

GENERAL SYNOD

PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION

BISHOP GEORGE BELL AND THE CARLILE REPORT

Proposed by Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich)

That this Synod:

- a. express its appreciation to Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE QC for his thorough review of the way the Church of England dealt with a complaint of sexual abuse made by a woman known as 'Carol' against the late Bishop George Bell;
- b. acknowledge and accept unreservedly the serious criticisms of the investigation carried out by the Core Group charged with investigating the complaint, as set out by Lord Carlile in his conclusions at paragraph 254 of his report, dated 15 December 2017 [GS Misc 1173];
- c. note that the effect of those conclusions can only be that the process was so fundamentally flawed that any finding, explicit or implicit, that Bishop Bell committed the alleged acts of sexual abuse, cannot stand or be sustained, regardless of the fact that determining the guilt or innocence of Bishop Bell was excluded from Lord Carlile's terms of reference;
- d. accordingly, acknowledge that Bishop Bell's reputation as one of the great bishops of the Church of England is restored untarnished;
- e. regret the distress caused both to Bishop Bell's surviving relative and to 'Carol' by the Core Group's inadequate investigation;
- f. regret that the statement made by the Church of England on 22 October 2015, announcing the settlement of a civil claim by Carol against the current Bishop of Chichester was, as is now revealed to be the case by Lord Carlile, both inaccurate (in stating that the settlement followed a "thorough" pre-litigation process) and disingenuous (in stating that none of the expert independent reports commissioned "found any reason to doubt the veracity of [Carol's] claim");
- g. regret that the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his public statement on 15 December 2017 following the publication of the Carlile report, (i) failed to acknowledge expressly that the process was so fundamentally flawed; (ii) failed to accept Lord Carlile's recommendation that where, as in the case of Bishop Bell, a settlement is made without

admission of liability, it should generally be with a confidentiality provision, and (iii) stated that “a significant cloud” was left over Bishop Bell’s name, when the only basis for such statement was a single uncorroborated allegation, first made over 40 years after the alleged events, when Professor Anthony Maden (the expert instructed by the Core Group) had said that “*memory is not reliable over such long periods of time*” and that “*after so many years there is no way of determining without reference to corroborating information whether or not recall is accurate*”;

- h. accordingly, call upon the Archbishop to retract that particular statement; and
- i. call upon those institutions that responded to the Church’s statement of 22 October 2015 by writing Bishop Bell out of their history, to reinstate Bell’s name and restore him to their historical narrative.

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