

From: John Holroyd
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PRIME MINISTER

Diocese of Liverpool

I. Candidates provided by the Crown Appointments Commission

Rt Rev Gavin Reid (63 last month) Bishop of Maidstone (in the Canterbury Diocese) since 1992. Out-and-out evangelical: leads the Churches' work on the Millennium. "His public pronouncements occasionally lack judgement". Little parish experience and at his age he could retire in less than two years time;

Archdeacon George Cassidy (55 this year) Archdeacon of London and Canon of St Paul's since 1987. An Ulsterman and originally a NI Civil Servant. Of evangelical origins he's now middle of road. A tough and fair administrator – too tough for some. Wide range of social contacts outside Church. Energetic, with good mind, but some lack of "bottom".

The CAC gave 7 votes to Reid and 5 to Cassidy – effectively "no preference" and thus the choice for you is open.

II. Options

All the following are legitimately open to you:

1. to go for Reid:
2. to go for Cassidy:
3. to ask for more names.

Pros & Cons

1. George Carey wants Reid, one of his suffragans, to be appointed. But it is not his patch – Liverpool is in the Northern Province and David Hope has yet to make up his mind on his advice to you. Previously Reid has not been thought to be up to a diocesan job, so why is he now at 63? Answer: The diocesan reps on the CAC made a pitch for him, which G Carey backed.
2. George Cassidy would be energetic and get round the diocese: (David Sheppard has been too much identified with Liverpool city). He's also intelligent and, after some misgivings, supports the ordination of women. Can be a little narrow on social issues, but has learnt to be more measured and tolerant as he has experienced the difficulties of London. But is he really big enough to be Bishop of Liverpool?
3. Asking for more names is a bit risky, on two grounds. One is that an extra name that might come forward is that of Canon David Gillett, another evangelical and Principal of the Church's Bristol theological college. He's not up to the Liverpool job: so far he's been thought of as good enough for a suffragan post only. On the other hand you might get as a second additional name one of the two really good suffragans who could do the job – Langrish of Birkenhead and Stevens of Dunwich. The other risk is that George Carey might cut up rough at the results of the CAC and Reid being put to one side, even though, as I say, the appointment is not in his Province.

Subject to what David Hope says I would go for option 2, ie Cassidy.


John Holroyd