



Church in Wales Review

July 2012

The September 2010 meeting of the Governing Body was notable for the number of contributions from members with a common message: “The Church in Wales cannot go on doing the same things in the same way; some things need to change and we are open to – and indeed encourage – that possibility”.

The Standing Committee and Bench of Bishops responded to this call by appointing an external review of the Church, with particular reference to its structures and use of resources, to increase the effectiveness of the Church’s ministry and witness. The Review Group’s members are prominent thinkers with a blend of experience in dealing with matters ecclesiastical and organisational: Lord Harries of Pentregarth, the former Bishop of Oxford; Professor Charles Handy, the eminent writer and adviser on business and organisational theory (and son of a Church of Ireland archdeacon); and Professor Patricia Peattie, former Convenor of the Scottish Episcopal Church’s Standing Committee and the first chairwoman of the Lothian University Hospitals NHS Trust. The aim was to commission a review that could move quickly to gather and assimilate information about the state of the Church in Wales, then provide independent advice on how the Church might reshape itself to be more effective in the twenty-first century.

Given the extent of its members’ other commitments, the Review Group has pursued its task with extraordinary vigour and dedication. The Group determined its own approach and programme. It has visited every diocese in Wales, meeting with the Bishop and Diocesan team in each and holding an open meeting for Church members to express their views. The Group has met with the Governing Body and Standing Committee, the Bench of Bishops, the Representative Body, and the staff and students at St Michael’s College. A special meeting was held to listen to the concerns of a representative group of young Church members. In all it has heard the views of over 1,000 members of the Church in Wales; it has also considered over 200 written submissions.

This Report reflects very clearly the results of those discussions, on the one hand recognising the wide range of concerns of Church members and on the other building on examples of good practice from across the Province. And its conclusions demonstrate the analytical skills, and readiness to think both laterally and radically, for which the Group was appointed.

On behalf of the Standing Committee and the Bench of Bishops, we commend this Report to the Church for study, discussion and action. This could be a hugely significant moment in the life of the Church in Wales, and an unique opportunity to achieve the change demanded so clearly by our members throughout the Province. As a Church we must grasp this opportunity.

We would also wish to express our sincere thanks to the three members of the Review Group for the commitment and dedication they have given to this task, and for sharing with us all so generously their time, experience and expertise.

The Most Reverend Dr Barry Morgan
Archbishop of Wales

His Honour Philip Price QC
Chairman of the Standing Committee

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1. Introduction

First, on behalf of the group, we would like to thank all those who helped to organise, or who took part in, the review: those who arranged meetings, gave us hospitality or who travelled long distances to share with us their views. Especially we would like to thank John Shirley and Julian Luke whose exemplary efficiency made it possible for us, in busy lives, to conduct the review at all. It has been a very interesting, if demanding, task, and it is a privilege to have had a role at such a crucial time for the future of the Church in Wales.

We have visited every diocese and spent time first, with the Bishop and then with his senior staff. In every diocese there was a well attended open meeting, with over 1000 people attending the six meetings in total. Speakers were nearly always disciplined in what they had to say, with the result that a remarkably high percentage of those attending were able to contribute. We have had meetings with Bishops' Advisors and provincial officers. In addition to this we have attended meetings of the Governing Body, the Representative Body, the Standing Committee, the Bench of Bishops, as well as with St Michael's staff and ordinands, and other individuals. A representative group of young people came to London to share their views with us. We have received and read more than 200 written submissions. It has not been possible in this short report to respond to all the many points made, some of them very detailed and local, but in one way or another they have all helped to inform our thinking.

The review we conducted should not be seen in isolation. There have been a number of reviews and reports on different aspects of the Church in Wales in recent decades and we have taken these into account without needing to repeat the serious research that went into them. Some of these reports resulted in needed changes. More immediately there have been discussions about the way ahead both amongst the Bench of Bishops and at the Governing Body. A list of the major reports, decisions and recent discussions is set out in the appendix. We see ourselves as part of that process. Our recommendations should be seen as a clear marker for changes towards which people have been reaching for some time. In some of the dioceses the changes we recommend are already beginning to be put in place. So part of our task has been to note good practice and urge that this be put in place systematically across the whole church. Some of these changes needed are now very urgent indeed, others will take a longer time to bring about. We believe that the recommendations set out here, when implemented, may well provide a model for other churches facing similar problems.

2. The desire for change

The overwhelming impression we have received from these meetings and submissions is an awareness of the need for change, a desire to change, and a commitment to change. This has been hugely encouraging. The snag of course is that there have been very varied and sometimes conflicting views of what needs to change, and how changes should be made. Our task has been to listen to these strongly held views and try as best we can to make some evaluation of them in the light of our reading of the overall situation of the Church in Wales.

Many people we met are conscious of the statistics that prompted the setting up of this review group in the first place: the expected retirement of large numbers of clergy in the next few years, the shortage of ordinands, the joining of more parishes than can be adequately ministered to by a single priest, declining church membership and the almost total distance of young people in Wales from the church. This makes the present time a Kairos moment, that is, a moment of crisis and judgement with the possibility within it of creative response to what Christ is asking of us at this time.

The first general question we asked was about positive aspects of the Church in Wales. There were a good range of answers to this, including much good work at parish level, social projects and the continuing position of the Church in society. But the dominant note was undoubtedly the fact that the Church in Wales offers warm, friendly and welcoming communities. This was particularly apparent to people who had come from outside to live in Wales. What worries people, however, is that this positive element is hampered by too many aspects of the organisation and structure, together with a cultural context which is frustrating the creative energy which is ready for change.

3. Gospel and institution

When it comes to the changes which people want to see, the dominant conviction, often stated, and always assumed, is that as Christians we have saving truths to share with people, and we want church structures that better enable those truths to be seen, stated and experienced. As Christians we have a view of what it is to be a human being in society which is fundamental to human well being, both in this life and in eternity. Yet at the moment we are burdened and hampered by too many aspects of the way we organise our church life. The recommendations we make about structures and organisation are in order that the wonderful vision we share of what it is to be a human being, made in God's image and called to share his life, may be made more manifest. If there is one text we would take it is the beginning of the First Letter of John, where the writer says

“Our theme is the Word which gives life..... the eternal life which was with the Father and was made visible to us...It is this which we have seen and heard that we declare to you also, in order that you may share with us in a common life (*koinonia*), that life which we share with the Father and his son Jesus Christ.”

This makes it clear that membership of the Christian community not only takes us into a *koinonia* with other human beings, it takes us into the very *koinonia* of God. The church as an institution, its structures and organisation, only have a purpose in so far as they serve and achieve that aim.

Yet the Church in Wales is an institution: and that is nothing to be ashamed of. The point about an institution is that it gathers the wisdom and insights of one generation and enables them to be passed on through space and time. Revivalist movements excite at the time, but can quickly fizzle out. Institutions are built to carry the Gospel through time to succeeding generations. Yet to do so they need to change and adapt to the circumstances of each age. One overwhelming impression we have received is that the Church in Wales continues to have the structure and organisation appropriate to an established church 100 years or so ago, but which is now stretched beyond what it can or should properly bear now. The legacy of establishment has good features, not least a continuing sense of responsibility to the wider community, and a respected position from which to speak to it. But as a disestablished church, the Church in Wales has, and ought to claim, the freedom that comes from this in making necessary changes. The present structures are hindering people from making visible the Word of life, and drawing them into the *koinonia*, which is at once the common life of the Christian community and the Divine Life shared with us in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. The most obvious example of this is the parish system which was designed for an age crucially different from our own, the implications of which we set out in Section 6.

The purpose of our report is to make such recommendations as will enable the Church in Wales, as an institution persisting through space and time, better able to share the Gospel, and to draw people into our common life, that life of God made present in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Releasing creative energy for ministry

Honesty demands that we report that morale in some parishes is very low indeed. Yet, this can be noted because the dominant impression we have been given, especially by the public meetings, is of a great desire for energy and creative ministry to be unleashed. However this is combined with frustration that this creative energy is being repressed. Why is this? Why this sense that so much more could be achieved in the way of ministry and its related feeling that this is being stifled? The answer is both cultural and structural.

The cultural reason is the downside of an apparent strength, namely the respect in which the office of Bishop is held in the Church in Wales and the authority which he wields by virtue of his office. Furthermore, we can honestly report that the present Bishops are able people who, in their different ways, are giving real leadership. But is it the right model of leadership? For the downside of the high authority of the bishop is the fact that despite their efforts to work more collaboratively a number of people have said to us that the Church in Wales is still characterised by a culture of deference and dependence. This is a model of leadership that is carried over into the parishes, where so often the complaint has been that it is all about the clergy, that there is a culture of "Father knows best". What this means in practice is that people look to the Bishops and clergy to take initiatives and it has been suggested to us that nothing much happens without this. Further, it means that bishops will often be consulted about minor decisions that ought to be made elsewhere. What is needed is a new, more collaborative, style of leadership, modelled by the Bishops and reflected at parish level. In the end this is about trust; letting people participate fully in decision making processes and then trusting them to own and implement those decisions. As will emerge in the report, we believe that lay people need to play a much more participative role in the life of the church than they do at the moment. As stated above, there is real leadership being offered at the moment, but it is not of such a kind as to affirm and release the energy of those lay people who will need to play a key role in any future ministry.

One of the major impressions we have received is from trained lay people, Readers and others, who feel that though being trained and willing, they are simply not being properly used. At the same time we recognise there are lay people who do not want to be involved and who in consequence look to the clergy to do everything. The key point however that is there is talent and willingness amongst many lay people to be used more fully in the ministry of the church. As will become clear in the report, we believe that the church can only continue into the future if it taps into this human resource.

5. Governance and Decision making

The cultural reason for the situation just described is, as we might expect, reflected in and reinforced by structural reasons. One obvious example, is the system of governance in the Church in Wales. Unlike other churches in the Anglican Communion it does not have a fully developed system of synodical government. This may save it from some of the cumbersomeness of the system, as experienced elsewhere, but it means that there is no proper flow of ideas and resolutions from parish or deanery to Diocese and from there to the Governing Body and the Representative Body. As an example of what we mean, the Diocesan Conference in most Dioceses is used as an occasion when the Bishop shares his thoughts with his people, in contrast to what happens in other churches when it is an occasion to debate motions that are put to it by parishes

or other Diocesan bodies. The addresses of the Bishops to their conferences are of a high order, but however wise and timely the words of the Bishop might be, the present system means that there is no flow of ideas and energy arising from people in the parishes. We believe it should be made clear, if necessary by Constitutional amendment, that motions can come from parishes and other bodies to diocesan conferences and from conferences to the Governing Body. Furthermore this should be seen as part of the normal pattern of church life. When people feel they have a real say in shaping diocesan policy, they are more likely to have a stake in making it a success. At the moment they do not have that say in any significant way. It may be necessary, in order to facilitate a real change in expectations, for the Conference to be renamed a Synod. Furthermore, in the light of the recommendations in Section 6 about the establishment of Ministry Areas, the whole system of election to such a body would need to be reconsidered.

We believe that the present structure of governance could be made to work in a way which is more reflective of parish feeling than it is now, without at the same time becoming cumbersome. The Standing Committee already has the power under Section 35(1) of the Constitution to make and amend regulations. It is true that these have to be laid before the Governing Body but the reality is that many needed changes could be brought about without going through further debate. At the moment there is a feeling that the constitution is an unhelpful constraint on changes that might be necessary. The reality is that it ought not to have this effect. We consider the question of the Constitution later but when we use the term “legal” we refer to the Constitution without in any way implying that it is part of the law of the land, as might be the case in England.

Recommendation I

1) The Governing Body and bishops should make it clear, if necessary by Constitutional amendment, that motions can come from parishes, and deaneries (or whatever body might replace them), to Diocesan Conferences, and from Diocesan Conferences to the Governing Body, and that such motions would be welcome.

2) Consideration should be given to renaming the Diocesan Conference a Synod, and in the light of the development of Area Ministries, a new system of elections may need to be established.

We do not believe that the present system of elections to the Governing Body always results in a true reflection of church opinion. At the moment there is very little knowledge for people to go on when making up their minds for whom to vote. We believe that every candidate should provide a short manifesto setting out their church experience and where they stand on the major issues facing the church at the moment. The manifestos could be sent out to electors by each diocesan office. Wherever practical this should be a principle for all elections in the church.

Recommendation II

Candidates for election to the Governing Body should provide a short manifesto which would be sent out to all electors by each diocesan office. All elections in the Church should be conducted in such a way as to ensure that electors know what the candidates stand for on the issues of the day.

6. Leadership teams serving a Ministry Area

The parish system, as originally set up, with a single priest serving a small community is no longer sustainable. It was put in place when people lived and worked in the same parish, when they did not travel except occasionally to the local market town and when it was assumed that church and nation were of one faith. All this has changed. The communities to which people now belong are very varied and people travel freely to take part in their life. It was rightly suggested at the Governing Body that the catchment area of the local secondary school now provides a good guide as to the kind of area which the church should regard as natural for ministry.

At the moment priests are having to serve three, four or as many as ten parishes, with all the extra attendance at meetings and administration this involves, and often these parishes are combined with a Diocesan role. The present practice of amalgamating parishes, or creating Team or Group Ministries is not working and simply perpetuates a system which may have served previous ages well, but is now hindering the prime work of sharing the Gospel and drawing people into the Christian community. A radical change of perspective is needed: from parish to a much larger area, and from a single priest, to a team with different gifts.

Suspending parishes in the Church in Wales is a much easier matter, legally, than it is in the Church of England. It can be done by the Bishop. Some dioceses are already moving away from the idea of the parish as the basic unit of ministry with talk of Minster models of ministry, clusters of parishes or ministry areas. We have chosen to use the term Ministry Area in this report. What is being done in some dioceses is encouraging, but we believe it needs to be carried through systematically, across the whole church, with a clear plan for what ministry is needed in each Ministry Area. Such Ministry Areas will need a leadership team containing lay people as well as clergy, in accord with the principle of collaborative ministry which is fundamental to all our recommendations, and training for which is discussed in Section 8.

Recommendation III

After a Ministry Area has been identified every appointment within it should be made first to the leadership team which will minister within it. When there is a vacancy, every parish living should as a matter of principle be suspended, at least until such time as the leadership team for the Ministry Area has been formed.

This does not mean that congregations should be left leaderless. On the contrary, there should be a small designated leadership team and designated leader for each congregation. However, in most cases this would be a Non Stipendiary Minister, Reader (Licensed Lay Minister) or other appropriately trained lay person. This person would be part of a ministry team formed from the congregation and would themselves be part of the leadership team of the Ministry Area. In using the term team leader, whether of the leadership team of the ministry area or the congregation, we are in no way undervaluing ministerial and priestly ministry. We are simply drawing out the key element that is required in this role, which is collaborative leadership. This is both a charism of the spirit and a skill which can be improved.

Recommendation IV

Every congregation should have a designated leader and ministry team.

The implementation of this recommendation would mean there might be say 25 congregations or churches in a designated Ministry Area. This would have a leadership team which might include three stipendiary posts. Having been appointed first and foremost with a view to having specialist gifts for that leadership team, a person might then be appointed the leader of a particular congregation. But this would not always be the case. There might be one member of the team with specialist gifts for relating to those outside the church in new ways. Indeed we recommend later that this should be the case.

We recognise that this is a major change in the way appointments are made at present. However, it is clear to us that nothing less than this will serve the church of the future, and, as mentioned, a number of dioceses are already moving towards this new model. It demands a radical rethinking of present appointments, in that people would be appointed first and foremost to the leadership team, and only then, if appropriate, to a particular congregation within it, and most congregations would in fact have a non-stipendiary leader, either ordained or a trained lay person.

It is true that there are a few major churches in urban areas which remain viable as single entities. This is because they have large congregations, are financially self sufficient and can therefore afford to employ specialists, such as youth or children's workers. But such parishes are very much the exception and that

model cannot be expected to work in rural areas or deprived urban ones. Where there is such a strong individual congregation with its own leadership team, we recommend that it acts as the hub of a wider cluster of smaller congregations.

We recognise that the parish system has one very valuable feature which need not and should not be lost under the new pattern of area ministries. This is that everyone in the parish has a legal right to be married or buried in the church, and the parish priest will feel a responsibility to everyone living in it, not just the congregation.

Therefore in due course it would be appropriate for the 25 or so congregations or parishes of the Ministry Area to be designated a major Rectorial Benefice, to ensure the continuation of this sense of care for everyone in the area and their right to be married or buried in a church in it. But this is to be seen as the end result of a process in which all parishes are first suspended, and in which everyone is appointed as a member of a leadership team serving a Ministry Area.

We have deliberately used the term Ministry Area, rather than Deanery. Deaneries, as at present constituted, are not always a natural geographical unit. Where they are, then a Deanery may prove to be a good basis for a new Ministry Area. However, with the development of ministry areas, deaneries as we know them will cease to have a role and should then no longer have a place in the structures. Nevertheless Bishops are already working closely with Area Deans in thinking about the future of particular deaneries and they have a key role, working with other clergy and senior lay people, in the transition period leading up to the formation of Ministry Areas. Furthermore it could be that the Area Dean is the right person to be the initial leader of the leadership team.

When Ministry Areas are in place the natural person for the Bishop to relate to will be the team leader of the Ministry Area, not the Area Dean. However, as each diocese will have a number of Ministry Areas, we believe that, under the Bishop, each Archdeacon should have the immediate pastoral oversight of 10-12 teams. Their sphere of responsibility may very well be coterminous with the present archdeaconry boundary, but it might not be, depending on what turned out to be the natural catchment area for the Ministry Areas. The Archdeacon would be the person to whom each team leader would first of all relate.

There is at the moment no senior lay person in a deanery equivalent to the Area Dean, no Lay Chair of a Deanery Synod, as there is in some other Anglican churches. We believe each Area Dean, after consultation, should identify a senior lay person in the Deanery to work with him or her as a Lay chair, in drawing up plans for a new ministry area.

Recommendation V

Area Deans, together with a Lay Chair from each Deanery, should work under their Bishop, in conjunction with other clergy and lay people, to plan for and put in place area ministries served by leadership teams. These may, or may not, be co-terminus with present Deanery boundaries.

Recommendation VI

With the establishment of Ministry Areas served by leadership teams the office of Area Dean should no longer exist.

Recommendation VII

Each archdeacon should have immediate pastoral oversight of 10-12 ministry teams.

7. Cathedrals

We believe that cathedrals will have an increasingly important role in the church of the future. Experience from elsewhere shows that although church attendance generally is declining, cathedral congregations continue to grow. This is because they can be centres of excellence for preaching, education and music. People today are prepared to travel to find such excellence. This means that cathedrals need to be fully part of the mission and ministry strategy of each Diocese and, within the overall principle of collaborative ministry, their distinctive role needs to be taken into account for this, as well as for the Ministry Area in which they are situated.

Recommendation VIII

The distinctive role of each cathedral as a centre of excellence should be fully integrated into the mission and ministry strategy of its Diocese.

8. Training for collaborative leadership

We believe that training for leadership, and in particular training for collaborative leadership, is a crucial priority for the future of the Church in Wales as we envisage it. Each bishop will need to identify leaders and potential leaders able to serve the ministry areas. As a very high percentage of clergy are due to retire in the next few years this will need looking beyond the next three years to those who will still be in full time ministry, without neglecting those in post now, who will play a key role in bringing about the transition. There are leadership programmes

that have worked well in other churches. Such programmes involve the bishops themselves from the outset.

Recommendation IX

Each bishop should identify potential leaders for the leadership teams of Ministry Areas and, with them, experience a course of training in collaborative leadership. This training should include members of staff of St Michael's College and the training schemes, so that they can pass on the benefits to those in training.

Recommendation X

One of the Bishops should be appointed to commission high quality training in collaborative leadership.

9. Support and appraisal of the clergy

From the point of view of the amount of money and time that is invested in the selection, training and support of the clergy, they are the most precious "asset" of the church. It is vital therefore, from this point alone, that they feel fully supported and trained to do the joyful but daunting task of ministering in these difficult times.

We believe that towards this goal there should be a regular system of clergy appraisal, which at least at the beginning and from time to time afterwards, should include a "360 degree" examination of their ministry. This involves looking at how they are perceived by colleagues, parishioners and others, and includes an interview with a trained professional from outside the church system. Amongst other advantages such a system makes it easier to identify the current Continuing Ministry Education needs of the person concerned. We believe that the person responsible for organising this for the 10-12 teams in his or her pastoral area should be the Archdeacon.

We became aware of quite widespread confusion amongst clergy and laity about what exactly is the role of the clergy in these changing, confusing times. Many feel caught up in administrative tasks that are very different from how they understood their calling when first ordained. These appraisals offer an opportunity to rediscover and reaffirm the key tasks of ministry to which they were called in the first place and to re-order priorities accordingly.

Recommendation XI

1) There should be a systematic and co-ordinated system of ministerial appraisal throughout the Church in Wales. The Archdeacons should take responsibility for enabling this to happen for the leadership teams in their Ministry Areas. These appraisals should be designed to help clergy to re-discover their distinctive role and to order their lives accordingly. The team leader in each Ministry Area should be responsible for ensuring that all members of their team, lay as well as clergy, are also appraised.

2) Bishops should set out the core qualities and skills that are required for ministry in the Church of the future, and ensure that this is the guiding philosophy for all selection, training and ministry appraisals in the Province.

10. Young people and outreach to those outside the church

We met a delegation of young people who impressed us by the work they were doing trying to reach other people of their age group. From what they said and gave us to read there is imaginative work going on in some places. However, what they conveyed to us underlined the dire seriousness of the situation facing the Church in Wales. In addition to congregations declining, a high percentage of the clergy retiring and a shortage of ordinands, the number of young people with whom the church is in contact is miniscule. Those parishes that do have any serious work with young people are tiny compared to the number that do not. This situation cannot be addressed as the church is organised now. There need to be far more trained and full time people to work with young people. We also believe that such people should be able to utilize the opportunities provided by the social media to engage young people with the Christian faith and its relevance to our lives.

We recognise that as the finance is organised at the moment money is not available to employ the staff needed. However, one of the consequences of our other recommendations is that there will be money available in provincial funds to finance new priority work such as this. If the work is going to develop in the long run, however, then some of the extra money will have to come out of the share system.

It is not only the majority of young people who are outside the church. The population as a whole is now very unfamiliar with the church, finding its language and services strange. Therefore we think there should in due course be one person in each Ministry Area leadership team with the gifts and training to relate to such people, many of whom but not all, will be young. It might be appropriate, for example, to appoint someone able to focus full time on families, working with

a local school. We recognise that at the moment neither the people nor the financial resources are there for there to be one such person per Ministry Area. This should remain the goal, but as an immediate step there should be at least two people per archdeaconry appointed to work with young people.

Recommendation XII

At least two trained full time workers, clergy or lay, should be appointed to work with young people in each of the present archdeaconries.

Recommendation XIII

As Ministry Areas are formed, there should be one trained worker appointed in each leadership team with a particular ministry to reach out to young people and others who are unfamiliar with the church and its ways.

11. Worship and outreach

The Church in Wales rightly has the Eucharist at the heart of its worshipping life. However, it is widely recognised that for the majority of people today Christianity has become a foreign language and what goes on in church strikes them as strange, even alien. This is especially true of young people. We therefore recommend, as stated in Recommendations XII and XIII, that each leadership team have a full time person, ordained or lay, with the gifts and vocation to relate to those unfamiliar with the church, especially young people. They should be able to offer a variety of styles of Christian community and worship. We do not assume that all those outside the church would prefer alternative forms of worship. On the contrary, we know that some young people in fact prefer more traditional styles. Nevertheless there is another large and significant culture outside the church at the moment for whom present church services mean almost nothing.

Surveys show that for vast numbers of people, particularly young people, Sunday morning is not always a good time for church worship. Other days and times need to be explored.

Recommendation XIV

In each Ministry Area there should be, in addition to traditional services, at least one service every week, preferably more, in which the form and style of worship is such as will resonate with those unfamiliar with church culture. It should be on a day and at a time which reflects the pattern of life of those to whom it is meant to appeal.

12. Training for ministry: clergy and lay people, St Michael's and the training schemes

We believe that all training for ministry in the Church in Wales, whether by clergy or lay people, and whether it is predominantly residential or non-residential, should reflect an integrated vision of training. This means that much of the training will take a modular form, enabling someone to move from one form of training to another with their prior learning recognised. So, for example, it would be possible for someone who has done significant training as a Lay Reader, to train for ordained ministry with his or her previous learning being taken into account. We also believe it should be possible for a person to train for ordained ministry through a predominantly non-residential course, or through a mixed mode form of training.

In the church of the future most ministry, including the leadership of congregations, will be offered by lay people and Non-Stipendiary Ministers. For this to be effective good quality training must be a priority.

We do not believe that at this stage it is useful to have two distinct categories, Local Ordained Ministry and Non-Stipendiary Ministry. In either case the local congregation should have a role in discerning and nurturing the vocation. We use the word Non-Stipendiary Ministry to refer to ordained ministers who do not receive a stipend. How their vocation has been discerned and how they have trained will vary. Whatever the path, the testing process should be rigorous and the training of high quality.

This section should be born in mind when considering the next two sections, on St Michael's and on the training schemes.

Recommendation XV

All training for ministry in the church should be part of one integrated vision, clergy and lay people, residential and non-residential.

13. St Michael's College

St Michael's is able to draw on the academic resources of Cardiff University, in addition to offering courses for ministry in the college itself. It has taken initiatives to offer courses in chaplaincy work and these, together with conference work, are helping to improve its financial situation. There is an able staff who have done a great deal to improve the poor reputation the college has sometimes had in the past. Nevertheless we have to report that there is a significant level of dissatisfaction amongst some of the students, who remain resentful that they have not been allowed to train at an Evangelical or traditional Catholic college of

their choice in England. There is also some dissatisfaction both amongst ordinands themselves and in parishes that they are not being trained for the job they will actually have to do.

On the positive side we can report that a number of students told us how they had made enduring friendships with students who came from a different tradition to their own. In a world and church that is divided, it is salutary and healthy that ordinands train in an environment where strong differences of opinion exist, and where there is the possibility of building relationships of mutual respect despite them. However uncomfortable this may be at times, it does in fact help ordinands prepare for the reality into which they will be entering, and the capacity of some to make the friendships noted above bodes well for their ministry in the future. That said, the frustration of some of the students needs to be addressed in some practical ways set out below.

Recommendation XVI

Bishops should continue to send all ordinands who are to undergo residential training, whether in full or part, to St Michael's College, unless there are exceptional circumstances why they should train elsewhere, but they should address both short term and long term issues relating to the current pattern of training.

The short term issues that need to be addressed include:

1. The misunderstanding about what properly belongs to the pre-ordination part of the training and what belongs to the post-ordination period. This needs to be more clearly explained and understood both by ordinands and parishes. It is desirable that what belongs to each part should be written down so that both ordinands and parishes are under no misunderstanding.
2. The expectations of what training at St Michael's with those of different traditions involves. Before going to the college each ordinand should have an interview with their Bishop, as well as their DDO, to talk through some of the issues that might arise. One misunderstanding, for example, was that some ordinands thought they were expected eventually to agree with those with whom they at present strongly disagree, whereas, of course, it is a matter of understanding others better and, through that understanding perhaps discovering a mutual enrichment.
3. The support to be offered to the ordinand whilst in training. The Bishop should help the ordinand identify a wise and experienced soul friend or spiritual director to accompany them during their time of their training, both pre and post ordination. This person should not be a member of St Michael's staff but should, with the agreement of the ordinand, be able to raise any matters of concern with the staff.

4. Ordinands should be given a greater say in the choice in where they should serve their title.
5. The membership of the St Michael's College Committee. This committee should have on it both an Evangelical and a traditional Catholic to ensure that the College is sensitive to the concerns of these traditions.

Recommendation XVII

- (1) The possible misunderstandings, expectations and support of the ordinand should be addressed by their sending Diocese before going into training.**
- (2) Ordinands should have a greater say in their title parish.**
- (3) The makeup of the St Michael's College Committee should reflect a range of church traditions.**

The more radical question is whether the present pattern of training is the right one for the Church in Wales today and we believe that the Bishops should look at the new pattern of training being developed in the Church of Ireland to see if that offers a more relevant model. We are glad to note that the Bench of Bishops is due to have its January meeting in Ireland with a view to considering this. In the Church of Ireland ordinands begin by undertaking a diploma in theology by distant learning, as part of the fellowship of vocation in their diocese. They only go to college when that has been completed. They spend two years at college, studying a curriculum of theology orientated towards their future ministry, and including parish placements. They are then ordained as a Deacon and spend a year in a parish as an intern, but with a week's residence a month back in college. During this time they have to complete a 20,000 word dissertation, leading to a Master in Theology. If this is completed successfully they are then ordained as a Priest and go to their title parish. The parish in which they serve their internship is likely to be near their home parish but it will not be the parish where they serve their title.

Recommendation XVIII

Consideration should be given to the new pattern of training being developed in the Church in Ireland in which the pre-college, college and post college periods are much more closely integrated, with a view to training ordinands for the kind of collaborative ministry and leadership that the Church in Wales now needs. This should also consider the training needs of ordinands for Non-stipendiary ministry, and take into account the pattern of future ministry recommended in this report, of Ministry Areas served by leadership teams.

14. Training schemes

There is a great desire amongst many lay people in the Church in Wales to have their ministry affirmed and more greatly used. This is so amongst Readers, but not only with them. We were therefore glad to note the growing importance of lay training as initiated in the St Seiriol Centre in the Diocese of Bangor and other dioceses. Although certain differences in training philosophy have emerged between the various schemes, we believe these can be overcome. As set out in Section 12 we believe that the Church in Wales needs an integrated vision of training, in which what is offered on the schemes and what by St Michael's is part of a united whole. Training opportunities in the North and the South should also be considered together.

Bishops are already encouraging people to engage with this training and it should continue to be a priority both in the teaching of bishops and other clergy. Although the training schemes are rightly seen as offering training which all lay people can, and perhaps should, take advantage of, there is no doubt that it is from such schemes that future vocations to authorised forms of ministry are likely to arise. The training of more lay people and more Non Stipendiary Ministers is essential now and into the future.

We believe that Non Stipendiary Ministry should receive greater encouragement in the Church in Wales than has sometimes been the case and that ordinands accepted for this ministry should be able to train on a scheme, but with periods of residential training at St Michael's as part of their preparation.

We believe that the training of Readers should be fully integrated into the overall scheme of ministry training. We also believe that their ministry would be greatly helped if, except for legal purposes, the name Reader were changed to Licensed Lay Minister. This would better reflect the kind of ministry they are actually offering in the church.

We further think that when people are selected for training, whether as a Lay Minister or for Ordination, proper recognition is given to prior learning, whether carried out on the Church in Wales training scheme or in some other way. As mentioned earlier, this will necessitate a more modular approach to training.

In line with earlier recommendations it will be fundamental to all training, at both St Michael's and in the training schemes, that ministry in the Church in Wales for the future is collaborative. So training in collaborative leadership will need to form part of the curriculum.

Recommendation XIX

Priority should be given to lay training through an integrated national training scheme, building on the schemes now in operation, and including St Michael's.

Recommendation XX

More encouragement should be given to people to train for Non-Stipendiary Ministry and it should be possible to train for this ministry through an integrated national training scheme involving a mixture of non-residential and residential training.

Recommendation XXI

Readers should be re-named Licensed Lay Minister, and, together with other lay people, be trained for a wide variety of different forms of recognised lay ministry in accordance with people's different gifts and vocations.

15. Dioceses: their number and administration

We have received a wide variety of views on how many dioceses there should be in Wales, fluctuating wildly between one and the opinion that every deanery should be a diocese! The majority view was probably that there should be three or four dioceses, with some re-drawing of boundaries. However, we believe that this is the wrong time to be changing the number and shape of dioceses. It would occupy time and energy for the next ten years and distract the church from the urgent changes which are necessary now, irrespective of the number of dioceses. The present number and shape of dioceses may not be ideal. If we were starting again we would have three. However, the present number and configuration works and we think that the Church should continue, at least for the next four years, with the present six dioceses.

Our impression is that both the province and the dioceses are very well administered by their present Diocesan Secretaries and staff. However, there is a widespread sense across the church that the Church in Wales is top heavy, with too many committees and too much time spent on simply keeping the institution going as it is. This, as indicated earlier, is significantly due to the fact that it has inherited a role and responsibilities which were appropriate to a previous age. We believe that the church would be more effective if there were three administrative centres, one in the North and two in the South and South West. Bishops would continue to have their own office and secretary as at present, otherwise all administration would be based in one of the three centres.

Furthermore, we think that the dioceses served by these administrative areas should work to amalgamate their separate diocesan committees into one for each

of the particular specialist responsibilities in question, to cover the whole administrative area. We believe that this would save not only money but, no less important, time and administrative burden. Furthermore it would enable specialist expertise to be used more widely across the area, not just in one diocese. We recognise that there may be some committees that may need to be kept separate, e.g. the Finance Committee, but the assumption should be that all committees, both the purely administrative and those concerned with mission and ministry should be joint, unless there is an overwhelming reason why this should not be the case.

These recommendations should be reviewed after three years, with a view to evaluating the effectiveness of the change. At that point a judgement should be made about whether or not the church is best served by six dioceses with three administrative centres, or three dioceses. If the latter, we believe there should still be the same number of bishops as at present, namely seven. There would be three diocesan bishops and four area bishops with legally delegated pastoral responsibilities. At least one of these would be an area bishop in the Diocese of Llandaff, as discussed in section 17. The advantage of having three administrative centres is that there would be savings of scale, whilst freeing up area bishops to focus more fully on their missionary and pastoral role. We do not prejudge the issue. It may be that the change to three administrative centres, together with the merger of a good many diocesan committees, would bring about the necessary savings in administrative burden, time and cost, without a reduction in the number of dioceses proving necessary.

We also believe that some Provincial functions could be located in the North Wales Office, in particular those that would form a natural link with the offices of the Welsh Government offices situated there. We recognise that the main government offices are in Cardiff but there may still be a case for some of the church's work to be located in the North. With good modern communications, video-conferencing, skype and so on, it is not necessary to have every administrative function on the same site.

Recommendation XXII

There should be three administrative centres, one in the North and two in the South and South West.

Recommendation XXIII

The Dioceses served by the three administrative centres should form joint committees for all areas of work, unless there is an overwhelming reason to keep a particular committee separate.

Recommendation XXIV

The administrative centre in the North should also be the base for the provincial work that relates most naturally to those offices of the Welsh Government that are located in Llandudno.

Recommendation XXV

The recommendations XXII, XXIII and XXIV should be reviewed after three years and a judgement made about whether the Church in Wales is best served by six dioceses with three administrative centres or whether it would be more effective to reduce to three dioceses, together with four area bishops.

16. Administration: division of responsibilities between the province and dioceses.

The Province has undertaken certain tasks for dioceses in recent years and this has been widely welcomed. Reference was often made in particular to Human Resources and IT. We explored with people whether there were more tasks which could be done at Provincial level, or vice versa, whether there are any present Provincial responsibilities which would be better done by Dioceses.

Recommendation XXVI

(1) Staff at present on Diocesan payrolls, whilst still being paid by the Diocese, should have their payroll administered centrally.

(2) Diocesan investments should be invested centrally, with a view to savings in commission rates.

At the moment a number of specialist tasks are undertaken part time by clergy who have to fit this in with their parochial responsibilities. Whilst it can often be enriching for a priest to have more than one role, with the area ministries and leadership teams of the future, there will not always be scope for this. The small leadership team will be engaged full time in mission and ministry within their area. Consideration should be given to this before any dual appointment is made. Furthermore, work in some fields, for example safeguarding and education, now necessitates people with up to date professional expertise in the relevant field.

(3) The responsibility for both safeguarding and the church's educational work should be undertaken by full time trained professionals administered by the Provincial Office.

We recognise that every diocese has a different system for collecting the parish share, and that this makes it difficult to administer centrally. But we question whether this is necessary or, if it is, it would prove impossible to do more of the

administration centrally. The principle of each Diocese setting the parish share is the right one, but do they all need to be different?

(4) The parish share should continue to be set by each diocese but consideration should be given as to whether there could be a more unified system, and whether any of the administrative work in connection with the share could be done more efficiently at provincial level.

(5) The IT network should be rationalised with a greater degree of compatibility and centralisation, with Dioceses paying an outsourcing fee to the province.

When the Social Democratic Party was formed a few years ago they set up a system of direct contact between party headquarters and every member. So, for example, every member was able to have a vote in the leadership election. In a world where nearly everyone will be on e-mail, or its equivalent, such a system would make it easy to communicate with every member of the church, with the sharing of views, and possibly a voting system, enabling everyone to feel a greater sense of participation in the life and governance of the church.

(6) The Provincial data base should work towards including details of parish officers, and the e-mail addresses of all church members on the electoral roll of churches.

We received widespread complaints that the faculty system was lengthy and cumbersome. We know that the faculty form has recently been redesigned to make it easier to use. We think that the church should also devise a procedure for an accelerated or abbreviated system for dealing with requests relating to smaller-scale works to buildings, and we understand this is already being considered.

(7) There should be an accelerated or abbreviated system for dealing with requests for a faculty for smaller scale works on church buildings.

17. The Archbishop's See

We are aware of the long inconclusive debates on this subject in the past. Further, we realise that historically the position has been open to any of the bishops, and this is in principle a very attractive option. Again, we realise that if the See were to be permanently located in the South this will make the dioceses in the North, in particular, feel more estranged from Cardiff. But the fact is that the centre of government is now in Cardiff, and the Church in Wales is in the fortunate position that politicians and the media continue to look to the

Archbishop of Wales for his views and influence. Furthermore, we believe it is not in fact physically possible, without detriment to health, to carry out properly the role of Archbishop from North Wales. We are therefore clear that the Archiepiscopal See ought in the future to be permanently linked to Llandaff. We hope that the other dioceses will accept that in letting go of their previous opportunities to have their bishop as the Archbishop they will see that this as in the best interest of the church as a whole.

We believe that the Suffragan bishop in Llandaff should be an area bishop with a legally delegated area of pastoral responsibility. We also think, in line with collegiality, that there should be an elected Vice Chair of the Bench of Bishops who would share chairing responsibilities of the Bench with the Archbishop.

Recommendation XXVII

The Diocese of Llandaff should be designated the permanent Archiepiscopal See.

Recommendation XXVIII.

The Diocese of Llandaff should have an area bishop with a legally delegated area of pastoral responsibility. This area and its name should be chosen by the Diocese.

Recommendation XXIX

A vice-chairman of the Bench of Bishops should be elected by the other five bishops. He would share chairing duties of meetings of the Bench with the Archbishop.

18. Church Buildings

We have received a good number of heart felt pleas from tiny congregations struggling to maintain an ancient building. As is widely recognised, this is an issue that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

First, we need to be positive about church buildings. They are sacraments in stone, pointers in their way to realities that abide when all else passes away. Particularly in our time, when so many people love to visit church buildings, their value is not to be underestimated. If someone visits a small, isolated country church and finds that it is well kept, cared for and clearly prayed in, this is itself a witness. So time and money spent caring for a building should not in principle be regarded as a waste. In some areas a "Friends" of the church building can be set up, drawing on the affection people have for the building, even if they do not attend worship there. We think that wherever possible such a body should be formed.

So, closing a church building is a sad business, and it is understandable that a congregation in that position might take it as a failure on their part. However, it is possible to convert some buildings into multi-purpose use, and there are some good examples of this already happening. Obviously, this is a better option than closing it altogether. However, multi-purpose use is not always possible, and it is clear that some churches do have to be closed because there is no pastoral need for them, they are of no particular architectural value and they are far too big and costly to maintain.

It is not fair to a struggling congregation to leave the decision about the future of their building to them alone, or even the diocese. We think a small team of people working from one of the administrative centres should be formed in order to liaise with dioceses and parishes with a view to helping them make the necessary decisions and then carry them out. The steps would be:

First, each proposed Ministry Area would carry out an initial review about how many church buildings are needed from a pastoral point of view and should make recommendations about which should be maintained in the area, which could be considered for multi-purpose use and which might have to consider closure. This review could be carried out in conjunction with the review about the number of stipendiary members of the leadership team are needed, as set out earlier in the report. The review should also take into account the ecumenical dimension; the possibility of co-operation and joint use of buildings with other denominations in the area. The appropriate Archdeacon would be part of the review team. The results of this review would be sent to the central team who would then liaise with each parish affected to help them think through the options and offer expertise. "One Church One Hundred Uses" has already visited the Church in Wales and has produced its recommendations. We believe these and any other options for alternate use of church buildings need to be considered in a serious and systematic way across the whole church. For this to happen there will need to be people able to focus on the work full time.

At the moment there are six people employed to look after parsonages. We believe this number should be reduced to four, and that two members of the team should be re-deployed to concentrate exclusively on helping parishes with their church buildings. These two would be expected to have the necessary expertise to direct parishes towards grant making bodies for buildings. They would also, between them, have responsibility of relating to secular bodies about the care and maintenance of church buildings and graveyards

Recommendation XXX

(1) Under Diocesan leadership a plan should be drawn up for each planned Ministry Area about the number of church buildings that are needed from a pastoral point of view, which should actively pursue the possibility of multi-use and which might have to consider closure.

(2) Two posts in the diocesan parsonage board inspectors team should be re-deployed to assist parishes in working with church buildings and obtaining funding for works to church buildings.

Recommendation XXXI

A small team should be formed at provincial level whose task would be to liaise with parishes in which church buildings have been designated for possible multi-purpose use or closure, to help them think through the options and offer expertise.

Recommendation XXXII

Each congregation with a church building should form a “Friends of...” in order to draw in financial support for the building from those who value it but do not attend worship.

In addition to these recommendations, which are urgent, we also think that the Church in Wales should consider a more radical scheme of selling or letting its parsonages and raising the stipend level so that clergy can buy or rent their own homes. With a system of area ministries, which will involve a small stipendiary team serving a large area, the rationale for living in one fixed place no longer exists. The Church in Wales does offer retired clergy help with housing, in the form of loans and housing associations, but it could be that they would prefer to have the security of a stake in the housing market during the time of their ministry. Also, some older ordinands do already have a stake in the property market. Selling the parsonages would significantly lift the administrative burden on the church. We recognise that there might be a case for retaining some parsonages because they are particularly well sited, and others because they will be needed for letting, for example, to lay youth workers. However, the assumption would be that a parsonage would be sold unless there is a strong case not to do so, and the stipend level would be such as to give incoming clergy freedom to buy or rent. An alternative would be for there to be a housing allowance which could be adjusted for more expensive areas. Clergy would be under an obligation to live within or within easy access to the Ministry Area they were serving.

We are aware of the disadvantages of this more radical proposal, but nevertheless think that, given a new pattern of ministry, it is one that should be fully investigated to see where the balance of advantage would then lie.

Recommendation XXXIII

A study should be made of the desirability and feasibility of selling off most parsonages in order to raise the stipend, or make a housing allowance, so clergy could afford to buy or rent their own homes.

19. Finance

Although many parishes are feeling the strain of raising the parish share, money is not the real problem for the Church in Wales. On the basis of our recommendations set out above, each leadership team (involving perhaps 3 or 4 stipends or salaries) serving a Ministry Area would be financed by the money raised from the congregations within that area. We recognise that in some rural areas and some deprived urban areas this will not be possible, at least in the short term, and the share that is raised in the Diocese as a whole will need to take this into account. Nevertheless the immediate goal must be for congregations in each Ministry Area to raise enough share at least to cover the costs of its own leadership team including add on costs such as pensions contributions.

Recommendation XXXIV

The congregations that make up each Ministry Area should be responsible for raising enough money at least to cover the full costs of its own ministry team, and an appropriate proportion of diocesan costs.

We think that what is paid for out of the share, and what is paid for by central funds should be made clear and communicated to the church as a whole. There are certain functions, for example, the cost of safeguarding, the education team and the buildings team which can justifiably come out of the historic funds of the church. If in the future all these posts are undertaken by full time professionals, this will be a very relevant matter. On the other hand it is right that, as recommended above, the cost of ministry in the Ministry Areas should be fully met from the congregations that form part of that area.

At the moment 30% of the present cost of financing the church comes from historic endowments. We believe that this should be designated either to meet some of the historic responsibilities that have arisen from the church's history as an established church, or to finance essential new initiatives, which we discuss later. It should not be spent on covering the direct ongoing costs of traditional parish ministry.

A number of our recommendations carry a cost. These include the appointment of people throughout the church with specialist skills to relate to those outside the

church, especially young people, and the leadership training. We also think that the full, or nearly full, cost of training ordinands and their stipend for their title period could reasonably be met centrally. At the moment three quarters of the cost of ordinands is met by the Province but not the cost of the title parish. One advantage of this change would be that it would give greater encouragement to dioceses to foster vocations and it would also give greater flexibility about which should be the title parish. On the other hand there are some costs now being borne centrally, e.g. church governance, which in other churches are borne out of present giving.

The cost of these initiatives would be met by the savings from money now being spent to subsidise traditional parish ministry, which in the future would be covered by money raised within the Ministry Area itself.

Recommendation XXXV

Income from the endowments of the church should be used only to fulfil historic obligations, e.g. past pensions, the cost of bishops and some national responsibilities or to finance vital new initiatives.

Recommendation XXXVI

We identify three initiatives with a significant cost which should be borne centrally.

(1) Two full time workers to be appointed to each Archdeaconry, trained to relate to those who find church culture foreign, especially young people. This should be for an initial five year period. The goal, as set out in an earlier recommendation, is for each Ministry Area to have such a person, but that will need to be funded in part from within the Ministry Area itself.

(2) The leadership training, and the cost of qualified people to carry out a 360 degree review of all the clergy.

(3) The cost of training ordinands, including their first curacy.

The rising cost of the share is a source of worry to most congregations. This is an anxiety that is not going to disappear, especially as congregations will be expected to bear the full costs of ministry in their area. However, as this is likely to mean fewer stipendiary posts than there are now, and when that cost has been covered, the rises in share seen in the past should level off.

In a church that sees itself as interdependent it is right that there should be mutual support. It is not enough simply to cover the costs of ministry for one's own area. Provision has to be made for those areas that at the moment, and for good reason, are not in a position to cover their ministry costs. Support for such areas should be ungrudging. Nevertheless it is reasonable that congregations

able to raise significantly more than what is required of them to cover their own ministry costs, their share of diocesan costs and proper support for areas in genuine need, should have some cap put on their share. The share system should not work as a disincentive to growth. Over and above a certain percentage, such churches should be able to invest the extra money they raise to employ additional youth and other workers. We do not know what that percentage should be, 10%, 25% or what, but we think there should be a cap at some point. In other words the goal for each Ministry Area, in addition to the costs of its own buildings, should be 1) to cover the costs of its own stipendiary team plus 2) its share of diocesan and provincial costs and 3) its share of support for those area ministries genuinely not able to cover their costs. Their share should not go on rising beyond this and extra money raised should go to develop its own ministries.

Recommendation XXXVII

Growing congregations able to raise more than what is required of them for their contribution of the share for the Ministry Area should, above a certain point, be able to spend this money to develop their own mission, rather than it becoming part of the common pool.

Recommendation XXXVIII

A study should be made of what costs properly belong with the Province out of historic funds, and what should come from present giving. The decisions made in response to this study should be communicated to the church as a whole.

We were not happy that the money used to pay pensions comes out of the general finances of the church. We believe, as a matter of principle, that pensions accounts should be kept separate from other funds. We know that this has already been looked at and we were told that it would cost more, as it would require separate investment managers. We believe that in the interests of transparency, clarity and good governance this option should be re-visited. The present situation seriously obscures the financial position of the Church in Wales. We believe that the option of a separate pensions fund, perhaps operated by the same investment manager who deals with general funds, should be investigated further.

Recommendation XXXIX

There should be a further, independent, examination of the costs and benefits of a separate pensions fund responsible for past and ongoing pension liabilities.

Although the Finance Department at Provincial level makes a simplified version of the accounts widely available, it is still not really possible for the average

person to understand the percentage of the income spent in each of the different areas of the Church's work. This has led to frustration amongst those who wish to understand the finances of the church better. The simplified version of accounts offered by the Diocese of Monmouth, did succeed in making matters clear to us. With a simple drawing of a cake cut into slices, each slice indicating what percentage of money was spent on what aspect of the work, it was possible to understand at a glance how the money came in and how it was spent. We understand that some other dioceses use this model, for example Llandaff, and we recommend that this model for all dioceses, and for the provincial accounts. This simplified version should then be made widely available, especially via e-mail.

Recommendation XL

The province and each individual diocese should produce each year a simplified, diagrammatic version of accounts so that people can see clearly how the money comes in and what it is spent on. This should be widely communicated.

At the open meetings a number of lay people spoke about the importance of tithing. If this is to be taught in the Church in Wales a lead must come from Bishops and Clergy, both in their own example and in their teaching. They must make it clear what this means in practice at a time when there are so many calls from worthwhile charities, and what the spiritual basis of this is. We understand that the Church does have a model of 5% of take home pay for the church and 5% for other good causes. However, it seems that this is not widely known or taught.

Recommendation XLI

Bishops and clergy should make their model of tithing, and its spiritual basis, more widely known.

20. Fees

The Church in Wales is unusual in allowing clergy to keep fees for funerals, weddings and other occasional offices. This system is open to abuse and we find it unacceptable. Taking such services is one of the privileges of ministry which the priest will be glad to undertake anyway, and for which the church pays him or her a stipend. We think that all fees should be paid into church accounts, and go towards the cost of the share in the Ministry Area. It is important that the majority of clergy do not lose out by this change and the stipend level should be recalibrated to make it comparable to or better than that of other Anglican churches in the British Isles, taking benefits and pension levels into account.

Recommendation XLII

- 1) Fees for occasional offices should be paid into church accounts and go towards the cost of the Share in the Ministry Area.**
- 2) Clergy stipends should be recalibrated to ensure that they are comparable to that of neighbouring Anglican churches.**

Area Deans also receive additional money and whilst that can be justified, it does make it more difficult to change area deans when this may be necessary. In the pattern of ministry that we envisage for the future, where each diocese will have large Ministry Areas served by leadership teams, the bishop and archdeacon will relate directly to team leaders and there will be no need for area deans as they exist now. In any case we think that the alternative of offering proper expenses or a non-pensionable responsibility allowance for the period when extra responsibilities are exercised is the right principle.

We also find it surprising that people are paid extra for such tasks as teaching on a lay ministry course, when again, this would seem to be a part of the ministry for which they receive a stipend anyway.

Recommendation XLIII

Proper expenses, or a non-pensionable responsibility allowance, should be offered for the period when extra responsibilities are exercised.

The question of differentials for bishops, archdeacons and deans raises wider issues that we are not in a position to comment on. However it was put to us a number of times that there did not seem any justification for bishops and archdeacons receiving a larger pension than other clergy. We also thought there was a case for having a fixed tenure for some positions, such as that of Archdeacon, to encourage movement and flexibility in church appointments.

Recommendation XLIV

The question of differentials, especially in pensions, should be considered by the Governing Body.

21. The Welsh Language

We have been made aware of the tensions that exist over language. There are Welsh speakers who feel that the Welsh language is not taken seriously enough by the Church in Wales, and English speakers who are critical of the cost of publications in both languages. This is one factor in the tension between different parts of the province and which also accentuates a North and South divide.

The Church in Wales, since disestablishment, has been wise to re-position itself as the church of the Welsh people. This has been a particular strength in the light of the relative weakness of Welsh non-conformity compared to the time when it dominated Welsh Christianity. The Church continues to play its role within the Welsh Language movement as a whole but there are some secular developments, such as the establishment of Welsh Medium Schools, which may need closer attention by the church. We welcome the recent report of the Welsh Language Vocations Group “Each in our own Language”, though we are not ourselves in a position to comment on its many detailed recommendations. However, we do think particular priority needs to be given to the encouragement of Welsh speaking ordinands. We also think that St Michael’s should give more encouragement for its students to immerse themselves in Welsh whilst they are in training. As Welsh medium schools are now very much part of the education scene, thought should be given as to how they can best be ministered to.

Recommendation XLV

Attention should be paid to the recommendations of the Welsh Language Vocations Group report “Each in our own Language”, in particular:

- (1) Priority should be given to the nurturing of Welsh speaking ordinands.**
- (2) Adequate provision should be made at St Michael’s and in the training schemes for people to learn and improve their Welsh.**
- (3) Attention should be paid to Welsh medium schools and how they can best be ministered to.**

22. Mission and Ministry

At the moment there are a number of Bishops’ Advisors responsible to individual bishops for different areas of the church’s work. This arrangement does not allow for co-ordinated strategic thinking across those areas, or management of the officers as a team. We think a proper board responsible for the work covered by the advisors should be re-constituted. It should have the authority to relate directly to the Governing Body and Standing Committee, and be a key body for the formation of mission and ministry policy for the Church in Wales. It should have elected members on it from the Governing Body.

Recommendation XLVI

There should be a Board of Mission and Ministry responsible for all the spheres of work at present covered by the Bishops’ advisors. It should have the authority to relate directly to the Governing Body and Standing Committee, and be in a position to help shape the training policy of both St Michael’s and the

training schemes. There should be a Director of Mission and Ministry to direct the work, and an annual report and debate on their work by the Governing Body. There should be elected members on it from the Governing Body.

We do not feel in a position to comment in detail on all the aspects of the work covered by the Bishops' advisors, and the fact that it is not mentioned here, or there is only a brief mention, does not mean that we think it unimportant. Some of the areas have been covered in earlier recommendations, e.g. on the Welsh language, young people and ministry.

(1) Church affairs.

Although ecumenical relationships have not been a prominent feature of what has been said to us we believe that all possibilities of working more ecumenically at local and national level should be kept open. In particular we believe that the Church in Wales should use its historic position in Wales, whereby it is expected to make a contribution to national life, to enable other churches to share in this role as appropriate. The "voice" of the churches should not be just that of the Church in Wales, but should reflect thinking in other churches as well.

We were struck by the way some young people's groups have established fruitful relationships with para-church bodies such as Christian Aid. In addition to relationships with other churches, such organisations often have a contribution to make in joint working.

We note two reports due out in October from the Commission of Covenanted Churches, one on "Pastoral Oversight" and one on "Church Governance", with some radical proposals for ecumenical working.

Earlier in the report we recommended that in considering the pastoral provision and number of buildings required for each Ministry Area account be taken of the presence of other denominations. Every possibility for joint working together should be explored, including joint chaplaincies where appropriate.

(2) Church and Society

Social Responsibility Projects, which employ 160 people and engage 3000 volunteers to help in the work, offer an important service to the wider community.

(3) Communication

The Church in Wales is in an enviable position in having good relationships with the media both in the South and the North of Wales, so there is no difficulty in getting a church viewpoint across to the wider community. We think this should be used to the full. We also think, as recommended earlier, that every form of

modern communication should be utilised in order to facilitate provincial and diocesan communication with church members, with the goal of everyone being in touch through e-mail or its equivalent.

(4) Education

The Church in Wales has 168 schools who make an important contribution to the life of the nation. We think that full time professional staff responsible for this work should be employed at provincial level. We also think that ministry teams should work more closely with schools in their area, both state and church schools. This is happening in a few areas but by no means all. With the appointment of more full time workers for outreach amongst young people, as set out in previous recommendations, this should be more possible. Apart from anything else a church school might be an appropriate setting for an alternative form of Christian gathering and worship for those who find church buildings alien to them. In an earlier section we mentioned that the catchment area for the local secondary school might be a natural place to begin thinking about the size and shape of a Ministry Area, and this could help build a closer relationship with the schools within it.

Recommendation XLVII

Ministry teams should work closely with the schools in their area, particularly church schools.

(5) Ministry

We have already commented and made recommendations on ministry in other sections and earlier recommendations.

(6) Evangelism and Renewal

We have already recommended earlier the goal that the leadership team in each Ministry Area should have a full time person with the gifts and responsibility for outreach to those unfamiliar with the church, especially to young people.

However, sharing our faith with others in appropriate ways is not a responsibility that can simply be delegated to others. All Christians are called on to be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. (1 Peter 3, 15) This can be done, as was rightly said to us, in and through ordinary, natural conversations. Teaching and training in the church should encourage and help people to do this.

23. The election of a new bishop and archbishop

We believe that the present system of electing bishops is both cumbersome and unable to offer the electors adequate information about potential candidates. We recommend a much smaller nomination committee. This would be made up of the archbishop and the other four bishops in post, together with two lay people and two clergy from the Diocese where there is a vacancy and one lay person and one clergy person from each of the other dioceses. This would amount to a body of 19 people. This committee, chaired by the Archbishop, would long list applicants after the vacancy had been made known in the usual way and then short list a small number, usually four, for interview. They would then send the name of their chosen candidate to the Standing Committee for election. The Standing Committee would have the power to elect that person or to ask the nominations committee to think again. An alternative for the appointment of both bishops and the Archbishop is that the final decision should be made by the Governing Body, rather than the Standing Committee.

We think that the same principles should apply to the election of a new archbishop as we have recommended for new diocesan bishops. There should be a nominations committee who, after due process, would put a single name to the Standing Committee to elect or ask for another name. The size of the committee would be the same as we have recommended for the appointment of diocesan bishops. At its first meeting the committee would discuss whether there were people other than the present serving bishops in the church who should be considered for election. There might, for example, be a Welsh speaking Bishop in another part of the Anglican Communion. It would not be necessary for a person at that stage to be in Episcopal orders. If there were one or more people to be considered, they would first be asked if they would wish to stand for election. At the same meeting serving bishops would be asked whether or not they would wish to be considered. Each person who had agreed to be considered would be interviewed about their understanding of, and vision for, the role. (Members of the committee who were candidates would not take part in interviewing other candidates.) After the interviews and further prayerful reflection there would be a secret ballot. All members of the committee would be entitled to vote, including any serving bishop who was being considered. The committee would be chaired by the Vice Chairman of the Bench unless he wished to stand, in which case the committee would elect one of their number to chair.

For the appointment of a new area bishop for the Diocese of Llandaff the archbishop would set up a small advisory body consisting of four members nominated by the diocesan conference, two clergy and two lay, and one serving bishop elected by the Bench of Bishops. The archbishop would chair this advisory body, to whom names would be suggested and by whom a small number would be interviewed. A name would be put to the archbishop for him to appoint.

Recommendation XLVIII

1) There should be a nominations committee for the appointment of new bishops chaired by the Archbishop. This would be made up of the five Diocesan bishops in post, two lay people and two clergy from the diocese where there is a vacancy and one lay person and one clergy from the other dioceses, making a total of 19. After the usual procedure of short listing and interview they would recommend a name to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee would have the power to elect that person or to ask the nominations committee to think again. Consideration should be given as to whether the Governing Body rather than the Standing Committee should make the final decision.

2) The same principles should apply to the election of an archbishop as apply to the election of a diocesan bishop. The nominations committee would be able to consider other names in addition to those at present serving as diocesan bishops in the Church in Wales.

3) The area bishop for the Diocese of Llandaff should be appointed by the archbishop drawing on the advice of a nominations committee elected by the diocesan conference plus one serving bishop elected by the Bench.

24. The Constitution of the Church in Wales

The present Constitution of the Church in Wales is large, complex and unwieldy. It also seems to act as an inhibitor of necessary change, with the implication that the change requires a change in the Constitution and this would be difficult. In fact, as stated earlier, the Standing Committee already has the power to make changes to regulations without these always having to be debated by the Governing Body.

During the last 15 years there have been two working parties charged with the task of making the Constitution more manageable. The second group held more than 100 meetings and succeeded in distinguishing between regulations and core material in Volume I. But there is still Volume II which also contains Canons and regulations together.

If our more radical proposals are accepted, we believe that would be the time to set up a new working group to produce a new Constitution reflecting those changes and to do so in one or more volumes in a way which is clearer and less complex than the present ones.

Recommendation XLIX

In due course a small working party should be formed to re-examine the Constitution. This would seek to produce a document which is shorter and simpler, and which would build on the principle, already established, of distinguishing between Canons which could be changed only with difficulty and Regulations which could be changed by the Standing Committee.

25. Leadership for change

We believe the church is fortunate in having a capable Bench of Bishops and many able and dedicated people, lay and clergy, responsible for its administration, which is efficiently managed. However, the crucial question is: where is leadership for change going to come from?

If leadership is to be collaborative it would not be appropriate to leave it to the Bishops alone. Both the Representative Body and the Governing Body have defined, essential roles, but not ones that lend themselves to offering comprehensive leadership. There is however the Standing Committee.

We believe that without making any structural changes at the present stage there can and should be an enhanced role for the Standing Committee. Indeed it is not so much having an enhanced role as exercising powers which legally it already has, but which it is not actually exercising at the moment. The Standing Committee has the great advantage in that it is indeed truly representative of all the governing instruments of the Church in Wales. All the bishops are members of it, and it contains members from the Representative Body and members from the Governing Body who are elected by the dioceses.

We believe that the Standing Committee should exercise its constitutional role as in effect being the executive committee of the Governing Body. It should take responsibility for seeing through the changes that are necessary at this time. After consultation it should appoint a small group, one bishop, one priest and one layperson (the last two who may or may not be members of the Standing Committee itself) who would work over three years to implement the recommendations from this review which have been accepted, reporting regularly to the Standing Committee.

This means no change in the responsibilities of the Representative Body, with its impressive record of managing the finances of the church. They would continue to do this, setting the boundaries of the finance available for policy decisions made by the Governing Body on the advice of the Standing Committee.

Our report will be considered first by the Bench of Bishops, then by the Standing Committee and then by the Governing Body. On the assumption that our

recommendations, in full or part, are accepted, it will be vital to have an authoritative body in place to see them implemented. We believe that the Standing Committee is the only body representative enough to do this. They would do it, as indicated, by setting up a small sub group of people with the necessary enthusiasm and energy for change, who would be able to devote real attention to this over the next three years, but the Standing Committee themselves would be responsible and they would report at each Governing Body on the progress of the recommendations.

Recommendation L

The Standing Committee should be the body responsible for seeing through those recommendations of this report that are accepted by the Governing Body. They should form a small working group charged with processing the changes. The Standing Committee would report to the Governing Body at every meeting on progress made.

If the Church in Wales is to survive as an influence in the life of the nation in the next generation the major changes we have recommended are not just essential but urgent. The Church in Wales took three years to organise itself as a disestablished church. We believe there is a three year period of grace now to bring about changes of a similar magnitude. We recognise that some of them will unsettle familiar ways of thinking about the ministry but the church cannot go on the way it is without sinking further into decline. In unsettling times there is an element of risk which cannot be avoided, and which has to be faced for the sake of the Gospel. As was stressed at the beginning of the report, all the changes we recommend in organisation and structure are designed to make clear and express the fundamental purpose of the church: to proclaim the Gospel and draw people into the life of Christ. At the same time, if the Church in Wales has the resolve and persistence to bring these changes about, it could well provide a good model for other churches in the Western World which are facing a similar situation.

ANNEX

Previous Reviews: Context

Placing the Church in Wales Review in Context

The Church in Wales Review was commissioned by the Bench of Bishops and the Standing Committee to the Governing Body in late 2010/early 2011. However, it is by no means the first major review to have been carried out in the Church in Wales. When agreeing its approach with the Bench of Bishops, the Review Group was clear that it would want to ground its own work in the experience of previous exercises of this kind. The full reports of the following historic reviews have been considered by the Review Group and taken into account throughout this process. Perhaps not surprisingly, similar themes and concerns have arisen during this Review as those identified on previous occasions.

Previous Reviews

(Although there have been a number of other reviews carried out within the Church in Wales on more specific matters since the 1970s, this list concentrates upon the more wide-ranging reviews.)

The Archbishop's Commission on the Boundaries and Structures of the Church in Wales

This Commission of 23 members was appointed in the 1970s, and produced three Interim Reports before its Final Report was debated at a special meeting of the Governing Body in July 1980. Ultimately, most of the Commission's recommendations were rejected by the Governing Body. However, the Commission did undertake a considerable amount of research and consultation within the Church in Wales prior to producing its reports, from which the Review Group has benefited, not least because the concerns raised in the reports mirror many of those raised during present day diocesan consultations. These included:

Concerns about funding the work of the Church:

In 1980 92.5% of the total costs of running the Church were met by the Representative Body, although there were concerns that this level of support was unsustainable and that members might not be able to afford to meet a greater proportion of costs. Certainly, the level of giving has increased significantly since then (the Representative Body's level of support is currently about 30%). However, members remain concerned about whether or not the Church will be able to afford to meet its future costs generally, and maintain its traditional model of ministry in particular.

The effect of an ageing demographic on numbers of both Church members and stipendiary clergy:

Concerns identified by the Commission about the trends of decline in congregation numbers and the number of stipendiary clergy remain relevant, and indeed have intensified more recently as the effect of the continuing trends becomes apparent. Should clergy numbers fall below a certain minimum number, it was recognised that the current model of parish ministry might be impossible to sustain and that some dioceses themselves might become unviable. On the other hand, should attendances continue to fall and clergy numbers stay relatively stable, it was suggested that the Church would be unable to meet the costs of the stipendiary clergy.

Calls to simplify and streamline the administrative structures and processes:

It was suggested that there were too many committees in the Church's structures, and that it was already becoming difficult to find members to serve on them. There were also concerns that the current structure placed considerable burdens on the Bishops in general, and the Archbishop in particular. (Concerns about the need to support the office of the Archbishop have also been explored more recently – see 1992 report and Archiepiscopal See, below.)

Areas in which progress has been made:

Whilst some issues identified by the Commission continue to have resonance for the present Review, in other areas significant progress has been made subsequently. For example, there was considerable emphasis in the Commission's final report on the need to increase clergy stipends to a reasonable level, and to provide better support for clergy in retirement. The issue of clergy remuneration and pensions is no longer raised by Church members as a question of fair treatment, but rather as a question of affordability.

The Commission had also recommended that parish accounts be collected and summarised. Since 1990 increasingly detailed financial returns have been made annually by each parish, with data held in a central database and accessible by diocesan and provincial offices. A standard form for parish accounts (on which the annual financial return is now based) was introduced two years ago, and has been broadly welcomed.

The legacy of the Commission

Although most of the Commission's proposals were rejected by the Governing Body, the experience of the Commission's work and the way in which its conclusions were considered has left a deep legacy in the Church in Wales. As noted already, the research carried out during the 1970s into the state of the Church in Wales highlighted important issues for future consideration by the Church, and provided a wealth of information to enable it to do so. The Review Group has benefited in its own work from this material being available.

Secondly, the speed with which the Commission's final report was lost in the Governing Body, despite it being backed by many years' work beforehand, appears to have led to a loss of confidence in the Church in Wales in "grand Commissions" and radical structural proposals. Post-1980, Church members were more inclined to scepticism when faced with ambitious proposals, or calls to participate in comprehensive reviews. This has meant that subsequent exercises of this kind have sometimes been more cautious in the way in which proposals have been brought forward to the Governing Body, with additional stages of consultation at different levels introduced for more recent reports. It may also have discouraged the Governing Body from returning to the issue of major structural change. In carrying out the present Review, the Review Group has often been reminded about the work of the Commission, and on occasion warned of the lessons that should be learned from its demise.

Archiepiscopal See

1992 Proposal

One outcome of the 1980 Commission, and its concern about the administrative burden placed on the office of Archbishop, was the 1992 *Report of the Working Group on the Future Role of the Archbishop*. Whilst many of that report's recommendations – the provision of additional support through the appointment of a secretary, chaplain and press officer – have been implemented, its most far-reaching proposal is still the subject of considerable debate.

The recommendation that a permanent archiepiscopal see be established at Llandaff was discussed at various levels within the Church between 1992 and 1996, at which point it was rejected by the Governing Body. The GB's decision in 1992 to approve the proposal in principle before referring it to the dioceses (and in particular the diocese of Llandaff, which would have been the most affected) was in hindsight a misjudgment, and may have contributed to the level of opposition to the proposed move experienced from the start, not least in Llandaff. A series of amendments to the proposal between 1992 and 1996 did not fully meet the concerns of the diocese of Llandaff about the way in which day-to-day episcopal ministry would be provided to that diocese - by an Assistant Bishop - whilst the Archbishop (the diocesan bishop) was engaged in provincial duties.

2007-2010 Return

The subject was revisited in 2007. The establishment of a National Assembly at Cardiff Bay had certainly created a greater expectation within Wales that other national institutions and organisations would also be based in Cardiff. In addition, the current Archbishop's experiences as Diocesan Bishop of Bangor, Diocesan Bishop of Llandaff and Archbishop of Wales had led him to suggest to the Bench of Bishops and Standing Committee that it would be unrealistic and unreasonable to expect a Bishop based in one of the northern dioceses to carry out the role of Archbishop as currently understood.

Two reports were produced. The first, in June 2007, proposed that the Archbishop of Wales become a purely provincial office, with no regular diocesan duties. This option was not accepted by the Bench of Bishops, which felt that an Archbishop needed to perform certain aspects of episcopal ministry – to confirm and ordain – from a diocesan base in order to remain both grounded and nourished. Further work was then carried out on the “Llandaff as permanent archiepiscopal see” option, and a report produced in October 2008 which was the subject of diocesan consultation in 2009 with mixed results. In both reports, considerable work was carried out on the role of the Archbishop, which has since been built upon by the Bench in discussions with the Governing Body (April 2010).

Conclusions

Once again, the question of balancing provincial and diocesan needs in appointing an Archbishop and in the provision of further episcopal support has proved difficult to answer in such a way that it reassures and encourages the support of members across the Church in Wales. The Bench of Bishops has postponed any further work on the proposal pending the outcome of the Church in Wales Review, which has been asked to consider the structures and use of resources of the Church. The 1992, 2007 and 2008 reports have been made available to the Review Group which, amongst its membership, has experience of different forms of archiepiscopal arrangements: fixed – England and Ireland; and peripatetic – Scotland.

Governing Body Review

The Governing Body reviewed its size and composition on two occasions at the turn of the Millennium. In 2001 the Venerable Bryan Williams’s working group recommended a reduction in the size of the Governing Body from 350 to 243, but the proposal was rejected by the Governing Body (although the principle of equal representation of dioceses was reaffirmed). Following further work on the duties and functions of the Governing Body by a working group chaired by Dr Graham Humphrys (which reported to the Governing Body in 2003), the Standing Committee brought forward recommendations on the Governing Body’s size and composition in two reports in April and September 2004. Asked to choose between four options, on this occasion Governing Body members approved a more radical option – a reduction to 144 members. The changes to membership were phased in over a number of years, beginning with the diocesan elections in 2005 and culminating with the Governing Body reaching its new size (144) in January 2008.

Representative Body Review

Between 2003 and 2005, the Representative Body carried out a review of, “all aspects of provincial structures including expenditure”. The working group commissioned to carry out the review produced two interim reports – which were discussed with the Governing Body – and a final report which was debated by the Governing Body in April 2005 following a period of consultation with dioceses. The scope of this review was necessarily more limited than that of the Archbishop’s Commission on Boundaries and Structures as it was appointed by the Representative Body. As a result, its recommendations related principally to:

- Simplifying and streamlining the movement of funds between the province and dioceses, replacing a series of small grants with the Block Grant arrangement;
- Restructuring the Representative Body itself with a substantial reduction in its size (from 75 to a maximum of 26 members) and number of committees;
- Reviewing the Representative Body’s own administration;
- Introducing some changes to the clergy pension scheme to reduce costs;
- Introducing a new clergy retirement housing loan scheme.

It was not possible for the Review to consider the significant number of suggestions put to it for changes to the number of dioceses or to diocesan boundaries.

This work, and subsequent discussions with the Representative Body, have provided the Review Group with a useful insight into not only the work of the RB and its role within the provincial Church structure, but also the way in which the work of the wider Church is funded and other important areas (for example, the management of buildings) are handled.

There is no doubt that the current financial difficulties facing the Church in Wales at both a provincial and a parish level have helped to focus minds on the need for change – “we cannot afford to go on doing the same thing in the same way”. However, this does not tell the whole story. Members are concerned also – more so – about the decline in attendances and the relevance of the Church to wider society. The Church in Wales Review was not established to identify ways to cut costs, but rather to help ensure that the Church is able to make best use of its considerable resources – human, architectural and financial – in the service of its greater mission, ministry and witness to the people of Wales. The Review Group has borne this objective uppermost in its collective mind as it has carried out its work.

Work Leading to the Current Review

The decision to commission the current Review was a response by the Bench of Bishops and the Standing Committee of the Governing Body to the resolution passed at the September 2010 Governing Body meeting during the debate on Membership and Finance statistics:

That the Governing Body take note of the [Membership and Finance] report and ask the Standing Committee and the Bench of Bishops to respond to the situation these statistics describe.

Members had been particularly concerned about the continuing trend of falling attendances, particularly among young people, and also about the apparent difficulties that the Church in Wales was experiencing at all levels – parochial, diocesan and provincial – to meet the costs of running the Church. There were contributions during a number of debates at that meeting which expressed a common sentiment: “As a Church we cannot go on doing the same things in the same way”. It was suggested that a review of the Church in Wales – not restricted to financial matters – be carried out.

However, this prompt was not the only call for such issues to be considered by the Church. The Bench and the Standing Committee recognised that such a review would need to bring together and draw upon two other independent but linked pieces of work being carried out at the time. First, the Archbishop’s call to the Church (set out in his Presidential Address to the Governing Body in April 2010) to consider how to be a more outward looking church leading up to the centenary of its disestablishment in 2020 (on which the Bishops had started to undertake some preliminary work). Second, the work carried out by the Governing Body’s 2020 Groups over a number of meetings, again looking ahead to the type of Church that would be required to meet the needs of the people and communities of Wales at the centenary of the Church’s disestablishment in 2020.

These two pieces of work laid the foundations for the outline brief for the Church in Wales Review agreed by the Bench of Bishops and the Standing Committee in December 2011, entitled *Challenge, Change and Opportunity* (overleaf), and the agreement of the following terms of reference for the Review Group in June 2011:

To examine the structure and organisation of the Church in Wales with a view to increasing the effectiveness of its ministry and witness to the people of Wales.

The Review Group has since considered in some detail the work of the Governing Body’s 2020 Groups which, together with other background material provided by the Bench and the Representative Body, provided an essential introduction to the current state of the Church in Wales and the concerns and aspirations of its members.

Challenge, Change and Opportunity

Theological Foundations

The Church is the Body of Christ. This means that it is called to be:

- A channel of God's grace, renewal and pastoral concern for the individual, who is called to faith and fullness of life in Jesus Christ.
- A source of fellowship and community in our society, as the Church calls people into renewed relationships with one another.
- An agent of change in the world, as the Church is called to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and to bear witness to the justice and peace which are the marks of God's Kingdom.

Is the Church in Wales "fit for purpose" and able to respond to this vocation in the context of twenty-first century Wales?

Current challenges

The challenge of structure.

The Church in Wales has historically existed as a Christian presence in every community in Wales. In discussions in Governing Body in September 2009 and April 2010, the Governing Body reaffirmed that this presence in Wales and for Wales is an integral part of its mission. However, parishes are under increasing pressure – facing the reality of ageing congregations and declining resources. The Church is organised into deaneries, archdeaconries and dioceses. Do the current structures meet the needs of the Church and support its work? How does the Church retain an effective presence and witness to the love of God across Wales?

The challenge of resources.

Currently, provincial and diocesan investments subsidise the true cost of providing ministry to our churches by approximately 30%. However, this rich resource from the past is coming under increasing pressure as investment management in a time of recession becomes tougher, and the cost of providing pensions takes ever more resources. How can the human and financial resources of the Church, and its buildings, be effectively deployed to support mission?

The challenge of leadership.

There has recently been a process of discernment about the office of Archbishop in the Church in Wales. This led into a discussion in Governing Body about the ministry of bishop. Governing Body affirmed that it wishes the bishops to have a high public presence in speaking to society, and energising the life of the Church. Is the organisation of the Church in Wales configured to assist community building and effective leadership?

The Brief

At Governing Body in September 2010, the bishops and Standing Committee were asked to respond to the situation described in the Membership and Finance Report for 2008/9, which addresses some of these matters.

On behalf of the bishops and Standing Committee, the Archbishop is requesting an expert group from outside the Church in Wales to review the life of the Church in Wales in the light of these challenges. It is envisaged that the report will ask fundamental questions about the life of the Church in Wales in the decade leading up to the centenary of its disestablishment in 1920, and make specific recommendations about organisation and resources.

The report will address the questions:

- Are the resources available to the Church in Wales being deployed efficiently and effectively to enable the mission of the Church?
- Is the organisation of the Church in Wales one which enables the Church to be effective in addressing the nation of Wales?
- How should the organisation be adapted to enable the Church to live more fully into a model of Church life which is theologically and missionally coherent and sustainable in the long term?

The Bench of Bishops
October 2010