

## COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

### REPORT 2002

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP

##### *House of Bishops*

Most Rev RL Clarke, Bishop of Meath (Chairman)  
 Rt Rev MHG Mayes, Bishop of Limerick  
 Rt Rev RCA Henderson, Bishop of Tuam

##### *Standing Committee*

Ms C McCutcheon (Honorary Secretary)

##### *General Synod – clerical*

Rev Canon JAA Condell  
 Ven KR Good  
 Ven AET Harper

##### *Pensions Board*

Lady Sheil

##### *General Synod – lay*

Mrs A Forrest  
 Mr RF Palmer  
 Mr DG Perrin

##### *Representative Church Body*

Ven DS McLean  
 Mrs CH Thomson

##### *Principal of the Theological College*

Rev Canon CA Empey

##### *Honorary Secretaries*

Very Rev H Cassidy

##### *Co-opted*

Rev OMR Donohoe  
 Rev C Lindsay  
 Dr A Pierce

##### *Co-ordinator of Auxiliary Ministry Training*

Rev Canon KA Kearon

The Commission on Ministry is very grateful to the Rev Canon JR Bartlett for his immense contribution to the work of the Commission since its inception in 1996 and wishes him well following his retirement as principal of the Church of Ireland Theological College.

The Rev Canon CA Empey was welcomed as an *ex officio* member in his capacity as principal of the Theological College. The Commission also welcomed the Ven DS McLean, appointed by the Representative Church Body.

The Commission conveyed its best wishes to the Rt Rev AET Harper on his consecration as Bishop of Connor. As Bishop Harper was no longer eligible as an elected clerical member of the Commission, he was appointed as a co-opted member.

The Commission regretted the resignation of Dr A Pierce as a co-opted member, due to other commitments which made it difficult for him to attend meetings.

## 2. SUMMARY

The most significant matters dealt with by the Commission on Ministry during the past year have been:

- Preparations for the Summit on Ministry to be held in September 2002.
- The implementation of the provisions contained in the Bill passed by the General Synod in 2001 for the establishment of Mediation Panels.
- A review of women in the ordained ministry a decade after the Synod approved the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate.

## 3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Commission on Ministry was established by the General Synod in 1996. In accordance with its terms of reference, the Commission makes recommendations concerning the Christian Ministry, both lay and ordained. This includes the deployment of stipendiary and non-stipendiary clergy appropriate to the requirements of the Church of Ireland in the future. Matters relating to ministry may be referred to the Commission by the House of Bishops, the Standing Committee and the Representative Church Body.

## 4. GENERAL

Working Groups from within the Commission deal with specific areas. These Groups meet separately and report to full meetings of the Commission, which met on six occasions during the year. The business of the Commission is mainly reported under the headings of the Working Groups, which are as follows:

- (a) Perceived needs and expectations of ministry.
- (b) Deployment of clergy.
- (c) Auxiliary ministry.

## 5. PERCEIVED NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF MINISTRY

### *Members of the Group*

Ven AET Harper (Convenor)	Mrs A Forrest
Rt Rev RCA Henderson, Bishop of Tuam	Ven KR Good
Ms C McCutcheon	

The issues arising from the parish visitations reported in 1999 were instrumental in shaping the topics agreed for the Summit on Ministry being held in September 2002.

When the group commenced this process, it was pointed out that “one of the principal tasks of the Commission on Ministry is to examine the life, witness and mission of the Church of Ireland in order to see how its ministry may be shaped or reshaped to meet future needs and opportunities. That examination and any proposals for change must take account of the contemporary experience of the Church at parish level. The sub-committee set up to examine the “perceived needs and expectations of ministry” has begun a process of dialogue to enable us to hear what people active in their parishes think and expect. Representatives of the Commission were [again] generously received and in every case the consultations were open, helpful and illuminating.”

The Summit on Ministry will be residential and held over a period of three days from 9 to 11 September 2002 in All Hallows College, Drumcondra, Dublin. Guest speakers have been invited to address the Summit on the following topics:

- The reality of ministry now and what the Church and Community will look like in 2020
- Structures and styles and patterns of ministry for the future
- The place of “popular culture” and “populist” styles in parish worship
- The international and ecumenical context for ministry in the Church of Ireland

Approximately one hundred participants have been invited to attend the Summit, which includes representatives from each diocese and guest participants from other Churches. Each diocese has prepared responses to questions put by the Commission in preparation for the Summit and these responses were presented by diocesan spokespersons to a meeting of the Commission held in January 2002.

Details of arrangements for the Summit on Ministry are included as Appendix A.

## 6. DEPLOYMENT OF CLERGY

### *Members of the Group*

Rt Rev MHG Mayes, Bishop of Limerick (Convenor)	Very Rev H Cassidy
Rev Canon JAA Condell	Rev Canon CA Empey
Mr RF Palmer	Lady Sheil

The General Synod of 2001 passed the Bill to provide for the establishment of Provincial Mediation Panels, from 1 June 2002, and to make further provision concerning mediation in conflict resolution and related matters. The Statute implements the main proposals contained in the Commission on Ministry’s White Paper on Pastoral Breakdown brought before the General Synod in 2000.

The Provincial Mediation Panels each have power to make recommendations to the bishop concerning any case of pastoral conflict which that bishop has referred to the Panel. The procedure is available for cases which are incapable of being resolved at local level within the diocese.

Each diocesan council has been requested to appoint one ordained priest and one layperson on the nomination of the bishop to serve on the Panels for a three year period from 1 June 2002. The Commission is of the opinion that the Panels should meet once per year and that the responsibility for training members in conflict resolution is a matter for the Panels.

The Statute provides for regulations to be made by the Representative Church Body concerning severance terms and all other related matters. The RCB Stipends Committee has set up a group to consider the drafting of regulations. While there could be difficulty in funding severance payments in the short term, it could be some years before any settlement is made under the new legislation.

The Commission considered a letter from Cork, Cloyne and Ross Diocesan Council concerning difficulties encountered with the deployment of clergy to provide service duty during vacancies, holidays and periods of illness. *Extended Eucharist* and *Local Ordained Ministry* were discussed, but it was emphasised that neither of these practices is authorised by the Church at central level. The Group undertook to give further consideration to the question of Local Ordained Ministry.

The Working Group prepared a report on this matter, which was approved by the Commission and forwarded to Cork, Cloyne and Ross Diocesan Council. The report is included as Appendix B.

## 7. AUXILIARY MINISTRY

### *Members of the Group*

Rev OMR Donohoe (Convenor)

Mr DG Perrin

Mrs CH Thomson

Rev Canon KA Kearon

Rev C Lindsay

Appended to the report last year was a discussion paper which was prepared following extensive consideration by the Commission on the role of auxiliary ministers. The matter was considered in the light of the replies to the questionnaire sent to all auxiliary ministers in order to obtain their views on all aspects of the auxiliary ministry. The Commission would wish that the issues raised in the discussion paper are taken into consideration by the Theological College Council.

The Commission was requested to carry out a review of women in the ordained ministry. As it is more than a decade since the General Synod approved the ordination of women as priests and bishops, the Commission agreed that this was an appropriate time to review the matter while recognising the contribution that women make to the ordained ministry of the Church.

The Working Group on auxiliary ministry was requested to turn its attention to this matter and report on the practical issues pertaining to women in the ordained ministry. In March 2002, a questionnaire on this matter was issued to Bishops, Archdeacons and to a sample of parishes where women are serving or have served, as well as women priests and deacons.

## 8. CONSULTATIONS ON MINISTRY

The Ven AET Harper attended an Ecumenical Consultation entitled “A Renewed Diaconate”, on behalf of the Commission on Ministry, which was held in Windsor Castle on 2-4 April 2001. A report on the Consultation is included as Appendix C.

The Rev Canon CA Empey was appointed to represent the Commission at a Consultation on Presbyteral Ministry, to be held at St Georges House, Windsor Castle on 15-17 April 2002. The invitation was received from Dr Paul Avis, Director of the Centre for the Study of the Christian Church.

**APPENDIX A****SUMMIT ON MINISTRY**

The Summit on Ministry will be held over three days on 9, 10 and 11 September 2002 in All Hallows College situated in Grace Park Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. The Summit will be residential.

The timetable for the Summit will be structured around keynote addresses by prominent speakers on the following topics:

- The reality of ministry now and what the Church and Community will look like in 2020
- Structures and styles and patterns of ministry for the future
- The place of “popular culture” and “populist” styles in parish worship
- The international and ecumenical context for ministry in the Church of Ireland

Each address will be followed by a respondent appointed in advance to carry out this function prior to open discussion of the topics raised in the address. This stage will be followed by group sessions and feedback to a plenary session which should produce new initiatives in ministry for further consideration by the Church. Topics for the group sessions will have been generated from the keynote addresses and respondents.

Those that will be invited to the Summit will include the following:

The Archbishops and Bishops

Five from each Diocese including two lay members of Diocesan Council or Synod

Church of Ireland Theological College staff

Members of the Central Assessment Panel

Members of the Commission on Ministry

Representatives from the other Irish Churches

Representatives from the other Anglican Churches in Great Britain

A Representative from the Porvoo Communion

The Rev Canon John Mann has been appointed as Chaplain to the Summit and will be responsible for arranging the worship during the conference. Mr David Meredith has been appointed as co-ordinator.

Funding for the Summit will be divided between the Priorities Fund, the Representative Church Body and contributions from the dioceses to cover the accommodation expenses of the diocesan representatives. The Priorities Fund has designated the Summit as its special project for 2002.

As representatives of all dioceses will be involved in the Summit, dioceses were asked to take part in a preliminary exercise to provide background information. In order to assemble this information dioceses were asked to consider the following questions, which may indicate how ministry in each diocese may have evolved by the year 2020:

1. What demographic and socio-economic changes are taking place in your diocese, and what differences will these changes make to the character of church life and the provision of ministry? (eg movements of population, growth, decline, age structure, immigration/emigration, country/town/city/inner city, journey to work daily/weekly, second homes, poverty/prosperity, marriage/cohabitation/casualisation of relationships, early retirement, other)
2. How would you describe the current age structure of the worshipping community? Are there any discernible changes taking place?
3. What forward planning is your diocese engaged in to respond to the needs of mission and ministry for the future, and what additional or different resources will be needed to support the changes you envisage?
4. Is your diocese pursuing opportunities for mission and ministry in collaboration with other dioceses or denominations?

Diocesan spokespersons from each diocese were invited to a meeting of the Commission on Ministry to present the response from their diocese to the questions in preparation for the Summit. The responses contained a number of common themes which will be covered by the keynote speakers and considered in detail at the Summit.

**APPENDIX B****TEMPORARY DUTY IN PARISHES**

The Appointments and tenure sub-group was asked to consider the letter from the Diocesan Secretary of Cork, Cloyne and Ross on the question of provision of Eucharistic services without having to depend heavily on the services of retired clergy, as is frequently the case at present.

At the outset, it should be assumed that retired clergy are not available anywhere, and that as a matter of principle no parish should organise its affairs on the assumption that there will always be retired clergy to fill a gap. That is a very short-sighted policy.

There are five alternatives to be considered:

- A drastic programme of church closures
- Lay eucharistic presidency
- “Extended” Eucharist
- Local Ordained Ministry
- Saturday evening worship

Within the Province of Dublin and those dioceses of the Province of Armagh that are in the Republic of Ireland, where the problem of small, numerous, scattered communities is greatest, and excluding the mainly urban diocese of Dublin (but including Glendalough), there are 164 benefices, and 589 places of worship. A high percentage of these have 3 or 4 churches, and there are some benefices with as many as 9 places of worship. One and two church benefices are rare.

Even if all possible stipendiary clerical posts were filled (which they seldom are), and if all auxiliary clergy were available all the time, the regular provision of eucharistic worship in all places is pushing things to the limit. There is very little slack to be taken up, and in the above figures no account is taken of eucharistic ministry in hospitals or private homes.

However, the Church of Ireland is extremely reluctant to go down the church closures road to any significant extent, and realistic rationalisation may be ruled out for the foreseeable future.

The second option, lay eucharistic presidency, has so far not been seriously considered, if at all, within the Church of Ireland, and if anything is even less likely than the first option.

Of the remaining three, two could be put in place immediately.

- (1) The “Extended Eucharist”. Although the “extended Eucharist” (ie previously consecrated elements being brought to churches, hospitals, private homes etc. and distributed by authorised lay persons) received a negative response at General Synod level, pastoral necessity suggests that this should be re-visited. The Liturgical Advisory Committee should be asked to draft an appropriate form of worship for use in the context of the extended Eucharist.

- (2) Saturday Evening. The second possibility that could be put in place immediately is the Saturday evening option. Some parishes practise this already with varying degrees of acceptability, but the main objection to it is that of inconvenience. The Church of Ireland prefers to focus all its liturgical activity to Sundays.
- (3) Local Ordained Ministry. The third remaining alternative, the Local Ordained Ministry, could not be put into effect immediately. The Standing Committee's Committee on the Ordained Ministry considered the idea in some depth. Its observations are contained in the Standing Committee Report to the General Synod of 1994 (Appendix C), and need not be repeated here. Although the idea received a degree of opposition at the time it was not formally voted on, and it should be given a more formal testing at General Synod level. However, even if it does prove to be acceptable in the long run, it does not solve the immediate crisis, and we therefore recommend that the first and second of the three practicable options be adopted in cases of pastoral urgency.



**APPENDIX C****A RENEWED DIACONATE****AN ECUMENICAL CONSULTATION****IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE  
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH****ST GEORGE'S HOUSE, WINDSOR CASTLE  
2-4 APRIL 2001**

The Consultation was conducted under 'Chatham House Rules', so that details of the discussion cannot be disclosed. However, the context and conduct of the Consultation can be indicated, together with the list of invited participants (annexed to this note.)

The purpose of the Consultation was to receive ecumenical comment on the contents of a draft report on the renewal of the Diaconate in the Church of England. Upon completion, the report will be commended to the House of Bishops of the Church of England. If accepted by the House, the report will be published in September 2001 for consideration by the General Synod of the Church of England at its meeting in November 2001. The text of the draft report was not made available to the ecumenical delegates but the contents of the various sections was explained verbally in plenary sessions. An undertaking was given at the end of the Consultation that a report on the proceedings at Windsor would be drawn up and circulated to all participants. I am not yet in receipt of such a report.

In essence, the report on 'A Renewed Diaconate' will argue for the establishment/re-establishment in the Church of England of a distinctive diaconal order on theological, ecclesiological, ecumenical and practical grounds.

- It will envisage the establishment of a permanent diaconate alongside the existing transitional diaconate.
- The transitional diaconate will remain the normal precursor to admission to presbyteral and episcopal orders.
- The permanent diaconate may be either stipendiary or non-stipendiary.
- The report works out in careful detail the distinctive elements of diaconal ministry including its key role as a bridge between the sanctuary and the street.
- Because of the thorough examination and exposition of the nature and content of diaconal ministry it seems likely that the need will arise for a similarly thorough examination and exposition of the nature and content of priestly ministry.
- Specialised training in preparation for diaconal ministry within the permanent diaconate is envisaged. Indeed a course designed to provide this already exists at the University of Chichester under the direction of the Professor of Christian Theology, The Revd Professor Robert Hannaford.
- The key text in establishing a renewed understanding of the diaconate, and one clearly highly influential in the thinking of the C of E Working party, is John M Collins's seminal work 'Diakonia, Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources' (Oxford 1995) unhappily now out of print.

Assuming, as the members of the Working Party seem to do, that the report will be accepted by the bishops and receive a fair wind from the General Synod, the long term effects upon the ministry of the Church of England are likely to be profound. Together with the increasing implementation of varieties of 'Local Ministry Teams', the face of ministry in the Church of England looks set to be modified substantially.

Certain factors may be adduced as having contributed towards motivating the Church of England to re-examine its practice in respect of diaconal ministry. One such was the need to re-examine and tidy up the position of the diaconate after the recent mass admissions of many women deacons to priestly orders. Another factor in the current situation is the financial position of many English dioceses. Neither of these factors apply in quite the same way to the Church of Ireland. The ecumenical relationships of the Church, particularly in the context of the Porvoo and Hanover Consultations, have provided a more significant motivation, however, and these considerations do apply to us. Overwhelmingly important, however, is the transformation (through re-discovery) of our understanding of the role and importance of the ministry of the deacon in the life of the whole Church and, therefore, the appropriateness of re-establishing that ministry in all its fullness at a time of change and renewal in the ministry of the whole People of God.

AET Harper, May 2001

#### NAMES OF THOSE INVITED

Rev Prebendary Dr Paul Avis	General Secretary, Council for Christian Unity
Rev G Russell Barr	Director, Centre for the Study of the Christian Church
Rev Thomas Bruch	Convenor, Working Party on Ministry, Church of Scotland
Rev Dr Joseph Cassidy	Lutheran Council of Great Britain
Rev Christine Craven	Principal, St Chad's College, Durham
Deacon Margaret Crompton	United Reformed Church
Rev Dr Per Eckerdal	Church of England Bishops' Working Party
Rev Dr Robin Greenwood	Church of Sweden
Rev Deacon Christine Hall	The Church in Wales
Rev Professor Robert Hannaford	Director, Bishop Otter Centre for Theology & Ministry
Ven Alan Harper	Professor of Christian Theology, University of Chichester
Rev Peter Hayler	Archdeacon, Church of Ireland
Ven Gordon Kuhrt	Church in Wales
Rev Dr Roy Long	Director of Ministry, Archbishops' Council
Rev Maylanne Maybee	Lutheran Council of Great Britain
Rev Jean Mayland	Deacon, Church of Canada
Rev Dr Paul McPartlan	Co-ordinating Secretary, CTBI
Rev Pat Munro	Lecturer in Systematic Theology, Heythrop College
Pat Nappin	Deacon, Church of Scotland
Rev David Newman	Board of Social Responsibility, Church of England
Mr Richard Noble	Moravian Church
Rev Roy Overthrow	Church of England Bishops' Working Party
Very Rev Stephen Platten	Deacon to the Bishop of Salisbury
Rt Rev Barry Rogerson	Dean of Norwich
Ms Nini Smedberg	Bishop of Bristol
Rev Allen Walker	Church of Sweden
Deacon Christine Walters	Church of England
Rev Sister Teresa White	Deacon, Methodist Church
Rev Deacon Ann Wren	Diakonia, Church of England
	Church of England Bishops' Working Party