

# **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH HELD AT ST PAUL'S & ST GEORGE'S CHURCH EDINBURGH FROM 6-8 JUNE 2019**

## **Freshers' Meeting**

A meeting was held prior to the start of Synod to introduce new members to the programme and to the Synod's business procedures.

## **Opening Eucharist**

The Synod was constituted at a celebration of the Eucharist in St Paul's & St George's Church, Edinburgh at 10.30am on Thursday 6 June 2019.

The Most Rev Dr Mark Strange, Primus, delivered his charge to the Synod during the Eucharist. Referring to the reading from Isaiah 30, he noted how panic and fear caused those of faith to run away from Jerusalem and the house of God. The prophet urged the people to listen to the voice of the Lord – "this is the way, walk in it". As members engaged with the Synod agenda, the Primus encouraged them to remember that there was no point in asking questions if one was not prepared to seek the answers, to listen to one another and try to walk together on the way. The current time was one of unprecedented political upheaval with the reality of Brexit paralysing UK politics. People had been damaged by Universal Credit, were frightened by UK immigration policies, and young and old were living lonely lives because of social isolation, sexual exploitation and addiction. Increasingly, the Church was servicing food banks that ought not to be required and humankind, as steward of creation, continued to destroy it. The structures of the Church were to serve God, not themselves. As society cried out for reconciliation, fairness and hope, the Scottish Episcopal Church needed to be a church which could offer that but it could only do so if such values were mirrored in the way members treated one another. The Church had a mission to bring the love of God to the lives of others, to care for them, to share faith with them and uphold them because, as Jesus had said, "truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me".

During the Eucharist, an offering was taken to support the work of Aberlour Childcare Trust. The offering amounted to £1,117 (excluding Gift Aid).

## **SESSION 1: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR**

### **1.1 Preliminary Business**

#### **1.1.1 Welcome**

The Primus welcomed all members of Synod including the following delegates representing other churches and faiths:

Lieut-Colonel Carol Bailey (Salvation Army), the Rev Dr Grant Barclay (Action of Churches Together in Scotland), the Rev John Bremner (United Reformed Church), the Rev David Broderick (Baptist Union of Scotland), the Rev Dr David Easton (Methodist Church in Scotland), the Rev

John Fulton (United Free Church of Scotland), the Rev Alexander Horsburgh (Church of Scotland), the Very Rev Stephen Mulholland (Roman Catholic Church), Dr Maureen Sier (Interfaith Scotland), Mrs Jacqueline Thomson (Focolare Movement), Mary Woodward (Religious Society of Friends) and the Rt Rev John McDowell (Church of Ireland).

Synod members introduced themselves in table groups.

### **1.1.2 Election of Prolocutors**

The Very Rev Fay Lamont and the Rev Canon Simon Mackenzie were elected as Clergy Prolocutor and Vice Prolocutor respectively.

Dr Anthony Birch and Dr Nicola Mills were elected as Lay Prolocutor and Vice Prolocutor respectively.

### **1.1.3 Tellers**

Dr Daphne Audsley, Mr Malcolm Bett, the Rev Dr Michael Hull, the Rev Dr Richard Tiplady, the Rev Canon Dr Anne Tomlinson, Mr Donald Urquhart and Ms Miriam Weibye were appointed Tellers for the meeting.

### **1.1.4 Assessor**

The Primus announced that Professor Nicholas Grier, Solicitor, had been appointed as his Assessor.

### **1.1.5 Voting**

The Secretary General reminded Synod members as to who was entitled to vote on Motions and in elections. In cases where a count of votes was required, Synod agreed that the Facilitator at each table would complete a voting record slip to record the votes on their table. Voting slips would then be collected by the Tellers who had been appointed earlier in the meeting so that the total number of votes could be ascertained.

### **1.1.6 Permission to Speak**

The Synod granted its permission for each of the following to speak during the course of the meeting: the Rev Philip Blackledge, the Rev Annie Naish, Ms Caroline Longley, Mrs Patsy Thomson, the Rev Dr Richard Tiplady, Dr Donald Bruce, Dr Lesley Penny, Ms Ley-Anne Forsyth, Mrs Claire Benton-Evans, Ms Amie Byers, Ms Rebecca Cromwell, Ms Becky Northover, Ms Phoebe Pryce, Ms Olivia Smith, Ms Eleanor Tofield, Sheikh Sayed Ali Abbas Razawi and all ecumenical and interfaith guests.

### **1.1.7 Minutes of General Synod 2018**

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Dr John Ferguson-Smith (Convener, Administration Board), seconded the following Motion:

*"That this Synod approve the minutes of the meeting of the General Synod held on 7-9 June 2018".*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*.

### **1.1.8 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

### **1.1.9 Elections**

The Secretary General explained the procedure in relation to elections.

By general acclaim, the Synod appointed Mr James Gibson as the Convener of the Administration Board.

By general acclaim, the House of Clergy appointed the Rev Canon Dave Richards and the Very Rev Alison Simpson to serve a second term as clergy representatives on the Standing Committee.

By general acclaim, the House of Laity appointed Ms Jenny Whelan as a lay member of Standing Committee.

By general acclaim, the Synod appointed the Rev Professor Paul Foster, the Rev Professor David Jasper, Ms Nan Kennedy and the Rev Paul Watson to serve a second term as members of the Institute Council.

By general acclaim, the Synod appointed Professor Patricia Peattie to serve as lay member on the Preliminary Proceedings Committee and Mr Gary Burton to serve as its Secretary. The Synod authorised the Standing Committee to fill a remaining vacancy for the position of a practising lawyer on the Preliminary Proceedings Committee on the understanding that such appointment made by the Standing Committee would be brought to General Synod 2020 for appointment for the remainder of that person's term.

By general acclaim, the Synod appointed Lady Wolffe and Ms Anna Poole to serve as practising lawyers on the Clergy Discipline Tribunal.

It was noted that during the course of the meeting, the Synod would be invited to consider a second reading of an alteration to Canon 52 the effect of which would be to dissolve the Information and Communication Board. The Secretary General explained that owing to those unusual circumstances, Synod was invited to authorise the Standing Committee to appoint a new Convener to the Board if that second reading were not

accepted, on the understanding that any such appointment would be limited to a period of one year and that a nomination would then be brought to Synod 2020 in the normal way. Synod accepted that proposal by majority.

#### **1.1.10 Corrections to Synod Papers**

The Secretary General drew the attention of Synod to errors in the Synod papers as follows.

On page 120 in the report of the Clergy Wellbeing Survey, the sentence "the majority of respondents feel happy with their life within ministry and the time split between working and home/leisure life" was to be regarded as deleted. Also, on page 121 the figure of 76.19% of respondents who felt that they did not have a balance between their ministry and home life ought to have read 70.48%. He explained that the reasons for these errors were that in its original form the Survey report had amalgamated figures for both stipendiary and self-supporting clergy and that when the statistics were separated into those two categories the narrative comment had not been fully updated.

#### **1.1.11 Roll Call**

The roll call of Synod members was taken by completion of attendance slips. A total of 121 members attended.

### **1.2 Faith and Order Board**

#### **1.2.1 Committee on Canons/Buildings Committee**

Ms Rebecca Cadie (Convener, Buildings Committee) presented the second reading of changes to Sections 1 and 3 of Canon 35. She reminded Synod of the discussion which had taken place the previous year about how the Church looked after its buildings, given the context of ecclesiastical exemption from listed building control. That was delivered through the process set out in Canon 35. In 2018, the Synod had supported the proposed changes and in the main these had also been supported when the changes had been discussed in dioceses. The Buildings Committee had discussed comments made in some Diocesan Synods, details of which appeared in the Synod papers. Some comment had been made in relation to use of the terms "stained-glass" and "painted glass". Both fell within the craft of decorative glazing and the Committee was happy to include in the wording being proposed to the current Synod reference to both. There had also been discussion about "curtilage". The previous year she had confirmed that curtilage was a term understood within planning control. Guidance documents from the Scottish Government stated that "curtilage, although not specifically defined, is accepted to mean land which is used for the comfortable enjoyment of a building and which serves the purpose of the building in some necessary or reasonably useful way, normally the curtilage would relate to the property boundary...". She also referred to listed building guidance from Historic Environment Scotland which stated

that under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (Scotland) 1997, "every listed building has a curtilage (boundary). This means "any object or structure within the curtilage of the building though not fixed to it may be considered to be listed..." The Buildings Committee was content that the term "curtilage" was, therefore, an appropriate term for inclusion within the Canon.

Ms Cadie reminded the Synod that Canon 35 made clear that it was still necessary to comply with other legislation affecting buildings, for example, the need for planning consents, building warrants, etc.

Dr John Ferguson-Smith (Convener, Administration Board) proposed and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That the amended text of Canon 35, sections 1 and 3 be read for the second time."*

The Rev Peter Harris (Edinburgh) supported the proposal. His church had managed to install charging points for electric vehicles prior to the change of the Canon. Reading the Canon, however, he wished to confess that he had not always sought consent of the Bishop under Section 4 of the Canon which stated that churches ought not to be used for any purpose which was not religious or ecclesiastical without such consent. Events such as fayres, fêtes, etc had taken place. Did he require retrospective consent?

The Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) responded that there had in fact been a general permission for Mr Harris' church for such events for some time.

The Rev Jonathan Livingstone (Glasgow and Galloway) queried whether "erection of fencing" ought to be included in the list of minor works to be exempted from Canon 35, as appeared on page 57 of the Synod papers. Ms Cadie responded that for fences in excess of 1,100 cm high it was necessary to apply for planning permission. She encouraged churches to consult their diocese even if a formal consent was not needed.

The Rev Canon John McLuckie (Edinburgh) indicated that the Cathedral in the Diocese of Edinburgh included within its curtilage a building which did not belong to the Cathedral. He sought clarification as to whether such an instance would fall within the scope of Canon 35. Ms Cadie responded that the Diocesan Property Committee would wish to know what was happening within the space comprising the curtilage – for example, whether there were implications for access, lighting, etc. It was a matter which she believed ought to be brought forward for consideration under Canon 35.

The Motion was then put to the vote in houses and passed by the requisite majorities as follows:

House of Bishops: passed unanimously  
House of Clergy: passed by majority, 3 against, 1 abstention  
House of Laity: passed unanimously.

Ms Cadie then turned to Resolution 3 under the Canon and explained that an approach had been received from the Scottish Civic Trust that the requirement in that resolution that proposals for alterations to church buildings be advertised to the Scottish Civic Trust, should be deleted. The Buildings Committee had considered this and proposed an amendment to Resolution 3 to delete reference to the Scottish Civic Trust and local civic amenity bodies. She noted that there would still be the opportunity for comment to be made through the planning process.

Dr John Ferguson-Smith then proposed, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the first paragraph of Resolution 3 under Canon 35 be deleted and replaced by the following:-*

“In the case of a building included in the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest the Vestry shall, before making a formal application to the Bishop and the Diocesan Buildings Committee for any change under this Canon, advertise the proposals to the congregation and Historic Environment Scotland, and in the case of exterior works the local planning authority, allowing members of the congregation and these bodies four weeks in which to make written representations on the proposals. Any representations received shall be considered by the Vestry before a formal application for consent is made.”

The Motion was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

### **1.2.2 Review of Canon 4**

The Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) reminded Synod that in 2018 the Synod had instructed the Faith and Order Board to set up a process of review of Canon 4. He had been appointed as Chair of that review and the Review Group had met twice to date. It was seeking feedback from those who had had experience of the process whether as a member of an Electoral Synod or of a Preparatory Committee or as a candidate. Feedback was being sought by the end of June 2019. The Group had taken note of points raised at General Synod 2018 as well as drawing on the personal experience of Review Group members. Such issues included whether the timescales under the Canon were unhelpfully prescriptive, whether there should always be a requirement to deliver a shortlist of between three and five names and whether it was necessary for the shortlist to be public.

Whether the present Canon simply required tweaking or a significant rewrite would depend on the feedback received. However, Bishop Armes emphasised that if the Church wished to elect its Bishops then there would always be a need for a process to ensure that the election was run fairly, decently and in good order. Secondly, he cautioned against expecting too much of a Canon. There was more to finding the Bishops the Church

needed than simply having a process. The business of discerning good candidates started long before the date the previous Bishop retired. Discernment meant seeking the will of God for a diocese, listening for and being open to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Where the Canon had worked well in the past, interviewees and candidates had been treated with respect and human warmth and the host diocese had taken trouble not only to ensure the proper handling of paperwork but also to ensure that candidates felt appreciated, whether or not they were elected. Meticulous organisation was required for this as well as a quality of relationships which could not be legislated for. A diocese had to get its act together to deliver this. For that reason, the Review Group was considering whether it would be helpful to write a commentary to accompany the canonical process. He looked forward to receiving thoughts which members of Synod might have to offer.

## **SESSION 2: THE RT REV ANDREW SWIFT, BISHOP OF BRECHIN, IN THE CHAIR**

### **2. Standing Committee: Accounts, Quota and Strategic Direction Overview**

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) expressed thanks to the staff of the General Synod Office and to his fellow members of the Standing Committee. He was pleased to note that Synod had elected Mr Jim Gibson to the convenership of the Administration Board and to re-appoint the Rev Canon Dave Richards and the Very Rev Alison Simpson for further terms. He also welcomed Ms Jenny Whelan as a new member to the Committee and expressed thanks to the Rev Chris Mayo who had resigned earlier in the year and to Dr John Ferguson-Smith who was completing his convenership of the Administration Board at the current Synod. He expressed particular thanks to Mr Malcolm Bett, Treasurer, for his dedicated, thoughtful and imaginative work on financial matters.

Illustrating his presentation with PowerPoint slides, Mr Gordon turned to the financial outturn for 2018. 2017 was the most recent year for which full details of charge income was available to the General Synod Office. In that year, £23 million of income had been raised, approximately £1.7 million had been transferred to dioceses and Province by way of diocesan and provincial quota increasing their share of the overall resources from 3% to 8% and 7% to 10% respectively. In 2018, the income to the General Synod had comprised 65% from investments, rental and fee income and 31% from quota. The income had been spent as to 22% on support and training for ministry, 13% on mission development and support, 12% on communication, 7% on support for retired clergy, mainly through housing, and 5% on engaging with other denominations and faiths. 41% had comprised support and advice from the Province and GSO staff to dioceses and charges including £310,000 by way of Mission and Ministry Support Grants and £190,000 of Building Grants.

In 2018, the aim had been to achieve a budget surplus of £50,000 on the General Fund. The actual surplus had been £123,000 because investment and other income had been £37,000 over budget and expenditure by most boards had been

slightly under budget. There had been some overspends by the Standing Committee such as legal and advisory fees, which had been necessary to deal with difficult personnel and associated issues, and support for the Primus reflecting geography (the difference between a Perth base and an Inverness one), additional travel associated with episcopal vacancies and a deliberate policy to accept opportunities to engage with other parts of the Anglican Communion following the change made by Synod in 2017 to Canon 31.

Mr Gordon also reported that fluctuations in the Stock Market in the latter part of 2018 had seen a fall in the value of investments by over £850,000. The position had subsequently recovered but he reminded Synod of the volatility of markets and the possible impact on the level of income available to draw down to fund revenue expenditure.

Mr Gordon then proposed, and Dr John Ferguson-Smith (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That this Synod accept the Annual Report and Accounts of the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church for the financial year ended 31 December 2018.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

Mr Gordon then turned to the context for the rolling budget 2019-2021. The strategic priorities identified in the Standing Committee Report for 2018 were not set in stone and were discussed both within the Standing Committee and in joint meetings with the College of Bishops and were therefore subject to development as thinking evolved and new opportunities and challenges emerged. He made no apologies for borrowing from the Bishop of Argyll and The Isles by saying that the purpose of all of this was to provide opportunities for encounter with the living God. If one wanted the Kingdom to come, there was much to do.

The strategic aspirations of the Committee were as follows:

- **Formation:** preparing women and men to carry forward ministry in communities which no longer simply comprised traditional churchgoing people. Synod would hear later in the meeting more about the activity of the Scottish Episcopal Institute. This entailed financial consequences, particularly where there was a desire to place curates in locations which did not have the necessary financial resources available locally.
- **Mission:** the Mission and Ministry Support Grants scheme was currently under review and might be adjusted. It was necessary in some places to sustain existing ministry but the Mission Board was also looking at the possibility of developing financial support for new missional initiatives. The amount available for Buildings Grants was being increased by £55,000 in 2019 and subsequent years.
- **Governance:** whether the provincial governance arrangements in the widest sense were fit for contemporary purpose was kept under review. Reviews of a number of Canons (Canons 4, 53, 54 and others) were currently underway and a proposal in relation to communication would be considered



later in the meeting, as well as alterations to the committee structure in relation to engagement with people of other faiths. Standing Committee encouraged all boards and committees routinely and systematically to consider the quality of their deliberations and decisions and the relevance of their agendas.

- Relationships: this covered relationships within the SEC, with other parts of the Anglican Communion, with other denominations and with other faiths. Later in the meeting, Synod would hear of a range of engagements.
- Support: over and above financial support was the help and guidance which the Province could provide to dioceses and charges. Later in the meeting, Synod would consider next steps necessary to be taken on safeguarding; last year there had been discussion of support given in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation. It might be possible for the Province to support collaboration between dioceses in relation to buildings and to strengthen links between Province and dioceses acknowledging that different dioceses had different strengths and requirements – the "variable geometry of relationships".
- Communications: the Standing Committee would support the actions outlined in the Synod papers to improve communications deploying the professional resources and technology available to the Church and linking virtually or physically provincial, diocesan and charge capacities to share information and promote the Church's story.

The Standing Committee and College of Bishops had met jointly in December 2018 and planned to meet again, probably early in 2020. The Committee had been encouraged to learn that the College of Bishops, acting in its metro-political role, would spend time later in the year taking stock in developing an overarching narrative for the SEC for the 2020s. Such a statement would help further sharpen priorities and provide a basis for further collaborative working between the two bodies.

Mr Gordon spoke to the budgets for the years 2019-2021. Beyond inflationary increases, there were significant uplifts in spending for the Administration Board by an increase in Building Grants of £55,000 in 2019 and subsequent years, for the Institute Council to take account of the appointment of a new full-time Provincial Director of Ordinands, the provincial contribution to the maintenance of mixed mode students, additional curate funding and expenditure on training for the new recruitment and selection procedures. The budget for the Institute Council was driven by assumptions about the number of curacies to be funded and variations in such numbers could impact significantly on budgets and outturns. The budgets contained best estimates but were subject to a health warning. The assumption for budgetary purposes was that the provincial contribution to curate funding would be at the historic level of 50% of stipend but there was a recognition that it might be necessary to offer a higher provincial contribution in some settings. Mission Board funding had been increased by an additional £50,000 allocated to the Church in Society Committee for Child Poverty Grants and a provision of £10,000 was included within GSO salaries to fund the new Provincial Youth Committee Enabler post.

The result of this was that in 2019-2021 deficits were now being budgeted for. In recent years Standing Committee had budgeted to break-even but for a variety of credible reasons surpluses had been generated. By budgeting for deficits, actual outturn might well be closer to break-even. There were worthwhile and impactful initiatives and priorities on which to spend resources and fortunately there were surpluses which could now be drawn down in order to fund them.

Mr Gordon then addressed the question of quota explaining that Standing Committee's proposal was for there to be no increase in provincial quota in 2020. In arriving at that decision, Standing Committee had noted the views expressed at General Synod 2018. He also explained that the budget papers referred to the impact of the departure from the denomination of two large congregations on quota and quota assessable income. Owing to uncertainty over the timing of such departures, Standing Committee had decided that for 2020 calculation of diocesan shares of provincial quota should proceed as if the departing charges had not departed. A recalculation of quota assessable income would have had the effect of requiring dioceses other than those losing congregations to contribute more to provincial quota in 2020. As a transitional measure, the Committee had decided that the Treasurer would have discussions with the dioceses in question with a view to agreeing a reduction in the quota which those dioceses would contribute to the Province reflecting their loss of income in the period to the end of 2020. The shortfall in income to the Province would be covered from provincial reserves. The Standing Committee would consider over the following year whether further mitigating action might be necessary in 2021 and beyond. Leaving aside the position of departing congregations, the proposal for provincial quota for 2020 would amount to £741,527 – which represented no increase on 2019. Synod would be invited to agree that figure later in the meeting.

Mr Gordon then spoke to the proposed change to the Digest of Resolutions addressing the eventuality of Synod failing to agree proposals in relation to the level of future quota. Mr Gordon expressed gratitude to Dr Jaap Jacobs for comments received on the Motion and the Standing Committee had been happy to accept changes offered by Dr Jacobs. Revised wording for Motion 5 on the agenda had been provided to Synod members on their arrival at Synod. In essence, the Motion would allow the Standing Committee to determine the level of quota for the year in question at a level no greater than that applicable in the immediately preceding year.

Mr Gordon then proposed, and Dr John Ferguson-Smith (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That paragraph 2.2.6 of the Digest of Resolutions be deleted in its entirety and replaced by the following: –*

*“The Standing Committee shall consider the annual budgets prepared by the Boards and Committees of the General Synod and recommend the figure of Provincial Quota annually, the portion of such Quota to be requested from each Diocese and the manner of division of unrestricted provincial income among such Boards and Committees.*

*In the event that the General Synod does not agree the amount of Provincial Quota to be requested from Dioceses for a particular year, the Standing Committee shall have power to set the quota for such year at a figure no greater than that of quota requested for the year immediately preceding that particular year." "*

The Chair sought the consent of Synod to the withdrawal of Motion 5 as it appeared in the Synod agenda and its replacement with the alternative text which had been provided to Synod members on arrival at the meeting. Synod confirmed its consent.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 1 against.

## **SESSION 3: THE VERY REV SARAH MURRAY IN THE CHAIR**

### **3.1 Administration Board**

#### **3.1.1 Introduction**

Dr John Ferguson-Smith (Convener, Administration Board) introduced the session, his final one as Convener of the Board. He added his thanks to those already expressed by the Convener of the Standing Committee, to General Synod Office staff. The Synod had already heard from the Buildings Committee and he had been pleased that the provision for Building Grants had been continued and increased. The Retirement Housing Committee did not have a slot on the agenda for the current Synod because there were no particular matters of report.

#### **3.1.2 Rule 10 Motion – Ethical Investment**

The Secretary General explained that just before the current meeting had been constituted during the Eucharist, he had received the text of a Motion submitted under Rule 10 of the Rules of Order. He explained that the Assessor had confirmed that it would not be competent for the Synod to pass both the Rule 10 Motion and the Motion which appeared as Motion 6 on the agenda for Synod. Synod would in effect have to make a choice as between the two Motions. Under Rule 10, the mover of the new Motion, the Rev Diana Hall, would be given two minutes to explain why she considered Synod ought to bring her Motion onto the Synod agenda. The text of the Motion was as follows:

*"That:*

- The Ethical Investment Policy be updated to reflect the moral imperative to divest fully from fossil fuels and to extend the list of restricted categories for direct investments and pooled funds;*
- Pending agreement of a revised Ethical Investment Policy, the current Ethical Investment Policy be retained; and*

- *There be formed an Ethical Investment Advisory Group to develop a strategy to enable the SEC to completely disinvest from unethical sources of revenue.”*

The Rev Diana Hall (Edinburgh) then spoke to the Motion. She noted that Motion 6 on the agenda for Synod concerned financial stewardship and had a commendable aim to allow the Church to invest wisely and with due regard to moral and ethical responsibilities. It sought to allow investment in pooled funds which were good for financial risk profiles and financial returns. If passed, the Motion would make the Church's investments less, not more, ethical. That would be a dereliction of moral duty. Both the United Nations and the Scottish Parliament had confirmed that the world was in a climate emergency and the Church had a moral responsibility to respond. Synod had an opportunity to set the Church on a fresh path to support the environment as a prophetic voice. Her Motion sought to stop the Church investing in pooled investment funds and to initiate a review of the Ethical Investment Policy to follow the path of other denominations making positive steps including the United Reformed Church, the Church of Ireland and the Society of Friends by seeking to divest from fossil fuels. The Motion recognised the complexity of the task by establishing a group specifically to work on such matters. She invited Synod to vote against Motion 6 so that her alternative Motion could be proposed and passed for the good of the world.

### **3.1.3 Investment Committee**

Mr Adrian Tupper (Convener, Investment Committee) explained that the Committee oversaw the collective investment scheme known as the Unit Trust Pool. The General Synod was the largest investor in the fund and income from it accounted for approximately 65% of General Synod income. This allowed quota to be kept to current levels. Other investors included dioceses and congregations, united in the investment objective of growing the twice annual distribution. The Pension Fund was managed separately. The Committee comprised six investment professionals, all members of the Church, and was supported by General Synod Office staff and members of the Church in Society Committee were also invited to attend meetings. The Committee appointed investment managers, currently Baillie Gifford, to manage the Fund. The portfolio as a whole was split into three: Baillie Gifford's Long-Term Global Growth Fund (to provide capital growth), the Baillie Gifford Multi-Asset Income Fund (to produce income) and a third segment comprising direct investments managed on a "balanced" basis (Global Income Growth). As at 31 March 2019, the investments totalled £78.7 million and the return had been 11% up on the previous year (annualised return) after fees. In its oversight of the portfolio, the Committee considered a number of factors including quality of service, risk and cost. Over the years, Baillie Gifford had been reappointed on a number of occasions because they had always provided good service. They had been able to respond well to what the Church required. Given the intention to be able to distribute an ever-increasing distribution from the Fund, it was important that the investment return was not volatile. The Fund was a small one as far as institutional investments were concerned and it was not

always easy to achieve diversification at reasonable cost or even to access diverse investments at all. Consequently, use was made of pooled funds. This allowed access to investment strategies which would otherwise be beyond the reach of the Church. As a consequence of the long relationship with Baillie Gifford, the fees charged were very low for a fund the size of the UTP. A pooled fund competitor (and the Committee had talked to others) would charge perhaps double what was charged by Baillie Gifford for pooled funds and perhaps three times for direct investments. Lower fees meant a greater distribution to General Synod and other investors in the UTP. Generally speaking, the more complicated the investment mandate, the higher the fees would be.

The Committee also participated in the Church Investors Group which brought together 67 churches and similar organisations with over £21 billion of investments. It worked to bring change to companies through applying investment policies based on Christian ethical principles. Issues such as executive pay, modern slavery and climate change had been on the agenda and global corporations had been forced to change their policies.

Mr Tupper addressed the Motion being brought from the Committee as appeared on the Synod agenda. In 2018, he had indicated to Synod that the Committee would consult within the Church on views about proposals to move further funds into the Multi-Asset Income Fund. He had stressed that if that decision had been an investment one only, the Committee would have had no hesitation in taking it. However, the Committee had been aware that the Ethical Investment Policy applied only to direct investments and by investing wholly in pooled funds the policy would cease to have practical application. He had not felt comfortable about that. The results of the consultation were included in the report in the Synod papers. He thanked Malcolm Bett and Daphne Audsley for undertaking the consultation and compiling the feedback. The outcome was a split of opinion between following a purely investment-led approach on the one hand and, on the other, a desire to keep at least some part of the portfolio subject to the Ethical Investment Policy. In the light of the consultation the Committee had decided not to pursue the switch of investments into wholly pooled funds.

Mr Tupper explained that the current Ethical Investment Policy had been written before any pooled funds had been held and therefore did not cease to address such a situation. The challenge was therefore to apply the thinking on ethical investment to the new set of circumstances. At present, the policy prohibited direct investment in companies which held more than 15% (or in some cases more than 10%) of their revenue in certain sectors. In the draft policy contained in the Synod papers, the Committee suggested that the total exposure to companies generating income in excess of 15% in prohibited sectors should be limited to 1% of the total value of investments across the whole UTP. The current exposure of the UTP was 0.3%. Such a policy was broadly similar to that adopted by the Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group in relation to its use of pooled funds. The draft policy obligated the Church to ask questions about

holdings in pooled funds and thereby constituted a strengthening of the Ethical Investment Policy. The Motion allowed a degree of flexibility which might not in fact be needed but the Committee believed that investments could be structured to provide more stable returns, at lower risk and cost, if it was possible to find an acceptable way forward. The proposal was to seek approval from Standing Committee before committing to any particular switch of funds. Standing Committee would be able to consult whomever it considered appropriate, such as the Church in Society Committee and indeed the Investment Committee would wish them to do so.

Mr Tupper was aware of the Rule 10 Motion which had been brought. His concern with the proposal was that it left no flexibility whatsoever and it would mean continued exposure to an equity market with the risks associated with it, with no clear way out were market conditions to change. He was aware of only one pooled fund which adhered entirely to the restrictions contained in the existing Ethical Investment Policy. That fund would not provide the diversification which the Committee believed was necessary to meet the needs of General Synod and other investors. There were funds available which closely matched the Ethical Investment Policy and which could be considered. For the record, Mr Tupper confirmed that the Long-Term Global Growth Fund which represented approximately one third of the UTP was not ethically screened but did not hold any prohibited investments, nor was it likely to do so.

Dr John Ferguson-Smith then proposed, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That*

- the Ethical Investment Policy be updated to reflect the use of pooled funds whilst respecting the need to subject investments to ethical screening and reporting;*
- pending agreement of a revised Ethical Investment Policy the Investment Committee be permitted to transfer all or part of the current segregated ethically screened fund to appropriate pooled funds subject to Standing Committee’s approval of the policies of any proposed pooled funds.”*

In seconding the Motion, Bishop Swift suggested that the Motion represented a strengthening of the Ethical Investment Policy. However, if it were not to pass he believed that the Rule 10 Motion would provide a good opportunity for the Church to show leadership.

The Rev Professor David Atkinson (Aberdeen and Orkney) indicated that he agreed with much of what Mr Tupper had said and, as Convener of the Church in Society Committee, he commended the work done by the Investment Committee. It was important to recognise that the Church was a small investor which was why pooled funds needed to be used. The Church needed the income but there was also a need to be aware of the importance of expressing the Church's ethical principles and doing that through the Church's investments. Over the previous couple of years the

Church in Society Committee had been working with the Investment Committee to look at matters such as climate change and two years previously a new red line had been set in relation to thermal coals and tar sands. It was always difficult to justify why the ethical policy was applied only to 30% of the overall portfolio. Whilst that might seem like a slippery slope, he believed it was important to maintain the mix and this allowed red lines to be applied to the bespoke element of the portfolio. That assisted in the Church's membership of the Church Investors Group which had significant influence with major businesses. It was important to be able to maintain that stance and he believed that the Motion on the Synod agenda risked losing that stance because it reduced the requirements in relation to the current bespoke funds. It put significant responsibility in the hands of the Standing Committee. That Committee was very competent but it was very busy attending to a large range of matters and his concern was that it would not have the time to act as the ethics committee for the Church. The Standing Committee Report contained a section on risk management but it did not address reputational risk. That was of concern to him in relation to ethics. The multi-asset investment fund to which Mr Tupper had referred included a very large number of investments and assessing whether any of those involved a risk was very complicated. He therefore wished to propose that most of the Motion on the agenda be accepted but that it be altered so that any movement out of the bespoke funds should be subject to being wholly consistent with the red lines already set in the Ethical Investment Policy. That would therefore give rise to a difficulty in relation to the multi-asset investment vehicle because of its holding in British American Tobacco.

Professor Atkinson then proposed, and the Rev Nick Bowry (Aberdeen and Orkney) seconded, an amendment to the Motion so that it would read:

*"That*

- *The Ethical Investment Policy be updated to reflect the use of pooled funds whilst respecting the need to subject investments to ethical screening and reporting;*
- *Pending agreement of a revised Ethical Investment Policy the Investment Committee be permitted to transfer all or part of the current segregated ethically screened fund to appropriate pooled funds subject to those funds being totally compliant with current ethical restrictions."*

Mr Hugh Morison (Moray, Ross and Caithness) suggested that there was a need for flexibility provided that that could be justified within agreed ethical principles. He believed that the original Motion provided that flexibility whereas the proposed amendment did not. He would vote against the amendment.

Dr Jaap Jacobs (Breachin) expressed concern at the use of the word "current" in the amendment and considered that its effect might be too restrictive.

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) asked whether the Investment Committee agreed with the proposed amendment.

Mr Tupper opposed the amendment because he believed it would reduce flexibility.

The amendment was put to the vote but not carried. Synod then proceeded to debate the Motion as set out in the Synod agenda.

The Rev Diana Hall (Edinburgh) spoke against the Motion. She wished to thank the Administration Board and Investment Committee for their hard work and stewardship. Good stewardship was imperative but also difficult. She did not wish to tear down but rather to find a way to help build up. The draft Ethical Investment Policy was framed in a way to make it seem reasonable. However, if it were to be reframed it was tantamount to indicating that it was acceptable to make money out of armaments, gambling, pornography, thermal coal and tar sands. She asked the Synod whether it was happy for the Church's income to be based on such things. This was the year in which a 16-year-old had acquired sufficient legitimacy to address Parliament and, indeed the Pope, on the reality that the world was facing a climate emergency. The policy left the Church in dereliction of its moral duty and she was deeply grieved by it. The house was on fire and it was imperative to act now. Three things were needed: divestment, a more rigorous Ethical Investment Policy and the right help to achieve it. The Church needed to do its part to ensure that fossil fuels stayed in the ground. There was a need for rigorous, courageous and prophetic policy-making because collective action was needed to address the current emergency. If the Church's current investment advisers could not provide the assistance which the Church needed then there was a need for new ones. Allowing pooled funds would fan the flames of the fire not douse them. There was an opportunity to do better and it was imperative that that happened. She urged Synod to vote against the Motion.

The Rev David Mackenzie Mills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) also invited Synod to oppose the Motion. In Genesis, God said that creation was good and then stewardship was given to humankind which had not done a good job. He was in no way innocent of the part he played in using fossil fuels but he recognised a corporate responsibility on Synod to join its voice with others highlighting the catastrophic emergency currently faced. There was a need not just to reduce reliance on fossil fuels but to quench the world's thirst to have more. He hoped his children would inherit a world which was as good as the current generation could make it. In revising its Ethical Investment Policy, the SEC had a very public opportunity and duty to speak and act prophetically in caring for the beauty and health of the Earth including divesting completely from fossil fuels. If investment in pooled funds were to continue the list of exclusions needed to be expanded.

Dr Jenny Wright (Edinburgh) spoke against the Motion because it appeared to maintain the *status quo*. How the Church used its money and the documents comprising an ethical policy made a statement to the world



about what the Church believed and the values it upheld. In encouraging discipleship she encouraged people to think about how faith affected the whole of life, including finances. As a priest, she preached about justice and walking humbly with God in all areas of life. Holding investments could not come at the cost of theology and ethics. Money was important but one could not think only about maximising profits. Two of the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion were to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation and also to strive and safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the Earth. She indicated she would like to see a more radical investment plan, guided by such marks of mission. There was a need to invest using negative criteria but also using positive criteria choosing good, ethical, change-making companies to invest in. There was a need to take seriously human rights abuses and invest in companies that were sensitive to the communities in which they operated, that had responsible employment practices and that treated suppliers and customers fairly. There was also a need to divest from fossil fuels. She asked for a longer list of investment exclusions, thinking particularly about challenging unjust structures in society. The investment plan should be consistent with good stewardship. Christians were called to be wise in dealing with what God had entrusted to them and she prayed that God could give the Church courage to put its money where its faith was.

The Rev David Paton-Williams (Edinburgh) also spoke against the Motion. Context was changing rapidly. Two years previously Synod had had a debate about divestments from fossil fuels. Two years was a long time in the current context and one now talked not of climate change but of climate emergency. Would someone reading the ethical policy in the future have any sense that now was a time of climate emergency? He questioned whether the policy was fit for purpose. He accepted that it was in line with the Synod's debate two years previously. Protection of the planet was perhaps the greatest call to mission in the current age. He did not wish to say to his grandchildren that his stipend and pension were paid for at the cost of the planet. He was disappointed that the policy did not go further than excluding thermal coals and tar sands. For example, it appeared from the policy that the Church was happy to invest in those who undertook fracking or drilled for oil under the Arctic. He asked whether any specific discussions had taken place in the light of the concerns previously expressed about fracking and, given the policy of shareholder engagement, had any consideration been given to such policy being conditional and time-limited? He had in mind the Church of England policy of signalling to oil and gas companies that if they did not bring their policies in line with the Paris Accord by 2023 they would then divest. He believed the SEC should do the same.

Mr Jim Gibson (Glasgow and Galloway) supported the Motion. "Ethics" essentially meant "sacrifice". He was reminded of the Christian Aid slogan "live simply that others may simply live". Whilst he would prefer that the Church held direct investments over which it could exercise control, he also wondered whether individuals gave the same degree of scrutiny to their personal investments or pensions. There could be a risk of hypocrisy.

Ethical investment was a minefield – in addition to the restricted categories, he suggested there were other fields such as companies involved in the production of plastics, products which led to food obesity, companies which had exorbitant executive salaries, Wonga loans, Amazon etc. How wide ought the Ethical Investment Policy to be? He was concerned that there was as yet no track record of the existing ethical policy. The whole debate indicated that levels of giving in the Church needed to be reviewed. The distribution from the UTP already included an element of capital growth and in that sense the family silver was already being sold in order to prop up the work of the Synod.

Mr Robert MacDonald (Argyll and The Isles) said that the argument in favour of the Motion was based on investment criteria. He believed that it was mistaken to view asset classes such as property or infrastructure (as would be included in the Multi-Asset Income pooled fund) as less volatile classes. They were also significantly less marketable. He was surprised to hear that corporate bonds were being regarded as an inappropriate investment. He suggested that a fund such as the Unit Trust Pool would normally have an element of the fund in investment grade corporate bonds partly because if investing on an ethical basis Government stocks might not be appropriate, on the basis that governments funded armaments and wars. He reminded Synod that the Church of England Church Commissioners had encountered trouble in the 1990s when they had been unable to meet their pension fund liabilities because of direct property investment. He opposed the Motion on investment criteria grounds.

Mr Grant Swain (Moray, Ross and Caithness) considered that he had been hijacked. Prior to Synod, he had intended to vote in favour of the Motion but the debate at Synod suggested there was an underlying swell for a completely new policy. He would be happy to consider that the following year, once he had had a chance to read prior paperwork. In effect Synod was being faced with a choice of that which was no worse than currently appertained and a radical Rule 10 Motion which had appeared at the last minute. He considered this grossly unfair. He would therefore support the Motion on the agenda and suggested that an investment policy be considered for discussion the following year.

Dr Julia House (Aberdeen and Orkney) suggested that change was always frightening. An ethical approach was what the Church did – there was no choice in the matter. However, she took issue with the comment that £74 million was a small amount of money. There were other churches in religious organisations which would have a similar approach to the SEC and it would be possible to work with them. She wondered if there was an attempt to avoid a full review because much had changed recently in terms of the availability of ethical funds. It was important not to be afraid of standing up for principles because that was what Church did.

The Rev Markus Duenzkofer (Edinburgh) had two points of order. He hoped the Secretary General would explain procedurally to the Synod how the choice between the two Motions was to be dealt with. Also, he

suggested a short recess since he considered it would be helpful for Synod members to talk with one another rather than at one another.

The Secretary General explained that Synod would be asked to vote on the Motion contained on the Synod agenda. If that were passed, because the Rule 10 Motion contradicted it, the Rule 10 Motion would then not be put to the vote. If the Motion contained in the Synod agenda were to fall, then Synod could proceed to debate the Rule 10 Motion. Initially, however, Synod would need to agree under Rule 10 that it wished to bring that Motion onto the agenda.

Dr John Ferguson-Smith indicated that he would invite Mr Tupper to respond to points which had been made. As a general comment, he observed that the subject was one which raised real emotion. Everyone shared that. Those responsible for oversight of investments came from the same position. If Synod wished to do something different from what was proposed in the Motion on the Synod agenda, he suggested that that needed to be done in a measured way and not in a sudden way because a sudden movement might result in a significant financial penalty.

Mr Tupper responded to comments which had been made. On the subject of fracking, the Committee had not specifically discussed this. The main company involved in fracking was INEOS which was a private company in which it would not be possible to hold shares. He was not convinced that the portfolio as a whole in fact held any shares in fossil fuels anyway. As far as disinvesting was concerned, selling shares to another investor did not in fact stop extraction albeit it created headlines. It was correct that the Multi-Asset Income Fund did not have a track record but it comprised an encapsulation of a number of investment strategies which Baillie Gifford already had in place. In the absence of these being packaged into one fund, the UTP would not have had access to those separate strategies. He accepted that property and infrastructure had risks associated with them but the point of diversification was so that the investor was not dependent on one single class of asset at any one time. The Fund Managers would only choose assets which they would reasonably believe they could dispose of if necessary. On the question of income and capital, it was correct that part of the distribution came from capital. It did not amount to raiding the family silver but was part of a strategy adopted a number of years previously recognising that the investment return included both capital and income. If the Fund were invested in the Multi-Asset Income Fund the income would be sufficient to fund the distribution. If there were an ethical version of that Fund, the Investment Committee would have no hesitation in investing in it. The Committee was encouraging Baillie Gifford to bring such a fund to the market. The Committee had spent 12 months putting the paperwork together for the current Synod. He had not seen any analysis of the effects of the Rule 10 Motion such as how much it would cost or the risks associated with moving to a different manager. He would wish to see workings on that before making any informed comment. He suggested that the increase in fees which the approach might involve might result in a drop in the distribution of approximately 20%. The Committee spoke to other reputable investment houses frequently and "beauty

parades” were conducted from time to time. He was in touch with one alternative investment house at the current time but in all cases management fees that would be charged would be higher and the Committee needed to satisfy itself that any alternative house would offer something over and above what was currently provided.

The Chair invited members of Synod to discuss matters in their table groups for five minutes.

The Rev Diana Hall (Edinburgh) asked what would happen to existing holdings in pooled funds if the Motion on the Synod agenda were to be rejected and her Rule 10 Motion accepted. Her understanding was that it would make no current difference, the Motion would not require disinvestment from pooled funds immediately but rather the door would be opened to indicate that such matters were to be looked at again.

The Chair then put the Motion to the vote which was not passed.

The Secretary General indicated that if Synod wished to debate the Rule 10 Motion, a two thirds majority was required to bring the Motion onto the agenda.

Synod then voted by the requisite majority to debate the Rule 10 Motion.

The Rev Diana Hall (Edinburgh) spoke to her Rule 10 Motion. Knowledge of the climate crisis was constantly increasing. Greta Thunberg had become the face of a new generation of activists. Young people, who were more or less absent from the current Synod meeting, were angry for other generations dragging their feet. She felt embarrassed and apologetic. However, it was not only young people pressing the issue. David Attenborough's call had been heard far and wide to the effect that the scientific evidence suggested that if dramatic action were not taken within the following decade irreversible damage to the natural world could result. Other churches had already taken action: the United Reformed Church, the Church of Ireland and the Religious Society of Friends. She urged the Scottish Episcopal Church to join them. If there was to be any hope of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 there was a need to wean society off oil and gas rapidly. People outside the Church were asking where the Church's moral values were. In the meantime, oil and gas companies continued to grow their core business while saying they respected the Paris Accord. Continuing to invest in fossil fuels meant the Church was actively contributing to climate chaos. Members of the Church were taking personal action in relation to their own carbon footprint but it was clear that collective action was needed and quickly. The Motion allowed the Synod an opportunity to stand up and be counted. It was time for the Church to put its money where its mouth was. She recognised that it was a complex area which was why the Motion proposed specialist attention from those with investment and ethical expertise. She had received a comment that the Motion was unspecific in terms of timescales and mechanisms. That was acceptable because those who would take on the responsibility needed flexibility in undertaking the work.

Ms Hall then formally proposed the following Motion:

*"That:*

- *The Ethical Investment Policy be updated to reflect the moral imperative to divest fully from fossil fuels and to extend the list of restricted categories for direct investments and pooled funds;*
- *Pending agreement of a revised Ethical Investment Policy, the current Ethical Investment Policy be retained; and*
- *There be formed an Ethical Investment Advisory Group to develop a strategy to enable the SEC to completely disinvest from unethical sources of revenue."*

The Rev David Mackenzie Mills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) seconded the Motion and thanked Ms Hall for bringing it.

Mr Grant Swain (Moray, Ross and Caithness) suggested that if the Motion were to go forward it ought also to include reference to palm oil as an excluded category.

Dr Jaap Jacobs (Breachin) noted that the first and third parts of the Motion used different wording. In one place it referred to fossil fuels whereas in another it referred to unethical sources of revenue. Also, it did not include the list of excluded categories contained in the draft Ethical Investment Policy. He therefore wished to suggest that the Motion should make reference to the other excluded categories of armaments, gambling, pornography, tobacco, fossil fuels and palm oil. The Chair advised Dr Jacobs that if he was proposing a formal amendment it would need to be seconded. Mr Grant Swain (Moray, Ross and Caithness) seconded the amendment. The Chair requested a copy of the proposed amendment in writing.

Dr Beth Routledge (Glasgow and Galloway) urged the Synod to vote in favour of the Motion. She supported the idea of expanding the investment policy by disinvesting from other unethical practices, for example, companies practising tax avoidance or child exploitation. Mainly, however, she wished to reassure those members of Synod who were concerned about the level of financial returns. If a rigorous ethical approach were to be adopted the Church might lose money but the tide of the world was turning. Businesses were increasingly aware that they needed to conduct their businesses ethically. If the tide had not quite turned thus far and there was more work to do then it was for the Church to be a living, radical and prophetic voice for change. She wondered whether 200 years previously the Synod would have debated the ethics of investing in companies which made their money through the use of slaves. It was her hope that in a further 200 years investments in companies which mined fossil fuels, made their money from tobacco or which exploited children would be equally unthinkable.

Ms Victoria Stock (Edinburgh) said the matter was one of integrity. If people said they were Christians, they needed to act as Christians. Without justice there would be chaos. She urged Synod vote in favour of the Motion.

Mr Euan Grant (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) wished to draw a distinction between symbolic action and action likely to have an effect in terms of the climate emergency. This had been alluded to by Mr Tupper earlier. The value of the Motion in symbolic terms was self-evident but it was much less clear what effect it would have, on the basis that much greater leverage on the affairs of an oil company could be achieved by a consortium of shareholders.

The Rev Liz Baker (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) reflected on what the Synod would say to congregations. In her experience, congregations were reluctant to disinvest. There was a greater emphasis on cash than on the Kingdom. She urged Synod to support the Motion.

The Rev Markus Duenzkofer (Edinburgh) said he had spoken at Synod two years previously about active engagement with stock companies. He suggested that experience since then suggested that they would not listen and he believed the only way forward was to disinvest.

The Rev Dr Jenny Wright (Edinburgh) said she understood that the proposed amendment was to include a list of currently restricted investments. She suggested that the current Ethical Investment Policy already included such a list (with the exception of palm oil). She considered that the amendment was not necessary. Dr Jacobs withdrew his amendment.

The Chair put the Motion to the vote which was passed by majority.

#### **3.1.4 Child Allowance**

Dr John Ferguson-Smith (Convener, Administration Board) explained that the proposal in relation to child allowance emerged from the work of the Clergy Remuneration Package Review Group in 2016. At present, child allowance was potentially payable in relation to children under 16 or, if in full-time education, under 21. That upper limit was now regarded as somewhat arbitrary and it was proposed that it be reduced to 18. The number of cases to which the issue referred was in fact very small. A transitional period would allow those currently in expectation of receiving the allowance in respect of children under 21 to continue to receive it.

Dr Ferguson-Smith then proposed, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That*

- *paragraph 4.3.2 of the Digest of Resolutions be deleted in its entirety and the insertion in its place of the following:-*

“Child Allowances shall be paid annually at a rate set by the Administration Board. They shall be paid on behalf of all qualifying children of all qualifying stipendiary clergy of the Scottish Episcopal Church who apply for such allowances. The allowances shall be paid in February (or when claimed, if later) in the year following that to which they relate. Payment shall be made to the Paying Officer of the parent concerned. Qualifying children and stipendiary clergy shall be such children and stipendiary clergy respectively as meet criteria set from time to time by the Administration Board.”

- *notwithstanding the foregoing, for the purposes of child allowances payable in 2020, 2021 and 2022, child allowances shall continue to be payable to qualifying stipendiary clergy who are currently in receipt of child allowance in respect of children under 21 in full-time education.”*

The Rev Peter Harris (Edinburgh) declared an interest in the matter as his son was due to go to college later in the year and he had been supported year on year by grants from the Sons of the Clergy and the provincial child allowance. The child allowance had been useful as a contribution towards clothing for his children in the past and he wished to thank the Board for its availability. He queried the rationale for the proposed change. If children were under 21 and in education they were being asked to take on loans and enter into debt. £425 would not make a significant difference but, as a parent, made him feel supported.

The Rev Liz Baker (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) sought clarification. She recalled that her daughter had previously received child benefit until the age of 21 being in full-time education. She was not sure whether that still applied. A Synod member confirmed that that no longer applied.

Dr Ferguson-Smith noted the points which had been made.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 4 abstentions.

## **3.2 Faith and Order Board**

### **3.2.1 Canonical Review Group**

The Most Rev Dr Mark Strange (Convener, Faith and Order Board) reported on the work of the Canonical Review Group. The Group was continuing its consideration of Canons 53, 54, 64 and 65. The Group had met four times since General Synod 2018 and further meetings were planned. The intention was to complete the work in time for the Committee on Canons to take forward recommendations from the Group to bring a first reading of canonical change to Synod 2020.

### **3.2.2 Doctrine Committee**

The Rev Professor David Jasper (Convener, Doctrine Committee) reported that 18 months previously SCM Press had asked the Doctrine Committee if it would undertake work on the subject of truth and post-truth in the current age. A series of essays entitled "Truth and the Church in a Secular Age", written by some members of the Committee as well as other authors, had been compiled. It was to be published in July 2019. The essays had been edited by Dr Jenny Wright and himself. They were not intended to take a "position" but to engender discussion on truth and post-truth from a range of perspectives – theological, philosophical, pastoral, scientific, spiritual, liturgical and cultural. The writers were all worshipping members of the SEC and all believed absolutely in the necessity of truth however that was to be understood.

Following upon previous work on the authority of the episcopate, the Committee had embarked on a wider project on the theology and authority of ministry in the SEC. That included lay ministry and the Committee was working closely with the Diaconate Working Group. The work would emerge either as an issue of the SEI Journal or possibly as a Grosvenor Essay. It would provide theological reflection on ministry, not doctrinal statements. It was not intended that the exercise would reinvent the wheel.

Along with Dr Wright, he had attended a meeting of the Church in Society Working Group on genome editing. The Committee was also working with the Liturgy Committee on the revision of the 1982 Liturgy. It was also involved in a proposed conference in 2020 on issues of gender and language as a preparation for that liturgical revision. This would include consideration of how much of the Church's liturgy which was deeply patriarchal and needed to be looked at. As an example, he indicated that theologically it was perfectly acceptable to say that God was "made man" but whether that was culturally so comfortable was another question. Such matters needed to be given proper attention in liturgical language.

Professor Jasper reminded Synod that the Doctrine Committee advised the Faith and Order Board. It was not a representative Committee but nevertheless strove to include a range of church personship, age and gender as far as possible. Members of the Committee did not always agree.

Questions were invited but there were none.

### **3.2.3 Liturgy Committee**

Dr John Davies (Convener, Liturgy Committee) presented the work of his Committee. A new printing of the Scottish Liturgy 1982, incorporating the permitted changes relating to gendered language, was being prepared and would be presented to the Board in August 2019. In addition, the Board had commissioned the Liturgy Committee to produce a completely revised Eucharistic Liturgy by 2024. As part of that process, a scholarly conversation on the principles of liturgical reform would be aired in a special



issue of the Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal. The Committee was additionally involved in the process of organising an academic conference to address the wider possibilities and implications of gender in relation to liturgical reform. Whilst it might be thought that gender differences in the liturgical life of the Christian churches had become significant only in recent years, scholarship demonstrated how such differences had always mattered profoundly. Work on this topic was being done in the Episcopal Church, the Church of England and in Sweden. All of this was important because the Church was first of all a worshipping community of all of the baptised with the Eucharist at its heart.

Growth and change were signs of life and renewal was the means by which such growth and change came about. In one sense, the Church could only be renewed through its liturgy since it was through the liturgy, and baptism and Eucharist most precisely, that the Church was made and existed. The liturgy led and impelled the Church in mission. Liturgical formation and renewal therefore had to be the foundations for mission and growth. Only with the Eucharist as the centre of the life of the Church could the love of God reach beyond the act of worship and into the everyday life of the world. Done right, the liturgy showed the Church how to see the world, how to live in it and was therefore for the transformation of the world.

Comment was invited but there was none.

## **SESSION 4: THE RT REV IAN PATON, BISHOP OF ST ANDREWS, DUNKELD AND DUNBLANE IN THE CHAIR**

### **4.1 Administration Board – Personnel Committee**

Dr John Ferguson-Smith (Convener, Administration Board) introduced Ms Jan Whiteside as the new Convener of the Personnel Committee. He expressed thanks to Ms Whiteside and her Committee for what had been achieved in the previous 12 months.

Ms Whiteside suggested that Synod 2018 had demonstrated that the Committee had not been listening carefully enough. In October 2018, she and other members of the Committee had met with a number of Synod members who had spoken during the Personnel Committee session at Synod 2018. There had been two particular outcomes from that meeting. The first had been an undertaking to go to the Administration Board and seek a review of clergy stipends, pension and housing. The second had been to identify what issues were of most concern to clergy. A Clergy Wellbeing Survey had been undertaken, the results of which were printed in the Synod papers. Anonymity had been guaranteed and the results had been analysed externally by the HR Department, an external consultancy firm that provided HR support to the Church. Specific comments which had been made by individuals in response to the Survey had not been included in the report to Synod in order to respect anonymity.

The results of the Survey had perhaps not been too surprising. It was encouraging that 82% of stipendiary clergy enjoyed their ministry as did 88% of the Church's self-supporting clergy.

Clergy had been concerned about stipend in a time of rising costs as well as pension provision and housing. The Administration Board had asked the Personnel Committee to suggest to the Board at its following meeting how a review of such matters might be undertaken. Any such review would take time and the outcome was unlikely to please everyone but she considered that it was nevertheless a significant step in the right direction.

Other responses to the Survey suggested that whilst most clergy considered they were given the resources needed to carry out their calling, some did not. Some felt they had not been adequately supported during a period of illness and many felt they did not have a work/life balance. Many did not claim all of their expenses and she encouraged clergy to recover such expenses so that the charge and diocese could be aware of overall costs. Clergy could always make donations back to the Church.

Sadly, whilst bullying and harassment might take place in any organisation, the statistics from the Survey were shocking particularly for a church which prided itself on being welcoming and inclusive. It questioned people's understanding of what constituted Christian behaviour. Ultimately, this was a problem of discipline and such issues fell under the pastoral authority of the Bishops. However, the problem was not just one for the College of Bishops nor just for the clergy nor just for the laity – it was a whole Church problem and would not be solved easily or quickly. Representatives of the Committee would meet with the College of Bishops to discuss matters later in the month. If the Church acknowledged that there was an issue needing to be addressed then it was essential that ways be found to address it. The Church could not and should not continue to ignore it and such practices had to be stopped.

Ms Whiteside suggested that as a matter of good governance there was a need for an anti-bullying strategy. The Personnel Committee was just at the start of a process and she was open to suggestions which Synod members might wish to make. It might be necessary to find out in greater detail what clergy meant when they said they felt bullied or harassed. Workshops, focus groups or a further survey might be appropriate. Every part of the Church needed to understand that such practices were not acceptable and would not be tolerated. Evidence in other churches suggested that the SEC was not alone and there might therefore be merit in exploring with Anglican and ecumenical partners how such matters were addressed in other churches. She encouraged members to talk with her, any such conversations being treated in the strictest confidence.

The Rev David Mackenzie Mills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) noted the anniversary of the election of Bishop Paton as the new Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane and one element in his presentation during the election had been that of speaking truth to power. Mr Mackenzie Mills thanked the Committee for its report on clergy welfare which provided material for considered and sober thought. He wondered why others in ministry, particularly lay readers, had not been included in the Survey. Speaking truth to power meant speaking to the institution which all those at Synod had inherited. He referred to a friend who was involved in strike action in their workplace over a requirement to work six days per week. That was seen as a possible cause for industrial action. On page 121 of the Synod papers he noted that a significant percentage of clergy had

indicated that they did not have a good work/life balance. He suggested that clergy were too polite, or perhaps too proud, to admit that the bar chart appearing in section 7.1 on page 124 was not in fact accurate and that far more clergy felt they spent "far too much time" rather than "a bit too much time" working and not enough at home/at leisure. He suspected clergy spouses and partners would agree. He was reminded of comments by a retired minister whose children indicated that where there was a struggle in relation to time allocation between work and home life, it was always the Church which won. Clergy could boast about how little time off they took and that could be a catalyst for breakdown.

Ms Victoria Stock (Edinburgh) said it was unacceptable that 39% of stipendiary clergy had felt harassed or bullied in the previous 12 months. This was a whole Church problem. If clergy were affected by bullying, she wondered to what extent lay workers in the Church also experienced bullying. She suspected that they did. There was a need to appreciate the significant contribution which the laity brought to the life of the Church and what policies and procedures were in place to protect lay people. She wished to make a plea that the position of lay people was considered even if it fell outwith the strict remit of the work of the Personnel Committee.

Dr Beth Routledge (Glasgow and Galloway) wished to comment on the question of clergy time off. She worked in a profession which had a high level of staff burnout and poor levels of staff wellbeing. There were similarities with the Church. The bar charts on page 122 of the report concerning the taking of time off, holiday entitlement and level of stress gave her cause for concern. She found it alarming that almost one quarter of stipendiary clergy did not generally take one day off per week. She was not sure how a person who was in effect the sole employee could continue functioning if they were not able to take adequate time for rest. Similarly, in relation to the statistics for time taken off for sickness or ill-health (in relation to both stipendiary and self-supporting clergy), she suggested the Personnel Committee should consider how many clergy needed to take time off for ill-health but felt unable to do so. Resilience was not about how long one could keep going but about having the necessary structures in place to support clergy. The figure suggested that such structures were not present in the Church.

The Rev Denise Herbert (Brechin) reported that she had experienced bullying both in South Africa and in Scotland. She wondered if the Survey had been sent to active retired clergy since she had not seen a copy but accepted that she may have missed it. [Post meeting note: retired clergy were included in the Survey.] She felt that retired clergy were not given sufficient acknowledgement. She wondered how many clergy were living on their own and how many were living in families or supported by spouses or partners. She lived on her own and her family did not live locally and therefore could not provide local support.

The Rev Canon Kathy Collins (Moray, Ross and Caithness) thanked the Committee for undertaking the Survey. If the question of bullying was to be addressed, she suggested that the Society of Mary and Martha (Sheldon) might be approached because they had experience in that area.

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) also thanked the Committee for having undertaken the Survey. He agreed with the Convener that

the Church had to say that the kind of behaviour which had been identified could not be tolerated. Unfortunately, it had been tolerated. He suggested that some of the problems might result from the structures of the Church. He believed that members of the episcopate might be able to help but the issue raised questions about episcopate itself and how it was exercised within the Church. Also, he noted that the figure concerning bullying and harassment referred to the preceding 12 months. He considered there was a need to take a longer view. Nearly 20 years previously he had spoken to the Synod about bullying which he had received within the Church's training structures and of abusive relationships that had existed then amongst staff. That speech had not been minuted. Was it the case that saying such things in Synod could now be recorded because he suggested that the fact that they had not been in the past might be part of the reason for the present situation?

The Rev Ruth Innes (Edinburgh) said that she would have appreciated seeing a statistical breakdown of the results on a gender basis to ascertain whether there was a difference between men and women. Also, if another survey were to be undertaken online, she wished to point out that the previous survey had not allowed respondents to see what the future questions were and nor was it possible to go back in the survey and change what had been said previously.

The Rev Dr David Easton (Methodist Church) congratulated the Church on being concerned about ministerial welfare. He believed there was a profound issue about boundaries for clergy between "work" and "play". For lay people involved in the Church, their involvement was not their "work". The boundary for clergy was very blurred. There was also much "loneliness" in ministry which could affect wellbeing partly because clergy worked on their own and from home. There also remained an expectation that clergy were omniscient. He suggested that the Church might wish to consider having a provincial wellbeing officer or a clear policy on sabbaticals. There was such an officer in the Methodist Church and there was a policy of a three-month sabbatical for every seven years served.

The Rev Peter Harris (Edinburgh) believed that the issues being discussed were related to the fact that clergy were called rather than employed. He also spoke about the lack of boundaries between work and leisure time – for example, if at the local swimming pool he became involved in a lengthy conversation with a parishioner. As a belittled, bullied, intimidated rector he felt that the Church's Canons offered him no protection. He had encouraged his church to prepare a code of conduct to set out how vestry members ought to behave. He found it unbelievable that such a course of action was needed. It was possible that such a code of conduct needed to be introduced across the board.

The Rev Rosie Addis (Edinburgh) noted that later in the meeting the Synod would consider a report on safeguarding. Safeguarding recognised that at some point any person could be vulnerable. There was a connection between that and the issues being discussed in the current debate.

The Rev Sophia Marriage (Edinburgh) congratulated the Committee on a good first step. She felt it was not just a case of saying "the Church needs to do X". She agreed with Provost Holdsworth that there was a need to consider structures. She had been particularly worried by the implication from the report that 75% of

stipendiary clergy did not feel supported by their diocese/bishop and ministerial colleagues. That was a matter for urgent attention.

Mrs Ruth Warmer (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) said that there was an existing structure for support, namely that of rector's warden. That should be drawn to the attention of vestries.

Ms Whiteside responded to comments which had been made. At the outset the Committee had considered the scope of the Survey and had decided that the issue needed to be approached "bite by bite" which was why the exercise had commenced with a clergy survey. On the question of a six-day working week she had already recognised whether that was a matter which needed to be considered. On the subject of health, there was an issue as to how to enable clergy to indicate that they were not well enough to be "at work". The Survey did not address whether clergy were living on their own or the degree of family support available. There had been a need to keep the Survey relatively succinct. She recognised that the question of gender breakdown of the figures had not been undertaken. She recognised that joined up thinking with safeguarding was needed. She thanked the Synod generally for its comments.

Ms Whiteside then spoke to the two Motions from the Committee on the General Synod agenda. It had been clear from debate at General Synod 2018 that lengthy policies were not the best way to proceed. However, the Committee was keen that clergy ought to be entitled to benefits equivalent to some of the statutory benefits available to employees. The Synod papers explained the proposal in detail and the first Motion would incorporate the proposal into the Digest of Resolutions. The second Motion was to empower the Administration Board to make grants to assist congregations where they incurred additional costs associated with such benefits.

Dr John Ferguson-Smith (Convener, Administration Board) proposed, and the Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Digest of Resolutions be altered by the addition of a paragraph 6.12 as follows:-*

“Stipendiary office holders shall be entitled to maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave for the same periods and subject to the same conditions as apply in the case of an employee under the Employment Rights Act 1996 or any regulations made under that Act. Where a stipendiary office holder is statutorily entitled to maternity or adoption pay, it shall be paid at the level of standard stipend for 22 weeks and, for the following 17 weeks, at the rate of 90% of standard stipend or the standard rate set by the Government (whichever is the lower).”

The Rev Jenny Wright (Edinburgh) expressed thanks for the Motions. She noted that maternity and adoption pay were specifically mentioned. She wondered whether consideration was given to the question of shared parental leave so that pay could be given in accordance with the statutory provision. Ms Whiteside

responded that the intention was that clergy would have access to similar benefits to employees.

The Rev Canon Jane Ross (Glasgow and Galloway) welcomed the Motion but was concerned about the reference to the fact that for the final 17 weeks the rate of maternity/adoption pay was to be at 90% of stipend or the standard rate set by the Government or whichever was the lower. She thought it ought to be whichever was the higher.

The Rev John Bremner (United Reformed Church) suggested that the Motion should be changed so that it referred not simply to the Employment Rights Act 1996 but to future legislation also.

Dr Beth Routledge (Glasgow and Galloway) was concerned at the reference to Standard Stipend rather than to average earnings. She wondered how it would be applied if, for example, a Bishop wished to take maternity leave. Ms Whiteside confirmed that the intention was that clergy, including Bishops, would receive equivalent benefits to employees.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 4 abstentions.

Dr Ferguson-Smith then proposed, and the Rev Amanda Fairclough seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Digest of Resolutions be altered by the deletion of the existing paragraph 4.3.3 and the insertion in its place of the following:-*

*“The Administration Board shall make provision for grants to be payable to assist congregations towards additional costs incurred by congregations in situations where they make payment to clergy of maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental pay.”*”

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) noted that the proposal made reference to grants to assist congregations. Whilst he did not wish to complicate matters, he noted that if a Bishop were to go on maternity leave then assistance to a diocese might be necessary. Ms Whiteside confirmed that the intention would be to cover a situation of Bishops as well as other clergy.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 2 abstentions.

The Chair expressed thanks to Ms Whiteside.

The Chair also expressed the thanks of the Synod to Dr Ferguson-Smith for his term as Convener of the Administration Board.

## **4.2 Information and Communication Board**

The Rev Philip Blackledge (Acting Convener, Information and Communication Board) indicated that he had shortened his speech because the Synod programme was running behind schedule. He referred to the paper contained in the Synod papers concerning the dissolution of the Information and Communication Board. In essence, the proposal was to dissolve the Board

because it did not do anything. It was an editorial board for a magazine that no longer existed. There had been two main issues which had arisen when he had attended Diocesan Synods earlier in the year, namely what would replace the Board and how would the voices of the dioceses be heard in future. In one sense, an editorial board for a magazine which no longer existed did not in fact need replacing. However, there was a strong need for communications to work better along with the desire for stronger diocesan input. The proposal in the paper was that instead of having a provincial group of people, those diocesan individuals involved in communications would be brought together, diocese by diocese and, rather than imposing a provincial structure on them, the proposal would enable them to have input into provincial work. Encouraging diocesan workers to work together ought to prevent dioceses needing to reinvent the wheel, would enable bigger projects to be done on an inter-diocesan level, would save time and allow them to share expertise and work with provincial staff when they felt it useful to do so. In terms of dioceses improving their communications for mission, the proposal would make things better because there would be input into the paid provincial staff and there was a hope that in some way they would be connected into the Mission Board so that ideas emerging within that inter-diocesan group could be taken up through the Board to Standing Committee, in so far as matters affected provincial strategy. This would not make things perfect but it might make them better. Such matters could in fact be pursued already. This would not be a replacement of the Board, because the Board did not really do anything, but it would serve the mission of the Church. The Board currently served no purpose for the Church's mission which was why its dissolution was being proposed.

The Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) proposed the following Motion:

*“That the amended text for Canon 52, Section 23 be read for the second time.”*

Bishop Swift indicated that he proposed the Motion as a member of the Information and Communication Board. The effectiveness of the Board had not been a suitable return on the investment of time, people and money. Dissolution of the Board did not mean that communications did not matter, quite the opposite. The proposal was to try and make communication better. He urged Synod to support the Motion.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) seconded the Motion.

The Chair indicated that owing to the late running of the agenda he intended to restrict those contributing to two minutes per person.

Mr Jim Gibson (Glasgow and Galloway) noted that in the past companies had had electronic data processing departments. They had worked in isolation and were called upon when specialist help was needed. Times had moved on and all employees now needed to be familiar with the basics of how computers worked but there was still a need for specialist assistance from time to time. He considered there was an analogy with the situation regarding the Information and Communication Board. The paradigm had shifted and the role for which the Board had previously been set up no longer existed. He urged Synod to support the Motion.

Ms Victoria Stock (Edinburgh) on a point of order asked that the matter be given longer consideration because it was an important one and if there was insufficient time at the current point in the meeting she suggested Synod might return to it later. The Chair responded that he wished to keep the debate going in the current session but would be generous in his time allocation.

Ms Stock said she considered the reasons for the proposed dissolution were valid but she was concerned that Synod appeared to be moving very quickly from identifying the problem to providing a solution in a single step. She considered there were other options. The Board could have a role in looking at different possibilities for the future. She accepted that communications had changed and was no longer publications-based. Everyone was now online and connected. This affected how people related to one another and impacted on people's identity. Being in the digital age was more than simply being able to use a website or run a social media account. The digital world was profoundly different from a book or the printed press. She therefore proposed that the future focus of the Board should take a more digital focus and that instead of drawing on geographical representation on the Board it should comprise those with experience in the digital area and who were theologically grounded. She considered that losing the Board would weaken communications and that neither the Mission Board nor the Standing Committee would have communications as their sole purpose (unlike a board). She encouraged Synod to think with creativity and oppose the Motion.

The Rev Professor David Atkinson (Aberdeen and Orkney) also wished to ask Synod to vote against the Motion. Canons were important in describing the shape of the Church. It was important that the structure of the Church was well managed and worked in a business-like way. The essence of the proposal was that information and communication was such a professional matter that it needed to be handled by professionals rather than by amateurs. He suggested that this was a move to a business culture, alien to the Church. He believed that information and communication needed to be linked solidly to dioceses because each diocese was different. It was important that the differences in culture between dioceses were reflected in how the Church dealt with communications. He accepted that perhaps the current remit of the Board needed to be changed for the future but he believed that the Board itself ought to remain, representing the dioceses. Professionalism, and the use of professionals, was indeed important but there was a diocesan role in indicating to the professionals what needed to be done. The proposal would mark a change in relation to the Standing Committee from being the executive committee of the Synod towards being the executive committee for the Church. He considered that to make such a move would be to the peril of the Church.

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) also spoke against the Motion. He spoke as a former Convener of the Board. He did not wish to claim that the Board had always been functional but he believed it did much work, and much more than simply publishing a magazine. Some of the professionals and diocesan communications staff had very limited time and, within the dioceses, calls on their time were significant. There had been no negotiation with dioceses about releasing any of that time to the Province. He had heard that the Board was not working. If it was broken it needed to be fixed, not abolished. He wished



to agree with comments made by Professor Atkinson about the governance of the Church. He believed it was a bad idea to put onto the officers of the Church greater policy decision-making. The decision-making and policy development of the Church should come from the Church itself, rather than officers and employees. He believed it was important to give the Board another go because such matters had never been more important.

The Rev Sophia Marriage (Edinburgh) noted that the Canon did not say that the Board was a defunct editorial committee. Referring to an earlier debate in the meeting in which Synod had discussed the question of ethics and professional investment, she noted that the current debate now appeared to be one between professionals in the communications realm and theology. The previous debate had expressed a desire to keep the two matters together and she believed the same needed to happen in the current debate. The Church's professionals could provide all the professional skills which were needed but the policy of the Church ought to come from within the synodical structures and not left to the Standing Committee.

Mr Hugh Morison (Moray, Ross and Caithness) reported that when the matter had been discussed at his Diocesan Synod the view had been taken that the Board ought not to be abolished because the Synod did not know what was to replace it. Having seen the Synod papers a different view had been taken by the diocesan representatives at their pre-General Synod meeting. If the Board was not doing a reasonable job, why ought it to be kept? He agreed there was a need to communicate with boldness and draw on the expertise of those experienced in digital communications but that was not to be found in a board which met three or four times per annum. Canons were inflexible and there was a need for flexibility in the Church's communications. He urged Synod to support the Motion to allow a flexible and effective communications strategy. One other matter which had arisen in his Diocesan Synod was whether the professional resources available to the Church were sufficient.

The Rev Philip Blackledge then responded to comments which had been made during the debate. He accepted that dioceses were different which was why more emphasis was being placed on the diocesan workers. If professionalism was not important then what was the purpose in employing such individuals? This was not a centralising issue. Dioceses would have just as much input as was currently the case but it would save time on the part of diocesan communications workers. On the question of moving to a solution quickly, he suggested that two years was not quick. He suggested that Ms Stock's comments were to the effect that the Board ought to be altered in terms of remit and composition. That was in fact what was being proposed. The idea was for a lighter touch so that it was less burdensome for diocesan workers. He agreed that communications were not the Mission Board's sole focus but without communication mission was impossible. Responding to Provost Holdsworth, Mr Blackledge indicated that he had encountered mixed comment in the dioceses as to whether in fact the Board had undertaken good work in the past. One member of the Board had said that they were ashamed to take expenses because the Board did so little. The point of involving diocesan workers was not to take more of their time but rather to facilitate them working together so they could take less time reinventing the wheel. He wished to have the future based on good relationships and positivity. In private

conversations which he had had, it had been made clear to him that the structure of the Board was not the central issue but rather the poor personal relationships between people in the Synod meeting and people in the General Synod Office. Such matters were important. Matthew 18 set out how to deal with conflict and was in fact a good basis for a code of conduct against bullying. If one had an issue with someone else, one spoke to them privately one-on-one and if that was unsuccessful then two or three witnesses were to be called and if that did not work then the whole congregation were to be involved. Keeping a board which did not have any teeth was a way of embedding conflict into the structures not resolving it. He wanted communication to work because it was so vital to mission.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed by the requisite majorities as follows:

House of Bishops: unanimous

House of Laity: 38 in favour, 11 against, 7 abstentions

House of Clergy: 34 in favour, 12 against, 8 abstentions.

The Chair declared the Motion passed.

The Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) then proposed, and Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Digest of Resolutions be altered by the deletion of paragraph 2.7 in its entirety and by the re-numbering of paragraphs 2.8-2.11 as paragraphs 2.7-2.10 respectively.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 1 against, 6 abstentions.

The Chair thanked Mr Blackledge, as Acting Convener, and all other members of the Board for their work on its behalf and also the Rev Chris Mayo for his work as the previous Convener.

## **SESSION 5: THE RT REV ANNE DYER, BISHOP OF ABERDEEN AND ORKNEY, IN THE CHAIR**

### **5.1 Standing Committee: Committee for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults**

Mr Christopher Townsend (Convener, Committee for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults) indicated that the focus of his report to Synod would be the Safeguarding Audit carried out by the Committee with the full support of the College of Bishops and Standing Committee. The Provincial Officer had received 43 calls for safeguarding advice in the previous year but few had necessitated further enquiry and there had been nothing to suggest that significant issues had gone unreported. However, the Church could not afford to be complacent. Having received annual safeguarding returns from dioceses for a number of years, the Committee had wanted to conduct a more in-depth analysis of safeguarding to allow it to collate qualitative as well as quantitative data and to

confirm areas of risk that necessitated further work. The Committee believed that the SEC had sound policies in place and had made progress over many years but was keen to identify where procedures could be improved and it had been important to establish how well policies were known, understood and implemented.

Mr Townsend explained that the audit had utilised a mixed method study to establish the degree to which churches were compliant with good safeguarding practice, factors affecting the likelihood of compliance with good practice, barriers to compliance and the support needed to increase engagement with safeguarding. A detailed questionnaire had been sent to all charges and a number of areas had been identified by the audit team as "red flag" issues which were the areas that would reflect concern in terms of a deficit in both knowledge and compliance. The Committee had set the bar high.

The overarching conclusion of the audit had been that whilst progress had been made by the Church in its approach to safeguarding there was a need for a broader and more consistent understanding of safeguarding in a faith context. It had been encouraging that the analysis demonstrated that most churches exhibited a low level of concern and many showed a significant level of understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. However, the analysis had also shown a lack of complete understanding and this was reflected in the recommendation regarding training. It was important to re-emphasise that safeguarding was not just about child protection but also the support and protection of vulnerable adults. That message was consistently communicated through current training provision but the audit had also indicated a need to revisit the content of the training and the way it was delivered. Training had been provided at nine locations in the previous 12 months and over 150 people had attended. This had largely been at the request of Diocesan Protection Officers or individual congregations. There was a need to remind vestries of their responsibilities for safeguarding in a congregation and that the Provincial Officers ought to be contacted for advice.

It had become apparent that some questions in the questionnaire had not been as clear as had been thought – for example, most congregations did in fact assess risk regarding their most vulnerable members but did not necessarily identify it as risk assessment as such. The recommendations in the main could be implemented without the need for canonical change but they had also reinforced the need for the ongoing current review of both Canons 54 and 65. A working group to assist with the implementation of the recommendations was currently being established and Mr Townsend would inform Synod of progress the following year. He invited Synod to comment on matters arising from the report included in the Synod papers in particular on the recommendation that clergy should be subject to compulsory safeguarding training.

Dr Anthony Birch (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) wished to commend the Committee for the work which they had undertaken but he suggested that there appeared to be certain statistical oddities in the Executive Summary contained in the Synod papers. He asked whether the full report would be available because that might provide information on definitions which were lacking in the summary. He also asked how individual charges were to receive feedback on their red flag,

or possibly blue flag, status. There had been 30 questions in the questionnaire but he wondered whether the red flags had been identified before the questionnaire had been written. If the red flags had been identified in advance then questions could be framed to achieve a balanced response. Also, on page 149, there was a failure of definition between the thinking of churches in the low and high risk categories. The summary did not contain any definition of low or high risk. He asked, therefore, whether any particular expertise in the devising of questionnaires had been accessed by the Committee before the questionnaire had been sent out.

Mr Townsend reported that the College of Bishops, the Standing Committee and Diocesan Protection Officers had or would receive the report. The Committee would consider the question of broader release. On the subject of feedback to individual charges, that matter would be considered by the Working Group. No decision had been made. The red flag issues had been identified in advance. He accepted the point regarding definitions but explained that the view had been taken that it would be better to ask open questions to ascertain local perception of safeguarding and risk. This could be revisited by the Committee in the formulation of future guidance. On the subject of expertise, Mr Townsend explained that Dr Jenny Parkinson, a member of the Committee, had played a key role in the devising and undertaking of the audit and had experience in research and analysis.

Mr Chris Brown (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) expressed thanks for the allocation of time on the Synod agenda for safeguarding and also for the report itself. He spoke as someone who had personally experienced abuse and worked with victims of abuse. He had been involved with actors in the film "Spotlight" one of whom had commented on the experience of victims by indicating "who can say no to God" – when abusing clergy appeared to act in the name of God. David Horsburgh had written about pastoral care in a Mennonite context and commented that churches suffered from congenital niceness which could lead to chronic niceness and ultimately terminal niceness. Churches across the Province needed to grasp the issue not just as a procedural one but as a profoundly theological and pastoral one. It was his experience that people might not report abuse until decades after it had originally taken place. Churches could also put pressure on the victim to forgive. He urged the theologians in the Church to think further about the question of forgiveness.

The Rev Denise Herbert (Brechin) spoke as the Diocesan Protection Officer in her Diocese. She thanked the previous speaker for his powerful statement. Training was vital and clergy ought to undertake it. Online training was available in the Church of England and dioceses could check to see whether their clergy had in fact undertaken it. She believed there was a case for considering online training in the SEC. She was a member of the NHS Ethics Committee in which there was a very high expectation that people would undertake training and the Church needed to do likewise. She underlined the need for congregational co-ordinators to report directly to the vestry on a regular basis. The vestry was responsible for safeguarding. She agreed there was a need to consider the question of forgiveness and support for the victim. There was also a need to remember the perpetrator's family.

The Rev Rosie Addis (Edinburgh) considered that safeguarding sometimes appeared as something of a Cinderella issue and she was pleased that time was being taken in the current Synod to address that. Every person had the possibility of becoming a vulnerable adult at some point in their lives. The issue ought not to be regarded as one "for the other" – there was a need for a change of culture so the Church saw it as "us". She suggested greater working together between safeguarding and personnel. She considered the Faith and Order Board could also be involved because she felt there was a need for a value statement before policies were developed. The thinking had to be grounded in theological understanding. This would apply both to safeguarding but other areas as well such as disability.

Professor Alan Werritty (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) asked if an action for historic abuse were to be raised would it be raised at charge, diocesan or provincial level and was there adequate public liability insurance cover in place?

Mr Alistair Dinnie (ACC representative) commended the guidelines which had been produced by the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission.

Rev Alexander Guinness (Argyll and The Isles) wished to raise the question of producing identity cards for clergy. He observed that anyone could pose as a cleric by wearing a clerical collar. He believed it would be helpful if those in positions of authority in the Church could be provided with identity cards. He believed this had been raised with the College of Bishops and wondered what their view on that was. Driving licences were not a sufficient alternative.

Mr Townsend then responded to comments made. He agreed that the Church could be seen as too nice. The biggest risk to any congregation was to think that because everyone in the congregation was nice, there could be no risk. He agreed that it was a question of developing a culture of safeguarding which was much more than a tick box exercise. He agreed that there were underlying theological issues and the Committee had discussed some of those in the past, particularly in relation to the subject of forgiveness. The idea of compulsory training for clergy had come not from the Committee but from members of the clergy. As to the potential risk of damage to the Church, that could be both financial or reputational and was in part why the audit had been conducted. He invited any further comments to be sent to Donald Urquhart, the Provincial Officer.

The Chair thanked Mr Townsend and his Committee for their work.

## **5.2 Faith and Order Board: Inter-Church Relations Committee**

The Rev Canon John McLuckie (Convener, Inter-Church Relations Committee) reminded Synod that every time the Eucharist was celebrated the Church prayed "may we grow together in unity and love". The Scottish Episcopal Church had a calling, as part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, to be a church which worked, hoped and prayed for the visible unity of the Church Catholic. The call to unity was not for the sake of organisational efficiency but was a fundamental and spiritual expression of the unity sought for the whole of God's creation. The proposed ecumenical policy being brought to Synod stated the calling clearly and recognised that the journey of unity took its first steps with the relationships which

the SEC formed with sisters and brothers in Scotland to participate together in God's mission. The work already begun with the Church of Scotland in *Our Common Calling*, was a prime expression of that policy in action and he would invite his friend and Co-Chair in that work, the Rev Sandy Horsburgh, to speak shortly.

The Committee also expressed local commitments in partnerships with other churches and in the papers provided to Synod there was a fresh commitment to the SEC's partnership with the United Reformed and Methodist Churches in a joint letter signed by church leaders. The Committee was also committed to working with Action of Churches Together in Scotland as it made a transition to a new expression of ecumenism for Scotland in the form of the new Scottish Christian Forum. Above all, at local level, the proposed policy was a simple invitation to everyone to keep on working with fellow Christians in as many and creative ways as were possible. The policy also reiterated the SEC's commitment to express unity in European and global relationships. The global character of the true Oikumene had never been more urgent than at the current time when the fragility of the planet was recognised. Something of that outward-looking dimension of ecumenism was contained in the report from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland a copy of which had been provided to Synod members on arrival. Finally, the proposed policy also helped to prioritise the Church's ecumenical work so that most effective use could be made of resources.

The Rev Sandy Horsburgh (Church of Scotland), speaking as Convener of the Church of Scotland Ecumenical Relations Committee, brought greetings from the Church of Scotland and also thanked the Synod on behalf of all ecumenical guests, for the Synod's hospitality and friendship. He reported that the Church of Scotland was delighted that the SEC was on the verge of adopting substantially the same ecumenical policy as the Church of Scotland had adopted in 2018. Ecumenism was not a discrete area of church activity separate from ministry, mission, worship and witness. The Church was most truly the Church when different denominations recognised that they were all part of the whole Church of Christ. All forms of church had their strengths and failings and there was a need humbly to acknowledge that the Church on earth was an imperfect reflection of the Church in heaven.

Through the *Our Common Calling* process, the two churches were growing together and the adoption of what would become a shared ecumenical policy was an important sign of that. That was not to say that the Church of Scotland was about to adopt Bishops, though increasingly it was recognising the value of personal leadership, nor was it praying for the Scottish Episcopal Church to set up presbyteries. Growth together was built upon and nourished by renewed appreciation for the gifts, insights, traditions and practices of each church and especially on the recognition that both churches shared a calling to minister to the whole people of Scotland. Some theological work had been undertaken on how to identify and respond to areas of theological convergence and divergence and the following principles had been discerned to guide the process:

- That if differences between the two denominations were those which would be tolerated within them, then such differences posed no theological obstacle to co-operation;

- That the churches ought not to judge each other's theology and practice by reference to their own respective traditions but by their fidelity to Scripture; and
- That both churches ought to presume that each other's traditions were faithful to Scripture and the call of Christ unless evidence to the contrary were encountered.

The churches had also reaffirmed their commitment to the Lund principle that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep difference of conviction compelled them to act separately.

The motivation behind *Our Common Calling* was not to fix a perceived problem, nor was it a church union scheme, but was an expression of joint commitment to the mission of God. The focus had been on learning from and seeking to encourage shared ministry in local contexts. They had been learning from places where there were already good examples of congregations working together both in cities and in rural areas. They had learned of new worshipping communities developing, such as the Crask Inn in Sutherland, drawing together Christians from both traditions and even appealing to those with no previous background in faith. They were also looking forward to learning about the sharing of ministry in the centre of Edinburgh through the work of St John's, St Cuthbert's and St Andrews and St George's West. Answers were being sought to questions about how ordained ministries could be shared so that congregations could be served better and best use could be made of tangible resources such as buildings.

Mission was at the heart of *Our Common Calling* and both churches had been inspired by what had been learned in Cumbria about working ecumenically in the cause of mission. That had raised more strategic questions and as the Church of Scotland looked to reconfigure its regional structure there was a commitment to do that work in consideration for the regional structures of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Whilst mission was rightly the focus, *Our Common Calling* was also a spiritual process. Speaking personally, Mr Horsburgh said that one of his most profound privileges as Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee had been to lead the working group in a service of Holy Communion in Inverness Cathedral. Breaking bread and drinking wine together was a simple thing but its effect was profound. He commended the *Our Common Calling* process to Synod as he had done a couple of weeks previously at the General Assembly.

Canon McLuckie then proposed, and the Most Rev Dr Mark Strange (Primus) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That this Synod approve and adopt the statement of Scottish Episcopal Church Ecumenical Policy.”*

The Rev John Bremner (United Reformed Church) affirmed Mr Horsburgh's thanks to Synod. It was undoubtedly the case that in Scotland there was a sense of the churches working more closely together and there were positive signs in the midst of what were deeply difficult times in relation to the Church's relationship to society. A colleague from the Church of Scotland had used the word "catastrophic" in relation to the situation and this had brought home to Mr Bremner the seriousness of the situation faced by all churches in relation to matters such

as the number of ministers, how church buildings were to be maintained, etc. How often such issues dwarfed the real issue which was that of mission to the people of Scotland. He supported the three Motions being brought to Synod by the Committee. However, he wondered how the relationship between the SEC and the Church of Scotland fitted in with the relationship between the SEC, the Methodist and United Reformed Churches. He emphasised the need to work together. On behalf of the United Reformed Church he welcomed the three Motions and would take the policy back to his own Committee and perhaps his own Synod.

Mr Euan Grant (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) wished to thank Mr Horsburgh for his remarks. He sought reassurance on one aspect of the ecumenical policy in relation to Trinitarian theology. He detected the shadow of modalism in the language of manifestation applied to the Trinity. He sought reassurance that such language was not intended to draw any distinction between the revelation of the Trinity through the incarnate Son and the Source of Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

The Rev Peter Harris (Edinburgh) spoke as an ecumenical partner of Mr Horsburgh. He noted that the ecumenical policy referred to the life of God as being "essentially relational". He believed that it was relational, not just essentially relational.

Canon McLuckie responded to comments made. He confirmed that there was no intention to introduce elements of monarchianism. Both churches were thoroughly chalcedonian. To say that the life of God was "essentially" relational meant that it was "of the essence" of God. Also, he recognised the compulsion of circumstances leading to the sharing of resources and working together but at the same time, he felt optimistic about the opportunities. He was attentive to the question about how the *Our Common Calling* process related to other processes and confirmed that it was not intended to be an exclusive process.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 4 abstentions.

Canon McLuckie then proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following Motion:

*"That this Synod affirm the Common Calling process as described in the update report."*

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) wished to affirm the *Our Common Calling* paper but struggled to do so in the form presented. He also wished to bring his personal greetings to Mr Horsburgh with whom he had worked as an ecumenical partner in Bridge of Allan. As with all ecumenical statements, it was a question of good manners and courtesy and for the view of one church not to trump the view of another. The Church of Scotland had a different theological tradition from the SEC. Normally in Synod, one did not speak about "fidelity to Scripture" only. The SEC had an extremely high regard for Scripture but it also took into account reflections on tradition and reason. He wished to propose that the third bullet point in the *Our Common Calling* paper be altered to read "that we should use our reflections on scripture, reason and tradition to discover the work of God in other Christian traditions". He suggested that the



SEC could offer this as a gift to the conversation in the way that the Church of Scotland brought its gifts also.

Canon McLuckie explained that the document in question was not a policy statement but was simply an update on discussions. However, he welcomed the point being made by Provost Holdsworth and agreed that Scripture needed to be read alongside tradition and reason. He was content to accept the proposed change on the basis that this was not a corrective to the Church of Scotland but rather the offer of something.

The Chair explained that the Motion in question would remain unaltered but it was being presented to Synod on the understanding that the update on the *Our Common Calling* process be altered as Provost Holdsworth had suggested. On that understanding, the Chair then put the Motion to the vote which was passed by majority, 1 against, 5 abstentions.

Canon McLuckie then proposed, and the Primus seconded the following Motion:

*“That this Synod welcome the personal statement signed by the Primus, Chair of the Synod, Methodist Church in Scotland and Moderator, United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland.”*

Canon McLuckie explained that there had been a period of reflection on the future of the EMU partnership. The church leaders of the three denominations had met and affirmed their support as set out in the personal statement being presented to Synod.

The Rev Dr David Easton (Methodist Church) explained he was coming to the end of his term as the head of the Methodist Church in Scotland. He was delighted that the EMU partnership was undergoing a period of renewal. Apart from the letter, he believed that there might be ways in which the churches could work together more closely both locally and nationally, for example, on the induction of clergy coming to Scotland from south of the border. Also, there could be some overlapping locally. He encouraged the Synod, especially the clergy, to be committed as the EMU partnership was rolled out locally. In closing, he paid tribute to the Primus who had been very committed and proactive ecumenically and he was delighted to have worked with him.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed unanimously.

## **5.3 Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths**

### **5.3.1 Address by Imam Sayed Ali Abbas Razawi**

The Most Rev Dr Mark Strange (Primus) welcomed to Synod Sheikh Sayed Ali Abbas Razawi, the Director-General and Chief Imam of the Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society.

Sheikh Razawi said he was humbled to be present at the Synod. Being present, he felt part of a wider family and, having watched the Synod in debate, that too had felt like family. He felt the fraternity and diversity within

Scotland was something unique. In his travels, he had never seen greater acceptance of diversity than was the case in Scotland. Despite being of different faiths, in Scotland there was a sense of being one family. Jesus was regarded as a prophet by Muslims in the same way as Muhammad. Jesus' teachings were taken as being infallible and from God. Part of that teaching was to love one's neighbour and one could see that being lived out by the Synod. He considered that today marked the beginning of a new chapter in coming together as family. He had been in Babylon the previous week and had felt the tension and confusion. In such times there was a need for leadership and for people of faith to come together. He believed there was much miscommunication. A Google search on Islam would reveal an initial 10 pages of misinformation and if one Googled Christianity in the Middle East the same would be true. Dialogue was therefore particularly important in the age of social media. He believed that both Jesus and Muhammad had taught this. For him, the Sermon on the Mount demonstrated the importance of the human touch. Social media was no substitute for human dialogue. Distances between people were increasing and there was a lack of understanding for one another. If people were not talking to one another, in times of difficulty or crisis communities became insular and then aggressive towards other communities. In Scotland, people opened their doors to one another. The Primus had extended his arms to him when they had met at Westminster Abbey to discuss Christian minorities in the Middle East. They had walked together from Westminster Abbey to Lambeth Palace in full religious robes. Dialogue allowed people to become friends which in turn led to trust and hope.

Sheikh Razawi explained that he was from a migrant community with 1,400 years of migrant experience. Abraham, Moses and Jesus had all been migrants which meant that those of the Abrahamic faiths understood the value of neighbours. The Prophet Muhammad had said that if one went to sleep when one's neighbour was hungry then one was not a Muslim. One's neighbour was anyone of the Adamic community. Humankind was the image of God in all its diversity. It was not just about "tolerating" the other but accepting the other. Shia Muslims had a legacy which went back to Imam Hussain. He and 72 of his colleagues had stood up for humanity and had been slaughtered as a result. Both Christians and Jews visited his shrine because he represented a sign of humanity. Christians, Muslims and Jews had been living side-by-side in the Middle East for 1,400 years and Sheikh Razawi believed that would continue to happen. He urged caution about statistics in relation to Christians in the Middle East.

Sheikh Razawi emphasised the importance of a theology of compassion. Both faiths taught compassion. In current times, it appeared that people were not willing to be compassionate to their friends let alone others. There was a need to be compassionate to one another whether friend or foe. The Abrahamic tree could heal people in times of division. The faiths could show that people were accepted in their diversity and for their differences. The faiths could work together in selfless service and be seen together shoulder to shoulder. He feared that words could be superficial. It was important that the love of sisterhood and brotherhood could be felt. The Ummah in Medina had brought together different faiths as one community.

He had made a pledge to advocate for minority Christian communities and had done so in the Middle East and Pakistan. He hoped that the two faiths could advocate for one another wherever respective communities were being oppressed. They should stand together to truly show the image of God.

The Chair thanked Sheikh Razawi for his address and his companions Mr Shabir Beg and Mrs Ishrat Hussnain for their presence.

### **5.3.2 Interfaith Relations Developments**

The Rev Cedric Blakey (Convener, Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths) thanked the Standing Committee for allotting space on the agenda of the current Synod. He explained that Synod in the current meeting was being asked to signal support for the ongoing task of promoting good relations between members of different faith communities in Scotland, to assist this within the SEC by making the Committee a full Committee under the Faith and Order Board and by giving it a simpler name, the Interfaith Relations Committee.

The SEC had a long and distinguished record in interfaith relations and part of the story was told in the booklet CAIRing for Scotland which had been circulated to Synod members. That booklet had been compiled a couple of years previously to tell the history of interfaith activity in the Scottish churches at a time when the Churches Agency for Interfaith Relations (CAIRS) was being wound up. He paid tribute to the significant work of his predecessors, the Very Rev John Conway, the Rev Dominic Ind, the Rev Donald Reid and others. The SEC had good reason to be proud of its heritage but the task was no less critical at the current time. Indeed it was perhaps more critical. The German theologian Hans Kung had famously written "there will be no peace in the world if there is not peace between the religions. And there will be no peace among the religions unless there is dialogue between them."

Others shared the same goals as the SEC. The Scottish Methodist Church and the Scottish Synod of the United Reformed Church were part of the Committee and together with the Scottish Catholic Bishops' Conference Committee for Interreligious Dialogue, the Church of Scotland, Quakers and others it related to the Scottish Government funded Interfaith Scotland. Synod was privileged to have its Director Maureen Sier as a guest at the current Synod. Significantly, other faith communities were also reaching out in dialogue enterprise. The Jewish communities had welcomed visitors to their synagogues on Shabbat and the Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society included Christians in their dialogue projects, social enterprises and youth exchanges. There were 22 local interfaith groups throughout Scotland and there was the opportunity for all to be involved locally in the annual Scottish Interfaith Week in November. The main outcome was good community cohesion. It was not necessary for all to have the same beliefs in order to live alongside one another, protect each other and serve together for the common good. In reaching out in friendship, respect and love one found that one examined one's own faith and practice more deeply. In a world

experiencing the rise of populism and a lurch to blame minorities in any culture for the ills of the day and in a year where violence and religious hatred had been experienced in the USA, Sri Lanka and elsewhere and where innocent Muslims, Jews, Christians and others had been attacked in their homes and places of worship, people of integrity and belief were called to understand others, befriend their neighbour and work alongside them. This was a task to be done in Scotland, in local communities.

Mr Blakey suggested that now was the moment to make good interfaith relations increasingly mainstream in the Church's common life and to signal that this was an endeavour which could be engaged with not just in cities but in remote rural communities also.

The Primus then proposed, and the Rev Professor David Atkinson seconded, the following Motion:

*“That this Synod, recognising the multi-faith nature of contemporary Scottish society, emphasises the urgency of the task of enabling all congregations to understand and engage with other faith communities in their neighbourhood.”*

Dr Maureen Seer (Interfaith Scotland) said it was an honour to be present at Synod and she had found the experience uplifting and thought-provoking. She thanked Sheikh Razawi for his words which had resonated deeply. She believed the Motion stated the urgency of the situation clearly. She commended the Motion and offered the resources of Interfaith Scotland to help. She wished to thank the churches, the SEC, Mr Blakey and his predecessors and the Primus and his predecessors for their support. Interfaith Scotland was a tiny organisation and needed the support of the churches. The task was urgent. She was a member of the Baha'i faith which asked its followers to consort with the followers of all religions in amity and concord so that there could be inhaled the sweet fragrance of God. She believed that sweet fragrance was indeed being inhaled on the basis of her experience of the Synod meeting. She also thought that the proposed new name for the Committee was sensible and she looked forward to engaging with it.

She looked forward to returning to Synod next year and to hearing how the Motion had been put into practice.

The Rev John Bremner (United Reformed Church) wished to remind the Synod of the distinction between agreement and disagreement at a doctrinal level between faiths, on the one hand, and, on the other, the necessity that society allow space for everyone to say their piece. The SEC and his own church had suffered in the past from a state which had not allowed space for diversity. There was a need for a constant call to Government to ensure that space for diversity. That was not to be confused with the suggestion that all faiths were saying the same thing. He could not rejoice, for example, that there were people in Scotland who did not know Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. He wished to commend the Committee for the wording of the Motion which called on congregations "to understand and engage with" (not to agree with) other faith communities

in their neighbourhood. He welcomed both of the Motions being brought forward by the Committee.

The Rev Canon John McLuckie (Edinburgh) strongly supported the Motion and wished to commend the work of the Focolare Movement which was accompanying the Inter-Church Relations Committee and brought a deep charism of unity and prayer in relation to both ecumenical and interfaith relations. He was delighted that their representative Jacqueline Thomson was present at Synod.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed unanimously.

The Primus then proposed and Professor Atkinson seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Digest of Resolutions be altered as follows:-*

- *by the insertion in paragraph 2.4.3 after the words “Except that the” of the words “the Interfaith Relations Committee shall have the right to appoint one additional member to the Church in Society Committee and also that the”;*
- *by the deletion in paragraph 2.4.3 of the words “The Convener of the Committee for Relations of People of Other Faiths shall, ex officio, be a member of the Church in Society Committee.”;*
- *by the deletion of paragraphs 2.4.4 and 2.4.7 in their entirety and by the renumbering of the remaining paragraphs 2.4.5 and 2.4.6 as 2.4.4 and 2.4.5 respectively;*
- *by the insertion of the words “the Interfaith Relations Committee” as a new paragraph 2.5.3 (e);*
- *by the insertion of a new paragraph 2.5.8 to read as follows:*  
“The Interfaith Relations Committee shall have responsibility for oversight at provincial level of matters appertaining to relations with people of other faiths.””

The Motion was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

## **SESSION 6: MS JENNY WHELAN IN THE CHAIR**

### **6.1 Mission Board**

The Rev Canon Jane Ross (Convener, Mission Board) indicated that the year had been a busy one for the Board. Her own personal circumstances had limited her scope for involvement recently which was why the Rev Annie Naish would report on behalf of the Board.

The Rev Annie Naish (member, Mission Board) challenged Synod members to consider how passionate they were about mission and discipleship. God called people into relationship and the presentation of the Board would be all about relationship. In the light of the statistics which had been referred to at General

Synod 2018, when it had been noted that since 2002 the SEC had declined in size by 29%, the Board had been looking at the opportunities. The Board had created the Local Mission Resourcing Group which drew together people from dioceses in order to share stories, information about events and what was going on so that there was the opportunity to learn from one another. All dioceses were in different places and the hope was to be able to offer to the wider Church thinking about mission. The Group had been considering the organising of a conference on mission strategy for Bishops and other senior diocesan leaders to inspire the whole Church to share God's saving love. The Group had also been reflecting on pioneering, church planting and Fresh Expressions. It was clear that there was a need to begin to explore new ways of reaching people. The traditional model for mission had tended to be "you come to us". Whilst that was still important, more needed to be done. There was a need to reach people with the good news in the communities in which churches were situated. There was a need for a strategic approach to such matters. There had also been discussion about the creation of a new initiatives fund in order to support new ideas and innovation. The Local Mission Resourcing Group had been tasked to put together a robust application process. That would sit alongside the Block Grants available from the Mission and Ministry Support Group and the new Child Poverty Grants. Also, there were many opportunities to work with others. Mission was at the heart of the new ecumenical policy. The General Assembly had made some radical decisions including the adoption of a proposal to undertake 100 church plants in the following 10 years. Could the SEC work together with the Church of Scotland in church planting and pioneer initiatives? Already, the SEC was working with the Church Army.

There was also the question as to how the Church should gather better data on what was going on within the Church. A new statistical form was being trialled in Moray, Ross and Caithness. If any members of Synod wished to engage in that they should contact her or the Rev James Currall. The idea was that the new form would be better at capturing information, such as midweek activities, than the current form allowed.

The Very Rev Sarah Murray (Moray, Ross and Caithness) reported on the discussions within the Board concerning Christian values in education. The Rev Nerys Brown had reported to the Board about the Christian values in education training programme. The Board had considered it would be helpful to find out more about the value of school chaplaincy and the role and mission of the Church in schools with young people. The Board had tasked a small group to explore the breadth of school chaplaincy in the SEC and all dioceses had been contacted in order to distribute the survey to both clergy and lay people. As well as providing a clearer picture of what currently happened, it had also sought to find out whether there was a need for resources and training to enable more of such work to be undertaken. The results of the survey would be analysed and brought to the Board meeting in September 2019. The Board would then be in a position to make recommendations on what was required of the wider church and how the Board could support this. She invited any Synod members who had not participated in the survey to contact her. Similarly, if there were those with skills in school chaplaincy, the Board would be delighted to hear from them.

Provost Murray then reported on behalf of the Board in relation to the review which had been undertaken of the Mission and Ministry Support Grant Scheme. The Board's panel, which was responsible for undertaking an annual review, had also undertaken the first triennial review of the scheme. The panel reviewed the annual reports and financial accountability statements from each diocese and collated information submitted by dioceses reporting on it to the Board. The purposes for which grants were provided included stipend support, travel grants and related ministry costs, the funding of mission development officers or equivalent, mission development such as Fresh Expressions, youth work and retreats. Amongst its recommendations, the panel had recommended to the Board that it should encourage dioceses to further develop their annual reporting and maximise the opportunity to reflect on their mission and ministry activities for the benefit of mutual learning throughout the Province, and to continue to work with the communications team to identify the most effective way of sharing news of mission throughout the Province. It had also encouraged the Local Mission Resourcing Group similarly to work with the communications team. The panel had also reported to the Board that there was a general sense that the quality of reporting from dioceses was of a high quality and provided expert examples of the life and mission of the Church. It had the potential to be a good tool for sharing good news stories and be a resource on good practice.

Provost Murray then reported on the triennial review. The review had considered the extent to which the objectives detailed in the original proposal had been achieved; the extent to which greater flexibility in the use of provincial funds had enabled new forms of mission or new initiatives; the extent to which the funds appeared to have been used to continue to support otherwise unsustainable posts or initiatives; the impact of funding in supporting ministry and enabling mission throughout the Province; the adequacy of the funding provided; the appropriateness of the formula used to allocate the funds; diocesan views on the annual review process. For most dioceses the fund appeared to be working reasonably well and was viewed as an improvement on the previous funding arrangements. The review considered that there was potential for further development of the annual review process as a means of assisting dioceses in reviewing and planning their own mission and ministry activities as well as sharing experiences with one another. It had also welcomed the opportunity of further enhancing the process by the involvement of the Local Mission Resourcing Group. The review panel had recommended to the Mission Board that consideration be given to revising the formula to more accurately reflect the funding requirements of dioceses and that the Local Mission Review Group should be invited to submit its collective comments on the annual diocesan returns.

Ms Naish then referred to the report in the Synod papers from the Mission Board on the comments which had been recorded on flipcharts at General Synod 2018. In response to the question "what does following Jesus mean to you?" she noted that "Jesus" had been mentioned 22 times. There was an acknowledgement by Synod members that they were followers of Jesus and had a relationship with Him. Other themes in relation to that question had been change, transformation and challenge. In relation to the question "how has being part of the SEC helped you to flourish?" she noted that the responses had suggested that the Church was good at welcome and inclusivity, at worship through liturgy and prayer and that

the Church gave space to explore. In relation to the question "what opportunities have you had to be involved in growing other disciples and how did that feel?", themes which had emerged had been the making of connections and being alongside people, creating opportunities for people to explore faith and the fact that all of that required commitment and time. The feedback in 2018 had asked whether such matters were just for clergy. Ms Naish emphasised that they were for everyone – disciples made disciples. God called disciples to grow new disciples. How could the Mission Board help in that?

Short videos of two individuals who had come to faith and become new disciples were then shown. Synod members, in table groups, then considered the following questions:

- What inspired you or challenged you about what those involved in the presentations were saying?
- How are our churches currently being effective in growing new disciples?
- What are the new opportunities for growing new disciples which we need to explore and how might the Mission Board help us all do that?

Ms Naish confirmed that the comments made on flipcharts at the current Synod would be typed up and considered by the Mission Board. A summary could then be sent to dioceses.

The Rev Canon John Walker (Aberdeen and Orkney) had been encouraged to hear what Ms Naish had said. During the process which had led to the change of the Canon on marriage a couple of years previously, it had been said that once that matter had been settled, full attention could be given to mission. Scotland was one of the most secular countries in Europe. A recent article in the Guardian, based on the number of non-religious marriages taking place in Scotland, had suggested that the nation was the most non-religious country in the world. Communicant numbers had now dropped beneath 20,000. This represented a drop of almost 10% in a single year. In his own Diocese, a congregation would leave the denomination resulting in a further 10% reduction in diocesan figures. In the past, the SEC had benefited from provincial initiatives such as Mission 21, Make Your Church More Inviting and Local Collaborative Ministry all of which had helped people to grow. He recognised that mission was not generated from the top down but nevertheless provincial initiatives helped. The Church was dependent on the Holy Spirit in its work of mission. The founder of the Iona community, George MacLeod, had said that nothing built community like a demanding shared task. He asked whether the Mission Board had plans for a provincial initiative in congregational development and growth?

Ms Victoria Stock (Edinburgh) suggested there was a need to think carefully about what was meant by growing disciples. Was it something that was "done" to people or was it more relational? She described herself as having been a "God freak" when she had been a child but that had turned out not to be very effective. Discipleship was more about who one was so that others could see something of God in one.



The Rev Dr Jenny Wright (Edinburgh), speaking as the other SEC representative on the Anglican Consultative Council, wished to commend the work of the Anglican Communion on intentional discipleship. There were fantastic resources available to enable people to live as disciples and which emphasised the making of disciples as well as simply being disciples. The Mission Board ought to take note of such materials.

The Rev Paul Watson (Glasgow and Galloway) said that mission was in his DNA but he had recently reached a watershed. He spoke of the American explorers Lewis and Clark who had sought to find a passageway to the Pacific. They had trekked to the source of the Mississippi River and had found not a channel to the Pacific but the Rocky Mountains. Page 166 of the Synod papers set out a core definition of what the SEC was good at. Lewis and Clark had had their old map but it had not been adequate to the geography of what lay before them. Lewis and Clark's mission had changed from that of finding a river to the Pacific to exploring what they found in front of them. The Church needed to do the same. There was a need to find new partners in mission. He suggested it would be helpful to set a day aside to look at what the new map might entail.

The Rev Mary Jepp (Glasgow and Galloway) said that she had only recently come to Scotland and lived in Kilmarnock, an area of great need. Her church was a minority church in the community but was nevertheless at its heart. The poor came to its doors. It worried her when the Church seemed to approach matters as if the numbers of people in church were the priority. Part of mission was about how to reach people in communities in real ways and come alongside them. That was the way in which hearts and minds would be won and communities changed. That might not fill pews but it would represent the Kingdom of God.

The Rev Canon Simon Mackenzie (Argyll and The Isles) suggested that the way in which language was used was important. He suggested that it was vegetables which were "grown". Jesus had "called" disciples and called them to love one another.

Mr Euan Grant (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) wished to draw attention to the need for concrete practices. Talking about relationships was all very well but people had plenty of relationships outwith the Church which were as nourishing as those within the Church, except that they did not make reference to God revealed in Jesus Christ. Friendliness from Christians was not guaranteed to outdo such friendliness outside the Church. Growth and formation were aided by concrete practices such as daily prayer, devotional practices, saying grace before meals, etc which gave a distinctiveness to the Christian life. Such practices had been an engine of growth amongst young people.

The Rev Rosemary Bungard (Argyll and The Isles) suggested that one of the essential things was for young people to know something about Christianity. In a post-Christian world, one of the ways in which people heard about Christianity was through Christian school assemblies. She asked that a closed Facebook page or website be established so that resources could be shared which were culturally relevant to Scotland.

The Rev Dr James Currall (Moray, Ross and Caithness) reported that when in training, he had undertaken a placement in Prestwick with Canon Ross' predecessor. He had said to Dr Currall that when people talked of "bringing people to Jesus", it was a case of recognising that "Jesus was already there". There was a need to recognise what Jesus was already doing and join in.

Canon Ross responded to some of the points which had been made. She agreed that a provincial emphasis on mission would be wonderful but there was a need to live with the intention that the Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy located mission in the diocese. There had been some talk about resurrecting the idea of a provincial conference but that was at a very early stage and there was a lack of personnel resource to take that forward. She agreed with Ms Stock on the importance of the relational aspects of discipleship and thanked Dr Wright for the comment regarding ACC material. The Board had already pointed to that material a couple of years previously at General Synod. She agreed with other comments which had been made including the sharing of concrete practices. The Board's agenda at each meeting included communication specifically and there was more work to be done in sharing good news stories. She agreed with the comment regarding school assemblies.

In closing the Mission Board session, Canon Ross expressed thanks to the Rev Professor David Atkinson who was completing his term of office as Convener of the Church in Society Committee, for all his work in relation to both the Committee and for serving on the Scottish Churches Rural Group.

## **6.2 Institute Council**

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson (Convener, Institute Council) introduced the report of the Council. As referred to in the Council's annual report, wisdom was the unique blend of vision and common sense. A vision was realisable, unlike a fantasy. He suggested that Synod members could identify in what was to come during the session those elements of vision and common sense. He was about to introduce people who made the vision real – people who recognised what Jesus was doing and encouraged those around them to join in. That was what leadership was about. The presentation would comprise contributions from lay theologians, namely lay readers, from those engaged in mixed mode training and, finally, a description of a pilot project to enable the Institute to provide training for authorised ministries. In his presentations to Synod in successive years, he had demonstrated how the vision for the Institute was being realised in common sense matters such as the provision of a pilot scheme. Capacity had also been built by the appointment of a new Administrator to the Institute staff and of a new Provincial Director of Ordinands. The Church was training a new generation of leadership to lead it into intentional discipleship, an essential part of which was lay readers.

Ms Patsy Thomson (member, Institute Council) spoke as a lay reader. She referred to a meeting of lay readers in spring 2019 at which her Diocesan Bishop, Bishop Mark Strange, had said that the connection with lay readers had with the area in which they lived was the heart of their ministry. Her location was Cromarty, it was a place with large numbers of artists and crafts people. People cared passionately about the environment, peace and justice and about spiritual

matters. The town contained a lively Buddhist sangha with a membership almost as large as the local Church of Scotland congregation. St Regulus, Episcopal Church, was recognised as the spiritual hub of the town and was open daily and people came in. The congregation was growing and visitors commented on the atmosphere of peace. Two Episcopalians had started the Cromarty Peace Group when the Iraq war was looming. Its first event had been a joint one with the Inverness mosque. Many members of the Peace Group had no religious affiliation. The Rector made the Church open for such gatherings. He had led a march of schoolchildren with a peace pole for incorporation in a new peace garden. In May 2019 there had been a service in Westminster Abbey celebrating 50 years of seaborne nuclear weaponry. The local Peace Group had held an alternative vigil for peace. The Primus had spoken powerfully disassociating the Scottish Episcopal Church from any support for nuclear weapons. She was hugely grateful to the Scottish Episcopal Church for making tolerant space available to her to take on lay reader ministry and for allowing her to promote interfaith links. She joined the sangha weekly and she endeavoured to dismantle prejudices about the Church. She tried to be a cross-cultural disciple. She regularly shared Richard Rohr's daily meditations with people of any or no faith. She closed with a reference quoted by Richard Rohr in his meditation of the day: "we are here to awaken from the illusion of separation".

Ms Caroline Longley (Edinburgh) explained that she had been licensed as a lay reader in September 2018 and was based at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Edinburgh where she was supervised by the Rev Canon Dean Fostekew. Her time in training at the Scottish Episcopal Institute had been very significant for her. It had been not only about gaining the theological knowledge necessary for preaching but also experiencing life in community, developing pastoral skills and growing in her spiritual disciplines. Following her licensing, one of her first tasks had been to find out what her contribution would be to the life of the Church in her new community. She had become a reader because she had felt a call to preach. She had enjoyed developing her preaching ministry and was beginning to find out what it meant to be a theological resource. The Church of England's Central Readers Council had developed three themes for lay readers one of which was "teaching the faith" and to which she felt particularly drawn. Two examples of her ministry related to that theme. Firstly, she had taken on the leadership of a monthly service in a local care home which included a dementia friendly talk. She had drawn on her training. Secondly, she had stewarded Edinburgh pupils as they staged a school strike to raise awareness of the climate crisis. This had raised hope in her that the necessary paradigm shift might be achieved in the coming years. The co-chair of a recent intergovernmental report on biodiversity had written of how society needed to develop a new narrative about "success" built not purely on economic factors but also on community, the arts and spirituality. The Church knew something about those things already. In her professional job, she was a civil servant and she detected much more openness to talk about spiritual, albeit not necessarily religious, topics. She wanted to be able to speak positively about what society could be aiming for. She wished to nurture whatever spiritual awareness might be growing in people. Both examples which she had quoted required ongoing commitment on her part and she felt her training had only just begun. She shared theological knowledge but her ministry also had spiritual and pastoral elements.

Bishop Pearson said that mission was about communicating the excitement of living with God. Lay readers demonstrated that. Mission was the heartbeat of the Church and the Institute was the pacemaker. There were three new candidates for lay readership training commencing in the current year bringing the total in training to four. In addition, a conference on lay readership was to be offered at Dunkeld House Hotel in November 2020. Specific dates would be communicated in due course.

The Rev Dr Richard Tiplady (Director of Mixed Mode Training) reported that in the year to date there had been two mixed mode students, one at St John's, Princes Street and the other at St Andrews Cathedral, Inverness. The initial plan had been for alternate year entry but there had been considerable interest from ordinands and placements and it was hoped that two more students would commence in September 2019, one in Edinburgh and the other in the Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane. Two other students who had been due to start in 2019 had for personal reasons deferred but would start in 2020 in the Dioceses of Edinburgh and Glasgow and Galloway. The first two students had been in city centre churches; those starting in the autumn would include a rural placement in a linked charge setting. The students had been involved in leading worship, preaching and pastoral care, one had started a youth group and the other a young adults group. There was an emphasis on mission and evangelism in the programme and a module on evangelism had been run not just for the mixed mode students but for other SEI students focused primarily on the integration of evangelism into the life of the local church. There had been a practical element for the mixed mode students. One had run an evangelistic Advent study group and the other was developing a project called "messy cafe". A module had been run on developing mission and ministry in context for all SEI students. Topics included were as diverse as mission as peacemaking, turning a small church towards mission, how to engage with those who defined themselves as "spiritual not religious" and the reasons why people left church. Reports suggested that approximately 750,000 people in Scotland were not part of church but regarded themselves as followers of Jesus. Initial planning was being undertaken for the pioneer project which the mixed mode students would undertake in their second year. Dr Tiplady was working with the Bishops on longer-term planning. He hoped the planning of mixed mode placements could be developed in the longer term alongside the planning of curacy placements and to enable both to serve diocesan strategies for mission. If those at Synod were interested in exploring the possibility of becoming a placement, he urged them to contact their Bishop initially and then approach him. He expressed thanks to both the Rev Markus Duenzkofer and the Very Rev Sarah Murray for the work which they had done together with him in the shaping of the programme to ensure that it served the SEC and the students.

The Rev Markus Duenzkofer (Edinburgh) reported on his experience of St John's, Princes Street acting as a mixed mode placement. "Mission" was a buzzword which provoked strong reactions. Mission was a wide field and done by all parts of the Church. It included outreach, speaking up for the voiceless and evangelism. He did not wish to pigeonhole evangelicals but wondered why mission was often left to that particular constituency. He referred to a friend who responded to approaches on the streets from fundraisers who asked "have you got five minutes" by saying "yes, but only if you have five minutes to talk about

Jesus". Mr Duenzkofer realised that he himself might not be able to do that for five minutes in a relevant way that witnessed to the goodness of God. Mixed mode training had challenged him to talk about Jesus in a relevant and life-giving way. His mixed mode student, Beki Cansdale, had said how important it was to her to see the outworking of mission in the local church setting. Her experience would enable her to link learning and ministry. She had brought wonderful energy and new ideas to create programmes which St John's would not otherwise have been able to undertake. Whilst the congregation was devoting financial resources sacrificially to support the placement, she was not simply an "extra pair of hands". There remained challenges because St John's was still a guinea pig, as mixed mode training continued to be developed. Inverness Cathedral, the other mixed mode placement, was in a similar position. He thanked Provost Sarah Murray for her collegiality in such matters. They were both feeding back to the SEI the challenges and the joys of acting as placements. He emphasised that Beki Cansdale incarnated the push and pull towards God's mission. Every time he interacted with her he was reminded that church was more than vestry meetings, worship planning or finance meetings. Church was also about those who had left the Church or not yet engaged with faith in meaningful ways. She reminded him that the Church was about mission and the whole congregation of St John's of the need to be able to talk about Jesus for more than five minutes – so that one could honestly pray "Lord, here I am, send me".

Bishop Pearson thanked Mr Duenzkofer and Dr Tiplady. He reminded the Synod that as SEI applied its vision and common sense, it was working across the Province and genuine learning was taking place from the experience, as Mr Duenzkofer had indicated.

Bishop Pearson reported that a pilot scheme was about to be initiated for those who wished to explore theology in its widest sense without taking a full-time course in theological study. This might be a means of providing training for other authorised ministries in the Church. In September 2019, a group of around five people in mid-Argyll would begin studying by Skype two modules offered by the SEI. This would include a module "Introduction to Doctrine". The teaching by Skype from Edinburgh would be backed up by local enablers in the Diocese.

The Rev Canon Dean Fostekew (Edinburgh) indicated that Caroline Longley had been too modest to admit that one benefit of having a lay theologian in the congregation was that it caused other ministries to rise up.

Bishop Pearson explained that the College of Bishops was responsible for appointing the Provincial Director of Ordinands who acted as the Executive Officer of the College when it functioned as the Provincial Recruitment and Selection Committee. He wished to record his thanks to the Rev Canon Dr Alison Peden who was retiring from the role of PDO. She was a person of outstanding integrity, holiness and intellect. He was delighted that the Rev Ian Barcroft was being appointed as her successor. Finally, Bishop Pearson recorded his thanks to all members of the SEI staff.

The Chair thanked Bishop Pearson and the Institute Council for its work.

## **SESSION 7: THE REV CANON DAVE RICHARDS IN THE CHAIR**

### **7.1 Church in Society Committee**

The Rev Professor David Atkinson (Convener, Church in Society Committee) explained that Synod members had received a report on the ways in which the Church in Society Committee allocated its grant budget for the development of mission. Following the discussion which had taken place at General Synod 2018, a fund was now in the course of being set up to provide grants to congregations for work in the field of child poverty. In September 2018, the Committee had run a one-day conference on pilgrimage, a report of which would be published in a future edition of the SEI Journal.

Professor Atkinson explained that the focus of the Church in Society session at the current Synod was to address the question: what it means to be human – the challenge of genome editing. It would be introduced to Synod by way of a conversation among Dr Donald Bruce, Dr Lesley Penny and the Rev Dr Jenny Wright. What it meant to be human was a subject which had been considered through the ages and in different ways. It was a major theme in literature and Scripture. How human beings might change was at the heart of science fiction. To an extent, such matters had now come together because genome editing had become a reality. In November 2018, a Chinese scientist had announced that he had genetically modified two human embryos and brought them to term. That underlined the urgency of the situation. Discussion on such subjects could be visceral and, therefore, the intention behind the conversation at the current Synod was to model dialogue.

Dr Donald Bruce explained that genome editing was the term given to a variety of scientific techniques and which had created a revolution in medicine, agriculture, food and other areas. It was a technology which was easy-to-use. It was likely that some applications would be regarded as acceptable but others raised profound ethical questions. The Committee had therefore set up a Working Group to bring together input from a variety of disciplines to look at the issue. Dr Wright spoke on theological perspectives. Why was it important that the Church should consider the subject of genome editing? In debates in the past, which had sometimes turned nasty, theologians had sometimes started by questioning why scientists wished to play God. Theologians were not there to tell scientists how to do their jobs better. Instead, theologians could assist in how to think better about life as it changed. Theologians could ask how the gifts of science and medicine could be used for the benefit of all people. Science and medicine could not answer the question of the human condition. Christians needed to work out how to live well in the frailty of humanness. That included how to live well in knowing God's healing and, ultimately, God's saving power. Part of the task of the theologian was to build a bridge between the rich narratives of Scripture and what it meant to be human and how that was held against the realities of current science. She raised the question of a theology of disability. How could one value all people if certain people considered they were being characterised as in some way less than human. There was a need to address ideas of perfection and recognise that it was all right to be imperfect.

Dr Lesley Penny spoke as a veterinary surgeon by training, working in biomedical research. The genie was already out of the bottle. Cloning had been a much less efficient procedure and had a success rate of approximately 1%. With CRISPR editing there was a much higher success rate. CRISPR editing was now being used as standard practice in biomedical research with plants and animals. Somatic cell work fixed a problem in the genetic code but did not pass matters down generations. Certain forms of disease, such as Huntington's, were genetic conditions. Clinical trials were already happening using such technologies. The issues arising from somatic cell work, given that it did not pass down the generations, were different from those that would affect future generations. In relation to somatic cell work, the issues might relate to basic justice and financial considerations such as who would be able to afford such treatment – which would be very expensive once available.

Dr Bruce indicated that the Chinese baby question had raised the issue of the editing of embryos. Such work might be undertaken for research or for treating disease. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority had given a licence to the Francis Crick Institute for research on the effect of knocking out aspects of the genetic code to see what effect that would have on development. The embryos would otherwise have been destroyed. Such research raised questions as to the status of an embryo. There were two particular Christian views, one of which asserted that life started at the point of fertilisation, the other that life started at some later point. The latter view allowed scope for research during the period prior to commencement of life. Another application was in relation to implanting. Ethical questions arose as to whether it was acceptable to change the genetics of people who were not yet born. Conversely, for those who might otherwise inherit an adverse genetic condition, was it ethical not to alter their genetics in advance? A further factor was that of risk since genes could have more than one function. To test that over generations would mean experimental babies which would clearly be unacceptable – unless it could be shown that the risk of the disease which might otherwise ensue would outweigh the risks of the treatment.

Dr Penny spoke about aspects relating to farm animals. For example, it would be possible to create animals which would be fully resistant to certain kinds of disease such as African swine fever. A range of ethical questions arose. Another example was in relation to the kind of dairy cows prevalent in the UK. They would be unable to survive in Africa partly because of climate and partly because of exposure to certain diseases. However, if such cows could be genetically modified that would allow greater milk production and other opportunities to the benefit of populations in Africa. It was also possible to gene edit to remove horns from cattle. At present, horns were frequently removed from calves in a somewhat unpleasant procedure. It was predominantly done in order to stop cattle hurting each other. That allowed the keeping of more cattle in smaller spaces which in turn raised issues of animal welfare. There were difficulties in supplying sufficient protein from non-animal sources for humans. Consequently, being able to introduce meat producing animals into areas of the world which could not currently support them could become a significant issue. She asked Synod members whether if low fat gene edited meat was available, in order to reduce the risk of heart attacks, would people buy it? Trials suggested that people would buy it only if it was considerably cheaper than normal meat. The result would be that those who would buy would be those who could not afford anything else.

Dr Bruce explained that he hoped the Working Group would be able to present the results of its discussion to bodies such as the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and also the European group on ethics. There might also be the possibility to engage with the idea of a future moratorium on germline questions. The Church had a very important role to play. Dr Wright said that grappling with such questions in a congregation meant addressing the fundamental question of what it meant to be human including dependency on one another, as members of the body of Christ, and also of the community outside the Church. There was a need to acknowledge that suffering was not meaningless, difficult as it might be. Congregations could address those issues through Bible study, having expert speakers, etc.

Professor Atkinson then proposed, and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes seconded, the following Motion:

*“That this Synod*

- welcome the report on genome editing in animals and humans;*
- recognise that some applications may be beneficial such as inherited cell gene therapy in humans and disease resistance in pigs but that some applications raise major ethical concerns, such as editing the human germline to produce modified babies;*
- instruct the Church in Society Committee to continue to examine these issues and to engage with appropriate national and international fora where these ethical issues are under discussion.”*

The Rev Rosemary Bungard (Argyll and The Isles) thanked the working party for its paper. She wondered how long ethicists might envisage a moratorium lasting and whether it would comprise a blanket ban on all laboratory research including that which had no intention to alter embryos from plantation. It was not known what the consequences of the Chinese intervention might be. Exposing human beings to such unknown risks was highly unethical. It was one thing to offer treatment in a situation where there was no other possibility but the creation of designer babies was altogether different. She knew a family where three out of four sons had been diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. That had been unknown in their parents but had been inherited from previous generations. Allowing licensed laboratory research in such a field would allow hope to such families. In the pharmaceutical industry, it took at least 10 years to be sure about the effects of certain kinds of treatment. She wished to call for licensed laboratory research such as was taking place at the Crick Institute.

Mr Euan Grant (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) suggested that the theological responses had asked questions but had not provided answers. One theological element which had been adduced was that of the image of God. Asking questions was only worth doing if one was prepared to attempt to give answers. He would welcome the report more if it had been bolder in offering answers. Answering questions necessitated a positive theology. Unless specifically Christian answers could be provided, he believed it was an open question as to whether the Church really did have a role in such matters. He posed the question why there ought not to be designer babies. In a liberal society, it did not seem implicitly wrong that someone might say they wished their baby to



be tall, good-looking, intelligent and humble. To say that such an approach was wrong would require one to give an account of the nature or the relevance of the normative human being or that "being as we are" retained a moral and normative force. There was therefore a need for a theology of human nature as well as simply asking the question what it meant to be human. Nature was a deeply contested theological category. Unless the Synod was prepared to say that those speaking on the subject had a particular authority, he believed there was limited value in simply asking questions. Unless a particular theology could be articulated, a Christian response did not add much to the debate.

The Rev Dr John Cuthbert (Moray, Ross and Caithness) contrasted the role of physicists and biologists. Fundamentally, physicists were observers and were not in a position to change things. Biologists were tamperers. In his experience as a biologist, the language of "normal" and "abnormal" was used. Often there was research into the abnormal to find out what was normal. That kind of terminology was no longer used. Defining what was accommodated or accepted in one's humanity included a large range of conditions. He believed that one of the challenges in a society which had less and less concept of the soul was that life simply became that which was between birth and death, with nothing beyond it. There was a need for a theology that spoke of the infinite rather than the finite.

Dr David Simmons (Glasgow and Galloway) wondered whether the debate could learn from the biodiversity movement. He spoke as a psychologist and was interested in neurodiversity. An expert had suggested that if autism could be eradicated there might no longer be any mathematicians, engineers, or scientists. There was a need to be careful. There were some single gene conditions where there was a good argument for alteration but where the boundary was to be drawn was indeed an interesting debate. It might require to be done on a case-by-case basis. He suggested that use of the word "defect" in the report was perhaps inappropriate. In his workplace, there was a team looking at social robotics. Artificial intelligence was growing in complexity and sophistication and there might be a point at which it would be necessary to decide whether an artificially made creation could be regarded as human.

The Rev Terry Taggart (Aberdeen and Orkney) suggested that when one was uninformed, one meddled at one's peril. In a previous occupation he had been a detective in Special Branch and, during the 1990s, had been involved in gathering intelligence on activists causing disorder at experimental crop sites. The Government at the time had been intent on stamping out opposition. He was not suggesting that the Scottish Episcopal Church would be infiltrated by undercover officers, but it was nevertheless worth bearing in mind. He was grateful to the Working Group for the report's openness and comprehensiveness and he fully supported the Motion. Science would do whatever it did, but the Church also must do what it needed to do.

Mrs Ruth Warmer (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) spoke of her personal experience in the loss of a beloved daughter owing to a genetically inherited disease, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. It had been totally unexpected and undiagnosed. She had died at the age of 26. The origins of the genetic condition had been researched and it had then been discovered that it had been present in previous generations but at no stage had there been any realisation that the

condition was in fact a genetic one. If there was research and medical knowledge that could be continued to edit genes to make sure ethically that further generations did not need to suffer loss she would support it wholeheartedly. This was an area on which Christians ought to take a stand.

Dr Bruce responded to comments. He explained that the idea of a moratorium would relate to germline changes to embryos not to genome research in general. There was no reason, for example, why research into Huntington's should be subject to moratorium. On the question of human enhancement, the Council of European Churches had looked extensively at the question of ethics and theology and there was a great deal of theology available on that topic. It was too large a topic for the Church in Society Working Group to address. The purpose of the Working Group's work had been to introduce the Church to the dilemmas. He could not give a single answer to the status of the human embryo because there were different Christians views on the subject. The churches could make a very significant contribution in such areas partly by explaining that there was diversity of views within the Christian community.

Dr Wright responded to theological comments. She explained that as a Christian ethicist she believed that asking questions was the place to start. Life moved rapidly and answers arrived at quickly became out of date. It was difficult to keep up but it was imperative for the Church to bring doctrine to bear on such matters in the service of public theology. The report raised many questions and further work would be undertaken on the theological aspects. All members of the Church should be asking such questions, particularly in difficult pastoral circumstances.

Professor Atkinson suggested that as new areas arose the first stage was always to ask questions. Answers were not always immediately available.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 1 abstention.

The Chair expressed thanks to the panel who had represented the issue and to Professor Atkinson as he completed his term of office as the Convener of the Church in Society Committee.

## **7.2 College of Bishops – the Role of the Churches in Reconciliation Following Social Change**

The Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) indicated that Brother Roger, the founder of the Taizé Community, had been one of the profoundest influences on his journey of faith. One of Brother Roger's guiding principles had been that of reconciliation and he had named the church at Taizé as "The Church of Reconciliation". Above the entrances to the church were notices indicating "be reconciled all who enter here" – both believers and those who could not believe. He had seen reconciliation as a basic demand of the Gospel without which Christians spoke without integrity and without which human beings were held back and could not move forward. For Brother Roger, reconciliation had meant the restoration of relationships. The imperative of reconciliation rested on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The witness to that was Scripture, interpreted by tradition and reason. The Church was a divided

Church in a divided world but was still called to reconciliation. As the Bishops had reflected on this, the starting point had been Scripture.

Synod members then engaged in Bible study, based on the tradition of *Lectio Divina*, in table groups.

Bishop Paton suggested that it felt to him as if the good ship UK had become stranded on the issue of Brexit. Whilst in Scotland the statistics were different, the division between opinion was nevertheless the same – in the nation as a whole, in families and indeed within the current Synod meeting. The question of independence was similarly divisive. In politics, whilst one was used to differences, one tended to be able to agree to disagree. Both Brexit and independence felt different in kind, not just degree. The issues invited polarisation rather than shared space. They were emotive, not just practical and political ones. Scotland was not the only country facing such difficulty and he invited the Bishop of Clogher to speak to Synod.

The Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher, brought greetings in Gaelic. He was the lead Bishop on the subject of Brexit in the Irish House of Bishops and advised the Archbishop of Armagh. On questions of social cohesion, in Ireland, they had settled for tolerance. Reconciliation was entirely different. Part of the reason for that had been that the churches had not played a particularly significant role, with the exception of a small number of individuals. It had been assumed that all was well in Ireland because of the Good Friday agreement but in fact he suggested that Ireland was now more divided than it had been when he had been a youngster. There was now less social integration than there had been. Reconciliation was not the same as forgiveness because it brought in a matrix of theological ideas which were much more complex. The drag on politics in Ireland had been the legacy of the past. On the subject of Brexit, the question of the Irish border had loomed large. His diocese straddled the border. It was in fact not "the Irish border" but rather the "UK/Irish" border. However Brexit worked out, there would have to be a resetting of relationships between the islands of Ireland and the UK.

The Church of Ireland was one of the few provinces of the Anglican Communion which stretched across two political jurisdictions. The Church was therefore the embodiment of a kind of non-political unity. Despite what might be thought, the demographics would not result in a nationalist majority which would allow for a shared Ireland (which, if it happened, would simply create another alienated group of people). The demographic suggested that the split would be 40% nationalists, 40% unionists and 20% who did not wish to be defined by either. All groups would therefore be minorities. As far as the border was concerned, the debates had included elements of complacency and exaggeration, both based on ignorance. A further myth in Westminster was that "the Irish are being difficult". That was the tail wagging the dog. In fact, for the first time in Anglo-Irish relations, the Republic had been in a position of relative strength. In his view, the Republic had acted morally, respectfully and responsibly. By pooling its sovereignty, the Republic had in fact been able to deepen and increase its sovereignty as a small nation.

Bishop McDowell suggested that some adjustment had been needed to the Good Friday Agreement. However, the advent of Brexit had prevented that. The

Church of Ireland was celebrating its 150th anniversary. In his researches on the subject, he had come across reports of debates at the time in the House of Lords on the Irish Church Act. The Archbishop of Armagh had been in the chamber and had spoken against the bill which had nevertheless passed. The Archbishop had recorded his thoughts at the time including the fact that a Catholic bishop who had watched the debate from the gallery had said to him "see what these English will do to you".

Bishop Paton said that in Scotland both Brexit and independence were emotive issues. Polarisation had led to populist approaches and some politicians to their shame had poured oil on the fires while others had become targets of hatred. It had encouraged racism and xenophobia and aggression towards immigrants and minority communities. Whatever happened practically, such feelings were likely to persist and even deepen. What would reconciliation look like? It would not be a superficial papering over of cracks or an avoidance of issues. Conflict which was faced and lived through in dialogue could be the engine of positive change. The reconciliation needed would be a long period of healing and listening and the rebuilding of social respect and political confidence. Gordon Brown had said recently that reconciliation would take a generation. What could the churches offer their communities? Earlier in the meeting, Sheikh Razawi had urged the Synod to consider how the faith of the Abrahamic tree could offer the healing of the nations by example. In England, the Archbishops had encouraged churches to invite people to come for a chat and a cup of tea. Starting the process of healing deep divisions might need something stronger than a cup of tea but such opportunities to be real would need to recognise that the questions had raised deep emotional impact on the everyday feelings of many people. The Church would need to offer safe spaces for people to express feelings of hurt, anger and disappointment. The Church of Scotland had proposed opening churches as places of prayer and reflection over the long-term. In February 2019, the College of Bishops had stated that it had become increasingly concerned at the level of aggression heard in the media and at times in parliamentary behaviour and that Scotland was rooted in values which made it an inclusive place. He suggested that the SEC had collective insights, skills and resources to offer from its own recent experience such as the principles of indaba in the Anglican Communion, principles of creativity and community and conversation which the SEC tried to apply in its own Cascade Conversations on issues of human sexuality. In such conversations, everyone was regarded as equal because there could be no victims in reconciliation. The Church could provide safe space for remainers and leavers to share their stories. The questions which the Archbishops in England had offered for use might be useful and were set out in the sheet provided to Synod members. Table groups were asked to engage in the questions and to concentrate particularly on how people felt about the issues. There was a need to move into the geography of hope.

The Synod engaged in table group discussion.

## **SESSION 8: THE REV SOPHIA MARRIAGE IN THE CHAIR**

### **8.1 College of Bishops**

#### **8.1.1 Vocation and Discernment Processes**

The Rt Rev Anne Dyer (Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney) gave a presentation on the changes in vocation and discernment procedures which would take place in the Scottish Episcopal Church from summer 2019. Candidates for the ordained ministry would no longer go to England for their final selection panel. Instead, the vocation and selection process would be undertaken entirely within the Province, overseen and resourced by the Province. The College and others working with it had been encouraged to review the entirety of the processes for discerning and authorising a rich diversity of ministries both lay and ordained. The Ordinal stated that it was the Bishops' responsibility to send out ministers and to nurture the community of the baptised. That was why the College was presenting these matters to Synod. The College had been considering how to ensure that those called to ministry were deployable in many settings and how the training offered through SEI would work for all.

Bishop Dyer wished to remind Synod that all members of the body of Christ were called, by virtue of their baptism, to participate in the mission of God. All were called to grow in Christ (as disciples) and were sent out (as apostles) in the power of the Holy Spirit. Every member of the body of Christ was a minister and ministry, in the world and in the Church, took many forms. The primary place where people were encouraged as disciples and where each person could discern their call to ministry, was the local church. There was work to do to encourage the ministries of everyone.

Some would find the primary location of their vocation in the workplace, through volunteer work or in family life. Many offered time and energy to activities within church life which did not require discernment or significant training. Good churches would actively support such vocations. Some vocations outside the Church required discernment, selection and training, such as workplace chaplaincy. In such instances, training might be provided from outwith the Church. Some Church ministries required vestry and Bishop approval such as eucharistic ministers or those taking services with the reserved sacrament. There would be authorisation and training, normally provided in the local context. Some church ministries were by invitation or election, for example election to vestry or Synod. Such ministries ought to be supported through training and in prayer. For such ministries of disciple and apostle, active and ongoing support was needed. The College intended to pay renewed attention to such matters.

In addition to the ministries to which she had referred, were being added authorised lay ministries. Such ministries would be at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop according to diocesan need. They would require diocesan selection, authorisation and training and, for example, might include worship leaders, pastoral assistants, evangelists or spirituality

leaders. These would be "train as you go" ministries and for which vocation would be discerned in the diocese for ministry in a particular charge. They would be authorised by the Bishop with ongoing training. There would be strong encouragement, for those who were able, to take one SEI module per year. Such ministries might be particularly appropriate for those serving in a particular charge or who would not have the time to undertake the three year training required for lay reader ministry. The College's hope was that such lay ministries might be the kind of ministries to which some people were sensing a call at the present time. For others, they might be a stepping stone to further ministry in the future.

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson (Bishop of Argyll and The Isles) did not intend to provide a detailed summary of the new discernment processes. However, he reminded Synod that wisdom had the two facets of wisdom and common sense, both of which were present in the new system. The detail of the new processes would be available on the provincial website in the near future. In short, the essence of the new system would be that the entirety of the selection process would be embraced with confidence in the SEC, rather than sending some candidates to the Church of England. The College had confidence that those selected through the new system would be deployable throughout the Anglican Communion.

Bishop Pearson reminded the Synod that in all things ordination was the prerogative of the Diocesan Bishop. The new system would emphasise that. The processes would draw on expertise from across the Province. The budget had been developed to ensure that the new system would work in practice. The Provincial Director of Ordinands would remain responsible for recruitment and selection of candidates for the ordained ministry throughout the Province. However, the way of referring candidates to the PDO would change. The local rector would write a letter of referral to the PDO so that the PDO was aware of who was in the process at any given time. The Bishop would similarly be informed. Locally there would be Assistant Directors of Ordinands who would work with the people in the process. This would not necessarily operate on a strict diocesan basis and the system would operate across diocesan borders. The PDO had now been revised as a full-time job. As well as the Assistant Director of Ordinands there would be Vocations Advisers who would be able to open up a gateway to a range of ministries. The College was endeavouring to bring together the nomenclature for different kinds of ministries. It could not all be done at once but the intention was to move towards a more unified pattern of ministry throughout the Province. Lay readership at present had a separate selection process but would in due course be brought into the new arrangements. The basic criteria for any ministry was that it had to be realistic, informed and obedient.

Bishop Pearson reported that individuals had already been approached to take on the new roles envisaged by the new processes and one training event had already taken place and had been an enormous success. That event had articulated the values and skills needed for the future. In future, the advisory panels would be in-house within the Province and the process leading to such panels would involve local discernment meetings which

would help people to articulate their faith. He suggested that the new processes were a sign of the Holy Spirit moving within the Church. If Synod members had questions they should direct them to those individuals.

The Chair indicated that questions would not be taken.

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) asked as a point of order why new ministries were being declared without having been intimated in the Synod papers and why there had been no opportunity to discuss matters or ask questions. Reference had been made to wisdom and common sense and it seemed strange that the Synod was not being given an opportunity to discuss. Bishop Pearson responded by saying that what had been presented was representative of what was in fact already happening in the Dioceses. The Bishops were beginning to offer a way forward, none of which was "in tablets of stone". Provost Holdsworth questioned the wisdom of speaking of a form of lay ministry about which the Church was not united. Bishop Dyer had recognised that the same language was not used across the Province and many churches did not speak of every person being a minister. He asked why that system was being imposed on the whole Province when there was an acknowledgement already that it was not agreed by all. Bishop Pearson said that matters were not being imposed. What was being said was that by baptism one entered the ministry of the Church and everyone was a full disciple. That was what baptism was about. Provost Holdsworth disagreed.

### **8.1.1 Primus' Activities**

The Most Rev Dr Mark Strange (Primus) reported on his activities on behalf of the Province in the Anglican Communion. In July 2018, he had attended the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and had also visited the Archbishop of the Canadian Anglican Church. One third of Anglican Primates had been present at the General Convention and there had been opportunity for significant conversation. In September 2018, he had addressed the Church in Wales' equivalent of the General Synod regarding the process followed within the SEC on matters of sexuality. Later that month he had also met with the Bishop of Bujumbura in Edinburgh. In October 2018, he had had the privilege of receiving, on behalf of the SEC, an Honorary Doctorate at Sewanee University in Tennessee and had taken the opportunity then to travel to New York where he had addressed staff and congregations at Trinity Wall Street. In November with the Focolare Movement, he had met Bishops from across Europe, mainly Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic. In December, he had paid an official visit to the Anglican Communion office and also had a meeting at Lambeth Palace. In February 2019, he had met the Archbishop of Brazil in London, with USPG and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. He had been invited to a retreat in Kenya for African Anglican Primates and spouses. He had been somewhat surprised to receive such an invitation. It had been a wonderful experience and his wife had been able to address the group on education in Scotland. A regional Primates' meeting had taken place in Armagh and, in April, he had visited the Holy Land and

preached at St George's, Jerusalem and had been able to engage with local people. He expressed thanks to Trinity Wall Street who had been very supportive financially. In November 2019, he was due to attend a meeting in Zambia and the next Anglican Primates' Meeting would take place in January 2020, leading into the Lambeth Conference later that year. On occasion, he had found himself being excluded from certain meetings as a result of the Synod's decision in relation to marriage in 2017. He expressed his thanks to the Very Rev Alison Simpson as Dean of his Diocese who handled matters when he was away from the Diocese. He similarly thanked Synod members for their support.

The Chair thanked the Primus for all he did on behalf of the Church and assured him of the Church's prayers.

## **8.2 Report on ACC-17**

Mr Alistair Dinnie (ACC representative) indicated that it had been a great privilege for him and the Rev Dr Jenny Wright to represent the Scottish Episcopal Church at the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Hong Kong, ACC-17. It had taken place in late April and early May 2019. He reminded Synod that the ACC was one of the four instruments of Communion within the Anglican Communion. Dependent on size, every Province sent either two or three delegates. In addition, there were eight regional youth representatives who had been added to the meeting for the first time. Amie Byers from the SEC had been one of those regional youth representatives. A number of other individuals with past or present connections to the Scottish Episcopal Church had also been present: Ms Rachael Fraser, Ms Lucy Copeland, the Rev Rachel Mash and Mr John Rea. Membership of the ACC included the Archbishop of Canterbury, as *ex officio* President and the Chair and Vice-Chair who were elected by the ACC, currently the Most Rev Paul Kwong and Ms Maggie Swinson. Five members of the Primates' Standing Committee were also members. Approximately 120 individuals had attended and 38 out of the 40 Provinces in the Communion had been represented. Mr Dinnie indicated the range of business which had been on the agenda and explained that, whilst not part of the formal business, there had also been a session on the Church of England's sexuality listening process *Living in Love and Faith*.

The Rev Dr Jenny Wright (Edinburgh) described the ACC meeting at which there had been many presentations but not enough time for discussion. The meeting had opened with a memorable striking of a gong at a service in the Cathedral. The Archbishop of Canterbury had said that the Church needed to seek "to be visibly the body of Christ, visibly serving, visibly disagreeing well, visible witnesses to the hope that drives us today". The Archbishop of Hong Kong had called for the Church to be relevant to the world. Particular aspects on the agenda which had stood out to her had been: woman on the frontline; *Thy Kingdom Come*; women in church and society; theological education; and the Anglican Safe Church Commission. The reports were available on the Anglican Communion website. She also referred to the networks of the Anglican Communion: Peace and Justice; Colleges and Universities; Environmental Network; Women's Network and Family Network. Resolutions had been passed including ones on equipping God's people for gender justice, the dignity of human beings,



sustainable development goals and the development, use and impact of nuclear weapons. One of the more emotional sessions had concerned a resolution initially on the subject of human sexuality but following revision referred instead to human dignity. A half hour slot had become 2½ hours in length. The original resolution, proposed by the Bishop of Oklahoma, had asked the Anglican Communion to institute a listening process, which had been promised earlier, and to take seriously the exclusion of people. Some voices at the meeting had expressed concern at being able to take such a motion back to their churches. After much discussion, three Bishops who had been involved in the discussion had re-drafted the resolution which was passed after the Archbishop of Canterbury had offered an apology regarding the way in which invitations to the Lambeth Conference 2020 had been handled. The debate had been reported differently in various ways around the Communion and she suggested that delegates may have been left wondering whether it had been a good or bad handling of the topic. For her, however, despite major differences, it had highlighted the availability of a platform to talk and a willingness to listen.

The meeting had also adopted various public statements on the situations in Sri Lanka, South Sudan, Sudan, Pakistan and India and on cyclones Idai and Kenneth. The meeting also received a report on the planning towards the Lambeth Conference 2020 and on the season of intentional discipleship. A publication "Jesus Shaped Life" was an additional resource in relation to intentional discipleship which had been produced. She encouraged Synod members to look at the resources available on the Anglican Communion website.

Mr Dinnie then offered his personal reflections on the meeting. Hong Kong itself had been the most unabashedly aspirational place he had ever visited. The flipside to the economic activity in Hong Kong were matters such as the euphemistically described "helpers" who slept in kitchen cupboards and could be sacked from employment when it emerged that they had a long term health issue. The Province of Hong Kong brokered the wealth of congregations such as St John's Cathedral into a very impressive social programme. The Anglican Consultative Council exemplified the diversity across the Communion and yet gathered united around the Eucharist. Aspects of the meeting had been very testing, as alluded to already by Dr Wright. In the final business session, the meeting had considered resolutions which had laid all too bare divisions around human sexuality but also differences about how people related to one another and where power and influence lay within the Communion. He had expected the difficulties but had been challenged where certain behaviours had fallen short of what he had hoped. By the end of the meeting he had felt somewhat disillusioned, tired and emotional and yet God had broken through for him at St John the Baptist, East Kowloon.

The Chair thanked Mr Dinnie and Dr Wright for representing the SEC in the worldwide church.

## **SESSION 9: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR**

### **9.1 Religious Society of Friends**

Mary Woodward (Religious Society of Friends) thanked Synod for its hospitality and welcome. Of the discussions encountered thus far in Synod, she enthusiastically agreed with some of what had been said and had found some parts marginally, and other parts very, challenging. Earlier in the year she had represented British Quakers at the Finnish yearly meeting, at which 12 people had been present and more recently she had been at the British yearly meeting at which there had been some 1,200. She had recently been appointed to a group which was rewriting the "Book of Discipline" which included an anthology of Quaker writings. She offered to the Synod the gift of silence and also her favourite quote from the "Book of Discipline" written in 1661 by Isaac Pemberton which spoke of self-giving to God and the growth of God's seed in oneself.

### **9.2 Standing Committee: Budget and Quota**

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) suggested that the Synod had come a long way in the previous two days of meeting. He hoped that members felt that good business had been done and that Boards and Committees had been mandated to undertake work in the year ahead.

Mr Gordon then proposed the following Motion:

*"That this Synod, having examined the proposed budgets for the General Synod for the year 2020, agree to a quota figure of £741,527 for that year."*

He reported that he had been asked whether the passing of the Rule 10 Motion earlier in Synod would require an adjustment to the budgets for 2020/21. He considered that they did not require adjustment but Synod would be invited to consider budgets for 2021/22 in 2020. He had spoken to the Rev Diana Hall and believed that the Rule 10 Motion which had been passed asked the Church to develop a strategy to work towards disinvestment. In the year ahead, the Church would work with her, the Investment Committee and the Church in Society Committee to develop a proposal for consideration at Synod 2020. Mr Gordon paid tribute to Mr Adrian Tupper, the Convener of the Investment Committee, who had done a huge amount of work in the previous 12 months with the Investment Managers and Church in Society Committee seeking to find appropriate investment vehicles to meet ethical standards and achieve the kind of investment returns needed to fund the Church's work. The medium to longer term issue which might need consideration would be the extent to which the Church's income was drawn respectively from the UTP and quota.

Dr John Ferguson-Smith (Convener, Administration Board) seconded the Motion.

Dr Jaap Jacobs (Brechtin) expressed thanks to the Convener of the Standing Committee for the replies which had been provided to the questions which had been raised at General Synod 2018 in relation to quota. He also wished to thank the Convener for the proposal being brought forward for a freeze on provincial quota. He felt that that showed that Standing Committee was both listening and

acting and hopefully this would provide some relief. However, he believed that there was still a need to address certain underlying issues. It was still the case that congregations faced a decline in membership and levels of giving. The question of whether the current system of financial relationship was fair arose – in particular the question of how provincial quota was shared. The Church might wish to consider whether changes to the system were required. He wondered whether the Standing Committee would consider setting up a group to review the structural arrangements.

Mr Jim Gibson (Glasgow and Galloway) noted that the effect of the Motion was that quota would be frozen for the third year in a row. Given the possible variation in investment income there had remained an underlying issue of congregational liberality and stewardship.

Mr Hugh Morison (Moray, Ross and Caithness) referred to the fact that he had previously worked with Mr Gordon in the civil service. He noted that the budget had been examined by Synod before having its very lively discussion about communications. He wondered whether there was a need for consideration or whether resources put into communications were sufficient. He also suggested that budgets, rather than being calculated to the nearest pound, might be calculated to the nearest ten pounds.

Mr Gordon responded indicating he had been delighted to catch up with Mr Morison during the course of Synod after many years. He owed a debt of gratitude to him for having been tutored by him in the past. Mr Gordon agreed that budgets could be rounded to the nearest ten pounds. Standing Committee would be reviewing with the Director of Communications how to take forward the proposals contained in the paper which had been considered by Synod. He agreed with comments made by Mr Gibson, who would also be involved in the future discussions regarding ethical investment in his new position as Administration Board Convener. As to Dr Jacobs' suggestion, Mr Gordon explained that significant work was done year by year by the Treasurer in conjunction with Diocesan Treasurers to agree the amount of quota assessable income. He would be delighted to engage in further discussion with Dr Jacobs to see whether wider consideration was needed in relation to the assessment of quota. Mr Gordon believed it to be reasonably fair given its relation to the state of individual congregations but there was also the question of how diocesan quota was set.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

The Chair expressed thanks to Mr Gordon for all that he did for the Church as Standing Committee Convener.

## **9.3 Mission Board**

### **9.3.1 Global Partnerships Committee**

Mr David Kenvyn (Convener, Global Partnerships Committee) reported on the work of the Committee. The Committee had approximately £110,000 available each year to spend on grants for work overseas in other Anglican

provinces. The use of the funds was restricted and could not be spent on any other purpose. It enabled the Committee to make considerable differences to the lives of ordinary people. In 2018, it had continued to work closely with the Side-by Side campaign and Thursdays in Black to make sure that gender justice issues remained at the centre of its work. Two major initiatives had developed the work in that area. The Committee was funding a project run by Charities Education International in Bangladesh to improve the lives of young women by increasing the educational opportunities open to them and improve their skills once they had left education. In Yida refugee camp in South Sudan, the Committee had assisted with the provision of sanitary products and in menstrual education. The Committee had supported a hospital project in Uganda, worked with the Green Anglicans project in southern Africa and in Amazonia had funded a women's refuge safe house as well as beginning to develop a partnership with a new youth project.

In Scotland, the Committee had worked with the Just Festival providing funding to enable a production from the Market Theatre in Johannesburg to be arranged. Unfortunately, that had fallen foul of Home Office delays in issuing visas and as a direct result of the Government's "hostile environment". The Secretary General had sent a letter of complaint to the Home Secretary but the latter's response had been inadequate.

The Committee had provided a travel grant for a member of the Diocese of Edinburgh to attend the Soul Edge Christian Leadership Training Programme among the First Nations of Canada and similar grants could be available to other dioceses. The highlight of the year had been the funding of a Christmas party for children from marginalised communities in Palestine organised by Wi'am, a Christian charity based in Bethlehem. The Primus had been able to visit Wi'am during his trip to the Holy Land earlier in the year. In the year ahead, the Committee hoped to hold a companion partnerships day in preparation for Lambeth 2020. He encouraged dioceses and churches which had a link with an organisation abroad to consider applying to the Committee for support.

Finally, Mr Kenvyn thanked Miriam Weibye and Marion Watson for their support for the Committee.

The Rev Denise Herbert (Brechin) thanked the Committee for their work which had included provision of grant finance to a charity in South Africa which was close to her heart. She expressed concern about the Home Office delay in providing visas. She wondered whether Synod itself could send a note of complaint to the Home Office. The Secretary General explained that the original letter of complaint had been sent on behalf of the Church.

The Primus thanked Mr Kenvyn and the Committee for their work.

### 9.3.2 UN Commission on the Status of Women

Ms Ley-Anne Forsyth, Youth Officer for the Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness, explained that she had represented the Church at the 63rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The theme for that meeting had been "social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls". Owing to her professional and church experience, she considered that she had a clear idea of the issues to which she felt the West, and in particular the UK, had to give an answer. The issues which she had identified and wished to take to the meeting had included equal opportunities for education regardless of gender (research suggested that by the age of six, children had future identified careers and learning on the basis of gender); the fact that more than four million children lived in poverty in the UK; the fact that one in five women and girls in Scotland had experienced serious sexual assault; the disproportionate amount of unpaid domestic work carried out by women; austerity; gender-based violence in all its forms; slowing the pace of progress in relation to women's rights; and the Church's own inequalities.

The Anglican delegation to CSW had comprised eight delegates. She had felt that the mandate for her work in New York had been the large number of women who had reached out to tell her of their concerns. In addressing Synod, she did so with the mandate of such people in the SEC who cared fiercely about the issues in question.

Anglican Communion staff had secured a private meeting with Lord Ahmed of Wimbledon, the head of the UK Government delegation. She had raised with him the concern that in the UK there appeared to be a regression in rights for women, referencing the UN report on austerity as well as her own experience of the disproportionate numbers of women who relied on supplemented income, in particular Universal Credit. Issues such as the "rape clause" and the failure to protect domestic abuse victims from economic abuse had been raised directly with him. Her comments had been "noted".

A delegate from the Solomon Islands had raised with Lord Ahmed the importance of faith-based organisations in delivering front-line refugees in her country. In response he had explained that the UK had set up a new fund which could provide support. Other opportunities to influence the UK delegation had come in the form of a nightly debrief with Charles Ramsden, Head of EU and International Policy.

After a week of presentations, meetings and discussions, negotiations had begun on the conclusion document. The agreed conclusions ran to some 22 pages. They included the noting by the Commission that universal access to social protection played a central role in reducing inequality, eradicating poverty and promoting inclusive growth. The Commission had also reiterated that everyone had the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of them and their families but had expressed concern that there were gaps in coverage, especially for women and girls.

Ms Forsyth commented that there had been a sense of regression at the meeting being pushed in particular by the USA. In fact, the USA had not achieved the backward steps which it had requested. Nevertheless a number of weeks after the meeting the USA had been successful at the Security Council in having reference to sexual and reproductive rights removed from the document. It was imperative that the Church as a whole and members of the Church as individuals did all that could be done to defend the rights of women and girls.

The theme of CSW 64 would be “Beijing 25” since it would be 25 years since the Beijing Declaration had been adopted by the UN. In 2020, 10 years would be left before the 2030 deadline for implementing sustainable development goal number five, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. She suggested that the Synod needed to ensure that its own house was in order and that the opportunity ought to be taken to reflect on the past 25 years within the SEC to see how far it had come since the Beijing Declaration. There was a need to consider sustainable development goal five and come up with a plan to ensure that true gender equality was met by the target date of 2030.

The Primus expressed thanks to Ms Forsyth and acknowledged how privileged the Synod was year after year to hear from young women in the Church who had come through the Provincial Youth Committee and gone on to represent the Church at the UN CSW. The Church needed to take heed of what they said.

Dr Julia House (Aberdeen and Orkney) thanked Ms Forsyth for her presentation. She had noted the comment that by the age of six girls and boys knew which career they should pursue. In the Church there was an internal bias of which one was not conscious. The Church did indeed suffer from terminal niceness and she had frequently encountered the expression “I am not sexist but...”. The use of language was very important. She was delighted that changes to liturgy were being considered but less happy about how long it might take. That was one reason why young women left the Church.

The Rev Peter Harris (Edinburgh) commented on how quickly the gender movement had moved on. He wondered whether there had been any discussions regarding the fluidity of gender at the meeting since that was a subject which the Church would need to start considering seriously for the future.

Ms Forsyth explained that any document to be adopted by the UN had to have support across the Board. While she agreed that there should be a discussion about gender fluidity, the meeting which she had attended had not been the place to do that. The Provincial Youth Committee handled matters well.

### 9.3.3 Provincial Youth Committee

The Rev Tembu Rongong (Convener, Provincial Youth Committee) said that longer serving members of Synod would note the development over the years in the PYC presentation at Synod from one or two members to the large group of individuals present at the current Synod. The work of the PYC had developed to the point that additional help had been needed to support the volunteers. He introduced Mrs Claire Benton-Evans who had been appointed as the PYC Enabler. Mrs Benton-Evans then spoke briefly about her role in championing the young people, being their advocate and defender, assisting them in finding their place in the Church and enabling them to speak for themselves.

Ms Phoebe Pryce talked about the things which she enjoyed doing in church and how opportunities could be created for young people. Young people were not the Church of the future but the Church of today. Young people could serve on a welcome team, lead the intercessions or even sit on vestry. The previous year a Glen-style service had been run by the PYC in a congregation which had involved interaction with the congregation. Ms Olivia Smith spoke of her experience in serving on a vestry. For her, the issue was whether the Church was doing enough to help those who were in need. There was a greater need to look outward beyond internal Church concerns. Ms Amie Byers reported on her attendance at ACC-17 in Hong Kong as one of the eight regional youth representatives. She had been blessed to be there with Mr Alistair Dinnie and the Rev Dr Jenny Wright as well as Rachael Fraser on the Anglican Communion Office staff. Her daily updates on the meeting were available on Facebook.

Ms Rebecca Cromwell spoke as the retiring Youth Chair of the Committee and the opportunities which that had given to her including serving as a lay person on the Preparatory Committee for the election of the Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane. Her time as Chair was finishing but further opportunities would arise. She would attend the forthcoming Kirchentag and also Glen as a leader. She expressed thanks to all those who had supported her during her period as Chair.

Ms Becky Northover spoke as the retiring Youth Secretary of the Committee. The Committee provided a safe space for young people to voice their own opinions. Initially, she had been unsure as to whether she had many opinions but over time the Committee had enabled her to put her ideas forward which had then become a reality.

Ms Eleanor Tofield spoke as the incoming Youth Chair of the Committee. She had come onto the Committee a few years previously and her main aim as Chair would be to seek the complete acceptance of young people in church. She hoped to be able to create closer relations with other churches in Scotland and thanked Rebecca Cromwell for being an inspiration.

The Rev John Bremner (United Reformed Church) responded to the invitation which he had heard to other denominations to become more closely involved. The more the Churches could work together, particularly in relation to young people, the better. The EMU arrangement might enable that to happen.

The Primus expressed thanks to all those who had contributed and to the Provincial Youth Committee as a whole.

#### **9.4 Scottish Episcopal Institute Valedictory Service and Close of Synod**

The Synod closed with the Scottish Episcopal Institute Valedictory Service at the end of which the Primus is expressed thanks to David Todd and those who had arranged the Eucharist and led worship throughout Synod, the representatives of other denominations and faiths, those who had acted as Chairpersons or Facilitators, the Assessor, the staff of St Paul's & St George's and of the General Synod Office.

At the end of the Service, the Primus confirmed the Acts of Synod and gave the blessing on Saturday 8 June 2019.