

Report on General Synod sessions
Tuesday 8th - Thursday 10th February 2022 in London

We begin this report at the end of the last day with a farewell to Bishop Paul given by the Archbishop of York. A farewell was also given to Tim Dakin, retiring Bishop of Winchester.

New starts: Revd. Kate Wharton was elected chair of the House of Clergy in the north of England, a role known as Prolocutor of the Convocation of York. Archdeacon Pete Spiers was appointed chair of the Appointments Committee, to allocate new members to sub-committees of General Synod. Dame Caroline Spelman was appointed chair of the Dioceses Commission. Several Liverpool members spoke for the first time in debates and questions. Special mention to Gabriel Chiu for his excellent maiden speech.

Presidential address: The Archbishop of Canterbury reminded us of Christ's prayer for believers in John 17:21 "that all of them may be one". He asked for reconciliation and introduced the "Difference course" about following Jesus in a conflicted world.

- Check out this free 5-session course for your parish: <https://difference.rln.global/>

Racial Justice: Lord Boateng, Chair of the Archbishops' Racial Justice Commission gave an update on the commission's first three months of work and made a passionate presentation. He praised the report "From lament to action" but said it has a long list of previous reports and recommendations and urged that we must "tell it and do it".

The Archbishop of York replied: "*we are determined to be different*". He added: "*Doctrine matters. If we follow Scripture, doctrine tells us what we need to know in order to live consistently as members of the body of Christ*". An example is the Barmen Declaration by churches in Nazi Germany in 1934.

Work on 35 recommendations has begun. The Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC, pronounced 'see-me-ac') is chaired by Rogers Govender the Dean of Manchester and will publish a diocese-by-diocese report of work undertaken on anti-racism, racial justice, belonging, inclusion and diversity. Much remains to be done, but it can only be done in love, anchored in the Gospel, it cannot be mandated.

- *How can your parish engage more fully with the agenda of racial justice?*

Safeguarding: Lead Bishop for Safeguarding Jonathan Gibbs and Interim Safeguarding Director Zena Marshall gave an update from the National Safeguarding Team. Implementing the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) report has started. An Independent Safeguarding Board has been created to provide oversight of the Church of England's national safeguarding work. Chair of the Board, Dr Maggie Atkinson, referred to three threads: complex procedures are too hard to navigate, institutional responses are slow, and equal basis should be used for victim and accused.

Archdeacon Pete Spiers said Liverpool has finished a Past Cases Review report and is waiting to publish. Revd Jack Shepherd asked for new procedures to use more accessible language. A motion to disapprove the report was resisted by a vote to move to next business.

Faculty jurisdiction (amendment) rules: We voted on new rules for permission (faculty) to alter a church building to move more churches towards net-zero carbon, following Synod's resolution on climate change in February 2020. The new rules mean that a like-for-like fossil fuel boiler will require a faculty. An amendment to seek advice rather than obtain a faculty was narrowly defeated.

An amendment to allow broadband equipment that is not cable based was carried.

Challenging slavery: We voted on a diocesan Synod motion calling on government to introduce legislation to protect trafficked minors. An amendment added a call to dioceses, deaneries, and parishes to raise awareness of modern slavery and to work with the Clewer Initiative to identify potential victims of modern slavery in the community and offer help to victims and survivors. Challenging human trafficking and modern slavery will be raised at the Lambeth Conference 27th July to 8th August 2022. We are called to pray for victims and survivors of modern slavery remembering the words of Jesus "proclaim release to the captives". Passed unanimously.

- *Is your parish aware of the Clewer Initiative to identify victims in your community?*

Clergy remuneration: A report finds the existing package is still adequate and appropriate for the majority of clergy but has not kept pace with inflation. The Church needs to maintain the overall value of the stipend against inflation in the future. We took note of the report.

Setting God's People Free: Programme of work to implement the recommendations of this report has drawn to a close. Work to equip lay people and to affirm the gifts of clergy and laity is now part of the Vision and Strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s.

- *Discover free digital resources: <https://churchofengland.org/our-faith/everyday-faith>*

Governance review: A report of a review group makes recommendations including a single national body called Church of England National Services, a Board of Bishops, a reform of General Synod and Synodical government more widely, and a Nominations Committee. After a robust debate, we voted narrowly to "thank" the review group for the report rather than "welcome" it, showing that Synod needs to scrutinise principles, not just details.

Persecuted church: We voted unanimously for a motion including a commitment to pray for the persecuted church and offer support to link dioceses facing persecution, and for the next Lambeth Conference to address the issue of persecution of Christians.

- *Try resources from Open Doors UK or Christian Solidarity Worldwide to help pray as part of "Thy Kingdom Come" between Ascension and Pentecost 26 May – 6 June.*

Members of Crown Nominations Commission for the See of Canterbury: We took note of a report proposing to include five representatives of the Anglican Communion in a committee of 17 people to discern any future Archbishop of Canterbury. The current Archbishop is not planning to move anytime soon!

Prepared by Richard Denno on behalf of lay members Nigel Lea-Wilson, Gabriel Chiu, Nadine Daniel and Debra Walker, February 2022