

18/98 Referral of Motions

(A report from the Standing Committee)

Introduction

1. By resolution 18/98 the Synod requested that the Standing Committee consider, and make recommendations, about all motions that remained to be considered on the business paper at the close of the final day of the 3rd session of the 44th Synod.
2. There were 21 motions which remained to be considered. The subject matter of each motion, and the mover, was as follows -
 - (a) Sexual misconduct by church workers (Ms Faye Hansen).
 - (b) Parental Leave Ordinance 1998 (Mr Garth Blake).
 - (c) Administration of confirmation by presbyters (The Rev Neil Flower).
 - (d) Faculties (Canon Bruce Ballantine-Jones OAM).
 - (e) Parish and diocesan boundaries (Canon Bruce Ballantine-Jones OAM).
 - (f) Parish and diocesan boundaries (Archdeacon Geoff Huard).
 - (g) Amendments to the Church Administration Ordinance 1990 (Mr Wal Forrester).
 - (h) Gay mardi gras (Mr Val Smidlers).
 - (i) Preservation of christian heritage (Mr Val Smidlers).
 - (j) Training for interim acting ministers (Ms Judy Cale).
 - (k) Deferral of ordinances (Archdeacon Trevor Edwards).
 - (l) Authority of scripture (Mr Neil Cameron).
 - (m) Ordination of women to the priesthood (Justice Keith Mason).
 - (n) Ordination of women to the priesthood (Justice Keith Mason).
 - (o) Ordination of women to the priesthood (The Rev Dr John Woodhouse).
 - (p) Provisional parish of Bondi Beach (Mr Brian Gaetjens).
 - (q) Commonwealth Bank (The Rev Ross Nicholson).
 - (r) Doctrine of the Trinity (The Rev Narelle Jarrett).
 - (s) Assent to ordinances (Mr Neil Ingham).
 - (t) Reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church (The Rev Bill Winthrop).
 - (u) Indigenous representation on the Synod (The Rev Paul Cohen).

Action taken

3. The Standing Committee referred Ms Hansen's motion about sexual misconduct by church workers, and a submission received from Ms Hansen, to the Archbishop who is responsible for the administration of the sexual misconduct protocol.
4. In relation to Canon Bruce Ballantine-Jones' motion about parish and diocesan boundaries the Standing Committee asked that the Legal Officer, Mr ROBERT WICKS, examine the implications of the report on parish boundaries and advise the Standing Committee of any implications there may be for the status of diocesan boundaries. A summary of Robert's report is printed as a separate report.
5. Mr Cameron's motion about the Authority of Scripture expressed concern about statements made by the majority of the Australian Diocesan Bishops in their submission to the Appellate Tribunal on the reference about lay and diaconal administration. The Standing Committee subsequently considered this matter and resolved as follows -

"Standing Committee notes that a majority of the Australian Anglican diocesan bishops assert -

'In the case of the canon (of scripture) it is argued that the church simply recognised the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It did not bestow authority on the canon; it acknowledged an authority the canon was seen to possess. However a similar process could also be claimed to be at work in the emergence of the apostolic ministry. The same faith which acknowledged the canon was also led in the same period to acknowledge the ministry as a divinely appointed means of serving the church and preserving its unity.'

Standing Committee repudiates this claim on the grounds that it is contrary to Article VI of the 39 Articles, and undermines the reformed basis of the Anglican Church of Australia and for these

reasons is unacceptable. Standing Committee strongly supports the member of the House of Bishops who said that -

'the analogy with the recognition of the Canon is unsustainable'.

Standing Committee also rejects -

- (a) the claim that this Church gives authority to the practice of the primitive church;
- (b) the claim that an ordained bishop or priest is a 'representative of the priesthood of the whole body'; and
- (c) the claim that 'when an ordained priest or bishop presides at the Lord's Supper this makes it apparent to all who are attending that the true minister of the sacrament is Christ himself acting through his ordained representative.

Standing Committee directs that the foregoing part of this resolution be sent to every Australian diocesan bishop."

6. In response the Archbishop of Perth, and the Bishops of North West Australia and Newcastle wrote commenting on the Standing Committee's decision. We have written to the Archbishop and the bishops thanking them for their comments.

7. In response to the Rev Dr John Woodhouse's motion about the ordination of women to the priesthood, the Standing Committee has requested that the Diocesan Doctrine Commission report on whether there are valid theological reasons to overturn the recommendations and conclusions of earlier Doctrine Commission reports about the ordination of women to the priesthood and, having regard to the fact that licensing rather an ordination is the pre-requisite for appointment to a parish incumbency, whether a restriction on licensing women as incumbents would meet the theological reasons previously advanced for restricting the ordination of women to the priesthood. The Doctrine Commission has advised that the report will be available for the 2nd session of the 45th Synod in 2000.

8. In relation to Mr Gaetjens's motion about the provisional parish of Bondi Beach, the Standing Committee asked that the Regional Archdeacon report on the matters of concern to the churchwardens. A report was subsequently received. The situation at Bondi Beach appears to have now been resolved to the satisfaction of the churchwardens.

9. In relation to the Rev Narelle Jarrett's motion about the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Standing Committee noted that the Doctrine of the Trinity has been used in debate to support both an egalitarian and subordination model for male and female roles in ministry. It has requested that the Archbishop refer what appears to be a conflict of views on the relation of the persons of the Trinity within the Godhead to the Diocesan Doctrine Commission for its consideration and report to the 1st session of the 45th Synod. A report from the Doctrine Commission has been received and is printed separately.

10. The Standing Committee considered that all other motions were properly matters for the Synod's consideration. It makes no recommendations to the Synod about those matters.

Notification of Action Taken

11. The result of the Standing Committee's deliberations on each motion was advised to the mover of the motion.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

MARK PAYNE
Diocesan Secretary

24 September 1999