

Manchester Diocesan Synod

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Deployment of Stipendiary Clergy: A Discussion Paper

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The Purpose of this Paper

This is a discussion paper. Its purpose is to raise for discussion a number of issues that press upon us as a diocese. The overall aim is to arrive, in time, at a clear set of criteria for deploying stipendiary clergy in Manchester Diocese, but this is an interim report to set the ball rolling.

The paper attempts to collect together a number of different concerns about and approaches to stipendiary clergy deployment, and to suggest how these issues might be seen in developing a strategy for clergy deployment. There is no sense in which it presents a final list of concerns (though I believe that the core issues are here) and it would be helpful if members of synod could add to the list or comment on the issues already included.

The paper recognises the importance and value of the parish system and makes some suggestions as to how we could encourage mission and growth both within and in parallel to the parish system.

It is clear that how we prioritise the types of stipendiary ministry will affect the way we structure the diocese. So the paper attempts to illustrate the effects of alternative ways of deploying clergy. For example, if some clergy are deployed into a specialist mission team, then there will be fewer "settled" parish clergy able to support fewer benefices.

The paper does not attempt to set out a detailed process for making decisions about these matters. It recognises the role and responsibility of the Bishop in leading the diocese through a process of change and indicates the sort of decision-making process that is required. For me, it is a process where there is clear communication between all those affected, including our ecumenical partners, and a process that deals with the complex issues of deploying not only our clergy but all our resources including congregations, lay leaders, money, buildings and training to more effectively serve the people of the diocese and to serve the kingdom of God.

The recommendations ask the synod

- to note and receive the paper; in other words to acknowledge that the continuing reduction in the numbers of stipendiary clergy is something we can not ignore.
- to recognise that pastoral reorganisation is necessary and to support the Bishop in restructuring the diocese to better enable us to provide ordained leadership for pastoral care, mission and Church growth in the future.
- In doing so, the paper also sets out the sort of process this must be — inclusive, realistic and focused on mission, growth and regeneration.

Introduction

This paper arises from discussion at the Bishop's Staff Meeting and Bishop's Council on how to deploy the decreasing number of stipendiary clergy allocated to the diocese by the national Church. The main questions to be addressed are...

- how many stipendiary clergy from the diocesan allocation are available to deploy in parishes?
- in what sort of roles should they be deployed?
- how many posts — and, by implication, parishes and benefices — can we sustain?

The paper outlines how the Bishop could support the parochial system by deploying the majority of parish clergy on the basis of the size of the population to be served, while developing a more focused strategy for growth by:

- identifying and reorganising parishes that are not viable given current resources
- deploying resources into areas with a strategic mission need or opportunity
- developing a specialist team of mission clergy to support parishes in the short-term
- encouraging the further development of OLM and Reader ministries and other lay leadership
- deploying some clergy on the basis of congregational size
- developing ecumenical partnerships for mission and pastoral care.

The paper is offered to the Diocesan Synod to facilitate debate around the implications of a reducing allocation of stipendiary clergy and the changing nature of our Church, whilst developing the effectiveness of the Church's mission in the diocese.

The Diocesan Context Includes...

- an estimated population of 1,890,531 people
- 290 parishes in 238 benefices, with 327 Church buildings or centres of worship ;
- on average, 20,513 regular Sunday attenders in 2003
- our long-standing commitment to take our full allocation of stipendiary clergy
- a prediction of 274 stipendiary clergy for 2006, including 35 curates in training posts
- the Pastoral Committee's advice that we can deploy one priest per 8,000 of population
- the implications of the paper on Priority Parishes, and the report "*Becoming One Body*"
- the need to have a vacancy rate of —10% to allow clergy to move within the diocese
- financial constraints imposed by the continued shortfall in Parish Share receipts
- some degree of agreement that we have "too many" church buildings

At the end of October 2003, we had 290.25 ministers in post, 223.1 parish priests, 5.9 assistants and 40.5 in training posts; with 9 clergy in sector posts and 11 senior clergy. Given the bishop's commitment to reducing the number of dignitaries, for the purpose of this paper, I have assumed a reduction of two in the number of dignitaries and sector clergy by 2006, giving a maximum of 220 clergy for deployment to parishes in 2006.

The growth of ecumenical partnership across the diocese presents us with new possibilities for the pastoral care of existing congregations and developing opportunities for mission and evangelism. There is a need to develop a clear strategy between the denominations about the recognition of ministries and the use of church buildings. For the moment, however, we focus on Anglican clergy.

Currently, we deploy parochial clergy primarily on the basis of the population to be served. Clearly, very few parishes will have the average population. In practice, the average figure translates into a population band ranging from about half to about one-and-a-half times the average in which it may be reasonable to deploy a priest. Having parishes with a population greater than the average, allows the Bishop to support parishes with a smaller population than the average. However, the balance between larger and smaller parishes and appointments to them must be carefully monitored to prevent staffing levels across the diocese becoming unsustainable.

Deploying all of the 220 available clergy to parishes, would lead to

220 parochial clergy + 10% vacancies = 242 posts, average population of 7,812 (3,906 > 11,718)

This number of posts matches the current number of benefices (including Team Ministries), but is considerably below the current number of parishes and church buildings/congregations. This indicates that even if all the available stipendiary clergy were deployed as parish priests there is a need either to reduce the number of parishes, or to appoint more non-stipendiary or house for duty clergy. However, the available stipendiary clergy could be deployed in a number of different ways, depending on our priorities.

Viability, Priority Parishes and Church Buildings Strategy

The diocesan report *Becoming One Body* noted that congregations with 20 or fewer regular attenders were in danger of collapse. In the 2003 Parish Share Census,

- 54 parishes had 30 or fewer regular attenders serving a combined population 218,684
- 21 of which had 20 or fewer regular attenders and a combined population of 73,964 Of the 54 parishes only two had a population over 8,000 and 27 had less than 4,000.

The paper on Priority Parishes suggests we have the resources to prioritise six parishes where there is a substantial population and potential for growth. The implication is that we have fifteen parishes with 20 or fewer regular attenders with no viable future, given our current resources of people and finance. However, it is not only small congregations where viability is in doubt. It is likely that several larger congregations are not viable — given the available resources. If parishes with no future are pastorally reorganised, this would release the clergy who serve them for posts where there is more potential for growth. Work has begun on developing criteria to help identify parishes that are no longer viable and these could be used to initiate either pastoral reorganisation or regeneration.

We need to be clear that many of the smaller parishes and congregations are located among the most marginalised and vulnerable communities in the diocese. The diocese receives money from the Church Commissioners precisely to support ministry in the poorest parishes, so financial viability is far from being the only issue in such areas. Nor is it clear that "success" in marginalised and more affluent communities should be thought of in the same way. (This forms part of the criteria group's task and builds on previous diocesan reports.) Where the Church contemplates withdrawal from such communities, this needs to be considered very carefully, including its effects on our wider mission and commitment to the poor. We also need to recognise that long-term population changes (especially in areas of decline and subsequent regeneration) may alter our view of the best way to promote mission a particular area.

As a matter of urgency we need to develop a strategic approach to Church buildings that identifies those we are not able to maintain and those we no longer want to retain. Shared use of Church buildings and use of alternative buildings for worship are routes that can be used both to develop mission and contribute to the sustainable use of buildings. Ecumenical sharing, dual Church/community use and renting of space (fee paid under license in the case of consecrated buildings) are all ways of extending use and can help make Church communities more viable. A suggestion that we deploy our "best" clergy to parishes with significant buildings should be dealt with through the normal processes of recruitment and selection.

Congregational Size

There is statistical evidence that one whole-time priest can not generally build a congregation beyond 120 regular attenders. In 2003, we had 30 parishes with more than 120 regular attenders, 4 with over 240 and 2 with over 360. Deploying an associate priest for each 120 regular attenders in a parish would commit 36 parochial posts to supporting large congregations. Deploying additional clergy to benefices with large attendances, would increase resources in some Team Ministries, but would also reduce the number of other parochial clergy we could support by 55 to 165, affecting our ability to cover the rest of the diocese adequately.

165 parochial clergy + 10% vacancies = 181 posts, average population of 10,444 (5,222-15,666)

Deploying additional clergy for every 200 regular attenders in a benefice would require 23 clergy, reducing the number of deployable clergy to 197.

197 parochial clergy + 10% vacancies = 216 posts, average population of 8,752 (4,376-12,128)

If "second" associates were seen as training posts, four more clergy would be released.

However, larger congregations often have more lay leaders and more potential for developing lay leadership that may off-set the need for ordained leadership. A more focused approach might deploy additional ordained ministry during a period of substantial growth to develop appropriate lay training and leadership.

Growing Churches

There are good arguments for deploying additional clergy to growing churches, but there are several ways we could consider deploying clergy to promote growth. We could deploy

- on the basis of congregational size so that growth is marked at key milestones
- to churches with a large “fringe attendance” where there might be potential for growth
- to specialist growth/mission teams to support parishes in the short- to medium-term
- to larger congregations in partnership with smaller congregations in difficult areas, to develop a “minster” ministry
- to parishes experiencing decline but where there is potential for growth and a strategic need for a worshipping missionary community especially where regeneration is planned
- to work alongside “traditional” parishes to develop alternative congregations as part of a strategy for long-term growth.

A team of specialist mission-priests would reduce the number of clergy in more settled posts; the main question here is, if we want such a team, how many clergy can we afford to deploy away from more settled ministry?

Opportunities for Mission and Church Planting

In each archdeaconry there are benefices that have special opportunities for mission. For example, associate posts have been agreed for Manchester city centre and Bury town centre, while Bolton parish church enjoys the services of the trust-funded Lecturer. We could look for up to three such appointments in each archdeaconry.

There are areas where deaneries see that a new church should be planted in un-churched areas, or where small congregations face real difficulties. This might be done by appointing whole-time clergy to lead the mission there, or in partnership with a stronger church that can share personnel and resources. The importance of lay people in planting new churches and exploiting new areas of mission needs to be recognised and developed. The appointment of a Church Army evangelist to explore city centre ministry in Manchester and of a lay chaplain to Bury town centre’s commercial community are exciting developments that should be encouraged and explored more widely.

A diocesan strategy for planting (and replanting) churches in areas vital to our mission needs to be developed as part of the Church’s mission and involvement in regeneration. There are implications for clergy deployment, laity development, Church buildings, ecumenical relationships and financial stewardship that will need both local and diocesan-wide support.

Clergy Workload

There is evidence that clergy find it difficult to relate effectively to more than four PCCs or cope with the administrative burden of more than four Church buildings and congregations. Currently, we have two benefices with more than four Church buildings, and they are served by teams where more than one priest is deployed, but this could become an issue given time.

Clearly, the workload we expect clergy to bear must be considered carefully. For example, in pastoral reorganisation, amalgamating benefices rather than parishes creates an additional administrative burden — more PCCs — that may keep clergy away from work that is more directly pastoral or mission-focused. Clerical and

congregational expectations of ministry need to be shaped to be as realistic as possible, and this requires a commitment to provide training for clergy.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that clergy are more frequently declining the chairmanship of Church school governing bodies because of the administrative work involved. At this point, it is important that all those involved in making appointments recognise the need to appoint clergy with an aptitude for working with Church schools.

A further issue to be considered is the additional workload placed on Area Deans. Where appropriate, the placing of a deacon or suitable assistant might help. More widely, we should perhaps consider the roles of NSMs and Team Ministries in supporting Area Deans.

Finally, there is the issue of the religious affiliation of the population; especially in areas where there is a large number of people of other faiths. Some have argued that in such circumstances there are fewer calls on clergy for pastoral care and this lowers their workload. In practice, ministry to and alongside people of other faiths is an increasingly demanding and vital aspect of the Church's work, and the presence of other faiths in a parish should not be used to "discount" the population.

Developing and Working with Collaborative Local Ministry

Manchester is one of the leading dioceses for developing OLM, and we have a high number of Readers. There is a question about whether the presence of OLMs and Readers requires less stipendiary input because "more ministry" is available, or more stipendiary input because of the pastoral need to lead and manage the local ministry team. The role of NSMs in leadership should not be overlooked in developing local ministry, and neither should the importance of good lay leadership — regardless of whether or not this is "ministerial".

In developing local ministry there are some issues of vision that need to be addressed:

- how can we encourage clergy and parishes to recognise and develop effective lay leadership?
- how can the role of Lay Assistants be developed?
- to what extent should Readers and OLMs be seen as deployable?
- what level of local ministry in a parish — for example, a college of OLMs and Readers — might be regarded as not requiring stipendiary leadership?
- what is a realistic target for developing the sort of local ministry that would reduce the call on stipendiary clergy?
- in what circumstances could OLMs and Readers be licensed to be "in charge"?

Conclusions

Of our 2006 allocation of 274 clergy, we should have 220 clergy to deploy to incumbent-status posts, the majority of whom will be deployed on the basis of population figures close to 1 priest: 9,000 population (population band of 4,500-13,500).

Effective use of these 220 stipendiary clergy will be assisted by

- identifying the minimum of fifteen parishes that have no viable future, and initiating pastoral reorganisation to reduce the number of buildings and benefices while releasing the clergy serving them to areas with more potential for growth (Deaneries; Pastoral Committee; viability Group)
- deciding whether or not we should deploy a proportion of the clergy available to support parishes as associate or specialist clergy and, recognising the effect on the number of parochial posts we can sustain, taking action to facilitate this (Diocesan Synod)
- identifying congregations that could be cared for by NSMs or house-for-duty clergy (Deaneries)
- establishing clear principles with ecumenical partners on shared ministry and mission (Bishop's Council; BMS)
- developing a strategy for buildings which, in the ecumenical context, identifies buildings we can not or do not want to keep, and initiates pastoral reorganisation that could be effectively developed for shared, dual or community use that could provide an alternative place of worship and reduce parochial costs (Deaneries; Pastoral Committee; BMS)
- developing a strategy, with ecumenical partners, for church planting (and re-planting) (Bishop's Council; Deaneries; Pastoral Committee)
- identifying benefices where lay, local and ecumenical ministry could be developed to such an extent that it would require less Anglican stipendiary input (Bishop's Council; Deaneries)
- identifying means of supporting Area Deans, perhaps by placing curates or NSMs (Bishop's Staff)
- providing training for clergy to help them cope with the effects of pastoral reorganisation and adopt the new styles of leadership that may be required in different settings. (BMS)

Recommendations

The Diocesan Synod is asked to

1. receive this discussion paper
2. note the conclusions above
3. recognise and support the need for pastoral reorganisation to reduce the number of parishes and Church buildings and our over-reliance on stipendiary clergy
4. accept, amend or reject the proposal that, to promote growth and mission, a significant proportion (but no greater than 15%) of the stipendiary clergy of "incumbent status" available for deployment in parishes, should be deployed in parishes as assistant clergy or to support parishes with specific help in mission, growth or church planting
5. support the Bishop in developing policies for providing pastoral ministry, and leadership for both the mission of the Church across the diocese and Church growth by
 - a. reviewing the deployment of stipendiary and other clergy and developing a clear statement on the criteria for making clergy appointments
 - b. ensuring clear communication with clergy, parishes and deaneries about pastoral provision and the deployment of clergy, developing lay leadership, clerical and lay workloads, mission strategy and stewardship of resources within parishes and diocese
 - c. ensuring clear communication with ecumenical partners, especially around the recognition of ministries, partnership in mission and regeneration, and use of church buildings
 - d. encouraging a strategic and ecumenical approach to the 'use of Church buildings, personnel and finance to promote growth, mission and regeneration
 - e. commissioning appropriate training to support clergy and lay people in meeting the challenges of change we face.

Aunt Sally Illustration

If 85% of the available clergy were deployed as parish clergy, and 15% deployed to support parishes in associate or specialist mission roles, the following would apply

Parish Clergy

85% of the clergy available deployed as parish clergy

$$220 \text{ clergy} \times 85\% = 187 \text{ clergy}$$

$$187 \text{ clergy} + 10\% \text{ vacancies} = 205 \text{ posts}$$

$$205 \text{ posts each serving an average population of } 9,222 \text{ (4,611 - 13,833)}$$

Currently, the diocese has 290 parishes in 238 benefices. This level of staffing would require a considerable reduction in the current number of parishes and benefices, beyond the fifteen that were identified as not viable and not eligible as priority parishes.

Associate and Specialist Mission Clergy

15% of the clergy available deployed in associate or specialist mission roles

$$220 \text{ clergy} \times 15\% = 33 \text{ clergy}$$

$$33 \text{ clergy} + 10\% \text{ vacancies} = 36 \text{ posts}$$

One way of deploying the 15% specialist clergy would be as follows

- 19 (+ 4 curates) deployed as associate clergy in parishes or benefices with more than 200 regular attenders
- 9 deployed to localities with special opportunities for mission or identified as areas for Church-planting (3 in each archdeaconry)
- 8 deployed as mission-priests to give short- to medium-term support to strategic locations where there were signs of growth or growth was essential

36 Total

Another way of deploying the 15% specialist clergy would be as follows

- 10 deployed as associate clergy to growing churches to develop local lay ministry and leadership or with another specific role
- 9 deployed as associate clergy to large congregations working in partnership with churches in difficult areas to plant or re-plant a congregation
- 9 deployed to localities with special opportunities for mission or outreach
- 8 deployed as mission-priest to give short- to medium-term support in strategic locations

36 Total

John Applegate, Archdeacon of Bolton, 17 February 2004

References:

- 1 2001 Census. Manchester and Salford City Councils have "won back" 40,000 people "lost" in the census — 25,000 in Manchester and 15,000 in Salford. However, it is not clear how this will affect the number of clergy we are allocated, nor whether the Office of National Statistics will allocate the 40,000 people to output areas allowing parish population figures to be revised. This paper is based on the current statistics which exclude the "lost" 40,000.
- 2 2003 Parish Share Census. The Census instructions ask parish officers to count people aged 18 and over who have attended church at least twelve times in the previous years.
- 3 Bishop's Chaplain (0.5), DDO (1), Executive Officer of BMS (1), OLM Staff (1.5), Training Officers (1.5), Racial Justice Officer (0.5), Ecumenical Officer (0.25), Higher Education Chaplains (3.5), Deaf Chaplain (0.5).
- 4 1 diocesan bishop, 3 suifragan bishops, 3 archdeacons, 1 dean, 3 canons.
- 5 2003 parish share census.