

Fourth Day

Monday 9 July 2007

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Stephen Venner)* took the Chair at 9.30 a.m.

Revd Tim Stratford (Liverpool) and *Revd Canon Carl Turner (Exeter)* led the Synod in prayer.

Presidential Address

The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu): There is a commanding invitation which echoes throughout the Bible. It is a message given at various times to patriarchs and prophets, to nations and to shepherds, to Zechariah and to Mary, to disciples and the fledgling congregations in the Church's earliest days: 'Fear not, do not be afraid.'

My brothers and sisters, this is a message that we need to hear, because it seems to me that we have become afraid. What are we afraid of? Of causing offence by being ourselves? Afraid of the future? Afraid of the challenges to our faith and actions from many quarters, to which we do not know how to respond without causing offence? Are we afraid of those who are different from us? Afraid of failure? Afraid of ridicule? Afraid of looking foolish? Afraid of taking risks?

For our summer holiday in August 2003, Margaret and I decided to spend two weeks on the Trent and Mersey Canal on a narrowboat. This was a very risky strategy. We had never done such a thing before. We had to learn new words, like 'windlass', 'winding turn' and 'bilge'. We were given 20 minutes of instruction and shown, on a model lock, how to get the boat in and out and how to move the tiller. We were told to travel for at least four hours a day in order to charge the batteries; and off we went, into the unknown.

Twenty minutes into our journey we encountered the Mersey, which tried to suck us into its stream. It was terrifying! However, we managed to stay afloat on the canal. Passing other boats, going under low bridges and negotiating locks were real and new challenges. The fear was ever-present. Would we crash into another boat? Capsize as we came out of a lock, or find no moorings at the end of the day? Some people fed us with dismal and scary stories, especially about a terrifying place called Fradley Junction, which has many locks; but many people we met were helpful and kind, friendly and, above all, encouraging. What we had to conquer was not the canal: it was our fear. We had to take the risk in order to make the journey.

As a Church, we need to learn once again to become risk-takers: people who take risks for the gospel; who take risks for Christ; who take risks in the service of God and of one another. We have to take risks in order to make the journey. We discover courage by doing courageous, God-like actions. ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.’ An act at a particular time and place; it is the sin of the world that Christ takes away. It is an action.

So what are we afraid of and what are the consequences of our fearfulness? The result of fear can be dangerous. Fear itself can create its own risk. Because often, when we are reacting out of fear, we do not behave with courage, determination and grace; we become defensive; we behave badly. This bad behaviour not only afflicts us as individuals but also at every level, as Churches, as nations. The language of fear has become the language of international relations. Worldwide, a new book on terrorism is published, believe it or not, every six hours! Fear has begun to shape the minds and the decisions of those who take counsel for the nations.

As Jim Wallis has noted, ‘The politics of fear can have disastrous results in both foreign and domestic policy. To name the face of evil in the brutality of terrorist attacks is good theology, but to say simply that they are evil and we are good is bad theology that can lead to dangerous politics. The threat of terrorism does not overturn Christian ethics’. It is mercy, loving-kindness, deeds of mutual charity, reciprocal solidarity, walking in God’s ways of love and justice.

Our fear of terrorism can lead us to false conclusions about all our Muslim neighbours. The challenge we face is not about moderate Muslims versus so-called radical Muslims. The challenge is about Islam being used for quasi-political ends, at whose heart is getting into paradise now, by suicide bombing, propelled by a hatred of the West and its way of life; attempting to avenge past hurts by piling them on present problems.

Therefore, the question is in fact about our discernment between those Muslims who, being loyal to the Holy Qur’an, are dedicated to a version of Allah who is merciful, holy and kind, in contrast to those who tendentiously make Allah vengeful, violent, merciless; promising paradise now, through acts of brutality and mass murder. In remaking God in their own image, they commit the ultimate act of blasphemy.

In the same way, we Christians must beware of taking the holiness of God to imply that his wrath and judgement are out to destroy sinners instead of redeeming them, loving them and forgiving them. For those who follow the man of Galilee who was crucified, self-righteousness must die at his cross. It is from the cross that the light of God shines forth upon the world in its fullest splendour. As David Bosch has said, ‘The Church is an inseparable union of the divine and the dusty’.

We are still human, and the chorus to the song *Anthem* by the Canadian writer Leonard Cohen reminds us that there can be a point to our lack of perfection –

Ring the bells
That still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.

We must resist the temptation to abandon Christian principles of justice to those who suggest that fear is a better teacher than Jesus himself. For us, the opposite of fear is not courage but the gift of wisdom, knowledge, discernment and insight from the Holy Spirit.

Sin harms the individual believer. Heresy, the wrong understanding of God, harms the Church. Idolatry destroys both the believer and the Church and is the cause of both sin and heresy. Our mission, like that of Jesus, is in the end to confront idolatry.

So what are we afraid of? Are we afraid of the loss of identity? Of a diminished sense of who we are and what it means to be us? You might think so, given the opportunity and the amount of time that society devotes in its public conversation to the question, 'What does it mean to be British?'

As a Church, are we afraid of the future? Are we afraid of change? Are we privately content with the comfortable certainties of decline? Or are we afraid of the public square? Of the public conversation about faith and society, difference and identity? In a space which we once confidently thought belonged to us as of right, how do we preach the words of life afresh in our communities of diverse ethnicities, cultures and peoples of other faiths present – and in a generation that is sceptical, cynical and fearful?

Fear is a subtle enemy, changing its face and nature in order to take us unawares, to get under our defences. We may think that we know what to fear, but we can be taken by surprise. You will have heard the story when a lion, a gorilla and a chicken were discussing fear. The gorilla said, 'When I beat my chest, all animals are afraid.' The lion boasted, 'When I roar, animals and humans for miles around are very, very scared.' 'That's nothing', said the chicken. 'All I have to do is sneeze and the whole world is terrified!'

At the moment, the Church is in danger of being paralysed by fear of schism in the Anglican Communion, by much painful disagreement over the controverted issue of ordaining people in same-sex relationships, and the blessing of such relationships. In our fear, too, Christ can easily be pushed out of the way, as we try to show others that we are right and that they are wrong. Then grace, compassion and love go out of the window.

As you know, I visited the General Convention of the Episcopal Church last year and I returned from the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada last week. In both Synods, regardless of the outcome of the debate, people spoke of their pain and sadness about the resulting brokenness of the Church, the Body of Christ. All sides showed

concern for the fact that, as Bishop Victoria Matthews said, we were being, ‘. . . drawn away from issues which are gradually destroying God’s creation: child poverty, racism, global warming, economic injustice, concern for our aboriginal brothers and sisters, and the growing disparity between the rich and the poor’.

It is not only the Church that needs to hear the words of Christ not to be afraid but also the rest of our society. We seem to lack a confident grasp of the world as it is. Many of us see the world only as we wish it to be and/or regret it is not. The gospel ought to help us to get beyond this computerized despair to a place of presence, engagement and participation; because, if we are afraid, then we are not the only ones.

Why in our society do we need to fill up the air with noise, celebrity and trivia? Because, beyond all that stuff, beyond the noise and the striving, we are so afraid of the terrible silence; afraid of an echoing, empty universe in which we are alone, without God, who says to us, ‘Do not be afraid. Before you were in your mother’s womb I knew you. I have made you and called you. You are mine.’

In this context of fear and of terror, religious faith can be seen not only as something dangerous but as foolishness, as something for the childish rather than the childlike; something trivial, comforting for the woolly-minded; something to be mocked and regarded as no better than Father Christmas or the Tooth Fairy.

In the opening chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul asks, ‘Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world?’ For, even now just as then, some demand miraculous signs and others look for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified – Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of the world and the despised, so that none of us may boast before him. Paul’s confidence in the gospel begins and ends with the cross of Christ, where the victory has already been won.

So it is that, during the years of *apartheid*, South African Government troops entered the church where Desmond Tutu was preaching. After the soldiers had searched at great length for a man who was not there, Tutu invited them not to leave but to remain. ‘Stay’, he said. ‘Stay with us and come over to the winning side.’ Tutu knew that, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, there is nothing now that we have to fear. The words of Christ to his disciples were, ‘Do not be afraid’. We need to take them seriously if we are to be serious in our risk-taking.

Does this mean that we can sit back, comfortable in this knowledge, and become mere spectators? Not at all. You know that better than me. That is why you are here! Like St Paul, we are co-workers in building the kingdom, until that day when he will take our work and make it perfect.

In our Church, are we afraid that the boat may actually be sinking? The Anglican Church, the Church of England and the Communion must put aside fear and anxiety and instead focus on Jesus' insistent call to the disciples in their small boat, in Luke V and to us, 'Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch'. In response to Simon's fear and astonishment at the incredible, net-breaking, boat-sinking generosity of the catch, Jesus says, 'Do not be afraid. From now on, you will be catching people'.

What are we afraid of? Of God's astonishing generosity, which is so far beyond our imagination and measure? Of God in action, all around us, showing us where to let down our nets for the rich harvest of the kingdom? Later, in John's Gospel, the risen Christ again tells his disciples to let down their nets, and again they are amazed at the weight of the catch. Over breakfast, in the dawn on the lake-shore, they are afraid to ask him who he is because, in the generosity of the catch and of the meal, as he breaks bread with them, hungry and dirty and tired from a night of fishing, they know him to be the Lord. It is here, on the lake-shore, surrounded by nets, fish, and grubby, tired people, that the pastoral, missional and sacrificial nature of ministry is set before the disciples and before us, as our common calling.

Every one of us is here because God has called us to his work in one way or another. We are here because we have heard that calling. We want to serve him and his Church, our brothers and sisters, and our communities. The fact that you are all here shows that you are ready to go where he calls and where he leads. Just eight days ago, more than 560 men and women – the highest number since 2000 – joined the ranks of clergy in obedience to the call of God on their lives: the call to take risks for the gospel.

Yes, there may be many things to fear: in our own lives, in the world and in our life as a Church; but God has a plan for us and he wants us to take hold of it. How can we be courageous leaders, courageous followers, ready to enjoy God's promise? 'Getting things done through wise and efficient use of the resources of people, time and money; and seeing planning as taking responsibility for a future filled with hope and accountability to God.'

One of the greatest illustrations of this is in the Old Testament, in the Book of Numbers chapters 13 and 14. God had a vision for his people: a Promised Land flowing with milk and honey; a land which they would possess. After wandering in the wilderness for a long time, they came to the edge of the Promised Land, ready to fulfil God's promise. Moses sent the cream of the crop, the best man from each tribe; 12 men to be the eyes and ears of the rest, to explore the land of Canaan. He fully expected that the reality of Canaan would confirm God's promise, and in a sense it did, for all the men who had gone to see agreed, 'It's a fantastic land. Look at the fruit. We never saw grapes and pomegranates like that. And the honey! It is the sweetest you have ever tasted. But we can't go and take the land! The people there are great strong giants, and the cities are not really cities: they're forts. And those Nephilim who live in the Negev, well, compared with them, we are just grasshoppers'.

Of course, all the Israelites were then very frightened and they complained, and blamed their leaders for promising them good things and then bringing them to this new place of danger. However, Caleb and Joshua had a different story. They agreed on all the facts. Their observations were the same; but, because their perceptions were different, their conclusions were different. Why? Ten of the spies were looking at the problem in the wrong way. They could only see gigantic, threatening problems and they were too fearful to move. They left God out of the picture. Caleb and Joshua saw the problem through eyes that were focused on God. They saw the possibilities that God was providing for them. They knew that God could help them through the hard times which lay ahead.

As Synod members, we are called to go out daily into the world to see what God is doing and where he is leading us. When we face problems, as we will, we can feel afraid and leave God out of the picture, or we can trust him to see us through. We need to be people of a different spirit: people who are ready to go; people who are ready to lead. When we come here to this Synod, we are bringing the whole of our parishes with us.

Back in the sixteenth century, the Elizabethan Settlement gave the Church of England its identity and its role, which was to be a spiritual home for every man, woman and child in the land. The parish structure, though often maligned, means that every person in this country has a church community who are called to pray and care for them; and it is the concerns of our parishes and our communities that we bring, in one way or another, to these discussions.

It is now very encouraging that the new Government has affirmed the nature of the Church of England, as by law established, within the nation's life. Moreover, it has recognized its decisive voice in the appointment of its ministers to different ministries. I hope this will mean that we no longer need to worry and wrangle about our internal structures and can concentrate on the larger issues of spiritual and pastoral care of those whom God has called us to serve in this land.

For there is no depth that Christ does not call us to visit with his suffering love. That is what it means to put out into the deep; to be willing to travel into uncharted waters with people. There is nowhere that we do not go: into prisons; into war zones; into areas of acute hunger and starvation; into hospitals and hospices; into grim estates; into isolation; into crowds; into loneliness, despair, depression or the fearful places of mental illness; into the last journey of death. Into all these places, which the world thinks are frightening, we go and we stay. We do not just visit. We live with people who have all of these conditions. As we do, we experience, again and again, meeting the risen Christ there with the poor and the suffering, his hands and feet and side marked with his suffering love.

We do big stuff and it is high time that we believed it; but sometimes we fail. The capacity to admit our weakness, to confess that we are fallible and have failed is a vital aspect of living out our witness as Christians, living honestly with our faults

and with our need for forgiveness. We must find the confidence to admit when we have made mistakes and to make changes for the future. Fear must not drive us into denial.

Recently we have come to understand that as individuals, as bishops and as a Church, we have taken judgements on issues around the safeguarding of children in the past which we now regret. We have worked hard, and continue to work hard, to change the ways in which we deal with such issues. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said in his statement in April this year, 'Since these sad events occurred, the Church, like other public bodies, has developed greater expertise and far more stringent procedures. This does not help victims of an earlier era, but the awareness of the cost they have borne is something that underlines the imperative need to keep all our procedures in the strictest working order'.

Do we truly live out our conviction that the salvation story of the gospel of Jesus utterly transforms the paradigm of what constitutes failure and success? In Matthew chapter 14 we find another miracle of generosity and grace – the feeding of 5,000. It is followed by Jesus walking on the water, reminding us once again that, with God, all things are possible. In the story, the response of the disciples to the hungry multitude was, 'There isn't anywhere to buy bread. There isn't any money to buy bread with. The numbers are so huge that it's clearly foolish even to try'.

Yes, it was foolish; but it was God at work. From this story, four things stand out. We must be willing to offer to God that which is ridiculously small. What we need is not great faith but faith in a great God. We must be thankful even for small things. In this miracle of God's generosity the miracle went on and on and on, until all were fed. We must be faithful in prayer and patience as we wait for God's response and, like the disciples in the story, work hard at sharing out the miracle of God's grace. Lastly, we must learn to trust God and leave our concerns and cares in his hands. In all our perplexities, Christ is with us, as Romans chapter 8 reminds us.

Margaret and I found that, on the canal, the troubles of yesterday did not dominate our today and the successes of yesterday were no guarantee of our victory tomorrow. We were determined to complete our journey and we grew in confidence as the days went by. We did not do it on our own, however; we made it through to the completion of our journey because of the wonderful company of the people whom we met on the way. The question is, shall we repeat the experience? I am very keen, but Margaret is not so sure! I know that we will do it again. After all, the River Ouse runs alongside Bishopthorpe Palace and in these days of rain and flood it seems that having boating skills could become increasingly important!

So, friends, do not listen to what the cynics say about the Church of England: that 'It moves forward by constantly looking backwards'. Do not allow yourselves to be persuaded by those who say, 'We've tried that before and it never works'. It is after they have been out fishing all day and caught nothing, when they are tired and hungry and

discouraged, that Jesus says to his disciples, 'Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch'.

For the Israelites on the brink of the Promised Land, the dream was ready and God was ready, but the people were not, because of their self-doubt and fear. They forgot that they were children of God. What happened to our dreams? Where is the vision God put before us? What is wrecking it? Is it because we are sinful, because we keep getting things wrong, because we talk too much about sex? I do not think that is the problem. No, I think that our dream is being delayed because our fear tricks us into thinking of ourselves as grasshoppers or worms.

In place of fear, we must face the troubles which confront us, in the Church and in the world, with steadfastness and wisdom. This means facing up to crises when they occur with honesty and realism, not minimizing the problem but not supersizing it either; keeping it in godly proportion.

Missionaries in China back in the 1930s noted that the Chinese ideogram for 'crisis' is a combination of two other word pictures, 'opportunity' and 'danger'. When we perceive a crisis, we need to see it in the light of its dangerous opportunity; not being paralysed by fear of the danger, but spurred on by hope in the opportunity.

In the first letter of John we read that, 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment and he who fears is not perfected in love. We love because he first loved us'.

In the face of all that confronts us and makes us fearful, let us recognize the authority of God's word made human in the face of Jesus Christ. His ancient promises of love, mercy and justice made manifest, as God pitched his tent among us and we beheld his glory. Let us also be confident, as we have faith in the Word of God, trusting God's own testimony. Do we believe the reports of the Lord? Do we believe the evidence of our own eyes, as we see God at work in lives and communities that are transformed? Let us live out that faith. Jesus Christ came among us, died, rose and ascended, and we have received the Holy Spirit. He is with us till the end of time.

The Lord says to us, 'Fear not, for I have overcome the world'. So, my brothers and sisters, let us not be afraid, but, rather, put out into the deep. Let us do it, and let us do it now.

The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed, Archbishop. Just for Synod's information, that will be broadcast on BBC Parliament at nine o'clock on Saturday evening, and copies of the Archbishop's Presidential Address will be available later this morning.

Annual Report of the Church Commissioners

The Chairman: It has been the custom of Synod to have a report from the Commissioners debated in a take note debate every other year. This year the Commissioners have decided to cast their nets out into the deep and to enter into a new way of being Church Commissioners. They have taken the risk of doing it differently this morning.

Their report is published and in a few minutes I will ask Andreas Whittam Smith, the First Church Estates Commissioner, and Timothy Walker, the Third Church Estates Commissioner, to present the report to us. There will then be an opportunity for interactive discussion, which basically means questions and answers. I hope that you have a lot of questions, which those two will be able to answer, together with Andrew Brown who will be joining them at that point.

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith (First Church Estates Commissioner): My thanks first of all to the Business Committee for allowing us to take Synod's time every year rather than every two years, and for allowing us to try a session like this, which I hope will go well and will be a forerunner of the way in which members should, as it were, get stuck into the details of the Commissioners' work.

I am not going to speak for very long, nor is Timothy. I am going to take you to the report. I want to take you to parts of the report, starting on page 7. The table at the top of page 7 is really a test for us: it is how you should judge us. There are two questions you need to establish in relation to whether we are doing our work well or not. First of all, are we growing the assets more quickly than the rise in wages and salaries, average earnings? Our beneficiaries' costs, fundamentally – whether they be dioceses or bishops' working costs or the stipends of deans, or whatever it may be – are rising broadly in line with earnings. That is the test, I think.

I hope you think that the record at the moment – and it is important to say 'at the moment', because financial markets can change – is very satisfactory. Synod will see that, over ten years, average earnings have risen by 4.2 per cent per annum and that our total assets have risen by 10.7 per cent. We are well ahead, therefore. That difference – 6.5 percentage points – is equivalent to £300 million per annum; so it is an enormous difference.

The picture over five years is very similar. Last year was certainly unusually good, where our assets rose by 13.6 and average earnings rose by 3.7. That is a ten-point difference which, in one year, is about £500 million. By the way, we do not stack that away: everything we have goes to the Church in one form or another.

The second test which this table displays is whether we, the Commissioners, have been managing our funds averagely, less than well, or well, namely whether or not we have exceeded what other funds have done. That is the second line. In the ten-year period we

grew our funds by 10.7 per cent and average funds rose by 8 per cent. That is a 2.7 percentage point advantage to us. The position at five years is much the same. Last year, we were about three points ahead.

I think that you need always to look carefully at that. Are we just trundling along with the market, or even falling behind it or doing better? It is very important that we do better. Every percentage point is an enormous amount of money on a fund which is worth over £5 billion.

There are two things which the Assets Committee do. One is to decide how to allocate our assets; how much property; how many of our shares to be overseas and how many to be in this country; whether or not to own bonds; how much residential property to own. Those are very big decisions and they have a powerful influence on our performance.

The second thing we do is to choose our professional advisers and investment managers. In the case of our share portfolio, we do not ourselves decide which share to buy or which to sell; that is entirely the responsibility of our managers. In the case of property, we do make the decisions ourselves. Policing, if you like, the work and performance of our investment managers is very important. That is what the table on page 7 tells you.

If you turn back to page 5 you will see how our fund is structured. In other words, how did we allocate our assets? You will see that broadly 95 per cent of our funds are in what are called 'real assets'; that is, either in shares or in property. In fact, I think that shares are a bit more real than property, in the sense that the performance of shares eventually is determined by profits – how profitable are the companies in which we invest – and that determines their dividends and their value; whereas the value of our property is determined by rents, and that comes out of firms' turnover. If equities are linked to profits, rents are linked to turnover. They are both real, however, and they both protect us against inflation.

I would like to say a little about one of those classes of property which we do not often mention, namely our very large rural portfolio. We have estates all over the country, in every part. Until very recently, frankly, we have seen that as essentially a residential property play, if you like. The mechanism is well established. As a particular tenant farmer may have no children who wish to carry on the tenancy and as he retires, his land is distributed to the other farmers in the estate; but then we are left with a cottage, a farmhouse or whatever, which we can sell. That has obviously proved very lucrative. The point about farming now, however, is that, with the worldwide rise in food prices, it is eventually turning round and, in my view, will shortly become a proper business. This is not very good news for the rest of us, because food prices in this country are rising by 6 per cent and inflation is at 3 or 4, and that is true across the world. However, it is a permanent turnaround in my view; because ultimately it depends upon China and India, whose growing populations are demanding a much higher quality of food, and

both are becoming net importers of agricultural products. So I believe that what seem to be a minor part of our portfolio, our rural assets, are going to look very good.

I would now like to take you briefly to page 47. At the bottom is what you might think to be a rather obscure little table. It says, 'Professional advisers'. I do not think that any table in a set of accounts is obscure. I was taught to read the obscure bits first, before going on to the headlines. If you were to compare that list with two years ago, you would see changes – and you always will see changes. Two investment managers who were there two years ago have gone and they have been replaced by two more. We do, very regularly, assess the performance of all those who advise us. We do subject them to beauty parades; we do constantly ask them to come and see us to explain how they are doing, and to suffer an interrogation.

However, there is one difficulty with knowing whether an investment manager should be changed after a period of underperformance. Are they underperforming because they are bad at the job, or have they taken a policy decision? At the moment, some are saying, 'We don't really trust the price of oil. It is where it is for political reasons. It wouldn't be there if there were no politics in that market, and we don't really like energy shares for that reason'; and for that reason they often drag behind the market. That is difficult to assess.

I will now take you on a little further in the accounts, to page 50, and briefly say something about two lines there. First, in the line which shows how much we distribute under the heading of 'Parish mission and ministry support', if you look carefully you will see that in the year 2001 we distributed less than in the year 2000. We do not ever want to do that again. We do not think that we should so organize our affairs that we have to cut our distributions. Since then, therefore, on the advice of our actuaries we have set up a smoothing mechanism. We keep a little bit back when we have had a very good period, so that we can bring it forward when the markets decline, as they inevitably will, and we can provide all our beneficiaries with stability. I think I am right in believing that stability is very important in the future planning for the Church.

The last point I want to mention, which you should always look at carefully, is that the Commissioners' administrative costs have remained more or less the same in money terms over a ten-year period. They were £5.2 million in 1997; they were £4.9 million last year. To be the same broadly in money terms, of course, is to be quite a decline in real terms.

That is all I want to say at this point, because I want there to be maximum time for dialogue.

Mr Timothy Walker (Third Church Estates Commissioner): I have been in place now for slightly less than a year. Those who have looked carefully at the small print will notice that in fact I did not attend any meeting of the Church Commissioners Board or committee last year, and therefore I can hardly claim much credit for the report and the

work. However, I am very much enjoying going out and meeting people around the country – bishops, deans and dioceses – and I hope and intend to go on doing that. If you invite me, I will come: at least, as quickly as the diary permits. I would like to express my gratitude for all the help that I have received, for information of all kinds and in all directions.

I would like to pick up a few points from the report, in the light of the experience of a new boy on the block. We are now making good progress on budgets for bishops and we are working to reach a consensus on the future of the historic houses. I am also looking for ways that, as the Church Commissioners, we can help cathedrals with development issues. We have made clear that single-stream funding will only be by agreement, if you like, between consenting adults.

I have been very struck by the good work done by the Pastoral and Redundant Churches committees, and I am very grateful to the members of those committees for helping me start to chair them. We have now had new procedures in place for about two years, involving a much more open and public process. I believe that these are working well, although there are some cases where those involved still have to internalize on this. Even when the objectors do not have their objections upheld – and they do sometimes – they recognize that they have had every chance to put their case to an independent body, and it has been heard and listened to very carefully.

I should say, for all those who appear before the committee, that the committee are very keen to make sure that there has indeed been proper consultation and that those objectors whose objections have not been agreed to have been listened to very carefully.

We will be having a review to learn the lessons of the first year or so. If those who have been involved, or who have not been involved, have things to tell us, please do so, because we want to learn from the experience of everyone. Staff of the Commissioners have been going round the country talking to dioceses, explaining the procedures, and we would be very happy to go on doing that, to make sure that everyone knows what is involved and how best to proceed.

I do not like the term 'redundant' for churches, but we must recognize that not all churches are in the right place or that in some cases the costs of upkeep are very great. We want to work with dioceses to help understand and use the process effectively, and to interact with all the other bodies which have an interest, or those with an interest in heritage.

We are about to employ Church Commissioners' staff on a regional basis to strengthen the relationships with diocesan staff, and hence our ability to help on the process. Every year, we go on a visit to dioceses to look at cases on the ground and, again, we are really keen to help all those involved work out the best way to proceed; and perhaps in some cases to reach a more timely outcome than is sometimes the case.

We are keen to see where the skills of the Church Commissioners' staff can be of help to dioceses in dealing with the range of problems, given that we see rather more of them than many individual dioceses.

I therefore commend the work of the committees. As I have said, I am very grateful to all those in dioceses who have helped us do our work. I am absolutely determined that we should work with you to assist the process in future.

The Chairman: I would now invite you to ask the questions that you have. We will probably take two or three at a time. To start with, I will ask Adrian Greenwood to ask a cluster of questions which he has already advised me that he has.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): I was the mover of last year's following motion which, in summary, was about how the Church Commissioners can better engage with Synod on controversial issues. The Church Commissioners have replied to that in GS Misc 858.

My question is this. In GS Misc 858, the Church Commissioners propose six practical ways in which the flow of information and the working relationship with Synod can be improved. Please could you expand further on how these ways will 'seek out and reflect the views of General Synod in advance of investment decisions which might affect the mission and/or reputation of the Church'?

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith: Let me take your last phrase first. Obviously, we have a very close eye to the reputation of the Church. We are put on warning about what that means in detail by the sort of dialogue, the sort of occasion, the presence of Synod members on the Assets Committee amongst the governors; we are put on warning about that all the time. The thing I beg you not to neglect is the powerful presence of elected Synod members on all our bodies. They are there to remind us of the views of the wider Church. They are there also to be focus points for other members of Synod to be in touch with, when you know them. That is the most important way in which we can be advised how to be careful with the reputation of the Church – if it has not already occurred to us, by the way!

As to whether outside bodies can give us the benefit of their advice when we are taking decisions, I have to say frankly, and without ambiguity, that is not often possible, particularly in the buying and selling of property – particularly in the buying of property – because the whole art is to have such good connections that interesting property propositions are shown to us before they get on to the open market. That means that we have to be ready to move very quickly.

Obviously, in the minds of the people from Southwark is the excellent decision we took over Octavia Hill; but we do not have any more Octavia Hills. That sort of very sensitive sales situation is not likely to arise again, therefore. I think that

we are very well plugged into the wider Church, what it thinks, and what we should do.

The Bishop of Dudley (Rt Revd David Walker): I have a question to the First Church Estates Commissioner about the rural landholdings. I am very pleased to hear about farming incomes, and that is certainly something that I have picked up in our own, quite rural, diocese. However, I would like the Commissioners to consider being a little more proactive in terms of rural diversification.

In work I was doing on a chapter for a book a couple of years ago, looking at some of the different major institutional landowners, the impression I was getting was that the Commissioners are not as proactive as some others in terms of encouraging their tenant farmers in small-scale diversification. We do need, for the sustainability of employment, a range of employment, and sustainability of our local communities, to be a little more proactive in that direction.

There is one very particular instance I would like to put to the Commissioners. A couple of weeks ago I was at a symposium at St George's, Windsor, looking at the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and traveller community in rural areas. One of the recommendations which we took away from that, which has been taken up by the CLA, is to try to bring together some of the major institutional landowners – and I believe there is a group of those landowners that meets formally from time to time – to look at whether it would be possible to identify sites in rural areas that would not gain normal planning permission, nor even planning as exception sites under normal s.106 agreements, and to make them available for the Gypsy/traveller community. That could, in itself, be a source of income for the tenant farmers who are managing those sites.

I think that would deal with one particularly prejudiced community in this country at the moment, who are often moved on from site to site. The Government have said that in the long term they will require local authorities to be a little more proactive, but they are at least five years off that. The possibility of identifying sites that Gypsies and travellers could use would alleviate a major wrong in our rural communities.

Dr Peter Harland (Ely): May I, as a former employee of the Commissioners, welcome the Commissioners' brave efforts over the last 12 years or so to deal with some of the problems of over-staffing which they had in the 1980s and early 1990s. I appreciate that this is not an easy problem to resolve, and I welcome what they have done. I am very glad to see that administrative costs have been kept down and that they remain vigilant over that. May I urge the Commissioners to remain vigilant in this respect, in order to maximize the resources for parish ministry?

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith: The Bishop of Dudley asked about assisting farmers as they seek to diversify. Almost all of them are trying to diversify in some ways, whether it be encouraging livery; supplying local farmers' markets, and so on; and assisting tourism in various ways.

We have made it a rule – and perhaps it is something we should think about again – that we do not suggest these things to the farmers themselves. It is their businesses, finally. When the tenant farmer wants to diversify – and they all know this, I think – they can turn to us for capital support, if it is that sort of project. We very often put a certain amount of our funding into whatever diversification they are trying to bring about.

I think that is the best way. Having made quite a few agricultural visits and met some very robust farmers, I would not care to tell them how to run their businesses. I would much rather that they said, ‘This is what we are thinking of doing. Will you come alongside us?’ – and we often do.

I had not hitherto heard of the remarks you made about whether landowners together should think through how to help travellers, Gypsies, and so on; but we are members of those institutes, and I am sure that we will take on board what is said to us.

The other question, if I understood it correctly, was about continuing to keep a sharp lid on our costs. I think that we can go on doing that, because we now have the advantage of having moved out of wonderful Millbank into Church House, with everybody else. Already there are dividends from that. The accounting departments are coming together much more quickly than they otherwise would have done. I think that we will, in countless ways, find methods of becoming more efficient. In the case of the relationship between the Commissioners and the Pensions Board, we will be taking on a certain amount of administrative work for them, and so on. We should therefore be able to keep our costs going down in real terms.

Mrs Janet Atkinson (Durham): A year or so ago, I was inadvertently drawn into the legal worries of one of our farmers in Upper Weardale, which related to a combination of unlawful building-up of rural tracks and underwater mineral rights. If you are a farmer in Upper Weardale No.1 Millbank can seem a very long way away. I was able to put him in more personal touch with some of the staff, who were extremely helpful. He is the churchwarden, and that is how he got in touch with me.

In terms of spreading the good news about what we do and who is there to help, could I ask whether our tenants get copies of the Annual Report? If not, could that be given some thought?

Canon Linda Jones (Liverpool): I have a question for the Third Estates Commissioner. Could we have a little more information about the regional staff who will be coming and working around the dioceses? I would also like to pay tribute to the availability, professionalism and friendliness of those who are working with the Pastoral Committee, especially in our experience in the Liverpool diocese.

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith: I can say to Janet Atkinson that, as far as I know, tenants do not get our Annual Report. We should perhaps think of sending it to them, or

perhaps of sending the quarterly investment report, which we do circulate as widely as possible.

Two or three weeks ago, we visited the very large and excellent Carlisle estate around Rose Castle, which is more or less entirely dairy farming. We began the visit by holding a proper business meeting in a room at Carlisle racecourse, where we gave a presentation of us, our portfolio, our rates of return, and exactly where the rural portfolio fitted into this; what part of it we kept an eye on because it was potential development land, and so on. We gave them a very thorough business briefing, and I think that they appreciated it. However, I take on board the comments which have been made.

Mr Timothy Walker: Thank you for your question about our regional staff and also for your comments about the helpfulness of staff. The first regional officer will start in Leeds in the near future. We do intend to roll this out nationally, and the exact timing obviously depends on a range of things. It depends on the right person being available for the right part of the country, and also we want to put people only where they will be able to do useful work. Ideally, we choose to place staff where there is a substantial amount of work for them to do and also where the diocese is keen to work with them. I am very pleased to note your interest as part of that process.

The Bishop of Basingstoke (Rt Revd Trevor Willmott): Perhaps I am the only one here who is not aware of the review which has been spoken of, regarding the Church Commissioners' Pastoral Committee. I would like to know more about that.

I would like to know more about its scope and its involvement of dioceses and, in particular, for those of us who are involved in appointment processes, both as bishops and, for example, diocesan pastoral committees, what help might be brought to us when some of the work of the Pastoral Committee also affects other legislation in the Church.

I would be very glad to know those details, and perhaps some timings as to when the details of that review may be made available to more of us.

Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark): According to page 10 of the Annual Report, the sale of the Octavia Hill Estates achieved a sale price of £192 million. How and where has this been invested?

Secondly, according to page 5 of the Annual Report, the Church Commissioners have the following amounts invested in property: commercial, 15 per cent; rental, 7 per cent; residential, 10 per cent. Are there any plans significantly to increase or decrease these percentages?

Mr Timothy Walker: Thank you for the question about the procedures of the Pastoral Committee. We have had the new Measure, of the openness and the public hearings, in place for about two years now. I have been chairman for this year and the committee

wanted to look at how these procedures were working. It is not a review of the whole Measure; it is a review of how we are actually working.

It is generating much more work for the committee, and one of the things we may want to look at is whether we should have panels of the whole committee rather than the whole committee looking at every case. We want to look again at issues such as whether we should have all the meetings in London or should we go out to where the cases are. We want to check whether the way we allow people to speak and be questioned is working. We want to hear what those who have appeared before us think about the process; whether there should be a greater reliance on written procedures; whether we should establish in advance which of the issues we can regard as decided and which not. It is really a practical matter.

When I took over the chairmanship, I did say that I did not want a review until I had had some experience myself. That is why it has not happened at once. The committee has not yet decided exactly how it wishes to proceed on this review, but we will very much want to consult dioceses and to hear their experience; and, of course, to listen, when we go out explaining the procedures to dioceses, to the feedback we get from that.

I will be very happy to suggest to the committee that we have some more formal means of consulting bishops and dioceses on what they would like to see out of the review. I would be happy to be in touch with you about that.

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith: I think that I received two questions. The first was how we had employed the nearly £200 million we released from the sale of the Octavia Hill Estates. What we did was to try to top up those parts of our portfolio where we felt that we were slightly under-invested. We have had a long-term move to be more heavily invested overseas, particularly in emerging markets. We put more funds into specialized investment managers who concentrate on smaller companies, because it is out of the smaller companies that the big successes of the future will come. We do have a long-term process under way of trying to increase our involvement in private equity, which is at 1 per cent at the moment.

I was also asked whether there would be any variations in the way we held investments. Broadly, we will stick, through thick and thin, to remaining in real assets. We will broadly continue to be 65 per cent equities, 30 per cent property, and that is where we shall continue to be over the long run.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): Amongst the Church Commissioners' myriad assets are the mineral rights between the high and low water marks in the Tees Bay. There was a lot of salt there and a salt lease. When it was negotiated it was something of the order of – for those who like old units – 6d per 1,000 gallons of saturated brine. That may have been a good price in the 1940s, but it is a lousy price in the twenty-first century! There was no allowance for inflation.

When you take stuff out of the ground, you leave holes in the ground. We did a good deal – because I was on the other side of the fence in those days – in using one of these holes for the princely sum of £5 a year, attached to the salt lease. It is still £5 a year. In other parts of the country, I had the happy job of selling similar holes in the ground and I extracted £1 million a year plus RPI every five years. The lease expires in 2008, which when I started work was a long way off, but it is round the corner now. I tried to persuade Sir Michael Colman to revisit it, because I was on the other side and I knew that we were sympathetic to talking to him. For goodness' sake do something about it in 2008!

The Chairman: It gives a new meaning to 'a holey Church'!

Ms Susan Cooper (London): The First Estates Commissioner drew our attention to the record of the Commissioners after the past 10 years. I wonder if he could comment on the record for the past 20 or 30 years. Over that period RPI and other things have been completely different. My experience as an actuary is that you cannot look back too far to compare records, and that the past 10 years is actually a very short period of time.

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith: First, I would like to take this opportunity to correct an earlier answer. The Secretary tells me that we do send our annual report to tenant farmers.

I was very glad to be reminded about that old salt lease. We do have a lot of mineral rights. We still have 750 lordships of the manor, which allow us to exploit what is under the land; quite a few of those are in London, however, which seems a difficult task! We are aware of these things: the Commissioners' portfolio is stuffed full of things like this. There is a long lease on Farnham Castle which will go on for ever. There was a very bad lease on Fulham Palace, where the Bishop of London used to live. We are full of things like this. However, as soon as they get to the point where they must be renewed, we are very commercial about them. I am glad to be prompted about that particular lease and if Mr Freeman would like to come down to London and work for the Commissioners he would be very welcome!

As to our 20-year record, we do have the numbers. Twenty years covers the bad times going back to 1987 and goes right through the crisis. Even so, we are in line with the average for all funds. We are not ahead of the average for all funds, but we are in line with that average over a 20-year period. Money lost will never be recovered, but there is a sense in which we have got back to where we should be.

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge (Ven. Clive Mansell): I am a Commissioner and before the Third Church Estates Commissioner's appointment I chaired the Redundant Churches Committee. I have thought of a couple of things in response to the Bishop of Basingstoke's enquiries. I was not too sure whether the enquiry was broader than Timothy Walker was able to address, and I wanted the Synod to hear this.

First, a team from the Pastoral and Redundant Churches department does go out into dioceses, doing briefing occasions to try to help dioceses think through things like pastoral reorganization, options, and the ways of going about the challenges they face. In that way, we hope that that will help dioceses and parishes with the issues that lie before them in the future. The comeback I have heard on that is positive.

Secondly, when we get to the issue of a hearing – and I have dealt with those in the Redundant Churches department – it is important that in our processes we do at least come to a point where there is an objectivity to the committee's hearing. When you hear about us reviewing things and working with the diocese, it is important that, at the end of it, we do not give the impression that it is therefore all stitched up for the diocese. Sometimes, when someone raises an objection against a proposal – it may be people in the community or it may be a parish – they will not want to go with where the diocese is going, and the committee needs to come to an objective position. Sometimes that position will go with the diocese; sometimes it will not. It is important that the committee does retain that objectivity and that therefore there is a just outcome to the process. We do our best on that.

Mrs Jane Bisson (Channel Islands): Can the First Estates Commissioner please advise us on this question? With the appointment of Jackie Bliss as Finance Director and the desire to see the three NCIs – that is, the Archbishops' Council, the Pensions Board and the Church Commissioners – work more closely together and, being a woman, as I try to think of economies, and certainly this question is based on economies of scale, has any thought been given or has discussion taken place on the appointment of just one auditor to all three NCIs?

Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford): I was very pleased to see the excellent financial performance of the Church Commissioners. I wonder if we could hear a little about what one might call the Christian performance. In a market where most firms and people in the City are described as greedy, how are we growing the kingdom? How are we modelling what a Christian organization should be? What are we doing about discrimination against women, against people with disabilities and against ethnic minorities? Also, in line with what the Archbishop was talking about, what are the fears of the Church Commissioners and how are they overcoming them?

The Chairman: My goodness! It is your turn, Daniel!

Mr Andreas Whittam Smith: Replying to the first question, the arrival of Jackie Bliss as Finance Director for the three National Institutions has been a tremendous blessing and is making an enormous difference, though she has a very tough task. We are getting behind her, to make sure that we reform something which needs a lot of reform.

In the Archbishops' Council we have the same auditors; the Pensions Board has different auditors, I believe. There may be advantages in having the same auditors, but there will

have to be different audit partners anyway. There may be a cost saving, I am not sure. One of the frustrations and glories of the Church of England is that we are all individual, legally separate units and we make our own decisions. Far be it from me to browbeat the Pensions Board into having the same auditors as us!

I hope that I did not miss too much of the last question, but I did hear what was it that the Commissioners feared. There is something that I fear. If one looks carefully across world markets, particularly keeping an eye on credit banking rather than stock markets, one sees that the deterioration in residential property markets across the world is beginning to have an effect. In the United States house prices are actually falling a little, which is extremely unusual and it has not happened here for a very long time. There have been one or two 'bumps in the night'; two or three hedge funds have got into great difficulties.

There is a phrase, 'periodic madness of bankers', which is when they think that something is so good that it cannot go wrong. Once upon a time, they thought that if you lent to countries they would never let you down; but, of course, countries do default. There has been the same attitude to a lot of recent lending – 'This can't go wrong' – and now we are beginning to see that it can. I think that we could have a financial crisis, which would affect the stock market but, primarily, it would affect banks. I do have some fears about that.

The Chairman: May we thank the Commissioners for answering our questions so frankly and openly, and for their time and consideration this morning.

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): On a point of order – and from a Church Commissioner. I do not know what the Standing Order situation is on a session like this, but there are two extremely important questions at the end of GS Misc 858, and they do ask for a response from the Synod.

They are '... can more be done to encourage Synod members to engage with (their elected representatives on the Church Commissioners) and vice versa?' and 'Are there blockages in what should be a two-way channel of communication?' We, on the Church Commissioners, elected by the General Synod, would like to hear the answer to that and would like to be a more effective conduit. I would be grateful if people could be invited to send in their ideas on that and as to how this session has gone.

The Chairman: The Synod has heard, and I am sure that they will respond. That ends this item of business.

THE CHAIR *His Honour Judge John Bullimore (Wakefield)* took the Chair at 10.55 a.m.

Diocesan Synod Motion

The Church Commissioners (GS Misc 856A and B)

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod request an urgent review by the Archbishops’ Council of the status and accountability of the Church Commissioners.’

This motion gives Synod an opportunity to consider how the working relationship between the Church Commissioners and the rest of the Church of England can be strengthened so as better to achieve the Commissioners’ mission of supporting the ministry of the Church of England, particularly in areas of need and opportunity. It also gives us an immediate opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of the exercise that we have just been through as an exercise in increasing accountability.

We want a positive, constructive and, above all – taking a lead from the Archbishop of York – a forward-looking debate today. I would like to say a few things by way of introduction. First, it is and has been recognized that, over the past ten years the Church Commissioners have done very well in the management of the portfolio, with the value of the assets and the income generated from them rising above expectations and benchmarked funds. That happy outcome has led to greater financial assistance to the Church, through parish mission grants, help with the pension deficit, and help for housing retired clergy. We are very grateful and we thank them very much. However, as I said this morning, we want to look forward and not back.

Second, as far as I am concerned this is an Octavia Hill-free motion and debate. It is a Southwark Diocesan Motion, chosen for debate by the Business Committee as described on Friday evening, not a personal motion. I am proposing this as the lay chair of the diocese of Southwark, with the full support of Bishop Tom and my colleagues.

Third, despite what the motion says, this is not urgent, and if April’s amendment is not accepted I will seek permission from the Chairman to move that the word ‘urgent’ is removed before the final vote.

Finally, the debate is likely to raise the issue of whether or not reviews, which are necessary to modern life and modern government, are more effective if they are internal or external.

If we look forward and not back, what might a review achieve? The question is not what have the Church Commissioners done wrong or failed to do in the past, but how could they do even better in the future? We know from Question time on Friday and the debate on pensions on Saturday afternoon that there are some activities which the Church Commissioners cannot presently undertake, notably on the thorny issue of clergy pensions, the deficit in the clergy-funded pension scheme and whether or not there should be a transfer of funds or the provision of contingent guarantees.

This debate may highlight more such issues: perhaps in relation to pastoral reorganization, where the Church Commissioners still operate an exclusive jurisdiction and where they have just announced an internal review; or redundant churches; or into the concept of mission-shaped investment, perhaps in new academies or other initiatives for working with children and young people, as we were exhorted to do by the Children's Commissioner.

In moving through this debate Southwark is offering Synod a range of options. At one end of the spectrum, a wide-ranging, open-ended review, aimed at anticipating a new constitutional settlement between Church and State, in response to the recent Green Paper which we shall start debating this afternoon. Alternatively, Synod could go for a narrow, focused review on specific outcomes. This would prioritize accountability, whereas the former would prioritize status.

Addressing the issue of status, the existence of the Church Commissioners could be said to be anachronistic and the product of a compromise between Church and State. The Commissioners were established by Parliament in 1948 as an independent charity. By English charitable law, that means the trustees, the Board of Governors, have a fiduciary duty to the charity, and yet their mission is to serve another organization, namely the Church of England. What happens therefore when occasionally, as it does from time to time, the duty of the trustees does not coincide with the interests of the beneficiary? We know that we cannot serve two masters, but can the Church Commissioners serve three, namely English charitable law, the mission of the Church of England and Parliament?

As our new Prime Minister opens up the possibility of a new constitutional settlement between Church and State, should we ask the Archbishops' Council to consider whether it is still appropriate in the twenty-first century for the Church's historic endowments to be held by a separate and independent body, albeit one that works in close partnership with it? That would be a long game; it would require primary legislation to see it through; but maybe now is the right time to explore this option. I would be grateful to hear what Synod members have to say, and whether, in that case, their review should be widened to the governance of the other National Church Institutions, especially the Pensions Board and the Central Board of Finance, as raised in Stephen Trott's Private Member's Motion and as raised by the Church Commissioners themselves in their response, GS Misc 856B.

Taking the alternative approach, April Alexander is proposing an amendment which would narrow the scope of the review to two specific outcomes. First, the proposal for a select committee regime, based on the parliamentary model, to scrutinize the Church Commissioners and hold them to account for their actions; secondly, for the Ethical Investment Advisory Group to offer written guidance on the ethical implications of the purchase, sale and management of land and real estate, which, according to their latest annual report (see inside the back cover), the EIAG have not yet done. This is relevant, because 25 to 30 per cent of the Commissioners' portfolio is held in property.

If Synod is minded for a shorter, narrower review with specific outcomes, then this option should be followed. In any event, however, I think that Synod should wholeheartedly welcome the initiative of the Church Commissioners to submit themselves to a select committee regime on a parliamentary model, as proposed by the First Estates Commissioner a year ago and repeated in GS Misc 858. The question-and-answer session that we have just enjoyed is a start. A proper select committee regime would require the appointment of a committee from amongst Synod, including an independent chair, with clear terms of reference, powers to ask for documentation and to summon witnesses. If we can make it work for the scrutiny of the Church Commissioners, it could be extended to other Church activity.

A third possible area of activity relates to the non-asset management functions of the Church Commissioners, namely cathedrals and bishops, pastoral reorganization, and the future of redundant churches. While there is already much co-operation and partnership in most of these areas, a review may identify opportunities for extending or varying these by transferring some of those responsibilities altogether to another body. Again, I would be interested to hear what members have to say.

The fourth area relates to the thorny issue of clergy pensions and the role of the Church Commissioners in the current difficulties as 'last man standing'. We have heard of the close partnership working relationship between the Archbishops' Council, the Pensions Board and the Church Commissioners. I ask the question, could that partnership work more effectively by making some structural changes to the three bodies?

A fifth area is in relation to the intractable but, nevertheless, important issue of the role of the Assets Committee. Is it good governance in the twenty-first century that just nine people, one-third of the Board of Governors, should have exclusive power in matters of investment and disinvestment, with no right of appeal, no second opinion, no reference to the Board, no time to stop and think?

I therefore commend this debate to Synod: it is an opportunity to shape the future. Please look forward and not back, and ask yourself this question: how can the working relationship between the Church Commissioners and the Church of England be strengthened, so as better to achieve the Commissioners' mission of supporting the ministry of the Church of England, especially in areas of need and opportunity?

The Bishop of Worcester (Rt Revd Peter Selby): I am a Church Commissioner, a member of the Assets Committee, Vice-chairman of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group – a person with a few conflicting interests in this matter. Not the 'last man standing', but the 'next man out'!

First of all, I want to salute the tone, breadth and generosity of Mr Greenwood's proposition and his speech, because I well recognize, and many other people here will recognize, that he could have made a very different kind of speech: one that would have been much less helpful and one that focused very much more on the particular grievance

which must still linger in the diocese of Southwark over recent decisions that the Commissioners have made. I therefore want to salute that and to refer to a couple of items within it, and in particular which appear more specifically in April Alexander's later amendment to be moved in due course.

I want to say something about the select committee model and refer to Gavin Oldham's earlier comment. In any decisions that are made about this we need to pay some attention to making the existing links work properly. We do have elected members from the Synod in the Commissioners. If we resort to other structures, some questions perhaps need to be asked about the accountability of those elected members and how those specific accountabilities are witnessed to in the life of the Synod, before thinking that we need to add something on to it.

Secondly, I want to say something about property, landholdings and the issue of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group conducting some kind of review of its processes in that regard. I think that we have to take very seriously the remarks of the First Estates Commissioner about what happens when particular purchases and sales come into view. It is not the case that there is no procedure at the moment that allows the wider Church to express an opinion. We have a standing protocol that requires the diocesan bishop, and therefore through that person others within the diocese, to be notified and to have the opportunity of expressing an opinion. Most recently, we did that in relation to the purchase of a property in an overseas jurisdiction, where the diocese concerned was consulted.

I therefore think that the question which needs to be asked is whether a body like the EIAG, which meets four times a year, could possibly undertake the required flexibility and depth of knowledge of a particular deal. Synod should know, however, that, in the purchase and sale of property, those responsible in the Commissioners pay very great attention to whether the uses of that property are in accordance with the ethical investment policy that we apply in the case of equity investments.

I would therefore give a guarded welcome to this debate. I feel somewhat wearied, frankly, at the thought of massive, in-depth reviews.

I will conclude with a reference to what I suspect was the, gently put, sting in the tail of Mr Greenwood's proposals, when he referred to whether the exclusive right and duty that is vested by statute in the Assets Committee is appropriate for this day and age. I think that most charitable organizations require trustees to act with a measure of independence, and I want in particular to draw attention to what has been said by the Commissioners about their responsibilities for inter-generational and inter-regional justice. In that connection, I will say something which I hope will be taken by the proposers of this resolution in the spirit in which it is meant.

I am on public record as believing that the Octavia Hill decision was wrongly made and a wrong decision. I am also on public record as believing that the pensions decision was

wrongly taken and wrongly made; and that was taken and made right here and with Mrs Alexander's strong support. I was against it.

We must not assume that changing the governance procedures will obviate the fact that there is deep and serious disagreement in issues connected with money – and there should be – in any vibrant and live Church. In fact, I believe that those areas of values and disagreements are far too little debated, not too much. I do not think you can assume that if you bring them here you will have a quieter life.

Revd Andrew Watson (London): On reading the background note GS Misc 856A this morning, I was struck by the weakness of one particular section, section 2, which asks the crucial question, 'Why a review now?' The primary answer to that question, we have been told, does not lie in the deep concern of the Southwark diocese over the sale of the Octavia Hill Estates.

The reasons that are given, however, seem peculiarly weak. We should have a formal review now, we are told, because the Commissioners are already looking at ways of developing their engagement with General Synod. We should have a formal review now because they are already giving fresh thought to the delivery of their responsibilities *vis-à-vis* the Charities Act. We should have a formal review now because they are already reviewing the audit arrangements. We should have a formal review now because they have already moved into Church House.

This is strange reasoning indeed. There is no question that, despite the forward-looking tone of Mr Greenwood's speech, the relationship between Southwark diocese and the Church Commissioners has gone through a stormy patch. There is no question that, for many of us outsiders to that particular scrap, there were strongly held and justly held views on both sides. However, where a relationship goes through a stormy patch and, crucially, where one partner in that relationship starts to take serious and significant steps to respond to the particular weaknesses that that scrap has exposed, the last thing that is needed is for some third party, that is, General Synod, to ask some fourth party, that is, the Archbishops' Council, to conduct an urgent review into the matter, consuming massive amounts of time, money and energy and, worse still, feeding an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust rather than seeking to dispel it.

I have some sympathy for the Southwark diocesan synod and understand their distress over the Octavia Hill controversy, but I suggest that quiet meetings behind closed doors between the offended parties might achieve rather more than some clumsy, public, synodical process. I urge Synod to reject the unamended motion.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): I want to highlight the suggestion made by Mr Greenwood that the Church Commissioners' functions in dealing with pastoral reorganization and redundancy might be transferred to the Archbishops' Council. I very much hope that, in any review, this suggestion will be given serious consideration.

The Archbishop of York reminded us this morning of the Church's tendency to move forward by looking backwards. It is true that the Church Commissioners have served the settled Church well in the past, in operating the procedures under the Pastoral Measure. However, this Synod, in embracing the *Mission-shaped Church* report and in passing the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure, has decided to try to change the culture of the Church of England away from a settled mode to a mission footing.

We have committed ourselves to making our Church mission-shaped and to require that those exercising pastoral reorganization functions have due regard to furthering the mission of the Church. To that end the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure, when it comes into force, will lighten and make more flexible the procedures for pastoral reorganization and redundancy.

As a result of this change of culture in the Church, we trust God that we will see increasing quantities of the new wine of effective mission. That is small 'n' and small 'w', you understand. That will require new wineskins. Even with the changes that we have heard about this morning in the Church Commissioners' Pastoral Committee, I believe that the Church Commissioners remain an old wineskin. Old wineskins are good; they are essential for holding old wine. However, if our pastoral organization and redundancy procedures are truly to meet the needs of a mission-shaped Church, a new wineskin, where the focus is on the promotion of mission and which will give priority to missional considerations, will be needed.

At diocesan level we will have the newish wineskin of the Mission and Pastoral Committees. Let us look at the possibility of having a new wineskin at national level, maybe an Archbishops' Council panel on mission and pastoral matters or something of that sort, which will give this priority to mission in a new way, to suit the new conditions into which we are moving. I urge that this be given active consideration, along with all the other matters that have been mentioned by Mr Greenwood in his speech.

Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield): I want to urge members of Synod to vote against this Diocesan Synod Motion for the simple reason that I do not believe it will further the mission of the Church at this time, but rather tie up a lot of people in a cumbersome and expensive process of looking over other people's shoulders and contribute to something of the climate of suspicion that I think our Primate was urging us to move away from in his Presidential Address.

The Church Commissioners have served us well over the past ten years and are clearly seeking to listen to the views of this Synod and to take every opportunity to enable that to happen. In setting up this cumbersome review, although we are told it is an Octavia Hill-free debate, I cannot help feeling that if Southwark had got their way, as it were, last year we would not be having this debate now.

Surely our job this morning is to congratulate the Church Commissioners on their financial stewardship of resources, because it is that excellent financial performance that

has enabled the Commissioners to lift the threat to the future of the Parish Mission Fund to which I drew attention in our last group of sessions. I warmly affirm the commitment to GS Misc 860 to continue the three major grant categories of support for poor dioceses, parish mission funding and cathedral grants, in line with earnings growth.

However, our job is also something else at Synod; it is to make sure that we give them a good steer on our financial priorities. Our job is to live within our means so that we do not put pressure on the Church Commissioners to spend money that they do not have and so repeat the mistakes of 20 years ago.

This week we have made good but difficult decisions in the area of pensions, but there are still difficult decisions to be made about spending priorities in other areas; one of those is the burgeoning cost in the current financial year of maintaining expensive see houses. As a Church we cannot walk away from our responsibility to maintain a significant part of the nation's built heritage in terms of our places of worship, our parish churches, but being the Church of England does not mean that we have a particular responsibility to maintain historic houses for some of our members to live in. We are not called to be the National Trust at prayer but a missionary agency proclaiming afresh the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We cannot walk away from our parish churches but we can decide not to continue to maintain these large houses, particularly because we have a responsibility to make sure that the Church Commissioners in their spending keep the right balance in faithfulness to their overall responsibility, which is for the additional provision for the cure of souls in parishes where such assistance is most required. Yet in this financial year the Commissioners are spending more on support for episcopal ministry than on ministry support for poorer dioceses and parishes. I have to declare an interest: Lichfield diocese is a significant recipient of those grants for the support of poor dioceses; we have very few historic assets. That is the Commissioners' particular statutory responsibility.

I want to ask Synod to reject this Diocesan Synod Motion, congratulate the Church Commissioners on their financial performance, and encourage them to keep their eye on the main task when they look ahead at their financial priorities for the next triennium, which is for the additional provision for the cure of souls in parishes where such assistance is most required.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): I beg to move as an amendment:

'Delete all words after "That this Synod" and insert:

"request:

- (a) the Archbishops' Council to prepare an independent report to the Synod on the Church Commissioners' own proposal that there should be a General Synod Select Committee on the Parliamentary

model to facilitate their further accountability to the Synod, having due regard to:

- i. representation of the House of Laity on the Select Committee; and
 - ii. the interest of the Synod in the major investment and disinvestment decisions of the Assets Committee;
- (b) the Ethical Investment Advisory Group to prepare a report to the Synod on the feasibility of advising the Church Commissioners on the ethical implications of their major decisions in the purchase, sale and management of land and real estate and on the EIAG's recommendations for making this advice effective, acceptable and within the spirit of the Commissioners' own policy statements; and
- (c) both to report back by July 2008".'

Adrian outlined the possibilities in his speech for an extensive review, which would be, as he said, a long game. This amendment, by agreement with Southwark diocese one year on, offers Synod the possibility of a much more focused approach. It is a two-pronged approach and both of the prongs build upon the stated intention of the Church Commissioners and should therefore, I hope, be acceptable to them.

If the Synod goes down this route, it will receive two reports in one year's time, each of which will present the possibility of the increased accountability which the First Estates Commissioner has been seeking, as recorded in the *Report of Proceedings* this time last year.

As Adrian mentioned, it was he, that is the First Estates Commissioner, who first suggested the possibility of a Select Committee regime on the parliamentary model. The suggestion has been repeated in GS Misc 858. The question-and-answer session we have just had was a welcome innovation and an improvement in the interim because a select committee regime would quite possibly be a long time coming. However, the question-and-answer session we have had this morning was closer to ministerial questions in the House than a Select Committee on the parliamentary model, which would have the powers which Adrian mentions to call for witnesses and documentation, I would suppose. It would, to quote the Church Commissioners, allow the Church Commissioners to seek out in advance the views of Synod without the risks inherent in public discourse. It is this which would allow the extra accountability which Andreas Whittam Smith was seeking last year in order that accountability to Synod would begin to match the accountability of the Commissioners to Parliament itself. Of course, the committee could include some of the Synod representatives on the Church Commissioners. It will be for the authors of the report to tease out the details about the terms of reference, the powers, the legal ramifications and the personnel involved. Initial inquiries suggest Standing Orders might well be required but new legislation is less likely.

Now for the second prong. The Church Commissioners' statement of their ethical investment policy includes the sentence 'This policy is applied to all classes of asset under management, including securities, land and real estate.' The policy document for the EIAG says exactly the same. Extraordinarily, despite this, no investment issue relating to land and estates has been referred to the EIAG, as far as I can determine, for advice to date, with the exception of a one-off report on GM crops.

The report from the EIAG would examine the possibilities of their expanding their own remit to cover management of land and real estate. The Oxford judgement recognized the ethical investment regime which was already in existence at the time of its pronouncement and allowed for reputational risks for a charity. However, this was among the issues which the report would have to consider.

The issues are vastly wider than those applying to residential property. Agricultural land and commercial property are clearly tenanted but landowners are not without their responsibility or influence. The Commissioners' report mentions strategic change of use, including planning permission, and there is also mention elsewhere of environmental issues.

The press have little interest in the niceties of ownership, as that might spoil a good story, of course. Here are further matters for the report to consider and report on, together with the issues raised by the Bishop of Dudley.

Investment and realization of investment in land and real estate can also hold ethical problems and Synod could draw much comfort from knowing that advice on these matters has been given by the EIAG and that the EIAG would include such issues in their annual report to Synod in much the same way as they do now. Further, it may or may not be appropriate to advise on individual decisions.

Last year, the EIAG indicated to me that advice on land and real estate was a realistic proposition, and my amendment asks them to examine the feasibility of that advice and define ways to make it valuable and appropriate.

I hope that this amendment commends itself to Synod if the scale of the review mentioned in the Southwark motion appears to be too far-reaching and unattainable.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): Members of Synod who may have found themselves in my position in promoting a Diocesan Synod Motion will be aware that, as time moves on, things change. Consequently, I support the amendment which April has put forward. It is quite clear that there is no appetite for a wide-ranging, expensive review of the role of the Church Commissioners; it would be a distraction at this time, but some important things have been said in the debate, which I hope will be picked up through internal processes.

I do want to say to Synod that we have witnessed a very grave experiment this morning

in the conduct of business and the way that accountability is expressed, and that is by the Church Commissioners submitting themselves to questions and answers. The question I want to ask members of Synod is: did that work? Was it effective? I still feel that probably it is the wrong way round if we are aspiring to a parliamentary model of Select Committee. As I am standing here now looking down, the Church Commissioners were standing and looking down, and we were sitting there asking them questions very deferentially. A Select Committee, as we know, is the reverse: it is the Select Committee which summons whoever it is before them and sets the agenda, et cetera. That may be very threatening; it may be that Synod does not want to go down that route; but is it worth trying? A report which would have to involve the Business Committee and the Standing Orders Committee would give us that opportunity and members of Synod could feed back their report.

As for the ethical investment group advising on the ethical implications of land, that is for general advice. I do not envisage what the Bishop of Worcester said, that it would mean consultation on every single transaction, but the setting of a general framework. So I welcome the amendment and I hope it will enable Synod to pass this motion and take forward the experiment that we have witnessed this morning. I am in favour of the amendment.

Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford): I want to expand a little further on the Question that I asked earlier, which unfortunately was not able to be answered. The Church Commissioners are probably the largest financial Christian institution operating in the City of London. Surely the Church Commissioners should be modelling what a Christian institution should be doing? I know how difficult that is; I speak as a minister in secular employment, constantly struggling with how to be a Christian in a commercial environment. I want to salute the work of one of our fellow MSEs, Stephen Green, who as you know is chairman of HSBC, but he does talk from time to time about how he is trying to make that bank, at least his leadership of it, Christian. I think we need in our review of the Church Commissioners to examine the question: how do the Church Commissioners operate, not just in a financial way and therefore maximizing our financial return, but in a Christian way, enlarging not only our finances, which are part of the kingdom, but enlarging the kingdom in other ways too.

I gave a couple of examples in what I was saying. I hope that in the Church Commissioners' model for the membership of the Church Commissioners and the people it employs there is positive discrimination towards women, towards ethnic minorities and towards people with disabilities, but I am not sure yet that there is. I hope that we will look at the ways in which our fears disable us. We had a good reply about one particular fear but the Archbishop was talking about many other fears which disable us in operating as Christians in commercial environments.

It seems to me that whether we have a Select Committee procedure, which strikes me as a very good idea, or some other procedure, we need somehow to help the Church Commissioners to be a really Christian organization helping other Christian

organizations in a market where many people and the media portray most institutions in the City as operating entirely from the motive of greed, with enormous bonuses and salaries. Is there some other way in which we can do it?

The Archdeacon of Berkshire (Ven. Norman Russell): Mrs Alexander has, as ever, put her finger sharply on some very important issues, but her amendment, notwithstanding the fact that it has been accepted by the proposer of the main motion, has somewhat narrowed the issues before us. I think that the issues are rather wider than the original proposal. I am planning to vote against Mrs Alexander's amendment, and indeed the original motion, though in some ways, and you might think rather oddly, I am very grateful that this motion has been proposed. I do think that there are some remaining problems of governance within the Church of England, but I think that this motion has the wrong target in its sights. The fact is that whatever the problems of the distant past, the Commissioners' investment policies over quite a number of years now have served us very well. I personally would be very reluctant to destabilize them.

I would like to draw Synod's attention to the Commissioners' response to the Green Paper GS Misc 856B. I would like members to turn over to the back page and to the long paragraph near the bottom, beginning, 'Our final reason for questioning the need for this motion . . .'. It goes on to say that 'The Church is a collection of interrelated bodies with a common aim'. There is, and has been for many years in all sorts of ways, within our Church dispersed authority. It is one of the great strengths of the Church that we do have dispersed rather than highly centralized authority, but as soon as you say that, there is, of course, a proper issue of co-ordination. This is picked up in the Church Commissioners' response: 'If this dispersed authority causes some uncertainty about precisely how the various bodies work together . . . How do the National Church Institutions relate to each other?' I think that that is where the key issues of the day actually lie.

Members of Synod may have picked up some indication of my concerns in the pensions debate, and in that particular debate about how the Commissioners, the Pensions Board and the Archbishops' Council, of which I am a member, are joined up. We have yet to see how the bringing together of the staff of the NCIs in Church House, Westminster will work out. However, as the First Estates Commissioner has already said, early signs are encouraging. Certainly from what I have seen of it I would agree with that, but I would make the point that co-ordination between the National Church Institutions needs to be done at member level as well as at officer level. I have a strong feeling that this has been well done at officer level; I am not convinced it has been quite so well done at member level.

As a member of the Archbishops' Council, which I have been for a year and a half – and I have to say that it has taken me about a year and a half to get my head round what the Archbishops' Council is for, but I think I am now beginning to see that – I do think that there are issues on the Archbishops' Council we need to look at, particularly with respect to how well the content of our agendas facilitates that co-ordination for which we exist. That is a matter that I will continue to pursue on the Archbishops' Council.

At times the Archbishops' Council does rubber-stamp things; at times I think that is entirely appropriate because, in the nature of what comes before us, that needs authorization and sometimes that works quite sensibly. Sometimes, I have to say, I think that we need to have a much more strategic debate with a much more strategic agenda than we sometimes have.

Thank you to Southwark for this motion. I think that what has been said by the proposer of the motion as well as by Mrs Alexander will have been heard by the Commissioners here in the hall today. I also say: let us at this point leave well alone and put our efforts into a better joining up of the NCIs.

Mr Michael Chamberlain (Archbishops' Council, Ex officio): On the sixth notice paper there is a financial statement in connection with Mr Greenwood's motion, which indicates the range of costs, depending on the scale of the exercise that the motion was seeking to achieve. The range is between £25,000 and £250,000. As I understand it, Mr Greenwood is going to support Mrs Alexander's amendment. We estimate that the cost of producing the reports that are called for in Mrs Alexander's amendments would be at least £12,000.

The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Richard Chartres): I, too, am very grateful indeed that this debate is taking place. I am grateful for the tone of the mover of both the amendment and the motion because I think the level of conversation in this Synod about the very important responsibilities the Church Commissioners carry on behalf of the whole Church has been of a remarkably high level in this group of sessions; it is a sign of how we can tackle some of this very complex business. I would just like to draw attention to one or two things that have been said in the course of this debate.

There is a question about how Christian the Church Commissioners are. Of course, we are all under the obligation to review our conduct in the most severe light, but one very important part of being Christian – and I think Stephen Green, who is a priest in the diocese of London as well as Chairman of HSBC would say this – is that it is no part of being a Christian to run your business as a shambles. Speaking from the City of London some years ago, I have to tell you that the Church Commissioners were not a byword for competence and efficiency and now they are. That is a very considerable gain.

I am also very grateful for a previous contribution: there is a major issue here about how we strike the balance between need and opportunity. How far is our historic asset base actually subsidizing the distribution of ministry that was decided on by Victorian church builders and how far is it actually missionary oriented? How far has it been able to identify new opportunities and make it possible for the Church to explore some of those new missionary opportunities? That is a question which really will not be touched by a change in the governance, but it is certainly a conversation we need to have very seriously.

Then again, we are just getting used – and I am speaking as acting chairman of the Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners – to the effects of the charity legislation. Of

course, the basis of accountability on which the Commissioners operate is in the course of changing as we conform to this new legislation, so we are already facing considerable questions of accountability. The same is true, and my greatest sympathy goes to the points made by Clive Scowen, that, of course, we do want to be a missionary-oriented organization. Members of Synod have spent, we have spent, a vast amount of time debating the Pastoral Measure recently. We have looked at these structures, and it is now time for us to see whether they work or whether they need further adaptation. We were told this morning that there is an investigation along those lines continuing.

My last point is this, speaking as what the Americans call, I believe, a non-remunerated endorser. I am not paid as chairman of the Board of Governors, unlike people in the City of London, and that may be one of the ways in which we are distinct. Just think who your Synod representatives are on the Board of Governors. Do you really believe that they leave the Board of Governors in any ignorance of the mood and the attitudes of this Synod? If you think who they are – Gavin Oldham, Father Trott and so many others – I can tell you that that is an entirely erroneous impression. We are constantly reminded, and quite rightly, of the views of this Synod, and that is one of the very important ways in which the conversation continues, as I hope it will.

The Bishop of Southwark (Rt Revd Tom Butler): I wish to support April Alexander's amendment. It goes with the grain of the Church Commissioners' proposals and hopefully they will see it as helping them in their deliberations.

The Church Commissioners and myself share responsibility for the trees in the modest garden of the see house in Streatham. Last year, being good stewards, the Commissioners commissioned a survey, which included a report by a tree surgeon on the half-dozen or so trees in the garden. It was an impressive report. The trees were photographed, measured and recorded. All were given a clean bill of health. A month ago, when the largest tree was splendiferous in foliage and blossom, the casual gardener, who comes in for two hours each week, knocked on the front door and said, 'Can I show you something?' He took me to the largest tree and poked the handle of his rake straight through the trunk. It was absolutely rotten, yet there was no sign of this on the outside. 'I should not let your grandchildren play near it' he advised. It was not only my grandchildren who were in danger, however, for the tree stood by one of the busiest roads in South London. The Commissioners were informed and within a couple of days the tree surgeon supervised the demise of the tree. The tree had seemed prosperous and healthy to the professionals: it was the common sense and the sharp eye of the jobbing gardener which had spotted the danger, and there may just be a parable here.

I have no doubt that the Church Commissioners are prosperous and healthy all the way through, never more so, and they are not short of professional expertise of all sorts from within their own structures. However, although I would not want to compare Synod members to jobbing gardeners, nevertheless, the common sense and the sharp eyes to be found in this Synod might well, in the form of a Select Committee, be of great assistance to the Church Commissioners who wish to stand tall and be fruitful for many years to

come. The question-and-answer session this morning was a very helpful step in this direction, but a Select Committee approach would bring far more rigour to the engagement. I hope Synod members will support the amendment.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The Chairman: I think Mr Greenwood has made it clear that he supports the amendment.

The amendment was put and lost, 93 voting in favour and 110 against.

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge (Ven. Clive Mansell): I am one of those ‘others’ the Bishop of London mentioned whom you elected to the Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners. I have served as a Commissioner for almost ten years now. In that body I also sit on the Assets Committee and the Redundant Churches Committee. Could I pick up a number of things mentioned in the course of the debate, Chairman? From a personal point of view, I have had experience of service on the Commissioners.

The first point in Mr Greenwood’s speech was to do with the Settlement of the Commissioners from 1948 onwards; it is a Church/State body. The Second Estates Commissioner is in Parliament. Parliament guards the settlement very jealously and I think would resist any attempt at this time to change the settlement through legislation.

The Archbishop in his address this morning talked about the parish system and our commitment to the whole of the nation, everybody within a parish area, whether they are a regular churchgoer or not. I think that is something we still need to put across to our nation, and indeed to our political leaders, because that culture, that outlook, may well be changed in the situation of a multi-faith society. If we find ourselves going for legislation at some other stage which begins to shift the Church/State balance of the Commissioners more towards the Church, there may be some who want to ask questions about whether the Church in a multi-faith society should have that sort of support from the State at all.

It is important to keep that sense of a wider community as part of this when we deal with the quasi-judicial roles in the Pastoral Committee and the Redundant Churches Committee. I mentioned that point earlier when I intervened in the previous debate. We need to be seen to have a perceived independence from what might be seen as inside the Church when making those quasi-judicial decisions for people who may not themselves be even partly inside the Church. We need to have that connection between the regular Church members and those beyond that confine when we make those decisions.

On the Assets Committee, as indeed on other parts of the Board of Governors and other work I do, I am contacted from time to time by people from Synod and elsewhere saying, 'What about this? Can you find out about that?' I have always taken those approaches seriously: I have either responded directly myself or I have contacted the staff of the Commissioners. I have invariably had that request dealt with very quickly and promptly by staff members who have either themselves replied to the inquiry or given me the information required. Our staff at the Commissioners have been extremely good and very efficient. When it comes to making Asset Committee decisions or decisions about assets, yes, sometimes the professional staff have been nimble-footed in securing the purchase of property. When we come to the more strategic decisions, the significant new things in our possible agenda for assets work, those are very thoroughly dealt with. We receive papers for the Assets Committee; we quiz them. People like myself, the Bishop of Worcester and members of Synod, amongst others on that committee, will ask questions and probe; we will put across issues which we think will be of concern to the Church widely as well as indeed to Synod members.

I do assure Synod that your voices are heard in that sort of way. We are grateful for the opportunity to come back to Synod on occasions like this and at the lunch-time fringe meetings that have been held in recent years, which a number of members have attended. I hope you have found these good occasions to engage in a smaller group with members of the Commissioners' staff as well as Commissioners on issues that arise. I think it is good to do that.

The other matter I just want to try and bring before Synod is the point made earlier in the debate by the Bishop of Worcester, about decision-making concerning our assets and our trusteeship responsibilities. We do have to try to take decisions which will serve all generations over the breadth of the land and not just at one time, or in one place at one time. Pressure is placed on us when there are controversial decisions in the public eye, but through that philosophy we are trying to serve not just this generation, our generation, but those who come after us and to keep the mission of Christ alive in this land for those who readily embrace it now and those who might yet embrace it in times to come.

Revd Canon Peter Townley (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. I beg to move:

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark), in reply: Thank you: I think this has proved to be a valuable and useful debate and a huge amount of issues have been raised. It looks as though members are going to vote that these matters are taken forward on an internal review basis rather than an external review basis, but we will see about that. There have

been many positive suggestions and I hope those are heard. The one that intrigues me most is the idea of the Select Committee. I would like to read an extract from the *Report of Proceedings* of a year ago. This is the First Estates Commissioner speaking:

‘I would also like to put forward a suggestion that is entirely my own and has not been discussed with colleagues. The Synod models itself on Parliament. There is a parliamentary device known as the Select Committee procedure, by which bodies are examined in rather greater detail. Speaking only for myself – I have not discussed this matter with my colleagues – I would willingly submit myself to that sort of attention in public every year.’

I am intrigued therefore that the First Estates Commissioner voted against the amendment which would have delivered him exactly what he was asking for, but there we go. As we know, in Southwark things have moved on and perhaps things have moved on with the First Estates Commissioner as well.

Synod is now voting for a wide-ranging review, having rejected the very helpful amendment for a narrow-focused review. It is up to members to vote in favour of the large review or not. Chair, I did talk with you about whether or not the word ‘urgent’ could be removed, because it is clearly not an urgent issue. I would ask your permission under SO 26(b) whether that is possible.

The Chairman: The advice I am receiving is that it is inappropriate to allow a Diocesan Synod Motion to be amended in this way. In any event, it has come late, but I apologize to Mr Greenwood publicly for perhaps at an earlier stage having encouraged him to think that that would be a fairly easy step to take. I rule that this matter has to be put to the Synod in the form in which it appears on the order paper.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark): In that case, it is clear what Synod is voting on. If the motion is defeated, then I would urge members of Synod to do two things. The first is to write to the Business Committee and give your feedback on the question-and-answer session, whether you think that was adequate and sufficient to hold the Church Commissioners to account or if you would like to see that developed further towards a parliamentary model. The second is to give your feedback on something that has come out very strongly in the debate this morning, the role of those members of Synod who were elected on to the Church Commissioners. They, too, are offering to submit themselves to greater accountability, greater interaction. I hope that there will be lots of follow-up on that and that we will interact with them accordingly.

I have done it once before but I will do it again. I am very happy to move the motion of Southwark Diocesan Synod unamended.

The motion was put and lost.

THE CHAIR *Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin (London)* took the Chair at 11.55 a.m.

Disability Issues for Ministry in the Church of England (GS 1663)

The Chairman: I draw your attention to the financial comment pertaining to this matter on the sixth notice paper.

Before we start, may I say a very special welcome to our visitors in the gallery here for this particular debate? May I also take this opportunity to apologize for the difficulties some of you may have encountered with regard to access? I am reliably informed that the difficult circumstances are beyond our control.

Under SO 97, I now call on Revd John Naudé to give a presentation.

Revd John Naudé: Madam Chairman, thank you very much for this opportunity to talk on a report you will have received on disabled clergy. It is important to point out, though, right from the beginning when talking about disabled people and disabled clergy, that because I use a wheelchair, the perception is that I am talking purely about clergy who use wheelchairs. The report is based on disabled clergy who have a variety of different disabilities, whether blindness, deafness or arthritis, and some may also be wheelchair users.

The Body of Christ is a very complicated body. It is made up of many different parts and different abilities. All parts are to be used for the body to function fully. If we are to achieve this, we will see a body that works in unity and in strength. We severely limit the work of God when we fail to use every aspect of that body.

Historically, I believe the Church has often seen disabled people as a broken arm or a broken leg, to try to fix or, at worst, maybe just to drag along. It has seen disabled people more as a problem than an asset, endeavouring to minister to disabled people rather than to be ministered by them. My own calling many years ago involved watching a TV programme that looked at the Church's attitude towards disabled people. At the end of that programme, I was in tears. I was not in tears because of what I had actually seen, and so I prayed and said, 'Lord, why am I in tears about this?' The frightening response from God was, 'That is where I want you to go.' It showed a Church that did not value the ministry that disabled people offered. Thankfully, I believe things have changed.

The Church is moving forward and recognizing that disabled people bring to the Church an important aspect of ministry as disabled people. The experiences and insights that disabled clergy bring to ministry can help the Body of Christ better to reach its full potential. We seek to play our part in the work that God has for his Church. There are challenges for the Church to enable this to happen but, unless it rises to these challenges, it continues to restrict the full expression of the Body of Christ to function fully.

Some of those challenges are physical, as in the need to change some of our physical environments. You may have a wonderfully accessible church, but if the attitudes are

not right within it we will still fail to draw people to Christ. Often forethought is all that is needed, ensuring that our meetings – our Synod meetings, our deanery chapter meetings, et cetera – happen in a building which is accessible to all who are invited. Please hear me when I talk about access. I am not just talking about ramps, I am talking about buildings that have loop systems and where we provide signing, large print, suitable lighting and easy access.

Disabled clergy have much to give to the mission of the Church, just as much as non-disabled clergy. Please do not restrict the calling of disabled clergy because of their disability. When I was inquiring about ordination, my DDO at the time said to me, ‘John, if you are being called into the ordained ministry, then it is the purpose of the Church to enable that ministry to happen.’ That was a really positive experience. My experience from talking to other disabled clergy exploring the process is that they do not often receive that response.

I see my disability as one aspect of what I bring into my service. There are insights and experiences that I have found to be really helpful. Sometimes a vulnerability – not always being in control and the need sometimes to ask for help – has been a great opportunity to engage in conversation and to break into a good relationship.

Each of us offers back to God who we are, whatever our individual characteristics may be. It is easy to undervalue or compartmentalize what we perceive disabled clergy can bring to ministry. It is by God’s grace that he chooses us and uses us. Sadly, there are some disabled clergy who feel that they have been boxed or labelled as of no use. It is difficult to complain because of the fear of being labelled as ‘you have a chip on your shoulder’ or ‘you have a problem with this’. I remember once visiting a Church where I was asked to preside. There were two huge brass candelabra restricting access to the altar. I asked if it was possible to move them – ‘oh, no, that is absolutely impossible’. I said, ‘In that case, it is impossible for me to preside here.’

Many members may also be wondering, looking at me as somebody who uses a wheelchair, how I visit parishioners when they may live up a flight of stairs or a block of flats. The simple answer is that I invite them to another venue or to my home, whichever suits them best: in ten years of ordained ministry so far, it has never been an issue. The problem is that we perceive issues that we associate with somebody having a disability but the disabled person will often have creative ways of managing that. That is why we do not need to put upon them other labels or other constrictions.

Having someone to take a lead role within the diocese, in order for us to move forward to ensure that disabled clergy are utilized in the ministry that God has called us to, would be a real asset to the Church and to the disabled clergy. Just as we often have people ensuring that the ministry of women or of people from an ethnic minority are considered, can we seek to offer the same services to our disabled clergy?

Thank you for this opportunity to speak today. I want to encourage you, please, to see

what disabled clergy have to offer to the Body of Christ as disabled clergy. The mission of the Church is fulfilled by all people. Disabled clergy seek to play their part in the calling that God has given his Church.

The Bishop of Sheffield (Rt Revd Jack Nicholls): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod affirm the value of the contribution made by disabled clergy in the life and witness of the Church of England and its commitment to and support for their ministry by asking dioceses to:

- (a) take note of the report *Disabled clergy in the Church of England* and the outcome of this debate;
- (b) ensure that a ‘lead’ person on disability issues is appointed in each diocese and that appropriate training is made available; and
- (c) ensure that disability issues are made an integral part of the functioning of diocesan structures.’

I do not intend to make a speech. Thank you very much, John, for what you have said. This is an important opportunity for our Synod to hear not the likes of me but those who have direct experience of living with disability and ministry within the Church.

I do not want to take up Synod’s time. I simply want to say thank you for this opportunity to raise the profile of disability and particularly disabled clergy at this Synod. New members of Synod may not realize that it is only in this quinquennium that facilities have been available for the participation of those who are deaf in the workings of our Synod: that took an awful long time to happen. It takes a lot of pushing and the pennies do not drop in a lot of places until very late on in the day. We are at the beginning of that process as far as disability is concerned; this is only the first shot. Hopefully, access in every way, shape and form for all people will be the norm in our churches in the future. We still have a long way to go. I do ask Synod to support the motion in my name.

The Chairman: I call on Revd Maureen Allchin; this is a maiden speech.

Revd Maureen Allchin (Salisbury): I am a priest in the Church of England in charge of five parishes and I have a high level of physical disability. Due to a progressive illness I have had to give up full-time parochial work. I have increasingly poor mobility and I am in pain.

When I first read the motion before Synod today, I wondered exactly what contribution, if any, I as a person with disabilities could make to the life and witness of the Church that I did not contribute when able-bodied. It has been a useful ongoing reflection for me, some of which I would like to share with Synod today.

Three years ago my body worked well; today it fails me. Three years ago, although hopefully a sensitive and compassionate person, I had little idea of the reality of life and faith for a disabled person. With my new empathy and insight, I am more aware of the practical needs of the disabled. I now, for example, invite people to sit with me for services and prayers if they feel more comfortable doing so, including for the Eucharistic Prayer. I encourage people to share the Peace with those who cannot easily move around and who look hopefully for people to approach them, or keep their eyes down just in case they do not. I am more aware of the need to give confidence that the Eucharist is valued for those who cannot access the altar rail or kneel to receive. I am aware of how isolated and overwhelming it is when people stand in front of the seated and block the hymns or PowerPoint displays projected on the screen, or block the view of the altar when the drama of the Eucharist is being enacted. I do not now close meetings by asking everyone to stand for the Grace when I know that there are some who need to sit. I am now very much more aware of how difficult it is for people with mobility problems to stand for election to General Synod. I would like to thank members for their kindness and support over the last few days when I have been unable to access independently my room or this chamber.

A huge part of my current journey is also about the need to fight the feelings of being a nuisance and inadequate. It can really feel like a fight when I know that I cost my parish and my diocese more in expenses because I need to use taxis where others walk, and drive and park when others can access trains. I challenge people uncomfortably about their choice of rooms for meetings and whether there is enough seating available at social events for those who need to sit. I am a thorn in the flesh to diocesan offices, et cetera, when I request parking bays for blue badge holders and challenge them to protect these bays and not to allow the deputy director to park in them when all the other spaces are full. I ask why wheelchair and buggy unfriendly gravel has been laid or why in public buildings I cannot open doors or access bells. I question why disability issues are not an integral part of the functioning of diocesan structures or why all dioceses do not have trained advisers on disability issues within their personnel structures. Am I seen as being helpful or am I seen as whining? I am not always sure.

My first few hours here on Friday left me feeling very vulnerable and unwanted. My first response was to go home immediately and to resign from General Synod. I soon bounced back; I always do. Sadly, I can already see the dangers of my being marginalized by some parts of the Church organization. I do feel isolation and a loss of role and identity by a Church that offers sympathy and pity but does not always know what to do with me, a Church that unwittingly rewards those who have energy, physical strength and the confidence to be at the centre of things; for example, those who can robe and process, who can fulfil the aesthetics of the liturgy, who can drive distances to meetings and have the strength and energy to offer to do more. Such marginalization is tragic for me and for the Church because I and other disabled people do have more than a practical and pastoral contribution to make to the Church's life and witness. I am finding that the experience of my body is refashioning my faith journey, and I am reconstructing my theology in the light of my disability.

I, for example, have a story to tell of the many wonderful signs of God I see on my current journey. I have reflections to share on what wholeness in Christ means in the midst of physical brokenness and fragility and how this is reflected in the brokenness and vulnerability of the cross. I can contribute new insights on healing and wholeness and prayer. The miracle I pray for is to live wisely and positively, creatively and compassionately within the reality of my circumstances, but I still hope for the day when I can discard my stick and buggy and sell them on eBay.

Donald Eadie wrote in the *Church Times* that theology must not be left to those who are fit and strong; theology must also be wrestled for through pain and disability, the raw materials of our encounters with a mysterious God. Listen to me, listen to us. I promise you that our stories and insights will bless you and will enhance the life and witness of the Church. Please support this motion.

Revd Katie Tupling (Derby): I am going to stand to do this rather than sit because I like to make a point visibly rather than hide in the shadows as I have done for about 33 years so far. It is time to come out, as it were, of the shadows.

I am asked the same question over and over again and generally I do not mind the question: 'Oh, what have you done to yourself then?' The problem comes when I am about to give my answer because I know that my answer will, generally speaking, elicit either embarrassment or distress. My answer is, 'Oh, I have not done anything; it is just disability.' I do not mind the answer but people either look horribly embarrassed and run away as fast as they can, with 'Oh, I am terribly sorry' and that is it, they have gone; or show amazing distress as though I was struck by war, pestilence and famine last night and will never recover. It is really OK to ask me 'what are the crutches about?' and for me to say 'I am disabled' and it not be the end of the world.

To cut a long story short, I was born – obviously, as you can tell. I did not walk until I was two and a half. They thought I was lazy; they are partly right, but not medically – some things never change. At two-and-a-half they said, 'Ah, cerebral palsy, that is what it is' and their medical advice was: 'Take her home and love her. Here is some cotton wool for you to wrap her up in. She will not do normal school; secondary school, probably not; university, definitely not; ride a bike, no; swim, no; get married, no'. The list of things that you all take for granted I would never do. I went to a normal school; my dad taught me to walk when they said I could not, bless them. I went to a normal university and a normal school. I have a normal husband, pretty much, but do not tell him I said that, and I have a normal life. I blend into your way of life pretty well, apart from the crutches that came about as a result of well-intentioned but slightly disastrous surgical procedures 14 years ago. I try not to offend if I can – with disability anyway; my friends would say I probably do it all the time. I am in this weird shadow world between ability and disability. I blend in; I am one of you but you do not realize I am also not. It is a very strange place to be.

What do I offer as a disabled priest? Frankly, I have no idea: I struggle with that a lot.

People tell me that the qualities they appreciate most about me are my honesty and vulnerability. My bishop would probably back that up but he is not here. I tend to hide a lot and so how I am vulnerable, I do not know. Maybe that is what gives me away.

Theology: I think disabled people, people with disabilities, whatever you want to call it, embody a sense of suffering: not being a doormat, please, no, but suffering; not whingeing but suffering; not Paul's 'suffering brings endurance': that is for the sake of the gospel. This is different, and do not quote me Paul when you say disability is a really good thing. We embody healing. I do not quite know how that works but often when I talk to people in a place of pain they say, 'You have a disability; you understand'. They can talk more about where they are and about their pain and it brings a sense of healing for them. I do not know how it works but it just does.

We have a question about creation. What does it mean for me to be made in the image of God? Does he have crutches? I doubt it. Fearfully and wonderfully made – how does that work when bits of me really do not work? Embodying a sense of brokenness; most human bodies are not what they are cracked up to be. I cannot wait until I get to heaven: I will be doing cartwheels! A sense of wholeness: can you be disabled and whole? There is some theology for you.

Personally, I have to say that being disabled really sucks. I have been so very brave for such a long time; well, that is rubbish: I have just had to make do. It is not bravery; it is necessity. I really cannot stand being disabled. Last night I lay in bed and said to God, 'Why are you making me get up in front of these people to talk to them?' He said, 'Because you need to'. I cried a lot and I am going to do it now, so I am going to sit down in a minute. I really hate being disabled.

This is why our parishes, our PCCs, our bishops – and mine wherever he has gone – and everybody in the Church need people like me but not me – please take note, bishop – to be advisers in dioceses and parishes and churches, to be advocates on both sides of the argument. PCCs see the Disability Discrimination Act as a big stick to beat us with and disabled people say, 'It is quite liberating for us, actually'. It is about attitudes, about relationships, about being the Body of Christ with broken limbs here and there and perfection, body beautiful, everywhere I look. I do not look at the bishops in saying that! It is about being the Body of Christ and dioceses need help to know how best to incorporate all the Body of Christ into that one body. If disabled people can help to do that and clergy can be encouraged, then we are all the better for it. Please support the motion, amended or otherwise; I do not really mind.

Revd Canon Michael Webb (Newcastle): I would like to welcome the report and the fact that we are debating about the number of clergy who have a variety of disabilities and the attitude towards them. I want to focus on just one part of the report. From my experience as a House of Clergy chair and as a trainer of curates, I find the number given for those who suffer from depression at 1.61 per cent to be somewhat surprising: it is certainly not consistent with my experience over the past 35 years. Whilst the figure may

be true for the small number of people sampled on this occasion, I believe that from our joint experience the incidence of those who suffer from this kind of problem will be considerably higher. I do not think that anecdotal evidence is sufficient. I hope that a further piece of research will be commissioned to discover just how many people suffer from these long-term, debilitating illnesses, often at huge cost and pain to themselves, to their parishes and to the Church at large.

The history of our Church is full of those who through, and not just despite, their illnesses have given great service, insight and help to the life and work of our Church. Today, with modern treatments and therapies, such disabilities certainly do not need to be the end of a person's ministry. There are many opportunities for ordained people to continue in the service of Christ to the full in ways that are many and varied, but the present organization and the financial position of the Church mean that it is often difficult for such folk to find work appropriate for them: it is not immediately obvious where they may be placed. I think, though, that there is encouragement from current secular legislation, which I believe provides that those receiving medication for mental illness for the rest of their lives should be found work at the level of their ability.

I would hope that bishops in seeking to staff parishes, and those engaged with the HR implications of the Clergy Terms of Service Measure, will be guided by what I believe is a God-given insight from the secular world and, rather than perhaps sidelining these folk, would indeed seek to utilize the huge gifts that they have been given by God and find work which suits their capacity.

Mrs Janet Bower (Bradford): I am sure that, like me, members were very touched by the first three speeches. What are we to do about it? I think that sections (b) and (c) give us some indications about process, how we should take this forward in the dioceses.

I would like to share something with Synod about the process that we have been through in Bradford, which has a plus and a minus. Several years ago at diocesan synod we had a motion not dissimilar to this, which called for a bishop's adviser on disability, for a task group to be set up within the diocese, and for each parish to have somebody within the parish to take responsibility for disability issues. We got the bishop's adviser and the task group, some of whom are there today. I would like to thank those who have enabled some people to get into this building today. As was said earlier, it is not all about buildings; attitudes count for a lot. We have the bishop's adviser, who is a mother and carer of a young woman with very complex learning disabilities; we have a retired architect who is a wheelchair user; we have the chaplain amongst deaf people. We also have the diocesan resources officer to give some clout to what the bishop's officer says.

We recruit and offer support and training at least once a year to the parish advisers, some of whom have impairment themselves. We also offer training within the senior staff meeting on church halls and deaneries. At the end of all this, and it comes back to the point in the report, there do seem to be clusters of disabled clergy in some dioceses and not in others. Despite what we have been doing, and although it has been broadly

more about Church membership than specifically about clergy, we do not have a clergyperson in Bradford who would describe themselves as having a disability. We need to do more than this, because if we accept totally what the report says, that disabled clergy bring significant gifts and insights to ministry *because* they have an impairment and not in spite of that, in Bradford we need to join other dioceses in doing something about it.

Revd Stephen Lynas (Bath and Wells): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘Leave out the words “disabled clergy” and insert “clergy with disabilities”.’

At first glance my first amendment is a rather simple piece of political correctness. I would like to reassure Synod that I do not do political correctness. I am asking you to make a very minor-looking change to this motion to move from talking about ‘disabled clergy’ to ‘clergy with disabilities’. We have heard that some people with disabilities do not mind, and that is fine, but it does seem to me that we need to get the text right in the official document, whatever shorthand we use when we are talking to each other.

My wife is a wheelchair user occasionally; we have a blue badge; we cruise down the high streets of Somerset looking for a disabled parking space. I was once taught by a disabled trainer about the context of the disabled toilet. In plain English, a disabled toilet is a toilet that is not working! In my life, a disabled parking space is one that has been disabled because some other selfish driver has stolen it and my wife cannot have it!

GS 1663 does not talk about handicapped clergy – as Bishop Jack has said, we are on the way – but it does say in big letters ‘disabled clergy’. I think I would be happier, and I suspect many of our clergy with disabilities, including our own diocesan adviser on these matters in Bath and Wells, if, whatever we say in conversation, in official documents we use slightly more helpful terminology. In speaking to this first amendment I hope it will be possible for the official document, when it is sent to dioceses, to be re-titled all the way through in terms of the motion and the paperwork as well as what we vote on today. That is the reason for me suggesting in my first amendment that Synod might like to make a very simple change to the wording.

The Bishop of Sheffield: There is a lot of discussion going on about what is the appropriate term to use – ‘people with disability’ or ‘disabled people’. There are medical models and there are social models and both are politically correct.

The reason why on this occasion we have chosen this particular model, ‘disabled clergy’, is simply because of the alternative meaning. We are talking about people – and the Church needs to hear this – who are being disabled in their ministry by the way they are being treated. In that sense they are disabled people. That is why, given the choice, I would prefer to keep ‘disabled people’ rather than ‘people with disabilities’ whilst we are at this stage in our understanding about that.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mrs Alison Wynne (Blackburn): I would like to speak in favour of this amendment and I thank Stephen Lynas for bringing it to our attention. Of course, some of us could say that this should have been what the original motion said, but wrong language has a habit of creeping into accepted usage, even to the extent of being used by those of us who have a disability. Maybe some people do not mind; I do not particularly mind when people refer to me as a disabled person, but it reflects an attitude.

For a very long time we were simply called ‘the disabled’. We have struggled to lose this label; we have largely succeeded but it has been a long fight, and fighting is wearying. We seem to have settled for a halfway position of being called ‘disabled people’, which is at least acceptable but it is not enough: it puts disability as the first thing that people think about us, and we are people first. Our disabilities are a very small part of who we are. If, as Stephen told us, a disabled toilet is one that needs fixing and a disabled entrance is a doorway that has perhaps been bricked up, what does that make disabled clergy? It is vital that the Church takes a lead in using the right language in this motion. Please support this amendment.

Revd Gill Hemwood (York): Three years ago I could not walk half a mile; I could not climb a flight of stairs. I was having treatment for cancer; I was halfway through chemotherapy and needed a blood transfusion. I went through some of the things I have heard about earlier in getting a glimpse of what being somebody or anybody else with disability meant.

During the period between chemotherapy and radiotherapy, strange as it may seem, the vocation seemed to be to look for an incumbency. God seemed to be saying, ‘Now is the time’, and I have been looking for a parish. My family and others thought this was completely barmy. Here was I, someone not even able to walk the dogs properly, but the doctors and all the nursing staff encouraged me to go for that vocation, go for that vision. I was fortunate that the staff nurse in the oncology department was herself a practising Christian: God moves in mysterious ways. I looked at various parishes and dioceses and on no occasion was I discriminated against on the basis that I was in the middle of cancer treatment. I find that quite surprising.

The reason why I have come to stand here is because of the insights into disability which made me realize that all of us are provisional in our abilities, whether physical, psychological or emotional. Maybe our health is something many of us take for granted. Now that I can walk my dogs up on the moors, I remember every day with thanksgiving that I have my health back at the moment, but my life is provisional. I do not know whether the cancer will come back and I do not know how long my ministry will last. I think that is a real blessing in that it focuses on what I am doing and what I am asking God about.

When we had our Bible study gatherings the other morning, in our group we were asked

as an icebreaker, ‘Who would you bring into Synod, which personality and celebrity would you bring?’ Somebody said ‘Kylie Minogue, because she could tell us about her cancer experience and how she conquered it’. I feel that is why I am standing up now. Please remember that our abilities, whatever they are, are provisional. Please support this motion because our disabilities might be temporary, and that is the meaning I get from this amendment.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and carried.

Revd Stephen Lynas (Bath and Wells): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘At the end of paragraph (c), *insert “, particularly Diocesan Advisory Committees and Parsonage Boards”*.’

The reason I have put in this second amendment is because it seems to me that if we want to do more than offer pity and support and the other things that we have heard about this morning, then we need to do something about the structures of the Church. I am worried that the motion as it stands simply commits us and our dioceses to good intentions; good intentions are fine but sometimes they do not actually do the trick. There are specific things that dioceses could do about this to make a difference. I have suggested two areas. The first is the diocesan advisory committee, the dreaded DAC. This report that we are considering has good news; it suggests that for clergy with disabilities things are getting better, slightly and slowly.

What do clergy with disabilities find when they get into church? We have already heard from Maureen and John about what it is like to try to conduct worship in some of our churches. What happens if a parish does appoint a priest who, for the sake of argument, is a wheelchair user, but who might have any other sort of disability? What happens is that you have to cobble up access arrangements. You have chipboard ramps and a wooden box, and ‘Can you please move the candelabra?’ We end up with a situation in church which is rather like the situation here – a rather ugly edifice has to be put in and those who use it feel slightly gruesome about doing so. If this stuff had been thought about at the design stage, it could have been done subtly, beautifully and without wrecking a church building. When you are re-ordering and you want to put in a forward altar and dais, if the architect designs in a ramp, such as has been done at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine, where many of us stay in London during London sessions, you can have a beautiful curved access ramp as part of the dais. You can do it when you design it in; you cannot do it as an afterthought.

I am suggesting that we invite DACs to be much more proactive about faculty applications when they come into this kind of thing, and consider the sanctuary itself as a place that needs proper access and not just the church door, the knobs and the handles. Why should access to the Church be limited to the congregation? Why should not the clergy have it too? I second what has been said about gravel on church paths, as an occasional wheelchair pusher: forget it, it is horrible.

My amendment then goes on to talk about what parsonage boards, houses or glebe committees, or whatever you have in your diocese, could do. The average person moves house every seven years, they say, and when they do so, if they need to, they can think about bungalows, downstairs bathrooms and taps that people with arthritic hands and wrists can actually use, and all those kinds of thing.

The average priest changes job about every seven years but, of course, they do not have a choice about what house they will have to suit their needs. Although we have a programme in most dioceses for upgrading parsonages, it tends to be for stuff like double glazing and better locks. Many clergy find themselves moving into houses that have not really been touched for 20 years. If you have a new parsonage house, you are not quite in heaven but on the way, because that will have been built to current building regulations, that have stuff like power points which are *here* and not down *here*. A new house will have a ramp at the front door and not three steps; a new house will have wider doors so that wheelchairs can get round the house.

If we are going to take clergy with disabilities seriously, then I submit that we need to take their housing seriously. There should be a routine so that when we do improvements to parsonages they must be disabled-friendly improvements. We do not want dioceses to be in a position where they think this is about another box-ticking exercise. You know how it goes: CRB policy, done that; vulnerable adults' policy, done that; disabled clergy policy, done that. It should not be like that. We want houses where priests with disabilities can live and minister easily. We want churches where priests can minister worthy sacraments without having to undergo an obstacle course.

The Bishop of Sheffield: We are minded to accept this amendment as a friendly addition to the motion, but with just one rider. When we began the work among disabled people and it was added to the brief of the committee among deaf people, we had a conference in London to which representatives were asked from each diocese. Quite a number of dioceses did send people from the DACs; we had a fair amount of architects and so on. That was fine, apart from one thing: it does let people get away with the idea that if you have a wheelchair ramp, then you have actually fulfilled all your obligations in terms of access. Sometimes architects are not the best people to talk about the access to Christian life for people who are living with mental disabilities or the fact that large print will be needed and so on. As long as we do not restrict what we are about by having a particular focus on this aspect because it is physical and obvious, with that rider I am happy to accept the amendment.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr David Hawkins (Worcester): On the face of it, I support this addition. In the introduction to this someone used the words 'the dreaded DAC'. It really does make my blood boil when I hear expressions like that. I work five days a week for a DAC and advise up to eight dioceses. I am also on the disablement committee and we have difficulties: there is an element of faddism in this whole subject. Loos, of course, are acceptable; we all need them, especially as we get older, and we are all going to live to twice the age of our great-grandparents. When it comes to other matters and trying to get parishes to co-ordinate the overall picture, which the bishop has just recently referred to, it is a more difficult job: 'Oh, no, that is going to be in the budget in three or four years' time'. So those members who live in parishes, and I hope that is the majority, should realize that you must address this problem seriously and get a long-term plan if you cannot afford to do it in one go. I would add to that list of the DAC, English Heritage and SPAB, perhaps because sometimes I do find at site meetings that this does get DACs into bad odour with those other agencies. We often wash our dirty linen in public and do not really address and come up with a common sensibility on what we are talking about.

In the introduction today John (and this is related to the subject of this amendment, Madam Chairman) was truly right in saying that it is the overall point that matters. I am so glad he mentioned altars. I have a problem with nave altars which are put on daises: I do think it is quite absurd where that hides the high altar. Sometimes there is confusion about how we behave in churches.

Many members know that I have been campaigning a long time for the removal of pews, so that we can have adaptable seating and all people can use church buildings as they were until 1820. (*Applause*) (I am slightly naughty on that one as I gave the English Heritage lecture on my concerns about the loss.) Two containers of pews leave this country every day from Felixstowe: if you do not believe me, I will take you down there to see the containers being shipped to Holland. Still, our churches are meeting places for all people, not just for those who are not yet members but for those people who may never become members of our Church.

The Archdeacon of Lincoln (Ven. Arthur Hawes): I want to support the amendment. I will just tell you a little bit about what happens in the diocese of Lincoln, where we have 647 church buildings, 90 per cent of which are Grade I or Grade II listed and therefore not usually conducive to accessibility for all. We have appointed as one of our many advisers Peter, who has multi-disabilities and he is a wheelchair user. He himself has been carrying out an audit of all our churches; he has now covered 50 per cent. As a result of that work, and I do commend to you that you think of doing an audit on all your church buildings if you have not done so already, vast improvements have been made but, in agreement with the last speaker, I have to say that English Heritage are not always supportive: they will not support the plans that we have to take out pews and to make the buildings much more accessible in many different ways. As far as I am

concerned, the Disability Discrimination Act, access for all, will *always* take precedence over the conservation of the building.

Mr John Freeman (Chester): 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 Nigel Chetwood (Gloucester): We have talked about wheelchair disability. I am a recent convert to wheelchairs because my wife broke her leg last October: I have discovered things like radar keys and disabled toilets and the rest of it. I thought everything was fine until I got into the situation of needing those services.

I want to speak to the question of size. I am a small cog in a charity that provides support for visually impaired people. It is my privilege, week by week, to go to an ophthalmic clinic to support the people who are awaiting treatment and to share with them their fears that they might well be losing their sight. Very few people are blind; many people cannot see very well. There are very many useful machines or gadgets that enable people with bad eyesight to read, the trouble is that there is a cost for many of them.

One of the tests of this motion that we are passing today is: will anything happen? Will it be real in the dioceses? Will those people with disabilities get a positive response from dioceses once money is involved? I pray that they will and that there will be no need for our wives or spouses to suffer broken legs to realize that there is a real need.

Revd Canon Pete Spiers (Liverpool): When I was at theological college, and I think it was the first week there, we were lining up for breakfast and the guy next door to me said, ‘What are you going to have?’ I said, ‘I think I will have some cornflakes.’ He said, ‘Let me get them for you.’ That was very nice. I thought: o.k., I am in here. I sat down and I asked him, ‘Could you pass me the milk, please?’ He got the milk and he poured it on my cornflakes. I said, ‘Could you pass me the sugar, please?’ He got the sugar bowl and put the sugar on my cornflakes. I turned to him and said, ‘Would you like to eat it for me as well now?’ I have to say that we got on famously after that.

The reason why I did not put in a blue request form to speak was because I hate the labels. I hate it when we have to say that there are people with this or people with that, whatever ‘that’ is. However, having listened to all that has been said, I have requested to speak because I want people to look at the ability and not the disability. I think that is absolutely essential. Certainly, as part of my identity, I am thinking not of what I cannot do but of what I can do. I want to echo lots of the previous speakers who have spoken and who have disabilities. There is a sense in which we all have disabilities. Some of

them can be seen and some of them cannot. There is also a sense in which, as we grow older, we might move into disability.

I hope that members are going overwhelmingly to support this report. I am not offering in Liverpool diocese to be the lead person on disability issues: I would much rather people who are so-called able-bodied take the lead. As I understand it, we are to look not only to our own interests but also to the interests of others. This may surprise some of you, but I hate being the centre of attention. I hate being labelled.

A number of people asked me if I was going to speak in the debate on disabled clergy. I would love it if people who did not have that label were to look to the interests of those who have that label. Please support this motion with all you have.

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 Bishop of Sheffield, in reply: I am very grateful for all the contributions we have heard in the last hour, some of which have been very moving, all of which have been heard, and many of which will be acted upon. I am not going to go through in any detail the speeches that have been made, but I do want to say one thing and that is thank you very much to Anna Aprea and Philip Maddock who have produced this report and done this work. I say this very particularly because, you see, in recent years when disability became an issue as part of the Church’s structure, it was simply added on to the work of ministry among deaf people, without any extra resources at all.

This is a very short report, some might say thin. It is restricted only to the ordained in the Church of England in terms of questionnaires and collating their responses. This is entirely because the facilities that have been made available to us are so restrictive. We do not have the resources that we need to put into practice that which I feel Synod would like to have put into practice in terms of further work among all sorts and conditions of people so that our Church may be truly accessible. This is just a first stage. If we do move on to other stages, I think Philip Maddock, whose primary work has always been among the deaf, and other colleagues will be really stretched to capacity. In the Church at large, please may I ask that in passing this, which I know Synod will, you do not automatically assume that the right person to lead on disability issues in your dioceses is the same person who leads those ministering among those who are deaf: they are very different causes.

I thank Synod for giving this time and the opportunity to move forward in this area.

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

‘That this Synod affirm the value of the contribution made by clergy with disabilities in the life and witness of the Church of England and its commitment to and support for their ministry by asking dioceses to:

- (a) take note of the report *Disabled clergy in the Church of England* and the outcome of this debate;
- (b) ensure that a “lead” person on disability issues is appointed in each diocese and that appropriate training is made available; and
- (c) ensure that disability issues are made an integral part of the functioning of diocesan structures, particularly Diocesan Advisory Committees and Parsonage Boards.’

(Adjournment)

THE CHAIR *The Archdeacon of Colchester (Ven. Annette Cooper)* took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

Statement by the Chair of the Business Committee

Revd Prebendary Kay Garlick (Hereford): There are two matters that I want to explain to Synod. First, I would like to take you back to the speech made by the Chair of the House of Laity at the debate on the Anglican Covenant, when she suggested that a Private Member’s Motion might be tabled so that the Church of England’s response may in some way be discussed at the February Synod. When they thought about it, members will probably have realized that any Private Member’s Motion tabled now would not be open for signature until February, so not debatable before July. We have therefore been giving some thought about the best way forward. I am pleased to say that the Archbishop of York has very helpfully confirmed that the Church of England’s response to the draft covenant document will be reported to the Synod in a way that will enable a conversation to take place in the February group of sessions. The Business Committee will need to give further thought to how best to facilitate that.

Variation in the Order of Business

The second matter is about this afternoon’s debate. We are in a somewhat unusual situation, as you will realize, where the motion has had to be changed because of the decisions of quite another body. If you add to that the fact that, as you will see on your notice paper, there are seven substantial amendments, which necessarily came in very near to the closing time of 10 o’clock this morning, we could find that we could run out of time on this very important debate. I am therefore asking Synod, rather shamefacedly, to agree to take out the ‘not later than 5.15’ rubric for Standing Orders that we put in yesterday. I have nothing at all against Standing Orders: I just have to keep shifting it around to find the best place for it. We may find that we get it in now, but

I think it is rather unlikely. If not, we may be able to take it later this evening – otherwise it will come in probably after the budget debate tomorrow – but I need your permission to take out the rubric that we put in yesterday.

The Chairman: Can I ask you for your consent, Synod? It would help us greatly.
(*Agreed*)

You will already be aware that BBC Parliament will be broadcasting the Archbishop of York's Presidential Address on Saturday 14 July at 9 p.m. I can now add to this information that this afternoon's debate on senior appointments will be shown on Sunday 15 July at 6 p.m. We all know that BBC Parliament is a digital channel available on freeview, cable, satellite and the Internet.

Talent and Calling: Report of the Senior Church Appointments Review Group (GS 1650)

The Chairman: It is rather lovely that we have a guest with us today. At the invitation of the Presidents, Sir Joseph Pilling, chair of the review group, will address Synod. Sir Joseph, we welcome you and look forward to hearing what you have to share with us.

Address by Sir Joseph Pilling

Sir Joseph Pilling (Chair, Senior Church Appointments Review Group): Madam Chair, David Houlding wrote to me and asked me to take this on. He did not say that it would culminate in my appearing in York and addressing this group. He was wise, I think; if he had done, I may not have agreed to take it on. Personal matters apart, however, it is helpful for our group to have this opportunity and, setting aside my personal anxieties, thank you for the invitation and the opportunity to set out our stall on *Talent and Calling*.

Talent and Calling was not the first title that we considered. When Colin Podmore proposed it, it was something like the twenty-first. We did not stop to consider why we liked it. We fell upon it like hungry people on a feast, I think because it captured so well the heart of the discussions that we had had. 'Talent', with its echoes of the parable, brings out God's gifts to his Church in the skills and qualities of his servants. 'Calling' emphasizes the discernment of vocation as an essential part of senior appointments in the Church.

Chapter 1 of our report summarizes briefly the earlier work on senior appointments. We chose to benefit from the theological work done for those groups rather than to

commission fresh work of our own. Nonetheless, the principles outlined on pages 10 and 11 were of fundamental importance in all the work that we did.

As it happens, and unsurprisingly, the best practice in the Church and in secular organizations is consistent with foundational Christian values. Thus we found ourselves in the happy position of being able to recommend to the Church that it should apply its own values in a more detailed and consistent fashion: we are not urging the Church to copy other organizations.

It is an unusual experience for a third of a report's recommendations to be overtaken before the report has even been considered. The ten recommendations on Crown deans in Chapter 8 and the recommendation on Crown canonries were framed in the context in which we were then working. We saw the possibility of this proposal by a new Government, but it was not for us to speculate about it.

As a group we have had no chance in the past week to digest and reflect on the change in that context. My own views on the new position are not relevant and, as I have explained, I am not in a position to speak for the group as a whole. I think it is safe to say that some are pleased at the turn of events and others will regret the proposed change. As the Church works out its response in detail, I hope that *Talent and Calling* generally, and chapter 8 in particular, will be useful.

We gathered a formidable volume of evidence and the arguments for and against a continued active role for 10 Downing Street are fully set out on pages 78 to 80, although we do not evaluate them individually. If the Church turns to develop a new procedure of its own the ideas that permeate our report should provide a good starting point.

I hope even more fervently that, in the stir inevitably created by the Green Paper, this Synod will not lose sight of the rest of our report, which is entirely the business of the Church itself. The 51 appointments made and initiated by the Crown are important, but so are the appointments of 68 suffragan bishops and the 254 other senior appointments. I turn now to deal with those other chapters of the report.

I was warned at an early stage by several people that I would hear lots of horror stories. I did hear some – perhaps not as many as I had been led to expect, and it was not always clear whether the horror story had occurred ten months or ten years ago. We had to decide whether there was any set of recommendations we could properly make that would virtually eliminate the risk of more horror stories. We concluded that that was a false goal.

Most of our report is made up of the arguments for detailed changes that, if adopted, will give a greater sense of fairness, achieve good appointments and remove inexplicable inconsistencies. However, we have not sought to enforce uniformity. The law and the varied nature of the roles that we covered mean that some variations are reasonable and desirable.

In order to avoid silly and unfair procedures, we believed that those responsible for appointments should retain some flexibility. For example, from time to time there is bound to be a vacancy where the bishop and those around him see a strong case for an appointment from within the diocese – maybe other recent appointments all coming from outside the diocese. They know there to be several internal, well-qualified candidates. It would scarcely be kind to encourage applications that are doomed to failure because *Talent and Calling* had required, let us say, every vacancy for an archdeacon to be nationally advertised.

Our aim has been to keep a reasonable balance between consistency and flexibility. We hope that in future, when there is a departure from the expected procedure, those responsible will be able to explain convincingly and credibly why a different approach was preferred.

Mention of balance prompts me to say that problems can arise on appointments when an organization goes to one extreme or another. I have known cases where a rigid pursuit of fairness to potential candidates has actually made it more difficult to appoint the best-qualified person. That is very unfair to the organization and to the people whom it exists to serve. We believe that we have done nothing to make that more of a problem for the Church in the future.

Even in recent years there have been examples of the opposite situation. Procedures can be cut back to the point where no one except the decision-maker and the chosen person is satisfied that the best person has been appointed or that relevant qualities have been properly tested.

As I have said, we do not recommend an invariable practice of national advertising, but it is dangerous to ignore advertising on the grounds that one happens to know the best person in the Church to hold a specific post. I recall in another life a firm of head-hunters for whom I had the highest regard being shocked when I insisted that their search must be complemented by advertising. I heard less about it when the appointment went to the person who had responded to an advert and who would never have been found by search. The approach that we recommend for most circumstances is a combination of search and advertisement.

Despite their limitations, we saw formal interviews as very important. From time to time we can learn a surprising amount from an interview about a person whom we thought we knew very well. An interview is also a prompt to another important feature of good practice, which is not absolutely invariably followed in the Church; that is the involvement of more than one person in appraisal and assessment both in short-listing and interview.

Lack of confidence, except when facing this audience, is not usually a weakness of mine. It has often been my own experience that it has been particularly salutary to discover how much I have had to learn from the reaction of others in interviews. Sometimes a

fellow member of an interview panel has never met the candidate whom I have known for years, and still their insight has been illuminating to me.

In summary, the procedures that we endorse and develop in the detailed recommendations spring from a great deal of experience within and without the Church.

Since I was a young man with friends pursuing a vocation for ordination, I have known the trouble that the Church takes and the money it spends to test vocations, and I have never heard it argued that the Church should treat the issue more lightly. When we came to think about it, members of the group, including me, were struck by the lack of an equally searching and serious procedure to identify and prepare priests to assume the heavy responsibility of its most senior posts. Our recommendation for a talent pipeline addresses precisely that gap. Depending on how it is received, this could be our most far-reaching recommendation, and it may be thought odd that it is covered in two pages of a report consisting of over 100 pages.

Our approach has given the Church a chance to consider the idea in principle. Provided that it receives a broad welcome the detailed work will also be able to take account of the comments made this afternoon and elsewhere in discussion of the idea. Some additional cost is unavoidable; how much will depend on the details of the scheme that is eventually worked up, if the idea meets with favour.

A talent pipeline should never be the only route to a senior appointment: someone who enters a scheme can be given no guarantees about the outcome. However, with those and other detailed safeguards, I am enthusiastic about the potential for this approach to help the Church to make the best use of the people that God gives it.

There was an oft-expressed hope that we would somehow put paid to debate about senior appointments for all time. In that respect we will be a sad disappointment. Any group, I believe, would have been condemned to that fate, because improvement is always possible. Structures and procedures that were splendid when introduced will always need to be adapted to changing circumstances.

There may even come a time when Synod wants to appoint another review group. Meanwhile, I have great confidence in those who have day-to-day responsibility for senior appointments. They are committed to continuous improvement and I believe that they will remain so. The appointment of a high-powered group will be not the only way to deliver desirable change.

Before I sit down I hope that it is not an abuse of this opportunity to make two further points about which I personally feel quite strongly. First, I want to talk about the disappointed and how they are treated. My hunch is that the Church is too prone to see a tension between kindness and telling the truth and to opt for what is seen as kindness. I believe that, on the contrary, if leaders in the Church worked through the application

of the foundational values that we have identified, the Church would set the standard for the whole country in honest feedback. It would become clear that kindness and truth can be comfortable bedfellows. Disappointment cannot be avoided, but there would be less nagging uncertainty and no perpetuation of unrealistic hope, which can distract from the important task in hand.

Secondly, I want to explain that I came to this review as a long-term pew-dweller with no experience of the workings of the Church beyond the parish level: my understanding of the state of the Church was shaped by the media and by gossip.

When I was told who would be joining me in the work I was alarmed. They were people with strong opinions and their affiliations made me think that I would be facing the most awkward group to chair that I had yet met. How wrong one can be! The group listened to each other, they were sensitive to each other's strongly held convictions and they were ready to accommodate each other to find the best way forward. Chairing was easier than I have ever known.

I mention this chiefly not to pay a tribute to them but to say that I was left feeling much more positive about the Church to which I belong as a result of working with them. It so cut across the public image that I wanted to highlight it this afternoon.

As I conclude my remarks I feel rather strange – a little like the parent of a five-year-old entering the school gates for the first time, or, even more, because I am old enough to have experienced both, like the parent of an older child entering a workforce for the first time. There is not much more that I can do, but it has been a great privilege and I shall be watching with close attention. (*Applause*)

The Chairman: Thank you, Sir Joseph. We move now to Items 58 to 65 on order paper VI. You will need GS 1650 and the additional paper, GS 1650A, which includes information given in the Green Paper, *The Governance of Britain*, as it applies to senior appointments. GS 1650A contains an explanatory note by the Secretary General about how it affects our business today and a copy of the Archbishop of York's response to the Prime Minister's statement.

The Bishop of Leicester (Rt Revd Timothy Stevens): I beg to move:

'That this Synod, noting that proposals in the Government's Green Paper of 3 July (attached to GS 1650A) will necessitate further discussion with the Church:

- (a) welcome the prospect of the Church achieving the "decisive voice in the appointment of bishops" for which Synod voted in 1974;
- (b) affirm its willingness for the Church to have the decisive voice in the selection of cathedral deans and canons appointed by the Crown,

given the Prime Minister's wish no longer to play an active role in the selection of individual candidates;

- (c) invite the Archbishops, in consultation with the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops, to oversee the necessary consequential discussions with the Government and to report to the February group of sessions, including on the implications for those matters covered by chapter 8 of GS 1650; and
- (d) endorse the recommendations in chapter 10 of GS 1650, with the exception of recommendations 20–30, invite those responsible to give effect to them and invite the Archbishops' Council to report to Synod during 2008 on progress and implementation.'

This debate provides the Church of England with a privileged moment to take advantage of the opportunity and challenge presented to it by the publication of the Government's Green Paper, *The Governance of Britain*. The opportunity is to take forward confidently and purposefully the new arrangements for senior appointments now that fuller responsibility for them has been handed to the Church. The challenge is to ensure that, as we do so, we keep our eyes on what the Archbishop of York has called 'the sacred trust, enshrined in law, to serve the common good of all the people of England'. I hope that that will provide the compass by which we can steer our debate this afternoon.

In July 1974 this Synod carried a motion affirming the principle that the decisive voice in the appointment of diocesan bishops should be that of the Church. In 1976, with the agreement to establish the Crown Appointments Commission, the Church achieved much but not all of what it was seeking. James Callaghan decided to retain an element of discretion for the Prime Minister to reverse the order of the Church's two preferred names or to ask for more names. Gordon Brown has now decided that from now on he and his successors will simply recommend to Her Majesty the person nominated by the Crown Nominations Commission as its first choice, as is already the case with the nomination of suffragan bishops.

The Prime Minister has also expressed a belief that he and his office should no longer play an active role in the selection of candidates for Church appointments more generally. The Green Paper sets these proposals in the context of a much wider agenda for limiting the powers of the Executive, making the Executive more accountable and, in the Government's words, reinvigorating our democracy.

We therefore have two main tasks before us this afternoon. The first is to begin to shape a response to the Government's Green Paper in such a way that our historic vocation as the Church of England is enhanced and refreshed. Secondly, we have a responsibility to attend to those recommendations in the Pilling report – and there are many of them – which are not fundamentally affected by the Government's statement and which could

have significant implications for the selection, development and deployment of a generation of senior leaders for the Church.

First, let me turn to the Green Paper. It sets out four guiding principles that affect the role that the Prime Minister will play in Church appointments. The first of these is that the Government reaffirms its commitment to the position of the Church of England by law established, with the Sovereign as its Supreme Governor.

The second principle is: ‘The Queen should continue to be advised on the exercise of her powers of appointment by one of her ministers, which usually means the Prime Minister.’

Talent and Calling notes: ‘. . . a widespread appreciation within the Church of the part played by Her Majesty The Queen in the affairs of the Church and her personal and public commitment to the Christian faith.’

The Prime Minister’s proposal that from now on he should ask the Crown Nominations Commission to put only one name to him is a development that my motion welcomes. It leaves the work of the CNC fundamentally unchanged, in that it will continue to have responsibility for submitting a name to the Prime Minister, who will advise the Queen. I suspect that in practice it will continue to identify two names but that only the first will be forwarded to the Prime Minister until and unless that candidate declines or is otherwise unavailable. Some modification of Standing Orders will be required if the Prime Minister’s Secretary for Appointments is to cease to be a non-voting member of the Commission.

Perhaps more contentious are the implications of the proposal that the Prime Minister should not play an active role in the selection of candidates for cathedral deaneries and other Crown appointments in the Church. In anticipating this possibility *Talent and Calling* observed: ‘The removal of this patronage, and the downgrading of the Downing Street appointments office which would inevitably follow would mark a further stage in the disengagement of Church and State in England and it is quite possible that it might in turn prompt further changes and accelerate a process of disestablishment.’

However, the report also recognized that ‘weighty arguments were advanced both for and against the present system’. There are differences of view about this, of course, in this Synod, as we shall no doubt hear during the debate, but let us be clear once again that this decision does not imply any resiling from the Church of England’s position as the Church by law established.

There will certainly be some who will be disappointed that the widely appreciated role of the Prime Minister’s Appointments Secretary will no longer be available to the Church. *Talent and Calling* observed: ‘The Downing Street appointments office can be seen as a search and recruitment service offered to the Church by the State at no charge. Its work also offers a second route whereby those who have not been put forward by

their own diocesan bishops may nonetheless be considered for senior appointments.’ That, in my view, has been a very considerable benefit to the Church. In due course we shall have to weigh whether some external, professional reference could be available to the Church if this important link to the Prime Minister’s office is to disappear.

However, I am sure that the Synod would want me to express on its behalf our appreciation of the present Prime Minister’s Appointments Secretary’s work over the past eight years – (*applause*) – and I am pleased to see that he is in the public gallery – for the wisdom, professionalism, courtesy and sensitivity of his office in partnership with the Church in general and the Archbishops’ Secretary for Appointments in particular.

The Green Paper raises significant questions especially about the appointments to Crown deaneries. There will be those who believe that the choice of deans should be made by a process broadly comparable with that of the nomination of diocesan bishops, involving a committee whose members would include the bishop and the diocesan lay chair, but also representatives of the wider community. Others will take the view that deaneries lend themselves to adventurous appointments and that committees may have a tendency to prefer safer candidates. On this view, the bishop, having the authority to make the appointment after consultation, would be preferred to a Crown nominations style process. Many will feel that representatives of the wider Church of England and the wider civil society within and beyond the diocese should be involved. It will take time to sort out all these matters, and we cannot expect to resolve them today.

The Green Paper reminds us that the Government is committed to ensuring a productive dialogue with the Church about these matters. I shall therefore welcome the amendment by the Bishop of London, which underlines the need to talk through a range of consequences with the Government in a way that properly serves the interests of the Church of England.

In paragraph (b) of the motion we affirm the Church’s willingness to work with the changes that the Government has proposed. In doing so we shall need to recognize that cathedrals and deans are not the domestic property of the Church of England alone, but exist to serve and celebrate the life of a much wider community and a much wider range of interests, networks and communities than those who worship regularly with them.

Paragraph (c) of the motion addresses the question of how these conversations with the Government should be taken forward. I shall say more about that when I comment on Fr Houlding’s amendment, and possibly on one or two of the other amendments, in due course.

Let me now turn to the substance of the recommendations that have significance for the whole life of the Church and which are not necessarily affected by the Green Paper. Chapter 3 deals with the so-called talent pipeline, as Sir Joseph reminded us. To date, it could be argued that we have relied largely on chance: some have obtained for themselves the experience that will equip them for senior office; others have been helped

by bishops to do so; and some have been appointed with deficits in both their experience and their preparation. We no longer have the luxury of leaving things to chance, and in any case it is not defensible that many have gained experience simply through connections and patronage.

What is proposed is not a fast track – it may be about the same amount of time being spent gaining a greater variety and depth of experience – nor is it about positive discrimination; the best candidate must always be chosen. It is by no means a guarantee of appointment, and those who are not in the talent pipeline may still gain appointment through developing the necessary skills and experience in other ways.

Chapter 4 deals with issues around diversity. Some conservative evangelicals may resist appointment to non-parochial ministries. Some traditional Catholics may find it difficult to work happily with women clergy. However, there are certainly others who are capable of the flexibility that senior appointment involves but do not seem to be gaining appointment. If we are to model to the world how diversity and unity can be held together, we must be committed to developing the diversity of the Church's senior leadership.

The heart of this report may be said to lie in chapters 5, 6 and 7, which develop the thinking about how bishops make appointments of suffragan bishops, archdeacons and parish church cathedral deans and canons. Very few of those who wrote to the review group suggested that bishops should not make these appointments, but we are a Church in which episcopal authority is exercised collegially and communally as well as personally. If senior appointments are made by a bishop by processes that are not transparent or understood by the diocese, it can have the effect of appearing to be something of an absolute monarchy – unaccountable and indeed sometimes inexplicable.

On the other hand, if those who are called to lead are to be given the opportunity to do so, the bishop's choice must be a real one, not simply a question of rubber-stamping the outcome of a bureaucratic or spuriously democratic process. That is the balance that I believe the report strikes – both a requirement to consult and the freedom for bishops to decide.

In the case of archdeacons, the bishop's choice is absolute. A suffragan's role, though, is not confined to the diocese. By virtue of his ordination he is a member of the provincial and national College of Bishops. The Archbishop must be willing to endorse his nomination to the Crown and to consecrate him. What we have before us, therefore, is an agreed process in the case of suffragan bishops and frameworks, with more room for local adaptation, in the case of archdeacons, deans and canons.

In essence, the recommendations will require the House of Bishops to replace the existing Code of Practice on senior appointments with a new one. Such a code of practice will not have legal force. It will be a document that the House will have

approved and that its members will be expected to follow, but it will be good practice rather than law.

I believe that the motion before us today will allow us to do two things for which we as a Church have critical responsibility: first, to think through the implications of finding ourselves with the power to determine as a Church who will be our bishops, deans and residentiary canons without reference to Prime Ministerial patronage; secondly, to ensure that those who are called to senior office in the Church know that the Church has paid due care and consideration to those appointments and that it has been prepared to both learn from and enshrine some best practice from other organizations in the way that these appointments are made. Under God, we surely cannot shirk either of those responsibilities, since they present us with opportunities that we must now seize. I hope that the Synod will bend its mind and heart to these questions in the debate that follows.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of five minutes.

Mr Anthony Archer (St Albans): I rise to congratulate warmly Sir Joseph Pilling on what I believe is an excellent piece of work. Members of Synod can be forgiven for wondering what has happened to the report in this new motion and the series of amendments, but I want to suggest that the two documents *The Governance of Britain* and *Talent and Calling* are inextricably linked. The one provides the key to enable the other to deliver what the Church needs.

The way in which any organization goes about the appointment of its leaders is a mirror of that organization. We can be very grateful for the light that the review group has shone on the processes, and I for one hope that this piece of work will serve to develop further how we do what we do in the vital task of senior appointments.

The brief was very clear and the review group seems to have been faithful to the motion that Synod passed. Members will recall that my original motion asked for a review of the ministries to which these appointments are made. Although that part was struck out by amendment, the group seems to have been cognizant of the importance of not only reviewing processes but also the nature of the ministerial roles to which the Church calls people.

The title of the report, *Talent and Calling*, is instructive and I was pleased to read chapter 3 on the subject of identifying and developing talent. I think that the Church of England is awash with talent, but I am less sure, given the fat organization that we are, whether the right people are being considered for preferment or, worse, whether some very good people are never being considered. That is not fair on the clergy and is no service to the church at large. There needs to be a much more dynamic approach to developing and monitoring talent.

The report addresses the importance of calling but does not directly recite 1Timothy 3.1: 'If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.' It is OK and

indeed good, as the report says, to have open conversations about your ministry: we are allowed to co-operate with the Holy Spirit. I accept that some clergy will never wish to apply for posts, but ministers, even bishops, are allowed to be refreshed. A calling is not a life sentence to a particular form of ministry or place. Talk to your bishop, challenge him and ask him what he can do to suggest new forms of service.

I was not expecting the chapter on diversity but I welcome it. Many secular organizations are routinely monitoring diversity. The report highlights what we know – that we are weak in the BME area but, worse, weak in the basic area of gender diversity. Let's get smarter with enabling women priests to experience different forms of ministry and developing a pool that is available when we finally get round to ordaining women as bishops.

So to process. Suffragan bishops: appointment groups must be mandatory. I was pleased that the review group focused on the role of the archbishops in the appointment of suffragans – recommendation 13. This is the way to ensure compliance with a sharpened code of practice that I want to see in place. The same applies to archdeacons. Advertise the positions, make available detailed candidate briefs and search widely. Some bishops do that; others do not. The position of the deans and the parish church cathedrals is much the same. For a dean's ministry to be effective it needs to be clearly an integral part of the wider diocesan initiative.

Now I turn to the Crown deaneries. I am bound to say that I predicted this was the area where the review group would be challenged. Countless earlier pieces of work expressed surprise at the continued role of the Crown in the appointments of the historic cathedrals. It is the longest chapter in the report. The Green Paper *The Governance of Britain* arrives at the sensible conclusion that the Prime Minister should not have an active role in the selection of individual candidates for diocesan bishoprics, and in the case of cathedral and other Crown appointments in the Church is committed to a process of constructive engagement that will presumably lead to the same outcome in this area, despite the Bishop of London's cautious amendment. I strongly support development in this area.

The fact that the report had to recommend that there should be a public statement about the process for appointments to Crown deaneries is evidence of the lack of transparency that my original motion highlighted, the further evidence uncovered and the resulting recommendations 20 to 30, which are now parked. That pointed to a system that I believed appeared not to be working well. Cathedrals are centres of mission, integral to the mission and ministry of the Church. The appointments need to be made by the Church itself. It seems to me that the great advantage of an unwritten constitution is that conventions can be adopted and adapted. That regarding suffragan bishops, that the Prime Minister accepts the first name, can readily be applied to the Crown deaneries.

In conclusion, this report, coupled with the Green Paper's proposals, which in my view are capable of implementation with some ease, provides a framework for making

further important changes to the system. As I said in my background paper in 2005, the Church of England requires appointments processes that are consistent with the vision of a mission-shaped Church. The considered recommendations of a full-scale working party, if implemented, could have far-reaching benefits to the future of the Church and those chosen to lead it.

I urge Synod to support wholeheartedly this motion, which I see no reason to amend.

Revd Richard Hibbert (St Albans) – a maiden speech. I too welcome the report *Talent and Calling*, with its emphasis on some measure of consistency of practice across senior appointments, and the timeliness of the report and debate following the Prime Minister's recent announcement.

That last step has provided our Church with a clear opportunity to make new arrangements internally within the Church and externally with the Government, so that common and consistent – and, it would seem, therefore much more open – practices may be encouraged and enabled at both a horizontal level across the dioceses and at a vertical level across all senior appointments.

To aid the implementation of this report, and in the light of the Government's Green Paper, this Synod has an opportunity to encourage the Archbishops, the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops to draw up a robust code of practice, not just guidelines, that will cover the full range of the senior appointments process, namely, the identification of potential candidates through the process of consideration on to appointment or – and this may be too strong a word – disappointment. That, too, needs to be managed well.

Such a clear code of practice would maintain an openness about the process that will enable common protections and safeguards for potential candidates and offer some measure of support to a bishop without removing his decisive say. In particular, the role of the advisory group to the bishop, as mentioned in the report, removes the potential isolation of the bishop, as was clearly felt by my own bishop not so long ago, admittedly in the context of a Crown appointment under the old system, if it is not too soon to call it the old system.

On the vertical plane of senior appointments there are two issues that implementation needs to consider. The most major one is to ensure that the consistency of practice that a code may provide will enable this Synod to encourage the resourcing and strengthening of the office of the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments so that, as an enhanced human resources department, it may have the resources to spot the talent, to advise the bishops and to guide the candidates through the process.

The report commends the Bishop of Liverpool's use of an experienced member of the laity as an adviser for such services; that is indeed good practice. In particular such a strengthened and resourced human resources department that would aid candidates not

accepted to understand more clearly why they were not accepted is seen as best practice in modern-day professional human resources.

I have just appointed the fourth full-time member of our staff and my parish and I have been greatly blessed by the work of a professional human resources director. It is a delight to have someone who can formulate the questions, ask them with great care and grace and at the same time open up the candidate like peeling an onion. The tears were mine as I saw my parishioners being opened before me! Indeed, I dare to encourage all the bishops to appoint a professional human resources adviser in their dioceses to advise them on all aspects of managing their human resources through selection, interview, appointment review and, of course, discipline.

If the Prime Minister seems to be slightly distancing himself, though not fully, from the process, I think that we need to keep that channel open with him and to show our commitment by the proper resourcing of a senior appointments process. I believe that the review group has done sterling work. I look forward to its fulfilment and to our holding the Government's Green Paper to account and striking a good balance between the Government and the Church. I ask Synod to accept this motion.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): As a member of the review group, following the Prime Minister's statement last Tuesday, it seemed to me that the report before us might be awarded the OBE – 'overtaken by events'.

Many members certainly seem to be under the impression that the Government has already made an irrevocable decision and that we must simply follow its lead. Fortunately, that is quite simply not the case. A Green Paper is, of course, a consultation or discussion document. The Government describes this particular Green Paper as the first step in a national conversation and the start of a process of consultation, so we should be clear that there is everything to play for.

The decision then is whether to try to second guess what the Government wishes to do and acquiesce with it, or whether to consider what we believe is best for our Church and nation and then make our best efforts to convey that effectively to the Government in constructive dialogue. I hope that members of Synod will choose to exercise leadership on this important matter. Is that not why we are here?

My amendment aims to set out some very simple and basic points to provide a context for the discussions sought by the Government. My aim is that there should be a fundamental framework within which we keep all our options open. It seems foolish to me to reduce our flexibility at this stage. In welcoming the continued Establishment of the Church, I am simply echoing the opening words of the relevant section of the Government's Green Paper and indeed the Archbishop of York's response.

There is, however, much more to it than that. The establishment and involvement – some might say the support – of the Prime Minister's office in Crown appointments is

indicative of an engagement between Church and State. That engagement has evolved and continues to do so, but for those of us who believe strongly in the way that our Church and nation are bound together in this knotty bundle of life, any proposal for disengagement must be considered very carefully if it is not to be part of the unravelling of the golden thread holding everything together under God. We cannot say that we support Establishment but act in a way that undermines that: actions speak louder than words.

Moreover, there would be a bitter irony if there was to be a disengagement of Church and State as a result of this Green Paper, for chapter 4 is concerned very heavily with developing a clearer set of values for our nation. It states, 'Shared values are the bedrock on which the elements of our nation are built. Our values are given shape and meaning by the institutions that people know and trust'. Far from disengaging, should not the Church be using all the influence that it has to engage in this crucial debate and to be at the very heart of discussions about the values that shape society?

The irony would be heightened when one realizes that, by and large, the Prime Minister's office has in recent times been responsible for more diverse and more representative appointments than other Church appointments processes. There will always be exceptions to the rule, but committee processes inevitably tend to favour consensus candidates. Although some people may regard the description 'a safe pair of hands' as a compliment, I know that I am not alone in fearing the possibility of the Church of England being middle managed into oblivion. Fortunately, in the cheerful diocese of London we have all the evidence that we need of the benefits of diversity in senior appointments and an openness to characterful eccentricity!

You will see that my amendment refers to a significant part for the Prime Minister's office in the Crown Appointments process. I cannot pretend to know precisely what that part should be; I do not believe that any of us can know. It will and should depend, at least in part, on the Prime Minister's reaction to our debate, but I believe that it keeps our options open to find a way forward that ensures that both the Church and the Prime Minister's office as the Crown's adviser can play their full and proper roles in modern Crown Appointments processes, and that the Church can continue to be seen as fully and wholeheartedly engaged in its particular responsibilities to our nation and our common life.

Please support the amendment standing in my name.

The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Richard Chartres): I have in my possession an unpublished memoir written by my predecessor, Beilby Porteus, who, of course, had to face the enormous challenge of the French Revolution, the consequences of which we are still living with! The first two sentences of this memoir state:

'On 22 November 1787, Dr Lowth, Bishop of London, died. The next day, by express, a letter arrived from Mr Pitt saying that he had placed

my name before His Majesty King George III and the King had been graciously pleased to approve my nomination.’

That is how things were done. I leave to the judgement of Synod which direction we have moved in since then, but we are where we are.

In the light of this report, I look with considerable excitement to the opportunity that we have been given both by this report and by the recent Green Paper. As we look at that opportunity that we have been given, we cannot ignore, as the Bishop of Leicester has said, the very considerable advantage that we have had from a couple of extremely professional and experienced people – civil servants of distinction with back up. They have been able to collect the kinds of view that have played a very valuable part in ensuring diversity in the appointments process.

My very modest, simple amendment is designed to remove paragraph (b) of the Bishop of Leicester’s motion and, in its second part, place it on a much more positive basis, because the Prime Minister actually has committed himself in the Green Paper to a really positive engagement between the Church and the Government on this particular question. If we pass this modest amendment, it will, for example, provide an opportunity to air some of the anxieties that have been expressed by deans and others and to find ways by which we can build that important reality check and additional service into our arrangements.

The ethos of the Church of England emerges, at least in part, from the accidental survival of semi-independent cathedral institutions. Of course, the independence of cathedrals as private corporations was a late medieval abuse, corrected by the Church of Rome at the Council of Trent. Nevertheless, it has actually contributed very greatly to the particular ethos of the Church of England, and I would not like to see an homogenized Church as a result of the changes that we make in too much haste – hence my very modest amendment.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Dean of Durham (Very Revd Michael Sadgrove): I too welcome much that is in this report, and I want to speak not so much to the Green Paper and its possibilities but to one particular issue relating to the appointment of deans, because it seems to me that there are here issues that the report has not quite grasped.

As a twice-appointed dean – or, as we say in the forest of deans, a duodenal! – I have an interest in this matter. My problem is that the report does not go far enough to address the fault line that runs right across the cathedrals of England. As we know, there are the Crown cathedrals, which are mostly ancient, prestigious and big, and there are the others, the parish church cathedrals, which are mostly modern foundations and much more modest and urban.

The Cathedrals Measure of 1999 tried to eliminate this distinction by saying that every cathedral is the seat of the bishop and a centre of worship and mission. However, by not addressing the patronage and parish issues, which that report basically regarded as too difficult, it reinforced what all cathedrals know – that there are still two kinds of cathedral with two kinds of legal status and no fewer than three different appointment processes for their deans. This makes no sense. If a cathedral is a cathedral is a cathedral, irrespective of size, age and location, then a dean is a dean is a dean.

Sheffield and Durham are very different, yet I can say that the core task of a dean is the same in both places: as a member of the bishops' staff meeting where it all begins theologically; as critical friend to the bishop; as senior diocesan priest; as head of the foundation; as chair of the Chapter; as public representative of the Church in city and county. In all those ways the role is very much the same. It is bad ecclesiology to say that appointment to these two places should be by different routes. You might as well say that the Bishop of Sheffield should be appointed in one way and the Bishop of Durham in another, as if the older dioceses were more important or more prestigious – or even, dare I say, more demanding – than the younger ones. I am looking for some reaction from those two friends of mine, the Bishops of Durham and Sheffield: no doubt I will be told later!

As a matter of good theology as well as consistency, I am calling for a single appointments process that will apply to all deaneries. Only in that way will it be clear that every dean and every cathedral has the same relationship to its bishop and to the national Church. I know that that is easier to say than to achieve, but the process for episcopal appointments links the local and diocesan with the wider Church and the nation, and perhaps that offers a good model, as indeed the Bishop of Leicester has suggested.

It is easy to say that we are where we are as a matter of history, but the oddities of cathedral history have left us, I believe, with a decidedly confusing situation so far as deaneries are concerned. (*The Chairman rang the bell.*) Good theology and good practice call for this to be put right and I hope that the Synod will do it.

Mr Robert Key (Salisbury): The easy bit is to ask Synod to support the main motion. Our biggest challenge is to respond positively to the Prime Minister's statement. I see this as a wonderful opportunity to breathe new life into the Church's ministry in every parish in the land, so let constructive engagement commence.

The most difficult task, I think, is to find the right model for a new appointments system, for bishops, deans, canons and parish livings. Incidentally, there is a health warning here because the statement itself says that they are consulting only on diocesan bishops, and I happen to think that we should move forward on a broad front with the deans, canons and parish livings as well, so that they do not get out of step.

I believe that in our deliberations we have to avoid a self-selecting oligarchy of bishops,

served no doubt by a curia, and that we have to avoid the pitfalls of elections that take the edge off life in some Churches in the United States and, dare I say it, the Episcopal Church of Scotland. I think that we should build on tried and tested consultation processes and the rather sophisticated, intelligent networks that we have built up across the dioceses right across the country, and that we should beware the latest fad of corporate management. I think that we should take the opportunity to look at the reform of patronage. I ask members to sign the Private Member's Motion that is floating around. If the Crown and the Lord Chancellor can, so can hundreds of others consider their positions as patrons.

Paragraph 62 of the statement refers to relations between Church and State. In parallel, I think that we also need to consider the reform of the way in which Parliament endorses Church law. We on the Ecclesiastical Committee do our best, but the current obscure system is nearly 100 years old, archaic, anachronistic and not fit for purpose. The Ecclesiastical Committee was invented because Parliament had no mechanism that would work; it has now. Instead of an obscure committee with no power to amend, only to veto, we should fall into line with the modern, standard practice in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. I believe that Synod should submit draft Measures to a joint committee of both Houses for pre-legislative scrutiny, such as the Joint Committee on the Human Tissue and Embryos Bill, on which I serve at the moment. After consideration, Synod should then resubmit Measures to one House and then the other in the usual way. I believe that Church law should be a regular and normal part of the parliamentary process, not a quaint anomaly. Let us put out into the deep and let down our nets.

The Bishop of Chelmsford (Rt Revd John Gladwin): At the moment I am a member of the group advising Jack Straw on the reform of the House of Lords. It is very clear to me from my involvement with the group, and from some conversations with Government ministers and officials around the particular issues in front of us this afternoon, that Her Majesty's Government has no desire to see either this issue or the issue of Lords reform enmeshed in the difficult issues of disestablishment. Those are very separate matters in their minds.

The Prime Minister's proposal that has affected our debate this afternoon is a typically British proposal, an evolutionary change, which does not alter the basic constitutional position of the Church of England in this nation. What the Prime Minister has done is to clarify the process and increase transparency in these appointments, and we should welcome that.

Every one of us who holds a licence in ministry is in public office. Our ministry is carried out on behalf and in the setting of the whole community. Bishops and senior people in the dioceses are not there just to run dioceses or oversee congregations. We are in public office, publicly to represent the gospel to the whole community. There is therefore a proper accountability of the Church to the wider community.

As members know, I am on my second diocese as Bishop of Chelmsford. In spite of what some in the diocese may think, it has been a very refreshing experience for me. My experience is that the work done by the Prime Minister's and the Archbishops' offices in preparing statements has been extremely thorough, and I have to say rather more searching than the diocesan statements of needs have proved to be. As we get into this process we now have the opportunity to accept responsibility for that part of the process. That may be a way in which we are able to resist the incipient congregationalism that is running round our Church and to recover some sense of the public character of our ministry. I therefore hope that, in the conversations in which we are now to engage, the Church will accept some responsibility for engaging with the whole community in asking what it is looking for from its leaders.

Mrs Janet Atkinson (Durham): As I come to the end of my quinquennium on the Crown Nominations Commission I am particularly pleased that this senior appointments working party has returned to us now. In fact I have been involved in this kind of work for the whole of this century, starting with the Perry commission. We were told then not to think of casting envious eyes on, let alone trying to upskittle, any Church-State arrangements. Some of our number, and some critics of the way in which the Perry outfit was set up, thought that this would constrain our work and hamstring us; it did not. We were charged with improving the Church's half of the bargain.

At this moment when we are not quite sure how the Church-State balance will turn out, I want to say: let the Pilling report be not apologetic about not having cracked the whole thing and being the final report to settle this in perpetuity. The Pilling group was not to know what the new Prime Minister would do, and no one can tell what will happen next.

Through the previous process we found that small but sensible alterations to the way in which we do things can have enormous consequences. With Perry we all thought that the changes that we were suggesting would work. When Michael Clarke's follow-up group took it over and turned it into legislation we were pretty sure that it would work; but I can tell you, brothers and sisters, that having worked under the new arrangements the change for me, as one who saw how the old system worked, has been phenomenal. The change to the professional way in which the paperwork, the searches and the records have been dealt with has been astonishing. It feels much more professional and I think that we have more confidence in the outcomes.

Of course, we have to battle our way through the new shake up, but let us just be thankful for the part that the Church has to play in that. If it is going to increase that will be excellent, but even small changes by way of working in a more professional manner mean that we are carrying out our side of the bargain so much better – and thank God for that. As a Perry person, I would like to wish a hearty God speed to the Pilling people.

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith (London): I beg to move as an amendment:

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

- “(a) welcome Her Majesty’s Government’s stated commitment to the continued Establishment of the Church of England;
- (b) renew its commitment to the life of the nation and its spiritual welfare;
- (c) note Her Majesty’s Government’s hope that this Synod debate “will be a good starting point for dialogue” in relation to cathedral, parish and other Crown appointments in the Church, as part of a “process of constructive engagement between the Government and the Church” (*The Governance of Britain* Green Paper, CM7170);
- (d) welcome the proposal that, for diocesan bishoprics, the Crown Nominations Commission should put only one name to the Prime Minister for recommendation to the Queen;
- (e) note the considerable evidence submitted to the Senior Church Appointments Review supporting the involvement of the Prime Minister’s Office (as the Crown’s adviser) in the Crown Appointments process;
- (f) invite the Prime Minister to consider how his Office might continue to play a significant part in the consideration and selection of candidates for such appointments, in the context of the recommendations made in chapter 8;”

and re-letter paragraphs (c) and (d) accordingly.’

The Bishop of Leicester: I am grateful to Mr Hargreaves-Smith for his amendment and for his speech, but I am going to ask Synod to resist this amendment. The reason is that the sub-paragraphs of the amendment from (a) to (e) are perfectly unobjectionable, but all of them are either implied by the motion as it stands or by what I had to say in my opening speech.

However, I have difficulties with sub-paragraph (f). If you read the *Hansard* record of the parliamentary debate on the Green Paper, you will see that there is on the whole a tide of support for the direction of travel in which the Prime Minister is heading and that the principles enunciated in the Green Paper are broadly supported by Parliament. They have also been supported publicly by our own Archbishop. It seems to me that this amendment implies that those fundamental principles are still negotiable, and I have to tell Synod that I do not believe they are.

By all means let us have an amendment that reinforces the need to keep constructive conversations with the Government – and I will therefore be supporting the Bishop of London’s amendment in a moment – but I have a fear that this one could be taken as having the effect of saying that the Church of England is not sure that it actually wants

the decisive voice in appointing its own senior leadership, and in the months ahead it could have the effect of distracting us very considerably from getting on with the task that we now need to grasp and making these proposals works for us.

I therefore invite Synod to resist this amendment.

Revd Andrew Watson (London): Given the changing political climate Aiden Hargreaves-Smith has acted with admirable speed to move his amendment to an already revised motion. In General Synod our procedures are often seen as slow and cumbersome, and the movers of the motion and the amendment are to be commended for acting so swiftly on our behalf.

However – hang on a minute – do you or I share the vision of this amendment of how the future Church of England should look? Have we had enough time to take in the full implications of Gordon Brown’s announcement? Are we ready today to say, with Mr Hargreaves-Smith, that we wish to go back to the Prime Minister and ask how his office ‘might continue to play a significant part in the consideration and selection of candidates for senior appointments’, or is that knee-jerk reaction indicative of an approach that is fearful, lacking in confidence, maybe even infantile?

When as the Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown handed over decisions concerning interest rates to the Bank of England, we would have been rightly surprised if the bank had immediately demurred with the words, ‘No, no, your advisers are far better at that than we are’. History will judge that the bank’s acceptance of a challenge was crucial for the prosperity of the past decade.

In reality I am something of a fence-sitter when it comes to sub-paragraph (d) of this amendment. As an ardent Trollope fan I am currently halfway through the *Palliser* Novels in which the main political issues of the day were decimal coinage and the disestablishment of the Church of England, and I have to say that I am very glad that 140 years later the Church is still established. Where I sit on the fence is over the question of whether Establishment is helped by sub-paragraph (f) or whether the sub-paragraph rather perpetuates a particular view and vision of Establishment that will become increasingly redundant, the danger then being that all the positive, life-giving aspects of our privileged position as the Church by law established will be lost as we fail to deal with individual matters that are becoming increasingly anachronistic.

I am not necessarily saying that Mr Hargreaves-Smith is entirely wrong in his analysis; he may not be. However, this matter certainly needs some very serious thought. At the very least, we need some kind of briefing paper to help us fence-sitters. It is for that reason that I encourage the Synod to reject this amendment.

Mrs Carol Ann Ticehurst (Lincoln): The content of the Green Paper is an invitation to the Church to enter into conversation with the Government, not a decision that the

Government has made. I believe that the Church itself should come to a common mind on this issue and inform the Prime Minister of our response.

At present, the Prime Minister's Secretary – a senior civil servant who is a communicant member of the Church – acts as the Prime Minister's adviser for Crown Appointments. This is a very valuable connection for us. As an Established Church we have a mission to the whole community, and the Prime Minister's adviser is capable of gathering opinions and seeking advice from people and organizations that may be reluctant to speak frankly to a representative of the Church. When left to our own devices we have the capability to exclude particular traditions. I urge Synod to accept Mr Hargreaves-Smith's amendment.

Canon Dr Christina Baxter (Southwell and Nottingham): Rarely does the news of an announcement by the Prime Minister make me shout 'Alleluia! Praise the Lord'. However, as you may guess from my contributions to the report that we are discussing this afternoon, that is exactly what you would have seen in my study as the news came to me, not only because of the tenor of the Green Paper but also because I thought that it would save me an awful lot of work, and I was glad of that.

Mr Hargreaves-Smith has reversed that, and I did not say the opposite of whatever is the opposite of 'Alleluia! Praise the Lord' when I found the amendment, but my heart did sink a little. Nevertheless, I think that in the long term it will be a good thing, because I am asking Synod to resist this amendment wholeheartedly.

The reason behind my original intention to propose something like this Green Paper was that I think that the Church has reached a time when it is right for us to choose the people who will serve in senior appointments. I believe that we do not have to be entirely inward looking, which is what I believe people mean when they talk about congregationalism. I am always very embarrassed when we say that, because I am sitting alongside ecumenical partners who have a very good tradition of being another kind of Church polity. We can incorporate externality, which I think is what people are saying about listening to a number of different voices, but we can, nevertheless, be in charge of the process. I think that it would be extremely odd if we were to say, 'Yes, we would like to be responsible for diocesan and suffragan bishops but we do not want to be responsible for nominating people to other appointments'. I believe that we should take this opportunity to say clearly to the Prime Minister and the Government that we welcome their announcement and that we are ready to do the work that they are offering us.

I shall vote against the amendment by the Bishop of London because I think that the original motion was clearer, but if the Bishop of London's amendment goes through I will vote wholeheartedly for the Bishop of Leicester's motion amended by the Bishop of London. I cannot consent or agree to this amendment that says, 'We are not sure whether we really can still deliver or can ever deliver our own processes for filling senior appointments'. I hope that Synod will gladly take this opportunity, for which we have

not had to negotiate or ask but which has been offered to us in a generous Government Green Paper.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and lost.

The Bishop of London (Rt Revd Richard Chartres): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph (b) *leave out* “wish no longer to play an active role in the selection of individual candidates” and *insert* “commitment to a process of constructive engagement between the Government and the Church (*The Governance of Britain* Green Paper, CM7170)”.’

The Bishop of Leicester: I have already indicated that I would be happy to accept this amendment. We have already heard a number of points relating to different categories of cathedrals, the public accountability of the bishop’s office and a number of other issues, about which there needs to be constructive engagement with the Government. I suspect that that constructive engagement actually may also have the effect of educating some of our colleagues in Government about the way the Church works and its values and intentions, and that too may be valuable. I would therefore be happy, if the Synod is so minded, to accept this amendment.

The Bishop of Durham (Rt Revd Thomas Wright): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. It is a small drafting point. In this amendment as it stands, I suspect that it would be helpful if, in addition to all the others, we had inverted commas placed round the phrase, ‘process of constructive engagement between the Government and the Church’, corresponding to what we find on the opposite page, indicating that that phrase is a quotation from the Government’s Green Paper. I suspect that that is what the Bishop of London intended and that the omission of those inverted commas is due only to the proliferation of the other inverted commas that appear in the amendment.

The Chairman: Thank you very much, bishop. I am quite happy to accept inverted commas in the place that you have indicated.

The Bishop of Salisbury (Rt Revd David Stancliffe): In supporting this amendment I am keen that there should be a balance between the Church’s search for a wider view and to look with misgiving on the proposal to abolish the office of the Prime Minister’s Secretary for Appointments: it is not good for the Church that the Archbishops’ adviser on appointments should work on his or her own. That is my first point.

Secondly, I feel that it is important to pass this amendment because in the position in which we are in relation to the appointment of deans, there is one other feature that I think has not been mentioned in the debate, namely that only the dean appointed – yes, with lots of consultation with the bishop, but by the Crown – has the power to challenge the bishop. That may not be welcomed by those with an exclusively hierarchical view of the Church, but on two or three occasions in Portsmouth, when I was provost, I had the opportunity and felt it right to do that; and certainly the Dean of Salisbury has needed to do that for me more than once.

I think that when we look at the process of appointment in the future, we do not want to opt for a one-stream pattern just like that. I think that the kind of partnership we have between the Church and the State in making these appointments, in searching for and sifting advice, does potentially deliver us from a one-stream orthodoxy of what all Church appointments ought to look like. I hope that that is at any rate part of what the Bishop of London has in mind. No doubt he will remember, as I do, the motto of the Order of the Thistle – *quis custodiet ipsos custodes*.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment was put and carried.

Revd Prebendary David Houlding (London): Members of Synod may remember how fascinated we were many years ago when the BBC documentary entitled *The Monarchy* came out, because never before had we quite seen such inside workings of the Royal family. In that documentary there was a phrase about the monarch, which has stuck in my mind – ‘It is not so much the power the Crown has but the power that the Crown prevents others from having.’ In other words, so often the Crown ensures our liberties rather than curtails them.

I believe that my amendment is entirely consistent with the one that we have just passed in the name of the Bishop of London. Indeed, it makes perfect sense to go on and ask the Pilling group to continue and to finish its work. As it stands it is, as Sir Joseph has already told us in his opening remarks, a little piece of unfinished business, and I think that it would be right to allow the group to continue to think about the implications of the Government’s recent statement.

We need to develop new systems of appointment. We need, and I believe want, the Church to have a decisive voice in senior appointments. The Establishment of the Church of England is not set in stone. Indeed, in addition to being the current chairman of the Appointments Committee of this Synod, I was part of the Perry implementation group. We need to develop proper systems that will serve us well in the future. We have

heard from so many speakers already about the amount of work that needs to be done, about the careful thought that will have to be applied to these new procedures that we will need. There is therefore a great deal further to go, and I think that we all want to make sure that we take our fair share of responsibility as the Church proceeds: we do not want to reinvent the wheel.

This report is excellent. It has done exactly what we asked it to do in the first place, and we welcome it. Therefore let this group continue with its work and see whether it can finish it. It is not fair simply to leave everything in the hands of the Archbishops. We need to help them and as it were protect them as they engage in this constructive debate with the Government: the Church must not be caught on the back foot. Yes, in a sense, the Government's announcement was expected, but maybe the timing was unexpected. We do not want to be caught out. We want to make sure that we take a leading role. Nor do we want to become simply subject to a department of State: that would be a great mistake. In paragraph 62 we read the words: 'The Queen should continue to be advised on the exercise of her powers of appointment by one of her Ministers, which usually means the Prime Minister'. I think that that needs a good deal of further clarification.

I invite Synod, please, to support my amendment and to encourage the group under Sir Joseph Pilling to continue. There is, dare I say, Sir Joseph, not just a little more that you can do; there is a lot more that I believe you must do. (*The Chairman rang the bell.*) It is precisely in the spirit of the Bishop of London's amendment that I ask Synod to support this amendment in my name.

The Bishop of Chichester (Rt Revd John Hind): I am pursuing my life's ambition to rival the Bishop of London in modesty and simplicity. Mine is a very short amendment with a very simple aim. Although I want to see the recommendations endorsed and the process of implementation go ahead without delay, it seems to me that the Green Paper may have implications, which we may not totally see at the moment, for a number of the recommendations, not simply those numbered 20 to 30. Because all of this has happened so quickly, I think that we should give to those charged with the implementation a little more flexibility than is given by an apparently unqualified endorsement of the rest of the recommendations.

To insert the words 'subject to the above' at the beginning of the paragraph and to delete the reference to those particular recommendations would achieve that and would ensure that in the implementation of the recommendations proper account is taken of the mind of Synod expressed in the earlier paragraphs of this motion. I also think that this is important since, in the light of events, we are not having the 'take note' debate that would usually precede this kind of motion.

Dr Edmund Marshall (Wakefield): I had not intended to join in this debate this afternoon until I heard the Dean of Durham's contribution, in particular his plea that there should be a uniform system of appointment for our cathedral deans. I would therefore plead that, in the further work that Sir Joseph's group is to undertake, it

should not be assumed that the Dean of Durham's voice is fully representative in that respect.

I come from Wakefield, which has a parish church cathedral. The reason for the different systems of appointment for deans in our cathedrals is not that some of the cathedrals are ancient and some less ancient, but because some of them are still parish churches. That is why the rights of parochial church councils are still maintained through the cathedral chapter in the appointment processes for deans of such cathedrals. I very much welcome the section of *Talent and Calling* that preserves the rights of parish church cathedrals in this respect. In fact, I think I am right in saying that the report does not really propose any great material change to those rights of parish church cathedrals. I would therefore ask the group to continue to take the same view in its further work.

The Bishop of Bradford (Rt Revd David James): I rise to speak in support of the Bishop of Chichester. There are references in the report to the unhappy recent history of Bradford Cathedral and I want to reassure the Synod that the cathedral is now full of happy bunnies, all seeking to be fruitful and multiply – spiritually!

I have an excellent dean, two superb canons, and, after six years of waiting, the CVA is due to be signed off next week and there will be 'Alleluias' from all over Bradford as the cathedral returns to normality. I believe that the Simeon Trustees have been blamed disproportionately for their involvement in unfortunate appointments to Bradford Cathedral, and I would like to put on record that in the past three appointments they have been very generous in sharing their authority with the bishop and the chapter.

Nevertheless, I want to resist the proposal in the Pilling report, which is why I am supporting the more general recommendation from the Bishop of Chichester. I hope that we can review the matter afresh and in spite of what the previous speaker said look in the same way at all cathedrals together in relation to the appointment of their deans.

The Dean of Southwark (Very Revd Colin Slee): I support David Houlding's amendment, which I think adds an extremely sensible element to the process in which we find ourselves. In any reconsideration of where we are in this entire debate, I want to urge the Pilling group to remember that in the House of Commons the Church has many communicant MPs, who in many respects represent very well the lay opinion of the Church. In the House of Lords we have 26 diocesan bishops. In that sense, the clergy are disenfranchised in Parliament, because we are not allowed to stand for it. Therefore if this entire debate is referred back to the Pilling commission, there will be ample opportunity for further debate within that commission.

If you consider the deans of the Church of England at present, they are hardly a homogenous group: that is one of the great merits of the Church of England. There are deans who are very good at raising money; there are deans who are brilliant preachers; there are deans who are brilliant scholars; there are deans such as the Dean of Durham,

with whom I am unusually agreeing this afternoon; there are deans who agree and disagree about many things; and there are curious deans – an expression that you can take in any way that you like. To quite a large degree, the great virtue of that element of our Church is, in fact, derived from the manner of appointments.

I therefore urge the Pilling commission to look at this but not to come up with a system of appointments for deans that exactly matches that relating to the appointment of bishops, which also has its own flaws. Simply to find a method of conformity that will reproduce the flaws that we know already exist would be a grave mistake. Let us have some variety, let us have some colour and let us see the whole spectrum of humanity reflected in our churches and our cathedrals.

Revd Prebendary David Houlding (London): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘Insert as a new paragraph:

“(c) (or (g) as the case may be) invite the Senior Church Appointments Review Group to undertake urgent further work in the light of the Government’s proposals and to report the outcome of that work to the Archbishops;”

and re-letter the following paragraphs accordingly.’

The Bishop of Leicester: I found myself agreeing with much of what Fr Houlding had to say in his speech, but I really want to say to Synod that this is not the moment to tie the hands of the Archbishops. I expect that they will want to call on the expertise of the Pilling group, but they may need to bring in some other expertise in addition. In any case, we do not know whether the whole of the Pilling group is available to do this piece of work. As we have already acknowledged there will need to be negotiations with the Government and further clarification of the issues, and the position may well change quite rapidly over the next month or two. The Archbishops may well need to move with fleetness of foot. I do not think that a formal working group process is what we need the Synod to commit them to at this stage. If in due course that appears to be the best way forward, let us leave it to the Archbishops’ discretion.

The Chairman: Would anyone like to speak to this amendment? I see no one standing.

The amendment was put and lost.

The Bishop of Chichester (Rt Revd John Hind): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph (d) (or (e), (g) or (h) as the case may be) leave out “endorse the recommendations in chapter 10 of GS 1650, with the exception of recommendations 20–30,” and insert “subject to the above, endorse the recommendations in chapter 10 of GS 1650”.’

The Bishop of Leicester: I am happy to accept this amendment. It properly allows for any unanticipated effects of the Green Paper to be factored into the subsequent recommendations. It includes the word ‘endorse’ and it gives authority to others to take the recommendations forward in due course. On that basis I think that it is a helpful amendment and I am happy to accept it.

The Chairman: Does anyone want to speak to this amendment? I see no one standing.

The amendment was put and carried.

The Chairman: Item 63 therefore falls. I now call on Paul Collier to move and speak to his amendment.

Revd Paul Collier (Southwark): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph (d) (or (e), (g) or (h) as the case may be) after the words “GS 1650 *insert* “except for 8 and 10”.’

I wish to echo the comments of many, welcoming this report very warmly indeed. I think that it will represent huge steps towards improving the leadership of the Church, the development of our clergy and the morale and mission of the whole Church. Partly because it is such a good report and such a step change for the Church – although, of course, in many ways reflecting a growing awareness of good practice – it seems to me that paragraphs 8 and 10 of the recommendations need to be looked at again. Paragraphs 8 and 10 ask for conservative evangelicals and traditional Catholics to be identified in the list of people nominated as candidates for possible preferment, also that diocesan bishops actively seek people from those constituencies to be included in the list.

I am very much in favour of all the comments that have been made about the importance of the diversity of the Church of England being reflected in senior Church positions and in our leadership. However, I do not believe that this is a helpful way of addressing that issue. After I had been on the CNC for about a year or so and we had had a particularly busy first year with six appointments, an evangelical bishop approached me and said that he wished to congratulate me on all the evangelical bishops that we had appointed. I am sure that to some extent he was teasing me, but I also thought that in a way it was a rather odd remark, because I certainly could not really care less whether or not the bishops appointed through the process are evangelical. What I care about is that they have the skills and potential to be extremely good bishops.

Where I think these recommendations go wrong is that they transfer important principles in the treatment of two particular minorities – gender and ethnicity – to very different kinds of constituency. When we have dealt with the appointment of women and ethnic minority people in the Church, we have for good reasons adopted procedures for monitoring the numbers so appointed. That kind of monitoring has been controversial and there has been quite a lot of resistance to it, because it has its

downsides. However, women and ethnic minorities are already visible; they are generally known to be women and known to be people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The problem is that where they are known, prejudice can operate in overt, covert and institutional ways. That is why monitoring is particularly important in this instance, so that patterns can be looked at and it can become obvious that that kind of prejudice is in operation. In addition these factors relating to gender and ethnicity are completely neutral when it comes to churchmanship, theology and church politics, that is, we expect people from those backgrounds to be women and ethnic minority people. (*The Chairman rang the bell.*)

That is why I think we need to look again at paragraphs 8 and 10 of the recommendations and not treat them in the same way as the other two issues. I therefore urge you to support the amendment standing in my name.

The Bishop of Leicester: Paul Collier has made a number of important points. He is right that race and matters of churchmanship fall into different categories, but I think that in some important respects he is wrong in what he says. Ethnic minorities are not necessarily visible categories, and you can actually only monitor diversity if you have identifiable lists of diverse groups to enable you to monitor them. That is widely accepted practice in a whole variety of institutions.

The effect of passing Paul Collier's amendment would be to send a very strong signal to certain evangelicals and conservative Catholics that I am not sure every member of Synod would want to send. I think that we want to create a Church in which their route to senior appointments is as ready a route as anyone else's. We cannot have diversity and inclusiveness on our own terms; it is all or nothing. I would want to resist this amendment and leave the recommendations as they stand.

Revd Angus MacLeay (Rochester): It is interesting that over the course of this agenda in the General Synod we have been working at inclusion – children, Methodists, minority ethnic persons, clergy with disabilities. We have all been working at inclusion, but if you were a conservative evangelical or a traditional Catholic, the opposite would be true if this amendment was to be passed. It is rather worrying that such an unequivocal message comes from someone who has served on the CNC.

Rather than going further down this road, let us look at it from another angle. What is it that our Church needs at all levels, including our senior leadership? Does it not need people who are gifted in working and have seen some modest success in Church growth? Does it not need people who have current experience of Church plantings? Does it not need people who have seen many dozens of people go through to ordained ministry from their congregations? Does it not need vibrant communicators and innovative leaders in mission?

I do not want you to misunderstand me. Conservative evangelicals and traditional Catholics have no monopoly on those gifts, but to pass this particular amendment

would be to cut off many of those gifts from the life of our Church. Therefore in order to see those kinds of gift being used right across the board within our Church, it is very important that we resist the amendment.

Paul Collier may not want me to be a bishop, and that will be no great loss to the Church of England, but for many of the people with whom I have worked and know it would be a great loss if their skills, energy and gospel vision were not given on behalf of the Church to seeing the Church continue to be energized for mission in the coming years.

Mr Jonathan Redden (Sheffield): For the first time, Madam Chairman, on a point of order. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

The Chairman: I think I would like to hear one or two more speakers, but please try me again in a little while.

Revd Canon Simon Bessant (Blackburn): About two or three years ago the diocese of Blackburn adopted a diocesan mission statement. I am very proud of it; I wrote most of it! It contains a line referring to being an inclusive Church, about which I am really pleased, because I believe in that. That is why I am very sad to see here an amendment of exclusion.

I come from the evangelical tradition. I came to faith and I was nurtured in it, but I do not think that anyone would now call me a conservative evangelical. However, I will not speak about my own tradition. I will speak about the other end of the spectrum – the traditionalist Catholics. As a diocesan officer in the diocese of Blackburn I work with all traditions, and there are many traditionalist Catholics in my diocese. I disagree with them about many matters. I could go through a whole list. I particularly disagree with them about the ordination of women, but I recognize that among them are some of the holiest, most prayerful and gifted clergy that I have ever worked with. Are they now to be excluded from consideration for senior appointments in the Church of England? I hope not. Therefore, I ask Synod to say ‘no’ to this amendment.

Mrs Christina Rees (St Albans): – and Archbishops’ Council. I am so pleased that we are debating this report. I think that it has such a wonderful, unexpected timeliness for our Church at this time. In a very small, indirect way, I feel a little involved in the making of this report because I was part of the consultation mentioned in chapter 4, which the Archbishops’ Secretary for Appointments held at Launde Abbey for senior women and bishops. Some of the points that emerged from that consultation have been incorporated in this report as points for consideration and commitment to various actions that will result from that consideration. I therefore very much welcome this report and am very pleased that we are debating it.

However, I am standing now because I am minded to support Paul Collier's amendment, which I do not see as an amendment for exclusion. The Bishop of Leicester said that some conservative evangelicals may not be willing – forgive me, bishop, I am probably paraphrasing what you said – to hold senior positions and that some traditionalist Catholics may not be willing to work with women clergy colleagues, but that others who would be suitable for senior appointments do not seem to be obtaining those appointments. I think that the logic of that argument would apply to other shades of tradition that have not been mentioned, and to other groups within our Church, and that it is inappropriate to single out those two groups. Nor does it correspond with the logic of the argument that is used in the rest of the report, which has made it very clear that all appointments, whatever else is considered, should be made on merit. Those two recommendations leaped out at me as somehow sitting ill at ease with the other recommendations. I would therefore say that to accept Paul Collier's amendment would not be a vote for exclusion but a vote for making it more the same, and I would expect that some of my conservative evangelical and traditionalist Catholic friends would actually not want to be singled out in quite that way.

With regard to recommendations 8 and 10, I think that it is perfectly all right for bishops to ask, on a list being given to them, 'What is the churchmanship, what is the tradition of these names that appear on my list?' but then not go on to look positively for clergy from those backgrounds. To my mind that crosses a line straying from pure meritocracy to seeking candidates in an inappropriate way. If these were to be excluded, I would also like to suggest that perhaps some of the points raised and actions committed to in chapter 4 about women are given the force of recommendations, and I was quite surprised not to see that. Therefore, because I do not think that it is an equivalency gender issue or an issue about these two particular areas of tradition, I shall support this amendment.

Revd Robert Cotton (Guildford): Contrary to what Angus MacLeay said, the Collier amendment is not about denying inclusion to conservative evangelicals and traditional Catholics but about the basis of inclusion. I therefore ask: which comes first, equality or diversity? A similar kind of experience may be that you set up a parish group to talk about mission and suddenly realize that you do not have a young person or a woman included, so you bolt someone on to the group. We all know that that kind of tokenism does not work: it is insulting to the person bolted on and it is awkward for everyone else. It works only if the basis of inclusion is that everyone is believed to have a voice and an experience worth hearing.

What happened with the civil service? In the 1970s and 1980s it had many equal opportunities policies, which produced much good but to some extent stalled in the early 1990s, because large organizations evolve slowly. They therefore moved to diversity policies which are based on the premise that as we believe all are equal, so we must actively seek diverse voices; but note the order – equality, then diversity. If you attempt a diversity policy before you believe that all voices are equal and worth hearing, such a policy can fall foul of seeming to be involved in organizational power play,

protecting one or two constituencies at the expense of others, and I do not believe that Angus MacLeay or anyone wants that.

Of course, we want conservative evangelicals, traditional Catholics and clergy from minority ethnic backgrounds in positions of leadership. I want that. Note, however, that I have mentioned only three of the four groups in chapter 4. Unless and until we have legislation that allows women to play a full part in the leadership of the Church this kind of situation is unacceptable. The Church of England needs leadership from all four groups mentioned in chapter 4, and all four groups need to be held in equal and honourable places in our Church.

The Chairman: After the next speaker, I would welcome an intervention from my newfound friend in the balcony to test the opinion of Synod.

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): There is much to be said for evidence-based policy. We are debating the report of a group that has spent some considerable time investigating all these issues. The two recommendations that are highlighted by this amendment have a background: the background is in chapter 4. At the end of paragraph 4.5.8, the group concluded: ‘it is difficult not to conclude that there is an element of unfair discrimination (whether conscious or unconscious) in the system.’ That is in the section that deals with conservative evangelicals and traditional Catholics.

The Pilling group made its recommendations in order to deal with that unfair discrimination, conscious or unconscious; or, rather, in order to enable it to be dealt with. To remove those recommendations in the way that is now proposed seems to me go against the whole tenor of the group’s approach as a whole. It would make it much more difficult to allow us as a Church to make the fullest use of the fullest gifts of all our members.

I urge Synod to resist the amendment.

Mr Jonathan Redden (Sheffield): Madam Chairman, on a point of order. 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 come now to the amendment by Professor Anthony Thiselton. Because there is complexity in it, I would like, at the risk of getting into trouble with some other colleagues, to allow you five minutes, Professor Thiselton, for your speech.

Revd Canon Professor Anthony Thiselton (Southwell and Nottingham): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In paragraph (d) (or (e), (g) or (h) as the case may be), before the words “invite those responsible” *insert* “and subject to paragraph (e) (or (f), (i) or (j) below as the case may be)” and at the end *insert* as a new paragraph (e) (or (f), (i) or (j) as the case may be) “consider that, as regards recommendations 13 and 14, the process for the appointment of suffragan bishops be mandatory rather than recommended good practice and that consideration be given to the involvement of a second person representing “national interests” alongside those in the diocese”.’

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. In fact, I think I ought to thank the lawyers for making the first seven lines so complicated that whatever I say will seem simple by comparison; but I am on a winning streak because there are only really six words additional to ‘suffragan bishops’ that I need to stress: ‘mandatory’ is the first and ‘second person representing “national interests” ’ is the other, which is a simplified way of putting what I think Dr Baxter meant by ‘incorporating externality’.

The amendment does have a presupposition, and it is the role of the suffragans when we reach the stage of CNC. I have enormous sympathy with those who say that the suffragan office is too important simply to be regarded as a kind of apprenticeship for diocesan appointments. Nevertheless, it is factually the case that time after time after time, the diocesan six, in particular, on CNC say, ‘We want people with proven, God-given gifts already demonstrated in episcopal ministry’. So, like it or not, the vast majority of nominations that come to CNC, for better or worse, are suffragan bishops. This has an important knock-on effect for the processes of appointment of suffragans. First of all, if the report is firmly commending good practice why can that commendation not be mandatory? The CNC ensures a level playing field by mandatory processes. I learnt, alas too late, that the reason might be because the proposals had not yet been before the House of Bishops and that, in effect, it was a courtesy. Had I realized that in time I would have inserted the clause ‘subject to the approval of the House of Bishops’, but I cannot alter the wording of the amendment. I think that there is more to be gained by asking that that process be made mandatory for all suffragan appointments even at the risk, I regret, that it could not have gone first to the House of Bishops. I can only say that any individual bishops whom I have asked about this have said, ‘Yes, it jolly well should be mandatory’.

The second thing I come to is that if the pool of diocesan nominations is mainly, in the end, factually, to turn out to be suffragan bishops, it is a bit late in the day to have somebody to come in to ask about the potential for national interests, national vision, national perspective. I want to join with those who say that they have been extremely grateful for the input of the Prime Minister’s Appointments Secretary, as well as the Archbishops’ Appointments Secretary, for keeping before the eyes of the CNC interests that are not simply internal to the dioceses. I am given to understand – I do not know so much about other Christian traditions – that outside Christian traditions many in Jewish and Muslim and other faiths still think of the diocesan bishop as ‘their’ bishop. In fact, bishops, I am told, discover increasingly how weighty their duties are outside the

diocese. Most of the diocesan bishops have briefs for looking after interests to do with prisons, education, Parliament, theological education, ecumenical affairs, the Anglican Communion; they need, at the suffragan appointment stage, to be exhibiting potential for those enormous responsibilities, otherwise you will have a pool of names going before CNC, some of whom will not have it. I really do hope, therefore, that the Bishop of Leicester will not resist the aspect of ‘mandatory’ simply because there was not enough time for it to go before the House of Bishops. I apologize if that is a discourtesy, but I do not see any other way forward than to ask the Synod to insert the word ‘mandatory’, and I do hope that this issue of national perspective, which the two secretaries have brought before our eyes, will work at the level of the appointment of suffragans.

How should that be done? It already says in the proposals that someone should represent, but that is one person singular. What I am asking is a fairly harmless clause: that consideration should always be given to whether you should not have more than one person in that capacity.

The Bishop of Leicester: It is a tough call, resisting Professor Thiselton after a two-and-a-half-hour debate, but I am going to do that because I think the word ‘mandatory’ is not necessary. If you look at paragraph 5.6.10.1 on page 56 of the report, you will read this: ‘We have recommended that the archbishops indicate that they will expect the process set out in sections 5.6.2–9 above to be followed in choosing suffragan bishops with whose nomination they will be asked to concur and whom they will be expected to consecrate’. The archbishops effectively have a veto; they do not have to consecrate anybody they choose not to consecrate. This report makes it very clear that they will expect this procedure to have been gone through.

I hear what Tony Thiselton says about his conversations with some bishops but the conversations I have had with others say, ‘For goodness’ sake, don’t let them lay too much more burdensome procedure on us. Keep it as light as you can’. It is in the service of that view that I want to resist the word ‘mandatory’ because I think it is frankly not necessary.

As to the consideration asked to be given to the involvement of a second person, I would be entirely content that that consideration be in due course given; I do not think that it requires an amendment to the main motion to achieve that.

The Chairman re-imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Bishop of Winchester (Rt Revd Michael Scott-Joynt): I think this is the first time I have ever not anticipated and received with delight a contribution from Professor Thiselton to this Synod. I am very grateful for what the Bishop of Leicester has just said, and in what I am going to say I recognize that the balance is very difficult to strike. On the one hand, I have had the privilege of leading in the appointment of three suffragan bishops in my time as Bishop of Winchester, and I hope it is the case that, as good

practice in working the GS Misc 455 code of practice has developed, I have followed it with really a great deal of care; and I am wholly committed to following the suggestions, decisions and advice of this working party. On the other hand, however, I suspect I am not the only one of us for whom, as we read Professor Thiselton's amendment, a kind of lurking and suppressed heaviness began to come to the surface. There is a strong sense (in many of us, I think, but I will speak for myself) that, keen and energetic as we are about the whole range of things that we have the privilege of undertaking for Christ and the Church, almost month by month this, that and the other becomes more laborious and we are asked to take on still more which is time-consuming, energy-consuming and resource-consuming. This is at a time when we hear on every side people saying that either there are too many bishops or we do the wrong things or we spend too much money or whatever it may be. It becomes, month by month, harder and harder, and it takes a greater effort, to be the teachers, the pastors, the prophets, the prayers that we are called and consecrated to be, that we want and are wanted to be; and there is the constant, creeping danger of our being seen by others and almost some days being seen by our staffs and by ourselves as executives of the General Synod, and now, with the way some of this is being put (though I am confident that is not the expectation of the archbishops), the executives of the archbishops as well.

It seems to me that the Bishop of Leicester is right. I am confident that I and the rest of us will work at all this, its spirit as well as its letter, though there are bits of it that I shall argue with, if I have any opportunity to argue, as it is turned into a code of practice; but I really would say to Synod, 'Please, not mandatory', and for those kinds of reason.

Revd Dr Richard Burridge (London University): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. Under SO 23(a), I wonder if I could invite you to test the general consent of Synod, as defined in SO 131, as to whether Professor Thiselton's amendment may be divided. He is making two points, one about the mandatory element, which the Bishop of Leicester, supported by the Bishop of Winchester, wishes to resist, and the other about consideration being given to the involvement of a second person to represent the national interest, which is an extremely important point and which the Bishop of Leicester is in favour of. So we have a problem in voting on those two things in one amendment. I know that the Bishop of Leicester has already said that we do not need an amendment to give consideration to a second person, but this would at least test the mind of Synod, on this matter of the national interest. Mention has already been made of it a number of times and there has been great consideration of the work that has been done by the Prime Minister's adviser and so on; we would be able to show our support for that, whether or not the mandatory bit gets through. Personally, I am in favour of both bits, but at least by doing this we can treat the two issues separately.

The Chairman: I need to take advice, Dr Burridge, if you will wait for a moment.

I have thought long and hard, and taken advice, and I have decided to leave the amendment as it stands.

Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): Trust me, I'm a doctor! Please don't trust me, I'm a bishop! This is not meant to attack my friends in the House of Bishops, but there is an issue here of how explicit any procedure should be. Some years ago, the Bishop of Durham – not my good friend here – asked me to sit on the committee that appointed archdeacons. We did a very good job, and I was very happy. More recently, I had other things, and the Bishop had other things, and I was not involved in the appointment of either our recent archdeacon or suffragan bishop, but I was very cheered and encouraged to know that the process was followed, to my understanding, perfectly and very appropriately; I am delighted with the process and delighted with the appointments. In other words, I am not necessarily saying that I want to be at the table but I do want to know that the process is transparent, fair and appropriate.

My work in the NHS and universities suggests that where a process is clear, well practised, open, planned and well monitored by human resources teams the process is not only good for the organization but good for the people who are appointed; they know they have been appointed properly, and that all stakeholders have been involved, and that they are therefore empowered and able to do their job much more effectively because they know that all people know that it was done correctly. I have also been involved in GP selection which, of course, is done much better than hospital selection and the recent junior doctors appointment debacle, MTAS. There I think we can see where the problems of a new system, not tested and not resourced, have in effect led to disaster. Please do not be ill in August; you may not find anybody in the hospitals to look after you other than over-worked consultants!

So I am asking Synod to support my friend Anthony Thiselton's amendment, not because I do not trust the bishops but because I think this will give firmer encouragement for all of us to know that they are doing the thing correctly and would not put the archbishops in a difficult position where there was any doubt about it.

The Bishop in Europe (Rt Revd Geoffrey Rowell): The Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments, a former Keble theological student, invited me to a leadership course at Windsor. We had to bring someone, another bishop, who was doing the same job. I said, 'The only two eligible are the Pope and Prodi and neither is free to come'. The point of that is partly to say that, as far as the diocese in Europe is concerned, this particular amendment proposed by Professor Thiselton would pose some difficulties. However, there is a wider thing: the second person representing national interests alongside those of the diocese. National interests are important, but when I was appointed as a suffragan bishop in the diocese of Winchester I had some international experience rather than national experience, and I think that that is another dimension that needs to be brought out. So although the diocese in Europe has its own procedures for appointing both the bishop and the suffragan bishop, I think that we want to be clear that this code of practice, when it comes to be drafted, recognizes that particular case. There are some things about the international dimension that would need to be borne in mind.

So I hope that some of the concerns will be there but I would want the Synod to resist the amendment.

Revd Canon Pete Spiers (Liverpool): The diocesan chairs of clergy have an annual meeting at Launde Abbey, and we had Sir Joe Pilling come and address the group on this very subject. I can tell you from listening to the various chairs of clergy that there are very many different ways in which people are appointed to senior positions in the Church of England. So I welcome this report and I also welcome Anthony Thiselton's amendment, and I am going to ask Synod to support it.

I do so reluctantly because the word 'mandatory' seems a bit distrustful, but even if we do not press the amendment I would hope that the archbishops will indeed ensure that this agreed process that I hope we are going to vote through will be followed. My concern – and this is why I want to support Anthony Thiselton – is how far down the track a process of appointment will get before someone wants to blow the whistle, and then it is far too late a point at which to say, 'Hold on. We need to go back to square one'. I would like to see a much more transparent, fair process. In the world of education, where I have a bit of experience, the good process whereby we appoint head teachers and deputy head teachers works there. Why should it not work within the Church as well? So please support Anthony Thiselton's 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 lost, 124 voting in favour and 164 against.

The Archdeacon of Bournemouth (Ven. Adrian Harbidge): May I continue our discussion about the appointment of suffragan bishops? I am an archdeacon. I know my place! I am six foot four; my diocesan is six foot five. I look up to my diocesan bishop. However, my suffragan is only six foot two. I really do not know how he got the job!

I note that the review group forgot to have an archdeacon in its membership, so it is understandable that its members missed a trick or two when it came to the appointment of suffragans. Chapter 6.3.2.3 suggests that suffragans who have a geographical responsibility – and I may add that that geographical responsibility almost always comes from an archdeacon – should have a particular part in the appointment of that archdeacon, but there is no parallel suggestion for the appointment of suffragans. Archdeacons know their place, and they know it very well. When we visit a church, no one puts on special music for us – (*laughter*) – and no one puts on special hats. When we turn up in a parish, we see the parish as it really is. [*A member: No you don't.*] Oh yes we do! Last September, in the historic churches cycle ride, I was able to cycle round all the benefices in my patch: 135 churches. I now know what they all smell like. Some of

them smell of cows, some of them smell of horses, and a lot of them smell of Indian takeaways. When it comes to appointments, do remember that archdeacons are the ones who really know their place.

By the way, Chairman, I do look up to my suffragan as well!

Revd Richard Moy (Lichfield): I speak, as a six foot four young man in a stripy jumper with no desire to be an archdeacon, with regard to the talent pipeline which about a thousand hours ago Sir Joseph said was the most important part of the report, and we have yet to come on to it.

A few months ago I was sitting in a vocation, recruitment and selection committee, advocating that we should be investing more in the young ordinands that we have approved and asked the diocese to raise up in terms of leadership training. There was a sort of embarrassed shuffle across the Ministry Division officials as they no doubt realized that this report was coming out later and that someone else had latched on to a good idea. The Church at the moment is already in great debt to a man called James Lawrence who works for the Church Pastoral Aid Society and runs a programme called the Arrow leadership training course. It is fantastic. I know because I have recently been selected to go on it! A number of people who did not train at such wonderful institutions as I did have said that the first week there was as beneficial to their ministerial development as their entire three years in theological college. I am sure that they are wrong in choosing to say that, but I believe that adding leadership training to our development of people is very important. I am therefore very much in favour of this talent pipeline and I would like to suggest that there is a way whereby it can be perhaps less divisive and less something that people may feel they fall off, if we consider that training people for leadership generally is a very good idea.

It should be a key role not just to try to develop great leadership for our deans, archdeacons and bishops but for those who are going to serve in other responsible positions and in large churches as well, or even those very difficult rural churches which no doubt require more leadership skills than most of those in the cities.

I think that this is a superb proposal. I would love to see it taken further and I really commend to Synod the practice of James Lawrence and the Arrow course as a way this might be taken further.

Canon Dr David Blackmore (Chester): I want to focus on an apparently small matter in connection with the nomination of suffragan bishops. In paragraph 5.6.8.1 on page 55 we read that two candidates are to be nominated to the Prime Minister. I merely point out that this is a higher number now than is the case for diocesan bishops, where only one is being requested. The suggestion is made in paragraphs 60 and 63 of the attached paper that the arrangement for suffragan bishops should continue in that there is to be a convention brought in whereby the first name is always chosen, but I would suggest that this is to limit the flexibility of our nomination process. Any normal procedure arrives at

one name – certainly in every panel I have ever been on in other walks of life – and in the event that this name cannot be appointed, the nomination process merely needs to go back on itself and look down the list and see if there is another appointable one, and maybe there is not, for example; but to have to offer a second name to the Prime Minister and to have to inform such a candidate, who might in all probability not be appointed, is clumsy and pastorally inept.

So I suggest that, in the course of the discussions that are referred to in paragraph (c), this matter should be part of the deliberations between the archbishops, the Council, the House of Bishops and the Government. Sort it out, please. I say this not just to remove an untidiness; it is really for the principled consistency of the thing, for the practical efficiency of the nomination panel and for pastoral sensitivity.

The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu): I want to thank Synod for the way it has rejected quite a number of amendments and has accepted those of the Bishops of London and Chichester. When His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury and I, under SO 4(b), brought a new motion, it was because of the changed circumstances, and to try and go back where we are not is not going to be very helpful. So I am very grateful to Synod that it has rejected quite a number of amendments and stuck to the main motion, which I hope Synod will pass by a large majority.

The thing about the Church of England which often worries me is the way we call for a review or reports which take quite a long time, and by the time they come out the scene may well have just altered. Those of you who have travelled from the East End of London know that as you get to Bank station there is this announcement ‘Mind the gap’. Occasionally, the train comes, stops and goes away, and you hear the words ‘Mind the gap’ when the train has already left the station. Friends, I think what has happened to us, through what the Prime Minister has proposed, means that we have to be rather nimble on our feet, concerned about the mission in the world out there and seeing what actually should happen and lightening our procedures and our way of working. ECUSA meet only every three years and so does the Church in Canada. We meet twice a year, and I want to ask if our systems – not only of appointments – are actually conducive to quick responsiveness.

I was very privileged to be able to talk to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State before they became what they are now and to have a conversation just two hours before they were actually appointed; and in the midst of appointing Ministers, in the midst of the terrorist threat, the Prime Minister was making a lot of time and Sir Gus O’Donnell was also making quite a lot of time to discuss this. If you want his office to work with the Church, really it is the office, and, in the end, the sheer professionalism and expertise of William Chapman, which has been key in what has been achieved in terms of appointments. It is the person, often, and I want on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Synod to thank William Chapman for an amazing job. I am very grateful that the Green Paper says, ‘Until new arrangements are agreed, the Secretary for Appointments will continue to assist as appropriate’ and I hope, William, you are not

looking for another job (because there are none anyway). I hope you are going to stay and help us through the process, and I want to thank God for your ministry and your enthusiasm.

I just want to repeat that I am afraid the horse has already bolted. If you want to hold it back, it is not there.

Revd Maureen Hobbs (Lichfield): I speak to Synod currently as a parish priest and diocesan adviser for women's ministry, with a great interest in how we develop all our ministers, whether male or female. In my former existence I was a consultant, among other things tasked with the recruitment of senior technical and management personnel for all sorts of different organizations, large and small. I was one of those people sometimes called 'head-hunters'.

I welcome the report in its breadth and its depth, and particularly, like my colleague Richard, I welcome the findings in chapter 3 for identifying and developing talent, and the comments already mentioned about the use of both advertising and search as recruitment tools, along with the emphasis on increased transparency; but I must emphasize that advertising and search are only that – they are only tools – and are not a magic solution to an organization's need for the right people at the right time. From my experience as a member of the bishop's staff, I find frustrating the amount of time proportionally that we spend – worthily – discussing the so-called problem cases, clergy who are victims of disciplinary issues or disillusionment or demotivation, compared with the energy and time that we give to discussing potential. What the report gives us a chance to do is to continue a process of culture change throughout the Church and particularly in the hierarchy, so that no longer somebody gets the reputation, as has already been said, of being 'a sound chap' or 'a safe pair of hands' because of where he – or maybe even she – trained but so that there is a more evidence-based approach and the desire to invest in the on-going training and development of good, effective, well-motivated clergy, those who are not always causing ripples of concern or even actively seeking a move.

I welcome the emphasis on the importance of drawing up detailed person and role specifications and the wide consultation envisaged in that. In my experience that is crucial in ensuring a good and productive fit between an opportunity and a candidate, and it can be very helpful also in handling the difficult but necessary de-briefing of those who are not successful by presenting it – and perhaps even training some of our bishops to present it – in terms of future development and ideas for the individual, so that disappointment can be turned into successful outcome.

In my reading of the Gospels, Our Lord – perhaps the ultimate search consultant – chose his disciples totally on potential rather than on proven achievements or application forms. What is more he continued to work with those who did not immediately live up to his promise or expectation of them.

The Bishop of Guildford (Rt Revd Christopher Hill): I was not intending to speak but the issue of suffragans and two names has been put up. At the risk of anticipating what the Bishop of Leicester may tell the Synod, there was good support for sorting that one out. It will actually involve a change in the Suffragan Bishops Act, a Henrician Tudor piece of legislation. I think it is now right to do that, but that is why the flexible way in which the motion now stands is absolutely right because there is a lot of discussion to go on now, to do with the new situation, which the Archbishop of York has, of course, spoken about.

Revd John Cook (London): I want to thank the review group for a very clear report, but actually here at Synod things are not always quite as clear as we would like them to be. Perhaps members sometimes feel we need a glossary. We heard yesterday the word ‘indefectibility’ as part of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, and I asked three members of the House of Bishops if they could tell me what it meant. Only the Bishop of Chichester could; everybody else said, ‘Mm, I think it’s something to do with . . .’. I want to give Synod another word to work out: I want to talk for a moment about ecclesiastical deficit – nothing to do with the pensions issue – and two areas of it that I spotted in this report and want to raise.

An archdeacon said this to an incumbent who came to see him about a possible calling overseas (not from London diocese), ‘You shouldn’t do that because you’ll be committing ecclesiastical suicide’. We need to give attention to whether those who serve overseas are perhaps being excluded from some of the senior appointments. It is a tragedy if this is the case because God-given gifts are being denied to the Church, as is the experience of the Church overseas which is so vital, as we were reminded yesterday when we talked about the Body of Christ worldwide in the context of the Covenant. The experience of the Church overseas produces people who have worked in multi-faith situations and have experienced being minorities in an alien culture. The experience of working overseas also brings experience beyond a person’s years. I can think of one man I know in our diocese: he has run a theological college and has been number two to a bishop; he loves his parish life, but I wonder if anybody has noticed him. He is thrilled with ministry at the moment but he has enormous gifts. Just think about the bishops down the years who have served, having come with overseas experience: Bishop Stephen Neill, Bishop Stanley Booth-Clibborn, Archbishop Sentamu, Bishop Tom Butler, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali. Let us make sure that we keep our eyes on the overseas opportunities.

The second area of ecclesiastical deficit – perhaps not intentional in the report – is that although there is much there on gifting and ability I wish there had been a bit more about godliness and character, and I hope that everyone will give more thought to that as well.

Dr Sheila Cameron (Dean of the Arches and Auditor, Ex officio): I was not intending to speak but I thought that I perhaps ought just to say something about preferment lists because it seems to me that there is a chicken-and-egg situation in relation to them. You have to get on to a preferment list – or it is ideal to get on to a preferment list – and then

you may be considered for a higher appointment in the Church, but if you have not had the experience to get on to the preferment list you are stuck at the bottom. We know that many are called but few are chosen and that this applies in the Church as elsewhere, but one of the difficulties arises if individuals are prevented by personal circumstances from getting a breadth of experience. I am thinking particularly of part-time posts. I have had experience of a male priest-in-charge who has a half-time stipend; he works on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, not on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. That is a man. It is clearly pointed out – and I am grateful for this – in paragraph 4.2.13 that there are many women who need to work in part-time posts. They need to do so – as may men – because of other responsibilities. For women it is generally children but it may be older relatives. I am particularly concerned at the reference to the fact that women are currently offered assistant curacies. I had a very anxious young woman ordinand ring me up a few weeks ago, saying that she had been told that the policy in her diocese was that she would just get a series of assistant curacies for as long as she was only available to work part-time.

I am entirely in favour of the monitoring recommended in chapter 10, which we are endorsing in the motion from the Bishop of Leicester, which I shall support. It talks about monitoring and the filling-in of a form detailing the gender and ethnicity of candidates considered; but that is only if you have actually got as far as the preferment list and consideration, and I just hope that those who are going to take this forward will not lose sight of the importance of looking down the line and seeing what changes may need to be made and what policy alterations may need to be made to enable those who, for some reason or other, cannot offer themselves full-time not to be deprived of the opportunity of gaining the necessary experience to enable them, in due course, to get on to the preferment list.

Mr Tim Allen (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): In supporting the amended motion, I want to concentrate on paragraph (d) and, in particular, on the expansion proposed by the review group in the role of the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments. In this I shall draw on recent personal experience, that of serving as one of the diocesan representatives on the Crown Nominations Commission for the vacancy in St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. I came away from the CNC experience with strongly favourable impressions of the process, relating, first, to Archbishop Rowan's exceptional gifts of chairmanship and, second, to the generous way in which all the central CNC members were ready to work sympathetically with the diocesan team to identify the individual who would best meet the needs of the diocese while also satisfying national needs. My third strongly favourable impression, and that most relevant to this motion, was the excellence and professionalism of the contributions made to the process by the two Appointments Secretaries: Caroline Boddington, working for the Archbishops, and William Chapman, working for the Prime Minister. At an early stage in the process, the two secretaries descended on Suffolk for just two days of conversations with many individuals and groups. From their expert listening, they distilled an immensely wise and perceptive picture of the diocese and its needs in terms of a new bishop. This was invaluable, as was the wealth of information and good

judgement which they put before us in relation to the many names considered by the CNC in our days of working together.

Given this recent personal experience, I am delighted that Sir Joseph and his colleagues share the general admiration of their qualities and want to see those qualities applied more widely to other senior appointments. In the review group's recommendation there are numerous proposals for the further involving of the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments in improved procedures for the working of the Church, as the report puts it, for example, the talent pipeline. This further involvement of the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments promises to be valuable in making better senior appointments below diocesan level. However, just as I am happy with the proposed greater role for the Archbishops' Appointments Secretary, I am dismayed at the prospect that the Prime Minister, in withdrawing from personal, real involvement in senior Church appointments, will at the same time very likely withdraw the valuable and free service to the Church of his Appointments Secretary, William Chapman. 'One step forward, one step back' is how I see it. In line with the Bishop of London's successful amendment to paragraph (b), my hope is therefore that ways may be found to preserve the diversity that has been one of the benefits of prime ministerial involvement in the senior appointments process, as opposed to the bland and colourless candidates who are said to be favoured by a committee system.

So, Madam Chairman, I shall, if I may, reserve my cheers for Mr Brown's decision to stand aside until I see what mechanism is proposed to retain or replace the valuable role hitherto played by the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary.

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 Bishop of Leicester, in reply: I am immensely grateful to all those who have contributed to this debate. It can be a little intimidating to lead a major and complex debate with a large number of amendments, even when the proposals have been carefully pre-digested by the Archbishops' Council, the archbishops and the House of Bishops. To do so on the back of a Green Paper only just published, which nobody has yet had full opportunity to absorb, is an even more precarious position to find oneself in, but I want to congratulate Synod for, in spite of that, conducting a very helpful, rational, coherent debate, in which a very large number of contributions have been made which will be immensely helpful to those now charged with taking this forward.

We have had a debate in which there has been a proper balance between a consideration of the implications of the Green Paper and consideration of the Pilling recommendations. We have heard great appreciation of Sir Joe Pilling's work and that of his group, and I know that Synod as a whole endorses that and, coupled with that, the

work of Colin Podmore in drafting such an excellent document. We have heard voices of confidence from the Church of England ready to seize the moment now offered to us and make it work for us in conducting the mission to the nation that is ours. We want our most senior posts to be publicly accountable; we want to resist any drift to congregationalism.

We have heard much appreciation of the work of the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary and also of the work of the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments. In whatever flows from this discussion we need to do our best to ensure in the further consultations that that critical independent voice which the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary has offered us is somehow included, by some means or other, in whatever new arrangements emerge. (*Applause*)

Much work now remains to be done. There must be negotiation with Government; there must be exploration of the large questions we have heard about today, in particular, appointment to cathedral Crown deaneries, and the consequential changes that have been referred to by the Bishop of Guildford and others to the suffragan appointments process and the amendment to the Tudor Act under which that is presently provided for. This will eventually issue in a code of practice, and there will be plenty of opportunity for further discussion as that develops. The motion in my name commits those responsible to reporting back to Synod during 2008.

Synod has probably heard the story of the new bishop visiting in his diocese who goes to visit one of his clergy in the vicarage, and the vicar pops out to put the kettle on. His eight-year-old daughter sits with the bishop and summons up the courage to ask a question. 'Can I ask a very difficult question?' 'Of course, you can.' 'This question is so difficult even my Daddy can't answer it.' 'What's the question?' 'Well, my Daddy can't understand how you ever became a bishop in the first place.' In the light of today's debate and this excellent report, all that is going to become clearer.

The motion was put and carried in the following amended form, 297 voting in favour and 1 against:

'That this Synod, noting that proposals in the Government's Green Paper of 3 July (attached to GS 1650A) will necessitate further discussion with the Church:

- (a) welcome the prospect of the Church achieving the "decisive voice in the appointment of bishops" for which Synod voted in 1974;
- (b) affirm its willingness for the Church to have the decisive voice in the selection of cathedral deans and canons appointed by the Crown, given the Prime Minister's commitment to a "process of constructive engagement between the Government and the Church" (*The Governance of Britain* Green Paper, CM7170);

- (c) invite the Archbishops, in consultation with the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops, to oversee the necessary consequential discussions with the Government and to report to the February group of sessions, including on the implications for those matters covered by chapter 8 of GS 1650; and
- (d) subject to the above, endorse the recommendations in chapter 10 of GS 1650, invite those responsible to give effect to them and invite the Archbishops' Council to report to Synod during 2008 on progress with implementation.'

Revd Prebendary David Houlding (London): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I wonder if I might through you, Madam Chairman, as chairman of the Appointments Committee and on behalf of the whole Synod, offer a vote of thanks to Sir Joseph Pilling for a splendid job well done? (*Applause*)

The Chairman: That completes this item of business. I think that the chairman of the Business Committee might like to say something.

Revd Prebendary Kay Garlick: This is what I hoped would not happen. We have 25 minutes before the next timed business. Do you think we can do Standing Orders in 25 minutes? [*Members:* Yes.] Shall we go for it? [*Members:* Yes.] Great. Have we got a Chairman for it?

The Chairman: Thank you. We will find one.

THE CHAIR *Canon Mrs Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield)* took the Chair at 5.25 p.m.

Forty-first Report of the Standing Orders Committee (GS 1664)(resumed debate)

The Chairman: Members will recall that we will need GS 1664, the first notice paper and the eighth notice paper, on which we have an amendment in the name of Gerry O'Brien which I indicated would be taken as Item 46; in addition, on the green sixth notice paper we have a financial statement. I would be very grateful, Synod, if we could conclude this business in the time we have left, which is a little more than 20 minutes.

SOs 36 and 37

'Leave out Standing Orders 36 and 37 *and insert*

"Show of Hands

- 36. (a) Save as otherwise provided in this Standing Order, the Chairman on putting any question to the vote shall take a show of

hands of those seated in the hall, the result of which as announced by him shall be conclusive.

Division of the Whole Synod

- (b) On any question (except where a division by Houses is required) the Chairman may order a division of the whole Synod and shall do so if 25 members so request either before the question is put or immediately upon the announcement of the result of a show of hands.

Division by Houses

- (c) In the following cases the vote shall be taken on a division by Houses:
- (i) on any question referred to in paragraph (d)(i) of SO 35;
 - (ii) on any question referred to in paragraph (d)(ii) of SO 35 where a special majority of each House is required;
 - (iii) on the question of Final Approval of any Measure or Canon unless by permission of the Chairman and the leave of the Synod this requirement is expressly dispensed with; and
 - (iv) subject to paragraph (d) below, on any question where 25 members so request either before the question is put or immediately upon the announcement of the result of a show of hands or immediately upon the ordering of a division of the whole Synod.
- (d) A division by Houses shall not be permitted:
- (i) following a division of the whole Synod;
 - (ii) where a special majority of the whole Synod is required (except on any question referred to in paragraph (d)(ii) of SO 35 where a special majority of each House is required in addition to a special majority of the whole Synod); or
 - (iii) where the matter is a question of procedure to which this paragraph applies.
- (e) The questions of procedure to which paragraph (d)(iii) applies are:
- (i) a special procedural motion (SO 29);
 - (ii) a motion to vary the order of business (SO 9);
 - (iii) a motion to suspend a standing order (SO 38);
 - (iv) a motion to adjourn debate on the Final Approval Stage of Article 7 or Article 8 business (SO 94); and
 - (v) a motion for public and/or press to withdraw (SO 129).

Procedure on Voting

37. (a) On a show of hands or a division it shall not be in order to vote from the gallery of the hall, or, except by permission of the Chairman when there are no seats available in the hall, an aisle or gangway.
- (b) For a division by Houses a bell shall be rung to warn members that such a division is about to take place, and that they must enter the hall if they wish to take part in the vote. Two minutes after the bell has stopped ringing all the doors of the hall shall be closed and the question put, whereupon the division shall begin.
- (c) Divisions, whether of the whole Synod or by Houses, shall be conducted by electronic means unless the Chairman directs that a division be conducted by physical separation of the members voting.
- (d) On a division, whether of the whole Synod or by Houses, the number of those who wish to record an abstention shall be counted.
- (e) For a division, whether of the whole Synod or by Houses, conducted by physical separation of the members voting, the Ayes and Noes doors shall be reopened and members wishing to vote shall do so by passing through the appropriate door. Votes and abstentions shall be counted by such number of tellers (being members willing to serve) as may be appointed by the Chairman.
- (f) Voting, whether by show of hands or division, shall be otherwise conducted in accordance with instructions to be issued from time to time by the Business Committee and, subject thereto, the administrative arrangements for the taking of any vote shall be made by the Registrar under the direction of the Chairman.
- (g) The Business Committee shall also give instructions to ensure that, where the voting on a question is conducted by electronic means, the names of the members voting for and against that question, or wishing to record an abstention on that question, are made publicly available in such manner as may be determined by the Business Committee.” ’

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall QC: I beg to move:

‘That this amendment be made with effect from such date as may be specified by the Business Committee.’

Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In the proposed Standing Order 37(b) *leave out* the words “by Houses” and “such”.’

Under the new system of voting with the option of electronic voting we will have two procedures for voting. Most of our votes will continue to be taken by a show of hands. Generally speaking, they will be large majorities one way or the other – things like motions for the closure and so on – and my single vote will make no material difference; it certainly will not change the outcome. However, sometimes we will be asked to vote electronically by pressing buttons on our hand-sets, and there are three main reasons why we will be asked to do this. In the first place, there will be some contentious issues: when the vote is very close every vote counts and we want to know exactly how many votes there are on each side. Sometimes we will want to measure precisely the strength of feeling on an issue, for the benefit of the Government or the press. Sometimes Standing Orders will require us to do so. In these instances, the computer may count votes of the whole Synod or it may count the votes by Houses, but as far as we are concerned the procedure will be exactly the same.

Strangely, the Standing Orders Committee is proposing different procedures for us, depending on how the computer is going to count the votes. If a vote is important enough for us to need to count every vote, I put it to Synod that we should make every effort to maximize the number of people voting. It would be most unfortunate if the length of the queue for cups of tea downstairs were to influence the outcome of an important vote. It would, in fact, be extremely embarrassing if voting figures that were published to the press, the Government or anyone else were to reveal that two or three hundred members of Synod were not present for the vote, a vote that was important enough to be counted. The Standing Orders Committee proposes that a bell be rung if the computer is going to count the votes by Houses but not be rung if the computer is simply going to count votes of the whole Synod. I understand that that decision was taken in Standing Orders Committee by a narrow majority: the members certainly were not of one mind.

My amendment proposes that a bell will be rung before any electronic count, regardless of the way the votes will be counted. It has been suggested that we are always going to be pressing our buttons, but I submit to members that, by and large, we will not. Most of the votes today have been fairly obviously one way or the other and precise counts – the electronic system – will not really be necessary. In the past we have not had many votes by Houses because of the disruption to Synod – we had to stop the Synod, go through the doors, have the count and everything else – but in future it will be just as easy to have a vote by Houses as to count the whole Synod, and I submit that the process should be the same.

My amendment will promote consistency, in that it says that a bell will always be rung before votes are counted. It will spare us embarrassment by maximizing the number of

votes when that number is going to be published. It is plain common sense, and I commend it to Synod.

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall QC: In responding to this amendment, I need really to contrast what the current position is with that which will exist when we have electronic voting. Mr O'Brien is quite right, that currently we usually vote by a show of hands – if we had voted on every item listed on the Marriage Measure, it would have been 17 times – and only if the result of a show of hands is not clear do we have a count. In those circumstances, we do not ring the bell, nor do we wait two minutes. If it is for a division by Houses or a division of the whole Synod, which are unusual – again, Mr O'Brien is right – the bell is rung. When we use electronic voting we will still vote usually by a show of hands, but there will be no counts; so if the Chairman feels uncertain about the way the vote has gone, we will use the machines. In effect, what we will do then represents a division of the whole Synod, and that is the clear advice that the lawyers have given to the Standing Orders Committee.

The effect of what Mr O'Brien proposes is that whenever we have a division in the circumstances I have described, with electronic voting, we will ring the bell. We will therefore ring the bell in circumstances where we do not currently ring the bell. The best example was five minutes ago. For reasons one can understand, the Chairman wanted to see the precise numbers; what would have happened with electronic voting there is that we would have rung the bell and waited two minutes to get the result of 297:1. The Standing Orders Committee believes that to accede to this amendment would have a significant and adverse effect on the smooth running of Synod. We do not think it is a good idea, and we do not think that it is consistent with the resolution Synod has passed about electronic voting.

Having said that, we know what our role is, and we leave it to the good sense of Synod.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): As one of the minority on the Standing Orders Committee who felt the bell should continue to be rung for a division of the whole Synod, as it currently is, I would like to explain to Synod why I took that view. My task is greatly assisted by Gerry O'Brien's speech, and he has already made a number of the points I would have made; I entirely agree with what he said. Suffice it to say that whenever we come to a division of the whole Synod under the new arrangements it will be because the vote is important for one reason or another and an accurate count is important. It seems to me, in a democratic assembly taking important decisions on behalf of the Church of England, that, where a vote is likely to be close and where it is important, it is desirable to take what steps we can to maximize the number of those taking part and to ensure that people are not disenfranchised because they happen to have popped out for a cup of tea or nipped to the loo.

I am one of those sad individuals who tend to sit in Synod hour after hour, for fear of

missing something, but I am well aware that most members of Synod have lives and find it necessary to spend time out of the chamber, either for refreshment or to attend to other business. They should not be accidentally disenfranchised on important votes, and to the extent that they are at the moment – because we do not ring the bell for a count – that is wrong, and what Gerry O'Brien and I are suggesting would be an improvement. Indeed, where a special majority of the whole Synod is required, generally speaking, a division by Houses is not permitted, and so unless this amendment is carried the bell will almost never be rung where a special majority of the whole Synod is required.

In the debate on the Standing Orders Committee report on Saturday, it was suggested that it was inappropriate for people who had not heard particular speeches to be warned to come in to vote. It has never been the policy of this Synod that to be qualified to vote members should have heard the whole debate. The numbers voting would be very small indeed on most issues if that were the rule.

Arguments about time and flow of business persuaded the majority of the Standing Orders Committee, and I respect those arguments; but enormous amounts of time will be saved in other ways by electronic voting, and I submit that two minutes to ring a bell on these important votes is a small price to pay for maximizing the Synod's participation in those votes. It will also give a short space for reflection, which is no bad thing when we are taking an important decision.

I ask the Synod to support Mr O'Brien's amendment.

Mr Philip French (Rochester): I wonder if we could ask for the legal advice to be reconsidered. I think we are confusing a division with a show of hands. At the moment, Madam Chairman, if you want to know the mind of the Synod you ask for a show of hands, and if it is apparent to you and has the general consent of the Synod that there is an overwhelming majority in one direction or another we take it on the immediate appearance. If it is not so clear-cut, you ask for a count. You have a device, or devices, within the chamber that enables you to count the hands being held up. Those devices are the eyes of some members of the staff. In the new dispensation we will have other devices in the chamber that can serve the same purpose: the electronic hand-sets of those members at that moment present. We could use them in exactly the same way, to call a show of hands that is not immediately apparent at first sight.

That is not necessarily the same in principle as a division of the whole Synod, a matter sufficiently weighty that we wish to call into the chamber those members who have gone outside for a cup of tea, or a matter which is sufficiently weighty that 25 members of Synod have stood to request a division. I would ask the Standing Orders Committee to think again on advice whether we can achieve both the intention of Gerry O'Brien's amendment and the speed of using electronic voting.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

The Bishop of Willesden (Rt Revd Pete Broadbent): I am very rarely able to call Clive Scowen muddle-headed because he is such an amazing person in terms of what he contributes in our area and in London diocese, but I think that here both he and Gerry are being muddle-headed. Philip French has begun to tease out what the issues are. There are two different sorts of thing that we are talking about here: one is procedural and one is constitutional. A division by Houses is written into the Constitution of this Synod as something which is guaranteed as part of the synodical government procedures and Measure. We have to have it, and it is a way in which we ensure that our voting can give voice to the three different Houses of Synod. It is quite right therefore that bells should be rung for that. A division of the whole Synod is either used because you or someone else in the Chair are not quite sure of the numbers and you need to check; that is just procedural. Occasionally, there may be a good case for counting the whole Synod without counting by Houses. It may be sensible to think about putting a Chair's discretion in to say that the bell could be rung in instances where the numbers need to be counted, such as at the end of the last debate. That would be appropriate, but I think we would actually find ourselves in the ludicrous situation of slowing down the Synod's business if we rang the bell each time we were going to count.

So let us be quite clear: it is only about certain sorts of weighty matter that the bell should be used. Please reject the amendment. If it needs to come back with a further proposal, it needs to be about the Chair's discretion to order the bell to be rung in certain circumstances.

The Archdeacon of Bournemouth (Ven. Adrian Harbidge): – and also a member of the Standing Orders Committee. I am quite worried about this amendment in the impact it will have on our deliberations. If the bell is being rung constantly, people will think 'Oh there it goes again' and they will not bother to come up to vote. I could see it being totally counter-productive if we were to pass this amendment.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of one minute.

Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford): I just want to point out to Synod that when we have electronic voting a division will not take anything like as long. Yes, there will be the bell and the two minutes, but then there will be an instant vote, whereas at the moment we have to go through the doors, which takes us two or three minutes, and then there is all the business of how long it takes to add up all the numbers afterwards. That is an important issue.

The other thing that the Bishop of Willesden mentioned is also terribly important. Why can we not have – and I know this will have to come back – the discretion of the Chair to decide when a division of the whole House is needed, in other words ringing the bell and calling people in, or when 25 people ask for a division of the whole House, and other times when we do not do that and we just use the current method, mentioned just now, where the counting of the whole House is done by people immediately voting without the bell, and so on?

The amendment was put and lost.

The motion was put and carried.

SO 35(c)

‘Leave out “SO 36(d)” and insert “SO 36(c)”.’

SO 68(a)(iv)

‘Leave out “SO 36(d)(iii) and insert “SO 36(c)(iii)”.’

The Chairman: We have these two consequential items which are just a change of numbering, so I will put them *en bloc* to the Synod without debate:

‘That these amendments be made with effect from such date as may be specified by the Business Committee.’

The motion was put and carried.

SO 114

‘At the end of Standing Order 114 insert

“(h) The deputy Chairman of the Committee may, if he considers that its business can properly be conducted by correspondence, instruct the Secretary to circulate (in writing or by electronic means) to the members of the Committee and to the persons entitled to attend meetings of the Committee under paragraph (g) above proposals requiring its approval; and, unless objection is received from any member of the Committee or from any person entitled to attend meetings of the Committee under paragraph (g) above within fourteen days from the date of their posting or transmission (as the case may be), the proposals so circulated shall be deemed thereupon to have been approved by the Committee with the same effect as if they had been approved at a duly convened meeting: Provided that if the proposals consist of or include (i) approval of the Comments and Explanations on a Measure and agreement that they be submitted to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament or (ii) approval of the draft of a report of that Committee and agreement that it be presented to Parliament, those proposals shall not be deemed to have been approved by the Committee unless and until a majority of the members of the Committee have given their approval to the proposals (in writing or by electronic means).

(i) The Committee may delegate to its deputy Chairman the approval of the Comments and Explanations on a particular Measure to be submitted to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament.

- (j) Subject to the foregoing provisions, the Committee shall have power to regulate its own business and procedure.” ’

New SO 118A

‘After Standing Order 118 *insert* as a new Standing Order:

“*Procedure*

- 118A. (a) Subject to the following provisions, the Business, Appointments and Standing Orders Committees shall have power to regulate their own business and procedure.
- (b) The Chairman of each Committee may, if he considers that its business can properly be conducted by correspondence, instruct the Secretary to circulate to the Committee in writing or by electronic means proposals requiring its approval; and, unless objection is received from any member of the Committee within fourteen days from the date of their posting or transmission (as the case may be), the proposals so circulated shall be deemed thereupon to have been approved by the Committee with the same effect as if they had been approved at a duly convened meeting.
- (c) Each Committee may delegate to its Chairman the approval of any matter which requires decision and which, because of its urgency, cannot be dealt with at a meeting of the Committee or in correspondence under paragraph (b) above. Such delegation may be general or specific and shall be subject to such conditions (if any) as the Committee may from time to time impose.” ’

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall QC: I beg to move:

‘That these amendments be made with effect from Wednesday 11 July 2007.’

May I just say (although it is probably not in order) that I heard what the Bishop of Willesden said, and we will certainly look at that.

The motion was put and carried.

Church Army

The Chairman: We come now to a presentation by the Church Army. The purpose of the presentation is to celebrate the Church Army’s contribution to the life and ministry of the Church of England over the past 125 years. The presenter will be Mark Russell, the

Chief Executive of the Church Army, and we are very pleased to welcome him in that capacity. He will illustrate his talk with PowerPoint and a DVD. May I say on behalf of us all how much we welcome this opportunity to hear about the work of the Church Army and particularly the Fresh Expressions; there will be some time for questions afterwards.

Mr Mark Russell (Chief Executive, Church Army, and Archbishops' Council, Ex officio): It is a real privilege and pleasure for me to be given this opportunity to address Synod in this the 125th year of Church Army, to celebrate the role that Church Army has played in helping the Church serve this nation. May I say thank you personally, as a member of Archbishops' Council and as a member of Synod, for the support you have given me since I took on this job just under a year ago. If you were surprised at my appointment, I assure you it came nowhere near the surprise that I felt. In fact, as I have travelled round the country and been introduced to people as the Chief Executive of Church Army I think people might have been less surprised if Mr Blobby had been appointed the new Chief Executive rather than me! Thank you for your welcome today.

(Speaking to the PowerPoint presentation) It was a good shot. The flowerpot descended from the upstairs window and hit the silk top hat with great accuracy and considerable effect. Underneath the now battered hat was a young Anglican clergyman in his early thirties. He was in the firing-line because he was leading churchgoers in an open-air meeting in Kensington, west London. This part of London was considered well off, yet there were parts of the area which were best avoided if you valued your reputation or even your life. It was in such an area that this open-air meeting was taking place. The young curate was Wilson Carlile and the fearful, faithful bunch of churchgoers came to form the first recruits to Church Army.

The then Archbishop of Canterbury accused Wilson Carlile of wanting to turn the Church upside down, and Carlile famously replied, 'No, Your Grace, I want to turn it inside out'. One of the first handbills given out about the work of this new Church Army said, 'Every night at 8 o'clock and Sundays at 3 and 7, Church Army declaration of war against sin and Satan, under the command of the Revd W. Carlile. Come if you dare.' It is not exactly how we do things these days as we encourage people to join us in ministry, is it?

I also checked out the questions that prospective Church Army evangelists were asked back then when the training college was set up. Perhaps I can try them out on Synod today. '1. Can you take a back seat and play second fiddle with a happy heart?' Perhaps we should have slotted that into the last debate. '2. Can you use the same homely language in speaking for Christ as for your trade? 3. How much indoor and outdoor persecution can you stand without being angry?' I perhaps will write to Ministry Division and suggest we stick those into CME or maybe into selection conferences.

In January 1883 the *Church Times* reported that Church Army had done even more than William Booth to provoke blasphemy and disorder across the land; it should

receive no encouragement and ought never to march again. I am pleased to say that 125 years later both the *Church Times* and Church Army are still here. I hope we have kissed and made up since then, except last year when in an article they called me the Wayne Rooney of the Church of England, which is a shocking thing to say of a Spurs fan. Only a couple of years ago Church Army was described in *The Times* as the SAS of the Anglican Church and by my good friend the Bishop of Maidstone as reaching out to people in a way that the Church normally fails to do.

We have moved on, but the Church has moved on too. The *Mission-shaped Church* agenda is exciting, it is radical and it is happening. I was thrilled when we passed the Pastoral and Dioceses Measure, which takes the agenda further forward still. We are delighted at Church Army that we have established a developing partnership at the heart of the Fresh Expressions agenda. Church Army evangelists work as part of Steve Croft's team, and our Sheffield Centre, led by George Lings, continues to challenge, provoke and support the Church in its evolving role in mission and evangelism.

I count it an honour and a real privilege and profoundly humbling to be asked to lead this society at this time. For any organization that gets to this age the most crucial question to ask is 'Why are we here?' At the heart of that question is 'Why did we start?' What was wrong with our society and what was wrong with the Church that Carlile wanted to fix? I am going to say something now you might not have heard the chief executive of a mission agency say before: I pray that I will live to see Church Army close. You can quote me on that. Church Army exists, as any other mission agency, as a mirror to challenge the Church about something it is not doing properly or fully. So I dream that the Church will become the mission-shaped Church that we pray for, so that we can see Church Army and all the other mission agencies closed because the Church is mission-shaped and reaching out to people, is radical and is evangelistic.

So what was it that Carlile saw? He saw a Church that was turning in on itself, a Church that seemed more interested in the spiritual needs of itself than those of the millions of people in the land who were desperately in need, emotionally, spiritually and physically. Many were hungry and homeless. They had nothing. Carlile saw a Church that was disengaged from people and out of touch. He yearned for the Church to do more to share faith through word and action, by mobilizing people to share the gospel. Carlile had three Cs at the heart of his mission: conversion, consecration and church membership.

Good Anglican that I am, I would endorse these but I want to add three more. First, co-operation: co-operation in the Church across all traditions, and co-operation ecumenically in mission and evangelism; partnership and working together must become even more important as the resources available to us in the Church come increasingly under pressure. Second, compassion: compassion for those outside who are hurting, compassion for those outside who never darken the door of our Church and whose lifestyles are often not perhaps what we would want them to have. Eugene Peterson says of Jesus in Matthew 9 that he looked out over the crowds and saw that

they were bruised and broken, 'like sheep with no shepherd' and, Peterson says, 'his heart broke'. You and I need to have our hearts break for the people of this country who are in need, who are hurt, who are broken, who are wounded and who know nothing of the love of God in their lives. Third, being contemporary: to understand the needs of the culture that we are working with, to be culturally relevant and sensitive about how we do mission. I believe passionately that Fresh Expressions do not undermine or devalue the inherited Church but simply say, in this Google generation, we need different ways to be Church.

I am proud that Church Army has always been a home for all traditions within the Church: evangelical, liberal, Anglo-catholic, high, low and everything else in between. We spend so much time talking about what divides us and yet as a Church surely what unites us is our commitment to reach this nation with the love of God, to share faith in word and action. So today I want to re-commit Church Army to being a gift to you, to being a gift to the Church, to help work out what all this means in our culture, as the singer Fatboy Slim would put it 'right here, right now'.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury commissioned me last year, he said that mission produces thanksgiving. If I can be a wee bit controversial – I think you have got used to me being a bit controversial from time to time – I think the Church has got the message across the land that mission is becoming important but I find as I travel that while people have got that message they have got it for the wrong reason. When I go to visit parishes or deaneries or dioceses, people tell me, 'We're passionate about mission, Mark, because we're worried there won't be a Church in 20 years' time.' That is not a good enough reason. Or maybe we are worried that we cannot pay our pensions bill. That is not a good enough reason either. We want to do mission, surely, because we love Jesus and we love people. We do mission and evangelism because people need to know how much he loves them and they need his grace in their lives. They need to know the assurance of their sins forgiven. That all means that they will give thanksgiving to God, and the Church, rejoicing in new people discovering faith, also will give thanksgiving to God. The whole mission exercise gives thanksgiving to God.

That is what drives me, that is what I am passionate about, that is what Church Army is passionate about and it is what I hope we are passionate about: simply helping people meet Jesus. So as an organization for 125 years we have gone beyond church walls to reach people where they are, to share our faith with them at the point where they would like the conversation to begin. In the short time I have been doing this job I have travelled all across the country. I have been to Ellesmere Port and met Rob Barker and Richard Tett who take a huge double-decker bus into housing estates across the diocese of Chester, to meet young people where they are with a mobile youth centre, praying with young people, talking about faith, listening to their concerns. I saw how a former Sikh, Kinder Kalsi, is helping to serve his local community in Sheffield. I met Edwin Bates and our team who do stunning work at the Marylebone Project, London's largest dedicated homeless hostel for women. In Manchester I met Ben Edson and the guys who run Sanctus I, an emerging church reaching out to young professionals. Just a mile and a

half from my own home in south-east London is a hero called Nick Russell who works on an estate in Kidbrooke, an estate full of social needs and issues, and who, along with his wife, brings up his little daughter on that difficult estate. It is an estate where so many young people feel they have no hope, an estate where Nick touches those young people's lives when nobody else will.

If I had more time I could tell you about our work with asylum seekers and with alcoholics. I could tell you about Malt Cross in Nottingham, reaching out to those who spill out on to the streets from pubs and clubs on a Saturday night, story after story of helping people come to a place where they meet Jesus, the real, exciting, dynamic, passionate, wonderful, dangerous, loving Jesus.

Today at Synod I am thrilled that we can première a little DVD we have just produced. It begins with Wilson Carlile and it finishes up with another 30-something guy just as passionate about Church Army and convinced that we still have a job to do. This is not a slick PR exercise; it is a gritty glimpse of the important and life-changing work of Church Army over 125 years. You can get this DVD in the little packs we have for you; if you have not picked one up already, they are on our desk; and, in this visual age, you can get it on my blog or our web site or on You Tube. Do think about hosting it on your web site. So let me première for you now our DVD *Making History, Bringing Hope*. (*The DVD was then shown.*)

Carlile and all those Church Army evangelists down the years inspire me, and the evangelists we have today inspire me. I am privileged and proud to be part of that heritage and tradition. I do not think that the factors that motivated Carlile to found this organization have gone away; they are different in some ways but people are still in need. There is still homelessness and there is still poverty; there are still millions of people who know nothing about God and his love in their lives. Mission and evangelism are in our DNA.

I was walking down Charing Cross road in London a couple of weeks ago – over the past three weeks I have spoken to about thirty thousand people at a number of big events – and I met a young man called Matthew who has had a profound impact on my life. He is 21 years old, he has been homeless for two years and he sleeps rough. (Incidentally, he speaks really highly of St Martin-in-the-Fields, who help him.) We were chatting and I told him what I did for a living and we ended up talking about faith. I said, 'Matt, can I ask you something? What is your message to the Church of England, so I can tell them over the next month? I'm going to be speaking to the Synod in July and everyone is going to be there, from the Archbishop of York down. What do you want me to tell them?' He said this – Matthew, 21, Charing Cross road, homeless – 'Tell them to stop arguing and tell them to bring God's hope to this country'. I have never heard a better definition of our job as a Church. Martin Luther King said, 'When you lose hope, you lose the vitality that keeps life moving'. Matthew and I prayed together, and that meeting has had a profound impact upon me.

We have a gospel that is full of hope and is life-changing. Carlile's vision was of ordinary men and women doing extraordinary things in the power of the Holy Spirit. His desire was to bring hope to people. I know in my soul that that is your desire too. So Church Army wants to work with you. We want to work together to bring Christ and his love into our twenty-first-century context in your diocese, in your parish and in your community.

Thank you so much for your prayers and your support, and thank you for listening.
(*Applause*)

The Chairman: We probably have time for about three questions.

The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds (Rt Revd John Packer): Thank you, Mark. That was thrilling and a delight to be part of and to hear.

I want to ask about collaboration between the Army and dioceses. We all have, in one way or another, our Fresh Expressions developments in our dioceses, and often, at any rate, they do not have any significant link with the Army, it seems to me. With a number of Church Army evangelists, either they are employed by the diocese, in which case they seem to have little contact with the Army, certainly strategically, or they are employed by the Army and placed and paid for by you, in which case there seems to be little contribution strategically from the diocese. Is that just Ripon and Leeds, or do we need to do a good deal more work on what is at the moment a lack of collaborative working between dioceses and the Army?

Mr Mark Russell: Thank you, Bishop. I am very grateful for your question. One of the things I have discovered very quickly about the Fresh Expressions agenda is that the train is moving and we are throwing the tracks down as we go along. I suspect that what you have asked in your question merits much thought, and we will give it that and see if we can build better practice for the future.

Mr Ian Smith (York): – and also CMS Ireland. I would just be interested to know, Mark, whether you have difficulty in working with the military connotation, whether that goes down badly or whether it helps.

Mr Mark Russell: It will not be a surprise to you to know that this is not the first time that question has been asked of me since I got this job. There are a number of very important strategic questions to do with our identity, our name and things like that, and over the next number of years, as an organization, we will address them. I dropped a very large hint in my conference speech to the society in April, saying that there were a number of strategic issues that we had to think about and I mentioned that one. We will think about it very carefully. You know what? Like any organization, people have a lot of affection in their hearts for the name, but I suspect, knowing our evangelists as I do, that what drives them is the gospel and the kingdom and serving the Lord. If we can talk together and think things through and discover if the name is maybe an obstacle for

people, perhaps we will be able to change that. All I can tell you is that as an organization we are aware of the issue and we are committed to working it through over the next couple of years. Watch this space! If you have any ideas, drop them to me in an email and I will be very happy to receive them.

Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester): Mark, with apologies for just throwing this at you without any notice, everything you do is obviously resource-constrained. If someone were to give you an extra million pounds tomorrow, would you do more of the same or would you strike out in totally different directions?

Mr Mark Russell: What a great question! Gerry, if you have a million pounds I will very happily talk to you after this presentation.

As I said to the bishop, we are laying the tracks. I would want to encourage Church Army to dream. I want us to dream big. You know what, though: we are not just Church Army. We are part of PWM, and we are part of a number of mission agencies across this country; I want us to work more closely together and to see how we can partner each other more closely, with CMS and CPAS and all the other mission agencies, in trying to reach this nation with the gospel. Church Army, like the other mission agencies, is part of the Church. We are not Lone Rangers; we are part of the work of the Church here, and that is why I am thrilled to be in this setting right now.

However, I do want us to dream and one of the things that I have been doing with my team is encouraging them to think big. So if another million pounds pops up, we will *be* big. One of the things I have encouraged Church Army to do – and I would encourage the wider Church to do it as well – is to permit people to make mistakes. When I was a youth worker we had a Fresh Expression of Church which 200 teenagers came to, and everyone pointed at it and thought it was great. They took notes of what we did and copied it and put their church name on it if it worked for them. What they did not realize was that Pulse was prototype number seven and there had been six fiascos before it. Every time I did it the PCC would look at me as another disaster happened and say, ‘Mark, are you going to learn how to do this right?’ As we do Fresh Expressions, we need to permit people to fail. The Church is not always very good at doing that. We expect instant results; we have short-term contracts. We need to allow people to make mistakes. We need to love them and help them to be pioneers. I hope that in Church Army we can continue to do that and I would hope as well to be a mirror to the rest of the Church, so that you can learn from our mistakes and from our lessons as well.

Thank you, Synod, for your help. Thank you for listening and for your support. I see the General Secretary of CMS has got his hand up. In the spirit of partnership, I think I ought to hear what he has to say. (If he wants to offer me a million pounds I would be very happy to receive it.)

The Chairman: I am sorry, I really have to say No. [*Members:* Ah!] We have worship timed at 6.15. Well, if you can say it in one sentence, please.

Revd Canon Tim Dakin (Oxford): Mark, congratulations from CMS on 125 years. I used to sit on the knee of a former chief secretary of the Church Army about 45 years ago. What is your dream for what the Church will be like in 45 years?

Mr Mark Russell: In one simple sentence, my dream for the Church in 45 years' time is that every person in this nation will know there is a God who loves them and will have responded to that with their lives and will know his blessing and his grace every day of their lives. (*Applause*)

(*Adjournment*)

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Sheffield (Rt Revd Jack Nicholls)* took the Chair at 8.30 p.m.

Private Member's Motion

Ethical Investment Advisory Group: Restricted Investments (GS Misc 857A and B)

Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford): I beg to move:

‘That this Synod consider that the list of restricted investments maintained by the Ethical Investment Advisory Group should be:

- (a) published to provide easy access for all Church bodies and for individual Christians of all denominations, to help them in structuring ethically the investments in their care; and
- (b) made available under licence (subject to an appropriate fee) to commercial fund managers so that they are in a position to offer a range of ethically compliant funds of varying risk, management and performance profiles, which can be available for both Church bodies and individual Christians.’

Over £5 billion in funds is held by our parishes – more assets than at the Church Commissioners – plus many more investments owned by individual parishioners. This motion is important because it is about getting the best possible ethical returns on all of them. My concern has increased over recent years that we are failing in our fiduciary duty to achieve the best returns reasonably obtainable with parish assets. That is why I have done a survey of PCCs in preparation for this debate and why I have made extensive investigations to ensure that investment can be significantly improved. Also, as someone whose working life has been devoted to properly informed investment on a genuinely populist basis, it worries me deeply that the Church denies access to the practical outworking of its ethical values to the people whom it seeks to serve.

Because we are talking about billions of pounds of investment, the implications of this seemingly minor motion on publishing the EIAG restricted list are substantial. What I am trying to achieve is a sea-change in the way we *do* investment in the parishes, and we need to pass this motion to achieve it.

My survey of parish investment shows that 68 per cent of money is held on a long- or medium-term timescale but two-thirds – virtually the same percentage – is held in short-term cash deposits. Most members will be aware that over the long-term stock market investments out-perform cash deposits by a substantial margin, around 3 per cent per annum. This mismatch between asset allocation and investment timescales is therefore costing the parishes about £50 million a year, and that is 3 per cent on about £1.5 billion. The Church Commissioners have only a very small minority of their funds invested in cash or near-cash securities, as Synod heard this morning. If Church Commissioners invest in real assets for optimum returns, so should PCCs.

My survey has also highlighted the very high concentration of the 12 per cent of parish assets which are stock market based in a single fund: the CBF Investment Fund, managed by CCLA. Over 98 per cent was invested in that one fund, so it was important to ask why we put all our eggs in the one basket, because any good investment professional knows that such concentration gives rise to risk and the danger of poor performance. Here are the first two reasons given: ‘we have no information on alternative investments’ and ‘there are no other funds which comply with Church of England ethical restrictions’. So members can see where I am coming from with this motion.

The CBF Funds were set up in 1958 ‘as a means of providing an integrated investment and cash deposit service for parishes, dioceses, cathedrals and other C of E bodies wishing to avail themselves of it’. However, this is what the Archbishops’ Council said of its own funds in 2007, nearly 50 years later. ‘Freed from any conflict with their trustee responsibilities as members of the CBF, the members of the Council could more easily take decisions on where the Funds for which it has direct responsibility should be invested (as, like other Church investors, it has a number of investment vehicles open to it).’ So the Archbishops’ Council realizes now that it has a fiduciary duty to take an open approach to find the best investment vehicles. Where, however, does this leave the parishes? In answer to my Question in February, Michael Chamberlain pointed out that the Charity Commission’s guidance clearly sets out the duties of trustees and hence PCCs as regards suitability, diversification, review and advice. We are not doing it. Let me remind you that the Church Commissioners took their UK equities away from CCLA management on concerns over performance.

The parishes have no choice of investments on an ethically compliant basis: no capital-protected funds (which are good for minimizing risk), no indexed funds, indeed no other equity fund except the CBF Investment Fund. That is the other reason why they are achieving sub-optimal performance with the assets entrusted to their care, and it is a legal and regulatory concern. Ethics are important to PCC members, and we should

celebrate that fact. So you cannot free up investment opportunity in a Church context without freeing up the ethical restricted list. Let us go back then to the issue of ethical investment and why it matters so much.

It stems from the premise that any investment that takes place in a Christian context should be in line with our values. The judgement in the Bishop of Oxford's case against the Church Commissioners stated that Church investors should pay heed to Church values and ethics provided that the best performance reasonably obtainable is achieved. It was as a result of Synod pressure in the wake of this case that the EIAG was formed, and its constitution makes clear that the benefit of its output was intended for the whole Church: 'the EIAG shall be responsible for disseminating its work and serving as a wider resource for the Church of England in advising on the implementation' – the *implementation* – 'of ethical investment policies'. It is not just about policies; it is about the practical outcome of those policies. This wider remit is simply not happening. Beyond the central investment bodies the EIAG provides a screening service only, for DBFs, cathedrals and the occasional high-net-worth client stockbroker. If parishes want their investments stock market based there is only one option available that is ethically sound – the CBF Investment Fund – and if individuals want to invest ethically, according to the Church of England guidelines, tough, unless they are clients of Cazenove or Rathbones. Meanwhile, CCLA do not provide *any* funds in which ordinary people can invest; and because no other fund manager has access to the restricted list, there are no ethically compliant funds available elsewhere on this basis, not even a fund linked to the ethically adjusted index, the basis on which the Church Commissioners invest 28 per cent of their funds.

We must free up the restricted list. If we do this now, there is a lot we can achieve. I have consulted with many fund managers and with the FTSE index company, and I know that they will rise to the challenge in offering choice. For example, Legal & General are standing by to introduce an ethically adjusted indexed fund on both a gross and a net basis. Parishes and people will be able to benefit from the range of funds offered, and those who want to invest directly will know what to avoid.

First, however, Synod needs to say Yes to my motion, and this is why. I have been a member of the EIAG for eight years but I cannot get the secrecy of this list lifted without Synod's help. I have tried three times, and three times I have been refused. A motley collection of objections is thrown up against publication. I have addressed them in my background paper and they really do not amount to anything substantive. Mostly, it is fear: fear of a negative perception of our ethical stance or fear that somebody or some corporation might object. Fear is not the way to run the Church's life. (These words in my speech were prepared before the Archbishop's presentation this morning!)

We discuss publicly the rights and wrongs of ethics in particular companies, whether Caterpillar or Provident Financial. We publish our policies for excluding certain sectors. All ethics is a question of balance, and we cannot pretend a restricted list does not exist when we are happy to say that we do not invest in tobacco, gambling, armaments

et cetera. So where is the negative perception in publishing what the list actually is? I wish to promote the positive as much as anyone in this Synod, but let us not allow a pretence that we have no restrictions deny access to practical help for parishes and people.

As for reprisals, an investment lawyer tells me that there has never been an action against a factual advisory list; and we can insure against it anyway: the premium would be covered by the licence fee on just £3.5 million of funds under management. For the avoidance of doubt, I have checked carefully to confirm that the publication of a list is not financial advice under the provisions of investment legislation.

So my appeal to Synod is to ask the EIAG to stop living by fear and to publish the list. We should indeed 'put our light on a stand so that it gives light to everyone in the house', but there is a still more compelling message from Luke 11, when Our Lord says, 'Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering'. The religious hierarchy has often sought to withhold the key of knowledge from the people. It is one of the reasons why the Reformation found such a welcome in England, since the Catholic hierarchy at the time had become obsessed with holding back the word of God. So let us not withhold the keys of ethical knowledge from our parishes and people and favour just the rich and wealthy. This is an issue of conscience and ethics itself. How can we deny people the opportunity of getting the best possible ethical return on their investments?

Please support the motion, speak in its favour and vote for it.

The Chairman: Before I open the motion for general debate, I just want to draw your attention to the financial comment on the sixth notice paper, paragraph 18–21.

The Bishop of Ely (Rt Revd Anthony Russell): I think that Synod should be very grateful to the diocese of Oxford for raising this matter. I commend the work that has been done by the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, and will support the motion, as I hope many other people will.

The work on ethical investment is but the tip of an iceberg of a much greater concern about the ethical aspects of economic activity. No economic activity takes place in a moral vacuum, and the work thus far has been largely to do with the restricted list. The problem with that is that we have come to appreciate the enormous interconnection and complexity of modern economic life. On many of the restricted lists distilleries and breweries appear, yet we own large agricultural holdings, as was mentioned this morning, and malting barley is one of the principal crops. It is difficult to draw the line. There are many other examples like that. Work in the whole area of ethical investment has moved on really from the restricted list to a direct engagement with firms involved in activities that we would like to draw attention to.

I would like to bring before Synod the report of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group

and draw attention to pages 8 and 9. Page 9 is to do with the food supply chain and especially with food retailers. I will not go into great detail on this beyond saying that, in the main, farmers and the eight principal supermarkets are very grateful for the work that has been done and readily participate in it. Page 8 records the work done on palm oil and bio-energy. There has been much publicity and a great deal of discussion about bio-energy in this country, seen as an appropriate response to global warming. The Government have set a policy of 5 per cent of transport to be fuelled by green fuels by 2010, recently extended to 2015. The present amount is 1.25 per cent, so there is a heck of a long distance to travel before we reach that. Bio-energy is by definition renewable; there are significant carbon savings, it is locally sourced, it lessens our vulnerability to geopolitical instability, and so on. It appears to be a win-win situation. Nothing, however, is without consequences. Many of the moral and ethical aspects are frequently overlooked, and there is a high degree of over-simplification.

There are two major sources of bio-energy in the world. The first, used by the USA and Europe, is from arable crops, principally maize, wheat and sugar beet. The consequence has been an astonishing acceleration in the price of wheat during the past year: when we met in Synod 12 months ago the price of wheat was £80 per tonne and it has now reached about £118 a tonne, and you can get higher prices than that. Farmers follow financial incentives and the consequence of that is that food prices are about to rise very significantly, as we heard this morning. The effect of that will be felt by those on low incomes. The second consequence is that there is a major debate now about the difference between fuel and food, and Ministers are beginning to talk about food security. In the United States it is a matter of maize production; there have been shortages of maize because it is all going into fuel use; the price has gone up; there has been rioting in Mexico because cheap maize is not available, and so on. It is, of course, a great problem in those countries. The cheapest form of bio-energy comes from palm oil and from sugar cane, vast amounts from south-east Asia, Brazil, Indonesia and so on. This has social and agrarian consequences as well as environmental consequences.

In this country we are looking for a great increase in bio-energy and the companies are responding, but the tell-tale giveaway is that the refineries are all being placed next to deep blue-water ports, with the implication that it is not home-produced stuff they are looking for but imported palm oil and so on. (*The Chairman rang the bell.*) As a consequence there are enormous moral issues. I beg Synod to support this motion.

Mrs April Alexander (Southwark): – speaking on behalf of the Church of England Pensions Board. You will have seen the memorandum prepared on behalf of the National Church Institutions, of which the Board is a member. The Board is a signatory to the memorandum, having considered the issues on previous occasions, again together with the other investment bodies. The Pensions Board has an interest in the list of UK companies and pays towards the cost of its compilation. The EIAG's view is that the EIAG itself cannot act independently of the Pensions Board, which in turn has grave doubts about whether it could give permission for publication. The Board has duties to the members of the scheme under trust law and pensions legislation. Trustees are

required by pensions legislation to consider the opinion of the employer, including in this case General Synod, although the Board has always done this with enthusiasm. However, the same legislation requires the Board to act in the interest of members even if that is over and against the wishes of the employer. If Synod were to pass this motion, it is the view of the Board that it would still have to act within its own integrity because of its legal position.

The risks in question: the first of these, as Gavin Oldham points out, is defamation. He says that he has had comments, rather than advice, from a lawyer to the effect that he is unaware of any such action on the basis of an advisory list. We and the EIAG would submit that such an advisory list has never been published, but the risk of action is material. Other bodies like the EIAG take the same view. We have to consider the use that the press might make of the information, such as, for example – and you can see the headline now – ‘Church of England has declared that such-and-such a plc is unethical’ – when in fact this is not what we are saying at all; the company is simply trading in a commodity that we have agreed we will avoid. Further, a company recently successfully sued the *Financial Times* for defamation when its share price fell, following an article, and there is little reason to suppose that the Church or the Board could escape being enjoined in such an action or indeed an action against itself. Certainly to judge by the activities of Nestlé in days gone by, a company might well take up hours of its own and Synod's time in self-justification, should it feel the need.

In risk management terms, Gavin may be right that the risk is remote, but the implication could be very serious indeed and the costs high. Trustees exist to eliminate or to mitigate risk and not to take risks. What is more, trustees are jointly and severally responsible for their actions, and that responsibility remains even after they have left the Board. Board members could not take the risk, however remote, of personal liability in any legal action in the future, and nor would Synod expect them to do so. To mitigate the risk of defamation, considerable resources would need to be applied to the constant double-checking of statements made and to the updating of information in the list, as mergers and acquisitions change the investment scene by the day. This is not a cost that the Pensions Board could justify to the membership of the scheme.

Companies in totally unacceptable areas of business are easy to spot. It is in the grey areas, as the previous speaker has mentioned, where the difficulties arise, and where companies change their business. The proportion of the proscribed activity carried out by a company may become the criterion on which to base a decision. These criteria become very finely judged and subject to amendment, but currently there is a proposal under active consideration by the NCIs that these finer criteria should be published. As soon as any list of companies was published, it would immediately be out of date and dangerous.

The second group of risks are regulatory risks, of which Gavin mentions but one; but even here I disagree with his analysis. The FSA rules do indeed cover promotion; they cover advice, including the advice to disinvest or refrain from a particular investment;

and the EIAG could well find itself caught by them for this reason. If that were the case, and the EIAG were unauthorized, as it is, it would be committing a criminal offence. Authorization itself is time-consuming and expensive and, further, there is a directive coming in in November which will have further implications and under which promotion to pension trustees will be covered.

The previous speaker spoke of the other activities in which the EIAG engages, and I think if members have read the report they will be very impressed by these; but they cannot be carried out in the public eye. Nevertheless, they are positive; they are the things that the Church should be engaging in, and I am sure that Synod would support them. They are a far cry from the mere compilation of a proscribed list.

Mr Richard Whitmill (Youth Council): I cannot really speak on the technicalities of this but there are plenty of other people to do that. I am pleased to see this motion coming before Synod and I support it. Ethical shopping, ethical living and ethical investment are all of great interest to young members of the Church, or at least to the ones that I know. I remember, for instance, a Youth Council where members spoke passionately and eloquently on the Caterpillar debate, and we have supported fair trade as well.

I support this motion because it allows individuals and smaller Church organizations to use their money to encourage good ethical practice in the business world as well as to get a bit more money in the parish coffers, but I do not think the production of a list is enough in itself. It would be quite easy for an individual or a PCC to pick EIAG-approved funds, invest in them and then sleep easy, knowing their investments were ethical, but this does not engage with the complexities of ethical investment. Simply making a list public will not encourage people to think about why an investment is ethical or unethical; nor will it direct our prayers in a thought-provoking way.

In some ways, it would have been good if the Bishop of Worcester's amendment was incorporated in this motion because it has an element of process in it. We need to open up the EIAG's thinking to people at local, parish level, and we need to do more than just produce one glossy leaflet a year. However, I do welcome this motion because it is the first step; it encourages Christians to use their purchasing power to invest in ethical companies and engage with those companies, and I think it should be seen as the start of a process to open up the work of the EIAG and to engage Christians at ground level in what it means to invest ethically. I encourage Synod to support this motion.

Canon Alan Cooper (Manchester): You have in your hands a response to Gavin's Private Member's Motion. It has been prepared by the Pensions Board, Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council. However, members of Synod will recall that at the February group of sessions Synod approved the transfer of the trusteeship of the CBF, after many, many decades, from the Archbishops' Council to a separately constituted body of trustees, who now have sole responsibility for CBF Funds, under the name of CBF Funds Trustee Limited. This was brought into being after many months of discussion and fact-finding and for the greater protection of all the

bodies concerned. CBF Funds Trustee Limited is now the third institutional investor in EIAG.

The new trustees, as they must, have authorized me, in the unavoidable absence of Michael Chamberlain, to speak on their behalf. They fully support the note which has been prepared (GS Misc 857B); that contains the position we have taken up against the motion put by Gavin. It sets out the views of the NCIs on the motion and the stance of EIAG.

EIAG is not on trial this evening. What it has done for 11 years has been of a high standard and highly valuable to the good name of the Church. So the trustees – CBF Funds Trustee Limited – are keen to see a constructive way to look at the many issues which are of interest not only to Synod members but out in the dioceses and the parishes, but we would have to say that we are committed one hundred per cent to the work of EIAG.

In former days, CCLA was the body to which thousands of parishes and DBFs related, and over many years I was associated with that through the Archbishops' Finance Committee and, before that, the Central Board of Finance. The one thing I learnt more than anything is that parishes have to feel absolute trust in those to whom they are entrusting their money. The protection of trust is essential. Mitigation of risk is the second consideration. So, while the CBF trustees do not have any direct say in the Synod discussions (and therefore I am authorized to speak for them), it is my intention to vote quite definitely for the Bishop of Worcester's amendment. It is a way forward to improve where we must, to lessen risk where we must and to keep the care of those who entrust their moneys particularly to the three institutions before us.

So on behalf of the trustees I will vote against this motion and in favour of the Bishop of Worcester's amendment.

The Bishop of Worcester (Rt Revd Peter Selby): I beg to move as an amendment:

'Leave out all words after "this Synod" and *insert* the words "urge the Church Commissioners, the Pensions Board and the trustees of the CBF funds to make available more details of how they carry out their ethical investment policies, in order to help Christians of all denominations manage the investments in their care".'

I have to say that being asked to present something to the General Synod on behalf of the three National Church Institutions goes well beyond my wildest career ambitions! The only concern I have is that I am asked to propose an amendment which might seem to some to be a defence of secrecy and so to confirm to my brother his words in a letter of congratulation to me when I got my present job: 'I suppose, having kept left upstairs, you will turn right at the top.' However, this is not an amendment in favour of secrecy. We have an incredibly good – I would say, for myself, incredibly moving – story to tell of

the development of an area of work to a place where it is now no longer a fringe activity, where there is a huge level of interest in what we do and where the issues expand daily, so that the only brake on our endeavours is the amount of resource that would be required adequately to pursue all the avenues which are open to us. I refer particularly to the comments of the Bishop of Ely earlier in the debate, which seemed to me just to demonstrate the huge, intriguing complexity of the whole business of what we do with our money, the effects of it, and what we can achieve if we act responsibly and act together.

You knew it anyway. Your churches that had Traidcraft stalls on a Sunday morning and were thought to be engaged in a slightly wacky activity now know that they have influenced supermarket purchasing to a massive degree, to the point where we are actually in some danger of losing the private enterprise which has lain behind the fair trade initiative. This is an incredibly good and important story.

Why then is there a disagreement, a disagreement not about whether we want to widen understanding and increase participation in ethical investment, but about how this is to be done?

Last year, with my wife, I went on holiday to Croatia. I have to confess that we took a phrase book with us. It was very useful. It got us on and off buses. It got us the right things in the supermarket and enabled us to pay for things properly. However, there was one thing it did not do: it did not teach us any Croatian. We got back home knowing as little as we had known when we left. I do not think you teach mathematics, either, by giving people a list of the answers. There is a kind of disclosure that conceals, just as there is a kind of revelation that conceals. We are in the business of revealing: of revealing our work, of publishing reports, of encouraging people to get inside the issues, of encouraging people to see that in their own life and in the life of their church. If we publish this list, we shall become a banning group; we shall be returning 40 years to the origins of this group, which was to isolate issues and subjects which we would not touch. Christianity is not a religion about banning things; it is about positive engagement, and that is what we live out in the enormously encouraging work of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group.

I would encourage Synod to give us the encouragement that this amendment contains to pursue this work, to ask for the resources, to ask for the energy, that will publicize what we are doing and get more people on board with it, and not to hold us back by what appears to be revealing and open but actually holds people back from a real understanding of the intriguing and adventurous possibilities which are ahead of us and which might really change the way in which world institutions operate.

Mr Gavin Oldham: My dear friend Peter, with whom I have worked now as a Church Commissioner and on the Ethical Investment Advisory Group for over eight years, wants Synod to vote on the whole motion now by replacing it with this wrecking amendment. It is even more of a wrecking amendment than the one in the Covenant

debate, about which the Bishop of Chichester said, 'if you want to vote against the motion, do so, but don't vote for the amendment', for it seeks to address a wholly different set of parties – that is, Church Commissioners, the Pensions Board and the trustees of the CBF Funds – from my motion, which addresses the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. His amendment would be more in place in a debate on the Church Commissioners' or the Pensions Board's annual report, where Synod is scrutinizing their activities. It dangles a carrot about the possibility of more information about their investment decisions, but please resist the temptation because my motion is not about their investment decisions; it is asking for publication of the EIAG advisory list for the benefit of parishes and people.

There is a real distinction between advice, which is what the EIAG does, and which should be a resource for the whole Church, and investment decisions, which is what each of these investment bodies does. If this amendment does claim any justification for being on the order paper, it is by displaying the extent to which the central investment bodies think that the EIAG belongs to them, and that they should therefore ration out the amount of information which is available to parishes and people. In fact, that is just what April Alexander was saying by regarding the Pensions Board as synonymous with the EIAG. Its presence on the order paper therefore confirms to you one of my key concerns. I am not even sure that this amendment would be legal under competition law if it were passed because, by addressing the trustees of the CBF Funds, you would be aiding and abetting them, with whom the ethically compliant funds that I am asking you to make possible would compete, to perpetuate their monopoly as suppliers of Church of England compliant stock market funds to the parishes. Synod has to remember that CBF trustees are no longer members of the Archbishops' Council; they are a virtually independent set of investment professionals, following the legislation that we passed in February.

If this text were proposed as a following motion, I would have no problem and would indeed vote for it; but it is not. It is an amendment designed specifically to frustrate the purpose of my motion. I know this because I asked that it be re-designated a following motion and was turned down. My motion asks the EIAG to carry out its constitutional duty, thereby helping parishes to fulfil their fiduciary investment responsibilities, and I hope that Synod will resist the amendment so that we can concentrate on that task.

The Chairman: The amendment, which I judged not to be a wrecking amendment (after taking a considerable amount of legal advice), is now open to debate.

Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester): – speaking in favour of the amendment, not just because it has been proposed by my diocesan bishop and not just because it is probably his last speech here after ten years, but because it is right.

Why do I prefer the wording of the amendment to that of the main motion? I just want to explain to the Synod this evening a couple of things that have not actually come out thus far, and that is the difference between different types of ethical investing and ethical

funds. You have light green funds, which seek to change companies' behaviour – it is commonly known as 'socially responsible' investing – and you have dark green funds. Just as an example, which links in very strongly with the actual wording of the amendment, there is the point about how they carry out their ethical investment policies. If I can just highlight a couple of funds, because Mr Oldham did mention Legal & General funds, if you look at, for instance, foreign and colonial stewardship funds, which have been running for about 20 years, they actively try and change the behaviour of different investments in that fund, and they will not proactively invest. If you look at something like the Jupiter ecology fund, which actively looks to invest in small or medium-size companies, one of the major holdings in that fund emphasizes the dilemma we have this evening. The Jupiter fund invests in Cranswick, which is an organic meat and food producer. If you are vegetarian or vegan, would you actually want to invest in that particular fund? Hence the dilemma. To give more information and more details of the policies would actually be of far more use to parishes, the Church generally and individuals as regards how they should invest.

I am also very concerned about paragraph (b) of the motion, which is another reason why I support the amendment. There are two types of fund. There is institutional pricing and there is retail pricing. If I went along as Robin Lunn to take out one of these so-called funds, I would not get the same price as the Church investing *en bloc*, so again I am somewhat concerned as to what is being put forward in the main motion.

I really do think that the amendment is where we should be, and I agree with April Alexander's comments earlier. I think that what the Synod wants tonight is more information, rather than lists. I ask Synod to support the Bishop of Worcester's amendment.

Revd Dr Richard Burridge (London University): I find myself in a bit of a quandary this evening, not least because I think I have just torn up the speech I was going to make.

My first reaction throughout all this is to support Gavin, as I have done and as we have worked together over many years. I find it difficult because this disagreement is becoming clearer tonight between those of us who have worked a long time together on trying to achieve the best thing for ethical investment. My first reaction to support Gavin was supported further when I saw yet again another of these wrecking amendments, deleting everything except the words 'That this Synod', and replacing them with something else; and I have spoken about that elsewhere. However, as I have talked to Bishop Peter and as I have thought more about it and as I have read the papers, I have found that I have more and more problems. An added point is that things have changed enormously in this field of ethical investment; that they have is a tribute to Gavin, to our good friend Mike Tyrrell, who unfortunately is no longer with us, to the work of the Christian ethical investment group, and indeed to Neville White and the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. This whole thing began back in the days when Richard Harries was still Dean of King's and celebrated becoming Bishop of Oxford by taking the Church Commissioners to court and trying to get a list of things that we

should disinvest from, at a time when we all knew as students that we should not go to Barclay's and so on. It was easy then: you knew who the bad guys were and you did not give them your money.

If it were still like that, then Gavin's motion would be absolutely right, but we have all worked very hard to make it a little bit different from that, and that is the problem I have. As we look through the report of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, we see that Gavin has worked very hard and many others have too, and we see that there is now this quite different distinction between the positive and the negative, between the banned list of things that we avoid and this business of getting hold and engaging positively. Palm oil has already been mentioned, and conversations with British Airways is another one; and a list of banned groups is not going to help that.

So I find myself persuaded that simply to come up with a blacklist will not achieve what is really important about what Gavin said at the start of his speech and in his background paper.

I think the thing that Gavin Oldham's motion and Bishop Peter are agreed on is the importance particularly of all these various funds held by parishes being properly ethically invested and not just sitting around in short-term returns, and so on. I do wonder, though, if they are sitting around waiting for this banned list to be published if the main motion is accepted, or if they are already beginning to be involved in it. Certainly there is a lot of advice coming out of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. On page 20 of the main report we have the statement of ethical investment policy; we asked the group to publish that, and it is very clear about the use of positive and negative criteria. There is the long list of policy statements in previous reports, question-and-answer fact sheets, and so on. I wonder if Bishop Peter's amendment would actually help PCCs more. The one thing it does not do – and I think that Gavin's reaction to what he said is absolutely fair – is that Gavin's original Private Member's Motion, which I signed and supported, was directed towards the EIAG, whereas Bishop Peter's amendment is directed more to the Pensions Board, Church Commissioners and so on.

I think that the EIAG is already doing a very good job of trying to help the Church, and in paragraph 7(a) of GS Misc 857B we read how the EIAG offers to screen portfolios free of charge for Church organizations.

What I would like to see is all the things that Bishop Peter's amendment says that they should do, to make it more transparent, and also to continue to support the work of Neville White and the EIAG in trying to get these socially responsible investments, both positively and negatively, out into the churches, and to encourage the PCCs – the subject of Gavin's research – to take account of all that, in order properly to use their funds. Therefore, reluctantly, I think I am going to have to support Bishop Peter's amendment rather than Gavin's motion.

Mr Paul Boyd-Lee (Salisbury): – and Archbishops' Council. I would like to echo those

words of Dr Burrige and pay tribute to Gavin's immense perseverance over the years in raising the ethical profile of our investments. Really, it is towards those ends that I feel the amendment does go more towards what we are trying to achieve here than the actual main motion. The paper from the National Institutions, GS Misc 457B, highlights this in paragraph 4. There is a problem with the original wording of the motion as to which list is being referred to, and there is a distinct difference between the two lists. Paragraph 6 refers to the ambiguity in the motion which in paragraph (a) talks about giving 'easy access' to the list and in paragraph (b) uses the phrase 'under licence'. So there is a problem there.

Let me just move on a bit further. Surely you have met this accusation that all the Synod talks about these days is sex: 'they are obsessed with sex'. When I first joined the General Synod they were obsessed with coffee – I suppose there might be a natural progression between the two! – and it was a particular company concerned with coffee; but things are not static, and I think this is perhaps part of the problem with what Gavin Oldham is trying to achieve. The finance field is moving immensely fast, and what we were trying to ask for a few years ago, even last month, things have moved on again. With that particular company and coffee, the products of that company have changed greatly since those days and also I think they have hearkened to what Synod was battering on their door about for many years and have changed their policy to some extent. So the problem is that if you do produce a list, as the mover of this motion was saying, it could be out of date, or people could use that list to indict companies when they have changed their policies. What the amendment seeks to do is to provide the tools with which to judge companies, securities and so on, rather than to name particular companies which might change their policies over the years.

I worked together with a fund manager on a particular portfolio, and it is really gratifying to me for this manager to come to the investment meeting that I am involved with and to say not 'I see these companies are on the list and you've banned them' but 'we've found, looking at the criteria which you've put together, it suits these particular securities. Are you happy that they go into the portfolio?' That is what they are looking for, the criteria; and I think this amendment helps to do that.

Let me just pass on to another matter, if I may. Paragraph (b) of the motion talks about 'commercial fund managers'. I am not quite certain what that means, but I do know that I meet together with the directors of some of the charity investment funds. These are the funds that have a tax exemption to help charities, in particular, and there really is a problem here of getting the message across to them to include things which are ethically acceptable to us and yet to generate the value of a company which holds its value and perhaps pays good dividends as well. I think a lot of companies are still stuck with a culture – some members will know what I am talking about – of banks first, then oils, and then tobacco maybe and alcohol; it is that culture which we have to break, and we need the tools to show them not only how to break it but also to encourage them to find other investments which are really good.

A second point on the charity companies: we are actually talking in this motion about helping individual Christians, but individual Christians cannot invest in those funds, and we need to give advice to them as well.

So I really would support the amendment because I think it gives flexibility to the Church Institutions to do their work, and I have indeed seen in recent months an encouragement to negotiate more and to do just that.

Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford): On a point of order, Chairman. With the greatest respect, could we hear a speech against the amendment?

The Chairman: I am trying to do that. A number of people who have put themselves down to speak in favour of the motion have ended up actually speaking for the amendment, so it is rather difficult! It is a good thing that people are moved by the speeches during the debate, but it does not make my job any easier! I suspect that the next speaker may fulfil that role.

Mr Thomas Benyon (Oxford): I find that speaking at Synod is rather like the obituary of the dead waiter: 'God finally caught his eye.' I would like to speak against the amendment and congratulate Gavin, who has asked me not to tell you what an exemplary businessman he is in case you all go and seek to borrow money from him afterwards. So I said I would not do that. He is, of course, a man of huge experience in this particular field.

There is one statistic that haunts me here, which is that we are wasting an estimated £50 million a year. I believe that we ought to be able both ethically, morally – maintaining our standards – and legally to save that money. I believe that the parish treasurers have a duty of care to make sure they exploit the money ethically and properly to save that money. I believe that donors would be profoundly shocked if they knew that we were not doing everything we possibly could to make sure that the money they donate is used to its maximum extent. There is one group of people I might also tell Synod about who would be thrilled if Gavin Oldham's motion were lost, and that would be the banks. Once or twice or maybe four times a year we see the extraordinary bank profits; everyone sucks their teeth and says how appalling it is that the banks are exploiting us all. Yet shall I tell you what is happening? The banks' profits overall have increased by £50 million a year because of all the money that the treasurers are putting on deposit – or not even on deposit but in their current accounts – because they are terrified of making any mistake. So if you want to do something about the bank profits, I ask you to support Gavin tonight.

I would like to end by reminding Synod of what that great old Methodist John Wesley said we should do. We should make all we can, we should save all we can and we should give all we can. I would like us to make that £50 million more by supporting Gavin.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

The Chairman: I shall consider that in a moment but having listened carefully to the point that was made to me about people not having the opportunity to speak against the amendment I think I will ask Dr Giddings first and then another member who wishes to speak against the amendment. Then I will take the point of order.

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): Chairman, I would like to ask you if you would be willing to accept an amendment to the amendment – just to show that there is more than one person in the Synod who can try this! – to help the Synod and, in particular, those members who signed Gavin’s motion in the first place. This would be that in line 3 of the Bishop of Worcester’s amendment we should insert, after ‘CBF funds’, the words ‘in collaboration with the EIAG’. For your convenience, I have the amendment written out on a piece of paper, with the appropriate references, so that I can hand it to you, in order to comply with SO 26(b)(i) and (ii), which I believe, having learnt from a very senior source, is what is required.

The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. I am so grateful! Will you please hold things for a moment while I take a bit of advice, which I think I need.

I will come to a decision when I have had a comment from the Bishop of Worcester as to whether he feels this is an appropriate addition to his original amendment.

The Bishop of Worcester: If speaking for the National Church Institutions exceeded my wildest ambitions, being rescued by Dr Giddings – (*laughter and applause*) – I did not end the sentence so you do not know what I was going to say!

Chairman, I have no difficulty with adding those words because, of course, that would be the way in which the institutions would work. The EIAG is not only that with which they collaborate; it is an act of collaboration. That is why it exists. The reason why the amendment appears to address different institutions is because I am perfectly clear where a decision, in the end, about this matter would rest; but, of course, that decision will be taken, should be taken, must be taken, in collaboration and within the councils of the EIAG.

The Chairman: You said you find difficulty but does that mean that, even though you find difficulty, you are willing to see it as part of your amendment?

The Bishop of Worcester: If I can express what I said briefly, Chairman, yes.

The Chairman: I will ask Gavin if he is happy to accept that. [*Members:* No.] Do I have to do that? No, I do not. Sorry, it is a bit complicated up here. Right, I have accepted the amendment to the amendment. Is that the wish of Synod?

The amendment to the amendment was put and carried.

Revd Jolyon Trickey (Guildford): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. On page 18 of Standing Orders it clearly states, 'With the permission of the Chairman . . . an amendment may be moved notwithstanding that due notice of it has not been given'. There is surely no requirement to ask the Synod for its approval. It is in your discretion.

The Chairman: I know, but I am a very kind man, and it is very nice to know that people are on your side. Thank you.

Revd Hugh Lee (Oxford): The Bishop of Worcester spoke very eloquently and urged us not to be like schoolchildren being given the answers to our maths questions, and so he is urging us to present the PCCs with ethical investment questions and for PCCs to make up their own mind, with all this good information, about whether or not they should invest this way or that. I think that may be quite difficult for many PCCs, because when you even present the annual accounts to most PCCs it is difficult to get any sort of discussion whatsoever. Indeed it is also quite difficult for the Church Commissioners who, with all their expertise, do not do this on their own. That is exactly why the Ethical Investment Advisory Group exists, in order that they may have ethical investment advice rather than using their own expertise because they do not think they have it themselves and so need this. Why can PCCs not have that too? That is precisely what paragraph (b), in particular, of Gavin's original motion is offering us: that PCCs would be able to have a range of ethically compliant, Church-compliant investment vehicles to use. If the Church Commissioners need this sort of thing, how on earth can we expect PCCs to do it on their own?

So I would urge Synod not to be persuaded by the Bishop of Worcester's argument about our being grown-up because, as I say, the Church Commissioners are not all that grown-up. I urge Synod therefore to vote against this amendment and then for the original motion.

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

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

The amendment as amended was put and carried, 108 voting in favour and 61 against.

Revd Canon Dr Chris Sugden (Oxford): I now need to speak against the motion as amended because I think we should vote down this motion. I want to hold before Synod a vision of where what we do at Synod can immediately translate to the life of parishes. How many of us – treasurers and archdeacons excluded – know where the parish balance of funds is invested? Here was a chance to offer our people a way to get the double benefit from funds that they give to the Church for the parish share or the building fund. While it sits waiting to be disbursed or provides a reserve for the parish, the parish can make the positive decision to support environmental projects or fair trade

investment or wind farms. Investment in these is not just a matter of the head; it appeals to the heart. It is hard to make an appeal to the heart based on the announcement that the parish or deanery reserves are held by the CBF for a return of 3 per cent or whatever. Note that one of the speakers for the original motion was a young person. This engages the interest of young people, environmental projects and so on.

I speak as a trustee and a former chair of Traidcraft for many years. A few years ago we sold the company to our shareholders, many of whom are members of Churches; we had no problem in raising millions of pounds through the share issue and, as the Bishop of Worcester rightly said, Traidcraft had an enormous impact on the upsurge in supermarkets' commitment to fairly traded goods. There was a direct return on the investment that our shareholders made, and this started not with centralized funds but with local people, a few people selling badly tasting coffee at the back of church. That was a matter of risk, a matter of faith. Faith is a matter of risk. I remind us of the parable of the talents. I have heard a lot about burying our talent in the ground this evening and not putting it at risk, not taking the risk. Imagine the interest there would be in PCC meetings if PCCs could discuss whether to invest in a wind farm or in environmental projects or in fair trade. By supporting the original motion you would have been changing the culture of handing funds over to a large central fund, which may be very worthy and may be supervised by actuaries who, as we know, are accountants who have found accountancy too exciting.

We discussed Gavin Oldham's motion during our Oxford diocesan dinner just before this event. Gavin is a professional investor; he is chair of The Share Company; he knows what he is doing. He also drives a Toyota Prius, as does our diocesan bishop, and the diocese of Oxford is keen to point out that the Bishop of London has no monopoly on green credentials. I think Gavin persuaded many of us about this. The issue appears to me this evening to have been head against heart, negative against positive, old against young, centralized investment against encouraging the enterprise initiative and empowering parishes. If our parish treasurers could invite PCCs to discuss seriously where to invest their money, imagine the interest generated in directing investment where not only would it be supporting the work of a parish but it would also be saving the planet or promoting fair trade. *This* will be a double whammy and *that* could only have been a positive outcome. I encourage Synod to vote against the amended motion, because I think Gavin Oldham was right.

Mr Barry Barnes (Southwark): I can tear up my speech because I would have supported the Bishop's amendment. There is one thing that I have left and would like to ask: I was curious to know how wide this survey of PCCs was. Perhaps we could be enlightened on that.

Revd Jeremy Crocker (St Albans): – and General Synod member on the EIAG. First, I would like to say what a privilege it is to be on the board with a group of very professional individuals. The members have listened extensively to Gavin Oldham's motion and ideas three times and have voted unanimously against this motion.

However, now that it has been amended the board is very happy to consider and take forward the ideas and see where we can go.

I would like briefly to remind Synod of three examples of how the ethical investment policies are being carried out in dialogue with some of the companies which have caused some concern. We all know about British Airways and the cross example. Neville and other members of the board worked with Willie Walsh to help bring about a change in that policy, and I am delighted that that is now back to roughly where it was before all the things happened. With BP we were very concerned about the Texas oil disaster and we met the managing director of BP to talk and to listen, and we were assured and quite comfortable about their future plans and their future cares. On Burberry, we had some letters concerned about the pastoral care of many losing their jobs.

Just to give an example, suppose we had provided a blacklist of companies in 1996–97; we opted out of BSkyB because of the pornography and the company expressed their sadness and that was that and there was no more dialogue; only just now have we begun a dialogue with them again. So I am positive that EIAG with this amended motion will be very happy to take these ideas forward.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells): – not from Oxford, aged 56 going on 18 (thank you, Mr Sugden). I am going to change this story a little bit; it is a story I heard a long time ago and I will give you the real story afterwards.

The story I heard recently was that a woman was talking to her daughter and she said, 'Give a man a fish and he can eat for the day. Teach a man to fish and you can get him out of the house at five o'clock in the morning and he won't come back until tea-time and you can get on and do your own work.' The original story, as members know, is 'Give a man a fish and he can eat for the day. Teach him to fish and he can eat for a lifetime.'

I am so pleased that the motion has gone the way it has today because giving negative information about what we do not want to invest in is not teaching people how to invest ethically. In order to do that we have to teach them about ethical investment policy and we have to encourage them about how that works, what the logistics of it is and how it really works on the ground. It has been said – and Bishop Peter mentioned it – if you just give them the answers it does not work. So I would encourage Synod to vote for this motion because it is genuinely an opportunity to teach people how to fish properly.

Mr Brian Newey (Oxford): Gavin had two clear objectives. One was to stop PCC treasurers idly leaving their money on cash deposits in banks and earning minimal rates of interest. The other was to create alternative investment channels than those that are available to them that are ethically known at the moment, like the CCLA fund. It seems to me that his motion is not essential to achieve that. The Bishop of Worcester's amendment, giving the grounds on which the main Church Institutions invest, as a model for parish treasurers would, I would have thought, encourage other investment

institutions to create ethical funds on those lines, and it would have all the advantages that the Bishop of Worcester eloquently described, while achieving Gavin's two principal objectives. I therefore would speak against Gavin's motion while supporting his laudable objectives, on the grounds that I think the Bishop of Worcester's amendment would achieve them better.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mr Justin Brett (Oxford): Are not Private Members' Motions in General Synod fascinating things? You turn up to talk about one motion and you end up either debating Standing Orders or passing something else entirely.

I am very sad that Gavin's motion has gone down, but that is as it is and we have an alternative that will at least do us some good provided one particular thing happens. It is at this point that I want to put my parish treasurer's hat on and say that I hope this motion, having been passed, will not simply be parked somewhere or there will not simply be some little report somewhere that goes to a few people and then we kind of forget about it. There is good information out there; we have very talented people doing this work for us, of whom Gavin is one; it would be a really good thing if we took away from this the fact that actually there is now an appetite for this kind of information in the parishes. So could you please do your best to make sure that the information you are going to generate gets down to parish level?

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): On a point of order, Mr Chairman. I beg to move:

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

Mr Gavin Oldham, in reply: Well, chaps, you probably expect me to shed a few tears over this. I am not going to do that. There has been a lot of debate on different issues but broadly it falls under three headings: the profile that ethical investment can have throughout the Church; the way that funds work (and there seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding about how funds work); and also quite a bit about guidance which could come out to parishes from that point of view.

The Bishop of Ely spoke on profile issues; Richard Whitmill talked about raising the profile; there were comments indeed from the Bishop of Worcester on the issue of profile, and also Richard Burridge. A lot of this stuff was brought into positive/negative issues. What I have to remind Synod on the profile issue is that only 12 per cent of parish funds are actually in stock market investment anyway, and 98 per cent of those are in the CBF Investment Fund. So I am terribly sorry about this but passing this motion is not going to do anything for the profile of ethical investment at all. You will only actually do that by raising the level of stock market investment within the parishes.

Turning to the funds issue, which quite a few people raised, there were one or two questions about exactly what the funds issue meant. Somebody seemed a bit confused about what I meant about commercial funds and the institutional or the retail or whatever. Yes, I have been asking about getting funds launched on both a charitable basis and for individuals as well, and I have done a lot of negotiations on that basis. The really important one is Legal & General. Legal & General already have the ethical investment restricted list; the difference is, though, that they can use it only for the Church Commissioners, 28 per cent of their portfolio, and they cannot use it actually to launch an ethically compliant, index-linked fund, a very simple, very low-cost fund, which a large number of parishes would feel very much at home investing in. I will make real efforts to persuade the Ethical Investment Advisory Group at least to accept that the Legal & General can actually use the same policy that they already have sight of to launch these index-linked funds, because that will at least give us something to be able to talk with in the parishes, and it would give us one fund which is available to individual Christians throughout the Church and which is compliant with the Church of England's ethical policy, which is what I am trying to do. Remember, CCLA do not issue funds for individuals, and this is why I am so keen to get at least that one. I promise you I will work very hard to achieve that.

On guidance, had the motion been passed I was going to disseminate this message about the investment responsibility of parishes and work very hard at this, because Michael Chamberlain responded positively to my Question in February saying that yes, indeed, we must roll this out; and this morning I actually suggested to him that if the motion were passed we should work together to develop a programme to do that after he stepped down as chair of the Finance Committee, thereby putting in place the guidance that PCCs are calling for. I have to say that it is tricky, under the conditions that I have now. If I get the Legal & General fund issue, there will be something to talk about there; but otherwise I will tell you what is going to happen as a result of this. Ethical policy will be splintered all over the place because the only funds that people in parishes or individual Christians can choose are funds run according to other people's ethical policies. So you will get this parish adopting one by M&G and another one from Co-op, with another coming in from Jupiter or something like; they will all be different policies and the whole thing will be a muddle. I am sorry that is the case, but that is the result of passing this amendment. So just pray with me that I can persuade the EIAG at least to allow Legal & General to launch the ethically adjusted indexed fund, because that is really important for getting guidance out, which at least means we can roll out the Church of England ethical policy, which I believe is really important.

What Brian Newey said towards the end is absolutely right: the issue of ethical investment is not actually the core issue, like getting a return up in parishes; it is to get more funds invested on a stock market basis. Yet that is exactly what I am trying to do because it has to be ethically compliant to do that. However, I can assure Synod that I am not going to give that up. I am going to carry on working towards that.

Barry Barnes asked me to explain how wide the survey of PCCs was. I had 77 responses

from different parishes across 27 dioceses. Parish investments within these parishes totalled over £8 million. The survey was done by post and electronic response, and the survey period was between September and December 2006. I hope that gives Barry all the information he needs about the survey.

Here we are, then. We have reached the end of the debate and, as far as I am concerned, I do not really mind which way you vote because I am afraid the amendment has centralized this issue; and you know what happens when you centralize it. It actually deadens out the whole issue, which is exactly what my great colleague Peter was arguing for, that basically this is an EIAG issue, as April Alexander was saying, and they do not want you to be involved with this process. I do not mind whether you vote for it or not, or abstain, but I promise you that I will carry on working to see if we can get sensible investment levels within the parishes so that we can make some inroads into this £50 million, because otherwise the FSA might have a go at us.

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

‘That this Synod urge the Church Commissioners, the Pensions Board and the trustees of the CBF funds in collaboration with the EIAG to make available more details of how they carry out their ethical investment policies, in order to help Christians of all denominations manage the investments in their care.’

The Chairman: Before we ask the Archbishop to dismiss us with his blessing, I would like to apologize for my natural northern bias towards the diocese of Oxford.
(*Laughter*)

The Archbishops' Council's Annual Report (GS 1668)

The Annual Report of the Archbishops' Council's Audit Committee (GS 1669)

Under Standing Order 96 the Synod was deemed to have taken note of the Archbishops' Council Annual Report and the Annual Report of the Archbishops' Council's Audit Committee, as no member had given notice of a wish to have either report debated.

The Sitting was adjourned at 10.00 p.m.