



ONE MINISTRY

The mix between stipendiary, self-supporting and other forms of ordained ministry is changing, as the Church responds to fresh challenges and an evolving world.

This booklet explores the current situation, identifies some trends and recognises the opportunities as we lead and serve across the Diocese of Bristol.

“The most fundamental discipline is discipleship itself, but beyond that come the specific forms of what we usually call ‘states of life’. Ordination is a ‘state’, something still pretty general, still needing further precision: there is not one way of being a priest.”

- Archbishop Rowan Williams, ‘Ray of Darkness’





BISHOP LEE WRITES

In the past decade we have seen a significant and welcome rise in numbers of people entering an authorised lay or ordained ministry of the Church of England.

As a result, most parishes are now served and led by teams of lay and ordained people and there are as many clergy serving in a self-supporting capacity as there are receiving a stipend. This is transforming the landscape of ministry and mission, providing fresh energy and resources to our churches.

These developments bring their own challenges. New ways of working in partnership are emerging and indeed a new culture of ministry.

To aid this transition we have appointed a Bishops' Adviser for Self-Supporting Ministry, Charles Sutton, a priest who has served in both voluntary and paid roles. Amongst other activities, Charles has reviewed what we do here in the Diocese of Bristol and how it compares with others. This is an important contribution to our understanding of the ministerial resource within our diocese and I thank all those who helped with the research.

This booklet provides an overview of the findings and indicates some of the opportunities ahead. I very much hope it will contribute to ensuring all God's people flourish and bear much fruit for Christ and God's Kingdom.

+Lee Swindon

Rt Rev Dr Lee Rayfield
Bishop of Swindon

SELF-SUPPORTING MINISTRY - A SNAPSHOT

There isn't a single, generally accepted term for clergy who serve as unpaid priests and deacons. The names we use tend to define how individuals see themselves and also how they are seen by the church, whether local or universal. It is unfortunate that the most generally accepted title is associated with payment (or lack of).

Rowan Williams, in a lecture delivered to Ordinands in Oxford in 2004 mused, "Why do we like that negative term 'NSM' (Non-Stipend Minister) so much?" This is an important question. Embedded and heavy in the notion are what appear to be a set of negative values associated with non-payment. Yet within the threefold of ministry, there is only one unified order of priests:

"Priests are ordained to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel. They share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church, delighting in its beauty and rejoicing in its well-being. They are to set the example of the Good Shepherd always before them as the pattern of their calling. With the Bishop and their fellow presbyters, they are to sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament, that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ and be a living sacrifice acceptable to God."

- Common Worship 'Ordination of Priests'

Amongst all clergy in England, those who would historically have been termed as 'non-stipendiary' are growing in number. Here in the Diocese of Bristol the proportion at the end of 2013 was 44% and this is set to rise. The role these colleagues will play in the church in the short and medium term is of considerable importance. Looking to the future, it will become increasingly so.

We have set out to explore how we as a diocese can best maximise on this trend and release new energy within the institution. Our goal has been to provide better understanding and greater local insight so that we can shape ourselves for the future more effectively.

How do our self-supporting ministers within the Diocese experience the living out of their vocation? What are the high and low points?

This research should ensure we have a more informed approach to:

- Strategic planning and development
- Enabling and maximising the contribution of all our clergy
- Delivering a duty of care through individual provision of support, development and opportunity
- Recognising and valuing the full range of ministerial gifts
- Releasing the full potential of all our clergy.

THE EXPLORATORY SURVEY

In late 2013 we conducted a survey amongst all clergy within the Diocese who were not 'stipendiary'. The findings were analysed in early 2014, with a detailed report and recommendations supplied to Bishop's Staff for consideration and reflection. This document is the summary version.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A considerable weight of literature tackles the question of priesthood and the purpose here is not to revisit this, nor is it to remake the point already made concerning definition by source of income. There is one priesthood and one diaconate.

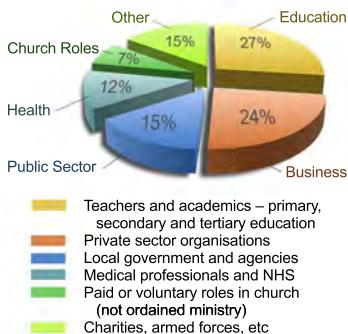
What was very clear in the exploratory work is the need to step away from our inherited legacy which shapes how we think and act.

The need is to see ordained ministry as one; and to acknowledge that the way individuals fulfil their priestly calling varies considerably. In this we should support a cultural change which not only impacts on people's thinking, attitudes and behaviours, but also encompasses all the internal structures, processes and systems that reinforce it.

THE NUMBERS

At the time of this 'snapshot' there were 108 stipendiary clergy, 50 self-supporting ministers (SSM) and 36 ordained local ministers (OLM). There were a further 118 clergy with Bishop's Permission to Officiate, primarily active retired priests within the Diocese. The gender split between SSM and OLMs combined was broadly equal (42% female); and around 60% are above the age of 56 years.

SSM - BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE



Of these various backgrounds, some 30% of SSMs are retired, 19% in full-time employment and 23% work part-time.

One of the most encouraging numbers was the high response rate (78%) amongst the combined SSM and OLM population. And one of the most interesting figures is that the combined work contribution of the SSM and OLM population equates to 37.5 stipendiary clergy. This, with on-costs, could be considered an approximate salary saving in excess of £1.8M.



IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY!

The evidence repeatedly paints a picture of a diocesan structure and culture built upon the legacy of a primarily stipendiary clerical resource.

Here are some examples from our research that illustrate this:

- Sense amongst self-supporting ministers that they have 'second class status' (37%, or 60% with the 'not sure' responses added)
- Belief that being self-supporting will have a negative impact on role applications within the Diocese (30%)
- Support for self-supporting ministers is mainly provided outside the diocesan structure (54%)
- Diocesan 'organisational time' is structured around stipendiary work rather than that of 'secular' work
- Ministry in the 'place of work' not accorded with the level of attention that would be expected in an 'outreaching' diocese
- Ministry reviews and professional development not really inclusive of SSMs (does not work well 70% and 65% respectively)
- Lack of useful or informed use of 'workplace skills' (60%).



THREE OUT OF FIVE

SSMs and OLMs feel their 'place of work' skills are not well used by the church

Skills include:

- Advisory support or expertise
- Management and administration
- Strategy development / implementation
- Development reviews and audits
- Mentoring and coaching /support
- Counselling
- Event management**
- Public speaking
- Supporting professional development
- Information Technology
- Performance

FOUR OUT OF FIVE

SSMs and OLMs feel their role is a privilege and joy

FOUR OUT OF FIVE

SSMs and OLMs feel valued within their own church

Just under a fifth of non-stipendiary clergy feel they have a voice in the diocese

"Church is the primary environment in which I exercise my ministry"

"My ministry is balanced between church and the workplace"

"My ministry in the workplace is more important than my church ministry"





MUTUALITY & COLLEGIALITY

GEOGRAPHY AND TIME

By its very nature, self-supporting ministry (this includes both SSM and OLM) is constrained geographically, which impacts deployment. Whilst 28% of the survey respondents said they are willing to travel a distance of about 30 minutes, the largest proportion (50%) are content to stay where they are in parish terms. The proportion willing to relocate is small (7%).

Strategic use of self-supporting ministry within the Diocese is not seen to take place - only about 19% of respondents think it does. Yet, bearing in mind some of the limiting factors, they do provide a potential resource in times of vacancy (supporting parochial leadership development), maternity leave, illness or study leave, or simply in the application of specific skills as an interim or short-term placement.

Just over a third allocates more than 20 hours each week to 'church activity', and about a quarter of participants would like to give more time. When it comes to how they spent their time within the church role, it is primarily and unsurprisingly directed toward leading worship (especially sacramental) and pastoral work. For most (three-quarters) this is in the parish or benefice to which they are dedicated and in which they feel valued.

A COLLECTIVE SENSE OF BELONGING - ONE MINISTRY

The self-supporting ministry population within the Diocese is diverse and for some is seen to stand apart from the stipendiary population. Yet, in line with the notion of 'One Priesthood', there is a need to minimise this distinction and reduce those factors that accentuate difference. Many of the activities which tend to reinforce separation are shaped by history and form part of the organisational legacy.

- **Belonging activities.** These are collective actions that reinforce group affiliation. Diocesan and deanery events are good examples. It is encouraging to see that 40% and 49% of participants engage, respectively, at diocesan and deanery levels, yet this is still less than half the SSM population. In most cases the primary purpose for meeting with colleagues is mutual encouragement (66.2%), and learning and development (16.2%).

- **Provision of support.** Support and encouragement reinforces the sense of belonging through a growing understanding of the commonality of issues, challenges and experience. One form of support for self-supporting ministers might come through formal Ministry Reviews but for many this does not work well; similarly they feel that professional development does not work



WHERE NOW?

We have attempted to provide a snapshot of self-supporting ministry within the Diocese. The amount of data collected was very considerable and we are working with and sharing this with other dioceses who are using the same or similar approaches. But it is really important to say 'thank you' to all those who so willingly completed the survey and provided such a hugely impressive response rate. It was good to see how much participants appreciated the opportunity to share their views on these subjects.

THE REAL TEST IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

As a result of this research, the Diocese of Bristol has undertaken to consider and implement a variety of actions. Some of these will focus on the 'mechanics' in terms of the systems and processes that operate within the Diocese; others are concerned with more cultural and attitudinal factors that impact on the way clergy are recognised and valued.

In common with the national Church it is recognised that soon half the Diocesan clergy will be self-supporting. This is not a matter of finance, but a reflection of whom God is now calling to the ordained ministry in the Church. We are being blessed with clergy of different skills, perspectives and work patterns to minister in new and revised ways in the church and in the workplace. What is important for the Diocese is that any action based on this trend is built on a foundation that is theologically informed and true to the richness of our tradition.

Consequently, over the next couple of years the Diocese of Bristol is committed to finding ways to:

- Accelerate the process of cultural change to create a real sense of 'one ministry'
- Ensure that activity associated with our clergy aligns with diocesan strategic imperatives, has coherence and is 'joined-up'
- Build on the positive momentum and interest achieved in recent months with the exploratory work on this subject
- Focus primarily within the Diocese but also take the opportunity to learn and share on a wider scale with neighbouring dioceses and at a national level.

well either. Since ordination, more than half self-supporting ministers see their ministry as having developed as a result of their own drive.

- **Communication of value.** Having a sense of one's own value contributes to the ability to perform at an optimal level. It is good to see that nearly 60% of participants feel valued by the diocese; and this rises to more than 80% who feel valued within their own church. However, only 16.3% believe they have a voice within the Diocese.
- **Symbols of affirmation.** Reward is delivered in many ways. It is of great encouragement to see that approximately 80% of SSMS see their role as a privilege and joy, although it is a little worrying that nearly 5% do not. There are a number of symbols of affirmation and reward which are important in conveying meaning. A variety of suggestions were provided by participants in response to an open question, 'What would you do to improve the position of self-supporting clergy within the Diocese?' Most suggestions were concerned with relationships and personal contacts, although there were also a few more symbolic acts, such as proper payment of expenses, development budgets and such like.



A REFLECTION FROM ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL RAMSEY

I regard the contemporary development of a priesthood which combines a ministry of word and sacrament with employment in a secular profession not as a modern fad but as a recovery of something indubitably apostolic and primitive. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the apostles visited churches which they had founded and appointed and ordained "presbyters" within them.

These "presbyters" were the local clergy, the teachers and pastoral and liturgical leaders, the beginning of what later centuries were to know as the second order in the threefold ministry - the order into which I ordain men today.

But it is inconceivable that they were 'paid professionals' in their office, as the resources for this would have been most unlikely to be there.

This is not to say that the change to a professional priesthood was wrong, and a number of aspects of the Church's nature and mission called for it. But it is to say that what we call our 'auxiliaries' (self-supporting clergy) today belong most truly to the apostolic foundation, and we may learn from them of that inward meaning of priesthood which we share with them."

- Michael Ramsey, 'The Christian Priest Today', 1972

TALK TO US!

We are keen to hear your practical suggestions as we drive this process of cultural change forward to create a genuine sense of 'one ministry', making the most of the gifts of all our clergy.

Perhaps you have specific professional skills you feel are underused by the Church. Let's talk about how we can use your expertise and experience better.

Or maybe you have ideas on how we can provide more structured space for SSMS and stipendiary clergy to come together to foster collegiality, learning and mutual support.

Please get in touch with Charles Sutton.
Email: charleses@me.com

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

With-Intent

Worker priests and Ministers in Secular Employment – Anglicans who see their 'paid work in the secular world' as the ministry to which they are called
www.with-intent.confiteor.org.uk

Chrism

An association of Christians, mostly clergy, who see their secular employment as a primary field for ministry. This site contains many informative articles - have a look at 'Discipleship and ministry in the workplace' (Megan Smith)
www.chrism.org.uk/publications

CABE

Affirming Christians in leadership roles in business.
www.cabe-online.org

Diocese of Bristol's Ministry Development Team

Supporting the growth and development of our ordinands, clergy and readers within the Diocese.
www.bristol.anglican.org/ministry-resources/ministry-development-team

