

2007 Report to General Synod

DOCTRINE COMMISSION

Membership

The Most Reverend Dr PF Jensen, MA, ThL, BD, DPhil (Chair).

The Reverend Dr P Adam ThL, BD, MTh, PhD.

The Reverend Dr S Cowdell BSc, BTh, BA (Hons), PhD.

The Right Reverend Dr GN Davies, BSc, MDiv (Hons), ThM (Hons), DipA, PhD.

The Reverend Dr JDS Dunnill, BA (Hons), DipTh, CertEd, PhD.

The Reverend Dr D Edwards BD (Hons), GradCertEd, PhD.

Dr Lorna Hallahan BSocWk, PhD.

Dr Muriel Porter OAM, BA, LittB, MA (Theol), PhD.

The Reverend Dr Andrew McGowan, BA (Hons), BD (Hons), MA, PhD.

Dr Heather Thomson BSW, BTh, MTh, PhD.

The Reverend M Stead, BCom, BD(Hons), DipMin is secretary to the Commission

The Revd Dr Andrew McGowan was appointed to the Commission in 2005. Following the retirement of the Most Reverend Dr P F Carnley AO in May 2005, the Most Reverend Dr PF Jensen was appointed as chairman. Following the resignation of the Revd Dr Graeme Garrett from the Commission in November 2005, the Primate, on the advice of the General Synod Standing Committee, appointed the Revd Dr Peter Adam and Dr Heather Thomson to the Commission in December 2006. (Dr Adam had served as a consultant to the Commission since 2003).

Meetings

The Doctrine Commission met in Melbourne in May 2005, February 2006 and February 2007.

About the Reports of the Doctrine Commission

Where a report is given in the name of the Doctrine Commission, it represents the opinion of the Commission as a whole. Where a report is listed under the name(s) of its author(s) writing 'on behalf of the Doctrine Commission', it represents the opinion of its author(s) which has been endorsed by the Commission and commended for consideration by the wider Church, though not all members of the Commission may necessarily agree with everything in the report. Where a report (or essay) is listed under the name of its author alone, it represents the opinions of its author, writing as a member of the Doctrine Commission.

Agenda

In 2005, the Bishops' Conference requested that the Doctrine Commission examine mission ecclesiology, in dialogue with the particular issues raised by the Cray Report (*Mission Shaped Church*). During 2005 and 2006, the Doctrine Commission devoted significant time to the preparation of a series of essays in response to the theological issues raised by this book, on the following topics:

Introducing *Mission Shaped Church* - Michael Stead

A Theology of Church – Glenn Davies

Incarnational Theology for a Missionary Church – Peter Adam

Church and Community: The Church at Mission Transforming Society - Don Edwards
The Mission-Shaped Church and the Foundation of Christian Disciples - John Dunnill
Worship and the 'Mission-Shaped' Church - Andrew McGowan
Holy Spirit and Mission: Captivity and Charism in *Mission Shaped Church* - Scott Cowdell

These essays were published in a dedicated edition of the *St Mark's Review* in June 2006.

In 2005, the Doctrine Commission was asked by Standing Committee (SC2005/1/091) to study the Rochester Report ('*Women Bishops in the Church of England?*') and report back on its major themes and possible relevance to the Australian situation. Scott Cowdell prepared a report on behalf of the Commission which highlighted key themes, and concluded that, while the report was very useful as a resource which presented both sides of the debate, there was limited applicability to the Australian situation because of differences between English and Australian church polity, and that in practical terms, the report did not go beyond ground already covered in the 2004 Draft Issues Paper of the Working Group on Women in the Episcopate.

In 2005, the Doctrine Commission was asked to discuss the theological issues arising in connection with the Agreed Statement on Christology of the International Anglican Orthodox Commission (IAOOC). Andrew McGowan produced a report on behalf of the Doctrine Commission, which, inter alia, encouraged the IAOOC to consider elucidation of the Agreed Statement, particularly of clause 2, so as to resolve possible ambiguities regarding the use of the word "nature".

In 2005, the Doctrine Commission was asked by the Standing Committee to advise in relation to a proposed bill in relation to the admission of children to Holy Communion. In June 2005, Glenn Davies prepared a response on behalf of the Commission, which was circularised to the proponents of the bill.

For the past three years, the Doctrine Commission has been examining the theological issues surrounding sexual and other forms of abuse, in response to various references from General Synod, Standing Committee and the Professional Standards Commission. We recognise that we still have considerable work to do before offering a full-scale report, and have planned further research on the subject under such themes as power and authority, the culture of the church, truth and reconciliation, the nature of sex, and the nature of sin. However, because of the importance of the subject, the Doctrine Commission has produced a brief interim Report on this subject, which we have recommended for distribution to this General Synod.

The Doctrine Commission has considered a report prepared by Glenn Davies, which argued for an amendment to the *Solemnization of Matrimony Canon 1981*. The report argues that the requirement in the Canon that at least one of the parties to be married must be baptised, ought to be removed. The Doctrine Commission supports the proposed amendment, and has asked the Standing Committee to promote a Bill to General Synod to this effect.

In June 2006, Archbishop Jensen and Dr Scott Cowdell jointly prepared a response to "Four Questions" issued for discussion by the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC).

In 2006, the Doctrine Commission began examining the matter of the Reservation of the Sacrament and Extended Communion, as referred by Standing Committee (SC2005/2/008). Peter Adam and Andrew McGowan prepared a comprehensive paper, which was discussed by

the Commission at its meeting in February 2007. Arising from this discussion, Drs Adam and McGowan have prepared a subsequent paper for the consideration of Standing Committee.

In 2007, the Doctrine Commission examined the issue of cohabitation between a man and a woman, at the request of Standing Committee (SC 2006/1/031), and provided its report to Standing Committee.

Archbishop P F Jensen
Chair of the Doctrine Commission

[2005 DC Admission of Children to Holy Communion.pdf](#)

[2005 DC Report on Rochester Report.pdf](#)

[2006 DC Response to Agreed Statement on Christology.pdf](#)

[2006 DC Response to Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission.pdf](#)

[2007 DC Cohabitation Report.pdf](#)

[2007 DC Eucharistic Ministry in the Absence of a Priest.pdf](#)

[2007 DC Holy Matrimony Canon Amendment.pdf](#)

[2007 DC Theological Issues Surrounding Sexual Abuse.pdf](#)