

**COMMISSION ON MINISTRY**

**REPORT 2005**

**1. MEMBERSHIP**

*House of Bishops*

Rt Rev KR Good, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe  
(Chairman)  
Rt Rev MHG Mayes, Bishop of Limerick

*Standing Committee*

Mr J Richardson

*General Synod – clerical*

Rev Canon GL Hastings  
Rev ECJ Woods  
Very Rev SR White

*Pensions Board*

Lady Sheil

*General Synod – lay*

Ms R Handy  
Mr DG Hannon  
Mr RF Palmer

*Representative Church Body*

Ven DS McLean  
Mrs CH Thomson

*Principal of the Theological College*

Rev Canon CA Empey

*Honorary Secretaries*

Mr SR Harper

*Co-opted*

Rev OMR Donohoe  
Mrs A Forrest  
Rev C Lindsay

*Co-ordinator of Auxiliary Ministry Training*

Vacant

The Commission records its appreciation of the Chairmanship of the Most Rev RL Clarke, who has led the Commission since its inception in 1996. Among other initiatives, Bishop Clarke has overseen the introduction of part-time deployment of stipendiary clergy and the establishment of Provincial Mediation Panels as part of the procedure for conflict resolution. The Commission is very pleased that the Rt Rev KR Good has agreed to take over as Chairman of the Commission.

The Rev Canon CG Hyland left the Commission on his retirement in January 2005 and the Rev Canon KA Kearon took up the post of Secretary General of the Anglican Communion in January 2005, thus leaving vacant the *ex officio* post of Co-ordinator of Auxiliary Ministry Training. Their considerable contribution to the work of the Commission is very much appreciated. The Rev ECJ Woods was elected in place of Canon Hyland.

**2. SUMMARY**

The most significant matter dealt with by the Commission on Ministry during the past year has been the consolidation of the Summit process by identifying specific issues to be addressed by sub-groups.

**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. THE APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS**

During the past two years, the business of the Commission has almost entirely been concerned with the Summit on Ministry process, which involves all members of the Commission. Under the Chairmanship of Bishop Good, the Commission felt that the most significant issues highlighted by the Summit process should be addressed.

While many issues were raised during the Summit process, there were four or five specific issues that stayed to the forefront throughout the process and the Commission decided to address these issues by the appointment of working groups from among its own members.

The following issues were identified for which working groups were appointed:

<b>In-service training</b>	Ven DS McLean Ms R Handy Rev Canon CA Empey Mr DG Hannon
<b>Training for lay ministry</b>	Rev OMR Donohoe Rev ECJ Woods Mrs CH Thomson Mr SR Harper
<b>The diaconate</b>	Very Rev SR White Mrs A Forrest Mr J Richardson Rev Canon GL Hastings
<b>Auxiliary ministry and Local ordained ministry</b>	Rev C Lindsay Rt Rev MHG Mayes Mr RF Palmer Lady Sheil

The report of the Commission this year is concentrating on issues relating to training.

## **5. REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS**

### **IN SERVICE TRAINING**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is probably witnessing some of the greatest changes in people's attitudes and accepted standards of life. As each new area of concern, each new trend, comes to the forefront many feel that those in training for the ordained ministry should be taught how to minister in such situations.

This puts an increasing burden on an already heavy area of study which is already under great strain. We have expected our three year training course to include what would normally be covered in four years at University. We are at bursting point. This can not continue!

Radical changes will have to be made. Training for ministry should in future start in the Theological College and continue in the Parish. Curates Assistant should, in their first three years, undergo a continuing course in ministerial education.

Such a course could lead to further qualification

The working group are listing the competencies required of curates before they become rectors. The list covers areas such as planning and conducting worship for a variety of named occasions; preaching in different situations; personal spiritual development; developing an understanding of mission; exercising leadership; ministry to those who are sick, the dying, to children and the unchurched; the organisation, planning and conduct of meetings; self-management and many other skills. Such a list would be used annually by curates-assistant and their trainers to assess their levels of experience and expertise and then devise a training plan for the future. In addition the group are drafting a protocol for a working agreement to be agreed by the curate-assistant and rector on the appointment of the curate-assistant. After discussion and debate the document would be signed by both parties and a copy sent to the diocesan bishop.

We note that some Curates Assistant are placed in parishes where Rectors have only just completed their own curacy days. Other are left to fend for themselves in parishes where there are a number of churches. This should not continue.

The main trainers will be the Rectors who should undergo a week's residential course each year in which

- they might share experiences
- the responsibility of their role would be heightened
- their needs could be explored and serviced
- they would learn how to deal with/manage the bright deacon
- they would learn management skills

All of which would lead to empowering the Rector.

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Further, there should be a written understanding between the Rector and the Curate Assistant.

If a Rector does not fulfil this training role then no Curate Assistant should be placed with that Rector in future years. At an Institution the Bishop, in delivering the act of institution to the Rector, says '*I confer on you the care of God's people in this parish which is entrusted both to you and to me .....*' The Curate Assistant shares the Rector's 'job'. The Bishop therefore should have a say in both the welfare of and the training given to the Curate Assistant.

Further, if all Dioceses were to follow the example of some and contribute towards the stipend of the Curate Assistant it would further help to ground their role.

During the first three years of a curacy adequate time should be allowed on a weekly basis for

- Rector – Curate Assistant meeting
- academic work
- theological engagement
- reflection

The Curate Assistant would also attend Diocesan In-Service Training with their fellow Curates Assistant. Such a programme would envisage Post-ordination and Continuing Ministerial Education delivered at diocesan or regional level. It would necessarily require a common curriculum, monitored and validated centrally. It is hoped that elements in such a programme would be validated by a Third-Level institution, allowing, for example an opportunity to undertake an MA or a B.Th. (Hons) course extramurally, building on the foundation of a B.Th. degree.

Parishes would need to be informed of such training and also disciplined in their time use of the Curate Assistant.

### RECTORS

All Rectors should undertake regular In-Service Training. There are a number of occasions when this is particularly important.

**At the start** - on becoming a Rector.

(Here as with the Curate Assistant a system of mentoring should be established.)

**In mid career** - courses are needed for professional updating. This could take the form of directed sabbaticals. Clergy at this stage in their career need time out for reflection.

A 'stalling point' can occur in ministry. 'What have I achieved?' 'Where am I going?'

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‘Should I move because I might cope better elsewhere?’

**Approaching retirement** - clergy would benefit if a course were available for them as they prepare to adjust.

### BISHOPS

Bishops would benefit from In-Service Training, especially at the beginning of their Episcopate.

Topics such as

- Exercising authority, be it moral or otherwise, whilst not having executive powers
- Leadership
- Management Skills
- Legal knowledge and skills

would seem to be essential.

Bishops might benefit from having Diocesan support teams.

Bishops should have regular formal appraisals of their clergy. These would indicate areas for in-service training should they be necessary.

All twelve Dioceses should follow the same practice with regard to In-Service Training.

### TRAINING FOR LAY MINISTRY

At the outset we feel it important to state:

- 1 Lay Training is NOT about ‘clericalising’ the laity**
- 2 Lay Training is NOT undertaken in order to ‘assist the clergy’**
- 3 Lay Training is necessary in order that lay people can be helped to fulfil their baptismal call to glorify God to serve others**
- 4 All training is a process and must be available on an ongoing basis**
- 5 Clergy should enable lay ministry and laity be encouraged to accept lay ministry**

We have identified three areas where training is needed. These are not exclusive to each other, but the divisions help to clarify different needs. A person might easily move from one area to another in the course of his/her faith journey.

#### 1. PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

We all need help and support on our faith journey, we need help to “know ourselves” and recognise God in our lives. A variety of opportunities should be available at local level to help people grow in their faith. This area of training might well be an end in itself or

in some cases, it might lead people on to consider moving to either area 2 or possibly 3.

## 2. EQUIPPING FOR LOCAL MINISTRY

All lay training and ministry should be in response to identified needs. We chose the word 'equipping' as the most appropriate word to describe this area of training.

The Church should equip lay people with a greater confidence so that they can effectively share the faith with others and so that they can walk beside others in supporting them on the journey of faith. Equipping people in this area should help people identify their gifts so that they can better use their talents to serve God, the Church and the community and so that their gifts can be developed.

Equipping people in this area will usually be done in order that people can undertake specific tasks in the Church and community. One area where lay people could use their gifts is in the area of the pastoral ministry.

We envisage that under this heading people would be invited to offer their services in a voluntary capacity.

Parishes and Dioceses need to be made aware of courses such as "Network" to help people identify particular gifts.

In addition to the training of lay readers and parish readers there should also be opportunities to equip people to assist in worship and to help in the preparation of worship alongside the clergy.

*At present the C. of I. Board of Education is setting up a database of courses throughout the Church of Ireland.*

## 3. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Professional training is training which prepares people for full time or part time paid positions. Positions on offer would be at National, Diocesan or Parish level. These positions would include hospital chaplains, youth workers, school chaplains, counsellors, organists and administrators. In the majority of these situations training courses are already available and these should be fully recognised (e.g. C.P.E.Course) The Church must give people who are professionally qualified recognition of their work. Structures should be put in place to facilitate the employment and remuneration of suitably qualified professional persons - both lay and clerical.

***For tasks involving pastoral care we feel that there should be some Episcopal commissioning of people for the work they are undertaking. People might be commissioned to serve for an initial period of say three years, allowing for the fact that there must be flexibility.***

***We believe that clergy have a special role and function within the life of the Church but if they are to work alongside lay people then both clergy and laity will need to experience some joint training.***