



For the attention of the House of Bishops

c/o Mr Christopher Smith  
Archbishop's Chief of Staff  
Lambeth Palace  
London  
SE1 7JU

6 December 2012

We, the undersigned, deeply regret that the House of Laity of the General Synod of the Church of England failed to reach the two-thirds majority required to pass legislation enabling women to be ordained Bishop. This was a huge disappointment delivering a devastating blow to the Church of England and undermining its credibility among the people of the nation it seeks to serve. It is a missed opportunity to see women and men sharing fully in the mission, ministry and leadership of the Church of England. Other Anglican provinces have found a way of doing so and been enriched by the ministry of both male and female bishops as a consequence.

There is overwhelming support for women bishops in both the church and throughout the country. We have been discussing this issue for a generation and working on the details of this compromise legislation for over ten years. Almost 73% of General Synod members voted in favour of women bishops, challenging the legitimacy of a voting process that is able to frustrate the mandate of forty-two out of forty-four Diocesan Synods. This decision may be legally binding, but it carries no moral authority, undermining the process of representation the Synodical system is supposed to enshrine.

We welcome the statement issued on the conclusion of the Meeting of the Archbishops' Council on 27-28 November 2012, and the decision that a process to admit women to the episcopate be restarted as soon as possible.

We offer our prayerful support to members of the House of Bishops as they prepare to meet shortly in December and ask them to explore, as a matter of great urgency, every possible avenue to effect the will of the Church on this issue.

We urge them to support the recommendation of the Archbishops' Council to put in place a clear process for discussions in the New Year with a view to bringing new legislative proposals before the General Synod as a matter of urgency, convening in February 2013 if necessary.

We ask the House of Bishops to end the theological anomaly of women priests who cannot be ordained as bishops by bringing forward the simplest possible form of legislation without delay, thus fully recognising and affirming the vital importance of women's ministry in the church.

We strongly support the principle that a woman appointed to be a bishop must be a bishop on exactly the same terms as her male colleagues, whilst recognising the need to make pastoral provision for those unable to accept the ministry of women bishops. However a new way forward must be found and one which does not enshrine discrimination on the grounds of gender.

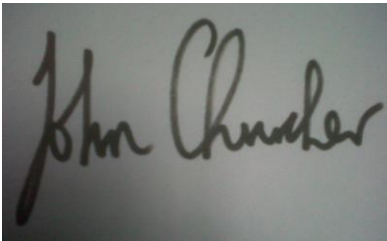
In the meantime, we continue to celebrate all the ways in which women enrich the life of the church and look forward to their leadership as bishops.



Rev'd Ian Wallis  
Chair, St Mark's CRC  
On behalf of CRC Council



Rev'd Jonathan Clatworthy  
General Secretary, Modern Church  
On behalf of the Trustees of Modern Church



John Churcher  
Chair, PCN Britain  
On behalf of PCN Committee



Rev'd Canon Diana Gwilliams  
Chair, Inclusive Church  
On behalf of the Trustees of Inclusive Church