

DIOCESE IN EUROPE
THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



ARCHDEACONRY OF SWITZERLAND
MINISTERIAL REVIEW

DESCRIPTION
AND
RESOURCES



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MINISTERIAL REVIEW

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MINISTERIAL REVIEW

Introduction to the process

Ministerial Reviews are now standard practice in many Dioceses of the Church of England. They are understood as a means by which the pastoral oversight of the Bishop can be extended to all the clergy. It was agreed that the Swiss Archdeaconry would pilot a scheme on behalf of the Diocese and that this should be done in the course of the year 2004 so that a report could be given to the Diocesan Synod in June 2005. Our Diocese is in many ways different from those in England and in respect of the regular process of ministerial reviews it is understood that it may be difficult to achieve a complete oversight of all the clergy, some of whom may be working in isolated places far from contact with a suitable partner. Nevertheless, we are pleased to offer the Swiss Scheme as a model for the Diocese, realizing that in Switzerland we are in a privileged Archdeaconry where it is possible to meet without too much time-consuming and expensive travelling.

The Swiss Archdeaconry Scheme is based on a thesis prepared by our Chaplain in Basel, the Reverend Geoff Read, to whom we offer our grateful thanks for all his thoughtful work in helping us to set it up.

In Switzerland we are privileged to have a group of lay partners appointed by the Archdeacon who have been assigned to the clergy. We also offer our gratitude to them for their fine work, which is greatly appreciated by those participating.

Ministerial review we understand to be a process whereby the clergy are assisted in recognizing the need for reflection on the pastoral nature of their calling. It allows opportunity for encouragement in seeking to fulfil their vocation as priests through a process of honest reflection. Here, it involves an annual time of self-review in the company of a chosen partner. It is clear that it is not an assessment or appraisal, nor a form

of spiritual direction or work consultancy. It is part of the process in which we regularly review our response to the call of God. It is intended to assist us all as the Body of Christ so that his gifts will grow in us. It is good to remember that we are called to a life of obedience and effectiveness, not one of success. At the heart of the process lies the Ordinal which reminds the clergy of the vows made at the time of Ordination.

In Switzerland all the clergy have been assigned by the Archdeacon to a lay partner – not from their own chaplaincy. The lay partners' rôle is understood as a confidential one, of acting as a "sounding board" as the clergy reflect on their vocation in the context of their chaplaincies within both the Archdeaconry and the Diocese. Since this process has been undertaken there have been separate meetings of the clergy and lay partners. We are glad to report that, after some initial misgivings and reluctance particularly on the part of the clergy, all involved are glad to have taken part, realize more deeply the privileged nature of our calling, and wish to continue with the process.

We therefore offer this scheme – with gratitude to God for all his gifts – to our Bishop, whose oversight we value highly, and to the clergy and laity who have taken part. We recognise that in other parts of our Diocese the scheme may need to be adapted to suit local needs. For example, ecumenical partners, ordained or lay, may be suitable to assist clergy in more isolated Archdeaconries. May this scheme continue to help us all in building up Christ's Body in the Diocese in Europe.

John Williams
Archdeacon of Switzerland

The Feast of the Epiphany 2005

Roles: Bishop, Archdeacon, clergy, review partners

Bishop

The scheme is an expression of the Bishop's pastoral care of the clergy and through them the work of the chaplaincies.

Archdeacon

The main rôle of the Archdeacon is as a local advocate of the scheme, primarily through the use of Chapter meetings for training, encouraging and reminding clergy of the steps in the review cycle. The Archdeacon arranges recruitment, training, support and assigning of review partners and makes provision in the Archdeaconry budget for the expenses of the scheme. The Archdeacon also reports to the Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Synod.

Clergy

The clergy make contact with their review partners to arrange an annual review. Before this meeting they spend time on the resources as preparation for their discussion.

Review partner

The function of the review partner is to act as a sounding board and facilitator.

Criteria for suitability

- Experience in the use of appraisal schemes in a professional or voluntary context
- Willingness to adapt previous experience to the particular needs of clergy review
- Awareness of basic skills in reflective listening

- Willingness to offer time and energy in a voluntary and confidential capacity to enabling clergy develop their vocation

References will be taken.

Partners are selected from outside the clergy's own chaplaincy. They may be lay or clerical, and could be from other denominations, making use of ecumenical partners.

A brief training for the review partners is suggested in order to coordinate the approach in the Archdeaconry.

A Prayer for Clergy and Review Partner

Heavenly Father, thank you for the time you have given us for this review;

Holy Spirit, teach us to listen,
that we may be guided by you,
and be transformed to be more like Christ.

In his name we pray.

Amen.

Annual review sessions

Aim

The scheme aims to offer an opportunity to the clergy for regular reflection on their pastoral ministry, as expressed in their Ordination vows.

The process

- On-going reflection throughout the year, aided by the resources in the following pages.
- An annual review session with a partner.

The annual review session

The scheme is conceived to run in a three-year cycle.

The annual review session is arranged at mutual convenience by the clergy and the partners. In year one of the process the first meeting with the partner might be simply a getting-to-know-one-another session, with a discussion of which of the resources are to be used, and how. This would subsequently be followed by the review session itself.

In advance of the session a selection of documents from the resources may be sent to the partner, to form a basis for discussion. The questions at the end (page 24) may be addressed on an annual basis during the session, in order that goals can be set.

It is suggested that the place selected should be quiet, allowing for no interruptions. The content of the session is clergy driven, with the review partner in a facilitative role. Confidentiality must be assured.

At the end of the session no documents are drawn up. The clergy tell the Archdeacon that the review has taken place.

RESOURCES FOR REFLECTION

The general context of ministry

Use the following questions as a tool to review your current ministry. As the Ministerial Review is a three-year process, it might be worthwhile comparing your answers over this time period and seeing if there have been any changes.

Choose two or three questions below to discuss.

In what terms would I describe the present context of my ministry?

What are my current responsibilities?

Have there been any major changes in responsibility since I was appointed?

Give a brief description of the congregations to whom you minister. It might be helpful to describe them in terms of types of service, activities, electoral roll numbers, average Sunday attendance, social mix, children, youth etc.

What do I see as my priorities? What do the congregation see as my priorities?

Over the last year, have my commitments reflected my priorities?

What has been rewarding over the past year? What has been less than rewarding?

What changes in my ministry do I foresee in the not-too-distant future?

The Church in the world

This section and the following one aim to help you reflect on your growth and development in the core skills of ministry. A journal may be a helpful tool in this process (see page 22), as might be the insight of congregational members willing to be “critical friends”.

In answering the various questions, you may find it helpful to gauge your growth and development by giving yourself a mark between 1 and 10 where 1 is the lowest and 10 the highest.

Choose two to three different questions below to discuss. It might be helpful to vary your choice throughout the three-year programme.

How strong is my knowledge of the Bible and Christian Tradition? Has this knowledge developed recently?

How well has my own spiritual life been sustained and developed in recent times?

How developed are my descriptive, analytical, and critical skills that are necessary in understanding and communicating the Faith?

How well do I apply the Bible and Christian tradition through my preaching and pastoring of my congregation?

How strong is my understanding and practice of how the Christian community is to be salt and light in both the local community and wider world?

How aware am I of changes in culture and how effectively have I been able to address them?

How well have I earthed the Bible and Christian Tradition in such a changing context?

The growth of the Church community

As in the previous section, a journal may be a helpful tool in this process, as might be the insight of congregational members willing to be "critical friends".

In answering the various questions, you may find it helpful to gauge your growth and development by giving yourself a mark between 1 and 10 where 1 is the lowest and 10 the highest.

Choose two to three different questions to discuss.

How well do I handle pressure and change?

How developed are my relationship skills especially with other staff and with the individual members of my congregation as a whole?

How effective am I at discerning and developing the gifts, ministry and vocation of others?

How effective am I in developing and communicating vision and in setting, planning and reviewing goals?

How strong is my public leadership, especially in the areas of leading worship and teaching?

How well do I serve people who need pastoral care?

How well do I work alongside other local Church leaders, Anglican or otherwise?

How open am I to receiving guidance and how able am I to give it?

To whom do I turn for support?

Reflections on the Ordinal

This section invites you to reflect on your developing sense of vocation, on your original calling and how this has developed. It is based on the words of the ASB Ordinal and "Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy".

You may use your own questions if you wish.

For Year 1 of the programme:

What were the key elements in your original call to ordained ministry? How would you describe your original understanding of the ordained ministry to which you were called? Jot down key words.

For subsequent years:

Review your description of your original calling and also the notes from previous years' reflections on vocation. Jot down the key words that strike you as still valid and note the ones that strike you as needing fresh or expanded thinking.

*Select **three** imperatives for reflection*

(1) 'Set as the pattern'

"They must set the Good Shepherd always before them as the pattern of their calling."

As an ordained minister, what do I believe it means to pattern my ministry on Christ as "Shepherd" in relation to the following?

- As a representative
- Community life
- Pastoral care
- Nurture and teaching
- Unity
- Sacramental life and worship
- Vision
- Other

Which am I most drawn to and why?

How far do these priorities consciously shape my ministry?

Which am I least drawn to and why?

Is there any tension between my convictions about priorities, my duties in ordained ministry and the realities of my context?

Is this a creative tension?

(2) 'Trust'

"In the name of the Lord we bid you remember the greatness of the trust now to be committed to your charge ... You cannot bear the weight of this ministry in your own strength, but only by the power of God"

Do I think of ministry more with a sense of responsibility or with a sense of privilege?

Is my attitude to ministry characterized more by "doing" or by "being"?

From what or whom do I derive my sense of self-worth, purpose and affirmation?

Whose expectations do I seek to fulfil?

What is the greatest weight I bear in ministry?

Over the years, has the weight of ministry become harder or easier to bear?

(3) 'Search'

"Search out the careless and indifferent... You are to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord... which faith the church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation."

How do I respond to the following statement and why: "Mission is a primary clerical calling"?

How has the world changed during my ministry since ordination?

What emphasis do I believe is required for the Church to faithfully proclaim the Gospel today?

How might this answer cause me to rethink my role as "messenger, watchman, steward"?

(4) 'Teach'

"Preach and proclaim the word of God... teach, admonish, encourage, build, feed and provide.... strengthen the faithful."

Choose one of the following questions

What material resources am I currently drawing upon for public ministry and for personal growth? Do they affirm or challenge me?

Which of the verbs in the above quotation best describe my preferred preaching style? Can I think of instances, during the last year, when a less preferred style was more appropriate and effective?

"Part of the clerical vocation in both preaching and teaching is a prayerful openness to being prophetic and challenging as well as encouraging and illuminating." (*Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*) What balance do I strike between these elements in exercising my vocation to teach?

(5) 'Lead'

"Lead in prayer and worship ... to equip God's people for the work of ministry and to build up the body of Christ"

How would I describe my natural leadership style?

How has this developed in the past three to five years?

Which additional elements have I had to (and do I need to) develop in my current situation?

(6) 'Absolve'

"The call to repentance...to absolve and declare forgiveness."

How does the ministry of reconciliation currently find expression in my ministry?

Has that changed over the years? If so, how and why?

Which adjectives would I use to describe my expression of this dimension of ordained ministry?

(7) 'Respect'

"Respect authority...in all things lawful and honest."

How would I describe my current attitude towards authority as expressed in:

- The office and person of the Diocesan Bishop

- the Diocesan Synod
- Archdeaconry/Area – Archdeacon/Area Dean, Synod
- Chaplaincy – lay people elected or appointed to office in my local church

How has this changed during the course of my current ministry?

To whom do I believe I am accountable and why?

How is such accountability expressed in practice?

(8) 'Be diligent'

"Be diligent in prayer and study, praying for his Holy Spirit."

What do I believe to be the purpose of such diligence?

To what extent can such a word be used consistently of me?

(9) 'Fashion'

"Fashion your life and the life of your household according to the way of Christ."

To what degree do I reflect wholeness or "fullness of life" in my expression of what it means to be ordained?

If married:

How well am I balancing two concurrent vocations, to marriage and ordination?

How does this find practical expression in my life as a whole?

If single:

Do I believe that my vocation to ordination should consume all of my life?

Do I have time and space for personal recreation and relationships?

As I consider my current patterns, priorities and workload in ministry, how much are they expressions of positive and consistent choices?

(10) 'Promote'

"Promote unity, peace and love."

In the Church in which I currently serve, what would I identify as the greatest threats to unity, peace and love?

What does my vocation ask of me if I am to be one who "promotes" such values?

How do I express my role as a public representative of Christ's Church in the wider community?

In a changing culture, often critical of symbols of authority, how has my perception of how others see me changed?

How supportive of me in my ministry are my congregation?

A theological reflection

Anecdote

Select an incident or situation from your ministry during the previous year. It should be one that has prompted questions about your role as an ordained minister, rather than questions about the adequacy of particular skills or issues in the ministry of the church you lead. For example, has there been a situation where the expectations of others about your role have conflicted with your own? Or, has your present context regularly and legitimately required you to actively consider aspects of your ordination that you feel are as yet unexplored or underdeveloped?

Jot down the key points of the anecdote and the questions which begin to arise in your mind.

Analysis

Identify the key issues or points that emerge from this anecdote in relation to your role as an ordained minister. Where is your understanding of this role being affirmed, challenged, stretched or deepened? Try to be as precise as possible about the questions being raised.

Application

What resources from Christian Tradition will you draw on to reflect on the questions raised? Why are these “authoritative” criteria for you? What new resources have become available from within your theological or denominational tradition? What wider resources might be available from outside your particular theological or denominational tradition?

As you reflect, where are the points of resonance and dissonance between your experience and Christian Tradition? Explore the validity of both.

Action

Jot down key words describing where your experience has legitimately challenged, deepened or affirmed your understanding of your vocation. What are the fresh insights into your role as an ordained minister?

What steps can you take to respond positively to these insights?

Keeping a journal

Keeping a journal can be a helpful discipline and tool for reflection. A framework for a 'Ministry Journal' follows, based on A. Irvine's "Between Two Worlds - Understanding and Managing Clergy Stress" (Continuum/Mowbray 1997).

Daily Journal - guided questions

- What occupied most of your time today?
- What is/was your predominant feeling as the day came to a close?
- What provided you with the greatest sense of satisfaction?
- What was the greatest source of frustration/anxiety?
- Describe time spent with family and in personal relationships.
- Did you find time for your own personal space for relaxation, exercise and rest?
- What challenged your thinking?
- What was your source of spiritual renewal today?
- Other comments or observations on the day:

Weekly Journal - guided questions

- What seem to be the predominant factors/issues of the week?
- What do you feel was the greatest accomplishment of the week?
- What provided the greatest frustration?
- What building did you do during the week of relationships with family, friends and others?

- What spiritual renewal/strength did you receive during the week and from what source did this come?
- What stewardship was exercised over your physical being?
- Were there aspect(s) of your life neglected during the week? If so, which? Why?
- Other comments or observations on the week:

Monthly Journal - guided questions

- What seem to be the predominant factors/issues of the month?
- What do you feel was the greatest accomplishment of the month?
- What provided the greatest frustration?
- What building of relationships with family, friends and others did you do during the month?
- What spiritual renewal/strength did you receive during the month and from what source did this come?
- What stewardship was exercised over your physical being?
- Were there aspect(s) of your life neglected during the month? If so, which? Why?
- Other comments or observations on the month:

Annual review session

During the annual review session the following questions may be used. Reflection arising from the preceding resources should also take place.

Review last year's objectives – to what degree have they been achieved?

What has been rewarding about my ministry in the past year?

What has contributed to this?

Have there been aspects of my ministry that I have found less than satisfactory?

What possible actions do I see for these areas?

What changes have there been in my work and journey of faith over the past year?

What objectives have I set for the coming year....

.... for myself?

.... for the congregation/area of ministry I lead or am involved in?

What training or support would help towards achieving these objectives and the further development of my ministry?

Reference List

Irvine, Andrew R.: "Between Two Worlds - Understanding and Managing Clergy Stress" Continuum/Mowbray (1997).

Some questions have been based on "Mission and Ministry - The Churches' Validation Framework for Theological Education." 2nd (New ecumenical) edition (2003).

Working Party of the Convocations of Canterbury and York: "Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy" Church House Publishing (2003)

(see <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/papers/guidelines.pdf> or <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200203/jtselect/jtecc/87/8710.htm>)

23 February 2005