

gatherings, bookstalls, youth and children's representatives – seem to mean as much to its members as does the formal court business of the Church's supreme legal body as legislature, executive and judicial authority. The current consultation will ask these deep questions about purpose and point, in addition to the perennial ones about timing, length, location, and so on.

doi:10.1017/S0956618X09001707

Governing Body of the Church in Wales

April and September 2008

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WOMEN BISHOPS

In April, a Bill was considered to enable women to be consecrated as bishops. The most crucial amendment for consideration was that 'the Bench of Bishops will provide pastoral care and support for those who in conscience cannot accept the ordination of women as priests and bishops through the ministry of an Assistant Bishop or Bishops'. The Archbishop resisted the amendment on the grounds that, if it were passed, the Church

would be appointing a male bishop who had doubts about the validity of the orders of a woman bishop. Such a bishop and his followers would have real doubts as to whether the sacraments presided over by her were real sacraments, and real doubts about whether anyone ordained by her, male or female, was actually ordained.

The amendment was lost by 71 votes to 48. However, while the Bill was unanimously supported by the House of Bishops and passed in the House of Laity, it failed to gain a two-thirds majority in the House of Clergy and therefore fell. Following the retirement in June of the Provincial Assistant Bishop, David Thomas, the bishops decided not to appoint a successor on the grounds that to do so was neither necessary nor consistent with Anglican ecclesiology. The Archbishop promised that the bishops would provide continuing care for those opposed to the ordination of women and stressed that they still had a place within the Church.

CONSTITUTION GROUP

The Governing Body heard that a Bill would be drafted to introduce the new Constitution of the Church in Wales and would be considered by the Standing Committee in July 2008. It would be circulated to the Governing Body for consideration in April 2009.

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

The draft of *An Order for Morning and Evening Prayer for use in the Church in Wales 2008* was discussed in order to permit a final revision for approval at a future meeting. The Order was warmly welcomed. The form of publication would be determined by the Worship Resources Advisory Group and the Order would return to the Governing Body for authorisation in the future.

LAMBETH CONFERENCE

In September, the Archbishop reflected that, at the recent Lambeth Conference, ‘there seemed to be a genuine desire on the part of everyone to engage constructively with those holding different views’. He felt that the issue of sexuality should not dominate the Anglican Communion’s agenda, given that it was not a credal issue. That said, the frustration felt by those who wanted a much clearer resolution on homosexual activity had to be frankly acknowledged and much depended on whether or not the moratoria on the blessing of same-sex unions and on the consecration of bishops in same-sex unions were observed in practice.

His conclusion was that the real value of the Communion was in deepening relationships and mutual affection. Most Anglicans wanted the Communion to work but, if decisions were made too quickly and provinces were obliged to decide where they stood on various matters before they were ready to do so, it would all end in tears.

CATHEDRALS AND CHURCHES COMMISSION

The Governing Body agreed a series of amendments to the Rules of the Cathedrals and Churches Commission. Under the amended Rules, the duties of the Commission will be:

- i. To advise chancellors on all petitions for faculties relating to cathedrals;
- ii. To advise chancellors on any faculty relating to other churches, especially Grade 1 Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments;

- iii. To monitor the operation of the faculty system, including the operation of Diocesan Advisory Committees, faculty procedures and the ecclesiastical exemption process;
- iv. To act as the voice of the Church in Wales on all matters relating to the built heritage; and
- v. To advise the Representative Body on its built heritage.

FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY

The Working Group on the representation of women in Church structures had recommended that the Governing Body formulate an equality policy aiming for lay representation on all committees of at least 30 per cent women by 2011 and 50 per cent by 2013, and for a gender mix of senior clergy that reflected the existing gender mix in ordained ministry. In addition, all church committees should ensure that people were appointed for their skills and the contribution that they could make; and equality of opportunity and experience should be provided for both laity and clergy. Possibly the most controversial proposal was that recruitment of ordinands should take account of their commitment to gender equality.

The Governing Body received the Report, commended it for study and action, and requested the Standing Committee to report back on progress within three years.

REFORM OF CHURCH COURTS

A proposal was brought forward to reduce the number of courts within the Church from six to three: the Diocesan Court, the Disciplinary Tribunal and the Provincial Court. The Governing Body welcomed the proposed simplification and invited the Standing Committee to bring forward a Bill to implement the proposals in due course.

CLERGY TERMS OF SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Draft Terms of Service for clergy had been produced in July 2007 and had been the subject of an interim report to the September 2007 Governing Body. The draft guidelines and proposals for Disciplinary Policy and Procedures were now brought to the Governing Body, prior to further consultation with clergy and the presentation of a Bill to implement proposals for 'common tenure'. The proposals identify two categories of complaints. 'Neglect of the duties of office, or persistent carelessness or gross inefficiency' would be dealt with by the Bishop. Other complaints, such as 'conduct giving just cause for scandal or offence', would be the concern of the Disciplinary Tribunal. All new clergy would be appointed on the basis of 'common tenure', while serving clergy

could choose either to remain in their current offices on the basis of the existing provisions but without the additional rights and protections under Section 23 or to transfer to common tenure.

doi:10.1017/S0956618X09001719

General Synod of the Church of Ireland

May 2008

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The Synod met in Galway; there were two Bills of particular significance.

ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS

The first Bill represented the culmination of a review, begun in 2003, of the structures and procedures of the Church of Ireland Ecclesiastical Courts and Tribunals, which had remained virtually unchanged since the latter part of the nineteenth century. A new disciplinary process was required, sensitive to the concerns of the clergy and the key pastoral role of bishops, while at the same time ensuring compliance with the legislation of both jurisdictions in Ireland and with European legislation on employment rights.

The existing provisions relating to the operation of the Diocesan Courts and the Court of the General Synod regarding such matters as granting licences, dispensations and faculties, remain largely unchanged. The substantive changes were contained in Part IV, which provided a new structure, in addition to the existing Diocesan Courts and Court of the General Synod, for dealing with disciplinary matters. The Bill sets out who may make a complaint and how it should be brought to the attention of the authorities, and provides a filtering mechanism. There is also provision for pastoral resolution of problems, with reference to a disciplinary tribunal as a final possibility, and provision for a right of appeal.

Compared to the old system, the new procedure places more emphasis on lawyers than on bishops. However, in one respect, the bishops retain the last word. If a question relating to the doctrine or ritual of the Church of Ireland arises in any matter before a disciplinary or appeal tribunal, the tribunal shall, if it considers that an understanding of the doctrine or ritual concerned is