

THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CHURCH IN WALES: RECENT LEGISLATION

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At the April 1993 meeting of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales held at St. David's University College, Lampeter, the Bill to amend Chapter XII of the Constitution of the Church in Wales received its second reading and, under the accelerated bill procedure allowed by section 38(5) of chapter II of the Constitution, underwent its committee stage and had its third reading. Having successfully completed all these stages it was promulgated by the Archbishop as a Canon of the Church in Wales.

The Canon amends sections 1, 2 and 3 of chapter XII, which sections relate to the retirement ages of clergy. Previous to the passing of the Canon, the compulsory retirement age for male clerics was seventy, with provision to allow them to retire as of right once they had attained the age of sixty-five. Female deacons, on the other hand, were required to retire at sixty-five but could retire as of right once they were sixty, while deaconesses had to retire at sixty. The new Canon has standardised the retirement ages of clerics, both male and female, and deaconesses. The compulsory retirement age for all is now seventy, subject to the possibility of postponement for three months or a longer extension with the bishop's permission. Sixty-five is now the age at which all clerics and deaconesses may now retire as of right. Provision for early retirement on grounds of disability continues, but early retirement is now retirement before the age of sixty-five for all classes. Previously, it was retirement before sixty for female deacons and deaconesses. The Canon has in effect ended discrimination between male and female clerics with regard to retirement within the Church in Wales.

The Governing Body also approved, on the recommendation of its Standing Committee, a change to its own membership and some changes in the composition of the Standing Committee. It was agreed that the Warden of St. Michael's College, Llandaff, should be an *ex officio* member of the Governing Body, while the Standing Committee membership was to be amended by ending the right of the Representative Body to nominate up to two of its members to the committee and instead allowing the Standing Committee itself to co-opt two members. Likewise, the respective chairmen of the Divisions of the Board of Mission are no longer to be automatically members of the Standing Committee, being replaced by the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of the Board of Mission Council and two Divisional Chairmen chosen by the Council. The Drafting Sub-Committee will now produce the necessary amendments to the Constitution required to effect these changes and present them to the September meeting of the Governing Body.

Finally, it should be noted that the Bill to Enable Women to be Ordained as Priests received its second reading. A Select Committee has been appointed to consider amendments of detail to the bill, and it will report to the Governing Body in April 1994, when the Bill will have its committee stage and third reading.