

## **DIOCESAN SYNOD REPORT-April 2010**

Birmingham Diocesan Synod met on Saturday 13th March at Coleshill CE Primary School. Members of Synod were welcomed by the school choir and orchestra, who also participated in the opening devotions.

### **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

Bishop David reviewed the TRANSFORMING CHURCH INITIATIVE

-the Discipleship Conference was held in November which identified a desire to build discipleship, especially with children and families and the need to develop relationships with the wider elements of the community.

-the Transforming Church Consultants have now started their work with parishes leading to fertile discussions across the Diocese which are already having an effect on the experiences of both parishes and individuals.

He suggested some BIGGER QUESTIONS that we need to think about

-What does it mean to be the National Church and how are we seen?

-all are responsible for the ministry of the Body of Christ but what is the specific role of those called to Stipendary Ministry?

-What will it mean to be a Christian in this region in 15-20 years time?

What we do/say/plan now will shape this. The biggest challenge to us is PRAYER.

### **GENERAL SYNOD REPORT**

The February Sessions had covered a variety of subjects including:

-an update on the proposed legislation on Women Bishops

-Communion with the new Anglican Church grouping in North America (ACNA)

-Mission and Fresh Expressions

-decline of TV coverage of Religion on the BBC

-Clergy Pensions

-Anglican/Methodist Relations with the President and Vice President of the Methodist Church both addressing Synod

### **REPORT ON CHURCH SCHOOLS**

We were reminded that the CofE brought education to vast swathes of this country and so influenced the lives of many ordinary people.

Today 1 million children are educated in a CofE school.

We need to encourage closer links between the schools and parishes.

Our Diocese takes on board the initiative EVERY CHILD MATTERS TO GOD and links it to the Church's Mission (see separate sheet)

We then received a presentation on Coleshill CE School by the children, head teacher, governing body, vicar and Diocesan representatives, as an example of a successful Voluntary Aided school.

What makes it special?

-WORSHIP

-GOVERNANCE

-CHAPLAINCY

-ETHOS

-LINKS WITH THE PARISH CHURCH

Part of the school aim is that Christian love and commitment is demonstrated in all aspects of everyday school life.

The relationship between school and church enriches both and overflows into the local community and gives opportunities to proclaim the Gospel.

The report then looked at connections between the Church and non-church schools of which there are many varied examples.

A new initiative being developed is the DEVELOPING AFFILIATED SCHOOLS SCHEME

This is where a local church and school are already working together well.

After consultation with school/church/governors a formal document is adopted agreeing that the links will continue and develop and the school then becomes affiliated to the Diocese.

The scheme will benefit:- community cohesion, mutual support and opportunities for mission.

Our first affiliated school will sign up on 30th April.

Information on the scheme will be going out to parishes soon.

## **COMMON FUND CALCULATION FORMULA**

There was a presentation and discussion on the possible options and revisions being considered by the COMMON FUND REVIEW WORKING PARTY

WHY?-To try to make the calculation more accurate and fairer for each parish?

-To increase the collection of common fund, when the rate is currently worsening, while costs are increasing?

-To develop a system which is not a disincentive to growth, as the current one is, being based on electoral roles and average Sunday attendances?

Suggestions are that electoral role and average attendance should no longer be part of the formula. Instead government statistics on Indices of Multiple Deprivation in addition to Parish Income Factors should be used in the calculation. This would not discourage growth but wealthier areas would continue to support poorer parishes.

Other factors to consider are: - the level of the fixed element- should this be increased? (to above £9,000)

- selective distribution of Church Commissioners Allocation only to the poorer parishes? (unlike current practice which deducts this from total common fund and thus benefits all parishes)

- Or just allocate, at discretion of the Bishops to essential 'mission' parishes to maintain a presence in those areas without them being expected to meet their costs?

Whatever system is agreed it will need to be:- FAIR, COLLECTABLE, CONSISTENT.SIMPLE, and SUSTAINABLE?

## **MALAWI**

Parishes were thanked for their generous support for the Anglican Church in Malawi in the present economic circumstances (£57,500 given during 2009)

We are asked to give generously in 2010 (target set £70,000)

We are also requested to continue to pray for Malawi and the ongoing partnership being developed.

Elden Small April 2010