

Questions and Answers under business rule 6.3

1. Freemasonry lodges and Anglican Church Schools

The Rev Bill Winthrop asked –

- (a) Since 1988 have there been any Freemasonry Lodges associated with any Anglican Schools?
- (b) What are they?
- (c) When were they established?
- (d) What Diocesan approvals were given for their establishment?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that, based on the information provided by diocesan schools, the answers are as follows –

- (a) Yes
- (b) “Lodge Torchbearer”, Shore School;
“The Lodge of the Kings School”, The Kings School;
“Lodge Trinitarian”, Trinity Grammar School.
- (c) Shore - 1930
Kings - 1947
Trinity - 1977
- (d) As far as each of these schools can ascertain, no diocesan approvals were obtained (or, indeed, required) as the Lodges were established by old boys of these schools.

2. Motions to reduce speaking times

Mr Graeme Marks asked –

In the last 6 years, how many times has the Synod agreed to a motion, with or without notice, to reduce the time limit of speeches in committee?

To which the President replied –

I am informed the answer is as follows.

At each of the last 6 ordinary sessions, the Synod has agreed to a motion to reduce the time limits for speeches in committee.

Under the old Standing Orders, 10 minutes was the time limit for speeches in committee. In each of the years 1996 to 2000 inclusive a motion was moved on the first day of the session to reduce the time for speeches in committee from 10 minutes to 5 minutes.

Under the new business rules (first used in 2001) the time limit for speeches in committee is 5 minutes. On the last day of the session in 2001 a motion was moved to reduce the time for speeches in committee from 5 minutes to 3 minutes.

3. Listing of names of stipendiary lay workers in the year book

Ms Jennifer Flower asked –

In light of the Archbishop’s mission statement and the challenge given therein, is it possible in the year book for 2003 and subsequent year books for stipendiary lay workers who are children’s ministers or workers to either be separately listed or to have some form of indication by their names to facilitate contact between such workers and the sharing of ideas and resources?

To which the President replied –

The Standing Committee has made the same request. I am informed that the Registry will be writing in the near future to Stipendiary Lay Workers to obtain the relevant information, subject to privacy legislation. It is hoped that this information will be available for the 2003 Year Book or, if not then, the 2004 Year Book.

4. Professional Standards Unit

Mr Malcolm Purvis asked –

- (a) How many staff are funded through the Parish Cost Recoveries payments to the Professional Standards Unit?
- (b) How many cases has the Unit dealt with in the last year?
- (c) How many of those cases were for incidents that allegedly occurred in the last 10 years?

To which the President replied –

I am informed the answers are as follows.

- (a) 2 full time - Director, Administrative Assistant 5 part time/casual - Contact Persons
- (b) Year ended 30 June 2002 - 58
- (c) 32

5. Low Fee Schools

Mr Greg Holmes asked –

In the light of Synod resolution 33/94 in relation to low-fee schools what consultations have taken place between the Sydney Anglican School's Corporation and other "Anglicans in each area who are already involved in the management of low-fee paying Christian Schools" and what protocol is in place to ensure that such discussion takes place with appropriate schools and groups of schools?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answer is as follows.

The main purpose of Synod resolution 33/94 was to encourage the Archbishop and the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation to set up new Anglican schools in the population growth areas of Sydney. The resolution also urged the Corporation to institute close advisory links with "those Anglicans in each area who are already involved in the management of low-fee paying Christian Schools". Those Anglicans known at the time to be so involved were consulted as part of the compilation of a report prepared in response to the resolution and presented to the 1995 session of the Synod.

A difficulty associated with Synod's resolution is how, in an on-going manner, to identify those Anglicans in each area already involved in the management of low-fee paying Christian schools since they are not a discreet or identifiable body or organisation. Nevertheless in pursuing its mission of establishing new schools, the Corporation actively seeks the support of local parishes, the regional bishop and archdeacon and other Anglican bodies in any area under investigation.

A copy of a more detailed answer to this question will be posted on the noticeboard. [*Not reproduced here*]

6. Sexual abuse claims

The Rev Lindsay Johnstone asked –

- (a) Within available knowledge has the diocese (or a diocesan insurance policy) ever paid compensation to a victim of alleged sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, child abuse or paedophilia in lieu of the continuation of legal action against an alleged perpetrator being a clergy person or lay worker?
- (b) If the answer to (a) is “yes”, was the compensation ever paid with a proviso or requirement that the person receiving the compensation undertake to the diocese a commitment to silence?
- (c) If the answer to (b) is “yes”, in what years and on how many occasions?
- (d) Within available knowledge within the diocesan schools governed under ordinances of this Synod has the diocese or a diocesan school ever paid compensation to a victim of alleged sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, child abuse or paedophilia in lieu of the continuation of legal action against an alleged perpetrator being a member of the staff or another employee of that school?
- (e) If the answer to (d) is “yes”, was the compensation ever paid with a proviso or requirement that the person receiving the compensation undertake to the diocese a commitment to silence?
- (f) If the answer to (e) is “yes”, in what years and on how many occasions?
- (g) Within available knowledge has the diocese ever paid compensation to a victim of alleged misconduct of any type by a member of the clergy or lay person in lieu of continuation of legal action against a senior clergy person for alleged failure to deal appropriately with an accusation against a clergy person or lay worker?
- (h) If the answer to (g) is “yes”, was the compensation ever paid with a proviso or requirement that the person receiving the compensation undertake to the diocese a commitment to silence?
- (i) If the answer to (h) is “yes”, in what years and on how many occasions?

To which the President replied –

I am informed the answers are as follows.

- (a) Yes
- (b) The settlement contained provisions that the parties not divulge “the terms of the settlement of the dispute” and “that neither of them shall disparage the other party”.
- (c) 2000 - once
- (d) No
- (e) Not applicable
- (f) Not applicable
- (g) No
- (h) Not applicable
- (i) Not applicable

7. Religious fundamentalism

Mrs Lesley Hicks asked –

- (a) In view of the escalating world-wide Muslim/Christian conflict, what steps are being taken in our diocese to reflect on these issues and counter the accusations that, with our trust in the Bible and our evangelistic zeal, we are radical, fundamentalist Christians, to be equated with radical fundamentalist Muslims?
- (b) Is there any committee devoting itself specifically to these vital issues and, if not, could such a body be established?

To which the President replied –

Strictly this question is out of order under business rule 6.3(4)(a) because it contains an assertion.

I would however refer Mrs Hicks to the comments in relation to “fundamentalism” I made in last year’s Presidential Address. These can be found on pages 370 to 376 of the 2002 Year Book.

In response to (b), no such committee has been established.

8. Overhead projection

Mr Brian Gaetjens asked –

Synod resolution 35/01 requested the Diocesan Secretariat to consider a further trial, during debates, of projection onto screen of the wordings of motions, ordinance clauses, and proposed amendments.

Has the Secretariat or Standing Committee considered this Synod request, and what was the result of its consideration?

To which the President replied –

I am informed the answer is as follows.

The matter has been considered.

There are several difficulties which arise. They fall into 3 areas, procedural difficulties, resource difficulties and technical difficulties.

Procedural difficulties arise in respect of motions (including amendments) moved during debate. At present, a member who wishes to move a motion during debate writes it out and provides a copy to the President. Debate on the motion proceeds forthwith. If the motion had to be displayed onto a screen, there would be further delay while a word processing operator entered the wording and the text of the motion was checked. There is concern that these additional delays in process would unduly affect the flow of Synod proceedings.

Members of Synod are encouraged to give notice of motions, especially amendments, as early as possible. A new business paper and amendment sheet is provided each day to give members written notice of all known motions.

Resource difficulties arise because the existing personnel and equipment of the Secretariat are already fully utilised in managing the existing business of the Synod. At this session, there are 15 Secretariat staff managing the business of the Synod. It is already beyond the capacity of the staff of the Diocesan Secretary’s department to manage the business without other assistance being drawn from other departments of the Secretariat. When overhead projection for motions was last trialed our experience was that a further 3 staff were required, namely, 2 word processing operators, and a third staff member to check, follow debates and arrange for the display on the large screen. Staff limits prevent us from moving this way at this time.

On the technology side, it has been suggested that a number of lap tops be located around the Wesley Theatre for members to type in their own motions. However it is very difficult to control an open system such as this and there is concern that a crash in one lap top, possibly caused by an inexperienced operator, would affect the whole system.

Consideration has been given to a system whereby palm pilots (or equivalent) would be made available to Synod members. Staff would take a palm pilot to any member wanting to move an amendment who would write the motion into the palm pilot. The motion would then be transferred into the lap top which displays it onto the screen when requested by the President. Further thought on this is needed.

While the Secretariat will continue to give thought to the matter, it is not proposed to undertake further trials at this session.

9. Rectory standards

Mr David Power asked –

- (a) What, if any, are the minimum standards for rectories in Parishes in the diocese of Sydney?
- (b) What, if any, are the minimum standards for assistant or associate ministers accommodation in Parishes in the diocese of Sydney?
- (c) What, if any, will be the minimum standards for rectories in Parishes without property in the diocese of Sydney?
- (d) If parishes are unable to meet minimum standards for rectories, would that parish be denied the right to nominate a rector, or would the Archbishop refuse to offer that parish to a clergyman?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answers are as follows –

- (a) For most purposes, rectories must be approved as suitable by the Archbishop. To this end the Church Grounds and Buildings Ordinance 1990 provides that the architectural panels for each region are jointly to prepare guidelines for the purposes of erecting or altering certain types of building including houses for the use of clergy. A copy of these guidelines can be obtained from the relevant regional Archdeacon.

Although the guidelines relate to the erection or alteration of a range of building types, they provide for minimum standards applicable to rectories. In general, a rectory should have 4 bedrooms, a study, a family room and separate lounge room (to facilitate the separation of public and private areas of the rectory) and a double garage.

- (b) There are currently no specific minimum standards in relation to accommodation for assistant or associate ministers. I am informed that a sub-committee of the joint architectural panels is currently revising the building guidelines and is considering including minimum standards of accommodation for assistant or associate ministers in a revised version of the guidelines.
- (c) I take it that “parishes without property” is a reference to churches recognised under the Recognised Churches Ordinance 2000. Under that ordinance, one of the criteria for recognising a church is that, if recognised, it would have the ability from its own resources to provide the person proposed to be its minister with housing arrangements acceptable to that person and which have been certified as suitable to the Archbishop by the relevant Archdeacon. For most on-going purposes, such as determining rights of presentation, the test in relation to rectory standards is generally the same as for parishes, namely that the rectory must be approved as suitable by the Archbishop.
- (d) The rights under the Presentation and Exchange Ordinance 1988 are dependent on, among other things, the rector being provided with the “free use of a residence” approved as suitable by the Archbishop. However the Archbishop is able to certify that a parish should have its presentation rights despite non-compliance with this test if the matters of non-compliance are such as should not prevent the parish from having the benefits under the ordinance. This will, in each case, be a matter of the Archbishop’s discretion and will depend upon the circumstances of the case.

10. Alcohol policy (1)

The Rev Neil Flower asked –

Considering that the Glebe Administration Board has a policy of not investing in and making money from the manufacture or sale of drugs and/or alcohol –

- (a) Does the Standing Committee have a similar policy?
- (b) If not, has such a policy been considered?
- (c) If yes, what was the criteria used for either acceptance or rejection of such a policy?
- (d) Does income received from the rent from the licenced liquor outlet in St Andrew's House go to "Anglicare" or other organisations for the rehabilitation of those whose lives have been blighted by liquor?
- (e) Have there been any studies made as to the desensitizing effect such open sales of liquor may have on causing future drinking problems in the students at St Andrew's Cathedral School?

To which the President replied -

I am informed that the answers are as follows –

- (a) Yes. A copy of the policy will be posted with the answer to this question. [*Not reproduced here*]
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) The Town Hall Arcade Ordinance 1998 was passed by the Standing Committee on 24 August 1998. The effect of the ordinance was to remove the prohibition on the sale, distribution and consumption of liquor in or from premises in Town Hall Square.

This amendment was considered to be consistent with Synod resolution 13/96 –

"This Synod...encourages the Standing Committee to change the 'Social Covenants' which must be included in leases, so that church trust property can be leased for the conduct of licenced restaurants, subject to the consent of the parish council (if any) for which the trust property is held."

At the time the Glebe Administration Board was in the process of procuring pre-leasing commitments from potential tenants for the food court in Town Hall Square. Some tenants were hesitant to enter into a commitment while the question of the sale of liquor in the food court was unresolved. Some would not lease or only lease upon the payment of a lower rent if the sale of liquor in the food court was not allowed. It was therefore considered desirable to permit the sale of liquor for the financial viability of the food court.

- (d) Not directly. The income received from the Town Hall Arcade is shared equally by the Endowment of the See and the Glebe Administration Board. The Board's share of the income forms part of the income made available to the Synod.
- (e) Not to our knowledge.

11. Equipping of Christians

Mr Allan Piper asked –

A work colleague and I, who both attend suburban parishes, intend starting a prayer group at our office in the city. Our aims are to encourage other Christians at work in their witness, and that others come to a saving faith in Christ. In this, we have been encouraged by the formulation of the Mission. We don't care if those saved are added to the 10% of either of our parishes, nor even if they become Anglicans, but that they come to Christ and grow into Christian maturity.

In view of this –

- (a) Under the Mission, what plans are intended to equip and resource groups such as ours?
- (b) How is it intended to recognise situations such as ours when assessing the achievement of the 10% goal?

To which the President replied –

- (a) The initiatives to implement the Mission are being developed in consultation with all those who wish to join us in reaching the lost for Christ. To this end I would encourage Mr Piper to suggest how we might be able to help him and his colleague in their ministry (by, for example, filling out the appropriate comment and suggestion sheets circulated to members during this session of Synod).

However I would envisage that the basic support for these workplace initiatives is the parish church to which the founders of the group belong. The minister of the local church should be able to provide support and nurture for such creative mission initiatives.

There is also a significant number of resources by way of publications, evening course lectures (Moore College), seminars and conferences which currently exist. It is hoped that other resources will also be made available, though the purchase of Dr Peter Bolt's *Mission Minded* would be a good start.

- (b) In order to assess the achievement of the initial goal of 10%, it is proposed that we do an audit of our current church attendances including such trans-parish fellowships as proposed in this question. We shall need to rely upon information coming from the grass roots to aid us in our data collection.

12. Chaplains in the Defence Force

The Rev Rob Sutherland asked –

In light of our recently adopted mission –

- (a) How many licensed clergy from this Diocese also serve in the Anglican Church's mission to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) as part-time ADF Chaplains?
- (b) Has the Diocese received a request from the ADF or the Anglican Bishop to the ADF to help fill the 6 fully funded currently vacant part-time Army Reserve Anglican Chaplain positions in our region?
- (c) If so what action has been taken?

To which the President replied –

I am informed the answers are as follows.

- (a) 10
- (b) There has been correspondence from the Bishop to the Australian Defence Force regarding full-time training positions. To my awareness, there has been no correspondence regarding the vacant part-time chaplaincy positions.
- (c) Not applicable

13. Gay Games

The Rev Ian Millican asked –

- (a) In light of the first of our fourfold policies, that is to call upon God for an outpouring of His Spirit, what action is the Archbishop taking, or encouraging parishes and other diocesan organisations to take, in respect of the Gay Games to be held in this city in a few weeks, and other public activities organised to promote homosexuality in our city, to –

- (i) cover all those involved in these games, and other activities, with prayer for their repentance and trust in Christ; and
 - (ii) cover all those in our Diocese not involved in these Games, and other activities, with prayer that they may resist Satan's temptations to think or act in ways which displease God?
- (b) In light of our Mission to proclaim our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, and the commitment of the Archbishop and this Synod to see that Christ is indeed proclaimed to all people, what action is the Archbishop taking, or encouraging parishes and other diocesan organisations to take, following on from the wonderful outreach at the Olympic Games, in seeking to proclaim Jesus to all those involved in the Gay Games, and in the various other public activities organised to promote homosexuality in Sydney?

To which the President replied –

- (a) I am grateful for the matters raised by Mr Millican. I have, as yet, done nothing along the lines that he proposes but will give consideration to his suggestions.
- (b) Again I thank Mr Millican for his encouragement. I am aware that St Michael's Church, Surry Hills undertakes a ministry each year during the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. St Michael's Church is opened each year during the Parade giving members of that church opportunities to speak to spectators and passers by. I understand fliers are distributed inviting people to come into the church. The church is open for prayer and for discussion with the ministers, parishioners and helpers from other churches of various denominations. Gospels and Bibles are distributed to everyone who wishes to have one. The parish of Surry Hills has asked for our prayers, ideas and help in this outreach.

14. Bible studies for people with limited literacy skills

Mrs Barbara O'Donnell asked –

Where in the mission strategy is allowance made for people of limited literacy (up to 10% of the Australian population)? Such persons may find traditional Bible studies very threatening and thus counter productive (ie they avoid attendance).

To which the President replied –

Although the mission strategy does not specifically refer to persons with limited literacy, this is exactly the type of group that we would want to better reach in terms of implementing the strategy. One of the Mission Initiatives considered by the Synod is to request research to be undertaken in the areas (geographical and sociological) where we are not reaching the community. I would encourage Mrs O'Donnell to make whatever suggestions she can to enable us better to reach persons of limited literacy.

15. Embryonic stem cell research

Mrs Heather Anderson asked –

With reference to the motion on embryonic stem cell research passed on 15 October 2002 without amendment (although an amendment was called on Monday) can we please have clarification in paragraph (b).

- (a) Does this mean that we are calling on no research on embryos created after 5 April or no use of IVF embryos created after 5 April?
- (b) Does it also mean that we agree to the use of embryos for research that were created before 5 April 2002? If not, what is to happen to them?
- (c) What is suggested to happen to "spare" embryos created after 5 April 2002?

To which the President replied –

I am informed the answers are as follows.

- (a) I understand paragraph (b) of the motion to advocate that “spare” IVF embryos created after 5 April 2002 should not be used for research.

The date of 5 April 2002 is significant because the Research Involving Embryos Bill, which is currently before the Senate, only deals with the use of “spare” IVF embryos for the purposes of research created before that date.

- (b) No.

The Social Issues Executive (which I chair) has consistently suggested that alternatives to research be considered for “spare” IVF embryos created before 5 April. One alternative, which is practised in the United States, is the adoption of spare embryos. If, as is likely, adoption is not possible for all 70,000 embryos in question, it would be better to retain them or to allow them to succumb in the most natural circumstances possible.

- (c) If we were to allow “spare” IVF embryos created before 5 April to succumb, this would be a recognition of the fact that it was wrong to create so many embryos in excess of the needs of IVF in the first place. The Social Issues Executive argues that “spare” embryos should not be created and that this could be achieved by developing technology to store sperm and eggs separately rather than creating embryos and then freezing them. So in essence, what is being suggested is that “spare” embryos not be created at all.

Could I add that we need to prevent the intentional stockpiling of embryos for research. As a community we must acknowledge our mistake in so doing, grieve the loss of these human lives and make sure it doesn't happen again. We should not be creating an industry out of embryos as research subjects.

16. Bible based churches

Mrs Elaine Langshaw asked –

For the purposes of the Diocesan Mission, Initial Goal of Mission which of the following churches are Bible based?

- (a) the Roman Catholic Church,
- (b) the Eastern Orthodox Churches,
- (c) the Coptic Christian Orthodox Church,
- (d) the Salvation Army,
- (e) the Uniting Church of Australia,
- (f) the Seventh Day Adventist Church,
- (g) the Pentecostal Churches,
- (h) the Hillsong Church?

To which the President replied –

Originally, I used the word Bible-believing, but I have changed it to Bible-based as in this question. Virtually all Christian churches and denominations can be characterised as “Bible-believing” in one sense or another. The challenge is to distinguish the role the Bible is given in the structure of authority. You will remember in my Presidential Address I said –

“By ‘Bible-based’ I have in mind in particular the churches which owe their theological structure to the Reformation, and who thus see their fundamental authority in the great ‘scripture alone’ of the Reformation. They give scripture the priority over the traditions of the church and the findings of human experience whether rationalistic or spiritualising. From the scriptures they preach a gospel that is shaped by salvation through Christ alone, by faith alone, through grace alone, to the glory of God alone. This is the Reformation understanding of the gospel. As I indicated last year, in inviting collaboration with classical Christian orthodoxy, I believe that this gospel itself is at stake in some of the disputes we have with our fellow Christians, and we cannot, even for the sake of mission, allow inclusion to become confusion. ‘Bible-based’ is not an invitation to theological and pastoral irresponsibility.”

The question invites us to examine the structure of authority taught within each of the denominations it mentions. In terms of my definition of "Bible-based" we would be seeking to include those denominations like our own which confess the doctrine of the sole and sufficient authority of scripture and justification by faith alone, ie what I call "the Reformation understanding of the gospel". Much as we may admire aspects of the Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches, this would distinguish us from them. As to whether other Protestant denominations fall into the same category, this would depend upon a closer examination of the basis of their association. Of course it is also true that most denominations represent a mixture of actual commitment to their confession, and this would need to be taken into account at a local level.

17. Alcohol policy (2)

The Rev Neil Flower asked –

In light of the answer to question 5 of Wednesday 16 October 2002, part (c) -

- (a) Who considered it desirable to permit the sale of liquor for the financial viability of the food court?
- (b) If the Standing Committee, was there full debate on the subject? If not, why not?
- (c) If not the Standing Committee, which person(s) or sub-committee took the decision and how was it decided in the Standing Committee?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answers are as follows.

- (a) The members of the Standing Committee who voted in favour of the Town Hall Arcade Ordinance 1998 considered it desirable to permit the sale or distribution of liquor for consumption with food or the consumption of liquor with food in the food court of the Town Hall Arcade.
- (b) The minutes of the relevant Standing Committee meeting do not record whether there was a debate on the subject. However as indicated in the answer to the question on 16 October, the amendment made by the ordinance was considered to be consistent with Synod resolution 13/96.
- (c) Not applicable.