

DIOCESAN SYNOD REPORT - JULY 2011

Birmingham Diocesan Synod met on the evening of Wednesday 13th July 2011, at St Alban's Academy, Highgate, Birmingham.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Bishop David spoke about the challenges facing the Church in the new quinquennium

- *GOING FOR GROWTH* - both numerical and spiritual
- *CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMON GOOD* - engaging with society, especially in these difficult times
- *MINISTRY* - reimagining and resourcing, with the view to sustaining Christian ministry in every community and in a contemporary society.

What is the national context for our Christianity? Can't be complacent. Christians need to have views and influences on national and local issues.

Here in Birmingham Diocese, the TRANSFORMING CHURCH initiative is involved with many of these areas. There is a great significance of ethnic minority Anglicans in this Diocese and in developing relationships across the Faiths. We also have the importance of our link with Malawi.

We need to use our resources well and efficiently to meet targets and develop effective mission.

We need to be inviting those around us to "*Walk with us as we walk with Jesus.*"

GENERAL SYNOD

Archdeacon Hayward Osborne gave a report on the July meeting of General Synod

Some of the areas covered included:-

- The Anglican/Methodist Covenant
- Relationships between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church
- Presence and Engagement with Other Faiths
- Parochial Fees
- Mission Action Planning - urgently needed to support parishes into mission
- Training Costs
- Broadening Representation on Diocesan and General Synod

ANNUAL REPORTS 2010

The Revd Jackie Hughes, Diocesan Director of Education gave a presentation on the

"Future of Religious Education in Birmingham Schools" (Briefing paper gives more detail)

The Education Bill will bring about some of the greatest changes to the Education System since the Butler Act with major implications for RE. So we are at a crossroads. The current law relating to RE and collective worship is flouted in a quarter of Secondary Schools. We need to tackle this secularisation of schooling. What is it saying to young people and society about faith, religious tolerance and community cohesion? That is why RE and collective worship must remain central to the school experience of all pupils.

We were also introduced to the work done by the Birmingham SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) designing a new Agreed Syllabus for RE to allow schools (Secondary and Primary) to meet statutory requirements. They are also launching a new website (google: Faith Makes a Difference) in September 2011 to support RE and collective worship. It will contain detailed lesson plans and variety of resources to deliver the syllabus. Access will be free to Birmingham LEA schools, but schools in other areas will have to pay for the resources. It will also be of use to faith leaders, and those who minister to children and young people in church.

Synod then accepted *The Reports of the Diocesan Boards, Councils and Committees for 2010* which had been previously distributed to members of Synod.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

The accounts for 2010 were adopted by Synod, and Mazzars LLP reappointed as Auditors. Mr P Nunnerley, DBF Chair, commented that collection of Common Fund in 2010 was £350,000 under budget. However, there was not a full complement of stipendiary posts in place in the Diocese, and so this compensated the deficit.

2012 BUDGET

The DBF Chair moved that Synod authorised an expenditure of £8.826 million for 2012. This takes account of the increase in National Insurance and opting back into SERPS. Synod approved the Budget.

Synod authorised an incumbent's stipend of £23,000 (+2.27%) from 1st April 2012.

Common Fund would be determined in accordance with the Diocesan Formula used for the 2011 calculation.

The Chair commented that so far this year collection of Common Fund was up just 1% over the same period for 2010. If this deficit continues in future years then obviously The Diocese will have to consider the future of funding ministry in the Diocese or consider alternative patterns of ministry.

Elden Small,

July 2011