

there was, in addition, some lay resistance to being told how to manage their affairs by two clerical proposers. The proposal was rejected.

RELATIONS WITH THE METHODIST CHURCH

The most important piece of legislation related to the ongoing arrangements with the Methodist Church in Ireland. As was reported at the time, the first reading of a Bill to enable the interchangeability of ministry between the two Churches obtained the requisite two-thirds majority of both Houses last year. The second and third readings took place this year. In response to one query as to the attitude of the rest of the Anglican Communion, the Synod was reassured that, while the proposal was a local arrangement, it had received significant international attention and endorsement, notably from the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order. There was also some unease about the validity of orders. However, the various expressions of unease seemed to be directed not so much towards the prospect of a closer relationship as towards the speed at which it was being approached. In the event, the Bill achieved the requisite two-thirds majorities very comfortably. The Churches themselves and their structures will remain separate but, in the future, upon certain specified events happening, the clergy will be permitted to serve in either. Work towards an even closer relationship will no doubt continue.

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General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church

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INTRODUCTION

This year the General Synod was held in a different venue in Edinburgh, in the former pro-cathedral, which had been renovated and enlarged at great expense, the cost of which had been raised by the congregation. Overall, a useful house-keeping meeting was held, with little contentious argument.

In delivering his charge the Primus said that the Church was called upon to be a community of disciples and not an institute with members. He highlighted three current challenges in the life of the Scottish Episcopal Church. The first was the changes being proposed for the creation of a new Scottish Episcopal Institute and a new Mission Board, with the focus of missionary energy being placed in dioceses and congregations. The second was the referendum on Scottish independence (on which the Church remained impartial). The third was the passing of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act. On this, the challenge for the Church was a spiritual one, to find out what it meant to live in its context faithfully and yet together. There was a diversity of views in the Church, but it had to explore and respond to its diversity while staying in relationship as a community.

There was a short presentation by the Bishops of Brechin and Aberdeen on what it meant to be a bishop in mission. They touched on the relevance of numbers and the use of buildings. Did vestries study the Bible together and think spiritually together?

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Boards had been encouraged to keep expenditure as tight as possible; and this restraint had led to a surplus for 2013. Income had been higher, exceeding budget projections, and expenditure had been below budget. Capital funds had also increased by over £2.6 million, largely as a result of increases in the stock market. Significant financial deficits were forecast for future years, however. The Synod was largely dependent on investment income. Average congregational giving worked out in the order of £5 per week per communicant. The number of members of the Synod was recalculated every ten years according to the formula contained in the Resolutions. This would result in a reduction of the diocesan representatives in the next ten-year period from 140 to 124.

Budgets were approved and quota was fixed, with an increase of 2.5 per cent, slightly more than RPI. The Pension Fund had been topped up but it was doubtful if borrowing grants could be reintroduced. The increase in the number of curates in the coming year had financial consequences. A surplus of around £28,000 was expected in 2014 but deficits were projected for the following two years.

PENSIONS

By the end of 2013 the deficit on the Fund had been reduced to £200,000. The next triennial valuation would be carried out at the end of 2014. The scheme continued as a defined benefit one. Clergy did live longer than the average; and it was doubtful if any reduction in contribution could be made in the near future.

LAY REPRESENTATIVES

Under existing Canons a retired cleric cannot act as a lay representative. This was thought inappropriate and an alteration to the Canon to make it possible was passed unanimously on a second reading.

SCOTTISH CALENDAR OF SAINTS

An alteration to the Canons to change the date of commemoration of John Mason Neale (since the current date was that already allocated to St Boisel) was passed unanimously with one abstention.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Doctrine Committee had produced a series of *Grosvenor Essays*, and their most recent one was entitled 'The Church and Scottish Identity'. It had been compiled as an invitation to its readers to draw out and reflect on values embedded in Scottish life, especially peaceable and respectful relations. This gave an opportunity for discussion on the forthcoming referendum.

The Liturgy Committee noted that the experimental period for the Service of the Word had been extended for a year and the committee was eager to receive feedback from members. The Eucharistic Prayer used at the opening Eucharist was also an experimental text and comment on it was likewise sought.

The Information and Communication Board made reference to changes over the years in the method of information distribution, electronic methods replacing paper. A new website had been launched. The quality of the Church's magazine, *Inspire*, had, however, been maintained, if not improved.

With regard to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, the committee dealing with those matters continued its efforts to implement the Anglican Council's Safe Church Charter.

The primacy of mission had been established at the Synod in 2013 and the diocese was now seen as the focus of mission. The Home Mission Committee reported on its steady work to establish networks in youth, children, mission initiatives, stewardship, spirituality, lay learning and rural issues. A degree of provincial coherence was aimed at.

The Overseas Committee proposed to change its name to 'Global Partnerships Committee' to reflect the reciprocal nature of its relationship with the Church in other parts of the world, in particular in Brazil and Kolkata. The Churches were facing the growth of Islamism in Africa. Support had to be given to the Church in South Sudan and Tanzania.

The Buildings Committee noted that, during the year, energy efficiency in church buildings had been considered and a useful document had been

produced and commended to charges. Provincial building grants had been subject to a moratorium and vestries were encouraged to ensure that their buildings were regularly surveyed; maintenance training sessions were being organised.

Other Committees reporting were the Church in Society Committee and the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland Committee, which considered the question ‘What does a good society mean to you?’ An opportunity would be given to re-energise the mission endeavour in deprived areas of Scotland. The reports were received.

ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES

The General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) addressed the Synod. The previous ACTS network had been replaced by fixed-term programme work. Effective outreach and mission in Scotland was now beyond the ability of any one denomination. With declining congregations in all denominations, effective co-operation, trust and good communication resources could maximise their efforts. The ACTS website was being upgraded.

The Synod received and took note of the Message of the Tenth World Council of Churches Assembly and commended the study guide for use in dioceses.

The list of the Churches with which the Scottish Episcopal Church is in full communion was expanded by the addition of the Latvian Evangelical Church Abroad and the Lutheran Church of Great Britain. There would now be the possibility of interchangeability between members and clergy of the Churches. This, however, was not transivity.

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF THE CHURCH (TISEC)

The adoption of the Common Awards validation procedure under the University of Durham was an exciting development in the context of theological study and formation. It gave the Scottish Church the chance to have its own validation approach. Appreciation was voiced of the work done by lay readers. The governance structure proposed for the new Institute replaced thirty-five bodies responsible to, for or with TISEC with a simple Institute Council.

The Synod followed this discussion by breaking up into groups and discussing the following questions:

- i. What qualities do you hope to see in your clergy?
- ii. Should ordination training be purely academic or practical as well?
- iii. What skills do clergy need in today’s Church and society?
- iv. What is the best way of equipping those training for ministry to become effective ministers and leaders?

The discussions led to a number of comments and questions. In response, it was explained that there were no plans to change the current system of using the Church of England bishops' advisory panels. Until the General Synod of 2015, the role of the Ministry Development Committee was to be suspended and all its functions would be undertaken by a body to be appointed by the Standing Committee.

SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

A motion had been received to discuss same-sex marriage on the ground that members of the Church were not of the same mind about the matter and that no-one should be forced to act against his or her conscience. Before such a motion could be discussed, the Rules of Order required a two-thirds majority; on a vote being taken by ballot, the result was 77 in favour and 54 against, an insufficient majority for the motion to be carried.

The Synod voted to hear a series of short presentations on the cascade conversations held during the year, and groups were invited to consider the following questions:

- i. What did you see and hear in the conversation which had taken place?
- ii. What has shaped your views about same-sex relationships over the year?
- iii. What considerations should the Scottish Church take into account when exploring whether to incorporate same-sex marriage into its life?

The Primus pointed out that the changed context arising from the Marriage and Civil Partnership Act made movement necessary and inevitable. The Cascade meetings would continue and the Church should model to the world patterns of how to move forward together in relationships even when there is no agreement.

STATISTICAL RETURNS

A motion was submitted that current annual statistical returns did not properly measure the life and activity of dioceses. A broadening of the collection of statistics was sought to give the Church greater confidence in relation to training and the Church's relationship with secular society. An expansion of statistical collection would, however, pose bureaucratic difficulties for larger churches. The motion was passed with no abstentions.