

Muslim conversions too hot for synod

Matthew Cresswell

A HIGHLY controversial debate by the Church of England's General Synod over whether it should seek to convert Muslims has been temporarily dropped. The Church has claimed there is currently too much other legislative business to deal with at next month's synod meeting.

Lay member Paul Eddy, who tabled the debate as a private member's motion, said he was frustrated by the decision, adding: "I'm not at all surprised that the motion didn't get

timetabled following the opposition I had from many bishops and the reaction to the media interviews."

"This motion has wide support from both the Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical wings on synod, and from the telephone calls and emails I have received, people feel very aggrieved that, at this particular time in the Church's history, synod was not given an opportunity to debate evangelism," said Mr Eddy.

Meanwhile, following reports of bullied clergy the Church of England has urged dioceses to implement new "Harassment Advisers".

These specially trained clergy or laity would act as a "sounding board" for victims. The concept is outlined in the "Dignity at Work" report released this week. The report follows the trade union Unite's claim that the Church was not supporting its bullied clergy and that many were seeking help from them instead.

The Rt Revd John Packer, Bishop of Ripon and Leeds, who contributed to the report, said: "We are all less than perfect and in all human communities occasions can ... arise where people, for a variety of reasons and sometimes unknowingly, use behaviour that is unacceptable."

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Diocese of Westminster

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