

Second Day

Wednesday 24 November 2010

Legislative Business

Draft Act of Synod Adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant (GS 1809) (Article 7 and Article 8 Business)

THE CHAIR *Canon Margaret Swinson (Liverpool)* took the Chair at 9.30 a.m.

The Chairman: Let me take you through the sequence of what will happen this morning. The Business Committee have determined that the draft Act of Synod be considered under the preliminary motion procedure, for which provision is made in SO 71(a). That begins with a motion, Item 504 on your Order Paper, 'That the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant be considered'. If this item is lost, the business will finish at that point. If the item is carried, we will proceed to the other items of business set out on the Order Paper, and, at a later group of sessions and subject to completion of the Article 7 and Article 8 procedures, the draft Act of Synod will return to Synod for final approval, on a motion that the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant be approved.

Debate on Item 504 will be the most wide-ranging of the debates that we have this morning, and it is an opportunity to debate both the principle of whether the Church of England should enter into the Covenant and the terms of the Covenant. Members who wish to address the specific issues raised in the amendments at Items 505 and 506 should reserve their speeches until the debates on those items.

Due to the nature of the business and the number of new members who may be unfamiliar with it, I have decided under SO 21(c) to give the Bishop of Bristol 12 minutes rather than the normal 10 in which to introduce the item, which I hope will enable him to give a bit of background.

The Bishop of Bristol (Rt Revd Michael Hill): I beg to move:

'That the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant be considered.'

When I accepted the invitation to be one of the Church of England's three members of the Anglican Consultative Council, I fondly thought that this would mean travelling to rather interesting parts of the world, gaining encouragement from sharing experiences with fellow Christians around the Communion and perhaps putting my name occasionally to pieces of paper, reporting back to Synod on how we were getting on. What I have subsequently learnt is that it involves coming to Synod, as I did in February, and making speeches on behalf of the House of Bishops so that Synod members can then take a pot shot at me from a number of different directions.

Today's business comes here on behalf of the House of Bishops. In the short time available to me I want to try to answer four questions. First, why has the House of Bishops commended the Covenant to Synod for adoption? Second, why is this business that needs dealing with at this inaugural group of sessions? Third, what about the objections that have been raised? Fourth, what are the consequences of what we decide today?

First, why should the Church of England adopt the Covenant? I think we need to be honest in saying that the background to the Covenant process has made it hard for debates about the Covenant to avoid turning into proxy debates about the issue of gay people. In simple terms, those who saw the decision of the American Church to consecrate Gene Robinson as a prophetic act fear that a Covenant might impede other prophetic acts in the future or introduce some new element of coercion or punishment into Communion business. Those unhappy with the American actions, or at least concerned about their impact on the wider Communion, have generally been more open to the idea of a Covenant, though some have seen it as a necessary rather than a sufficient step.

The last Synod managed to get beyond that stand-off and consider the case for a Covenant on its merits. Yes, some were against, but in the various votes that we had in four debates on the Covenant, in addition to a separate debate on governance in the Church of England and in the Anglican Communion, there was strong support for the Covenant process and for seeking to develop the various earlier drafts that were produced. Our comments were reflected in the successive revisions of the text.

What the Covenant does is to invite member Churches to commit themselves to greater mutual accountability, consultation and the pursuit of consensus on issues which are new or controversial and may have serious relational consequences in the Communion. This is what happened with the admission of women to priestly and episcopal ministry where there was extensive consultation in the Anglican Communion from the 1960s onwards.

Paragraph 3.2.2. of the Covenant is quite explicit in respecting the constitutional autonomy of all the Churches of the Communion. Neither an individual Church nor the Communion as a whole can compel any other Church to set aside a decision that it has properly taken under its own constitution. Additionally, paragraph 4.1.3 says explicitly that the mutual commitment involved in Covenant relationship does not 'represent submission to any external ecclesiastical jurisdiction'. It goes on expressly to affirm that nothing in the Covenant alters the constitution of any Church or limits its autonomy.

Suggestions that the Church of England would be subordinating itself to an international body are, therefore simply not true. What the Covenant does do is acknowledge the relational consequences that will follow if particular Churches decide to go it alone on a contentious issue.

Second, why is this business that a new Synod needs to deal with at its first meeting? Well, of course, there is always a reason for taking more time but it is now nearly a year since the final text of the Covenant was sent to the Provinces. The House of Bishops considered it in May and recommended adoption. In normal circumstances

the business would have come to the Synod in July but we had more pressing things to do at the last meeting of the old Synod. So I do not think we are rushing, but neither should we dawdle. It is for each Province of the Communion within its own decision-making processes to consider whether to adopt the Covenant. Mexico has already agreed to do so. I understand that the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is also well advanced with the process.

Members have before them in GS Misc 966 a substantial briefing paper from our Faith and Order Commission, and I believe that we have all the information we need to answer the question for today, which is whether to start the formal process of adoption. If members do not believe that the Covenant is at least worthy of consideration they will want to vote against my motion. If they endorse the Covenant or at least think it is worth discussing before they finally make up their minds, then please vote in favour.

Third, let me say a few more words about the objections that have been raised. Paragraphs 25 to 63 of the briefing paper address six questions and objections, and in the course of the debate I hope members will look through those again while listening to all the speakers. One objection that I want to take head-on is the suggestion that there is something profoundly un-Anglican about the idea of a Covenant. Let us be careful about describing things as un-Anglican. The then Archbishop of York refused to attend the first Lambeth Conference in 1867 because it was not a manifestation of Anglicanism that he recognized. The creation of the Anglican Consultative Council under Archbishop Ramsey and the establishment of the Primates' Meeting under Archbishop Coggan were further developments that responded to the needs of the time. Each new initiative had its sceptics. None has proved a panacea but each has played its part. I see the Covenant as another such development.

Covenants between people and Churches are about agreements freely entered into by independent parties who wish to deepen and formalize their relationship with each other. It is the exact opposite of a power game. It is about commitment and recognition of what we need in and from each other.

So, finally, what are the consequences of today's vote? The refusal by the Church of England even to consider adopting the Covenant would undoubtedly be a serious blow to the whole process and to the Archbishop of Canterbury's efforts to keep dialogue going across the fault lines within the Communion. The effect of a Yes vote will be to send the draft Act of Synod out to diocesan synods under the Article 8 procedure. Final approval by the General Synod will not be possible unless the majority of diocesan synods have given their consent. That was the procedure that we followed with the Porvoo Agreement with the Lutheran Churches and it is the process we have already embarked on with the legislation on women in the episcopate. By agreeing to start the process today, Synod will be keeping open the option of the Church of England adopting the Covenant before the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in the latter part of 2012.

That meeting is not a deadline: the Anglican Communion does not lend itself to deadlines. However, by then it will be nearly three years since the final text of the Covenant was agreed and eight years since a proposal for a Covenant was made. In

the context of Christian history it is not very long, but in the context of most of the other things that we have to do it is not very fast either.

I urge members to make a decision on the basis of the actual words of the Covenant as set out on pages 16-27 of GS Misc 966. I shall be voting for the motion not primarily out of loyalty to Archbishop Rowan – though I am loyal – nor because I think the Faith and Order Commission have produced a good analysis – though they have – nor even because I think the Covenant is going to produce immediate healing within the Anglican Communion; nothing but the power of the Holy Spirit will do that. I am going to vote for the motion because I have read the Covenant and I cannot find anything in it that I do not agree with. In fact, I want positively to affirm it as a statement of both what I believe and how I think we should behave towards each other within a worldwide communion of autonomous Churches. I commend the motion to Synod.

Revd Mark Beach (Coventry): I thank you for calling me, Chair, especially so early in the debate, for reasons that you will see later on.

I am a great fan of Thinking Anglicans – well, I like to try and think myself. I imagine that Simon Sarmiento is somewhere around, although I have not seen him; so thank you, Simon, for the service you provide for the Church, but I have to say that on this occasion I am somewhat bamboozled by the extent of the coverage that you have given to the Anglican Covenant debate and by all the conflicting opinions .represented. So what am I to make of the Covenant that is before us?

I start from the position that anything which can help us to hold our Communion together must be a good thing. I certainly have no desire to see the divisions which already exist become deepened. However, the more I read of the text of the Covenant the more concerned I get. Let me offer a few examples of what I mean. In paragraph 5 of the introduction we read about the ‘bonds of affection’ within the Communion. These are doubtless very real, especially between linked dioceses, but affection cannot be legislated for; we cannot instruct the provinces of the Communion to live in this way. The development must be organic and dynamic. Also, my experience of linked dioceses is that they tend to be with dioceses in the developing world – we link with Africa or India – but what of links with those parts of the Communion where theological boundaries are being stretched? Should we not be seeking to listen to, and learn from, our Anglican brothers and sisters in America and in Canada in order to understand where their developments are coming from?

Second, what of the supposed independence of each province to proclaim the gospel afresh to each generation? The glory of Anglicanism to me is the freedom to preach the gospel in ways that acknowledge the diversity of our situation. Certainly this freedom should not be at the expense of causing harm to others, but we cannot know in depth the consequences of living in these diverse environments. What offends one will delight another and vice versa. In several places the Covenant refers to the Anglican tradition, which I understand to be that careful interpretation of Scripture in the light of the tradition of the Church, its scholarship, reason and experience. There seems to be lots in the Covenant about the first two – Scripture and the tradition of the Church – but less emphasis on scholarship and reason and the role they play in the development of doctrine.

At the heart of my concerns lies the distinction made by Roman Catholic ecclesiologists between a top-down and a bottom-up ecclesiology. The former is represented by an authoritarianism which seems to me to be contrary to the spirit of Anglicanism. However, it is precisely what I see in the Covenant. The latter, the bottom-up approach, listens carefully to the local Church, to its narrative, to its culture, to see how the whole can best respond. I have already referred to the importance of listening, and acknowledge that the Covenant does indeed encourage this; but the encouragement is, in my view, outweighed by the heavy-handedness of the rest of the document.

Ursula Le Guin, the fantasy writer, has described this kind of tension as that between father tongue, the language of the assembly, of law-making and of business agreements, and mother tongue which, she says, is the language which keeps people going, keeps them talking, and which listens carefully to both sides of the debate. Archbishop Rowan has described father tongue as distancing the speaker from what is being spoken about, while the mother tongue is constantly ignored or belittled by the speakers of father tongue. I fear that we have fallen into just that trap and that, if the Communion is to survive, it will be because we have conversed in mother tongue and not because we have attempted to legislate for unity.

However, my final and most significant reservation over the Covenant is also the most pragmatic, that those provinces which are opposed to the Covenant, because they think it will limit their freedom, will not sign it, which will, quite simply, result in irrevocable division before we have even started to do controversial things. I have not yet decided how to vote on this, so I will listen very carefully to the rest of the debate and I hope to be guided.

Mrs Debrah McIssac (Salisbury): I am a new member. Being a new girl is an uncomfortable position to be in, whatever the circumstances are, but I think that in this particular case it is a very welcome experience because I, like, I hope, many other new members, come without all the baggage that the Covenant debate carries. So I took what might be an unusual step – I hope not – of first reading the Covenant before reading anything else, what you might call a ‘clean’ read, and I tried to be as objective as possible.

When people come to read something that is written down on paper they can approach it in two ways: they can approach it optimistically or they can approach it very sceptically and suspiciously. If you have ever been engaged in reading, for example, a draft divorce settlement, it is often approached very suspiciously: the reason that the husband wants the dog with the bad breath is because she ruined his Brian Ferry CD collection some years ago! I asked some colleagues, lay and ordained, within our deanery to do the same thing too, read it clean, and they came back with comments like this: ‘I am a bear of very little brain and long words bother me. However, it looks to me like an honest attempt to embrace all possible points of view’. What will matter, in five or 10 years, is not what its history has been, what the process leading up to this has been; what will matter is how we have acted when we are in the Covenant, what referrals have been made, what hesitation has been exercised and of course what decisions have been taken by the Standing Committee. That is what will matter: the precedents that are set then, not the history that has gone before.

It is important that we get over some of the aspects: frankly, Nassau and St Andrews read to me like a golf tour and I am not sure that that is where we should be heading. So what will matter, I think, is how those in the covenanting relationship treat each other, whether the power is used sparingly, and the wisdom of any Standing Committee recommendations, should it ever come to that. Hooker phrased it not as a compromise for the sake of peace but a comprehension for the sake of truth, and there has been quite a lot of discussion about what the truth is that is embedded in this. However, the truth of which he speaks, I think, is about relationship and interrelationships.

I was told that one got up to speak only if one had some expertise, and I think I have a bit of expertise in relationships and interrelationships. I am one of six children and I have over a hundred first cousins by birth. (I do not think there was much else to do on those cold prairie evenings in Canada!) I was always taught that families work like this: you think about the impact and the consequences for others before you take any action. I think what we are being called to do here is to give scope to adult/adult relationships, to adults who look beyond the immediate and beyond their own priorities and take most seriously both the inculturation of the gospel and our incarnational faith. Also – and I hope members will forgive me for saying this – to remove any echoes of the Empire which may just be colouring our perspective, just as the many people of the Churches of the Covenant will need to overcome the shadow of the Empire. These discussions are going to be no easier for the Canadians or the other colonials than they are for the English.

I ask Synod to think about the consequences of not receiving and sending this to the dioceses with all despatch. When considering what impact it will have on the Church of England, I believe we ought to think about how we can be selfless and indeed sacrificial, and what it will mean to the other Churches if we do not. My understanding is that the Canadian Anglican Church is waiting to see what we will do. I heard the Archbishop of Hong Kong speak last week, and he intimated that it would have serious consequences for his province if it was not progressed in the Church of England. If we do not send this to the dioceses now, the Anglican Communion will not end with a bang – that is not the way the Church works – but I for one want no part of its ending with a whimper.

Revd Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Durham and Newcastle Universities): As the Archbishop of Canterbury says on page 14 of this report, GS Misc 966 – I hope he is not going to contradict himself in a moment! – it is open to us, for ‘utterly serious and prayerful’ reasons, not to seek the kind of intensification and legalization of relationships that this Covenant entails. I would suggest that we should, seriously and prayerfully, decline to use this particular structure to express our friendship and love for our brothers and sisters. My concern is with some serious underlying questions of theology that are problematic, and there are two particular areas which I would like to focus on this morning and which pick up on what the previous speaker had to say.

The first is the importance of context in doing our theology. The preamble and sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.2.4 of the Covenant text rightly emphasize the importance of our very different contexts to our mission, our theology, our reading of the Bible and our ways of being Church. For the last four years, the focus of my academic research

has been on the importance of context in theology. Theology, of course, simply means talk about God and while our changing contexts do not change God they do change the ways in which we talk about God and perhaps the ways in which God talks to us. Context is of particular importance in shaping evangelistic and apologetic theology, which are very much products of their cultures. One question of course for us to grapple with is the way in which recent developments in technology mean that we each now live in multiple contexts: the local and the global are increasingly blurred, and the potential for a clash of contexts is something we need to think seriously about. This Covenant process is to be welcomed in so far as it kick-starts and resources that conversation.

Section 3.2.1 very reasonably asks that, in making decisions in our own context, we 'have regard for the common good of the Communion' and 'endeavour to accommodate [the] recommendations' of the Instruments of Communion. The implication is surely that such accommodation would often, but not always, be possible. Yet there is a sudden and abrupt change of direction at 3.2.5 and especially in section 4. Suddenly our contexts are irrelevant. The recommendations of the Instruments of Communion and the overriding imperative to avoid any risk of controversy override local mission imperatives. Much more sustained and serious work on this area is needed, and we should quite properly refuse to be rushed.

Second, I want to challenge the use and misuse of the language of family in this document. In paragraph 38 on page 9 it suggests that the Covenant 'sets out the basis on which the Anglican family' lives together, and in paragraph 4 on page 17 of the preamble to the Covenant the language of family is again used. However, this cosy talk of families forms a stark contrast with the reality of section 4.2 of the Covenant text. Families, unless they are dysfunctional, love and support each other unconditionally; a family is the one relationship that we do not join or leave. As such, at its best the family models the constant loyalty of God to all people that the Archbishop spoke of so movingly in his presidential address yesterday. This is surely what is meant by Jesus teaching us to call God 'Father' and it is why, as a Church, we support and uphold marriage and the family in all its forms. As a university chaplain I see all too often the emotional damage done when a family put conditions on their love, on their support and on the continuation of relationship. 'Relational consequences' sounds very chilling indeed.

We are told that the Covenant sets out the framework for family relationships, but what sort of family lives by a covenant with relational consequences for breaches of the rules? In previous debates on the Covenant it has been described as a kind of pre-nuptial agreement. To me, this text sounds rather like a couple in marital difficulties deciding to ask their wider family to vote on whether they should divorce or not. I urge Synod to resist defining our family relationship with our Anglican brothers and sisters round the world in such negative and legalistic terms.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Rowan Williams): I have already said a good deal in yesterday's presidential address about why I personally support the Covenant and I do not want run over the same territory again, but there are one or two points I would just like to inject into the debate at this juncture which really have to do with a point made by the Bishop of Bristol in his introductory speech. They are to do with the

directions of Anglican identity and Anglican self-understanding in the past hundred years or so.

The drift of Anglican development has been towards more Instruments of Communion, that is to say more ways in which we can in some sense act with coherence together for the sake of God's mission. That has been both an internal and an external matter. Internally it has involved the development of things like the Consultative Council and externally it has been expressed in the agreed statements we have undertaken in our ecumenical dialogue. Very importantly interwoven with all that is the life of local exchange, which has already been referred to, across the Communion, which now exists in a quite different way from what was the case even 30 years ago: it is no longer sponsoring mission partners somewhere else but is genuinely sharing in mission and a mutual learning.

It is against that background that the Covenant stands before us. I hear and partly understand the anxieties just expressed by Miranda about legislating for family relationships. The fact is, though, that of course accommodation is not always possible in a complex global cluster of Christian bodies. We want to work together for mission and we want to be accountable to each other and sometimes there are crises and brick walls that we meet in that attempt. It is, I think, unduly idealistic to believe that good will alone can carry us through in the complexities of our present context, and the Covenant is an attempt to set out a structure for consent rather than a structure for discipline: consent about what kind of issues we are dealing with, consent about whether there really is anything incompatible with calling yourself an Anglican. Please do not see this solely through the lens of one or two current issues. It is that attempt to set out a structure for consent which is, I believe, what we ought to be focusing on in this discussion.

I sometimes use the phrase for the Anglican aspiration as looking towards 'consensual Catholicism', that is, a genuinely global and coherent fellowship of Churches which exists by people being willing to bind themselves to one another and to be accountable to one another rather than be subject to one central authority, and I do want to resist very strongly the suggestion that Covenant proposes or creates a central authority. The organs that attempt through the Covenant to discern the status of various questions, the seriousness of various traditions, are all of them organs that exist through election by the provinces of the Communion, including this one. So we are not suddenly creating an ecclesiastical authority in mid-air, completely separate from the ways in which local Churches, including ours, work.

Reference has been made to adult relations in this respect. I think that is a helpful peg on which to hang our reflections. We are trying to understand what it is to be properly accountable to each other. We are not ruling out innovation and we are not attempting through the Covenant to declare in advance the impossibility of this or that development; we are looking for a way of talking in an adult fashion about how we decide the level of seriousness involved. As we have been reminded, context is vastly important, but at the same time our context in the Communion is a global one, not merely a local one. Naturally the tensions between global and local are real, and they are not going to get any easier; but we do not, I think, solve our problem simply by appeal to context while forgetting the global context in which we as Anglicans here

seek to be part of, responsible to, the mission of Anglicans elsewhere, as they seek to be part of and responsible to the mission we seek to exercise.

Mr Anirban Roy (London): Thank you, Chair. I get to do my maiden speech following the Archbishop!

When I got elected to Synod one of the members of the congregation came up to me and said, 'You're going to have to deal with this Covenant. Do you know? They're trying to make us all Methodists'. I got quite excited by this, so when the papers arrived I went straight for the Covenant and read it. Obviously (and rather disappointingly) there was nothing about Methodists but there was, as I started reading it, a lot of great stuff. Sections 1 to 3 were brilliant. I looked and thought, 'There's nothing here I disagree with'; there was stuff that I wanted to explore more but nothing I disagreed with. Do you know what? There were historic footnotes, there were biblical quotes. This is stuff that we should be about.

Then those footnotes and those quotes started disappearing in section 4; it did not feel like changing the structures of the Church but did say, 'We're going to find ways of condemning other people because we don't agree'. I thought the Bible was pretty clear: you do not condemn unless you want to be condemned yourself, and there is stuff about specks of sawdust and planks as well.

So, having read the Covenant itself, I looked at what the Archbishop had said and what the bishops said, and I realized that I was asking the wrong question because the question surely is: what would Jesus do? The story that came to me was the one about the woman caught in adultery. She has broken the law and she is dragged in front of Jesus. The law is clear: she has done the wrong thing. Jesus tells us what we should do then, and we all know the punch-line. At the end, though, Jesus did not ask her to repent (which is what the Covenant asks). He did not condone what she did either, but neither did he condemn, and the condemnation is the bit that I struggle with in this because I do not think that is what Jesus would want us to do.

I would like to touch on two other points that have come up today. What happens if we do not agree? Well, we go back to 2003 and we have declarations of impaired communion or broken communion, and do you know what? As others have said today, you cannot create bonds of affection with a piece of paper. If people say that to us or to other provinces, surely the answer is 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord and we will be here waiting for you when you are ready to come back'. It is also a fair point to say that this is the only game in town. What is the alternative? I think, in his presidential address yesterday, the Archbishop told us, so I am going to quote him: '...loyalty grows and flourishes when we spend time together exploring what has brought us together; which is God. It happens when we pledge ourselves to seek out those we disagree with and work till it hurts on finding ways of sharing prayer and fellowship with them'. What would Jesus do? I think he would work till it hurt.

The Chairman: I call Simon Cawdell for a maiden speech.

Revd Simon Cawdell (Hereford): In our diocese we have reason to celebrate our part of being in the Anglican Communion. Not only do we gain much from the connection we have with our partners in Tanzania; we also recognize that the dioceses to our

West are in a different part of the Communion from us and indeed are a part from which we have received great benefit, Your Grace.

Revelation 21 gives us a vision of the city of God that is walled but with gates that are never shut. It seems to me that it is a vision of faith and community that is bounded but not limited, and it seems equally to me as I read the Covenant that that is what it is intended to provide in the concept of a community which is both defined and welcoming. As with any community, we sometimes have periods of time when we become dysfunctional. There are arguments, there are disputes that need to be worked out between us all; and the Covenant seeks to provide a way in which those disputes in our common life can be resolved in love. It is that simple to me and that clear. Yet there are times when we need to provide for how we are going to act when those first ordinary conversations are not producing the fruit we hope for.

I have also been subject – I suspect, in common with many in this chamber - to a considerable number of lobbyists and lobbying by people telling me, as one succinctly put it, that the Anglican Consultative Council ‘hath no jurisdiction here, let alone the Pope’. I found this attack extraordinary, following as it did a series of arguments about the Covenant, presented with the force of tail-feathers from a fleeing pigeon and with about as much significance, not least because it would seem to me to be fleeing from something that simply is not there.

It is a mistake to understand the Covenant in juridical terms, whereas it is intended, as Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi, so clearly put it to the Lambeth Conference, to be about an act of grace, about how we are the Body of Christ, and, yes, about how we frame that common living: grace which at times recently has seemed conspicuous by its absence and grace which by this measure we can see restored.

I believe we must face the first consideration and vote for it without strings. We have plenty of chance to amend later, should we wish to, having heard the voices of the people in the dioceses. If we vote for it, we will be voting for the greatest opportunity the Church of England has ever seen to debate in our dioceses and in parishes our position in that wider Communion which is ours. Contained in this Covenant is the clearest definition of Anglicanism in our time, and it deserves study not just in this body but out there in the dioceses and in the parishes. Alternatively, we may vote against it; but if we do, the real danger is that we will be sending a signal to our friends elsewhere that they mean less to us than I believe they do. It seems to me that that would be an act lacking the grace that I wish to display in my time on Synod. I shall vote in favour.

Revd Professor Paul Fiddes (Ecumenical Representatives, Baptist Union): I am truly grateful for this opportunity, as a member of another Christian communion, to offer a comment on your project of an Anglican Covenant. My worry that I may be being presumptuous in speaking about the ordering of your life is a little alleviated by the fact that my own tradition shares with some other Free Churches in placing covenant at the centre of our ecclesiology. The idea is not a novel and a strange one to us. The members of the very first Baptist and Congregational churches, at the beginning of the 17th century, made covenants with God and with each other, using a form of words like this: we promise to walk together and watch over one another in ways that are known and ways that are still to be made known, that is in days to come.

There are notes being struck, then, in the present Covenant which are familiar to those in my tradition. For example, the Covenant is held together not by law and juridical authority but by mutual loyalty and trust: for example, that the purpose of covenant is to find the mind of Christ together: for example, that covenant is a process of mutual commitment in which the future remains somewhat open and uncertain.

I want to thank the Anglican Communion for taking the concept of covenant further than we have done, we who have covenant as it were in our genes and bones. We have thought of members coming together in covenant in the local church and of Churches coming together with each other in a regional and national way. We have not so far embarked on the grand venture of a more catholic, worldwide covenant, and we look forward to seeing how the Holy Spirit will lead in this, perhaps with the hope that we might follow.

However, I do want to raise a question and perhaps a challenge. What is the theological basis for covenanting together at all? The argument, as set out in the preface to the Covenant text, seems to be that Christ calls us into communion with each other through baptism, that this communion entails responsibility and mutual commitment and that this then leads to the making of a covenant together. I suggest that we should affirm more directly that Christ calls us into covenant with each other and with the triune God. This is at the heart of my own tradition of covenant-making. The risen Christ stands in the midst of the community of disciples, calling them into a covenant which is at the same time horizontal – with each other – and vertical – with God. Theologically there can be no covenant without Christ as the covenant-mediator and -maker, mediating both the eternal covenant of grace and the covenant made here in history between each other as one covenant. A covenant, then, will not hold together unless those covenanting believe that they are being called into it by Christ here and now, that Christ is making covenant and that we are being summoned to obedience.

So I would like to hear one question being asked, among others: is Christ calling us in this time and place into covenant? Is this a moment in which we are being summoned? In answering that question the discernment is yours.

Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford): I did a lot of growing up in the 1970s. In 1970 I was 7; by 1980 I was 17. A major feature in my childhood and adolescence was the troubles in Northern Ireland, which were mentioned almost continually on Radio 4, which my mother had on all the time. Growing into a realization of what ‘tarred and feathered’ actually meant was something of a horror. I would have thought, back then, that the situation was irresolvable. Both sides were intractable. I bought myself a book about the causes and the arguments and I could not see a way to solve this. Nonetheless a solution came with dogged negotiation, not made easier by both sides being illegal and having to be identified. Although there are still occasional flare-ups today, the troubles are largely behind us.

The situation facing the Anglican Communion seems to be not dissimilar: two sides, both entrenched, and it does not look as though a solution can be found. This is playing out on the world scene, but there are also, in my personal experience, local echoes that are causing pain. In Northern Ireland the consequences of the troubles

were that people were tortured and killed. I would say the consequences of our disputes are actually as great, if not greater, as splits in the Communion are damaging mission and turning people away from the knowledge of the saving grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The proposed Covenant is intended to address these issues but it seems to me that the effect of section 4.2 can only be to split the Communion further and permanently. What is needed here is lengthy, patient negotiation until the sides agree, still to differ – that is inevitable – but to respect each other’s views and coexist. If it can be done in Northern Ireland, surely it can be done within the Anglican Communion? This Covenant will not achieve this, not in its current form. To use a simile already made, if a relationship is in trouble the answer is not to invite a walk down the aisle and the signing of a marriage certificate; instead a trip to Relate is in order. Our Communion needs Relate, and if Relate does not exist we must create it. This Covenant, however, does not do that, and I would urge members to vote against.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells (Rt Revd Peter Price): The Chief Rabbi’s address to the Lambeth Conference has already been referred to. In it he spoke of covenant as being about relationships, not transactions. He spoke of covenanted goods such as love and friendship, influence and trust, of shared lives, shared interests and fidelity. He spoke of a God who wants to make covenant and of human beings always wanting to make out of covenant contract. Covenants transform, he said; contracts have a tendency to make us clutch and hold on to things.

It is important to remember these distinctions as we consider the continuing process of adopting the Anglican Covenant. This is a process which has led to much heart-searching: whether to vote against or to abstain or to vote for. I chair the Anglican Communion pastoral visitors programme, and one of my visits this year has been to the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church of the United States. Later in the year the Bishop of Liverpool also visited. What we both found – to our surprise, I suggest – was a Church offering vibrant, relevant worship, engaged theology and a profound sense of mission. There was too a commitment to address differences, both forthrightly and in a considered and, to use Mike Hill’s words, an adult way, committed to staying together. At the conference I attended it was also agreed that that Church would engage with the Covenant itself.

Recently the Anglican Communion visitors met in London to give consideration to the origins of the Anglican Covenant and, frankly, we were surprised by our corporate ignorance. Most of us had assumed that it had arisen from the decision to elect Gene Robinson as a bishop. We were wrong. In 1992 a report *Belonging Together* was presented to ACC-9, and it sought to establish some principles of relationship and governance within the Anglican Communion. ACC-9 in its turn commissioned the Virginia report, which presented its findings on governance in 1997, prior to the Lambeth Conference. This report more than any other laid down the foundations of a covenant process. In 2000 and 2001 irregular consecrations of bishops took place in Singapore and in Denver; in 2003 Gene Robinson was consecrated in New Hampshire; in 2004 the Windsor report was published.

The main thrust of the Windsor report was in fact governance, but sadly and, as so often, from people’s desire to be helpful, a rather hurried attempt was made to draft a

Covenant. It was not subject to the scrutiny usually associated with such documents, and to say that this was unfortunate is an understatement. It has coloured the whole process whereby particularly the early drafts of section 4 were perceived as punitive and contractual rather than covenantal. Over the next five years designs and drafts have brought us to the place where we are today. The controversial section 4 has been hugely revised and clearly states that the Covenant cannot override the constitution of the canons of a province. It offers ways in which the Covenant can be amended. Its tone has shifted from the juridical to the relational. It is arguable that concerns about narrow confessionalism have been allayed, that doctrinal developments occur, issues of scriptural interpretation have been reworked and the role of the Primates downplayed.

The issue of governance will not go away. Like many, including other bishops, I struggle with this issue. At the same time, voices have been heard and have been listened to. If we stay with the process we are not committed to tablets of stone. The question for us is: how much do our relationships matter and will the Covenant process help them? Although I still have some reservations, I shall nevertheless vote in favour of this continuation of process.

Ms Jacky Humphreys (Bristol): I am troubled by this proposed Covenant. I am not necessarily utterly opposed in all circumstances, depending on its terms, but at the very least a Covenant sceptic. I am a lawyer and I have a background in both canon law and family law, both of which are quite relevant to the current discussions.

While I accept wholeheartedly that we must look to the impact across the Communion of our decisions here, we also need to be fully aware of how the Covenant will impact on our own rules, our Church laws and the way we do things in our own Church. That is something that troubles me, because I do not think that we have had those implications properly spelled out for us.

The concerns I have are the relationship between the Covenant, if adopted in its current form, and existing Church law, particularly with things like canonical obedience, the Clergy Discipline Measure, and those sorts of practical matter. I have deliberately sought out and spoken to other lawyers whose views I respect on this issue, who have said there is nothing to worry about; it deals purely with international matters and it is not in force as law in our Church. Obviously, I went straight back to the text and looked at it again, to see why I was concerned about it and if I had got it wrong. I therefore want to share with Synod why I think that may not be quite right.

I would take us first to 4.1.3. I will first read what the second sentence does not say and then read what it in fact does say. It does not say, 'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion.' What it says is, 'Nothing in this Covenant *of itself* shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion.' Most of the laws of the European Union do not of themselves alter English law; but, once they are ratified or adopted into our law, they then become effective in our law as though they were our law.

Let us look at 4.2.1 and the last sentence. 'Participation in the Covenant implies a recognition by each Church of those elements which must be maintained in its own

life and for which it is accountable....’ Not ‘should’ or ‘ought’ or ‘will be encouraged to’ but ‘*must*.’ Once we are talking the language of compulsion, of things being mandatory, then for it to mean anything it means rules and it means law.

When we have a determination of an issue by the Standing Committee of the ACC, how will that play out in the day-to-day running of our Church? What effect will it have if a clergyperson in one parish does something that does not quite fit? Are they obliged to be disciplined? Would the bishop be disciplined if they did not discipline him or her? It is a complex area but we have had no guidance on it. I think we need such guidance before we step forward into the Covenant.

I want Synod to look again at 4.2.4. I have been criticized in informal discussions for describing the Standing Committee of the ACC through the Covenant as ‘sitting in judgement upon us’, but that is what 4.2.4 says. ‘The Standing Committee shall make every effort to facilitate agreement’ – good; ‘...may take advice from such bodies as it deems appropriate’ – good; ‘to determine a view on the nature of the matter...and those relational consequences which may result.’ It is a very gentle way of saying it but that is a determination of the issue; that is a judicial decision.

Those of us who have seen previous drafts of the Covenant will remember when Section 4 was much more legal and actually set out in terms what the legal processes were for the determination. It is still there; it is toned down; it is less obvious; but it has not gone away.

My second point is on the Standing Committee of the ACC. I trust that everyone in Synod, particularly those who are supportive of this, has gone away and read the recent minutes of the Standing Committee of the ACC and know what this body is that we are asking to sit in judgement on us. If members of Synod have not, then I would really encourage them to do it. It is a body of very committed, talented people, but I do not believe that it is either suited or resourced to take these sorts of important judicial decision for the entire Communion. On a political note, some of the conservative people who are trying very hard to keep on board within our Communion through this process have already resigned from it – and that is clear from the minutes. As I say, I am troubled by this process and I am sceptical of it.

Revd Canon Gary Jenkins (Southwark): I warmly support the Anglican Covenant. It is an attempt to square a circle and, in my opinion, it just about succeeds.

It recognizes and respects the principle of provincial autonomy. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said yesterday, the Covenant does not override canonical autonomy. I believe that those who are concerned about that matter should be reassured that provincial autonomy is entirely respected by the Covenant; yet the Covenant asks provinces and Churches to exercise their autonomy in such a way that they take into account the effect that their decisions may have on other Churches. In particular, it encourages Churches to consider the relational consequences of their decisions; that is, what effect these decisions will have on other Churches in the Communion and their relationships with them.

In this way, it gives a real cash value – if I may use that term – to the very concept of communion. It recognizes that we belong to one another as part of the Body of Christ.

It recognizes that when one part of the body is hurt we all share in the pain. It recognizes that no national Church is an island. It recognizes that provincial autonomy must always be exercised in the context of a Communion of Churches. It recognizes that the concern for the whole Body of Christ may affect the decisions that we make as local Churches. This is what I believe communion is all about. Autonomy says, 'You can do whatever you like.' Communion says, 'You may choose not to, for the sake of others.'

In the current document at 3.2.2 we read that the Covenant is designed 'to respect the constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding our mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole.' In respecting this principle of autonomy but asking Churches to exercise their autonomy with a responsible concern for the whole Communion, I believe that the Covenant is a very Anglican Covenant and it deserves our support.

Revd Canon Anne Stevens (Southwark): The question I want to ask this morning is how will this Covenant affect the voice of prophecy in our Church? I know that people are raising various concerns about Section 4 of the Covenant. My main concern comes in Section 3 at 3.2.5. In that section, each Church commits itself 'to act with diligence, care and caution in respect of any action which may provoke controversy', particularly that which 'could threaten the unity of the Communion and the effectiveness or credibility of its mission.'

The trouble is that the prophet's calling is to be controversial, to stir up, to unsettle, to ask awkward questions and challenge the status quo. If a prophet is not provoking controversy then he or she is not doing his or her job. If a Church embarks on a course that runs the risk of silencing its prophets then it is not doing its job. The Church would be severely limiting its capacity for reform.

The Judeo-Christian tradition has not always loved its prophets but it has always needed them, and we need them more than ever today – and I mean that genuinely – from every part of the theological spectrum. Our Church needs prophets like those in the days of Ezra, who can remind us about the Scriptures and the law of God. We need prophets like Amos, who can remind us of the justice of God. We need prophets like Third Isaiah, who can remind us about the outrageously inclusive love of God. We need to hear all these voices and, even more importantly, we need to hear the conversation between them. It is in that conversation that all of our own hardness of heart and all of the distortions and prejudices of our own particular positions are brought into the light and criticized by each other. It is that conversation that can open up the opportunity for reform and renewal in our Church.

I am not opposed to the Covenant in principle but I am struggling to see how the measures laid down in Sections 3 and 4 preserve and honour the voice of prophecy in the Church in all its diversity. Somehow we need to find procedures that can open up that conversation rather than shutting it down, which is what I fear this document does.

I am still genuinely undecided about how to vote this morning but, whatever the outcome of our vote, I hope that the Church of England will be doing all it can to keep

the conversation flowing in the Anglican Communion in ways in which everyone can join in.

Canon Elizabeth Paver (Sheffield): Since 2002 it has been my privilege to represent the Church of England as the lay representative to the Anglican Consultative Council and, at ACC-14 in 2009, I was elected vice-chair of the ACC Standing Committee, which is proving to be a very challenging position at this time of serious disagreement and disharmony within some Churches in our Communion. However, I would like to assure Jacky Humphreys that the people on that Standing Committee are truly representative of the Communion. Not only do they represent the different continents upon which our Anglican Churches live but they are also representative in their opinions about many issues, including this one. We take our work very seriously.

I have often been humbled by the trust of many other Anglican Churches and the love that they have for the Church of England, even though they may be thousands of miles away from England. They still look to the Church of England for leadership on difficult issues. I hope that Synod will have the courage, even if it finds the Covenant not to be a perfect document – when has the Church ever produced a perfect document? – to find it to be one that we can work with and a process that we can work with, in order that the Anglican Communion can live together.

I have followed very closely the process by which we have come to this Anglican Covenant text and I wish to put on record my sincere thanks to the Faith and Order Commission for the report GS Misc 966. Its clarity and comprehensive coverage of the historic facts and the stages of germination will allow both new members, and I hope diocesan synods, who may have come fairly recently to the Covenant, and also those who have taken part in the past debates and consideration of the text and process, to feel fully informed and aware of the vital importance of this Covenant to the future life and mission of the Anglican Communion.

From the Windsor report in 2004 first proposing the idea of an Anglican Covenant to the final text being agreed by the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council in December 2009, five years of intensive work by eminent theologians and consultative groups have been undertaken. Texts have been circulated to the Churches in the Communion for consideration and comment. Our General Synod held debates in February 2008 and 2009 which affirmed the principle of an Anglican Covenant and noted the procedures which the Church of England would need to go through to adopt such a Covenant. Our own House of Bishops has commended the adoption of the Covenant to this Synod. Are we to be episcopally led or not? I would wholeheartedly endorse their recommendation.

To those who still see the Covenant as a disciplinary measure which will create highly centralized and un-Anglican structures I can only endorse the message of this report: that it is important to see the Covenant as a positive means of handling our diversity, not a tool for either forced control or forced division. If it changes how ‘new’ is handled and welcomed, then it is a change that is calling us to responsibility; that actions have consequences; that our brothers and sisters in Christ are affected by what we do. The Covenant is about preserving the breadth of Anglicanism with a measure of coherence. To vote against it is to vote against inclusion and true diversity.

The Church of England, the Anglican Communion and the Archbishop of Canterbury need this vote to go through overwhelmingly, so that we can be seen to give some leadership.

The Bishop of Lincoln (Rt Revd Dr John Saxbee): We have had some wonderful maiden speeches today and may I congratulate those who have made them? This is the final speech I shall make in this Synod, so I think it is probably the speech of a clapped-out old matron!

In relation to the Anglican Covenant I am on record as saying in this Synod that I entirely support the process, as long as it never ends. (*Laughter*) Let me explain what I mean. The Anglican Communion does not need a covenant, because Anglicanism *is* a covenant. It is a way of provinces living distinctly apart from each other while remaining a part of one another. That is a way of doing difference differently from the ways in which groups and individuals usually do difference. It is predicated on grace and good will. If there is grace and good will then a covenant will be unnecessary, and if there is no grace and good will then a covenant will be unavailing.

Listen to this quote from Hilary Mantel's book *Wolf Hall*, putting words into the mouth of my distinguished predecessor Cardinal Wolsey. 'Wolsey always said that the making of a treaty is the treaty. It does not matter what the terms are, just that there are terms. It is the goodwill that matters. When that runs out, the treaty is broken, whatever the terms may say.'

The Church of England has a bit of a history of putting in place measures in response to a particular presented issue and then discovering that the proposed cure not only has unintended consequences – and the Good Intentions Paving Company is still very much in business, I assure you – but also that the cure can actually make matters worse.

We all know that the process towards the drawing-up of this Covenant was triggered by events in the Episcopal Church, a few years ago notwithstanding, and the long preamble that was helpfully presented to us by the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Those events were by no means trivial, but to elevate them to the status of game-changers when it comes to how we deal with each other over time is stepping over a very significant mark in the sand, and I truly doubt whether it will be conducive to long-term stability.

The Covenant may of itself not be tyrannical but there are those in the Communion whose treatment of our lesbian and gay sisters and brothers has had at least a touch of the tyrannical about it. If I ever come to the conclusion that a Covenant of this kind will give them comfort, then I would be bound to resist it.

Anglicanism has been described as 'a fellowship of civilized disagreement.' I leave Synod to judge whether a two-tier Communion, with first and second division members, answers to that description of 'civilized disagreement.' Frankly, it feels like we will be sending sincere and faithful Anglicans to stand in the corner until they have seen the error of their ways and can return to the ranks of the pure and spotless.

I am grateful to Mr Roy for referring to the story of the woman taken in adultery. If we recall, Jesus first of all drew an extended circle of sinfulness, to include those who considered themselves to be more righteous than she was, and then drew an extended circle of acceptance to count her in. Synod will know the little rhyme – ‘They drew a circle that shut me out – heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But Love and I had the wit to win: we drew a circle that took them in.’

We can draw ever-tighter circles of sinfulness or we can draw ever-wider circles of acceptance, so that all provinces and not just some hear Our Lord’s injunction, ‘Go and sin no more’ but also echo his reassurance, ‘Neither do I condemn you.’

I love the Anglican Communion. I value our inter-diocesan links and I have learnt so much from visits to many provinces, but I do not love it so much that I would want it still to be a Communion but no longer Anglican. That prize is not worth the price.

I therefore leave you, Madam Chair, with the wise words of the American philosopher H.L. Mencken, with which you may be familiar. ‘For every difficult and complex problem there is a solution which is simple, straightforward and wrong.’ As an answer to a difficult and complex problem, this Covenant is simple, straightforward and, I still believe, probably wrong. There is too much religion in the world and not enough faith, and I think this Covenant seems to be more about factory-farm religion than free-range faith.

As I want the conversation to continue, I cannot vote against the motion to go on considering it and its implications, but I do think that the implications are very significant. As I ride off into the wonderful sunsets of West Wales, I wish you all well and hope and pray that, as this process continues, you will enjoy discussing the idea of a covenant and hesitate long and hard before signing up to one. (*Applause*)

Revd Canon Simon Killwick (Manchester): I see the Anglican Communion every Sunday when I stand in my church and look around at the congregation. There are many members from other provinces of the Anglican Communion present, from the West Indies and from a number of African provinces, and I thank God that my church is like that.

We tend to think of ourselves, dare I say it, as Anglicans before we even think of ourselves as members of the Church of England. The international dimension of our Church and our Communion is something that is vital. It is part of the New Testament vision – the Book of Revelation, ‘I saw before the throne of God people of every tribe, race and nation, worshipping the Lord together.’ It is an essential part of the Catholic vision of the Church that the gospel is for all races and all nations, all people at all times. Our Lord Jesus Christ has come to unite all people in himself, so we cannot just ignore the international dimension of the Church.

There is an initiative going round the country at the moment called Messy Church. I am one who has often believed in the Church of England as a messy Church and I have often been suspicious of people who have talked about trying to ‘tidy up’ the Church of England. However, there does come a point where untidiness becomes such a total mess that something has to be done about it. There comes a point at which, when untidiness is straining relationships, we simply cannot ignore it.

I would urge Synod to vote wholeheartedly in favour of giving consideration to the Covenant. It is about bringing a measure of coherence to the Communion but it is not about uniformity. It is a very Anglican sort of covenant. It is more like the covenant there is in marriage than like the covenant which is a legal contract. It is not about a straitjacket; it is about a framework within which Churches can relate to each other and grow in love and fellowship. It is a framework in which the member Churches of the Anglican Communion can work through difficulties and differences. It preserves the autonomy of all the member Churches but it introduces a way of expressing accountability and responsibility.

We cannot simply go back into the past; we can only go forward. We live in a global village. We are part of a Church which is essentially international. We cannot become insular, put our heads in the sand, and think it will all go away. The Covenant is the way forward and I believe that it is a prophetic thing that is calling for our support, in order to take the Anglican Communion, in love, fellowship and faith, into the future. I would urge Synod to support the Covenant wholeheartedly.

Miss Vasantha Gnanadoss (Southwark): I am speaking in favour of the motion. I believe it is right that the Church of England should enter into and adopt the Anglican Communion Covenant. I say this as one who has sought to play a full part in the life of this Synod for the past 20 years and also as one of the many members of the Church of England who has roots in other parts of the Anglican Communion.

The Anglican Communion grew out of the Church of England mainly in association with British commercial and political imperialism. Despite these unpromising origins, we have reason to believe that God in his redemptive grace has called out the Anglican Communion to be a distinctive component of the Church of Jesus Christ.

This development of a global Communion has been accompanied by the pragmatic evolution of the structures that we now call the instruments of communion, responding to changes in the Church and in the world. I believe the Covenant to be an authentic further development of the structures of the Communion.

The introduction of the Covenant may from time to time place constraints on the pace of development in some parts of the Communion, but this is nothing new. Constraints arising from imbalances of economic and political power have long been the experience of many. As we become more and more aware that actions and decisions in one part of the Communion can have serious repercussions elsewhere, it is surely right that we put in place an orderly system to ensure that changes are made with sensitivity to the widely differing circumstances in different provinces.

The Bishop of Blackburn (Rt Revd Nicholas Reade): The Bishop of Sherborne, writing in one of our newspapers last week, took us back to the debate that led to the 1975 Declaration of Assent. The solution was, he said, 'an elegant middle way', to which liberal and catholic Anglicans and evangelicals could keenly subscribe.

I believe that the Anglican Communion has needed a similar solution for some time now, to enable us not least to decide which of our differences may need to divide us and which of those differences clearly do not need to divide us. As we have heard,

many Churches do have a mechanism for making such decisions but, with no Petrine ministry, no curia, no hierarchical decision-making structure, how do we do it?

What do we have instead? Perhaps only the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting, which together with the Archbishop of Canterbury make up, as we have heard, our four instruments of unity – all of which are essentially consultative. We are therefore left with a real gap and, frankly, saying that that does not matter and therefore doing nothing is just not an option.

Looking back at our history over the last 20 years, particularly the last ten, it is abundantly clear that we need something further. That something, of course, cannot be anything that will change the nature of the Anglican Communion; but if we do not have that something further, we will change the nature of the Communion because we will almost certainly find parts of the Communion re-grouping into a looser federation, and that is not the Anglican Communion.

Yes I would like the Covenant to be tighter in certain respects; but it is, as Dr Eames described it some years ago, an agenda for relationships rather than, for example, a judgement on sexuality issues. None of us wants a covenant whose main aim is policing every move every member Church makes, looking to see who is going to be expelled or downgraded next. Rather, we want something that is based on prayer, generosity and good will.

Work has been in progress for seven years. Of course it is not perfect: far from it. However, I would rather give the benefit of the doubt to all those who have worked and prayed their way through this for all those years than just to do nothing.

I believe that, like the Declaration of Assent way back in 1975, we have found that elegant middle way in this Covenant. It is a way that, as we have heard, could later be modified in the light of experience. Let us give this our keen support.

Revd Canon Richard Franklin (Salisbury): I want to raise two questions about the Covenant, which in a way are different from those posed by some other speakers. I have some fundamental theological problems with its ecclesiology, its way of understanding Church and Communion. It is of course true that the idea of covenant is a deeply biblical and Christian idea, but the main use of the idea of covenant in Scripture is God's graceful covenant with humans to which we are called to reciprocate. There is a long political use of the idea of covenant, however, and it is my view that, despite all the theological accoutrements, the text before us is principally a political rather than a theological document.

I said that my hesitations are concerned with ecclesiology. In my judgement, the Covenant is proposing that communion is a construct, something that has to be sustained, maintained, expressed, enabled, nurtured and fostered – all terms which one finds within the Covenant document. Surely the communion of the Church is essentially something that is given to it by God and which it retains, notwithstanding its failures and shortcomings?

It seems to me that the Covenant document employs an ecclesiology which, in 2.1.1, acknowledges communion as a gift from God but which denies this as a reality. It

implies that we and not God have to create communion. A troubling expression that has been used to describe the purpose of the Covenant is that it is ‘to make explicit and forceful’ the loyalty and bonds of affection which govern the relationships between the Churches of the Anglican Communion; but communion is not something that can be forced by human means. I appreciate that we are talking of the Anglican Communion here and not Christian communion in general. Even so, I have severe doubts about an approach to communion as a kind of constructive moral enterprise.

I am also deeply concerned that the Covenant and associated changes to the mechanisms of the Anglican Communion imply a far more centralized vision of the Church’s life than is traditional to Anglican ecclesiology, with an overemphasis on the universal at the expense of the local. Although catholicity has sometimes been defined as universality, a much more coherent definition is ‘wholeness’. This may be found in each and every local church. The Greek Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, for example, maintains that ‘Catholicity is to be found in the eucharistic gathering of the local Christian community.’

The increased power and authority for the instruments of unity tend toward the creation of universalistic structures. It carries the implication that the local church only becomes catholic, part of the whole, when under the control of the wider Church. However, the local church is, or should be, catholic in and of itself, since, as the local eucharistic community, it draws the many into the one communion. The great problem with universalizing structures is that they will impose one cultural norm – something that we have seen throughout Christian history, to the great detriment of the gospel and of our mission.

Synod may judge that the political purposes behind the Covenant are sufficient to back it, at least for consideration. I may even conclude so myself. However, I have endeavoured to flag up some difficulties and some issues, which make it hard for me to accept the document with equanimity.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Miss Sally Muggeridge (Canterbury): Here I am, on the second day of my first Synod, and I have been so impressed by the speeches so far. The big question to me and to everyone else is will it work?

To set a little bit of context, my background is in large international organizations, where my job was to bring together people from across the world for a common goal and to achieve the objective. The word always was that the sum of the whole should be greater than the individual parts. There is this conundrum, on which we all have to reflect. Being with a big international organization, you had a leader and the leader would say, ‘This is what we will do’. We used to call them ‘God shots’, because they did indeed come down from on high. We need to think carefully about the leadership of our wonderful Anglican Communion and the fact that, internationally, everybody is an individual part but should be part of that greater good.

I have heard the Church and the Anglican Communion described as ‘untidy but lovable’. In my business life, I found that organizations very much needed to flow and ebb but never put in such a position – and here it may be that ‘covenant’ is not quite

the right word. A covenant is a solemn promise to engage in or refrain from a specified action.

This morning the *Guardian* talked of a piece-by-piece dissolution of the Communion. We need to think carefully about the wording. I was quite alarmed when I read 4.2.5 and 4.2.6, and indeed 4.2.7, where there is talk of ‘relational consequences’. I find those words very hard to consider. We may be asked to defer. How will things flow from a covenant? Maybe we just need to think again.

Mr Mark Russell (Archbishops’ Council): Leadership is a painful role. It is tough and it is frequently misunderstood. I think the Archbishop of Canterbury has the most impossible job in the history of the world – and we have a remarkable occupant in that role. (*Applause*) It is a lonely task. In the seven years that I have been a member of this Synod I have never heard Rowan ask us for our support in the way he has for this Covenant. He has appealed to us. He has asked us to back him; he has asked us to back this Covenant. He has told us that if we do not, the Communion risks unravelling. I believe him, because I trust him. Time and time again, this Synod has told him that we love him, trust him and value him. I have always believed that love is shown in trust.

I am CEO of a large organization. I make difficult decisions every day and frequently those decisions are misunderstood; but I am very sure that if the people knew the things I knew and that I cannot talk about, they might understand the decisions I make.

Comparison has already been made in this debate to Northern Ireland. With this accent, you may guess that I know something about that. Peacemaking is messy. I was part of the Ulster Unionist Party team under David Trimble in the run-up to the Good Friday Agreement and was in his constituency, trying to muster support for something that people did not support. The problems of Northern Ireland were deep-seated; there were violently different views held passionately on both sides. A Unionist problem was a Nationalist solution. Everyone saw things differently. It was a nightmare. I hate the Good Friday Agreement as a document. I dislike it immensely. I am a legally trained person. The language sucks; it is horrible – but we needed it. We could not have solved Northern Ireland without the Good Friday Agreement. It was a springboard to give permission to local people across the country to begin making new relationships at local levels. We needed the relational solution on the ground; we needed structural solutions in place too. It needed me as a youth worker to bring Protestants and Catholics together, but it also needed the politicians to produce a document that gave protection to all.

We need to be sure of what we are doing today. If we say No, not only are we voting this down but we are also not backing our Archbishop when he asks for our help. The consequences for our Communion and for our Archbishop are significant. We are not passing this today; we are voting to continue a process. I for one will back the Archbishop and give him the support that he asks for and quite honestly deserves.

The Bishop of Gloucester (Rt Revd Michael Perham): I am one of those who will vote for the motion with some reluctance. Reluctance because I do fear that, despite assurances, a covenant could eventually be used in a punitive manner against fellow-

Anglicans, as well as because of the more general worry that a covenant may alter the kind of Church we are. Nevertheless, I will vote for the motion for two connected reasons.

First, not to do so is to make more difficult the task of the Archbishop of Canterbury in his ministry to the Communion and I want to strengthen, not weaken, his hand. Second, the Covenant process keeps us talking and keeps us all in communion through challenging times. The process helps, even if we fear the final outcome.

What I really hope is that, when we eventually reach the point when a covenant is poised to come into force, we shall look at one another and say, 'What's this for? We have no need of it.' One of the reasons why I hope that this may be the outcome is the continuing indaba process.

At the Lambeth Conference two years ago, I felt led to try to form a triangular partnership involving my diocese and two others in very different cultures. What emerged was and is a partnership with the diocese of Western Tanganyika in Tanzania, which is what you might call black, conservative, evangelical – its bishop had also been to GAFCON – and with the diocese of El Camino Real in California, which is mainly white, though with a significant Latino minority, liberal, inclusive, fairly typical of the Episcopal Church, its bishop being one of the few women diocesans in the Communion. In the two years since, representatives of our three dioceses have spent quality time together in all three countries. We have prayed together, done *lectio divina* together, explored theological and ethical issues together, eaten together, gone on pilgrimage together.

There have been some extraordinary moments of grace. There was the reception that Bishop Mary received in an African diocese that had never seen a woman deacon, let alone a bishop; the meeting in California of African Christians with lesbian and gay people, listening, developing relationship, learning to respect and to see Christian authenticity in people whose interpretation of Scripture and tradition is different from our own. We did not set out to change opinions but change is what we have experienced: change and transformation in ourselves and in others.

Now our triangular partnership has become one of six sets of triangular partnerships participating in pilot schemes to do something similar across the Communion. The Communion's continuing indaba project has a wider intention than we have had. It is to get each set of three to explore together shared mission priorities, but at the heart of it remains the building of relationship, trust and love that can hold the Communion together and deepen our unity.

My hope is that we shall model something that will provide a pattern for such relationships, involving as many dioceses as are willing to take part. My regret is that we did not do it ten years ago. We may be too late. I pray not. I have as much confidence long term in a continuing indaba as I have in the Covenant, for which I shall vote today.

Revd Dr John Perumbalath (Rochester): I wonder how appropriate it is to use the word 'covenant' for this document, particularly with the judicial nature of Section 4.

The biblical texts quoted in the introduction to the Covenant are about our communion in Jesus Christ and God's invitation, furthered through covenants initiated by God in his divine grace. Section 4 of the document, however, as observed by the House of Bishops in the Province of Brazil, is closer to a contract in the modern Western provincial tradition – appropriate for the State as a form of binding political association and not a proper mutual, theological and missionary commitment. It creates new and strange relational mechanisms, which can significantly alter the ecclesiological nature of the Anglican Communion, bringing it closer to the idea of a denominational macro-structure.

I speak as someone who has roots in two overseas Churches within the Anglican Communion and having worked for seven years of my first ordained ministry in the Church of North India, serving on its General Synod. My family became Anglican just a generation ago. It was not an easy decision for my parents to leave the Oriental Orthodox Church, which was our home for 19 centuries, but we believed that we were moving from one communion to another, to a more inclusive and open communion. We were passionate about the communion and our theology and missiology were shaped in that ecclesiastical context. That may not be the case for the next generation, even for my daughter, because their Church in all probability will not be of the single and unrestricted sacramental communion as Anglicans but just bound to it by personal and historic links. This Covenant can be divisive.

Sections 1 to 3 of the Covenant text are commendable but, with Section 4 added to it, the document is ecclesologically un-Anglican, theologically bankrupt, and a potential cause for relegation of some of the Churches which are today in full communion with us. I shall vote against it and would encourage anyone who is concerned about the unity of the Anglican Communion also to vote against it.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): We have to remind ourselves that this Covenant did not come from nowhere. While it is true that the Anglican Communion has managed so far without a covenant and we may wish that we could carry on into the future without a covenant, I think that we all recognize that circumstances have changed, that tensions have built up and that the status quo is simply not an option.

Nor do I think that anyone in this Synod could fail to recognize and be aware of the deep commitment of the Archbishop of Canterbury to finding a way to hold the Anglican Communion together. This Covenant is the outcome of a long process of detailed, finely-balanced negotiation. At the very least, we have to recognize that our Archbishop of Canterbury knows more about the dynamics and details of that process than most of us do.

I do not think that we have heard in this debate what those who oppose the Covenant see as the alternative. Perhaps we are just hoping that the problem will somehow go away, or maybe some people do not even think that there is a problem, or do some people think – as one of the speakers intimated – that the way forward is perhaps for certain groups of people just to pack their bags and go away?

I have, as some members of Synod will have heard me say before, a number of friends in the Anglican Church of Canada. At the moment they feel as though they are standing on shifting sands and they want something to hold on to. They are absolutely

desperate that we should affirm this Covenant. They are hoping and fervently praying that the Church of England will also do so. I would ask Synod to give the Anglican Communion a chance and to support this motion.

Mrs Mary Johnston (London): On a point of order, Madam Chairman, under SO 33, I beg to move:

‘That the debate be now adjourned and resumed at the July 2011 group of sessions.’

The Chairman: Mrs Johnston has moved the procedural motion that the debate now be adjourned and resumed in July 2011. Under SO 33 she has not more than two minutes to give us her reasons. I will then ask the Bishop of Bristol, as mover of the main motion, to speak for not more than two minutes. When I have heard those two speakers, I will decide in my discretion whether to allow any more debate on the procedural motion.

Mrs Mary Johnston (London): My reasoning is really about process and context rather than content. It seems to me that we are embarked upon a very serious debate, with huge implications for the whole Communion and the Church of England in particular, and that that is a very significant matter for an inaugural session of Synod.

About a third of us here are entirely new to Synod and everything about our procedures is unfamiliar. Yet we are here this morning, on our first morning of business, dealing with this hugely significant issue. All of us here, apart from the bishops – and that may be significant – have just been through an election. That is an experience that I suggest, for all laity and clergy, makes us acutely conscious of our responsibility to the Church of England. That is what our laity, our parishes, our people, elected us to represent them here for.

This particular issue has not only domestic but also international implications. That is an enormous, onerous burden on this Synod. We have heard some compelling contributions. It is clear that there is uncertainty and perplexity about the impact of a covenant on this Church.

The bishops have been much more closely involved in the Covenant process than we have. I think that we need some time for the rest of us to catch up with where the bishops are. I am suggesting that perhaps in February the Business Committee might bring forward a presentation about the implications of the Covenant, how it will work, and then we could perhaps have indaba groups to work it out. (*The Chairman rang the bell.*)

The Bishop of Bristol: I want to be as brief and clear as I can be in asking Synod to resist this procedural motion. Can I remind members that what we are doing today is asking for Synod to vote on a process? This is about sending it to the dioceses under Article 8. It is not the final decision. This will come back to Synod.

The last Synod debated various drafts of the Covenant on four occasions. The final text of the Covenant was published nearly a year ago. We have had a solid piece of work from the Faith and Order Commission and other people have made their own positions clear, in favour of the Covenant and against it. I do not think that there is

any reason, therefore, why the new Synod cannot deal with the business before us today. It is not the end of the adoption process; it is the beginning of a process that will require debate in the dioceses and then again in this Synod before we come to a final decision.

Let us stick with the task before us, therefore, because I think that to send a lukewarm message today will be sending not a very good message.

The Chairman: I am minded to take one speech either way on the adjournment. Archbishop, which way do you wish to speak? If I am taking one each way, I need to find out what your view is.

The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu): I want us to proceed with the motion. Our duty here is to be both legislative and deliberative. I will simply remind members again of the history and why this cannot be allowed.

The Synod debates on the Covenant were as follows. In February 2005, the Bishop of Durham led a debate on a motion on the Windsor report from the House of Bishops, and the Covenant was in there. The motion was carried on a huge show of hands. In 2007, Archbishop Drexel Gomez introduced and the Bishop of Chichester moved on behalf of the House that Synod ‘affirm its willingness to engage positively with... a process to produce a covenant.’ Again, all amendments were resisted and the motion was carried on a show of hands. In February 2008, on behalf of the House, I led a ‘take note’ debate on the Church of England’s submission on the draft Covenant. It was carried by 266 votes to 20 with 19 abstentions.

Although not strictly a Covenant debate, in July 2008 there was a desire that there should be some kind of information that would help everybody, contained in a Diocesan Synod Motion from Guildford. Again, the Covenant was talked about. In February 2009, the Bishop of Rochester moved that Synod take note of the proposed Church of England response to three questions on the Covenant, sent by the Anglican Consultative Council. Again, this was carried.

We have been at it, we have moved it forward, and now you want to say, ‘Wait until February.’ If I were a new member of Synod, being told that I was not capable of sorting out the wood from the trees would be an insult. (*Applause*)

Any legislative body always inherits the earlier legislation. Let us be more disciplined and go for it. Incidentally, all the other amendments should fall by the wayside as well!

Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): I have been listening to the debate. I came here today sure that I was going to vote against, but probably may well now vote in favour. However, Mary’s proposal has given me pause for thought.

She mentioned that, in terms of process, the bishops have had this longer than everything else. I have listened to the Bishop of Blackburn, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Bishop of Lincoln and the Bishop of Gloucester today, and they are all saying that there are problems; that there are holes and uncertainties in terms of the content rather than the process. I just wonder whether this opportunity of an

adjournment gives Synod members a chance to reflect on that and to ask themselves the question whether it is right to send a covenant to the Church of England as a whole without much demonstration of what those problems are. How are our people to assess the value of this Covenant without having a clear picture of some of those problems that they have admitted still remain?

By adjourning now, giving time for that indaba process and coming back in July, irrespective of the timetable and the length of the list that the Archbishop has just read out, I think that it will give us a chance to inform the Church of England much better than we might do than by simply nodding this through at our first group of sessions.

The procedural motion was put and lost.

Revd Canon Dr Simon Cox (Blackburn): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

Revd Stephen Coles (London): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I think you said that you would have electronic voting. In the light of that, could we please have a vote by Houses?

The Chairman: We have not yet reached that point because the Bishop of Bristol must be allowed time to reply to the debate.

The Bishop of Bristol, in reply: It seems a long time ago since Mark Beach made the first speech in the debate. I listened to him very carefully and found that I could disagree with very little of what he said apart from the fact that I could not see why, on the basis of what he said, he was not in favour of the Covenant. I refer him to sections 1.2.4 and 1.2.8 of the Covenant, which I think say quite a lot of what he might have wanted to hear about Scripture, reason, Church tradition and experience.

I am very grateful for Miranda Threlfall-Holmes’s emphasis on context. All I can say to her is that having brought up five children of my own, if I had allowed autonomy without any accountability I would have even less hair than I have today!

Debrah McIssac reminded us that she is one of six children and 100 first cousins, so she has my sympathy as Christmas draws near. I appreciated her comment on coming to the Covenant as a kind of clean read; I think that is a very helpful perspective.

I am of course grateful to the Archbishop for his wisdom on the subject.

I listened very carefully to Anirban Roy. I thought that his speech was going to end up a little better than it in fact did. I was interested in his exegesis of the woman caught in adultery, which was picked up by a later speaker.

I was grateful for Simon Cawdell's contribution. In the context of supporting this motion he said that we have an opportunity to amend the Covenant. However, I need to make it clear to Synod that that is not strictly true; we cannot amend it. We have either to adopt it or not at the end of the process.

It was rewarding to hear our ecumenical colleagues make their contributions. I thought that what Paul Fiddes said with his very sharp question about the theological basis for a Covenant was both helpful and clarifying for us.

I need to move on at high speed, just to say to Julie Dziegiel that I think Mark Russell made rather a better point than I could in relation to her comparison with Northern Ireland.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells spoke well and summed up what many members are clearly thinking.

I need to give time to my colleague from the Bristol diocese, Jacky Humphreys, who is troubled by this, simply to say that I am not sure the parallel with European law carries, because I am advised that this is not really an appropriate parallel. By acceding to the Treaty of Rome this country agreed to submit itself to the jurisdiction of the European Court in Luxembourg and to allow European law to have direct effect in this country. The Covenant does not create Anglican Communion law. There is no principle of direct effect, no international court and no body with any coercive authority. The point is that the ACC will not be making judicial decisions; it will make recommendations.

I am grateful to Gary Jenkins for his support.

Anne Stevens raised a concern shared by many here about whether this Covenant will kill the voice of prophecy. I do not have a vast experience of prophets but my limited experience according to what I have heard and seen tells me that gagging prophets is as impossible as it is undesirable.

Elizabeth Paver gave us a little kind of framework from the centre of the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council as it were, and I was grateful for her support of GS Misc 966, which was very helpful.

I think that many would have some resonance with the points made by that clapped out old matron from Bristol, the Bishop of Lincoln. I was interested in his circles of acceptance from the John 8 narrative, and I would like to hear his sermon on that subject at some point. Very early yesterday morning I read through the Covenant. I cannot say that it was a clean read for me. However, given that it is 450 or 500 years since the divines of Anglicanism were put together, I thought that it was a very Anglican piece of work and I could not quite understand why he felt that it was not.

Simon Killwick reminded us that untidiness can become a mess, and that is certainly true. I believe that the Covenant is an attempt to create for us a framework within which not to deal with our mess but certainly to keep talking about it.

Vasantha Gnanadoss and the Bishop of Blackburn made robust contributions in favour of the Covenant.

I listened very carefully to Richard Franklin's fundamental ecclesiological questions and his understanding that the text is political rather than theological. At the end of his contribution I wondered whether this was not just a kind of idealism and whether we are where we are rather than where we would like to be.

Sally Muggeridge asked us whether it would work. If we do not adopt it today, we will never know, and I hope that she will feel able to adopt it despite her misgivings.

Mark Russell made his usual high impact performance and I was grateful for that.

With customary generosity, the Bishop of Gloucester shared with us some of his anxieties and reminded us that alongside all this some very important work is being done with the continuing *indaba* process, and I would like to commend to Synod – not that I do it myself but we are thinking seriously about it – that these tripartite consultations with a conservative diocese and a more liberal diocese are a really grown up way of pressing on.

To John Perumbalath, I think that the Covenant is trying to do exactly the opposite of what he fears and I guess that we will just have to agree to disagree on that.

Finally, thank you to Prudence Dailey. It is a very sharp point to make that if we back off this today, what is the alternative?

This Covenant is about creating a framework for ongoing conversations so that hopefully we can engage with each other as adults, and I hope that the Synod will support the motion standing in my name.

Revd Stephen Coles (London): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. As you have indicated that we will have electronic voting, can I therefore propose that we do it by Houses?

The Chairman: We can take a vote by Houses only if 25 members stand in their places. Are there 25 members standing? There are.

The motion was put and The Chairman, pursuant to SO 36(c)(iii), ordered a division by Houses, with the following result:

	Ayes	Noes	Abstentions
House of Bishops	39	0	1
House of Clergy	145	32	11
House of Laity	147	25	8

The motion was therefore carried.

The Chairman: We now move to Item 505. I am aware that one or two members are slightly confused about why we are taking amendments after we have just voted on

the main motion. To clarify the matter, it is because we are not amending the main motion. What we are now considering are the amendments that relate to the text in GS 1809, and for this part of the business we will be using the 40-member procedure under SO 56.

Mr Justin Brett (Chichester): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘In recital (1) after “the Anglican Communion Covenant” *insert* –
“, subject to the exception referred to below,”; and
After “GS Misc 966” in paragraph 1, *insert* –
“, with the exception of section 4.2,”; and
Before “solemnly covenants” *insert* –
“subject to that exception”.’

First, let me start by saying what this is not; it is not a wrecking attempt or an attempt to derail the process. If it was an attempt to derail the process, I would not be seeking simply to remove a part of the Covenant draft, which I believe as the Church we cannot and should not sign up to. What I am in effect trying to do is sign us up to a Covenant which I believe is a coherent whole.

I would also like to briefly take issue with something that was mentioned earlier in the debate about the fact that this is the beginning of a process and that we shall have a chance to change things later. Yes then we did, but this is now the ‘later’ when we have a chance to change things. Once it goes to the dioceses by Article 8 reference, it comes back in exactly the same form as it went and we say Yes or No – end of story. Therefore, if there are aspects with which the Synod is not happy, this is the only chance that we have to amend what is going on.

The fact that we have come this far in the debate means that we want to engage with the Covenant process and that as a Communion there is a huge amount that we can say which we have in common, but if the aim of the Anglican Communion Covenant is to keep us together, I would submit that section 4.2 of the Covenant does not belong in the agreement. Section 3.2 already sets out what we as a Communion need to do to keep together. We need to seek a shared mind with other Churches and to act with diligence, care and caution in respect of any action that may provoke controversy or threaten the unity of the Communion.

Given that that is already in the Covenant document, section 4.2 can be there only for the purposes of enforcement. It replaces what should be bonds of affection with what is in fact the language of contract. Recognition of and fidelity to the text of this Covenant enables mutual recognition and Communion. I recognize my brothers and sisters in Christ because I can see Christ in them and they, I pray, can see Christ in me. However feeble and broken my attempts might be to follow his commands, I do not expect them to produce their ACC accreditation. The question about section 4.2 is not whether it claims or is intended to be punitive but whether it can be used in that way, and I say, as others in this chamber have already said, that it can.

Let us look at sections 4.2.5 and 4.2.7, which refer to relational consequences. There is nothing in the document in front of the Synod about what a relational consequence is, but relational consequences were listed by the Covenant design group in Singapore

in 2008. They include suspension or termination of voting rights in the Instruments of the Communion and removal from the ACC schedule of membership. This is in direct opposition to 4.1.3.

I know this as the language of a teacher: 'It is up to you whether you do the prep or not, but if you fail your test next week you are in detention'. I know it as the language of the playground: 'If you do not do what we like, you are not our friend and we will not talk to you any more'. We cannot sign up to a document such as that, because we do not have the legal competence to do so. That is why 4.1.3 is in there in the first place. If it was not there, the Church of England could not sign. I therefore urge Synod to excise from the document that which is contrary.

I want to end with one final thought. In the words of Bishop Alan Wilson writing recently, 'As a sinner saved by grace through faith, I have absolutely no will to start making judgements about my sister or brother or the Churches to which they belong that would compromise my ability to sit down at the Lord's Table with them. I am a broken sinner in a fallen world and so are you'. (*The Chairman rang the bell.*) It is for that reason that I beg Synod to pass this amendment.

The Bishop of Bristol (Rt Revd Michael Hill): As usual, Justin Brett speaks with a certain clarity and grace. I guess he knows that I am going to urge the Synod not to support this amendment. Section 4.4.1 of the Covenant states that the Covenant consists of the text set out in this document in the preamble sections 1–4 and the Declaration. The invitation to all 38 provinces of the Communion is to adopt the Covenant. There is no provision for adopting some parts and not others. Any suggestion that purporting to adopt the Covenant without section 4.2 would somehow be less damaging than simply refusing to adopt the Covenant will not seem like that to many of our brothers and sisters around the Communion. If members do not like the Covenant, that is a perfectly legitimate point of view, but the honest and straightforward thing to do is vote against it in your diocesan synods and when it comes back here for the final stages. We may not like the question that we have been asked, but it is the question that we have to answer. Do we adopt or not?

Finally, I want to challenge the idea that somehow this would be a better Covenant if it contained nothing about processes on how to try to resolve disputes when they arise. The Bible itself says a lot of wonderful things about the Church, but it also deals with what happens when there are disputes within the fellowship. Being prepared for the consequences of human failure and having in place some agreed processes does not mean that we are half-hearted about our commitment to each other or our dependence on God's grace. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome he said that we belong to one another. I think that we have to work very hard on what it means to belong to one another when we disagree with each other.

The Chairman: The amendment proposed will continue to be debated and proceed to a vote only if 40 members stand in their places to indicate that they wish that to happen. Are there 40 members standing? There are.

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu): Why Covenant? We had a wonderful contribution from Professor Fiddes telling us that it is the Covenant of Jesus Christ. We are summoned to participate in his death and resurrection; that is the Covenant. If anyone thinks that discipline cannot be a part of it, they should read Paul saying that some people are unworthily receiving the Lord's body; they were even dying. I am afraid that Covenant must always have within it the possibility of discipline. Yes, grace is wonderful and always tends to make sure that the law is not hushed, but this is not cheap grace. At the heart of grace is the cross of Jesus Christ. He is the one who died and rose again and asked us to participate in his body and his blood. I want to believe that the law is not always bad. Law is good, but it is bad when we do not realize that Christ by his grace makes it good law.

Of course, there are those who want to continue the process without actually deciding this. I now represent the Church of England in the meetings of the Primates, which the Archbishop of Canterbury chairs. If I were to go to that meeting and all the other provinces had voted on section 4.2 but we had decided to delete it, it would be very difficult for the Anglican voice of the Church of England to be heard and I would be absolutely naked. I would therefore ask members to take the text to the dioceses as it is, and if it does not come back with two-thirds, well and good, but Synod should not deprive the dioceses of the possibility of seeing the entire text because we have actually neutered it somewhat. I therefore urge members to resist the amendment.

None of us is above the law. We have our canons. What happened in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral? There was a lot of debate and some thought that it was going to change the whole of Anglicanism, but it did actually save the Church. What about the Declaration of Assent and the preface to it? We know, of course, that clergy promise to use only those forms of service that are allowed by canon but that as soon as the bishop turns his back they start to use their own rites and there is no punitive effect. This is the kind of Church that we live in with canons, rules and declarations.

I urge the Synod not to deprive our dioceses of the possibility of looking at the entire document which the rest of the Communion will have decided. This went through the ACC and was amended and it is an agreed text, so I ask the Synod to allow our parishes to look at it as well.

Revd Dr Robert Munro (Chester): I want to share a few reflections on biblical covenants about which we were reminded by our ecumenical partners. I believe that one note missing from the debate is that covenant-making is supposed to be a joyful process in which we come together. Indeed, as the Royal covenant making is anticipated by the nation, there is a real danger in having a less than wholehearted encouragement of that process, as has been noted by at least one of our members in the House of Bishops.

At this point, therefore, I want to say that scriptural covenant-making is joyful, that it brings people together and carries with it two characteristics not to be feared but celebrated, and it seems to me that biblical covenants never come without cost or consequences. Covenant-making is a costly process.

In Scripture the sacrifices made at the point of cutting the Covenant are an ample sign of those things. We know that there is already a cost involved in this process. There

has been a great cost to our partners across the world in standing together. I am privileged to serve in a church that is partnered with a number of Churches that have been directly affected by the tear in the fabric of the Communion which led to the Windsor process. For us it may cost the disdain of our culture; for them it risks their lives for the sake of the gospel in some circumstances.

This cost we all bear not grudgingly but joyfully in our fellowship in Christ. Indeed, the second characteristic of biblical covenant-making is that it always carries consequences; there are blessings and curses associated with it. Even in unconditional covenants those consequences are born at least in Christ in his sacrifice for us. This does not simply say that there are no responsibilities that come with biblical faithfulness.

A couple of years ago my sister was married and I joyfully attended her wedding. For the previous eight years she and her partner, to whom she was very committed, had been living together, and she had children. That did not mean that I went to that covenant-making with any reluctance. Indeed it was because she was taking on a degree of commitment and consequences in that relationship that brought her to it. Unfaithfulness can be involved whenever covenants are made. Those consequences are shown in Scripture in the exile and the exodus. On the other hand, there is a joy in coming together under God's grace and sharing and submitting together in this Covenant process. Let us see the joy of our Communion, not the fear of regulation as being that which binds us, and let us join together in affirming this without reservation or restriction on the result.

I encourage Synod to reject this amendment and the one that follows.

Dr Philip Giddings (Oxford): I want to draw Synod's attention to two points, neither of which has come up thus far in our debate this morning. The first concerns an anxiety in this chamber and elsewhere about the undesirability of punitive consequences. I think that we need to remember to apply that anxiety in other debates as well. We also need to remember that those sorts of punitive consequence have already been applied in other parts of the Communion in the debate in which we are now engaged. Dr Munro has just referred very delicately to the use of canonical and other Measures in churches in North America to exclude those like Dr James Packer who are loyal, faithful, godly, scholarly Anglicans. That that has happened is deeply regrettable, and it is part of the division and difficulty within the Communion that we have to address.

Secondly, if this section is removed from the Covenant, for many of us it would withdraw the last tiny bit of autonomy within the Communion of self-discipline which the Covenant retains. A number of members of Synod, including me, have voted for this with some reluctance because it is not a half loaf but a quarter of a loaf, and part of it not well baked, but we have nevertheless gone with it for some of the powerful reasons that have been explained. If this goes, what will we have that will make any difference to resolving the issues in front of the Communion? The Archbishop of York has said that without this kind of Covenant he will have nothing with which to play.

I therefore urge the Synod to reject this amendment.

Professor Helen Leathard (Blackburn): In worship this morning we had references to the Kingdom of God and to Christ the King. We have a Covenant given to us by Jesus Christ in the New Testament, and if that is not sufficient to keep us together as Anglicans or Christians throughout the world, I am not convinced that any particular form of words will do it, and I am especially not convinced that a form of words which hints at exclusion will do it. I am therefore minded to support this amendment, not because I do not understand what was explained about the fact that at the end of the day we have to vote for it or against it but because I believe that we need to think carefully through the possible relational consequences.

As I read the papers for this Synod I was preparing a sermon on Zacchæus, as I am sure many of us were at about that time, and I think that section 4.2 risks putting us with the grumbling outsiders rather than going into Zacchæus's house with Jesus and working until transformation comes. What I would like to see by way of relational consequences is perhaps the imposition of an interminable indaba between those who disagree rather than exclusion from Instruments.

Mrs Christina Rees (St Albans): I think that we have had an absolutely stunning debate and I have been greatly impressed with the quality of all the contributions. What has emerged from this is that we all want to stay together and carry on in the Anglican Communion. If we pause for a moment and not concentrate on quarter loaves half baked but on the things that we all have indicated we absolutely want to do, we surely know that we are part of a Communion, that we want to remain part of that Communion and that we are passionately committed to it.

However, concerns have been raised about certain aspects of it, and the Bishop of Gloucester certainly gave us one model to work with, because one of the questions is: if we do not pass it as it stands, what will we do? Well, we could do worse than carry on those triangulated conversations that he and many other bishops seem to be having across the Communion. There are models that we could explore rather than resorting to section 4, which has caused the greatest problem. Section 2.1.1 refers to Communion as a gift of God, yet it is said in section 4.2.1 that only by mutual recognition will we have Communion. I simply do not believe that; I do not believe it as a Christian or as an Anglican.

I thought that our response to the Bishop of Lincoln was not just because this happens to be his final speech and he is retiring, but he managed to convey in his speech a disease that we all have about section 4, and I would urge Synod to ask what we would be left with if we omitted section 4. What would it leave us with? It would leave us with the three sections that we can all join with together and the relationships that we are passionate about continuing. We want to carry on and talk and we want to solve some of the difficulties, but I think there is a sense that the framework of solving the difficulties set out in section 4 is not necessarily the best way forward.

I do not have the answers nor do I have a plan that I prepared earlier for getting rid of section 4 and inserting a new one, but let us have the trust, maturity, hopefulness and faith that perhaps sections 1, 2 and 3 are enough for us as a Communion of people who love each other to carry on together.

Mr Tom Sutcliffe (Southwark): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

‘That the question be now put.’

This motion was put and carried.

A member: On a point of order, Madam Chairman. May we have a division of the whole Synod?

The Chairman: That would require 25 members to stand. Are there 25 standing in support of a division of the whole Synod? There are not.

The amendment was put and lost.

Dr Brian Walker (Winchester): I beg to move as an amendment:

‘*Insert as new recital (3) –*

“The Church of England understands the Anglican Communion Covenant as a means for maintaining continuous inclusive relationships between all covenanting Churches.”; and

At the beginning of paragraph 1, *insert –*

“Subject to paragraph 2,”; and

After paragraph 1, *insert –*

“2. The Church of England will not participate in or support any limitations or suspensions of the kind provided for in section 4.2.5 or sanctions effected under section 4.2.7.”.’

This amendment addressing clauses 4.2.5 and 4.2.7 on page 26 will allow us to accept the Anglican Communion Covenant while avoiding what Archbishop Rowan in his message last year sought to avoid, namely a procedure for punishments and sanctions.

When we last discussed it, I welcomed the proposed Covenant. However, I raised concern about the section that sets out what happens when a Church chooses not to adopt requests of the Instruments of Communion and there is a relinquishment by that Church of the Covenant’s purpose until they re-establish their Covenant with the other member Churches. This did not sound like the Christian family values of patience, forgiveness and love.

Thankfully, the text of the Covenant before us no longer speaks of relinquishment or of the need for them to re-establish their Covenant with us. Indeed, the briefing paper concludes with the Archbishop of Canterbury’s words to the Lambeth Conference: ‘A Covenant should not be thought of as a means for excluding the difficult or rebellious but as an intensification – for those who so choose – of relations that already exist’. Sadly, when we turn to the details of the Covenant we find that the final version is not as strong on intensification of relationships in times of disputes but focuses instead on the imposition of relational consequences – see page 26.

Section 4.2.5 allows the Standing Committee to recommend to any Instrument of Communion relational consequences for a Church failing to defer a controversial

action. The possible consequences specifically include limitation of their participation in or indeed suspension from that Instrument while advice is sought. Surely, this is not the time to suspend Communion from any Instruments of the Anglican Communion but is the very time to intensify those relationships and to remain in deep Communion with that Church to enable us to explore together ways to develop enduring reconciliation?

Once an action or decision is declared incompatible with the Covenant, the Standing Committee has to make further recommendations as to the relational consequences which flow from that action. While the clause does not spell out these relationships, it requires the Standing Committee to address the extent of the impairment and, taking the context of clause 4.2.5, it is likely that they will include suspension or perhaps even exclusion. As Paul explains, the reality of the Church as the Body of Christ means that we cannot say to another member of the body 'We have no need of you'.

Passing this amendment will allow us to enter into and adopt the Covenant and if necessary declare how and why an action is incompatible. Meanwhile, if our intention is to maintain relationships with all covenanting Churches by not participating in or supporting limitations or suspensions prescribed or sanctions effected under clause 4.2.7, I think that that should be sufficient for us to be able to continue with our discussions and rebuild those relationships.

The Bishop of Bristol, in reply: Madam Chairman, I will try to be brief; I know that you are anxious about the time.

Members will obviously have guessed by now that I am going to encourage them to resist Dr Walker's amendment. Some of the points that I made about Justin Brett's amendment apply to this amendment as well. The simple question that we are being asked is whether we are prepared to adopt the Covenant. As soon as we start to insert declarations about what we might or might not do in certain hypothetical situations we will introduce uncertainty and hesitation.

In addition, I have some difficulty with the implication that here there are no circumstances at all in which we would want there to be relational consequences as a result of what another Church in the Communion had decided to do. For instance suppose another Church in the Communion really did become, as a document recently mentioned, neo-Puritan and decided to abandon the historic episcopate, are we saying that we should have no consequences at all? Suppose the leadership of a particular province of the Communion became so corrupt and allied to an authoritarian regime that it endorsed the theory of racial supremacy or gave encouragement to ethnic cleansing, are we saying that there should be no possibility of relational consequences then?

I urge the Synod not to support this amendment.

The Chairman: In order for the debate to continue to a vote on this item, 40 members need to stand. Are there 40 members standing? There are not. The amendment therefore lapses.

That concludes the debate on the draft Act of Synod as such. As I indicated at the beginning of the debate, provided the procedures under Articles 7 and 8 of the Synod's Constitution are completed successfully, at a later date the Synod will have an opportunity to vote on whether or not to finally approve the Act of Synod.

We therefore come to Item 507, the following motion in the name of Revd Canon Robert Cotton. This canvasses various issues relating to the next stage of the process and in particular the referral of the draft Act of Synod to the dioceses under Article 8.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton (Guildford): I beg to move as a following motion:

‘That this Synod, recognizing and affirming the difficult issues addressed by the Anglican Communion Covenant:

- (a) request that the date determined by the Presidents for the reference of the draft Act of Synod to the dioceses under Article 8 should be no earlier than November 2011;
- (b) direct the Business Committee to ensure that the documents circulated to diocesan synods for the purposes of the Article 8 reference include a range of briefing material, properly reflecting the diversity of views on the Covenant within the Church of England; and
- (c) invite the House of Bishops to encourage in the dioceses a process of widespread education about, and engagement with, the substance and text of the Covenant.’

We have committed ourselves to asking the dioceses the questions, and that is good. Now the key question becomes: in what ways will the Covenant strengthen the Anglican Communion?

My motion asks for three things, the most important of which is the first. It asks to delay the Article 8 reference until we have dealt with the Article 8 reference on women bishops. I know that the Bishop of Bristol will say that there is a pressing timetable in relation to the ACC meeting in 2012, but does their timetable trump ours? Members will know that it has taken a great deal of work to get the Church of England to this stage on the matter of women bishops, and much still needs to be done with that Article 8 reference.

Within the network of clergy chairs we are currently advising each other on how to handle this matter in diocesan synods, and many dioceses seem to be following the pattern that has been commended – that of allocating one diocesan synod next year to deepen theological understanding and then to have a debate which could be divisive in a following synod. For them, once the process of discussing diocesan budgets has been added in, that will be the 2011 timetable full. There could be all sorts of resentment and misunderstandings if our two Article 8 references overlap.

Today we have already sent out a very clear signal to the rest of the Anglican Communion that we support further discussion of the Covenant. The first part of my motion respectfully requests that we finish our current business before allocating

proper time for discussing the Covenant further, and that is what paragraphs (b) and (c) ask for; they are relatively uncontentious. It is because ignorance about the Covenant to some extent in some places of our Church matches a lack of interest in the Covenant. It is dangerous to put on the statute book something that we do not understand and are not sure we want.

Therefore, asking for good briefing material is not about asking for documents that urge us to vote Yes or No, but it is educational; it is about answering the question ‘In what ways will the Covenant strengthen the life of the Anglican Communion?’ For example the Archbishop has said that this is not about creating an external authority. I believe him, but why does it feel like that to many, and should those many be blamed for that feeling? Let us have more material explaining it.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells said that the usual scrutiny was not applied early in the process and that we are still catching up, and that is what my motion asks for – catch-up material so that we can understand. This following motion is essentially about seeking to turn what could be grudging, half-hearted ignorance into endorsement with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

The Chairman sought leave of the Synod to extend the sitting by 10 minutes.
(Agreed)

The Chairman imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Bishop of Bristol (Rt Revd Michael Hill): To ring the changes, I have to speak from a different place. However, I am sorry to say that, as Robert Cotton has implied, I am not going to ring the changes in the advice that I give to Synod. I want to urge the Synod not to support this following motion.

I think that paragraphs (b) and (c) are unnecessary and that paragraph (a) is positively unhelpful in the light of what we talked about earlier. Working from the bottom up, paragraph (c) is unnecessary because I cannot believe that we will have anything other than a process of engagement in dioceses. I would have thought that the experience of this morning demonstrates fairly clearly that people understand what the issues are. Indeed, engaging with the text itself would be a very good thing.

On paragraph (b), I am happy to trust the good sense and judgement of the Business Committee. The Business Committee has always represented a wide range of views across the Synod and I believe that it is well able to ensure that the material sent out gives us what we need to work with. I also suspect that it will be supplemented by all sorts of useful briefing papers from those who hold particular views on the subject.

My main problem is with paragraph (a). The next meeting with the ACC will take place towards the end of 2012. I do not know whether we shall have been able to reach the final approval stage by then, but if we do not start the diocesan referrals until November next year we shall not even know whether a majority of dioceses is prepared to support the Covenant. By letting the process take its course now in the normal way, by the time of the next ACC we shall have had either the final approval vote or at the very least achieved much greater clarity over opinion within the Church

of England towards the Covenant. I believe that we owe it to our Communion partners and to ourselves to get on with the process, have the debate and come to a conclusion.

As to whether dioceses can cope with two controversial items of business at the same time, the Article 8 reference on women bishops started in September and is already under way. Nothing that we do in relation to the Covenant will delay or cut across that process. I believe that many months ago diocesan secretaries were alerted to the possibility of two Article 8 references running in parallel with each other. I am sure that when it meets next month the Business Committee will want to think quite carefully about the return date for the Article 8 reference decision on the Covenant so that dioceses can have the time that they need to come to a conclusion, but I urge that we do not put the whole thing on ice for a year.

Mr Tim Hind (Bath and Wells): Something must be done. This is something, therefore it must be done. Yes, we are in the middle of a process but I think that we need to understand where we are in the process. Many members here today voted in favour of us going forward on this, not because they necessarily will vote in favour of it later but because they want to continue the dialogue and the process, so let us not assume that we are in a one-size-fits-all situation. I believe that some things are still missing in terms of what we need to do, and that is why I would like to support Robert Cotton's motion, because the point about education is very important.

I want to talk about integrity, context and grace. At the beginning of this group of sessions a speaker said that we had lighter paperwork this time round, and that is true. However, the import of that paperwork has been quite extensive. I think that this has been quite an historic Synod. We have not talked about women bishops but we have talked about the Big Society and about the Anglican Covenant, and there is a sense in which our decision-making has to have integrity about it. Does the touch and feel of what we decide have the same effect across all those three?

The answer is that probably it can, and still come to different conclusions provided that the context is understood. The context of each of the three is different. The Archbishop of Canterbury talked about it being unrealistic that for example this can be done just by good will, yet many people spoke about the need to understand the grace. One of my favourite hymns is about the wideness in God's mercy and understanding that some things are carried out by our organizations 'with a zeal he will not own' and that 'there's a place for all God's people'; and we need to be aware of that.

Let us also remember that we are not the Orthodox Church. If we were, we would not be discussing this. Since the Orthodox Church was formed all forms of innovation, including papacy and others, have come to the point at which we are today. Innovation has allowed the Church of England to be the way it is and the Anglican Communion to have diversity.

I therefore urge the Synod to take on board Robert Cotton's suggestion to take a little time out so that we can deal with the reference on women bishops and ensure that there is good quality education in the dioceses before we make the decision.

Mr John Wilson (Lichfield): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. Would you be prepared to accept a motion for closure after the next speaker?

The Chairman: I will accept a motion for closure after the next speaker and the Archbishop of York.

Revd Professor Richard Burridge (University of London): I have just flown back from North America. Twelve hours ago I was in Atlanta, home of Martin Luther King and Jimmy Carter, with Tom Wright and others at the Society of Biblical Literature and the Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars. If members have missed Tom Wright's voice here today, be in no doubt that we heard plenty of it over last weekend.

I met colleagues from Africa, Australia, New Zealand, North America, Canada and so on, trying to pursue what it means to understand the Scriptures, and in particular we had parallel meetings about the project on which many of us are engaged on the Bible in the life of the Anglican Communion. When I said that I was leaving the conference to fly back to the debate in this Synod about the Covenant, enormous and deep anxiety was expressed to me from across the globe and the traditions.

I have listened to this morning's debate through my jet lag and I was delighted that Dr Munro reminded us that covenant is a joyful biblical idea. I have seen no sign of joy today. Rather I have heard deep anxiety about this topic from speakers saying that we must go forward and keep up the process because it is the only thing in town, but that there are many reservations about it. We were told that we must keep with the process, but now we are being told that it cannot be changed or amended and that we cannot stop.

Canon Cotton's amendment gives us a chance to reflect further and think carefully about what all this means. Many of us have been involved in this for many years. For five or six years I chaired a group for the Bishop of Southwark across a whole range of areas in the diocese. We looked at lots of different versions of the Covenant and wrote notes for the Archbishop of York to take to the debates. We also tried to decide what the key question was. If this is to have teeth, what is the mechanism for exclusion? Is it the Archbishop of Canterbury? Is it the Pope? Is it the Lambeth Conference? Is it the Vatican Council? Is it the Primates? Are they the curia? Is it the ACC? At least the latter involves laypeople and clergy. Now we are told that it is a Standing Committee.

This reference will give us a chance to have further discussion on what is referred to in paragraph (c) as 'a process of widespread education'. If we want a Covenant to be joyful and about furthering bonds of affection rather than about punishment and making an unbiblical decision of the Body of Christ, saying 'We have no need of you', where party strife is a work of the flesh, where we are told to accept one another as Christ accepted us, we need this time to engage with that process of widespread education and reflect further on this before we are rushed into it, important though the process is.

I hope that Synod will support Canon Cotton's motion.

The Archbishop of York (Dr John Sentamu): It is always best to send Article 8 business to the dioceses with a very clear decision; it is almost like a referendum. This kind of delaying mechanism should really be discussed by the Presidents with a view to establishing what needs to happen. It should not tie the hands of the Presidents. When we passed the legislation on the consecration of women bishops and sent it to the dioceses, there was then an attempt to do something similar to what this motion seeks, and I resisted it because I thought that the dioceses should have a very clear date and time and discuss the matter. Of course there is always the possibility of a following motion from any diocese in the light of a particular decision taken.

With regard to delaying until November 2011, as far as the diocese of York is concerned, the papers on the legislation concerning women bishops have been sent out and we are trying to have that matter debated and discussed. For the life of me I cannot say that because that document has been sent down it will cause confusion or be unclear or that there will be two elephants in the room.

I want to suggest that 2011 will be too late, for two reasons. First, it is intended that there will be a meeting of the Primates in January and already some provinces are on the way to adopting the Covenant, so the question to the Church of England will be: 'Sections 1, 2 and 3 look very much like your Declaration of Assent. What is the problem now?' and I will then have to try to explain why we are having a delay. Second, the Business Committee has issued the necessary Explanatory Memorandum relating to the Article 8 business, which will go out again. In addition the House of Bishops is encouraging this process of widespread education; the bishops are hearing it. Every one of them, after all, is supposed to be a teacher of the faith. If they do not do the teaching properly, there is little that this motion can do.

For all those reasons, friends, I think that this is an untidy attachment to what we have already passed. I say that we should allow it to stand as it is and people can always come back and talk about it. Incidentally, if Item 508 is reached and debated, I believe that it too should be resisted, because in the end on that particular day we can vote by Houses.

Mr John Wilson (Lichfield): On a point of order, Madam Chairman. I beg to move:

'That the question be now put.'

This motion was put and carried.

Revd Canon Robert Cotton, in reply: The process of handling a following motion is not straightforward, but I was told that it could not be tabled in the form of an amendment, rather as a following motion. I was puzzled about why the Bishop of Bristol was sitting down there, but at least it gave me the chance to have an officer whisper in my ear, 'Friend, come up higher', which is why I am here now rather than down below.

Reference has been made to the motion asking for things that we do naturally, but that is one of the ways that Synod motions are actually handled. Naturally we will engage in education and the bishops will encourage that, but one of the things that we do in General Synod is submit motions to make sure that what is good happens. That is why paragraphs (b) and (c) are worded as they are.

I think it was very helpful to have your comment about paragraph (a) and the return date. It may be that the reference does not need to wait until November 2011, but I would urge those responsible to give us sufficient time so that the return date is not rushed. Of course, diocesan synod processes need to be clear and handled practically, but if this lands on our agenda within the next six to nine months we may well have to organize additional diocesan synods. I leave it to the wisdom of those who have to make the decision on that, but I urge them to give us time and possibly hold off that return date.

Synod may not support the motion – so be it – but what is important is the action that we take. What we all need to do now is study this further in a non-tribal way. We need to respect the energy that is still needed for the Article 8 reference on women bishops, and then let us turn to this issue with enthusiasm.

The motion was put and lost.

The Chairman: The time is now one o'clock. Following motions may be taken only if time is available and we do not have time, even with the extension, to address properly the issues contained in Item 508. The remainder of the scheduled Legislative Business will therefore be taken at 2.30 p.m.

(Adjournment)

THE CHAIR *The Archdeacon of Colchester (Ven. Annette Cooper)* took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

Variation in the Order of Business

The Bishop of Dover (Rt Revd Trevor Wilmott): It will not have escaped members' notice that we have about an hour and three minutes before we come to timed business and so I need to move a variation in the order of business, with your consent, Chair. First, if I may, a word of clarification about the two following motions which were listed for debate but not reached: they were from Clive Scowen on the Big Society and from John Ward to continue our debate on the Anglican Communion Covenant. Under SO 8, following motions which are not moved lapse unless the Business Committee direct otherwise. I am very happy to undertake that, at their December meeting, the Business Committee will consider whether and, if so, when one or both of these motions might return to Synod.

There are also three items of legislative business which were scheduled for debate this morning: two items concerning the clergy terms of service legislation and the amending Code of Practice under the Clergy Discipline Measure. There is also the draft Church of England Marriage (Amendment) Measure scheduled for this afternoon. I would like to propose the following variation in order of business so that we start this afternoon with Items 501 and 502, the Ecclesiastical Offices Regulations and the Ecclesiastical Offices (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Order because they are the most time-critical of all our legislative items. When that is

finished, I would then like us to move to Item 500, the draft Church of England Marriage (Amendment) Measure and then, if time permits, we will come to Item 503, the Amending Code of Practice under the Clergy Discipline Measure.

This variation requires your consent, Chair, and that of the Synod. (*Agreed*)

[At its meeting on 15 December 2010, the Business Committee agreed that Mr Ward's following motion should be debated and included it in the agenda for the February 2011 group of sessions.]