

Runnymede Deanery Synod Women bishops discussion

Do we want women to be bishops?

- Yes, General Synod has agreed:
 - no theological barriers to having women bishops
 - to set in train legislation to make it happen
- women and men together in image of God
- House of Bishops will be enriched by women's experience and perspectives
- catch up with our sister churches

Other churches

- 15 of the 38 Anglican Provinces have agreed to have women bishops
- **none** have made **legal** provision for those opposed, provision based on grace and trust
- Methodists, URC and Baptist Union all have women in senior regional and national roles
- lack of women bishops is barrier to unity with Methodists

Main arguments against women bishops

- Headship: Bible says women should not be in authority over men
 - context is marriage, not church oversight
 - metaphor is not clear
 - there were women leaders in the early Church
- Sacramental assurance: priest has to be male because Jesus and the 12 disciples were male
 - Jesus had named women disciples too
 - desire for unbroken line of ordination leads to church within a church

Key issue for the Church of England

How shall we appoint women as bishops in a way that

- maintains the traditional understanding and role of bishops
- leaves space for those who in conscience cannot accept women as priests or bishops
- avoids any flavour of discrimination or half-heartedness by the Church towards women priests and bishops?

Manchester Report April

2008

Is the draft legislation fair?

Yes, because

- there will be arrangements for any parish that wishes to have a male vicar or bishop

and

- “bishops will be bishops” – female bishops will be on a par with male ones

Comments on draft legislation

- statutory code of practice is compromise for women (no legal provision in other Provinces)
- principle of delegation retains relationship between parish and woman diocesan bishop
- senior women will be unwilling to serve as bishops unless on a par with men, otherwise would change nature of episcopacy
- no alternative provisions have been found that are workable

The Church is missing out

- great majority of Church of England has accepted and affirms ministry of women priests
- experience of women's ministry has led to greater understanding of complementary gifts
- God has called and gifted women to serve as incumbents, rural deans, archdeacons and deans
- women's gifts needed in House of Bishops
- Church's mission is compromised



Women bishops here for the 2008 Lambeth Conference