



Church of England Evangelical Council stands ready to work with all sides to find a constructive way forward.

The General Synod's no vote for women bishops will undoubtedly cause both pain and even incredulity to some, yet to others a relief that biblical and catholic orthodoxy has been upheld. The reality is that the outcome brings no victory to either side. It is true that broadly speaking the church as a whole has grappled responsibly with this issue. What will be extremely sad is if the result of this vote leads some women to feel they are marginalised in the church, for the reality is that the New Testament encourages the ministry of both men and women, yet in complementary ways. There are of course many places where the rich ministerial gifts of women already have a chance to flourish. But as a result of the vote, this complementarity needs an even greater encouragement by word and action in our churches.

As CEEC has warned on many occasions, one of the reasons for the outcome of the vote will have been the weak and inadequate approach to provision for those who could not accept the possibility of the ordination of women to the Episcopate. At any return to this issue, this matter will require far more thoughtful attention than it attracted hitherto. There was an easy dismissal by some - of those who disagreed with women bishops. This sadly was perceived as ungenerous to say the least, and the whole church needs to learn and learn again that generosity towards those of different opinions is a true sign of the gospel of Christ.

As an outcome to this vote the church may well be criticized that it is out of touch with the times. The truer criticism could well be that we failed to attend to God's work in God's way. The CEEC, which represents a range of views on this matter, will happily sit down and pray and discuss possible ways forward with any individuals and groups who seek to know the mind of God and build unity throughout his Church.

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