

## Explanatory memorandum



To accompany proposed following motion for Diocesan Synods

### **Purpose of the motion**

- The motion overleaf has been put forward by the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC) in order that those who cannot in good conscience accept the consecration of women to the episcopate might be kept within the Church of England.
- The CEEC believes the motion is important to preserve a more faithful, effective and fruitful mission to the nation.

### **History behind the motion**

- The CEEC represents a wide variety of views but has always agreed on the need to provide adequate legal provision for those who cannot in good conscience support women bishops.
- Only the House of Clergy at the July 2010 General Synod did not accept the amendment proposed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. The very narrow margin of defeat and the voting across the three houses indicated a high level of support for adequate provision which will not be forthcoming without the draft legislation being amended.

### **Implications of the current proposal**

- At present the Church of England supports and values two integrities. If the provision goes ahead as it stands, many who hold one of those integrities will have difficulties in selection for ministry, ordination and deployment. For maintaining a position recognised for its integrity, many will come to be excluded.
- The proposed legislation promotes moniscopacy (which has no scriptural foundation) at the expense of the existing unity between those of differing integrities (which does) and will cause the former to destroy the latter.
- The proposed legislation would have implications for the Oath of Canonical Obedience, which is made to the Diocesan Bishop *and his successors*. As no provision is proposed for those who, following the introduction of the legislation, could not make such an oath, those who hold to a traditional integrity will immediately become compromised. They would no longer be able to hold to the oath they have sworn.
- Whilst a Code of Practice is proposed, no-one is clear as to what the content will be. Further, it will be at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop, could be changed and the experience of many in other contexts suggests that it is likely to be inadequate.
- The proposed legislation makes no provision for lay people who have reservations about women bishops (for confirmation etc).

### **Content of the motion**

- It is important that provision for those who hold to a traditional integrity is conferred by the legislation rather than by the Diocesan Bishop in order to maintain theological and relational objectivity and consistency across the Church of England.
- Ordinary jurisdiction (which equates with the authority of a Diocesan Bishop) need not be geographical. Church history indicates that episcopacy has not always been viewed in this way.
- The following motion does not debate the issue of women bishops but rather the provision for those who have not changed from the teaching which the Church of England presently holds on this matter and (on theological grounds) cannot accept the ministry of women Bishops.
- The motion, if accepted, will not be discriminatory. For those who oppose the consecration of women to the episcopate, it calls for provision to be made in all dioceses, whether the present Diocesan is male or female.

### **Process**

- The Standing Orders of the Diocese must be consulted in order to understand the process by which this following motion might be brought to the Diocesan Synod.
- Advice from the Diocesan Secretary is essential
- Communication with as many people as possible (PCC, Deanery Synod, Rural Dean) and from different theological traditions will help to provide an understanding as to why this is important.

## Proposed Following Motion for Diocesan Synods

This synod

1. desires that all faithful Anglicans remain and thrive together in the Church of England; and therefore
2. calls upon the House of Bishops to bring forward amendments to the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure to ensure that those unable on theological grounds to accept the ministry of women bishops are able to receive episcopal oversight from a bishop with authority (i.e. ordinary jurisdiction) conferred by the Measure rather than by delegation from a Diocesan Bishop.

*(The draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure can only proceed if a majority of Dioceses vote in favour of its adoption. What is asked for in the proposed following motion only arises if the draft Measure is approved by the majority of dioceses.)*