

**DIOCESE OF COVENTRY**

**COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY  
THE WAY FORWARD**

**Report to the Bishop's Council**

**from the**

**Patterns of Ministry Working Party**

**March 1997**

**Contents:**

- 1. Introduction**
  - 1.1 Purpose of the Report
  - 1.2 History of the Working Party and method of working
- 2. Propositions on Ministry**
  - 2.1 The Propositions
- 3. Patterns of Ministry**
- 4. Recommendations**
- 5. Further Questions to be explored**
- 6. Implementation**

**Appendices**

- A. The Context of Ministry**
- B. Non-Stipendiary Ministry in Ministry Leadership Teams**
- C. Membership of the Working Party**

*This is the Report of the Patterns of Ministry Working Party. The group has also produced a simplified discussion document and a supplementary report containing the results of the survey of the diocese and papers presented to the group which were used in their discussions.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1.1 In July 1994, the Bishop's Council established a working party to develop and propose a strategy for ministry in the Diocese, following a diocesan consultation on Patterns of Ministry held in April 1994.

That consultation was part of the diocesan response to the House of Bishops and the Advisory Board for Ministry's encouragement to the dioceses to find ways of providing patterns of ministry which are "imaginative and flexible".

Although, for the whole of the life of the working party, there have been serious issues to face in terms of finance, deployment and recruitment for the ordained ministry, it should be emphasised that in our discussions and thinking we have tried to explore what a proper pattern of ministry for the church should be and that other constraints have only served to sharpen out thinking and bring a greater sense of urgency to our task.

- 1.1.2 The brief of the group included: evaluating the existing experiences of diverse ministry patterns; considering collaborative patterns e.g. ecumenical and clergy/lay; and rethinking the relationship between sector ministries and the parochial ministry.

### **1.2 History of the Working Party and method of working**

The working party was chosen by the Bishop and his staff and met for the first time in September 1994. It has continued to meet on a monthly basis since that date with two whole days away.

The working party was selected to reflect as many parts of the life of the church as possible. The group represented the lay and ordained, male and female, rural and urban, parochial and non-parochial constituents of our diocesan fellowship. In particular, some members of the working party were accustomed to thinking and reflecting on the issues involved, whilst for others, the whole subject was completely new.

We have attempted to work collaboratively. In particular we have spent important time exploring the whole subject of ministry and how it impinges on the church and the world. It has felt important to us that every member of the group should be enabled to grasp the issues involved if we were to be able to offer the diocese some constructive and creative ideas for the future.

We had no wish to "re-invent the wheel". We have therefore consulted widely. We wrote to everyone holding the Bishop's licence, every Reader, and every PCC secretary to discover what initiatives in ministry were already in place and working. We also made contact with other dioceses and denominations. We are indebted to all those who responded to our survey and who helped us in our thinking.

Although, we are very clear about the central recommendation of the report, inevitably much of the detailed working out has been left for the diocese as a whole to consider. We wish to suggest a pattern for ministry which is very flexible, and, because of our deep commitment to the principle of collaboration, we believe that the implications of this report mean that we have to initiate a process of discussion which will allow the conclusions to be owned and developed by the diocese as a whole.

## **2. Propositions on Ministry**

It was very important for us to spend time together as a group looking together at the theology of ministry. In the appendix to this report there are three short papers on the Changing World, the Changing Church and the Changing Nature of Ministry which reflect the changing context in which ministry is exercised today.

The propositions which follow are the theological basis for our report. We intend them to reflect the unchanging principles which undergird all our thinking and hope that in themselves they might form a useful starting point for discussion of this report.

### **2.1 The Propositions**

(a) God created the world. God's vision and purpose is for a world in which men and women (created in God's image and likeness) will respond to the love that he offers and live their lives in relationship with him

(b) God is at work in his world. Through his work of creation, redemption and empowering, God seeks to bring into existence his vision and purpose for the world.

(c) All women and men are invited to share in God's work in his world. Wherever women and men are doing those things which make the world more as God wants it to be, they are sharing in God's work.

(d) In order to make the world as he wants it to be, God sent his Son Jesus to enable and show men and women how to be fully human.

(e) The Holy Spirit continues the work of Jesus, enabling men and women to live their lives in communion with God and to engage in his work in the world which is ministry.

(f) All Christians are called to engage in ministry in all aspects of their daily lives and are authorised for their ministry by their baptism/confirmation.

(g) The Church has a responsibility to give men and women confidence to exercise this ministry.

(h) God reveals himself to us as Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit, - a community of persons working together in unity) so ministry should be undertaken collaboratively.

(i) The ordained ministry exists to resource, equip, feed, model and focus the ministry of Christ and the ministry of the baptized.

(j) The ministry of all Christians should itself be a sign of Christ and his redemptive and reconciling love in the world which God created.

## **3. Pattern of Ministry**

These propositions lead us to conclude that Christian Ministry is participation in, and response to, the Mission of God to his world. Such Ministry belongs to the whole people of God by virtue of their baptism, being both a response to and expression of

God's healing and saving love for the world. It is focused on worship of God and service to the world rather than on the church itself.

Because ministry has its origin in the creative and saving love of the Trinity who is a community of equal persons, we believe that *all* ministry is by nature collaborative. It must be rooted in community which is marked by mutuality and equality.

This collaborative style should find expression at all levels of the church's life: not just within parishes but between parishes and in the various sectors and networks within which Christians live and therefore minister.

**No one should minister independently or in isolation.**

Therefore, our basic recommendation is that teams should be established at all levels of the Church's life to model, focus and enable the ministry of the whole people of God. The ordained ministry should find its true meaning and purpose as part of, rather than prior to, such collaborative ministry. It has a particular role, in addition to the provision of sacramental ministry, of giving expression to the Anglican understanding of an episcopally ordered Church.

**4. Recommendations**

**Ministry Leadership Teams**

- 4.1 **We recommend, as a matter of urgency, that the whole diocese should work towards Ministry Leadership Teams being established under the authority of the Bishop in every parish (or cluster of parishes) and embracing every area of non-parochial ministry in the diocese.** These teams, which will normally be ordained and lay people working together, will take responsibility for every aspect of the life and mission of the church and will vary in composition depending on the nature of the ministry involved. In the case of parochially based Ministry Leadership Teams, their membership and responsibilities will be subject to the approval of their local PCC(s).
- 4.2 The precise nature of Ministry Leadership Teams will vary depending on the context in which that ministry is being exercised. In some situations, for example, the Ministry Leadership Team may co-ordinate the work of other task-oriented groups, in others it may be the only team.
- 4.3 In some situations, it will be very appropriate for there to be ecumenical members of a team.
- 4.4 Every Ministry Leadership Team will have a leader approved and authorised by the Bishop.
- 4.5 An incumbent will be a member of the Ministry Leadership Team. Whether or not the incumbent is the leader he/she will be responsible for expressing the Bishop's oversight within the team.
- 4.6 The members of Ministry Leadership Teams, whether lay or ordained, should be equipped for their work by being trained together. The Vocations and Training Department should set up a strategy and programme to enable such training which will need to be of a substantial nature and will include incumbents.

- 4.7 As we wish to affirm the importance of the sacramental life of the church, steps should be taken to recruit men and women to ordained ministry (in a non-stipendiary capacity). *(For a more detailed consideration of the implications of this recommendation, please see Appendix B.)*
- 4.8 The local church should always be alert to the possibility of identifying and encouraging individual men and women who might offer for such ministry as part of Ministry Leadership Teams.
- 4.9 The Vocations and Training Department should propose a policy for the selection of such ministers.
- 4.10 All licensed clergy should belong to a Ministry Leadership Team.
- 4.11 Where there are Readers, their Ministry should be represented on the Ministry Leadership Team.
- 4.12 Wherever possible, the Bishop's Staff should ensure that all appointments to the staff of the diocese reflect the commitment to the establishment and support of Ministry Leadership Teams and should be sympathetic to the collaborative principle underlying all ministry.
- 4.13 Every Ministry Leadership Team should have at least one member who is responsible for enabling ministry and mission to take place within the wider world. It would be particularly appropriate for ordained Ministers in Secular Employment to support this activity.
- 4.14 Every Ministry Leadership Team should have at least one member who is responsible for enabling contact to be made with those who are not part of the Church.

## **5 Further Questions to be explored**

As much of ministry is by nature diaconal, we believe that the possibility of establishing a permanent diaconate nationally should be seriously considered and recommend that the diocese establish a small group to explore this area and to promote it through the General Synod. In addition, the Working Party is aware that the creation of Ministry Leadership Teams will inevitably sharpen the debate about the role and ministry of Readers and would hope that the group could consider this area as well.

## **6 Implementation**

- 6.1 A task group, chaired by the Bishop of Warwick, should be set up by Bishop's Council to enable the recommendations of this report to be discussed, costed and then implemented and monitored within the diocese.
- 6.2 Initially, two part-time advisers (ordained or lay) should be appointed, one for each archdeaconry, whose task would be to encourage the establishment of Ministry Leadership Teams. The advisers would be members of the task group.
- 6.3 The membership of the task group should include representation from the Vocations and Training Department and the Diocesan Pastoral Committee. There should be some overlap of membership with the original Working Party and it should include others with particular experience and expertise to offer.

- 6.4 Deanery Pastoral Committees should be asked to examine as a matter of urgency the right grouping of churches and parishes in their area, to best enable collaborative ministry to be established. Diocesan Boards and Committees should undertake a similar exercise.
- 6.5 PCCs should be asked to consider the establishment of Ministry Leadership Teams and in particular to define the task of the Ministry Leadership Team in their area/parish.

## **Appendices**

### **A The Context of Ministry**

#### **A.1 The Changing World**

The world is the place where all Christians are called to serve. This must be a fundamental basis of our incarnational faith, and is reflected strongly in our propositions on Ministry. We therefore begin by looking at the realities of life in the world, in order to begin to see where God may be at work, and where he has called the Church to follow.

We speak of God as Creator. So, God is creative in all acts of creativity in the world, as human beings made in God's image, continue to participate as co-creators.

God is involved in all the struggles in the world, both in the brokenness which they cause in the lives of individuals and communities, and in the work of those who struggle to bring justice and equality. God is to be encountered within oppression, injustice, poverty and the hidden places of suffering.

The world is a place of constant change, which we may sometimes label as 'progress'. We are always living with uncertainty, so there is a tendency to look back with nostalgia for remembered (or imagined) certainties. People are searching for meaning, or feeling that their lives are meaningless. Against this atmosphere of change, many look to religion for timeless truths and certainties. One major change has been the break-up of geographic communities. New communities have now come into existence; these new 'villages' may exist through the work place or pub, leisure pursuits or shopping malls. These new communities are the places where people develop, and discover their relatedness to others. New technology has had a significant impact on the areas of community – and the information technology and communications networks now available will have continued and far reaching effects.

Technology has given us a global world view. News is instantly communicated around the world – we are made aware of war, oppression and injustice. We see the increased connectedness of the life of the world, but along with this comes the increased possibility of global control, especially through multi-national corporations and business.

This increased awareness has heightened our sense of responsibility to care for the world we have been given – both in preserving the environment and our stewardship of non-renewable resources.

We live in a world of many faiths and cultures. Within England, and in Coventry and Warwickshire, these cultures co-exist side by side. There is greater knowledge of other faiths, but a continued need for building respect and understanding. There is also a strong folk religion, some of which is rooted in the Christian tradition and

patterns of church life but much is not, which should be viewed positively as a way people encounter God and express a very real faith.

## A.2 **The Changing Church**

As part of the Body of Christ, the Church of England can never escape its responsibility to share in the healing and reconciling work of her Lord by proclaiming the Gospel and by service in and to the world.

The Church of England appears to some people to have lost much of its influence. The need, as an established church, to embrace everyone has led to wide variations in thought and practice. Many, both within and outside, have variable and often unrealistic expectations of the Church.

The Church currently faces further uncertainty induced by a falling level of resources, both human and financial. Furthermore, the tension of living with its own history, sometimes enshrined in archaic procedures and changing patterns of worship, puts an additional constraint on evangelistic endeavour in a world which is itself rapidly changing. There is on the part of some within the Church, a reluctance to accept change and yet, at the same time, a deep awareness of the world's need for the saving power of the gospel.

Despite these uncertainties and difficulties there is strong evidence of a yearning within the Church to find the means of ministering effectively to a broken and divided world and to be the Herald of that diving truth which is the Gospel of Salvation.

## A.3 **The Changing Nature of Ministry**

Patterns of ministry are set within the wide contexts of the World and the Church as a whole. They are, in part, a response to the specific characteristics, challenges and opportunities of these contexts in which they ultimately have a relevance, or not. There are also internal controls on patterns of ministry which are set by the nature of the Christian gospel and the church's task. These supply the grounds for assessing the authenticity and characteristics of existing or proposed patterns. At root, we believe that all Christian ministry must be tested against the touchstone of whether it is CHRISTLIKE, i.e. it has an integrity and is faithful to the character, teaching and purposes of God in Jesus Christ.

Christlike character grows out of responsive Christian discipleship. It reflects the demands of love and obedience. It is caring and compassionate but also costly and challenging. Ministries that reflect such character are the fruit of the **calling** of all baptised Christians, embracing lay and ordained roles.

Christlike functions of ministry reflect a spectrum of purposes from the pastoral ('feed my sheep') to the apostolic ('go into all the world and make disciples'). While individuals may be gifted or released for particular ministries an essential character of true ministry is that it is **collaborative**, reflecting God's calling to, gifting and equipping of the whole Church.

This suggests that an essential characteristic of Christlike ministry is that all individual ministries, whether ordained or lay, and all patterns of ministry, with whatever emphasis, are involved in a **sharing** of Christ's life and God's purposes. Some responsibilities are episcopal in overseeing and shaping the character of the whole. Some roles are priestly or diaconal in focusing particular or local ministries. All are linked to others within the whole network of Christian mission and ministry.

Particular patterns of ministry, then, are the fruit of a conscious or unconscious dialogue between the contexts in which ministry is set and the ongoing discover, in each generation, of the nature and power of the Christian good news. Current questions over patterns of ministry take on an urgency because radical changes in the social context and culture in which we live combined with shrinking resources within the church call for a radical reassessment of what is both desirable and possible. So, for example, contextual changes now call for greater primary emphasis on apostolic functions of ministry rather than pastoral (maintenance to mission).

While there may be a certain 'givenness' about some of the characteristics of Christian ministry, most patterns are not so fixed but are the fruit of particular historical, social and theological developments. In looking to the future, therefore, we can expect patterns of ministry to adapt and develop from current norms so that they better reflect the mission potential of the church. In a fast moving, changing culture we need to plan for greater flexibility of patterns, in a manner that enables and equips all Christians for ministry.

## **B NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTRY IN MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAMS**

Two strands of theological development can be identified in many traditions of the world-wide church:

- the movement towards lay ministry
- the recognition that the church is a Eucharistic community which needs to be able to celebrate the Eucharist

It seems unlikely that the Church will be able to service this sacramental ministry with stipendiary clergy in the foreseeable future and where it tries to do so the role of the priest as president of a local Eucharistic Community (as opposed to a visiting celebrant who drops in occasionally) is being stretched to, and beyond, breaking point.

It is important to recognise that the whole community is priestly and that the role of the priest among the community is to be the symbol and mouthpiece of their corporate priesthood. In any scheme which included ordained ministry of a "local" nature the ordained priest would find his/her meaning and purpose within a local Ministry Leadership Team; he/she would be called from that team and trained with them so that right from the outset the exercise of ministry is seen to be collaborative – priesthood is seen to be one ministry among many. If a community does not raise up a Ministry Leadership Team there would be no place for such an ordained minister.

Some people are concerned about the "local" nature of this ministry but in one sense all authorised ministry is local, exercised under licence from the Bishop.

Even with the "full-time" stipendiary ministry it is the licence from the Bishop which gives authority to exercise ministry within a particular locality. Though priesthood is universal, a particular ministry is local; further "training" is always needed to exercise a new ministry without compromising a person's priesthood (eg. If a parish priest is

appointed to a Cathedral Staff, a diocesan post, or even a different sort of parish he/she will (should) need some more training, however formal or informal that might be).

The “universal” nature of this ministry would be expressed both by his/her ordination into the priesthood of the Church of God and also by undergoing the selection process laid down by the House of Bishops. This would involve attending either a local or national selection conference. The national selection procedure emphasises more this universal dimension of priestly ministry as long as the particular nature and expression of the ministry for which the candidates are offering themselves is recognised.

Some Non-Stipendiary Ministers would not be inducted into livings but would exercise their ministry under supervision (oversight) from an incumbent who would also have shared in the training of the Ministry Leadership Team of which the minister would be a part.

If recognised ministry is to be exercised in the church of the near future there seems to be no alternative to Ministry Leadership Teams and non-stipendiary ordained ministry should be one element of that. This would not just be a response to the practical and pastoral pressure to maintain a recognised ministry within the church. It would also be a response to theological development within the wider church both of an understanding of lay ministry and the recognition that the Church is essentially a Eucharistic community.

### **C. Membership of the Working Party**

Chairman: The Revd Stuart Beake  
Secretary: The Revd Gordon Benfield

The Bishop of Warwick  
The Archdeacon of Warwick  
The Revd Dr Rod Allon-Smith  
The Revd Philip Aspinall  
The Revd Tony Bradley  
Canon Mark Bryant  
The Revd Mary Clarke  
Mrs Ruth Holliday  
Mrs Penny Hughes  
The Revd Anthony Lury  
Dr Anthony Manning  
Dr David Tweedie

**DIOCESE OF COVENTRY**

**COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY  
THE WAY FORWARD**

**Report to the Bishop's Council  
from the  
Patterns of Ministry Working Party**

*Supplementary Report*

**Contents:**

- 1. Results of the Diocesan Survey**
- 2. Local Ministry Schemes**
- 3. Other Papers Received**

## 1. RESULTS OF THE DIOCESAN SURVEY

### 1.1 PARISH INITIATIVES

‘Community ministry’ is a phrase given to projects which are church based are trying to engage with the needs of the local community. In a number of parishes, Lunch clubs were run and in one parish a Day Centre runs each day of the week. One parish has a Community Outreach Group, looking at local needs and how the church can respond to them. Building up partnership with other local agencies creates possibilities. One church runs a Parent and Toddlers group with the local nursery nurse from the local clinic. There are a number of examples of this kind – holiday clubs for children, lunch clubs.

Worship groups are the forum in a number of places for encouraging lay led worship and fuller participation of all. One parish has lay led worship where there are five lay teams who alternate.

Specific ministry work is the name we have given to very specific group work that is going on in some places – groups for those to be married led by lay people, a ‘just looking’ course, a course encouraging people to look at their own gifts. One small congregation, recognising that they were not able to do everything, choose to concentrate specifically on Baptisms and follow up in their community.

Church planting is a feature in some places. In one parish this is spoken of as an increasing opportunity for lay people. Questions arose as to how they will be given sacramental provision if the plan of five or six small church plants is fulfilled. It also raises the questions about discussion of Local Ordained Ministry.

A number of churches have an annual project concerning work with children. Children’s Activity weeks during the summer or half-terms or on a regular basis is one clear way of the local church responding to local needs of children and young people.

### 1.2 LAY MINISTRY

**Current Patterns.** What follows is a simple list of the patterns of lay ministry emerging from the parish responses, in no particular order of merit.

(a) Parish Officers eg. Churchwardens. These officers are holding posts which are enshrined in Canon Law and Statute.

(b) Readers This lay office is provided for under Canons E4 and B12. Readers may undertake a wide range of ministries within their area of jurisdiction.

(c) Church Army Officers The Church Army exists as a distinctive Office within the wider Church, whose remit is usually associated with the task of mission and, more specifically, evangelism at the local church level.

(d) Lay deanery and diocesan officers The fact of key deanery appointments being held by lay people strongly emphasises the fact that the laos involves a collaboration between clergy and laity.

(e) PCC and Sub-committee members The 'ordinary' members of the PCCs have the duty to co-operate 'with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical', according to the Synodical Government Measure.

(f) Spontaneous Lay Leadership One of the parish submissions contained the interesting story of how a member of the congregation effectively motivated the local church to change.

(g) Licensed lay assistants Under Canon B12 the Bishop may licence people approved by the PCC to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion in church. This is fairly narrow – albeit very important – licensing, but one that could be extended to cover other lay ministry functions.

(h) Locally authorised church-based lay ministers There is an increasing recognition of the wide range of lay ministries that can possibly be exercised within the life of the local church.

(i) Non-accredited lay ministries The corollary of the situation outlined above is that most lay ministry – both within and beyond the church door – is neither affirmed nor accredited.

(j) Stipendiary lay ministry There are examples of local churches paying for the services of lay people, on either a part-time or whole-time basis.

(k) Non-stipendiary lay ministry Many more parishes are involving the laity in important areas of oversight. To this extent non-stipendiary lay ministry remains the norm.

(l) Local lay ministry teams – pastoral It should normally be possible to both equip and accredit teams of lay people to serve the church and community together. The diocesan Lay Ministry Guidelines make provision for this.

(m) Local lay ministry teams – apostolic The development of shared lay ministry patterns is not confined to pastoral models of the local church. There are a number of examples around the diocese where lay teams have been developed for the express purpose of reaching-out to new people groups.

(n) Lay ministry groups This is the group of lay people who perform a specific task or function within the life of the local church. These will include finance or building sub-committees, music and other creativity groups or mission-related working parties.

(o) Local ecumenical ministry teams The move to more collaborative patterns of ministry will be especially effective where it acknowledges the varieties of gifts exercised by lay people across the denominations.

(p) Informal lay ministry – life experience It is important to see the most informal activities that we perform as crucial aspects of our ministries, eg caring for and nurturing children and other dependants within the home.

(q) Lay chaplaincies An increasing number of lay people taking on part-time, unpaid work as chaplains to various places. Within the diocese there are a number of examples of lay chaplains to stores, shopping precincts, hotels, office complexes, ministering as assistant hospital chaplains and helping in various educational establishments.

(r) Deaconesses – a passing model In the late 60s – when the women’s lay order of Deaconess was abolished to place women on a par with male Deacons – many felt that their earlier ministry role was devalued.

(s) Lay religious Most religious are lay, which raises questions about the ways in which we perceive the ministries of lay and ordained.

1.3 **READER MINISTRY AND THE FUTURE** *paper kindly supplied by The Revd Roy Large, Warden of Readers*

Within the framework established by two ACCM papers, and the ABM – inspired Bishop’s Regulations for Reader Ministry the Diocese of Coventry has over the past seven years developed a new approach to the selection and training of Readers, and a plan for post-admission training, Reader development and in-service training.

Implicit in these developments has been a change in our understanding of the role of Readers and of their relationship with others involved in ministry, especially the clergy.

Until recently, and in practice in many cases still, the Reader has been seen as having a ‘stop-gap’ ministry, available to take services, especially matins and evensong, in the absence of an ordained person. Although Readers have for many years been diocesan, as distinct from parish, Readers, and although many have helped out in other parishes, especially during holidays and vacancies, their ministry has remained essentially parochial. Readers have often seen their ministry in terms of ‘helping the vicar’, rather than an offering of their own gifts and skills in parallel with the ministry of others. This view is fostered by a number of incumbents themselves and by an authority structure which is hierarchical, and which places the Reader in a perpetually dependent and vulnerable position in relation to the incumbent.

Recent policy, already in place, sets out to encourage a wider use of a Reader’s ministry, whilst remaining within the church’s existing authority structure. This policy, after stating what is legally permitted, makes five additional points as follows:-

- (a) Readers have their own gifts of ministry to offer, which they should be helped and encouraged to develop as fully as possible.
- (b) Readers form part of the staff team of a parish and should be involved in staff meetings as appropriate.
- (c) Readers and their incumbent are encouraged to agree on the duties to be undertaken and should make a written statement of them.
- (d) It is usually desirable for the interests of Readers to be represented on the P.C.C. or D.C.C.
- (e) A parish requesting the services of a Reader must be willing to accept either a man or a woman.

This policy statement is expanded implicitly in the further programme for the development of Reader ministry. This has something in common with the Clergy Development Scheme, though linked with it is the procedure for the renewing of the Reader’s licence (formerly on a three, now on a five year cycle). Hitherto, the only review of a Reader’s ministry, if there was a review at all, was by the incumbent. Under the new system the development process will be largely conducted by area sub-wardens. One of the main purposes of the development review, which will include reports written by the incumbent and the Reader, is to see whether appropriate use is being made of the Reader, and whether his/her gifts and skills are being used, and ‘to ensure the most creative use of (the) Reader within the area or diocese’.

An issue which is now on the agenda of Reader development is that of re-deployment. There is an uneven distribution of Readers in the diocese; in the southern deaneries, especially, there are relatively few Readers, whereas some urban and suburban parishes have several. This means that some Readers are under-used, and feel under-used. If Readers really are to be diocesan Readers in practice as well as in theory, then implicit in their admission is the possibility of serving the diocese where there is the greatest need. There are obvious difficulties about moving Readers from one parish to another, but potential Readers are

already advised that they may be asked to consider re-deployment at some stage, and one aim of the parish placement on the training course is to give student Readers a feel for ministry in another parish.

That, briefly, is the current position in the diocese. However, as we look to the future there are one or two areas which need further consideration and development if Reader ministry is really to have an integrity of its own and not remain in such a markedly subordinate position to ordained ministry. First, we see the lay ministry of Readers as being parallel rather than subordinate to that of ordained ministry. An experienced Reader is not in the same position as a curate, who is in a quasi training situation. At present, when there is a change of incumbent, the Reader's licence must be surrendered six months after the end of the vacancy, and the new incumbent must renominate the Reader, this is unsatisfactory and demeaning to the Reader, who should be seen as part of the established staff of the parish, and not a disposable asset.

Secondly, there is the question of confidence, and much that contributes to it and flows from it. Clearly it is not satisfactory that Readers should be able to continue their ministry if what they are doing is inadequate, which can be a basis for lack of confidence. To a certain extent this issue is covered in the diocese through the development scheme. However, there are more far-reaching possibilities, which could give readers more independence and would enhance their integrity and give them a confidence which they basically lack within the present system. The way forward is to hand to Readers greater responsibility for their selection, training, admission, and subsequent development, and for fostering and maintaining necessary standards and discipline. This would involve developing sensitivity towards such matters as confidentiality, the position of clergy, traditional expectations of an ordained 'presence', and a number of other things.

I do not think this can be achieved unless those in key positions are themselves Readers, and therefore to put an approach of this kind into practice it would be necessary to appoint Readers to the positions of warden and chair person of the Readers' Board, and, in greater numbers than at present, as tutors on the training course. There would also need to be a 'mission statement' setting out new principles and a code of practice for the Reader ministry of the future.

#### 1.4 **MINISTRY OUTSIDE THE PARISH STRUCTURE**

##### **Introduction**

We have received many significant contributions about ministries being forged outside the conventional parish structures. Many reflect the pain and struggle to persist with a vision of and calling to new and radical ministries. Some are taken up because of practical situations, and in particular point to the need for our review of patterns of ministry to give serious thought to the place of unpaid clergy partners.

It is, above all, important that these ministries are seen as an integral part of the ministry of the church, the ministry of Christ, and not as some optional extra. This indicates we need flexible structures which give coherence to these patterns of ministry. Many are already well established and yet still need to be incorporated into the whole pattern of the Church.

We have summarised the information we have received in brief paragraphs under headings. In some cases, we have noted a pattern of ministry which we know exists and where further input is needed.

##### **Non Stipendiary Ministry**

All those NSMs who wrote to us, are NSM because they hold part-time church or agency jobs, and keep links with a parish on a non-stipendiary licence. One correspondent said, "any form of ministry on the boundaries or in a secular setting needs a formal parish base to provide support from clergy colleagues and laity, and because there is a bridge building element to these ministries".

There are other NSMs who work in full-time secular jobs, but whose prime focus of ministry is the parish (either as assistant or as incumbent). We have not received comments from any of these in the Diocese of Coventry.

### **Ministry in Secular Employment**

MSEs share a belief that they have been called to a ministry in the work place and a wish to interpret the gospel in terms of the work place – their role will depend on the secular position held. Some would argue that their paid work is their ministry. A non MSE writes: “They are the model for all Christians at work having to live faithfully in their work with the inevitable tensions that brings – and the blessings”.

MSE reminds the church that there are innumerable ways in which ministry takes place. Those in secular employment (which includes several others of our groups in this appendix) may bring challenge, judgement, solidarity with suffering and much else to communicate to the church what it should be. This two way dialogue is a vital, though demanding, function of the MSE, which requires integrated involvement in the life of a parish and the structures of the church – not least in networking with other sectors and agencies to bring coherence to ministries which are different but complementary.

### **Tentmakers**

This title has been coined by Presbyterians in the USA to encompass a variety of forms of secular ministries. However it describes most specifically a pattern of part time paid ministry in a local church, supported by part time secular employment. This may include part time work as minister of a church during a vacancy – specifically to resolve any organisational issues before the arrival of the new minister.

### **Permanent Deacons**

Many Deacons, particularly in the USA, would describe themselves as MSEs their principle mission being to bring the spirit of service to the place of work. One Deacon in Chelmsford Diocese works part time as Chaplain to UPA projects, and wishes to explore the distinctly diaconal nature of this ministry and how the deacon’s ministry may be used in the church’s organisation.

### **Readers**

Many Readers are in full-time paid employment, and some see this as a key aspect of their ministry, even describing themselves as Ministers in Secular Employment. This should be encouraged, through Reader training and networking.

### **Lay Ministry**

In contrast to the trend of speaking of “lay ministry” as getting lay people to help out more in the church, there are many laity who see their work outside the church as their ministry. This may be in their secular daily work or through voluntary work with agencies. This understanding is encouraged during the Exploring Christian Ministry course, and organisations such as the Industry churches Forum provide meetings for people to share their experiences. Lay people need more opportunities for training and more support for bringing their faith to bear in their everyday lives. Research and training materials are available from Ministry in the World of Work (MWW) on empowering daily ministry – there may also be some practical examples from parishes.

### **Sector Ministries**

Many clergy are employed in full or part time work for agencies which contribute to the mission of the church. We include here Hospital, Industrial University and School Chaplains, although these each have very different ways of working, which also reflect the diversity of the individuals involved. We also include the work of Social Responsibility and Interfaith officers, and note the development of a Chaplain to UPA projects in Chelmsford.

Some parish clergy also get involved in these areas, through local schools or as Associates of Mission in the World of Work. Lay and Ordained Associates are a crucial element of the work of MWW, and may offer a model for the work of other sectors. However, the details of service, pay and working conditions need careful attention for those working in part time chaplaincies.

There is an increasing move toward dual role appointments, for example in the recently appointed MWW Development Officer, Communications Officer and the Bishop's Officer for Community Relations. We would want to hear feedback from them, and people already involved in similar posts, on how these dual roles work out, to review their viability and ensure adequate training and support. Any future Patterns of Ministry need to affirm and support all these areas to demonstrate an outward looking church expressing the love of God in the environment of human life – it should not be squeezed out by the need to maintain parish structures.

### **Counselling Agencies**

Many Christians work in agencies such as Cruse, Samaritans, and Relate; for many this is a significant part of their ministry, which may go unacknowledged in their church community. Other initiatives, such as the Anchor Centre in Hillfields, use people's professional skills. Our replies only reflect clergy involvement in such agencies – we need to hear from more lay people.

### **Other Agencies**

Agencies supporting the wider mission of the church function outside and beyond diocesan boundaries. Some, such as Church Pastoral Aid Society, are located in the area; others (South American Missionary Society, Missions to Seamen, Children's Society, Church Missionary Society) have local and regional representatives. We have only received replies from clergy involved in managerial/organisational positions in these bodies, and would value input from lay officers.

These are promoted or have links with individual parishes, groups interested in mission, or as guest preachers. We do not see how these fit clearly with a coherent view of Patterns of Ministry in the Diocese and need to explore this further. An organisation such as Missions to Seamen offers a model of ministry to a distinct community outside the conventional geographical parish structure, and may offer insights for new ways of working, for example in industry.

### **Retired Clergy**

Retired clergy are often involved in supporting the active parochial clergy by conducting services during holidays etc or assisting with parish visiting they have more time for careful and prayerful preparation. They also help Dioceses by conducting services during vacancies (and even substantially acting as incumbent). Their invaluable contribution is fully acknowledged – but we question the reliance the church places on people who should be free to enjoy their retirement.

However, some may also be involved in other sectors, such as counselling or teaching, and should be encouraged to use their particular skills.

We have looked at papers of varying quality and length from Portsmouth, Worcester, Birmingham, Salisbury, Gloucester, Exeter, Southwell. Two main themes emerge from all the papers:

- 1) Collaborative ministry – (Exeter is spending £8000 per annum over two years working with deanery chapters residentially to encourage them to work with laity.)
- 2) Local Ministry Teams – these are seen as the outworking of the desire for collaborative ministry.

There is a general desire that the responsibility for ministry should be shared by a diocesan authorised team rather than being the sole responsibility of the Incumbent. Canterbury sees ministry teams as important because (a) “Informal lay ministry has grown to the point where it needs a clearer focus and better authorisation and support” and (b) “Some able lay people are held back by lack of a proper structure to deploy them responsibly”.

In theory dioceses differ as to how ministry teams come about. Canterbury requires every parish to have one while Worcester sees the teams as responding to what is already happening. In practise I am not clear as to how many parishes in Canterbury have got teams and this raises a question about how the diocese effects change. If there are issues about how parishes effect change then the diocese needs to model good practice in the way it seeks to effect change.

There is a general feeling that the training and formation of parish teams are a very important part of the exercise. The training of the team increases their confidence. A brief experience which I had recently of Salisbury Pastoral assistants suggests that the confidence building of the training was probably more important than the authorisation.

Some dioceses are going for more priests. Salisbury is aiming for another 200 although these emerge out of parish teams. The diocese will select a parish to produce an LNSM rather than electing an individual. Southwell want an extra 50 NSMs over 5 years some of who will be existing Readers. Portsmouth helpfully perhaps put the question: “We must, we believe, ask whether parishes want more ordained ministers or more recognition and support for lay ministry”. It answers by going for what it believes that diocese is asking which is development of lay ministry. In going down that track it asserts that every Eucharistic celebration need not involve a consecration with the natural local pastoral leader being the Eucharistic leader on occasions. Portsmouth places responsibility for deployment of ministry resources with the deanery. This heightens the role of both Rural Dean and Lay Chair.

Reading the papers one or two nuts and bolts issues occur to me which we shall need to address. These include travel costs for NSMs working outside their own locality, looking at how Readers can adjust and develop to fit into new diocesan strategies, the role of retired clergy and as mentioned above Communion by Extension about which the House of Bishops are presently engaged and on which there is now a brief General Synod paper.

Overall the papers seem to be almost entirely concerned with maintaining existing patterns and structures. They appear almost only concerned with the life of the local Church with the exception of Newcastle which sees parish teams helping members of the congregation to minister the world.

## 2 **LOCAL MINISTRY SCHEMES** - kindly written by Canon David Brindley

A number of world-wide ecclesiological movements are leading in the direction of Lay and Ordained people working together in Local Ministry Teams.

- a) The Growth in Lay Ministry  
In recent years there has been a renewed emphasis on the importance of Baptism as a call to and authorisation for ministry. Laity are not only taking more responsibility within the Church, but in all denominations they are becoming a practical and theological resource.

- b) The Centrality of the Eucharist  
There is a world-wide recognition that the Sacrament is inseparable from the Ministry of the Word and Pastoral Care, and that the Eucharist arises out of the Christian community rather than being imposed on it from outside. Much current theology is arguing that the Eucharist is celebrated by the whole people of God, the Body of Christ.
- c) A change in the perception of Priesthood  
There is a de-professionalisation of priesthood taking place in most major denominations throughout Europe. This can be seen in the development of a Roman Catholic permanent Diaconate, Non-stipendiary Ministry in Protestant Churches, and the development of ministers in secular employment.
- d) The decreasing number of Priests  
Some would argue that the decline in numbers of Clergy, especially in Europe, is the action of the Spirit forcing the Church to change its patterns of ministry. Others would say it is due entirely to sociological factors, but it does raise the question for all the Churches of how they should respond to falling numbers. It is argued by some writers that the Christian community has a right to priests, and that the institutional Church should not deny priests to the local Church. If the local Church needs priests, then the institution should enable the locality to find them rather than erecting barriers.

Priesthood and Lay Ministry are not two separate things. They are strands of a single rope held together by Christ. It is, therefore, a mistake to develop Lay Ministry Teams and Local Priestly Ministry separately. The logic suggests that there should be a single process of selection, training and ministerial development. Collaborative ministry can only work if it is built into the structure of training and ministerial practice.

Local Ministry Teams at their best embody a number of principles:

- a) the unity of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care;
- b) collaborative training;
- c) a catalyst to the whole people of God in the Locality;
- d) applicability to a wide range of situations;
- e) answering the real needs of the locality;
- f) episcopally authorised;
- g) under continuous training and review.

#### THE SHAPE OF LOCAL MINISTRY TEAMS

- a) It is essential that a decision for Local Ministry should be made by the PCC. Gloucester and Lincoln have developed a course 'Exploring Local Ministry'. This includes a mission audit, and encourages the PCC to develop a statement of needs. If on the basis of this short course the PCC decides to begin Local Ministry, it then needs the Bishop's permission to begin and to select and train a Team.
- b) After selection, training begins for the selected group. This follows two paths:
  - i) Parish based groups. Working under the guidance of a local tutor, following centrally produced work-books, the groups learn and practise pastoral care, worship, and other aspects of ministry. The incumbent must be involved at a number of points in this training. The group is assessed on its own performance, and on how effectively it involved other people within the church in the tasks.
  - ii) Diocesan training, at which the groups meet other Teams and are introduced to the concept of the church beyond the parish.

- c) Potential Ordinands may or may not arise within a particular team, depending upon the needs of the parish and God's call. They are selected according to the national model, and continue the local and diocesan elements of training. They are also slotted into the local non-residential course for some elements, and train alongside Stipendiary and Non-stipendiary Clergy.
- d) The Team is authorised by the Bishop as it begins training. He authorises not individuals, but the Team as a corporate entity. There are periodic reviews of the life of the Team, and there is a built-in retirement and renewal process for the lay members.
- e) Local Non-stipendiary Ministers are ordained Deacon after three years in training and ordained Priest at the Bishop's discretion. A.B.M. continuously examines the courses to ensure standards and compatibility across the country.

#### LOCAL NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTERS

- a) We must distinguish between ordination into the Catholic Church and licensing according to the individuals' gifts and local need. Local Non Stipendiary Ministers receive the same ordinations as all clergy, and their sphere of ministry is limited by licence as is that of all other clergy.
- b) All Local Non-Stipendiary Ministers are under the supervision of an Incumbent. Their sphere of ministry is a part of a benefice. The incumbent is involved with their training both as someone in training himself, and also as a trainer.
- c) Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry is subject to regulations published by the House of Bishops particularly with regard to licensing, movement, and supervision.

The advantage of Local Ministry Teams from which Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry may arise is that each parish can tailor the system to its own needs. The training can be flexible enough to offer options, so targeting the particular needs of the place. Those needs may or may not include Priesthood, and this system enables a full team to operate consisting entirely of Lay people, or gives the option of a call to Ordained Ministry, arising either from within the individual or from within the Team. If the Team includes ordained members they become 'parsons' and are the sacramental focus of the Eucharistic community. Such a scheme has a number of advantages. It is a positive response to the situation in which the Church finds itself at present, taking seriously the developments in Lay Ministry which have occurred in recent years and the need for more clergy. It enables the church to express its local and universal nature, and it is recognisably Anglican in keeping together Ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care.

## **2 RESULTS OF THE SURVEY UNDERTAKEN BY THE GROUP**

### **2.1 COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY**

Most of the examples reported to us were within parishes, rather than between parishes, and depended very much on the style and skills of the parish priest. There were many examples of ministry being shared with the laity but most of the examples given seemed to be clergy dependent. There were a number of examples of parishes waiting for a new incumbent to arrive, or in one case to recover from illness, before developments in shared ministry were able to develop. The other side of this coin was an example quoted where shared ministry had been hijacked by one or more individuals during an interregnum in a way which caused conflict when a new Vicar was eventually appointed. This raises the whole issue of supervision, authorisation and control of lay ministry. There can be very serious problems when lay ministers and ordained ministers and their strategies are in discord.

On the other hand we were told about several initiatives in maintaining ministry when there was a vacancy in parishes, such as the sustaining of sacramental worship through the use of the reserved sacrament. There were also examples of non-parochial clergy being brought in to share ministry with lay people to good effect. Nor is it entirely true that the parish priest always dominates the ministry strategy in a parish. We were told of one parish where the incumbent had heavy diocesan responsibilities and where the PCC Secretary acted as the link between the incumbent and the lay team and seemed to have quite wide responsibilities with the incumbent acting in a supervisory and consultative role.

A large rural parish reported the imaginative use of a Church Army Captain to reach an unchurched section of the parish where the parish church was probably too traditional to have attracted them. After several years there were signs of limited movement between the two worship centres.

Other parishes reported strategies for devolving lay pastoral care throughout the congregation including one based on Carl George's book on Meta-church. Here, through a pattern of one person caring for ten others who in turn care for ten more it was suggested that one parish priest could pastor a much larger number of people. It was questioned whether the church functioned best at three levels (cell, congregation and celebration group) as much church growth theory has it. Often the congregation seems to cramp the style of both cell and celebration group. In the Meta-church model 'cell' and 'celebration' (the whole community) are released. It is not uncommon for lay groups to be trained and then left to themselves; in this parish they meet fortnightly with their leaders who in turn meet fortnightly with their home groups. It was noted several times that a big issue was retraining the clergy to oversee, train and supervise lay ministry rather than lead or dominate it.

It was noticeable that almost all the examples submitted appeared to revolve round one person – the parish priest. However much he shares, and whether he shares real responsibility or simply the jobs of ministry, seems to depend on his temperament. There were, however, some clear examples of regular and effective consultation where shared leadership was modelled and expressed.

One issue raised was that of parish boundaries and their effect on the present situation. This was particularly true in the area of baptismal policy and the delicate realm of 'sheep stealing'. Has the time come to think less rigidly about boundaries of all kinds? Are some present attitudes a hindrance to effective ministry?

There were, of course, warnings against radicalism in some parish responses. One priest asked that we should not neglect the powerful influence and effective ministry of the parish priest being constantly and lovingly among his people.

Ecumenism, surprisingly, was seldom mentioned though examples were reported of ecumenical experiments and one parish did describe how ministry within a group of covenanted churches had been enriched though little detail was given.

Several parishes gave reports of ministry initiatives directed specifically at young people who are, it seems, proving less easy to cater for in contemporary society and less willing to respond to traditional patterns of ministry. Clubs and music groups and similar initiatives are being created alongside more traditional church activities; residential camps and holidays were described and one parish makes separate worship provision for younger and older members with the two groups coming together for some kind of shared concluding act. There is a whole dimension of ministry to be investigated here.

Examples of effective involvement of NSM's and Readers were plentiful and their roles are discussed in other sections of this report. One unusual development was that of 'lay deacons' in the parish. Their function seemed to be more than liturgical and their designation and recognition within the congregation, and thus their authorisation, led us to consider the whole question of the diaconate within the Church of England. In the light of meetings and discussions with Roman Catholic colleagues who have been involved in the development of

the permanent diaconate within their church we feel it is time to urge new thinking on this issue.

### 3. **OTHER PAPERS RECEIVED**

Diocese of Gloucester: Local Ministry Scheme and Training Programme

Coventry Diocese: Report of Consultation on Patterns of Ministry, Glenfall House, 1994

St George's Windsor. "A Window of Opportunity", Report on a Consultation for Diaconal Ministries today in the Church of England. 1995

Diocese of Canterbury: "The Future – a Strategy for the Diocese of Canterbury", 1994

Bishops' Conference (RC) of Great Britain: Briefing 87, "Permanent Diaconate" 1987 together with many subsequent papers about the growth of the permanent diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church.

Edward King Institute: "Local Ministry" – Report of a National Consultation on the development of Local Ministry, 1994

ABM Policy Paper 1, Local NSM, 1991      ABM: Ministry Paper 4, A Review of LNSM Schemes

Phil Aspinall: "Witnesses to the Word", report on a visit to an APT Conference in the USA, 1995

United Reformed Church, West Midlands Province, "Patterns of Ministry"

The working party also gratefully acknowledges receipt of many documents relating to patterns of ministry in individual parishes, many of which are referred to in the preceding section of this report.