

**AIMING HIGHER: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE  
CHURCH'S MISSION**  
**Values, Purposes and the Resourcing of Chaplains**

**A Report by the Board of Education**

**Foreword**

The Church of England has long been associated with colleges and universities, and many universities have Christian foundations. Even those which do not have, over time, built relationships with the Church of England through local dioceses, through the presence of church members within the institutions (students and staff), through academic departments of theology and through the provision of chaplaincies.

Good stewardship of resources, both human and financial, continues to be a priority both for the Church and for the higher education sector. At a time when chaplaincy posts have been under threat in some places, the Board of Education wishes strongly to celebrate and build on the Church of England's commitment to the sector in all its diversity. It wants to support the pursuit of knowledge and truth in higher education institutions by further encouraging and engaging with a public debate on the values and purposes of higher education – a debate which recognises that the benefits of higher education are far more than simply economic ones, important as they may be.

This report traces the Church of England's engagement in the discussion of the values and purposes of higher education during the course of 2003 and 2004, since the publication of the Government's White Paper *The Future of Higher Education*, which gave rise to the *Higher Education Act 2004*.

With 44% of 17-30 year olds now participating in higher education, we recognise that chaplains in higher education in particular are key agents of God's mission as they work with and within their institutions alongside people of all faiths and none, and we want to encourage them in their work. The Church of England must continue to deploy whole-time chaplains if we are further to develop the relationships which exist, for the mutual benefit of the Church, the higher education sector and the wider world.

Two points may need clarification. First, our report makes reference to the eleven Church Colleges and Universities founded by the Church initially for the purposes of teacher training but which now have a much more diverse mission. Dearing and Hind have signalled that these could play an increasingly important part for the Church, and the Board has established a Mutual Expectations working group which will in due course report to Synod. Its findings are not, however, the subject of this report.

Furthermore, although there is blurring at the edges between Further Education and Higher Education, they remain distinct sectors. The Board came to the clear conclusion that engagement with HE and FE was sufficiently different that it would be difficult to handle the two together. The consideration of how the Church of England secures greater commitment from and access to Further Education will be the subject of another report, and it is hoped that the Church's mission and ministry to that sector will be the subject of a future debate at General Synod.

+ Kenneth Portsmouth  
Chairman, Board of Education

# **1 The Context of Higher Education: The Higher Education Act 2004**

- 1.1 Higher education has been near the top of the political agenda over the last two years. Bishops have been active in the debate on the Higher Education Bill, now passed into law as the *Higher Education Act 2004*.
- 1.2 The Higher Education Act legislated for changes in the way higher education is financed and organised. Most widely publicised has been the government's intention to introduce variable tuition fees of up to £3000 a year for full-time undergraduates in order to address the financial shortfall in the sector which is the consequence of many years of under-funding. The current flat-rate fee of £1150 will be varied from 2006, with students having to pay anything from nothing at all up to the full £3000, depending on the level of fee set by the higher education institutions they attend. Those families which earn less than £30,000 a year will be eligible for a grant of up to £2,700, and institutions which charge the maximum fee will be responsible for funding bursaries of at least £300 for the poorest students.
- 1.3 Unlike the current system, where fees are paid 'up-front', under the new arrangements the fees will be covered by a loan repayable once a graduate's income exceeds £15,000. It is expected that most will have cleared their debts after 13 years, but any debts from loans or fees still outstanding after 25 years will be written off.

- 1.4 Any university wishing to charge the full £3000 fee will have to satisfy the new access regulator OFFA (The Office for Fair Access) that it has measures in place to ensure widening participation – that is, the taking up of places by those from the most disadvantaged groups in society. But there is a real concern, backed up by research, that the very people who it is intended should be attracted to consider higher education are those who will be most deterred by the prospect of graduating with substantial debts. There is no doubt that higher education issues will continue to be widely discussed, with key points of concern continuing to be: the introduction of variable tuition fees and the resulting fears about increased levels of student (and parental) debt; questions of access, both in terms of widening participation generally and fair admissions policies; and the ongoing need to address financial shortfalls in the sector.
- 1.5 All this is taking place in a higher education context in which the experience of being a full-time student as opposed to a student on a part-time course is far less marked than it was. Many full-time students work to support themselves. There has been a great increase in the number of students studying part-time to take account of other personal or financial commitments. These students will still have to pay fees up front. Students are no longer necessarily entering higher education straight from school. Above all, there has been a huge increase in the number of students in higher education over recent decades. No fewer than 44% of all 17-30 year olds now participate in higher education. It is intended that this should rise to 50% by

2010. These figures compare to a 4% participation rate in the 1970s.

- 1.6 There are 93 university institutions in England (counting the London colleges as separate institutions) and a further 41 colleges of higher education. The average (mean) number of students is 9,275. However, 28 institutions have 15-20,000 students and 12 have in excess of 20,000 students.
- 1.7 There are 2.175 million students in higher education in the UK. 1.093 million of these are on first degree courses. 39% of all students are part-time (10% of all first degree students). Total undergraduate level numbers have increased by over a third (36%) since 1994/95. Of these, whilst full-time student numbers have risen by 17%, part-time numbers have risen by 99%.<sup>1</sup>

## **2 The Value and Purpose of Higher Education: an Economic Perspective**

- 2.1 The Government's White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (January 2003) began with a statement of values:

### **Values**

*1.1* Higher education is a great national asset. Its contribution to the economic and social well-being of the nation is of vital importance.

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<sup>1</sup> Source HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) and UUK (Universities UK), 2004

*1.2* Its research pushes back the frontiers of human knowledge and is the foundation of human progress. Its teaching educates and skills the nation for a knowledge-dominated age. It gives graduates both personal and intellectual fulfilment. Working with business, it powers the economy, and its graduates are crucial to the public services. And wide access to higher education makes for a more enlightened and socially just society.

*1.3* In a fast-changing and increasingly competitive world, the role of higher education in equipping the labour force with appropriate and relevant skills, in stimulating innovation and supporting productivity and in enriching the quality of life is central. The benefits of an excellent higher education system are far-reaching; the risk of decline is one that we cannot accept.

2.2 In the Board of Education's response to the White Paper, the Church of England's main criticism was not of the Government's analysis of the need for reform, but of the wider vision of what higher education might ideally deliver. It suggested that the questions 'What is a university?' and 'What is higher education for?' were neither asked nor answered satisfactorily.<sup>2</sup> Values in education had been dealt with extremely briefly, and defined very narrowly. It remains important that the debate on values in and the purposes of education should not be put aside.

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<sup>2</sup> The Future of Higher Education: Response to the White Paper, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2003, p2

- 2.3 There are those who understand the phrase ‘value of higher education’ in broadly economic and utilitarian terms. A recent publication from the Council for Industry and Higher Education is entitled ‘The Value of Higher Education’. It argues that higher education brings economic and social benefits, and that UK higher education is one of the most efficient in the world, in terms of cost per student. Graduates underpin all sectors of the economy, and are less likely to be unemployed. Graduates are, it states, also likely to be: less engaged in crime; more healthy, and hence make less call on the NHS; more involved in communities; more tolerant of the views of others. It refers to a recent comprehensive study which provides powerful evidence of higher education’s personal and societal benefits.
- 2.4 Not only does a graduate have increased social mobility and more skills, but “graduates contribute to the cohesiveness of society and demonstrate the attributes of active citizenship”, being more likely to be racially tolerant, less likely to espouse authoritarian views and more likely to be a member of a voluntary or charitable organisation. But even this is described as an economic benefit:

In short, the presence of graduates can only be seen as beneficial. They contribute to the wider health as well as wealth of society and many of the social benefits (eg on health and crime) benefit the macro-economy, including through reducing the tax-burden.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Value of Higher Education, CIHE p. 14

2.5 Whilst the White Paper stated that universities would be assessed in terms of their ‘contribution to the economic and social well-being of the nation’, the predominant language was about the creation of economic wealth as the aim of a university. The White Paper emphasised the financial benefits of higher education for the individual, and language about competition and global business was prominent. There was, in fact, little discussion of the social benefits of education – the ‘common good’. The Church of England, on the other hand, has sought to emphasise the value of interdependence, rather than greed, and the belief that the prospect of greater earning potential is only one motive for entering higher education:

In Christian terms, education is understood to be part of the gospel – good news for all – which is first and foremost for individuals and for all who are able to benefit from it. Its purpose is the search for truth, and Christians believe they are called to serve, using the knowledge they gain and the talents they develop in the service of others. The churches continue to be involved in the education, training and employment of people who may not be highly paid, but nonetheless contribute critically to the overall health of the nation.<sup>4</sup>

2.6 Lord Dearing, in his National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, identified the purposes of higher

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<sup>4</sup> The Future of Higher Education: Response to the White Paper, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2003, p. 2

education as including the inspiration and enabling of individuals to the highest potential levels throughout life, and playing a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised and inclusive society. As the White Paper response pointed out, if it is the case that it is “research, knowledge transfer and teaching which are our universities’ historic missions” (*Statement to the House of Commons by the Secretary for Education and Skills, Charles Clarke, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2003*), it is also the case that the universities were founded by the Church for reasons other than the economy.

### **3. Values: Wider Perspectives**

- 3.1 The prevailing financial argument has been that higher education benefits the individual student, who should therefore be expected to pay something towards his or her education. Nonetheless, many both within and outside the sector continue to argue that higher education is not just a private but a public good. The benefits of a well-educated population are felt by everyone, not just those who go to university themselves. Universities are places where solutions are found to problems – medical, technical, environmental and so on – which benefit all of society, even if individuals are not always aware of this.
- 3.2 The Church’s White Paper response argued that historically universities have been the guardians of the culture and values of society. Whilst the importance of a healthy economy is recognised, it is in the national interest for the higher education process to develop the whole person, and important for this to be explicitly

recognised by government. People bring broader benefits to society than simple economic contributions. So the Church's response ended by stating:

The fear, therefore, is that as an unintended result of current policy, there will be a shift in values towards self-interest as a prime motivation, and away from the ideal of self-sacrifice in the common interest, which is central to the Christian tradition.<sup>5</sup>

- 3.3 In the debate on the Higher Education Bill which followed the publication of the White Paper, and in discussion with the Minister, the Bishop of Portsmouth emphasised wider values and purposes, and urged that the contents of the Bill should be set in a proper values framework which looked beyond individual gain to personal fulfilment in the wider context of the common good.
- 3.4 The possibility of introducing a 'values' amendment to the bill, inserting a new Clause 1, was explored. However, after discussion it was clear that this would require an amendment to the long title of the bill that would not be supported or achievable. Instead, having argued that it was only possible to make decisions about the future of higher education now if we had a strong sense of the purpose of higher education, the Bishop of Portsmouth suggested what the values of higher education might be in his speech at Second Reading in the House of Lords. The role of higher education was:

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<sup>5</sup> The Future of Higher Education: Response to the White Paper, Board of Education, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2003, p. 7

to inspire and enable individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest potential levels throughout life so that they grow intellectually, are well equipped for work and can contribute effectively to society;

to promote the spiritual, moral and cultural wellbeing of individuals and of society;

to increase knowledge and understanding for their own sake and to foster their application to the benefit of the economy and society;

to serve the needs of the economy at local, regional and national levels;

and to shape a democratic, civilised, inclusive society.<sup>6</sup>

3.5 A forthcoming book, *Values in Higher Education*, brings together a number of current perspectives. Sir Alan Wilson, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds and now Director-General for Higher Education at the Department for Education and Skills, takes a paramount concern with knowledge as his starting point to describe the purpose of the university. But he continues:

Universities also have social obligations – ‘civilising’ and opportunity-creating roles – making knowledge universally available. This

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<sup>6</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> April 2004

begs a lot of value-related questions about what is ‘civilising’, ‘good’, ‘honourable’....some of these questions are answered in part by the values that the University of Leeds, for example, formally commits itself to: critical independence and academic freedom; lifelong learning; inclusion; responsiveness; and openness and transparency.<sup>7</sup>

- 3.6 There are a number of ways in which the ‘opening-up’ of universities is a natural consequence of the emphasis on such values. Critical thinking involves an openness to others and this operates at all levels in a university, which is by definition multi-disciplinary. What is learnt in one discipline informs others. Again, higher education is increasingly international. The reasons for this are in the main financial ones, but the opportunities to engage in the curriculum with the rich diversity of students now present in universities and colleges are great – for example, exploring issues of global citizenship.
- 3.7 The very diversity of higher education provides a safe context in which difference can be explored, intolerance countered and beliefs questioned. Arguably, an awareness of shared history and interdependence is as important now as ever it was if prejudice is to be challenged and people are to live in peace. Furthermore, widening participation initiatives emphasise closer collaboration between students and local communities, for example through volunteering, visiting schools, and so on. These different ways in

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<sup>7</sup> In *Values in Higher Education*, Simon Robinson and Clement Katulushi (Aureus Publishing 2005) pp. 65-66

which social inclusion is increased by higher education are very important. At the same time, also of great importance is higher education's ability to help individuals develop a sense of their own roles within their local communities.

- 3.8 Good widening participation aims risk being undermined by the fear of debt, The Church of England has been vocal in expressing concern about this, whilst showing its overall commitment to the Government's emphasis on funding a quality higher education sector, improving the financial package for students and widening participation. The Government have drawn attention to their signing of the normative statement on higher education (the World Declaration on Higher Education<sup>8</sup>) - UNESCO's equivalent of an international treaty - which set out the missions and functions of higher education. The first core mission and value is "to educate highly-qualified graduates and responsible citizens able to meet the needs of all sectors of human society". Citizenship, as many young people in our schools are learning, is about responsibility, community and the common good. If we as a nation are to expect our students to be responsible citizens, able to meet the needs of all sectors of human society, then we must make certain that we take our responsibilities seriously in meeting their needs as best we can during their progress through higher education.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *World Declaration on higher Education for the Twenty-First Century*, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1998

<sup>9</sup> See speech by Bishop of St Alban's, Higher Education Bill Committee stage, 25<sup>th</sup> May 2004

3.9 The value of application of ethics and theology in higher education is becoming recognised. A recent Consultation Document (2005/01) on 'Sustainable Development in Higher Education' has been published by HEFCE (the higher Education funding council for England). Significantly, the model of sustainable development that HEFCE are adopting for the consultation takes a systems approach:

Natural capital – the biosphere, raw materials and solar energy – is transformed through science and technology into built and human capital (tools, machines, processed materials and human skills and know-how); and then through the political economy into consumer goods, education, transport, health and wealth. Then, by means of theology and ethics, we can realise the ends of life, including identity, community, fulfilment and happiness.<sup>10</sup>

That 'theology' and 'ethics' are being used in a HEFCE consultation in this way could legitimately be seen as a major step forward.

#### **4. A Higher Purpose**

4.1 In a letter to the Bishop of Portsmouth on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2004, the then Minister (Baroness Ashton) referred to his speech at the second reading of the Higher Education Bill:

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<sup>10</sup> Sustainable Development in Higher Education (HEFCE, 2005) paragraph 19

(You) raised the very important question of the purpose of higher education. I recognise, as you do, that it is about much more than the development of knowledge and skills, and driving economic growth, though these are all crucial aspects. As I said during the debate, higher education educates and socialises those who pass through it, teaching them the value of independent thought and analysis and of understanding and recognising different viewpoints. Universities have a proud tradition of independent consideration of the issues facing our society, and I regard them as the custodians of our intellectual heritage.

- 4.2 This being the case, universities have a crucial role in ‘speaking truth to power’ - a point made, and much quoted during the debate on the Bill, at the second annual Higher Education Policy Institute Lecture on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004. Professor Robert Reich, professor of social and economic policy and a labour secretary in President Clinton's administration, had voiced his concern that in the United States the universities' role in society of speaking truth to power had been corrupted. The ability to think critically is not only what makes a graduate valuable to an employer, but what underpins the universities' role in critique of society.
- 4.3 Higher education offers to the student not just what is learnt but the critical skills acquired in the process. In another chapter in *Values in Higher Education*, Archbishop Rowan Williams quotes Cardinal Newman, writing on the Life of the University in 1854:

The process of training by which the intellect, instead of being formed or sacrificed to some particular or accidental purpose, some specific trade of profession, or study or science, is disciplined for its own sake, for the perception of its own proper object, and for its own highest culture, is called liberal education.

He comments:

Newman is talking about how critical and constructive habits of mind are formed by a process we might call ‘learning about learning’. Learning is ‘short of enough’, says Newman, because it does not look at its own workings...but if you understand the kind of thing you’re doing when learning, you have acquired what people nowadays call a transferable skill...This seems to be what lies at the heart of Newman’s vision of ‘liberal education’, and of what he therefore believed to be essential for the university. It means the university can never be either a simple training school or a pure research institute.<sup>11</sup>

4.4 Dr Mike Higon has also reflected from a Christian perspective on the idea of the university as a place of learning, in his Boundy Lectures 2004.<sup>12</sup> Arguing that the call to be a disciple is the call to be a learner, he

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<sup>11</sup> *Faith in the University*, Rowan Williams in *Values in Higher Education*, Simon Robinson and Clement Katulushi (Aureus Publishing 2005) p. 30

<sup>12</sup> *Thinking the University: Towards a Theology of Higher Education: The Boundy Lectures 2004*, delivered by Dr Mike Higon at Exeter University, March 2004

suggests that the core task of the university is to allow people to take responsibility for their ways of thinking and acting. The fundamental form of academic life is conversation, and if universities are serious about being learning institutions – about being universities – then they needed to ask about the kinds of conversation which hold the whole university together:

Learning the common good is... a kind of learning which involves opening ourselves, as far as is possible, to *everyone*, paying attention to *everyone* we might.

- 4.5 In a recent Oxford University Commemoration Day Sermon, the Archbishop of Canterbury called on universities to revert to their tradition of learning. He took Proverbs 25:2 as his text - 'It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter'. He suggested that what was required was not 'an elegy for lost educational values', but an understanding of the real difference between the early and the modern university: the early university was bound up with the formation of people whose job would be to govern the kingdom, and in order to do that there were certain things which it was understood they must learn. Education was a formation in the kind of reasonable argument and decision that would make someone a sure guide to others. Universities, he argued, existed to create 'public people' - people committed not only to reasoned argument, but to a responsibility to the ideal of rational governance and rational public discourse:

The reasonable society is ... one in which we know how to talk with each other, how to negotiate, to challenge, to argue coherently about what is good for human beings as such. The challenge to any institution of higher learning these days is to draw out these public dimensions of the intellectual life....(the) Church might properly say: 'If there is any commitment in the university to the nourishing of public discourse and public service, it has to have a serious place for the discussion of the shape of a just common human life – which involves, unavoidably, the religious question of what it is that human beings are 'involved' with over and above their material or personal or professional or national identities.<sup>13</sup>

## **5. The Church and Higher Education**

- 5.1 If the English higher education sector is a major arena for the population's engagement with new ideas and with each other, so it is for the engagement between the Church and the world.
- 5.2 The great diversity in the student population nationally enables participants in higher education to meet and exchange ideas with others who think and believe differently. This creates opportunities for people of faith to explore their beliefs in a wider context, and to interact with each other.

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<sup>13</sup> University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2004

- 5.3 The opportunities for the Church's appropriate engagement are ever changing. For example, the Government have signalled their intention to allow some colleges of higher education (including some church colleges) to proceed to university title. This will create new opportunities in the sector.
- 5.4 Above all, in the context of the recent explosion in student numbers, the Church of England's provision of chaplains now gives it an outstanding level of contact with a large proportion of the nation's young people and those who work with them.
- 5.5 The value of the ministry and witness of individual Christians studying or employed within higher education institutions is very great. Many people of faith within the institutions have a significant role to play witnessing to their beliefs. Christians can and do relate their faith to the life of the university, and the life of the university to their life of faith. This may take place separately from any chaplaincy involvement.
- 5.6 However, it is recognised that chaplains have particular opportunities and responsibilities for exploring questions of faith which enable them to build relationships which others can not, or do not have time to, do. Chaplains can also support others (students and staff) in their ministries in the institutions in which they serve, both by their ministry to them, and by fostering an environment in which matters of faith can be explored appropriately.
- 5.7 Over the years, the Church of England, through its chaplains, has built relationships with higher education

institutions across the country, including all residential universities. These relationships thrive on trust, goodwill and experience. They are hard won, but, in a fast changing sector, relatively easily undone.

- 5.8 The great majority of students in higher education are currently in universities and colleges which are served by chaplains<sup>14</sup>. However, the nature and pattern of the Church of England's chaplaincy provision has changed markedly in recent years. Changes have arisen because of three main factors. First, changes in the sector have created new sorts of universities. Second, lack of financial resources in the dioceses has led to the creation of split posts. Third, changing attitudes within the universities towards the needs of the faith communities have led to new ways of thinking about chaplaincy. These changes, outlined below, are complex, and have been viewed positively by some and with alarm by others.

## **6. Changes and Developments in Higher Education Chaplaincy**

- 6.1 Changes in higher education have led to dramatic change for all higher education institutions.

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<sup>14</sup> The Church of England's Education Division lists 217 chaplains in England. These are either Anglican or Ecumenical Chaplains, or University/College chaplains acting for or are financially supported by the Church of England. They serve 110 higher education institutions, though 76 chaplains are in the universities of Cambridge, Oxford and Durham (34, 29 and 13 respectively). The remaining 141 chaplains serve 107 higher education institutions, and where an institution has more than one chaplain, they often serve on different campuses.

Government policy has created a sector where very different sorts of university are left to operate, and compete, along side each other. The nature of chaplaincy varies according to the nature of the institution it serves. We may distinguish four main types of institution.

- 6.2 First, there are colleges with Christian foundations. In the ancient collegiate universities the statutes of the great majority of colleges require that a Chaplain or Dean of Chapel be appointed who is not only Christian but Anglican. In these institutions there has been relatively limited expansion and chaplaincy provision has remained broadly stable. In most cases, there is a substantial chapel, posts are relatively secure, chaplains have access to the entire college communities and will be known to the great majority if not all of the body of students and staff. The relatively small size of the colleges and consequently increased access which individuals have to the chaplain mean that there can be a thriving Anglican ministry which touches the lives of many. This is funded by the colleges and not by the dioceses.
- 6.3 Other colleges with Christian foundations fall into this category, including Church colleges and universities (though the pattern of expansion has been different). Chaplains in these institutions can have a more high profile role contributing to the ethos of the institution, where the Principal is committed to Christian leadership and the distinctive value of being Church college or university is emphasised.
- 6.4 Secondly, there are the civic ('redbrick') universities,

such as Manchester, Sheffield and Birmingham, many of which were founded in the nineteenth century. In the 1950s, the Church of England's ministry to such institutions was often centred on providing hostels for young students away from home. Even though their foundations may have been explicitly secular, they have since welcomed and endorsed chaplaincies, with dioceses appointing and funding chaplains to the institutions. In such universities, where there is not structural institutional embeddedness by right, this has had to be acquired by a careful process of negotiation. In Leeds, for example, the chaplaincy provides a service to the university through a Service Level Agreement. The presence of a chapel or chaplaincy may provide a focal point, but in these large institutions, often widely spread, the primary opportunities for ministry are as likely to occur outside these spaces.

6.5 Thirdly, expansion of higher education in the 1960s resulted in the creation of new universities such as York, Essex, the University of East Anglia, Warwick and Bath. The ancient university collegiate ideal of a community of scholars living together was developed on a larger scale, and full-time chaplains were appointed, often with chapels or chaplaincy centres. In many such institutions chaplaincy can thrive when based around the chaplaincy building, the nature of a campus being more conducive to gathering a community; but also, the relative geographical proximity has enabled chaplains to relate to the institution in a wider variety of ways.

6.6 Fourthly, there are the New (post-'92) Universities - the

former Polytechnics. In the 1970s, these multi-site institutions had very few residential facilities. The full-time chaplains appointed to them had a much more diffuse, but no less important, ministry seeking to engage the life of the polytechnic at all levels, rather than concentrate on pastoral ministry with Christian students in chaplaincy centres. Through engagement with students in their own context and by showing interest in their work relationships of trust could be built. These relationships could lead to deeper engagement on matters of faith with people who would never have sought out a chaplain or entered a chaplaincy building.

- 6.7 By the 1990s, when these institutions became universities, there had been an explosion in student numbers, and wider access policies had led to an increase in the numbers of mature students and local students living at home. Chaplaincy across the sector has now moved away from being primarily a ministry to vulnerable young students, and the focus has become ministry to adults (both students and staff) in their place of work, be it university or college. Opportunities for gathering students are very valuable where this is possible. Furthermore, in some universities and colleges chaplains are able to have an effective personal and pastoral ministry across much of the community. But elsewhere, the gathering of the Christian community is more profitably left to local churches and extensive provision of pastoral care is effectively provided by Student Services departments. Here, it is in the Church's 'ministry to the institution' (including Student Services) that the Church has the greatest opportunities for influence and mission.

- 6.8 The experience of polytechnic chaplaincy ministry has become more widely applicable as the sector and institutions have grown. Through this wider ministry, beyond the Christian community, the Church makes contact with those ‘outside’ it. Many such people are in the ‘unchurched’, ‘closed de-churched’ or ‘open de-churched’ categories described in *Mission-Shaped Church*. For them, a contact or conversation with a chaplain may well be the first they will have had with an official church representative. University chaplains are ambassadors for the Church and reach very large numbers of people. In Induction (‘Freshers’) Weeks at the beginning of the academic year, individual chaplains report giving talks about the chaplaincy to many hundreds and even thousands of new students. Such opportunities require resourcing and support.

## **7. Competing Priorities for Resources in the Dioceses**

- 7.1 The need for careful stewardship of diocesan resources is well understood. Less well understood are the possible consequences for chaplaincies and for the wider church of the withdrawal of funding from existing posts.
- 7.2 Complete withdrawal of posts has been very rare, although there are several posts where there have been longstanding vacancies. It is worrying that decisions are increasingly being made to reduce the diocesan contribution to chaplaincy by making the post part-time. So, for example, one full time chaplaincy post has in recent years been replaced by a part-time post filled

by a curate in a nearby parish. In another university, two full-time chaplains have been replaced by one post this academic year, and that post is not full-time.<sup>15</sup>

- 7.3 Chaplains consistently report that the key factor in establishing a strong chaplaincy in a university is presence. Part-time chaplains can and do exercise significant ministries, often working in defined areas of an institution or with particular groups of people. However, chaplains report feeling frustrated at the negative consequences for the Church of moves from whole time to part time provision, and of the impracticalities of ill-fitting combinations of chaplaincy and parish work, in which the chaplaincy usually loses out.
- 7.4 Part-time chaplains who are in their institutions only a day or two a week describe the enormous difficulties of effective ‘sessional’ chaplaincy work in higher education, where a ‘drop-in’ ministry of availability at a particular time and place is widely considered to be unproductive. The more evident the chaplaincy presence, the more opportunities for engagement can be taken up, and the chaplaincy will avoid the risk of coming to be regarded as peripheral and even simply as an emergency welfare service. Experience suggests that part-time chaplaincy is most effective when there is in place some kind of overall chaplaincy co-ordination by someone whose main work is the co-ordination of the chaplaincy.

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<sup>15</sup> The 217 Chaplains on the Education Division list include 125 full-time chaplains and 92 part-time chaplains. Excluding Oxford, Cambridge and Durham, the remaining 141 chaplains now include 83 full-time and 58 part-time chaplains.

7.5 In order to maintain full-time provision, one solution to the problem has been to approach universities for funding. However, where the Church of England reduces its financial contribution to the running of the chaplaincy, it may also weaken its stake-holding in the chaplaincy. A university may at any point in the future choose to terminate the post which it funds entirely. It may decide that the post should not be held by an Anglican, or even by a Christian. The post of co-ordinating chaplain of the multifaith chaplaincy at one university is currently held by an Anglican, but the appointment is open to members of other faiths.<sup>16</sup>

## **8. Relationships between the Faiths and the University**

8.1 Employment legislation introduced in December 2003, the *Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003*, makes it unlawful to discriminate against employees on the basis of religion and belief. The regulations explicitly extend this to include all students in higher education. This is affecting how some institutions are thinking about the ways they engage with the faiths. At the same time, it has also created an opportunity for chaplains to help individual

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<sup>16</sup> Chaplains at Oxford, Cambridge and Durham are fully paid for their chaplaincy work by their colleges. Disregarding the 11 English Church colleges and universities which mostly fund the 18 chaplains which serve them, the Education Division is aware of 2 full-time chaplains and 4 part-time chaplains whose stipend/salaries are fully funded by their institutions, and 8 full-time chaplains and 3 part-time chaplains whose stipends/salaries are jointly funded. The Division knows of 7 additional full-time chaplains whose stipends are paid by their dioceses but who are housed by their universities.

institutions to clarify their policies and intentions, and to demonstrate their wider commitment to the whole institution, beyond the Christian community.

- 8.2 The makeup of the student body and the relationships between the faiths and the universities are changing as many universities seek to attract more international students. A marked increase is widely expected, and globally the demand for international student places will undoubtedly continue to outstrip provision.<sup>17</sup> International students need support, not only adjusting to living in the UK and in learning and assessment methods, but particularly where their faith needs, spiritual and practical, are not sufficiently provided for. The need for pastoral care and for cultural awareness to accompany inter-faith and ecumenical work will increase.
- 8.3 Universities do in general see the faith needs of their staff and students as worthy of institutional support, but are likely to believe that this is only possible when the chaplaincy service provided is explicitly for all. Universities are in many cases generous in their provision for chaplaincy, both in terms of privileged access to their institutions, and in terms of space, resources and facilities made available to chaplains at little or no cost. They may also provide financial contributions either towards expenses or salaries or housing. But they are most likely to be willing to contribute towards services which are seen to be

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<sup>17</sup> There are currently 270,000 international students (EU and non-EU) in UK universities. One British Council estimate suggests that 2020 this number could rise to 850,000.

explicitly for the benefit of the whole community, and for people ‘of all faiths and none’. Such a vision for chaplaincy, long established in Anglican chaplaincy ministry, is also shared by some other denominational chaplains. The modern English university will therefore not necessarily prefer to have a chaplain who is Anglican rather than a chaplain of another denomination.

- 8.4 Where Christian chaplains have taken the initiative in helping the university to ensure that the community’s diverse faith needs are met, this has been invaluable in establishing their credibility in the institution. At the same time, ensuring that students and staff can be supported in other faith traditions can release Christian chaplains to be explicitly Christian alongside others expressing their own faiths.
- 8.5 It is for this reason that many chaplaincies now have ‘faith advisors’ to whom the university or chaplaincy may refer members of faiths other than the Christian faith. In some cases, the nomenclature of chaplaincy has given way to other ways of describing the work. At the University of Derby, the chaplains are part of a Department of Spirituality and Pastoral Care. This need not imply a ‘watering down’ of the mission of the Church in the university through the chaplaincy. On the contrary, such developments are often the result of necessary remodelling of chaplaincies in order to minister most effectively to people where they are.
- 8.6 Universities often need to refer to chaplains for advice and support over wider issues of religion and belief. Effective chaplains seek to work alongside other faith

groups and organisations to build appropriate relationships (for example with World Faith groups such as Islamic Societies, other ecumenical faith groups or Christian Unions). Appropriate neighbourliness without inappropriate identification benefits the institution and provides the chaplaincy with good foundations on which to build.

## **9. The Future of Chaplaincy in Higher Education**

- 9.1 The results of a series of nationwide consultations on chaplaincy in Higher Education and Further Education were published for the General Synod in 2002 in *Pillars of the Church* (GS Misc 667). The report found that “chaplaincy is at the cutting edge of mission, discerning the presence of God in daily life and finding a new language in which to explore key issues with non-churchgoers of all ages” (*Pillars p.viii*).
- 9.2 The main conclusions included: “the Church, in all its dioceses, must be clear about the priority of education chaplaincy in its mission to the nation”; and “Chaplaincy, rather than being seen as a specialism on the margins, is a fundamental part of the normal ministry of the Church.” *Pillars pp.viii-ix*)
- 9.3 Chaplains are by their presence and their activity well placed to give visible space to Christian activity. The form this activity takes will depend on the context in which the chaplain is ministering. Gathering the faithful may be aided by the provision of a Christian chapel or a chaplaincy centre, though it does not depend on it. The presence of a chapel or chaplaincy building may also

stimulate thinking about values and purposes: one student at the University of Bath commented to the chaplain that the chaplaincy was “the only place on campus where nobody is assessed”.

- 9.4 Elsewhere a chaplain’s task can be ‘uncovering a sacred language for a secular university’<sup>18</sup>. Chaplains live their daily lives among the people of God where they are already gathered, engaged in the life of the university or college. They have the opportunity to explore what it is to live in the university as a person of faith, as well as what there is in the university to have faith in.<sup>19</sup>
- 9.5 Chaplains may also be able to provide some students with the only opportunity they may ever take to look at theological material and argument rigorously and develop a habit of critical faith. Mission is at the heart of chaplaincy. Church of England chaplains have much to contribute to the life of the dioceses. Chaplains need to take responsibility for educating the wider Church about the opportunities and challenges of their work among students and staff; in return, the wider Church needs to listen to what they have to say.
- 9.6 How, in the light of competing priorities, should higher education chaplaincy ministry be resourced? Pressures on dioceses are resulting in their placing different

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<sup>18</sup> Title of MA (Pastoral Theology) dissertation by Ivor Moody, chaplain at Anglia Polytechnic University, 2003

<sup>19</sup> see *Faith in the University*, Rowan Williams in *Values in Higher Education*, Simon Robinson and Clement Katulushi (Aureus Publishing 2005) ; see also Tim Jenkins quoted in *Pillars of the Church* (GS Misc 667, Church House Publishing, 2002) p. 38f

degrees of priority on higher education chaplaincy. We suggest that four future strategies are possible.

## **10. Strategies for the Deployment of Higher Education Chaplains**

### **10.1 *Strategy 1: Diocesan Funding of Full-Time Posts***

Dioceses could continue fully to fund full-time chaplains in higher education. The benefits to the institution and the chaplaincy are well attested and the case can be made that such a strategy is best placed to ensure the development of the Church of England's interests in the universities, and the Church's mission there. However, it is clear that in some dioceses competing priorities have resulted in less than full funding of chaplains.

### **10.2 *Strategy 2: Shared Funding of Full-Time Posts***

The benefits of full-time chaplaincy are maintained, though the Church of England may lose some of its stake-holding in the appointment. Shared arrangements between the Church of England and a university, or between the Church of England and other Christian denominations and the university, can be creative. Where shared funding is necessary or desirable, ecumenical partnership arrangements should not be overlooked. This model is exemplified at Kingston University, where a full-time Ecumenical Chaplain is employed by the university and jointly funded by the Church of England, the Baptists, Methodists and the university. The United Reformed Church provides the

housing. Experience suggests that where a full-time chaplain is jointly funded, the funding partners can feel that each benefits from involvement in an appointment for which it only has to find a proportion of the funds.

### 10.3 ***Strategy 3: Diocesan Funding of Part-Time Posts***

Where a split post or reduced post is created, the Church of England may benefit from a part-time chaplain answerable to the diocese. However, the limitations of part-time chaplaincy have been outlined, and time restraints are likely to lead to less team-working with other denominational chaplains. Ultimately, the Church of England may lose its stake in future institutional arrangements for faith provision.

### 10.4 ***Strategy 4: Diocesan Withdrawal from the Funding of Chaplaincy in Higher Education***

In a few universities, the funding of chaplains/chaplaincy co-ordinators is being paid for by the institution. If, under such an arrangement, the Church of England is able to maintain its stake-holding and perhaps additional sessional part-time denominational chaplains can be more beneficially employed, the benefits for the Church are clear. The risk for the Church is that the co-ordinating post may cease to be Anglican or Christian, and that a consequence might be a reduced ability to minister to the institution as before.

### 10.5 In the light of all that has been said in this report, we recommend that wherever possible funding for full-time Church of England posts should be found. Where this is

not appropriate because to provide a full-time Church of England chaplain would undermine an existing shared ecumenical arrangement, then every effort should be made to ensure the provision of a whole time chaplain who is supported by the Church of England amongst others. In those few cases where a higher education institution is unusually small and a full-time chaplain cannot be justified, we recommend that any part-time post is carefully considered, to ensure that the post-holder's chaplaincy work is properly prioritised.

10.6 As the Bishop of Portsmouth wrote during the debate of the Higher Education Bill:

My...hope is that the Church will continue to realise the remarkable opportunity we have of ministry in universities through our well-established chaplaincies. It is a ministry that helps institutions, staff and students face tricky questions; and it seizes the opportunity to reach out to 18-to-30-year-olds at a very formative time in their lives, people whom the Church otherwise finds it very hard to reach. The mission opportunities are vast; we would be faithless or criminal to cast them away.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Church Times, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2004