

# Fifth Day

## Tuesday 10 July 2007

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu)* took the Chair at 9.30 a.m.

*Revd Rhiannon Jones (Ely)* led the Synod in prayer.

### **Farewells**

*The Chairman:* Before I turn to farewells, some little words of explanation, first of all, about these envelopes, marked ‘York Minster’, on your seats. We are not trying to raise money for York Minster. It is just that I have joined HRH The Prince of Wales to re-launch the ARC-Addington Fund to help farmers who have lost a lot of their livestock and crops because of the floods. He has already made a substantial donation to it, so I thought it a good thing – since we are launching it nationally today – to give General Synod the chance to give. If you put in some money and you are a taxpayer, write the word ‘flood’ so that it does not go into the funds of York Minster.

Mark Bonney, who has been our Synod chaplain, steps down today. Unfortunately, he had to leave to take a funeral in Salisbury Cathedral for a former chapter clerk. Mark has been exemplary. He has sorted out our worship and I think if we thanked God for what he does then those from Salisbury can see we are very grateful. (*Applause*)

I ought also to say, in case you have not caught up with it, at nine o’clock this morning at 10 Downing Street it was announced that the successor to Dr Peter Selby as Bishop of Worcester will be Dr John Inge. So remember him in your prayers and your love.

Where am I to start? I am going to start with Dr Peter Selby. He was my bishop in Kingston, and it is right that I should start there. No news story, no matter how turgid, is complete these days without a picture. Trying to find something to complement a particularly worthy yet lengthy debate in one group of Synod sessions at Westminster, the *Church Times* managed to capture a close-up shot of Bishop Peter in characteristic pose, leaning on the back of the bench in front, head down, in a pose which most of us have come to associate with him, intense concentration, but which in the eyes of the photographer may well have been thought to attest to both the imminence and the desirability of deep sleep.

The photographers will be deprived of this model as Bishop Peter retires after ten years as Bishop of Worcester, but we will be the poorer and miss a unique contributor to and indeed shaper of our corporate life. Perhaps the most important thing Bishop Peter has brought to us has been a Christian conscience and a desire really to engage with matters of substance. Archbishop Rowan Williams, in some valedictory remarks in the House of

Bishops, said that perhaps we all have, or should have, an inner Peter Selby, a borrowed expression but one that I think is most apposite.

We have seen this in so many ways: in his national role as Bishop to Prisons, in his championing of causes, drawing the circle wider and wider still to embrace all humankind, his involvement in unemployment and the future of work, his concern about social tensions in inner cities, particularly for minority groups, for ever identifying and stepping into their shoes. On a very cold winter's evening, Bishop Peter turned up at our vicarage when I was vicar in Tulse Hill. He was wearing a duffel coat with a hood. Our daughter Grace, who was nine at the time, announced, 'Dad, there's the tramp at the door. I'd better put the kettle on. He'll want his usual meal of ham and cheese sandwich'. Actually, from the little spy window, the way he looked wasn't very different from the usual visitor we had on a Thursday night.

He has had perhaps a less expected role as Church Commissioner and member of the Assets Committee: last night in the debate on ethical investment, we saw, touched and tasted vintage Selby, matured and totally exhilarating. (Those of you who were not here do not know what you missed.) He has been a highly respected member of the House of Lords, always measured in his contributions but always deeply penetrating. Alongside these national roles and concerns – and he has one of the worst train journeys to London of all the bishops – he is also dedicated to immersion in the life of the diocese of Worcester; the CNC made it very clear how deeply committed he was to his diocese.

He has been what I call a real applied theologian, with a reputation for active engagement in so many matters and for positively struggling with issues. People may not always agree with him, but they have endless respect for him and his views. The clarity of his mind and compassionate attitude is palpable. His humanity always endears other people to him.

Bishop Peter has always had a healthy ambivalence towards the less democratic parts of the British Constitution, and I am told that as the time drew closer for his taking his seat in the House of Lords he began to think quite seriously about whether he should be the first bishop to refuse to take his seat in the House. Whether by chance or not, just as it was getting close to decision time, he received a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, inviting him to be the next Bishop to Prisons and saying that this would give him a role within the House of Lords to raise issues affecting some of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in our society. It was certainly one factor, if not the only one, in helping Bishop Peter reach the decision that he should take his seat in the Upper House of Parliament. It is true to say that Bishop Peter is not the only person who has gone to the House of Lords and to prison in quick succession in recent times, but he is probably the only one for whom prison was the greater attraction. (*Laughter and applause*)

Retirement? Not for Bishop Peter. With effect from next January he has been appointed president of the National Council of Independent Monitoring Boards – wait for it – of Prisons and Detention Centres. This is a two-days-a week – hm! really! – voluntary post,

which is mainly about enabling the discoveries of local boards in institutions to achieve some national attention. I do not doubt we will hear a great deal more from him on a subject close to his heart.

Bishop Peter, you have been a great apostle for justice, the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized. We wish you and Jan well and every happiness and a little easier time in the future. May the Isle of Wight be a place of blessing. Thank you. (*The Bishop of Worcester was accorded a standing ovation.*)

I now come to Bishop Colin Bennetts, Bishop of Coventry. For many years now Bishop Colin has been voted, very unofficially, as the most debonair and dashing member of the House of Bishops. As such, he has improved the image of a House with which you do not associate such adjectives and has proved a great asset. I am told by reliable sources that some female members of the Synod have been known to have palpitations when Colin smiles at them. More seriously, though, but consistent with these attributes, Colin is a bishop who takes risks – just as I said yesterday – risks for the gospel, risks for Christ, risks in the service of God and one another. As an example, Colin has been the formative spirit and chair of the international centre for reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral, which has made an immeasurable if not always very visible contribution to reconciliation in our troubled world. Supported by an able team he has personally worked in Baghdad, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nigeria, at no small cost and with remarkable results. More significant perhaps are the primates' meetings he has enabled and discreetly led at Coventry in recent years. Despite what one might think from email traffic and newspaper headlines, it is possible to get people who disagree to sit at the same table and talk to each other, to understand each other and the better to discover that leadership roles are not easy for anyone, whatever the views they represent; and Colin has been at the heart of that facilitation. These reconciliation gatherings have been moving experiences in which one cannot but see the Holy Spirit's presence. Anyone who has prayed the early morning prayers for reconciliation round the altar of the old Coventry Cathedral will know what I am talking about.

Also consistent with what I described as this dashing and debonair image is the fact that Bishop Colin is a very relaxed bishop. Nothing surprises him. I think this is significant. When it gets together, the House of Bishops is capable of driving itself into an extreme state of corporate *angst*, and in some ways this is not unreasonable; there is a lot to be concerned about. However, Bishop Colin brings a calming influence, a wise, stabilizing take on things and it really helps that nothing seems to surprise or faze him. I am told he was working in the Middle East with a senior member of his staff who announced, 'I'm just off to meet with a jihadist terrorist and might not be coming back'. Colin's response was 'Fine'! In a curious way that was probably the most affirmatory thing he could have said. He reacted in the same way when the doctor told him that he had lung cancer. 'OK but I've never smoked in my life. When will the operation take place?' Matter of fact and not fazed by it.

As well as all this, Colin has been a bishop of great spirituality as well as a bishop of

great evangelical zeal, and for six years he was co-chair of Springboard, Archbishop George Carey's initiative for evangelism, supported by Archbishop John Habgood. Bishop Colin has also had a diocese to look after, which he has done pretty well too, to judge from initial Crown Nominations Commission discussions. Yet in spite all of that and running a very well-oiled diocese, he has found time to do a lot of other things. I am told this morning that he trained our Secretary General for Reader ministry.

So Bishop Colin leaves with our love and prayers for him and for Veronica. I am sure the next chapter will be just as fulfilling, but I hope it will be less hectic. May God, his peace, his love, his gift to you, be always with you; and thank you for simplifying life for most of us. (*Applause*)

Finally, this morning I come to Bishop Graeme Knowles, Bishop of Sodor and Man. This is not a farewell but, I hope, only *au revoir*. Bishop Graeme Knowles has graced the bench of bishops and thereby the Synod for four years but has been called to new duties and challenges as Dean of St Paul's, a great honour on which we want to congratulate him. In his ministry Graeme has incurred the highest aggregate removal costs! It was, of course, no fault of his. He went from Thanet to Leeds, from Leeds to Portsmouth, from Portsmouth to Carlisle, from Carlisle to the Isle of Man, and now from there to London. It would be unfair to suggest that he has been putting the greatest possible distance between himself and his previous responsibilities. I cannot instruct the very reverend deans – who can? – but I do know they can be creative in tackling things, so I hope that they can find a way of getting him back here very soon because we shall miss him. Our love and best wishes to him and Grace in their important next step. God bless. (*Applause*)

THE CHAIR *The Archdeacon of Colchester (Ven. Annette Cooper)* took the Chair at 10.03 a.m.

## Financial Business

### **The Archbishops' Council's Draft Budget for 2008 (GS 1665)**

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* I beg to move:

‘That this Synod now consider for approval the Draft Budget of the Archbishops' Council to cover expenditure to be incurred in the year 2008, as set out in GS 1665.’

I would like to begin by clarifying one point and pre-empting any questions: bishops' removal costs are not in this budget!

In preparing this Budget the Council has been acutely aware of the financial challenges

facing the Church, including the cost of clergy pensions, which we debated on Saturday. So we have had to strike a difficult balance. It is incumbent on us to ask for the resources that are required to enable us to meet our necessary national commitments, including the cost of ordination training; equally, we have been very conscious that every extra pound we ask for is an extra pound that the dioceses have to find, primarily by increasing the parish share. The budget that the Council has brought, involving as it does a 2.9 per cent increase above the 2007 level, is an attempt to strike a fair balance.

Given the challenges facing the Church, we have reviewed each line of the budget to ensure income and expenditure are realistic and justifiable. It is worth noting that a little less than 40 per cent of the total budget relates to work carried out at national level. Just over 40 per cent of the budget is spent on ordination training for our Church's stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministers, 6 per cent is spent on grants, including those supporting ecumenical and Anglican Communion bodies, and the remaining 14 per cent of the budget is for mission agencies' pension contributions and clergy retirement housing costs. Meeting these at national level facilitates a greater element of mutual support between dioceses, and I urge Synod members to do all they can to improve the knowledge at local level of what the apportionment actually covers: ministerial training, grants and mutual support, as well as work undertaken at national level.

I would now like to cover each Vote in turn. Once again this year the main budgetary issue relates to Vote 1, the budget for ministerial training. In recent years we have seen an increase in the numbers offering themselves and being selected for training. The overall numbers in training this coming academic year are expected to be higher than at any time since before 1970, although, of course, in those days virtually everyone was destined for stipendiary ministry whereas this year about 50 per cent of those being ordained will be going to a non-stipendiary post. Whilst this is a welcome reversal of the decline in numbers that had been seen during the early part of the decade, there is a financial cost to the positive response to the call for more vocations. Dioceses are extremely anxious that the increase in ordinands should be related to their future deployment plans, and the Ministry Division has begun work on this subject.

At a financial level there are two main factors: the total numbers in training and the balance between those undertaking residential training in colleges and those undertaking part-time, mainly non-residential training on the regional courses. We now forecast that the total numbers in training will exceed previous projections, although it remains likely that there will be some reduction from the peak of 1,467 in 2007-08. We have also seen a greater proportion of those in training opting for full-time residential courses than we previously expected. The variability of numbers in training is a real challenge for the colleges and the regional courses, and although the recent increased numbers have eased concerns about the viability of some colleges, the House of Bishops continues to keep the colleges under review. It remains to be seen what effect the call for more younger people will have on this balance.

I am grateful that the theological colleges and courses have managed in the past

academic year with only an inflationary increase in the Vote 1 contribution to core costs. This has not been easy, given the additional numbers in training. The Bishops' Committee for Ministry has indicated that the squeeze on core costs funding should not be continued for a further year. This, together with the higher than forecast numbers in training, is the main reason why the recommended budget for 2008 is 8.5 per cent above the 2007 level.

We have limited the recommended apportionment to 5.5 per cent by the use of reserves. However, as DBF chairmen know only too well, reserves can be used only once, and I need to warn Synod – and particularly bishops and diocesan chairs of finance – that if the number of ordinands exceeds our forecasts, or if a greater proportion undertake their training in colleges, Vote 1 increases in 2009 and 2010 are likely to exceed our present projection of 3.7 per cent, possibly quite significantly. I should report one other development, happily one that is intended to be cost-neutral. From 2008–09 a new block grant system for funding theological education and training will be introduced. The new system will be more transparent in its operation and will give greater budgetary authority to the training institutions.

I now move on to Vote 2, which covers the cost of staff and activities of the Archbishops' Council and General Synod. Once again the issue of pensions raises its head. To restrain costs which would otherwise have escalated unacceptably, we have, with regret, closed the final salary scheme to new entrants. As Synod members will have seen from the budget, a new defined contribution scheme has been put in place for staff joining any of the National Church Institutions from July 2006. In addition, negotiations are taking place to reduce the costs of maintaining a defined benefit scheme for existing staff. Despite these pressures we have, through tight control of expenditure, managed to limit the increase in Vote 2 apportionment to 1.4 per cent. This is a considerable achievement following last year's standstill budget and a sequence of seven years in which there has been a cash uplift in only three. Over the past five years this has been equivalent to a saving of £1.3 million in real terms, which has been possible only through a steady squeezing of staff numbers. Looking forward, we aim to limit annual increases in Vote 2 to a maximum of 3 per cent. This will effectively mean that any new areas of work, however attractive or necessary they may be, will have to be funded by reductions in other areas.

The Vote 3 apportionment shows an increase of 4.9 per cent, with the most significant factor being the need to increase the provision for legal aid. Increased demand on the Legal Aid Fund, following the implementation of the Clergy Discipline Measure, was expected but it has been less than anticipated. We will continue to review the grants to ecumenical and Anglican Communion bodies case by case, increasing them by up to 3 per cent.

Vote 4 covers the pension contributions of clergy employed by the mission agencies as part of the Church's commitment to their work. Following last year's standstill budget, it is necessary to increase the budget by a net 6.9 per cent. With an increase of

17.6 per cent in the pension contribution rate for the clergy scheme from 1 January 2007, this would have had to be higher but for the ability to draw on reserves and some decline in overall numbers, which may now be at an end.

Vote 5 represents the Church's contribution to the clergy retirement housing scheme, and I am pleased to say that we are able to ask for 3 per cent less than in 2007, due to steps taken by the Pensions Board to reduce the costs of running the scheme. However, the Pensions Board has warned that on current projections costs are likely to increase by between 5 per cent and 7 per cent *per annum* in 2009–10.

The total budget for 2008 is therefore £25.9 million. Normally the apportionment for each diocese is calculated according to a formula but this year the Council had concerns about the way the formula appeared to be working and as a result has recommended a flat rate increase of 2.9 per cent for all dioceses on the pre-pooling figures produced by the formula for 2007. This was explained in the correction slip that was placed in members' pigeonholes at the start of the group of sessions, and it will create the necessary breathing space for a review of certain aspects of the data in the apportionment formula, in time for decisions on next year's budget.

I commend this budget to Synod. I hope members will consider it to be a fair and reasonable budget which provides some necessary extra funding for ordination training. The Archbishops' Council is pleased to commend it now to the Synod.

*Dr Peter Capon (Manchester):* I would like to welcome and support the increase in the Vote 1 expenditure of 8.5 per cent but, as Mr Chamberlain has just explained to us, we must be under no illusions as to what this does or does not achieve. The 8.5 per cent is entirely accounted for by inflation and the increased numbers in training. It is essential, but it is a standstill budget in real terms. The new block grant funding from the following year recognizes the independence of our training institutions, but it is essential that if they are to be treated as independent institutions they should be funded at a proper level.

We did not reach Question 60 on Friday evening, in which Anthony Archer asked if theological funding was designed according to the principles of full cost recovery and to which the Bishop of Derby would have answered that it was not and that colleges had to use a proportion of conference income, other income, historic resources, any money that they could find, to subsidize every single ordinand. For the college to the council of which I have recently been appointed, this amounts to some £1,000 per ordinand. I have heard figures of £2,000 per ordinand mentioned by people on the councils of other colleges. The reason given for this by the Bishop of Derby is that to do otherwise would have resulted in significant increases in the national apportionment for training at a time when the Church could not afford it. That is true for 2008, but the danger is that we let this become a permanent situation, and we cannot allow it to do so. The colleges need to spend their discretionary income on developments, not least the developments to accommodate the regional training partnerships. They cannot spend their discretionary

income twice; they cannot spend it both on subsidizing ordinands in training and on doing necessary development. So I support this as a short-term fix but I do not think it is either moral or ethical for it to be a long-term situation.

In the answer to my February Question, the Bishop of Derby indicated that colleges could apply for additional resources if their own discretionary income was inadequate, but it turns out now, in a letter recently received from the Ministry Division, that this is only within the constraints of Vote 1 and only according to very strictly defined criteria. So to get some of this money you have to rob Peter in order to pay Paul, and the Bishop of Derby's promise is really rather hollow.

The Archbishops' Council, as we have heard, has recently resolved to resource the Archbishop of Canterbury's initiative to encourage more younger ordinands but, as has already been mentioned, if this is successful we will need places in colleges and mixed-mode courses for full-time training for these younger ordinands. We must have the resources to ensure that we train them properly.

As I have said, I am aware of the pressures on the 2008 budget and I support Vote 1, but I do not see how a 3.7 per cent increase in subsequent years can possibly meet these challenges. There is an urgent need for the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee to face these issues and to set a Vote 1 budget in the future which makes full and proper provision for the training of our ordinands, the training that they need and deserve.

*Mr Nigel Chetwood (Gloucester):* I want to speak for the regional courses, as a governor of WEMTC, and express my appreciation for the increase in grant under the block payment scheme, but I am very concerned – I am still finding my way with WEMTC – that our reserves are so small and, with the rapidly changing numbers of people being trained, we are at times desperately trying to find provision to meet the need. I just simply say thank you for what has been promised in the future but ask for some flexibility so that, as numbers jump up suddenly, there is provision to meet those needs.

*Revd Canon Gordon Oliver (Rochester):* – speaking as an interested party, as chair of one of the regional courses, the South East Institute. I too warmly welcome the small relief that very slightly compensates for the problem that we have had by keeping funding effectively level and therefore reducing over the past few years. What has happened, of course, is that the costs of the central Church have been simply devolved on to the so-called independent institutions, who have not been treated at all as if they are genuinely independent and in control of their finances. It means that the independent theological education institutions have themselves been forced into deficit budgeting. In response to a Question that I posed on Friday evening about deficit budgeting, the response was that we should visit our bankers and use our property portfolio. Ho, ho. What property portfolio? Are we supposed to engage in deficit budgeting and mortgage ourselves up to the hilt, simply to stay in business because the Church of England declines or cannot or is struggling with our finances?

I cannot remember whether it was last year or the year before that the Bishop of Durham held up a £1 coin, I think or a penny. (He denies all knowledge. Well, anyway, we are in postmodern days, Bishop, so it is true for me!) (*Laughter*) It was some odd bishop or other who held up £1 and said that that represented the net contribution that would be needed from each member of the Church of England per year to solve this problem: per year. This Synod is very good at debating fair trade issues and ethical investment. I think we have to accept that the forecast of 3 per cent or a little above 3 per cent increases from 2009 spells disaster for initial theological education funding in our land; if we are going to argue for ethical investment in the secular world, we need ethical investment in theological education in our Church.

*Mrs Gill Ambrose (Ely)*: I want to speak about Vote 5: the CHARM scheme and housing for retired clergy. In the parish in which I live in the south of Cambridge, we have five small bungalows for retired clergy. With one exception, they are occupied by people who are widows. They are very elderly, and their rent and the contribution that they make to the maintenance of these houses has just gone up. So I was a little concerned to hear that people were glad to report that there had been a reduction in these costs. These women are, not to put too fine a point on it, very poor. Most of them have not worked since their marriage. They supported their husbands' ministry; their husbands have retired and subsequently died. They still play a significant part in the life of our parish. They are wonderful supporters of the community, and yet they are living in really very difficult circumstances. You would not know the circumstances they face because they are all intelligent and extremely good at managing, but we know how hard it is for them; and I just want to convey that to Synod, when we talk about being glad to report a reduction in the expenditure, because I feel quite sad about that and I hope we will bear it in mind in the kind of decisions that we make.

*Mr Gerry O'Brien (Rochester)*: If we look at our order paper we notice that we have five votes, and the vote for the largest sum of money is Vote 1 – Training for Ministry. I was reflecting on what Mr Chamberlain said in his opening remarks. On the one hand, some years ago – perhaps when I joined this Synod – most of the people who came out of theological training came out of colleges and were going into full-time stipendiary jobs. We now have roughly half the people coming out of theological training who have been on courses which are, by and large, part-time, and many of them are going into part-time jobs or non-stipendiary jobs. The nature of ministry is changing. I am not sure whether we planned it that way, but that is the way it is happening.

Mr Chamberlain was hinting that if the trend reversed, as well it might, and more people opted for full-time residential training, the increases in Vote 1 in future years might go up quite substantially. There is a saying in business that you get what you pay for. I would like to put in a plea that, as we produce future years' budgets, we think carefully of what sort of theological training we want and what sort of ministry we want, and we do not allow ourselves to be driven by the accountants.

There are obviously ways of training people that are cheaper. Do we actually want to

move to a Church where people are trained part-time, work part-time, work in a non-stipendiary way? Will this dramatically change the nature of ministry that we have in the Church of England? It may be that we welcome that and say, 'This is really good; that's the way we want to go', and at least we will be going that way with our eyes open. We may be saying, 'What we actually want in our parishes are full-time stipendiary clergy' and the consequence of that choice might be that we have to pay for it.

So I hope that in future years, as we look at Vote 1 – Training for Ministry, we will not simply opt for the cheapest option but will look for the option that delivers the kind of training and the kind of ministry that we desire in the Church of England of the future.

*The Bishop of Sheffield (Rt Revd Jack Nicholls):* I am very conscious of the fact that under Vote 2 any increase in expenditure has to be paid from within the budget and therefore through other cut-backs, but I am still emboldened to make a request, following yesterday's debate on disability issues and the enthusiasm with which that was received. I cannot help but note that there is actually no budget for our work among people with disabilities. There is no budget there; the work has simply been added on to a very tight and small budget for work among those who are deaf. It seems that, if the deaf have to pay for work among the disabled, there is something slightly wrong.

*Mr Colin Slater (Southwell and Nottingham):* In speaking on Vote 1, I want to support everything that Peter Capon and Gordon Oliver have already said in this debate. I believe that this is good news morning. We must surely regard it as good news that ordinand numbers have increased so markedly. We do, do we not? We have worked for it; we have prayed for it; and now more men and women are coming forward than at any time in recent years. So our prayers have been answered and our hopes have been realized. God indeed has been very good to us. We should not be surprised, not one bit, that the increased numbers come with a financial cost attached.

My contribution to this debate is not to make any special plea on behalf of St John's College, Nottingham, on whose council I represent this Synod, as does Peter Capon, but to make some general and, I believe, important points, applicable to all our training institutions. As the budget report itself explains in paragraph 12 on page 5, a new system of block grant funding for theological education is being introduced. What I have learnt is that, as part of this new system, it is proposed (I quote) 'to recognize that the residential institutions do have other sources of income', which, of course, entirely supports the point already made, that the institutions themselves are required to support every single ordinand. Moreover, while the block grant will include some element – which I take not to mean 100 per cent – for the repair and maintenance of college buildings, it is *not* intended to meet any of the cost of major refurbishment or improved facilities. That will have to be found – or, rather, raised – by the colleges: quite a challenge.

We have to be – and I am sure we are – grateful to the Bishops' Committee for Ministry which has canvassed the case for increasing the overall college funding by some

5 per cent more than inflation. That increase is necessary. This Vote 1 training budget, yes, at a record of £10.6 million net, is also necessary. I hope that Synod will support it gladly, and even joyously. We have heard in this group of sessions a good deal about investment policy. Supporting men and women as they train for ministry in our Church is surely the best financial investment we can ever make for the future well-being of our Church.

*Revd Prebendary David Houlding (London):* If we believe that all vocation is of God, then God indeed will provide and, of course, we do rejoice in the growing numbers of those offering themselves for ordination in our Church; but the question is also what is the Church militant here on earth doing to provide? We have heard a lot about the training budget, but at the end of the process the question I ask is what work is going on in the Ministry Division and in the House of Bishops to provide the job for which someone is being trained? Ordination is indeed a way of life but there is a job to do as well and it would be a very sad situation if we ended up with more being trained and prepared for ministry, whether on courses or in residential training, and then not having a title to go for. That has to be thought through as a matter of policy when someone is accepted for ordination in the first place. Are we providing not simply the financial means for the training but the way of life that they need, for which they are being prepared?

The second point I would like to raise – something I mentioned in the House of Clergy meeting on Friday and at the annual meeting of the Church Commissioners – is about the significance of clergy housing in retirement, especially in London and the South East. This is increasingly a problem because of property prices. If you want to retire in London, it is almost impossible to do so because of the escalating property prices. I think there will have to be some very careful thinking-through how these budgets are prepared, in order to provide for clergy in this particularly acute situation that is only going to get worse.

*Canon Peter Bruinvels (Guildford):* I speak as a Church Commissioner and a member of the Legislative Committee, and I want to speak to Vote 3. I believe I am the first to talk about Vote 3. I want to pay tribute to the work of the Legal Department. I want to express my thanks for what they do – in the revision committee, in the steering committee – and they are unsung soldiers; the legislation that is going to Parliament increases every year and they work very hard for it. However, the one issue I do have is over the Clergy Discipline Measure and the amount of money being allocated for it. We have an increase this year of 16.7 per cent – we are up to £350,000 – and I know that when you look at the figures you will see that we have only spent about £170,000 or something like that; but we have to be prepared for a substantial increase in clergy discipline appeals, the commission needing to meet more often, and all of that, and I am questioning whether that is sufficient. I know that we did not spend it all last year. I think that we as a Church are suffering from a litigious society, and there is no doubt in my mind that a number of our clergy feel very threatened that perhaps there is a sword of Damocles waiting for them. Perhaps once or twice it is justified and sometimes it is

not. So I would like the Finance Committee to look again at that. I think the budget generally throughout is fair and this 2.9 per cent across all dioceses is to be expected and is reasonable.

So please can we look at that again, not forgetting the work that is done by all these legal advisers whom we have. The Clergy Discipline Measure and the commission will be reviewed again; we must take care and try to avoid ending up in court if we can; but, if we are having more court hearings, that budget is not enough.

*Revd Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Durham and Newcastle Universities):* I would just like to make a plea for more generous financial support for ordinands training for ministry. I cannot see any reason why an ordinand training for ministry requires less than a stipendiary cleric to live on, and I have several friends at the moment who are training and many of them are struggling. Many of them also find significant inequities in the way in which different dioceses are prepared to fund their training, in the way in which different dioceses will take into account their partner's income, and things like child care costs which can be extremely significant; when I was training for the ministry my child care cost me around £6,000 or £7,000 a year, none of which the diocese was prepared to pay for. So I would like to see an end to that postcode lottery, and I would like to see much more generous grants for ordinands. One of the people I know training in Durham at the moment tells me that the amount allowed for a child does not pay for school dinners.

I would also like to make the point that the time we spend in a training college does not count as pensionable service. So people are asked to leave pensionable service for two or three years and are not given enough to save for that time and it does not count as pension. Part of the retirement housing problem in the future could perhaps be dealt with by looking at the issue of what we do with housing for those in training, with perhaps some encouragement given to people purchasing houses and a mortgage rather than rent being paid to help them through that time. They would then have a house they could rent out in the future and that could be a long-term way of looking to solve the problem.

*The Bishop of Salisbury (Rt Revd David Stancliffe):* I am grateful for the debate and the points that have been made about the Vote 1 money. I want to draw Synod's attention to paragraph 10 on page 11 about new training pathways. I think the hope is that the rather strict distinction that we have had made by one or two speakers between those in colleges and those on courses is likely in the future to be very much more flexible. Certainly in the central southern region, where the regional training partnership looks like being substantially under way, there is the very likely possibility of candidates doing part of the training course-based and part of it residentially, with their moving to and fro between the various patterns, which have hitherto been thought to be very separate, becoming part of the norm. Are we – those who put candidates into training, and as Fr Houlding properly reminds us, provide them with not only ordination but a post to be ordained to – going to have the ability to choose the right kind of pathways that are appropriate to each candidate?

At the moment it is very difficult to do this because all the funding comes directly through Vote 1 into colleges and courses, and it is quite hard to negotiate, if you are a bishop sponsoring a candidate, a proper and suitable training for particular candidates. I hope that in the future the question of how we are going to manage this is looked at more radically. We are going to need to have some devolution of funding from Vote 1 into local regional training partnerships if we are going to be serious about getting the kind of training that we want for our candidates, bearing in mind that that is not all going to be front-loaded into three years' pre-ordination and that some of it is much better done as people are experiencing diaconal ministry and taking those responsibilities themselves. So I hope that in future years – although I want to support all the Vote 1 moneys that there are for us this year to vote on – we will have a more imaginative construct for how we should be able to use initial funding.

*Revd Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich):* We have been shown faith by the pension department, who are keeping our defined benefit scheme. Faith has been shown by the clergy in accepting a cut in the link between pensions and stipends. It came out of that debate that we need a new generation of young leaders and older leaders who are prepared to practise tithing themselves and be courageous enough to teach tithing to the Church.

What message are we giving to our emerging leaders now if we are mean with the money we are going to spend on their training? No matter how good the teaching will be in those theological colleges or institutions or courses, what they are learning is that they do not matter enough. That is the lesson they are going to learn. The worst lesson is that we, as their spiritual fathers, are not teaching them faith in action.

I have been tremendously encouraged by the faith of the young people around this place, particularly a young man called Mark who has been given a tremendous responsibility. I want to see more young people like that coming forward into leadership responsibilities, doing great things. He should not be thrilled that he is about to challenge and send out ten evangelists into tough areas; we should be sending him 100 evangelists to go out into tough areas. That is the task before us now. I really do believe that we have a faith challenge here and that everyone is part of it.

So here is one simple suggestion. Why do we not cut back on the number of reports that we commission and the number of committees we set up by 30 per cent? Then – and here is one knock-on benefit – we can all go home on Sunday evening with a clear conscience, because there will be less work to do.

On a more serious point, we need – and I mean this quite kindly – to start putting our money where our mouths are; better, putting our money where our heart is; better yet, putting the Lord's money where the kingdom is. We need to start giving serious money to theological training and to life-long learning, because, if nothing else, the CME budget still remains something of a joke, in my opinion. Jesus said that where your treasure is, there is your heart. Our heart should be to train the people we need to help

us all bring in the kingdom of God. I call on the Archbishops' Council to set an example of putting faith into action by, over the next few years, being more generous with theological education of all kinds.

*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.*

*Mr Michael Chamberlain,* in reply: I do not wish to duck answering some of the comments that have been made but clearly a lot of these are issues which both the Ministry Division and the Archbishops' Council need to take on board, in view of the various comments that have been made. I just want to make one or two observations, however, if I may.

There were one or two comments about the need for finance for the colleges for capital expenditure and major repairs. I need to remind Synod that these colleges are independent institutions and therefore the Council and this Synod need to be very careful about the arrangements if money is provided for capital expenditure or indeed for renovations; it is something which the Ministry Division is looking at, because in certain cases we might have to think about some equity-sharing arrangements in order that the position is protected.

I just wanted to comment on the South East training scheme. The Archbishops' Council is not in the business of making loans, and it seemed to me that the request for funding in respect of that was one that should have been addressed to the sponsoring dioceses, if there is an issue in that regard.

On retirement housing, the reduction in cost in the figures for the 2008 budget arises principally because of the disposal of properties that are not required. I would also like to remind the speaker that the rental is capped at 30 per cent of income. Mr O'Brien suggests that ministry issues and training issues are driven by accountants. I can certainly assure Synod that that is not the case; they are driven by the Bishops' Committee for Ministry, and it is that Committee which has decided that there has to be increased funding in this year and indeed a more transparent system with the new block grant system. Fr Houlding mentioned the relationship between the number of ordinands and future deployment plans; I said in my speech that this is an issue which has certainly been raised on a number of occasions at the Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum, and the Ministry Division is already starting to work on it. In respect of retirement housing, there is a working party which is in existence and, as we heard yesterday, there will be the additional funding from the Church Commissioners, owing to their results for last year. Canon Bruinvels referred to the provision that we make for legal aid. It is very early days. We are gradually building the funds up but, until we have some clearer indication of the likely level of call on the funds, I think we are adopting a sensible

course. On the question of support for ordinands and generous grants, I am sure that that has been heard by the Ministry Division and will be taken on board. Last, the Bishop of Salisbury's point about pathways and the devolution of responsibility and funding to local partnerships is again an issue for the Ministry Division. The Bishop of Sheffield's comment about funding for disability has, I think, been heard too.

*The motion was put and carried.*

## **Votes 1 to 5**

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* I beg to move:

‘That the Synod authorize the Archbishops’ Council to expend in 2008 a sum not exceeding £10,947,200 in respect of Vote 1.’

*The motion was put and carried.*

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* I beg to move:

‘That the Synod authorize the Archbishops’ Council to expend in 2008 a sum not exceeding £10,060,328 in respect of Vote 2.’

*The motion was put and carried.*

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* I beg to move:

‘That the Synod authorize the Archbishops’ Council to expend in 2008 a sum not exceeding £1,596,000 in respect of Vote 3.’

*The motion was put and carried.*

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* I beg to move:

‘That the Synod authorize the Archbishops’ Council to expend in 2008 a sum not exceeding £800,000 in respect of Vote 4.’

*The motion was put and carried.*

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* I beg to move:

‘That the Synod authorize the Archbishops’ Council to expend in 2008 a sum not exceeding £2,960,000 in respect of Vote 5.’

*Mr Richard Moon (Bath and Wells):* On behalf of retired clergy, I just want to bring to the attention of Synod, on page 44 of this document, the fact that the rent for occupying

CHARM accommodation has increased from 25 per cent to 30 per cent of their gross income – not net income but gross income – and then, back on page 7, it says in paragraph 26 that the cost of water rates is being transferred from the Pensions Board to the occupants over a three-year period from 2006. That is two increases for retired clergy who, I have been told ever since I joined this Synod, were advised to sell their homes on the basis that the Church would look after them in retirement. Is this the way to look after them? Is this equitable? Is this fair? Is this the way to treat needy retired clergy? I think not.

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* First, I would say that it is a maximum level that applies and, second, that this is not a new decision but one which was taken in previous years.

*The motion was put and carried.*

## **Apportionment**

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* I beg to move:

‘That the net sum to be provided in 2008 to meet expenditure approved in Votes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 be apportioned between the dioceses in accordance with the Table of Apportionment (contained in GS 1665).’

*Mr Gavin Oldham (Oxford):* I have a couple of issues to raise, if I may. First, as Gordon Oliver intimated, you have probably heard quite enough from me on the subject of ethical investment in the past 24 hours. [*Members: Yes!*] Thank you, Synod, I appreciate that. There is, however, one aspect that I must add because it impacts on the apportionment, and that is the cost of ethical investment. Over the past ten years the cost of ethical investment to the Church Commissioners’ funds is estimated to be round about £100 million; that is capital costs. So it has an impact on our annual distributions of about £3 million. The point that I would like to make is that if our distributions are impacted by £3 million it actually hits the area which is the most discretionary. The most discretionary area is not pensions or the bishops or the bishops’ costs; it is the poorer dioceses and the areas of need and opportunity. I would therefore like to ask the Archbishops’ Council to look into this aspect of apportionment, to see if we can come up with a fairer way of bearing the burden of the cost of ethical investment in the future.

My second point is quite different, and I am delighted to say this. I have worked with Michael Chamberlain for the past six or seven years on the Finance Committee. When I first joined the Committee I gave him quite a rough ride in General Synod at Westminster, and I now apologize for that. (Actually, it was Christina who put me right at the time, just as she put me right on Andrew Britton the other day. Thank you, Christina; you are always right on these things.) Michael is a man of real commitment and dedication to the Church. He is a man who has treated his role of stewardship with great dedication and great care over the years, who really looks into the way we run our affairs and searches out the issues and problems and finds the solutions, and actually

works with people to make finding the solutions a joint exercise. I would like to pay tribute to him therefore because I think that this is the last time he will stand in front of General Synod, and it would be fitting if we gave him a really good send-off. I ask everyone to express their thanks to Michael. (*Applause*)

*The Chairman:* Thank you, Mr Oldham, for drawing our attention to the fact that this is the last session that Michael will be leading us on. I know that the Archbishop of York wants to address Synod at the end of the debate.

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* I acknowledge the point that Gavin made to begin with. It is, of course, an allocation issue and not an apportionment issue, but it has been heard.

*The motion was put and carried.*

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* May I just say something, Madam Chairman, with your permission?

*The Chairman:* Of course.

*Mr Michael Chamberlain:* There are really three things I would just like to say. First of all, the job in all its aspects has only been possible because of the dedication of the staff in the National Church Institutions. In my seemingly long professional life I have never experienced such commitment as I have in those who work on our behalf, both at the centre and in the dioceses. On your behalf, I would like to thank them most sincerely for all they do for us and for the tremendous support they have given me over (unbelievably) the past eight years. Second – and this has some resonance with the debate on the Church Commissioners on Monday – I would like to tell you that I have witnessed the increasing impetus to work as one body. Perhaps it is not always visible, but the Church Commissioners, the Pensions Board, the Council and the House of Bishops are tackling issues together. The pensions task force, the spending review and, of course, the integration of the three NCIs in Church House: it augurs extremely well for the future. Last, you can be assured that with my successor Andrew Britton you will be in safe hands.

*The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu):* I give thanks to Synod that, although it has its Standing Orders, it is becoming more relaxed; it even allowed Gavin Oldham to speak on a motion and then thank somebody – which was totally out of order! – so I rejoice that Synod is becoming slightly more relaxed. In fact, the young people who have been observers here said that this was one of the most relaxed groups of sessions, so I hope we are sitting more lightly to our rules.

What I want to say is that it is usual for there to be a certain sense of relief when we get to the end of the financial business, but today the greatest sense of relief will be on the part of the person who has, for the last time, had to persuade you to approve the budget.

Michael Chamberlain was one of the founder members of the Archbishops' Council when it was created in 1999. For the past eight-and-a-half years he has chaired the Finance Committee and taken the lead here in Synod in our financial debates. What members have seen for a few days at each group of sessions is just the small tip of a very large iceberg of commitment to the National Church Institutions, with six meetings a year of the Archbishops' Council, a similar number for the Finance Committee, four meetings chairing the joint employment and common services board, attendance from time to time at sessions of the House of Bishops to try and keep us on the rails – well, you can always hope! – and many more commitments besides, not least time-limited but intensive projects such as the pensions task force and the spending review group. To all these responsibilities Michael has brought a dedication, seriousness of purpose and sheer professional competence that have been outstanding in every way. He is not a man for over-statement or the dramatic gesture. If Michael looks at a set of figures and furrows his brow, that is enough to signal that there is a problem. If he says something financial is 'all right', everyone breathes a sigh of relief, knowing that Michael's word can be relied on. He has never let us down in eight years.

They have been important years for the coming together of the National Church Institutions to deliver an attainable vision of working as one body. Michael has played a central role in that, not least in chairing the member-level body that deals with management, organization and terms of service issues across the national Church organizations. The level of trust and partnership that he has created there, alongside Allan Bridgewater and Andreas Whittam Smith, owes a great deal to his skill and transparent integrity.

Michael came to the Council after serving the Leicester diocese as chair of the board of finance for many years. His outstanding contribution to the Church of England over such a long period was recognized by the award of an OBE in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours list, and we rejoice with him in that.

You know, Michael, that this is not the end of the work that you will be doing for the Church. Your local congregation can still look forward to your leading the hymns from the organist's bench for many years to come. However, this is your last Synod, your last budget and our final opportunity to say thank you for all you have done. We have a worthy successor to you in Andrew Britton but we shall miss you very much and we want to wish you all the very best for the next phase of your life. (*Mr Chamberlain was accorded a standing ovation.*)

THE CHAIR HH Judge John Bullimore (Wakefield) took the Chair at 11.10 a.m.

## **Worship**

*Revd Prebendary Kay Garlick:* The worship that we have enjoyed over this group of sessions has been put together by the Liturgical Commission, by our chaplain and by our new chaplain as well. The new chaplain has asked me to say that if you have any

comments about how the worship has been, how you would like it to be in the future, any suggestions at all, both he and we, the Business Committee, would be very grateful for any constructive comments and suggestions, ready for our meeting in September when we will be meeting with the new chaplain. That also goes, of course, for comments about anything to do with the way Synod runs.

## **Legislative Business**

### **Draft Church of England Marriage Measure**

#### **Draft Measure for Final Drafting and Final Approval**

#### **Report by the Steering Committee (GS 1616Z)**

*The Dean of Wakefield (Very Revd George Nairn-Briggs):* I beg to move:

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

The report before Synod rehearses the recent history of this draft Measure. Synod was so helpful in giving a very clear steer on Saturday that we bring the draft Measure back, having met again as a Steering Committee, virtually unchanged. There are just two technical amendments which I will come to later. Otherwise, with the addition of the amendment that Synod passed on Saturday, it is as it was before.

*Revd John Wynburne (Oxford):* I am truly delighted with this piece of draft legislation. I have been fighting in the trenches for many years for more generous conditions for weddings. I am a great aficionado of marriage – my wife has given me permission to say that – and this legislation will bring joy into the hearts of most clergy. I could have wished myself for the conditions to be a little more generous but, as in marriage, you have to live with some imperfection. (My wife did not give me permission to say that.)

After a break of nearly 20 years, this is my first group of sessions back in Synod. Half the bench of bishops were in the talent pipeline at the first flush and in the ranks at that time; Dr Giddings was a rookie (it has taken him years to get on the podium); and my first speech was on *Faith in the City*. This draft legislation will, I think, do much to reaffirm faith in Synod and faith in marriage. I wholeheartedly support it and encourage us to get on with final approval.

*The Chairman:* May I remind members that at this stage we are debating the report that has come before us rather than the merits or otherwise of the Measure as such.

*Mr Clive Scowen (London):* I do not know, Chairman, whether you will think this

germane to the report or to the Measure, but it is a point that needs to be made some time this morning and, if I may, I will try to make it.

Although Sarah Finch's amendment on marriage preparation on Saturday did not receive support, I believe two important points emerged from that discussion. There is widespread support for offering marriage preparation to all couples getting married in church, and Canon B 30 places a duty on clergy to explain to a couple who are there to marry the Church's teaching about marriage and the nature of the covenant that they are entering into; but I believe we have to recognize how difficult it will be for clergy to discharge that duty to some couples who will marry under this Measure, particularly where they choose to marry in a church many miles from where they happen to live or work.

So I would make a plea for some strategic work to be done, both to resource clergy to deliver marriage preparation to couples with whom they may find it quite difficult to meet more than briefly and once, and especially to establish a system whereby marriage preparation can be organized for couples across the country in a place near where they do live or work, rather than expecting that they will travel huge distances to receive such preparation, which, in many cases, they will not. I am not certain who the lead body for this work should be – the Education Division, the Ministry Division, the Mission and Public Affairs Division, the House of Bishops, FLAME, could all have a role – but will someone please pick up this issue to ensure that whenever a couple is to be married in church they can easily access high-quality preparation for Christian marriage. That way we might really begin to make something of the much-spoken-about mission opportunity which this Measure offers.

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

‘That the question be now put.’

*This motion was put and carried.*

*The Dean of Wakefield*, in reply: I thank Mr Wynburne for his comments and his affirmation of marriage. As to his remarks about flaws in any marriage, I could not possibly comment!

I am grateful to Mr Scowen for re-emphasizing the very important area of marriage preparation. As he reminded us, Canon B 30 does still require us, in preparation, to make sure that people know what they are committing themselves to; but he made the point himself, that other people can do this. I myself have prepared couples who were going to be married somewhere else. Clergy, believe it or not, do talk to each other, and it is quite possible to make this work. Let us remember, though, that part of marriage preparation, as I have always seen it, is that I get to know the couple whom I am marrying and they get to know me; best of all, if they can get to know the Christian community who inhabit the church that is all part of the outreach. Sue Burridge is sitting

behind me, making careful notes. I belong to this wonderful organization The Mothers' Union; there will be members sitting here; and there will be other organizations who will, I am sure, take very seriously the challenge of marriage preparation in this slightly different scenario.

*The motion was put and carried.*

### **Clause 1(12)(a)**

*The Dean of Wakefield:* I beg to move the following special amendment:

‘In sub-paragraph (iv), at the beginning *insert* the words “where none of the above sub-paragraphs applies”.’

I am going to give two comments about the first of these two amendments. First of all, it is a clarifying one. We are dealing here with, if you like, the pecking order of clergy who have responsibility in a team for making sure that this happens, and the new amendment makes sure that this is a catch-all and that we end up with someone being responsible. The second comment is that this is a wonderful example of how things in the best-run households can go wrong. These words were in an early report of ours and somewhere in the printing they got dropped out of the draft. I cannot be more honest than that with you. They are technically necessary just to make sure that we have clarity about our responsibility in team ministry.

*The Chairman:* I see no one standing.

*The special amendment was put and carried.*

### **Clause 2(1)**

*The Dean of Wakefield:* I beg to move as a special amendment:

‘*Leave out* the words from “a person” in the fifth line to “connection” in the seventh line and *insert* the words “one of the persons to be married to swear that one or both of those persons has a qualifying connection with a parish with the meaning of section 1(3) above and to state the nature of that connection”.’

This slight amendment to clause 2(1) is intended to make sure that, where a licence has to be obtained, a common licence, the State law in the Marriage Act and our own Church law are running in parallel. It is making clear that, where the connection is with one of the couple who cannot actually apply for the licence and swear themselves, their partner may do so. It could be because somebody is out of the country, or whatever. At the moment, as it is written, it looks as if only the person with the connection can make the oath, but this is now bringing it into line with State law. Also not only will they establish that there is a connection; they have to state what the nature of that connection is, so that the grounds on which someone is asking for this procedure are absolutely

clear. This again is a technical amendment which I hope Synod will have no difficulty in agreeing to.

*Chancellor Tom Coningsby (Vicar General of York, Ex officio):* I wonder if it could be explained to us what it is about the State law which makes this amendment necessary because, although I do not think we have had an opportunity of considering this particular point before, looking at it at first blush it would seem to me that the way in which this was originally drafted in our Measure was right and that the amendment is doing something rather odd; what it is doing is saying that either party can make the necessary declaration, which might mean that the party who does not actually have the necessary knowledge directly of the history of the other party to the marriage is making the declaration on behalf of that other party. I would have expected our Measure to say that the one who makes the statement should be the one who has the direct knowledge of the facts relating to it. So could we just have an explanation of what it is about the State law which makes it difficult for us to do what seems to be the normal thing?

*Mr Hugh Privett (Salisbury):* A very small point on this clause which may, in fact, be a non-point – I did make it clear to the powers-that-be beforehand – and it is that, in clause 2(1), on the third line in the order paper, the penultimate word is ‘swear’. I query whether that should not be ‘declare’. I think the word ‘swear’ has been used because it refers back to clause 1(9) which, in an earlier draft, referred to an affidavit. You swear an affidavit, but you declare a declaration. I just wonder whether ‘swear’ should not better be ‘declare’.

*Mrs Janet Bower (Bradford):* Just a minor drafting point: if we pass this amendment will we not have three people, because we required ‘a person’ and then ‘one of the persons’ to be married. I think we should delete the ‘a person’ as well.

*The Chairman:* No I think that comes out; that is part of the words that are to be removed.

*Mrs Janet Bower:* That is fine. Thank you.

*The Chairman:* I am told that is right.

*The Dean of Wakefield,* in reply: I am grateful for those comments. To Chancellor Coningsby, we are looking here at section 16 of the Marriage Act which has the provision for a partner, if I may use that word, to swear on behalf of the other one. We are merely bringing this Measure into line with that. There is no other hidden text there. There are occasions when the person who has the connection will not be able to swear that themselves. To come to the second point, we are talking about swearing an affidavit. The declaration, which we talked about in another part of the Measure, is before a priest or minister who needs just a little extra reassurance that there is a qualifying connection. That is a different thing to be doing and has a different weight to it. So ‘swear’ is the correct legal word to be used in that place.

*The special amendment was put and carried.*

## **Final Approval**

*The Dean of Wakefield:* I beg to move:

‘That the Measure entitled “Church of England Marriage Measure” be finally approved.’

After our debate on Saturday I hope that I can keep this introduction brief. This Measure is a short one compared with some of the legislation we have considered recently and it is directed to a single object: to extend the present very restricted range of places where couples may marry according to the rites of the Church of England. At present, most of the law on this subject has not been drawn up by the Church but is to be found in an Act of Parliament, the Marriage Act 1949, which is now almost 60 years old. Under the existing law a couple have the right to marry in the church of a parish where one or both of them are resident or have their names on the church electoral roll, but they may not marry elsewhere except with a special licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Needless to say, society has changed a great deal since 1949. Nowadays, young adults, in particular, often move from one place to another fairly frequently. However, when they come to decide on the church they wish to be married in and they enter into the permanent commitment to one another before God which that involves, they often wish to do so in a place with which they feel they have some special connection, often the place where they grew up or where the parents of one of the couple live. They see that as ‘home’, even though they may not be resident there as a matter of law.

Even under the present law there may be a way of achieving that by one or both of the couple worshipping in the parish long enough to be entered on the church electoral roll, even though they may not plan to go back there after they have been married. The other possibility is to apply, as I said, for a special licence, but that is always discretionary – we are here conferring a right in this Measure – and it involves additional form-filling; and no matter how careful people are in explaining things, there are additional fees and it can make it look as though the Church is making hoops for couples to jump through at the very point when we want to welcome them and rejoice that they are committing themselves in front of God to a permanent marriage.

The object of the Measure is to change that in cases where a connection has been established, so that the priest can extend the kind of welcome to the couple that we would all wish the Church to offer to them. Because of that, this Measure is important from the pastoral point of view; it is certainly not simply a piece of technical fiddling with the law. It will meet a real need, and that has already been demonstrated by the number of clergy who have been asking when this will come into being and when they can start taking bookings: ‘I am being asked already,’ they tell me, ‘by couples because they’ve heard about it.’ Nevertheless, I would like to stress that the special licence

procedure and marriage after habitual worship in the parish and entry on the electoral roll will not be affected. Residence also will not be affected. They will still be there as routes to marriage in the Church of England.

This Measure has been a long time in the making. If I wished to be facetious, I could say that we started on this road in the last century. (Well, 1999 was the last century.) A good deal of time and effort has been devoted to bringing us to this final point. The Steering Committee believes that with the strong guidance of Synod last Saturday we have now got it about right. We have a list of connections which is simple and user-friendly. It will be supplemented by what we envisage will be some equally user-friendly guidance from the House of Bishops.

While the Measure concentrates on one specific aspect of the law of marriage, it has a wider and more fundamental significance for the Church. The various groups that have worked on it have all intended it to play an important part in the Church's task of supporting and upholding the institution of marriage, as well as in helping and encouraging those individual couples who come to us at that most significant moment in their lives. The debates we have already had on this legislation show what a high priority the Synod gives to this vital aspect of the Church's role and I hope that the Synod will have no hesitation in giving this its final approval.

Before I sit down, Chairman, there are many people who have helped us get to this point, some sitting here in front of us, others who have been on previous working groups, the Steering Committee and the revision committee; but I would like to pay particular tribute to the staff who, over many years, have supported, advised and helped us get what I hope is now a clear piece of legislation. I know the rest of the staff will not mind if I particularly bring before you the name of Ingrid Slaughter who, even in her retirement, has given us unstinting work. (*Applause*)

*The Chairman:* The motion is now open for debate. I remind members that motions for the closure, the speech limit or next business are not in order in this debate. That means we could be here for a long time. However, I retain a discretion under SO 21(c) to alter the normal speech limit of five minutes, so there is still hope.

*Revd John Chorlton (Oxford):* – actually, I am from Slough and since Slough has not had any mention in this group of sessions I thought I would just say so.

Most people that I marry usually have their own children as bridesmaids or pageboys and in that ministry of marriage as a parish vicar I see that I am playing a little part in repairing society, helping people to take steps with God. However, it was interesting that my little college radio – I have felt like a boy this week really – crackled into operation this morning at seven o'clock and told me that the Tories have now decided that marriage is a doctrine for society. I do not know about you, but at Christmastime (and, you know, we invented Christmas) they are having too much fun at home to come to church; we invented Mothering Sunday, but that has been stolen; and the kids are too

sick at Easter anyway with Easter eggs to come to church. I do not want to sound cynical, because our church is actually growing in numbers and God has been blessing us; but we Christians invented marriage, and now it is a Tory doctrine! With this Measure I think that we as a Church should take the initiative. Let us be unashamed that marriage is God's way for men and women. Let us preach it and use this Measure to help people to live it out in society. We did not invent it; God invented it and he blesses it.

*The Chairman:* I ought to have reminded members that there is in the financial statement in the sixth notice paper a paragraph that deals with the financial effect of this legislation. I draw your attention to that.

*Revd Mark Ireland (Lichfield):* I shall be voting for final approval of this Measure but with some sadness. I had hoped very much, after we met in London, that we might be able to open the doors of the Church much wider to those standing on the threshold of faith, to those seeking to marry rather than simply to live together in transient relationships and to those seeking, however tentatively, to involve God in their relationship. However, having argued the case before the revision committee for a much greater generosity in allowing people to marry in a church of their choice and having lost that argument, I am grateful that this Measure does at least give us half a loaf and will encourage some more people to marry in church, especially those who have some qualifying connection with us already. However, since we believe that marriage is a creation ordinance and not just for people who already belong to the club, and since we believe that marriage is a gift from God which brings great blessings to the couple, gives security to children growing up and contributes to the stability of society as a whole, I still long for the day when the Church of England will actively encourage those with no church connection to get married and will make our premises and services freely available to enable them to marry each other and, in so doing, make real William Temple's oft-quoted dictum that the Church exists for the benefit of its non-members.

*Revd Canon David Bird (Peterborough):* My observation of the way the system runs at the moment, at least since I was ordained, is that some clergy keep to the rules, others break them or bend them, and some seem to say 'What rules about who could get married where?' What we have before us is something which will really help us to live within, in a sense, rules about who can marry where in a way that can be creatively used to encourage more and more people to get married in church.

There are two things that I want to say. The first is that a lot more needs to be done among the clergy to get them to work together on this issue. I am appalled at stories that I hear from couples about clergy and the way they have treated them when they have turned up on the doorstep, and I encourage the House of Bishops – who have apparently had a presentation on this document which Sue Burridge and others have produced, *Understanding Marriage*, and I think we have all received this – to make this really part of CME in their dioceses and to see to it that in deaneries clergy are encouraged to work together, so as to give people the impression that the Church of England does act as one

body in a deanery. Then, when somebody comes to me and says, 'I want to get married on 15 July' and my church is fully booked but they have connections and they actually live in someone else's parish, I can do my hardest to get them to meet the other person in that other parish and to do something about it. It seems to me, from stories I have heard, that that is not happening at the moment. We do need to work together. So I hope that this piece of legislation will really help us and encourage us to see the opportunities. This is a marvellous piece of research and work that I hope we will all look at; and I hope too that we will be even more encouraged by it to work together as clergy to encourage more and more people to use our churches for marriage.

*Revd Jan McFarlane (Norwich):* The first time we took our place behind the church stand at a local wedding exhibition, I was amused to hear somebody say, 'You'll never guess what I've just seen. There's someone here dressed as a vicar!' but the remark hit home: they did not expect a real vicar to be at a wedding exhibition. In fact, they had probably never even met a real vicar before. Those of us who have responded to the encouragement of the Church of England Communications Unit to take part in wedding exhibitions all across the country have had the opportunity to meet the couples the clergy do not usually meet, the couples who would very much like to be married in church but either think they are not eligible in some way or else do not know how to go about it. We do not usually meet those couples, and it is those couples who have been given a voice through the research carried out by the Archbishops' Council, by the Henley Centre, recorded, as the previous speaker has just said, in GS Misc 861. I wish that everybody here this morning could have seen the presentation on that report given by the Communications Unit and Social Concerns last evening.

We seem to think that by passing this Measure we are going to be absolutely inundated by couples wanting to be married in our pretty churches, but what the research shows, and what we have encountered at wedding exhibitions, is that couples will not necessarily approach the Church, either because they do not know how – and Granny cannot make the approach for them any more because they are of a generation whose Granny does not go to church – or because they are terrified of the clergy. I do not usually think of myself as a scary person but, according to the research, that is exactly what I am. Even with all those concerns, though, for reasons I cannot quite articulate, church for them still feels the proper place in which to get married; and if we welcome them they will bring their non-churchgoing friends and relatives with them, and we are given the most incredible mission – not just pastoral but mission – opportunity.

So anything that allows us to offer such couples the warmest and the most accommodating welcome is surely to be encouraged. Please, let us approve this Measure with wholehearted enthusiasm and make the passing of it a new chapter in our outreach to those who are hovering nervously on the very edges of our Church, just waiting to be welcomed in.

*Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):* Mark Russell last night talked about laying

down tracks as he was going, and the opportunity of the parliamentary stage of this legislation gives us a chance to lay down one or two tracks in both practical and administrative ways. In the progress of this Measure concern was expressed about the workload placed upon busy, popular, greater churches and the like and that it might also result in a sort of sucking-in of marriages into these larger centres. My own church is one of those popular churches but as a deanery we are already talking to each other about how we administer weddings together and how we share that workload. In the two churches in our deanery that are very popular for weddings, we are talking to our colleagues and particularly looking towards opportunities for assistant clergy and non-stipendiary clergy who maybe do not have much experience of, or opportunity to take, weddings to do so through coming and sharing in the ministry in our churches. We also hope that we might be able to use the other local clergy who maybe feel that their weddings are being taken away from them in some way in the sharing of this ministry.

So I would encourage members of clergy chapters and bishops in their dioceses to be proactive from now on in order that we can get some clear thinking and preparation done before this Measure comes into force.

The other thing I wanted to say is very prosaic. My former training incumbent, who is now the Archdeacon of Bournemouth, taught me a lot about weddings, but he was very keen to get home; if he were here, I hope he would be very proud of me for making this point. I think we need a new MB1 form – the form that we fill out for the booking of weddings – to help us make sure we are using the Measure properly. There are a lot of new provisions, a lot of new qualifying connections, and in our parish those forms are filled out by a team of dedicated laypeople who are very keen to get this right for us; and a simple, easy-to-use form that helps them to prepare and assist people to fill out when applying for weddings would be very helpful in that process.

*Revd Jonathan Baker (Oxford):* – not a terrifying clergyman, I hope. My point is really a development of the last one. I too want wholeheartedly to welcome this Measure and rejoice that it has reached this stage of final approval. Such few marriages as I now conduct in the chapel at Pusey House in Oxford are by special licence and that, I think, will continue; but when I was a parish priest, and a new one, one of the most invaluable documents on my bookshelves was that very clear A4 booklet – I think it had a green cover and was printed on lovely cream paper – from the legal department, a guide to parish clergy about marriage law. I am sure that our friends in the legal department will be working on this already, but this is a very brief plea, in order to get this right and to use this Measure properly and use all the opportunities that it brings, on behalf of my colleagues in parish clergy, for an updated version of that document which will be as clear, helpful and instructive as such publications from our friends in the legal department always are. We shall need it and we look forward to receiving it.

*The Archdeacon of Tonbridge (Ven. Clive Mansell):* I too welcome this and I am delighted we have got this far. I would like to thank the Dean and his colleagues for the

work they have done and I am delighted that the Dean himself, as he comes towards retirement, will be able to see this complete its synodical process. We do wish you well in retirement, George.

The Dean mentioned in his address the question of when it would come into force. With headline reporting, everybody will say, 'Synod's passed this now' without knowing the full implications of the legislative process. Of course, what happens now is beyond our control in terms of timing, but I wonder whether out of past experience the Dean and his colleagues might be able to say, 'It's unlikely to come into force before' – and then give us some guidance, such as not before January '08 or Easter '08 or autumn '08. It would help us, in trying to report back to parishes, to know exactly when – not that this is going to be rushed through – when we can say it is more likely to be practically in force. I am sure some guidance from past experience of dealing with legislation would give us some indication as to timescale.

*Revd Peter Hobson (Leicester):* It is possible, from the way the speeches are going, that I shall be the only person in this chamber who will be voting against final approval. I thought I would like to explain why.

A year ago, on general approval, I spoke against the concept of such a Measure. If members were present in London in February, they will perhaps recall that I attempted to persuade Synod to vote down clause 1, as it then stood – unsuccessfully, as it turns out, but not without some support. Despite all the excellent things that have been said today – nearly all of which I agree with completely – about the pastoral opportunities, the way we should work together, the welcome we should give, I still feel that this is a slightly surreal experience that we are going through and one in which I want to own my measure of surreality by voting against. Why is that?

The Dean of Wakefield spoke in his introduction about the hoops we make people jump through in order to get married in church, and that we ought not to be putting more hoops, and that was the mind of the Synod; but he as it were gave the game away when he pointed out that the reason for these is not synodical legislation but the Marriage Act 1949. In other words, whose are the hoops that declare whether or not you have a right to be married in church? Of course, the answer is not the Church's hoops but the State's hoops; it is the law of the land.

We have already said many positive things in this group of sessions about the Establishment of the Church of England, and I suspect I am in a minority in saying that I am not wholly persuaded that that is the best way to go; but I think that this is really one of the more bizarre manifestations of Establishment, so that we are desperately trying to make ourselves welcoming and friendly against the law of the land that says 'You do not have the right to be married in some of our churches'. This legislation will simply make it possible to say No to somewhat fewer people. The Dean of Wakefield said that society has changed a great deal since 1949 and proceeded to evidence that by saying that people are much more mobile. Well, of course, they are, but if that is the one thing we

draw attention to when we look at marriage law in the past 60 years we are surely missing a few tricks. People lived then in essentially a Christendom age; we now live essentially in a post-Christendom age. People then knew what Church was, and not only their grannies but probably they went to church; now they do not. People thought vicars were affirming, friendly people; now they are scared of us, we have heard. It is a completely different world we live in and yet we are tinkering around with the same presuppositions.

As I said at the outset, I am not against any of the positive things that we do when we affirm marriage as a creation ordinance, when we welcome people to church, when we offer them preparation (which we cannot require, of course); all these things I do and will continue to do and am glad to do. However, I think we are about the wrong business at this stage. We have missed a trick and I at least will not vote to support the continuing Babylonian captivity of the Church.

*Revd Canon Dr Chris Sugden (Oxford):* Lest we make this too theological a discussion, I think this Measure represents the very end of the horse-drawn transport era as regards the way we run our business. Just imagine the effect on people criss-crossing the country, finding the nicest and most suitable place to have their weddings, if there was a fuel strike for 12 months.

*Mr Paul Hancock (Liverpool):* If Synod does remember me speaking last year – I think it was actually here – my daughter did get married, but I want to tell members one thing that somebody has touched on. For years on the bus I have passed a church, and I thought it was closed. One day I saw a wedding there, and I realized that that church, an inner city church, with no beauty to it – you would not say ‘Oh, that’s a lovely church, I want to get married there’ – was open. When my daughter got married, people witnessed to me afterwards, ‘I heard the bells. Wasn’t it fantastic? Your daughter got married, then.’ That is something that we ignore sometimes. We forget the witness to those who are unchurched, who do not go to church but who do take note of what goes on there. Over 60 families wrote to us afterwards, basically people who are unchurched, and said how moved they had been by the service. It was unusual; we did not have the usual readings or the usual hymns – one of the readings was the Lectionary reading for the day of the groom’s birthday – but people were moved by that service because the Spirit of God was there.

I want to pass quickly to a second point. As a church that is in an interregnum and has been in an interregnum for over two years now, it is vital that we get the information that people have been requesting for the clergy to the laypeople who in our church are having to deal with the initial enquiries. It is laypeople who staff our vestry hour, and there is no vicar fifty yards down the road to have a quick word with. There is no guarantee that we will be able to ring another vicar quickly about anything. We have been really blessed by the vicars who have visited us for the marriage ceremonies that we have had; so have the couples and so have the guests; but we do need this guidance quickly. The clergy want it; the laity want it too.

*The Dean of Wakefield*, in reply: I am very grateful for all those comments, and I will try to respond to some of them. To Mr Chorlton, who said that Slough had not been mentioned, I was born there! It was good to be reminded, as we have said consistently in our reports, that marriage is not a churchy thing but part of God's initiative, part of creation. All we try to do is give it some form and shape and dignity when people enter into it. To Mr Ireland, it is a bit like doing the hokey-cokey, really. We have had some people saying 'Free for all' and other people saying, 'Must keep it tight.' We hope we have landed somewhere in the middle, which means that where people have a genuine qualifying connection they will have no difficulty in getting married in the place they want; I fancy we could argue for probably another ten years on that, but there we are.

I thank Canon Bird for his kind words. We do hope we have a simple Measure here, and it is good to be reminded again by him that this challenges clergy to work together even more than they do at the moment. When Mrs McFarlane was talking about her experience at the wedding exhibition, I remembered a friend of mine who, with the same incarnational zeal, went to the Reading festival to live in a tent for several days. She said her greatest evangelizing tool was her dog, because it was a large and rather dopey dog. I walked straight into it. I said, 'What's it called?' and she said, 'It's called Deefer', and I said, 'Why is it called Deefer?' and she said, 'Deefer dog'. That really got people talking to her over the silly name of the dog. You are absolutely right, Mrs McFarlane; we need to be out there making initiatives. I have several clergy colleagues who know they have to sacrifice themselves by going into the pub at regular intervals so that they might be where the people are.

Canon Butler, thank you for telling us about the deanery planning. I am sure we all need to share good practice. I had whispered in my ear that a revised form is under consideration, so watch this space. Thank you for your welcome, Fr Baker. The faculty office has also been hearing what they need to produce in order to deal with the new situation. Regarding when the legislation might come in, we are hoping that it will be no later than the middle of next year; but it is in the parliamentary timetable that we have to trust.

I appreciate that Mr Hobson has opened a wider debate on Establishment. Can I just make this point? We are the only body in the land that can actually amend State law. That is something not to be forgotten. Passing this Measure will amend the Marriage Act of 1949. It works two ways. We do have opportunities, rather than always being at the receiving end of Parliament. Let us remember that. If it feels like a surreal experience, believe you me, there have been times, when we have sat receiving evidence from people, when that has felt equally surreal!

It was good to be reminded of the eagerness of the laity for this, of the important role that laity play in marriage preparation and the care of couples who come to us, and of the importance too of having open churches. People can see we are alive and kicking and intend to carry on growing in the way of Christ.

*The Chairman:* Under SO 36(d)(iii) a division by Houses is required for a vote on final approval of a Measure, unless I give permission and the Synod gives leave for that requirement to be dispensed with. It is important to have accurate voting figures for the vote on final approval of a Measure and also to establish how far the Measure has the support of all three Houses, not least in order to make the position on that clear for the Ecclesiastical Committee and both Houses of Parliament. I am therefore not giving my permission for the requirements under SO 36 to be dispensed with for this motion, and I order a division by Houses.

*The motion was put* and *The Chairman*, pursuant to SO 36(d)(iv), ordered a division by Houses, with the following result:

	<i>Ayes</i>	<i>Noes</i>
House of Bishops	26	0
House of Clergy	106	3
House of Laity	123	3

*The motion was therefore carried.*

*The Chairman:* The Measure now automatically stands committed to the Legislative Committee.

Just before we pass from this item of business, I am sure the Synod would want to thank the Dean for helping to pilot this little ship finally to harbour, or at least to the harbour of the Legislative Committee. It has not been an entirely easy voyage. Perhaps many of you will be aware that this is the Dean's last Synod because he will soon be retiring. He has served the Synod since 1980. He was a member for the Southwark diocese and then for the Wakefield diocese; he has been among the Deans, obviously; and many will remember him serving on the Panel of Chairmen. He has made a great contribution to the life of the Synod and he has been a good and cheerful friend to many of us. I am sure we would want to wish him and Candy well for the months and years ahead. (*Applause*)

*The Archbishop of York prorogued the Group of Sessions at 12.18 p.m.*