



Experiences of Ministry Survey 2015: Respondent Findings Report

January 2016

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Preface

This brief report sets out some headline findings of the 2015 Experiences of Ministry Survey. It would not have been possible to produce without the participation of survey respondents, the preliminary work of the advisory group and ongoing analysis conducted by Dr Mike Clinton. Thank you to all.

This work is part of a five-year process of research and consultation that aims to find out what helps clergy to become and remain both faithful and effective in ministry. Findings from the 2011 and 2013 surveys have already been reported to the Ministry Council and are informing consultations with Bishops and Directors of Ministry. It is also contributing to discussions relating to the Renewal and Reform agenda, see: <http://www.ministrydevelopment.org.uk/kcl>

Mike Clinton and I continue to present additional analysis of the survey results in a range of both academic and church contexts, on the relative effectiveness of forms of Continuing Ministerial Development. I am actively engaged in work with diocesan officers to explore with them what our findings to date may mean for their practice.

Whilst there is much still to learn about what will sustain and energise clergy in a future that promises to be demanding as ever, this report, and the ongoing research that underpins it, is an important contribution to that learning.

Thank you once again for taking part.

Dr Tim Ling
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1. Introduction to the Experiences of Ministry Survey

The Experiences of Ministry Project is a five-year process of research and consultation that aims to find out what sustains clergy for a ministry that for many will encompass many different settings over several decades. This project seeks to inform national strategies for supporting ministry and shape the future emphasis of continuing ministerial education and development by asking clergy to share their personal experiences and views. The EMP is an independent piece of research conducted by Dr Michael Clinton, a Lecturer in Work Psychology and HRM at Kings College London. The project has been supported by Dr Tim Ling, Head of Ministry Development, and an Advisory Group of national clergy.

A core element of the EMP is the Experiences of Ministry Survey (EMS). The first EMS was conducted in 2011 and over 3000 clergy responded. The second EMS was conducted in 2013 and over 2000 clergy took part. This report presents some of the findings from the third EMS, conducted in the summer of 2015. The aim of the project is to collect data on a nationally representative sample of clergy at each time-point, but also to follow a representative sample of clergy across these three time-points to better understand how their experiences change and the effects these changes have. The survey covers attitudes and feelings relating to clergy's day-to-day role, their diocese, spiritual and numerical growth and their health and well-being and draws on a number of academic theories relating to occupational effectiveness and well-being.

Ethical approval for EMS was granted by a KCL Ethics Panel (ref: REP(EM)/10/11-52). For more information about EMS, please visit: www.experiencesofministry.org

2. The 2015 Survey Respondents

Over 2,400 survey responses were collected through the 2015 survey from a representative sample of clergy in England. Complete and useable responses were received from 1251 stipendiary, 547 self-supporting and 162 active retired clergy, including representatives from all Dioceses in the country. Three-quarters of the sample was married, about a third was female and the average age of the sample was 58.5 years.

3. Findings of 2015 Survey

A selection of the findings to the survey are presented below. Please note that the year-on-year comparisons are based on the full samples collected for each survey rather than a tracked cohort.

Workload

Similar to findings in 2011 and 2013, the vast majority of clergy find their roles to be demanding:

- Around 90% of clergy agree that their role is intellectually, spiritually and emotionally demanding
- 58% of clergy agree that their role is physically demanding

The amount of time spent on various activities were found to vary across clergy roles. The time spent engaged in various ministerial activities during the previous week is presented in Figure 1, split up by stipendiary, self-supporting and active retired clergy.

EMS2015 Respondent report

Table 1. Time spent (hours) across activities during previous seven days by role		Stipendiary					Self-supporting					Active retired	Total
		Incumbent	PIc	Chaplain	Diocesan role	Dual role	OLM	Chaplain	NS role	MinSE	Dual role		
Total hours worked	Mean	50.2	51.4	62.3	60.2	53.6	31.6	51.0	30.3	29.8	36.3	22.1	44.1
	SD	17.0	18.1	32.5	20.5	17.2	15.3	29.7	15.7	18.1	22.8	14.4	21.9
Preaching/teaching (including preparation)	Mean	5.1	5.4	4.2	5.7	5.2	4.6	4.7	4.2	3.8	4.5	3.2	4.7
	% of total hours	10.2%	10.6%	6.7%	9.5%	9.8%	14.5%	9.2%	13.8%	12.6%	12.3%	14.6%	10.6%
Engaged in liturgical duties (e.g. planning, preparing and presiding at worship/services)	Mean	5.4	5.5	2.4	2.2	5.8	3.9	3.2	3.6	2.6	3.4	2.3	4.4
	% of total hours	10.8%	10.7%	3.9%	3.7%	10.7%	12.4%	6.2%	11.9%	8.6%	9.5%	10.3%	10.0%
Participation in corporate & individual prayer	Mean	4.9	5.5	3.8	4.4	5.0	4.3	4.4	4.5	3.8	4.2	3.6	4.6
	% of total hours	9.7%	10.6%	6.0%	7.4%	9.3%	13.5%	8.6%	15.0%	12.8%	11.5%	16.5%	10.4%
Fund raising	Mean	1.4	1.5	0.3	0.3	1.3	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4	1.0
	% of total hours	2.8%	3.0%	0.4%	0.4%	2.3%	0.5%	0.8%	1.8%	1.5%	1.5%	1.9%	2.2%
Enacting legal responsibilities (e.g. CRB checks)	Mean	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.2	0.8	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.5
	% of total hours	1.4%	1.5%	1.3%	2.0%	1.5%	0.6%	1.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	1.2%
Administration and organisation	Mean	8.5	8.9	9.1	13.8	8.7	2.2	4.6	2.4	2.0	3.3	1.4	6.4
	% of total hours	16.9%	17.4%	14.6%	22.9%	16.3%	7.1%	9.0%	8.0%	6.6%	9.0%	6.4%	14.4%
Exercising pastoral ministry (e.g. in crisis and in regular pastoral care, visiting people's homes)	Mean	4.8	4.4	8.7	2.9	4.4	2.3	8.1	2.5	1.7	3.4	1.9	4.1
	% of total hours	9.5%	8.6%	14.0%	4.8%	8.3%	7.1%	15.8%	8.1%	5.7%	9.4%	8.7%	9.4%
Conducting and preparing for occasional offices (e.g. baptisms, weddings, funerals)	Mean	3.3	3.7	0.7	0.4	3.2	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.1	1.9	1.3	2.6
	% of total hours	6.5%	7.2%	1.2%	0.6%	6.0%	6.2%	3.7%	6.1%	3.8%	5.2%	5.8%	5.8%
Leadership role in local community (both as minister & recognisable community leader)	Mean	2.9	2.5	3.3	2.1	2.9	1.0	3.7	1.4	3.3	1.9	0.9	2.4
	% of total hours	5.8%	4.8%	5.4%	3.5%	5.4%	3.0%	7.2%	4.5%	10.9%	5.3%	4.1%	5.5%
Working with colleagues (either supportively, collaboratively or in providing leadership)	Mean	3.3	3.1	8.7	9.6	4.1	2.6	6.6	2.5	2.4	4.0	1.2	3.5
	% of total hours	6.6%	6.0%	14.0%	15.9%	7.7%	8.4%	12.9%	8.3%	8.0%	11.2%	5.4%	7.8%
Use of social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)	Mean	0.9	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.6	1.2	0.8	0.5	0.9	0.5	0.9
	% of total hours	1.8%	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	2.3%	1.9%	2.4%	2.5%	1.8%	2.5%	2.4%	2.0%
Engaging in your own CMD	Mean	1.4	1.5	2.4	3.7	1.7	1.1	1.4	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.0	1.4
	% of total hours	2.8%	2.9%	3.9%	6.1%	3.2%	3.5%	2.8%	2.8%	4.9%	3.5%	4.6%	3.2%
Intentional outreach (e.g. offering hospitality, hanging around the school gate)	Mean	1.9	2.0	4.4	1.2	1.9	1.6	2.1	1.0	1.4	1.3	0.8	1.7
	% of total hours	3.7%	3.9%	7.0%	2.0%	3.5%	5.2%	4.1%	3.4%	4.7%	3.7%	3.5%	3.8%
Running nurture courses for new Christians and/or new members	Mean	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.5
	% of total hours	1.3%	1.5%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%	1.2%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	1.3%	1.0%	1.1%
Working with children and/or young people	Mean	1.8	1.9	6.2	0.6	2.4	1.1	4.6	1.1	0.8	1.2	0.3	1.8
	% of total hours	3.7%	3.8%	9.9%	1.1%	4.5%	3.5%	9.1%	3.7%	2.6%	3.3%	1.5%	4.1%
Travelling time to and from worship centres	Mean	1.1	1.6	2.5	3.5	1.4	1.2	1.9	1.4	1.2	1.8	0.9	1.3
	% of total hours	2.2%	3.1%	4.0%	5.8%	2.6%	3.8%	3.7%	4.7%	4.2%	5.0%	4.1%	3.0%
Other	Mean	1.7	1.5	2.3	4.6	2.6	2.4	1.4	1.0	3.1	1.6	1.0	1.7
	% of total hours	3.4%	2.9%	3.6%	7.7%	4.8%	7.6%	2.7%	3.3%	10.3%	4.5%	4.5%	3.9%

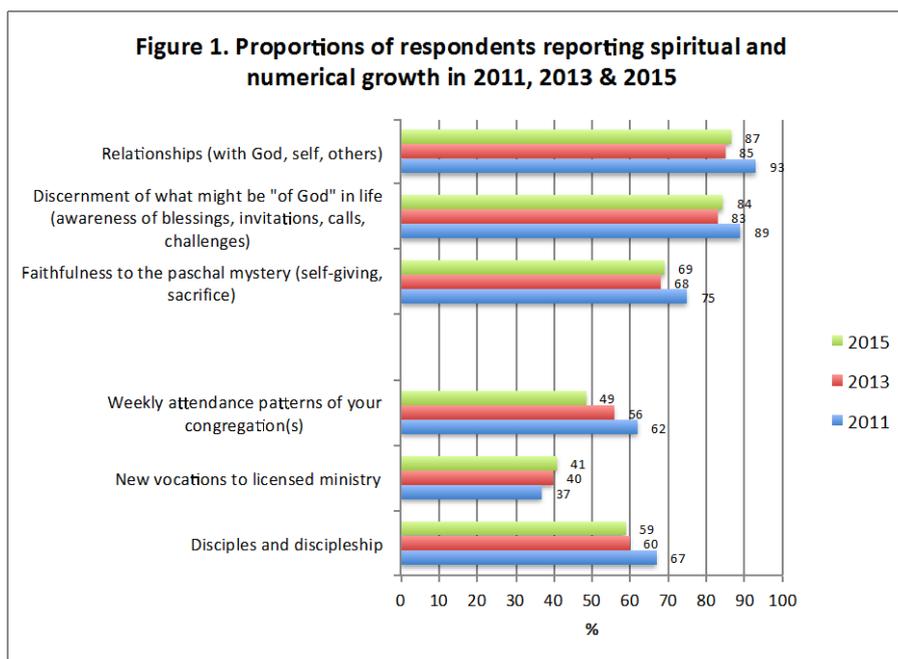
In summary these findings show:

- Many clergy groups work very long hours, particularly those with a diocesan role and Chaplains
- Administration and organisation continues to be the activity forming the greatest part of the previous week for clergy, but particularly for stipendiary ministers:

Spiritual and Numerical Growth

Across the five years of the survey, a number of questions sought to examine perceptions of spiritual and numerical growth:

- The spiritual growth questions referred to aspects of relationships (with God, self and others), discernment of what might be 'of God' in life and faithfulness to the paschal mystery amongst those they serve.
 - As in 2011 and 2013, the vast majority of clergy reported positive changes to each.
- The numerical growth questions referred to weekly attendance patterns of congregations, new vocations to licensed ministry and disciples and discipleship.
 - As in 2011 and 2013, clergy are again broadly positive regarding numerical growth in each facet, with more clergy reporting growth than decline
 - However, growth in weekly attendance does show a year on year fall

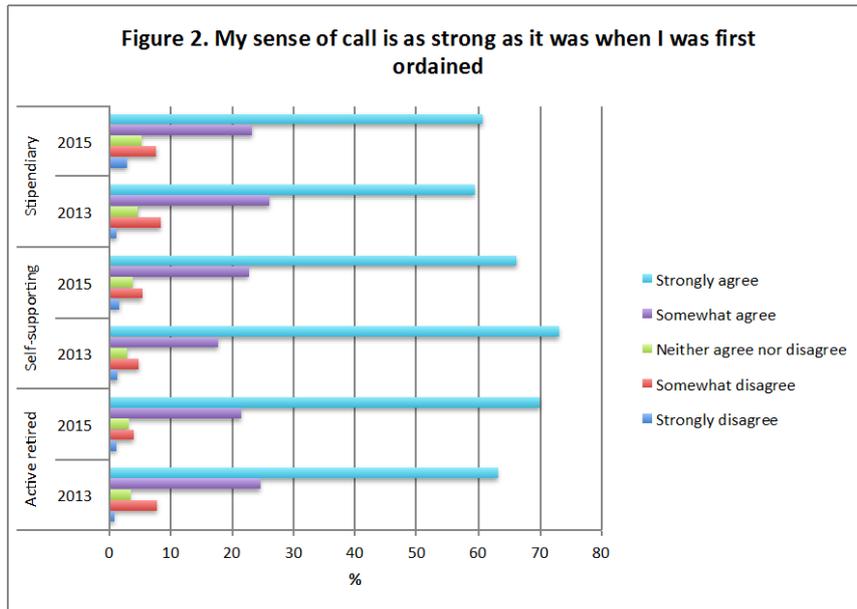


- The main factors statistically underlying more positive growth in 2015 were found to be the frequent running of nurture courses, having a strong and clear sense of calling, innovation in how one enacts ministry and a strong feeling of vigour and dedication towards ministry.
- Some additional work has been conducted to examine how the EMS data on attendance growth compares to the data collected via the parish returns system. Preliminary findings indicate that there is a small, but statistically significant positive association. This suggests that the EMS data are connected to the wider data held on attendance growth.

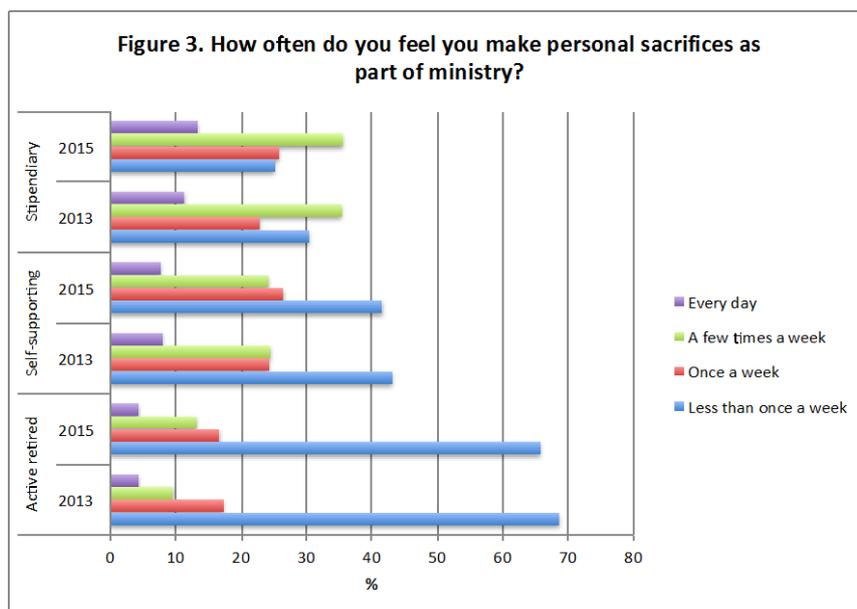
Clergy Vocation and Sacrifice

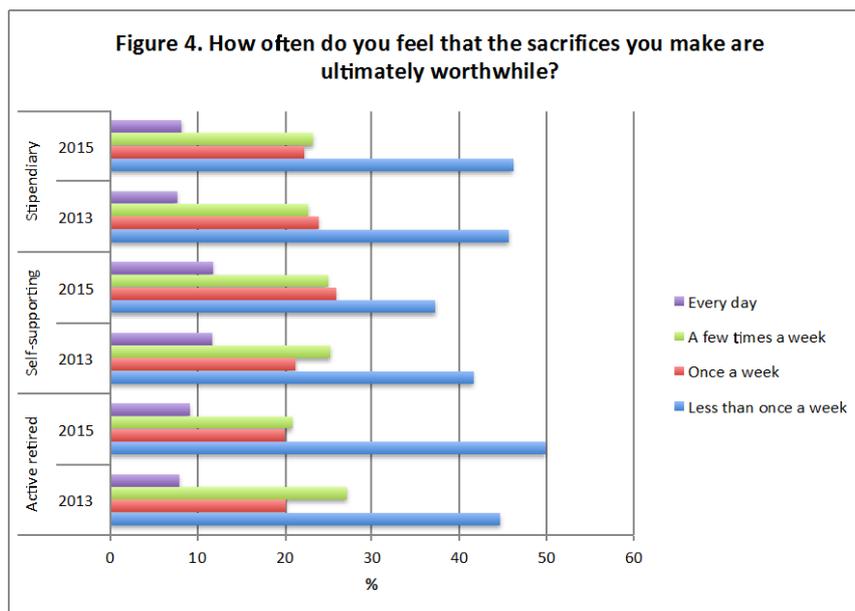
As in previous years, findings from the 2015 survey indicate that the vast majority clergy are both highly engaged in their ministry (they feel vigorous, dedicated and absorbed in ministry) and do not report substantively high levels of burnout (emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation).

In 2013 and 2015, questions were asked about clergy sense of vocation. Having a strong and clear calling has been found by both surveys to underpin many positive outcomes, including clergy engagement, vocational fulfilment, well-being and also the reports of growth. As shown in Figure 2, reports of vocation are very positive and consistent over the two years.



In 2013 and 2015, questions were also asked about clergy sacrifice, in terms of frequency and size, and also the extent to which sacrifices are forced, engaged in willingly and viewed as being worthwhile. Figure 3 and 4 shows the levels of sacrifice frequency and the sense that sacrifices made have been worthwhile over the two years.





Further analysis of the data shows that sacrificial behaviour is positively associated with the measures of clergy engagement in ministry and also in some of the reports of growth. However, high levels of sacrificial behaviour is also found to be related to lower levels of clergy well being, which questions how sustainable high levels of sacrificial behaviour may be over the longer term.

4. Conclusions of 2015 Survey

EMS15, by building on the two previous surveys, presents a very consistent picture of how clergy currently experience a life in ministry. A great number of interesting findings have been uncovered by the surveys. There have also been many interesting ‘non-findings’ as well. Multiple statistical tests have been conducted that have examined the influence of a large range of variables, including things like gender, number of hours ‘worked’ a week, form of tenure, location of role, theological training pathway, and type of role. On the basis of the responses of clergy to these surveys, these factors do not come out as hugely important in explaining differences in experiences of growth, well-being or vocational fulfilment. This is not to say that these issues are unimportant, but that there is a great deal more commonality of experience than one may always imagine is the case. The surveys have also presented a largely optimistic picture of the experiences of ministry, at least for the majority of clergy who took part.

Larger and more detailed reports have been and will continue to be produced to help inform decision-making regarding national strategies regarding ministerial education and development and it is hoped that the survey data collected from now over 5,000 clergy can be of use in answering a range of policy questions over the coming years to provide better support to clergy in their roles.

The level of response to each of the EMS surveys has been very encouraging. One of the main reasons for conducting multiple surveys, rather than just a one-off ‘snap-shot’, is to better understand the ‘chicken or egg’ problem (i.e. the issue of causation). One of the tasks for the next six months is to get a better understanding of the changing experiences of clergy who took part in all three surveys, of which there are nearly 300. This will help to move beyond simple correlation towards a richer understanding of what might have preceded changes in clergy reports of growth, well-being and fulfilment. We hope to report on some of those findings next year.