Resolution was to correct anomalies in The Calendar and The Table of Readings. The second was to provide a new form for the Institution of an Incumbent: at the time of writing, liturgists throughout the Church of Ireland are no doubt submitting their amendments. The final Resolution proposed to amend the Canon relating to the burial of the dead by removing suicide from the list of occasions when a minister may, at his own discretion, refuse to read the burial service in full. All these Resolutions were passed with the necessary majorities and will be presented in 2007 as Bills.

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General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church

June 2006

IVOR GUILD
Writer to the Signet

While the retiring Primus was still in office as Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney and was therefore in attendance, the Synod welcomed the new Primus, the Most Revd Dr Idris Jones, who had been elected only a month before. Dr Jones warned Synod against seeking dramatic changes and commended gradual change by general consent.[1] The agenda, which consisted of the normal mixture of finance, canonical alterations and inter-church relations, reinforced this view.

FINANCE

An annual deficit was budgeted for, in the belief that actual results would, broadly, break even – since they usually turned out better than planned. For the past year, however, the deficit had been £100,177, which was significantly larger than expected. For the current year, it was hoped that promotion of the 'Year of Stewardship' would reduce the budgeted loss of £102,000. In these figures no credit was taken for legacy income, which was carried to capital – such capital being needed for objects such as providing houses for retired clergy. While the Church was encouraged to increase its giving, all committees were urged to reduce their expenditure if possible. Fortunately, the Pension

1 The new Primus is Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway. The full text of his Charge is available at <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/archives/2006/06/08/general-synod-2006/>, accessed 2 December 2006.

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Fund triennial actuarial valuation was favourable; and, with further increases in the annual contributions, it was hoped to make good the current deficit. Contributions would continue at 25.3 per cent.

CHILD PROTECTION

It took little time to adopt a Policy Statement on Child Protection and to instruct all vestries to adopt a Code of Good Practice. Vulnerable adults were added to the objects of protection, and this involved a number of small amendments to the Code of Canons. One of the changes prevented an accusation of child abuse against a cleric from leading automatically to his or her immediate suspension.

ELECTION OF BISHOPS

No Synod can be held without alterations being proposed to the Canon on the Election of Bishops. Experience with the latest election throws up situations where changes of procedure are shown to be desirable, whether it be the provision of a *curriculum vitae* by each candidate or a wider choice of Assessor to the Convener of the Preparatory Committee. Any diocesan lay person learned in the law and a communicant of the church can in future be chosen as Assessor. It was also thought desirable to make it clear that the decision as to which candidates should be interviewed must lie with the Preparatory Committee, that the College of Bishops should have access to all the papers available to the Committee, and that no name should be considered without the prior consent of the person concerned.

AUTHORISATION OF LITURGIES

Greater discussion took place over the proposals that authorised liturgies should be listed in a Schedule to the relevant Canon itself and that changes to the Schedule might be made by a Resolution of Synod on the recommendation of the Faith and Order Board; this would make it possible for changes to come into effect more quickly and with less formality. Suggestions for the printing of a Prayer Book with all alternative services, possibly with the deletion of material never used, were turned down as too expensive. A plea for a fixed date for Easter was heard, along with fears of alteration of the 1929 *Scottish Book of Common Prayer* as amended in 1953 and 1967. In the end, the original proposal was passed unamended.

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LITURGY

The discussion on the authorisation of liturgies led on to the Report of the Liturgy Committee. The new Liturgy of Holy Baptism had been circulated to dioceses, and some felt that there was no adequate difference made between children and adults. Various additions and amendments were proposed. A motion that the Synod should delay the final vote for a further year, so that the Liturgy Committee could consult again with dioceses, was turned down. The amended Ordinal was than added to the list of authorised liturgies.

RESIDENTIAL HOMES

The cost of running the two Residential Homes owned by the Church had increased so much that the Mission Board proposed to transfer their governance and operation to a separate legal entity. This new body would run each Home in conjunction with the existing House Committee but would be responsible for the costs. If the new arrangement did not prove practicable, the Home would have to be closed; in the case of one of them, even the sale of surplus adjoining land would not realise enough to meet the accumulated deficit. This proposal led to much debate, since the idea of a Home being closed was distressing. A letter from one of the Homes was lodged, but the resolution before Synod was then passed.

QUOTA

A small increase of three per cent was proposed to the amount of quota. This triggered a debate on whether or not the burden of supporting the Church was being fairly apportioned among the dioceses. A motion was happily passed to explore different innovative models of financial and administrative organisation in an effort to reduce overall expenditure and enable greater allocation of funding across the Province. A call for a report can usually – as here – meet with unanimous support; however, the eventual recommendations will be the subject of greater dissension. Likely proposals could well include the reduction of the Synod to a two-day meeting and the merging of the seven administrative centres across the Province.

RECRUITMENT

A Report had been made available that asked the questions, 'How was vocation discovered?' and 'Why did the Church ordain?' No answer was given as to why few young candidates sought ordination; the problem was not unique to the Scottish Church and dialogue would continue.

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JUSTICE PEACE CREATION NETWORK

Disappointment was expressed that the 'Make Poverty History' campaign had not achieved greater results. Two dioceses were on their way to achieving Fair Trade status. The Synod was shocked to hear reports of continued trafficking of women for the sex trade, especially at the recent football World Cup in Germany.

MARRIAGE LITURGY 2006

This revisal of the experimental Marriage Liturgy of 2002 was presented to Synod and was passed to dioceses for consultation and comment. It was hoped to present it in 2007 for formal approval.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The Committee dealing with this subject had it in mind to suggest two Rolls in place of the present single Congregational Roll kept by the rector of each parish. The first Roll would be of those attending the services, while the second would be of those who expressed an intention to be fully involved in the affairs of the congregation and who were prepared to make a declaration. Only those on the second Roll (which would be kept by the vestry) would be eligible to hold office and to vote at general meetings. A detailed proposal would be prepared for Synod in 2007 and the canonical changes would be presented in 2008.

CLERGY STATUS

The Employment Rights Working Party continued to examine the position of the clergy, especially in the light of the decision in *Percy (AP) v Church of Scotland Board of National Mission*,[2] which had established that clergy could take action under sex discrimination legislation. With no immediate problem with regard to clergy numbers, the lack of new ordinands did not raise any worries.

CONCLUSION

The legal problems of church membership were too esoteric for many, while liturgy was not a matter of deep concern, provided that there was no tampering with the accustomed services. Raising more money had become a familiar subject of debate – but because it somehow solved itself it caused no lack of sleep. Members were therefore able to disperse with no pressing anxiety about the future of the Church.

2 [2005] UKHL 73.

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