

to set up a working party to review the law and practice regarding the offices of suffragan bishop, dean, archdeacon and residentiary canon, including the role of diocesan bishops in making nominations to suffragan sees and the role of the Crown in the making of appointments. The working party has since been set up under the chairmanship of Sir Joseph Pilling and is expected to report in July 2006.

WINDSOR REPORT

Finally, at the February group of sessions the Synod welcomed the report from the House of Bishops accepting the principles set out in the *Windsor Report* of the Lambeth Commission on Communion. Although the House stated its support for the proposal made in the report for the drawing up of an 'Anglican Covenant' to make explicit the bonds which currently bind members of the Anglican Communion together, the resolution passed by the Synod did not touch on that proposal as such. Formal consideration of both the principle and the content of any 'Anglican Covenant' will accordingly have to await another occasion.

THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CHURCH IN WALES

*The annual report for the Church in Wales was not available
at the time this Issue went to press.*

SYNOD OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IVOR GUILD

Writer to the Signet

The Synod in 2005 had none of the excitement of the Synod in England. No matters of general contention were on the agenda, and members assembled in a relaxed mood. The struggle for reconciliation in the Anglican Church, which was the subject of the opening address by the Primus, scarcely affected Scotland. Domestic issues prevailed.

CLERGY RETIREMENT

When the Canon dealing with retirement was passed it was not made clear that a cleric holding a stipendiary office on 15 July 1991 was not subject to compulsory retirement. This was clarified.

ADMISSION TO HOLY COMMUNION

The Canon regulating admission to Holy Communion had been passed more than forty years ago. It was now proposed to rewrite it to reflect the changed views about admitting members of other denominations. The sacrament of baptism was now to be accepted as the full rite of initiation into the Church and, subject to any regulations that the College of Bishops might impose, the admission of any baptised person to Holy Communion was to be at the discretion of the cleric having charge of the congregation. In addition, any baptised person who was a communicant of any Trinitarian church was recognised as eligible.

CATECHISING

The alteration of Canon 28 (now to be headed 'Of Christian Education and Nurture') is an expansion of the existing Canon. The revised Canon requires the clergy to set aside a due portion of time on Sundays and other convenient days for examining in the faith members of the congregation, old as well as young, thereby extending the notion of education beyond the requirements of the 1929 Catechism.

DIVINE WORSHIP

An alteration to Canon 22 fell to be considered for a second time. This allowed the Scottish Calendar 1981 (which deals with the celebration of Festivals and the observance of Holy Days) to be altered by a simple resolution of the Synod on the motion of the Faith and Order Board. Another alteration of the Canon was considered for the first time; this provided for the authorised services listed in the Schedule to the Canon to be added to, deleted or altered by a similar simple resolution — a less formal procedure.

In bringing forward these changes it was intimated that the possibility was being considered of publishing the Code of Canons on the website, with regular updates.

ELECTION OF BISHOPS

Scarcely a year has passed without the Canon dealing with the election of bishops being altered. Views were expressed that there was still scope for improvement. The present procedure had been found by some of the candidates to be 'bruising', and it was therefore decided that a further review of the Canon should be undertaken.

SUSPENSION

The only canonical change that came up for the first time (apart from the small change to Canon 22 already referred to) was in connection with offences by clerics. It was proposed that an accusation of abuse should not

lead to automatic suspension unless it concerned children and had been intimated to the Provincial Child Protection Officer. A lengthy debate about child protection and a Report by the Child Protection Officer revealed that during the past year 1,181 disclosures had been processed, and the relevant Handbook had been updated.

FINANCE

The Accounts were inevitably a matter for discussion. A deficit of £173,000 had been run up; and a workable excess of expenditure over income was expected in the current year. An acceptable level of budgeted deficit was thought to be £50,000 in a year, and all Boards were asked to trim their expenditure to achieve this.

BAPTISM

A revised liturgy for baptism was brought to the Synod. Since last year the word 'Initiation' had been dropped. It was felt that the service of baptism was a valuable occasion for introducing to those not otherwise Church members the deeper meaning which the Church saw in the ritual.

THEOLOGICAL TRAINING

Theological training remained a matter for discussion, although it had now been remitted to the dioceses. The Scottish programme had been recognised by the Church of England Ministry Division and Bangor University had validated the course. Some dioceses believed that some candidates, such as those in the Western Isles, felt a sense of geographical isolation now that training had ceased to be operated centrally. The question of the Library, which had originally been part of the Theological College, was still unresolved. The annual cost of running it was in the region of £20,000.

CONGREGATIONAL STATUS

A Green Paper was presented that stressed the many situations for which no provision had been made. The paper was approved and the Committee on Canons was asked to propose alterations to the Code to implement the new structures outlined in the paper, particularly the removal of the present status of independent congregations. All single, independent congregations should become incumbencies and their clergy should have the same right of tenure as incumbents.

SUMMARY

No doctrinal difficulties, no deep discussion of divisions threatening the unity of the Anglican Communion, no wrestling with the proper relationship with those of the Islamic faith. Debate focused on tidying up domestic deficiencies. A nod to the *Windsor Report*, a possible addition to

the Calendar of Saints, a motion of concern about current trade injustice and support for the 'Make Poverty History' campaign—and then the Synod reverted to housekeeping issues of budgets and quota. Africa might be dying of AIDS, but adequate housing for Scotland's aged citizens had a *more immediate impact.*

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

MICHAEL DAVEY

There was little legislation to burden Synod during 2005. Such as there was largely concerned housekeeping.

MARRIAGE RECORDS

The first Bill imposed a requirement that every church or chapel in which a beneficed or licensed member of the clergy officiates and in which a register of vestry members is kept maintains a marriage record book in which can be recorded details prescribed by regulations. Previously, marriage registers were provided by the state in both civil jurisdictions in Ireland and there was, consequently, no requirement upon select vestries to provide for the keeping of marriage record books. However, since 1 January 2004 in Northern Ireland (and, it is anticipated, shortly in the Republic of Ireland) the recording of marriages by clergy for state purposes has no longer been required. It was felt that, nonetheless, the Church required information for its own purposes: hence the legislation.

BUILDINGS

A second Bill was passed enabling diocesan councils to appoint chartered building surveyors in addition to their existing power to appoint architects. It also gave the Representative Body the right to appoint, at its own expense, architects, surveyors or suitably-qualified conservation specialists.

DOWN CATHEDRAL BOARD

The final Bill sought to reduce the size of the Down Cathedral Board, thereby reversing the process commenced in a previous statute of 1985 which enlarged it. In particular, the Bill relieved the Ordinary of the obligation of being a member of the Board. The Bill was introduced by the Bishop of Down, who made it abundantly clear that, while he might be relieved of the obligation to attend Board meetings, his right to know what was going on and, indeed, his right to interfere, were in no way affected.