

Full Synod: First Day

Monday 11 November 2002

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of York (Dr David Hope)* took the Chair at 4.00 p.m.

The Chairman led the Synod in prayer. The Synod prayed for Archbishop Rowan Williams as he prepared to take up office as the next Archbishop of Canterbury, and also remembered in prayer members who had died since the previous group of sessions.

The Chairman: On behalf of Synod, I extend a welcome to William Fittall, the new Secretary General, who is seated on my right. You are very welcome among us, William. (*Applause*)

Having already offered our prayers for the Archbishop of Canterbury-elect, it may just help Synod members to know something of the process. Following his nomination in July and election last week by the Canterbury chapter, the Archbishop of Canterbury-elect is due to be confirmed on Monday 2 December in St Paul's Cathedral. From that moment he will, in law, be Archbishop of Canterbury, though he will not be taking up his full range of duties until after the Enthronement at Canterbury on Thursday 27 February. That is the week of the February group of sessions, which will now conclude on the Wednesday evening rather than on the Thursday.

Introduction of New Members

The Chairman: We welcome some new members of the General Synod: Mr Arthur Binns (Leicester); the Archdeacon for the Royal Navy (Ven. Barry Hammett); Dr Wendy Lovatt (Coventry); Revd Harold Loxley (Sheffield); Revd David Osborne (Bath and Wells); and Revd Philip Williams (Southwell). Members who have been on Synod before are the Archdeacon of Lewes and Hastings (Ven. Nicholas Reade); and as new bishops the Bishop of Birmingham (Rt Revd Dr John Sentamu) and the Bishop of Bradford (Rt Revd David James).

We greet you and welcome you all. (*Applause*)

Also on Synod's behalf I welcome Mr Peter Doyle, the new Vice-Chairman (and Chairman-designate) of the Church Urban Fund, and Ms Fran Beckett, the Fund's new Chief Executive, both of whom are seated in the gallery. (*Applause*)

Progress of Measures and Statutory Instruments

The Chairman: The Clergy Discipline Measure has been submitted to the Ecclesiastical Committee and the Committee will consider the Measure in December. The

re-submitted Church of England (Pensions) Measure has been found expedient by the Ecclesiastical Committee. The Synodical Government (Amendment) Measure has been laid before both Houses of Parliament. The Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2002, the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2002 and the Parochial Fees Order 2002 have all been laid before Parliament and will come into force on 1 January 2003. As from 24 November 2002 the Cathedrals Measure 1999 will be fully in force in relation to all cathedrals to which it applies, that is, all cathedrals in England other than Christ Church, Oxford.

THE CHAIR *Canon Jane Sinclair (Sheffield)* took the Chair at 4.12 p.m.

Report by the Business Committee (GS 1474)

The Dean of Derby (Very Revd Michael Perham): I beg to move:

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

Once again Synod has a busy agenda though not one, I hope, that will prove too full. The Business Committee continues to wrestle with the problem that the Synod wants to meet less often and have fewer pressurized debates when it does meet but at the same time members, together with synodical boards and councils, understandably go on urging upon us the need to include debates on more issues than time really allows. I will say more of this in a few moments in relation to amendments, but it does need to be stated at the outset that, unless the Synod wants the Business Committee to be draconian in refusing to admit subjects to the agenda, our days will continue to be overcrowded until a culture of self-denial takes hold of both individuals and synodical bodies. I suspect that some people quite like to be under pressure while they are here, while others do not; and that is part of our dilemma.

Looking to the future we can see some lightening of the load. The February group of sessions will of necessity be shorter than originally intended because of the Enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury on the Thursday of Synod week. That does not mean that we intend asking for more time from Synod members in July, and we have no reason at present to believe that there will be a need for a group of sessions in November 2003.

Many members were at the meetings of the Convocations and the House of Laity earlier this afternoon. As a result of the decisions taken at those meetings, which will be circulated on a notice paper, our business for Thursday morning on marriage is intact. There is, however, a modest variation in the order of the financial items on Thursday afternoon, as set out in the eighth notice paper, which I will deal with presently.

I hope that we may be leaving behind a time when the Synod seemed to find it difficult to engage usefully with what was happening in the contemporary world and when we

were often faced with debates that had passed their sell-by date. At each of the last three groups of sessions we have had high quality debates on current world events. The hope must be that this afternoon's debate on Iraq follows that fashion. The Business Committee has agreed that on suitable occasions it would be appropriate to invite representatives of other faiths to our debates; the Iraq debate is such a suitable occasion and before that debate we will be welcoming our guests who will be sitting in the gallery to hear what we have to say.

Tomorrow after worship we start with legislative business and the revision of the Care of Cathedrals Measure, followed by the first consideration stage of the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure. We have allowed just over two hours for this legislation but it is always difficult to predict the amount of interest, so through you, Madam Chairman, I would remind Synod of the list of contingency business on page ii of the agenda and ask members to be aware that these items could be called at short notice.

We then have something less usual, which is a following motion relating to an item of business from the previous group of sessions: the debate on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant. The position in the Standing Orders is that, if a following motion is not taken during the group of sessions to which the original motion relates, it lapses unless the Business Committee directs otherwise. In this case, we felt that it should come back, not only because of the interest in this matter but also because other following motions were taken in July and, in fairness, we believed that this should be treated equally.

In the afternoon we have the report by the follow-up group on *Working with the Spirit*. This has a number of components. First, there will be a general debate on the report of the group, followed by a motion inviting those responsible to implement the report's recommendations. After that, we come to the detailed consideration of the amendments to the relevant Standing Order and, as members will see from the 11th notice paper when it appears, there are already some amendments to what has been proposed. Finally, the proposed amendments to the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation will be taken as part of legislative business on Thursday morning.

Members will see soon from the ninth notice paper that the pink agenda contained the wrong deadline for amendments to this item of business on the Vacancy in See Committees; the deadline is in fact 5.30 p.m. tomorrow, so there is still time to do that.

Tomorrow we have timed business, Questions, at 5.00 p.m. but as – believe it or not – only 70 Questions have been submitted they ought not to take up the whole two hours allocated. There is a possibility, therefore, of some flexibility with regard to timings at that point and also of the introduction of one of the contingency items of business tomorrow afternoon. In relation to Questions themselves members will note that some changes agreed in July have been implemented although others will need to wait for changes in Standing Orders.

Wednesday morning brings us to liturgical business, followed by the Diocesan Synod Motion on the vesture of ministers that we were unable to take in July and concluding with the appointment of the Archbishops' Council's auditors. The afternoon brings us to a debate on a major report from the ecumenical Mission Theological Advisory Group *Presence and Prophecy*. This is followed by Mr Barnes's Private Member's Motion on the Abortion Act, again carried over from the July group of sessions, and the second in a series of debates, at the end of the day, requested by members of the Synod on constitutional matters, this time on parliamentary democracy.

Thursday begins with the amendments to the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation followed by the final approval debate on marriage in church after divorce. We will then consider the Archbishops' proposals to fill the vacant places that have occurred or will occur on the Archbishops' Council. The afternoon begins with another Private Member's Motion, this time on female genital mutilation, followed by debates on clergy stipends and pensions, about which I need to say a little more. If members will look at the eighth notice paper, they will see some proposed changes to these items. This has occurred because both reports have a common denominator, that of guaranteed annuities, and it has become clear that the recommendations of the two reports are sufficiently intertwined that it is not sensible to take them separately. So we will have take-note debates on the two reports, but when it comes to the following motions these have been combined. This means that Synod will be able to consider the whole package together. The motion is of course capable of being amended, and naturally amendments have been received; but Synod will not be in the position of having in essence to make a decision on one matter – whether or not to abolish guaranteed annuities as part of an integrated financial strategy – before it has been able to debate the matter in detail.

Friday morning concludes the meeting of the Synod with a report on the funding of the Churches Conservation Trust, followed by a major debate on the Archbishops' Council's youth strategy, including the setting up of a youth evangelism fund.

On worship, although we have not been able to schedule a celebration of Holy Communion in the assembly hall on this occasion we still have rich provision: each day in the chapel worship begins with Morning Prayer, followed by Holy Communion, with a further celebration at lunch-time. Details are on the seventh notice paper. Here in the assembly hall we begin with morning worship, for which we have every reason to be grateful to Mark Bonney, our still relatively new chaplain, who will welcome comments on these arrangements. We are conscious of not having included a celebration of Holy Communion during the day in our place of business at either the July or November sessions this year, and I, for one, regret that timetable pressures have not allowed this. I hope that we shall rectify it in February.

I return finally to the question of amendments. I referred earlier to the high quality debate that we had on Israel-Palestine at the previous group of sessions. That debate could well have become unhinged because of the large number of amendments tabled.

Many people have expressed the view that there were too many amendments at the July group of sessions, and the Business Committee has agreed with that. If there are a lot of amendments they take time from the main issues on which people want to focus, and the debate can lose its coherence. There is something of a vicious circle about this: if a debate appears to be a little tight on timing members can see that putting down an amendment is the best way to ensure that they speak; but a debate with a string of amendments then has even less time for the substantive issues, and so frustration abounds.

The Business Committee is looking to ways of changing our procedures to prevent amendments squeezing out debate on the main motion. Changes in Standing Orders will probably be necessary. We have a group at work on the matter but we must proceed carefully lest we curtail the rights of members in a way that would harm the Synod. We will report to the Synod on this next year. Meanwhile, members can help by using the amendment path with restraint and by ensuring that amendments, when moved, are dealt with as expeditiously as fair practice allows, so that there may always be time for serious consideration of the central issues in any debate.

With that appeal, in which, I think, I speak for the majority of members, Madam Chairman, I beg to move.

Canon Hugh Wilcox (St Albans): I want to draw attention to paragraph 40 of the report *Clergy Stipends, Pensions Review and other Financial Issues* and first of all to say that that report is not, as this says, from the Archbishops' Council; it is a report by the Financial Issues working group, and there is an important distinction to be made. The Archbishops' Council's comment on that report is buried in Annex 7 and I draw the attention of Synod members to that particular gloss on what is happening.

Bearing in mind what we have just heard from the chairman about amendments, I want to point out the odd situation that we are in when we discuss this matter. A whole variety of proposals – I think it is 26 proposals, and 27 if you include the pensions thing – are going to be rolled up into one debate and I have no doubt, Madam Chairman, that whoever is in the Chair at the time will be rather resistant to the idea of our voting separately on each issue (unless the Business Committee is going to think about this between now and Thursday). Therefore the only way of registering an objection to the package is to lay an amendment which says that 'except that in Number So-and-So read something else', which I for one would be loath to do; but we are dealing with very important matters which cannot, I submit, be rolled up together. They are not all of a kind; they are all separate issues requiring separate arguments, most of which affect the working clergy of our Church and of course the laity who have to pay for it.

So I hope that the Business Committee will in the interval between now and then have a look at this because I do not think that it is quite as uncomplicated as the chairman would like to think. I do not want to add to his labours – I would hate to do that – but

on the other hand this is a very important matter and I do not think that we are going to help if we try and ignore the fact that there are a lot of contentious issues within this package. We need to find some comfortable way of dealing with it in the time that we have available.

Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark): I wish to draw the attention of Synod to the fact that yet again the report of the Business Committee makes no reference to any follow-up to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. It was two years ago, during the November 2000 group of sessions, that we debated the report GS Misc 625 by the Stephen Lawrence follow-up staff group entitled *Called to Lead: A Challenge to include Minority Ethnic People*. Introducing that debate, on behalf of the Archbishops' Council, Dr Philip Giddings spoke of 'the collective failure of [the] Church to provide full opportunities for black and Asian people to take their full part in our life at every level'. Dr Giddings added later, 'That is why the Archbishops' Council have determined to take this issue so seriously and why we have set up the multi-disciplinary staff team'.

Two years on, it is increasingly difficult to believe that the issues raised by the Stephen Lawrence inquiry are being taken seriously by the central Church structures. There seems to have been no further word from the staff group or indeed from the Archbishops' Council. Is this staff group an inadequate mechanism for such an important programme? Who takes the lead? Who monitors progress?

I want to mention two particular areas of concern. The debate which took place two years ago highlighted the issue of vocations to ordained ministry. This remains a key issue. I recently saw a publication from one of our theological colleges which includes photographs of hundreds of white people and gives no hint that the college has a responsibility to train a ministry suited to our multi-ethnic society. Similarly, the annual publication *Statistics of Licensed Ministers* continues to give no information about the number of Asian, black and white clergy. I asked a Question about this at the July sessions this year, and the answer that I received from the Ministry Division struck me as evasive and unconvincing.

Earlier this year there was a full revision of electoral rolls and, coupled with it, a system to collect statistics on ethnic origin. In my own diocese I have seen the resulting statistics. These provide valuable information and are already stimulating useful follow-up action. Please may we have an assurance from the Business Committee that time will be given at the February sessions to consider a report on the outcome of this exercise nationally, including an explanation from any diocese that decided not to cooperate with the request from the Synod that statistics be collected in this way, and pressing that this matter be dealt with urgently, otherwise I fear that our structures will once again miss the opportunity to take seriously the ethnic diversity of our Church.

Mr Chris Pye (Liverpool): I refer to paragraph 45 of the report: *Youth Strategy*. It is all good stuff in that paragraph. Two of the four themes of the Archbishops' Council are

in there: equipping to evangelize and children and young people. Yet what has it got on our agenda? The graveyard slot. At this point the chairman of the Business Committee scribbles a note to say, 'Well, Mr Pye, we like to put a carrot at the end, some important subject that will make people want to stay', but what about the message that we are sending to the outside world, not to people in our cosy little club here in Church House but to young people, people with young children, people who work in the area of children and youth? The message will be that it is more important for us to choose bishops and argue how we do it. Yet we read in the press a report saying that by 2030 there will be no youth left in the Church.

We also have an ageing and declining congregation, so when we discuss stipends who is going to pay? If you look at GS 1467 and the resolution in Annex 1, Resolution 8 is still in there, even though most of the dioceses voted against it. (I will pause here while you make a quick note to phone your DBF chairman.) The way the agenda is structured, it is not merely that we are rearranging deck chairs on the *Titanic*; we are in the situation of sitting in the deck chairs complaining that our drink is too warm and asking for more ice.

In the company that I work for we had a problem with health and safety. Our record was not good enough. So what did we do? We put health and safety as the first item on the agenda. Our record in health and safety has improved, but where is health and safety? It is still the first item on the agenda. We have put our money where our mouth is. If we mean it, we do it.

What is in paragraph 45 is good stuff, but let us face it: in a Synod that starts on a Monday afternoon are we at our best at 11 o'clock on a Friday morning or are we thinking, like Paul Simon did on Widnes station, those immortal words 'Homeward bound. I wish I was homeward bound'?

Please, if we are going to take working with children and young people seriously let us move it up the agenda and give it prime time. If the Business Committee wants a carrot to keep members of Synod here on a Friday, let us have something synodical that we relish. Let us go for how we select Crown appointments; let us go for how we pay whom and when and how.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): May I ask the Business Committee whether it proposes to allow time for a debate on the control of exports of arms in the near future, notwithstanding the culture of self-denial so much wished for by the Dean of Derby? The Synod last debated this topic in 1994 in the wake of the Scott inquiry into the arms for Iraq affair. My proposal would be to build on this debate. They debated a report from the Board for Social Responsibility which recommended that there be conditions for the granting of licences for the export of arms. Broadly speaking, these were that Her Majesty's Government were encouraged to continue in and intensify efforts towards the responsible limitation of the arms trade, and that export licences should only be granted when sales met certain criteria.

In 1998 the then new Labour Government had the presidency of the EU and persuaded our partners in Europe to adopt a voluntary code of conduct on the export of arms. This embodied conditions clearly based on those of the BSR, allowing of course for the passage of time. In 2002 Royal Assent was given to the Export Control Act which enshrined very similar conditions in UK law, so the Board for Social Responsibility and the Synod might well consider that they have cause to feel a warm glow of satisfaction at a job well, if slowly, completed. Unfortunately, this is not the case. There are many flaws and loopholes in the legislation which make it imperative that Synod keeps a watchful eye and formally expresses concern. More than this, even while the Bill was passing through the Houses of Parliament, export licences were granted in circumstances which did not meet the spirit or the letter of the new legislation. These were recorded in the Government's own report on arms sales for 2001.

A joint parliamentary committee on strategic exports has raised concerns about particular sales. Because of this, the bishops were very active in the Lords, debating several amendments to the legislation which would have closed several of the loopholes. They included the Bishop of Manchester, who quoted the Archbishop of Canterbury, because he himself could not be there to speak. The most important of these amendments was the one relating to prior parliamentary scrutiny of export licences. More than three hundred MPs have signed an early day motion calling for such prior scrutiny. (*The Chairman rang the bell.*)

I submit that this should be a motion for debate in Synod and that the debate should take place well in time to have an influence on manifestos for the next election.

Dr Susan Atkin (Chelmsford): I would like to draw Synod's attention to what I believe to be an omission from Synod's agenda this week, and that is any reference to the appointment of our new Archbishop, Dr Williams. I know that the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury is not, strictly speaking, Synod business, but this is the first time that the General Synod has met since the appointment of Dr Williams was announced, and I feel that it would be somewhat churlish of us to go through the entire week of business without making any reference to it whatsoever. I would like to ask the chairman of the Business Committee to see if he can possibly find time in the next three-and-a-half days for this Synod to approve the text of an official statement, which could be circulated to Synod members in a notice paper, welcoming Dr Williams' appointment and assuring him of our prayers and our wholehearted support at this time and in his future ministry among us. (*Prolonged applause*)

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): This is a small point in comparison with the last one. SO 7 says that Diocesan Synod Motions shall normally be considered by Synod in the order in which notice is received except that the Business Committee may vary the order and report in writing the reasons for such variation. Oxford has an extremely important Diocesan Synod Motion on page 36 of the agenda on the review of the freehold. It is time-sensitive because it relates to the Dioceses and Pastoral Measure

Review Group. I wonder if the Business Committee could either use its discretion to alter the timing of this Diocesan Synod Motion or look to a straw poll of Synod to see if there is any support for such reordering of the sequence of Diocesan Synod Motions so that it could be taken a lot earlier.

Mr Paul Dever (Winchester): I would like to thank Mr Pye for his comments, and I want to add a few to them, if I may. Paragraph 45 again: the youth evangelism fund and the youth strategy are two core issues that we need to be looking at as a Synod, and yet we have them crammed into one debate. This is a real shame because, where money is involved, usually that part of the agenda takes over, and the very important issues that the youth strategy raises will be pushed to one side, I fear. I question why we have these two pushed together; in the past, when we have had some substantive issues, we have had a whole afternoon to look at them. I am sure that it would have been possible to have more time to look at both the youth evangelism fund and youth strategy and to get to grips with what we are trying to say and what our mission to young people is.

I am afraid that the agenda will indeed be hijacked by amendments and then the grey areas that we need to be looking at will be pushed to one side, and we will not have time to go into them in depth. I am afraid that on a Friday we may run out of time and so it will get quashed. I would ask the chair of the Business Committee whether in future, when we have this kind of debate, young people could be involved in it. Surely this is one issue on which we could have asked the opinion of young people? It lends itself to breaking up into small groups. Could this not have been a prime opportunity to do this?

Revd Dr Richard Turnbull (Winchester): I would just like to reinforce the comments made earlier in the debate by Canon Wilcox and, rather than repeat them, specifically ask the chairman of the Business Committee why Synod has not been invited to debate and discuss the position of the Archbishops' Council on the matter, not least because, as I understand it, the pink agenda paper was printed before consideration was given to how to handle the views of the Archbishops' Council.

Revd Peter Spiers (Liverpool): Just on the subject of amendments, I would like to hear a bit more from the Business Committee about its consideration of how to deal with the issue of amendments. One of the groups that I am part of is the User Friendly Group of the General Synod, which is looking at how we can increase participation in debates here. As the Dean of Derby has rightly pointed out, people quickly work out that if you want to make a speech you put an amendment in. One way of dealing with this, I would suggest, is that if 40 people are not standing when an amendment is put forward it is not debated.

I would also like to suggest to the Business Committee that they limit speeches to two minutes, rather than five, as in this debate, to make sure that everyone gets a chance to participate.

I would also like to hear from the Business Committee how it intends to ensure wider participation by new and old members of Synod, to get a good cross-section of views, because it is very important that there is wide participation and real debate and that people feel able to express their opinion on all these important matters.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mrs Dorothy Chatterley (Carlisle): To help the Dean of Derby this afternoon I am going to make myself, I hope, very plain. I want to ask for some changes in the order of business and some alterations in the allocation of time.

First, on page 7 the Business Committee has thought it right to allow two hours for a debate on Iraq. In view of the latest news my feeling is that this is inappropriate. All that is necessary, surely, is a condemnation of all who threaten world peace, a declaration of support for the efforts being made by Her Majesty's Government and a call for prayers for peace. When I was a small girl in the Second World War, the world was festooned with posters which said 'Careless talk costs lives'. I commend that to Synod and ask for a shorter period of time.

Then on page 8 we read that time has been found for a following motion on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant, but I see that that means only 45 minutes. Moreover this debate is scheduled before Questions, and since there are at least five Questions from the diocese of Carlisle concerning the hard sell of the Covenant around that diocese it seems to me that the following motion should come after Question Time and not before it. Synod needs to hear what is already happening. So I suggest that the following motion might need two hours.

In conclusion, I summarize: please, reduce the time on Iraq, increase the time on the following motion, and change the order of business to allow Questions before that following motion.

Mr Tim Royle (Gloucester): I just want to add my voice, if I may, to the plea from Mr Pye that we should alter the agenda so that we can have the youth debate earlier in the week. He is absolutely right – and it was shown by the amount of support that his speech received – that we must put our young people at the very top of our agenda. We need a good debate; we need a lot of people here; and I urge the Business Committee to look seriously at moving something out and back to Friday and putting that youth debate in its place.

Mr Ian Garden (Blackburn): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The Dean of Derby, in reply: Madam Chairman, to reply to the debate in the five

minutes that you have given me will be difficult because there was a whole series of very different points; but I will try to deal with them briefly.

Canon Wilcox raised the question of the debate on finance and how the issues can be divided. I simply need to report to the Synod that the proposer of the debate and indeed the financial working party were very clear that they wanted the Synod to consider this as a package, and that they will be quite resistant to our dealing with it in any other way than as one big package. Canon Wilcox, however, is therefore right that, despite what I said about amendments, the only way that the Synod can register a vote against any part of that package will be by a series of amendments. That is the way to do it.

Mr Pye pleads for the debate on youth evangelism to come earlier in the Synod. I have not written anything down about a carrot, and I do not see things in terms of the graveyard slot. It can be quite difficult when a group of sessions ends at five o'clock in the afternoon and we know that people have to get trains home, and so on; but other than for those who live a very long way away – over the water and maybe down in Cornwall, I am not sure – a midday ending to a Synod meeting means that we ought to be able to do a proper morning's work, and we ought not to have the culture and mentality which assumes that anything on the last morning of a group of sessions that will end at lunch-time is the graveyard slot. We need to resist that and to see such a morning as an important time in the Synod's deliberations.

Miss Gnanadoss made a point about the follow-up to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, and members of the Archbishops' Council will have heard what she said, as will members of the Ministry Division – and that is important. One thing that I can say is that there has been an eleven-month vacancy in a rather important post, which has now been filled by Simon Bell, the new adviser for minority ethnic concerns; with that appointment, the expectation is that there will be a report to Synod on these issues next year and, in particular, that there will be a report in February on the statistics to which she referred (although I need to say, in passing, that it is quite difficult to put the statistics together when not all the dioceses have yet sent them in).

Mrs Alexander raised the question of a debate on the control of arms exports. The Business Committee will of course consult the Board for Social Responsibility about whether they think that they should bring such a debate to the Synod. Meanwhile, having had a very fine speech about why it is important, we might find that followed up by Mrs Alexander's putting down a Private Member's Motion and all those who would like to see it debated soon rushing to support it. That is the way in which the Synod provides for those kinds of thing to come into the agenda where there is a dissatisfaction that they are not coming from Synod boards and councils fast enough.

Dr Atkin mentioned a response to the appointment of the new Archbishop of Canterbury. The practice of the Synod in the past has never been to pass motions of congratulations when a new Archbishop of Canterbury has been announced, and

I suspect that we might be wise to follow the precedents. There are some Questions in relation to Archbishop Rowan's appointment which the Archbishop of York will answer in Question Time tomorrow. Beyond that, I suspect that it might not be helpful to have this on our agenda further during this group of sessions. Nevertheless, I heard, as did the Archbishop of York, the prolonged applause that greeted Dr Atkin's speech and he and I, no doubt, will have a conversation about it.

Dr Turnbull is concerned about the debate on finance and the role of the Archbishops' Council. My understanding is that the proper procedure was followed in that the report has come to us from the group that prepared it, going to various bodies on the way, including the Archbishops' Council. I fear that I may not have entirely got his point; perhaps he and I can have a conversation about that.

Mr Spiers would love to know what the Business Committee is up to in terms of wondering what we might do about amendments. I do not think that I want to share that because we are at a very early stage, but it is true that what he said – something about 40 members standing – is an idea that has been around. It is, nevertheless, quite difficult to see the way forward because even if you just take that one issue, should it be 40 members standing to debate the amendment after the proposer has had a chance to make a speech and say what it is about, or should it be 40 members standing before anyone has opened their mouth at all? These things are difficult, which is why we need to proceed with caution.

Mrs Chatterley wants us to turn round the debate on the following motion on Anglican-Methodist unity and Questions because there are some key Questions that can inform that debate. She has made sure that you, the members, are aware of that. Make sure that you look at the Questions, and that will help in the debate on the following motion. I do not honestly believe that we can turn it round at this notice, and in any case, in terms of the timing for that debate, 45 minutes for a following motion on top of the debate that we had last time must surely be seen to be an adequate amount of time.

Mr Oldham asks whether special consideration can be given to bringing forward the motion from the diocese of Oxford. I will bring that to the attention of the Business Committee when we next meet.

If I have missed anybody, I apologize; but I think that I have answered all the questions that I can.

The motion was put and carried.

The Dean of Derby (Rt Revd Michael Perham): I beg to move:

‘That the Synod approve 14 to 18 February as the dates for the February 2005 group of sessions’.

Members will recall that at this stage in the last group of sessions the Archbishop of York got to his feet and pointed out a difficulty with the dates being proposed. The Business Committee has reflected on this and now puts before Synod a new set of dates which I hope will be accepted.

The motion was put and carried.

THE CHAIR *Mrs Margaret Swinson (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 4.55 p.m.

Iraq: Would Military Action be Justified? The Church's Contribution to the Debate (GS 1475)

The Chairman: Before we begin our debate, I would like on behalf of Synod to welcome the visitors alluded to by the chairman of the Business Committee, our guests from other faith communities who have been particularly invited to be present for our debate on the situation with Iraq. They are seated in the gallery. We welcome Ms Fiona MacAulay, representing the Board of Deputies of British Jews and Revd Deacon Aziz Nour from Iraq, representing the Council of Oriental Orthodox Churches. (*Applause*)

The Bishop of Coventry (Rt Revd Colin Bennetts): I beg to move:

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

The fact that this introductory speech has been rewritten no fewer than three times in the past four days is owed not so much to vacillation on the part of the speaker as to the rapidly developing situation that the world community finds itself in, in relation to Iraq. Some of the matters referred to in the report that we are considering have, to some extent, been overtaken by events; that is an inevitable risk in seeking to address any topical issue. The majority of the report, however, still deserves our close attention and our strong support, since it raises a number of significant matters of principle which are not going to go away, whatever the shape of events over the next week or so.

We all approach this debate with heavy hearts, as we contemplate the prospect of war with Iraq. How appropriate that today, Armistice Day, requires us to think not only of war but of the consequences of war. Sadly, recent negotiations at the United Nations have often appeared more concerned with finding a pretext for war than with an incentive for peace. Indeed, it seems that much of the rhetoric of recent months has been designed to prepare the nation for such an outcome. Those who have questioned this trend and who have pressed for a negotiated settlement of the crisis have all too quickly been labelled as pacifists or appeasers, their concerns dismissed out of hand.

The Church has not been immune to such criticism. That is not surprising, given that the Church has been, rightly, at the forefront of an emerging coalition comprising key elements in our society, all urging restraint and caution. While some question the Church's very involvement in politics, others have questioned its stance.

Let me be clear. I believe that it would be grossly irresponsible if the Church did not raise certain moral and ethical issues, issues that have to be resolved before any recourse to military action. In doing this the Church nationally has sought to contribute to the wider public debate. The House of Bishops recently made a submission to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee's inquiry into the war against terrorism. Archbishop Rowan Williams has made other significant contributions. This role has not changed with the agreement last week of a new Security Council resolution; on the contrary, it has become even more important.

Before embarking on this debate I must declare an interest. My own position has, to some extent, been shaped by a visit to Iraq that I undertook some three years ago with, among others, the current Bishop of Bath and Wells, Dr Charles Reed from the BSR, and Canon Andrew White from Coventry's International Centre for Reconciliation. Since that time I have been involved with various attempts to build bridges with the people of Iraq.

One example of this is a recent project in which we brought a number of Iraqi doctors to Britain to re-train in the latest bone marrow transplantation techniques. This skill is desperately needed in a country where, following the Gulf War, the incidence of childhood leukaemia is more than twice the international average. During the past three years a stream of religious leaders from Iraq and from the Middle East generally to Coventry has led to a number of friendships, and these friendships have inevitably shaped my understanding of this crisis.

I must also make clear that I approach this subject from a particular theological perspective. First, I believe that Christians are called to be peacemakers. We are required to love our enemies and to pray for peace. Every reasonable prospect of a just and peaceful solution has to be exhausted before any resort to force. Second, justice demands that our responses and actions be proportionate and measured. The aim of any war must be peace, and true peace demands not simply an absence of conflict but also the active reconciliation of previously warring parties. Third, those who are engaged in resolving this conflict have a duty to the future, especially the welfare of peoples caught up in any armed conflict. Those who proclaim that their cause is just must be seen to act justly and must take responsibility for their actions.

How then do these principles affect my reading of the current situation? The General Synod should welcome the fact that the United Nations has been able to agree a resolution. Resolution 1441 reflects an important and necessary step forward in attaining an international consensus. The resolution provides a clear time-line for the resumption of a strengthened UN inspectors' regime, as well as the procedures

to deal with Iraq's non-compliance. If UN inspectors find Iraq to be in 'material breach' of this resolution, the matter will be referred back to the Security Council for further consideration.

It is at this stage that a degree of constructive ambiguity appears in the resolution. France, Syria and Russia have argued that it should be for the Security Council at the time to decide what type of action would be necessary, should non-compliance occur; in contrast the United States appears to be arguing that, if no Security Council agreement were forthcoming, individual member states could take unilateral action. It is at this point that I have a number of concerns about the resolution.

The resolution fails to distinguish between those incidents of non-compliance that could fatally compromise the work of the inspectors and those that would not. Iraq's failure, for example, to supply within 30 days of the resolution a complete declaration of its weapons programme would surely be in a different category from that of a chemical engineer who refused to be interviewed. Are all instances of non-compliance to be reported to the Security Council or only those that seriously compromise the inspectors' work? What are the criteria by which the seriousness of any act of non-compliance will be judged? Do all acts of non-compliance necessitate military action? How will the United Nations reach a decision as to whether or not the harm of non-compliance in one area outweighs the good being achieved in other areas? Will any response be proportionate to the infringement?

There has already been much speculation over the weekend as to whether or not this resolution will make war more or less likely. Only time will tell, but my feeling is that the toughness of the resolution, allied to its ambiguous language, as well as the priorities of US foreign policy which have helped to shape it, make some form of military confrontation likely. On the other hand, the emergency meeting of the Arab League yesterday and the day before seems to be sending a clear message to Saddam Hussein that he really does need to comply, otherwise he is on his own.

Whatever the outcome of the next few days, some of us cannot avoid the suspicion that this crisis may have been manufactured to suit American foreign policy interests. GS 1475 sets out in much greater detail some of the American geopolitical strategy which has inevitably shaped the Bush administration's thinking on Iraq. Consequently, I do not think that we should allow ourselves to accept the proposition that all our concerns have been allayed by this new resolution. Valid questions remain as to the legitimacy of regime change and whether or not the United Kingdom and United States are correct in their threat assessment of Iraq. Our role must be to continue to raise these issues which need to be resolved before any recourse to war. The nature of any post-conflict settlement needs to be spelt out before any action takes place. It is to these questions that I now turn.

There can be no dispute as to the nature of the current Iraqi regime. It is a narrowly based secular government. When it claims Islamic credentials it is usually for blatantly

propaganda purposes. It came to power through violence. Its very survival rests on its ability to crush internal dissent and to make secure its own borders by whatever means. Appalling human rights abuses against Iraq's own citizens mirror the atrocities committed in the Iran-Iraq war and Iraq's subsequent invasion of Kuwait. The Iraqi people would clearly be better off with a more representative government. To deny Western complicity in the creation of this monster would be utterly hypocritical, but, as the Bishop of Rochester has so helpfully pointed out, confessing such complicity should not lead us to moral paralysis.

Yet to assume that military action aimed at changing the regime would lead to a process of democratization within Iraq and across the Middle East is, to my mind, fanciful. Far from bringing peace and stability, such action could all too easily fan the flames of extremism. Neo-colonial aspirations, however well intended, are ill-judged. Little attention has so far been given to any post-conflict settlement that might emerge following any war. Nation-building in Kosovo, Somalia and Afghanistan has hardly been encouraging. The idea of Iraq as a United States or United Nations protectorate is equally unrealistic. Without greater clarity there is danger that Iraq could splinter along ethnic and religious lines, so further destabilising the region, already in turmoil following the war against terrorism and the on-going Arab-Israeli conflict.

No one would disagree that Iraq possesses chemical and biological weapons nor that it is actively seeking to develop a nuclear capability. Iraq's weapons of mass destruction clearly breach all UN resolutions. Iraq must provide for the UN inspectors to have unfettered and unhindered access to facilitate the identification and destruction of its weapons of mass destruction. The international community has a clear mandate and responsibility to disarm Iraq. Iraq has a clear obligation to comply with all UN resolutions.

To assume, however, that the international community has exhausted all peaceful means of resolving this conflict is misguided. Even our Government's own dossier acknowledges that Iraq does not pose an immediate threat. If such a threat did exist, recent UN negotiations would surely have dispensed with the need to set a time-line for compliance; they would have focused instead on providing the United Nations and its member states with a clear authority to disarm Iraq by any means necessary. I doubt that we would have witnessed such diplomatic haggling if such a threat really existed.

Instead, all too often in recent months the analogy has been drawn between Nazi Germany and Iraq: if only we had intervened in Nazi Germany in 1936, the horrors of the Second World War could have been averted. The analogy suggests that we should resist negotiating with dictators in favour of aggressive action while we still have time. I do not necessarily disagree with the analysis but only with the analogy: Iraq in 2002 is not Germany in 1936. A more accurate analogy would be with the Weimar republic of the 1920s. Then, the failure of the Great Powers was their unwillingness to use diplomatic and economic measures to force Germany's compliance with the disarmament provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. Significantly,

we have not heard the more bellicose sections of the media arguing that we should have gone to war with Germany in the 1920s; but that is precisely what the new UN resolution on Iraq invites us to prepare for. Just as it would have been wrong to have gone to war with Germany in the 1920s, so I believe it is wrong to press for a military solution in Iraq at this stage. To seek such a solution to any future acts of non-compliance at a time when Iraq does not pose an imminent threat to international peace would be to lower the threshold of war to unacceptable new levels.

It was unfortunate that the UN so blatantly labelled this resolution as ‘a final opportunity’; this closes the door unnecessarily on any further diplomatic initiative. The result is to back not only Iraq but also the United Nations into a corner. Yes, we should learn the lessons of history; yes, we should insist that Iraq disarm; but should military action inevitably follow from any violation of this resolution? Although any non-compliance could threaten the UN’s credibility, so too would this credibility be threatened if it lowered the threshold for military action. That is why it remains paramount that the United Nations rather than any one member state decides upon the consequences of any infringement.

The international community must not look for reasons to hasten the demise of the inspectors merely to satisfy America’s objective of regime change. While UNSCOM did not fully complete its mandate in 1998, it went some way to achieving its goals. The UN inspectors were successful in the past and can be successful again. Most analysts would agree that the dual policy of sanctions and UN inspectors has contained Iraq for the past 12 years, albeit at a horrendous cost in humanitarian terms. Sanctions have denied Iraq access to vital equipment necessary to rebuild its weapons of mass destruction. If Iraq does allow the inspectors back into the country – and it will be political suicide not to – there is the possibility that the inspectors can achieve their task.

The potential human and political costs of any conflict are horrific. The threat of a prolonged urban war, possibly entailing the use of chemical and biological weapons, with the risk of substantial civilian and military casualties, must be avoided at all costs. Ninety per cent of the victims of war are civilians and half of them are children. To justify that kind of bloodshed, the evidence for Iraq’s capacity to deploy weapons of mass destruction against its neighbours would need to be compelling. To warrant intervention, the harm done by any violation would need to outweigh the good achieved by the inspectors in other areas. We must not give up on the inspection process prematurely.

Many of the issues that I have touched on today are prominent in GS 1475. The recent UN resolution marks an important moment of international cooperation that should be welcomed. Iraq’s compliance with this resolution is the surest way to avoid a military confrontation. It is clear, however, that in the event of non-compliance the UN is entitled to enforce its decisions. It is my belief that it must be the UN rather than a member state which should determine the consequences that follow non-compliance.

In making that decision the UN member states must hold firm to the principle that force remains the very last resort.

Canon Andrew White (Coventry): I find this debate extremely difficult, mainly because the more time I have spent in Iraq, particularly in recent weeks, the more complex the situation has become. There is one certainty among the people of Iraq and that is their gratitude to the Church of England for the support that it has shown to the people and nation of Iraq at a very difficult time, though I think that part of their gratitude should actually be directed to the Church in Wales. However, the voices that one is hearing today from Iraq are very different from the voices from even 18 months ago. The people are suffering terribly. They have been oppressed from without and within. Yet they are stating quite categorically that, even though they live in fear and terror of war, they have also had enough of their regime. This is not just the voices of the ordinary people on the streets but also the voices of people in very senior leadership positions. It is not easy for me to stand here and say this today because, for a start, it immediately means that I cannot return to Iraq, but I think that it is important that we hear the voices of the people at this time before we simply try and give our position from a distance.

The people are desperate. The people are saying that they no longer have the energy or the ability to bring about change themselves. The effects of 12 years of sanctions have clearly added to the oppression of the nation. Maybe it could be argued that if the sanctions were to have been lifted several years ago change could have come about from within. Today Iraq is a nation of people living in fear.

I agree with everything that my Bishop has just said in his introduction, and we have grappled long and hard with this on-going crisis, but I think that it is only right that I am honest with Synod as to the voices that we hear today on the ground in Iraq. I think that we hear those voices in part because the Church of England over recent years has taken a real interest in Iraq, and relationships have been created with the people, with the leadership. Obviously these voices of fear, of concern and of dissent are not coming from the Naji Sabris and Tariq Azizes of Iraq. Their position is clear – they state that they are willing for the inspectors to return – and yet they also seem to have come to terms with the fact that there will be war and that they will lose the war; they talk about how they will fight to the end. Resolution 1441 gives Iraq the opportunity to try to do its part, but we have reached a point in history where the time for change has come. The big ethical, theological and political issue for all of us is how that change is to come about.

Nor must we forget some of the larger problems in the Middle East at present: the very real concerns over all-out war in that region must not be refused consideration. Israel does face a very real threat, and in discussions in Iraq the threat that Israel faces is actually acknowledged. The people of Palestine are extremely frightened about the consequences that a war against Iraq may have for them. The reality is that there is likely to be a war against Iraq, and therefore one of the issues that the Church needs to face is, ‘What do we do next? What do we do to support the people of Iraq?’

It is very important that we continue to show our support for the people of Iraq, not least to show that this war is not a war between Christianity and Islam, as some would like it to be. Therefore the position that the Church has taken is even more important.

I just share those few thoughts, and I would continue to say that it is essential that we go on talking to our Government, that we use any channels of communication that we may have with the US Government – I will be going to meet senior people in the State Department early next week – and that we do all in our power to try to work for reconciliation; but we must also hear the cries for change, and we must start talking and thinking seriously about how that change can come about.

We are living in a dangerous time and we must not under-estimate the importance of prayer. At the end of the day, there are many words that will be said in this debate, there are many words being said in both Houses of Parliament, and they will have some effect; but we know that in the end the whole situation is in the hands of the Almighty. So we probably need to pray more and talk less.

Revd Richard Seabrook (Chelmsford): As the Bishop of Coventry has correctly said, today is Armistice Day, when we think about those who gave their lives in the cause of freedom and truth. The lessons of 20th-century conflict inform us greatly: that the United Kingdom and the United States of America have been leaders in the establishment of an order of peace and justice in the face of tyranny, together, our two nations, in alliance. That alliance has been formed in times of darkness and calamity, against fascism, Nazi ideology and Communism. We cannot compartmentalize the regime of Saddam Hussein in this way, but we can say that it is a regime of hatred and subjection of minorities. They include the Kurds of the north; and you may have read today in the *Daily Telegraph* of the destruction of the homeland of the Marsh Arabs: whereas once half a million people lived in those marshes, now there are just ten thousand. The threat of Saddam Hussein is there, and it shows no sign of lessening.

I believe that this is a time when the transatlantic alliance comes into its own, but the document before us I find to be anti-American. In paragraph 21 it seems to imply that American foreign policy is something that is based on shifting sands, and the paragraphs that follow are critical of US foreign policy. Yet the strength and influence of the United States of America, if used correctly, is a positive force in the world, and I believe that, in this instance, to remove Saddam Hussein and the weapons of mass destruction is an object to be supported by all who remember the lessons of history, namely what happened in the 1930s. (I must disagree with the Bishop of Coventry: I am sure that a comparison has to be made between Saddam Hussein and Hitler.)

The acting alone of the United States echoes what the United Kingdom did last century when she stood alone. In paragraph 26 the statement that the United States of America ‘will only become involved in those conflicts which threaten its vital national interests’ is disingenuous. With weapons of mass destruction, it is the world that is under threat and not just the United States, and yet the United States in this sees its role clearly.

On paragraph 63 I would want to see the United Kingdom giving full support to the United States in a post-war settlement, if that situation should arise. The document is critical of US intervention in Somalia, Kosovo and Afghanistan, but do we really believe that, if the United States had not intervened, the regime in Somalia, the Taliban and Milosevic would have gone away? If the US had stayed on any longer in those countries she would have been accused of American colonialism. Yes, we must leave the people of Iraq to rebuild their nation if there is regime change, but the West must give as much support as possible.

Support for the United States and United Kingdom-led military intervention, I believe, is justified, however painful that decision is. If Saddam Hussein is found in breach of the United Nations' second deadline of 7 December, I believe that there can be no alternative. Saddam Hussein must be removed now. The West's failure to remove him after 1991 and the Gulf War is something that the West should feel remorse about. We should support the American Government. Her Majesty's Government should give the necessary support to the US Government, and Her Majesty's Government should be given the support of the established Church.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells (Rt Revd Peter Price): I want to welcome and thank the Board for Social Responsibility for its clear paper on military action and Iraq. I want to applaud the United Nations Security Council in its achievement of an agreed resolution concerning the return of UN weapons inspectors to Iraq. I pray that Saddam Hussein's government will have the wisdom to accept and implement the UN resolution. I further welcome the Bishop of Southwark's amendment to the next motion, and I hope that Synod will pass it. I believe that the House of Bishops' statement of 9 October remains valid and that no grounds exist that would justify the use of force to resolve this conflict.

Saddam Hussein is an evil ruler, but that is not enough for war. Iraq has a programme of weapons of mass destructions, but that is not enough for war. The question remains as to what Saddam's evil portends for the world and if there is an imminent and urgent threat from his weapons and, therefore, what response would be both effective and consistent with Christian ethics.

The current crisis with Iraq has invoked unheard-of opposition from the worldwide Church, right across the traditions. There is a deep sense that unilateral pre-emptive action would lower the threshold for war below acceptable levels, making it unjust and immoral. Professor George Hunsinger of Princeton, along with Professor Glen Stassen of Fuller – not normally people who would associate with each other, and representing quite extreme views within the Church of the United States – have argued that pre-emptive action would 'dishonour the nation, disregard morality and undermine international law'.

Synod's report clarifies the basis for 'just war' and what gives it legitimate authority. Any further conflict in the Middle East would lead to unpredictable consequences and,

as Archbishop Williams said last week, ‘risks the lives of hundreds of thousands in a region that could rapidly and uncontrollably spiral down into chaos’. He continued, ‘We also jeopardize any authority we might have to appeal for restraint in other situations on the basis of international law’.

A ‘carrot and stick’ approach, therefore, is needed. In return for the disarming of Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, there must go the gradual lifting of sanctions and a pledge of no military attack if Iraq really cooperates. The international community must continue united in a strategy to isolate, contain and disarm, and ultimately to undermine Saddam’s regime. Circumstances must and can be created by which the Iraqi people can become subjects of non-violent resistance to achieve the goal of regime change that we all desire (though we must recognize that this will not come cost-free).

Our order paper calls us to prayer. My hope is that this can be focused particularly on the feast of the Epiphany, as well as being part of our general intercessions, for as we pray we need to recognize that many in the military, especially those who are Christians, are questioning being asked to take part in a war that cannot be morally justified; and it raises for them issues of conscientious objection. Supporting and advising those facing this dilemma will take wisdom and discernment. Patriotism, as Bonhoeffer discovered, does not only require allegiance to our country; it means upholding every noble ideal for which it stands but opposing it with deep regret where it is wrong, not just for our own sake but for the sake of the world which God loved and loves, and for the well-being of our sisters and brothers in every tribe and nation. This is a time for just peacemaking, not unjust warmaking.

The Archdeacon of Worcester (Ven. Joy Tetley): Although this may sound irrelevant, I ask Synod to bear with me for a few moments. I have recently been doing some work on the Book of Jonah. This instructive little tale is concerned, as it happens, with the fate of a city in the ancient equivalent of Iraq. It also raises fundamental issues about the character and workings of God, notably what is God’s attitude towards an unfriendly power whose behaviour is far from acceptable. Such theological questions are still highly pertinent. Who is God, and what does God require? This is the essence of the theological search and a live issue that the Church should be both engaging with and communicating. Yet good and welcome though it is, I do not see enough of that fundamental engagement in the document before us. Do we not need to be up front in speaking of God? That surely is a major contribution that we have to make, and, in that, biblical perspectives are crucial (and that of course is a key word).

In Jonah’s case, the answer to the question about God’s attitude towards an unfriendly power is that God is a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The people and indeed the animals of Nineveh matter very much to God, so much so that God is willing to go to enormous lengths to bring about a peaceful change of heart. Jonah, however, would much prefer the way of violence: that would teach them, and it would make him feel better.

The human and non-human creatures of Iraq still matter very much to God. Their voices matter. Their situation matters. They are on his heart. Let us say so unashamedly. Let us explore and share the meaning of the reconciling Gospel of God as it relates to Iraq. In a nutshell, perhaps what we need to be saying loud and clear and in the profoundest sense of this phrase is this: for God's sake – quite literally for God's sake – hold fire.

Mrs Anne Williams (Durham): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Coventry, in reply: I would like to respond briefly to the contributions that have been made and then draw Synod's attention to something which has just come to my notice.

First, may I thank Canon White? He is probably the person in the room who knows more about the current situation in Iraq than most of us, and from what he contributed to the discussion I would like to underline his reference to the fact that this is not a war against Islam. This is not Christianity against Islam, and it is very important indeed that we make that point clear. There are over a million Christians in Iraq and until very recently they have lived in relative peace and harmony with their Muslim neighbours. Sadly, one or two events in recent months have made that more difficult. Not least, as it is reported, Saddam Hussein has now forbidden the use of traditional Christian names in baptism, apart from two or three which are, as it were, authorized. Other than that, no other names are available for Christian baptism. The way in which Christians and Muslims in that country are now living together is going to test the strength of their friendships and relationships over many years previously.

As regards Mr Seabrook's contribution, we clearly do not agree on this entirely. I would simply invite him to compare Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler if he wishes, but my point is not whether the two men are comparable but whether they are in a position to do the same kind of things. My point is that Saddam is virtually impotent in terms of delivering weapons of mass destruction, and Hitler was certainly not impotent from 1936 onwards, when it came to delivering his weapons against Europe.

I warmed very much to the suggestion from the Bishop of Bath and Wells that we designate Epiphany as a day of prayer. This is a very constructive and positive suggestion. I am not quite sure of the mechanism but if, at the very least, what we take away from this debate is the need to pray fervently I would be very happy. That chimes in very much with the contribution from the Archdeacon of Worcester that we acknowledge that God is sovereign and seek his mind and his wisdom in this, and remember that he is a gracious God.

Something has just come off the internet and the Chair has given me permission to share it with Synod. It is from the BBC News and it is a report on the debate that is currently taking place in the Iraqi parliament. The heading is 'Iraq urged to reject UN resolution'. A senior Iraqi official has urged the country's parliament to reject the tough UN resolution on weapons inspections. The session is currently being shown live on Iraqi television. The key paragraph is to the effect that Iraq has until Friday to agree the resolution, which says that Baghdad must allow unhindered access to suspected weapon sites or face serious consequences. This, as I read the report, is not the final decision of the Iraqi parliament. It is a proposal that is being put forward by the head of the foreign relations committee and therefore carries some weight. We shall have to wait and see what the final decision of that parliament is. I am grateful for the opportunity to share that with Synod, but my heart sinks.

The motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Coventry (Rt Revd Colin Bennetts): I beg to move:

'That this Synod, mindful that Christians are called to be peacemakers but aware of the deteriorating diplomatic situation between Iraq and the international community:

- (a) endorse the conclusions of the House of Bishops' submission (9 October 2002) to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee's on-going inquiry into the war against terrorism as set out in paragraph 1 of *Iraq: Would Military Action be Justified? The Church's Contribution to the Debate*;
- (b) call on Christians to pray for the world and its leaders, and to work together with people of all faiths, in the search for a just and peaceful resolution of this crisis;
- (c) call on Christian and other religious leaders in Britain to urge their followers to avoid words and actions that might lead to conflict between people of different faiths;
- (d) encourage dioceses to support Christian Aid, the Centre for International Ministry at Coventry Cathedral and the Church of England mission agencies as they continue to minister to the needs of the most vulnerable people within Iraq and the wider region;
- (e) call on all parishes to exercise particular pastoral concern and support for the families of members of the British armed forces who are separated by the present crisis; and
- (f) commend to dioceses for further reflection the BSR report *Iraq: Would Military Action be Justified? The Church's Contribution to the Debate*.

There is nothing that I would want to add to what I have already said. The item is self-explanatory, and I am happy to move it formally.

The Bishop of Southwark (Rt Revd Tom Butler): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘After paragraph (a) *insert* the words

“(b) welcome the recent United Nations resolution as evidence of international resolve to disarm Iraq, and believe that it is for the United Nations Security Council alone to decide what proportionate action should follow any breach of that resolution;”

and re-letter the remaining paragraphs accordingly’.

The situation in Iraq is of course a moving target, as we are hearing, and the motion in the name of the Bishop of Coventry had been drafted before the form of the UN Security Council resolution was known. My amendment simply updates the motion, and I believe that the amendment also strengthens it by specifically pointing to the last two clauses of the Security Council’s Resolution 1441, which might be of extreme relevance in the days, weeks or months ahead. Paragraph 12 of that resolution states that the Security Council decides to convene immediately upon receipt of a report of an Iraqi obstruction or non-compliance in order to consider the situation and the need for full compliance with all relevant Council resolutions, in order to secure international peace and security. Paragraph 13 states that the Council recalls in that context that the Council has repeatedly warned Iraq that it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations.

The phrase ‘serious consequences’ is of course diplomatic language for the use of military force, and the spirit of these UN resolutions is that the Security Council will convene immediately and consider any report of Iraqi non-compliance before the decision to use military force is taken.

Since the passing of this UN resolution, United States leaders have clearly said that they will feel free to take military action if there is a report of Iraqi non-compliance. Such unilateral action would have very serious international consequences and would also risk undermining the authority of the UN itself. My amendment makes it clear that authority in these matters lies properly with the United Nations and not with any individual country.

The Bishop of Coventry: I simply say that I am delighted that this amendment has been put forward. I thank the Bishop of Southwark for it and I welcome it.

Revd Professor Nigel Biggar (Northern Universities): I am going to do something slightly odd and begin by presenting a case for supporting the motion without amendment, the case that I was set to make when I walked into this chamber. Just

before I finish I will tell members about a doubt about my own case that has come into my mind since this debate began.

The motion as it stands asks us to endorse the conclusions of the House of Bishops' submission to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee. As it stands, I thought it well balanced and flexible, because the conclusions affirm the British Government's stated policy of working through the UN to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, the Bishops' conclusions do not rule out the possibility that the time may come when military action as a last resort is justified; nor do those conclusions, as they stand, rule out the possibility of military action being justified without UN authorization. When I entered this chamber, I thought that that was right, for these reasons.

It is right because the power to uphold international law is vulnerable to the politics of the Security Council where, thanks to Stalin, a single vote cast to protect the dubious interests of a single member state is enough to paralyse the UN as an effective global policeman; that is what happened in Kosovo, where NATO did not seek UN authorization because it knew that it would not have got it. Why? Because Russia would have cast its veto. Why? Because Russia did not want its ruthless hands in Chechnya tied by legal precedent.

My point is not that UN support for military action against Iraq should not be sought. My point is simply that the failure to obtain support does not by itself make unilateral action wrong. Whether that is right or wrong will be decided by whether or not military action is indeed a response to a grave and immediate threat. To date it seems to me that Washington has failed to give a plausible account of what that threat might be. Evidence that Iraq might transfer weapons of mass destruction to Al-Qaida ranges in quality from the weak to the implausible.

The Bishops' conclusions, as they stand, make no judgement on the nature of the threat that we face, and I rather wish that they had; but the position that they do take, which affirms the current policy of working through the UN on the one hand without, on the other, closing the door on future unilateral military action seems to me appropriately flexible, and I would have urged Synod to endorse it without restrictive amendment – until my doubt arose in the course of the past 15 minutes.

In this situation, not as a rule but in this situation, where the US administration appears to be intent on war and does not have good enough reason for going to war, maybe it is right that her use of military force should be bound by the deliberations of the UN. If members think so, they should vote in favour of the amendment; and I think that I will.

The Bishop of Rochester (Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali): I thought that Professor Biggar had said what I was going to say, but it turns out that he has not, after all! So I need to say what I wish to say.

Naturally, I agree with the first part of this amendment, but the second part, which would limit the decision to act to the UN, I have some reservations about because, as I thought Professor Biggar was saying, it would fetter the right of nations to defend themselves, either individually or collectively, in the light of what the inspectors may discover – and we still do not know what they may discover – and also of any possible danger to national or indeed to collective security, which has not so far been mentioned, or indeed the possibility of genocide in Iraq itself, which has only marginally been mentioned this afternoon. I am glad that Professor Biggar has mentioned the point about the difficulty of getting the UN Security Council to act because of its procedures, and that is also something that worries me.

So I would oppose the amendment because it alters the balance of the main motion, which I am glad to support.

Mr Tim Royle (Gloucester): I was not going to speak in this debate, but this amendment impels me really, I think, just to say one or two things, if I may.

I cannot bring myself to vote for it because I really do believe that we will be playing into the hands of this man who has shown over twelve years or more now that he cannot be trusted. This latest news that we have just received, that a senior official in his government has recommended to the parliament that it should not accept this resolution, indicates to me that perhaps Saddam wants to have a showdown. For what reason, I cannot understand, but that parliament is clearly not one that is free, as ours are free; they have just had an election where 99 per cent or more voted to keep Saddam Hussein as president. I cannot believe that it would be in the interests of the world – and I use that phrase bearing in mind that half the world does not have the benefits that we have in the other half (and that has to be addressed; but it is another subject) – to adopt this amendment; if we were to adopt it, it would just show that the Church does not understand the realities of the political world in which we live, the fact that, as an earlier speaker said, there is a veto which could be easily used, and then we would be in a situation where again it could be played off and played off and played off, and it would just so annoy and irritate and cause even more extreme reaction than we already have.

We have achieved a minor miracle in getting a unanimous decision from the United Nations which at least has brought the rest of the Arab nations on the side of doing what needs to be done. Do we want to go back and reopen all the arguments? (I do not honestly go along with the Bishop of Bath and Wells and his arguments about the question of going to war.) If we accept this amendment, it will not redound to our credit, and I shall therefore vote against.

Mrs Anne Williams (Durham): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost, 110 voting in favour and 141 against.

Mr John Higginbotham (Leicester): May I start by saying that I share the misgivings of both the Bishops in that we are shooting at a moving target in a rapidly changing situation, but I think that some of the points that I hope to make will still be relevant.

We have a great concern for the already hard-pressed Christian communities in the Middle East and also our relations with Jews and Muslims which any false step could greatly jeopardize. We need to view this not just in the context of Iraq itself but in the wider context of its implications for the whole of the Middle East. The legitimate concerns of Arab leaders should be taken very seriously. President Mubarak, who realizes only too starkly the volcano on which he sits, has first-hand knowledge of the dangers of its eruption. Caution is never an inspiring war cry, but the events which have taken place since this report underline the need for caution more than ever; the situation, as we have seen, changes daily. Turkey has elected a government which may prove more sympathetic to Islam than the traditional secularist stance would suggest. Israel is embarking on a period of political instability which, as we know from experience, encourages extremist parties to come out of the woodwork. President Bush's recent triumph in the mid-term elections will have certainly encouraged hawks rather than doves in the White House. All this should be a terrible warning of the eruption that could be pending in the Middle East.

Of course Saddam Hussein needs to be reined in, and few would dispute that; but if he seeks to evade the UN resolutions – and all past experience suggests that he will – we could easily find ourselves committed to a war full of perils. I am not saying that we should not go to war in any circumstances; what I am saying is that we need to consider this very gravely because, even if we 'win', we could find ourselves with a splintered Iraq and a Middle East ablaze. One of the just war criteria is that the after-state should be better than the prior state; there is simply no guarantee that this will be the case.

I have grave doubts in any case about a *pax americana*: as long as the US is seen to be a close supporter of Israel there will be inevitable suspicion in the Arab world about the USA as an honest broker. We can only try to allay these suspicions, which will inevitably cast a shadow over Britain as we are seen as America's principal ally. My point, therefore, is simply this. We cannot view this problem as merely confined to Iraq. Unless we see it in the context of the whole Middle East we are in danger of blundering in and causing far greater damage than that which we seek to rectify. Is Saddam worth it? must be a question very much in our minds. By all means seek to restrain him but, unless we do this with the assent of the Arab world and the grand coalition that we managed to build in the Gulf War, we are in danger of appearing in a neo-colonialist garb which will only provide fuel for Al-Qaida and others of that ilk. If ever we should hasten slowly, it is now.

Let us hope, in spite of the latest evidence from Baghdad, that Saddam heeds the unanimous resolution of the UN Security Council. If not, Iraq is not the only country that will suffer.

Canon Paul Brett (Chelmsford): I want to speak to paragraph (f) of this item: the question of further reflection. We cannot ask whether going to war against Iraq might be morally justified unless we have clear and detailed criteria to help us answer this question. The best that we have so far of course is the ‘just war’ tradition, even though it is – how shall I put it? – fluid round the edges, but is this really enough? We may well ask all the probing questions. Is there genuinely a just cause? What is the proper authority to make the decision? Is it intended to counter a real evil and not just to advance our own economic self-interest or remove a leader that we do not like? Would it be a response to an attack and not a first use of force? When has all else actually failed? We may even go on to ask the other questions. Will we gain our overall objective? Will innocent children and the elderly be safe from direct attack? Will the good to be achieved be worth the suffering and misery caused along the route? To be honest, however, it is almost impossible to give a straightforward answer to any of these questions in this case.

A greater problem arises when we move on to the subtle distinction between anticipatory self-defence and preventive war (page 45 of the excellent report). Even more difficult is the extraordinary American term ‘pre-emptive retaliation’, as I have heard it called. This seems to make nonsense even of the English language. Here we reach the heart of the dilemma: are there any adequate, workable criteria by which to evaluate the morality of war in the modern world?

Look at the argument at the heart of the current debate. Would an attack on Iraq, if it were to happen, be a matter of self-defence? Surely it can never be right to try to defend yourself by punishing someone for doing something that they have not yet done. Think of the consequences for public morality and social stability if this doctrine were acceptable. Do you lock up Lord Archer for telling lies in court before you have proved that he has done so? Do you convict Paul Burrell for selling royal property when he has not done it, in case he does do it? To accept this line of argument would be to lose any objective rule of law with verifiable cause and effect, with evidence of things done, not just vivid apprehensions of what might be.

Things may have changed in the past 48 hours with that unanimous UN resolution, but if Saddam were to reject or to default on what is asked of him, would that add up to a morally acceptable reason for attacking his country with the devastating military force at our disposal? This would no longer be self-defence; it would be out of all proportion, and it would probably cause conflagration in the Middle East out of all control. The Churches’ most important contribution is surely to develop increasingly workable criteria to help evaluate the morality of modern warfare. The just war criteria are of limited help. Modern warfare has entered another dimension of complexity. The moral issue indeed requires further urgent reflection, as paragraph (f) reflects.

Revd Simon Bessant (Blackburn): I want to affirm section (c) of this motion, referring to paragraphs 67–69 of the report, and take the debate particularly into our own English context. Part of my work is that in my ministry I am co-secretary of the Blackburn Diocese – Lancashire Council of Mosques dialogue group. We recently published a press release and public statements expressing our concerns about conflict in Iraq. In my dealings with Muslims in this country two themes constantly surface on this issue; indeed only last night I popped in to see my next-door neighbours, who are Asian heritage Muslims, and in five minutes we were discussing Iraq and these two themes came out again.

The first is that war in Iraq will affect our own communities. Enormously good work in inter-faith relations has been done in the past 14 months, particularly by the Archbishop of Canterbury internationally and nationally; and throughout this country much has been done. I believe that those good relationships are now threatened by conflict, and it only strengthens the hands of the extremists because to the British Muslim community talk of Western military action feels like a new crusade, and that is very disturbing to them. I fear that we may yet find that some of our communities are very fragile. Clearly, these matters affect us in our own country.

The second concern is this. My Muslim friends constantly ask me, ‘Why these double standards?’ They talk about UN resolutions in regard to Iraq but they refer back of course to Israel and Palestine – the Holy Land – and that issue is still of great concern to them. It undermines Western integrity. I note that the report affirms the Prime Minister’s desire for a Middle East conference, but it is essential to make further progress in regard to the Holy Land before considering any move for military action in regard to Iraq. I would just like to affirm what is said in paragraph 69 of the report: ‘The consequences for inter-faith relations of an attack on Iraq must therefore be of grave concern for a Church with a responsibility for the spiritual well-being of the whole nation’.

Dr Elaine Storkey (London): I am a bit concerned that we are losing the main thrust of the report, which is about our right to offer this advice or come to these decisions, built upon our theology. I think that an earlier speaker was wrong: we are talking about God all the time here because just war principles do embody a theology of tradition, of biblical insights and so on, which are underneath all that we are saying. So I want to disagree with Paul Brett in his statement that these are now outmoded principles and that modern warfare has developed to such an extent that we can no longer apply them in a meaningful way. I think that the problem is not that they cannot be applied but that they are not being applied. Let us look at them.

The just cause: what is a just cause of war? Well, it is defence, it is violation of the sovereignty of other nations, it is open hostility to one’s neighbours, it is a response to violent conflict already entered into or a major and immediate threat to international peace. The possibility of atrocities not yet entered into is not a just cause; it is not that we might or might not punish someone for something that he has not yet

done; it is simply not a just cause. Nor is a regime change a just cause. In fact, a regime change as a reason for going to war is a dangerous precedent. Look at all the other countries where we might like to have a regime change: do we set this down as a possible reason for other wars? Then there is the whole idea of a last resort. Here just war principles are again very clear: war is to be entered into when every other means has been considered, tried, pursued and exhausted. We have until Friday to know whether this is the case. Like everyone else's, my heart sinks at the news from Iraq, but we do not know; the jury is still out; nothing is ever finished until the final whistle blows. The United States has been talking about war long, long before any of the ways have been considered and examined and finally decided upon. War has always been there, in the background in a sense, to achieve what the United States sees as a legitimate aim. I do not believe that the American government has been for one moment bothered about just war principles; there is a whole range of other things wrapped up inside this, and again I would disagree with a former speaker.

Take proportionality: the United States undoubtedly has weapons of mass destruction and holds them on a scale which would be unimaginable in any other country or regime; a war conducted on terms decided by the United States could well unleash the kind of horror and suffering for hundreds of thousands which could not possibly be in proportion to Saddam Hussein's current threat to his neighbours in the Middle East. If Saddam does possess the weapons that we think he has, we have to be very sure before we give him the excuse to use them.

Finally there is the whole issue of proper authority. The decision to go to war has to be made for just reasons, with the right intent, as a last resort, by the highest authority: another just war principle that we hang on to. The United States is not the highest authority; I am very sorry that we failed to pass the Bishop of Southwark's excellent amendment which would have strengthened the motion, because in this case the United Nations is clearly the highest authority and America's tradition of international cooperation is not very encouraging, with its repudiation of the Kyoto protocol, the international criminal court, the comprehensive test ban treaty and the biological weapons convention. We need a higher authority whose self-interest is not bound up in this in one way or another.

Therefore we need these just war principles actually to be applied right across the board. Let us not abandon what we have. It is what we have to offer our country and our world in this debate and this discussion. Let us rather plead for their implementation.

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Richard Harries): I voted for the Bishop of Southwark's amendment, but I do think that it is important for us Synod members to remind ourselves that there is a very genuine dilemma here. Professor Adam Roberts has argued recently that even before the recent UN resolution Saddam Hussein was in breach of previous resolutions and there was a legal basis for war. We intervened in Kosovo in a way that many of us thought was absolutely morally necessary and indeed

rather later than it should have been, but there was no specific UN resolution for that because of the fear of veto. So if war is declared by the United States and it is followed by the United Kingdom there would be a legal basis for that.

Nevertheless, I supported the amendment because the UN, if it is about anything at all, is about getting the widest possible international legitimacy. That is what it stands for and this issue as much as anything else is about the authority of the UN, about which we all care very deeply. So if there was unilateral military action, that would indeed in one sense enforce UN resolutions but in another sense it would undermine UN authority because it would lack the widest possible international authority and legitimacy.

One point on the main motion: the UN resolution is tough, so tough that it is difficult to see how Saddam Hussein could not accept it without the total humiliation that he is unwilling to subject himself to. If we are serious about wanting him both to accept and implement the resolution, we need to give him a way of accepting it, that is, of selling it to his own people. That means a clear promise that sanctions will be lifted. Of course people in Iraq suffer primarily because of Saddam Hussein, not because of sanctions themselves; the point is, however, that he could offer his people a plausible reason for climbing down over weapons of mass destruction.

There is a Chinese proverb: 'Build a golden bridge for your enemy to retreat over'. Saddam Hussein is a cruel tyrant. His people would be very much better off without him, as Canon Andrew White so movingly emphasized, but war in the present circumstances could prove an even greater evil. It is a hard judgement to make, but, if we judge that war would unleash even greater destruction and suffering than is at present being endured, a bridge to enable Saddam Hussein to retreat across will be necessary. Much will depend on how determined certain people are to avoid war, if at all possible, or to bring about a regime change whatever the cost. If we are determined to uphold the authority of the UN, which we must be, and if we want to maximize the chance of averting military conflict, then in addition to the tough resolution and the threat of force we will need to offer Saddam Hussein a way of realistically accepting the consequences of that resolution.

Revd Dr Joe Cassidy (Durham and Newcastle Universities): I would like to speak in favour of the motion and this excellent report, but I would like to point us to a worry at the top of page 52, which mentions the use of 'overwhelming force'. It is one of the things that concerns me most about using force in this particular instance: the near-inevitability of using overwhelming force. Indeed the US has a doctrine – the Powell doctrine – of the use of overwhelming force, and it certainly does not coincide with just war principles. The doctrine suggests that you ought not to go to war unless you can win it – and that is perfectly sensible; it also suggests that you ought to be able to end a war quickly because that will minimize suffering – and that also seems sensible; but it then further suggests that the way you end a war quickly is to use overwhelming force and minimize your own casualties. Hence in the past few cases we have seen the

use of air power, to the point where countries have been almost obliterated, as a way to minimize the loss of US forces. However, the result is that we greatly increase the likelihood of non-combatants' injuries, and we lose all sense of proportionality.

I dearly hope that we do not go to war, but if we do go to war the Church has to speak out very strongly, using just war doctrine, and to insist at every point on proportionality because when we lose proportionality the war becomes an unjust war; and a Christian cannot fight an unjust war.

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Christopher Herbert): I want to draw attention, following some of the comments made about inter-faith dialogue in this country, to paragraph 69 of the report. I have the privilege (and it is a real privilege) of being the chairman of the Council of Christians and Jews, and it would be very wrong if out of this Synod a message went that did not include an understanding of some of the fears that exist in Jewish communities in this country. I simply urge that all of us who are involved in trying to create dialogue and trying to work for peace, not least in inter-faith dialogue, please, please, to take the presence of Jewish communities in our country with due seriousness.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): I would like to thank the BSR for this excellent report and just make one point on page 58, right at the end of the report: that we must encourage the Prime Minister to try to tackle the problem of Israel, because that underlies a lot of what we have heard today; and that is one thing that he can actually do while we are taking this 'softly, softly' approach to get finally to the right solution in Iraq, particularly if someone can find out how to build the golden bridge that the Bishop of Oxford has brought to our attention.

The Bishop of Guildford (Rt Revd John Gladwin): The ambivalence that surrounded the vote on the amendment is illustrative of the anxieties that run through this debate right across Synod. The issue that we are facing is war. This is 11 November, the day of the armistice in 1918. We all know with the history that followed how much damage was done to Christian witness by the difficulties that the Churches had in the face of that war. Even the Quakers compromised their pacifism during the First World War.

Karl Barth said that war tempts humankind to break all God's commandments. In North Africa in the 1960s there was a terrible civil strife in Algeria, against, from the French point of view, terrorists. Two hundred thousand Algerians were killed and 20,000 French, and the impact of it on Algeria is still being felt because Islamic opinion in Algeria was radicalized as a result and moderate Islamic opinion suppressed.

War is a deeply dangerous weapon and we Christians have to say it even if sometimes we have to face it. If we do not say it and if we get caught up in the jingoism that surrounds it we compromise the witness of the Christian Church.

Three years ago I went to Mozambique, which had had 20 years of the most appalling civil war. They took me to a hillside, and the people said, ‘One side took their prisoners of war up to the top of that cliff and pushed them over.’ The women were so terrorized by this that they did not go to collect their men’s bodies until a few weeks later, only to find that the animals had eaten everything. The people did not tell me which side it was that had done it but Mozambique is now at peace, not because any international force went in to sort it out but because, in the end through the strategic work done internationally, conditions shifted and peace is now in Mozambique.

I do not think of Hitler this afternoon when thinking about this megalomaniac, Saddam Hussein; I think of Idi Amin. I think of that appalling man who did such deep damage to Uganda; but we did not send troops in there, and Uganda is now at peace, a shining example in Africa of many things in the development area.

The question I have this afternoon is this: how have we got ourselves, in the Western world and the international community, in this fragile world, into a situation where we are hemmed in, by this tinpot dictator in Iraq, to war? What has gone wrong? Where has the diplomacy gone wrong? Where has the strategy gone wrong? How is it that we face this afternoon the potential of war around this issue? We Christians need to be very clear about the deep dangers that face us if we go to war.

Revd Dr Paul Gardner (Chester): I will be supporting the motion and I am grateful for the measured tones in which the Bishop of Coventry introduced the subject to us this afternoon. I have been a little more concerned at the way in which the debate has gone since.

We have on occasion heard voices reminding us of the oppression that has been going on under Saddam Hussein, but we need to remember that he was not considered a tinpot dictator by, for example, Iran, Kuwait or during the Gulf War by Israel, or by Syria, or by the Kurds. We could go on. There *is* a difference between him and Idi Amin, not least in the weapons that he possesses and that we know he possesses. We need to be very careful to look at the beam in our own eye at times.

There has also been a tone of anti-Americanism, and I would support a friend from Chelmsford, I think it was, who mentioned it earlier; we need to be careful with that. We have many friends in America who are making the same noises to their government as no doubt this assembly will make to our Government today. Yes, we are speaking on a world stage, but let us do it looking to ourselves first and foremost and asking how we as Christians stand in such a difficult situation for those who are the oppressed – for that too is a biblical command – and for those who are suffering injustice – for that too is a biblical command – and let us not forget them while we rightly say, ‘Let’s be slow to go to war’.

The Archdeacon of Lambeth (Ven. Nicholas Baines): I too have become increasingly concerned as the debate has gone on, and that is because we have had a number of

references to historical precedents thrown out as though they were fact when in fact they have been incredibly selective. For example, Russia and Chechnya: why does no one hear anything about Chechnya any more, or at least the Americans putting pressure on the Russians to stop their war of attrition there? Because part of the cost of our going into Afghanistan was that they bought our silence. If we are going to talk in moral terms, we have to talk in morally equitable terms. We cannot be selective about these things.

I am equally concerned because, although it has not been spelled out in this way, there is a confusion between Al-Qaida and the so-called war against terrorism and what Iraq is about. No one has said who Iraq is threatening. It is no good saying that Saddam is threatening his own people or that he has gassed the Kurds or that great line of people who would not regard Saddam as a tinpot dictator and to whom Dr Gardner has just referred; we knew all that in the early 1980s when he was gassing the Kurds and we were providing the means, or when he was fighting the Iran who was the enemy at the time. Who was funding him? Who set up this monster? We did. Where is the moral consistency here?

I think that it was the Bishop of Coventry who said that we should not let guilt about the past lead to paralysis now, and I agree with that; but we have to approach this debate with a certain humility. We have always known what we were dealing with in Saddam; this is not new.

My concern is that several references have been made to the fact that today is Armistice Day. We also need to know that the moral, psychological and political legitimacy for Hitler and the rise of fascism in Germany came about because the terms of the settlement of the Versailles Treaty were regarded as a stab in the back. Decisions that are made today and the basis on which they are made – morally, politically, economically, militarily – matter enormously, because the next generation and the one after that will use victimhood or any sense of oppression or injustice as a means for propagating further acts of terrorism in the future. Today we risk creating future generations of terrorists and of states who have it in for Britain and America because we have indulged in what I have criticized on the floor of this Synod before as the politics of pragmatism. We need a degree of humility.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd John Perry): During the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall on Saturday evening, the commentator referred on several occasions to the possibility of war once more on the horizon, and I noted his concluding words at the end of that memorable evening: 'It's the season for decisions. May they be the right ones'. That is the concern of us all, and the call to prayer is pre-eminent.

Last Saturday the Chelmsford Diocesan Synod had a thoughtful, sober debate on whether military action on Iraq would be justified. Synod members were most appreciative of the BSR report that we have before us today; it gave an informed

background to a debate which focused largely on the potential consequences of military action. There was of course a great concern about the people of Iraq themselves, especially the children, with a Save the Children report in mind (and I listened carefully to Canon Andrew White with his inside knowledge of the situation there and that gave me another perspective). Then there was voiced, as there was in Synod today, the question of the possible destabilisation of the whole Middle East in the event of military action. It was King Abdullah of Jordan who warned that the Middle East could go up in flames and who added another vivid picture when he said that, in the light of the failure to move the Israeli-Palestinian process forward, military action against Iraq would really open a Pandora's box. Then Christians in the whole region and beyond would be put seriously at risk; this was expressed strongly. Saddam Hussein, like Bin Laden, would be seen by extremist military groups as a martyr.

A former army chaplain drew our attention to the pressures on those who serve today in the armed services, but there was a particular consideration that is very real to our diocese (and the diocese of Blackburn was mentioned in one of the earlier speeches as having a similar concern), that there could be serious repercussions in the United Kingdom, not least in the East London part of our diocese, where there is growing fragility and fear among the substantial multi-ethnic multifaith population. Christian, Muslim and Jewish relations would be severely tested. Generally speaking, British Muslims would view an attack against Iraq as just another example of double standards, with the control of oil supplies as the major hidden agenda.

It was Paul Valley, associate editor of *The Independent*, who described one writer who in his title wrote 'War on Iraq will boost stock market'. 'Buy shares in oil and armaments, but avoid tourism, the experts advise. The world goes about its venal business'. I thought that a very telling comment.

Earlier in the summer the Pax Christi declaration, of which I was a signatory, was presented to the Prime Minister. The declaration included this strong statement: 'It is deplorable that the world's most powerful nations continue to regard war and the threat of war as an acceptable instrument of foreign policy in violation of the ethos of both the United Nations and Christian moral teaching. The way to peace does not lie through war but through the transformation of structures of injustice and the politics of exclusion, and that is the cause to which the West should be devoting its technological, diplomatic and economic resources'. Removing the dangers posed by dictators and terrorists can only ultimately be achieved by tackling the root causes of the disputes themselves. That is the path that needs to be pursued. Peacemaking with justice, not warmaking, must be the continuing focus. 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good', the apostle Paul warned. My fear is that we are in great danger of being overcome by the greater evil.

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

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Coventry, in reply: Today's debate has provided all of us with an opportunity to share our experiences, as to how this issue has already impacted on us as individuals and on our parishes and our dioceses. I began by suggesting that the Church has a very important role in shaping the debate. We may think that, in the light of today's developments, that is almost too late, but I believe that we need to stick with it and to keep shaping the debate as it takes place in our nation and in the wider world.

I am very grateful indeed for the breadth of contributions that we have had today, and I am particularly grateful for the reminder that we need to be both measured and humble. I doubt very much that anyone would really want to stand here and say, 'I know the answer to this' because it is such a complex issue. We may, on balance, want to go in one direction rather than another, but I suspect that all of us are aware of the deep complexity of the issues that we have been trying to tackle today, and that awareness in itself ought to lead us to humility and to prayer.

I would like to pick up a few of the points that have been made. Forgive me if I do not mention them all because it is virtually impossible to summarize a debate like this. In no particular order, I would like to underline the importance of some of them. First of all, setting it in the broader context of the Middle East: the Middle East context itself, quite apart from Iraq, is an issue that we have already attempted to debate, and I believe that when we did tackle it we had a very good debate, which in itself was a measured approach to the issue. The fact that it was measured has been acknowledged and appreciated by a wide variety of people who, I believe, saw the Church of England at its best, admitting that it was complex and yet recognising that there were issues that needed to be resolved and taken forward. If we are to set today's debate in the context of the Middle East, there are certain things that we cannot avoid facing. That is the issue of double standards (already mentioned) and the issue of how the future of Israel and Palestine relates to any 'solution' that we might find emerging from Iraq. We cannot avoid these issues and we must be prepared as Christians to face them theologically and with compassion.

The phrase 'just war' has been used on a number of occasions today, and we heard an extremely clear and thorough exposition of the main tenets of the just war theory from Dr Storkey. We thank her for that. Somebody else made the point that the just war theory was past its sell-by date. I suspect that both statements are true. The just war theory has served us well, and continues to do so in situations that are relatively static; in other words, when we are talking about nation states in conflict with one another, the just war theory continues to serve us well. However, it has also been said today that, quite apart from Iraq, one of the consequences of military action in that context could be the proliferation of terrorism, and terrorism is not susceptible to just war theory in anything like the same way. It has been well put that the contrast is between something systemic and something territorial. When talking about territorial conflict,

where there are relatively clearly defined boundaries, I believe that the just war theory still has a lot to offer. When we are talking about something systemic, I believe that it leads us back to the realization that it is not military force that will solve this but something which gets to the root of the issue and deals with root causes. If, as Christians, we have anything to offer, I believe that we have something to say about systemic disease and how, through the Gospel, that might be addressed and tackled. I would be very sad if we went away from this debate today concerned mainly about political issues and failing to grasp more fully something of the nature of sin and forgiveness which in some way – and God only knows how – needs to be applied to this current conflict.

One final thought, and that is to take up the idea of carrot and stick, as I put it down here, or golden bridges, as the Bishop of Oxford so poetically put it. This is a very important point, and it is quite obviously an element of human nature, particularly perhaps of human nature as found in dictators: that if they are to give ground some reasonable means of giving that ground must be made available to them. I myself believe that although sanctions, it might be argued (and I have done), contain the situation, they are not the right way forward, and they certainly have not been the right way forward for the people of Iraq who have suffered and died as a result of them. The UN figures alone point to the deaths of over half a million children as a direct result of sanctions during a 10-year period.

We can argue *ad infinitum* whether sanctions are preferable to military action, but we need to address the sanctions issue as part, if you like, of the bargain that we are prepared to offer to Saddam Hussein in order to allow him to accept this UN resolution. We have to give him something in return. Would it not be wonderful if that something in return could alleviate the suffering of the ordinary Iraqi people as well as giving him what he might consider an honourable way out of the situation?

I hope that we shall continue, as we have committed ourselves to do, to pray. I have no doubt that we shall at some stage return to this issue in some shape or form. Meanwhile, I express my gratitude for all the contributions to this very important debate.

The motion was put and carried, 290 voting in favour of the motion and none against.

The Synod was adjourned at 6.54 p.m.