

Fifth Day

Friday 15 November 2002

THE CHAIR *Mrs Diana Webster* took the Chair at 9.45 a.m.

Revd Caroline Dick (Durham) led the Synod in prayer.

Financing the Churches Conservation Trust: Report by the Church Commissioners (GS 1472)

The Chairman: I call upon the Third Church Estates Commissioner to move this item, which will be a PowerPoint presentation.

Lady Brentford (Third Church Estates Commissioner, Ex officio): My slides are not part of a PowerPoint presentation but they are illustrations, and there is a subtle difference.

I beg to move:

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

I would first ask the Synod to turn to GS 1472. In paragraph 11 you will see that the Department of Culture, Media and Sport’s settlement covering 70 per cent of the Church-State funding for the Churches Conservation Trust was expected to be announced by now. I can tell you that, as of this morning, we hear it will arrive today. I am very sorry that I do not have it with me. This delayed announcement is already much later than usual and means that this debate will have to be conducted in terms of the maximum figures that would be required to meet the Trust’s budget bid in full. However, the actual settlement is likely to be lower and will be reflected in the Order the Commissioners propose to lay before the Synod in February 2003.

To place this matter in context, Synod members will know most redundant churches are found suitable alternative uses. This results from much hard work by diocesan redundant churches uses committees and their agents. A considerable number find a new life with other Christian denominations or in civic or community use. Others still find commercial uses or are subject to residential conversion. Where there are net sale proceeds, two-thirds go to the diocese concerned for the work of the living Church.

However, a diocese sometimes has to report that it has been unable to find a suitable

use for a listed redundant church. Then the Commissioners may face a difficult choice between preservation of the church by the Churches Conservation Trust or demolition. Since 1969, the Trust has received 327 of the best of these churches.

These churches are not sterile monuments. They remain consecrated and can be used for occasional worship. The Trust is aware of over 450 services last year and the churches retain the potential to return to full parochial use. The Trust makes great efforts to ensure that as many as possible of its churches are open and accessible to the public. Community and cultural events are encouraged. There were 233 such events last year and over 800,000 visitors. The Trust's educational work is expanding and the first 12 education booklets for schools were published last year.

All this good work has a cost but inevitably the Trust's major expenditure is on putting the churches they receive into good repair and maintaining them thereafter. In the three-year funding period which expires next March the Trust will have received £12.6 million from Church and State. Of this something like two million will have been spent on the 11 additional churches which the Commissioners passed to them. The Trust is hoping for an 18 per cent increase in its main funding for the coming triennium and to afford 12 to 15 new vestings over that period. However, it is important to note that the Trust seeks funds from other sources and, in particular, will make substantial efforts to secure Heritage Lottery Fund support for particular projects.

We come back to the Church's 30 per cent share of the Trust's main funding and where it will come from. It is important to remember that the State's contribution has increased from 40 per cent to 70 per cent since 1969 and is part of an overall financial and legal package which has considerable benefits for the Church. For example, over the years some £200 million has been offered by English Heritage in grants to parish churches and cathedrals.

There are two sources for the Church's share of the Trust's costs: first, one-third of the net proceeds from the disposal of other redundant churches; secondly, the Commissioners' own funds.

Sale proceeds have been disappointing in recent years, partly because of the relatively small number of redundancies. This has led to the contribution from the Commissioners' own funds being higher than expected. The Order which will come before the Synod in February will allow the Commissioners' own contribution to fall or indeed be zero if proceeds are more buoyant.

For those interested in detail, paragraphs 16 to 21 of GS 1472 also deal with the funding of the Redundant Churches Temporary Maintenance Account set up by the 1994 Pastoral Amendment Measure to help dioceses maintain redundant churches whose future is unresolved. This has to be topped up from time to time and the rather convoluted arrangements set out in GS 1472 will, I believe, achieve this. However,

sharp-eyed members will have noticed that the new Miscellaneous Provisions Measure will simplify the funding arrangements and make them more flexible.

Professor Toyne's working group reviewing the operation of the Dioceses and Pastoral Measures is working hard to make further improvements in the way in which the redundancy arrangements operate. The first flavour of their thinking will emerge early next year when they carry out consultations on their tentative proposals, but resultant legislation will not come into operation within the 2003–2006 funding period which we are discussing today: that starts next April. So the proposals before the Synod have to be considered within the current arrangements to enable the Trust's work to continue.

Synod members have been patient in listening to this rather dry material. I hope that the illustrations have made it more palatable, but the substance of the Trust's work is by no means dry. Many members will have seen this from the display mounted by the Trust outside the Hoare Memorial Hall and I would also encourage those who like computers to visit the Trust's website on www.visitchurches.org.uk.

The Trust's work is widely admired inside and outside the Church. It provides a model for preserving an important part of the nation's best buildings for future generations not just as heritage but speaking eloquently of the faith that inspired their builders and often forming a vibrant part of the community and a valued educational and community resource.

I ask the Synod to give its approval to these proposals for meeting the Church's share of the costs in 2003–2006.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

The Archdeacon of Newark (Ven. Nigel Peyton): I would like to ask a question that I think is important and to make one or two points.

The question is: what is the longer-term strategy for coping with what I see as an increasing number of potential church redundancies? It seems to me important for the Church Commissioners and the Churches Conservation Trust to have a strategic forecast of the likely level of redundancies as well as a financial forecast for cash that is going to be available to the Trust. Of course this is part of a much wider strategic issue really for the whole Church and nation. It is about the debate concerning the future of built heritage in our communities.

In the 2002 Archdeacons' Articles of Inquiry, I asked churchwardens in my archdeaconry about the viability of their churches. I asked them to weigh up issues of maintenance, membership and also mission opportunities and money. I asked them quite bluntly how many of their church buildings were likely candidates for redundancy in the next decade. Presented with such a challenging question, you might

expect the answers to be pretty conservative. I would like to report to Synod that 11 per cent – in my case that means 24 churches in Newark archdeaconry – felt that they might well be candidates for redundancy in the next decade.

I think with the archdeacons' help, presuming that we are still allowed to be here in Synod, you can actually multiply that across the country to get a strategic forecast. It seems to me that we may be facing a serious escalation in the next 10 or 20 years. There is a degree of supporting evidence. Many members of Synod will perhaps belong to or know of multi-parish benefices where what we really have is a growing single congregation rotating round a number of buildings that now come to the question: which building would we prefer to keep?

I know this is balanced by many communities which are desperate to keep their parish church. I understand that. Many of them are paying their parish share in full and putting a lot of money into building maintenance, but many are not paying their parish share at all or in full but are putting money into the building, which is dubious, and some are doing neither, which is simply not on.

Sadly, and I am a cradle Anglican and I am very sad to say this, it seems to me that the sustainable pattern of Ministry for Mission in many places is rapidly becoming what I call 'occasional use and minimal maintenance'. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, with a commercial eye, recognizes this and offers very flexible insurance arrangements to congregations and communities that find themselves in this position.

In their excellent report on page 3, paragraphs 5 and 6 illustrate the scale of the task and the difficulties so far. With respect to Lady Brentford, I must say that I think the interpretation of figures is just a touch optimistic. It is true that half of the churches have found alternative uses, which means half have not. On page 5 in paragraph 13 it is made crystal clear that the finances for the future of the care of churches vested in the Trust are not necessarily going to be adequate, even at present levels.

I would like to thank Lady Brentford for sharing her holiday slides with us this morning. This has been a helpful and excellent report explaining to us how the Trust does its excellent work in Church-State partnership. Perhaps the Third Church Estates Commissioner could add just a little more about how this partnership is to be sustained into a more demanding future and how it can become more proactive rather than simply reactive; in other words, a bit more in tune with the gospel message which we heard in our Bible reading this morning.

Revd Paul Ayers (Bradford): When I first read this report I almost ignored it, thinking that it was a routine matter that would be passed inevitably, but then it dawned on me that it is something significant, which I care about. I welcome the reminder in paragraph 3 of the report that the review of the Pastoral Measure 1983 includes the arrangements for dealing with redundant churches. I heartily support the idea that we should review the proportions of Church and State funding for CCT. I think it should go a lot further.

It dawned on me that I am being asked whether I am happy that the Church Commissioners should spend up to £4.4 million over the next three years on redundant churches, and I am not. I am not happy that one-third of the proceeds of the sale of redundant churches goes to CCT. I am not happy that the balance should come from the Church Commissioners' income. We are engaged in looking at ways to fund the mission and ministry of the living Church – stipends, pensions, mutual support, setting up the Youth Evangelism Fund and so on. In this context, £4.4 million is not a trivial sum.

If there are others who like me are concerned about this and would like to send a strong message to the Church Commissioners that we are not happy, a message which I believe at least some of them would be quite sympathetic to, and some of the CCT, then one way to do it would be to vote against this proposal, particularly the next item. If we think that is too drastic, we could at least stand up in this debate and say that we are not happy.

Someone will ask what should be done with these redundant churches and should we just let them fall down? Yes, that might not be a bad idea in some cases. It does dishearten me that buildings which are doubly redundant, in other words the Church has no use for them and every attempt to find an alternative use has failed, sometimes because of the heritage enthusiasts, should receive very substantial funding that the living Church struggles to find for its usable buildings.

I am not happy that a vast Victorian edifice on a hillside overlooking a northern industrial town has over £100,000 spent on it, while the congregation moved out years ago to a small building over the road. I am not happy that a building surrounded on every side by retail and office premises, right in the centre of a vast city, has over £7,000 spent on it so that thousands who pass it every day can ignore it in droves. I am not happy that quaint buildings in the middle of nowhere receive the kind of funding of which living congregations can only dream.

But are these not precious architectural gems? Maybe they are in the view of the heritage enthusiast, so let those who find them precious in the statutory and voluntary bodies find the funding for their upkeep. This already well-funded charity with offices in Fleet Street should have no trouble and it should be happy to release Church Commissioners' funding for the far more difficult task of supporting the Church's living ministry.

Dr Julian Litten (Chelmsford): I would like to address my remarks to paragraph 6 of GS 1472, but also before that to make a comment to the previous speaker. These are not redundant churches: these are, thank God, churches in waiting. It would be advantageous for us to remember that if we do not have sufficient people to use those churches today, then hopefully this way of looking after them might mean that in years to come they could be released for worship. Indeed, one or two churches that have been previously vested with the Churches Conservation Trust have been so released

to go back into worship. Indeed, even the £4.4 million that is being asked for now is less than the cost to build two of those 327 churches that the Churches Conservation Trust themselves look after.

That said, I would like to speak to paragraph 6: a waiting period ‘normally not exceeding three years’. Lady Brentford knows that I have been chirping on about this three-year waiting period for very many years, and to see whether or not it can be reduced. I dislike leaving churches vacant for three years at a time when they are repeatedly attacked by vandals. There is evidence of buildings being boarded up during the three-year waiting period; the boarding up attracts vandals rather than deterring them, and also very many works of art from these buildings end up not only on the national but also on the international market, having been stolen from those buildings during the three-year waiting period.

I find it rather strange and odd that if we know that a building is to be declared redundant, it then has to be vacated and left empty for three years. If we know that it is to be declared redundant, why can it not continue to be used until the night before the building is going to be handed over for its next purpose? It is what I would tend to do with a house that I might own. If I have chosen that I no longer want that house and would like to dispose of it, I am not going to abandon it fully furnished for three years and leave it for anybody to break into to take what they would like. If I am not going to do that with my own house, then I do not think we should do it with God’s house.

I did get in touch with the Redundant Churches Division of the Church Commissioners earlier this year to see if it would be possible to try and reduce this three-year waiting period, and indeed when it comes to direct vesting, whether or not that could be reduced. I am told that it can be done, in a letter I received in June of this year, within six to eight months if we so desire.

If there are going to be some churches that are of such inestimable importance and are outstanding architectural gems in their own right and are most certainly going to be the subject of a direct vesting with the Churches Conservation Trust, then we should make sure that that vesting should take place immediately, that the building itself is maintained in use as a place of worship until the night before the vesting takes place.

Revd Chris Lilley (Lincoln): Madam Chairman, you might well consider me to be a fortunate vicar to have one church in my parish that is vested with the CCT. In fact, during the last three years I have had three, two in my previous group and one in the place I have just moved to. I would like to commend the quality of the work that the Trust does in those churches and their generosity in allowing the parishes to use them for occasional worship. Indeed, when the ceiling collapsed in Friesthorpe Church, and that is not a redundant church, three years ago, we were allowed by the Trust to move back into the Conservation Trust church, Snarford, which is one of their jewels, for as many services as we needed until we managed to restore and repair Friesthorpe church. I am very grateful for the work of the Trust.

However, I do have two concerns, and they have been picked up by earlier speakers. I would like to put a different spin on them, if you like. The first is to do with a number of rural churches in particular that are potentially going to become redundant. In Lincoln diocese alone, we have something like 100 churches in communities of fewer than 100 people, with average Sunday attendance of fewer than five. Virtually every one of these churches is Grade I or Grade II* and predominantly the congregations are very elderly. I believe in mission, and I believe it is possible to regenerate rural churches, but when churches get to such a point, it is very difficult indeed. If we are realistic, we need to look in terms of what we can do with these churches.

I know that some communities are willing and able to set up trusts to support the maintenance of those buildings, but in these very small communities where even the word hamlet is often an exaggeration, that is not a realistic possibility. So we are faced in the diocese with a situation where many of these churches simply cannot be vested in the Conservation Trust and we are stuck with them as our responsibility. In these communities almost invariably there is no realistic alternative use for them.

My second concern is to do with the use of Commissioners' funds. I would be very reluctant for Synod today to vote against the proposals for the next three years, but I would hope that the Church can look seriously over those next three years at alternative means of finding that funding. Like earlier speakers, I am increasingly uncomfortable with the idea of Commissioners' funds being used to maintain redundant buildings, whereas they ought to be used for the ongoing mission of the Church.

Mr Philip Lovegrove (St Albans): I am always grateful for Dr Litten's speeches because he is a cultural giant; I am a cultural desert and a philistine but you need me to enjoy the relativity of his graciousness!

I would like this Synod to vote to terminate this arrangement and vote against these proposals. I agree with every word that Paul Ayres said. The whole business has spawned a separate organization, which costs quite a lot in administration and operates from offices separate from the Council for the Care of Churches.

The cost to historic resources has also been mentioned: £4.4 million if no redundant churches are found to provide the funds. I remind Synod that the guaranteed annuities figure is only £4.9 million.

I would also like to pick up the point of how much the Government has collected under the 5 per cent insurance premium tax that has been put upon us all: how much has that cost out of these funds from CCT in the conservation of churches?

I am very pleased to hear all this. I always remember wandering into the Liverpool diocesan office on the morning that three churches had burnt down in Everton Valley. I

saw Stuart Blanch, then Bishop of Liverpool, and I asked him for the name of the diocesan arsonist! If we wish to develop a strategy, here is one diocesan central post that everyone should have and not be shared!

I really do think we need to encourage, against all the odds I have to say, the demolition of churches. I come to it with a story. In South Oxhey in St Albans diocese in Hertfordshire is a UP area. A brilliant church was built about 40 years ago and it had to be knocked down. We had to find the best part of half a million to build a new one with a drop-in centre and all the other great things that go on in UP areas in a seven-day-a-week church. At the same time as we were struggling to raise this half a million, the Churches Conservation Trust was spending £15,000 in the chapel of ease next door on a reredos. The chapel of ease is an eyesore; it is a blot on the landscape and no one goes near it, apart from the drug takers and the vandals.

I cannot stand in Synod as the chairman of a board of finance and see this sort of thing going on. It just is not right and we should put a stop to it.

I finish with words of scripture – yes, I do read it occasionally – ‘Jesus called us to be fishers of men, not keepers of aquariums’. Please God, we stop this.

The Archdeacon of Surrey (Ven. Robert Reiss): At the start of this year I became a trustee of the Churches Conservation Trust. It was an invitation that came, as far as I was concerned, quite out of the blue. Since it is a Crown appointment, perhaps I might add that I did not seek it and I would not have gone to a competitive interview for it, but it has been a fascinating exercise getting to know an organization which, frankly, I knew very little about before. Perhaps Synod should know that I have been very impressed with what I have found. The care that is shown to the Trust’s over 300 churches is of the highest order in terms of its technical expertise.

Thanks to the funding from the Church Commissioners, which we must remember released far greater funds from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, those churches can therefore be adequately repaired and maintained. This is, I think, a very good example of the Church working hand-in-hand with a government department.

It is also important that this Synod should remember that the churches are and remain consecrated buildings. Services can be, and in many cases are, held in them on an occasional basis, so they remain in that sense places of worship. I am currently, on behalf of the Trustees, looking at the rules we have about the use of the churches for such services. Speaking purely personally, I think there may be a case for relaxing the rules slightly, providing of course the incumbent and the bishop agree to a particular use, but I should add that no firm decisions have been taken about that. Obviously they cannot be used for regular Sunday worship, otherwise why have they been declared redundant, but that does not mean to say that they are no longer valued and loved by many in the communities where they are situated. I believe it is important for the Church’s credibility that they continue to be properly cared for.

The Trust is also under an obligation to try to encourage people to visit them for other reasons as well. We do permit a variety of events, like conferences and exhibitions. A recent development, as Lady Brentford said, has been to produce some very good educational material to encourage visits by schools. On a recent tour of Trust churches in the West Midlands undertaken by the Trustees, it was very good on our visit to a Trust church in Bridgnorth to see that it coincided with a school visit, and there were crowds of junior school children in that church enjoying what is a very interesting building. It was also good to know that earlier in the week it had been used regularly for the annual Festival. Trust churches may no longer be used for regular worship but they are certainly not just dead museums.

I agree with the Archdeacon of Newark that there is a real uncertainty about the number of churches that are going to come to the Trust in the future. In paragraph 12 of the paper there is mention of four to five new vestings a year. The decision on whether a church no longer needed for regular worship should be put in the Trust's hands rests not with the Trust but with the Church Commissioners. Our suspicion is that the figure of four or five churches a year is going to be an underestimate in the medium to long term, though possibly not in the next three years. If that is the case, the issue of funding is undoubtedly going to get more complex. In the next three years we must face the issues that have been mentioned earlier, but I do not believe we should abandon at this stage, and destroy, the relationship we have with the Government to have the funding for the next three years.

I hope the Synod will support this motion but encourage the Trust to look at the matter carefully with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in the next three years.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd Clive Mansell (Ripon and Leeds): I am a member of the Redundant Churches Committee of the Church Commissioners.

I am grateful for many things that have been said in the debate. We have a lot of sympathy, whether individually or as a body, with some of the concerns raised by the Archdeacon of Newark and some of the other speakers about whether there will be more costs in the future.

Undoubtedly, when a church is no longer used for regular worship, redundant perhaps, there is a problem. That problem will not go away; it has to be dealt with by somebody, and there are various processes to deal with it. That problem may increase if more churches are made redundant in due course.

Earlier this week we debated a motion by Mr Roy Thompson seeking to call upon the Government to provide more funding for churches and their repairs – we were particularly thinking about living churches – and that had wholehearted support. If

we are going to try to encourage government support for that sort of project, we also need to try to play our part in the existing arrangements where already Government is in partnership with us.

Like you, I regret the possibility that £4 million of the Commission's money in theory could be spent on this particular project, but that money does generate a very considerable return from the Government, 70 per cent as opposed to our 30 per cent contribution. If we wish to have Government working in partnership with us, we have to do as much as we can to make sure our share of a deal does work properly. If we can reduce the amount in money that has to be contributed by other sources to the CCT funding, all to the good. Someone talked about, I think it was the 'plush trust' with offices in Fleet Street. I wonder how many here have given money themselves as a private donation to the Churches Conservation Trust in this last year. I suspect it is a cause which many of us support. We see some of their work and approve of what they are trying to do but do we actually give anything personally towards that?

What we are talking about today is how our part of the Church corporately is trying to support that particular work. We, in turn, are in partnership with the Government. It is not an easy arrangement but here is something we are trying to do. If we wish to try and encourage Government to support us with a living Church, and I totally support that, then we have to try to play our part realistically with existing arrangements, albeit trying to renegotiate them in due course.

I have one other point, on the bargaining chips, if you like. We contribute 30 per cent and the Government 70 per cent. By and large, the arrangements for the control of this process remain in the Church's hands. If that 30 per cent share were reduced to, say, 20 per cent or 15 per cent, I suspect we would lose more of the control of how this process works to those who are not within the Church's own particular family.

Revd Andrew Watson (London): I have a question for Lady Brentford: are any of the redundant churches preserved by the CCT within easy reach of a larger church which could plant a new congregation within them?

I have been involved in three such schemes in potentially redundant churches, one involving a Grade II* listed building of great beauty: for film buffs, that architectural gem you can see from Hugh Grant's roof terrace in the movie *Notting Hill*.

I believe that such initiatives, where possible, can be highly effective in promoting mission, while safeguarding parts of our architectural heritage at no cost to the wider Church. I am quite aware that this will not be the answer for many areas, including some of those we have heard of today, but just a handful of churches being brought back into their original worshipping use will be a start.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells): I, like many of you I suspect, have picked up the excellent book *Hope for the Church* this week. I have started reading it and I find it

very readable. The analysis I have done so far shows that whereas congregations have been diminishing, the number of Church buildings that we hold has not, *pro rata*. My analysis following that means that we are building up a tidal wave of churches that will become redundant in due course if that continuing diminution of congregation continues. We do need to take this very seriously, but we cannot have the congregations being strangled in terms of their ability to support the living Church, whilst keeping these museums going,

John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Mr Chairman, I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

Lady Brentford, in reply: I thank all those who have spoken. This is a very good moment in the Church’s history to have spoken. The Archdeacon of Newark asked about the long-term strategy. It is a question I have been asking and various other people in the Church have been asking it too.

The Church’s Heritage Forum, which is still quite a young organization chaired by the Bishop of London, who is sitting here, which includes representation from all the central Church organizations concerned with our built heritage, is working towards a policy statement for Church buildings. This would be designed to bring changes in public attitude and Government policy for the support of our ecclesiastical heritage. We are taking this very seriously. You will all have heard the anecdotal evidence we have heard today. I keep hearing it. The evidence, of course, does not actually yet support that. The diocesan figures for redundancies are low because we keep asking them; the actual figures are even lower. Last year we had 16 redundancies; this year we have 30, which goes back to the mid 90s level. We are watching it like hawks because clearly this is a major problem for the Church, or could be a really serious problem.

All your comments today will be enormously valued and taken into account – and Paula Griffiths from the Council for the Care of Churches is sitting here – by all the bodies concerned with this matter because it is of deep concern to the living Church.

To Mr Ayres, Mr Lovegrove, Mr Hind, I am aware of the problems and I am also very aware of the enormous cost of repairs for the living Church at the moment, as many people have reminded us.

I would also ask Synod not to labour under any illusion that it is any easier to alter or demolish a listed redundant church than a listed secular building. It is a very expensive business to do that, and we need to be aware of that, as I know dioceses are.

I thank Dr Litten for his, as usual, extremely pointed remarks. The waiting period that

he refers to I think is mostly used as the use-seeking period, and we are looking at that very carefully in the Pastoral Measure review. It is the absolute maximum: most dioceses manage to settle this much more quickly.

As for direct vesting, there is not enough money for many vestings.

To Mr Lilley, the Church Heritage Forum is very aware of the rural communities and the dilemmas facing these tiny hamlets of 100 people. I get telephone calls about that often. Again, in the context of the Pastoral Measure review, we have been looking at that very carefully.

I would thank the Archdeacon of Surrey for his support of the Churches Conservation Trust. It is also true that for a lot of the children going into our churches that is the first time they ever go into a church, and at least they have been into one and they can begin to understand that the faith has a history. On the back of the introduction leaflet for the Churches Conservation Trust you will find that one of the members of the Trust has written a prayer.

I would remind Mr Mansell that this control, at least at the moment, and I was grateful for that reminder, does remain in the Church's hands. The Churches Conservation Trust has a reputation for excellence.

I thank Andrew Watson. The Trust does encourage those partnerships and would welcome any more that anybody here would like to bring.

Thank you very much indeed for your remarks today. This debate will be crawled over and great account will be taken of it.

The motion was put and carried.

Lady Brentford (Third Church Estates Commissioner, Ex officio): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod approve the recommendations in paragraph 23 of GS 1472.’

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Archdeacon of Lincoln (Ven. Arthur Hawes): I would ask members of Synod to support this item. You may ask why I do this when we live in a climate of financial stricture. You have already heard from my colleague, Chris Lilley, about some of the churches in Lincolnshire. We have 362 churches and 90 per cent of them are Grade I or Grade II listed buildings. Those buildings make a major contribution to the landscape, and south Lincolnshire is not much else.

When you leave the lovely town of Newark on the A17, the first place you come to and the first thing you see is a mediaeval church tower in the village of Beckingham. This was put up for redundancy but, when the experts from the Trust came to look at it, they said, 'Sorry, but we already have plenty like this, we don't have room for any more'. What do you do? If you cannot find an alternative use, if you cannot vest the church in the Trust, then the only thing you can do is knock it down. We have already heard this morning that that is a possibility. What message does knocking down or boarding up a church send out to the local community about the presence of God in that place?

In addition to that, there are many villages, certainly in the archdeaconry of Lincoln, where the church is now the only public building remaining. The reason I support this motion is to ensure that we put these church buildings to greater use. My intention would be to have greater partial use of church buildings. For example, we have one which is being used as an extension to the local school. We need to be much more imaginative in the way in which we use our buildings. I hope that one day one church in the archdeaconry will have a cash till. There are many places now where people have to travel 10 to 15 miles just to get cash from a cash till. There is another example where one is being used as a post office in the base of the tower. We need to be much more imaginative in the way we use our buildings. In the meantime, we must find this amount of money to support those we have.

The Bishop of Hereford (Rt Revd John Oliver): I would like to echo what has just been said by Archdeacon Hawes as it is extremely important. I would like to ask Lady Brentford when she replies to this debate, and I hope members of Synod will vote in favour of this, whether the Churches Conservation Trust has a policy of engaging in active debate with those who are responsible for a church that is being offered for redundancy or for thought by the Trust as to whether serious consideration has been made of alternative uses.

Members of Synod may well know that the Government Rural White Paper of two years ago for the first time recognized the significance of church buildings as community buildings. The Prince of Wales's visits in the community rural outreach programme has focused on the 'pub is the hub' of rural communities where you introduce into a pub a lot of other activities and services to increase its viability and to provide for people in scattered communities. Can we not think in terms of the 'church as the perch' on which other things rest? Archdeacon Hawes has mentioned one or two other possibilities. I am sure there are examples from all over the Church of England. In the Hereford diocese we have a number of churches which have been adapted for community use but which might otherwise have been candidates for redundancy.

Of course you need capital to do that, but there are various sources from which that money can be found. We had money from one of our district councils when it sold off its housing stock. Money was actually there for the asking and two of our churches

have been converted with astonishing success – a small kitchen and a loo and a building which is now used for community purposes – and in both cases the congregation has significantly increased because people get used to coming to this building. They like coming there and they find it a warm and welcoming place. The potential for that must be much greater than is being realized in many places. There was the millennium funding for churches in community services. We were able to tap into that money for a number of other churches in the diocese.

I do hope that there will be a more active and imaginative look at alternative uses for church buildings and alternative sources of funding to enable that kind of development and conversion work to take place. It really has transformed things in a number of our parishes, and I am sure it could happen in many other places as well.

Mr Guy Milner (Chester): Years ago I spent ten years in Ireland with the Church of Ireland being my mother church. I returned a few years ago and asked how the Church of Ireland was progressing and my friend the Dean of Christchurch said, ‘Our policy now is “pay up or shut up”.’ What does that mean? He said, ‘We have a thriving church. Go off and look at Derralossary’. Derralossary Church where I have taken services and preached is now an ancient monument – on a hill, no roof, no windows, not demolished, still there. We have old monasteries so displayed.

I am suggesting to Lady Brentford that an alternative to demolition and clearing the site is to make some of these churches, which have no other viable future, into ancient monuments.

The Archdeacon of Malmesbury (Ven. Alan Hawker): I love ancient churches. I delight to go into them. I admire the work and the standard that the CCT achieves but I am still deeply uneasy about the resources of the Church which go to them.

I could vote in favour of this motion and I am hovering at the moment, but I need some information. Something I have heard time and again over the last few years but never had an unequivocal answer from the centre is the suggestion that when the scheme came in the *quid pro quo* for the Church was the loss of the 50 per cent rates rebate on vicarages and rectories. If that is true, and transfer that into community charge now, I would value knowing what the true cost of this scheme is to the Church when that loss is taken into consideration. Alternatively, if that is a fabrication that has been spread around for whatever reason, I would like it to be stamped on completely.

Lady Brentford, in reply: Thank you very much indeed. Again, this is terribly helpful to us. It is all grist to what we are trying very hard to work on and spending a lot of time doing.

To the Archdeacon of Lincoln, when I started going round the country on some of the tours we have done on the redundant churches committee and others, I could not get over the endless conversation that goes on with local authorities on what they call

‘townscape value’ and ‘landscape value’. It was a new kind of phrase and way of looking at things to me. I knew it because we all do but I could not get over how valuable that is in people’s understanding. I have come to the conclusion that it is to do with our corporate memory and heritage and a whole raft of things.

I would say to you that when we do come to demolition and if it is contested, we almost always end up at a non-statutory inquiry, which is very expensive. We have not had one for a long time but when it has happened, we have not won.

A number of people spoke on partial use. I am grateful to the Bishop of Hereford for that illustration of partial use and the encouragement for it. The alternative uses and partial uses are being encouraged in every direction as far as we can. As we all know, there are legal issues here which are very complex and we are trying to address that in the Pastoral Measure and Dioceses Measure review to see whether we can in fact simplify those arrangements with the agreement of the Government. We are seriously looking at that.

I say to Mr Milner that we have looked and are looking again with the review at monuments and mothballing. It is not looking very good at the moment.

I would say to the Archdeacon of Malmesbury that the loss of the 50 per cent rebate on the rating of vicarages and so on was part of the package by which they came down from 70 per cent to 30 per cent for the Church to pay. When we look at this package again, which we shall be doing in the next three years very seriously, that is part of what we will be looking at.

All this conversation has been very helpful as far as we are concerned and I am grateful.

The motion was put and carried.

The Chairman: As a result, the funding order will be laid before the Synod next February.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Christopher Herbert)* took the Chair at 10.55 a.m.

National Youth Strategy: Joint Report from the Board of Education and the Board of Mission (GS 1481)

The Chairman: We shall have the major part of the debate on the ‘take note’ motion, so that there will be an opportunity for a number of people to speak. A large number of people have indicated they wish to speak, including seven or eight who wish to make maiden speeches. As members of Synod, you will know, they are always encouraged to speak and get ahead of others.

The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Alan Chesters): Members of Synod may have found this a long and tiring week. I am bound to say I wondered whether this debate in the last hours of the group of sessions might seem to the young people of our Church and society something of a hangover. Personally I would rather say, 'We have saved the best wine until now.' Good News for our young people is the key to the report I have the honour to present on behalf of the Board of Mission and the Board of Education.

Some of what lies before us has felt a long time coming. It was in 1999 that a Board of Mission conference, *ACE '99*, reviewing the decade of evangelism, asked for a Youth Evangelism Fund. As the Archbishops' Council discussed the proposal (what sort of fund should it be? what sort of invitation was being offered? to follow Christ or to join the Church?) the Archbishop of York was not alone in asking, 'what sort of Church?'. From that grew a resolution to listen to young people, to consider the wider implications of the Council's commitment to children and young people and to look afresh at equipping the Church for evangelism.

In July 2001 the Council resolved to hear from young people on what the Council's themes might imply for them. What did it mean to welcome and encourage children and young people, and be encouraged by them, and to engage with them on their spiritual journey wherever they are? In October 2001 at their residential meeting in Sheffield, the Archbishops' Council indeed met a varied group of young people: two were active young members of the outreach work of St Thomas Crooks; one had rediscovered his faith in an RSCM choir course at a cathedral; another member of the Young Adult Observer Group at General Synod was passionately committed to the contribution young people could make to the Church's sense of direction and purpose; yet another had come to a living faith through the care and completely unpushy support of a Christian worker in her difficult personal circumstances.

In November 2001 the Archbishops' Council began to identify their priorities in the light of these encounters. The Council's theme 2, to coordinate a strategy for encouraging and equipping church members to further the task of evangelism, began to feature in the emerging strategy through the development of its thinking on the Youth Evangelism Fund. In April 2002 the Archbishops' Council agreed its Youth Strategy. In May of that year, endorsing this, the House of Bishops sought a greater emphasis on service, challenge and adventure as part of young people's engagement in mission. Only our crowded July agenda prevented earlier consideration of all this by General Synod itself.

Let me be very clear: the strategy before us is not born out of desperation, nor does it come out of the blue. It is built on solid foundations. Members of the previous General Synod will be aware of the report *Youth A Part* in 1996, which reminded the Church at large of the importance and urgency of work with young people. Much has flowed from that report, as Synod discovered in July 2000 when it considered its impact. Members may be surprised to learn that, although there are no accurate national statistics at present, it is widely accepted in the field that the Church of England now

employs more youth workers than does local government. The Archbishop of Canterbury's event for young people *Time of Our Lives* in 1999 made a dramatic impact on participants and their bishops alike. Some have the scars to remind them of it! There has also been substantial, but often almost unnoticed, growth in opportunities for what is generally called 'alternative worship' for young people. We recognize the alternative style but reject the name, seeing the worship as truly what the Church does. If Soul Survivor is one of the largest and best known, there are many smaller versions up and down the country. The monthly Unbelievable service on Sunday evenings in Blackburn Cathedral is a good example of this.

This leads me to remind the Synod that not all young people are the same and of the work among young people done in and through our cathedral churches. I reckon that in various ways between 50 and 70 young people are part of the life of Blackburn Cathedral. The Church of England continues to have a strong and substantial commitment to work with and outreach among young people.

However, no one in this Synod would be complacent about the relations between the institutional Church and young people, but neither should we panic. This is no time for despair. Many young people have a stronger awareness of the things of the spirit than those of earlier generations. There is often a great sense of community and of obligation to the planet and to each other. There is also bewilderment at the spiritual market place and at the range of choices that earlier generations never had to face. It can all be so confusing. There is also simple ignorance of the Christian story at the heart of this community's spiritual and cultural life. There are many claims on young people's time and energy (not least on Sundays): the need to compete and to achieve, consumerism and materialism. However, this is hardly new. It was Wordsworth who said,

'The world is too much with us; late and soon, getting and spending,
we lay waste our powers.'

So the work of nurture and encouragement for those young people who are active in the Church, or just clinging on, and of outreach to those who are effectively ignorant of the Good News is a high priority for today. The work will and should have an impact both on the young people who are active Christians, as they are recognized to be and come increasingly to feel a vital part of the Church, and on the Church, as it receives encouragement and ideas from that vitality, enthusiasm and sometimes impatience which young people exhibit.

Like many bishops, I have come to have regular meetings with our young people across the diocese. This has proved a very useful learning encounter, especially when we move on from navel-gazing about the Church to other issues.

With this strategy, we are offering a new way of working. The strategy is detailed, stating the purpose and reasons of each proposal with key tasks and timed outcomes.

The strategy, if it is approved today, will be demanding but we hope not unrealistic over the next five years. The strategy will not just involve the Archbishops' Council, General Synod and those working here in Church House; it is for the whole Church in the dioceses, deaneries and parishes. This is where the strategy has to come to life and its emphasis will vary from place to place according to need, context and resources. It will ultimately be effective when it has changed the attitudes of those committed members of the Church who are not currently engaged in work with young people. They will have confidence accompanying them on their journey of faith, sharing their own experiences and being enriched by what they in turn receive. Diocesan youth officers have taken part in consultations about the strategy and are broadly committed to their important role in its implementation. Where a diocese has no diocesan youth officer, it will be necessary under the proposals for a named individual to take responsibility for the implementation of the strategy.

There are four elements to the strategy. Young People and Worship is not about seeking to exercise control or to limit imagination. The purpose of achieving a national view of what really is happening is ultimately so that others can be encouraged and try things themselves.

Members of this Synod who know me will not be surprised to hear me say that for me the worship of the Church is centred on the Eucharist. The so-called Parish Communion movement, with which I grew up, which began over fifty years ago, had a transforming effect on the worship of the Church, although even I have to admit it was not all for the good. Certainly the Eucharist came to the centre but what was almost lost, certainly in many parishes, was the quiet route in for the uncommitted, the tentative or the seeker after truth. You can sit in church for Mattins or Evensong without feeling out of it, but when everyone goes up and you do not know what to do there is that sense, and so you can in the Family Service. But, and this may seem paradoxical, all-age worship cannot appeal to everyone. We need to face that. We think nothing of a popular mid-week service for the retired or a mid-day service for the local workers; they seem to count. Why not worship which is mainly for young people and often led by them? What are the obstacles? How can we promote best practice?

Young People as Leaders is an issue already embraced by the General Synod and by a number of dioceses. Young people are here; we hear their voices, but more can be done to enable them to be effective leaders in the Church, not just for the sake of the Church but to develop the leadership skills of Christian young people for the benefit of wider society.

Resourcing Youth Workers in the same way builds on experience and takes this forward. This section of the strategy concerns the great many volunteers who work with young people already in parishes and deaneries in a host of ways, their training and support, recognizing the ecumenical *Spectrum* training and the need for further development. Resourcing Youth Workers is also about the growing army of paid,

employed youth workers in parishes and deaneries. At present there is no agreed practice about how they are recognized and authorized (are they ministers? should they be licensed? does the diocese need to know about their existence at all?). Nor are there clear expectations about their training and experience. There are no entirely reliable data on how many there are and where they are. The suspicion is that they work, above all, in comparatively prosperous evangelical parishes. Does this mean opportunities being missed elsewhere in the wider Church?

The last section is on Young People and Mission. We recognize young people's often very strong commitment to justice and peace and the relief of need. We also see the life-changing experience of community service and the use of gap years. There are currently few diocesan-sponsored ways of relating that energy and experience to the hopes and aspirations of the Church and the wider Anglican Communion. The strategy seeks to explore ways, but key here is the challenging proposal for a Youth Evangelism Fund, which is fully endorsed by the Board of Education, as well as by the Board of Mission, by the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council. I can hardly think of anything that has been more endorsed in my episcopal years.

I believe that this Fund will give a powerful signal to the whole Church and beyond that we passionately want to meet young people wherever they actually are. It must also ensure that some really exciting innovation takes place. I hope, Chairman, that the Chairman of the Board of Mission may be called in the debate to say a little more about this aspect.

The strategy is detailed and demanding. It is a strategy for the whole Church. Although it is clearly an Anglican strategy, there is a great deal of practical and effective youth work with ecumenical partners and we fully recognize the important role of the para-church organizations. Youth work training and practice is also very conscious of the importance of working inclusively. These realities lie unspoken within this strategy.

Finally, above all, the strategy recognizes the great variety of gifts God has given the Church for ministry and leadership and for his work of transforming the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of Christ. Like many a priest of my generation, I cut my teeth on a parish youth club in the diocese of Southwark in the 1960s. I learned there then, and I have no reason to change my view now, that young people have God's gifts in full measure. My prayer is that, through this initiative, they 'may have life and have it in all its abundance'. St Irenaeus said, 'The glory of God is a human being fully alive.' I hope, as a result of the strategy, the fund and this debate that our young people have that life. I commend the National Youth Strategy to this Synod.

Miss Rachel Beck (Sheffield): I would like to urge Synod to vote in favour of this strategy and for the Youth Evangelism Fund. However, I would also like to encourage everyone not to stop there. Let us not think we have done our bit for young people and forget about it. By voting for this, we are making a commitment to being serious

about young people, to making them feel welcomed, encouraged, included and empowered. We are also acknowledging that young people should be one of the top priorities, not just at national level but also at parish, deanery and diocesan level. We can all do something to influence this.

I suggest we go back to our parishes, our deaneries and our dioceses and look at what is available for young people and how they are responded to. Let us get an agenda item on our PCC, deanery and diocesan synods to look at this issue. There will probably be areas of good practice in deaneries and dioceses, so let us share ideas and successful initiatives and perhaps also invite some young people along to take part in the discussion to let you know how they feel and what their suggestions are.

Let us make sure young people either stay as a top priority, if they already are in your diocese, or they become one. I know there are a lot of people here who are already heavily involved in youth ministry and working with young people, but everyone has a part to play. It may be welcoming young people into church, having a chat with them or showing an interest in them. Young people want to feel as though they matter and are valued as much, if not more, as we all do.

It is especially important through the challenging, often life-changing teenage years to feel there is somewhere you can be yourself, feeling no one is judging or pressurizing you, a place where people will listen to your ideas and sometimes just be there when you need someone to talk to. It would be wonderful if this place could be the Church and I truly believe it can be.

So let us go home fired up with enthusiasm and belief for what we can do in our own parishes, deaneries and dioceses. Let us remember that we say young people are the Church of both today and the future; however, if they do not feel welcomed, valued and encouraged in the Church, I doubt if they will want to be involved with the Church.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Mrs Anne Foreman (Guildford): I am glad that Synod has this proposed National Youth Strategy before it today and I fervently hope that it will be Good News for young people.

The first thing that struck me when I read the report was the nature of the language used. The Bishop of Blackburn and the Bishop of Liverpool provide an introduction that speaks of the need to adapt and change, to share skills and knowledge alongside and in relationship with young people and to learn from them. It envisages the transforming energies of young Christians impacting on society. Similarly, Section I of the Appendix talks of ideas and energy, of variety and creativity of approach and of having a lightness of touch. It declares young people to be the best evangelists of young people. Section II talks of risk, and more specifically the risk of trusting young

people as leaders with responsibility to experiment with worship and new forms of discipleship.

The main body of the report tackles implementation and I applaud the Archbishops' Council and the Board for being rigorous in setting out purpose, reason, key tasks and outcomes with timescales. This is the language of action and hope, and I commend it to all those preparing other reports for Synod. From it comes a well recognized model of implementing the action that is needed to tackle the four elements of the Youth Strategy: Young People and Worship, Young People as Leaders, Resourcing Youth Workers and Young People and Mission. That model can be summed up as gathering examples of good practice; developing guidelines; establishing pilot schemes; training; and here and there a mapping exercise.

I have two concerns about using this model to address all four elements of the Youth Strategy. The first is that, in order to achieve the desired outcome, no less than 56 key tasks have been identified, and even in these days of multi-tasking and given the hard-working staff of the Board of Education and the Diocesan Youth Officer network, this is quite simply too many tasks.

Secondly, and I think more importantly, I do question whether this model is right for all four elements. In the interests of having a Youth Strategy that works and that does indeed take young people seriously, I ask that rather less be done and that the Board consider cutting out some of the tasks or at least making a shift of emphasis for some of them.

For example, those aspects of the Youth Strategy concerned with the existing structures, continuing to develop the Young Adult Observer Group, developing the Church of England Youth Council and resourcing youth workers, will quite clearly be moved forward by the approach suggested, but those that are more directly connected with evangelism need, I think, a more adventurous touch, a more imaginative touch, a more trusting touch and, above all, a lighter touch.

Look at Young People and Worship. On Wednesday we heard about worship as a focus for mission. This report suggests that it is necessary to identify effective examples of worship (effective by whose criteria?); to produce guidelines on accountability and authorization; and in 2005, to hold a series of training days. Why? An example of good worship practice in our diocese today may be nothing like what might happen next year, let alone in 2005. That will be the result of the experiences of those involved; it will have sprung from their relationship with God and with each other, from their desire to meet God. It will be continually evolving; it may be influenced by supportive clergy or it may not.

We hear often, and it is reiterated in this report, that the Church is failing young people, but it *is* the Church that is failing young people: it is not the Gospel message that is failing young people. We need changed methods to ensure that the unchanging

truths are heard. We need to recognize that talking about God is no substitute for giving young people ways of experiencing God. If you have ever been involved in worship alongside crowds of young people with hearts ablaze for Jesus, or quietly reflective in a 24/7 prayer happening, you will know that it did not happen because the young people had access to nationally approved guidelines!

Similarly with young people as leaders, there are many examples of local initiatives for growing young leaders in response to local needs. Research by Leslie Francis and David Lanksheer has identified over 9,000 young leaders within the Church of England, and I suggest there are many more, and they will best be served by recognition and encouragement rather than a new training programme. So, please, a lighter touch for young people.

The Bishop of Liverpool (Rt Revd James Jones): I know it was a surprise to some people that when the original proposals for the Youth Evangelism Fund came before the House of Bishops and the Board of Mission I was unpersuaded because of two major reservations: first on finance and secondly on the relationship between youth evangelism and the Church.

Finance seemed to me a major obstacle. Knowing that the Church Urban Fund was under review and favouring a continuation of that fund, and also supporting the funding for a new Church schools initiative, I was worried that, without a funding strategy for all three, we might well fall between three stools.

I am pleased that the Archbishops' Council has addressed this concern and agreed to a strategy that plaits these three strands together. On the relationship between youth evangelism and the Church, I felt this was a major omission in the first paper. Indeed, there seemed to be a wilfulness to exclude the Church from youth evangelism. I understand that antagonism but feel that we must understand it and then develop ways of bridging the two cultures. I am delighted that, with the help of the Bishop of Maidstone and his remarkable expertise in this area, these issues have now been addressed in the strategy that is before the General Synod.

Like Job, I am blessed with three daughters. It is from them that I learn much about youth evangelism. My youngest daughter, Tabitha, at the age of 15 – and who, by the way, looks stunning in a mitre, much better than I do – wants to start a youth cell church in the chapel at Bishop's Lodge. She is looking forward to discussing this with the new vicar; I am looking forward to discussing this with the new vicar as well!

The absence of young people from our churches is a scandal, both theologically and pragmatically. Theologically: a great divine once said 'The first revelation of God in the Gospels is that God himself could be a young person'. Jesus was the Son of God as a young person. He was not on probation to becoming the Son of God as a young person. To be without young people in our churches is therefore to be without an essential aspect of the image of God.

The absence of young people from our churches is a scandal pragmatically because without them we have no future; but if we adopt this strategy, as I hope we will, then we have to learn that in any new relationship one always changes. Indeed you cannot enter into a relationship with another person and remain the same. You cannot be unchanged otherwise there has been no relationship. If the Church is to embrace young people at the local and national level, we will have to change locally and nationally. I pray, as we support the motion today, that we will do so with spiritual courage.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Canon John Hall (Blackburn): I welcome of course this report, *Good News for Young People*. I applaud both the aims of the National Strategy and provision for a Youth Evangelism Fund. I applaud the reference to building on excellent ecumenical relations in youth work at every level.

The emphasis of this joint report is that it is a national strategy: evangelism with and amongst the young people of our nation. As a Catholic Anglican I welcome the report's acknowledgement on page 30 that "Young people" are not a homogeneous group'. That is why it is imperative that under the heading 'key tasks' on pages 10, 18 and 22, the network in between youth agencies is inclusive, drawing in examples of good practice from all aspects of churchmanship and tradition.

In Section II of the Appendix, Bishop Graham Cray's comments I believe are a resource for a great deal of meditation, reflection and prayer, particularly the call for a forum through which good practice can be shared and developed. My middle daughter, herself a teenager, told my wife recently that she only lives for the National Youth Pilgrimage to Walsingham. Fifteen years ago, two of us started that with 13 children. This August, we had nearly 1,000 teenagers. What makes it so special for her and for them? Perhaps it is because it is an environment where she can freely express herself, where she is loved and valued by adults as well as other teenagers, where she is affirmed for who she is and where she is made a hero for the faith.

A fortnight ago we had a mission weekend as part of our PCC's ongoing commitment to the Springboard Initiative. Ninety children and teenagers spent all day and all Saturday night with us, which culminated in a fantastic act of worship. The theme for the weekend, as it coincided with All Saints, was *Saints and Heroes*. The young people were encouraged to examine what makes a saint and what makes a hero of the Church. We concluded that it has been and continues to be those who have the courage to tell the story of the significance of Jesus for them. These young people and all that they have to endure in our secular society are our heroes. Their youth leaders are our heroes. Those who teach in our schools and colleges and govern them are our heroes. We need to equip them well for the ongoing task which is ahead.

We need a forum and a strategy well equipped, well financed; we need a commitment from this Synod which reflects our indebtedness to all those who work them. It needs

to be inclusive, easily accessible to all, owned by all, understood by all, a burden to no one, a source of joy for all, a source of hope for this our nation and its youth. I urge members of Synod to take note of this report.

Mr Dudley Coates (Ecumenical Representatives (Methodist Church)): My first ever speech to a large gathering was just across the road at a Methodist Association of Youth Clubs London weekend when I argued in favour of the then Anglican-Methodist Conversations in the early 1960s.

I want to make four quick points to Synod. First, it is my experience at any rate that a significant proportion of the young people with whom I am in contact have little or no denominational allegiance. I welcome what is said in the report and what has been said in the speeches so far about the need for an ecumenical dimension but I wonder whether we need to think through the implications of that lack of denominational allegiance for some of the other matters we discuss as well as in these youth issues.

Secondly, I thought the Synod might be helped to know, in connection with Section C of this report, about young people as leaders, that in the Methodist Conference we now have five young people elected by the elected members of our annual conference present as well as young people who are elected in the ordinary way by districts. The youth conference can bring resolutions to our conference. Sometimes it is quite amusing. They brought a resolution, for example, to extend lay presidency recently and we had the interesting experience of watching all the youth conference members solemnly voting against the resolution that they had just brought! That might please some of the Catholic members of this Synod. They do have that additional voice in our proceedings, but it is a bit easier for us because we elect a conference every year. I recognize there are issues there.

The same point arises in local churches as well. As a member of a large church a few years ago, we made a conscious decision that we should bring young people into the church council, but we brought more than one. I want to emphasize the point that is made that there is no one view of young people. The Bishop of Blackburn and others have made this point already but it is important not to assume that because you have heard one young person, you have heard all young people, any more than if you hear one Methodist, you have heard all Methodists, or one archdeacon, you have heard all archdeacons.

What flows from this is that the issues we are debating now need to permeate the thinking of all us. I would like to finish with two quick links back to other matters we have already discussed. On the point we discussed earlier this morning, what about making more of our churches – yours and ours – available as drop-in centres for young people? We might have to take the odd pew out in places, but what about it?

Finally, a little story: I am a very formal local preacher in Methodism, I wear a gown –

most do not – but I was persuaded not to do so when my daughter invited me to preach at the Open Space service at St Paul’s Methodist Church in Aberystwyth where she is a worship leader. I do not think I would have voted for more flexibility on Canon B 8 had I been allowed a vote in this Synod but I think there are times and places when it is right to do things differently from the way you would otherwise normally do them, and this was one occasion when I felt that right.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): A friend and fellow member of Synod told me that it was self-indulgent of me at 33 to consider myself young. I am greatly heartened and reassured today. Looking around large parts of the Synod – and if their Lordships will forgive me, especially the sacred inner circles – I realize that all things are relative!

I wish to welcome this timely and excellent report most warmly. It uses language which makes it clear that children and young people are not, as Rachel Beck has already said, just the Church of tomorrow; they are the Church of today. The report makes it clear that children and young people are not just the subject of Church initiatives but are lively protagonists in the work and mission of the Church.

The report is particularly to be welcomed for representing joined-up thinking. I submitted one Question for this group of sessions. It referred to two consultations, both by the DTI, both relating to the employment status of clergy. I received a telephone call asking if I was happy for the Question to be split in two, as one consultation is being dealt with by the Ministry Division and one by the BSR. The joined-up thinking of the Boards of Education and Mission is much to be commended.

I would like to mention two small caveats. First, I hope that the monitoring by the Board of Education will include a request to dioceses to report back. It is essential that the proposals of this report are not lost in the Church’s structures. I would say to members of Synod: we have a responsibility not just to support the report with our words but with our actions and in our dioceses. Secondly, it is excellent that we should meet children and young people, indeed everybody, where they are, but I am anxious that relevance should not be over-emphasized. In a world which seems to be changing at an ever-increasing pace, where there is increasing family breakdown, a decreasing sense of community and endless innovations in school curricula, many children and young people yearn for stability, for continuity and for security. The Church must respond to this wish and need for a sense of belonging.

I end with some words from the Book of Job commended to us in July by the Young Adult Network: ‘I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. I thought, “age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom”. But it is the spirit in a [person], the breath of the Almighty, that gives [them] understanding. It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right’.

This is not just Good News for young people; it is Good News for all the Church.

Revd Sue Booyis (Oxford): Two weeks ago I had the comparatively rare experience of accompanying all three of my children aged 20, 18 and 14 to church. Why this extraordinary occasion? We were going to say goodbye to a youth worker appointed in the Oxford deanery following the offer of a grant by the Oxford diocese for a new project some years ago.

We wanted to appoint someone who would work relationally across the deanery with young people in the sprawling housing estates in the poorer parts of Oxford. When I look back, I would have to suggest to myself that in our commitment to this we were naïve, foolish, over-confident and certainly over-expectant of the young man we appointed. The development grants we were offered were sensibly offered in the same terms as grants are offered in this report, to reduce over a number of years so that we were encouraged to be self-sufficient. We started out not knowing what was going to happen in year three. Naïve and foolhardy we may have been, but I like to think that we were also committed and prophetic.

Five years later, Chris is leaving. His successor has been appointed. Her position is secure. To my great joy, it is supported by the evangelical church up the road that already employs a youth worker and a children's worker.

I want to offer you three snapshots of my experience of this project. It is Easter Eve and about 30 young people are sharing a meal with 20 Church adults. Maybe ten of those are regularly associated with the Church in some way or another. We are about to embark on the Easter Vigil. During the night, we meet hourly for some kind of worship: silence, music, sharing. Between the hours, we make a giant Easter egg, a cope for a celebration of the dawn Eucharist, and a banner.

It is very difficult to cover the subject in a short time but I want to commend to Synod, particularly those who share my grey hair, the idea that we do not, in trying to set appropriate targets, focus on one which you will find on page 31 of the report. 'It is difficult to envisage a youth evangelism initiative that does not give high value to young people's ongoing engagement with Christian community.' The young people with whom Chris was involved were sometimes engaged with the Church community, but we never expected to judge him by the number of bums he put on our seats.

Revd Simon Pothén (London): I speak for this joint report as a member of the Board of Education but I had a few misgivings about it. I did not want to place an amendment for fear that it might die the death of a thousand qualifications. My contention is simply the omission of minority ethnic youth from this report.

It seems as though *Simply Value Us* (GS Misc 601) has not been read or not been taken into consideration by this report. I know what will be said by the Bishop of Blackburn in his reply, that somehow the minority ethnic young people are embedded in this report and that we are, through a process of osmosis, to discern its presence within this report. I am afraid I do not share that optimism. Call me old-fashioned, call

me cynical, call me what you will, the simple fact of the matter is that the Church of England is not in that state of grace where minority ethnic young people can assume anything from the Church. It has to be named; it has to be embedded; it has to be set forth so that we may not be misunderstood.

GS Misc 601 *Simply Value Us* points us to a whole series of alienations that young minority ethnic people feel about the Church today. Racism in society is endemic and the Church seemingly has not answered *vis-à-vis* the lack of a Stephen Lawrence follow-up report in this session of Synod.

The Church is not interested in matters of race: this is what young people have said in *Simply Value Us*. They do not feel that the Church is identifying with any issues to do with minority ethnic culture. What the Church needs to do in *Simply Value Us* is stated quite clearly: to develop structures and skills which will support minority ethnic young people, to develop activities which enhance their self-esteem and their cultural identity and also to develop a sense of their belonging. The Church needs to promote itself as an institution that values ethnic diversity through role-models, through mentoring and various other schemes, to develop the recognition that existing Church structures are *for* them rather than against them.

I quote Bishop Colin Buchanan in 1994 – eight years ago – when he visited a conference. He said: ‘I was very struck by the relative youthfulness of so many of our black participants. They were giving us the truth the way it is and generally without hesitation.’ I beg this Synod to take note of that ‘without hesitation’ and the truth that is spoken in love.

Mr David Price (Portsmouth): I was immensely heartened to hear the Bishop of Blackburn talk about the value of choral music and gap years, both schemes which many cathedrals are trying out at the moment.

A recent report on BBC News told us what is the most popular form of activity for children and youngsters on a Saturday morning. It is not swimming or any other sport, it is not dance, nor even piano lessons; it is singing. Not that long ago, the same situation pertained, but it was on a Sunday and it was in a church choir. We still retain enormous numbers of children in this way but we have a golden opportunity in this area to improve in evangelism.

My job is as a cathedral director of music. If you read the *Church Times*, or the *Church of England Newspaper*, we are an endangered species at the moment. I would like to see more cathedral musicians given the opportunity and some resources to work with diocesan youth officers and the Royal School of Church Music in an area, so that we may use music, as it always has been, as a tool for evangelism with the young.

Truro Cathedral regularly hosts Saturday mornings of 100 youngsters involving them in choral workshops. My assistant at Portsmouth spends three-quarters of her time

working as a diocesan music adviser, with and training children as singers and instrumentalists in music groups. She runs a scheme called Classroom to Choirstalls, and it is just that. She works for a term with a number of schools, who may have no musicians on the staff, running a singing club. At the end of the term, those who want to do so are encouraged to join the church choir, and of course in most cases that means that a children's choir is started where there may have been no choir at all for years. A parish in Havant has just started a choir of 12 teenagers. What do those 12 teenagers bring with them? They bring a family each, of course, and a wealth of opportunity for mission. I dream that this project could be replicated in every diocese.

Let us not fall into the trap of always assuming that all young people are into the 'trendy agenda'. I was involved in Rave in the Nave at Ely Cathedral when I was there in 1993, and a feature of that night has struck me: the nave was full of bouncy castles, tuck shops and an arena for a rock band. At one point in the evening the candlelit Lady Chapel, which was set aside as a quiet space for the adults, was packed with hundreds of teenagers listening to Gregorian plainsong, singing the Litany of the Saints, while the adults and some of their parents were bopping in the nave in a rather embarrassing fashion!

Choirs and music groups are the best youth movement the Church possesses. It involves them and gives them a stake in worship. It commits them to a church and lets them play a full role in partnership with adults. So I welcome this report and ask that, in the working out of all the detail, we seriously consider how music can be used to proclaim the Gospel to young people and with young people.

Revd Phil Williams (Southwell): I was ordained in 1990 and have spent much of the past 12 years working alongside young people in churches and communities in Sheffield and Nottingham. I have found young people varied, lively, exasperating, challenging and irreverent. At times it was they who kept me sane in the Church.

I want to encourage the Synod with a good news story to illustrate some of the features in the report. My former parish in Nottingham was mostly council housing, a UPA pocket in a larger, affluent, conservative world. The estate was within the Labour-controlled city boundary but surrounded at its edges by the university campus, a large park and an urban town in another borough. The area was a political and geographical no-man's land.

As a small congregation, we had few resources. One of our church members felt called to youth work. She left her job and became a student at the Centre for Youth Ministry at St John's College. As a church, we knew there was nothing much for young people in the area. A church member at CYM did her ongoing placement with us. In time, she set up a questionnaire inviting young people on the streets to say what they wanted to happen in the area. Members of the church went out with the questionnaire on the streets, talked with the young people and filled in their responses. The results were calculated and then the CYM placement student took some of the unchurched young

people to Nottingham Council House to present their findings to the area committee, asking for a £5,000 feasibility study for changes to the small local park and the setting up of a youth club. Please picture the scene as the six 11- to 15-year-olds went into the Council House chamber for pre-meeting tea and biscuits with china cups and saucers. I will not forget the council official who, with a wry smile, told one young person he was not allowed to sit in the chairman's seat!

The young people made their presentation, were awarded the money and in time they were able to pay for the sessional youth worker to set up a youth club in the church hall. Why have I told you this story? It is a story very much in line with the elements of the report: youth representation, leadership training, initiative funding and vision.

While we may be concerned about the detailed strands of the report's strategy looking ragged, perhaps we need to ask ourselves whether we are looking at the back of the tapestry while the young people will understand us to be saying No to the big picture on the front, which is of Christ reaching out to them. I urge members to vote in favour.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd John Perry): The Bishop of Liverpool listens to his children; I listen to my grandchildren, especially the 15-year-olds.

I warmly welcome this report. I hope we will be right behind it. In September the Chelmsford diocesan conference for those in leadership drew about 2,000 people together. When I sent out the invitations, I made a plea that there should be at least one person under 25 from the benefices to attend that conference. A number of parishes wrote back and said they had no one under 25.

After an article I had written about making connections, I recently had an e-mail through from a young person who said, 'I am a follower of Jesus Christ but I don't feel I belong in the life of my local church. I do not see any future for me in the Church'.

I would like to make three brief points. Like other dioceses, in appointing full-time youth workers – and we are making quite a number of appointments – it is noticeable now that the pool of possible candidates is diminishing. We need to encourage this ministry with much strength behind it. Of course, this report will help in that important vocation.

Secondly, the report draws attention to our Church schools. We owe much to the Dearing report for heightening their importance. I am often distressed as I go round the diocese when I see the disconnection between the Church school and the local parish. We must continue to maximize those very important connections.

Thirdly, and Rachel Beck picked this up, encouraging youth leader involvement and participation in the synods and councils of our dioceses: it is making quite a difference to our Bishop's Council to have youth representation on it. With that in mind, a quote

from the Bishop of Maidstone's excellent part of the report: 'The church's work amongst young people combines continuity with change. It *begins* with its responsibility to pass on its faith to the next generation. It *continues* with the responsibility to be open to change, as it listens to the Spirit of Christ in the young. Without this openness to listen Christian mission can be trapped in a timewarp and become ineffective.'

I hope we will put our backing behind this report with everything we can.

Miss Jayne Ozanne (Archbishops' Council): I would like, if I may, to start by asking Synod members a couple of questions. What are you hoping for? What sort of Church do you see in ten years' time? Indeed, what sort of Synod do you see in ten years' time? In other words, where are we going? Perhaps most importantly, what do we need to do to get there?

I really welcome this report and in particular one very important sentence in the last paragraph, which reads: 'We need to take the risk of trusting ... leaders with responsibility to experiment ...'

Interestingly, after our debate last Tuesday morning, which for me was whether we were prepared to change and become a both/and rather than an either/or Church, and whether we were prepared to embrace different parts of the body and empower them to be themselves, I was asked to give a speech on, of all things, risk management. I think that is strangely apt for this particular report. I offered that the way to manage risk was to ensure that there is a common set of core values, which everybody buys into. I offered that these were primarily trust, openness and respect, and that at the same time we need to look at our attitude to failure: did we see it as something to fear or something to embrace and to be able to grow through?

Trust, openness and respect are good core Christian values but, in looking at the way Synod, I am afraid, has voted over these last few days, I am not convinced those levels of trust always exist.

This paper focuses on a youth strategy but I would offer that it touches on much more than that. It is not just about young people; it is about embracing a new culture, one that affects all the generations.

I happened to meet one of our newly appointed members on Tuesday afternoon. She, like me four years ago, was trying to get to grips with understanding this Synod. We did not have much time but she asked me what was the best way of understanding the make-up of this Synod. I paused and said, 'Four years ago, I was sat down by a friend who told me, "Jayne, you need to understand there are three main groups here in Synod: evangelicals, anglo-catholics and liberals"', and I have seen that. I have seen how we go off to our fringe meetings and strategize and, frankly, it saddens me. Now I would describe things differently. I would offer that there are two groups in

Synod: the traditionalists and the modernizers. It would be interesting to see what proportion is here in this chamber for this particular debate. The key thing that separates us is our attitude to risk.

She then asked me what my role on Council was. I smiled as I remembered what a friend said recently, 'Jayne is a woman who tends to like talking about the elephant in the room that nobody likes to acknowledge or indeed own up to'. Dear friends, I have come to believe that there are many elephants, indeed taboos, that we do not like talking about in this chamber – the no-go areas such as seeing shellsuits as a positive thing!

The most difficult one I want to talk about now is that this paper is about youth but it is also about renewal. For many, not all, youth projects involve an element of renewal. What I do I mean by renewal? I mean charismatic, believing and operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I mean taking literally all those hundreds of verses in the New and Old Testaments which talk about the gifts of the spirit set out in I Corinthians XII. I have to admit that it bemuses me somewhat how passionate we are about certain parts of scripture but seem to ignore various others, like Acts XIX, Joel II, Ephesians V.

There is a problem with the Holy Spirit. He is uncontrollable. He requires room to be creative and innovative. He is not predictable and he definitely causes us to take risks.

Mrs Angela Scott (Rochester): I welcome this report *Good News for Young People*. However, this report can only be effective if we at the grass roots and parish ministry make a concerted effort to engage with, encourage and empower the young people with whom we already have contact. For example, our ordinary, open evangelical church has employed youth workers for over ten years, and we are now seeing young people in positions of leadership in the wider Church.

As a means of service, challenge and adventure, to quote the Bishop of Blackburn, a significant number have been abroad on short-term projects with Christian mission societies. We currently have three under the age of 25 on our PCC and three on our staff team of nine: one, the youth worker, the second exploring her Christian vocation, and a third taking a gap year and spending three months in the parish. Each of them has demonstrated a maturity of faith; encouraging, empowering and enabling in ministry is reciprocal. They are seen as leaders by the whole Church family. They help prepare and take part in worship; they are involved in activities beyond youth work; they have a heart for evangelism and mission and each is earnestly seeking visibly to be a person of God in the world to both their peers and to those of us who are only mature in years.

I would urge you to accept this Youth Strategy and to incorporate the proposals for a Youth Evangelism Fund. Our young people are the Church of today and some are also leaders now as well as the Church leaders of tomorrow. We need to see the

Church as work for young people nation-wide, not just locally. Young people need all the help and encouragement they can get from those of us who may be older yet not necessarily wiser, but who are on the same spiritual journey and who may even be behind them on the road.

Revd Captain Paul Allinson (Durham): May I warmly welcome this Youth Strategy? As a delegate from Durham on the ACE conference and as a person who has worked with young people as a Church Army evangelist and now as a parish priest and diocesan children's adviser, I recognize its great value.

Whilst noting the limited resources available within the Church in financial terms for the many competing calls on investment, I believe this strategy to be of vital importance to the mission of the Church. In encouraging young people to be people of worship, new forms of worship are noted in the report, such as all ages or mothers and toddlers. In Durham certainly these tasks are undertaken with the help of the youth officers' network but primarily by the children's advisers' network or family life officers in some places. We must use the whole range of networks, recognizing the interaction between children's and youth ministry, including voluntary societies such as the Church Army and the Children's Society.

I must also note that eucharistic worship can be both relevant and meaningful to the young. At our own diocesan youth and children's events at Durham sacramental worship can be seen to call, convert, energize and commission. Even in events such as Greenbelt and at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and at other events commissioned by the Cursillo movement, the Eucharist is central. Certainly with one-fifth of churches in our diocese now admitting children to Holy Communion before confirmation, this is increasingly an all-age experience.

As the *On the Way* report showed, no strategy or nurture plan can be done in isolation. Therefore all-age funding must be considered and minimum or maximum age parameters must be flexible. A bus stop in my own parish is often a meeting place not just for over-11s but for six-or-seven-year-olds up to 25- and 26-year-olds finding somewhere to find cover during the rain. Perhaps dioceses themselves could determine this placement of resources.

In leadership, while recognizing the leadership of young people, training must encourage their connectedness to their own youth and friendship network and not ghettoize or de-skill young people. Indeed, children and young people have a prophetic voice, challenging and sometimes uncomfortable. We must resist the temptation to see energy, youth and enthusiasm and either collar it, certificate it or so control it that we kill it.

I would also hope that those called to be leaders, like Synod representatives, will be called from both churched and unchurched backgrounds, various churchmanships, social classes and regions. In this we follow the Archbishops' Council's

recommendations to encourage children and young people. May I encourage Synod to support this strategy and fund it with faith, hope and love.

Revd Jenny Thomas (Southwark): I welcome this report. I would like to focus on the area of training on page 9 of GS 1481, section C.(a). Whilst I agree with what is said there, I notice that under 'Key Tasks' on page 10 there is no mention of the Church Army. In my experience, the Church Army is the forerunner in the field of training young people and youth workers. This has resulted in a high proportion of diocesan youth workers who are Church Army trained.

I myself began my ministry with the Church Army, being trained in the area of youth work, and I have retained this focus on training not only in my work with young people but also in the area of vocation in my present ministry as a parish priest. I recognize here two aspects of training: the training needs of young people and the training needs of leaders, and of course at times the two may be the same.

My congregation in an Anglo-Catholic tradition is multi-ethnic, and I am delighted to have among them a high proportion of young black men who regularly attend Church and are members of the young people's group. The young people were asked their opinion about the worship. It was interesting to note that they said they are happy with the worship as it currently stands, including those who experience a prayer and praise of meditative style joined with contemporary music for the very first time.

The young people were also asked how they would like to contribute to the life of the Church. In response to the request, they said they would like to be more involved in reading lessons, intercessions and to be a part of the planning for all-age worship, the offertory and serving tea. I organized training sessions for them and many of them are now so involved.

Our church is also involved in an innovative ecumenical programme which will further support the training needs of young people, filling in the gaps left by the discontinuation of the youth worker's post by the local authority. The local authority has a programme for young people and I think that the Church could tap into this.

For me, the importance of training is synonymous with work with young people in our churches. My Church Army training has equipped me well for working with young people and in particular responding to their needs.

To the Boards of Education and Mission I say 'Please consider the important role of the Church Army in this regard'.

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

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Blackburn, in reply: I have to thank the Synod. I think this has been the Synod at its best – a whole series of short encounters with this agenda and the positive responses are really quite overwhelming. I do want to take a moment to congratulate all our maiden speakers. I think the Synod has been richly helped by those who participated. (*Applause*)

In the interests of brevity, I will just make a few points. Thank you to Rachel Beck for starting us off on such a positive note and emphasizing so many aspects of the report: welcome, priorities and getting it on the agenda of the local church at every level – PCC, deanery and diocese – to share ideas.

I am enormously grateful to Anne Foreman for her own immense experience as a former national youth officer of the Church. I responded enthusiastically to the language of action and hope which she drew out. I am not sure we can have a light touch; 56 may be too many but, remember, it is diverse and diffuse across the Church. Can we have too light a touch to the vital areas which you thought should have a lighter touch? I know what you mean but I hope that does not mean *laissez faire* and let it all happen and slither around.

I am grateful of course to the Bishop of Liverpool for the points about Our Lord as a young man but also, and a number of speakers picked this up, the change in culture locally and nationally which has to come.

I thank Canon John Hall of my own diocese for bringing the Catholic perspective to this and the encouraging news he brought, both at a national level and also in his own village parishes in the north of the Blackburn diocese, and about earthing and rooting it in the local scene and the relevance of young people and where are the heroes and so on.

I am grateful to Dudley Coates. My own background in my early years as a Methodist always warms me to Dudley's response; the tremendous contribution which the Methodist Church has made over the years again and again to the youth agenda needs to be recognized, acknowledged and affirmed, and I gladly do that. The guidance he gave us is interesting about how the Methodist Conference approaches this, and also his point about linking it to other debates. This is a debate about the whole Church, not just simply about the young people within it.

There are many more points I could make. Mr Hargreaves-Smith, we will try to do the monitoring and the relevance.

I want to move on to Simon Pothén because he is a trusted member of the Board of Education. He is right in one sense, both in the omission and in knowing what my response would be, because I think we do at some point have to accept that the Church is the Church is the Church, but we take his point and we are working with CMEAC on trying to identify dioceses where there is good practice which should be shared. I hope he will take my word on that.

I am delighted with the comment of Mr Price of Portsmouth about the whole business of music across the range. It is hard for my friends to believe this but I believe I am here this morning because at the age of 11 I was invited to sing in a church choir. (The Archbishop is amazed because he knows my singing voice!) It is that engagement, that sense of belonging, which links Church and evangelism and mission which is so important.

We have had some wonderfully good stories of children and grandchildren and I appreciate that. We will deal with the Bishop of Chelmsford's point about the link with Church schools and funding.

I wanted to say a word about the Church Army. Some diocesan youth officers are Church Army officers, and I personally welcome that enormously: I wish there were more Church Army officers on which to draw. My experience is that it is really quite difficult to get people from the Church Army, and I would want to encourage that.

To Paul Allinson of Durham, this networking seems to me to be important. I took his point about the Eucharist. It does seem to me that we need help, and it can be done, as to how to present the Eucharist in a way that engages young people. All I said about other services does not take away my belief that parishes could present and celebrate the Eucharist in a way in which the youth are involved.

I need to say, in the light of some comments, that the Archbishops' Council intends to present, in due course, a children's strategy which will build on this and link with it.

The motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Alan Chesters): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod

- (a) endorse the four key areas of the proposed National Youth Strategy;
- (b) approve the proposals for the establishment of a Youth Evangelism Fund;
- (c) call on the Church in the dioceses and parishes to be actively involved in the implementation of the National Youth Strategy; and
- (d) ask the Archbishops' Council to monitor the implementation of the National Youth Strategy and to give a report on progress before the end of the current quinquennium.’

Miss Rosalind Fuller (Winchester): I have two brief points. Much of what I wanted to say has already been said better than I could say it. On training for voluntary youth

workers, I want to highlight the fact that we are all called to spread the word of Jesus Christ amongst all people so that when the opportunity for training comes up for volunteers to work with Youth, that will mean all of us because we all have a God-given calling to spread the news amongst everybody.

I am concerned that this use of 'strategy' might mean that all youth work is going to be sectioned off as something different. We can say, 'Right, we have our youth strategy, it is in the bag, and now we can get on with whatever else we are doing'. It is for everybody to go back to the parishes, deaneries and dioceses and work from the bottom up. A top-down strategy can work only when people at the bottom become involved.

I am a bit concerned with something the Bishop of Maidstone said on the last page of the appendix. It states: 'It is unrealistic and inappropriate to expect the majority of congregations to adapt to an emerging culture in which they have not been nurtured'. I am not sure if I can agree with that because I believe that faith should be ever-evolving and each person's personal journey should never stop at one cultural barrier. As Jayne Ozanne said about renewal and the changing of the Church's culture as a whole, we cannot just have separate services and call them alternative; these people need to be involved in mainstream worship. Ironically, to the outside world what we think is normal in the Church is very odd and not normal at all. We need to remember that sometimes.

I am also concerned about having a separate youth synod, which has been spoken about briefly. I am concerned that we will have the young people talking separately to General Synod and never the twain shall meet, which is why I shall be pushing in future for young people to come on to Synod from the youth synod and to have full voting and speaking rights.

Finally, I am also a little concerned about timing. I was 17 when I spoke at General Synod for the first time as part of the Young Adult Network Observer Group. I am now 24. Seven years might not seem like very long with people talking about things happening in the 1960s, when I was not born, but seven years is a long time in the life of a young person. That is the time between starting secondary education and leaving school. In the last seven years, thousands of young people have moved through the education system without ever hearing about the word of Jesus Christ, so we need to act now.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr Michael Chamberlain (Archbishops' Council): I feel a bit uncomfortable about having to make this financial statement when there is such enthusiasm for the setting up of the fund, but nevertheless Standing Order 98 requires me to draw Synod's attention to the 10th Notice Paper which sets out at paragraph 5 that there would be significant costs in running an appeal to raise funds for a youth evangelism fund,

and then in running the fund itself. This is inevitable. The costs will be more fully assessed as part of the next stage, now that Synod has approved the establishment of funds, or I hope will do so.

It is important that the Synod's and the Council's financial exposures are carefully monitored. Arrangements are being put in place to ensure this happens, including appropriate break clauses. All those involved will need to remain vigilant to ensure this happens. Other parts of the Youth Strategy may also have financial implications, but of a much lesser order. The proposal on page 10 that the Young Adult Observer Group might have a representative from each diocese would involve some additional cost, but it is expected that, as at present, the cost of the Young Adult Observer Group would largely be met other than from central funds.

The proposal on page 12, that a number of the Youth Council members might be afforded formal General Synod observer status, may involve additional cost. If there were to be any substantial costs falling on Church funds, this would be highlighted when the Standing Order comes to Synod for approval, by which time we will know the number of youth observers being proposed.

Mr Timothy Cox (Blackburn): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In sub paragraph (a) after the words “National Youth Strategy” *insert* the words “save that the number of Young Adult Observers attending the July Group of Sessions of the General Synod funded by the Archbishop’s Council be limited to a maximum number of 20 in any one year, priority being given to those attending for the first time”.’

Much though I hate to disagree with my Bishop, because I think he is going to disagree with this, I feel that this is an important amendment which provides much flexibility and gives priority to first-time attendees. In the last four years there have been 76 young adult observers, excluding youth officers and Young Adult Network executive officers, attending, or 63 individual young people. They came from 27 different dioceses with two ecumenical representatives. Norwich has sent the most with 10 people since 1999; St Albans a close second with 9; St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and York both sent 5, with Guildford, Durham and Blackburn sending four.

My amendment promotes the diversity to be found across dioceses where one diocese may enthusiastically send more than one person. The proposals contained on page 12 of GS 1481 indicate that there should be one person sent from each diocese. This would have meant that in the year I came, when Blackburn sent three observers, two of us would not have been able to attend unless the diocese had decided to support us individually.

At present, the Archbishops’ Council provides a grant which pays for some observers at the July Synod. I believe that this amounts to around five observers, with an

additional seven being covered by external grants. The rest is currently met by the dioceses.

My amendment allows for up to 20 observers to be supported centrally, with priority going to those who have never been before. This does not mean that it would limit the number to 20 but rather that any diocese which wished to send somebody else would support that person themselves.

Diocesan and national youth officers would not be affected by my amendment as they would already be funded by their own budgets. Young Adult Network executive officers should already be funded from the Young Adult Network budget and therefore would not be affected either. So who then does it affect? This amendment means that those applying to go can be supported whatever diocese they come from. If Norwich wishes to send two young people for the first time, then under my amendment, they would receive priority over a diocese which is sending one returning person. That diocese however should still be encouraged to send that person, but at its own cost.

I also see a scenario where a reduced Synod is watched by a greatly increased young observer group. The proposals contained in this report on page 12 show that in July we passed a motion which will enable an unquantified number of new young Council members to be afforded formal observer status. With the proposals contained in C (b) on page 10 of the report, with youth officers, Young Adult Network executive officers and those formal observers, we will easily surpass 50 young observers. This would be over one-tenth of the size of Synod.

I hope that we will encourage dioceses to send young people, at an average cost of £200 per observer, but I also feel it is important that we do other youth work. I hope members will vote in favour of the extra flexibility contained in my amendment and not falsely see it as limiting the number of places.

Finally, could I thank Mark Humphriss, Canon John Hall and Peter Ball for their valuable help in framing this amendment, and members of the Board of Education staff for providing lists of the last four years' attendees?

The Chairman: Thank you for your gratitude expressed so courteously to the members of staff who have assisted you. I am sure that will be greatly appreciated.

The Bishop of Blackburn: If I could give Tim Cox from the diocese advice as his bishop, I would say that, having made this speech in the Synod and the Synod and the powers that be having heard, it would be wonderful if he were to withdraw it, but if he wishes to press it, then I will resist it because I think these are quite difficult and technical issues when you get into representation.

Bearing the burden of the Bridge committee which looked at this Synod, the business of numbers, what they represent and where they come from, is very complex. I would

like to leave this matter with the flexibility provided and to have it further looked at by the Archbishops' Council on the advice of the Board of Education and those concerned with youth within its remit, rather than limiting us by accepting Tim Cox's amendment this morning. I do give him my assurance, as much as I can, that what he has said has been heard and will be reflected on. I think for the Synod to limit itself to 20 may be something it will regret. We have been talking all morning about the culture seeping down into all the dioceses; I would not be so sanguine as he is that every diocese would necessarily come forward, and that would be to the detriment of the young people in that diocese through people there putting a block on it.

The Chairman: The Bishop has asked that the item might be withdrawn. Mr Cox, do you wish to do that?

Mr Timothy Cox: No, sir.

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): I wonder if we have correctly understood what is being proposed in this amendment, which I think is not to prescribe the number of young adult observers there should be, which is certainly a critical issue in terms of discussions of representation, but rather to encourage the Archbishops' Council to fund a particular number. That is not so much a matter about representation as clearly about funding. If that is the point, then actually we do not need to pass it but we do need to hear it. We need to hear it as an issue about funding and how often it is that in funding we test the reality of our priorities, rather than a much more complicated issue about synodical government, which would detain us for much longer.

Mrs Margaret Swinson (Liverpool): My main problem is about priority for those attending for the first time. Those of us who have been members of Synod for a considerable period of time will know that it takes a while to get used to the place and young adult observers are not present for the entire July Group of Sessions. For those who come from dioceses with very limited resources, the possibility of some of them returning more than once will become very restricted if we pass this amendment, and that gives me great concern. We are now seeing the fruits of repeated attendance by young observers at Synod: a number of them have now been elected and are making very positive contributions, and I would not want that to be stopped.

Revd John Cook (London): On a point of order, Mr Chairman, I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

Revd Jeremy Crocker (St Albans): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘After sub paragraph (b) *insert*

“(c) ask that the Youth Evangelism Fund be particularly used in working with the marginalized and the unchurched”

and re-letter the remaining sub paragraphs accordingly.’

This joint report on Good News for Young People is a good one. It only slightly mentions the unchurched and tackling social deprivation on page 46. It fails to develop these points in an adequate way. The National Youth Strategy needs to focus on those outside the Church, and those with serious social problems.

The Children’s Society talks about working with the most marginalized of our society, in a statement made by the Bishop of Leicester on behalf of the Children’s Society, but this joint report ignores that.

The National Youth Strategy needs to work with the unchurched and the marginalized. That is what the Church where I serve has been trying to do. A year ago I met with many of the local people, police and youth workers. We decided to set up a youth club for the unchurched and marginalized. We now have a membership of 60 teenagers and we find it challenging. The council pulled out of developing a football pitch, with charity help, but I have now built a five-a-side pitch for local young people.

When I began work in this parish two years ago, there was very little advice available. I feel that there is plenty of advice for those working with teenagers who are churched but very little for the unchurched. I hope you will support this amendment.

The Bishop of Blackburn: This is difficult because of the word ‘particularly’. Had that word not been there, I would have asked Synod to vote against this. I do think Mr Crocker is omitting to read page 32, ‘What sort of Fund?’. ‘The Fund’s main intention will be to support local, grassroots projects – projects that are geared towards young people in a local community, area or district.’ It even goes on at the bottom of the page in a note to say: ‘A “community” may not necessarily be based on a geographical locality such as a parish or other church grouping.’

I would have thought that the report and this strategy includes what Mr Crocker wants to emphasize. We want the largest flexibility so that whoever makes the grants can examine projects across the Church and nation and come to a decision, With the word ‘particularly’ – which is like that beloved Anglican word ‘normally’ – I could live with it if this was passed.

Mr Paul Dever (Winchester): My definition of ‘marginalized and unchurched’ might be slightly different from Mr Crocker’s. I want to draw the difference between urban deprivation and spiritual deprivation. I have a young person who comes from a well-off family who sits on our washing machine each Sunday night in tears because

her Dad is going to go off to work during the week in London and her mother is going off to work somewhere else. She is undoubtedly spiritually deprived. She has a key and lets herself into her house. She is by herself all week. The work we can do for that young person and people like her is undeniably really important.

You must not become confused with the really important work in urban priority areas, which of course is vital, and that of young people who might be well off but equally be spiritually poor.

I am confused whether to vote for this or not. My definition of 'marginalized and unchurched' is different. Equally, I would encourage the wording of 'unchurched' but I would like Synod to remember something said earlier, that the best people to work with the unchurched are often churched young people, their friends they meet at school, for example. I would be fearful that if we were just focusing money at the unchurched, we would cut out giving money perhaps to a church youth group which plans to set up a pool club so that friends can meet to play pool on a Saturday night, for example. As the Bishop has said, this might narrow down the wide number of projects that this money could be used for.

Canon David Bird (Peterborough): I would like to support this amendment. There are many things I wanted to say in the wider debate about the importance for vision. My vision for the Church is to reach out much more to those who are marginalized and unchurched. The term 'unchurched' is going to cover quite a lot of people in our land, especially young people.

In my own parish on a Saturday afternoon about 100 to 150 young people, all of whom I would describe as unchurched, mainly Goths, hang around in the churchyard. I have spoken to some of them. We have set up a group to pray for them and to work out what we do with them. We have full-time youth staff in the parish and their work is mainly with the churched young people and encouraging them to go out and reach others. It seems to me that there are so many unchurched and marginalized young people out there that we must have this within the Youth Strategy and not simply be funding what is already going on within the churches.

There is a lot of support for this sort of work from Government. We have secured a grant from the Children's Fund to employ somebody to work with marginalized young people in the school in our parish. That is vital work but it would not be a priority if it was Church money going into it, I am sad to say. I am quite keen that we support this amendment. I think it will give a real focus to the mission of the Church to reach the people who are not, at this point, touched by our churches. I would encourage members to support this amendment.

Mr Peter LeRoy (Bath and Wells): I particularly want to welcome the well-researched plans for the Youth Evangelism Fund and this helpful amendment. I gather that the plans for the fund have been in gestation for a long time, since 1999. There are two

reasons to support this. One is because the need is so urgent in many less well-resourced parts of the country and every year lost could mean many young people missing the opportunity to encounter the Good News of Jesus Christ. We learn that 80 per cent of Christians make their initial commitment before they are 18. Some churches, like my own, have witnessed a renaissance of youth evangelism of young people who reach others with the Good News of Jesus Christ because we have been able to pay for a youth worker to take the lead and to coordinate. Our concern should be for those parishes or deaneries which cannot afford to do this. The fund could be both the catalyst and the lifeline which they need, especially in urban priority areas, and, may I add, in rural areas working with a deanery. Hopefully they will be able to recruit and train youth workers to encourage and coordinate teams of volunteers.

Secondly, I welcome the fund because it is realistic, it has been well researched by our consultants, and importantly it will not be targeting hard-pressed parishes or dioceses for donations, and this is crucial. It was good to learn in the Board of Education that our consultants have uncovered a significant number of Christian trusts and potential major donors who seem very ready to fund specific evangelistic initiatives among the young, rather than existing work structures or support systems.

So parishes and deaneries in marginalized areas with young people outside the Church should receive the project and an injection of cash help if we get behind this fund. A partnership of prayer and supportive personal interest may follow because we know that people love to give to people and to hear about what is happening and to pray for it.

I hope we will make sure that our diocesan youth advisers and networks have sufficient opportunity to buy into the thinking behind this scheme. In so far as this will be a scheme with national resources contributing to local evangelism, at parish and deanery level, among the marginalized and unchurched, this fund must be warmly encouraged and established without delay.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

A Member: May I have a point of clarity, perhaps from the Bishop, on the difference between the Youth Strategy Fund and the Church Urban Fund and how they work together? It seems to me that the Church Urban Fund is doing a lot of the work that the Youth Strategy Fund is planning to do.

The Chairman: ‘A point of clarity’ is a useful phrase but, for the sake of clarity, curiously I am not going to allow that at this stage in the debate.

The amendment was put and lost.

Mrs Linda Jones (Liverpool): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In sub paragraph (c) (or (d) as the case may be) after the word “dioceses” insert the word “, deaneries”.’

At the Anglican Conference on Evangelism in 1999, I actually voted against the proposal for a youth evangelism fund. Since then, I have been slightly reassured about its viability. I would be further reassured if this amendment were accepted. I believe it is critical and that is indeed reflected in the report on pages 3, 32, 33 and 39.

The area of work is one where deaneries can be an effective way for parishes to collaborate in any youth strategies. In my local deanery we have two churches with alternative worship for young people. Several of the younger members of our church have decided to attend these churches on Sundays. We have to reassure their parents that these young people are not being disloyal to our church but really being saved the cringing embarrassment of their parents bopping around at our 9.45 service.

Meantime in our parish we are actively reaching out to unchurched young people mid-week. In all our work we need to engender an attitude of collaboration and not competition. We need to be looking at different ways of meeting the different needs of young people in our areas.

In our diocese of Liverpool we are actively encouraging deaneries to work strategically by grouping and clustering appropriately for mission. I believe it is unrealistic to expect many of our parishes to be able to carry out this work by themselves. I would encourage you to vote for the amendment standing in my name.

The Bishop of Blackburn: I am happy to make Mrs Jones’s day and ask the Synod wholeheartedly to support this amendment.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

John Freeman (Chester): On a point of order, Mr Chairman, I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried

The amendment was put and carried.

The Chairman: We now come to the main item as amended. Please be certain that you have something to say that is new and riveting.

The Archdeacon of Lambeth (Ven. Nicholas Baines): After 25 years of various types of youth work and now chairing the youth and children policy group in the diocese

of Southwark, I recognize that part of the reason I am here today is because people trusted me when I was much younger, when I was a young teenager. I cringe at some of the things I said and did but I am grateful for those adults and leaders who allowed me to do it in order to learn. I hope I did learn.

One of the things we are slow to learn, although it has been mentioned in this debate, is that we can never talk about youth culture; we have to talk about youth cultures. I have three children aged 20, 18 and 14. The 14-year-old is still at home. If I want to embarrass his friends, I try to use his language in their company. I do not understand why what some time ago was 'wicked' meaning good is now 'dirty' meaning good. Tomorrow it will be something else. The language keeps changing and I do not understand it.

I have made the mistake of using the wrong categories of music with my kids. When I was a teenager, there was one developing type of pop or rock music. I read today in *The Guardian* about Craig David and 'urban garage'. Is there a rural garage or is there just urban garage?

My point is quite simple. If we are going to have a youth evangelism fund and a youth strategy, we need young people who understand this language, not just advising Synod but on the groups that will allocate funding and be party to the decision-making in relation to this strategy. We have young members of this Synod. I do not want to see them ghettoized into youth areas but using that particular language, expertise and proximity to the people we are talking about. It is a matter of language, mission and culture.

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

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Blackburn, in reply: Thank you very much to everyone who has taken part in this section of the debate. To Rosalind Fuller, I do not think it is an either/or; it is a both/and actually.

The Bishop of Maidstone makes a point but he does not make the only point. The separate youth synod is deliberately called a council to make a kind of separation but if the links are not there, it is not going to work. I agree with you about the seven years; I have been around this scene a good deal longer. We have been dripping away at a stone but not quite got there and it is time we gripped this now.

Thank you to Mr Chamberlain and particularly for the point he is making about the steps. We are not voting for something which is automatic today and will cost the Church a tremendous amount. There are brakes in the process which have been skilfully thought through. I hope they will not need to be applied.

I agree with Paul Dever. In my own experience, there are tremendous needs among well-off young people as among well-off adults. I am glad we voted as we did. We have the support of a number of people to do that.

I am asked to say to Mr LeRoy, who asked a specific question about diocesan youth advisers, that they have already been engaged in the process which has brought us to this point. Through those networks and mechanisms there will be an ongoing process. Of course, this is the Church of England and not everybody buys the same thing at the same time in the Church of England. We just have to realize that.

Somebody asked about clarity. If you still want to check that before you finally vote, I think pages 37 and following of the report set out the distinction between the schools fund and the youth evangelism fund which are seen as working together to deal with the same area and a revised plan. It is there in the report.

I agree with the Archdeacon of Lambeth. I think there is nothing worse than middle-aged people trying to speak in the language of young people who see right through us. They expect older people to be older people and not to be trendy. It is all to do with mutton dressed as lamb in a linguistic sense. We must not ghettoize the young people. The Archdeacon is absolutely right: we need to hear from them now: it may be infuriating but it will be enormously helpful. I say this from my own experience of having 30 young people around Bishop's House twice a year. That has been a very fruitful engagement in the latter part of my ministry.

I conclude with those few remarks and my thanks to everybody concerned, including you, Mr Chairman.

The motion was carried in the following amended form:

‘That this Synod

- (a) endorse the four key areas of the proposed National Youth Strategy;
- (b) approve the proposals for the establishment of a Youth Evangelism Fund;
- (c) call on the Church in the dioceses, deaneries and parishes to be actively involved in the implementation of the National Youth Strategy; and
- (d) ask the Archbishops' Council to monitor the implementation of the National Youth Strategy and to give a report on progress before the end of the current quinquennium.’

The Chairman: On behalf of Synod, may I thank the Bishop of Blackburn, who has presented this joint report by the Board of Education and the Board of Mission and,

as he and I are of roughly the same generation, we would be very happy to teach anyone the Charleston afterwards!

Farewell

The Archbishop of York (Dr David Hope): This is a formal farewell to the Bishop of Bristol.

Bishop Barry Rogerson came to Bristol from Wolverhampton in 1985. He travelled to the city for his enthronement by train, choosing to embark at Swindon, which is the other centre of gravity within the diocese. The shape and boundaries of the Bristol diocese are sufficiently peculiar for passports to be required twice on that journey, first between Chippenham and Bath, and then again at the outskirts of Bristol. Legend has it that the blinds were drawn down as the train briefly passed through the northern part of the diocese of Bath and Wells!

He came to a city that has always been proud of its own history and, so determined to be independent of another great city about 120 miles to the east, the clock on the quay at Bristol is always eleven minutes behind London time! Bishop Barry arrived in Bristol at a time when it was somewhat paralysed from problems within local government. He quickly joined forces with the new Dean, Wesley Carr, and the recently appointed new Vice-Chancellors of the universities, and others, to fashion an initiative which was to revitalize the city. It created new partnerships between business and politics, industry and education, and between the richer and poorer parts of the city. Bishop Barry was subsequently awarded an honorary Doctorate of Law by Bristol University in recognition of this work.

If there is one word, though, which describes the essential style of his episcopal ministry, it is the word 'inclusiveness'. Without doubt, Bishop Barry has striven for inclusiveness in at least two significant areas of our Church life – the role of women in ministry, and ecumenical relationships.

Regarding the first of these, Bishop Barry has been in the forefront of encouraging and supporting the ordination of women to the ministerial priesthood. He maintained the city's independence from London and Lambeth *not* by being eleven minutes *behind*, but about *eleven days in front* of any other bishop or archbishop in ordaining the first women priests within the Church of England! Fearful of demonstrations outside the Cathedral on the day, there was great relief when those who gathered with their banners turned out to be a group of Roman Catholic nuns waving the slogan, 'Our turn next!'.

To do justice to Bishop Barry's involvement in the ecumenical scene would require a tribute of some considerable length all of its own. In 1987 he became a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, and he has

been the Church of England representative on its Central Committee since 1991. He has made outstanding contributions to the work of the Commission and Council. His commitment to the WCC has been unswerving, yet part of that commitment has been the robust criticism of its structures and ways of working when he saw fit.

As if this was not enough in itself, Bishop Barry has also developed close contacts with the Porvoo churches, in particular with the Church of Norway. Nor has the Lutheran Church in Germany escaped his attention. Bristol city is twinned with Hanover, and from this has grown a link between the two cathedrals. When his occasional sparring partner at the World Council of Churches, Margot Kässmann, was elected a bishop in the Lutheran Church, this charming but formidable woman readily turned to Barry for advice about problems common to bishops, and he has been keen to learn from her situation – an example of the Meissen Agreement bearing fruit at a personal level. Bristol is also the first diocese to employ and pay German Lutheran clergy on its own staff.

Then there is Bishop Barry's association with the Melanesian Mission, which dates back to his Lichfield days, but has been pursued with vigour ever since. On top of that, there has been his involvement in the link which Bristol diocese has had with the province of Uganda.

Nearer home, Bishop Barry has been a President of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland from 1999 and is currently the Co-chairman of the Formal Conversations taking place between the Church of England and the Methodist Church; and it was only last Sunday that he presented five representative leaders of other Christian denominations in Bristol to be installed as ecumenical prebendaries of the cathedral.

As Mary Tanner has said of him, Bishop Barry has shouldered a major role in the ecumenical scene for many years both in this country and abroad. His contribution has been outstanding, and he will be greatly missed.

If Bishop Barry has been diligent in the ecumenical scene, he has been no less active in helping to support and shape the ordained ministry of our own Church. From 1987 to 1991 he was chairman of the Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry – ACCM, as it was known – and its successor, the Advisory Board for Ministry, until 1993.

Within the House of Bishops, Bishop Barry succeeded Bishop Eric Kemp on his retirement as the 'father' of the House, having been a member not only as Bishop of Bristol since 1985, but also as an elected suffragan of Wolverhampton from 1982. While he has been prepared to be outspoken, he has also been unswervingly loyal to the decisions of the House – very much a team player. For example, you will never find Bristol diocese, at least not thus far, outside the parameters for the number of clergy it is allowed under the Sheffield allocations, which is more than may be said for some!

With all this international and national involvement, you might well be tempted to ask the question, ‘When was Barry ever in Bristol?’ But he was, from time to time! There, he will be remembered as someone with boundless energy, considerable time for the clergy, and not least if you as a clergyperson were in some kind of trouble or difficulty. His colleagues describe him as ‘ahead of the game’ in understanding the financial and structural problems that face our Church, and say that he has shaped the diocese in a way in which it can face with confidence the challenges of the 21st century. Recognizing the importance of Swindon, it was Bishop Barry who moved the suffragan see from Malmesbury to Swindon.

When Bishop Barry found time to relax, you would often find him at the local cinema watching a good film – and then skilfully bringing an episode from it into the next sermon at a confirmation service. He has also kept up his theological reading, and one of the painful partings of these recent months has been the books from his library that have had to be taken to second-hand booksellers for lack of space in his retirement home. He has never left behind him, though, the scholarship that he enjoyed as Vice-Principal of Lichfield Theological College and a lecturer at Salisbury and Wells.

In all this he has been enthusiastically supported and encouraged by his wife Olga, who is in the gallery. They met while they were both studying at Leeds University, and they and their two daughters, and their three grandchildren, have been described as a delightful family. Bishop’s House, Bristol, is perhaps the only see house where you are regularly required to put on a coat before you eat your lunch. This is not because the house itself is cold, but because Olga has a penchant, so I am told, for eating out-of-doors, even in what others would regard as inclement weather: a bit of Yorkshire grittiness has obviously brushed off there! However, if the outside climate has sometimes seemed a little chilly, the hospitality that she and Barry have afforded the diocese has always been enormously generous and warm, and hugely appreciated.

Perhaps this sentence from someone in the diocese says it all: ‘Bristol diocese has loved their bishop and valued his leadership and care over the past 18 years, and we will miss him greatly!’ and so indeed shall we, all of us in this Synod. On Synod’s behalf, I express our thanks and appreciation to you, Barry, and assure you and Olga of our prayers and good wishes for both of you for a long, happy and fulfilling retirement. *(Applause)*

The Archbishop of York took the Chair.

Canon Dr Christina Baxter: On a point of order, we, the officers, believe that the Synod would like to thank the Archbishop of York for his sterling work alone during this group of sessions and to assure him of our prayers as he continues to hold more responsibilities during the interregnum. We thank you so much. *(Applause)*

The Archbishop of York prorogued the Group of Sessions at 1.00 p.m.