

General Synod Report Monday at Church House Westminster

Date : 6 February 2006

With Synod business due to begin at 3pm separate meetings of the House of Laity and the two clergy convocations took place immediately beforehand. The main item on the agenda was the new regulations concerning the **admission of children to Holy Communion**. There is still strong feeling against this change, which will be debated in full synod later in the Group of Sessions. The Laity meeting had to adjourn when time ran out for debate of a following motion.

After the formal notices Synod business began with **a report from the business committee**. A wide range of issues were raised and discussed in this debate including the lack of any formal debates before the Synod on matters such as sexuality, racial hatred legislation and so on.

A number spoke about the fact that "questions" was not taking place until the final day of business. Most Synod members see questions as vital and an important part of maintaining accountability. Also they provide an opportunity for people to find out information before important debates. Nevertheless question time is constantly under pressure and moving it to so late in the agenda has not gone down well.

The only reason given was that it could not be on Tuesday evening because the House of Bishops are eating with the Lord Mayor!

There then followed two presentations. The first on ecumenical responses to the Rochester Report, details of which can be found on the Church Society website. The second presentation concerned clergy Pensions in the light of and then a presentation on Pensions.

The final business of the day was the customary report and debate on ethical investment. The ethical investment policy is not simply a matter for the central Church bodies because it also covers the investments of the Central Board of Finance for church groups and other charities.

The agenda for tomorrow, Tuesday, consists of the following:

- Women Bishops - Guildford Report (GS1605) (This will be the first of two debates on Women Bishops.)
- Rural Issues - 'Seeds in Holy Ground' (GS1606)
- Anglican/Baptist - 'Pushing at the Boundaries of Unity' (GSMisc801)
- Higher education & the Church of England (GS1601)

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