

## General Synod Report Sunday at York University

Date : 10 July 2005

Sunday business does not begin until after lunch. The first item taken was a report entitled 'Presence and Engagement' on the work and role of Churches in areas where there is a substantial presence of other faith communities.

Introducing the report the James Jones, the Bishop of Liverpool, said that the report was not advocating just proclamation nor just dialogue but 'proclamation within the context of dialogue'. There were a variety of constructive contributions and the report was endorsed.

Second business was a motion from Oxford Diocese to attempt to increase the level of parochial fees. The introductory speech was dreadful and appeared to claim, amongst other things, that clergy should charge couples for their time in running wedding preparation classes. There were issues about the details of the report but the fundamental issue of whether the Church is charging out its clergy as professionals or seeking to minister the gospel of Christ. An amendment was lost and surprisingly given the balance of debate the main motion was rejected strongly.

With about three-quarters of an hour to go until the evening meal break debate resumed on the Standing Orders. This did not get very far and a third bite of the cherry will need to be made, probably on Tuesday morning.

The Church Urban Fund was set up around 20 years ago as a response to the report 'Faith in the City'. Synod heard about some of the work funded by the CUF together with some of the initial and ongoing concerns. There was quite a strong view articulated that times have moved on and that the CUF approach was no longer the most appropriate way to meet the needs of the day however the report was carried overwhelmingly.

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