

GENERAL SYNOD 2011

MOTION NO 3 – Speaking Rights for Ecumenical Guests

Proposed by Revd John McDowell, Diocese of Down – on behalf of the Honorary Secretaries

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Your Grace; each year, as I am sure the House is aware, we invite a number of guests from other Christian traditions to witness the proceedings of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland.

I use the word *witness* advisedly, because in order actually to hear one of our ecumenical guests give utterance, the President must first ask Synod if they are prepared to suspend Standing Orders, to allow a non-member to speak. In the technical language of Synod

It would be our hope , should this motion find favour with Synod, that our guests will feel free to be as frank and open as they can be in their contributions, because we are all too aware of just how insular we can be. We genuinely feel that only the whole Church can know the whole truth and the intention of this motion is to open up our debates to benefit from the distinctive wisdom which is represented by other Christian traditions.

There is also a safeguard built in to the motion. As Synod can see the motion does not propose that speaking rights for ecumenical guests should extend to Legislative matters. These often relate to internal governance, doctrinal, pension or financial affairs, for which we should take full responsibility *both* in debate and in decision. Needless to say it remains the case that only Synod members may vote on any matter.

However the proposed revision of SO 21, *will* give our ecumenical guests the same speaking rights as those of employees of the Representative Body, and will help to enlarge the breadth of our debates and mark a further modest in our shared journey.

Your Grace, I have great pleasure in proposing that...