

BILL NO 4

Explanatory Memorandum

When the General Synod was established by the General Convention of 1870, diocesan representation was based on one clerical member for every ten cures and two lay members for each clerical member. The number of representatives produced on this basis has remained largely unchanged since that time, despite considerable demographic changes in the distribution of the Church of Ireland population.

Various proposals to reform the General Synod have been considered by the Standing Committee and the General Synod in recent years. These have largely focused on achieving an equitable representation from each diocese. The present membership is 216 clerical members and 432 lay members, with the twelve bishops being *ex officio* members. The total membership is 660.

The recent process began in June 1998, when the Standing Committee appointed the Synodical Structures Working Group, which reported annually to the Standing Committee. In 2001, a Bill was submitted to the General Synod proposing a total membership of 393, based on one clerical member for every five serving clergy in the diocese and two lay members for each clerical member. The Bill was lost on the First Reading.

In the following year, a Private Member's Bill was submitted, also based on serving clergy, at a ratio of one clerical member for every two clergy. This Bill, which would have produced a larger membership than at present, was also lost on the First Reading.

The General Synod of 2002 requested the Standing Committee to continue the process and in the following June the Synodical Reform Working Group was appointed. In its 2005 report to the Standing Committee, it recommended a diocesan representation model based on one clerical member for every 2.5 serving clergy. This model would produce a total membership of approximately 582. The Standing Committee in March 2005 was divided on whether the proposed model should be recommended to the General Synod. Consequently, it was decided that there would be insufficient support for the proposals and no recommendation was made to the General Synod. (see Book of Reports 2005, Standing Committee Report page 155 and Appendix Q, pages 250 -254)

A decision of the Diocesan Synod of Down and Dromore in June 2006, requested the Standing Committee to bring forward legislation within three years to provide for more equitable representative of the clergy and laity on the General Synod.

In response to the request from the Diocese of Down and Dromore, the Standing Committee agreed that a Bill based on the proposals made by the Synodical Reform Working Group in 2005, should be brought before the General Synod 2007 for consideration.

The effect of the proposed legislation is that the table in section 4(2) of Chapter I of the Constitution will no longer appear. The review of the number of representatives every third triennium by the Honorary Secretaries will be reported to the General Synod and published in the Journal.

An example of the outcome of the proposals is shown below; the Bill provides for regular revision.

1. Two lay members for each clerical member in each diocese;
2. A total membership of approximately 582;
3. Membership based on one clerical member for every 2.5 cures in each diocese;
4. A minimum of four clerical and eight lay members for each diocese;

Diocese	Cures	Synod Members	Clerical Members	Lay Members
Armagh	46	57	19	38
Clogher	33	42	14	28
Derry and Raphoe	49	60	20	40
Down and Dromore	79	96	32	64
Connor	77	93	31	62
Kilmore and Elphin	24	30	10	20
Tuam, Killala and Achonry	9	12	4	8
Dublin and Glendalough	55	66	22	44
Meath and Kildare	18	24	8	16
Cashel and Ossory	34	42	14	28
Cork, Cloyne and Ross	22	27	9	18
Limerick and Killaloe	16	21	7	14
Total	462	570	190	380

The number of cures is based on the Report of the Working Group 2005.

Summary of General Synod membership:

House of Bishops		12
House of Representatives		570
Clerical	190	
Lay	380	
Total		582

REV CANON BJ COURTNEY
REV CANON SM NEILL

(on behalf of the Standing Committee, at the request of the Diocese of Down and Dromore)

BILL

To amend Chapter I of the Constitution

WHEREAS it is expedient to conduct a continuing review of the size of the House of Representatives;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that the principles upon which the clerical and lay representatives to the General Synod to represent the several Dioceses and United Dioceses of the Church of Ireland be set out in the Constitution of the Church of Ireland;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that the Table contained in Section 4(2) of Part 1 of Chapter I of the said Constitution be deleted;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable to review the number of clerical and lay representatives returned to the General Synod to represent the several Dioceses and United Dioceses of the Church of Ireland be conducted at least every third triennium;

AND WHEREAS for such purposes it is necessary to amend Chapter I of the Constitution;

BE IT ENACTED by the Archbishops and Bishops, and the Clergy and Laity of the Church of Ireland in General Synod assembled in Kilkenny in the year 2007, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. For section 4(1) of Part 1 of Chapter I of the Constitution there shall be substituted:

- ‘4(1) (a) The House of Representatives shall consist of representatives of the clergy and of the laity, to be elected as hereinafter provided in the year 2008 and triennially thereafter.
- (b) The number of clerical representatives to be returned to the General Synod by each Diocese or United Dioceses shall be in the proportion of one representative to every 2.5 cures, where cure shall have the meaning as contained in section 36 of Part V of Chapter VI of the Constitution. An additional representative shall be returned for any remaining cure or part thereof.
- (c) For the purposes of subsection 1(b) the number of cures shall, in the year 2008 and at every subsequent review carried out in accordance with subsection 4(1)(e), be ascertained on the 1 January of the review year.
- (d) The number of lay representatives shall be to the clergy in the proportion of 2:1.
- (e) On 1 January 2008 and thereafter, on 1 January preceding the first of each third triennium, a review of the number of representatives both clerical and lay to be returned by each Diocese or United Dioceses to the General Synod, shall be conducted by the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod on the basis of the principles hereinbefore set out, provided that the number of representatives of the clergy to be returned by any Diocese or United Dioceses shall not fall below 4.’

2. Section 4(2) of Part 1 of Chapter I of the Constitution shall be deleted with effect from 1 January 2009.

3. For section 4(3) there shall be substituted:

4(2) The Synods of the several dioceses composing each united diocese may from time to time make such mutual arrangements as to them shall seem fit for apportioning among such dioceses respectively the number of representatives allotted to the several united dioceses in accordance with section 4.

4. The former sections 4(3), 4(4) and 4(5) shall be renumbered 4(2), 4(3) and 4(4).