

Women Bishops Legislation

Deanery Synod



- 15 out of the 38 Anglican provinces now welcome the ministry of women as bishops
- Perception of the church's attitude to women hampers the church's mission
- House of Bishops needs the complementary gifts and experience that women would bring

BACKGROUND PART 1

1994

- women were ordained as priests in the C of E with provisions for those who could not in conscience accept the ministry of women priests

1998

- Lambeth Conference: *"those who dissent from as well as those who assent to the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate are both loyal Anglicans"*

2005

- General Synod took note of the Rochester Report "Women Bishops in the Church of England?"

WHY CAN SOME NOT ACCEPT THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN BISHOPS?

- Conservative Catholics are unable to accept the sacramental authority of women bishops because bishops both in the NT and in the universal practice of the church have always been men.
- Bishops are the successors of the twelve apostles and represent Jesus in a particular sacramental way

WHAT ARE THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF WOMEN BISHOPS?

- Scriptural challenge to see men and women created in the image of God
- All are called through baptism and equally gifted by the Holy Spirit
- Ecumenism is about relations with Protestant as well as Orthodox and RC churches

- Majority of churches which have the order of bishops do not accept women as bishops
- Conservative Evangelicals, submitting to the authority of scripture, seek to follow a pattern of complementarity between men and women and NT teaching and the practice of male headship in the church

BACKGROUND PART 2

2006

- General Synod affirmed admitting women to the episcopate would be a proper development.
- Also voted to go forward with drafting legislation to enable women to be ordained to the episcopate whilst making provision for those unable to accept the ministry of women bishops

July 2010

- General Synod voted in favour of draft legislation with a statutory national Code of Practice to be drawn up by the House of Bishops.

- If a majority of dioceses approve, it will return to General Synod for final approval, then parliamentary approval and Royal Assent.
- If the legislation fails, the earliest any new legislation could be introduced would be in 2015 after a new General Synod has been elected.

THE PROCESS

- The revision process in General Synod is complete.
- The draft legislation has now been referred to the dioceses for approval and voting must take place before November 2011

MANCHESTER DIOCESE

“That this Synod approve the proposals embodied in the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and in draft Amending Canon No.30.”

The vote (by the three houses of bishops, clergy and laity) in the Manchester Diocesan Synod takes place on 24th September 2011

- As the main motion cannot be amended, dioceses can propose following motions, communicating concerns to General Synod.
- The House of Bishops can make changes before the Final Approval stage.

Voting in Deanery Synods is advisory and informative only but will be reported to Diocesan Synod for the debate on 24th September 2011.

The Diocesan Synod can also consider further ('following') motions proposed by members of the Diocesan Synod.

THE MEASURE

- Provides for the consecration of women bishops.
- For those who cannot accept the provision, a code of practice will exist.
- Key clauses are 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6

- If the Diocesan Bishop does not himself ordain women priests then a scheme must be provided for the ordination of women in the diocese and the pastoral care of female clergy.

THE MEASURE: CLAUSE 1

- The existing arrangements for Resolutions A and B will lapse.
- It is expected that the Act of Synod providing for Extended Episcopal Ministry will be rescinded.

THE MEASURE: CLAUSE 3

Describes how a parish requests the ministry of a male bishop or a male priest by means of letters of request in specified forms:

- ongoing episcopal ministry/pastoral care.
- during a vacancy, to request the appointment of a male priest.

THE MEASURE: CLAUSE 2

- Imposes a duty on the Diocesan Bishop to make a diocesan scheme to provide for a male bishop to celebrate the sacraments and provide pastoral care when a parish requests this.
- It allows but does not require her/him to delegate other aspects of episcopal ministry to the male bishop.

THE MEASURE: CLAUSE 5

- Requires the House of Bishops to draw up a Code of Practice.
- The Code of Practice cannot be finalised and approved by General Synod until after the legislation has Royal Assent.

THE MEASURE: CLAUSE 6

Imposes a duty on Diocesan Bishops and others to have regard to the Code of Practice.

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