



HIGHLIGHTS

OF THE CHURCH IN WALES GOVERNING BODY SEPTEMBER 2011

Equal Opportunities for all in the Church

The main theme of the September 2011 meeting of the Church in Wales' Governing Body (GB) was equal opportunities, as the 143 members discussed ways in which to improve the gender balance on Church committees and in senior clergy roles, and to improve ministry to people with disabilities and additional needs. Ann Beynon OBE, the Wales Commissioner for the Equality and Human Rights Commission, addressed the meeting, setting the context in which the discussions took place.

The Representation of Women in the Church

As a result of a report presented to the GB in 2008, a Working Group was set up, charged with the tasks of reviewing the representation of women in the Church in Wales, and making recommendations for best practice. The Group started from the belief that all humans are created in God's image, with equal dignity, potential and responsibility. Striving for gender equality is about working to enable women and men to be better co-recipients and ministers of God's grace and salvation.

The Working Group saw the Church best placed to fulfil its mission when all of its members are enabled to fully acknowledge their gifts and duties, and to exercise their unique talents and vocations as individuals. The Church must promote a culture where dignity, respect and fairness for all its members are paramount.

The Report of the Working Group to the GB, presented by Dr Gill Todd



(Swansea and Brecon), shows that change in the representation of women in the Church has taken place faster than expected and in a positive way:

- A number of senior clerical posts holders are now women;
- The proportion of women on the GB has increased from 27% in 2008 to 41% in 2011;
- There is an equitable gender balance of churchwardens and treasurers at a parish level;

- All posts are advertised as equally suitable to men and women, and significant efforts have been made to ensure that appointments are made with fairness and equality very much in mind;
- An Equal Opportunities Statement has been approved by the GB; and some dioceses have included Equal Opportunities training as part of their Continuing Ministerial Development programme.
- Issues of training and selection have been tackled by St Michael's College, Llandaff.

The Report recognises that the leadership of the Bishops has been key to the progress made. All dioceses have worked hard and

The Motion

That the Governing Body:

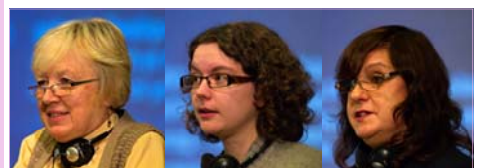
- affirm the place and ministry of both women and men in the life of the Church on the basis of equal dignity and respect, and celebrate the gifts and talents that God pours out in equal measure on both male and female according to his good purpose;
- welcome the significant progress towards implementation of the recommendations in the 2008 Report of the Working Group on Representation of Women in the Church in Wales;
- thank all those in the Province, dioceses, deaneries and parishes who work hard towards the goal of representation and participation of women in the life of the Church in Wales;
- request the dioceses and the Provincial Vocations Strategy Group to look again at ways of encouraging more applications from women for ordination to the ministry;
- request the Standing Committee to continue to monitor progress towards implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report and to report again to the Governing Body in 2014.

consistently to implement the recommendations made in 2008.

"The rapid progress indicates a Church which was already ready to grasp the challenge, and enjoy and take pride in its implementation. The Church in Wales feels a better place to be. Women are reporting less discrimination and bullying and are feeling more valued." "However, there are still things that need to be addressed. There needs to be an understanding that the achievement of equality of opportunity for representation is a pre-requisite for the achievement of equality of representation. We need to encourage women to come forward, to apply for and sit on committees, to improve the balance on provincial and diocesan committees."

Speakers in the debate warmly received the Report and the progress made, but stressed there was still some way to go, especially in the role of women on committees, and the number of women for selection for stipendiary ministry. In answer to questions about women in the episcopate, Archbishop Barry announced that discussions would take place in the GB next year, leading to legislation being prepared for a vote to make it possible for women to be bishops.

The motion, when put, was carried.



The Governing Body met at the University of Wales Trinity St David, Lampeter, on 22nd and 23rd September 2011



Ministry and People with Disabilities and Additional Needs



In 2002 the GB endorsed a disability strategy for the Church in Wales, which led to the development of the Parish Guide, setting out an holistic approach to addressing discrimination within the Church.

In 2009 the GB was challenged to think beyond its initial strategy to ensure that the Church in Wales continues to develop its ability to include all people within its community and worship. As a result a Working Group was set up to report with proposals for developing and delivering ministry for people with additional needs, and designing, delivering or commissioning training for clergy and lay workers.

Mr **John Harris** (St Asaph), the initiator of the process and a member of the Working Group, reported to the GB, emphasising the importance of ensuring



that the Church's commitment to inclusivity in ministry is demonstrated to those who have disabilities and additional needs by looking at best practice in ministry in a number of ways—by improving communication and ensuring that the very wide ranging needs of people with disabilities and additional needs are taken into account.

A questionnaire was sent to all parishes. The responses showed that care had been taken to provide good physical access, toilet facilities and hearing loops in church buildings, and there was evidence that many of those with disabilities and additional needs as well as their carers are able to cope with and enjoy worship without standing out as different.

It was identified that it is necessary to keep up to date with best practice and to promote and encourage the engagement of both clergy and lay people in appropriate training and learning opportunities.

"This is work in progress. The next stage is demonstrating and putting into practice our commitment to people with disabilities and their carers and families and showing that

The Motion

That the Governing Body:

- i. welcome the Report of the Working Group entitled Ministry and People with Disabilities and Additional Needs;
- ii. endorse the recommendations set out in the Report and particularly the Commitment Statement;
- iii. commend those parishes which have already taken steps to enable people who have disabilities and additional needs to contribute to and participate fully in the Church life;
- iv. encourage all parishes to build on the work that has already been done to develop ministry with and for people with disabilities and additional needs within a truly inclusive Church;
- v. invite the Standing Committee to review progress on the Working Group's recommendations in 2014, and to report back to the Governing Body.

The Commitment Statement

The Vision

Our aim in supporting people who have additional needs and disabilities in their faith journey is to create an environment where all people, whether they are parishioners, clergy, employees or visitors, can worship and participate in the life of the Church. The vision is to create a Church in which all people feel themselves to be fully part of the Body of Christ.

Our Commitment

This Church affirms its determination to develop an ethos in which people who have additional needs are supported with dignity and respect and which ensures that they, their families and carers are welcomed, are enabled to grow in discipleship and are fully included in our church community. Through this commitment the Governing Body of the Church in Wales encourages dioceses and parishes to promote awareness of the additional needs of disabled people and their families and carers and to promote an culture of inclusivity.

we are aiming to support our local church communities to think beyond physical barriers, to welcome and engage fully in our mission for all people by eliminating the barriers of attitude and lack of awareness."

GB heard moving stories of people with disabilities and special needs receiving either support or discrimination by churches. The motion was passed *nem.con*.

Equality and human rights in Wales

Discrimination denies an individual his or her authenticity

- Angela Williams

That quotation from an Afro-American lawyer provided the basis for an address by **Ann Beynon**



OBE, the Wales Commissioner,

Equality and Human Rights Commission, to the GB. "We need to see the huge potential of every individual in society, unrestrained by discrimination, with the vision of a society built on fairness and respect."

The Commission, an independent statutory body created in 2007, has focussed on building partnerships, and developing networks. It has sought to set a new agenda, focussing on four groups that those in Wales tell the Commission are most discriminated against: those with mental illness, gipsy travellers, trans-gender people, and refugees. Because of visits throughout Wales, it has been able assess the state of human rights throughout Wales.

The report *How Fair is Wales* was produced in March 2011. The report shows that the inequality that dominates the landscape is socio-economic; people from lower socio-economic groups do not enjoy the same quality of life as people from higher socio-economic groups, whether it is lower life expectancy, lower educational attainment, or lower incomes and wealth. Gender inequality remains, with women disadvantaged in key areas of employment and income. There is inequality associated with disability, ethnicity and age.

"The question is how do we ensure a path to a fairer, more tolerant Wales, where every individual reaches his or her true potential and authenticity?" The Commission is working on recommendations and working with partner organisations to develop, for example, an action plan for an effective process for eliminating disability harassment. There needs to be a broader agenda, working in communities—and this is where the Church can work in partnership with the Commission.



“Our bodies should not be State assets”

The Welsh Government's plans to introduce presumed consent for organ donation could turn “volunteers into conscripts”, Archbishop Barry warned in his Presidential Address to the Governing Body. In addition to the issue of organ donation, Archbishop Barry also raised concerns about the future of S4C and the use of the Welsh language in national life.

Presumed Consent

The Welsh Government intends to bring forward legislation where instead of opting in to be an organ donor and therefore signing a card, it will be assumed that everyone is willing to donate their organs after death unless they have opted out. At the moment, whereas 90% of the population say that they would be willing to be organ donors, only a third have signed the national register or carry a donor card.

Archbishop Barry told the Governing Body that he felt uneasy about presumed consent. He understood the thinking behind the legislation—the number of people waiting for transplants, the length of the waiting list, and the high degree of success—but in presumed consent there is a change of emphasis in the relationship between the individual and the state. “That is, unless we have opted out, that our organs belong to the State and the State has the right to do with them as it wills. The implication, by default, is that the State can decide on our behalf.

“That compromises individual rights and freedoms and poses the moral question as to whether the State can make such decisions. Is this a legitimate power for any State? The State will argue that such power will only be taken after consultation with relatives but there is a presumption in favour of the State and almost the belief that our bodies are State assets and therefore at the State's disposal.”

“Organ donation surely ought to be a matter of gift and not of duty,” said Archbishop Barry. “If one takes organs without consent, on the assumption that by not opting out, a person is tacitly assenting, then this is no longer a free gift to others. An organ donation ought to be precisely that, a gift, an act of love and generosity. Giving organs is the most generous act of self giving imaginable but it has to be a choice that is freely embraced, not something that the State assumes.

Put more crudely, it turns volunteers into conscripts.”

“The real way forward is for us all to try and encourage people to donate their organs and in order to make this more possible, the State ought to look at whether there can be questions on census forms or when we register with GPs or complete a tax return. Already in applying for a new driving licence, that question is now asked. This does at least ensure that there is a way of registering whether you want your organs donated or not and there obviously needs to be a much harder drive to get people to donate.”

“Professor John Saunders, Chair of the Royal College of Physicians' committee on ethical issues in medicine, has advocated that what we should have is a mandated choice, that is a legally mandated decision where all adults would be required by law to indicate their wishes about the use of their organs after death. This could be done through the Electoral Register or some other mechanism. That would then mean that individuals would be free to make whatever choice they wanted in relation to the use of their organs but they would be required to make that decision. It would be worth having that debate and by making people more aware, might encourage more organ donations.”

The Welsh Language

The recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport that S4C's budget was being cut by 24% over the next four years and that from 2013 onwards, the bulk of its funding would come from the Licence Fee, shows a total insensitivity by the Government about the role S4C has played in helping to revive the use of the Welsh language, said Archbishop Barry. “S4C is one of our national institutions which needs to remain independent and financially viable. Archbishop Gwilym Williams fought hard to ensure that Wales had its



own Welsh television channel because he realised the enormous influence it could have. It raises the question about the place of the Welsh language in the life of all our institutions.”

A recent correspondent has expressed concern about the place of the Welsh language in the life of the Church in Wales. The impression given in certain parts of the Province is that the Church in Wales is an English church ‘that no longer cares very deeply about the Welsh language, and treats those who speak Welsh as second class citizens.’

“The Church in Wales is not here to preserve the language or to make an idol of it,” said Archbishop Barry, “but it is a bilingual church, seeking to serve every community throughout Wales. Even if no Welsh services are held, things such as notice boards, freewill offering envelopes, hymn and prayer books ought to be available in both languages to emphasise the fact that we seek to minister to every person in every community.” “One ought never to underestimate the symbolic and psychological effects of not giving it a proper place in the life of all our churches.”

In the years since disestablishment, the Church in Wales has tried to be true to its inheritance by giving equal status to both languages. “This is an issue about our mission to the people and nation of Wales and also an issue of justice. We have, as a Church, a Welsh language scheme based on the Welsh Language Act of 1993. It states very clearly that *“the Church in Wales in conducting its public activities in Wales, will treat Welsh and English as languages of equal validity”*. In order to help us to do that better, the Bench of Bishops, in partnership with the Standing Committee, has established a Working Party which has been asked, among other things, “to consider what good practice in the provision of services and other ministry bilingually might mean”.

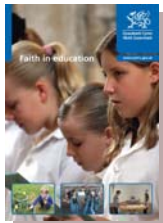
Church Schools
In July, the Board of Education of the Church of England published a document called “Admission to Church of England Schools”, stressing the vocation of such schools in educating



the poor in order to change their lives. That was the chief function of the National Society whose bicentenary will be celebrated in Westminster Abbey in October this year. It was founded ‘to promote the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales’.

“This affirms the duty of church schools, both to serve the communities in which they are situated and ‘to provide an education within an explicitly Anglican ethos’, said Archbishop Barry. “Church schools are both distinctive and inclusive, serving those who do not belong, as well as those who do belong to the Church. Our own Education Review Report in 2009 highlighted the fact that our church schools also welcomed people from other denominations and other faiths.”

In June this year, the Welsh Government published a document entitled *Faith in Education*, that outlines the partnership that exists between the Government and churches in the field of education.



The publication of this document establishes the provision of faith based education securely within the work of the Welsh Government and that, Archbishop Barry said, “is a matter for rejoicing.” In the foreword the Minister for Education says that the Welsh Government believes strongly ‘in celebrating the different and diverse cultures within Wales. Schools with a religious character are one aspect of the diversity within our communities and the Welsh Government acknowledges the significance faith has played in the development of the education system in Wales. Schools with a religious character, continue to fulfil a valuable role in Welsh society.’

“The document delineates the ethos and characters of faith schools and sets out the basis for a faith dimension within education. It tackles the question of the distinctive ethos of schools with a religious character

and the contribution they can make to wider society. It affirms and confirms the role of the Church in education and sets a clear path for effective partnership in the future.”

“*Faith in Education* acknowledges the very positive contribution church schools make to the publicly funded system of education in Wales. Archbishop Rowan, commenting on the recent riots, stressed the importance of schools teaching the value of virtue, character and citizenship – things which our church schools try to do. It is their emphasis on moral responsibility as well as academic achievement that can directly counter what the Prime Minister identified after the riots as the ‘slow motion moral collapse’ of society.”

Archbishop Barry quoted some excerpts from the document:

‘Evidence shows that schools in the sector draw learners both from their local neighbourhood and the wider community, often providing an environment of rich social diversity. Significant numbers of places are offered to those of other faiths or indeed of no faith.’

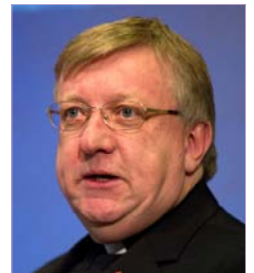
‘Respecting the dignity of all is driven by the concept of loving God through loving your neighbour, a belief lived out in school communities by welcoming and celebrating differences, and viewing them as positive contributions to life in the world.’

“These are strong statements in a Government document,” said Archbishop Barry, “and so I want to express gratitude to the Government for honouring the place of Church schools, and therefore, of the Christian Faith in the educational system of our nation.”

Faith in Education can be downloaded at <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110623faithineducationen.pdf>. The full text of Archbishop Barry’s speech can be found at www.churchinwales.org.uk/structure/bishops/sermons/b43.html.

The Diocese of Monmouth led the worship at the GB, celebrating the festival day of St Matthew.

The opening Bible Study and Prayer was taken by Canon **Jonathan Williams**, who reflected on the call of Matthew.



“Jesus called people used to getting their hands dirty. We must get our hands dirty for the Kingdom, sharing the love of God by serving the communities in which we are set.”



The preacher at Evensong in the College Chapel was Bishop **Richard Llewelin**.



He considered what it means to be rich, the theme for the collect and readings for St Matthew’s Day. In Jesus’ eyes, to be rich is to possess more than is truly necessary for a healthy, wholesome life.

The **Collection** at the GB services of £1239 was given to the Swansea Valley Miners Appeal Fund, of which Archbishop Barry is a patron. The Fund was established as an emergency fund in response to the tragic death of four miners at the Gleision Colliery in the Swansea Valley. This was the worst mining accident Wales has seen for generations. The Fund will support the families of the victims who need help to survive and recover in the future.

Donations to the Fund may be made to Swansea Valley Miners Appeal Fund, 39 Windsor Road, Neath, SA11 1NB.

REPRESENTATIVE BODY REPORT

Despite the challenges that continue to be posed by the difficult financial climate, the Representative Body (RB) made a significant investment in key areas of the Church's work in 2010.

However, as **Lord David Rowe-Beddoe**, the chairman of the RB reported, the severe instability in world markets, with the resultant difficult investment conditions, has resulted in a deficit of £701,000 for the year between 2009 and 2010. The net income dropped from £15.2m to £14.6m. "If I remind you that the net



The principal role of the Representative Body is to hold and manage the assets of the Church in Wales to provide support for the work of the Church as carried out through its Archbishop, Bishops, Clergy and Laity.

income in 2008 was £19m, then you will understand and have some consideration of the very direct effect the banking crisis and the economic recession has on the RB's ability to provide financial support for the wider Church." "Generating sustainable levels of income is particularly challenging at the present time." As a result, the RB is facing the prospect of a significant deficit of between £1m and £2m per annum for a number of years to come.

The evidence of continuing volatility in global stock markets means that there will not be an improvement in the investment climate in the near-future. In this context, the RB has embarked on its triennial review of expenditure and commitment. The actuarial valuation of the Clergy Pension Scheme has identified increased costs for the RB of £750,000 per annum. The RB has set aside a higher proportion of its income to cover past-service requirements. "The message to clergy is that the Scheme is still fully final; there is no danger from the short fall in RB income." The scope for reducing expenditure is limited, as much is in long-term commitments; however reviewing significant aspects of Church life could offer limited scope. To precipitate action would cause significant difficulties for diocese and parishes. In the light of the current situation and the triennial review, the RB has agreed:

- That the investment strategy should continue to be to invest for the best 'total return';
- The levels of the Block Grant payments to dioceses up to 2014 should be as previously advised;
- The £500,000 'additional' Block Grant

and 3% annual increase would stop after 2014;

- Further reductions in the block Grant after 2014 were likely.

In the difficult financial climate, the RB has pledged its support to the Church in Wales Review, and the Provincial Stewardship Campaign planned for 2012.

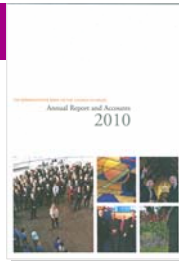
Clergy stipends and lay salaries will increase by 1.6% from 1st January 2012.

Mr **James Turner**, the deputy chairman of the RB, stressed that in difficult economic circumstances, it is hoped that people will recognise the RB's commitment as guardian of the Church's central resources, but also the provider of essential assistance to dioceses and parishes. The challenging financial environment in which those at all levels are currently working is recognised, and resources must be found to enable the Church's work to be carried out in order to keep parish share increases at a minimum.



Mr Turner outlined ways in which the RB supports work at a local level. The Property Department provides technical expertise, grant funding for church repairs, improvement grants etc. which are of real assistance to parishes. The Church in Wales website contains guidance notes, and the Church Heritage Project runs courses, all aimed at a practical cost-effective way of making a difference at parish level.

The Parochial Administration Handbook has been updated and is available on the website. New accounting advice, including a standard form of accounts, was provided to parish treasurers during 2010. 75% of the training costs of ordination candidates are met by the RB, and financial support is provided for initial Continuing Ministerial Development. St Michael's College, Llandaff, has now been merged with the RB. "These are extremely challenging times—but the positive message is that the work of the Church continues to be supported by the RB."



Clergy Pension Scheme

The RB proposed that the provisions of the Clergy Pension Scheme be amended to provide that the pension rights of a surviving civil partner of a cleric should be based on the cleric's full period of service. At present they are based only on service since December 2005.

The GB was advised that there are no overriding financial reasons for not implementing the proposed change, and after debate, the motion was passed.

Stipends

Bishops and senior clergy turn down pay rise

Bishops and senior clergy will forego their annual pay rise next year as the recession takes its toll on the collection plate.

They have chosen to turn down a 1.6% rise as a gesture of support for those facing financial uncertainty in parishes across Wales.

Archbishop Barry said, "We recognise that this is a difficult time for many of our parishioners as the recession bites and many are losing their jobs or having their salaries frozen or even reduced. Turning down our pay rises will save the Church some money and will, I hope, be a symbolic gesture to show we understand what the communities we serve are going through at the moment and we want to support them."

About 30 people will forego the pay rise. They include all the Bishops, Deans and Archdeacons as well as most of the senior staff of the Representative Body of the Church in Wales and some diocesan secretaries.

Enterprising Churches

An initiative sponsored by the RB, Ecclesiastical Insurance Group and Churches Tourism Network Wales, designed to help parishes think about how they can develop their role in their communities and their outreach to visitors, was launched at the GB. Parishes will notified shortly.

Q Baptism is the primary sacrament, the only form of Christian initiation required for full communion.



Anglican Liturgical Consultations in 1985 and 1991 both called for all baptised persons to be admitted to communion throughout the Anglican Communion. As many provinces of the Anglican Communion have responded to that recommendation, why has the Bench of Bishops of the Church in Wales thrown Communion before Confirmation into the long grass instead of bringing it to the GB for debate?

-Canon J W Griffin (Swansea and Brecon)

A I have never understood the logic of how we can baptise people into the Eucharistic community and then refuse them Holy Communion. The Church in Wales practice on Eucharistic discipline and Confirmation and Baptism has been referred to the Doctrinal Commission for detailed study and report back to the bishops. At present, the bishops are waiting for a considered response, so that they may consider the matter among themselves and decide whether or not it should be brought to the GB for debate. There is nothing to prevent a private member from bring the matter to the GB.

-Bishop Dominic

Q We have limited space availability in our churchyards. Should not burial fees resemble more closely the actual costs to parishes and the fees charged by the local authorities, and can the Welsh Government be urged to consider this?

-Mr David Yendoll (Monmouth)

A A working group has been established to look at the issues surrounding churchyards. It has recognised that the fees we charge do not reflect the costs and are much below those charged by local authority burial grounds. The Welsh Government sets the fees, in recent years the same as those charged by the Church of England, but has indicated its willingness to consider alternative proposals. The question of fees will be brought to the Human Resources Committee next month; for the longer term there is the need for a thorough review to propose a new framework of fees in Wales to reflect this and other issues. The intention would be to put proposals to the Welsh Government next year for implementation in 2013.

-Mr Sandy Blair



The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme (EAPPI), a programme of the World Council of Churches, brings internationals to the West Bank to experience life under occupation. Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) provide protective presence to vulnerable communities, monitor and report human rights abuses and support Palestinians and Israelis working together for peace. When they return home, EAs campaign for a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict through an end to the occupation, respect for international law and implementation of UN resolutions.

Bishop **Richard Llewellyn**, formerly Bishop at Lambeth, spent three months in Bethlehem, as an EA, and appraised the GB of the present situation of Palestinians in the West Bank.

Bishop Richard told the story of Daud Nassar, who he got to know and admire during his stay. Daud owns and lives in a small hilltop farm south west of Bethlehem, which has



“The crucial question is, *How can I bring about a situation in which someone who has decided that I am his enemy can become my friend?*”

been in the family since 1916. The farm produces vines and olive trees, but is surrounded by Israeli settlements. Although Daud is able to show title to the land, he has been engaged in a legal battle to prove ownership. At every level, pressure is put on the family to abandon the farm and land. Settlers continually attack the farm, uprooting trees, have damaged water systems and physically threatened the family. The approach road to the farm has been blocked with boulders by the Israeli army, and the road dug up.



“This is typical of what is happening in occupied Palestine, of what I saw and what I discovered. Daud is among the growing number of Christian and Muslim Palestinians who are committed to non-violent active resistance. Daud said:

“I refuse to be anybody's enemies. I will resist and overcome this evil, not with more evil, but with good.

“Rather than tell the other person that he is wrong, I want to help him discover by my loving actions where he may have gone wrong.

“I want to use my frustrations and disappointments constructively. Frustrations and disappointments can give us the energy we need to do things positively, rather than allow them to become a seed-bed for anger and bitterness.

EAs live alongside Palestinians to:

- offer protection through nonviolent presence;
- monitor and report violations of human rights and international humanitarian law;
- support Israeli and Palestinian peace activists;
- undertake advocacy work by telling their stories.

Bishop Richard's specific duties were to monitor a checkpoint, visit neighbouring villages and refugee camps, support peaceful demonstrations, and to worship in the local churches. He told graphic stories of his experiences during the three months.

What difference did he make? The presence of EAs is appreciated by Palestinians, and by peace groups; their duties at check-points allowed reliable and objective statistics. He did not go to take sides; the programme committed him to 'principled impartiality'.

The **Bishop of Bangor**, having just returned from a fortnight in Israel and Palestine, experienced the situation at first hand—"all amounts to be a catastrophe for the Palestinian people".

Archbishop Barry is a patron of *Friends of the Holy Land*, helping Christians there to ensure their long-term viability. The Bishop of Jerusalem, Suheil Dawani, has asked for support for his beleaguered diocese. He still has not had his residency permit. GB asked Archbishop Barry to write a letter of support to Bishop Suheil as a friend of the Diocese of Jerusalem.

THE CHURCH IN WALES IN 2020

At the last two GB meetings, members have worked in groups to identify the priorities for the Church in Wales over the next nine years. The five priorities, approved by the Standing Committee and Bishops, are:

1. We must demonstrate our relevance to the Welsh nation;
2. Provide effective local leadership for all our congregations using ordained and lay people as appropriate;
3. An organisational review to ensure proper management of this local leadership;
4. A concerted effort to lessen the emphasis on church buildings;
5. Closer co-operation between those understanding financial matters and those setting new strategies and seeing new visions.

"The serious financial situation faced by the RB, the reduction in the number of clergy, the shortage of ordinands—we need this root and branch review. We can no longer rely on 'sticking plaster' solutions. This is our last chance to reverse decline, and start to rebuild the kingdom. When we receive the recommendations it is down to the GB to be really bold, to be prepared to take swift and radical action. If this generation doesn't make decisions based on the recommendations of the Review, we will leave the next generation to face another decade of navel gazing."

-Sandy Blair (Monmouth)

"We should utilise focus groups to find out what those who don't come to church think and want."

"We are blessed that



the bishops take a stance on what is right, regardless of public opinion. "The Church has become too comfortable and not prepared to take risks. We need to reclaim the heart of the community, both people and places. It is great to have the Review, but for change to take place, it needs not only to be top down, but enacted from bottom up as well. All of us have the ability to make a difference if we step out and take a risk. We need to start doing it, not just talking about it or complaining about things, but to roll up our sleeves and with prayer, step out in faith and act."

-Rebecca Stevens (under 30s)

"There are only 14 members of the GB under 40 years of age—why so few?"

The principle reason is the low number of young people in our churches. Reaching out to young people has to be an absolute priority for the Church



Church in Wales Review

The Church in Wales Review Team, led by Lord Richard Harries, the former Bishop of Oxford, has started work, with the following terms of reference:



'to examine the structure and organisation of the Church in Wales with a view to increasing the effectiveness of its ministry and its witness to the people of Wales.'

The Review Team will meet with the senior staff of each diocese, and also hold an open meeting in each, to which everyone is invited to make comments and observations. People may also write to Lord Harries, c/o the House of Lords.

The Review Group will be attending the next meeting of the GB and will report its progress.

in Wales. We don't just have a missing generation, but 2,3 and 4 generations. We are losing young people at secondary school level. We need to give time and resources to reach out to young people. We need to think radically and laterally on how we can engage with the young people in our communities. St Michael's College should prioritise practical youth work in their ordination training. We must do something urgently before we have a fifth missing generation."

-Trystan Hughes (Llandaff)

ECUMENICAL ISSUES IN WALES

Launched at the GB was a guide listing the various partnerships and agreements between Christian Churches in Wales and worldwide of which the Church in Wales is a part.

The Commission of Covenanted Churches in Wales

Since 1975, the Church in Wales has been in a covenant relationship with the Presbyterian, Methodist, United Reformed and Covenanted Baptist churches in Wales. The Commission was set up in 1976 to expedite the implementation of the Covenant. It is now pursuing a broad and challenging agenda, looking at Church Governance and Pastoral Oversight, Local Ecumenical Partnerships, ecumenical ministerial deployment in new housing areas etc. It will report to a Gathering in Aberystwyth on 13th October 2012.

Cytûn

The Church in Wales is an active member of Cytûn (Churches Together in Wales), which brings together churches seeking to deepen their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world. In addition to being present at national events, it is a conduit of information between the churches and the Welsh Government and the wider public square in Wales.



CTBI

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland works with member Churches to co-ordinate responses, share resources and learn from each other's experiences in many areas of work.



CEC

Coming into being after the

Second World War, the Conference of European Churches helps its member Churches to promote the unity of the Church.

Porvoo

This is a communion of Northern European Churches that have agreed to 'share a common life in mission and service.'



World Council of Churches

The WCC brings together 349 churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries, representing over 560 million Christians.



Critical levels of attendance need immediate and radical action

Every year, parishes are required to provide information on attendances and finance that is used to analyse trends and to make projections for the future. "Putting the data in context, discerning practice, and overlaying that with what is really going on, looking for those contributory factors to trends in growth and decline, projecting forward—what does this mean for our future planning?" asked Mr **Richard Jones**, Llandaff Diocesan Stewardship Advisor, in presenting the annual Membership and Finances Report.

"Sadly the Church plays scant regard to all the data it has. It does not give it the time or the resources it deserves if we are to properly form, measure and monitor our strategy making and policy forming." "So often in the Church we move from one half-baked initiative to another, often at great financial cost with little or no thought at measuring outcomes and the difference we make, and learning lessons for future strategy and work."

"There is little good news in the Report. We have experienced an alarming rate of decline in average attendance, and that is clearly undermining our ability to perform financially particularly at a parish level." The difficulty in maintaining large buildings and making the books balance remains. "Large numbers of parishes are having to dip into diminishing reserves to make ends meet."

"Why do we perpetuate ways of working that are not promoting growth?" asked Richard—but he pointed to



parishes and churches that are growing and flourishing in spite of the general trend of decline over the last 20 years. But rather than sharing good news stories, which can soon become stale, he suggested that parishes shared good policy and practice, and to share the skills that we have available, but lock away within parish and diocesan boundaries. What are the lessons to be learnt, what skills were needed to ensure success, why does something work in one place but not another? "We all want good news outcomes, but are we committed to creating the environment in which these things flourish? Key decisions need to be made about personnel, leadership, training, skills, support, and resources, perhaps stepping outside the box, outside our comfort zone,



taking risks for the Gospel."

"Membership and average attendance levels are now at critical levels, whereby, as predicted, they are now undermining the ability to maintain diocesan and parish organisation, church buildings and ministry and staffing structures. Steps to make a change need to be decided upon, actioned and implemented without delay. We are short of time if we are to be a Church of mission and growth which survives into the future."

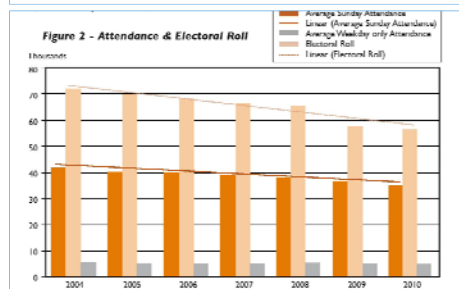
"It is my role to present the data in a factual, realistic and honest manner," stressed Richard. He thanked all those who give time, skills and money, lay and clergy, volunteers and paid staff, to make a difference for God and his Church. "However, as a whole, this year's Report highlights the situation the Church in Wales now finds itself in, and the challenges we need to face without delay if we are to remain relevant, sustainable and influential in Wales and to grow the kingdom of God in all those places in which we are called to witness and work within."

Canon **Patrick Thomas** (St Davids) drew the GB's attention to the crisis affecting bilingual parishes, with the shortage of Welsh-speaking clergy. He encouraged those considering a calling to ministry to learn Welsh before going to college.

The **Archdeacon of Monmouth** called for a radical rethinking of what it means to be the Church in the 21st century. "We need to be in touch with the wider society—pastoral ministry as we know it is only part of the solution." This was echoed by Miss **Carol Cobert** (Llandaff) who wanted to see more work in schools, pubs and other places where people are.

The Report's Headlines

- 23% fall in Christmas Communicants—however this is explainable by the severe weather conditions at Christmas 2010.
- 5% drop in Easter Communicants, 5% drop in average attendance throughout the year.
- Further significant declines in the attendance by young people, and in the number of baptisms and confirmations.
- Total income to parishes has risen impressively, though total parish expenditure exceeded total parish income.
- Average weekly giving per Sunday attendee increased by 1.8% between 2009 and 2010 to £7.79.
- However the level of direct giving fell, because there are fewer people each year contributing.
- The proportion of parish expenditure on ministry has increased from 43% to 50% and on buildings from 31% to 35%.
- The proportion of expenditure on outreach by parishes is only 5%.
- The transitional relief Gift Aid scheme came to an end in April.



The next meeting of the Governing Body will be held on 18th and 19th April 2012 at Venue Cymru, Llandudno.

HIGHLIGHTS

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