

Recruitment, training and deployment of ministers in the Church of England

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The presenting problems

There are at least six presenting problems regarding recruitment, training and deployment of ministers in the Church of England.

First, there is the basic problem identified by Richard J. Neuhaus:

Chrysostom and the other [early Fathers] thought that the salvation of souls - meaning heaven or hell - was at stake ... Isn't a lot of what we might perceive to have gone awry in theological education and ministry in the life of the church attributable to the fact that a concern for the salvation of souls is no longer alive among us? (*Theological Education and Moral Formation, Eerdmans, 1992, p 163*)

Secondly, there is a shortage of ordinands and clergy in the Church of England - if the goal is the good of the church and the conversion of men and women to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly - but only if the criterion is the current availability of stipendiary jobs centrally arranged - there is an alleged surplus of ordinands and clergy in the Church of England. This shows how the recently developed central system of recruitment and deployment is incapable of responding to the real need for more clergy. The November 1993 General Synod evidenced a lack of confidence in the central system and highlighted the current lack of a strategy. Hence the urgency of Reform's strategy for "the parishes to take back responsibility for the Church of England".

Fourthly, many ordinands come out of existing Anglican theological colleges and courses ill-equipped for ministry in today's world. There is weakness in their preaching and application of the gospel of Christ; and there is weakness in their acquisition of parochial leadership skills. On any count this is serious. It is particularly serious in a Decade of Evangelism. Such ordinands in the leadership of the Church of England will militate

against numerical growth. They will contribute further to decline. They themselves, however, should not always be blamed. The fault often appears to lie elsewhere. It can lie with the colleges, courses and staffs, including those of an evangelical tradition.

The problem is that these colleges, courses and staffs can be seeking church approval, social validation and personal satisfactions from the wrong quarters. Then training is misdirected. The "community of reference" becomes the wider church interpreted in terms of "liberal-catholic" Bishops; theologically liberal church bureaucrats; a progressively irrelevant liberal Protestant academic establishment; and other colleges, courses and staffs on the same treadmill. Sadly the "community of reference" is not the essential one: that is to say, the "normal" post-modern pagan population of our cities and countryside and the actual or potential Christian congregations in those places. The consequence of this is a hesitancy on the part of even some evangelicals to teach a thoroughly biblical theology over against the broad liberal consensus.

Fifthly, many evangelical ordinands find it impossible to secure a good first curacy. They are looking for one helpful in terms of ministerial training. But some are put into non-evangelical parishes. They then may compromise their faith and the gospel. Others are put into parishes where the incumbent generates little or no vision for God's work. Either way the result is depressed clergymen. They are not equipped for enthusiastic service in the kingdom of God. They have no understanding of how to manage growing churches. Rather they seem only equipped for a passive journey through a "ministerial career". Some then become bitter and "lose their first love"; and some become "luke warm." They have failed to learn how to preach, teach, evangelize, lead and manage; nor have they learnt how to negotiate bureaucratic and diocesan obstructions to ministry. Rather they learn how to conform to an anaemic middle-Anglicanism, with the main goal being (perhaps) preferment and ultimately a Church Commissioners' Pension (or what is left of it). All around, meanwhile, the Church of England is winding down and sinners are lost for all eternity.

Sixth, there are persistent reports of "good" men being turned down by ABM (the Advisory Board for Ministry). It is hard to verify cases, owing to the confidentiality of the process. My own personal experience of

ACCM, and now ABM, had always been good in terms of "results". That is with regard to the evangelical candidates I had known personally. Where a candidate was turned down, I had understood the reasons. Recently we had, however, a man who was turned down locally that we judged should have been tested by a selection conference. But while understanding some rejections of evangelical candidates, the empirical evidence is that some quite unsuitable liberals and catholics are not turned down. I recently came across one young clergyman who saw little value in the Apostle Paul, and also the case of a practising homosexual being accepted, but at whose selection conference one of the selectors was his lover. And there are others associated with Reform, whose judgment is to be respected and who have experiences of good men being turned down by ACCM/ABM. Something must be done.

The formularies and the canons

The goal is to have men in the parishes that aim, and seek, to fulfil the ideals of the "Ordering of Priests" in the 1662 Ordinal - this after all, under the *Worship and Doctrine Measure 1974*, is the doctrinal standard for the Church of England. All our new forms, such as the ASB Ordinal, must be constructed and interpreted in the light of that standard.

The text of the service makes the following points. The requirements are for "truth of doctrine" and "innocency of life". The men have to be "harvesters". They are to be "good shepherds" not "hirelings" and so not in ministry for their own but the sheep's benefit; they have, therefore, to be prepared to "fight the wolf". They are "to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever." And they "cannot by any other means compass the doing of so weighty a work, pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the Holy Scriptures, and with a life agreeable to the same."

Many - too many - currently in the ministry do not fit this profile. The ultimate farce (some would say "tragedy") is that before ordination under Canon C7 there has to be a "careful and diligent examination" to ensure

that the candidate is "found to possess a sufficient knowledge of holy Scripture and of the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of England as set forth in the [Thirty-nine Articles of Religion](#), the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal."

This Canon was promulgated or published in 1969 to relate to Canons A2 and A5 that make it clear that the doctrinal standard of the Church of England is found in the Thirty-nine Articles (under, of course, Holy Scripture); to Canon C15 that insisted on "assent" by the clergy to this doctrinal standard; and, of course, to the 1662 Ordinal with its requirement for the priest to minister doctrine "as this Church and Realm has received the same". Thus the "possession of knowledge" in Canon C7 must imply a commitment as well as mere historical knowledge.

But the liberal ascendancy in the early 70's revised Canon C15 to enable clergy to *reject* the doctrinal standard of the Articles. The original Canon C15 had required a declaration by the Bishop, Priest or Deacon "for the avoiding of all ambiguity". It said: "every person ... shall make and subscribe in this order and form of words:

"I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and the Book of Common Prayer and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the doctrine of the Church of England as therein set forth to be agreeable to the Word of God."

There was, of course, no explicit assent to the Holy Scriptures as that was contained in the assent to the Thirty-nine Articles.

But since the mid-seventies that declaration has been abandoned. Instead there is a new declaration. First, there is now a preamble about the "historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons." It continues with a question: "in the declaration you are about to make will you affirm your loyalty to this inheritance of faith as your inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to those in your care?" This is then followed by the declaration:

"I do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness."

The consequences

This new assent sounds very good. But in practice it allows, and was intended to allow by its proponents, all positions - including those who still assent to the faith of Canon A5, the historic faith of the Church of England, but also those who interpret "bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation" in very radical ways. Some of these are described in the words of the Doctrine Report *Christian Believing* like this:

their allegiance now is rather to the continuing Church of God than to any past beliefs and formulations, which they regard as inevitably relative to the culture of the age which produced them. Hence they can neither affirm nor deny the creeds, because they look to the present rather than to the past to express their faith, and attach most importance to fresh understandings of that continuing Christian enterprise which has its origin in Jesus. They agree that the creeds are *de facto* without rivals as official formulations of Christian belief, but they are in varying degrees unhappy at the thought that they should indefinitely continue to be so.

Those holding this latter position are described by the Doctrine Commission as "within the Church of England today." Nor are they classed as having the most extreme views. Beyond them are the ...

... Christians for whom the essence of their faith is to be found in a life of discipleship rather than in credal affirmation. Such people may have their own doctrinal interpretation of life, but these doctrines seem to them to be relative to their own culture and temperament rather than permanent statements of their faith. They would respect the dogmas of the Church (epitomized in the creeds) as showing, in the language and thought-forms of the age that produced them, balanced authoritative affirmations, excluding false theological solutions and including the necessary theological ingredients. For such Christians, however, both doctrines and dogmas are so inadequate to the living Reality of whom they are the attempted theological formulations that they cannot command *full*

commitment or loyalty. In the best sense of the word they are "provisional".

It is to be noted that the new Canon C15 does not speak about "full loyalty", only "loyalty". Hence ordinands can interpret the loyalty referred to in Canon C15 how they like. Their faith only has to be revealed, somewhere, *in* Holy Scripture.

The consequences of all this are obvious. You now have an organisation, the Church of England as a corporate body, that has a firm and clear basis and objectives (Canons A2 and A5), but a leadership no longer required to uphold that basis or seek those objectives! Can any organisation survive under such management?

We must next consider Canon C8. This canon refers to the exercise of ministry. It says that a person "duly ordained priest or deacon ... may officiate in any place only after he has received authority to do so from the bishop of the diocese."

But it is now questionable whether many are "duly" ordained as many have not been examined in the Thirty-nine Articles - or at any rate the doctrine of those Articles. Some positively oppose the Articles. I have to confess that when I taught Doctrine at Wycliffe Hall I did not teach the Articles as I now see I should have done. I required the Articles to be read along with a standard commentary; but I made no attempt to teach them as I would do now - not in a wooden, but sensitive way, showing how they are still highly relevant. We were all caught up in the ideological correctness of the liberal establishment of the early 70's and did not fully see its implications. My successor Oliver O'Donovan, in his more recent and excellent book on the Articles, wrote this:

When I began teaching theology at an English college some years ago, I would have reacted to the idea that I should use this document [the Thirty-nine Articles] as a text for instruction with frank distaste.

That says it all. We are all part of the problem. We, therefore, do not judge the Bishops. But can we any longer take these canons seriously? And a consequence of this is that the Bishops cannot be canonical themselves because the canons are not truly consistent. Canon C7 that, *de facto*, affirms the Articles thus is against the revised Canon C15 that allows

clergy to reject the Articles. So how then can clergy be expected to abide by the canons? This is especially important with respect to licensing and parochial boundaries.

Licensing and the parochial system

As clergy we swear canonical obedience in all things "lawful and honest". That means that if we are acting "uncanonically" the Bishop is fully entitled to call us to book but only "according to the canons" (there is no unqualified obedience). But the canons are to be taken as a whole. The condition of Canon C8 (on not preaching and ministering where one is not licensed to preach and minister) is Canon C7; and Canon C7 was intended to ensure that all the clergy, including those in parishes where one is prohibited from going, are faithful to the Thirty-nine Articles; and so they will be preaching the faith of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooker, the 18th century evangelical divines, men like Simeon and Ryle in the 19th century and leaders like Stott, Packer and Watson in the 20th century. But we know this is not the case. Canon C7 is no longer securing that precondition for the application of Canon C8. A majority of clergy appear not to be faithful to the doctrine of those Articles. Nor are they now asked to be faithful by the new Canon C15. Canon C8 would appear, therefore, not to be "honest" - to use the term of the oath of obedience - and so no longer binding. It is valid only with its precondition in place.

And what does licensing mean? Licenses to preach came in to stop Wycliffe's Lollards preaching the Gospel to the people of England - they thus have a good track record! At the Reformation licensing was redefined to ensure soundness of doctrine according to the Thirty-nine Articles. But today, as in the time of Wycliffe, licensing to preach has the effect of stopping sound doctrine being preached across our nation. This is because of the "parish system". So the parish system, if necessary, has to be bypassed.

The parish system needs to be seen as implying duties to those seeking help from the parish church, rather than granting exclusive rights (against other Anglican clergy) over the vast majority in the parish - most of whom, in practice, currently ignore not only the Church of England but any church. And all this is particularly important in urban areas. Here

communities and communication networks are often less based on "geography" or "the parish"; they are more based on familial, work or leisure associational ties. Surely we now have to follow in the footsteps of Wycliffe and our 18th century forefathers, such as Wesley, Whitefield, Grimshaw and Berridge: they all ignored parochial boundaries for the sake of the Gospel.

The Church is sick. As Bishop Ryle said in 1884:

When a ship is among the breakers, it is no time to stand on ceremony. He went on to talk about the parish system:

I do not hesitate to say that an English parish rightly worked, with right preaching in the pulpit, right education in the schools, right visiting from house to house, and right machinery for assisting the sick and poor, is one of the pleasantest and most refreshing sights in this evil world

But just in proportion to the good which the parochial system does when it is properly worked, is the harm which it does when it is worked badly, or not worked at all. The old saying is true, "The worst thing is the corruption of a good thing" ...

And the parochial system becomes a most damaging institution, a curse and not a blessing, a hindrance and not a help, a nuisance and not a benefit, a weakness and not a strength to the Established Church of this realm.

Now it is nonsense to deny that there are some large parishes in almost every diocese in England where the parochial clergyman, from one cause or another, does little or nothing. The parish church is comparatively deserted. People in such parishes live and die with an abiding impression that the Church of England is a rotten, useless institution, and bequeath to their families a legacy of prejudice against the Church, which lasts long if not for ever ...

And while this goes on the Church suffers, Churchmen are driven into Dissent, the world mocks, the infidel sneers, the devil triumphs, and souls are ruined ... You may write over a Parish's boundaries, "Infidels, Papists, and Dissenters may enter here and do what they like, but not a Churchman."

One hundred years later nothing has been done and the church is in a more desperate condition than when Ryle was writing. "When a ship is among the breakers, it is no time to stand on ceremony."

Selection

There is no reason ABM has to be responsible for selection. CACTM, ACCM and ABM are all recent developments and are not essential to the Church of England. Theological Colleges are also recent developments.

The Church of England's doctrine of selection, training and ordination has to be based on the Scriptures, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Ordinal and the Book of Common Prayer. And we need to remind ourselves constantly that we are not an "episcopal church" but a "reformed church with an episcopate". The essence of the church is the Word of God and not its episcopal ministry. This is important for our thinking on recruitment, training, ordination and deployment.

The only specific reference to the process of "selection" in our Anglican formularies is in the alternative Epistle in the BCP "Making of Deacons" - Acts 6.2:

[The Apostles] called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said ... look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business ... And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen etc ... whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

The "multitude of the disciples" *selected*. The apostles *ordained*.

Also there is the first collect for Ember Week in the BCP:

... guide and govern the Bishops and Pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred Ministry of thy Church.

Here selection is a function of Bishops *and* other "pastoral" clergy. Indeed, ordination to the priesthood is not an exclusive function of the Bishops, but "the Bishop with the Priests present" - these together lay on hands, according to the rubric in the Ordinal. In the early church Canon 13 of the

Council of Ancyra seemed to allow ordination by presbyters, as did our own Anglican reformers when need arose.

There are two orders, not three, in the Church. Our formularies reflect this understanding. Bishops are part of the order of the presbyterate, (as Jerome noted and as is asserted by classical catholic theology). The preface to the 1662 Ordinal studiously avoided the phrase "three orders". It simply says that "from the Apostles' time there have been *these* Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." It left open the question whether "bishops" and "priests" could be alternative names for the same people in the same order. However, the three services of the Ordinal imply that there are only two orders of the church. The headings to the pages of the 1662 Ordinal are, respectively, "The Ordering of Deacons", "The Ordering of Priests", but "The Consecration of Bishops". In the "Making of Deacons", according to the rubric, there is to be "a sermon or exhortation, declaring ... how necessary that order is in the Church of Christ." In the "Ordering of Priests" there is also to be a sermon "declaring ... how necessary that order is in the Church of Christ." But there is no such requirement in the "Consecrating of an Archbishop or Bishop": for there is no such order "in the Church of Christ".

Any "order" a bishop has in the Church of England is merely, as the 1662 Ordinal says, an "order" or "ordinance *of this realm*" - a political arrangement. In classical catholic theology the Bishop is clearly a senior presbyter. He has the greatest responsibility in seeing that there are "faithful and wise" choices before hands are laid on. But the other "pastors" also have a responsibility for those choices. So what should we do, when we find that Bishops are not fulfilling, or cannot fulfil, their responsibilities? Scripture rightly, and by law, is the Church of England's final authority - not ABM, not the synods and not the Bishops.

Paul tells Timothy that he has a fundamental duty:

The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others (2 Tim 2.2).

That is our primary duty. As much as possible we must live at peace with all men, but not at any price. Presbyters have a positive responsibility

before God to see that there are "reliable men". And "evil prevails when good men do nothing." If controversial action is required, so be it.

The way ahead

There is at present a need for an academic or specialized theological component in training. At the negative level there is a need to understand why and how so much modern Western Protestant theology is counter-productive. On the positive side there is so much to learn in terms of the Bible, the history of the church, dogmatic theology, ethics, apologetics and political theology. On the practical side there is much to learn about aggressive evangelism, preaching, church management, the expression of worship, structures, sociology, pastoral and personal needs, church growth and church planting, and even polemics. Above all there needs to be an environment where habits of prayer and bible study are second nature and where the goal is to glorify God and abide in Christ, seeking his agenda and not that of some semi-secular and semi-believing clergy or an ABM bureaucracy. Is there a college that currently can provide what is required?

In parts of Latin America, in the Pentecostal church, no one is admitted for training until they have planted a church. They then attend a seminary for one year. The next year they have to plant another church of greater size. Only then are they allowed to enter the second year; and so it goes on. Why should we think this so odd?

How can we get back on track?

The principle behind "episcopal ordination" is surely important. The fundamental difference between a "congregational" church and a "connexional" church is this: there is external validation and testing of senior pastors in the connexional church, while in the congregational church each church validates its own pastors. "Episcopal ordination" is to secure such external testing. In principle this surely must be good. But what happens when there is a loss of confidence in our Anglican "external testing" system? What can we do?

And confidence is eroding in so many areas. Not only do we have clergy in the "Sea of Faith" network who openly do not believe in God but who

were passed by ACCM/ABM. Also the Church of England is now in a slow decline that will ultimately be terminal unless something happens. Since 1975 electoral rolls have declined by nearly half a million people - a drop of 21 per cent. No doubt when it bottoms out a residual and progressively irrelevant "shell" will remain. But that is not a church we can be interested in.

But when an Anglican Seminary (General Theological Seminary, New York) is rewriting its housing policy to allow homosexuals to live together; when one of its staff insists on living together with her lesbian lover; when one week we hear that an Anglican Bishop in the US (the recently retired Dean of Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts) "comes out", declares himself "gay", remains in the House of Bishops and receives a "warm tribute" from Bishop Barbara Harris; when a week or two later we hear that he is married, with five children whom he is leaving in Connecticut so he can go to San Francisco; and when we remember that what happens in the US Anglican world often happens in England 10 - 15 years later, radical alternatives for worst case scenarios need to be proposed now.

First, Reform could set up alternative national "selection and testing procedures." These could include practical pastoral experience, with an evangelistic component.

Secondly, Reform could set up alternative training. This would be costly. But Reform parishes could, if necessary, deduct from their central payments an appropriate sum for this alternative training. These central payments are currently collected via "the quota". The figure would be several hundred pounds at least. For example, in the Diocese of Newcastle in 1993 the parishes were asked to pay (on average) £684 per licensed parochial clergyman for ABM. This money, plus extra money needed to support those from non-contributing parishes, could be paid to a central Reform fund. From this fund training grants could be made for ordinands. Money would thus follow those being trained. The attempt recently to close Oakhill is evidence that new financial arrangements must soon be in place. As there is little hope for agreement at the centre, the sending and paying parishes ("the market") will have to make the decisions. They will thus determine those current institutions that will thrive and those that will

not. This is indeed a good thing and already happening, though not admitted.

But this alternative training need not be fully residential; we should explore a form of "internship" coupled with "modular courses". These could be existing or new courses at certain institutions in the UK, US or Australia, and taught in two-weekly intensive components; there could be extra courses given by Reform members.

This modular pattern of training is successfully employed in other parts of the world. Certain training churches could be asked to take on "training assistants". At present many of the staff personnel involved in existing training are undoubtedly gifted and good people. However, some of those most able "to teach others" and with some of the most important of ministry skills are not utilized. Some of these people, I know, have been asked to consider senior appointments at our colleges, but have declined. They feel that serving Christ in the parish is the best way to fulfil Christ's commission. Such men need to be made use of. This is particularly true of those in larger churches. There is no reason why small "colleges" of trainees should not be attached to such churches. In the earlier part of this century there was such a college at Jesmond Parish Church for women workers.

Thirdly, on completion of training, men and women should be placed in appropriate churches. This deployment would have to operate through a network. There could be no guarantees; but we need to develop an entrepreneurial style of leadership. We do not want to select for training, at this point of our church's history, men who have to be spoon fed. There are theological principles of the labourer being worthy of his hire that we must teach; it is then up to God's sovereignty and human initiative.

The less there are central subsidies from the Church Commissioners the more deployment will have to be parochially determined. This is the trade off from the last 30 years of unrestrained doctrinal comprehensiveness in the Church of England. The central allocation of resources, when there has to be a dependence on parochial giving, becomes progressively more difficult. There are no sufficiently "agreed agendas". Central giving cannot then be motivated. The Church of England is a voluntary non-profit

organization. Deaneries or dioceses can, therefore, only make requests to, or advise, a parish regarding the spending of its money; they can never decide how the parish will spend its money.

Possible conflict

The Bishop of the Diocese where a man is to serve his title should be asked to "make him a deacon" with the intention of subsequently ordaining him a priest. The man must, of course, be paid for by the parish and not be a charge to the Diocese (in time few churches will be a charge to the Diocese - the quota system, it is now clear, has a limited shelf-life). The Bishop should then examine the man (by whatever reasonable means he thinks fit).

The Bishop, of course, has a duty to provide for the "cure of souls". So if there is a "cure of souls" in a given place and provided that the man has been selected under Anglican criteria; "possesses a sufficient knowledge of holy Scripture and of the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of England as set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal"; and in other respects is of "learning and godly conversation", the legal advice is that it would be difficult for the Bishop to refuse.

But what if some ever did? We hope this would be extremely rare. But what are the options? It is wise to think of hypothetical, if extreme, cases. But already there are reports of Bishops and their advisers who are proposing illegal suspension of livings or reorganization; such action is not "to make better provision for the cure of souls" nor does it "have regard also to the traditions, needs and characteristics of individual parishes". Rather it is the result of the whims or manipulation on the part of certain committees or members of the hierarchy to achieve a different agenda. It is a sad fact that in some cases trust has been lost.

If the Bishop did refuse such a request for ordination - something quite regular in earlier Anglican tradition - there need be no legal action taken. Rather the case would be publicized and the man could then be made a deacon and presbyter without the Bishop, by a group of sympathetic Anglican presbyters. In such a situation the presbyters would be "men who

have public authority given unto them in the congregation" ([Article 23](#)), a phrase used by our Reformers, in the words of one commentator, "to avoid defining too closely what are valid orders."

It is unlikely we could follow Charles Simeon's strategy of finding a sympathetic Bishop who was also Master of an Oxford or Cambridge College. This he did at the beginning of the 19th century when one of his good men was refused ordination. The Master obliged! Rather, as with our Anglican Reformers, and as had to happen during the uncertainties of the Commonwealth, presbyteral ordination would be recognised by the local congregation. Then unlicensed by the Bishop, the man could exercise a full ministry and be paid locally. He would be unlikely to qualify for a Church Commissioners' pension during this period. However, alternative pension arrangements could easily be made.

Subsequently he could be episcopally ordained so as to have a Bishop's authority and wider recognition. This happened after the Commonwealth. This would be necessary prior to his being instituted to a living. This would be a happy resolution to an unfortunate problem. But what if a Bishop refused this time as well?

If the Bishop refused to ordain and institute against the patron's and the PCC's wishes, a number of options would be open to the parish.

The least desirable would be for legal action against the Bishop. This could be on the grounds that at a time of clergy shortage not to ordain in such a case was uncanonical, because the Bishop was "not being faithful in admitting persons into holy orders" and not "providing ... sufficient priests to minister the word and sacraments" (Canon C18.6); but as costs could possibly fall on the Diocese and so other non-involved parishes, such proceedings would seem improper.

An alternative would be for the man to be established immediately within the parish and to officiate as a presbyter and use the parish plant that the PCC already possesses, pays for and maintains. The expense would then be imposed by the Bishop on the Diocese if there were legal action to evict the PCC and the man from their own church! If it could be shown that the Bishop was refusing to ordain a proven, Christ-honouring, able church leader of sound "learning and godly conversation" while, on some

occasions, he had ordained or condoned practising homosexuals and lesbians and those denying the Apostolic faith (as required by law), it is hard to see how he could win.

Were he to win, however, in what would be a show case, he would lose long term. This was the experience in the "ritual trials" in the last century. More seriously, one day he will have to face God's great assize. The question then will be, "has he caused any of God's little ones to stumble?" For such a time and for such an eventuality all that can be prayed is "Lord, have mercy" and for the conversion or removal of such a Bishop.

But we hope, and pray, that none of this would ever happen as Bishops would be willing to ordain and licence men that had been reasonably selected and that fulfilled the intention of Canon C7.

With regard to the ordination of women most churches associated with Reform would be more concerned to ordain them to the diaconate rather than the presbyterate. These issues therefore present fewer problems for women's ministry. Women, as now, would also be employed as lay workers, many of whom in evangelical churches are unlicensed (and very able). But there would be special training opportunities for the diaconate and other ministry roles that we would wish to encourage.

Conclusion

These clearly are first thoughts. Debate is required. We may need to operate a "mixed economy". Premature action should be avoided. But as with "quota-capping", some of us must make a start.

And the needs are becoming acute. There are increasing numbers of larger churches needing to be staffed by teams of clergy and church workers. These need to be trained. These churches are urgently needed for a city or town-wide ministry. The larger churches are needed to provide a wide range of ministry programmes appropriate to modern urban living. The larger church with a multiple staff in the Church of England is nothing new. My colleague's grandfather was vicar of St Mary's Portsea. He had 12 curates.

Then there is a need for "church planting", not least in urban priority areas. World-wide there are two interesting phenomena - the growth of "the larger church" and church planting. Both require gifted and well trained clergy. And church planting is nothing new. Jesmond Parish Church (itself a church plant in the middle of the last century for the sake of an evangelical ministry) at the end of the last century and the beginning of this one planted three "daughter" churches. Recently we have been associated with an attempt at church planting in an urban priority area. Today, however, the challenge and sadly the opposition are greater. So the quality of men and women involved in church planting needs to be of the highest quality, spiritually and in terms of ministry skills. And, as we have said, there is a general shortage of ordinands and clergy all round.

Our goal is not to destabilise the present system but to be faithful to the gospel of Christ, to see men and women brought to faith and maturity in him, filled with his Holy Spirit and to see the churches in our land growing, vibrant and truly relevant, being salt and light in a needy world. This needs a competent, committed and, above all, converted clergy.

Notes:

- 1. Dean Richard Field (1561-1616)**, an intimate friend of Richard Hooker, chaplain to Queen Elizabeth, and Dean of Gloucester, wrote a magisterial treatment *Of the Church* from the perspective of the Elizabethan Settlement. Along with Hooker, this is "Anglicanism" if ever! He argued that the marks of the true church were antiquity, succession, unity, universality and the name "Catholic". He held that Roman Catholics were the counterpart of the early Donatists, while the Protestants of the Continent were part of the true Church of Christ.

However, with regard to our own subject and episcopal ordination he said this in Book III:

If the Bishops become enemies of God and true religion, in case of such necessity, as the care and government of the church is devolved to the presbyters remaining catholic and being of a better spirit, so the duty of ordaining such as are to assist or succeed them in the work of the ministry pertains to them likewise.

What we are proposing in terms of "emergency" presbyteral ordination is not "un-Anglican". It is an authentically Anglican strategy "for such a time as this".

- 2. Modern ordination training** was the result of radical, independent and entrepreneurial action in the last century. F.W.Bullock has researched in two of his *Histories of Training for the Ministry in the Church of England* the period 1800 to 1974. He shows that modern centralised and bureaucratised training is, in fact, alien to the Anglican spirit. From 1816 to the First World War 40 different training colleges for clergy with 6 missionary colleges were pioneered and established. A further eight colleges were then established between the two World Wars with three pre-theological colleges. Many of these institutions were of the sort Reform is proposing - small but linked to active ministry. Some were associated with Bishops; some with Cathedrals; others with groups like Reform. Those that were effective survived; those that were not, did not. This pluralism accompanied one of the great periods of expansion in the Church of England. The decline of such "entrepreneurial training" has been accompanied by a decline in numbers of clergy and worshipping laity. There are surely lessons here for Church Growth.

"Practical" ordination training was especially pioneered through the "private enterprise" of Dr Baylee of St Aidan's. According to *The London Journal, 1856...*

... it was felt that the facilities for educating a competent body of spiritual clergymen ought to be enlarged, so that with adequate training they might be qualified to exercise their sacred vocation, either at home or abroad. The universities, under a different management, might supply all the necessary requisites; but as they do not, and scarcely ever did, private enterprise, to employ a commercial phrase, has liberally come to their aid and provided auxiliary schools, in the shape of colleges erected in the first instance by public subscription and afterwards supported by donations and by the abundance of students who flock to them for instruction ... Dr Baylee was early distinguished throughout the country for his polemical abilities, but he speedily began to devote himself to the more practical duties of religious tuition, urging upon the bishops

and clergy the necessity not only of a large increase in the number of ministers, but also an improvement in the quality of the instruction they received. In short, he nourished the idea of a college in connection with the Church of England, and devoted himself to its realization with extraordinary energy.

F.B.Heiser in his *Story of St Aidan's College, Birkenhead* said this: It was not, however, Dr Baylee's intention at first, or rather, it was not his method, whatever hopes he may have cherished, to establish at once a college in the full sense of the term. And in this respect the history of St Aidan's differs from that of most other colleges in the country. It did not come into being fully constituted; there was no group of men who said "Let us now found a college," of this or that ecclesiastical preference; it grew out of the modest but courageous endeavour of one man, who was on fire with the love of souls and guided by spritual insight and practical wisdom, to meet the dire need of the community in which he lived. His project was to establish a school and hostel, as we should call it to-day, in which men might receive theological tuition and at the same time render assistance to hardpressed incumbents, and in so doing "learn their job" ... They should give their services as laymen for so many hours in the week to parsons in thronging parishes, and at the same time be preparing by this practical experience and by theological study to join their ranks.

Thus what Reform is proposing by way of new training methods through internships is not "un-Anglican", nor is "private enterprise" in training. Indeed such "private enterprise" was at the heart of the great period of Anglican and Christian expansion in the last century.

- 3. Canon Michael Green**, formerly principal of St John's College, Nottingham, currently advisor in evangelism to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and joint co-ordinator of the Springboard initiative for the Decade of Evangelism, was interviewed (*Renewal*, November 1993) on his experiences of the Anglican church in Sabah and he described its theological training as follows:

The way in which the clergy are trained is very significant. They are not given blanket acceptance after three days at a selection conference and then put away in an ivory tower.

They are assessed each year as to whether they should go any further.

They have already been in a confirmation class, and a discipleship class, and a lay leaders' class. By class I don't mean something academic but practical: doing it, under experienced guidance. Then they are trained over five or six years, only one year of which is in theological college, in Trinity, Singapore; the rest of the time they are being trained in the diocese under competent operators. They are assessed all along the line and they may well not be ordained at the end of it. They may go into some other form of ministry. You don't get many misfits out of that care in training.

With regard to the training in our own country he added this: Almost all theological students go through some areas of depression in their college training, for the simple reason that they are taking in far more than they are able to give out. That makes for an imbalance in their spiritual diet.

I'm very interested in the way in which some of the New Churches like Pioneer are training their people on the job, with perhaps 60 days a year in intensive training in large modules and then going back to training on the job.

I think we've got something to learn from that in the mainline churches. A shake-up in theological training is bound to come, if only because of the shortage of finance.

Again this underlines the fact that what we are suggesting is by no means "un-Anglican"; also it is a reminder that what we are suggesting is the practice of other churches. Surely it is wise to learn from others, especially from those who are experiencing greater growth than ourselves.

- 4. Archbishop George Carey**, formerly principal of Trinity College, Bristol and now Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote this in 1986 in *Hope for the Church of England?*: Most of our students ... come from churches which are alive and buoyant. What, we may ask, are the reasons behind such growth, which goes against the national picture? Are there any common features at the heart of renewal? I believe that there are, and that one of the most important is the quality of leadership. Churches grow where there is effective and spiritual leadership; churches decline where leadership is impotent

and lifeless. Jesus was aware of the crucial importance of leadership and deliberately trained a number of key men to carry on his ministry after his death and resurrection. "He appointed twelve to be with him and to be sent out to preach" (Mk 3.14). They saw him at work, teaching, loving, touching and healing. They entered into his ministry and served their apprenticeship working with the "Master Carpenter". To the church's shame it has not noticed clearly enough the importance of this example. Jesus did not lock the disciples away within the cloistered walls of a college or monastery. He did not teach them in isolation from the needs of society - he took them with him into the sphere of battle. They learned "on the job".

... I want to say plainly from my experience of ministry, that what the church needs are students who love their Lord, who have been called to his service, and who come with gifts to be sharpened and honed for the glory of God. And what they need are teachers who have been proven in battle; men and women who have been through the fires of ministry and can share that with those they teach.