



# HIGHLIGHTS

## OF THE CHURCH IN WALES GOVERNING BODY APRIL 2009

## The needs of children today

### Archbishop Barry's Presidential Address to the Governing Body

How is it that so many parents can be incapable of parenting a precious and vulnerable child without neglect or abuse? This was the question Archbishop Barry asked in his address to a Governing Body that heard much during its meeting about work with children, young people and families.

Archbishop Barry quoted some of the statistics about the state of children's well-being in the UK:

- 300 young children die each year from violence and neglect in their homes;
- 630 children are taken into care each month;
- 7,560 parents per year are assessed a danger to their children;
- at least 200,000 children are on the At Risk Register.



degree of individualism is necessary for survival. We would all see individual choice and self-determination as necessary for a good life, but this has to be balanced with a proper sense of care and responsibility for others."

#### Love

"We all know that the real needs of children are love, stability and happiness. Life begins in the family, and from a child's point of view a loving family is the key to a good start in life. The Children's Society's Good Childhood Report tells us that when children were asked what makes for a good life, what they wanted more than anything else was love. If children are loved and well-cared for they learn to give love and to feel good about themselves. Without love they find it difficult to give love or to empathise with others."

Parental conflict and separation can have a disastrous effect on children. Because of career demands, parents are not able to spend enough time with their children, and this affects family life. However children place great value on talking and by listened to by parents.

"We may all know the real needs of children, but we frequently refuse to recognise that these often come at a personal cost to ourselves and our own needs and desires – be they compromises in our earning capacity or career development, or commitment to and the need to work at a less than ideal relationship. Children are not ours by right but a sacred trust. They have to be nurtured and cared for." "We need a huge change in our thinking. Parenthood should not be embarked on lightly—it's the commitment of two people both to one another and to their child."

#### Poverty

The impact of the global recession is hitting families in Wales hard, with the appalling social impact of unemployment. "It is well documented that children who grow up in poverty are more likely to be in poor health, have learning and behavioural difficulties, underachieve at school, become pregnant at too early an age, have lower skills and aspirations, and be low paid or welfare dependent," said Archbishop Barry. 29% of children in Wales live in relative poverty, excluding them from the minimum acceptable way of life.

#### Individualism

Both the Rowntree Foundation and the Children's Society have recently produced reports on modern day social conditions—and both identify individualism, greed and a decline of community as the causes of problems with children and families. "Traditional beliefs have been weakened over recent decades and excessive individualism has filled the void," said Archbishop Barry. "Excessive individualism is defined as the belief that the prime duty of the individual is to make the most of his or her own life, rather than to contribute to the good of others. Of course some



This year is the 30th anniversary of the United Nations' **International Year of the Child**. Churches are called upon to adopt 2009 as a celebration of children and childhood by:

- reviewing their work with children and young people;
- celebrating children and young people's contribution in the life of the Church and wider society;
- challenging the Church to fresh vision and expression, inspired by the spirit of the child.

It is an opportunity to make 2009 a year in which the issues, injustices and challenges facing young people today can be highlighted. It gives the chance for work with children and young people to be celebrated and to facilitate new initiatives with and for young people.

The Standing Committee of the Governing Body decided that in order to mark the Year of the Child the theme for Governing Body meetings this year would be *Children, Young People and the Family*.



*The Governing Body met at Venue Cymru, Llandudno, on 21st and 22nd April 2009*



Archbishop Barry sees the problems in family life as a reflection of the malaise at the heart of society.

"Parents and children alike receive constant messages from society and the media that they need to possess more goods and compete successfully against others in workplaces and schools to attain the trappings their resulting wealth will bring. Values of generosity, justice and fairness become sacrificed to greed and selfishness, which in turn erode trust and a sense of community in society as a whole. In our busyness and self-absorption we have simply lost sight of the big picture." "We are constantly seeking a higher standard of living for ourselves and our children, but we will not confront the reality that there may simply be no future for our children or grandchildren if we fail to adjust our living standards and address the issue of global warming."

"The problem with young people today is us - the adults - and the society we have created, and there are no quick fixes. What we need is a major cultural shift, but all we are doing at the moment is trying to deal with the effects rather than the root causes." Archbishop Barry hopes that the global recession will help people realise the horrendous damage that self-interest and unbridled greed can do to the community as a whole. "Its causes well and truly belong to 'us' - comfortable Britain - and those that we are so fond of blaming for the ills of society are themselves products of a society we have created."

Jesus and children  
The background to everything Archbishop Barry said was what Jesus said about children: *Truly I tell you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.* "Jesus believed that children were not just an asset for the future or a commitment to be undertaken for the sake of society. They were of infinite value as children. They deserved as much respect and care as any other human being. They have qualities that may bring them closer to the kingdom of heaven than a great many adults. Children have an inalienable value quite independent of their use to us."

The full text of Archbishop Barry's speech can be found at [www.churchinwales.org.uk/structure/bishops/sermons/b34.html](http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/structure/bishops/sermons/b34.html)

## Children's Commissioner warns of budget threat to vulnerable children

Vital services for vulnerable children may be scrapped if public funding is cut any further, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Mr **Keith Towler**, warned the Governing Body.



In answer to a question from Mrs **Ros Crawford** (St Asaph) asking why so many organisations are finding it so difficult to get money to help children and young people, Mr Towler said the honeymoon period of the Welsh Assembly Government's funding settlement was over and that Wales was already struggling to look after its most vulnerable children.

He warned that further cuts to community and voluntary organisations in Wales, such as *Headstart*, would lead to them pulling out of Wales or closing down. Mr Towler said, "The critical question for the Budget is how will it put a roadmap in place to ensure Wales will reach its target of eradicating

child poverty by 2020 because at the moment we are way off track. "The voluntary and community sector is talking to me about closure and that worries me greatly. It will be the preventative work which

will go first – work that prevents young people ending up sleeping on the streets, offending or put in mental wards. And that will put pressure on all services further down the line."

The Commissioner paid tribute to the work churches do with children and young people in local communities and he urged them to work in partnership with his office in taking such work forward. He said, "In Wales we have teenagers on our streets having to find somewhere to sleep for the night, find their own way to school or get a job placement. Surely as a civilised society we can do better than that for our children? I believe a society is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable people."

## The work of the Children's Commissioner

It was the 1999 National Assembly of Wales Health and Social Services Committee Consultation and the 2000 Waterhouse Report *Lost in Care* which led to the appointment of a Children's Commissioner for Wales.

The Commissioner's remit is to safeguard and promote the rights of children and young people. He works to make sure that children and young people are kept safe and that they know about and can access their rights. He has to consider the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in all the work that he does. This sets the minimum standards for children and young people's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. While this was ratified by the UK government in 1971, there has not been much real progress in the observations of the Convention in the



last six years. Mr Towler identified a number of highlights in his work in the past year—the UK Commissioners' Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Children; the *Happy Talent* review of local authority strategies for access to play for children and young people; the development of the website [www.childcom.org.uk](http://www.childcom.org.uk); and *BackChat* which gives the opportunity for children to feed in comments to the Commissioner. Two reports will be published in the next year—*Young Carers* and *Make learning better*. The

overall work of the Commissioner is to ensure there is a positive image of children and young people. Archbishop Barry expressed the appreciation of the GB for the work Mr Towler does on behalf of the children of Wales.





When in October 2001 the Children's Society announced its decision to withdraw from all activity in Wales, The Archbishop of Wales Fund for Children was immediately set up to continue, as best possible, work with children and young people. The aim of the Fund is to relieve need, hardship, sickness, handicap and distress amongst children and young people in Wales. The Fund receives applications for support from projects all over Wales, and has so far awarded £289,000 to these. They cover a wide diversity of activity: Family Centres, Play and Activities Clubs, children's work in parishes, Scout Groups, and Church in Wales Primary Schools. All exist for the benefit of children, young people and their families, and are based in all the Welsh Dioceses.

The Revd **Michael Williams**, the chair of the Fund, in thanking all who support it, stressed it was an important life-line for important projects.



ROOTS is an ecumenical publication based on the *Revised Common Lectionary*, providing a wealth of material to support the week by week worship and learning of the whole Church community. It consists of two bi-monthly magazines for leaders – *ROOTS Adult & All Age* and *ROOTS Children & Young People* – supplemented by [www.rootsonthe web.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com).

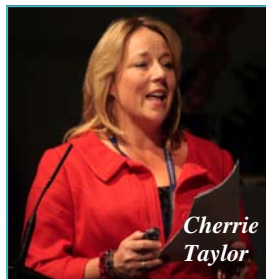
The Revd Dr **Susan Jones** (Bangor), one of the panel of writes for ROOTS, demonstrated the development of the website, which will include provision for bilingual prayers and other material for bilingual worship. However this needs £3000 to be viable.

## Children and Parents—A Strategy for the Future

“3.9 million children live in poverty in Britain” - this was stark statistic given to the GB by **Cherrie Taylor**, the Executive Officer of the Swansea and Brecon Diocesan Board for Social Responsibility. “The situation is dire—and it is going to get worse because of the recession.”



“While children in this country may not be going hungry as in other countries, many are eating irregularly and unhealthily. They are not going to after-school clubs because they haven't got the £1 to pay, not going on school trips, not having the correct school uniform. They are not being safe in their own home because their parents cannot afford the right equipment.”



Cherrie Taylor

“A child at 22 months of age in poverty falls behind in achievement, and is less likely to gain GCSEs or go to university in later life.”

“Child poverty costs the country at least £25 billion per year, but only £12 billion is spent on public services to deal with the fall-out of child poverty.”

“Tony Blair promised to break the cycle of disadvantage so that children born into poverty are not condemned to social exclusion and deprivation. Gordon Brown said that child poverty is a scar on the soul of Britain. Archbishop Barry said, ‘We want to give people life as Jesus did, new purpose, wholeness and peace instead of horrors.’”

“The family is one of the most powerful institutions throughout the world. When the prodigal son had nothing left, he returned to his family. We need to be the family to children in poverty.”

Cherrie described the work being carried out by the Swansea and Brecon Diocesan Board for Social Responsibility through its family centres and outreach projects, such

as the Bonymaen Family Centre and the Port Tennant Development Project. “Effective service provision for adults is vital for children. There are glimmers of hope when there is a vital relationship with parents. The key is working in partnership with parents.” Throughout the Diocese there are 400 support and help groups, 600 play groups, 10 weeks of play schemes, after-school clubs, trips and outings organised. The work involves listening to children, finding out what they would like to do, and therefore empowering them. This work is also taking place throughout Wales at diocesan and parish level as church premises are widely used, with the involvement of many people. “We, as Christians, must be as passionate as Jesus in giving all the opportunities for love, growth and life in all its fullness.”

What should be strategy for the future? “Early work can and does have a significant impact later in life. This does not involve complex interventions or schemes—small projects make a substantial difference. Early work can be very cost effective, as later in life it will be costly. We need to encourage politicians to take a long term view. Society wants instant solutions, but work in parenting is long term. The Church in Wales should be proud of the work it does in this, because it is about transforming lives.”

The **Bishop of Swansea and Brecon** commended the work with parents through the various projects. “We can instil into children a sense of wonder, awe and self-worth, through our activities, but society often rubbishes that. We must ensure the cycle of deprivation is fractured and that a sense of direction is given.”





## The Mothers' Union in Wales



The Mother's Union Provincial President, Mrs **Mary Salmon**, dispelled the stereotyped image of grandmothers over 70 making tea. The Mothers' Union today is a lively Christian organisation with more than 3.6 million members in 79 countries worldwide. Membership is open to everyone—male and female—baptised in the name of the Trinity. Its *vision* is of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships. Its *aim and purpose* is to demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the transformation of communities worldwide through the nurture of the family in its many forms.



Mary Salmon

There is a total membership of the MU in Wales of over 10,000. The Christian faith is shown in action through a variety of projects in each

diocese. Two child-contact centres are managed in *Bangor Diocese* by the MU. *Llandaff Diocese* has its own holiday caravan at Trecco Bay, Porthcawl, offering free holidays to those whose family life has met with adversity. Members in *Monmouth Diocese* make trauma teddies for orphanages in Africa, often the first toy the child has been given. *St Asaph Diocese* is putting Books of Comfort into local hospices. *St Davids Diocese* supports NightStop UK which provides overnight accommodation for homeless young people, MU members making up toiletry bags for those youngsters with no belongings of their own. Through the Start Up Project, *Swansea and Brecon Diocese* members provide basic kitchen materials for young people leaving care and setting up their first home.

MU members work in prisons, refuge centres, contact centres, support overseas projects—it is still as relevant today as it was when founded 133 years ago.

## Meeting young people where they are

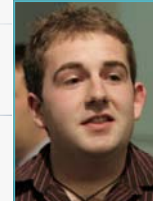
"The sense of guilt at the lack of young people attending church is not a good thing," said **Tim Feak**, the under-25s Officer for St Asaph Diocese, introducing the presentation on work with young people in the Diocese. "We must recognise that the culture of the nation has changed—we live in a different society from even five years ago. We have to meet young people where they are, not expecting them to come to Sunday services; and we have to meet all their needs, not expecting clergy and youth workers to have all the answers.

Youth culture is rapidly moving on. What can the Church do? What possible role can we play?"

St Asaph Diocese has a clear strategy, which is supported through grants available for youth work in parishes.

### 1. Establishing teams of youth workers

**Ben Lines**, the Holywell Deanery youth worker, described his work as seeking to build up relationships with young people. "They have something to say—if we are prepared to listen to them." Youth work is becoming more professional; however we need reflective practitioners—everything the Church does in youth work needs to be grounded in theology.



From top left: Tim Feak, Ben Lines, Hilary Murray, Rob Barker.

### 2. Developing Partnerships

The Church Army bus project, based in Chester Diocese, was described by the project leader **Rob Barker**.

Volunteers from churches make contact with young people in a variety of situations. The bus hosts a coffee bar that is often the hub of the work, focused on building relationships of trust with those who climb on board. This enables young people to engage with the body of Christ in a local community.

### 3. Increasing the capacity of volunteers

"It is volunteers who provide the glue that holds the work together," said Tim. The diocese resources and sustains those engaged in youth work through cluster groups, networks and conferences, giving them a sense of belonging to something bigger than their local church, and being valued and encouraged. **Hilary Murray** described her work as a volunteer in Bala. Age is not a deterrent to who works with young people, plenty of resources are available, and training is given at various levels. Youth workers should allow young people to express their faith and beliefs freely without restrictions—and help them feel safe. "While we need professionals badly to coordinate, volunteers remain the mainstay of the work."

## Addressing the deficiencies in work with children and young people

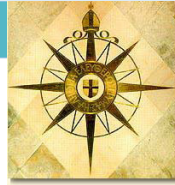
The GB commended the work of the projects and organisations that had made presentations, and the contributions they are making to supporting children, young people and families in Wales. "We tend to forget how much work goes on—this has given us a flavour," said Archbishop Barry.

His Honour Judge **Philip Price** QC (Monmouth) said the presentations show the urgent need to address the fundamental deficiencies in work with children and young people. "The care system is thorough and expensive—

but money is going in at the wrong end.

Parents have no modelling system on how to parent themselves. The downward cycle of deprivation must be broken." "We have excellent social workers, and organisations to help, but they are coming in at the end, not the beginning. A great deal is being done by Church members to get in at the beginning. We have the people, we have the skills, we have buildings for contact centres and support groups. Let's do more, because there is so much to be done."





In November 2007 a Church in Wales response to a first draft Anglican Covenant was submitted to the Anglican Communion Office. In March 2008 a revised new draft Covenant document, named the St Andrew's Draft was produced in the light of comments from across the Anglican Communion. The Bench of Bishops of the Church in Wales, aided by a small group of Welsh theologians, prepared a Response and this was submitted in March 2009. The Governing Body was asked to take note of the Response.

However, since the agenda of the GB was circulated, the St Andrew's Draft had been superseded by a third draft Covenant, the *Ridley Cambridge Draft*. As Archbishop Barry explained to the GB, this draft was produced in the light of the comments—including those from the Church in Wales—on the previous draft. The questions asked of the Province are:

*Does the text of the Covenant provide effective means to strengthen and/or promote our common life as a Communion?*

*Given the Covenant process which has been followed in preparing this, can your Province now proceed to make a decision on this text?*

The Revd Canon Dr **Peter Sedgwick**, convener of the group that prepared the Church in Wales response to the St Andrew's Draft, said he looked forward to seeing how the Anglican Communion was going to resolve the issues of authority which have been around for many years. The underlying tension is the need to empower the whole people of God, but within a hierarchical structure. The three great issues since the 1980s—the ordination of women, homosexuality, and lay presidency—have led Anglican provinces to respond in different ways, depending on their understanding of authority. "How do we, as the Anglican Communion, manage the tension?"

Bishop **Gregory Cameron** (St Asaph), the secretary of the Covenant Design Group, explained the major changes in the new draft, which will be presented to the Anglican Consultative Council, meeting in Jamaica in May 2009. The Covenant affirms the autonomy of each Province; it cannot amend or override the Constitution and Canons of any Province. However it also emphasises the relational and theological category of 'communion', providing a system by which an action can be determined to have a destructive impact on the common life and witness of the Communion, and an ordered way to assess the relational consequences which such an action may have. The Draft declares: "We recognise the importance of renewing in a solemn way our commitment to one another, and to the common understanding of faith and order we have received, so that the bonds of affection which hold us together may be re-affirmed and intensified."

**Summary of the Church in Wales Response**

- The Church in Wales is committed to the *process* of the Covenant.
- However, some find the concept of a Covenant difficult, others have concern about its nature, others recognise the need.
- The covenant process should be *dynamic*—allowing for movement and development in matters of doctrine and understanding truth. It should be mindful of the role of the Holy Spirit, the needs of the human person, the evolving nature of context, and of the historical process.
- Anglican *Via Media* must be retained and reinforced—combining order and freedom.
- Authority should be focused through conciliarity in a developed Anglican Consultative Council, modelled on participatory and egalitarian principles.
- The Church in Wales would have to face a very difficult Constitutional issue: would it be willing to surrender its autonomy to an outside body? It would be giving others the ability to give direction about the course of action that the Church in Wales should take—be it the Primates, the Anglican Consultative Council or the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- "The Covenant could be a more generous document, couched as an invitation. It should be an instrument of listening before anything else. We need to steward ourselves to give attention to the 'bonds' as well as the 'affection'. We ought to ask 'What can we do for the Communion?', not vice versa."

*The text of the Ridley Cambridge Draft can be found at*  
[http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/ridley\\_cambridge/draft\\_text.cfm](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/ridley_cambridge/draft_text.cfm)



**Bishop Gregory Cameron**

In answer to a question by Miss **Patricia Davies** (Llandaff) asking whether the Bishops would revisit the request to appoint another Provincial Assistant Bishop, since the decision not to was felt to be an act of injustice by some, Archbishop Barry said:

"We as Bishops of the Church in Wales have pledged that we will offer, and are indeed offering, pastoral and sacramental care to every member of the Church in Wales, without exception. That's what bishops are for – to minister to the whole Church and that is what we promised to do at our consecration. I honestly believe we try and do that to the best of our ability as bishops.

"We have also given an assurance that there is room in the Church in Wales for those who in conscience cannot accept the ordination of women. However, we are not minded as bishops to perpetuate a system whereby conscientious objectors may avoid not only the ministry of ordained women but also the ministry of male bishops who have ordained them. That leads in the end to fundamental division and a denial that things are other than they are – that we do live in a Church that ordains both women and men.

"There is a difference between recognising the fact that some individuals hold personal views that are at variance with what the Governing Body has decided about the ordination of women and reflecting those views in the structures of the Church as if the Church in Wales as a whole had doubts about women's ordination and the bishops who ordained them. That to my mind would be a real act of injustice – to ordained women, bishops, indeed to the whole Church."



*Archbishop Barry preaching at the Governing Body Eucharist, Holy Trinity Church, Llandudno, Tuesday 21st April.*

## BACK TO CHURCH



*Back to Church Sunday*, a Church of England initiative, was piloted in the Church in Wales last year by the Diocese of Llandaff. The Revd Canon **Val Hamer**, the Llandaff Diocesan Missioner, explained this 'simple but powerful initiative' in which people who do not attend church are personally invited to accompany a church-goer on a particular Sunday. "While of course asking someone to go to church with us should be on-going, having a particular Sunday as a whole Church initiative, with the resultant wider publicity, encourages those in the community to come back, as they won't feel they are standing out."

The 2009 theme for Back to Church Sunday is 'Come as you are'. The designated Sunday is 27th September, but another Sunday may be more appropriate in a particular parish. Information and resources can be found at [www.backtochurch.co.uk](http://www.backtochurch.co.uk).

## RETIREMENT AGE

The longest debate at this GB was over the following recommendations of the Standing Committee:

- the 75 age limit for churchwardens should also apply to sub-wardens;
- the age limit for lay members of the Electoral College should be raised from 70 to 75;
- an age limit of 75 should be introduced for lay members of the Provincial Court;
- the age limit for clergy on provincial bodies or committees should be 70 or the date of retirement if earlier.
- sub-wardens shall not be eligible for re-election or re-appointment following the completion of six consecutive terms of office, except by dispensation from the archdeacon.

The difficulty of finding people to hold office, particularly in the smaller rural parishes, was highlighted. Lord **David Rowe-Beddoe** (ex-officio) thought it was contradictory that while we supported the welfare of children, we were not supporting those entering their 'second childhood'. However, others felt there was a failure to hand on leadership in order to bring new life.

When put, the recommendation was accepted and will come to the GB at a later date for legislation through bill procedure.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTION



### Where can couples be married?

In 2008, the Church of England changed the law determining where a couple can be married. As a result, in England, a person with a "qualifying connection" with a church can be married in that church. A "qualifying connection" is having been baptised in the church; having resided, or a parent having resided, in the parish for at least six months at any time; or a parent or grandparent having been married in the parish. However, this does not apply to Wales, where its "current residence" that determines where a couple can be married.

It is only through an Archbishop of Canterbury's Special Licence (costing £144) that a couple with a "qualifying connection" as understood in the Church of England can be married in a Church in Wales church. To change the law for Wales would require an amendment to the 1949 Marriage Act, and this would not happen without Government support.

As a result of the Private Members' motion brought before the GB, it is hoped that discussions with Welsh MPs would lead to contacts with the appropriate government departments, and that with the support of the Welsh Assembly Government, agreement can be reached for the presentation to Parliament of a Bill which would receive Governmental support and be enacted.

Archdeacon **Malcolm Squires** (St Asaph), in proposing the motion, stressed that its purpose was to

### The Motion

That the Governing Body:

- (i) note that as a result of the Church of England Marriage Measure 2008 the qualifications for entitlement to be married in Church in the Church in Wales are now different from those which apply in the Church of England, and that this is likely to cause tensions especially, although not exclusively, in areas close to the border; and
- (ii) noting that an Act of Parliament will be required to change the law applicable in the Church in Wales so that it mirrors that which applies in England request the Standing Committee to take the appropriate steps to encourage the enactment of such legislation.

test the will of the GB—should we try to change the situation in Wales? GB agreed—and the motion was carried overwhelmingly. The 'can do' lawyers were asked to 'get on with it'.

## PRAYER BOOK

A Bill to incorporate into the Book of Common Prayer additional orders of service for Morning and Evening Prayer was passed by the Governing Body. The new book, which will also include an order for Prayer during the Day and an order for Night Prayer, will be available fairly shortly. It will be published by Canterbury Press at about £15.

In answer to a question as to whether consideration has been given to the bilingual publication of the Church in Wales' three year lectionary, the Bishop of Monmouth said that Church in Wales Publications is considering this. In the meantime, the texts are available bilingually on CD.

## CONGRATULATIONS



The GB warmly congratulated a long-serving member, Miss **Sylvia Scarf**, on being awarded the OBE, for 'services to the Anglican Communion and to Girl Guiding in Wales'. Sylvia received her award from the Queen in March.

## ST MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



In presenting the Annual Report of St Michael's Theological College, Llandaff, the Principal, the Revd Canon Dr **Peter Sedgwick**, said that the College now has the largest residential community (28 students) for many years, and 55 students following non-residential courses. The College is awaiting its inspection report. Members of staff will be contributing towards the work on vocations initiated by the bishops. A business plan for developing and modernising the College buildings will be presented to the Representative Body in November, and it is hoped work will begin in 2010.

## NEW WELSH BISHOPS



The GB welcomed the four new Welsh bishops consecrated since its last meeting: *from left to right* Wyn Evans, St Davids; Gregory Cameron, St Asaph; David Wilbourne, assistant Bishop of Llandaff; and Andrew John, Bangor.

## PUBLICATIONS CHANGE



On behalf of the GB, Archbishop Barry thanked Mr **Hendrick Haye** (*right*) for his loyal, faithful and enthusiastic eighteen and half years' service as Church in Wales Publications Manager. 'Henry', as he is known to all, retires at the end of April 2009, and has been succeeded by Mr **Ritchie Craven** (*left*).

## SUPERMARKETS AND BRITISH FARMING

### Fairtrade begins at home

The pursuit of cheap food coupled with the buying power of the big supermarkets is putting farming livelihoods at risk, says a recent Church of England report.

Making farmers pay for supermarkets' own promotions is just one of a number of invisible and pernicious practices squeezing farm-gate prices.

The GB, in passing the motion, agreed with the Church of England that a wider debate is urgently needed on the effects of retailers extracting 'below cost' supply agreements from farmers and their effect on a sustainable and flourishing agricultural sector.

The report identifies a number of invisible and pernicious practices that the consumer is largely unaware of and which have been accepted by farmers as a *fait accompli* as part of the price of doing business. These include:

- products labelled as British but often only processed or packaged here and obscuring the country of origin of the primary ingredients;
- flexible contract terms that seldom work to the advantage of the farmer;
- flexible payment terms subject to arbitrary change that often put farmers to an increased cost or financial loss;
- facilitation payments, deductions and a range of financial inducements paid to the retailer or processor at the farmer's expense;
- little evidence that retailers share the benefits of promotions with farmers, and much evidence that farmers, in the main, bear the costs.

In proposing the motion, the **Bishop of Swansea and Brecon** said that as a result of looking at this issue, those who deal with the investments of the Church in Wales should do so in an ethical way. The **Archdeacon of St Davids**, in seconding, called on investors to be 'responsible shareholders'. The Church in Wales must develop its ethical investment policy in a proactive rather than reactive way.

The Revd **Eileen Davies**, the Rural Life Advisor for St Davids Diocese, herself a farmer, said that fair trade should start at home. The ethos of fair trade is a fair price for a product—but this is not what British farmers are receiving from supermarkets. A farmer is paid 20p for a litre of milk which the supermarket sells for 75p. "Buy one get one free" is not altruism on the part of the supermarket—it's the farmer who has to reduce the price in order to get the supermarket's order. "This is not asking for farmers to be treated in a special way—what we are asking for is fairness."

The Revd **Roger Jones** (St Davids) hoped this motion would encourage people to think about supermarkets practices, and challenge them.

*The report Fairtrade begins at home can be downloaded from [www.cofe.anglican.org/info/ethical/policystatements/fairtrade.pdf](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/ethical/policystatements/fairtrade.pdf)*



### The Motion

- That the Governing Body:
- welcome the Report entitled *Fairtrade begins at Home – Supermarkets and the effect on British farming livelihoods* as a valuable contribution to understanding the current economic and commercial context both for food producers and consumers;
  - commend the Report for study and action where appropriate by all who have pastoral care of farming communities in Wales;
  - ask the Church's investors to take account of the Report and to use such shareholder influence as they may to ensure justice for rural communities.



The Governing Body next meets on 16th & 17th September 2009, at the University of Wales, Lampeter.

# Rebuilding Gaza Family Health Centre

It was the evening of 12th January 2009 when the Venerable Philip Morris, co-ordinator of the Church in Wales Jubilee Fund, received the news that the Shija'ia Family Health Centre, Gaza City, run by the Near East Council of Churches (NECC), had been completely destroyed by an Israeli missile. This provided free primary health care to 70,000 people in one of the poorest areas of Gaza, including mother and child clinics, ante and post-natal care, family planning and a pharmacy. It was at this Centre that the mobile dental clinic, completely funded by the Church in Wales, was garaged and based.



Miss **Sylvia Scarf** OBE (Llandaff), in proposing a motion commending support for the Shija'ia Family Health Centre, deplored the random rocket attacks by Hamas militants into Southern Israel, and the death, damage and injury among the civilian population of Gaza during 'Operation Cast Lead' at the beginning of the year. "By helping the NECC in the rebuilding and restocking of the Centre, we would be doing something to try and relieve some of the stress and long term effects of the conflict." "The Christian community in Gaza is small but significant in its work, especially medical and vocational work, and the staff and volunteers there rely on our prayers and material aid as they work among a large population in a small area."

"Whatever your views of the politics of the Palestine/Israel disputes, whatever your views on who is or isn't at fault in the conflict, we are asking you at this Eastertide to pray, to give generously and to fund raise for the Christian community in Gaza as they seek to share Christ's love and compassion for the devastated people of Gaza."

"The mobile dental clinic is such a familiar sight in the districts of Gaza City in which it works, with its red dragon so prominent on the sides and the front," said the Venerable

**Philip Morris** (Llandaff).

The actual dental clinic was not damaged in the attack, but all its equipment and medicines were lost.

"The Clinic is now operating out of a borrowed house – the work will continue, there is such determination by the NECC to fulfil its vision of helping create a Palestinian society in Gaza where people receive adequate health and educational services and enjoy a better quality of life. This is its Christian commitment to the people of Gaza – by supporting this motion and raising funds for the Shaja'ia Family Health Centre and the mobile dental clinic, we can be a source of strength for the continuation of Christian witness and presence in the Gaza Strip."

Archdeacon Philip expressed the gratitude of the Fund to all who had donated in the first few months of 2009 – over £40,000. In his Annual Report, Constantine Dabbagh says "this Diakonia goes further than response to charitable and humanitarian deeds-it is an expression of love and a real sense of solidarity."

The motion when put was passed *nem.con*. Members promised to drink coffee on 2nd May in aid of the Fund.

## The Motion

That the Governing Body:

- (i) express its sympathy to the Near East Council of Churches and the people of the Shija'ia district of Gaza City at the destruction of its Family Health Centre by an Israeli missile on 10 January 2009;
- (ii) commend the work of the Church in Wales Jubilee Fund in supporting the NECC in the rebuilding of the Family Health Centre and the restocking of medicines and equipment for the pharmacy and mobile dental clinic;
- (iii) ask parishes to raise money for the Fund and its work in partnership with the NECC in Gaza, particularly through "Wales' Biggest Coffee Morning" on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and other events.

The Diocese of Monmouth was responsible for arranging the worship at this GB.



The Eucharist on the Tuesday and Wednesday was held at Holy Trinity Church, Llandudno—in the Diocese of Bangor.



Choral Evensong was held at St Paul's Church, Craig y Don, Llandudno—in the Diocese of St Asaph. The service was sung by members of St Paul's Choir and singers from *Sedecim*.



The collection at the GB Eucharists amounted to £986 and will be given to the Archbishops' (Canterbury and York) Appeal for Zimbabwe. Members were asked to support the Anglican dioceses and parishes in that country as they desperately try to witness to God's love and address mounting needs.

## HIGHLIGHTS

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