35/99 Directory of Lay Synod Members

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

Introduction

1.   By resolution 35/99 the Synod resolved as follows -

"Synod requests, in order to facilitate communication among lay members of the Synod, that the Standing Committee investigate the production of a directory of lay members for distribution to all members.".

Current Policy

1.   The Archbishop's Registry maintains a data base of the names and addresses of Synod members and, in most cases, their telephone numbers. Information about email addresses has not generally been obtained. The information on the data base is used to create Synod membership lists and name and address labels for envelopes to send information to Synod members.

2.   For some time, there has been a policy to provide a set of the name and address labels to a member of the Synod, upon request, on the following terms -

(a)   The member must intend to use the labels to circulate material in connection with the business of the Synod. The "in connection with" requirement is interpreted reasonably broadly by the Diocesan Secretary who may approve requests for a set of labels.

(b)   A charge of $181.50, including GST, is currently made for each set of labels. This charge covers the staff time required to prepare and print the labels, the cost of the labels and postage to the member of Synod who requests them.

(c)   The labels are supplied on condition that the information contained on them is not copied or reproduced, and is not used for any other purpose. Since the labels can be readily "peeled off" and affixed to envelopes, there is no need for them to be copied. Labels not used must be returned to the Diocesan Secretary or be destroyed.

3.   Other requests for name and contact details of Synod members are referred to the Standing Committee for its consideration.

4.   The names of Synod members are usually printed in the Yearbook in the year which follows the first session of a Synod. Inadvertently, the names where omitted from the 2000 Yearbook.

Proposal for a Directory

5.   The production of a separate directory containing the names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of Synod members (both clerical and lay) will require much staff time to prepare. Information such as email addresses has not generally been obtained to date and would need to be collected. Then time will need to be spent in preparing the directory. There will also be costs of printing and distribution. Notwithstanding that the production of a directory of Synod members will facilitate communication, the Standing Committee considers that the costs of producing a separate directory outweigh the benefits.

6.   An alternative is for the names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of Synod members to be collected and updated each year, and be published in the Diocesan Yearbook. As the production of the Yearbook is undertaken by the Archbishop's Registry, this proposal has been referred to the Registrar for his consideration.

7.   Many of the costs of producing a directory of Synod members could be minimised if the information could be made available electronically. Unfortunately, the information on the Diocesan data base cannot be made available electronically at present because of the way in which the information is kept. However, new software has recently been purchased and the Registry is in the process of designing a new and improved Diocesan data base. Subject to the resolution of issues about privacy (see paragraph 9 below) the information presently published in the Yearbook will eventually be available on the Internet. It is hoped this will occur by the end of 2001.

8.   There are substantial privacy issues which also need to be addressed. Generally speaking, information about a Synod member cannot be made available publically without the approval of the Synod member. Members of the Synod have the right to request that personal information not be made available publicly.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

MARK PAYNE
Diocesan Secretary

14 August 2000