

**APPENDIX D**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSCOTT REVIEW GROUP TO STANDING  
COMMITTEE – November 2003**

The Truscott Review Group was appointed by the Standing Committee to consider the implications of the Truscott Report for the Church of Ireland.

The members of the group are Bishop Harold Miller (Chair), Bishop Ken Clarke, Archdeacon David Chillingworth, Dean Maurice Sirr, Rev Paul Hoey (Secretary) and Mr Robert Kay.

The committee reviewed the recommendations of the Truscott Report in detail over the course of several meetings. After a further period of reflection and discussion the committee now wishes to make the following recommendations:

- 1. Having considered the report in detail the committee does not consider it would be helpful to replace the Stewardship Office with a similar organisation.***

There has been no obvious demand for reinstatement or replacement and it seems that those parishes wanting financial expertise have been able to follow that up elsewhere including with Mr Murray Hunter, the former Stewardship Adviser.

- 2. The committee considers that the best way of fulfilling the aims of the Truscott Report would be to initiate a programme of congregational development for the strategic development of individual parishes.***

The committee looked at various models of Congregational/Parish Development, especially those of the American Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic diocese of Dublin, as well as the Turnaround teams of the diocese of Wakefield. The aim of these programmes is the development, in every parish, of a clearly understood and widely owned vision, towards which progress is made in strategic planning through collaborative ministry.

Key to the concept of Congregational Development is the holding of an annual conference for representatives from every diocese. The conference might address some of the following subject areas:

- Core values
- Vision
- Strategy
- Management of change
- Resources
- Team building
- Shared training of leaders
- Identifying, reviewing and resourcing of leaders

## Standing Committee – Report 2004

- Understanding culture
- Welcoming
- Maximising the use of church buildings
- Transitional ministry
- Using the visual in worship
- Growth
- Developing new models of church

The committee noted that, within the Church of Ireland, there have been many helpful conferences of various kinds down the years but that the weakness has often been in implementation. All too often when delegates return to “the trivial round, the common task”, good ideas are forgotten. This difficulty might be addressed, as in some of the programmes looked at, by allocating resources to specific parishes to assist with the outworking of the principles of congregational development shared in the conference and applied to the local situation.

Congregational Development programmes elsewhere are normally resourced by one or more full or part-time officers supported by regional, diocesan and parish volunteers. The committee recognises the difficulties this could present to the Church of Ireland at the present time.

Therefore, the suggestion being put forward is that an experiment be set up involving the holding of an initial conference and follow-up pilot projects in a few selected parishes.

The committee recommends the setting up of a working group to oversee the pilot, using existing resources,

**3. *In order for Congregational Development to take root at local level the committee considers that a modest revision to the Constitution on the remit of Select Vestries is advisable.***

The overwhelming majority of provinces and dioceses throughout the Anglican Communion charge the vestry (or its equivalent) with responsibility for mission and ministry in the parish as well as for what are referred to in the Church of Ireland as “The 3 Fs” – furnishing, finance and fabric. The same point has been made to or by various other groups within the Church, including the Councils for Mission and the Sectarian Education Committee (cf. report *The Hard Gospel* page 54).

The present regulations on select vestries arose out of a period of our history, around the time of disestablishment, when a priority for the church was provision for its buildings. The needs of the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are very different.

The present system may contribute to an unhealthy divide between clergy and laity. If, for example, numbers attending worship in a parish should decline, some lay people may choose to place responsibility at the feet of the rector without recognising their own accountability. Under the proposed new model responsibility for addressing the situation

#### Standing Committee – Report 2004

would be shared and set in a context of mission. Moreover, genuinely collaborative ministry at the level of the select vestry will surely provide a better model for ministry at every other level of parish life. Can allowing lay members of the church responsibility for purely material matters be commensurate with the Biblical pattern of ministry?

The committee recognises that in many cases the kind of collaboration envisaged already exists in vestries but without any official standing. The committee considers, especially in light of its recommendations on Congregational Development, that it is right at this stage to bring the Church of Ireland into line with its sister churches in the Celtic fringe and the overwhelming majority of others throughout the Anglican Communion by putting mission on the agenda of select vestries.

The committee undertook some research into various models of vestry in existence in other parts of the Communion. It also took note of a more radical revision considered some years ago by Bishop Roy Warke and others in which, among other issues, the role of parish councils and the elected presentation to vestries was considered.

In the light of this the committee's recommendation is that, at the start of section 24 of chapter 3 of the Constitution the following be inserted.

*The select vestry shall, notwithstanding the exclusive charge of the incumbent or officiating member of the clergy of all rites, ceremonies and liturgical practices of the Church, co-operate with the incumbent or other officiating member of the clergy, in:*

- *promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;*
- *the consideration and discussion of matters concerning the Church of Ireland or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the Church on any question;*
- *making known and putting into effect any provision made by the General or Diocesan Synod but without prejudice to the powers of the vestry on any particular matter;*
- *and in raising such matters as the vestry consider appropriate with the Diocesan Synod.*