

## General Synod Report

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The final business of the Synod was a paper on Asylum seekers which addresses both action which individuals and churches can take to help as well as social policy.

Prior to this the Synod considered the response to the ARCIC report *Gift of Authority*. The motion put by the Council for Christian Unity was remarkable given the history of ARCIC in that it raised some very serious questions for ARCIC to address. The difficulty with the motion is that it also affirms the work ARCIC has done and the process of ecumenical dialogue which ARCIC represents. There were several attempts to amend the motion and two of these were passed both of which weakened the robust language of the original. The modified resolution was passed with only a few of us voting against. What it will mean for ARCIC in the long-term remains to be seen.

The final motion on ARCIC

"That this Synod,:

- (a) re-affirm the Church of England's commitment to work with all its ecumenical partners towards the full visible unity of the Church of Christ;
- (b) recognise the significant role of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) in progressing the search for unity;
- (c) recognise the pioneering work of ARCIC in developing an ecumenical method which seeks to get behind the language of division and to express the common faith in fresh ways;
- (d) welcome the witness of *The Gift of Authority* that 'authority rightly exercised is a gift of God to bring reconciliation and peace to humankind' and its emphasis on the synodical nature of the Church as the form in which 'believers and churches are held together in communion';
- (e) acknowledge that differing convictions about issues of authority are best explored in the context of shared church life and collaboration in mission;

- (f) believing that any search for theological agreement on universal primacy requires that the contested claim of universal, ordinary and immediate jurisdiction for the Bishop of Rome be resolved, and noting that *The Gift of Authority* does not refer to this issue, request that it again form part of the agenda of ARCIC;
- (g) observing that *The Gift of Authority's* treatment of the teaching authority of the Bishop of Rome is not sufficiently clear, request that ARCIC clarify in what sense this is 'a gift to be received by all the churches'; and
- (h) affirm the ecumenical texts proposed for agreement by the Church of England should be consonant with the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it and with existing ecumenical agreements, especially when these have already been agreed by this Synod."

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