amendment:

‘At the end *insert* the words “with the exception of the recommendation in paragraph 36 of GS 1412 (Chaplain-General of Prisons)”.’

Earlier in the debate today we heard from Stuart Emmason and the Archdeacon of Norwich, who spoke eloquently about the case for the Chaplain-General retaining his place in the Synod as opposed to relying on chaplains standing for election or on other prison experience (as has been mentioned in debate) among membership of the Synod.

The Chaplain-General has a unique voice to raise in the Synod. He would speak from within the structures of Government; he is uniquely placed to influence Ministers and policy-makers, as opposed to all those others who would be speaking about prisons in the Synod. An extremely strong case is made out in paragraphs 35 and 36. The group was evenly divided. I tabled this amendment so that the Synod could make up its own mind.

*The Archdeacon of Tonbridge:* Again, when we have debates concerning prison and the prison service we discover that we have many people on Synod who have expertise in this field, so we feel that that constituency will be represented by people with real experience, both clergy and laypeople, working in the Prison Service. Another way of getting information to us is what we did in 1999 when the Presidents invited Martin Narey of the Prison Service to address the Synod prior to a specific debate, which was very helpful; that is another route whereby we can get information on issues like this. There are many ways of addressing both prison and other issues without necessarily preserving membership, in this case for the Chaplain-General.

However, it is just one place and, again, members must decide. We were divided on it, so we will take your lead.

*The Bishop of Lincoln (Rt Revd Robert Hardy):* I want to urge Synod to support Mr McHenry's amendment. The Chaplain-General occupies a unique place within the Government of the country, within the Civil Service and of course within the Prison Service. Anyone listening to the new Chaplain-General yesterday at lunchtime could not be unaware of both the urgency and the importance of the issues in penal affairs facing society today: 42,000 people in prison in 1992 and 67,000 today; 20 per cent of people now in prison of non-Christian faiths. There are serious theological issues which the Synod needs to continue to address, issues on guilt, forgiveness, redemption and hope. There are serious public issues in terms of asylum and immigration, the question of detention, the place of volunteers and not least rehabilitation, where, sadly, our Church has an appalling record in welcoming prisoners back into society. That is the first thing.

The second is that to remove the Chaplain-General's post is again a narrowing of the interests of Synod. Most of us know that prisons are a closed society. They are full of people without a voice, poor, marginalized and some of the most vulnerable in our society. They deserve from the inside to have someone to speak for them, and I hope that Synod will support strongly Mr McHenry's amendment.

*The amendment was put and carried.*

*Dr Elaine Storkey (London):* 'There's good news and bad news,' said the guard on the train outside the station. 'The bad news is that both engines have failed. The good news is that you're not on a Boeing 757.' There is good news and bad news in this report for the universities. The good news is that the vital contributions of theologians

to the Synod is recognized; the bad news is that we are going to abolish the university constituencies. In opposing this and proposing the amendment I am not ignoring the disadvantages of the present arrangement, illustrated in paragraphs 37–40. I recognize the limitations of having a constituency which limits representation to ordained theologians. In fact it means that I as a lay theologian teaching in universities cannot stand for this constituency. I am in the ironic position of defending my own exclusion, and I am doing so because the alternative is for me unthinkable. There are many ways of resolving it without abolishing the constituency itself. A patient with a complex medical condition who was referred to a physician would be absolutely stunned if the physician said, 'Well, the best way to sort out this condition is to eliminate the patient.'

The excellent arguments from the Bishop of Portsmouth and others have made my task easier, and I do not want to take up Synod's time by repeating them, but I do want to draw three others together. First of all, the universities are not institutions where the Christian faith is flourishing. The academic curriculum in many areas, not least in the social sciences, which I know best, is now thoroughly enamoured of a basic postmodern approach which remains incredulous of fundamental Christian assumptions of the Faith. The humanities, natural sciences, economics, psychology, business studies, anthropology, media and film studies all desperately need a continuing dialogue with theology, and this is becoming harder in our universities, partly because God is not part of the agenda of any of these curricula and partly because from many of our newer universities theology is all but entirely absent. Religion is subsumed under humanities or educational studies, and there is no vibrant department of theology. The result is a syncretist, relativist, vague religion-in-general which actually does not inform young people studying at university.

I know this at first hand. I was called in this very last term to a newer university by a colleague who said, 'Elaine, we desperately need an academic theologian to help our final year BEd students before they go out of university and teach in schools. Will you help us out?' I did. I found a class of keen students about to leave and in the autumn become teachers in our schools; in a recap (which took me two-and-a-half hours) of what they had learned in their religion modules so far, these students were able to name seven Hindu festivals and four of the five pillars of Islam, list three spiritual disciplines which brought fields of merit in Buddhism, and recite the hygiene laws from Leviticus, but had no concept whatever of the meaning of the word 'redemption'. What happened was that the curriculum was crippled by the absence of theology.

This is crucial for us as theologians in academia. It is not scholarly arguments that we fear – we thrive on those; we love playing games with the other academics – it is the academic dumbing down, it is the bureaucratic over-burdening, it is the narrowing of the debate. So those universities which have held on to theology departments, especially those which welcome professing and ordained Christians to study and teach in the department, ought to be affirmed, celebrated and congratulated, not ignored or dismissed. For us to say that this constituency is irrelevant could not help but marginalize their contribution and send all the wrong signals to our universities. We

would be saying that even the Church does not see the need to engage directly, as university representatives, with academic theologians. We would be tacitly endorsing the dumbing-down and marginalization of theology.

Second, academic theologians know what is going on; they are involved in a complex interplay between theology and the academy as a whole. They know each other's work, who has the expertise, where the real debate is. Even if we abolish the constituency we are still going to have to go, cap in hand, to them, to find out who to invite on to Synod, because they are used to discerning real theologians from those less scholarly figures beloved by the media; they can tell the difference between a scholar and a more academically sophisticated, performance-orientated, existential pietist; very often the Appointments Committee might not!

Third, as presently constituted, the university reps are an incredible free gift for Synod. Academic research is very expensive, scholarship is extremely costly; Synod gets it free. Because the universities are part of a constituency they send these people, these professors, to us free of charge; we pick their brains in debates and at the breakfast table, and it is looking a gift horse in the mouth to ignore this.

An awful lot of mistakes are made through misunderstandings, like the woman who really let fly at her husband and said, 'Look, Jim, when you came home last night you told me that you and Bob Lee had been all night in the Brown Bear. I've just seen Bob Lee's wife and I know you were in the Trocadero. Why are you doing this to me? Why are you deceiving me?' Jim said, 'Oh, I'm not deceiving you, love. It's just when I got home last night I couldn't say "Trocadero".'

We are still sober in Synod, we can still say "Trocadero", we can still make decisions based not on misunderstandings but on the vital relationship between the Church of England and the Synod and the universities out there. Do not let us do anything here today that might make our work of outreach into the wider culture, and especially the academic environment, more difficult.

*Revd Dr Richard Burrige (London University):* I want to thank Archdeacon Rose and the Follow-up Group for their report. Members have heard some arguments already from Bishop Kenneth and Dr Storkey and if you will hear the maiden voices from the north you may hear from my colleagues afterwards. I thought that it might help new members of Synod, which includes those new university reps, if I told the story of how we got here and where we propose to go from here if Synod passes my amendment.

When I went to Exeter University in the mid-to-late 1980s I was subject to pressure from an extraordinary pincer movement of Dr Christina Baxter and John Saxbee who asked me to stand for the Southern Universities seat; at that time university seats were caught up in politicking about certain issues that were before Synod at the time. When I came to London I took the London University seat as Dean of King's, having watched

my predecessor being presented on his retirement with a bound volume of speeches that he wrote for the Synod but was never called to deliver. This is now the third quinquennium in which I have tried to serve in this capacity.

In the small group I became a kind of convenor, with Bishop Stephen Sykes and then Bishop Kenneth, to try to focus, enable and co-ordinate our input and role within this body. It is, yes, to provide some theological input, and we go through the agenda and see who has the ability to try to speak to that; but it is not just that and at no point have I ever wanted to suggest that we are the only theologians on the Synod. I am not a theologian myself, just a humble Bible-reading scholar. However, there is also the issue about the world of higher education, a place where society decides itself, where we work with the enthusiasm of our young people and the wisdom of our mature students. I am particularly grateful for the suggestion of the Dean of St Albans that you also act as a restraint – you should have seen me before.

When Bridge came out I was appalled that, without any consultation, there were a number of misunderstandings; Synod seemed to be saying that it did not want the quality of the input of people like John Polkinghorne, Tony Thiselton, Michael Vasey and so on. We spoke with the Archdeacon and are very grateful for this much more nuanced treatment.

We have three anxieties about the nominated appointments: they will not be representative, they will not be democratic and they will be open to whoever the flavour of the month is, among the Appointments Committee and the Archbishops. Second, there is an incarnational issue. Will they really join in and stay the whole time and do the background work? We saw that in Professor Barton's Bible study, when he referred to the rest of our agenda. Third, again, it just assumes that we are here for theological input, and, as I have said, it is a two-way dialogue.

There is only a small distance between my amendment and what the Follow-up Group suggests. It has said in paragraph 37 that it is difficult to resolve, and I gather that this means that it does not know who the various people are. We have a practical suggestion: use the definition of university-recognized teachers. There is a list published by the Association of University Departments of Theological Studies. We say 'with theological expertise' because that will include the Polkinghornes. We suggest that it might be declericalized because there are bishops and laypeople who should be eligible to vote. It will also help do something about the gender balance. We would then work with the Follow-up Group to get a practical and fair arrangement so that we can serve the Synod and the wider Church and society at large, which is what I think is the servant calling, indeed the ministry, of academic theologians and theological academics.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Revd Professor Nigel Biggar (Northern Universities):* Two minutes means Plan C.

The normal means of election will assure Synod of theological expertise. That is quite clear. What it will not assure Synod of is theological expertise from universities. Some folk here doubt that that matters. There are two reasons why I suggest that it should matter.

First, university theology is primarily oriented to deal with secular ideas; it is not primarily concerned with the important business of forming priests in the Church. That is the first particular gift that we could bring. The other is that we operate in an ethos where intellectual freedom is fostered. I know that that can be abused and that it has been abused and used unfaithfully towards the gospel and the Church. Nevertheless it is possible to combine intellectual freedom with faithfulness, and I do not think that the Church can afford to be without that combination. So that is two things that a university theologian can bring to this body.

The third thing that the normal means of election will not ensure is university representation. Contrary to what the Follow-up Group has assumed, university reps do not just provide theological resources; they also represent the world of higher education. Why is that important? Higher education is not simply one sector in our national institutional structure; it is where the national vision is created. It has the particular role in our society of evaluating and imagining current and future forms of well-being and educating us accordingly. Normal elections and presidential appointments together will not match what university representation gives the Synod, and for that reason I would ask the Synod to support the retention of university constituents in some form, probably broadened, by voting for either of the amendments which will be before the House.

*Dr Helen Leathard (Blackburn):* I would like to speak in favour of Dr Burridge's amendment but would urge that it is not only opened up to the university constituencies in general as representing higher education, for the reasons that we have heard so clearly elucidated; I would like to urge that the Church colleges are included in that constituency. We have heard already how important Church schools are; there are substantial departments of religious studies and religious education in Church colleges and I think that it would be entirely appropriate for them to be included within the university constituency, whether or not they have quite reached university status.

*Dr Elaine Storkey (London):* I beg to move as an amendment:

'At the end *insert* the words "with the exception of the recommendations in paragraph 40 of GS 1412 regarding the abolition of the existing special constituencies for universities and fresh arrangements for the provision of theological expertise".'

*Revd Dr David Stone (London):* With your permission, Mr Chairman, I would like to respond to the amendments by Dr Storkey and Dr Burridge.

There can be no question that Synod needs members with professional academic theological expertise. Our argument, however, is that first of all there can be no question whatsoever that Synod in its general membership already has a significant number of members with such expertise, not least the mover of this amendment. It seemed to us then that the route to such expertise provided by the universities special constituency is first of all unnecessary. We hope that suitably qualified candidates will continue to find their way to the House of Bishops and be elected to the Houses of Clergy and Laity.

Second, we believe this to be undesirable. Without wanting in any way to be dragged under by the currents of anti-intellectualism, we are uneasy with the concept of what appears to be a sort of theological caste. Please remember that the present university electorate consists only of ordained people with a university post; in fact, that university post may not involve theology at all. So what is it that qualifies them to have such disproportionate influence in deciding who should be on this Synod, especially as those in other disciplines who do have theological expertise are excluded by our present arrangements?

In fact, it is even worse than this. I am indebted to Canon Hodge for telling me that in the northern province we have one representative from 17 electors in Durham and Newcastle, and one from 26 electors in the other northern universities. In the south there is one from 33 in Oxford, one from 22 in Cambridge, one from 43 in the other southern universities and – you are waiting for me to tell you, are you not? – one from five in London. I count the Dean of King’s among my friends, but I cannot see why London theologians should have so much more electoral power than those from institutions considered by our present rules to be less prestigious. Such rotten boroughs have no place in the Church of today.

Unnecessary, undesirable and – my third point – impractical. The advice that we have received is that the welcome growth in the number of institutions qualified to jostle for position in the southern and northern Other Universities is such that identifying qualified electors and candidates is an increasingly complex task. It may be that members are persuaded by Dr Burrigge’s suggestion that the present system can be modified, but certainly Dr Storkey’s amendment, which would leave the present system unchanged and unchangeable in this quinquennium, is one which we urge Synod to reject. The alternative proposed by Dr Burrigge at least deals with the issue of impracticality, but I suggest that it is still unnecessary and undesirable.

We anticipate that the merits of those such as Dr Burrigge would easily commend themselves to the clerical or lay electors in their dioceses, but even then there is a safeguard. It is not as though the Archbishops are going to look among the most agreeable of the authors of the books that their chaplains are reading for them. The proposal is that this Synod’s elected Appointments Committee will make appropriate recommendations in order to achieve a balance.

Finally, we rely on those members with particular theological expertise to guide and help us as we seek to understand and apply the great doctrines of our faith, not least the doctrine of the Incarnation, which leads me to hope that on this particular issue they and the rest of us will all feel able to join the turkeys in voting for Christmas. We urge Synod to resist these amendments.

*The amendment was put and lost.*

*Revd Dr Richard Burridge (London University):* I beg to move as an amendment:

‘At the end *insert* the words “with the recommendation in paragraph 40 for the provision of theological expertise by appointments by the Presidents after consultation with the Appointments Committee being replaced by a recommendation for one or more special constituencies of university-recognized teachers with theological expertise, whether bishops, clergy or laity, male or female”.’

I do so as a clearly irrelevant and unnecessary turkey.

*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.*

*Mr Brian McHenry (Southwark):* I beg to move as an amendment:

‘At the end *insert* the words “with the exception of the recommendation of a total membership of the General Synod in the range of 480–490 (plus appointees) in paragraph 62 of GS 1412”.’

Paragraph 62 of the report states that the proposals in relation to the size of the Synod are obviously very much in the context of decisions made about the size of the special constituencies and their survival, so there is a sense in which, with the figures constantly changing this morning, it has been like an exciting day at the Stock Exchange and it is difficult to decide what the target is in relation to this. However, my particular target is not in relation to the overall size, taking into account the constituencies; it is in relation to the reduction of clerical and lay representation, which comes through this report. I fear that the reduction in clerical and lay representation which is inherent in these proposals could be at the expense of a large number of minorities in the Church. They tend, as we heard earlier today, to be squeezed in the electoral process. We can all think of examples: young people, people from minority ethnic groups, people who regard themselves as of the central Church

tradition, just 'Church of England', conservative Evangelicals, traditional Catholics, people who see themselves as having some kind of prophetic voice in the Church. New entrants, whoever they are, always find it difficult when they are up against the incumbent members in a diocese. Canon Ballard made this point very eloquently earlier today.

Second, I fear that the reduction in clerical and lay representation would give the small dioceses greater representation in the Synod; I have no objection to the small dioceses, but let us just look at one example, Oxford. They will fall from 18 to 16 while several dioceses will remain at 6. Is that fair? Is it wise?

Finally, how much of a saving will it mean? At least £53,000 is quoted on the fourth notice paper and it is no mean sum, particularly where we are at the moment as a Church, but I passionately believe that due process, and a sense of participation in the governance of our Church by a wide range of groups, whoever they are, justifies this. I have this great passion for fairness which I believe is derived from the gospel, and that principle far outweighs any considerations of administrative efficiency or economy.

*The Archdeacon of Tonbridge:* This may be the crunch issue as regards numbers. We argue in paragraph 59 that unless we reduce numbers to below 500 the reduction will not really be significant and we may only be tinkering with the system. However, in the light of the amendments that we have passed this morning the group that is going to take this work forward will need to look again at the figures. Somebody at the back there said, 'Where are we now on numbers?' and I said, 'I haven't a clue', but we will be able to sit down and do the numbers again. If we reduce the number of archdeacons we may have more space there to manoeuvre, but if members want a Synod under 500 then I suggest that they resist this amendment. We worked hard so that there was reasonable representation from the ordinary members of clergy and laity in the dioceses. I know that we have gone for a bit of a reduction, but we tried to cut everywhere a little bit. We recommend that we try to get our numbers under 500, so I would resist this amendment.

*The Chairman* imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

*Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester):* To every complicated question before us there is usually an answer that is simple, straightforward and wrong. There is also a proverb which says 'Look before you leap', and I want us to consider what will happen if we make a reduction of this size in the number of members of Synod.

The present size does not necessarily get everything right. There is nothing God-given about the number that we have got, but the proposals that we have could make matters worse. I want to address four issues as quickly as I can.

One issue is that we have a split of members between the provinces of York and Canterbury. It used to be 72:28 in favour of Canterbury; it is now proposed to be

70:30; to be fair, it really ought to be about 67:33; but that actually needs to be sorted out. I would like to hear to what extent Canterbury is under-represented and York over-represented.

If we reduce the size of Synod the remaining members will have to do more work. We still have the same number of committees, we are all busy and if people have an appetite to turn up to even more committees, fine, please say so.

If we reduce the number of proctors and insist on maintaining a minimum of three, many dioceses fail to qualify for three. So if you qualify for 2.2 we round you up by 0.8, and where does the 0.8 come from? It comes from the larger dioceses. So we have smaller dioceses over-represented and larger dioceses under-represented. Even among the smaller dioceses we get gross inequalities. Hereford with 159 electors will have three members; Exeter has more than twice that number, 330, and it will have three members.

What are we doing? If we reduce the minimum to two it will mean that STV will not work as well as it could or should. Two will not give us balanced representation. Alternatively, we need constituencies which will have to consist of two or more dioceses. That will not be popular. If we reduce the size of the House of Laity we are not making an even cut, but we will cut the young, the minorities, the candidates from ethnic minorities, the very people we actually want here.

*The Chairman:* Mr O'Brien, I fear that you are out of time. Thank you.

*Ms Anne Williams (Durham):* Much of what I wanted to say has been said by the last speaker, but I think that we have concentrated an awful lot upon the number of people who are working here; I would like us also to think about the work that we have to do when we get back. There are deaneries to be reported to; if we are really serious about our work, there are parishes to be visited and talked to; and the fewer people that we have doing that, the less effective we are. We have dwindling numbers, we are told. How on earth can we do anything about the numbers unless we get out among our people and explain what we are about?

I asked a former boss of mine who was here with the Christian Aid contingent what was the one thing that she would want me to say if I got the chance. I did not, but now I have. That thing, she said, was to remind Synod gently that members have a responsibility to take the message from here back to the parishes. I am not reminding you gently, I hope. I am saying it strongly: we need a larger number of people here who can go back and give the time to the parishes and the deaneries and be effective on the ground and, we hope, to enthuse people with some of the messages that we have received here.

If I can give Synod a little proverb given to me by Mrs Paver earlier this week, it is this: to hear is to know; to speak is to feel; to do is to understand. Let us please have a goodly number of people who understand and take it out.

*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.*

*The Chairman:* I think that we need a count.

*Mr Lee Humby (London):* On a point of order, Mr Chairman. Could we have a division by Houses as this is a very important matter for the lay and proctor members of this body?

*The Chairman:* To enable me to order a division of the Synod there must be 25 or more members standing. Do I see 25 or more members standing? I do not.

*The amendment was put and carried, 194 voting in favour and 162 against.*

*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 Archdeacon of Tonbridge, in reply:* I would like to thank the Synod for the contributions to the debate this morning. The interested parties have rightly defended their position; they were elected to represent a particular constituency and they have sought to do just that; but I am quite pleased that our work now passes to the Business Committee to take it to the next stage.

Just before I close, I would like especially to thank the group that I have had the privilege of working with for the past three years and in particular to pay tribute to the staff: Francis Bassett, behind here, acted as our secretary very efficiently, particularly in analysing the responses from the considerable consultation process. Francis and indeed David Hebblethwaite worked very hard on drafting and putting into readable and clear language our views and our decisions. We were well served also by the legal advisers and the quiet wisdom of Philip Mawer. I would therefore ask members to express appreciation to the staff. (*Applause*)

I commend this amended motion to Synod.

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

‘That this Synod instruct the Business Committee to introduce legislation based on the recommendations contained in the report

- (a) with the exception of the recommendation in paragraph 13 of GS 1412 (suffragan bishops);
- (b) with the exception of the recommendations in paragraph 22 of GS 1412 for the abolition of or, failing that, a reduction in the level of representation for the special constituency of deans and provosts;
- (c) with the recommendation in paragraph 26 for the retention of the existing constituency of one archdeacon per diocese being replaced by a recommendation for a special constituency for archdeacons of the same size as the special constituency for suffragan bishops;
- (d) with the exception of the recommendation in paragraph 36 of GS 1412 (Chaplain-General of Prisons);
- (e) with the recommendation in paragraph 40 for the provision of theological expertise by appointments by the Presidents after consultation with the Appointments Committee being replaced by a recommendation for one or more special constituencies of university-recognized teachers with theological expertise, whether bishops, clergy or laity, male or female;
- (f) with the exception of the recommendation of a total membership of the General Synod in the range of 480–490 (plus appointees) in paragraph 62 of GS 1412;

and to explore as a matter of urgency ways in which young people can have an effective voice in this Synod.'

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of York (Dr David Hope)* took the Chair at 12.53 p.m.

## Farewells and Prorogation

The Bishop of Lincoln

*The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr George Carey)*: Before I pay tribute to the Bishop of Lincoln, may I just draw Synod's attention to this white slip of paper, containing Questions Nos 116 and 117, and my answer? We did not get to this in the Questions the other evening but we thought that it was very important to bring it to the attention of Synod and to ask for your prayers; it is about the follow-up to the Denver consecrations. I just want to preface this by one sentence, that I share many of Ping Chung Yong's and Emmanuel Kolini's concerns but disagree with the actions that they have taken, which are in my view profoundly schismatic. This will be an ongoing discussion, obviously. Do pray for those of us involved behind the scenes in the months to come.

Now to much happier things. In October Bob Hardy will retire after an episcopate of more than 20 years, first as Suffragan Bishop of Maidstone and then as Bishop of Lincoln. Lincoln is the largest English diocese in area and for nearly 14 years Bob has cared for its widely scattered communities, from Stamford in the south to the Humber estuary in the north. In doing this he has shown, like his predecessor Edward King a century ago, all the instincts of a skilled and caring pastor. Bishop Bob is known for his down-to-earth approachability, his practical kindness and generosity and his hands-on concern for people, especially clergy and their families. Throughout his time at Lincoln he has committed a major portion of his time to conducting ministerial reviews with all his clergy. He has won the reputation of knowing them well, for remembering them and for showing that he really cares.

Indeed Bob is a humble man who wears his scholarship lightly. He is noted for a self-deprecating humour. Let me give an illustration. When he was Bishop of Maidstone the story is told of his travelling to a meeting in London, when he was wearing an ordinary shirt and tie. As he got on the train about fifty people from a nearby mental hospital joined him. As they approached London the official or nurse decided to do a count: 'One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine ... Who are you?' 'I'm the Bishop of Maidstone.' '... 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 ...'. The story is also told, when he was in Lincoln, of his visit to a country church. He was appalled to see a bush growing out of the tower, 50 feet up. Bob said to the churchwarden, 'That's not very good, is it?' The churchwarden said, 'No, 'e's not, but if you come in the summer 'e'll be in full flower.'

Bob has shared in the running of the diocese with his suffragans and archdeacons in close and happy teamwork, and diocesan policy has been developed in a notably corporate manner. He gave a strong lead in launching his consultative document *New Times, New Ways*, which fired deaneries with a new sense of responsibility and led to far-reaching pastoral reorganization. We need to note that Lincoln Diocese has led the way nationally with ordained local ministry and its local ministry scheme.

On the ecumenical front Bob has sustained an active twinning link with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bruges in western Flanders. Jointly with his Methodist counterpart he has borne the main burden in overseeing, on behalf of seven major denominations, not only local ecumenical partnerships but also a wide range of other joint ecumenical agencies covering industrial mission, agriculture, chaplaincy in colleges of further education, local radio, social responsibility and work among deaf people. Another major slice of Bob's time and energy has been devoted to the governance of Bishop Grosseteste College, one of our Church colleges of education, and Lincoln theological college until its closure. On top of this, like any other Bishop of Lincoln in history, he has played an active role in relation to Eton, King's College Cambridge and Lincoln College Oxford.

Bob's early years at Lincoln were heavily overshadowed by internal troubles at the cathedral. The dean and chapter requested him to undertake a formal visitation. His review of their affairs was remarkable for its thoroughness, and several of its

recommendations have been implemented to good effect. Other recommendations, however, were not well received by the chapter, and the negative publicity that this attracted was a huge burden to Bob. Later, he also had to deal with serious allegations against a senior cathedral dignitary. Suffice to say that during this exceptionally difficult period the courage, stamina and steadiness of Bob and his wife Isobel won them enormous and widespread respect and affection, and I want to pay tribute to him as a colleague who walked with them during that period.

Besides being an effective and greatly loved diocesan bishop, he has played his part here in Synod, as we heard this morning. He has been a loyal member, although I have noticed and envied that at boring moments of Synod God has given him the gracious gift of sleep.

Bob has made a unique contribution at national level in the realm of penal affairs. Having become Bishop to Prisons when he was Bishop of Maidstone in 1985, he raised the profile of this role during a period of unprecedented change in the Prison Service. For 16 years he has related actively to successive Ministers and senior civil servants at the Home Office. He has systematically visited prisons and young offender institutions throughout England and became a principal spokesman on law and order issues in the Lords and in this Synod. Between 1989 and 1995 he initiated four international consultations which provided a unique forum for representatives from across the whole spectrum of those professions dealing with penal affairs. It is very fitting that his services to prisoners and to the Church of England generally were recognized by the recent award of CBE.

Bob has undertaken a number of important tasks on behalf of the Synod, such as chairing the candidates' committee of what is now known as the Ministry Division, reviewing the theological colleges and chairing the home affairs committee of the Board for Social Responsibility.

He has been an important member of one episcopal group which comprises the Bishops of Oxford, Sheffield, Southwark, Southwell, Lincoln, Canterbury and York, and we shall miss him and Isobel very much.

In all his ministry Bob has been closely supported by Isobel who has made her own contribution, working with wives and with my wife, Eileen; but she has also made her own contribution as a GP in Lincolnshire. Her generous and unstinting hospitality has been deeply appreciated by so many. May I in the name of Synod wish them both a very happy and well earned retirement in Cumbria. (*Applause*)

*The Chairman:* Just before moving on, here is a brief statement. Some of you may have noticed articles in this morning's newspapers which imply that the Church of England is retreating from the poorest parts of the country. On behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury and myself – indeed, I trust, this whole Synod – we want to make it clear to the nation that the Church of England is not now, has never and never will desert

the poor. Our ministry is to them, as it is to everyone in our land. This is the nature of our unchanging calling and commitment. The challenge facing our Church, to which reference has continually been made during this group of sessions, is how best to minister to the whole of the nation, including bringing our resources to bear on places of need and opportunity. Our approach is not to reduce the total of resources available to needy areas but carefully to consider the manner of their distribution. When a final decision is taken about this, it will bear the marks of prayer and the careful consideration that this question has received in the House of Bishops, the Archbishops' Council and not least this General Synod. Meanwhile our ministry continues and we are undeterred in our mission to the poor.

I have instructed that this statement be issued to the Press Association. (*Applause*)

Before I finally prorogue this Synod, I am sure that members would wish me to express our huge thanks and appreciation to Philip Mawer and David Williams and to all the staff of the Synod, not least our new Legal Adviser on my left, Stephen Slack – this is his first Synod – and also all those behind-the-scenes kind of people here and downstairs who ensure the smooth running of the Synod and its effective and efficient organization. (*Applause*) We rely on them enormously and we thank God for them.

*The Archbishop of York prorogued the Group of Sessions at 1.05 p.m.*