

Third Day

Wednesday 11 February 2004

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

The Archdeacon of Surrey (Ven. Robert Reiss) led the Synod in prayer.

Variation in the Order of Business

The Dean of Derby (Very Revd Michael Perham): Two variations in the order of business, Mr Chairman. The first is on page 10 of the agenda, to insert as the first legislative business tomorrow morning, before Item 503, the one item that we did not manage to cover yesterday morning, namely Final Approval of the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure. I also want to give notice at the same time that, should a gap appear in our agenda today at any point, we would take Final Approval of the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure at that point; but, assuming that it does not happen today, then it should come first tomorrow morning. The other variation in the order of business is on page 17 of the agenda, for Friday morning, and it is simply, at the top of page 17 after the debate on *The Gift of Authority* and before the debate on asylum, to insert the words 'not later than 11.45 a.m.'. It is a rubric to ensure that the first debate does not overrun and squeeze out the second debate.

The Chairman: The two variations have my consent. Is Synod happy? (*Agreed*)

Future Use of the Church Commissioners' Funds (GS 1529)

The Chairman: Having just picked up my fresh order paper, as you have, I see that we have a following motion which we will try to get to if we have time, but we have timed business at 11.30 and will have to see how we proceed. A significant number of members have indicated already that they wish to speak and it will therefore be necessary for me to impose an early five-minute speech limit.

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith (First Church Estates Commissioner, Ex officio): I beg to move:

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

People were saying last week that this was going to be a difficult Synod. On the contrary, I think that it may well prove to have been an historic occasion, the moment when the Church of England found an effective strategy to reverse many decades of

decline. As a clergy friend of mine said, 'If I didn't know this was the Church of England, I would have thought it was joined-up thinking'. He was referring to the three debates which will have taken place within the space of two days: yesterday on the Cray report *Mission-shaped Church* and also yesterday on the review of the Dioceses and Pastoral Measures, led by Professor Toyne, as well as our subject this morning: the future use of the Church Commissioners' funds. Actually, my friend's cynicism is misplaced. It is genuine joined-up thinking both to debate the ends – what kind of Church is the Church of England to be as it reaches out to fresh generations of people in the twenty-first century – and to consider the means by which these ends might be achieved, both in terms of legislation – what is permitted, what is forbidden – and in terms of resources.

Speaking personally, I find it useful to keep a distinction in my mind between ends and means and to see each for what it is. The reason why I do this is that roles in the Church of England are often defined in a way that leaves fuzzy edges. It is not always clear where authority starts and where it ends. This is particularly true in the case of the national institutions. The House of Bishops is considering how it might develop its role. Then, when we turn to the Archbishops' Council, we find that its founding documents confuse ends with means. As to the Church Commissioners, they have a duty not only to manage their funds prudently but also to see that their funds are used in the ways described in their statutes and in no other way. In a situation like this, full of ambiguity, it is very important to be clear whether one is discussing ends or means. Ends are surely primarily for the Archbishops and the House of Bishops to describe in general terms, and for these to be debated in this chamber. That is why it was so important to hear the Archbishop of Canterbury's enthusiastic endorsement of the Cray report yesterday and General Synod's support of the motions.

Of course, detailed decisions about ministry and mission are made locally. Action takes place exclusively at the level of the Archbishops and bishops in their personal capacities and at the level of the diocese, the cathedral, the archdeaconry, the deanery and the parish. From this it follows that the true tasks of the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners are to help the Archbishops, bishops, dioceses and cathedrals to furnish the resources with which ministry and mission can be carried out. That is why the Review Group examining the disposition of the Church Commissioners' funds has always seen its task as enabling and not dictating. This concept of enabling is often brushed aside. May I underline that to enable means to assist others realize their aims? It is in this strict sense that the Review Group has conducted its work. It is not telling the Church what to do. Rather, we are trying to help it achieve its ends.

That said, we need to discuss carefully whether the Review Group has hit on the right means. Ends are usually fixed but means can be adjusted as we go along. The latter are like a path which may twist and turn as one looks for the best route, even though the destination never changes. In other words, the discussion of means should be practical: if not this way, then some other way. So I ask all who will speak in this debate if they

will please be practical. Help us to improve our proposals. It is that sort of issue. There is no doctrine here. Moreover, if there are ecclesiological issues that we have missed we need to hear what practical improvements we should make to deal with them.

Now let me turn to the ideas underlying our report. Our starting point is this. What the Cray report and other key Church documents are saying is that, to flourish in the twenty-first century, the Church of England must support new mission opportunities as well as existing work. This is the key objective that we have kept in mind when considering how the Church's resources should be deployed.

When talking about resources we have had in mind two things, not one: both money and information. Each is equally important to the well-being of the Church. The one is the bloodstream; the other is the nervous system. The body needs both. I say this because information flows are often ignored, yet one of the marks of an effective institution, especially when it is experimenting with different ways of going forward, is the depth of its knowledge about the factors affecting its work: 'We're trying to do this here. What have others found?' That is why we believe that our proposals regarding accountability and transparency are essential.

Reflecting on money and its power, the Review Group saw that comparatively small amounts can make a big difference. This is true of the £60 million or so that the Commissioners make available to the wider Church after meeting their pension liabilities. This amount is only about 8 per cent of the funds which support the Church, the bulk of which comes from parish giving. However, remember that a large ship is steered by comparatively small shifts in the rudder. Money can work like this too.

Another aspect of money is that it can be employed in a variety of fruitful ways. We focused on two of its roles: as a catalyst and as a lever. The creation of a six-year grant scheme – a mission development scheme – which we recommend is an example of using money as a catalyst, for it would provide the means to experiment with and to help establish fresh expressions of Church suitable for the twenty-first century. It builds on the success of the current parish mission funding which has given dioceses the opportunity during 2002–04 to invest in new initiatives. Many have urged us to continue with that funding; it would surely be a curious step to discontinue it now. What we propose gives the process more of a jump-start. Every diocese would receive a share of this fund by right. The very widely drawn guidelines for its use are spelt out on pages 22 and 23 of our report.

Why is such a mission development scheme necessary? There are three reasons. First, the very existence of such a scheme provides an encouragement to all who are willing to explore fresh expressions of Church and other new mission opportunities. At present many ideas do not come forward simply because it is assumed that the funds are not there. Second, the sheer scale of the change in thinking advocated by

the Cray report is dramatic. It states bluntly, as members know, that 'the existing parochial system alone is no longer able fully to deliver its underlying mission purpose'. This implies, does it not, that slow, incremental advances will not suffice; major changes are required. Such transformations normally require substantial capital resources. The proposals in the Review Group's report are relatively modest in comparison to the challenges faced, but nonetheless they can provide an important catalyst to the kind of strategic shift required.

Third, as the Cray report reminds us, we do not have time on our side. Aggregate Church attendance continues to decline, as the figures released last month prove yet again. One estimate of what this will mean on present trends, which we quote in our report, foresees a total membership of 500,000 in 25 years' time, and I quote: 'the Anglicans of 2030 existing in a myriad of tiny congregations, struggling to maintain their buildings in a thinly spread Church crushed by the weight of its own heritage'. Not a pretty picture. That is why a jump-start is called for.

Some within the Church do not like to talk about decline or even to think about it. I sympathize. I have been through this myself when I was the founding editor of the *Independent*. After many years of success, sales began to turn down. I went into a state of denial, for one can only conduct one's work on the basis of optimism. That is a very natural human characteristic. Nonetheless my resolute good cheer did not halt the decline. Something more was required. Finally, I had to face reality.

The Cray report concludes by stating, 'The resources of the Church of England are understandably but disproportionately invested in inherited and traditional styles of church, which alone are no longer adequate for mission to the whole nation. Strategies are needed to establish new resources and transfer some existing resources for new initiatives.' It can be seen from this that what the Cray report asks for is exactly what the Review Group recommends. Actually, I do not see how you can accept the Cray report and not be in favour of putting more of our national resources into mission opportunities. If you will the ends, you must will the means. Otherwise it is just talk. Of course money alone cannot make a difference, but we can be sure that talk alone will achieve nothing worthwhile either.

How to find the money within the Commissioners' funds for the establishment of a mission development scheme is a complicated and difficult question on which there is already a variety of views. We have the parish mission funding, but how do we add to it? The important charges on the Commissioners' funds are clergy pensions, which cannot be touched, parish mission and ministry support in poorer dioceses, which should not be diminished, and funds for bishops and cathedrals. In relation to the last of these, we noted, for instance, that the Commissioners carry all bishops' costs with the exception of suffragan bishops' housing, without regard to the size or resources of each diocese. The wealthiest receive as much support for episcopal ministry as the poorest.

However, in recommending, as the review does, that a proportion of these costs be passed to the wealthier dioceses as their responsibility, we were fully aware that there

is no escaping from the iron law: if extra money is needed to fund new work, then it will have to come from Church members unless economies can be made. This must be so, for the historic endowments in the hands of the Church Commissioners and elsewhere are not being added to.

Economies are possible. I draw members' attention to the important page at the very end of our report, Annex C, entitled 'Attacking the administrative cost base'. We calculate that, broadly speaking, some £147 million is spent each year in support and administrative costs across the Church. Personally I would like everybody to work together on this and subscribe to an agreed target reduction. You could almost say that the Church is not so much poor as wasteful, but wasteful in a special sense. Not because anybody is profligate with the Church's money – nobody is – but because there is a wasteful multiplicity of administrative units and systems. Because there is so much to be gained here, we recommend that the Church Commissioners' funds should be used to invest on a commercial basis in cost-reduction schemes.

Nonetheless, we have to come back to the issue of increased giving. Church members are always being asked to pay more for the Church's mission; they respond magnificently. Yet if our Church is to grow in the future we must face the fact that we will need to increase giving even further, not just to maintain things as they are but to invest in growth. Moreover, it is evident that levels of giving and wealth vary from diocese to diocese. Let me be specific. Average giving per head as a percentage of average personal income of individual Church members in individual dioceses during 2001 was, as a proportion, twice as much in some dioceses as in others. Equally significant, 10 dioceses have an annual endowment income of over £2 million while 10 have less than £1 million. Looking at cathedrals, 10 of them have a recurring income of more than £1 million; others have far, far less.

These are large differences. This is why we believe that some dioceses and a small number of cathedrals could and should make good the loss incurred by a reduction in some part of the Commissioners' financial support of bishops and cathedrals. The strategic shift that we propose is not a shift away from resourcing bishops and cathedrals; their vital ministries require as much funding as they currently receive, if not more so. No, the strategic shift is away from the Commissioners providing full support to richer dioceses and cathedrals in order to release money for the support of new mission opportunities wherever they exist across the country.

I also spoke of the fruitful ways in which money can sometimes be used as a lever. It is in this sense that we recommend that the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners should seek from their beneficiaries a type of public accountability. Accountability, of course, can have many different purposes. We make a distinction in the report between hard and soft accountability. The last thing we want is box-ticking. Our objective in recommending a system of accountability over the use of all Church money is to enable different parts of the Church to share each other's needs and opportunities and to learn from each other how effectively they have been able to

tackle those needs and opportunities with the resources available to them. As we say, 'such widely dispersed knowledge should help decision-making'.

Now to sum up. Some have told us that they are not persuaded of the need for a jump-start at all. My reply is this: 'Are you unpersuaded because you are satisfied with the present situation of the Church? Or do you have a better way to carry forward the Cray report? If you do, now is the time to propose it before decisions are made.' In addition, what some others have already said to us in smaller forums is, 'Yes, there are some good ideas here, but don't touch us. Please leave our interests alone.' To this I ask, 'Is that really going to help the whole Church in its mission to the nation?' However, an even more common reaction has been, 'Yes, there are good ideas here but you're rushing us. We've already laid our plans, stretching five years ahead. We literally cannot absorb this now. What is the rush?' I well understand this but there is an urgency, is there not, to stop the decline in membership as soon as possible. Then it is said that much longer consideration would result in a better plan. Perhaps it might, but very often a prolonged delay means that momentum is lost and that in practice the proposal never receives the deeper consideration for which time has been made available and from which it might benefit. Worse still, sometimes the long-drawn-out processes result in the idea being lost altogether. I can tell you that in my experience – 40 years spent in a variety of tasks – delay is often fatal. We should rather take our cue from Churchill. His rule during the war was 'Action this day'. Is the Church of England not also fighting for its life?

Of course there remain very important details to be settled, now that the process of consultation on the broad thrust of the Review Group's proposals has been completed with this debate, but let us all at least agree that there are big and pressing issues here which we need to address as a matter of priority.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams): There are bad reasons for endorsing this report and there are bad reasons for opposing it, and I would like to try and get those out of the way at the start.

A bad reason for supporting it is that it looks seductively easy to put on one side of the equation the costs of bishops and cathedrals, and on the other the cost of exciting new mission initiatives. There may be those who like to think that the future of the Church lies in a revolutionary programme which does not conclude until the last bishop's gardener has been strangled with the entrails of the last minor canon. Equally, there may be those who oppose this on the grounds that they see in it a sinister Stalinist plot to introduce five-year plans into the Church of England, with a gulag at the far end of it for those who do not meet their obligations. Let us clear those out of the way and try to consider the real merits and the real problems of this report.

Here is a very, very challenging and very carefully thought out piece of imaginative projection. We are asked to take note; we are not asked to place a tick at the end of every sentence. That is of the first importance here because we need to distinguish principle and prescription.

In the discussion of this matter in the House of Bishops there was very clear agreement indeed about three fundamental principles. One was the principle of transparency and accountability at every level and every body of the Church: Commissioners, dioceses, Synod for that matter. It is hard to see that anyone could disagree with that as an imperative. There was complete agreement about priority for a proper level of flexibility in deploying imaginatively our financial resources to support mission and to nurture growth, not simply to sustain existing patterns, let alone to manage decline. There was also complete agreement about the priority of the equitable sharing of resources, surely a fundamental biblical principle in the life of any Church.

If you look at paragraph 76 of the report, you will see that these three priorities broadly correspond to the sort of thing outlined in B, E and F of that paragraph. The problems arise more with A, C and D, and the points that arose, particularly in the House of Bishops' discussion about these, were along the following lines.

The first is a very strong sense, to which the bishops are obviously committed and to which I hope Anglicans are committed as a whole, that the principal focus for mission is the family of local congregations gathered around a bishop who is primarily an evangelist and an inspirer of evangelism in others. That is where effective mission and evangelism begins. A fine phrase was used by one member of the working party, that the proposals were really designed to help bishops and dioceses 'back their hunches' in local initiatives; and I want to hang on to that phrase because it is a very useful one. However, if you grant that, the distinction between means and ends as it has been put before you is not quite as simple as it first appears. A bishop in council, in his diocese, is engaged not simply in defining ends but also in managing means, in making some of the micro-decisions about how schemes are implemented; and bishops who are active in local strategy in that way are not, as you might say, simply an alternative to mission spending; they are part of it. So the means/ends distinction can be a little bit more complicated than it seems; the bishop/mission distinction, which just occasionally lurks around the edges of this discussion, needs some challenging too.

Second, there is a question about the practicability of the proposals as they stand. I hear and understand what the First Commissioner has said about urgency, and I entirely share the sense, as I said yesterday, that we stand at a moment where very important decisions are open to us to make. Yet we have to face the fact that under the new proposals, if implemented as they stand, we could find ourselves in a situation where the very goals we want to promote are subverted by the destabilizing of effective existing local initiatives. Suddenly, a revolution in the management and resourcing of a diocese which has been working hard and in a costly way to coordinate and take forward its own mission can have a very bad impact practically and, as was pointed out in one of our discussions among the bishops, it could also have simple financial implications. It may not be just a question of transferring a fixed set of costs from the centre to the diocese; a diocese may have employment policies and salary levels whose effect is, in fact, to increase the bill. That needs to be thought about very carefully.

This relates to the third substantive point here. We are in a situation where, quite obviously, motivation, morale and trust are crucial in the life of our Church. The Bishop of London has said more than once that we are no longer, as the Church of England, a public utility; we are a voluntary body. Voluntary bodies depend on sound motivation, on high morale, on vital levels of trust between people and institutions, and that delicate balance can be upset if, as I say, the complicated work done locally about budgeting and planning is suddenly destabilized by new costs. This is why I am glad to see the following motion from Dr Campbell on the order paper for this morning.

So no dispute about the three fundamental principles and priorities; no dispute about a need for coherence in financial strategy; but a real concern, which I hope the Synod will take very, very seriously, that we may find ourselves moving towards means which actually subvert the ends that we have in mind.

As you know, I am an old-fashioned moralist and I was always taught that the coherence – the moral coherence as well as the practical coherence – of means and ends is part of proper ethical discussion. If the implementation of something like these proposals as they stand has the effect of undermining local initiative, and indeed of compromising that fundamental theological picture of the Church as the families of congregations round a chief pastor and evangelist, the price will be very high in terms of the ends that we have in view.

The First Commissioner has challenged us to be practical and I would just like to conclude by mentioning very briefly some of the things that the House of Bishops in their discussion have already committed themselves to thinking further about and indeed acting on. There are obvious questions about the cost of episcopal ministry overall in our Church, and the House of Bishops wished to take hold of that question, to look at a number of issues around suffragan bishops and the provision made for them, and to make some serious concrete proposals about that. However, only the diocesan bishops, dare I say, can do that as the coordinators of episcopal ministry within their areas.

We are also committed to continuing what has already begun in terms of a sharing of resources between wealthier and less wealthy dioceses. That is on the table, it is going forward, and we are more than eager to continue with that work. There are also already good examples of the pooling of administrative resources between dioceses, with some schemes very far advanced; this is an extremely promising area in precisely that neck of the woods which the Commissioner referred to as the attack on the administrative cost base.

In conclusion, we have a very challenging document. If Synod decides to take note of it, it will, I hope, be in a spirit which affirms strongly the principles and priorities, and which places a very, very large question mark against some of the practical means of implementation.

I hope that this will not be taken as a programme to which we say a blanket yes or no. I have said that there are bad reasons for supporting and bad reasons for opposing. We do indeed have a congruence between this and some of the business that we discussed yesterday, and that is enormously encouraging; but for that to work as we want it to work, on the basis of a soundly theological view of how this Church is ordered under God, we need some further thought, and we need, I would say, a real, active collaboration between our various national institutions: a proper conversation. We should not perhaps too easily accept a distinction between those bodies which deal with means and those people who deal with ends. Would that it were so simple, but our Church is not quite like that: it effects and articulates its policy and its vision in a more conversational style. If that puts before Synod a question about the very theology of Synod itself and its working with bishops, Commissioners, Archbishops' Council, that, I suggest, would not be a bad thing. We must beware of a kind of theological drift in the life of our Church which somehow isolates the different parts of our polity, moving us imperceptibly towards a view of Synod which is simply that of an undifferentiated legislative representative body as opposed to the local sacramental, practical and missionary life of congregations. That would be a tragedy, and a theological as well as a practical failure.

So if we take note let us do so with that clear sense of how we are distinguishing principle and prescription, but let us express gratitude for the work done and the challenge put to us, because a challenge of this sort is never a waste of time.

Revd Canon Bob Baker (Norwich): I have never been a Scout or a sailor or a hangman so I am not very good at knots, but I just want to draw four threads from this report and tie them together in a rather different way from the one proposed.

The first thread is implicit in the title of the report which speaks about funds and spending. We need to acknowledge that we are in the very privileged position of having money to distribute from the centre. Over many years the Church Commissioners have regularly out performed most other major investors, year after year after year, working within clear ethical constraints, and we owe them a great debt of gratitude; and yet you still go to diocesan synods and deanery synods and PCCs and hear people moaning about the Commissioners as though they were a bunch of dishonest rogues. They are not. You might take the opportunity at some point during this debate – not during my speech of course – of looking at Annex B at the end of the report and seeing how much your diocese receives from the Commissioners, not just in stipend support but in all other ways. In my diocese we get something like half a million in stipend support but the total amount for the diocese is nearly £4 million from the Commissioners at the end of that chart. Have a look.

The second thread is mission, and I welcome the Church Commissioners' commitment to mission. It was not always so. When I was a Church Commissioner we had some very interesting debates about the meaning of the cure of souls in their foundation documents, but I welcome the fact that the Commissioners are fully committed to the

Church's mission now. However, there seems to be an assumption running through this report that new forms of mission are somehow better than old ones, and I want to challenge that. The Cray report does not say that we should just do new forms of mission and not do old ones. It says that old ones work in some places still and new ones do not always work either. We need the freedom, therefore, to do both.

Revd Angry from North Norfolk rang me up last week and he bellowed down the phone, 'Don't the Commissioners understand that the best way they can support mission in our deanery is by paying for another stipendiary priest?' He may be right or he may be wrong – I do not know – but that raises for me the question of why we need two separate streams of funding, one for new initiatives and one for old ones. Surely we could have one. This report argues for more flexibility in the way that we use stipends money and a wide understanding of mission in new initiatives, so why not combine the two and simply allow the dioceses to have as much money as possible to use in the way that they choose to use it?

The third strand is bishops. I support the principle of delegating more responsibility for the funding of bishops to the dioceses. It seems to me good, theologically and practically. Theologically a bishop is bishop primarily of his diocese or his see; in fact you cannot become a bishop until the Queen has found the see, as she would say, most convenient for you. (That is what she says.) A bishop exercises his ministry, as the Ordinal that we shall be debating later this week tells us, along with the priests and laypeople of his diocese, in collaboration and partnership. It seems to me perfectly right therefore that the resourcing and funding of the bishop's ministry should be part of the resourcing of the whole ministry of the people of God in that place. Of course bishops have national responsibilities which should be funded nationally, but that is only a part of what they do. For practical reasons, as well, it is important. It would mean in a diocese that distinctions between the way a bishop's secretary is paid and the way secretaries in the diocesan office are paid would be done away with, because they would all be under one umbrella, and it would avoid the Commissioners having to make difficult distinctions and decisions in the way in which they fund bishops because there are so many different ways of doing bishoping. One bishop needs a Land Rover and another needs a bus pass, and so on.

This proposal enables dioceses to decide the level of funding for their bishop. In our own diocese a bishop has recently retired and the diocesan bishop has set in train a consultation about whether he should be replaced. Part of the argument is that we could replace him with an archdeacon, but we would have to pay for that whereas if we were to replace him with another bishop we would not. That is a totally wrong basis on which to make the decision but in practice that is what you are forced to do because of the way in which we resource bishops at the moment. We should not go down that line; we should accept what the paper says.

The fourth strand is mutual support. My history is not very good, but I think that the Church of England first committed itself to mutual support shortly before the Council

of Nicaea, certainly a very, very long time ago, and progress has been pretty patchy and very slow indeed. What I have not understood is why, when we are all committed to mutual support, we give some money to every diocese and then randomly hope that they will give some to each other afterwards. Why not share it all out on a fair basis first of all? That seems to me much more sensible and it would take us a long way down the road of mutual support.

My proposal, therefore, would be this: that the Commissioners should be responsible for generating the resources, which they do so brilliantly – and we must thank them for it; that the Commissioners should devolve to dioceses the responsibility – or some of the responsibility – for resourcing bishops; that the Archbishops' Council should develop one formula, in consultation with the dioceses, for distributing the funds that are released by the Commissioners; and that the dioceses should concentrate on their mission strategy. They know what needs to be done and, as this consultation and the response to the Cray report tell us, they are eager to get on with it in new ways and old; they should be allowed to do so.

Following that kind of route would be consistent with the proposals in the Turnbull report embodied in the National Institutions Measure; it would follow the philosophy of the Mellows report on resourcing bishops; it would be consistent with the Cray report; it would build on the freedom and flexibility of the Toyne report. It would be consistent too with the Commissioners' trust responsibilities for the cure of souls across the country. It would be joined-up thinking, and it would be good for the gospel.

The Chairman: The Dean of St Paul's, who I think needs a Travelcard.

The Dean of St Paul's (Very Revd John Moses): No, but I have my freedom pass, Mr Chairman.

A large part of me wishes that we might have moved to next business immediately after the Archbishop's speech, though I am not proposing that. However, it did seem to me, if I may say so, that what we were given by the Archbishop was a sensitive and robust response to this report which actually sets out the parameters of the discussion that must now begin. Those of us who are critical of the report are absolutely clear about the priority of mission development, the priority of finding fresh ways of being the Church, the priority of investing in growth. If we presume to question or to criticize, it is not because these things are unimportant; rather, it is because we believe that we would all have been helped, as members of this Synod, if detailed discussions had taken place with interested parties on the basis of a draft report before anything had been brought to Synod.

Of course we shall be told that this is merely a 'take note' debate, but we all know how easily proposals and possibilities take on a life of their own once the debate is finished and the detailed work of discussion and negotiation is unavoidably referred to a handful of people.

It seems to me that there are three constituencies that are directly affected by this report. There are the dioceses, and that is to say the parishes, and they will say for themselves whether or not they will be glad to take on board at this time the new financial responsibilities that will pass to them if this report is implemented. There are the bishops, and, if I may say so, the Archbishop has already made it abundantly plain that the House of Bishops will want to be very specific in some proposals that it would want to make. There are the cathedrals, and I believe that it is true of all my fellow deans that we would also welcome the opportunity to enter into detailed discussion with the Church Commissioners and with this Review Group on the basis of their proposals.

However, certain things need to be said from the perspective of cathedrals. I speak not as someone who has had, in a way, the privileged responsibility of being at St Paul's for the past seven years but as someone who, for the previous 15, was provost of one of our youngest parish church cathedrals. I suppose that our concerns as cathedrals could be put under three headings. First, I believe that there is a constitutional responsibility, where bishops and cathedrals are concerned. This is not to say that any one of us is asking for a blank cheque. Of all the monies that were disbursed by the Church Commissioners in 2003, the actual percentage that went to cathedrals was no more than 3.7 per cent. It is really much more to do with the history of the endowments that the Church Commissioners manage on behalf of the Church as a result of which, in my judgement, the Church Commissioners have responsibilities which are analogous to those of custodian trustees.

Even more important than that is the fact that our bishops and our cathedrals do not merely have a diocesan role; they have a national role and in some cases an international role, which has to stand alongside whatever local, parochial and diocesan responsibilities they properly carry.

Second, I would ask Synod to recall that it is less than five years since the Cathedrals Measure 1999 came into being after nearly a decade of long consultation and debate. At the heart of that Measure lies the principle of public accountability, and into the structures of the governance of all our cathedrals today are written large the lay dimension and the diocesan dimension that were not necessarily there before. It would be unfortunate – and I put it no more strongly – if within less than five years the financial provisions for cathedrals which were enshrined in that legislation were to be discarded.

Third, much emphasis is placed – and rightly so – on mission and mission development. It is not the cathedrals, it is outside observers, and often highly critical outside observers, who are telling us that cathedrals are places of growth. Yes, we begin in many cases with great advantages, but those advantages are being exploited in what I would call the work of primary evangelism. Of course, if the cuts that are envisaged in paragraphs 106–109 of the report take place, it will be the younger cathedrals and

the poorer cathedrals that will be the most seriously disadvantaged; it will be the more vulnerable cathedrals who will be far less able to do their job.

There is one final matter which goes beyond the special concerns of any constituency. The First Estates Commissioner hinted at it when he said at the beginning that we are really talking about what sort of Church we are and what sort of Church we want to be. There are fluctuations in the fortunes of the Church. There always have been as life moves on. Some patterns of ministry die; new patterns of ministry take their place. If, however, we have any sense of the catholicity of our Church we will ask what are the continuities that give identity and shape. I find it difficult to believe that bishops and cathedrals do not have a place as of right; and if they do we would only compromise and ultimately diminish them if the national Church failed to make provision at a national level for some of the core costs of ministries that can never be merely local.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Revd Canon Stephen Lake (St Albans): This report discusses the challenge which links mission and the funding of mission; it is a challenge that faces us all. It is not so long ago that I was incumbent of a parish that was effective in mission but where the greatest threat to that mission all along was money, or rather the lack of it. We weathered all the financial commitments of recent years, we covered past debts and still we grew. Our main partners in that mission were the bishops, the archdeacon and the diocese. Loading further commitments on to the parish in the form of funding suffragan bishops may well, after much faithful work, alienate us from that support and, in the words of a familiar television programme, make our task a 'mission impossible'.

We heard yesterday about the importance of new mission opportunities. We cannot enjoy these if mission in the parishes is to become impossible. It seems to me that the Commissioners are trying to tell the Church how to do mission rather than the Church doing mission supported by the Commissioners.

A few years on and without going native yet, I can also speak about cathedrals from the inside. The two jobs could not be more different, and yet at St Albans the greatest challenge and threat to our mission is money. Now with these proposals it looks to become impossible. This report, if its proposals are in time implemented in full, would wipe out 10 per cent of our annual budget and without doubt make that mission impossible.

It is a double whammy. We need an answer, and this is probably not it. Mine is not a maiden speech to say 'not in our backyard'; it is a speech to say that, with minimal consultation, the Commissioners are making proposals that show a misunderstanding of the task and of what really goes on in mission every day. As we have heard, cathedrals are not frightened of change; they embody it. I could not survive in one otherwise. Great changes have been made in recent years that are now bearing fruit.

To ignore the work done and to reject the value of recent years and then to take away what is vital funding – often only small amounts, but it makes the difference – which is specific to the job and also symbolic to the theology of cathedrals in the whole Church will only result in increasing isolation, independence and congregationalism.

Cathedrals are meant to be interdependent with their stakeholders, and they belong to us all. Having been in a parish where mission was working and now being in a cathedral where mission is thriving, it is obvious to me as a practitioner that these proposals will make new and proven mission impossible.

Perhaps we should not take note of the report. This will force the Commissioners to start again and this time as part of the team. My fear is that, if this goes forward, parishes, cathedrals, suffragan bishops and even the Church Commissioners may, in those immortal words, 'self-destruct', and we would not want that now, would we?

Mrs Anne Foreman (Guildford): I want to thank the working group for this report. I want to thank them for the boldness of the report and for its conciseness. I want to thank them for grasping the nettle. It may have been grasped too ruthlessly and too firmly by some; it may be seen to have been grasped that way; but I am glad that it has been grasped because otherwise we are falling into the danger that we always seem to do, of acknowledging that change needs to happen, agreeing that it needs to take place, but hoping that it will not make any difference to us at all.

As a layperson I think that laypeople find it increasingly hard to understand why the only significant growth area in the Church seems to be among its hierarchy. That is not a vote of no confidence in suffragan bishops at all, but it is to say that we have to get real and face the facts.

The previous speaker seemed to suggest that there had been a lack of consultation. I do not see that. It seems to me that the report consulted very widely. The group wrote to every diocese. The report is not framed in the sort of way that talks about 'must be done'; words like 'possible' and 'perhaps' are scattered through it. So I do not see it as a programme, as the Archbishop referred to it.

What I would like to say is that the suffragan bishops are perfectly able to defend their own corner but laypeople would really like to see the practical suggestions in this report implemented, particularly the one about looking at administrative costs and how they can be cut. It is mad that there is a national payroll, for example, for clergy but not for lay staff.

So I really do hope that the Synod pays heed to this report, takes note of it and acts on some of its proposals.

Sir Patrick Cormack MP (Lichfield): I hope that Synod will not take note of this report. The indisputable logic of the thoughtful and helpful speech of the Archbishop, the

speech of Canon Baker, the speech of the Dean of St Paul's, and indeed the speech from St Albans is that we should say to the Church Commissioners, 'Thank you very much but please think again.' That would be wise advice for us to give.

I am bound to say that I thought that the First Estates Commissioner was a shade gloomy in his presentation. As I listened to him I thought of Mona Lott: 'It's being so cheerful as keeps me going.' As I listened to the Dean of St Paul's I had another wartime memory of that wonderful picture of the dome, and that in a sense says what our cathedrals are about: a real symbol of mission. If we are talking about the mission of the Church, how can we in the name of goodness deplete the resources of the cathedrals which, in every diocese, are a beacon, not only the mother church of the diocese but a place to which people look for inspiration, where services are, by and large, beautifully conducted every day, where people go with school parties and others to learn the story of Christianity and Christendom in this country? To deplete the resources of the cathedrals is a counsel of despair in an affluent age.

What we need to say to Mr Whittam Smith, for whom I have a high personal regard, is that he should not be too put off by his experiences with the *Independent*, and that he should, please, remember that these funds are not the Church Commissioners' funds; they are our funds for our Church and its mission. We are concerned about our cathedrals; we appreciate what they do; and we are not going to advance the cause of Christianity in this land, whatever we think about the Cray report – and I am sorry that I could not be here yesterday – by striking a blow at our greatest churches.

So I would urge Synod, with prayerful thanks to the Church Commissioners, to say 'Go and try better; take it away'.

Dr Julian Litten (Chelmsford): Perhaps I could make a comment as a member of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England. The Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England is concerned, as its name implies, with the fabric of cathedrals; it is not directly concerned with their funding, nor has it any remit to be so. I do not therefore wish to comment on the figures suggested in the report for the reduction of cathedral funding but merely to make some general points which I hope those making decisions on this matter will take carefully into account.

First, cathedrals – even smaller parish church cathedrals – are complex buildings. They need time and commitment to look after. All need constant repair, maintenance and vigilance. It is vital therefore that their staffing is sufficient to ensure that there are personnel in the chapter with the time and specific responsibility for working with the cathedral's own professional advisers to ensure that the right level of attention is given to the needs of the fabric.

Second, the cathedrals' own systems of control over works are statutory. They must make sure that they have the ability to fulfil those requirements.

Third – and most important at the moment – the system of control over cathedrals' fabric needs to stand up to external and Government scrutiny. Remember that we await a consultation paper from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport on the future of the Ecclesiastical Exemption. Whatever funding is agreed for cathedrals in the context of the review that Synod is now debating, it is vital that we as a Church are able to demonstrate to Government that the Church is taking its own control procedures seriously in ensuring that sufficient resources in human terms are available so that those tasks are responsibly discharged. We cannot say to Government, on the one hand, that we as a Church deserve special treatment but, on the other, undermine our own ability to deserve it.

If Synod passes these proposals I would urge, at the very least, that before reducing funding from any particular cathedral there should be a careful analysis to ensure that it has the resources to discharge its statutory responsibility adequately.

Revd Canon Stephen Taylor (Durham): I wonder if I can use a football analogy to describe how the first reading of the report felt from our perspective up in Durham. If I may describe the Chairman as the goalkeeper, symbolizing the keeper of the funds, and myself, in this particular analogy, being the striker, the one who scores the goals that are set by the Archbishops' Council, it seems that the route that the report is proposing is the route that one approach in football has taken, i.e. straight from the keeper the ball is delivered to the striker to score the goals, ensuring maximum accountability and minimum distraction from the possibility of losing the ball or losing the plot along the way. There is some merit, of course, in football in using that particular route, and there are some disadvantages too. In this case, the disadvantage is that too few other team players are involved. On the other hand, the parish mission fund, which is greatly welcomed in our diocese, is just beginning. In this analogy the keeper has rolled out the ball to the dioceses and they in turn are inviting others to take part in the game and become players.

In the team there are perhaps more people than has been envisaged by the report: the dioceses, the bishops, the archdeacons, the cathedrals, clearly have their part to play, and the issue of joined-up thinking, of team-playing, is an important one; but I would suggest that there are other team players who might link up with other of our discussions, for example the report a couple of days ago on combating political extremism and the one on Friday looking at asylum. We are the Church to the nation and we have a concern for the issues that are causing fragmentation in our nation. There are initiatives by the Government and others to bring about a greater degree of community cohesion, and government offices and others are looking for people to take part in that; they are looking for people to fund, to build communities. I suggest that the Church is well placed, and has a very good track record for building communities. People are there, wanting us to be team players. So I would suggest that, as well as the narrow team players alluded to in this report, there may be others waiting in the wings to be involved and included in our play to support the general

mission of the Church in building cohesive communities and enabling this country to be a better place, which is one of the aims of our wider Church.

I commend the report for its imaginative thinking. I hope that, as we move the report on further, more players will be included so that we may have a full ownership of the commendable goals that are there before us and that we may learn lessons from the parish mission fund which we in the Durham Diocese have very high hopes for; we look forward to reflecting on it and learning lessons from it in the years to come.

The Bishop of St Albans (Rt Revd Christopher Herbert) 35: – to which the liturgical response is ‘You wish’.

When I was ordained almost 37 years ago in Hereford, as a young curate I would sometimes bump into an older incumbent in the town. He was a delightful and slightly eccentric character who always referred to me and all his fellow clergy in those all-male days as ‘brother’. I found it very touching, not least because it spoke the truth about ministry in the Christian Church. When I was asked as an incumbent many years later to become an archdeacon, I sought the advice of an older and wiser archdeacon and explained to him how anxious I was about changing from being part of the clergy ‘union’, because inevitably and rightly I would sometimes have to take a juridical role. ‘Think of the clergy always’, he said, ‘as your brothers and sisters.’ It was superb and most loving advice.

We began this morning’s session of Synod with prayer, and we said the Lord’s Prayer together. It has always been my understanding of the Lord’s Prayer that it refers not only to my relationship with God but to my relationship with fellow-Christians: we are in truth brothers and sisters in Christ. However, I recognize that fraternal relationships can be pretty vicious, so Cain and Abel spring to mind. In mediaeval imagery and texts Cain is frequently portrayed as beating Abel with the jawbone of an ass. Then I read this report. It is clumsy and inept and, I have to say, brutal. It is clumsy because it refers to consultation – which is now becoming one of the most slippery words in our Church’s vocabulary – but nowhere in the report does it indicate where changes were made to the text as a result of that consultation, nor does it tell us how many of those consultations took place after the report was printed. It is clumsy because it assumes that finance and policy are entirely the same and that those who control finance should determine policy.

It is inept because it recommends taking money from cathedrals, places which are at the very forefront of mission, and it does so – irony of ironies – in the name of mission. It is inept because it audaciously and, in my view, arrogantly assumes that we bishops have nothing to do with mission, when much of my time and that of my fellow bishops is spent precisely at points of mission; and it treats us as ‘cost centres’ which cannot be ‘insulated’ from cuts. It is inept because it fails to ask why our costs as bishops have gone up and because it does not explain that in dioceses it is bishops’ offices which are largely now the HR departments for the entire diocese. We cannot

put in place new legislation about data protection or child protection without extra cost.

However, I submit that it is brutal because it joins some – but only some – others in our Church in treating us bishops as leaders with a kind of disdain. It treats our role in mission with disdain. The fact that we have actually been called by God's Church to be bishops it also treats with disdain, and it does so knowing – *knowing* – that for us as bishops to have to justify ourselves in public is a degrading and humiliating exercise. It is brutality with a smirk. It is brutal also because it seems to set one part of the Church against another: cathedrals against parishes, bishops against cathedrals, the centre against the local. There seems to be very little concept of Christian solidarity at its heart and very little sense of true reciprocity.

If I were its authors I should want to have the grace and the courage to withdraw it at some point this morning. To do that would be honourable and it would be dignified. This is a flawed document arising out of a flawed process. So in the interests of Christian solidarity I urge Synod to reject it, but not to reject the notion that we need to discern how mission can best be funded. The more local that discernment can be and the more local the fund-raising, the better it will be; and by 'local' I mean the diocese and the bishop and what His Grace has rightly referred to as 'the bishop in council'.

Members may have noticed that I am speaking with a degree of passion. I do so because passion springs out of love for God and his mission. I speak passionately because if we are not in solidarity one with another, the mission of our Church will be far less effective than it should or could be by God's grace.

Revd Dr Richard Turnbull (Winchester): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. Under SO 33, I beg to move:

'That the debate be now adjourned.'

The Chairman: Dr Turnbull has moved that the debate be now adjourned. He has no more than two minutes to give his reasons for this procedure. I will then ask Mr Whittam Smith, as mover of the main motion, to speak for not more than two minutes in reply. When I have heard them, I will decide, in my discretion under SO 33, whether to allow any more speakers on the procedural motion.

Revd Dr Richard Turnbull (Winchester): I believe that it would be disastrous to vote on this motion, and I think that we need to do a number of things as a Synod. It would be disastrous to vote it through and disastrous to vote it down; it would send all the wrong messages. What we need to do as a Synod is demonstrate working as one body and see if we can find some way of working together to take the really good things that are in this report and deal with the problem areas, the irritations, the consultation. Therefore to vote it down would not be a good idea. To vote it through would not be

a good idea. To move to next business would not be a good idea. By moving the adjournment we can illustrate and demonstrate that this remains a consultation which can continue but is not the end of the road.

SO 33(h) says 'If the motion for the Adjournment of Debate is carried and the Synod has not by the same resolution appointed a time for the resumption of the interrupted debate' – and I do not propose such a time – 'it shall be resumed only by direction of the Business Committee.' So we have the option to come back, to look at the principles and debate it again after some of the consultations that we have referred to have taken place, so that we can shape what we have before us and demonstrate that we are not taking one side or another but, as a Synod with the national Church institutions, we are working together as one body to seek to produce the best possible way forward on this motion.

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith: I am grateful to Dr Turnbull for his proposal which certainly merits examination. A lot of people have said that there has not been enough consultation and that we have forced this thing on people. Actually this *is* consultation: Synod has never before debated the disposition of the Church Commissioners funds, ever; last time it was arranged between officials of the Church Commissioners and the Archbishops' Council. I have personally gone for widespread consultation; I have pushed it as far as possible and we have travelled all over the country to do it; we have received dozens and dozens of submissions. We have seen it as a steady process of which this is the culmination of the first stage. I find it completely unjust to be accused of not consulting; this is consultation.

That said, I personally would like to hear more opinions from this Synod because that is what we are here for: we are consulting. So I do not want to cut the debate too short. There is merit in what Dr Turnbull has moved. I do not know whether this fits into the rules of this assembly, but I wish that he would rise to propose his motion shortly but perhaps not as soon as this.

The Chairman: Well, Dr Turnbull has moved his adjournment motion already, Mr Whittam Smith, and you have responded to it. I am prepared to allow more speeches but we are debating the motion for the adjournment, and I propose that we do it under a two-minute speech limit.

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): – and a member of the review working group. I want to underline two things in this debate. One is the importance of listening to each other and hearing each other. The First Commissioner has just made a reference to the consultation process. This is a consultation document. We need to listen to one another and to hear one another. Consultation does not mean that you have to agree with everything that is said to you, though it is very nice when people do. It seems to me, therefore, that we need to hear more from this assembly and that cutting off the debate now would be a mistake. I do, however, agree that there is no particular point to be gained by passing a 'take note' motion which, as far as my understanding

(probably incomplete) of Standing Orders goes, does not commit us to anything at all. So it would be sensible, at the end of the time allocated for this debate, if we simply do not vote, and I am sure that those who are more expert in the Standing Orders than I could find a way of doing that. What is essential is that we listen to one another and grapple with the issues and not get too tied up on the particular details yet. This report says in terms, again and again, that we – meaning Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners together, not the Review Group, which is only the servant of those two bodies – need to hear what the Church wants to do, all of us, if we are to meet the challenge facing us. It is facing us now and we need to address it.

So my plea would be not to adjourn the debate now but avoid voting at the end.

Mr Brian McHenry (Southwark): – Vice-Chairman of the House of Laity and therefore on the Archbishops' Council. Like Dr Giddings and Mr Whittam Smith, I would urge Synod not to proceed with this procedural motion. This is a consultation exercise. If the Synod had listened very carefully to the earlier speeches from the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bob Baker, it would have heard clearly that there are good things in this report and bad things in this report. That is part of the consultation exercise. We do not have to accept all the prescription laid down in this report. Laypeople, apart from those involved in the Archbishops' Council, have not had an opportunity to discuss this report until now. There is a devastating analysis in this report, and we are not sure that we have all the cures for that devastating analysis, but we must start talking, and I do not want to stop the talking now.

Mrs Penny Granger (Ely): Mr Chairman, you probably have it in front of you but I would like to remind members of Synod that, under SO 33(c), if the motion for the adjournment of debate is lost it cannot be moved again during this debate. This means that if it is lost now, and unless somebody else moves Next Business – which I think is too harsh in this case – we shall have to vote on this one way or another. What we really need is the Previous Question but the Standing Orders Committee refuses to bring it back.

If I have a minute just to say why I think we ought to pass the adjournment motion now, Andreas Whittam Smith says that we have never discussed Commissioners' finance before. We had a very long and involved consultation process on historic resources, probably earlier than most people in the Synod remember, but we have discussed it. We often discuss – I think that we should do it every other year – the Commissioners' annual report, which gives members a chance to discuss things; and indeed we have done so. We have endlessly discussed Commissioners' finance and policy over the years, so it is not true to say that we have not done it before.

My problem with this is that if we actually get to a vote on this motion, OK, it is only a 'take note' but it is significant if we vote on it. If we pass it, it looks as if we are endorsing at least some of what is in the report; if it goes down, then what happens? I do not want to force other procedures – say somebody were to raise the idea of a

vote by Houses on this one and have it killed in that way – because I do not think that we should do that at this stage. What we need to do is to adjourn now, to allow the wider consultation to take place, especially with the House of Bishops, which obviously has strong views on it. So I support this procedural motion.

Ms Jacqueline Humphreys (Bristol): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. Whilst hearing what Mrs Granger has to say, SO 33(c) reads 'If the motion for the Adjournment of Debate is lost it shall not be moved again during the debate on the substantive motion except by permission of the Chairman', and a steer from the Chair may assist us to know whether, if Synod as a whole does wish to debate later and then follow Mr Whittam Smith's approach, there is scope for doing that, if that is what we want. That is all I wanted to say.

The Chairman: Mrs Humphreys has been reading my mind! It is the position that the Chair can give permission for a subsequent adjournment motion to be proposed during the same debate. However, I think that we need to get to the point here. I am prepared to allow one more speech and will then put this adjournment motion to the Synod.

The Bishop of Birmingham (Rt Revd John Sentamu): I think that the Church always gets itself into a mess. We all know what we want to do, which is that the debate should be adjourned; but we have another 30 minutes for more speeches. For heavens' sake, why are we shackling ourselves with Standing Orders and not actually allowing the debate to go on after postponing the decision? I know that it is not within the Standing Orders – (*laughter*) – but honestly . . . As a member of a Christian body I find this just naff: we vote it down, so we have more debate, then somebody jumps up again and you give them permission to do it. I think that is a nonsense. I would rather, Chair, that you used your authority with all of us. Please let us have more debate, but not on this; put this on the table, park it somewhere, and in about 25 minutes' time somebody jumps up again and moves it and then we vote on it. That to me is a more honest way of doing things than the nonsense of those Standing Orders. Please, let us be Christian!

The Chairman: Good try, Bishop! However, my hands are rather tied. We will proceed to vote on this adjournment motion. Of course it will be possible – but Synod has to make its own judgement – to throw out the adjournment at this stage and try it again a little later. I have not told you how I might react to that request for an adjournment, but I think that you could assume that I would probably allow it, if you want another 30 minutes' debate, Bishop. That is how we have to do it and I am afraid there is no other way.

The procedural motion was put and lost.

The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Richard Chartres): Remarkable intervention from the Bishop of Birmingham who, I remember, has of course served before as a judge! He was a judge and a good judge too, in my view.

It is crucial for members of Synod to realize that this process has come not from the Church Commissioners exclusively – that is a very important point to haul in – but from a review group that has actually put some fundamental questions to us that we have to take extremely seriously. That is why I am very attracted, if the Chairman is prepared to allow it, to the idea of, rather later, moving the adjournment because certainly we need much more conversation on absolutely crucial things that we cannot duck. How are we going to allocate the only great reserve that we have from our historic asset base? There is a question of proportions here. There is a question of sharing the pain, on the one hand, and there is also the question of how we do what we all want to do, which is provide incentives and catalysts for encouraging local mission. It may well be that to cover tedious but necessary administrative costs from the historic asset base, leaving the local Church in the dioceses to raise money for mission – which is a much more glamorous prospect and probably one that will be attended with rather greater success – may be a more practical strategy if we are really seriously concerned, as we all are, to implement the thrust of the Cray report.

Another point has been made in this debate which is also inescapable: we really do have to respond to the widespread concern about the number of – I will not say ‘hierarchs’ although those of us who deeply revere the work of Dionysius the Areopagite realize the true significance of this word, but ‘hierarch’ has a rather bad name. I prefer the word ‘holarch’: somebody who has a view of the complexity and the spread of the Church’s life, the kind of synoptic view which it is absolutely necessary to have in any Church that is thinking in the kind of Christian solidarity for which the Bishop of St Albans was calling. However, we do have to look at the issue of the distribution and the numbers of our ‘holarchs’ and how many we can afford.

These are some of the practical questions which, if this debate is adjourned, we really must look at with energy together.

Canon Dr Christina Baxter (Southwell): I want to take my share of responsibility, as a member of the Archbishops’ Council, for putting in train this review and also, as a member of the Finance Committee, for having been one of those who have talked it through. None of us intended hurt or insult to bishops or to anyone else, and if we have insulted them I apologize.

I want to begin by reminding us why we are having this conversation. We are having this conversation because laypeople, people like me, are not giving enough, and I take responsibility for trying to turn that round, with others in the Church who are working on that matter. We are still not giving the 5 per cent that we ask our lay members to give, and we are nowhere near giving the 10 per cent. In places where people could be giving far more than 10 per cent, on the whole we are not giving the 30, 40, 50 per cent which might make a difference to the mission of the Church of England. I am deeply ashamed of that and I hope that members pray, like I do, every day about the finances of the Church of England, not for our sake but for the sake of those who have not yet heard the gospel.

The reason why I am really glad that we have this document in front of us is because one of the things that has happened over the past 50-plus years is a drift that we have not noticed. I happen to have been the person who chaired the review of whether we should retain the use of this House or whether we, the Church of England, should become perpetual tenants in No. 1 Millbank. Because I did that, I read the little booklet in our college library which gives me the history of the Church Commissioners, and it is a very interesting history. It shows how the monies were put together in the first place and why it was done as it was.

I asked, as part of this process, what proportions of those monies came from the different sources into the Church Commissioners, those who were at the Church Commissioners' meeting with the Archbishops' Council – and it has only happened once in all the history of the Church of England that we have had a synodical discussion with the Church Commissioners; they have always, up until very recent times, when I was first on this Synod, been very jealous of their powers and not at all willing to be accountable to Synod or to the Church more widely. I am sorry to say that, but that is history and we are in new times now. Where did the money come from? Eighty-eight per cent came from funds which were contributing to the cure of souls in poor parishes. I go round the country as much as everybody else, and what do I hear from the poor dioceses? It is 'When will you seriously address the question of mutual support?' We have gone from 88 per cent of support for poor parishes down to a much tinier proportion. The numbers are all in this report. Why? Because of pensions – part of those pensions of course are helping poor dioceses – but also because of increased costs for bishops, deans and others. Nobody is saying that they are wasting money, although I am sure that it is important that we are transparent; no one is denying that they have work to do; but one of the questions that we must ask as a Church is whether we should be putting decreasing amounts of money into the poor parishes and increasing amounts of money in other places. I do not think so. I think that we are betraying our inheritance.

So the next question is: if we do readjust the proportions, what do we do with any 'surplus' money that is taken from one area? Where should it go? Should it go straight to those poorer dioceses or should it go somewhere else? One of the questions that we rightly debate here is how we handle it, and the debate that we are having this morning is very important so that we can come to the very best decisions.

However, in a way, I want to remind us that we are kind of rearranging the deckchairs on the *Titanic* unless we address the issue of giving. We would be much better off in approaching people to give generously if we were absolutely transparent about what we are doing with our money. I hear rumours – like I heard rumours a while ago and we managed to get bishops to share with us what their expenses are – that there are some cathedrals that are so rich that they are paying their deans or their canons more than the national stipend. Is that true? If it is true, should they be having money from the Church Commissioners? I do not know. I am on the Finance Committee of the Church of England but I do not know.

Those are the kinds of question, for the sake of the mission of God in this land, that we need to address. I am going to vote for this report because, however flawed it is, it has made us ask some hard questions, but I shall not be upset if we adjourn it; I shall be deeply sad if we turn it down because I think that it will be the Church saying that we are not even ready to ask the questions. I believe, under God, that we must ask the questions, and very swiftly find some answers before we slide into disaster.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Archdeacon of Leicester (Ven. Richard Atkinson): I too believe that there are crucial questions here that we must hang on to. One is the way in which financial resources can be used most effectively to stimulate the end that we all seek: the increased mission and outreach of our Church. I have concerns about the mechanism that is currently proposed. First, I wonder about its impact on that crucial level of our Church, the diocese. In the Diocese of Leicester we are already making local provision for mission and new activity as part of our core business, not as something that we tack on. If we follow the proposals here, there is a real danger that we have to readjust the figures and we will lose that local initiative, which is the key level.

Second, I wonder why we do not always take note of what we are already doing, and doing well. The Central Church Fund is an unsung success story, a relatively small fund but making grants to enable mission. We are doing it; there are lessons to learn about the way they have handled that over a number of years. I was a committee member of the Central Church Fund and I am now a trustee of the Church Urban Fund. Again, there is experience of how we use money creatively and effectively to draw down more resources to enable part of our mission of this Church. I do wonder why we have not taken the opportunity at this crucial time in the life of the Church Urban Fund to relate that to this work.

Two final quick points. I am not sure that we are right so swiftly to dismiss the principle of some form of bidding. It can be competitive and destructive; it can be energizing and creative. Second, the experience of both the Church Urban Fund and the Central Church Fund is that small amounts of money can draw in significant other resources, and here, as we have already heard, probably at the local level mission activity is one area where, if we can get our act together, we can do that. My daughters came home from Guides two or three weeks ago; their latest Guide activity (very different from my days of Scouts and Cubs) is 'make your money grow'; so far their return rate is 830 per cent on their £3 stake and they are heading for the Stock Market with their Valentine's gifts. This is not just about making our money grow; it is about making our mission grow. There are lessons that we can learn and perhaps the parable of the talents can also teach us something.

Mr Michael Chamberlain (Archbishops' Council, Ex officio): – a member of the Review Group and also chairman of the Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum. I would just like to draw Synod's attention to one or two points in the report which would be valuable to reflect on.

The question has been asked: why the report, and why now? The First Commissioner, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the debates yesterday give us the background, but there is actually a much more practical situation, and that is that the Commissioners have an actuarial valuation coming up and, in accordance with the National Institutions Measure, the Council and the Commissioners have actually to decide how to distribute the funds in 2005–07. Despite what has been said, this is the first time – certainly in my experience – that there has been such an open and consultative process in respect of these allocations. I believe that Synod should welcome that.

I would like to tell Synod about one or two points in the report which I think will be helpful, and particularly helpful in the dioceses. First, the report proposes no retreat from the distributions under the Darlow formula as selective allocations, and also no retreat from the financial proposals which Synod approved last November. Indeed, there are some minor changes to the Darlow formula which both reflect reality – the current policy of crediting the money to the diocesan stipends account – and also remove the effect that if numbers fall below Sheffield a diocese suffers.

The second point is the concept, the continuation and the expansion of the current mission support, with the aim of having by 2010 at least £9 million. There has been criticism of this but we have heard this morning, for instance, of one diocese that welcomes it. I know that a number of dioceses who do not benefit from selective allocations have welcomed the money that has been distributed under the current scheme, enabling them to finance projects and activities which otherwise would have been difficult to deal with.

I would just like to comment on the remarks made about cathedrals and bishops. The one thing that the report does say is that, if there is a reallocation of monies, the less well resourced dioceses and cathedrals will be protected. We are not talking about a blanket reduction. We have made this point specifically, that the less well resourced would be protected.

The consultation so far – and, as has been said, this is a continuation of it – particularly at the Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum has highlighted concern over the timing of any changes that are eventually agreed. One understands this, and the group is well aware – though some people do not seem to believe that it is – of the pastoral and financial issues that go into planning ahead for dioceses. It is easy to use this, of course, as the Commissioner said, as an excuse for not doing anything; but certainly the Review Group, the Council and the Commissioners will have to take into account the question of implementation of any changes that are eventually agreed; and that chimes well with Dr Campbell's following motion.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the proposal for an inter-diocesan ministry support fund. The Darlow formula is only used to allocate monies available from the Commissioners. It does not and cannot address the fundamental and much needed redistribution of resources to support the stipendiary ministry in less well resourced

dioceses. It seems to me that the Archbishops' Council needs to take on board the recommendation in the report to move this forward to see what can be done, so that there is a feeling of all of us acting as one body.

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the debate be adjourned.’

The Chairman: So you are seeking my permission?

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich): Yes. (Very nicely.)

The Chairman: You need to seek my permission and I grant it.

Mrs Sue Johns (Norwich): I was very persuaded by what Richard Turnbull said earlier about the reasons why it would be useful to adjourn this debate. I also took into account what other speakers in that brief debate said. In particular, it was mentioned that it would be good to hear from more laypeople; I find it rather unfortunate that, through no fault of your own, of course, Mr Chairman, we actually have not heard from very many laypeople in this resumed debate. In particular, I find it a little distressing that we have heard from two members of the Review Group, though they both made very good points. So I think that it would be useful to allow this to go back to the Business Committee to give us an opportunity to learn more about what everybody, not just laypeople, thinks about this, and to use all the good work that is in the report but also to take note of the concerns that have already been expressed so well this morning. For those reasons, I would like to see the debate adjourned.

The Chairman: I am happy to defend my record, which is that six laypeople have been called to speak, but we hear you.

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith: I think that we have now heard a very full range of opinions, some of them passionately expressed. I shall want to return the passion in private conversation, I think. I certainly now support this motion, and I hope that it will be carried.

The Chairman: Mr Whittam Smith, do you want on that basis to, in a sense, reply to the whole debate? (*Dissent*) Do we want to hear? (*Dissent*) No.

The procedural motion was put and carried.

The Chairman: The debate stands adjourned.

THE CHAIR *The Archdeacon of Tonbridge (Ven. Clive Mansell)* took the Chair at 11.25 a.m.

Being Human: Report by the Doctrine Commission (GS 1494)

The Chairman: At the invitation of the Presidents, the chairman of the Doctrine Commission, Rt Revd Professor Stephen Sykes, will address the Synod. After his address we will move to the 'take note' debate. Bishop Sykes, we welcome you and ask you to address us.

Address by Rt Revd Professor Stephen Sykes, Chairman of the Doctrine Commission

Rt Revd Professor Stephen Sykes: It is very strange not to announce my name and number at the beginning of my speech, but here we go. I want to thank the Presidents very warmly indeed for their kind invitation to give this brief introduction to the latest report of the Doctrine Commission, and I can honestly say that it is a very great pleasure to be back in Synod for this brief visit. I look forward to hearing the comments and responses of members of Synod to the report. Professor Thiselton, whose speech to Synod on the publication of the last report, *The Mystery of Salvation*, I still remember, has generously agreed to move the necessary motion and to speak and to reply to the debate.

I have written this introduction in the form of replies to understandable questions, the first of which is 'Why did we propose this subject to the House of Bishops as the topic we wanted to study?' We decided to offer our reflections on *Being Human* because we were convinced that very many of the questions which perplex humanity at the present time are fundamentally similar to the one which the Psalmist asked, 'What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?' Human beings do not come with instructions pinned on them, like a pack of self-assembly furniture. We evidently *become* people as well as inherit a nature from our parents, and that becoming is like a project or an achievement. That is why we focus on four highly significant words in the Gospel of Luke: 'Jesus increased in wisdom'. The report as a whole is about Jesus, our primary reference point for what it means to be human; it is about wisdom, how well we live before God alongside other people; it is about increasing, about growth and development; and it is about the Bible, which is passionate in its insistence on the vital significance of Wisdom.

'So why are the central chapters of the report about power, money, sex and time?' It is because the questions which concern us are not merely theoretical; how a person spends their money, conducts their intimate relationships, develops their talents and capacities or disposes of their time will involve a practical resolution of issues raised by these subjects. As we all know, powerful forces converge and conflict in these areas of life which, when combined with new scientific or technological knowledge, make huge demands upon us. The wisdom to judge rightly in such matters is not easily won; it is likely to involve argument between people of different convictions; and it certainly

involves drawing on the wisdom of past generations and a capacity to understand the pressures by which we are surrounded.

I told a theological colleague in my university what we were writing. He thought for a moment and then he said, 'But that's what 90 per cent of Early Church writings are about.' Of course, on reflection, money, sex and power correlate closely with poverty, chastity and obedience; and time lies at the very heart of the worshipping life of the Church. The four topics that we have chosen – which we do not consider to be in any way an exhaustive list – we chose because we believe that nobody can be a human being today without developing a wise way of understanding and coping with these realities.

In relation to each of them we operate a threefold method: each one is to be, first, affirmed, then judged, and finally transformed. As we say, 'That threefold reality of the incarnate, crucified and risen Jesus, who affirms, judges and transforms the world and human life, is the most condensed expression of Christian wisdom.' Increasing wisdom, we hold, is a matter of forming habits of heart, mind and imagination through a lifelong apprenticeship, the most fundamental aspect of which is membership of a worshipping community. As Psalm 111 says, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'; we cite the biblical scholar, Ellen Davis, to the effect that the biblical writers hold that wisdom is within the grasp of every person who desires it wholeheartedly.

First, then, 'How is power to be affirmed, judged and transformed?' In writing on power, we took account of the centuries-long process by which the concept of power has acquired fearsomely negative connotations, equated by many with domination or abuse; but precisely in that development we risk losing contact with the way Scripture uses the concept, affirming it as an attribute of God, or a feature of the ministry of Jesus, or an aspect of the gift of the Holy Spirit. There are of course uses of power, not least by religious leaders, which need to be judged, as the Prophets and the New Testament make clear. 'But . . . power cannot be seen as intrinsically corrupt. To be created by God entails being gifted with human powers . . . To be redeemed by God entails living in the light . . . of the Resurrection. To be sanctified by God entails enjoyment and exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.' No one, in Christian thinking, is literally powerless, which is why all of us must clothe ourselves with humility in our dealings with one another. To live wisely with the powers that one has, or which are embedded or embodied in the structures of which one is part, is deeply challenging to the 'truthful moral imagination', but to conceal them, or to deny that one has them, is a much more dangerous option because it is one of the disguises of invulnerability.

'Why have we written on money rather than on wealth?' We have chosen to focus on money, despite the fact that the biblical evidence is much more obviously concentrated on wealth, because we want to show how money itself is a profound influence shaping us as human beings. Thus, although it can be unhesitatingly affirmed, both as an essential instrument for any imaginable human society and as an ingenious good, it is far from a simple or neutral reality. It, too, needs to be judged in the light of the

gospel because, as we show, money does things to people as people do things with money. The creation of credit at the heart of modern banking, and the emergence of a global money market, are two developments with far-reaching consequences for our desires and attitudes. The task of being human before God with money involves dealing within ourselves with the instinct for idolatry and the behaviours which, by their constant repetition, school us in the service of Mammon.

‘Why did we write a chapter on sex?’ One chapter out of seven, but it might have been the only chapter, as far as the press conference that I took part in was concerned. Difficult though this chapter was to write – because the Commission contained members whose published views on this subject differ widely from each other – we were determined not to be frightened by the journalistic cliché that the Church of England is obsessed with sex. I consider it possible that, by the end of today, even the General Synod will be tired of arguing about it, so I will content myself with quoting simply our own summary: ‘On sex the basic thing to be learnt is that it is created to be “a whole-person relationship of love and loyalty involving body and self”. We teach a realism about the goodness and joy of sex together with the ways it can go terribly wrong. This is set in the context of God’s engagement with the world, and especially the encompassing reality of that engagement: the covenant relationship with God, other people and creation. The last word is neither the created goodness nor the wrongness but the reality and offer of transformation, as sex is taken up into renewed covenant relationships, the desire for the kingdom of God is made primary, virtues such as faithfulness, patience and gratitude are learnt, and the various sexual developments in our culture are tested for their wisdom or foolishness.’ This is, needless to say, a chapter where one relies on the goodwill of interpreters to observe its balance and not to engage in one-sided quotation.

‘Which is your favourite chapter?’ I have to admit that my favourite chapter is the one on time, partly because a lot of the material there was new to me, as we developed it, partly because there is a rather attractive use of music as an analogy, and partly because of what we say at the end about what we call ‘the temporal virtues’, living ‘in time’ with Christ in the Spirit. It is in this chapter that what we said at the beginning of the report about apprenticeship in a worshipping community is brought into clearer focus, how we participate in the shaping of time through worship, especially in the rhythms of the Church’s calendar, by means of seasons and holy days.

Finally, ‘Have we not neglected the traditional doctrinal content of the Christian understanding of personhood?’ Embedded in the report from start to finish is a recognition of what we call the ‘common themes’ of the various ways of approaching the Christian understanding of personhood. In the final chapter we make these wholly explicit: the capacity of people for relationship with God, often expressed in the doctrine of the image and likeness of God, or of the soul; the freedom of the will and the desire for God; the consequences of the Fall and the dominion of death; the possibility of repentance and the offer of forgiveness and transformation; and finally, the gift of resurrection to eternal life and a sharing of the divine nature through grace.

‘The glory of God is a human being truly alive, and the end of human living is the vision of God’: these marvellous words are those of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon at the end of the second century.

That is my introduction. As chairman, I just want to add my gratitude to all the members who have served on the Commission, a very warm word of gratitude to Canon Martin Kitchen who is with us here as the consultant to the Commission and whose appointment and whose activities made a major difference to our progress, and to our secretaries who were indefatigable; but I want also to say that the experience of working and worshipping with the Commission has been a joy and a delight. Our meetings have been characterized by a rare degree of generous-heartedness even in the midst of fierce argument. In the pressures of a modern university there is sometimes a very high price to be paid for participation in Church-based enterprise; but the gift to Our Lord which working on this book represents has been offered willingly and gladly. Thanks be to God.

The Chairman: Thank you, Bishop. We are very grateful to you.

Revd Canon Professor Anthony Thiselton: I beg to move:

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

I am grateful for the Chairman’s permission to add to the formal moving of the motion before us just a couple of comments, one which relates to the work of the chairman, on which he would obviously not be able to say what I want to say, and the other just a sentence or two about the background note prepared by Dr Martin Kitchen because that goes back to 1976, and I hope to put a little flesh and blood on that background report GS Misc 728.

We owe Bishop Stephen Sykes an enormous debt of gratitude for guiding and welding together a team with a common vision, a team which otherwise are very different individuals, not only men and women, clerical and lay, bishops and professors, but those with very different specialisms and different traditions, different temperaments and, at least initially, very different agenda. So we included traditional disciplines such as Bible, systematic theology and liturgy but also psychology, social sciences and literature. That is one reason why the report underwent multiple revisions. As I have been on four or more of these commissions since 1976, I can say that we have had more careful and thorough and multiple revisions than perhaps any of the others that preceded it since 1976, but Bishop Stephen Sykes has held us together with patience and wisdom, with warmth and vision, and I want publicly to pay tribute to him and express our gratitude for that.

Second, simply a comment on the background paper that our consultant prepared: it goes back to 1976 but I just want to put a little anecdotal memory and flesh and blood on the bones of that report. My first serving with the Commission was in 1976,

and a turning point came in 1980 when Bishop John Taylor of Winchester, who was chairman of the Doctrine Commission, and Bishop Eric Kemp of Chichester, who was chairman of the Faith and Order Advisory Group, sought clarification about their respective areas since there was a danger of a certain overlap or, to put it rather more crudely, the Doctrine Commission wondered whether all the best and most interesting things were going to FOAG.

We met at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine, and I had the unexpected privilege of chairing that meeting, probably because I was the only member who belonged at that point to both bodies. Archbishop Robert Runcie expounded his vision for what the Doctrine Commission ought to be doing. He pointed out that, up until now, we had been very much concerned with theological method with *Christian Believing*, which was very controversial, and *Believing in the Church*, which was rather more constructive; but in a way which almost was highly animated he said, ‘Why do you keep on discussing among yourselves how to do theology? Get on and do it.’ He envisaged a series of studies – for some reason, he seemed to think that they would be more effective if they were bound in ice-blue covers (which caused great merriment to the members of the Commission) – but the point was that they were to be on such themes as the doctrine of God, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of salvation and what in those pre-gender inclusive days was called the doctrine of man, and eschatology, and they would have a pastoral and practical dimension.

I believe that the three or four reports since that time have all admirably fulfilled that vision, led each one by a different chairman with a particular vision. I honestly think that the reports have become better and better as they have gone along and fulfil that vision precisely.

The Chairman: The motion is now open for debate. After the first two speeches, for which I shall allow a 10-minute speech limit, I will be imposing a five-minute speech limit; but perhaps I could ask all speakers to be wise in your use of power and time in the course of the debate.

Revd Canon Paul Brett (Chelmsford): On my way to Synod on Monday, Mr Chairman – or should I call you Moderator? or even just Clive? – I encountered a member of the Doctrine Commission and we fell to discussing this report; standing on an island in the middle of Victoria Street he said, a little wistfully, I think, ‘Please stand and say something sensible’. I will do my best of course, and I may even be able to say something humorous; and I am glad that members have laughed already once, for laughter is part of being human too.

In welcoming the report, I want to say how encouraging I have found its basic approach. I believe that we are here as Christians not to save souls from a corrupt world but to work with God to transform and renew the life of men and women in the world. To do this we have to begin with human experience and seek illumination for

the task from the Bible as well as other, secular sources. We need to begin by asking what it is to be human, and how it can all go wrong. This is what the report does. This is the starting point for theology and for doctrine.

I want to make three points. The first is about the Bible. Our Jewish and Christian Scriptures are themselves a unique distillation of human religious experience. They show us just as much about how to discover what is right and true as what we should believe and do. The Bible's authority is not in question, though its interpretation may well be full of questions. The defining of doctrine and ethics emerges from experience, human as well as religious. This is not Pelagian; it is an ongoing task for those whom Christ has touched and already made his own.

I believe that this approach offers hope for the future. It opens the way for further illumination, for the workings of the Spirit, for new expressions of our commitment to follow Christ faithfully.

This leads me to my second point. Human wisdom is also to be found in other areas of our culture and spiritual experience. There is a helpful discussion of this in chapter 2 on pages 12 and 28–31. Last Saturday, if I may give an illustration, I presented to an audience of a hundred people in our community (not all churchpeople) what I called a thoroughly wicked evening of music and song on the theme of the seven deadly sins. Having settled some time ago on this theme I had first of all to check what these sins actually were, and members will know that they are pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger and sloth. I illustrated each of them with short pieces of music from opera and other musical works.

Lust was the most exciting. In Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, for instance, Leporello recounts the list of his master's sexual conquests, some 2,065 of them, in five different countries. By my reckoning, at one a night that would have taken him over five-and-a-half years, without repetition and obviously without hesitation, though whether without deviation I could not say.

I have never forgotten the first time I heard the statue of Donna Anna's father utter the chilling words 'Don Giovanni' and saw the convicted sinner plunge into the flames of hell. This sinful, selfish carry-on led to revenge and death.

Later in the programme I turned to Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*. Here an American naval officer, Pinkerton, marries a 15-year-old Japanese geisha girl known as Butterfly. He regards it as much like a property lease: for 999 years but breakable at a month's notice. Having deserted her, gone back to America, and married Kate, he returns three years later to discover that he had fathered a child. Realizing the truth about her faithless lover, Butterfly takes her life with her father's sword, on which is engraved 'He dies with honour who cannot live with honour'. The opera ends with Pinkerton's agonized threefold cry of penitence: 'Butterfly, Butterfly, Butterfly'.

There is powerful wisdom here about superficial, exploitative, uncommitted sexual intimacy. It speaks to our human condition and about our human condition.

I mention these two operas simply by way of example, and much similar illumination can also be found in art and literature.

I have been told that my musical evening, to raise money for charity, has caused considerable discussion around the parish, both beforehand and subsequently, even at dinner parties, about these sins, what they are, why these things are sinful, and what to do about them. There is wisdom to be found in secular sources to set alongside that of the Scriptures, and we do well to heed it too. There is general revelation in our culture, accessible to human reason, emerging from human experience, as well as special revelation in the person and teaching of Christ.

My third point is simply to affirm the profound importance of the sentiments in that new collect for Christmas 2 which we discussed on Monday. May God indeed lead us to find him and respond to him in the face of the outcast, the oppressed, the exploited, those in any sort of need, and everywhere. This is God's world, and we can encounter him here in our human experience and in our culture, as well as in the Church and through our Christian doctrine.

Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): I am astounded to be speaking with a 10-minute speech limit. I had assumed that I would get five and, if I was unlucky, three; but 10 minutes is indulgent perhaps. What do you feel about that? I have a five-minute speech but I am going to take – five minutes maybe. How do I feel about that?

Seriously, occasionally I face a question which I hope Synod members have not had to face or, if so, certainly not to ask: how long have I got, doctor? Time becomes very real. I seek to try and answer the question. Of course, whatever I say will inevitably be wrong. I might be way out, hearing recently of someone who was given a few weeks to live and 20 years later came back to their GP rather surprised; or equally there is the person to whom you give perhaps weeks but sadly only days follow. It is a very honest question and obviously it is one to which I respond as honestly and as sensibly as I can. Yet I know that whatever I say will be taken as gospel and no doubt quoted back at me, or certainly discussed in the family and beyond.

It is a very complex business, time, and what happens to time in that finiteness of my response: is it days, is it weeks? What does time do?

Of course life itself, as we doctors know, is a terminal illness. We seek to treat it but inevitably it will get us all in the end unless we are like Enoch in the Old Testament. Yet the diagnosis of a life-threatening – or certainly life-ending – condition brings that intensity to the question: how much time? Does that finite time become longer or shorter? I know maybe the number of days, and yet each day becomes more intense. I seek to fill it with everything that I have not done so far. It is a sort of conundrum:

is life longer or shorter in its finiteness with a terminal diagnosis? I may make a will; I want to sort out relationships or look at my financial affairs. One of my ex-GP partners who died rather tragically hoped that he would die with great debt, in which case it would be the bank's problem and not, he hoped, his widow's.

We seek to redeem this time, to make sense of it. Some members will have seen the email correspondence that some of us had the privilege to read about at Mark Birchall's death and the response from Iona, and if I remember it correctly, about those special days around Christmas when they were together at home, before Mark's death in January. That gave me a feeling of the goodness of time, that time is a good as well as a gift from God, even in those final days.

That is why I particularly welcome this chapter on time in the report, pages 109–113 in particular, for there we read that to become a Christian is among other things to begin to live in time as given and shaped by God (page 109), whereas we read on page 112 that there is a 'rediscovery of the essential goodness of time', helping us to approach transience in a different way. Life and death look and feel different. The chapter reminds us that time is no longer the enemy that we must fight against every day, which risks overwhelming us, which makes us out of control. We are no longer slaves to time. The tyranny of deadlines and even decay we might feel is no longer quite the same. Yes there are deadlines, but maybe our thoughts about them are different. We can live constructively, positively, life to the full. We can gain control. Time is ours as God's gift; it has been created for us and redeemed through Christ that we might enjoy it.

Those of you who are doctors may know that the Christmas edition of the *British Medical Journal* often has more exciting and exotic things for us to read. In 1995 that rather maverick and fascinating social commentator Ivan Illich was asked to write a leader for it. He entitled it 'Death undefeated' and made comments about Christian liturgy and Christian experience, which he felt was no longer applicable in our modern age. He called for people to return to being able to live out their own death and dying, to embody in real time that experience. I quote from him: 'Don't let doctors medicalize you or the systems take you over': a real plea against the way medicine and subsequently computers and systems have taken over the art of dying. Hope to die a good death, he says, with someone with you, a friend to the last. Rediscover the old Mediterranean adage on this: a wise person, he says, needs to find, acquire and treasure an *amicus mortis*, a friend of death, a friend at the time of death, one, he says, who tells you the bitter truth and stays with you to the inexorable end.

Perhaps a bit gloomy, yet maybe we can take something from that wisdom. The truth, hopefully, for us is not bitter, but we may need to hear it, about ourselves and our relationship to God, of our life and times shaped in the image of Christ. I hope that our end is not inexorable in a negative sense, yet it will come to us; pray God we shall know when it is coming and be prepared and have this friend with us.

The principle remains: friendship and trust, the trust that we know can only come with time, the faithfulness of someone with us, living out in God's time until it reaches its earthly conclusion.

So have a good time. Enjoy the debate. Vote for the motion. Read this chapter in particular, one, as Bishop Stephen reminds us, that he enjoyed, and one that I have enjoyed too. A time to be with God here in Synod and wherever we are. So do read, have a good time and vote to receive this report with joy.

Revd Sarah Chapman (Winchester): I want to thank the Doctrine Commission for this report which I thought was brilliant, clear and easy to read, particularly compared with some of the other papers which landed through my door. I would like to make particular comment on the issue of power in the context of being human and being Church, especially how power is perceived and exercised.

In this my first Synod I have been surprised by the power that we have as members. You put your hand in the air and a motion is carried or lost. You walk through a particular door and a piece of legislation goes to the statute books or to the bin. I found myself wondering what Synod is saying about power in the gospel context when the sheep, that is, those clerical and lay, walk through doors into the outer confusion of an eternal corridor, and the shepherds stay gently and carefully within.

In our understanding of power, we would perhaps do well to reflect on some of the work done by Walter Wink in his trilogy on the principalities and powers, particularly the sort of power that we experience as Church, and how we can act against it, how part of our task is to unmask their idolatrous pretensions and to identify their dehumanizing values.

If we could begin to understand something of that power, we might begin to name and understand something of what is meant by the angel of the Church of England; we might find time to listen to that voice as well and, as we listen to that voice, to know and understand a deeper truth about the power that is exercised and the call to repentance, perhaps particularly a call to repentance for all the times we have behaved in an inhuman way. In doing so the balance of power is immediately shifted and we catch a fresh glimpse of God himself.

I think that there are many threads in this Synod, and I have noticed that, in the *Mission-shaped Church* report, it says, 'We need the grace of the Spirit for repentance if we are to receive a fresh baptism of the Spirit for witness.'

Mr John Ashwin (Chichester): I am a fan of the Doctrine Commission. I thought that *The Mystery of Salvation* was wonderful when it first came out, and I still think that it is excellent; so I was delighted to receive my free copy of *Being Human*, and I read it as soon as I got it. I expected it to be good, and it was. I welcome it very warmly as a layperson because doctrine is for all churchpeople, indeed for all God's people, not just for the professionals.

Yet before I had even had a chance to read it, a friend said to me, ‘Don’t bother with that, John. It’s been rubbished by the press, particularly *The Times*.’ However, when you read what it said in the letters page of *The Times*, it was obvious that not one of the correspondents had read or even opened *Being Human*; nor had the leader-writer. They knew what it said without reading it, because they know what the Church of England thinks on all these matters. They were wrong.

Why is *Being Human* so good? Why am I an enthusiast for it? I will just give Synod three little reasons. I thought that the chapter on listening to Scripture was refreshingly unexpected: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs. Proverbs? No, just worldly-wise, homespun Jewish wisdom, like Polonius to Hamlet: ‘To thine own self be true’, and all that. I was wrong of course, when I read the chapter. Ecclesiastes, yes, I liked that: an antidote to false optimism, the false optimism of New Labour. I am a member of the Labour Party, so I knew that would be good. Song of Songs? Surely that is just a dirty book you read in the choir? (I confess the sins of my youth.) No, it is, as we learnt in Morning Prayer this morning, when it was beautifully read, great poetry. So that was a wonderfully refreshing new take on Scripture.

Second, the sections on power, money and time are all excellent teaching. The weakest section, I thought, understandably was the one on sex. I was disappointed – and I read it two or three times because I thought that perhaps I had missed it – that there was no guidance about whether sex outside marriage is wrong or not. For example, is it wrong for couples who plan to get married to have sex beforehand, or not? It was silent on that. I and most people of my generation did not have sex before marriage, but my children did, and, to be honest, I do not know who was right. I would have welcomed some guidance on that. The chapter, however, was redeemed for me by the wonderful last section on sexual virtue; it is an absolutely splendid statement about the positives of sex. ‘Sexual’ and ‘virtue’, you know, do not seem to go together, but they do: the joy of faithfulness in marriage, the joy of sex in an ordered way. I thought that it was absolutely marvellous, and I commend this splendid report to anyone who has not had the opportunity to read it.

Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark): The task of being human before God is continuing creation. The Bible may be concerned with wisdom, but the shrinking role of the Bible in the vastly developed range of human wisdom since the Enlightenment has had and continues to have a huge impact on how people deal with the wisdom which the Church attempts to offer. The Bible is a minefield, as we know, and its victims are splattered across history. That is why I am not a biblical Christian and why I would fight to my dying day to prevent the Church having any effective control over society. I am a believing secularist, in terms of running things the way it used to.

The chapter that I am most concerned about here is not the one that deals with time, which tries to address the question of how we humans continue creation in cultural terms; it is lovely to hear someone talking about the effect of opera on their thoughts, and of course when one is trying to do a production of *Don Giovanni* one has to face

the problem of whether the Don is heroic in rejecting repentance, or whether this is a simple parable. I am inclined to think that it is a very complicated parable and that Mozart's view, as a proper Catholic and also a humanist, was very much more complicated than one might assume and, indeed, that productions do not always come out one way.

Returning to this chapter on sex, I have to say that I was, as I often am when listening to what the Church has to say about sex, pretty disappointed. I place what the Bible has to say about sex with what the Bible has said about the Jewish people in the New Testament: 'his blood be upon us and upon our children's children'. I do not know if any of you have noticed but there is a film about the life of Christ coming out, and this particular sentence is regarded as most unfortunate to the sort of people who back films, many of whom are, in the Hollywood environment, Jewish. It is the fact that we Christians are convicted – and reasonably convicted – for being at the heart of anti-semitism over two thousand years.

How does all this relate to sex? Well, *The Daily Telegraph* recently reported that Kenyan Christians regard homosexuality as horrific, totally unchristian. One parish member in Karen, on the edge of Nairobi, said, 'God would not want a homosexual to come between me and him'. There is an unfortunate echo there of what the homosexual or bisexual Lytton Strachey famously and humorously said, that he would try to interpose himself between an enemy soldier trying to rape his sister and the rapist. The persecution of sex, however, by the Church in most of its shapes and forms has led to unending human unhappiness. I had a cousin who was a psychologist and taught psychology as well at the University of Florence. This was a point that she frequently made. I believe that the less said officially by the Church about sex for the next few centuries, the better, and the more likely that some Christian wisdom may survive into the future and be available to serve people then. What wisdom the Church can offer about sex and about relationships is mostly common sense and has nothing to do with what the Bible says, which, as Professor Thiselton and many others, including Mrs Margaret Brown on Monday, have conclusively pointed out, is the so-called missionary position: that it is OK only between a married man and woman and certainly not anywhere else (though as a tool of mission I would say that the folly of the Church's teaching about sex is very largely responsible for the total disillusionment of so many people with the Church). However, yes, the true Church tradition *is* that fornication can only be hallowed by marriage and that homosexuals should become priests and keep their sexual habits utterly private. If you talk hypocritical or lunatic nonsense consistently about one thing, people may wonder whether anything you have to say is worthwhile.

When *Being Human* states that sexual love between a man and a woman is a wonderful gift from God and sexuality is a gift of God in creation, I have to say that that strikes me as complete rubbish. It is looking at a normal manifestation of life through the wrong end of the telescope. When we talk about sex in nature, we are talking about reproduction, but as human beings we know that sex is pleasurable.

I think that the Church's refusal to allow sex to be seen as being pleasurable and not always necessarily controlled is one of the major issues that we really do need to think much more about, because actually, though sex is a wonderful gift between a husband and wife, it can also be a means in a marriage of torture for both the parties.

I believe that sex itself is morally neutral and therefore we should think more carefully about this whole issue.

The Bishop of Worcester (Rt Revd Peter Selby): – and a member of the Commission. I have decided to desert my colleagues who are sitting on the platform because, when Professor Thiselton asks if I will sit on the platform in case he needs any help, I think that there is a certain irony in that idea.

I want to say one overriding thing really, which is that this report is work-in-progress and speaks about how the Church's work-in-progress proceeds. It is the second time that the Synod has been looking at this work agenda. One of the things that most encouraged us in the work was the time when we came to the Synod with the four central chapter headings and received the reactions of members of the Synod, to get some sense of whether we might be going along the right lines. The conversation continues. It continued over all the years that the Commission was sitting, and I can only echo the sense that has been expressed of privilege and of receiving a huge gift, particularly from colleagues who serve in higher education, from whom we were receiving not just the gift of time but the gift of work which they were not then able to count as credit in their academic and legitimate career aspirations. That is a very precious gift, and it should affect our judgement of the support that we give to Christians in that particular area of life.

The conversation continues still. I am engaged back home in a reading group, reading the report, and I can only say that the conversations have been of a higher quality than on almost any other occasion when we have had such a reading group. That has been because people have engaged with the material and have found that it engaged with them. I was very interested in what Dr Jamie Harrison had to say about the chapter on time: it is actually the subject of our next session and will be introduced by a person who is living with a terminal diagnosis; what she has to say about her situation will be profoundly relevant to what we think about money and sex and power as well, because our mortality conditions our estimate of all those things.

However, as well as conversation as a continuing process, I want to say that I have come to believe – and I do not wish to sound too much like a salesperson – that the process in which we engaged is also a statement, a witness, about God's converse with us, because I do not think that the report lends itself to categorization in those polarized debates about whether revelation sets the agenda or the world sets the agenda. It was not like that. We moved with a certain relaxed and passionate freedom back and forth between our understandings, preconditioned understandings, of Christian belief, and our experience of life in the world. I believe that that is a

statement about which Anglicans in particular can be pleased, and I hope that it finds ways through some of the polarizations which we are accustomed to when we think we have to make a choice about where we start and that that choice must determine how it will all work out in the end.

I actually believe that even the chapter on sex might, if we will let it, condition our conversation in new and interesting ways, the outcome of which I would not begin to foresee.

So I want to express to the Synod, who enabled the resourcing of the Commission, my gratitude for the immense privilege of serving on it, and my gratitude to my fellow members also; but I also want to urge the Synod to continue the conversation, because the conversation will in itself be an act of witness to a God who engages with his people.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): I would like to welcome this book too. I would like to welcome not only the care and wisdom with which it was written but also the length of time that we were given to study it and reflect on it. I particularly appreciated being able to raise it with our deanery synod towards the end of last year.

My career is in the world of money, and I want to talk about money. A recent edition of *Panorama* set a researcher the task of obtaining as much credit as possible on a salary of £25,000 a year. In addition to a mortgage of at least five times salary – that is, £125,000 – he opened a collection of credit and store cards with a combined credit limit of £56,000. Including mortgage repayments over 25 years, his combined outgoing on the full extent of this debt would be in the order of £21,000 per annum, or £2,000 more than his take-home pay, with nothing left over for any other expenses such as food, clothing, council tax and so on. The programme showed that many individuals cannot resist the lure of spending and continue extending their debt until the credit runs out. When that happens, personal despair can take over as the prospect of bankruptcy looms.

At the personal level this is a disaster, often encompassing entire families. If enough individuals face this kind of Armageddon, banks and credit institutions start coming under threat and no doubt this is what John Varley, Barclays' chief executive, was referring to in his recent warning about rash lending policies. The state of our economy is very exposed, with both Government and personal sector heavily in debt and relying on continuing very low interest rates to keep afloat. No doubt the Government would prefer not to remind us of the parlous state of the saving:spending ratio, since continued consumer spending remains absolutely necessary to maintain economic growth up to the election; but this is not a happy state of affairs. It may be necessary in a macro-economic sense, but at a personal level it is encouraging people to flirt with disaster.

There are in my view two obvious solutions. The first is the imposition of regulatory sanctions against mis-selling debt, and I hope in the future that we will see the

Financial Services Authority being given new powers to regulate the irresponsible mis-selling of debt by credit institutions, in the same way that they have investigated pensions mis-selling over recent years.

Second, we need to see a return to encouraging savings and investment through public awareness and culture which values financial caution and thrift. Savings and investments are important because they provide individuals with freedom to change their lifestyle and relief from anxiety. They are therefore not just financially but also psychologically important. Access to credit may seem liberating in the short term, but in the medium and long term people become tied down by the obligation to repay significant amounts. Economic freedom is almost as important as political freedom, and the ownership of disposable liquid assets in the form of savings and investments can help secure it.

So I welcome the inclusion of money in the Doctrine Commission's report and the contrast that it offers between the opportunities enabled by the great power of money to structure and shape our humanity and the potential slavery of the credit system. I hope that we can draw on this analysis and on the teaching of Christ on money and business to show others the relevance of the Christian message to their everyday life.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of four minutes.

Mr Tim Royle (Gloucester): I also welcome this report. I find it stimulating and a most useful document for the future, as one tries to explain to people the uniqueness of our human being. I think that we are programmed to believe, and we can see this right round the world today; those who are atheists find it very puzzling indeed how people continue to believe in one form or another.

I just want to concentrate, in the few minutes available to me, on one paragraph, point 3 on page 31. The report's authors say that they explore what it means to be human today, and they approach it through power, money, sex and time. I am not going to concentrate on those four; what I would like to concentrate on, if I may, is the result of this Fall, this turning away from the person who has created us to believe in our Creator, i.e. five items which I could not find mentioned and which I think constitute a hole in the report.

I call it, I suppose, the Adam and Eve syndrome: it's not my fault, it's his fault; it's not her fault, it's its fault. I mean the blame culture which arises in our postmodern, post-Christian society today. There is the lack of a sense of responsibility for anything that we see: *I'm* not responsible, *they're* responsible. There is the lack of taking a stand on responsibility, in that if something goes wrong then I should resign the position that I hold; nobody resigns today. Truth: how much truth is there? What is truth, people ask cynically. We know, do we not, both in politics and in social affairs, in government and in relationships with each other, how vitally important truth is; but our whole nature, because we are fallen, is to sell a half-truth, indeed no truth at all if we can

get away with it. Finally there is commitment. We are going to be having a debate later today on cohabitation, and this afternoon we talk about human sexuality, but what lies at the root of all this is the question of where commitment lies. Why do people not get married today? Why do they see that it is not really relevant to their lives? I am not going to rehearse what others may more adequately say tonight, but the fact is that we do not want to commit ourselves in any degree anywhere in case we go wrong. It seems to me that this is lying at the very root of our humanity. We are also programmed to commit.

Our Lord in the person of Jesus Christ, our Creator, committed himself to us, to the ultimate, in fact. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'; and even more so when the Creator lays down his life for you and me.

So when you scratch the spot, it surely itches in each one of us, and as we look at humanity, how fearfully and wonderfully we are made, as the Psalmist says, we cannot but stand in awe at how we humans have been placed in a unique position with regard to creation, and what responsibilities we have been given to look after this amazing creation that we are so privileged to live in. I was reading this morning II Peter and the last chapter, about how the earth is going to burn up; I had to challenge myself again as to whether I really look forward to the Second Coming. I am not sure sometimes, but what I do know is that, as a human being, I just pray that God will see, through Christ, my efforts to worship and to love and to adore him; and my firm hope is that through his sacrifice I shall not be found wanting.

Revd Richard Thomas (Oxford): I too want to say a huge thank you for the report. As I read it I began to reflect very much on what it is that makes me less than human. I think that that is a very pressing issue for us. The direction in which that took me was in the direction, funnily enough, not of sex but of television. I just wonder how much substitute relationships are damaging our society.

I have watched a number of families glued to *EastEnders*. The argument is always advanced that *EastEnders* is a kind of dose of reality, that the producers are trying to get us to engage with issues in our society, that it somehow crosses boundaries, cultural and social. Nice excuses, but for me they do not wash, because people are actually sitting in their homes with substitute relationships and that is, in effect, a construct, a substitute relationship created by a group of writers round a table wondering what will make good television and what will hold ratings.

I have a concern that we are not doing enough theological investigation into the effect of substitute relationships on the way in which our society works. The more I look at what is put out on the television, the more I think that what we are engaging in is a very dangerous set of substitute relationships that stop people meeting their neighbours, that stop the parties, that actually prevent risk. What I want to plead for is a little more investigation into this whole business of substitutes and substitute relationships and the damage that people sitting at home, not engaging in risk, can do to our society.

If that is true of a lot of television, what about the Internet? I would like to see more work done, please, on the nature of relationships that are generated through the Internet. Some of them are good; all of them, again, have this element of substitute about them.

Those are simply my reflections, Chairman, and I should like to offer them to Synod.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Bishop of Lincoln (Rt Revd John Saxbee): A friend of mine went to New York and got into one of those yellow taxis, and the taxi driver asked him where he was going. 'Going to a conference on philosophy,' he said. 'Oh that Descartes,' said the taxi driver. 'Too much *cogito*, not enough *sum*.' One of the lovely things about this report is that it has a load of *sum* in it; it is actually talking into our human condition and the reality of the lives that we lead. It is work-in-progress, as the Bishop of Worcester has said, but I think that it is work well worth pursuing.

However, I hope that when we read the report we will bear in mind its predecessor *The Mystery of Salvation* because one of the challenges to us whenever we look at human being, whenever we look at the whole question of anthropology, is the challenge of sin. I speak out of a liberal tradition of theology which has probably neglected that dimension of our humanity to its cost, and I hope that, when we as it were balance human being in all its joyfulness and creativity, we do so with that side of our humanity which led the pathologist in the Fred West case to describe human being as an excrescence on the face of the earth. It is a very different picture from the one that we would want to paint out of our Christian tradition, and yet it is one that we need to hear and acknowledge.

We have sometimes signed up to the myth of progress all too readily. We have been optimistic about human nature for two hundred years or so: 'God grant that I may never rest until my good is better and my better best.' That sounds like a philosophy of life that has taken us to enormous achievements in our society, and yet it has also taken us to the most enormous degradations of sin. The report does us a service in terms of highlighting in a very positive way the challenges of what it means to be human, and it does so against the background of that *Mystery of Salvation* report with its emphasis on sin and the way in which God seeks to remedy sin.

We must take time always to hear the still, sad music of humanity, and I am grateful for this report, that it challenges us to be aware of what it means to be human, not only with all its joys but also with its sorrows.

I began with a philosopher, and of course there is another great philosopher, Ian Botham, who said, 'I don't think we're here for a long time. I think we're here for a good time.' Well, yes, I think that God would probably nod at that, but all the evidence seems to suggest that Ian Botham and others have a great challenge. I hope

that we will always be on the side of joy and will be on the side of the human project in which God has invested so much, because Christianity, as the report says in one place (I think the same paragraph that Mr Royle referred to), has so often been about that which is negative, that which is destructive of human fulfilment. The old joke goes, ‘Why do Puritans never have sex standing up? Because God might think they were dancing.’

If it is true that we are committed, as we heard earlier, to life in all its fullness, to that glory of God which is a human being fully alive, then may we indeed be those who celebrate what it means to be human; and perhaps this afternoon when we are dwelling yet again upon an issue – human sexuality as a bone of contention – may we also have at the back of our minds that human sexuality, like time and power and all those other things, can also be the means of enormous creativity and great joy, to the glory of God.

Thank you to the Doctrine Commission. May we read *The Mystery of Salvation* and be aware of our sinfulness. May we read this report and also be aware of our enormous potential and seek to realize it.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Revd David Osborne (Bath and Wells): I hate these speeches where someone says ‘I come from a real parish’ so I will tell you where I come from, which is a real parish, and it is a rural parish; in fact, it is four parishes in Somerset and I am rural dean of a rural deanery. Some of the people there know about *Don Giovanni* and some of them have sung in *Don Giovanni* and some of them think that he drives a truck for Willmott’s. That is the kind of place where I live, and one of the things that happens, if I am talking with PCCs about our learning agenda – our teaching, our study, Lent courses, this kind of thing – or talking in the rural deanery about what we ought to be doing, is that people say time and time again, ‘We want to explore things which are about relating our faith to everyday life’. They also know – some of them because they have tried it – that you cannot do it with a sort of cut-and-paste approach to the Bible; it is much more profound than that.

This report that we have here actually provides us with a number of things. In my set-up we are using it as the basis for a Lent course; it is not the study guide as much as the inspiration behind it. We are going to be following these themes through and it will be very interesting to see how it works out. Yet it does more than that, more than provide another edition in the series on my shelves of things from the Doctrine Commission: it approaches the whole subject matter from the angle of wisdom. That is a word which you hear occasionally in this chamber but certainly not very much elsewhere. Technical skill, yes; ability, yes; celebrity, yes; but wisdom does not get a mention. Yet it is, as the report points out, a very strong part of our tradition to seek wisdom, the wisdom which begins with the fear of the Lord.

So I think that the report has done, and is doing, several things for us. One is that it is providing us with a framework, with some leads and some ideas, setting an agenda, opening up other questions; but it is also getting wisdom back on to the agenda. Wisdom is something which is part of our tradition and which we need to seek, explore and share with the world because it needs it.

Mrs Rachel Moriarty (Chichester): I am on page 39, and I want to talk about power linked with wisdom. The previous speaker spoke of wisdom and it reminded me of Solomon who asked when he became king for an understanding heart to discern righteously. That is something that we need to add to the concept of power. On page 39 there is a sentence which speaks of ‘those who love their own power without regard to the true justice of the omnipotent God’, and I would just like to reflect, with Synod, on my reaction to that, which was to see how power, justice and wisdom interact.

In my case, my power is exercised as chair of governors of a Church school, and it requires all the justice and all the wisdom that one could possibly need; but it is also a question of balance. What occurs to me is that justice is a question of balance and that that balance in justice is something we need to look at in the life of the Church, because it seems to me that in some of our own structures – and some of them have been exposed for me very much in the few days that we have had together so far – the justice within the structures still needs re-balancing and that there are areas of Church structures where the balance of justice between one group and another is not sound.

I simply commend to Synod that power leads to a consideration of justice, and wisdom adds the need to balance the requirements of different groups.

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.

Revd Canon Professor Anthony Thiselton, in reply: I am most grateful for the very constructive and helpful comments that have been made. To try to get through them in the allotted time, I will simply take them in sequence.

I thank Canon Brett for his comments, especially about transformation in the human situation and about the balance between biblical sources and sources outside biblical traditions. We have tried, as he said, to take account of that, not least in pointing out that the Bible, tradition and reason are part of the resources of the Christian mind. I thank him also for reminding us that play is part of being human; we have tried to emphasize that utilitarianism and duty are only a fraction of what receiving gifts of God with joy and celebration is all about; this is something about which the Bishop of Lincoln reminded us.

I am very grateful to Dr Jamie Harrison for his sober and constructive comments about time. We tried to express the notion that time is a good gift of God, and Dr Harrison reminded us of the goodness of time which need be neither an idol nor an enemy. I thank him for reminding us of the importance of this, in practical terms, for all kinds of people and situations, not least those faced with terminal illness. I am grateful for all the emphasis that speakers have placed on the practical dimension of the report, because that is what we aimed at highlighting; I am most grateful to those speakers who have in turn re-emphasized that.

I thank Sarah Chapman for her comments. We are grateful that she thinks it is clear and easy to read. Some of us have tried it out on various groups and found the same thing, but I hope that others will find that also. Yes, we have indeed referred to Walter Wink's work on power, believing that evil transcends mere individual evil and often lies collectively in power structures, and we have tried to express something practical about that. Thank you for highlighting the issues about the abuse of power. We hope that that is one of the warning aspects which the report holds out, side by side with the responsibility to use legitimate power.

I thank Mr John Ashwin for his welcome for the report. I am most grateful for his comments, especially on the chapter on listening to Scripture. He rightly perceived that we did indeed try to lay an emphasis on those parts of Scripture which are not always the first that everybody opens the Bible at: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs certainly. He perceived as a weakness that we had not explicitly tried as it were to pronounce on issues such as sex without marriage, and I think there are two things to say about that. One is that we were specifically not wanting to provide a kind of ethical handbook; we are talking more about the nature of sexuality. Nevertheless we have a lot about the need for passionate and serious commitment in both sexual relations and other areas of life, and I would hope that answers to the questions that he was asking are actually implicit in the report, even if they are not as explicit as some might have wished.

Mr Tom Sutcliffe made some serious criticisms of the report. I think that the reply to some of these was implicit in some of the comments of the Bishop of Worcester, pointing out that above all we did not want to invite any simplistic polarization between Scripture and other sources of wisdom, between conservative and radical, and so on. We tried to offer a balanced report, which is in process of further exploration, and I am enormously puzzled about Mr Sutcliffe's using an example such as 'surely marriage sometimes is manipulative and can be sheer torture'. That is *precisely* what we highlighted in the chapter on sex; we did not want to give an idealized picture of marriage as universal paradise. I was pleased that we had expressed very solemnly in the report that marriage can be the greatest blessing, but it can also be a manipulative relationship which includes torture. So although Mr Sutcliffe may have given the impression that we were at odds there, I am at a loss to understand how we are at odds because that is exactly what we tried to do.

We tried to go much further than the Enlightenment actually, not a sort of old-fashioned rationalism but trying to take seriously some of the social constructionism about issues of malleability in the sexual relationship, and we tried to give as balanced as possible an account of the issues about homosexuality, but not to anticipate the issues in sexuality which we knew the House of Bishops would soon report on. That is one reason why we were not more upfront about some of the issues that some members might have liked us to express.

I was very grateful obviously to the Bishop of Worcester for his helpful reminder that we are exploring, and that we wanted to avoid polarization. It was a triumph really that, while many of us started with very different views from one another, in the end we did not simply blandly agree but attempted to engage in such serious dialogue that we avoided undue polarization where something more constructive could be put in its place.

I am grateful to Mr Gavin Oldham for his comments about credit. We felt that the corporate and political and social dimensions of the problem of credit should be taken seriously, and I am very grateful for a positive response to that. Dr Martin Kitchen just whispered to me that I could mention Greg Easterbrook's book, where there is that wonderful little comment 'Why do we feel worse and worse as things seem to get better and better?' Well, lots of implications about that.

Thank you to Mr Tim Royle for his general welcome of the report, although I accept that there were some things that he thought should have been much more strongly emphasized. Again, I am slightly puzzled, because we did say an awful lot about commitment to one another (page 85: 'passionate commitment to each other') and we talked a lot about the virtues: sexual virtue, temporal virtue, and the need for responsibility; but I take the point that he wishes that we had said more on that.

Rachel Thomas, thank you very much – I am sorry, I beg your pardon, Mr Richard Thomas. (*laughter*) I am told that the qualification for holding a chair at Nottingham is teaching first at Durham and then having illegible writing; it works right back through to Alan Richardson who, I gather, was the first of them, and then Richard Hanson and Heywood Thomas, who have all done those two things, otherwise you cannot get the job. So I am trying to read Richard Thomas's name.

Yes, I take the point about substitute relationships. The nearest that we got to this was to try to take on board some of the issues in postmodernity about the problem of a virtual reality and social constructions, and to point out that these can become idolatrous virtual reality constructs. We may not have had the space and the time to do it as thoroughly as you might have liked, but we did at least begin to have a shot at it, and we take the point that it needs to be taken further.

Thank you to the Bishop of Lincoln for pointing to the importance of this dual emphasis on both sinfulness and fallenness, on the one hand, but also joy and

celebration, on the other hand. We hope that we have managed to show quite concretely how fallenness permeates all these practical dimensions of life – sex, power, money and time – but that God also has gifts and ideals for us in these areas.

I am very grateful to Mr David Osborne for telling us that this does work in a rural parish and that he is using it as a handbook.

As Dr Baxter had pointed out to me, it is strange, is it not, that we have many more women students to whom we teach theology than men but Mrs Moriarty is the first woman theologian who has actually spoken in the debate; so I am glad that Mrs Moriarty was there to say something, and I thank her very much for pointing out this interaction between power, justice and wisdom.

I tried on the way here to replicate the situation that gave rise to my comments in the last Doctrine Commission debate: I went up and down the London train, waving this report and hoping that lager-drinking people would ask for a seminar. I can only assume that young men who drink lager in the southern province are less interested in theology than lager-drinking young men in the northern province – unless of course they all aspire to sherry and do not drink lager – but I got no real response, I am afraid.

Thank you for your many helpful responses. The thing that I value most is what I take to be your recognition that we have tried to combine serious theology, serious engagement with Scripture, with a practical and pastoral dimension. I think we say towards the end of the book that we are discussing not simply in the abstract what it is to be human but what it is to be human in a particular time and place, and we have shown that the only person who was truly human as God meant humanity to be – Jesus Christ – precisely demonstrated what it is to be human in a particular time and place.

The Chairman: Thank you, Professor Thiselton. Thank you again to Bishop Sykes and to Dr Kitchen for joining us today.

The motion was put and carried.

(Adjournment)

THE CHAIR *Mrs Margaret Swinson (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams): Although it would be a rather long job to welcome all the visitors in the gallery this afternoon one by one, there is one particular visitor whom I should like to welcome on behalf of the Synod. That is the Visiting Professor in the Study of Post-Conflict Societies at King's College, London.

(The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu, former Archbishop of Cape Town, was accorded a standing ovation.)

[The Bishop of Birmingham (Rt Revd John Sentamu): Amandla!]

We often have some difficulty determining what it is to be an Anglican. One of the best definitions I know is the short answer, 'I belong to the same Church as Desmond Tutu'. I think that it is one of the more plausible and morally persuasive answers to that question. We therefore know this afternoon that we are indeed a properly constituted Anglican assembly! It is wonderful to have you here, Desmond. Thank you for coming.

The Chairman: Before the debate on the next item begins, I would like to remind members that the Synod will have the opportunity to consider the wider Anglican Communion issues related to this subject matter after the Eames Commission has reported. I would ask members to concentrate on this report this afternoon, rather than to stray into other matters.

Some Issues in Human Sexuality A guide to the debate: A discussion document from the House of Bishops' Group on Issues in Human Sexuality (GS 1519)

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Richard Harries): I beg to move:

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

Issues in Human Sexuality was published in 1991. Shortly after this the House of Bishops set up a new group. This group began with two main tasks. First, it met individuals and groups who had particular views on the issue in question, which they wanted to make known to the then Archbishop of Canterbury and the House of Bishops. So we entered into conversation with a range of groups and individuals with a diversity of views. Secondly, we sought to keep abreast of recent writing on the subject, of which there is a fair amount.

In 1997 General Synod commended *Issues in Human Sexuality* for study in the Church. At about this time the House of Bishops' group developed a third task, namely to help facilitate that motion calling for discussion throughout the Church, and we believed that this was best done by providing a guide to the debate. This we have now done.

At this point, if I may, I would like to thank those who have helped us over the years. In addition to the other members of the group, Jane Melrose, David Skidmore, who

was attached to us from the BSR, Jonathan Neil-Smith, Jane Shaw, our theological consultant, and Martin Davie, theological consultant to the House of Bishops and the secretary of our group.

As is well known, the report *Some Issues in Human Sexuality* does not set out to change the position of the House of Bishops. It is, as the title indicates, a guide to the debate. The point of the guide is that it seeks to set out a range of positions, the reasons for holding these positions, and questions which have been, or might be, raised against them. Our hope is that everyone who reads the report will recognize their own position in it, fairly and persuasively set out, together with questions they themselves would ask about alternative views.

As a group we have particularly tried to take on board the principle of ‘interpretive charity’. This does not just mean being kind to those with whom you disagree. It means, first, assuming that the views with which you disagree are not only sincerely held but are put forward by a rational person who holds them for good reasons. Secondly, therefore, it means stating those views, with which you yourself may disagree, in the most rationally persuasive way. Our hope is that ‘interpretive charity’, in this sense, will be an increasing feature of the debate on this issue and, in this way, we will be led more deeply into arguments and therefore more deeply into the mind of Christ himself.

The first chapter of the book looks at the changes both in society and the Church. It outlines the traditional Christian view of sexual ethics, and shows how Anglican thinking has developed in recent decades on the purposes of marriage and the issues of divorce, contraception and abortion, before moving on more specifically to the development of Anglican thinking on homosexuality.

It is widely recognized that the main reason this issue is so contentious theologically is because it raises, in the most acute form, issues of biblical interpretation and biblical authority. Hence chapters 2, 3 and 4 all focus on the Bible in different ways – chapter 2 on the use of the Bible in sexual ethics. The introduction to this chapter points out that, as Christians, we read the Bible not just as a witness to the grace of God but as a guide to the path of Christian discipleship, by which we may live appropriately in response to that grace.

This means that the nature of biblical interpretation, the next section, is crucial. Here, entering into highly contentious, complex areas, in as non-technical a way as possible, we reject the notion that the meaning of a text is created simply by its readership. We affirm that texts do have meanings, but that a proper Christian humility should leave us open to have our personal reading corrected by others. We quote Trevor Hart, who argues against those who believe that they can uncover a final, fixed, ‘determinative’ meaning in the biblical text in the following words. ‘[They] effectively render themselves immune to any alternative readings of it. They “have” the text. They are no longer open, therefore, to fresh considerations of it, or to hear it speaking

in any other voice than the one they have trapped, tamed, and packaged for observation. Thus they allow their own readings to have a finality bestowed upon them, a sufficiency that lifts them above the level of the text itself and out of reach of its criticism.' Hart is equally critical, however, of those who allow the text to mean only what we will allow it to mean. To the contrary, the text is a given to which we seek to respond by a disciplined hearing. Anthony Thiselton makes much the same points, concluding,

'... need not regard conflicts of interpretation with dismay. For they belong to a broad process of testing, correcting, and initiating readiness for fresh advance, even if from time to time they also enter blind alleys.'

We then suggest that there are four aspects in reading biblical texts: 'behind the text' issues, which are to do with the linguistic, cultural and religious assumptions which the human authors of the Bible shared with their readers, and which made communication with them possible. Then 'in the text' issues, which have to do with how a particular text functions as a text; and 'in front of the text' issues, which are concerned with how a particular text relates to the biblical canon as a whole and how it has spoken to Christians down the centuries. There is then a fourth issue, raised by the other ones, which is how we deal with the tensions which appear to exist between different parts of the biblical canon.

We then consider reason, which we use, of course, in interpreting the Bible with our God-given minds. While rejecting reason as an independent source for the knowledge of God's will, we nevertheless recognize that the reasonable moral convictions of the society in which we are set need to be taken into account, and may sometimes lead us to question our own convictions.

In relation to tradition, we reject the idea of tradition as a second and separate source of revelation alongside Scripture, but recognize that the mind of God has constantly to be discerned afresh in every age and in every context, and therefore Christian tradition is dynamic and not static. We then go on to discuss reading the Bible as a witness to the grace of God and as a guide to Christian discipleship. We argue that we cannot simply reduce the Bible's ethical instruction to the command to love, because what love means and requires of us is illuminated for us by the biblical witness.

Then on ethics, virtue and biblical interpretation, we consider the view that it is the interpretative community, and in particular the interpretative community that wishes to encourage a particular understanding of Christian behaviour, that should provide the hermeneutical key to interpret Scripture. However, while it is true that performances of, let us say, a Shakespeare play or a Beethoven symphony do vary greatly from one performance to another, we argue that there is a text and a score which we are not at liberty simply to read or interpret in any way we like. The text does provide a constraint. We end that chapter by suggesting that in order to read

the Bible in a Christian way we have to allow ourselves, whatever our views, to be challenged, modified or confirmed by the voice of God, addressing us through the 'givenness' of the text itself.

Chapter 3, on the theology of sexuality, takes as its starting point the contemporary search for self-fulfilment, but argues that a Christian understanding of what this means, as well as the timescale involved, is likely to be different from a secular one. It then goes on to argue for a trinitarian approach to this issue, with sections on God as Holy Trinity, the Trinity in Christian life, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This indicates that a new identity has been given to us by God in Christ: one which calls us to radical obedience to God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. What this might mean in the context of our sexual activity is spelt out. We look not only at our identity as males and females as set out in Genesis and the traditional focus on marriage, but also on the great tradition of Christian friendship, as set out for example by Aelred of Rievaulx.

However, while accepting that there is an inevitable physical dimension to all relationships of friendship, it does not necessarily follow from this that all sexual relationships between people of the same sex are legitimate. Section 3.5 sums up the traditional approach, and then 3.6 looks at some recent re-readings of the tradition. Referring to these writers, we emphasize that they are 'deeply rooted in traditional Christian thinking about the Trinity and the Incarnation. What they are arguing is that a trinitarian and incarnational theology should lead us to accept and even celebrate same-sex sexual relationships because they have the potential to reflect, and to enable human beings to share in, the eternal love that exists within the life of the Trinity and which has been communicated to us in Christ and through the work of the Spirit.'

However, we also note that we need to ask the critical questions as to how these more recent views relate to the understanding of human sexuality which we sketched out in earlier chapters. We look at this in more detail in chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4, on homosexuality and biblical teaching, covers very well trodden ground, but does so in the light of the most recent scholarship. We consider a number of revisionist approaches to these texts, but we note that the consensus of modern scholarship does accept a traditional interpretation. It should be noted at this point, however, that we are dealing with 'behind the text' and 'in the text' concerns, not 'in front of the text' issues about how that message should be received and interpreted today.

We also look at the example of Jesus and, in particular, his ministry of inclusion and what the implications of this might be. Whilst all Christians might agree that gay and lesbian people are included and affirmed by him, questions arise about what 'affirm' might mean in practice. Many Christians, as we know, reject the idea that affirmation of itself endorses a sexually active lifestyle outside marriage.

Much debate has gone on in recent years about the relevance of Acts 15 to this issue, and we discuss this. As the Early Church saw the Holy Spirit at work in Gentiles and as a result set aside Old Testament laws to do with ritual purity and food in order to make it possible for Gentiles to be included in the Church, so, it has been argued, we can see the Holy Spirit at work in stable, loving, same-sex relationships and, in a similar way, should set aside biblical texts which seem to forbid those relationships. This, of course, is to move into the sphere of 'in front of the text' issues, and we set out a range of options.

We indicated in the first chapter of our report that this debate about the interpretation of biblical text has to be understood in the wider context of the societal shifts that have caused attitudes towards sexuality and sexual behaviour to change in the modern era. In Chapter 5 we explore this wider context in more detail and introduce radical and, for many people, fresh material from the standpoint of lesbian feminism, which offers a major challenge both to traditional understanding of human sexuality and more recent male, liberal ones.

The questions it poses, and also the questions posed in return by traditional Christian theology to the lesbian agenda, are set out in section 6 of that chapter – questions which, taken as a whole, raise the issue as to whether this very radical way of looking at human sexuality is a legitimate or illegitimate development of the tradition. We note that, while many will feel threatened by it, significant theological work has sometimes emerged from the margins of the Church. In any case, it will take time in order to develop a genuine discernment about what is legitimate and what is illegitimate in this fresh perspective.

One of the strongest criticisms of the earlier report, *Issues in Human Sexuality* – one which was probably justified – was the thinness of the paragraph on bisexuality. In Chapter 6 of the guide, we have tried to treat this issue much more substantially, noting the new work which has been done.

The issue of transsexualism has also come on the agenda since *Issues in Human Sexuality* was first published, not least in the Church, where there are now recorded instances of clergy who have changed their gender. Because of the specialist nature of this issue, our group set up a sub-group chaired by the Bishop of Winchester, which made a separate report to the Government as part of their consultation process. There is not a very great deal of theological writing on this subject, but the theological issue is fairly stark: whether our God-given identity as human beings is defined by our bodies alone or also by our developed sense of who we are.

Chapter 8, 'Homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals in the life of the Church', begins by setting out the teaching of *Issues in Human Sexuality*, and then looks at various criticisms of it that have been made both from a revisionist and a more traditional standpoint. It then explores the various options open to us as a Church today: basically, whether we take a stricter or a more inclusive approach. The pros and

cons of these options are explored, together with their counterparts for bisexual people and transsexuals.

The last chapter sets out the diversity of views both within the Church of England, the Anglican Communion, and the worldwide Church, indicating some of the fault-lines that have already opened up. We go on to consider how we can handle this debate in a theologically responsible fashion.

We argue that it has to be handled in a theologically responsible fashion; that we cannot simply say that these kinds of issues do not really matter; and that we have to be honest about the disagreements that might emerge.

I end by repeating what I said at the beginning, namely our hope that everyone will find their own view in this report fairly and persuasively set out, and see that searching questions are asked of every position.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Mr Brian McHenry (Southwark): When the General Synod gave final approval to the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure in the early 1990s, there was clear evidence of wide public support for our action. We were in tune with public opinion in our society. Large numbers of people who had nothing to do with the Church were delighted with our action. At last, they said, the Church had moved with the times. It was futile, for me and for many others, to seek to explain to them that supporters of women priests had theological arguments in favour of the change; no, there was an instinctive approval.

How different now, on the other highly charged controversy of the contemporary Church of England. From my point of view, there is increasing evidence that we are not in tune with public opinion. This is a major difficulty for us. The national media are uncomprehending of us, and that is important, of course, as they set the agenda. However, the media may be no more than a mirror of public opinion. Umpteen conversations and casual remarks made to me by non-churchpeople for months have made me acutely uncomfortable about being a member of a Church which is perceived by many to be homophobic, hypocritical and discriminatory. From establishment figures to professional people, to people in very ordinary roles in society, there is doubt about and, worse, a profound distaste for our formal public stance. In the Greater London area, where I live, work and worship, where active membership of the Church of England is growing, there is widespread opposition within the Church to that official line. That is the context as I see it.

I accept, of course, that we must avoid the dangers of just going with the flow of social developments; that we must listen to the voices of tradition; that the Gospel contains eternal verities. I do not deny all those considerations, but there are those of us who would dearly like to see a different stance adopted by the Church, because we feel

passionately that the Gospel message is one of justice, fairness, non-discrimination, inclusive of all – women, men, old, middle-aged, young, children, gay, straight, bisexual – from all the peoples and all the corners of God’s good earth. There is something very wrong when we seem to adopt a legalistic and judgemental stance to an issue which affects real people, people created in the image of God.

If we cannot at least accept that there is now a strongly held viewpoint, within and without the Church, which wants to move on to a more open policy and stance, then I am profoundly concerned for our future as a national Church. We have been the source for centuries of a broad version of Christianity to non-practising members of our society. We are placing our ability to reach out to our country at serious risk if we cannot, at the very least, come to terms with the fact that there is increasing movement away from the traditional teaching on sexuality, for all the many factors set out in the House of Bishops’ report.

There are now two strongly held viewpoints in our Church and they are approaching equivalence in their acceptability. There will never again, I believe, be the kind of vote on a motion like Tony Higton’s in the Synod in the late 1980s. We must find a way forward. Neither side of the argument seems to me to be likely to prevail, at least in most of our lifetimes. We have to live with this tension and equivalence. For that reason, I was disappointed that the bishops do not buy in to the notion of legitimate diversity. Of course that idea cannot be lazily invoked, but I ask them, if the views of those who want change in this matter are in some way illegitimate, where is their place in this Church? Far better the idea – another idea in the report – that the Church is *in via*, on the way to perfection; but, as we have not achieved it, compromises must be made.

I would not like the Synod, particularly many of my friends in the Synod who adopt the traditional viewpoint, to interpret my remarks as not respectful of that viewpoint. My profound instincts for justice, fairness and harmony are exercised on their behalf as well. This great and wonderful Church of England is a mansion with many rooms and there is room for all of us, provided we can find the language to continue a civilized and open conversation, in charity and humility.

Sister Rosemary CHN (Religious Communities): I speak in this debate from the perspective of a vowed celibate life in the monastic tradition. For me, this life, freely chosen in response to the call of God, is, at the deepest level, a way that brings blessing, joy and fulfilment. It is the way in which I, in company with my sisters, can best grow in the love of God and my neighbour.

Before I entered the community, I was happily single. I enjoyed the freedom of action that went with that state and, at key times, I had the good fortune to be part of a Church community in which single people were welcomed and treated as normal, and our contribution was valued. I would therefore strongly defend both vowed celibacy and singleness as valued ways of being human, reflecting the love of God and growing

into the likeness of Christ. However, they are minority ways. Most Christian people hope to find their fulfilment in marriage.

Close companionship with another loved person is the best environment in which the majority of people can flourish. Article XXXII of the 39 – yes, I have read them and given them my general assent – reads, ‘Bishops, Priests and Deacons are not commanded by God’s Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.’

I think we tend to take that for granted and to forget that, in its time, it was revolutionary talk. It overturned the centuries’ old assumption that celibacy was the life that served better to godliness, and it was the only way permissible for clergy. None of us, I am sure, would now want to revert to compulsory celibacy for all clergy. For those of us under religious vows, who treasure celibacy as call and gift, the idea of forced celibacy is as abhorrent as the idea of forced marriage. However, what our Church no longer requires of heterosexual clergy, it still insists on for those who are homosexual.

Since the publication of *Issues in Human Sexuality* – which we have been reminded again is not a policy document – some gay clergy have reluctantly accepted celibacy as an imposed discipline. Some of these, I feel sure, have found that through their struggles they have been given the grace of celibacy received as a gift; in fact, that they are among ‘those who, going through the vale of misery, use it for a well and the pools are filled with water’. For others, however, misery remains just misery, and they are exposed to the danger of a kind of withering of the heart, which makes them less and less able to love anybody.

Christians who are happily married can bear witness to the way in which a partner’s love can be both a means of grace and a school of the Lord’s service: a channel of God’s love to them and through them – and we all rejoice with them in that. Gay Christians in committed relationships say that it is the same for them. When I observe the quality of their lives, and feel warmed and healed by their friendship, I know that it is true. I want to rejoice with them as well, but the Church tells me that I must not.

A lay member of the Church in which I used to be a curate, when interviewed by a local newspaper about Gene Robinson’s consecration, said, ‘When God calls a man, God calls all of him, including his sexuality’. We were reminded yesterday that mission means to see what God is doing and join in. Is it not more than time for us to open our eyes to what God is doing in our gay brothers and sisters? To find the humility to learn from them? To repent of the cruel way the Church has treated them and is treating them, and to join with God in loving and valuing them for all that they are?

Revd Dr Anthony Barratt (Ecumenical Representative, Roman Catholic Church):
Thank you, Madam Chairman and members of Synod, for this opportunity to

speaking. I do so with some trepidation. I do not want to come blundering into a debate but a number of members of Synod have encouraged me to, and I would just offer a few reflections on the guide. I hope they will not be too anodyne but may indeed contribute to the debate.

I am very glad to see in the guide that it addresses this issue of authentic personhood. The guide is therefore a very welcome contribution to that ongoing debate, which we are all passionately interested in. It also offers an invitation to reflection and discussion. It is a guide, as the Bishop of Oxford noted.

I do not want to rehearse the Roman Catholic teaching, which I am sure is well known to Synod members and has been reported in various ways and at various times – to paraphrase Hebrews – in the media. However, I will just make a few general remarks.

The central question that is underlying the report – which is the relationship between experience, Scripture, tradition, and indeed teaching of theology of revelation, as the Bishop of Oxford mentioned – is a question of what is the status of human experience, and how should it contribute to the theological evaluation of behaviour. Just talking on this theology of revelation, if I have a disappointment it is that there was not very much patristic material, though I am delighted that a mediaeval writer, Saint Aelred of Rievaulx, was mentioned by the bishop.

A second issue is the nature of authority, the interpretation of that in the light of Scripture and tradition, and whether there are such things as moral absolutes. If there are not, how do we proceed and, if there are, how do we proceed?

In terms of some more general remarks about the paragraphs, I have just a few that are in no order, but rather a *smorgasbord* of things. In 1.3.20 it distinguishes between behaviour for laity and clergy – which is interesting, but I wonder too if it would be helpful to have a broader view of the call to holiness of each person in his or her own sphere of life, and the call to conversion, following Christ, repentance, and indeed sacrifice in its original meaning, that is, making holy.

Section 4.5.2 gives a summary of the biblical position. I wonder too whether, in 4.3.53, the conclusion that it gives is actually following 8.4.83. Section 4.4.10 speaks about the biblical material on the homosexual disposition and its neutrality – or not, as the case may be. Again, I wonder if there might be mention of the theology of the human person, speaking about the effect of original sin, and that only grace can perfect nature. In other words, a broader outlook on what it is to be human, whoever we are, and that conversion is possible through the power of God's grace.

There are other, more technical, elements in the document. I am not a moral theologian. I am not sure whether that is a good thing or a bad thing: I think that they are an endangered species, rather like liturgists. I would like to make just one brief remark, however, on sex reassignment surgery, and to note that there is still

a debate about the origin of this condition. Some suggest that it is psychological and others that it is a genuinely physiological condition. More research is needed, although we do note that most research is on effective surgical solutions, rather than exploring the causes of the condition.

What view do we have, as the bishop alluded to in his opening remarks, about bodily integrity, including procreative capacity, which should be respected? There is a lot to think about in that. Again, what it is to be human – as we debated this morning.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak. These are just a few very ad hoc thoughts, but I hope that they make some contribution to this most important debate.

Revd David Banting (Chelmsford): I am grateful to the former Bishop of Guildford for suggesting that anybody who speaks from the traditional understanding of the Scriptures and Christian morality is not, by definition, homophobic. I am grateful to him for establishing that point in Questions last summer.

We also meet in National Marriage Week. I am sorry to see in this report, unlike the one we previously discussed, that there is no reference to the Song of Songs. I preached from the Song of Songs on Sunday. I return from Synod tomorrow evening to a marriage event in our Church with a title from the Song of Songs of ‘Sex and the Bible: Spicing Up your Marriage’.

The greatest fuel to this debate, the strongest plea to be listened to, seems to me to come from those whose agenda is for the Church’s teaching and practice simply to be changed, who do not appear to want to engage in the serious biblical debate that this report conducts and calls for. Indeed, the assertiveness and the urgency of this particular lobby have led to widespread disturbance, and indeed schism, in the Anglican Church round the world. I say schism, because if the previous speaker talks about an equivalence in our Church in this country and in the West between two different views, that cannot by any stretch of the imagination be true of the worldwide multi-ethnic Church, which is massively and cheerfully traditional and orthodox in these matters.

If the debate that is being called for, therefore, is only to have this agenda and this intention to change the Church’s practice and teaching, I cannot be enthusiastic about it. That sort of debate ought to stop. However, I am delighted and contented with a debate and reflection on the basis of what makes us Anglican Christians, and that is on the cheerful foundation of Scripture.

This report, after once again conducting an extensive consideration – not based on simply personal interpretation, but extensive, scholarly, widespread research and consultation – has concluded that the biblical witness, as a whole, points towards the orthodox understanding of sexuality and sexual practice. That repeats the debates of 1987 in this Synod; the biblical sections of the House of Bishops’ report in the early

1990s; the worldwide, Kuala Lumpur statement in 1997; the Lambeth Conference of 1998; the booklet *True Union in the Body*, issued at the time of the Primates' meeting in Brazil two years ago and now, once again, this particular document.

This is not merely personal interpretation. It is widespread consultation, and scholarly consideration of the biblical material. Those who want to change the Church's teaching or practice need to be heard to engage with this material, and indeed this sort of conclusion, hugely more than they appear to do in the debates, when we do indeed go to listen and to reflect, and find that is not their agenda. The agenda is to change the Church's position. I have not heard anyone engage seriously with, for example, the magisterial book by Robert Gagnon – which comes to the same conclusion.

I am grateful to the gay community, the best-known pro-gay movement in this country, for agreeing that the Bible does conclude that homosexual practice is wrong. They just think that the Bible itself is wrong or irrelevant. It is a bit like playing the game Scrabble and saying that the dictionary is important for the way the game is played, as an ultimate authority, but then never actually using it in practice.

The other reason why I am severely cautious about commending this report for debate, although I will, is that it seems to me that all the passion, energy and imagination of this wonderful Church of ours ought to go, not into further debate about the Church's teaching – that seems to me to be clear and not needing significant debate – but into the wonderful pastoral task of welcome and care for all sorts and conditions of people. Some wonderful work is being done in that area, which is not being heard of.

I want to commend this report for study, therefore, but on the Anglican basis of the Scriptures. That is what properly constitutes the Anglican Church.

Dr Anna Thomas-Betts (Oxford): In 12 years, we have come down from *Issues* – all of them – to *Some Issues in Human Sexuality*. We have a report here in which everyone will find something to affirm their own view.

We are urged to continue to listen, but we are not told to what end. Does this actually represent progress? I would like to progress further and concentrate on just one pivotal issue for the moment, and that is the nature of sin. Is sin simply the violation of some regulations, even scriptural regulation, or something deeper than that? The way forward for the Church is very different, depending on whether or not you believe that gays and lesbians are deliberately disobeying God's laws, and thus thwarting his will. If yes, the logic is that there is no place for them in the Church. I see no sense in saying to them, 'Your sexual orientation is OK. That's how God made you – in his own image – but you are meant to suppress it, or even repress it totally.' If we believe that God created a range of abilities and inclinations in human beings, yet all in his image, and if you know gay and lesbian people and their suffering, and their awareness that they cannot change, then the Church has to be inclusive of them.

Sex is one of the most powerful urges in human beings. To ensure the survival of the species, God also made it fun and pleasurable, although you would not know that reading this report! Otherwise, who would bother to indulge in this weird and slightly ludicrous act of copulation? We know of countless people who have espoused and lived faithful lives of chastity, like my own two aunts who are sisters in the Church of South India. We also know of countless examples of the consequences of people being forced to live in permanent denial and repression of it. It ill behoves us, the heterosexual majority who finds fulfilment in married life, to condemn others to lives of loneliness, especially those who take on highly stressful jobs. It is cruel, and that is what we are doing.

If they are allowed committed same-sex partnerships or close friendships, we cannot police how their affection is expressed physically. Are they allowed to hug or kiss? After all, we do not ask questions about the sexual habits of our heterosexual clergy or bishops. That is why I think that more guidance on the nature of sin would be useful – not that I think that we are likely to want to be bound by it.

Mr Jonathan Redden (Sheffield): One important issue that the report does not discuss is the medical aspect with respect to health. I carried out an Internet Medline search on health aspects concerning male homosexual practice. There were few papers published in respected peer-reviewed journals. These appear to show that a male homosexual lifestyle is unhealthy. However, as far as the level of proof is concerned, it has to be said that it is not absolute or set in stone. I am sure that Carole Cull could give an appropriate statistical critique of all these papers. In other words, not all the pieces of the jigsaw are in place and therefore more work of a scientific and epidemiological nature needs to be done.

Nevertheless, there are problems with such studies. First, people are very reluctant to talk to research workers about intimate aspects of their lives. Second, if they do, it is usually either advertently or inadvertently inaccurate. Moreover, many medical professionals are not willing to carry out studies, because genito-urinary physicians do not wish to give health warnings and thus deter vulnerable people from attending their clinics. The Government, whose view is that homosexual lifestyle and heterosexual lifestyle are virtually equivalent, are seen to be closed to discussions on this matter because they want to be committed to people's choices on all sorts of social issues. The evidence as it stands, therefore, is that the male homosexual lifestyle does carry a serious health risk.

British opinion has moved since the 1960s from decriminalization to acceptance, and is going through a process of affirming and even celebrating this as a lifestyle choice. The view of many, however, is that the Department of Health, gay advocates and their supporters must show that there is no risk, or little risk, to their health in this lifestyle.

As I have said, the balance of opinion, or the balance of papers written on this subject, seems to indicate that it is very detrimental in many disease issues. The Church would

also do well to keep these considerations in mind before celebrating or even advocating such lifestyles.

I know that we are talking about committed relationships, and clearly work has to be done on that, but we need to keep all these things in mind, as well as the biblical and other sociological matters that are concerned.

The Chaplain-in-Chief (RAF) (Church of England) (Ven. Ronald Hesketh): I use that long-winded title, Madam Chairman, because I have colleagues who are Scottish, Welsh and Irish, who remind me of their other allegiances. I will remind them that they are of the Church of Desmond Tutu when I see them.

Perhaps a perspective from the armed forces might be useful. Synod may recall that homosexuality and other issues of sexual orientation attracted as much media interest for the armed forces as they do now for the Church. However, the armed forces have come through a significant policy change, but not, I may say, without dark foreboding and gloomy prognosis. In the event, one day homosexuality was banned and, the next, it was not an issue. The whole process was undertaken with a great degree of grace and of dignity.

In effect, nothing has changed. We are the same society. We just recognized our diversity. The most important thing – and I would ask members of Synod to mark this – is that we are about achieving our mission within that diversity. Of course there are issues which we are facing now: difficult issues about quartering and other matters – where they may live and partnerships – but I believe these are pragmatic, secondary issues to the acceptance of each other.

When I discuss these matters with my adult son, he tells me to ‘get a life’. These are non-issues to many in his generation. Would it were so for us. However, I also enjoy living in a Church which can, when it has the mind, value the differences of opinion held in toleration.

The armed forces have embarked on and embraced diversity because we have long learnt the lesson that it is useless to go on a mission without this. The mission depends upon it. I am very happy to go back with this report to the armed forces and to say, ‘Study this, and understand the position that you have already got to’. I commend this military discipline to the Synod.

Revd Paul Collier (Southwark): I want to thank the authors of this report because, to me, they expose a fallacy that the Church offers celibacy as an option for lesbian and gay Christians. Section 1.2.24 describes the theological character of celibacy and, later, emphasizes this as the voluntary renunciation of something in itself good. Unless your theology allows for the goodness of some form of same-sex relationship, clearly this is not what is on offer to LGBT Christians.

In a similar way, abstinence is very different for heterosexual people, who, if they are not committed to celibacy, live with the hope and expectation of marriage – which means that they can date, experience romance, and so on. However, lesbian and gay Christians seeking to obey the demands of the Church clearly cannot date and experience romance with anything other than the expectation of pain and disappointment. So, for us, abstinence can only be sterile and hopeless.

For me, this highlights a failure of imagination in this report. We cannot just transfer heterosexual experience to LGBT people as a direct analogy. Behind this, therefore, is an even more important failure, and that is the failure to ask us about our experience.

When I was reading this report at home, my partner asked me, ‘What does it say about us?’ and I had to say ‘Nothing’. I am grateful for and impressed by the comprehensiveness of this report in all other respects – bless you, you have worked hard – and I am happy to support this motion on that basis, but it seems to me that it completely fails to take account of us as Christian people. I am not a heterosexual person gone astray. I am a gay Christian. For me, and millions of others, this is not an academic theological exercise. It is about my whole Christian life. This is about my whole relationship with God. That is why, for LGBT Christians, we are utterly vulnerable in this debate.

I have been a believer from the age of nine, and of course, throughout my teenage years, I struggled with a growing awareness of my sexuality. I felt guilty, ashamed and utterly alone in that struggle for years. When I was 18, I was finally able to admit to myself, and finally able to admit to God, to expose myself completely honestly to God’s scrutiny as a gay man. That experience was possibly the most powerful one of my Christian life, because at that moment I finally and fully, for the first time, experienced God’s love and acceptance. God’s answer to all those years of struggle was to tell me that I am loved and accepted as a gay man. Throughout my spiritual journey since then, I have tried to be honest with God, honest with the Church, and honest with myself. I have done my best to serve God and the Church in my Christian life and as a priest.

At the age of 40, therefore – five years into a relationship of lifelong commitment to my partner and nearly 10 years into my ordained ministry, which is also, I believe, a lifelong commitment – I cannot separate these things out in the way that this report seems to ask me to. While I am delighted to take note of this report, therefore, I do urge Synod to support Susan Cooper’s amendment, so that, when we discuss this report, you please talk with us, not about us.

I have to say that I do not recognize the Church in this report either. The Church is not the House of Bishops and it is not the majority of scholarly opinion, however much you use that as your mantra. I was elected to this Synod as an openly gay priest. I even helpfully printed my electoral address on bright pink paper. Maybe I am foolish to speak so openly and honestly in this chamber, but I do not suppose that this is a

surprise to anyone here. The reality is out there in the Church. The majority of our members want an inclusive Church. With this report, despite its limitations, I continue to trust God utterly to lead the Church, including myself, into all truth. I support the motion.

Revd Dr Kevin Ward (Northern Universities): I also wish to support and commend this report for study and reflection. I hope that it will be a critical study and a critical engagement.

I would like to relate this document that we have before us to the discussion on mission that we had last night. Yesterday, the Bishop of Liverpool spoke movingly on our gospel of hope, justice, mercy and life. It is my hope and desire that this message is clearly seen to apply to all the minority sexual groups about whom this report is addressed. Speaking specifically about gays and lesbians, when I was growing up many gay and lesbian people found in the Church a strong message of hope, justice, mercy and life, over against a society which was overwhelmingly hostile and disdainful of us. Particularly, we saw in Jesus Christ that redeemer and advocate for whom Job cried so passionately to come to his defence and justify him in the face of his detractors.

Forty years later, the situation has changed markedly. Now society, or at least large sections of it, supports justice and mercy for gay and lesbian people. It encourages them to look for fulfilment in life through loving relationships. The Church, on the other hand, is now often seen as querulous in its support, grudging and disdainful. By and large, the Church has realistically accepted that it can no longer be the legislator of the sexual morality of our society, particularly in relation to heterosexual people. Rather, it wants to encourage people to make responsible decisions about how to conduct their life; to examine the issues in conscience and before God.

I would hope that the Church can develop a similar debate on gay issues; that it can come out of a legislative and a punitive mode. I hope that the Church can explore these complex issues with, rather than about, gay and lesbian Christians, regarding gay, lesbian and other groups as fellow members of the Body of Christ: sinners, like all people, who have in Jesus Christ an advocate and a redeemer.

The Church should encourage, and can encourage, that positive and supportive debate, to enable people to make their own decisions, just as they can do in power, money, and time. Sex is a central mystery of our being. May we also encourage such mature and responsible Christian discipleship among the gay and lesbian community.

Mrs Jane Pitts (Liverpool): What are the current objectives of the Established Church at present? In other words, what do we want? We want to follow Christ and, in doing so, have some influence for good in the country – as when we consider the problems of asylum-seekers this week, or the onward march of that global scourge, HIV/AIDS.

How do we get it? By being a broad-based institution, worthy of respect. How do we queer our pitch? By engaging in tough arguments between team members. There are,

it seems to me, some key ways to achieve these objectives when considering our response to the guide. We must be generous. For example, let us accept our brothers as they see themselves. As a CAB counsellor, if you cannot do that, you are out of a job. Be prepared to give, without attaching strings. Avoid making judgements. We must be courageous and face uncomfortable biblical challenges. We must also engage in solid, up-to-date biblical study.

In the present climate, we must acknowledge the great courage of those who are honest about their sexuality, sometimes at great personal cost. Let us remember that God programmed us for change. Our physical bodies constantly self-renew, mature, and age. Similarly, our hearts and minds learn and change in outlook from our experience of God and the world about us.

There are two possible outcomes to our discussions. Either the Church of England will become sectarian or it will go for the toughest and most hotly contested of options, i.e. it refashions its organization, to make space openly – as I pray that it will – for Christian same-sex long-term partnerships, whether of laity or clergy.

There are those of us who have seen that these can be as devoted and self-giving as the best relationships lived in the sight of God ever are.

Revd Brian Leathers (Derby): Thank you for calling me, Madam Chairman, although I am not sure, in the light of last night's debate on gender neutral titles, as to whether a married man with four children can make a maiden speech! Less still on a subject to do with sex – the ultimate sin that the world must know about.

Actually, I have never understood why everyone is so stuck on sex as *the* sin. God made me as a sexual being. He did not call me to a celibate lifestyle. My wife and I were highly influenced by something from Trobisch which indicated that there should always be something of the virginal, the innocent, the wonderful and the holy in the sharing of a sexual act within the marriage relationship. After 17 years of marriage, I am still learning more about this wonderful gift of God – which is why I want to commend this report to Synod. I have found it excellent, Bible-based, and yet really wrestling with experience.

I knew some things about sexual offences from my training as a police constable, but I was not ready for the thorough treatment of transsexualism and bisexuality in this report – not that either of those come under the term of 'criminal offence'.

We have all learnt that the ancient societies found a place for homosexual acts, which I do see as sinful. What surprised me in this report was that perhaps we have been using the wrong terms to analyse what was going on. Should we follow Freud's idea and see all people as bisexual, as if we are part of a spectrum? Great progress was made in science when we started using the wonderful principles of Sir Isaac Newton, and how much we advanced when we got into the theories of relativity and into

quantum mechanics. How much progress may we make in understanding our fellows in using new terminology?

As an Evangelical, I take Bible passages as mentioned in the report and come up with a gift from God of sexuality and patterns from God of marriage or celibacy; but I was so pleased to read counter-arguments, without rancour, deftly parrying my favourite arguments, and I believe this is an excellent tool for study at parish or diocesan level. It puts many sides of the arguments – all in one handy reference book – and I am sure that it will also help equip us in the hard task of building unity in a Church divided over views of sexuality.

It is to be a part of the human race if we are struggling with understanding and with sin, but it is to be a part of the Christian Church to know the Saviour and receive his forgiveness. I commend this report for our study.

The Archdeacon of Wandsworth (Ven. David Gerrard): In 1997 I moved a Private Member's Motion urging discussion of the House of Bishops' paper *Issues in Human Sexuality*. As it says in paragraph 1.3.22 of our discussion document today, the Synod voted to accept the motion, 'moved by the then Archdeacon of Wandsworth'. I am written out of history already! I therefore particularly welcome the present thorough and comprehensive guide, *Some Issues in Human Sexuality*; I congratulate the four bishops who produced it, led by my old friend 'the then Bishop of Oxford'!

I want to make three simple points about the tone of this continuing debate, thanking all previous speakers for their comments this afternoon. The first quotation comes from Charlie Chaplin – not often mentioned in the Synod. He was interrogated by Senator Joe McCarthy's supporters in the anti-Semitic, anti-communist, witch-hunt in 1950s Hollywood. Chaplin, originally from east London, was asked, 'Are you Jewish?' and he replied, with great courage, 'I have not that honour'. I hope that all of us who are not homosexuals will, in public or in the secret places of our hearts, when we face the question of being gay, answer, 'I have not that honour'. For gay people, like Jewish people, have endured centuries of the most horrible persecution in many countries of the world, not least by the Churches, and yet have contributed so much to the history, the culture, the literature, and the religious and spiritual life of our world, that they deserve, not our grudging acceptance, but our real, expressed gratitude and honour.

Secondly, a quotation from the Reverend Sydney Smith who, on his way up to St Paul's Cathedral through the tenement-flanked alleys of the early nineteenth century, saw two women arguing with each other a few feet across the alley and quipped, 'They will never agree, for they are arguing from different premises'. Few of our minds, I suspect, will be changed in this debate or in future ones, for we are often arguing from different premises.

David Hume once said, 'The truth comes from arguments among friends', and I hope that will happen here. It will do so if we continue to examine our premises and watch

our language. Please, no more posters like the one in an Anglican church close to me, saying recently, 'Shoplifters and shirtlifters welcome here'. No more talk of fundamentalist Taliban bigots. Finally, a quote from Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who described the function of the American Supreme Court as, 'Engaging in the everlasting search, in a civilized society, for a proper balance between authority and liberty'.

Let us, in our continuing discussion about these issues both inside and, more importantly perhaps, outside the Church, try together to find a path which will provide a proper balance between the authority of Church and Scriptures and the liberty of gay people to live their lives according to their, and not our, Christian consciences.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Dr Yvonne Warren (Rochester): I am a layperson who tries to think theologically and to act out of theological principles. I am also a psychotherapist and a sex therapist. For 20 years I have worked with those with sexual issues. I believe that I have listened, and listened sensitively, to help men and women to work through their pain and confusions, and to find a place that they feel comfortable in, are able to live within, and an identity which is theirs – whatever that may be.

In my research for the book *The Cracked Pot*, which analysed problems facing clergy, I had the privilege of spending one and a half hours interviewing over 60 clergy – male and female. All, without exception, were very open and honest with me. Out of those 60, four clergymen said that they were gay. I well remember coming out of my interviews with them feeling an enormous respect for them and being struck by their deep spirituality. In all of this debate, therefore, I have tried to have a very open mind, listening and talking with those at Synod with whom I disagree, in July and here at this Synod.

I cannot look at what the biblical text tells as ably as many can, so I have read all the texts that have been sent to us avidly. I have even read quite a bit of feminist writing, but mostly within an analytical discipline. I therefore feel that I try to be as open as I can. However, I come back every time to certain givens. First, the Bible is and always has been the sacred text of Christians. Second, we, as the Church of God and as leaders, lay and ordained, have an absolute obligation to be accountable to the word of God and to live our lives under its discipline. Third, tradition is important, but only in so far as it faithfully responds to and interprets the word of God. We live in a pluralistic society that, as Grace Davie says, is aware of its own spiritual needs but which, on the whole, has little time or respect for the national Church.

In a nation that lacks moral direction, however, and that has an ethos of 'I have a right to be happy and to do what I like', the Church is in grave danger of losing any credibility, as it more and more lets the culture of the society around it seep into its very being. Jesus said in John 17 that we are in the world but we should not be of the

world. Surely that means that we must not disregard, but need to be committed to, faithful interpretation of what are God's directions on how we should live in the world.

Revd Dr Ian Paul (Salisbury): In my discussions with many people about this report, and especially with people who found it very uncomfortable and people with whom I would disagree on this issue, they have made two main criticisms. Many people have said there is an urgency, and especially an urgency for us to change and to move on. I am very conscious, however, that time travels differently, depending on where you are standing. How long a minute lasts depends on which side of the bathroom door you are! Seriously, however, I think that it is very important for those of us who would see ourselves in, for the want of a better label, a traditional position to continue to remember the pastoral issues here. I am very grateful to Paul Collier, in particular, for reminding us of the pressing pastoral issues involved.

It seems to me to be so important for this Synod to remember that it is not just a pastoral issue: it is also a doctrinal issue. The reason why we get hot under the collar – collars of all sorts – about this issue is not simply because we are obsessed with sex, as some earlier speakers have suggested. It is because this issue is fundamentally about how we know the truth about ourselves and, immediately adjacent to that, how we know the truth about God.

A friend of mine was ordained in a member Church of the Anglican Communion which has changed its mind on this issue of sexuality. He visited them recently and found that, not by coincidence, they are also changing their mind on who God is. He sees the Church as a different Church from the one in which he is ordained. We are talking about how we know the truth about ourselves, and how we know the truth about God. That is why there must be boundaries to legitimate diversity. Why we cannot simply say, 'Let's get on, disagree, and worship the same God.' As we began to dismantle the basis of how we know the truth about ourselves, we also dismantle the basis of how we know the truth about God. If that will put us out of step with public opinion, so be it. Young people do not want a Church which is simply trendy and agreeing with them. They want to know a Church which is distinctive and which offers them some radical and viable alternative ways of life.

The burden of proof must lie with those who want to change the Church's teaching. I was so grateful to the Bishop of Oxford for reminding us that the text is given. We will change our position once there is a clear and persuasive understanding of the Bible's big story or, to coin a phrase, meta-narrative – if you are posh. A big story, which will give us something new. At the moment, I and many others in this chamber do not see a convincing explanation of that big story which causes us to change. I commend this report.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): In this Synod we frequently reflect upon the fact that we are still a Christian society, whatever the statistics may tell us about attendance

at traditional forms of worship. We rejoice in that reflection, which is enshrined in our privileged position as the Established Church. We could also rejoice that much of our legislation was spearheaded by our Anglican forebears and that even recent legislation is deeply rooted in our Christian heritage.

Thus, many of the values and beliefs which we in this Synod hold dear are shared by our fellow citizens and lived out by them day by day, regardless of whether they count themselves Christian.

In the current context, they are certainly lived out by the huge proportion of our congregations who belong to the working population, and they are part of the daily experience of the even larger majority to whom we hope to reach out in new Church, the mixed economy, and other fora for mission that we spoke of yesterday. They include a belief in the dignity and worth of all our fellow human beings, which is reflected in the various tranches of anti-discrimination legislation over recent years.

For those of us in the secular workplace these provisions are often an almost daily preoccupation, and by no means of mere academic interest. They reach into the daily lives of all of us. Workforces have learnt lessons slowly, painfully, but steadily over the years. The courts have provided a real and present reminder of new responsibilities, and most have learnt at last the wisdom of the earlier provisions and recognize the pain and waste of talent before they were introduced.

Recently, the last pieces of this jigsaw have been introduced. Because of that, they are high on the agenda of those who have to make them work and of those who will be affected by them. If those who are bound by these discover that the Church regards itself as not so bound, how will they regard this? What about the newcomers we seek? Where are they? In pubs, hotels, schools, hospitals, and offices – as we discussed.

Further, if they perceive in a secular way that affording human dignity to all their colleagues embodies an essentially Christian message, what then? Finally, they might be particularly perplexed if they read that the DTI guidance on the recent sexual orientation regulations specifically states that clergy are covered by the protections offered by those regulations. They cover ‘office-holders’. I understand that this is a result of a glitch in the consultation process and rests on the definition of ‘office-holder’, which Church House disputes. However, the issue may be further compounded when new terms and conditions of service come into force.

As a Church, in all these circumstances could we seriously consider taking up a legal challenge on the issue, should one arise? What would the consequences be in our mission to the unchurched?

Miss Jayne Ozanne (Archbishops’ Council): ‘Where are you, God? I cannot see anything. It’s too dark. It’s too painful. I cannot feel anything. I lost that ability a long time ago. How can you abandon me here, alone in this no man’s land of nothingness?’

I cannot go back. What good could it do if I could, anyway? It's far too complex a path to retrace. I haven't the strength or the desire to move on. Tomorrow will only be full of the same confusion and screaming pain. Living in the present without hope or meaning is unbearable, and I so wish that I could put an end to it all. But that is not an option either, is it? You wouldn't approve of my taking that easy way out, would you? So why leave me here? Why cannot you do something? Why cannot I feel you? Why have you let go of my hand? I've talked to my doctors and my psychiatrists. They tell me it is simple: I should change my religion. They just do not understand, and why should they? I wish I could talk to someone, anyone, who can help put an end to this short-circuiting in my brain – this tormenting that keeps going round and round in circles, driving me quite literally mad. I know in my head that you are the God of love. You created me to love – but how? If the only thing that I long and pray for is the one thing that I am forbidden, can this be true? I do not understand. You seem to be punishing me and I am trapped in this hell of deep despair: longing to find a way out of this prison cell. So how can I live? Just how do you expect me to go on?'

This is one of the many personal testimonies, written by someone who had a breakdown over the tension between their faith and their confused sexual identity. I have prayed with many such people and seen them bravely walk down that long and difficult path of emotional and spiritual healing, under the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Many, but not all, find that their natural desires change and that they are able to move on, into a lifelong heterosexual relationship. The key to coming out of their prison? For many, it is the step of getting real about how they feel, the traumas they have been through, and the anger they felt, often towards God himself. However, all those whom I have met have one thing in common. They found that the Churches were the last place that they felt they could discuss their confusion and pain. For many, this was because they feared being boxed or labelled. Even a mere admission that they were confused about their sexual identity ran the risk of being labelled as 'unsound' or 'a liability'; but where could they turn to for help? Where would you turn if you were faced with the same confusion and pain?

I know that many of us pride ourselves that our churches are open, loving, accepting places, but are they really? Are they understanding? Are they safe? Much public criticism has been made of the Church as being homophobic. The question is, are we? I believe that, to answer this, we first need to answer the question, each of us, individually. But how do we know? I would ask you, if the opening paragraph had been written by the person sitting next to you, would that change your view of them? Would you want to draw back? Would you see them as somehow different to the person that you knew before? If you find that the answer is yes, then I would suggest that you are indeed homophobic.

Mr Barry Barnes (Southwark): I beg to move:

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Oxford, in reply: Thanks, first of all, to Brian McHenry, who drew attention to the fact that the ordination of women seemed to have widespread public support and that we were in tune with the wider society, and that as a Church we now seem to be out of tune. This raises the question of the Church's relationship with the wider society and in what way we should be counter-cultural. I think that we would all agree, whatever view we take, that we should in some profound sense be counter-cultural. We need to be aware, as Yvonne Warren put it, of the wider culture seeping into us inadvertently. The same point was made, I think, by Ian Paul.

We need to ask what would it mean, in this situation, to be counter-cultural. The Chancellor of Southwark Cathedral, for example, has argued that we are best being counter-cultural in affirming stable, permanent, faithful relationships in a thoroughly promiscuous society. That is the best way we are counter-cultural. I should emphasize that in these responses I am not arguing a personal point of view. I am simply raising the kind of question which we need to go on thinking about in this debate.

Sister Rosemary pointed out that celibacy needs to be a freely chosen vocation and, for her, forced celibacy is as abhorrent as forced marriage. Against that, some people would say that the true analogy is with the single person, who has never got married and is unlikely to do so. Against that, Paul Collier pointed out, quite rightly, that at least a single person has the possibility, a role model in mind to which they can aspire. The present discipline of our Church does not allow that ideal, that role model, for somebody who is gay or lesbian.

I very much thank Fr Barratt for his contribution. He highlighted quite rightly that more work needs to be done on the status of human experience and how we evaluate that. I am genuinely not making a partisan point against the Roman Catholic Church when I indicate that historians show that one of the reasons that the Anglican Communion changed its mind in relation to contraception was actually because of the lived experience of married people, and that was taken into account by the equivalence of the decision-making bodies of the Church at the time. We do emphasize in our report though that human experience cannot be seen as a separate or alternative mode of revelation. Rather, it is part of that totality through which we read the Scriptures.

I thank David Banting for his contribution. There may be some revisionists who are not willing to enter into this debate, but there are a great number of others who are, and I hope that we have fairly reflected their views in our report. Certainly it is absolutely true – what he says by implication, and what other people specifically affirm – that if the Church of England is to change its view on this issue, it must be because it is widely recognized that there is a sound biblical and theological base for that change. Clearly that case has not been made in a way which is universally persuasive at the moment, and the debate needs to go on.

He particularly affirmed the biblical sections. Perhaps I could just point out that we did draw a distinction between 'behind the text', 'in the text' and 'in front of the text' issues. Whilst we certainly rejected revisionist interpretations of 'in the text' issues, there still remained 'in front of the text' issues: that is, how we relate what is said there to our contemporary situation. That particularly concerns, for instance, Acts 15, and whether that is a genuine analogy or not of the situation which we are in now.

I would thank Anna Thomas-Betts for reminding us that many gay people have had to live with permanent denial and repression. I think that this links up with one or two other people. Some of the people whom I admire most are actually gay and lesbian people who believe that they must lead an abstinent life but are quite open about being gay or lesbian, and I do think that their voice needs to be heard. One of the good marks of our Church now is that that is becoming more the case.

Thanks are due to Dr Redden for drawing attention to health factors; to the armed services for reminding us of the really dramatic changes which have come about in the armed services; to Paul Collier, for being so honest with us. This report does have a number of stories of gay and lesbian people, particularly in the last chapters. We have quoted quite extensively, so there is some recognition there.

Thank you to Dr Ward for reminding us that this is also related to the mission of the Church; to Mrs Pitts and Brian Leathers for raising quite fundamental questions; to the Archdeacon of Wandsworth for reiterating that truth comes from argument amongst friends. I think that we would all join together in hoping that will be the spirit of the debate in the Church in the weeks and the months ahead.

I think that I have responded to Yvonne Warren and to Ian Paul. I thank April Alexander for what she said and, finally, Jayne Ozanne, who reminded us that this is a matter of real anguish for people. On a positive note, however, it is encouraging that some churches that take a very strict line on this are now being much more open, welcoming and affirming of gay and lesbian people, even if at that stage they are sometimes not responding to that Church's particular discipline. I suppose that it is a particular challenge for every church in the Church of England to have a placard outside it saying, 'Gay and lesbian people welcome here'.

The motion was put and carried.

The Bishop of Oxford (Rt Revd Richard Harries): I beg to move:

'That this Synod commend *Some Issues in Human Sexuality* to the Church for study and reflection.'

Ms Jacqueline Humphreys (Bristol): I beg to move as an amendment:

'After the words "this Synod" *insert* the words

- “(a) recognize that faithful Anglican Christians hold differing views on the issues of homosexuality, bisexuality and transsexualism;
- (b) ask that, as we seek to discern the truth about these issues, all future debate is conducted with greater honesty, together with sensitivity and ‘interpretive charity’;
- (c) request that the House of Bishops take a lead on this by publishing a document setting out the differing positions held by members of that House and the reasons why they hold those positions; and
- (d) pending publication of that document,”’

In my view, the first two parts of my amendment, (a) and (b), recognize two most important aspects of current debate. The first important aspect is that this *is* a debate: about truth. We are trying to discern what is God’s will for human sexual flourishing. That is why the word ‘truth’ appears in the first part of (b).

The second principle is that those who disagree with us in answering that question here are our fellow Christians, who are also seeking to be faithful to God. That is why (a) is there – because faithful Anglican Christians do, at present, hold these differing views.

Because of these two principles, it is essential that we find a way of seeking the truth in love. That is, we need to pray together, read Scripture together, listen to each other, challenge each other, be challenged by each other, praying always that Jesus Christ will lead us into all truth. However, as a Church, we are frightened of doing this at the moment. We are afraid of admitting what we really think and what we believe. We are afraid of admitting that we are sometimes rather confused and muddled by these issues. We are afraid that, if we are honest, we will be rejected by our fellow Christians as being unscriptural or unloving. We are suspicious of those who disagree with us. We are afraid that, if we have this debate honestly, it may split the Church. That is a fear across the Church, not just here. I have spoken to a number of people about this over the last few days, and had widespread recognition from other people that that fear does exist. It is across churchmanship. I was talking to a chap last night who would label himself as conservative Evangelical, and he says that he, in his own context, is frightened to talk honestly about this.

That is why I have included part (c) in my amendment. What I am asking the House of Bishops to do in (c) is to show us *how* to have this debate – without fear, without rejection and without splitting the Church. Many merits as this report has, I do not feel that it actually does that. It contains some very valuable material to resource the debate we need to have. I am grateful for that, and it is why in (d) I have retained the original thrust of the main motion.

Part (c) of my amendment sets out what I think is the necessary minimum in terms of how the House of Bishops can lead us and show us how to have that debate without fear. It is a deliberately very small minimum, and I leave it to the House of Bishops to discern what else they might want to do beyond that. For example, if they are going to do what I suggest, they may well wish to engage theologians from outside the House of Bishops to help them.

In particular – and I make this very clear – (c) does not require the bishops to tell us, if they do not think that it is helpful to do so, which of them individually supports which view, or even how many of them support each view. I think that it would be helpful, however, for the rest of the Church to know what diverse range of opinions exist within the House of Bishops, and how they hold themselves together, discuss this issue honestly, remain in love and charity with each other, faithfully trying to lead the Church. They are largely united on most of the important issues, but we know that they are not united on this one. I would like to see how they can have that debate and keep that unity. These issues are very fundamental and differences of opinion are very profound.

I believe that a document which stated that there were profound differences of opinion between the bishops, and set out a model for the way to debate them while remaining in love and charity, would help the rest of us to begin to address these issues, without the fear that does exist.

Obviously (c) is the meat of this amendment. If Synod agrees with me that such a document as I have suggested would be helpful, then please vote for the amendment. If Synod does not think that document would be helpful, then please reject it. Either way, House of Bishops, please find a way to help us have this debate without fear.

I wish to quote St Paul, from the end of 1 Corinthians 13. (*The Chairman rang the bell.*) I cannot – but I am sure you know what it says.

The Bishop of Oxford: I am very sympathetic to a lot of what Jacqueline Humphreys said, particularly her last plea for the House of Bishops to take a lead in showing how we can have this debate without fear. I can promise you that will certainly be taken back, and it has certainly been heard by the two Archbishops.

Nevertheless, it is true that all the views of bishops – and they are fairly diverse – are reflected in this report. There will not be any arguments put forward that are not already in this report. It is true that there is a diversity of views amongst the bishops and we do debate amongst ourselves. You ask how can we have a good debate. I go back to the time when we were debating the ordination of women. We had a profoundly moving and influential meeting of the House of Bishops, when each one of us really took on board the views of those with whom we disagreed. It was absolutely fundamental in holding the House of Bishops together. I think that we need to do that on this issue as well.

We have to acknowledge that we failed last summer. There was disunity in the House of Bishops, and we need to work at it. We had it once, however, and I believe that it can be recaptured. Although I cannot accept this amendment, for the reasons stated, I will certainly take your plea back to the House of Bishops.

Mrs Shirley Jackson (St Albans): I would like to mention to the mover of this amendment that it is an impossibility to speak for oneself in the singular on this particular subject. We should all be particularly aware that someone else – maybe they are here, maybe they are not – is involved, as is perhaps a much larger family of persons, with whom each of us is already in communication.

For that reason only, I cannot see how one can be open; I cannot see how one can tell the ‘truth’ without implicating another; and, for that reason, I would like to make sure that this particular amendment is rejected.

The Bishop of Winchester (Rt Revd Michael Scott-Joynt): First, I really appreciate Jackie Humphreys’s work and effort, and her anxiety in speaking as she has done and raising this amendment. I am the more aware of that because she and I met in the corridors earlier today. I am grateful too for what the Bishop of Oxford has just said about the work that lies before us as a House of Bishops. I do not think that (c) is the right way forward, however.

I want to explain why it seems to me that what appears as a simple statement in (a) needs a health warning. Here I recognize that I am in disagreement with Brian McHenry and with a number of others, though I share his sadness and puzzlement about how we go on in these next years together. The reality is that, if the Synod passes the amendment, it is not only a simple statement of fact; though of course on one level what it says is true. Some will vote for (a) with an element of welcome or approval or affirmation, as we have heard in the debate that has preceded this one.

For me, those words leave an acute sense – as I observe them constantly and have done over years – of regret, of puzzlement, of penitence. I have had that sense especially strongly in the months since last summer. Each time in Confirmations I claim the royal gifts of the Holy Spirit over candidates for Confirmation, and I think of us as a so fundamentally divided Church on these matters. If those words are passed, I believe that they will be heard all round the world, in the Anglican Communion and in a number of ecumenical contexts, in the former sense: that we are, as a Church, relaxed and accepting about continuing indefinitely in this condition. I think that they will be read as a signal: that, as a Church, we are very far from, and we really do not want to find, with God’s help, with the toughness that it will be, our way back to obedience, to our sources of authoritative teaching in these matters – whether they are those of the Church as a whole or those of this Church and of the Anglican Communion.

That message will be clear to the Primates, whose statement in October was, it seems to me, a clear encouragement and a prayer for us to engage in the kind of work I have

just described, as I hear that same encouragement and prayer coming to almost all our ecumenical partners, the world over.

There is more in this motion than lies on the surface – much though I appreciate Jackie Humphreys bringing it and the motivation with which she has brought it. I believe that passing it could contribute to far-reaching responses across the world, across the Communion, among our ecumenical partners, which the Synod may or may not intend as it passes it.

Revd Penny Fleming (Guildford): Heterosexual parish priest – I cannot think of another label for me, just at the moment. I am not even sure that I am coming from the same place as the proposer of this amendment. I was quite surprised to think that I might be coming from the same place as Mr Banting at one point this afternoon.

I would like to support the amendment for two reasons, one being that I think it is encouraging the House of Bishops to come out. In my sense of using that phrase, I mean to come out, and to teach and show us how it is possible to live together in unity and godly love, when you do deeply disagree. Where I agree with Mr Banting is that I do not think those of us who are really strong on this will change our minds. I think that there is a certain amount of urgency in this matter because it concerns people and the essence of who they are.

The other reason I support this amendment is because it talks about honesty. We have had a great failure in honesty in our Church in recent times. If you do not know what I am talking about, it was the Jeffrey John incident.

The previous speaker has talked about the Anglican Communion. I want to talk from where we were asked to talk from, which is that we are the Church of England and in England, and that is why I think this is an occasion where we should not be counter-culture; I actually think that we should be catching up with the culture. This amendment would bring about a wider and more honest discussion, if only the bishops would give us the lead and do a bit of teaching on it. We may not come to one truth, of course, but that would not upset me.

Some people talk about the Bible as a guide book. I have my father's Baedeker somewhere – which will mean things to some people. I have got the odd *Rough Guide* in my house – which will mean things to other people. People who write guidebooks come from different angles and have different things they want to tell people. I think that is how the Bible came about. We are told that it is a witness. When I meet people in the police, they say that if you get witnesses to an event, you will get different stories. I do not have a problem with that. What are we talking about? We are talking about the Scriptures, which claim to tell us about God. God cannot be wrong. They claim to tell us about God and man. Man can be wrong, and it seems that possibly even when God became man, God could have been wrong. Do you remember Jesus and that fig tree? He was a bit naughty there, was he not, for a god?

Please, let us understand that we are not going to come to an agreement on this, where we all say, ‘Yes, you were right. I got it wrong.’ Can we not grasp that nettle now?

I was quite happy being a woman, until I offered myself for ordination in the Church of England. Then I discovered that it was a bad thing to be, and the biggest label I carried was ‘Woman’. Worse than that: I discovered that I was a defective male in some people’s eyes. I thought that men could do quite well being defective on their own. They did not need me to help! The biggest moment of affirmation for me, however, was when this Synod finally carried the motion and, just for once, I felt that my Church truly affirmed me, as I am, as what I am, and where I am.

I would like that for gay people too. We say that God loves us as we are. We claim that Christianity is about transformation. Some of us think that means God loves gays as they are; some of us think that means gays can be transformed, ‘therapized’ out of what they are, et cetera. Please, let us be honest about this. Let us understand where we truly are and let us give these people a bit of hope that, one day, we will stand up in public and say, ‘We love you, because God loves you, and we have finally caught up with God and our culture.’

Revd Robert Key (Oxford): I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

Ms Susan Cooper (London): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘At the end *insert* the words “in all parish, deanery, and diocesan councils and synods”.’

I am moving these amendments because we need to help our own Church members to understand about sexuality, and particularly about homosexuality. We also need to provide a space for lesbian and gay people to talk about their experiences in a local group.

I come from a suburban, middle-class, well-educated congregation. There are still many, especially but not exclusively the older members of the congregation, who are no longer in the workplace and who feel a certain amount of ignorance and trepidation about this subject. They know very little, but they are open enough to come to meetings and discussions to learn more. They think that they do not know any gay or lesbian people and so it can be a little bit scary for them, dealing with the topic.

In our parishes, deaneries, and even in our dioceses, we need to offer a non-threatening opportunity for people to learn a little more about this subject, and to hear a lesbian or gay Christian speaking of their experiences and of how their sexuality informs their faith.

I am afraid that the rather general commendation in Item 15, that the report goes to the Church for study, will not be taken up, because the Church is rather a nebulous organization. I think that it needs to be brought to the attention of each diocese, deanery and parish, as the general commendation can be easily ignored. My amendment draws attention to all the levels of the Church where study and reflection will need to take place.

Though the voices of experience of lesbian and gay clergy and laypeople are included a little in the report, reading words is not quite the same as hearing people speak. No amount of that sort of learning can help those who have not had the opportunity to hear lesbian and gay people talking about their lives and their Christian faith, and really to understand what is going on. I would remind Synod that the resolution on human sexuality at the Lambeth Conference included an assurance that lesbian and gay people would be listened to.

Just in case anybody does not know any lesbian and gay people – and I do know that those of us in the large metropolitan areas probably have easier access to people who are prepared to speak from their experience – those who feel that they do not know anybody they could invite to their parish or deanery, they can always contact organizations such as Changing Attitude or the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, who will almost certainly know somebody reasonably nearby who would be prepared to come and share their experience.

For the past 15 years or so, proper discussion in the Church has been stifled on this subject, from the top down and from the bottom up. As a result, there is an amazing amount of ignorance about homosexuality, bisexuality and trans-gender issues. I have certainly heard comments from various bishops, including some who were quoted in the media, that a lot of their postbag on this subject does demonstrate great ignorance. It is therefore our duty to make sure that any discussion relating to sexuality is properly informed. It is our duty to our lesbian and gay sisters and brothers, but it is equally our responsibility to the members of our own congregations and communities, to provide a safe environment for them to come and learn, so that they do not feel threatened.

The Bishop of Oxford: I have very great sympathy for the reasoning behind both of these amendments of Susan Cooper, but I do have to ask whether it is not too prescriptive for dioceses to spell out that study has to be undertaken in this way.

Perhaps I may draw attention to the appendix to the report, which is a report of the study days we had in my own diocese some years ago. One of the paragraphs there

says, 'Speakers were recruited through the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, Changing Attitude, the Courage Trust and True Freedom Trust. I was heartened by the ready response from these organizations and from the people they suggested I might approach to speak.'

Later, that report goes on to say, 'The personal testimonies of the speakers were, by all measures, the most important, compelling and effective part of the day. I am very indebted to all who spoke. We heard from women and men, young and older, one person who had just celebrated 50 years' partnership, some who were experiencing partnership after years of loneliness. We also heard from those who have struggled with their sexuality and chosen not to enter into same-sex relationships, some choosing marriage. All spoke with great openness and honesty.'

So I am entirely sympathetic with what you are proposing, and I very much hope that many other dioceses will follow that kind of model. However, it is probably too prescriptive to lay it down in a Synod motion, and therefore I am not able to accept it.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin (London): I think that I understand what my sister from London Diocese is trying to say. However, I would just like to throw out a line of caution.

Over past years, black people have continually been asked to go and stand before groups, talking about what it means to be black. The reality is that all we need to do is to get alongside people as human beings, to discover who they are and for them to discover who you are. I would therefore be very cautious about lots of meetings where lesbian and gay Christians are having to come and prove to the world who they are.

If we are talking about honesty, the people are there in our communities; they are our neighbours; they are even members of our families. We just need to acknowledge them as members of God's creation – human beings.

Revd Richard Thomas (Oxford): I am in a dilemma now. What happens if we reject this amendment? It having been put, the message equally goes out that we do not want to hear voices. It does seem to me to be important.

I do not think that this is as prescriptive as some have suggested. It seems to me to be common courtesy that, when one is discussing an issue like this, we actually listen to the people whom this affects.

Mr Banting made a point earlier about those of us who wish to see the Church crossing boundaries, not engaging with the Scriptures. I think that if we do hear voices, he will hear that indeed the Bible does not just belong to the traditionalists or to the conservatives, but to those of us who wish to see change.

This is an important amendment, and I am concerned that if we do not pass it now, it having been raised, it will send out precisely the wrong kind of message to those people for whom we should be deeply caring and to whom we should be listening.

The Chairman: That was a very nice speech in favour of Item 70, but we are actually dealing with Item 69 at the moment. The problem is that both were introduced at the same time. We will hold that one on file for Item 70, therefore.

Revd Stephen Coles (London): I do not think that it is prescriptive to say this. We have the history of *Issues in Human Sexuality*, which was discussed very patchily. Unfortunately, we cannot just take it for granted that, if we commend things to the Church, it will happen. Perhaps we do need to say a little more about encouraging, and then suggest ways in which it can be done, which are in the back of the companion volume that goes with the report – about how we can set up places of safety, and all that kind of thing.

Just to say that we are going to send it out for a general commendation, given the history of the discussion of *Issues in Human Sexuality*, is not something on which we can really rely. It is as simple as that, I think.

Mrs Penny Granger (Ely): I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

Ms Susan Cooper (London): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘After the word “commend” *insert* “(i)” and at the end *insert* “(ii) that lesbian and gay voices and personal experience (clergy and lay) are heard when discussions take place as part of that process.”.’

Mrs Penny Granger (Ely): I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

The Chairman: We now resume debate on Item 15.

Mrs Ann Williams (Durham): I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The motion was put and carried.

THE CHAIR *Mr James Humphery (Salisbury)* took the Chair at 4.35 p.m.

The Bishop of Woolwich ((Rt Revd Colin Buchanan): Is there a quorum present in any House?

The Chairman: We will start with the House of Bishops. Will the bishops please stand? The House of Bishops is not quorate. While we are waiting to rustle up some more bishops, would members of the House of Clergy please stand? The House of Clergy is also not quorate. Let us see if the House of Laity can do any better. It appears that the laity are quorate. (*The bell was rung.*)

Thirty-eighth Report of the Standing Orders Committee (GS 1534)

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall QC (Manchester): I beg to move:

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

The role of the Standing Orders Committee is itself set out in a Standing Order, SO 117A, namely to keep under review the procedures and the Standing Orders of Synod and to submit proposals for amendment as it thinks fit. Given that the Standing Orders were comprehensively revised in the 1990s, we have seen our role as largely a reactive rather than a proactive one.

There are many varied proposals in our report. There is no substitute for reading the report, but there are two main themes. First, a major review of the liturgical Standing Orders and, second, a review of the Standing Orders relating to Questions, which I will deal with later on. It is helpful to note that these proposals have been prompted in a variety of different ways. First, some proposals have been requested by the Synod itself – for example the new SO 113A, relating to the Church of England Youth Council, was requested by the Synod – or indeed derived from reports which have been endorsed by the Synod, that is, the report of the Business Committee almost two years ago relating to Questions.

Secondly, the proposals to amend the liturgical Standing Orders were at the request of the Liturgical Commission, after the experience of producing *Common Worship*.

Thirdly, some proposals derive from people writing in with criticisms, sometimes helpful, sometimes perhaps not so helpful – but there we are. We are glad that

people do write in, however, and it is important that we continually review our Standing Orders.

Fourthly, some proposals to amend Standing Orders are merely to update them to reflect current practice, tidying them up or – horror of horrors! – correcting corrections which have been there for a long time and we never noticed. I am sure that will continue. All these proposals, of course, are designed to improve Synod's proceedings.

The report also considers matters which we have debated but not pursued, because it is right that Synod should know that. Moreover, we say that there are some matters which are still receiving consideration, in particular speech limits and whether we should be recording abstentions – and of course our work is ongoing.

I have to say, however, that the role of the committee is merely to enable Synod to decide how best it regulates its own proceedings. The committee has no axe to grind. It tries its best to discern the mind of Synod and therefore is content to explain its reasoning and, having done so, leave Synod to decide what it thinks is best.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Mrs Penny Granger (Ely): I ought to apologize, Mr Chairman, for speaking too often this afternoon. You may be surprised and relieved that I will not raise again the question of the previous question, which is mentioned on the last page of the report, even though I continue to mourn its departure.

I want to speak to paragraph 17 on page 16, which is about addresses by invited speakers, and to link with it paragraph 14, specifically the section on page 14 which deals with presentations. According to the report on the agenda, most of the changes proposed in GS 1534 are being made in the interests of adding flexibility to the Synod's proceedings. I assume that these changes fall into that category. I am all for flexibility and for the Synod's business to be transacted in a way which is understood of the people, not least because the prime movers in the 'making Synod user-friendly' group come from my diocese, and I need to be able to look them in the eye. However, I want to ask for a little caution in the way these reforms are used in the future.

This General Synod must not lose sight of what it is, that is, its members: those who are elected or appointed, by whatever means, to sit in the chamber and do business for and on behalf of the Church of England. Whatever it says in Standing Orders, the largest possible amount of sitting time should be given over to contributions from members of the Synod. The panel of chairmen drawn from the ordinary membership of the Synod and the moving of motions by members demonstrate that the business is in the hands of members, and we erode that principle at our peril. I do not want to see a Synod run by professional experts and no longer overtly a democratic assembly.

One advantage of the present system, as someone pointed out to me, is that you can be ruder to fellow members, even Archbishops, than you can be to staff. While it may be appropriate occasionally – very occasionally, I think – to have a presentation by a member of staff, on the whole it is right to keep a proper distance between the two and for the Synod to be seen by the wider Church to run our own show.

It is also a question of time and balance. This week's tight, time-constrained agenda includes no fewer than three addresses by invited speakers. They are all fine people, as we saw today and yesterday. Two are bishops and the person we are to hear tomorrow is a Government minister. However, they take up debating time from Synod members. They also contribute to making our debates top-heavy. Heavyweights are necessary and are valued, but I do not want them to squeeze out those of us who are perhaps a bit less heavyweight. I want therefore to urge the Business Committee and the Standing Orders Committee to proceed on this matter with caution and, together with the panel of chairmen, to keep a balance, so that the Synod remains a democratic debating forum, contributions from backbenchers are maximized and, above all, we should ensure that the Synod stays in the hands of its members.

Revd Peter Spiers (Liverpool): I welcome this report and I want to urge the Business Committee and the Standing Orders Committee to go even further. I refer to participation in our debates and, in particular, to the passage on amendments and speech limits.

It seems to me that there is no doubt that people are bringing amendments in order to guarantee themselves a speech. I wonder whether or not it is possible to look at the speech limits imposed on those people introducing their amendments, because some of them need a minute to be introduced, others need three or four minutes. Could we not be a little more creative in our use of time in that respect? It was very nice yesterday morning to have to wait for 40 people to stand up before we could consider an amendment. I wonder whether that is yet another idea that could be considered by those two committees?

So also with speech limits. What I fail to understand is why, when people are presenting a report, they need 10 or even 15 minutes simply to tell us what is already in the report. I also do not understand why you cannot say something in two minutes and need five minutes to say it. I am not timing my speech this afternoon, so apologies for that.

More people could participate if we had shorter speech limits. I think that people wanting to give maiden speeches find it very difficult. I know one person who has tried on five different occasions to give a maiden speech, and has not been called. They have now given up. When you become a member of the House of Lords – correct me if I am wrong – you pick the maiden speech that you want to give. Could we not have a similar system? Perhaps in advance – a week before – you have to submit your name and say, 'I would like to give a maiden speech on this

subject'; there is a ballot, and someone's name is drawn out. We need to be more creative and imaginative, I believe. It is terrible to think that someone could go through five years and not be able to give a speech. What is the point of coming on the Synod unless you are able to make that contribution?

It also seems to me that, in our debates, the more extreme you are the more likely you are to be called. Perhaps that is a good idea in the interest of balance, but it does have knock-on effects and uses up other time that people could use.

I welcome this report. I thank the Business Committee and the Standing Orders Committee for the way they have listened to people. I look forward to the debate again in July, and I hope that they will go even further on the matter of amendments and speech limits.

The Bishop of Lincoln (Rt Revd John Saxbee): I am taking up the invitation of the Standing Orders Committee to make suggestions, as in their first paragraph. It seems to me that we could look at the issue of the kind of motion we have just had this afternoon, which is a commendation to study. I just want to float the idea of whether it might not be useful for that motion also to be subject to non-amendment, rather like a take-note motion.

It seems to me that there would be only three reasons why people would put down amendments to a commendation-to-study motion. One is that they will use it as a Trojan horse. They will introduce what are really substantive amendments to the main motion, or to the take-note indeed, and they will try to introduce something into that which is not in the nature of the commendation to study but is a related but different issue.

Secondly, I think that they would attempt to try to limit or to extend, at least to dictate, to whom the commendation to study is being made. That happened this afternoon. It seems to me that we are all here from dioceses. We hear what is being said about the commendation to study. We take it back to our dioceses and we decide there how it is appropriate to interpret that motion. I do not think that it is for this Synod to be amending a commendation-to-study motion, in order to dictate to whom the commendation is being made locally.

Thirdly, it will sometimes be used in order to try to dictate what should be the outcome of the study. It will therefore seek to try to identify certain parts of a paper for commendation, whereas the others are not. I think that is inappropriate too.

I wonder whether it could be a contribution towards circumventing some of our more convoluted debates to look at this. I would be fascinated to see, in the next report, how the committee responds to this suggestion.

Mr David Webster (Rochester): The Standing Orders Committee now have a commendable record for making a fairly quick response to suggestions and requests.

In paragraph 18 of their report, however, ‘Representatives of the Church of England Youth Council’, I think that their commendable action is not quite as speedy as the report suggests. None of us would expect Geoffrey Tattersall and his team to take action in just six months. I think that you will find that the request made by the Synod was in July 2002 and not in 2003, as is indicated in their report.

As the mover of the motion making that request, I am grateful that representatives of the Church of England Youth Council are now to have official status, in the same way as representatives of other Churches. I am delighted that the proposed new Standing Order goes a step further, in that the representatives of the Youth Council will be able to table questions, and indeed to speak in any debate, without, as is the case with representatives of other Churches, prior arrangement.

As some members may remember, my request for this Standing Order stemmed from a visit I made a couple of years ago, in representing the Church of England at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It was there that I was impressed by the participation of young people. I hope that, before too long, when the Youth Council comes fully into being, similar participation will be possible in this Synod.

Revd Canon Bob Baker (Norwich): I have only two very brief points. The first is more serious than the second. The smooth running of this Synod depends not only on good Standing Orders but on the superb service we receive from the staff. I was disturbed to discover that, in preparation for the major business we had to do on Tuesday, members of the legal staff had literally been up till very late at night all over the weekend, and one member of the legal staff had had to give up some of his planned holiday to deal with those issues.

Part of the problem is that people do not put in amendments until the very last minute. I wonder if the Standing Orders Committee would look again at the notice for amendments, to reduce this unfair, and I think rather unkind, burden on our staff. I might say that the legal team have not complained to me at all, although I expect Judith will buy me a drink afterwards!

The second point is to do with Questions. We save a lot of time at Question time by not reading out the Questions. Could we not save a lot more time by printing the answers?

Mr Peter Smith (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall, in reply: I am very grateful to all those who have contributed to the debate. I am particularly grateful to Mrs Granger for not going into the previous

question – which I am not sure that I have ever understood but, if she is prepared to explain it to me one day, maybe I will understand a bit more.

As to presentations and speakers, I think that your remarks are really for the Business Committee, in the sense that we simply draft the Standing Orders. The chairman of the Business Committee will have noted what you say and will no doubt act accordingly.

To Mr Spiers, who raised the question of amendments and speech limits, as I said in opening the take-note debate, we are still considering the question of speech limits. Indeed, we are due to meet the Business Committee in May at a joint meeting, and will no doubt report further to Synod on our views about that, which is a difficult issue.

As to the Bishop of Lincoln, if you ask for suggestions, do not expect people not to give them, but you do not have to wait until this group of sessions to give them. You can write to us any time you feel free, and we will consider anything that you want to say. Indeed, that goes for all members. I am told that Synod used to have what were called ‘study motions’. We will have to reflect on what you say, to see what happened in the past and whether or not we need to consider it for the future.

To Mr Webster, yes, you have got us. The date is wrong. Of course I do remember your proposing the following motion in July 2002. I remember it because you asked a question at the next group of sessions, asking what we were doing about it. The answer was that we had not then met – but there we are. We could perhaps have come back a bit sooner than now, but time constraints have prevented us from doing so. It is a good Standing Order and I hope it serves us well.

Canon Baker spoke about the amount we are understaffed, and that is undoubtedly true – in this field and indeed in any others. He also invited us to look at notice for amendments. We will do that. However, he can look at SO 11 and reflect on that, which I think does give the power to the Business Committee to vary periods of time. There may therefore be a way round there. Thank you to those who have contributed.

The motion was carried.

The Chairman: Under SO 39(b) I have given my permission for items 26–46 to be taken en bloc.

SO 4

‘In paragraph 4(a) *leave out* the words “or SO 116(d)”.’

SO 12

‘*Leave out* the existing Standing Order and *insert* “When notice is required under these Standing Orders it shall be given:”’

- (i) to the Clerk to the Synod, in writing signed by the member, or
- (ii) to an address notified by the Clerk to the Synod for the purpose, by facsimile or email which is sent from an address previously notified to the Clerk to the Synod.”.’

SO 26

‘Leave out the existing Standing Order and insert

“(a) Subject to SO 10(c) and to paragraph (b) of this Standing Order, the full text of an amendment in writing and signed by the mover shall be delivered to the Clerk to the Synod:

- (i) where the amendment relates to business appointed for the first of a group of sessions, or which in the normal course of events is expected to be considered at the first of a group of sessions, not later than 5.30 p.m. on the day immediately before the first day appointed for the group of sessions; and subject thereto –
 - (ii) where the amendment relates to business appointed for a morning sitting, or which in the normal course of events is expected to be considered at such a sitting, not later than 4.00 p.m. on the day before that sitting; and
 - (iii) where the amendment relates to business appointed for an afternoon or evening sitting, or which in the normal course of events is expected to be considered at such a sitting, not later than 10.00 a.m. on the day of that sitting.
- (b) With the permission of the Chairman:
- (i) an amendment may be moved notwithstanding that due notice of it has not been given;
 - (ii) an amendment may be moved in a form different from that of which notice has been given; and
 - (iii) an amendment may be moved to an amendment.”.’

SO 10

‘Leave out paragraph 10(a) and insert

“(a) Subject to any provision to the contrary made elsewhere in these Standing Orders, notice of business relating to or arising from business already on the agenda shall be delivered to the Clerk to the Synod:

- (i) where the business relates to or arises from business appointed for the first of a group of sessions, or which in the normal course of events is expected to be considered at the first of a group of sessions, not later than 4.00 p.m. on the day immediately before the first day appointed for the group of sessions; and subject thereto –
- (ii) where the business relates to or arises from business appointed for a morning sitting, or which in the normal course of events is expected to be considered at such a sitting, not later than 4.00 p.m. on the day before that sitting; and
- (iii) where the business relates to or arises from business appointed for an afternoon or evening sitting, or which in the normal course of events is expected to be considered at such a sitting, not later than 10.00 a.m. on the day of that sitting.”.’

SO 25

‘In paragraph (a) after the words “any motion” *insert* the words “, or any amendment,”.’

SO 27

‘In SO 27(b)(i) *leave out* the word “main” and *insert* the word “substantive”.’

SO 39

‘*Leave out* this Standing Order and *insert*

“(a) Where an agenda or notice paper contains a motion for the amendment of Standing Orders, the Standing Orders Committee shall submit to the Synod a written report or comment thereon (which may be included in a notice paper).

(b) With the permission of the Chairman, motions for the amendment of Standing Orders may be taken en bloc where no notice of amendments has been given and where no member indicates that he wishes to speak against one or more of the motions.

(c) If the Business Committee determines that any proposed amendment of Standing Orders does not need to be debated, the following provisions shall apply:

- (i) Unless
 - (aa) notice is given by not less than five members not later than 5.30 p.m. on the first day of the group of sessions

at which the proposed amendment has been laid that they wish the proposed amendment to be debated; or

- (bb) due notice is given by any member that he wishes to move an amendment to the proposed amendment,

the proposed amendment shall be deemed to have been approved by the Synod without amendment.

- (ii) If due notice has been received of a desire to debate a proposed amendment, or of the moving of an amendment to a proposed amendment, when the item on the agenda consisting of the proposed amendment of Standing Orders is reached the Chairman shall call upon the chairman or another member of the Standing Orders Committee to move the motion “*That this amendment be made*”; and debate shall then proceed in the usual way.”’

SO 56

‘In paragraph (c) *leave out* the word “Revision” (where it first occurs) and *insert* the word “Steering”.’

Reports on Questions of Doctrine

‘*Insert* as a new SO 75A

“*Reports on Questions of Doctrine*

75A (a) At any point after the consideration of liturgical business at First Consideration stage and before that liturgical business stands committed to the House of Bishops, a report on any question of doctrine arising out of that liturgical business may be called for from the House of Bishops by:

- (i) the Revision Committee for that liturgical business;
- (ii) the House of Bishops; or
- (iii) any other member of the Synod, provided that not less than 100 other members indicate by standing in their places that they support the call for such a report.

(b) In the event of a report being called for from the House of Bishops under paragraph (a) above, the liturgical business shall stand adjourned until the completion of the debate on the motion referred to in paragraph (d) below.

(c) When prepared, the report shall be delivered to the Clerk to the Synod, who shall include it in the agenda for the next group of sessions and circulate it to all members of the Synod.

(d) When the report has been called by the Chairman of the sitting, a member of the House of Bishops shall move ‘*That the Synod do take note of this Report*’. It shall not be in order to move any amendment to the motion, or to move any further motion in relation to the report.”.’

SO 77

‘In paragraph (a) at the end *insert* the words “If 40 or more members stand in their places, debate on the motion shall forthwith be resumed.”.’

‘*Leave out* paragraph (aa) and *insert*

“(aa) More than one motion for re-committal may be moved in respect of the same part of liturgical business.”.’

SO 24

‘In paragraph (a) after the words “this Standing Order,” *insert* the words “and subject to SO 77(aa),”.’

SO 80

‘In the heading *leave out* the word “Continuance” and *insert* the word “Extension”.’

‘*Leave out* paragraph (b)(i) and *insert*

“(i) First Consideration (SO 75, paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) (but so that the proceedings at that stage shall commence with a motion in the form ‘That an extended period of authorization until . . ./the discontinuance from . . . of the liturgical business entitled (Short Title) be referred to the House of Bishops’.”.’

Minor Adjustments to Forms of Service

‘*Insert* as a new SO 79B

“*Minor Adjustments to Forms of Service*

79B (a) Where the Business Committee determines that liturgical business comprises minor adjustments to a form of service already authorized by the Synod, the liturgical business may be dealt with under the procedure specified in this Standing Order unless either:

- (i) 25 members of the Synod give notice by 5.30 p.m. on the first day of the group of sessions at which the liturgical business has been laid; or
- (ii) the Steering Committee give notice, following the giving of due notice of a proposed amendment to the liturgical business

that they wish the liturgical business to be dealt with in accordance with SO 75(a). Should any such notice have been received, the Chairman shall, when the item on the agenda is reached, call upon a member of the Steering Committee to move the motion specified in SO 75(a).

(b) Liturgical business to which this Standing Order applies shall commence with a motion by a member of the Steering Committee '*That the liturgical business entitled (Title) be considered*' to which no amendment shall be in order, and shall thereafter be dealt with in accordance with the procedure prescribed in this Standing Order.

(c) When the item on the agenda is reached the Chairman shall call upon a member of the Steering Committee to move the motion referred to in paragraph (b) above. If that motion is carried the Chairman shall call the mover of any amendment of which due notice has been given to speak for not more than five minutes; immediately thereafter, a member of the Steering Committee may speak for not more than five minutes in reply:

- (i) if the member of the Steering Committee indicates his support for the amendment the debate thereon continues;
- (ii) if the member of the Steering Committee indicates that he does not support the amendment, the Chairman shall declare the amendment to have lapsed unless 40 or more members indicate that they wish the debate to continue.

The procedure in SO 56(e) to (g) shall then be followed in relation to the amendment.

(d) When all amendments have been dealt with, a member of the Steering Committee shall move the motion '*That the liturgical business entitled (Title) be approved*'. If that motion is passed the liturgical business shall stand automatically committed to the House of Bishops, which shall consider it as provided for in SO 84.

(e) In this Standing Order the expression 'form of service' shall be construed in accordance with Canon B 1.''

SO 10

‘After paragraph 10(c) *insert*

“(d) Notice of an amendment to liturgical business under SO 79B (*Minor Adjustments to Forms of Service*) shall be delivered to the Clerk to the Synod not later than 5.30 p.m. on the day which falls two clear days (excluding Saturday or Sunday) before the first day appointed for such business to be considered or if no such day is appointed the first day when such business in the normal course of events is expected to be considered.”’

Expedited Further Revision Stage

‘*Insert as a new SO 78A*

“*Expedited Further Revision Stage*

78A (a) If, before the debate on the motion specified in SO 77(a), the Steering Committee gives notice in a Notice Paper of its intention in the event of such motion being carried to hold the Further Revision Stage at the same group of sessions as that at which such motion is passed, the procedure in this Standing Order will apply on the passing of such motion unless the Revision Committee, the Chairman or 40 members object.

(b) Where this Standing Order applies, both the Further Revision Committee Stage and the Further Revision Stage shall be held at the same group of sessions as that at which the motion specified in SO 77(a) is carried.

(c) SOs 53, 54 and 76 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the Further Revision Committee Stage, save that:

- (i) members (other than members of the Revision Committee) shall have no right to submit proposals for amendment of the liturgical business; and
- (ii) the report of the Revision Committee shall be made to the Synod and debated in the same group of sessions as that in which the motion specified in SO 77(a) is carried.

(d) SO 79 shall apply to the Further Revision Stage.”’

Final Revision Stage

‘*Insert as a new SO 79A*

“*Final Revision Stage*

79A (a) When a Further Revision Stage has been completed under SO 79, a member of the Steering Committee may move *‘That the liturgical business entitled (Title) be considered for Final Revision in Full Synod’*.

(b) Any such motion shall require a majority in each House of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting.

(c) If the motion referred to in paragraph (a) above is carried, the Synod shall proceed to consider the liturgical business further. SO 79 (other than paragraph (c)) shall apply to such consideration.”.

SOs 95 to 96

‘Leave out SOs 95 to 96 and insert

“Ordinary Reports

95 (a) Subject to SOs 96 and 97, every report intended for debate by the Synod shall be delivered to the Clerk to the Synod who shall, unless directed otherwise by the Business Committee, include it in the agenda of the next group of sessions and circulate it to all members of the Synod.

(b) Subject as aforesaid, when a report has been called by the Chairman of that sitting the Chairman or another member of the body concerned shall move *‘That the Synod do take note of this Report’*. It shall not be in order to move an amendment to the motion.

(c) If the motion is carried, it shall not be deemed to commit the Synod to the acceptance of any matter contained in the report.

(d) If the motion is carried, motions in relation to any recommendations appended to the report shall then be moved in turn and shall be capable of amendment. When such motions have been disposed of, any member may move after due notice a further motion expressing approval or disapproval in whole or in part of the report or otherwise relevant to and within the scope of its subject matter.

(e) If the motion is lost, no further discussion of the report shall be in order during the lifetime of that Synod and the business of the Synod shall proceed as though the report in question had not been brought before the Synod.

(f) Where the Business Committee is of the opinion that it would be for the better conduct of the Synod’s business, the Committee may

determine that a report need not be the subject of a debate under paragraph (b) above, and the Clerk to the Synod shall so indicate in the agenda. In that event motions may nonetheless be moved in relation to the report under paragraph (d) above as if the motion specified in paragraph (b) above had been carried in relation to it.

(g) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (d) above, it shall not be in order for a member to move any such further motion in relation to a report by the Business Committee on the agenda of a session or group of sessions.

Annual Reports

96 (a) The Archbishops' Council shall cause a report of its work and proceedings during the year in question to be laid before the Synod before the end of June in the following year. The only motion to be appended to such a report shall be *'That the Synod do take note of this Report'*. Such report shall include specific reference to –

- (i) the work of bodies answerable to the Synod through the Council as determined in accordance with the provisions of SO 109(a);
- (ii) the membership of each such body, the status of each member and any changes in membership during the year; and
- (iii) the number of meetings held by each such body.

(b) If the Business Committee so directs, the Clerk to the Synod shall include in the agenda the annual report of any body (not being a body referred to in SO 119(a)) which has been delivered to him.

(c) The Synod shall be deemed to have formally taken note of a report referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) above unless, not later than 5.30 p.m. on the day which falls six clear days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) before the first day appointed for the group of sessions at which the report has been laid, a member of the Synod gives notice in writing to the Clerk to the Synod that he wishes to debate the motion appended to that report including details of his points of concern. If such notice is given, the Chairman of the sitting shall, when the item on the agenda is reached, call on the chairman or other member of the body in question to move *'That the Synod do take note of this Report'*. It shall not be in order to move an amendment to this motion nor (except in respect of a report referred to in paragraph (a) above) may any further motions be moved in relation to the report in accordance with SO 95(d).

Presentations

97 (a) Where the Business Committee is of the opinion that it would be for the better conduct of the Synod's business, the Committee may determine that an item of business should be the subject of a presentation to the Synod and the Clerk to the Synod shall so indicate in the agenda. The presentation may be made in such form and by such persons (who need not be members of the Synod) as shall be agreed by the Committee.

(b) Without prejudice to paragraph (a) above, if the Business Committee so agrees the person or persons making the presentation may be invited by the Chairman to answer such questions by members of the Synod as the Chairman may allow.

(c) Where the presentation relates to a report to which SO 95 applies, once the presentation has been completed the motion specified in SO 95(b) may, but need not, be moved. Further motions in relation to the report may also be moved by any member in accordance with SO 95(d).

(d) Where a presentation relates to a report to which SO 96 applies, once the presentation has been completed the motions specified in SO 96(a) or (c) may, but need not, be moved. Further motions in relation to any report to which SO 96(a) applies may also be moved by any member in accordance with SO 96(c).'

SO 98

'Leave out all words after "has been submitted" and *insert* the words "where such a report has been submitted, the relevant motion shall not be voted upon by the Synod until either:

(a) a member of the Council or the Commissioners (as the case may be), or a member nominated by them for the purpose, has been called upon by the Chairman to speak to its report; or

(b) the Council or the Commissioners (as the case may be) have indicated to the Chairman that they do not wish any member to be called upon by the Chairman to speak to their report".'

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall: I beg to move:

'That these amendments be made with effect from Monday 16 February 2004.'

Dr Carole Cull (Oxford): ‘Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work and on the seventh thou shalt rest.’ Canon Baker has already alluded to the issue which concerns me. There is an inconsistency in the Standing Orders presented to us, in that if the staff are working on Questions or on annual reports, they are not required to work on Saturdays and Sundays, whereas if they are working on amendments there is no such provision.

I wonder whether the Standing Orders Committee have the permission of the Synod to insert such a provision, so that where it says the day before, that should say ‘not including Saturdays and Sundays’.

Mr Barry Barnes (Southwark): Items 43 and 44 deal with the Revision Committee stage, so far as liturgy is concerned. I am sure that we had all hoped that a later Synod would not be burdened with the liturgical amendments that we have had in the past when we dealt with *Common Worship*. One never knows what might happen in the future, and most of those of us who lived through the work on *Common Worship* will know how we suffered from it. There were endless points taken on the minutiae of the services. We enjoyed the two debates on the meaning of *ek*, and I am sure that we were grateful to the Bishop of Liverpool and the Bishop of Rochester for that very interesting debate. It nevertheless took up a great deal of time of Synod. I am sure that the tedium of dealing with *Common Worship* must have put a lot of people off actually standing again for the last quinquennium.

If we had a commission of the whole Synod, it could look at drafts of liturgy. It could then submit them to the House of Bishops for consideration, and they could then come to the Synod to be debated and either approved or not, as the case may be.

I hope that I am not speaking out of order in doing this, but I would ask that the Standing Orders Committee look again at how we deal with liturgy.

The Bishop of Woolwich (Rt Revd Colin Buchanan): I would just add one line to that. I have sat in this Synod and participated in four major sets of liturgical revision. After each set, the House has repented of the Standing Orders that it has used and has gone on to ones which have usually been worse.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall: Dr Cull, I fear that you may be right. In SOs 10(a) and 26 we do not exclude Saturday and Sunday. In SO 10(b), we do. I have no idea why there is a distinction. It has existed for many years. It has never caused us problems, but now that it has been raised no doubt we ought to address it. If we have a procedure to amend Standing Orders, we can no doubt do it very quickly. It will not be a problem in July, because we meet first on a Friday, but no doubt we will have to look at this.

I think that the points which Mr Barnes made were really about the self-discipline of members. That is really, it seems to me, a matter for members and not for the Standing Orders Committee. To the Bishop of Woolwich, what can I say but ‘wait and see’?

The motions were put and carried en bloc.

SOs 105 to 109

‘Leave out SOs 105 to 109 and insert

“QUESTIONS

General

- 105 (a) Subject to SO 10(b), a question (for oral or written answer) may be asked by any member of:
- (i) the chairman of each of the three Houses of the Synod;
 - (ii) the chairman of the Archbishops’ Council;
 - (iii) the Secretary General;
 - (iv) the Clerk to the Synod;
 - (v) the chairman of any body answerable to the Synod through the Archbishops’ Council as determined in accordance with the provisions of SO 119(a);
 - (vi) subject to (vii) below, the chairman of any Church of England body on which the Synod is represented;
 - (vii) in matters concerning the Church Commissioners, one of the three Church Estates Commissioners;
 - (viii) in matters concerning the Royal School of Church Music, the representative of the Synod on its Governing Council.
- (b) A member may ask up to two original questions for answer at any one group of sessions and up to two questions for written answer between groups of sessions under SO 109A.
- (c) Questions for answer at a group of sessions shall be accompanied by an indication as to whether an oral or written answer is required.
- (d) The Clerk to the Synod shall have power to require that a question shall be accompanied by a copy of any document to which it refers.
- (e) A member may withdraw any question for answer at a group of sessions by written notice to the Chairman, whereupon that question shall not be put.

Content

- 106 (a) A question shall relate:
- (i) in the case of the Secretary General or the Clerk to the Synod, to their respective duties; and
 - (ii) in the case of the chairman of any body referred to in SO 105, to the business of that body.
- (b) A question or supplementary question shall not
- (i) contain any argument or imputation; or
 - (ii) ask for any expression of opinion (including on a question of law) or for the solution of any hypothetical problem.
- (c) Where the Clerk to the Synod informs a member that his question is out of order, the member may ask for a ruling from the Chairman of the sitting of the Synod at which the question (if in order) would be answered or, when the Synod is not in session, from the chairman of the Business Committee. The chairman concerned may consult the Registrar upon the matter in question.

Supplementary Questions

- 107 (a) Any member may, in the light of the answer given to an original question for oral answer at a group of sessions, ask without notice one supplementary question in respect of and arising from such answer. Unless the Chairman determines otherwise, not more than two supplementary questions may be asked in respect of each original question asked.
- (b) The member who asked the original question shall have priority in asking the first supplementary question.
- (c) A supplementary question shall be strictly relevant to the original question and to the answer given.

Procedure for Reply to Questions for Oral Answer at Groups of Sessions

- 108 (a) The Business Committee shall allocate in the agenda for a group of sessions one or more periods of time for the answering of questions of which due notice has been given. Where two or more such periods are allocated they may, but need not, be consecutive.

- (b) At the relevant time, the Chairman shall call on the persons who are to answer the questions of which due notice has been given.
- (c) Where a question is asked of the chairman of any body falling within SO 105(a)(i), (ii), (v) or (vi), he may direct that the question be answered by some other member of the Synod who is a member of the body concerned.
- (d) With the Chairman's permission a single answer may be given to more than one question.
- (e) Save with the Chairman's permission, no oral answer to a question or supplementary question shall exceed one minute in length.
- (f) If there is not time for any answer to be given orally within the period allotted at a group of sessions, the Clerk to the Synod shall display a copy of that reply on an appropriate noticeboard throughout the remainder of the group of sessions.

Circulation of Questions and Answers

109 (a) Copies of questions for oral or written answer at a group of sessions shall be made available to members by the time answers are due to be given.

(b) A written copy of the proposed answer to each question of which notice has been given for oral answer shall be delivered by the Clerk to the Synod to the member who has given such notice not later than one hour before the time the answer is due to be given.

Answering of Questions between Groups of Sessions

109A The Business Committee may specify a date or dates between groups of sessions by which due notice may be given of questions for written answer. The answer to any question of which due notice is given by such date shall be given in writing to the member asking it not later than such date as the Business Committee may specify. The text of any such answer shall be included in the *Report of Proceedings* relating to the subsequent group of sessions.”’

SO 10(b)

‘Leave out SO 10(b) and insert

“(b) Subject to SO 4(b), notice of a question under SO 105 shall be delivered to the Clerk to the Synod

- (i) in the case of a question for answer at a group of sessions, not later than 5.30 p.m. on the day which falls seven clear days (excluding Saturdays and Sundays) before the first day of the period approved by the Synod for the group of sessions concerned; and
- (ii) in the case of questions for answer under SO 109A, not later than 5.30 p.m. on the day specified by the Business Committee under SO 109A for the purpose.”?

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall: I beg to move:

‘That these amendments be made with effect from Monday 16th February 2004.’

SOs 105 to 109, which is what Item 47 relates to, deal with Questions. Synod will recollect that in July 2002 it debated a report from the Business Committee, GS 1456, and carried a motion inviting the Standing Orders Committee to introduce changes to the Standing Orders to reflect the recommendations in that report.

These proposals reflect such recommendations, except one. The exception is that contained in paragraph 8 of the report, and that was the prioritization of Questions, in the sense of some Questions always being taken before others.

This was tried experimentally in November 2002, but was not perceived to be a success, in that it was felt, given the number of Questions, that there would always be some bodies who were probably never reached. It was not thought that that was a good idea, so the Standing Orders Committee, with the concurrence of the Business Committee, thought it inappropriate to pursue that recommendation.

In addition, we propose two other matters which were not in the Business Committee’s report. The first relates to SO 109(b), and provides that a copy of the proposed answers to Questions should be made available to questioners before Question time. This derives from a suggestion made by the Bishop of Woolwich, which was endorsed by the Business Committee. What a combination! No doubt this will affect the dynamics of Question time, although of course the questioner will need to direct his supplementaries to the answers given orally and not the disclosed proposed answer, where there is a difference. We acknowledge that the price that Synod may have to pay for that is that the answerer may have to confess that he or she does not know the answer: in which case, so be it.

Secondly, we have amended SO 106 to reflect the asking of Questions concerning legal issues, and the amendment reflects the position in Parliament. As I have already said, our work on this topic remains incomplete, and we intend to bring further proposals related to SO105 at some stage.

Perhaps I may mention Item 48. This is consequential. Because of the new requirement that the text of answers be given in advance of Question time, it provides that the deadline for the Questions is advanced by one day. The staff advise us that administratively this is necessary.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr Paul Boyd-Lee (Salisbury): I have a point of clarification. We have several Standing Orders within this part of the motion, and yet there is a three-minute speech limit. Does that mean that someone who speaks has to speak to all those Standing Orders within the three minutes, or can they be taken separately?

The Chairman: I will take advice. I am intending to take each of the amendments in Mr Humby's name and I intend that there be a three-minute speech limit throughout that process. It is for members of Synod to decide whether they wish to stand to speak on those items, in the light of the debate as it progresses.

Mr Lee Humby (London): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph (b) of SO 105 *leave out* the words “two original questions” and *insert* the words “three original questions, of which two may be for oral answer”.’

This amendment would have the effect of continuing to allow up to three Questions to be tabled for answer at each group of sessions, but accepts the limit of only two Questions for oral answer. It is intended as a compromise and, taken with my later amendment to SO 109, as an attempt to encourage more questions to be submitted for written rather than oral answer.

At the moment, I suspect that one of the reasons why so few Questions are tabled for written answer is the lack of publicity given to the answers for them. The Question is printed without answer in the booklet with the other Questions; maybe there is a single copy of the answer available at the reception desk; but most people do not find out what the answer is until the *Report of Proceedings* is published.

One of the reasons that prompted me to move these amendments was the Standing Orders Committee's acceptance of Bishop Buchanan's suggestion that the proposed answer to oral Questions be given to the person putting the Question before Question time begins. I understand from Church House staff that there would be no difficulty in also making available and circulating to all members the answers to written Questions at the same time. That is what my proposed amendment to SO 109 would achieve. I hope that Synod will accept this amendment and will also accept my later amendment to SO 109 and, as a result, we will see a lot more written Questions in the future.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall: I have to remind Synod that the proposal to reduce the number of Questions from three to two was contained in the report of the Business Committee and was approved by this Synod in July 2002. I have to say that quite strongly.

There were probably three reasons why the Business Committee proposed this and Synod approved it. First, that there were too many oral answers Questions being sought. Second, that the burdens on the staff and those answering the Questions were becoming larger. Third, that a more disciplined use of Questions was to be encouraged.

While Mr Humby's amendment will not lengthen Question time – in other words, the number of oral answers – it will increase the burdens on the staff beyond that which we propose. Additionally, it is not the best form of encouragement to self-discipline. So, being loyal to Synod's own decision in July 2002, the Standing Orders Committee would want the Synod to reject this amendment.

Mr Roy Thompson (York): Questions are a means of making points or obtaining information, routinely – when chairmen are routinely ignoring some potential speakers from the House of Laity. I now use this procedure of posing Questions routinely.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells): I am grateful that this amendment is being put, but I would want to resist it, the reason being that there is a question over whether or not two oral Questions are enough.

I met up with a colleague in work a few months ago; she said something to me and I thought, 'She's being a bit pedantic', and so I said so. She said, 'No, I'm not being pedantic; I'm being punctilious.' I had to go and look it up in a dictionary. It is to do with precision.

I think that there is something wrong in SO 105(a), which actually makes 105(b) look a little odd. The very first line of SO105(a) speaks of each chairman. As we do not have a chairman of the House of Clergy – I think we have two Prolocutors – there are four people who will have to answer each question, and that probably means that four original questions might need to be put.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): I beg to move:

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

Mr Lee Humby (London): I beg to move as an amendment:

'In paragraph (b) of SO 108 *insert* at the end "and the questions to the chairman of bodies falling within SO 105(a)(i) and (ii) shall be taken first".'

In a paper that was debated by Synod in July 2002 it was proposed that Question time be structured so that Questions for particular bodies be taken first. As we have heard, the Standing Orders Committee has decided not to proceed with that proposal. This amendment, if passed by Synod, would mean that Questions to the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council would always be taken first.

If Questions to all bodies continue to be taken by strict rotation, there will, as happened at the beginning of this quinquennium, always be periods of groups of sessions when Questions to these bodies are unlikely to be reached, even with the new limitation on the number of oral Questions that can be asked.

As the House of Bishops represents our spiritual leadership, the Archbishops' Council has the statutory responsibility for coordinating much of the work of this Church's central bodies. I do not believe that this is a satisfactory state of affairs. Questions to all bodies are important, but I believe that Synod must always be able to put questions to and to receive oral answers from those two leading bodies in the life of our national Church.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall: The Business Committee report, which came to Synod and was approved by Synod, suggested separate periods at Question time for three groups. First, Questions for the Houses and the Archbishops' Council. Second, to officers of the Synod – the Secretary General and the Clerk to the Synod. Third, all other boards, councils and other bodies. That was something which the Business Committee thought was a good idea and so did Synod – and we tried it. The Standing Orders Committee, with the concurrence of the Business Committee, found that it did not seem to work very well, and that is why we have not included it.

Mr Humby's amendment, of course, is not replicating that which was in the Business Committee's report; it is replicating only part of it. Our belief in the Standing Orders Committee is that practical experience demonstrates that it is probably better not to go along this road, and simply have all those who are asked Questions to rotate in the normal way. Although we do not have a very strong view about this, we would probably encourage Synod to resist it.

Revd Simon Killwick (London): If the amendment is passed, it could mean that the Church Commissioners do not answer Questions on a regular basis. I hope that Synod will therefore resist the amendment.

The amendment was put and lost.

Mr Lee Humby (London): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph (a) of SO 109 *leave out* the words “questions for oral and written answer” and *insert* the words “questions for oral answer and the questions and answers for written answer”.’

Maybe third time lucky, Mr Chairman. Even though Synod has rejected my earlier amendment regarding the number of Questions and permitting up to three written Questions, I would still urge Synod to accept this amendment.

This would mean that the answers to all written Questions will be circulated to all members before Question time begins. I do believe that it would encourage members to submit more Questions for written rather than oral answers, even if the overall limit is still two Questions. I do not believe that there would be a problem with that, and I did have a brief chat with someone from Church House this morning. I am pleased to see that the Standing Orders Committee accepted the suggestion made by Colin Buchanan, and I would suggest that this would be an equally useful amendment.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall: The Standing Orders Committee has not considered this point. At the moment, of course, Questions are printed in advance of our arrival here on the first day of the group of sessions. We are advised that, practically speaking and within the current timescale of requirements for questions and so forth, it would be very difficult for the answers to be physically incorporated into the booklets which contain the Questions. Of course, the written answers could be put on the noticeboard immediately before the Questions, rather than immediately after.

Perhaps I may say to Mr Humby that we are meeting with the Business Committee in May and, having confessed that this is not a point that we have already considered, we are happy to consider this with the Business Committee – although I have to say that our initial view is that there probably is not a lot to be gained by this amendment. However, we would ask Synod to resist this amendment, and perhaps let us think about it carefully – because it merits some thought.

The amendment was put and lost.

The Bishop of Woolwich (Rt Revd Colin Buchanan): I have three short points about Questions. First, I am extremely grateful that there is acceptance of the point which I have been making for about 30 years – and I shall hardly get the benefit myself – that answers will be given properly, in advance of their being answered on the platform. Up until now, I have always had to sneak up to some other bishop and find the answers surreptitiously. This will be a very great gain.

I would like to make two points about Questions for the future. One is that, as a matter of fact, the platform is now marginally disadvantaged, because they do not know what the supplementaries are. I would have gone further. I would have said that, if the person asking the original question is going to ask a supplementary, they should get that to the platform in writing prior to the answer time. However, I do not mind

their being disadvantaged. The platform has enormous and quite unfair advantages most of the time.

The other thing I would like to say is that this is really the point at which the floor – and I do feel part of the floor – holds the management to account. The accountability is considerably reduced when Synod meets only twice in the year. It would probably be good sense to have an allocation of so many hours per year for Questions to be handled, so that, if you had two sessions in the year, you would have a longer Question time and, when you have three sessions, you could have a slightly shorter one. There is just that getting off the hook a little bit when we do not have three sessions a year.

Mrs Anne Williams (Durham): To pick up on what the Bishop of Woolwich has said, I would have thought that supplementaries were asked in response to the answer given to the question, and not created before we had heard that answer. I would therefore resist that as a requirement. However, I do wonder if supplementaries may be asked of written answers, if we are to have them in advance.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The motions were put and carried en bloc.

SO 112

‘*Leave out* the words “specially qualified”.’

‘*Leave out* the words “, not being officers or staff of the Synod (except as provided by SO 123(d)),”.’

‘*Leave out* the words from “at the invitation of the Chairman” to the end and *insert* the words “if the Business Committee so agrees the person or persons addressing the Synod may be invited by the Chairman to answer such questions by members of the Synod as the Chairman may allow”.’

Representatives of the Church of England Youth Council

‘*Insert* as a new SO 113A

‘*Representatives of the Church of England Youth Council*

Attendance and Right to Speak

113A (a) The Church of England Youth Council or any successor body recognized and approved by the Board of Education may be invited by the Business Committee to send three representatives to attend a group of sessions of the General Synod.

(b) Subject to paragraph (d) hereof, a representative of the Youth Council in attendance at a group of sessions may be invited by the Chairman to speak in any debate.

(c) A member of the Youth Council may table any question for oral or written answer in accordance with the procedures set out in these Standing Orders.

(d) It shall not be in order for a representative of the Youth Council:

(i) to move any motion or amendment;

(ii) to exercise any voting rights.

(e) These Standing Orders shall apply to a speech by a representative of the Youth Council in like manner as they apply to a member of the General Synod.”’

Elections

‘Leave out SO 120 and insert

“ELECTIONS

120 (a) The provisions of this Standing Order apply to:

(i) any election in which the Synod, one or more of its Houses, either or both of the Convocations or any other class of its members as such constitutes the electorate; and

(ii) any election to which the constitution of the body concerned provides for it to apply.

(b) In its application to any such election, this Standing Order will take effect subject to any provision inconsistent with it in the constitution of the body concerned.

(c) Nominations in respect of an election to which this Standing Order applies shall be carried out in the following manner:

- (i) the Clerk shall circulate to all those members entitled to vote in the election an invitation to nominate duly qualified candidates;
 - (ii) nominations shall be supported by a proposer and seconder (who must both be entitled to vote in the election). Such support shall be evidenced in writing signed by the proposer or seconder (as the case may be) or, where given by a member of the General Synod, by facsimile or email which is sent from an address previously notified to the Clerk;
 - (iii) no such nomination shall be valid unless the person nominated confirms his willingness to stand. Such confirmation shall be given either in writing signed by the candidate or, where given by a member of the General Synod, by facsimile or email sent from an address previously notified to the Clerk;
 - (iv) the nomination shall be delivered to the Clerk to the Synod within such period (not being less than 21 days) as the Clerk, subject to any directions of the Business Committee, shall appoint.
- (d) If an election is required, it shall be conducted in accordance with the following provisions:
- (i) so soon as may be after the period for nomination has expired, voting papers containing a list of the candidates duly nominated shall be circulated to the relevant electors;
 - (ii) voting papers, marked and signed, shall be returned to the Clerk within such period (not being less than 14 days) as the Clerk, subject to any directions of the Business Committee, shall appoint;
 - (iii) any election to which this Standing Order applies shall be conducted by the method of the single transferable vote under rules to be made from time to time as provided by these Standing Orders;
 - (iv) the Clerk shall cause the votes to be counted, enabling any candidate or a person nominated by that candidate to be present at such count. The Clerk shall declare the result, and a full return of the result and the result sheet shall be sent to candidates in accordance with the rules referred to in the preceding sub-paragraph. A copy of the result sheet shall also be deposited in accordance with such rules.

- (e) Where a casual vacancy among the elected members of any body occurs the following provisions shall apply:
- (i) where the unexpired portion of the term of office of the outgoing member is 12 months or less the vacancy shall not be filled unless the Business Committee otherwise directs;
 - (ii) subject to paragraph (e)(iii) below, an election to fill a casual vacancy shall be conducted in the same way as an ordinary election. The vacancy shall be filled as soon as practicable and not later than six months after the occurrence of the vacancy. Where notice of resignation has been given to take effect at a later date, an election may be conducted before such date in order to fill the vacancy on or after such date;
 - (iii) where a casual vacancy occurs within the period of two years beginning with the date of the declaration of the result of the last ordinary election to the body concerned or of an election to fill a casual vacancy where the election was conducted by voting papers in the same manner as an ordinary election, the election to fill the casual vacancy shall be conducted by the papers of such previous election in accordance with paragraph (e)(iv) hereof;
 - (iv) where an election is to be conducted by the voting papers of the previous election, the Clerk shall ask every candidate not elected in the preceding election who is still qualified for election if he consents to serve. If there is no such candidate or no such candidate consents, the casual vacancy shall be filled by a fresh election. If there is only one such candidate and he so consents or only one of those candidates so consents, he shall be elected to fill the casual vacancy. If two or more of those candidates so consent, the votes validly cast in the preceding election shall be recounted from the beginning in accordance with the rules referred to in paragraph (d)(iii) above, but not so as to exclude any member elected during the original count.
- (f) Any appeal arising from an election under this Standing Order shall be carried out in the following manner:
- (i) an appeal panel of 30 members shall be appointed by the Appointments Committee of the Church of England consisting of 6 members of the House of Bishops and 12 members of each of the Houses of Clergy and Laity;

- (ii) notice of appeal shall be given in writing to the Clerk not later than 14 days from the date of the declaration of the result of an election or such later date as the Business Committee may prescribe in a particular case;
- (iii) any appeal shall be considered and decided by three members drawn from the appeal panel who shall be appointed –
 - (1) in the case of an election by Houses, by the chairman and vice-chairman of the appropriate House (or, in the case of the House of Clergy, by the joint chairmen); and
 - (2) in the case of any other election by the chairmen of the three Houses –

provided that where a chairman or vice-chairman is directly concerned in the appeal the Standing Committee of the appropriate House shall nominate a deputy to fulfil the function exercisable by that person under this sub-paragraph;

- (iv) the panel so appointed shall give the parties an opportunity of appearing either in person or with the assistance of another person while the appeal is under consideration.”’

SO 131

‘After the words “In these Standing Orders” *insert* the words

“*Address* includes, in the case of a communication sent by facsimile, a telephone number with facsimile facility.”’

SOs 123A and 124

‘In SO 123A *insert* as a new sub-paragraph (b)(i)

“keep a register of members of the Synod and receive notice of all vacancies, and all appointments, elections and co-options to fill such vacancies;”

and re-letter the remaining sub-paragraphs accordingly.’

‘In SO 124 *leave out* paragraph (e) and re-letter the remaining paragraph accordingly.’

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall: I beg to move:

‘That these amendments be made with effect from Monday 16 February 2004.’

The motions were put and carried en bloc.

Ms Jacqueline Humphreys (Bristol): On a point of order, in the light of the Birmingham motion being passed, when these amended Standing Orders are reprinted, can I have an assurance, from whomever is going to give it to me, that everywhere the word ‘chairman’ appears it will be replaced by ‘chair’?

The Chairman: I do not recognize that as a valid point of order, Ms Humphreys, but your comments have been heard.

THE CHAIR *Revd Canon Annette Cooper (Southwell)* took the Chair at 5.26 p.m.

The Chairman: We have in the gallery some civil servants from the Women and Equality Unit of the Department of Constitutional Affairs who are currently working on proposals for civil partnership, and also the policy officer on family law from the Law Society, so we are delighted to welcome you this afternoon. (*Applause*)

Diocesan Synod Motion

Cohabitation

Revd Simon Stanley (York): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod

- (a) believe that the provision in law of a contractual relationship, other than marriage, between two cohabiting adults is socially desirable, that such relationships exist and will continue to exist whether approved by the State and the Church or not and that the absence of a legal contract for such a relationship is a potential cause of injustice and misery; and
- (b) request the Archbishops’ Council to investigate and explore the issues involved in contractual partnerships, other than marriage, between two cohabiting adults and to report to the General Synod.’

The word ‘cohabitation’ is normally understood very narrowly, referring to two people, of whatever gender, in a sexual relationship. I shall certainly be addressing these situations to some extent during my address, but the motion itself is about all situations of people living together in the same house without being married, and is essentially not a debate about sexuality but about justice.

On behalf of York diocesan synod I want to begin by saying that, despite its fragility and risk, we have absolutely no doubt that the best, most wholesome and basic

Christian option for two people to live, flourish and grow together is marriage. Apart from the teaching on the subject in the Scriptures, there is plenty of evidence that stable marriage is good for people, as evidenced, for instance, in the Southwark diocesan report *Cohabitation: A Christian Reflection*, familiar to many in this Synod: ‘married people are on average happier, wealthier and live longer’. There is also a growing body of testimony that many children, as the report says, do not ‘adapt well to these more fluid structures’.

However, these more fluid structures are the ways in which increasing numbers of people choose or are obliged to live together. These fluid structures are nothing new but they are growing as the number of marriages decreases. Fewer and fewer people are getting married and more and more people are living together, cohabiting. Many of us may wish this trend to be otherwise, but it is not. The only newish feature is that people now choose to do it openly and mostly without a sense of shame or of attracting criticism from their peers. It is increasingly acceptable in society.

While continuing to promote marriage, the Church also needs to address the current situation. Indeed, it has done so on a number of occasions. In 1995 Synod took note of the report *Something to Celebrate* with its insight that cohabitation is for some people a step towards commitment. Last year the Southwark report on cohabitation was passed by its synod with its raft of suggestions on how marriage may be promoted and strengthened, with an emphasis on education.

So what about these people who cannot or will not get married? Clearly the Church does not want to disown or ignore them. As the Southwark report says, ‘Jesus met, embraced and included people where they were. He loved them first, so that they could start to love him back.’ In fact, the central platform of this York motion is that the Church attaches high importance to the promotion of social justice and the safeguarding of human rights. The Archbishops’ Council’s response to the Government’s proposed civil partnership Bill says that ‘the Church has, on occasions, taken a positive view of particular legislative changes where there has been a need to remedy injustices in our diverse society, even where the result may have been to facilitate developments about which the Church has had particular concerns given its doctrine and teaching. An example would be the law relating to divorce.’

This motion is a plea for justice where injustice exists. It is not a plea for Christians to ignore the differences between marriage and cohabitation. This motion’s purpose is to direct the attention of Synod to what is happening to many of those who live together outside marriage. This motion encourages us not to confine our consideration either to those who are in sexual relationships (either same or different sex), though I would like to deal with those areas very briefly first.

Since this motion (or, rather, its unamended precursor) came to York diocesan synod and was passed there, the Government have announced and published their civil partnership proposals, confining them to the situation for same-sex partnerships.

While these proposals are both important and far-reaching, discussing them in this debate will be premature and also serve to deflect our attention from the plight of other people for whom the Government have not as yet expressed any intention to legislate. The House of Bishops has set up a sub-group to look at the pastoral and other implications. What the York synod hopes is that today's debate should not centre on same-sex relationships. As for opposite-sex cohabitation, there is a great deal to be discussed. The issues addressed in the Government proposals for same-sex partnerships serve to highlight the issues, many of them the same, that apply to opposite-sex partnerships as well.

The question raised repeatedly since York synod passed the motion is 'But why don't they get married and thereby get all the protection they need?' but it is not that simple for everyone. The Church always hopes that cohabiting couples will one day consider marriage (though, sadly, the success rate of such marriages is rather lower than average) and it is right that we should encourage them to do so, given the opportunity. There are many reasons why people do not get married. For instance, there is still, after all this time – and Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act dates back to 1753 – a pretty widespread but mistaken belief that there is such a thing as common law marriage and that there are common law entitlements to be had. Not true, but still believed. Or there is the situation where a couple have differing expectations of the relationship. One of the partners, for instance, desperately wants to get married but the other will not. A woman falls in love with a man and moves in with him. She is keen to get married but he is not. They have children, all the time the woman believing that she will get him to the altar eventually. He then skips off or moves another woman in, so she has nowhere else to go and the only possibility of security for her is a court order for him to support the child. Many members of Synod will have seen these situations over and over again and recognized the crying shame that she and the children are unprotected.

Let me put it crudely. Broadsheet-reading cohabitants probably already make personal provision and protection for one another by means of a will and of agreements drawn up by solicitors. They are secure. The truth is that there are large numbers of people who will never get round to that. They are vulnerable.

Then there are those who are in non-sexual cohabitation. They live together for all sorts of reasons. For instance, some people, often related, have grown up together and been together in the same house all their lives; or a disabled person with a long-term live-in carer; or friends living together for companionship and to share expenses. Just a simple example: a single woman who has worked overseas for years returns to live with her married niece. The niece or the niece's husband dies, and the aunt lives with the survivor for many years under the same roof.

Surely they all deserve the same sort of protection as those who are married, especially when the relationship is ended by death, yet there may be no automatic right of legal protection under property law; they may have no rights of inheritance and, very

importantly, no right to exemption from inheritance tax; no pension rights are guaranteed to cohabitants, though this is improving; no rights to be consulted on decisions over sick partners, nor their funeral arrangements. There are many such vulnerabilities not addressed by the law, and it is time they were.

Legislation affording protection for all these people is urgently needed, and I hope that this Synod will tell the Government so.

In conclusion, I return to cohabitation as it is usually understood in its narrower sense. It is always difficult for Christian bodies such as this Synod to discuss issues like cohabitation when at heart many of us believe in a different way. I feel this difficulty myself, and it was a difficulty expressed at York diocesan synod. Is it our business? Are we compromising our position of commitment to marriage? Is it not dangerous for us to be thought, however mistakenly, to be caving in to the *mores* of our contemporary culture? Well, yes, it is dangerous. It is a risk. We may well have our good intentions misconstrued – you should see my bundle of amazing headlines announcing this debate. Yet a sense of justice and the need to speak for those who are ill-served by current legislation, or lack of it, means that we will have to take the risk of being misunderstood.

No one was more surprised than I was when the not particularly radical York diocesan synod backed this motion overwhelmingly as an issue that the Church of England needs to look at, discuss and express an opinion on. They and I hope that this higher Synod will do the same and set some wheels in motion.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd John Gladwin): I want to make two points in this debate, and am very grateful to the York diocesan synod for bringing it to us. I am particularly pleased that there are representatives of the Civil Service in the gallery to hear some of these matters.

I want to say, first of all, that in principle I support what the Government are trying to do in their civil partnership legislation, and I certainly think that it is open, in terms of the motion before us, to be framed in a way which is as broad and helpful as needs to be to meet people's human needs today. In making that point, I am not committing myself to support any particular legislation that the Government bring – we will look at that in detail when it comes to Parliament – but I think that the principle is right.

I want to remind the Synod that in the Anglican Church we have a long and honourable tradition of what one might call social morality and social ethics and that the way in which we address this sort of question is rooted in that tradition; we are, I think, in danger in our own age of forgetting it. People like William Temple come to mind, people like R.H. Tawney, whose significant work in the heart of the

twentieth century was very important in the shaping of the public mind around issues of public policy. I am reminded too, in the sorts of issue in front of us this afternoon, of Archbishop Ramsey's courageous stand in the 1960s when he encouraged the decriminalization of homosexual acts. It was not a popular thing for the Archbishop to do, but his stand on that matter was rooted in that tradition of Anglican moral theology in the social order, and that is the way in which we should address this question.

From a theological point of view, the question before us today in that context is 'What is in the common good? What is good for the whole of our society and social order?' The issue surrounding marriage that lurks in the back of our minds in this context must be taken inside that framework of thinking and reference: how can marriage be part of meeting the common good? So that is the first thing that I want to say, to remind us of an important Anglican moral theological tradition.

The second thing is more difficult to say, but I sometimes worry about the way in which we defend marriage in our society. I sometimes worry that we present ourselves in too narrow an understanding of that institution and that gift in our common culture. Sometimes in the way in which we talk about it and speak about it, we give the impression that it is a blessing only for those who enter into marriage. If marriage theologically is a gift that God has given to humanity, it is by its very character a blessing for all people and therefore we have to think about the needs of those for whom marriage as an institution is not appropriate. The question is whether marriage, as we have experienced it in the contemporary world, is a shadow hanging over our society, taking the warmth of the sunshine away from those who are not married; or is it an overshadowing blessing which enables us to look clearly in the face at how we, in terms of the common good, meet the needs of those who are not married. It seems to me that what Her Majesty's Government are seeking to do, by talking about civil partnerships rather than marriage, is, under that overshadowing gift and blessing to our community, making a proper provision for the civil rights of people in our society today. That is why I support the broad principles.

Lady Gore-Booth (Durham): This is a very muddling motion because it is trying to do two different things. I am not going to say anything about those who are living in homosexual partnerships, but the motion deals both with people who live together in chaste relationships – such as siblings and adult children living with parents – and also those who cohabit in the usual sense of the word, who are living together, what people a generation ago would have called 'living in sin', what the Bible calls 'fornication'. Probably most of us have considerable sympathy for the first category, but paragraph 27 of GS Misc 729B tells us the Law Society was unable to find a satisfactory legal solution to solving the hardship suffered by some people in chaste, interdependent relationships: 'Because each family is different, it would be difficult to encapsulate a solution in contractual terms that did not cause more problems.' If the experts in these matters cannot work out a way of dealing with these situations, I question whether it is sensible to ask the Archbishops' Council, at a cost of £17,000, to second-guess them.

Then there is the second group of people, and the rest of my remarks refer to them, those who choose not to marry. If a couple choose not to marry, I am not sure why they should choose a different type of contractual relationship; and if they are not organized enough to make a will, will they be organized enough to enter into another contractual relationship, a new sort of relationship, as envisaged by this motion? I cannot see why the York diocesan synod thinks that the Church should be encouraging people to believe that living together without getting married is anything other than a sin.

As paragraph 6 of GS Misc 729A says, people will no doubt continue to live together outside marriage, whatever the Church teaches. People will continue to commit sins, both sexual and non-sexual, whatever they are told to do. They always have. I cannot believe that it is going to change now. However, that is hardly an excuse for members of Christ's Church to encourage sin. Jesus was counter-cultural. Of course we have to live in the world, but that is different from conforming to the culture in which we live. Jesus told his disciples to go out and to be fishers of men; he did not tell them just to go with the flow. The only fish that go with the flow are dead fish. As Christians we have to go against the flow when it is counter to Our Lord's teaching. We should be doing everything we can to promote marriage and chastity – sex within marriage has always been considered chaste – and holiness of life. If this means that there are tax advantages and other certain advantages in being married, then let us thank God and the Government for it.

Revd David Robertson (Wakefield): As has been already said, heterosexual cohabitation is with us. I believe in marriage, but I am a parish priest and in my community a very large number of couples live together. I believe in marriage, but I am a single father and my four children are rapidly growing up. Whether any of them will choose to live with a partner and not marry, I do not yet know; what I do know is that cohabitation affects us all, whether it is our community, our congregation or our family, and it challenges our understanding of marriage.

Let us think about the generation gap because, unassisted, morality does not profit. We all know that each generation behaves as if they had invented sex themselves, but across the gulf of the generation gap, unless they discover sexual morality for themselves, there is drift from one generation to another. It works like this. In the first generation there is morality plus an understanding of why we behave in that way. The second generation then accept the morality but do not know why. The third generation say that if there are no reasons for the morality they will junk it. So why is it that Christian sexual morality remains largely undiscovered in the present generation? Because when it comes to marriage we have behaved as second-generation people: we have accepted the importance and morality of marriage but we have been very hazy about the reasons why.

This means that in our society, on the issue of marriage and cohabitation, the thinking of our culture is full of holes and, sadly, so is our Christian thinking; and men, women and their children are falling into those holes.

I have recently been studying this issue in preparation for a book about marriage which I have written for the Bible Reading Fellowship. As a Church we need to look hard at the Bible and equally hard at our inherited assumptions. The motion in paragraph (b) asks us to do this, and I therefore ask Synod to vote in favour of it.

The Bishop of Southwark (Rt Revd Tom Butler): I am speaking to the amendment which I will later move on behalf of the Mission and Public Affairs Council. We are grateful to the York diocesan synod and Canon Stanley for raising important issues. I suspect that when they originally passed their motion they did not know how timely it would be in the light of the Government's proposals for civil partnerships and the increasing awareness of the hardship and injustice suffered by people who share significant aspects of their lives together but are not covered by legislation. No one would dispute the injustices and the real stories of hardship that have been well publicized, but it is the ways that the York motion suggests that they are addressed that we question.

Paragraph (a) of my amendment gives Synod the opportunity of affirming again that it has always been the teaching of the Church of England that marriage – that is a faithful, committed, permanent and legally sanctioned relationship between a man and a woman – is a fundamental aspect of Christian teaching on relationships and central to the stability and health of human society. For these reasons, marriage as a contractual relationship warrants a special position within the social and legislative framework of our society, and my amendment makes this clear.

However, while safeguarding the special position of marriage, we believe that it would be possible to address those issues of social justice that are raised in the light of changing patterns of relationships in our society. The ways in which people live their lives have changed considerably in recent years. There has been a significant decline in the proportion of adults living as married couples; the number of people living alone has increased, as has the number of births outside marriage. Changes in care arrangements and provision have meant that substantial numbers of people are looking after members of their family or friends at home.

Just over a year ago, as we have heard, the Diocese of Southwark produced a thoroughly researched report entitled *Cohabitation: A Christian Response*, and part of that Christian response is for society to look afresh at the legal provision and the protection that it offers to such people. However, the types of relationship that we are debating today are broad and hard to categorize. The York motion brings together a whole range of varied relationships which we believe cannot be covered by a simple resolution. Paragraph (b) of my amendment calls for the creation of new legal rights on an issue-by-issue basis, rather than in blanket legislation. Yet this is a rapidly changing scene, so paragraph (c) of my amendment calls on the MPA Council to continue to monitor future developments on these issues and report as necessary to Synod. This would be within the resources of the Council.

In the meantime we hope that the Council's background paper is a useful summary to help people as they address these issues. I ask Synod to support the amendment.

Mrs Faith Hanson (Derby): I question this motion from York. We are told that it focuses on matters of social justice and is intended to address various types of relationship. However, it behoves us as a Synod to be realistic and to understand that the media and society out there will undoubtedly perceive it as the Church's approval of premarital sex and cohabitation between a man and a woman before marriage. That is what the motion implies. If that is not what it was about, why was it not worded more carefully and less ambiguously?

The Government may talk about contracts; the Church is concerned about something deeper: the binding, committed, self-sacrificial, lifelong relationship of marriage. How in the Church can we place these two types of relationship side by side and offer them as alternatives? There is no alternative to marriage.

The motion claims that a relationship other than marriage between two cohabiting adults is socially desirable, but research figures show the opposite. The Centre for Policy Studies reports that in 2002, 52 per cent of couples who cohabit before marriage break up within five years of the birth of a child, compared with 8 per cent of couples who do not cohabit, a very big difference. The 1999 House of Bishops' teaching document on marriage says, on page 8, 'Sexual intercourse . . . belongs properly within marriage exclusively' and on page 11, on cohabitation, 'This route of approaching marriage is exposed to uncertainties and tensions and is not to be recommended.'

On a practical level, there are many clergy and layfolk out in the parishes faithfully trying to teach and train our young people biblically in matters of marriage and sexuality. This motion will undermine their work. Many young couples are yearning for fulfilling, stable, lasting union, the blessing of marriage that the Bishop of Chelmsford was talking about, and there are still some who choose not to cohabit – I know of many – because they believe it to be wrong. This motion will mislead and betray them.

We witness a society in relationship turmoil. Out of compassion for society, we in the Church must do all we can to relieve and reverse that turmoil. Whatever underlies this motion, I believe that the effect of passing it will be disastrous, particularly in that it will be sending out the wrong messages to the people of our nation.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr Roger Godin (Southwark): The Southwark report on cohabitation has been mentioned several times, and I agree wholeheartedly with the last speaker that if this motion goes through unamended it will send out quite the wrong message. When the Southwark report went out, right out to Russia it was interpreted as the Church

approving cohabitation. That is the main reason for my wishing to amend either the York motion or my Bishop's. If we do not do this, right in the middle of National Marriage Week, the message will go out that the Church now believes that cohabitation and marriage are equally viable options and, sadly, despite what words may be said, it is the reported motion that gets to be the perception.

So I want the world at large to know that, first of all, the Church still regards marriage as the best framework for a man and woman to flourish and grow together in love, and for their children to do the same. We do believe that, do we not? So I ask Synod to proclaim that good news by approving this amendment either as a stand-alone addition to the York motion, if it passes that one, or as an addition to my Bishop's; the two are complementary – I am always complimentary to my Bishop! – because his refers to society and legal issues and mine refers to families and children and flourishing.

In current parlance marriage has been dumbed down. Last week, for example, the *Church Times* said 'Cohabitation has been transformed within a generation from a radical, or at least unconventional lifestyle decision, courting social disapproval, into something not remarked upon.' Rather than blandly accepting that reality – and using the words of the York motion – 'whether approved by the State and the Church or not', I believe that the Church should receive this news both with repentance that Christian marriage is not seen as best and also as a challenge to make it so by proactive preparation and aftercare. Yes, the reality is that marriages do fail, but that is no reason not to proclaim God's best, is it?

It may be helpful just to give a quick taster of the Southwark report that has been so badly misrepresented. It refutes the received wisdom that marriage following cohabitation is more likely to result in a more stable relationship; but it provides more than just social research. Its careful consideration of themes within the Scriptures even received the enthusiastic support of a card-carrying member of Reform, and I think that even Margaret Brown would like it; and while accepting the reality of the growth in cohabitation it offers highly relevant pastoral guidance.

All this can be got for a fiver. With respect, that sort of thing makes the financial projections look a bit silly. I feel quite sure that if the Council appointed a small committee, chaired by the Bishop of Southwark, then the work has been done; Southwark, with its usual generosity, has done all the hard work, and all that the committee would need to do is develop it.

I would like to finish with some words from the report, which say it rather more seriously: 'God gave us sex not only for procreation, but to express and sustain a relationship which reflects his kind of love – a love where each is completely given to the other, within a covenant of unbreakable commitment. That is why, with all its fragility and risk, we are certain that marriage is by far the best framework for a man and a woman to flourish and grow together in love, and for their children to do the

same.’ (Those are the words of my amendment, taken from the report.) ‘The Church must find a way to share this profound and joyful truth so that it is heard as good news and not as condemnation. Certainly we have to uphold an ideal, but without crushing or excluding those who have not, or not yet, realized it.’

Mrs Jenny Dunlop (Chester): I rise to speak against the motion. I speak in respect of the situation where two people are cohabiting as husband and wife rather than other interdependent relationships. As a solicitor practising family law, I agree that there can be great hardship on the breakdown of the relationship of a cohabiting couple. I often have the client in front of me and I have to say ‘It would be different if you had been married’. I do not enjoy considering trust law, resulting trusts, constructive trusts, to try to show that someone has an interest in a property owned solely by the other partner. This is happening increasingly and I am sympathetic to it, but there are steps that the partners can take to address the problems. Each one can make a will, nominate pension beneficiaries, put property in joint names.

A major problem, however, is people’s lack of awareness of their lack of rights and lack of awareness of their vulnerable position. I suggest some sort of publicity campaign, rather than giving them more rights. I do not think that the answer lies in creating new rights. I believe that the answer would be adequately addressed by finding a way of informing people what they can do, what steps they can take, to protect their position. One of those steps of course is to get married. If we as a Church believe in the centrality and uniqueness of marriage in our society, we should stand by that and work from that position to address the injustice and suffering of people unaware of their legal position.

Just a note on the law referred to in the briefing paper, paragraphs 18 and 29: opposite sex cohabitants do have rights to apply to court in situations where the disposition of the deceased partner’s estate effected by his or her will and the law relating to intestacy do not make reasonable financial provision for the applicant, not just on intestacy as stated in paragraph 18. Incidentally, anyone else can apply if, immediately before the death, they were being maintained either wholly or partly by the deceased.

Revd Elizabeth Baxter (York): – from that very radical Diocese of York! I was present at, and spoke to, the debate. I just wanted to say that the synod there gave overwhelming support to the justice issues that shape this motion. Canon Stanley said at the beginning that this motion was a matter not of sexuality but of justice, and I am not sure really that that is the case now when there has been so much talk about the place of marriage – and the amendments bring this to bear. This talk about marriage I really believe goes against the spirit of the York Diocesan Synod Motion, which is about justice. In our debate so far huge assumptions have been made about marriage. There are many questions to be asked about what happens with marriage in relation to power struggles and control. How much ill-health rather than good health has marriage been responsible for? These and many others are important

questions yet to be addressed in the light of other debates which are going on at the moment within the Church.

I ask that we do not add these issues to this motion but maintain the clarity of the motion as a justice issue, a justice issue for many people and not just Christian people: people of various faiths and of none. We need not be afraid. There is no loss here. We need not be afraid that somehow we are losing something which is at the heart of our Christian belief. We are losing nothing; we are offering something. This is about mission. So let us as a Synod lay down our fears and the panic that can drive us away from the justice heart of the Gospel and of this motion.

Revd David Butterfield (Lichfield): Notwithstanding the last speaker, I believe that it is important that this motion begins with the affirmation of marriage, and that is why I hope that we will vote to back the Bishop of Southwark's amendment – for that and for other reasons – but then also for my second amendment.

I want to ask the Synod to vote for the Bishop of Southwark's amendment because, before making statements about relationships not based on marriage, his amendment first affirms the primacy of marriage and does so in quite a clear way and sets the right context therefore for the motion. My amendment then goes further because it includes a reference to the Christian understanding of marriage. We believe that marriage should be central and have a unique place in the law of this country, not just because it has a better track record than relationships which are not based on marriage but because of what we believe theologically, namely that marriage is God's idea, his gift to us in creation, his overshadowing blessing, as was said earlier.

So my amendment begins with a reference, albeit brief, to theology and to what we as Christians believe about marriage. When in paragraph (a) the Bishop of Southwark's amendment states that marriage is 'central to the stability and health of human society', it does not include any theological reason for that truth; it is purely a pragmatic statement, as is Roger Godin's amendment too. It is because I want to lay a theological foundation, in keeping with the teaching of the Church of England, that I deliberately worded my amendment on the introduction to the marriage service in *Common Worship*, where we have the Church's teaching on marriage.

First of all, it affirms that marriage is a gift of God in creation, so my amendment picks up that point by my inclusion of the phrase 'God-given'. Second, the next paragraph in the introduction to the service says 'the gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of sexual union'; again I have pulled that phrase from there and put it in my amendment. Third, the introduction to the marriage service goes on to say that marriage 'is given as the foundation of family life in which children are nurtured', again a quote that I have taken and put into the amendment. So in drafting this amendment to head this motion, I have simply drawn on the teaching of the Church of England contained in our liturgy, and in my amendment

I have sought to affirm what clergy up and down the country say the Church believes about marriage every time we conduct a marriage service.

The main motion, or the motion as amended by the Bishop of Southwark's amendment, whichever we pass, if we pass one of them today, both make the important point that those whose relationships are not based on marriage should have legal rights. By accepting my amendment, Synod will make this point but in the context of affirming our theological belief that marriage rather than cohabitation is the ideal, God-given context for the expression of sexual love and the bringing up of children.

Revd Stephen Trott (Peterborough): I will be very happy with the amendment from the Bishop of Southwark, but in case that fails I propose to say something along the following lines, that what I am offering by simply changing one word is a change in terminology which reflects a different sort of concept of the relations that we are talking about. 'Contract' belongs to a very precise terminology; it is a very precise language; and what we are addressing here are a variety of very vulnerable and even novel relationships which do not have any reasonable analogy, either in marriage or in contract, as we understand it. We need to address not only those who are cohabiting in the tabloid sense; we need to address the needs of those who engage in the lifetime sharing of a home as siblings, cousins, friends, dare I say even under religious vows, and it is profoundly unwise for us to enquire any more deeply into the arrangements which they make within their household or to make the kind of assumption frequently made by the media about the nature of a relationship 'upstairs'.

The potential causes of injustice and misery which the motion speaks about as arising among those who choose unconventional lifestyles – and by 'unconventional' I simply mean 'not married' – do not require either marriage or the registration of a civil partnership, which is what I suspect prompted the York motion and the prospect of Government legislation along those lines; these things do not require marriage or a civil partnership to be corrected and addressed. Rights of inheritance, continuation of tenancy, pension rights, next-of-kin rights, and so on, which have historically been addressed in the law surrounding marriage, are not intrinsically related to Holy Matrimony as the Church understands it. The sacramental nature of marriage, as set out in our formularies, and in a thousand years of reflection in canon law, does not require these sorts of right to be assigned exclusively or even necessarily to marriage. Marriage is unaffected if these rights are given to other people.

So what I believe we should ask the State to do when it legislates in response to the needs which do exist is not simply to offer civil registration on the model of marriage registration. No contract is necessary but simply a means of providing an enforceable basis for those who wish to claim rights for their partner or companion with whom they share their life, who may not even want to have a relationship modelled on marriage but simply to enjoy the same basic human rights which are available to others.

So I hope that we can ask the Archbishops' Council to explore a much wider and more generous understanding of the nature of these relationships, not simply force it into the mould of marriage or contract but look at a much wider basis and see how those needs can be addressed.

Revd Dr Richard Turnbull (Winchester): – speaking on behalf of the Archbishops' Council, in order to draw attention to the financial implications of the motion before us and of the Bishop of Southwark's amendment. Under SO 98, I would refer the Synod to the ninth notice paper, which deals with the implications of the business of Synod, and, in particular, to paragraphs 12–13. If this motion were passed, it is expected that a working party would need to be established in order to implement the motion as it is currently drafted, and the total costs of that have been estimated at £17,000. This exercise of establishing a working party would not be required in the same way if the Bishop of Southwark's amendment were to be passed; in that case these costs would not apply.

Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford): A previous speaker has referred to the need for publicity. It is very clear that lots of people do believe that there is such a thing as a common law relationship, a common law marriage, and we hope that the Government – and if the Government do not do it, perhaps we should do it – will make it clear to people how few rights there are.

There is another area in which publicity is terribly important. The magazines will tell you that the average cost of a marriage is £15,000 to £20,000, and that is why lots of cohabiting couples do not get married. There is no need for them to incur that cost, but they do not know that. It is time the Church said, 'We'll marry you and it'll be very low cost or nothing' and explain that to people, that there is no need for them to go in for this enormous expense. Wonderful parties are wonderful, but they are not necessary for a marriage.

Revd Canon John Young (York): I am rather depressed by the apparent unwillingness of so many speakers to actually listen to the introduction. It seems there was a pen-jerk reaction to the word 'cohabitation'; speeches were prepared and delivered with no reference to what was said. Simon Stanley gave a clear and convincing introduction which drew very wide boundaries and focused very clearly on one issue, that of justice and fairness.

It is all very well to say that people can make wills. Next year my wife and I will celebrate our ruby wedding. If I were to die next week she would inherit my vast estate in its entirety, but if I had been living with my sister for 40 years she would inherit £255,000 and the rest would be taxed at 40 per cent. Is that fair? Clearly it is not.

There is one other tangential issue and that is to do with the housing stock. We are aware of soaring house prices, key workers unable to live near their place of work,

a divide in our society between the haves and the have-nots. By the same token, single occupancy of homes is increasing. I am not suggesting that we can put the two together and make a neat solution, but it seems logical that the Government should encourage people to share homes to help with the housing stock; and they have already made a modest start with tax breaks if you take a lodger for a room in your house. That is a very good precedent for the kind of thing that we are driving at here. We are not in the York diocesan motion prescribing a narrow circle; we are not attacking marriage; we are for justice and fairness. I hope that Synod will show that it too is for these qualities by voting overwhelmingly for this excellent motion.

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

‘Leave out paragraphs (a) and (b) and insert

- “(a) strongly reaffirm that marriage is central to the stability and health of human society and warrants a unique place in the law of this country;
- (b) recognize that there are issues of hardship and vulnerability for people whose relationships are not based on marriage which need to be addressed by the creation of new legal rights; and
- (c) ask the Mission and Public Affairs Council to monitor future developments on these issues and report as necessary to Synod.”

Revd Simon Stanley (York): I am very drawn, I must say, to this amendment but it is not my motion and I do not want to capitulate on the issue of the contractual basis of cohabitation as a form of legal protection. York diocesan synod considered this to be of great importance, so it is essential that I test the mind of Synod on this matter.

Mrs Maryon Jägers (Europe): I had no intention of speaking in this debate but I feel that I must, partly because we have these people in the gallery. I would like to speak briefly about civil partnerships and therefore the Bishop of Southwark’s amendment.

For the past 40 years I have lived in Holland and have seen how our society has changed – many people would say, not for the better – over this time in respect of civil partnerships. I left this country having worked for five years as a nursing sister in a large NHS hospital. I was there horrified to see how same-sex partners were treated, especially when one partner was dying: the usual remarks from the staff were, ‘Sorry you can’t come in, you’re not the next of kin’ or ‘You can’t make any decisions for the welfare of your partner’. In Holland same-sex faithful partner couples can contract a marriage and have all the legal rights of a married couple for pensions, for inheritance tax and for mortgages, to name but a few.

I see this as a human rights situation, not as a marriage, and I hope that Synod will support this motion. I have seen so many couples who have come to the Netherlands, battered, rejected by family and society, mainly from here, who come now to live in peace and fulfilment and live happy and contented lives.

The Chairman: Is there anyone standing who would like to speak against the amendment?

Mr Hayden Charles (Norwich): I would like to support the York motion going forward in its unamended form. We have had a lot of language flying around in this debate, and some of the comments that Fr Trott made earlier on I would like to pick up as well. We have had a lot of talk about things like sin – not surprising in this Synod – but I do not think that the York motion in its original form was really seeking to delve into the sinfulness or otherwise of any of the relationships which are mentioned in the motion. I also come back to the idea of the judgemental nature: should we actually be here sitting in judgement on people's relationships when there are overriding questions of justice? There was another comment elsewhere about the dumbing down of our thinking about marriage. Who is actually doing the dumbing down here? There is again another strand going through some of the comments: if something is not right, it must be wrong. Well, I am sorry, but I think that these days we recognize that there are all manner of grey areas and we cannot simply put everything into black and white terms. So who is doing the dumbing down? If we are really saying that something has to be either right or wrong, I think that *we* are the ones doing the dumbing down; and if we cannot put across points that are a little more subtle and expect people to be able to understand them, then, frankly, we are the ones who are just trying to oversimplify everything.

Therefore I would say that the introduction of all the talk about marriage into this motion, however worthy the intentions may be, is getting away from the original idea of the social justice issue that lies behind it. I hope that we will reject this particular amendment.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and carried.

Mr Roger Godin (Southwark): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘After the words “this Synod” *insert* as a new paragraph

“(a) believe that marriage is by far the best framework for a man and woman to flourish and grow together in love, and for their children to do the same;”

and re-letter the remaining paragraphs accordingly.’

May I just say, in clarification, that this is an additional clause, not an amendment to the Bishop's motion?

Revd Simon Stanley: Again, I understand the reason for this being there and I would not object to it strongly, but the debate is not really about different wordings about marriage or how people share significant parts of their life; it is not about the choice between marriage and not marriage; it is not about that. I am sorry to be boring again, but it is about issues of justice. I do not want the motion overweighted so that it starts to look as if this is a motion about marriage: the rights and wrongs. It is not. I have already declared three times during my speech that we believe in the rightness of marriage. It is not about that. I think that this extra paragraph would only serve to mislead people that it is a motion about marriage, when it is actually about justice.

The Bishop of Southwark: I think my amendment is actually in the spirit of the York motion. It is talking about legalities. Although I am sympathetic to Roger Godin's amendment, I think that it moves us away significantly from the York motion, and I do not think that I would be able to support it.

Revd Dr Richard Burridge (London University): I am delighted that the amendment of the Bishop of Southwark was passed. I recognize why he does not think that this amendment by Mr Godin will help him, because he wanted to talk about it in terms of law; but I think that this amendment will help us to deal with what I think has been the issue underlying much of the debate this afternoon and why we have got a little bit lost with it all.

The central question that keeps coming up is: 'How does the Church address society? Do we expect Christian ethics to be law? Or indeed do you think that Jesus was a legislator?' The concern that so many of the speeches have actually been about is that, while it has been stressed by Canon Stanley a number of times that this is about justice, people are terribly worried that if we pass it we will get headlines about the Church approving sin, and so on.

I have spoken a number of times recently about the importance of university reps, so can I just tell you about my doctorate and the last 20 years of my study in about 30 seconds? It is that I have been trying to research the nature of the genre of the Gospels, to understand what kind of documents they are. If you treat them as though they are ethical documents or ethical treatises or indeed if you treat them as if they are legislative documents, you are misunderstanding the nature of the documents. They are biographies in an ancient form, and ancient biographies are about the relationship between a person's deeds and a person's words. The crucial thing is that, on the one hand, we have Jesus who is the great, supreme ethical teacher, who says all the ridiculously difficult things about money, sex, power and time that we talked about this morning, while on the other hand, at the same time allowing and keeping company with, eating and having table fellowship with, healing and dying and seeing his death as redemptive for, people who did not keep that kind of ethic.

It is absolutely vital to be able to say that we can maintain a very strict ethic while dealing with and living in a society whose ethics may not be the same, but it does seem to me that the Bishop of Southwark's amendment allows us, on the one hand, strongly to affirm the importance of marriage (which enables us to get away from the anxiety about the Church approving sin) but, on the other, it also recognizes all the justice issues that the York motion put before us about the vulnerability of certain people, as laid out in the York paper, sections 3-4, or indeed in the background paper, paragraph 21.

It is true that Mr Godin's amendment and, for that matter, Mr Butterfield's amendment will strengthen that by providing the point about Christian teaching at the beginning, but it will also allow us to talk to a society that is working, very often, on a different ethic and to care for the vulnerable there.

If you think that that means that we are going to be misunderstood, then please remember that Jesus, while teaching a very high ethic, was crucified by a combination of the guardians of morality, the teachers of religion and the political masters; and very often the Church will expect to be treated the same.

Revd David Butterfield (Lichfield): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. Just a word of clarification, to say, without prejudice, that Mr Godin's amendment and my first amendment are alternatives and not additionals. I would just like to point that out to the Synod, if I may, so that they may choose between them.

The Chairman: I thought that was a different point of order.

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

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

Revd David Butterfield (Lichfield): I beg to move as an amendment:

'*Leave out* the words "strongly reaffirm that marriage is" and *insert* the words "affirm that marriage is the God-given context for sexual union and the foundation of family life in which children are nurtured and is therefore".'

Revd Simon Stanley: I really want to oppose this amendment for precisely the same reasons as the last amendment.

The Bishop of Southwark: Again I would want to oppose the amendment for the reasons that I gave for the last one.

Revd Michael Norman (Bath and Wells): I stand to express my concern about the York motion but also to support this amendment because I believe that we need strongly to reaffirm that marriage is the God-given context for sexual union and the foundation of family life, for the simple reason that was mentioned in the first speech that we heard at the beginning of this debate, and that was that couples who live together, when they come – and many do come – to get married, are far more likely to break down. The tragic fact came home to me only a few days ago when I was phoned up for a second marriage certificate, and I gently enquired why it was needed. The man told me that they had lived together seven years and then about three years ago they got married in my church, and everything changed, and now, sadly, the marriage has broken down. It is a very sad situation.

I believe that if we go away from God's plan, that will be harmful. So it is not a justice issue; it is a tragedy, and it is a pastoral issue and something that we need to face. As a Church we need to be lovingly firm on this issue and really proclaim that marriage is God's way, God's gift, and that it expresses a permanent commitment to each other. Let us encourage and proclaim that, and give a firm lead to our society. I believe that God speaks not just to individuals, not just to us, but that actually marriage is for society and that, where society goes away from that, it is harmful.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

Revd Canon Dr Hinton Bird (Sodor and Man): I am referring to the motion as amended by the Bishop of Southwark's amendment and the ‘creation of new legal rights’. My question is: for whom? Particularly I am thinking of those couples who could get married but choose not to, and why.

Marriage these days is very easy to get into. It is fairly easy to get out of. All you have to do is complain that your partner is very polite to you in public but very cruel in private, and you can virtually get a divorce by the post. I exaggerate but not by very much. The Government paper talked about interdependent stable relationships that are intended to be permanent. We have heard people talking about justice for people who, for various reasons, will not get married. I have a great deal of sympathy with the American girl who said she was fed up with the deep, meaningful relationship and she wanted to get married. Why do people not get married? Very often, as we have heard, the reason is that one partner does not want to be committed. Commitment brings rights for one partner; commitment brings liabilities for another. It is right that someone, usually a man, who is not willing to get married will not be very keen to rush into any legal relationship at all – he is quite happy having his cake and eating

it, thank you very much – and if these rights are going to be worth while, this type of person will be put off from being bound and tied. Sometimes the law in its mercy does step in. I think that if it is a fatal accident, and if they lived as man and wife, the poor woman does get some help from the law.

Yet how different is this from a civil marriage? It is really no solution at all; we are simply shunting the trucks down the line. What if somebody does not want to enter into a civil relationship? How are we going to get justice for the person involved there? It is the same problem, just further down the line. We have some poor woman whose ‘husband’ would enter neither into marriage nor a civil relationship and her case is no better at all. Do we have some new, lesser commitment than a civil relationship to cater for her? We could go on indefinitely.

The Government are quite right to confine this to people like those in same-sex relationships, where they have no opportunity of marriage. I would like the civil rights confined to such people or to family relationships, as we have heard, but not to those who could get married but just will not.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

Revd Simon Stanley, in reply: I am going to use a self-denying ordinance and simply not talk about the very valuable and interesting contributions about marriage. There were a lot of them and I do not really feel that we have time to cover those, and I certainly do not have the competence. I do however just say thank you very much indeed for all the contributions and I will single out a few, if I may.

I found the Bishop of Chelmsford’s opening speech about the long history of social concern in the Church very, very helpful. He reminded Synod of Archbishops Temple and Ramsey who are both still much revered in York, so we like to hear their names in this context. What is the common good? That is the really crucial question which connects with and underlies this motion.

Lady Gore-Booth, yes, the motion does include both innocent and fornicating couples, to use her terminology, because they need to have rights and legal provision. We either take an interest in only those who follow our own way or we are careful to make sure that we have a concern, as Our Lord had, for everybody, whatever their condition.

David Robertson: interesting social analysis of how marriage deteriorates. I need to think about that but I liked what he said because he approved the motion. I can only urge Synod to buy his new book.

Thanks to John Young for bringing us back to justice at that point, and making that very interesting comment about the sharing of homes, a good idea when the state of the housing stock in the country is so worrying.

I thank Maryon Jägers very much for that insight from elsewhere on human rights. That was helpful.

Hayden Charles hit the nail on the head, and I thank him for that. There are a number of grey areas which we as Christians, and Christian ministers of every kind, are having to deal with every day. We cannot just ignore them.

Richard Burrige: how does the Church address society? Very helpful words about the nature of the Scriptures and how we are to understand them.

There are lots more thanks I could express, but I just want to thank everybody for a very interesting debate. I only want to repeat the claim – for the last time – that the motion is about righting injustice and, as Christians, I ask you to support it. This is not a motion – certainly not in its amended form any more than it was in the original, and I am very happy about the amended form – for or against marriage. It is not a motion for or against cohabitation. It is a motion for justice, and I urge Synod to vote for it.

Revd Richard Thomas (Oxford): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. Can I ask for clarification about the finances before we vote on this? I would be very interested to know how come requesting the Archbishops' Council to investigate and explore is going to cost £17,000 but asking the Mission and Public Affairs Council to monitor and report back is going to cost nothing.

The Chairman: Thank you for raising that. I will take some advice.

I am advised that as we have closed I need to put the motion to you and therefore I invite Mr Thomas to speak privately to Dr Turnbull or other members of the Archbishops' Council to solve that problem. I hope that that is helpful. Because of the public interest in this debate, I am going to call for a count of the voting figures.

The motion was put and carried in the following amended form, 248 voting in favour and 27 against:

‘That this Synod

- (a) strongly reaffirm that marriage is central to the stability and health of society and warrants a unique place in the law of this country;

- (b) recognize that there are issues of hardship and vulnerability for people whose relationships are not based on marriage which need to be addressed by the creation of new legal rights; and
- (c) ask the Mission and Public Affairs Council to monitor future developments on these issues and report as necessary to Synod.’

The Session was adjourned at 6.49 p.m.