

**FORWARD IN FAITH
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY 2019**

ITEM 3: FAREWELL TO DR COLIN PODMORE AS DIRECTOR

**THE RT REVD TONY ROBINSON, BISHOP OF WAKEFIELD
CHAIRMAN OF FORWARD IN FAITH**

Dr Colin Podmore will be retiring in February 2020 as Director of Forward in Faith after nearly seven years in post. Before coming to this post, he served for twenty-five years in various posts at Church House, Westminster. From 1988 to 2013 Colin was involved in delivering an unusual number of complex and challenging projects. In the 1990s his theological and historical knowledge and proficiency in German enabled him to make an outstanding personal contribution to a landmark agreement between the Church of England and the German churches of the Lutheran and Reformed tradition.

Subsequently Colin helped guide the passage of the Common Worship liturgies through the Synodical process and oversaw the ambitious publication programme that followed. He was Secretary to two major reviews of the Crown appointments processes in 2001 and 2007, contributing an historical perspective to the sensitive and shifting boundary between Church and State. As Secretary of the Dioceses Commission, he helped oversee the first successful attempt in more than a century to abolish three dioceses and create one more coherent diocese in their place.

From 2011 he was Clerk to the Synod and Director of Ecumenical Relations. In this role his familiarity with the law, with theology and with the politics of the Church of England enabled him to make an exceptional contribution.

Colin joined us in Forward in Faith (a coup, I think) at a difficult moment in the life of the Church of England, shortly after the Synod had narrowly rejected legislation to enable women to become bishops. The fact that revised legislation passed in 2014 owed much to Colin's help, with us, in securing a solution which had up to that point proved elusive. We owe him a great deal for his part in the establishment of The Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda and his serving as Secretary to the Council of Bishops of The Society.

Colin has given confidence to our movement that there will still be a place for us in the Church of England. He has deployed his great powers of organisation to ensure that effective new support structures for traditionalist clergy and parishes have been put firmly in place. And he has worked unstintingly in travelling the country, working with far fewer resources than he was accustomed to at Church House, yet continuing to show a commitment that is not confined to our constituency but really does extend to the welfare of the whole Church of England.

Colin has published a number of books on ecumenism, the Moravian Church in England, Anglican identity, the place of Mary in the Anglican Tradition. As Director of Forward in Faith, he produced our *Fathers in God* book, which records the debates and arguments surrounding the ordination of women as bishops.

In 2002, Colin was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (FRHistS). In June 2017, he was awarded the Lanfranc Award for Education and Scholarship by the Archbishop of

Canterbury 'for services to education and scholarship in support of the Church of England and the wider Church'.

On a personal note, if I may, having worked with Colin as Chairman for Forward in Faith for the past five years and Chairman of the Council of Bishops of the Society for a bit longer, Colin and I speak often, almost daily and sometimes hourly, when situations demand and we have to produce press releases or statements, or answer some difficult questions that are being posed to us. I have come to value Colin's professionalism and his wisdom, and day by day I share with him many many frustrations about the Church of England.

Colin has been a scholarly, wise, politically astute and decent hard-working servant of the Church of England in a series of roles. But today we can take this opportunity to thank him particularly for all he has done for traditional catholics as Director of Forward in Faith.