

Newsletter: Summer 2018

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‘Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.’ Proverbs 15:27

Dear brothers and sisters,

I think I probably go to as many meetings as anyone reading this newsletter – and it’s easy to dismiss them as ‘talking shops’, distracting us from the real work of ministry. However, as the Proverb reminds us, we need to take counsel so that the plans we make are wise and therefore our energies well-directed. As concerns continue about the future direction of the Church of England, we need to stay well connected. I’m delighted that the regional meetings I’ve so far held have been well attended and I very much hope that other gatherings – particularly the ReNew conference on 17th and 18th September – will help us all think clearly about the way forward.

Now, before you head off for well deserved summer breaks, here’s a general update on where things have got to for those of us who are seeking to put complementarian convictions into practice.

Recent Survey

Very many thanks to all who took part in our recent survey. There was a high response rate of 70%. It will take Rachel some time to process all the information, but some early conclusions from an initial analysis of 50% of the replies show a variety of practice. At the regional meeting held in Sheffield earlier this month, David Banting made the point that the Reform Covenant never sought to specify exactly how churches should put complementarian convictions into practice. It simply spoke of ‘the unique value of women’s ministry in the local congregation but also the divine order of male headship, which makes the headship of women as priests in charge, incumbents, dignitaries and bishops inappropriate.’ It is therefore no surprise that the replies to the survey suggest a variety of different approaches.

For example, initial analysis shows that:

- While 90% of respondents would accept a female ordained deacon on their staff team, only 51% would accept a female ordained presbyter and this would be only if she was herself committed to the principle of male leadership of congregations.
- None of the responses analysed so far was from a church where an ordained woman is on the staff team but most had non-ordained women employed as administrators, pastoral and children's workers.
- Two thirds said that it would not be acceptable for a woman to preach to a mixed congregation. Of those who were not opposed in principle, very few said that it happened in practice.
- The majority of respondents were positive about listening to a woman teach or lecture at a workshop or seminar, leading a mixed housegroup (in some cases with the proviso that she is co-leader with a man), and about receiving holy communion at which a woman presided.
- Most respondents would accept a woman reviewer for their ministerial development review or an archdeacon's visitation.
- Views were very divided as to whether incumbents would be happy for a male curate to be ordained presbyter alongside women although most would be happy for such an ordination as deacon.

Our hope is to complete the analysis over the summer and let you have the results during the autumn.

One of the areas of work which will be helped by the survey results is my membership of the House of Bishops' 'Implementation and Dialogue Group.' This group was set up in the wake of the Mawer report on Philip North's nomination to the See of Sheffield. That report recommended that the House of Bishops should look at what could be done to embed the idea of 'mutual flourishing' more firmly in the life of the Church. I am keen on the one hand to promote our ability to have special arrangements, but on the other to resist the idea that we should operate in our own silos. I particularly want to urge that more be done to promote the shortlisting of complementarian clergy for incumbencies in churches which have not passed any resolution and the idea of complementarian plants being encouraged.

London Plan

The new London Plan was published at the end of May. Bishop Sarah Mullally said 'It is our hope that what we have forged together in London might serve as a paradigm for other Dioceses, and for the whole Church of England'. I am glad therefore that the new Plan will be considered by the Implementation and Dialogue Group. One of the effects of the Plan is to give my own role much greater clarity. In particular, the Plan states that I will:

- will be a sponsoring bishop for ordinands from conservative evangelical (CE) churches – working with existing Area Directors of Ordinands
- will be involved in discussions about the placement of ordinands in title posts
- will be asked to conduct ordinations of deacons and priests for those with CE convictions
- will carry out collations, institutions and licensings as commissary for CE parishes requesting his ministry
- will undertake Episcopal Reviews for clergy from CE parishes
- will be fully involved in, and take part in, interviews for appointments to CE parishes, including commending candidates to the Area Bishop
- Will be consulted over any proposals for pastoral reorganisation affecting CE parishes

Areas where the Bishop of Maidstone will not be involved include granting PTOs and safeguarding.

GAFCON

The English delegation at GAFCON was a substantial group of over 160. The great majority were conservative evangelicals, although there were also some from New Wine and Fulcrum. Overall, the conference was very uplifting – here after all was the largest gathering of Anglicans for 50 years, all focussed on the theme of how best to ‘proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations’. The morning expositions took us through Luke’s account of Jesus’ trial, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. If you get the opportunity, do listen to Richard Coekin on Luke 23:26-49 – a deeply affecting exposition of the crucifixion.

GAFCON itself represents lots of different strains of Anglicanism – yet it was very good to see the willingness of people to work together to try to help accommodate all the various concerns. At the end of the day, the final ‘Letter to the Churches’ represented not just the work of the drafting group, but a lot of input from national delegations – not least the English. It was a call to the Communion to return to the aspiration and doctrinal commitment of Lambeth 1998 (and in particular para 1:10) and stressed that GAFCON’s aim was not in any way separatist: rather it was an appeal to the whole Communion to unite around a position of biblical faithfulness and joyful (if costly) outreach.

So far as the UK is concerned, the English delegation listened closely to contributions that came from other parts of the UK, and over several meetings determined to work for greater unity, particularly among English evangelicals, in defending and proclaiming the gospel. There was a realism that some who might otherwise be entirely with us were put off by the way GAFCON has been perceived in the UK. As a result, we recognised that efforts to create greater unity might need to come through different routes – either informally or through bodies such as CEEC. Now we are back home, various conversations are underway, to see how we can take things forward. Both Andy Lines and I are involved in these, as are others who were at GAFCON.

Getting Busier...

This summer I have conducted 6 ordinations (including, in Southwark, the presbyteral ordination of Andy Fenton who was originally ordained deacon by Martin Morrison). In the last eleven months I have preached at 50 churches, in 25 of which I conducted confirmations, and have been engaged in 34 other church events (such as PCC meetings). A total of 228 people have been confirmed. By the end of the year I will have visited 11 Bishop’s Staff Teams, including in the last month the team in Lichfield, where some time was spent discussing the various outcomes of the recent Ad Clerum on ‘Welcoming and Honouring LGBT+ People’. I am very grateful to the many people who have written to me to express support and to assure me of their prayers in relation to the controversy which followed my own letter to the Lichfield bishops. I am also grateful to Bishop Michael himself who was quite clear that he regarded my letter as helpful.

The number of churches which have passed resolutions under the House of Bishops’ Declaration has now reached 125 and this number is likely to continue to grow. As I become more involved in practical ministry to many of these (eg seeing prospective ordinands; seeking to oil diocesan wheels over church planting proposals; and becoming increasingly involved in filling vacancies), the time I have available for individuals and churches diminishes. In one way this is very good, because we want to demonstrate to the wider church both the desire for this ministry and the need for it to be

extended. However, it also means that I sometimes struggle to provide advice and help in a timely way. I am therefore at the point where I need to consider how my role might be used most effectively – and what additional resources I might need for this to happen. Wonderfully, David Banting, who has recently retired as vicar of St Peter's, Harold Wood, has offered to help this ministry for a day a week from September – so I do hope that you won't hesitate to contact him. However, I am also meeting representatives of the Dioceses Commission in the autumn in order to describe the way I am conducting my ministry and the extent to which there are now resource constraints to being able to undertake it as effectively as I might. Please do pray that I will be given wisdom in thinking through how to move my role up a gear!

New Leaders in Larger Churches Conference

I have been asked by Peter Brierley to remind you that this biennial conference is taking place from 15th – 17th October at High Leigh Conference Centre in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire. It is aimed particularly at ministers new (less than 2 years in the post) to a larger church setting – with a regular Sunday attendance in excess of 300. It will facilitate the thinking through of issues of leadership in this context by learning from, and discussing with, established leaders. The conference will deal with: managing expectations; appointing and developing staff and senior volunteers; strategies for achieving vision; preaching and leadership; and the opportunities of Sundays. Further information is available at www.brierleyconsultancy.com/conferences An early bird price applies to bookings made before the end of August.

Sabbatical

I will be taking a sabbatical from the beginning of April until the end of June next year, 2019. This will necessarily reduce my availability throughout the year for confirmations and other engagements. If you would like to request that I take a confirmation in 2019, please bear this in mind. Please let Rachel know once you have made plans and she will work to organise things to include as many requests as possible. This will be much helped if churches in a locality have a shared confirmation service and if you can be as flexible as possible concerning dates. If you had been hoping to invite me to a meeting of your PCC during the week, then during the period April-June please consider inviting David Banting instead. He is a member of General Synod and is hugely knowledgeable about the House of Bishop's Declaration and current developments in the Church of England. As the recently retired vicar of one of our larger evangelical churches, he is also very skilled in advising on relationships within Dioceses. From September, David will have an email address for his work with me; in the meantime, please contact him via my office.

GDPR

As many of you will be aware, new legislation came into force in May regarding data protection. This requires that we obtain consent before we retain and use people's personal data including email addresses, for example, to mail out newsletters such as this one. In May, Rachel sent out consent forms; if you have not returned yours please do so as

soon as possible. If you have not received a form or would like another copy please contact Rachel on admin@bishopofmaidstone.org Please bear in mind that if you do not return the form, we will be unable to send you newsletters in future unless you work for a church for which I have been asked to exercise extended episcopal ministry.

Regional Meetings

I am holding a series of these meetings, covering the whole country in two years. The first meeting was held in Leyland on 28th February for clergy and leadership teams from resolution churches in Blackburn, Chester, Cumbria, Liverpool and Manchester Dioceses. The second was held in Sheffield on 2nd July for those from Derby, Newcastle, Sheffield, Southwell & Nottingham, York, Durham and Lincoln. The meeting provides an opportunity to consider particular issues that have arisen for churches which have passed resolutions; a time to share information about local situations; and a lengthy opportunity for questions about future ministry in the Church of England. The main meeting is followed by a session for curates who have completed at least one year of training and covers practical issues such as applying for incumbencies.

The dates of future meetings are:

- Cambridge on 10th October for those from Ely, Norwich, Peterborough, St Albans, St Edmundsbury & Ipswich Dioceses
- Reading on 6th November for those from Bath & Wells, Bristol, Exeter, Gloucester, Guildford, Oxford, Salisbury, Truro and Winchester Dioceses
- Tunbridge Wells on 15th January 2019 for Rochester, Chichester and Canterbury Dioceses
- Birmingham on 5th February 2019 for Birmingham, Lichfield, Hereford, Worcester and Coventry Dioceses
- London on 5th March 2019 for London, Chelmsford and Southwark Dioceses.

As a result of feedback, we have extended the invitation to these meetings to conservative evangelical clergy whose churches have not passed resolutions, in addition to the original target group of clergy and leadership teams of resolution churches. If you would like to be invited and fall into the category of clergy whose church has not passed a resolution, then please let Rachel know by emailing her: admin@bishopofmaidstone.org Please also let Rachel know if you can offer, or suggest a venue for any of these meetings. If the dates we have selected in 2019 look unsuitable for a diocese for any reason, we would appreciate it if you could let us know so that we can amend our plans.

Ordinations

During June and July, I have ordained 5 presbyters and 7 deacons in 6 services all in different dioceses. One more ordination to the presbyterate is arranged for the autumn. If you anticipate having curates whom you would like me to ordain in 2019, please do let Rachel know as soon as possible and well in advance so that we can liaise with the diocese and make appropriate arrangements.

Resolution Parishes - resolutions passed by conservative evangelical churches, 125 in total

Bath&Wells	St George's Wembdon	Exeter	St Matthew's, Elburton
Birmingham	St Stephen/St Wulstan, Selly Park		St Leonards Exeter
	St Agnes, Moseley		Christ Church, Paignton
Blackburn	The Church of the Saviour Blackburn	Guildford	St Andrew's Frimley Green & Mytchett
	St Bartholomews, Ewood	Leicester	Enderby
	Christ Church Blackburn	Lichfield	Oswestry, Holy Trinity
	Wellfield Church, BMO		Audley
	St Andrews Ashton on Ribble		Castle Church Stafford
	St Andrews Leyland		St Thomas Kidsgrove
	All Hallows Bispham		St Luke's, Wolverhampton
	Padiham	Liverpool	St Philemon's Toxteth, DCC
	All Saints Preston	London	St Thomas', Oakwood
Canterbury	St James Westgate		St Helen's Bishopsgate
	Christ Church Ramsgate		St Anne's Limehouse
	All Saints Loose		St Luke's Hampstead
Carlisle	St James, Burton in Kendal		St Botolph without Aldersgate
	Houghton and Kingmoor		St John with St Andrew Chelsea
	St John's, London Road, Carlisle		Christ Church Cockfosters
	St John's, Hensingham		St Paul's Hadley Wood
	St Bridget's Moresby		St Peter's Barge, Limehouse
Chelmsford	St George Dagenham		St Peter Cornhill
	St Paul's Harold Hill and St Thomas Noak Hill		St Peter's Fulham
	St Peter's Harold Wood		Christ Church Mayfair
	Immanuel, Brentwood		St Benet's, Paul's Wharf
	Henham, Elsenham and Ugley	Manchester	St Nicholas, Cole Abbey
	Becontree St Elisabeth		Christ Church Chadderton
	Christ Church, Leyton	Norwich	St Mary's Balderstone
	St Peter and St Paul Dagenham		Christ Church Lowestoft
	Fordham	Oxford	St Andrew's Honingham
	Chadwell St Mary		St Ebbe's, Oxford
	St Michael's Braintree		Arborfield
	St John's Great Clacton		Barkham
	Crossway Strataford		Christ Church Wokingham
	St John's Walthamstow		Holy Trinity Nuffield
Chester	St John's Lindow		St Paul's Banbury
	St John's Church, Over	Peterborough	St Mary's Maidenhead
	St Mary's, Cheadle	Portsmouth	St Peter and St Paul, Moulton
	St John's, Knutsford	Rochester	St James Ryde
	Toft		St Nicholas, Sevenoaks
	St John's Hartford		St John's, Tunbridge Wells
	St Catherine's Tranmere		Christ Church, Bromley
	St Mark's New Ferry		St Peter's Bexley Heath
	Holy Trinity Poulton Lancelyn		St Peter's Tunbridge Wells
	Christ Church, Wharton	Salisbury	St Johns Wimborne
Chichester	Holy Trinity, Eastbourne	Sheffield	Christ Church, Fulwood
	All Souls Eastbourne		St Andrew's, Kendray
	Little Common, Bexhill		St Thomas Kilnhurst
	Emmanuel Hastings		Christ Church Endcliffe
	Bishop Hannington Hove		Gleadless Valley
	All Saints Crowborough	Southwark	St Nicholas Tooting
Derby	St Peter's Stapenhill		Emmanuel, Wimbledon
	Little Eaton		Dundonald
	St Alkmund's, Duffield		St Luke's, Wimbledon
	St Mary's Chaddesden		Holy Redeemer, Streatham Vale
	St Giles, Normanton		St Stephen's, South Lambeth
	Trinity Church Buxton		Holy Trinity Wallington
Europe	Leipzig	Southwell	St Mary's, Wollaton Park
Ely	All Saints Little Shelford	St Albans	Holy Trinity, Frogmore
	Christ Church Cambridge	Truro	Fowey
	St Andrew the Great, Cambridge	Winchester	Christ Church Westbourne
	St Matthew's Cambridge		St Mary's Basingstoke
	St John's Orchard Park		Sherbourne St John, Basingstoke
		York	St Andrew's Kirk Ella, Hull