

RIPON COLLEGE
Cuddesdon



SUSTAINING LEADERS IN MISSION AND CHANGE

THE CONTINUING MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT
OF ARCHDEACONS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A Report by The Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology

December 2011

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FOREWORD

BY THE ARCHDEACON OF CLEVELAND, CHAIR OF THE ARCHDEACONS' FORUM

The church's life and work are always evolving, as the disciples of Jesus Christ engage in God's mission in a changing world. Archdeacons have a major role in that work, both through our own direct engagement, and also as those who facilitate and resource the witness and ministry of others. In our ministry amid a changing context, archdeacons need to be able at the same time both to respond flexibly and be visionary, and therefore the provision of effective and appropriate continuing ministerial development is crucial.

The Archdeacons' Forum commissioned this report as a first step towards better and more strategic provision. In these pages are an analysis of patterns and needs, and recommendations for the future.

On behalf of the Forum I would like to commend the report and its recommendations strongly to our archdeacon colleagues, to those alongside whom archdeacons work and minister, and to the Church of England's national structures. We hope that others in the church at large will find much in the report that is interesting and stimulating.

The Forum's thanks go to the Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology, especially to David Dadswell, the project leader and principal consultant, and the research team of Hilary Ison, Philip King and Martyn Percy.

The Forum is also grateful to Martyn Percy for his theological reflection on archidiaconal ministry. This is a personal contribution by Martyn to the debate, and appears appended to the report, while being distinct from the report itself. A number of others have been involved in this work. Among them it is only right to give special mention to two past members of the Forum: Annette Cooper, who had a particular role in the initiation of the work; and John Wraw, my predecessor as chair, who represented the Forum on the reference group and oversaw most of the work from the Forum's perspective.

Most especially, the Forum would like to record its appreciation of the financial support of Allchurches Trust, which has most generously funded the research project. Without the Trust's kind involvement, the research and this report would not have been possible.

Paul Ferguson
November 2011

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE (SECTIONS 1 AND 2)

Historically little provision has been made for the induction or continuing ministerial development (CMD) of Archdeacons. As leaders within dioceses, diocesan CMD provision does not address their specific needs. Yet, as those paid through their diocese, national provision has not generally been made available to them. Because of this, the Archdeacons formed national and regional forums. As a self-help measure these forums have been organising a range of support, training and development provision. These include a biennial conference for all Archdeacons, an annual conference for new Archdeacons, regional meetings, a mentoring system, and cell groups.

The research, which this report presents, is a response to the need, articulated by the National Archdeacons' Forum, for a well-resourced, appropriate induction and continuing development framework for Archdeacons.

A typical response to the question 'what is the role of an Archdeacon?' is that they are all different, varying according to the culture and needs of the diocese and the experience and interests of the Archdeacon. The changing nature of the Church of England (with, for example, differing ministry patterns, emerging, fresh expressions of church, and the change in clergy numbers, profile and deployment) means that the work of an Archdeacon is seen as changing significantly including a greater focus on people skills work, such as conflict management, appointments and ministerial review. The traditional, statutory work still applies to most Archdeacons and has been increased by

recent legislation, for example, as demanded by the new Clergy Terms of Service measure.

Targeted CMD provision is difficult to design and provide, as there is no agreed understanding of the work and role of Archdeacons and the capability a person needs to carry it out. This study attempted to build a picture of the role of an Archdeacon, given all the above changes as well as the move to appoint, for example, mission or strategy Archdeacons, separated from any geographical Archdeaconry and statutory responsibilities.

It is against this background that the Archdeacons' Forum, with the generous support of the Allchurches Trust, asked the Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology (OxCEPT) to research:

- The present and developing role of Archdeacons
- The competencies and expertise needed to fill those roles
- The initial and continuing development needs of Archdeacons
- Options for providing training and support for induction and continuing development
- How to resource those options

APPROACH (SECTIONS 3, 4 AND 5)

The research was carried out through a mixture of face-to-face interviews with samples of Archdeacons, Bishops, Diocesan Secretaries and national officers, online questionnaires to Bishops, Archdeacons and Area/Rural Deans, examination of the literature available and repeated reference back to the Archdeacons' Forum as the commissioners of the research. In order to draw out theological themes running through the study, Martyn Percy, Principal of

Ripon College, Cuddesdon, has contributed a theological reflection on the ministry and role of the Archdeacon in the light of the findings of the report.

FINDINGS (SECTIONS 6 AND 7)

The role of the Archdeacon is a senior leadership role in the dioceses with an important contribution to mission and strategy. It is a key support to the clergy, their families, to Churchwardens, and Area/Rural Deans. The consistent image is of an intermediary, an interpreter, a channel through which the diocese's strategy is communicated and implemented in the local church. Archdeacons are seen as needing to be spiritually secure and strategic thinkers. In all but a few cases, they have a statutory role with the jurisdiction of an Ordinary. The role is based on handling the tension between encouraging mission and creativity and ensuring that the order of the Church of England is maintained. Conflict is a regular feature of their work in their interpretive position between a range of different worlds and viewpoints. This means that developed people skills are essential. The role can be very busy and stressful. However, many Archdeacons use their statutory functions to encourage imaginative, mission based thinking amongst local clergy and churches.

The support they need for this work is considerable, as they start, as they continue and as they consider how their vocation is expressed in the long run. The overall impression of the quality of induction for Archdeacons is that it is patchy, often poor, and sometimes non-existent. Archdeacons are resourceful and self-motivating. They cope with the lack or poverty of induction by accessing written,

online and human resources and training to enhance their capability. The initiatives promoted by the Archdeacons' Forum, such as National Conferences, regional meetings and new Archdeacons meetings, provide welcome and useful support. What in secular circles would be called career development for Archdeacons who have been in role some time is limited. It is clear that the key players in the effectiveness of this support are the diocesan Bishops. There are disturbing gaps in the quality of Bishops' support for their Archdeacons in many areas such as clear understandings of what the Archdeacon is supposed to do and regular meetings to monitor and reflect on the Archdeacon's work and working relationships. There is some disparity between the way Archdeacons see their role and the Bishops' views.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ARCHDEACONS' CMD (SECTION 8.1)

In order to produce an effective set of proposals, we have based our recommendations on a series of principles.

- Continuing ministerial development for Archdeacons is a formational aspiration. It is as much about how to be a growing, integrated, spiritually secure Archdeacon as about carrying out the tasks of an Archdeacon; as much about challenge and growth in the role as beyond it.
- The Church in the diocese and nationally has a duty to ensure good quality learning and development for its Archdeacons.
- Archdeacons have a duty to foster their own learning and development.
- Effective CMD depends, therefore, on the working partnership between the individual Archdeacon and the diocesan/national Church.

- Archdeacons are senior leaders in the Church of England. Within the context of continuing learning and development of all clergy, as laid out in the national Statement of Expectations for CMD (guidance issued under Regulation 19 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009 – see Appendix C), the support, learning and development of Archdeacons exists as a subset of that for the senior leadership of the Church of England, which also includes Bishops, cathedral Deans and Diocesan Secretaries/Chief Executives.
- If such a national, cooperative understanding is to be implemented, it depends on generous, farsighted collaboration between various bodies and personnel. This will include the Archdeacons' Forums and their equivalent bodies for the other roles as well as the Archbishops' Advisor for Bishops' Ministry, the CMD Committee of the House of Bishops and the Ministry Division. It will depend on a sensitive understanding of the nature of the Church of England as a federation of fairly independent dioceses as well as being realistic about funding and its sources.
- Effective learning and development will be most effective if targeted to the right groupings within this cluster of senior leadership roles. This might be to an Archdeacon on their own, within the diocese, in a region, provincially or nationally. It may be appropriate to deliver training to the Bishop's senior leadership team in a diocese or in a regional partnership of dioceses. There may be occasions when it is appropriate to bring two or three of the roles together in the diocese, the region or nationally, according to the content of the training.
- Learning and development for Archdeacons (amongst others) needs to balance a series of factors:
 - Effectiveness and efficiency – getting the best out of the expenditure of time, effort and money
 - Inclusivity – doing together all except that which is best done apart
 - Confidentiality – respecting the space to reflect safely on my context
 - Good targeting – carefully matching support with individual and organisational needs
- Contextual changes in law, the Church's staffing, shape and strategy mean that the Archdeacons rely increasingly on highly developed people skills. Their CMD needs to balance this with the traditional emphasis on technical, legal knowledge.
- National guidelines and templates are made available which do not proscribe what must be delivered but provide reasonable expectations of good practice to minimise the variability of developmental support that exists now.
- Learning development is a proactive activity, which benefits from conscious, careful planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Benefits from learning and development are crucially the result of informed reflection on daily practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS (SECTION 8.2)

1. Develop the understanding and culture that Archdeacons' CMD is a national concern and a key part of Diocesan Bishops' work.
2. Ensure the balance within CMD for Archdeacons reflects their needs.
3. Construct shared, national best practice guidelines for the support which is provided.
4. Build a national Archdeacons' website using the Wash House App.
5. Strengthen the quality of induction of Archdeacons.
6. Each Archdeacon should have a current development plan.
7. Continue the biennial National Archdeacons' Conference
8. Make the New Archdeacons' Conference a twice-yearly event.
9. Continue the regional Archdeacons' meetings.
10. The Archdeacons' Forum should continue to oversee Archdeacons' CMD nationally.
11. Monitor the development of novel format Archdeacon roles.
12. Ensure CMD addresses the needs of women and ethnic minority Archdeacons.
13. Consider the best groupings of senior leaders for the delivery of input and training.
14. Consider options for the management of Archdeacons' CMD.

CONTINUING MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ARCHDEACONS

1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final report on the research done by the Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology in 2011 into the induction and continuing ministerial development (CMD) of Archdeacons in the Church of England with a view to recommending future practice in their CMD. It lays out the purpose, scope, research methods, findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. In addition there is a theological reflection by Martyn Percy on Archdeacons in the Church of England.

2. INTRODUCTION

Historically, little provision has been made for the induction or continuing ministerial and professional development of Archdeacons. As leaders within dioceses, diocesan CMD provision does not address their specific needs. Yet, as those paid through their diocese, national provision has not been made available to them on a serious scale, as it has been to the Bishops who are paid via the Church Commissioners. As a consequence of this and with initial support from Christian Research, the Archdeacons formed national and regional forums. As a self-help measure, these forums have been organising a range of support, training and development provision. This includes a biennial conference for all Archdeacons, an annual conference for new Archdeacons, a mentoring system, and cell groups for small groups of Archdeacons. Whilst the conferences are seen as valuable, provision and take-up in terms of cell groups and mentoring is patchy. Recent developments such as Common Tenure have been accompanied by national training for Archdeacons but focussed on the measure itself rather than considered within the context of the Archdeacons' roles as a whole.

The research, which this report presents, is a response to the need articulated by the National Archdeacons' Forum for a well resourced, appropriate induction and continuing development framework for Archdeacons. This may be seen to assume that it is possible to describe the role in a way that fits what most Archdeacons do. A typical response to the question 'what is the role of an Archdeacon?' is that they are all different, varying according to the culture and needs of the diocese and the experience and interests of the person. Within this diversity the changing nature of the Church of England (with, for example, differing ministry patterns, emerging, fresh expressions of church, and the change in clergy numbers, profile and deployment), means that the work of an Archdeacon is seen as changing significantly. The traditional, statutory work around faculties, visitations, inductions and pastoral organisation still applies to most Archdeacons. Some of this work has, in places, been delegated to professional, lay employees or Rural/Area Deans. The statutory work has been added to in the last few years by, for example, the move to new Clergy Terms of Service measure. In terms of the change in their role, the Archdeacons' Forum identified an increasing call on Archdeacons to take a lead in:

- The management of change
- Conflict resolution
- The pastoral care of clergy and their families
- Appointments
- Ministerial development reviews
- A growing number of HR functions
- Strategic planning and workforce development
- Advice to parish officers such as church wardens and treasurers
- Mission

Targeted CMD provision is difficult to design and provide, as there is no agreed understanding of the work and role of Archdeacons and the necessary capability to carry it out. Building a coherent picture is further complicated by the recent creation of Archdeacon roles which are entirely focused on, for example, mission or strategy, separated from any geographical Archdeaconry and statutory duties.

For many, working as an Archdeacon is likely to be their last stipendiary, ministerial role. Some will move into other roles such as Bishops or national officers. A few will move into parishes. A recent trend has been to appoint Archdeacons in their forties. While this may initially bring fresh energy to the role, the corollary is that this, together with the small number of appropriate or possible ministerial preferments, means that they may be in the role for decades. This has consequences in terms of continuing enthusiasm and focus.

It is against this background that the Archdeacons' Forum, with the generous support of the Allchurches Trust, asked the Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology (OxCEPT) to research:

- The present and developing role of Archdeacons
- The competencies and expertise needed to fill those roles
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- How to resource those options

3. METHOD

The team of consultants who conducted the research, Revd David Dadswell, (Project Leader & OxCEPT Principal Consultant), Revd Hilary Ison (OxCEPT Associate Consultant) and Dr Philip King (OxCEPT Associate Consultant) were supported by a reference group, which met regularly during the research. The Reference Group consisted of Ven John Wraw, (the Archdeacon of Wiltshire & Chair of the Archdeacons' Forum), Revd Dr Martyn Percy (Principal, Ripon College, Cuddesdon), Bishop Stephen Pickard (Director, OxCEPT) and Revd David Dadswell

The design of the research envisaged a number of stages:

1. Literature Review
2. Interviews with a sample of Archdeacons, Bishops and national officers
3. On-line questionnaires to all Archdeacons, Bishops and a sample of area/rural Deans
4. Interim report, conclusions and recommendations
5. Consultation with the Archdeacons' Forum to construct final, workable recommendations
6. Final Report

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to set the study in a context, relevant literature was researched. There is a small bank of literature from the Canons of the Church of England and ecclesiastical measures, articles in the *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, Hill's *Ecclesiastical Law* and various internal Church of England systems and papers which provide some basis for the understanding of the role. The Bishop of Derby has produced two reflective papers, *Archdeacons and Anglican Polity – Historical Background* and *Archdeacons in the Church of England – The Management of Change*.

In 2003 Peter Brierley of Christian Research conducted a large survey of Archdeacons, Bishops and Rural/Area Deans about the nature of the work of Archdeacons and, consequently, their training needs. One Archdeacon declined to complete our online questionnaire since, as they said, they had filled one in some years ago (presumably for the Brierley survey) and, in their opinion, 'it had made no difference.'

Other documentary sources investigated included role descriptions, recruitment material and the oft cited *Oculus Episcopi*, the handbook for new Archdeacons compiled by Hugh Buckingham, mysteriously handed on from Archdeacon to Archdeacon. This document was considered out of date some years ago and should be disregarded, except as a historical witness. There is the opportunity to re-write it as an updateable, online resource.

One of the outputs from this study is an annotated bibliography covering the history and theology of the role of Archdeacons and any sources that are of use in the regular work of an Archdeacon. This will be found in Appendix A

5. INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

The data gathering for this research was carried out through a series of face-to-face interviews followed by web-based questionnaires on SurveyMonkey. The sequence was designed to gather a series of hypotheses from the interviews, which could then be tested, investigated and supplemented by shorter, remote interactions with a much wider group of people. All those who were interviewed or who completed questionnaires were told that their responses would be held as confidential.

The interviews were all face-to-face except one on the phone. They lasted between half an hour and ninety minutes and took place between mid-March and mid-July 2011. It was difficult to get dates in some people's very full diaries. The selection of interviewees covered, as far as possible, considerations such as northern/southern province, rural/urban/suburban, churchmanship, gender, length of time in role, traditional/combined with another appointment/novel Archdeacon role design, and different diocesan structures such as area systems. Of the three groups targeted, five Bishops, fifteen Archdeacons, five diocesan secretaries/chief executives and four national officers were interviewed. In order to cover as many dioceses as possible the general rule was not to interview more than one person in each diocese. The Diocese in Europe was not included in the survey at this stage. The four officers were Ven Chris Lawson (Director of Ministry for the Archbishops' Council), Revd John Rees (Provincial Registrar to the Archbishop of Canterbury & Registrar of the Diocese of Oxford), Karen West (Archbishops' Adviser on Bishops' Ministry) and Caroline Boddington (Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments).

The interviews were based on a semi-structured format focusing on three questions:

1. What are you expected to do as an Archdeacon?
2. How do you know how well you are doing?
3. What is your future in the Church?

These three questions allow exploration of how Archdeacons know what they are supposed to do, what they are expected to bring and develop in terms of capability, and how they are

inducted, supported, reviewed and developed. The format was designed to investigate what resources and people they have found useful and what they would value in any proposals for induction and CMD. Discussion of how to support Archdeacons in 'mid-career' was also encouraged. It was clear from our engagement with the Archdeacons interviewed and the data gathered that, as a class, they are resourceful self-starters and thus it was important to ensure that the conversations did not undermine or diminish their sense of initiative and ability to find what they need.

The data from the interviews were compiled and analysed and initial conclusions reached. Questionnaires were constructed for three groups: all the Archdeacons who had not been interviewed, all the Bishops (diocesan, suffragan, area and assistant) who had not been interviewed and a sample of Rural/Area Deans. The questionnaires were deliberately limited in scope so that they could be completed in ten minutes or so to encourage a greater response rate. The Rural/Area Deans were drawn from dioceses that had not featured in the face-to-face interviews. E-mails pointing people to the online questionnaire sites were sent out on 1st July 2011 asking for completion by 22nd July. The numbers contacted and response rates (including the interviewees) were:

- 76 Archdeacons of whom 62 responded (85% response rate with 15 interviewees)
- 78 Bishops of whom 51 responded (81% response rate with 5 interviewees)
- 50 Rural/Area Deans of whom 28 responded (56% response rate)

Given that the timescale (three weeks) was short, that some people were on holiday, sabbaticals or had moved on, the response rate was pleasing. Area/Rural Deans were contacted through Archdeacons in their dioceses, so their time to respond was somewhat shorter.

We offer sincere thanks to all those who were interviewed and who filled out the questionnaires. The hospitality, openness and helpfulness we experienced made the work enjoyable and productive as we travelled the length and breadth of the country.

6. FINDINGS – THE ARCHDEACON'S ROLE

The next two sections lay out our findings, combining the sources discussed above – literature, documentary, interviews and questionnaires. Although the response rate to the questionnaires is high, the basic numbers of those questioned means that it is difficult to make major, generalisable claims for comparative percentages in such a small sample. However, especially where there are extreme percentages and significant consensus or disagreement, it is possible to draw conclusions about what the present groups in the various categories think and what they identify as needs. In such a small population, it will be taken as significant and salient if respondents answer with significant levels of emotion such as distress. Having asked the same or similar questions to the different groups in questionnaires and interviewees, it is possible to identify consistencies and differences in understandings of the role and its context between Archdeacons and those who benefit from their work. Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

6.1 The Role of an Archdeacon

The Bishop of Southwark, a former Archdeacon, has said:

The ministry of Archdeacons often goes unsung, but our Archdeacons are essential to the pattern of life in the diocese, upholding the Area system and undertaking Diocesan wide responsibilities. They are a support and a resource for our churches and parishes, helping to navigate the various challenges faced in buildings and governance as well as giving pastoral care and support and encouraging growth, mission and renewal. Presidential Address to Southwark Diocesan Synod, July 2011

This summarises well the various tasks an Archdeacon may undertake.

It was very common in discussions and interviews for the conversation to start with the assertion that no two Archdeacons' roles are the same. It is true that the styles and content of the role vary because of a range of contextual factors, for example, the urban or rural geography and sociology of the diocese, the distribution of tasks in line with diocesan structure and policy, the preferences of the diocesan Bishop, the culture and history of the diocese and the strengths and gifts of individual Archdeacons. It is our opinion that this has been overstated and used as an excuse to avoid delivering good quality induction, continuing ministerial development and support for Archdeacons. As will be seen from our findings, certain skills, fields of knowledge and support needs are common across a diversity of settings. As will also be seen, in order to be effective, Archdeacons are entitled to expect contextualised provision.

6.1.1 The Archdeacon as 'Ordinary'

For the vast majority of Archdeacons there is a core to their role based around the statutory functions of an Archdeacon. These will be described below. These functions and the geographical area, the Archdeaconry, in which Archdeacons operate as an ordinary (that is, exercising a jurisdiction with is theirs by right and not as delegated by the diocesan Bishop), provide the base for the Archdeacon's work. They are, as the Bishop of Southwark says, essential to maintaining the order and governance of the Church. The Archbishops' Council document *Statutory Functions of an Archdeacon* states:

[The Archdeacon's] work is responding to a theology of order. Rules and regulations are useful in resolving differences of opinion of interpretation, becoming accessible "measuring rods". They save every generation from having to "reinvent the wheel" every time a problem arises or a decision has to be made. Since the following of rules avoids disputes and conflict, it facilitates the work of the gospel.

6.1.2 The Archdeacon in a combined role

Around a third of Archdeacons who responded said they were in combined roles. The second roles included being residentiary canons of cathedrals, diocesan roles such as Warden of Readers, Director of Ordinands, and oversight of ministry, training or finance, or being a parish priest. The second role occupied mostly between 10 and 25% of the Archdeacons' time. There was only one case we heard of where the second role took the majority of the working week. It is common for Archdeacons to have a diocesan portfolio. This means that leadership in areas such as education, communication,

chaplains, or interaction with secular bodies on behalf of the diocese is divided amongst the Archdeacons in a diocese, often according to expertise or interest. It seems to be a pattern that the role is a combination of statutory and traditional work and participation in some other aspect of leadership in the diocese. Even in dioceses with strong area systems in which Archdeacons operate clearly in an area team, diocesan-wide portfolios are a regular feature of the make up of their role. Indeed, a number of interviewees suggested that it was helpful, possibly essential, for an Archdeacon to have a significant, other responsibility to make the role satisfying and to offer a useful contribution to the diocesan and national church. Those who remained in the role for some time indicated that it was important to find a major, additional area of interest or contribution, which may change over time, to maintain freshness and focus.

6.1.3 The Archdeacon as a member of the senior leadership team

Structurally, Archdeacons are seen in a variety of ways. In some dioceses, they are clearly part of the senior leadership team. In some dioceses, they are part of the larger Bishop's staff meeting and a smaller meeting with just Bishops and Archdeacons and possibly the diocesan secretary. In others, they are only part of the larger staff meeting. As far as possible, the leadership work of the diocese is shared. Work, for example, appointments or dealing with crises, is shared amongst the Archdeacons and Bishops according to skills and availability rather than role. In other cases, a distinction is made between the strategic work of the Bishop and the implementing and monitoring of that strategy by Archdeacons. One Bishop

talked of himself as the captain of the ship and the Archdeacon as the chief engineer, able to operate on the bridge, the deck and in the engine room. Recent legislation, for example, covering clergy discipline, has underlined the tendency for Bishops to keep themselves separate from discipline and confronting poor ministerial behaviour. This is ostensibly to make sure that they can deal with any appeal in a fair manner. However, Bishops are sometimes seen as avoiding difficult interactions where they might be seen as unpopular.

In dioceses where there are suffragan or assistant Bishops, there is a perceived risk of conflict over whether certain tasks and areas of responsibility belong to the suffragan/assistant Bishop or to the Archdeacon. The overlap and potential for rivalry and confusion between suffragans and Archdeacons was raised in a significant number of responses. Even within dioceses with area systems, although evidently normally much clearer, the distribution of tasks between area Bishop and Archdeacon can vary from area to area in the same diocese. This can be particularly pointed when an Archdeacon moves to be a suffragan or area Bishop in the same diocese. There is also an issue of oversight. Archdeacons in interviews clearly stated that they were the diocesan Bishop's Archdeacons, even when they worked in an area system or very closely with a suffragan. In any effort to find clarity over who is actually, in secular terms, the line manager, this dual relationship can cause interference and confusion.

6.1.4 Managerialist tendencies

In national terms, there seems to be a significant, if sometimes unspoken, debate happening about the nature of church leadership. The

Archdeacon's role seems to be the 'lightning conductor' for bringing these tensions to earth and making them visible. Since the development of strong, centralised systems and approaches arising from such initiatives as the Turnbull Report and the introduction of the Archbishops' Council, it is evident that structural assumptions about the Church of England as organisation are being played out with a consequent tension between a traditional Church of England approach and a more managerialist style. The application of centrally devised recruitment and appointment processes with inbuilt assumptions about the role of church leadership has ensured more open, consistent behaviour such as advertising all Archdeacon posts. Yet, there is disquiet about an understanding of the leadership role of Archdeacons being modelled on that of leaders or managers in business. The Common Tenure and Clergy Terms of Service legislation with its healthy emphasis on the Church looking after its clergy in the way any other modern organisation looks after its workers has reinforced the temptation to see Archdeacons as the equivalent of secular middle managers. The structure of the Church of England, with so many workers and so few 'managers' and its culture as a community of cooperative, but independent, ministers both at parish and diocesan level, may make this an impossible, and possibly undesirable, understanding of the Church. The way Bishops design the role of Archdeacons (consciously or unconsciously) is testimony to the diversity in style, structure and culture of the constituent parts of the Church of England. In interviews, Archdeacons saw managerial expectations being laid on their role but expressed doubts as to how possible it was

to carry them out given that they lacked any significant authority other than encouragement, influence and persuasion in all but the most extreme circumstances.

6.2 Images and Metaphors

In order to understand how Archdeacons and the other groups we surveyed saw the role, we asked what kind of images, people or metaphors from Biblical, theological and secular sources described their understanding of the role. In the interviews, this was an open question. It was evident from the interviews that Archdeacons ponder faithfully on issues of being a deacon, a priest, a leader and a pastor. In one diocese, there had been conversations about whether they could continue to afford Archdeacons, as there were highly competent lay people at the diocesan offices who dealt with many areas of their work. However, the universal response was that Archdeacons need to be ordained. The role is seen as characteristically diaconal, priestly, pastoral and needing the mixture of theological and ministerial understanding that only an ordained person can bring. In the questionnaires, we used the input from the interviews to test the popularity of images suggested by all the groups. (Some Archdeacons interviewed made reference to Trollope's Archdeacon Grantley and the Archdeacon in the television show *Rev*, though none admitted to owning leather gloves.)

Amongst the Archdeacons, over 98% of respondents saw the role as an *encourager*. The second most popular answer (90%) was *strategic thinker*, followed by *enabler* (82%). *Leader* came fourth (76%), followed by *senior manager* and *arch-deacon - servant* (both 68%), *intermediary*

(61%), *missioner* and *interpreter* (both 60%), and *friend* (42%). Given comments about clergy discipline above, it is interesting that 39% opted for *good cop/bad cop*, presumably where the Archdeacon is normally the bad cop.

The Rural/Area Deans were asked to select from the same list as the Archdeacons. Again, in their list *encourager* was the most popular answer (64%), followed by *enabler* (54%), *strategic thinker* (50%) and *leader* (46%). *Arch-deacon – servant* and *friend* were both chosen by 36% of the sample.

Thus, for Archdeacons and Area/Rural Deans, the consensus is that the key roles are those of encourager/enabler and strategic thinker.

The Bishops were asked to come up with their own images in the questionnaire. Many of the images given attest to a role as the *deputy* of the Bishop, his *'eyes and ears'*. The Archdeacon is often seen as the *fixer*, as an *administrator*, or as in secular roles such as *area manager*, *chief operating officer* or *Executive Officer*, *deputy headmaster*, *HR and facilities manager* and *right hand person*. A number of the images related to being a *steward* and a *deacon* (like Stephen) who ensures the *God given resources of the church – people, buildings, money - are used in the best possible way for mission*. Other images see the Archdeacon as *bridge*, *interpreter*, *pivot/connector*, *triage*, *example*, *gatekeeper*, *go-between* and *encourager*. The theme of keeping order and discipline comes in images such as *sheepdog*, *vinedresser*, and *sheriff*.

The difference in emphasis between the fairly consistent picture of the Archdeacons and

Rural/Area Deans of the Archdeacon as an *encourager*, *strategic thinker* and *leader* and the Bishops' view of the Archdeacon as the *fixer*, *their' eyes and ears' in the diocese*, an *implementer*, *interpreter* and *sheepdog* is predictable given the organisational position from which the different groups view the role. This means that Archdeacons have an in-between role where they have to attend to different expectations from the levels above and below them in the hierarchy. Some of the Bishops were clear in their imagery that the Archdeacons are part of the leadership team and some even talked about them sharing episcopate. However, it seems that the central task for Archdeacons is that of two-way bridging, interpreting work. This means that diocesan strategy is communicated and implemented, and proper governance upheld. In the other direction through the support, listening and advice the clergy, parishes and other ministries receive from Archdeacons, the Diocese can understand and respond to their needs. Representative work flows in both directions.

The range of images suggested points to the conflict that sits at the heart of the role. The Archdeacon is constantly asked to reconcile seemingly conflicting concerns: innovation and tradition; adherence to the rules and freedom to be creative; running an organisation and holding the irresolvable dilemmas of an institution; encouragement and discipline. As the Bishop of Southwark said, it is evident that Archdeacons stand at key connecting points in the topology of the Church. One Archdeacon saw the role as *weaving grace into the whole thing, making visible God's graciousness – creating lacunae of grace and freedom in structures*.

6.3 The Statutory Role

The Canons and ecclesiastical law articulate a series of duties required of Archdeacons as ordinaries within the diocese, as in this summary abbreviated from the Archbishops' Council document *Statutory Duties of an Archdeacon (July 2008)*:

1. Inspection of Churches Measure 1955. He/she is required to enforce compliance by each parish with the provisions of the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955 which requires each parish to have its Church inspection at least once every five years. Canon C22(5) requires that he/she shall also survey in person or by deputy all Churches, Churchyards etc and give direction for the amendment of all defects in the walls, fabric, ornament and furniture.
2. Visitations. He/she is required by Canon to hold yearly visitations (Canon 22(5)).
3. Inductions. He/she is required on receiving the directions of the Bishop to induct any Priest who has been instituted to a Benefice (Canon C22(5)).
4. Pastoral Measure 1983. An Archdeacon is ex-officio a member of the Diocesan Pastoral Committee and is an "interested party" in relation to proposals for any pastoral re-organisation. He/she is in practice responsible for identifying the need for pastoral re-organisation and negotiating with all other interested parties any proposals for it.
5. Incumbents. (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977. On a request to the Bishop for an enquiry into the pastoral situation in a Parish on the basis that there has been a serious breakdown in pastoral relationships the Bishop is required to direct the Archdeacon to take such steps as the Archdeacon considers appropriate to promote better relations between the parties and to advise whether in his/her opinion a formal enquiry into the pastoral situation in the Parish should be instituted.
6. Repair of Benefice Buildings Measure 1972. An Archdeacon is an ex-officio member of the Parsonages Board and has special interest in the clergy house in his/her Archdeaconry. Where the Board's functions are exercised by a committee of the DBF, there is no absolute requirement that Archdeacons are members although in practice they usually are.
7. Church Representation Rules. An Archdeacon has the responsibility of convening and conducting an extraordinary meeting of a Parochial Church Council under Rule 23(1).
8. Care of Churches, and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measures 1991. In his/her own Archdeaconry the Archdeacon is the most important person concerned with the enforcement of the faculty jurisdiction. An Archdeacon is an ex-officio member of the DAC, and is thus able to explain to the Incumbent and the Churchwardens who consult him/her the likely attitude of the DAC to what they want to do.

In their own jurisdiction it may be that an Archdeacon will have to oppose the Bishop's plans on a matter of law. The Archdeacon is an officer of the chancellor of the diocese and may operate independently.

In addition to these duties the Archdeacon has roles in more recent legislation particularly concerning Common Tenure and the new Terms of Service for clergy. For example, if a capability procedure is brought against a minister, the Archdeacon is normally the appointed person who runs the process and the investigation. Under Common Tenure the Archdeacon is very often the key player, as the Bishop's designated person, in formulating the Statement of Particulars and developing role descriptions to which each new role holder is entitled.

For some Archdeacons discipline has become a significant feature of the role. . Because each case can absorb considerable time and energy, where Archdeacons find themselves involved in disciplinary actions, this work, even for a small number of cases, can have a significant effect on their workload. In June 2011 William Fittall, Secretary General of the Archbishops' Council, offered General Synod the following analysis:

The disciplinary aspect of the Archdeacon's role is recognised in the statutory code of practice issued under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. Proceedings may be instituted against a priest or deacon by, among others, a *'person who has a proper interest in making the complaint'*. The code of practice gives the relevant Archdeacon as an example of a person who may have a proper interest for this purpose. About a quarter of all proceedings under the Measure are instituted by Archdeacons.

GS 1846B, 4

In the interviews, experienced Archdeacons commented that they receive many more requests for legal advice from parish clergy

and wardens than they used to and than they understood their predecessors received. There seems to be a lack of what one interviewee saw as the knowledgeable parish clergy in the diocese to whom less knowledgeable clergy would first go for advice on legal and procedural matters. Knowledge of charity and trust law was seen as very important across a range of contexts from schools and the new academies to the use of church buildings.

6.3.1 Can these dry bones live? - Putting flesh on the bones

There was some variation in whether Archdeacons saw the traditional work around buildings, inspections and faculties as a burden. Some interviewees saw it as a key part of their role and an opportunity to get alongside parish clergy and Churchwardens in a pastoral, creative, priestly ministry. Others saw themselves as conduits to the experts who could give the right answer, such as the Diocesan Registrar or the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) Secretary. There was also variation in how much of this work Archdeacons did themselves. Many delegated the inspection work of local churches to the appropriate Rural/Area Deans. All those interviewed emphasised the importance of having good working relationships with the DAC secretary, the registrar, the chancellor and the human resources officer of the diocese. Generally, these relations seem to work well and supportively. It is evident that many Archdeacons use these statutory duties imaginatively to foster mission and ministry and offer support and a listening ear. One Archdeacon saw his role in supervising the use and maintenance of buildings as encouraging and helping parish clergy and laity to use their rich resource of buildings more

creatively as places of local worship and mission. Archdeacons see their statutory involvement in pastoral reorganisation as an opportunity to encourage local parishes to think imaginatively about mission in their contexts.

6.4 Other Work

Given what has been said already about the typical construction of an Archdeacon's role, that is, the statutory tasks supplemented by diocesan or national portfolios, Archdeacons characteristically operate a series of other functions described below.

The arrangements for **clergy appointments** differed widely from the Archdeacons' being responsible for doing them all, through various forms of sharing the work, to the Archdeacons doing none. Most Archdeacons, however, appear to have considerable involvement in appointments and the questionnaires suggest that advice and training over how to run appointment processes would be welcomed.

Ministerial Development Reviews are a new and significant feature of many Archdeacons' work patterns. Again, the questionnaires reveal that support and training in this area would help.

One Bishop said that the Archdeacons knew better than he did what is going on in the diocese partly because they are often on every diocesan committee. **Committees** absorb a huge part of most Archdeacons' time allocation. Some dioceses are reducing and rationalising the numbers of committees, which should cut the time spent on them - a desire expressed in particular by the Area/Rural Deans.

Chasing **finance** is also a significant part of an Archdeacon's work. Adequate, financial competence is seen as a basic requirement for Archdeacons. Typically working with diocesan stewardship or resource officers, ensuring the parish share comes in demands a combination of soft and hard skills, both working alongside the parishes and deaneries and holding them to account. The other side of this is that Archdeacons can be bringers of joy and support in their access to funds and trusts.

For many Archdeacons their central work is the **pastoral care** of the clergy and their families. The diocesan, geographical and cultural context influences how easy this is to do. We came across one example where the diocese, as a result of a consultation on the Archdeacon's role, had set as a primary aim the pastoral care of the clergy and a quick response to their pastoral needs and crises.

It is evident from the response to several questions in the questionnaires and from the interviews that **conflict management and resolution** is now a major piece of work in Archdeacons' roles. Many Archdeacons have been on conflict management courses and recommend this as a key training need and individual capability.

Team working - according to the interviews and the questionnaires, the Bishop's staff is an important team within which Archdeacons work, but it emerged that Rural/Area Deans form the most important team for Archdeacons. The partnership with them varies in form and intensity from diocese to diocese and from Archdeacon to Archdeacon but it is a feature of the shifting structure and organisational

design of the Church of England that a range of allocation of tasks and duties is being operated between Archdeacons and Rural/Area Deans. Contact, for the most part, is much more regular and ordered than between Archdeacons and local clergy. In the questionnaires, the Rural/Area Deans value easy access to Archdeacons for advice, pastoral support and mentoring. They see the Archdeacons as interpreters of what the diocesan is planning and wanting for their local context. From the evidence of the questionnaires (for example, how often Archdeacons meet Rural/Area Deans one-to-one), the relationship is as a working team rather than of managerial supervision. Given that organisational pressures and changes may mean that Rural/Area Deans are expected to carry increased leadership duties in their Deaneries, individual supervision work by Archdeacons may have to increase.

Many Archdeacons enjoy their role's combination of **strategic leadership** work and direct contact with front line ministers and laity. Some will reinforce this by making sure they are out and about in the parishes on Sundays, covering vacancies and holidays and getting themselves invited for normal Sundays rather than just special occasions. On the other hand, Bishops reported that Archdeacons get to see the parishes and clergy 'as they are' rather than only at special occasions when the Bishop is likely to visit.

However, from the interviews and questionnaires there are some **significant, overall issues regarding their roles**. One is that Archdeacons tend to be the ones who go into situations where things have gone wrong, for example, to chase money or

where relationships have broken down. One Archdeacon recounted a time when a church member said, 'It'd be really nice to see you on a happy occasion'. A second general issue is the hours Archdeacons work. The concern to be sufficiently available and accessible, the need to travel considerable distances daily, and a culture that demands fast response to crises are among ingredients that contribute to a less than healthy work/life balance. There were several stories of emails being sent or responded to in the middle of the night. Observers of Archdeacons whom we talked to questioned whether this was culturally wise both in terms of raising unworkable expectations on Archdeacons and the quality of the example it sets to the clergy as a whole. For some this tendency is reinforced by Archdeacons', in their regular work, inhabiting the nine to five world of the diocesan office, the evening and Saturday world of the voluntary organisation and the Sunday world of church. A third issue which emerged is the isolation Archdeacons (and sometimes their families) can feel because they are not necessarily rooted in a supportive, worshipping community, and the consequent need to find appropriate support and sustenance - spiritual, personal and professional.

6.5 Where do Archdeacons come from?

In our sample, 71% of Archdeacons had come from a role as a parish priest. In the interviews, it was relatively common to hear that Archdeacons needed to have had significant parish experience, not only to understand the issues they would face most, but also to have credibility with the parishes. Yet it appeared that the transition from parish priest to Archdeacon was much more traumatic than for those who came from roles such as diocesan or national

officers. Those who had been incumbents often talked of a sense of dislocation and isolation. They had lost the community in which they worked and which gave them a spiritual and social base and, for some, an altar. Archdeacons are normally asked to preach, rarely to preside or officiate. Very often new Archdeacons have just come from large, successful benefices where their role is clear, they are in charge and they understand the social dynamics. Archdeacons we interviewed said that moving into the leadership team of the diocese could be very difficult. Relationships were unclear and sometimes quite counterproductive in the senior team. They had moved from being in charge to an uncertain place, perhaps of being second or third in command. Learning how to operate in their own work and in the senior team took some time. The word *bereavement* (for parish life) was used a number of times. It was often an unrealistic assumption that someone who had come into an Archdeacon's role from within the diocese would know and understand all they needed to operate at this different level in the diocese.

Those interviewed who had not come from parish roles seemed to move into these different organisational contexts more easily. However, when we tested this in the questionnaires, only 9% said the transition was very or extremely difficult with 27% saying it was not at all difficult. This may be a case where a minority of new Archdeacons' suffering needs particular attention. The extent of the distress a small number expressed indicates that it is crucial to ensure that support during the transition into the role can identify and help these Archdeacons.

Although for most interviewees and in some comments on the questionnaires, parish experience was seen as essential, one Bishop who had worked with a considerable number of Archdeacons advised that they need 'wide knowledge of the Church of England, and not only at parochial level ... those who have only previously been parish clergy have struggled most in the role'.

20% of Archdeacons interviewed or responding to the questionnaire were women. Those interviewed suggested that there were both advantages and disadvantages to being a woman in the role. In interviews, they indicated that there are still some sexism issues with parishes (I like your boots, Archdeacon, or are they gaiters?). As far as we can see, there is only one Archdeacon from a black or minority ethnic background. Although these proportions are not under the control of Archdeacons, any training provision would need to ensure minority group issues were recognised.

6.6 The capability of an Archdeacon

As we met Archdeacons and former Archdeacons through the interviews and sessions with the Archdeacons' Forum, it became obvious that Archdeacons are a very varied group in terms of background, style and preference. Combining this with the fact that they are called to work in diverse contexts means that it would be difficult and undesirable to look for a one size fits all picture of the capability of an Archdeacon – both in terms of what they bring and what they need to develop. However, some characteristic themes came out of the interviews and were tested in the questionnaires for the Rural/Area Deans and Bishops as those who benefit from Archdeacons' work.

In the interviews it became clear that Archdeacons need to have, or develop, the ability to manage a heavy workload with resilience. The job involves being the target of much negative emotion and pressure, which demands a spiritual and psychological depth and health in order to find what one interviewee called the *points of creativity*, as well as fulfilment and interest. One interviewee said Archdeacons need to develop a 'thick skin'. Humility and a willingness to continue learning founded in prayer was seen as essential.

Comparing the percentages for the different characteristics deemed to be important in an

Archdeacon, it is interesting how similar the rankings are between the Bishops and the Rural/Area Deans. Strength in spirituality and collaboration, efficiency and the ability to think strategically are the leading requirements. An interesting difference is attention to detail. From the evidence of the interviews, the Bishops rely on their Archdeacons for the governance of the diocese, as secular leaders would say, to keep them and the people in their organisation out of gaol. According to both groups, the role seems to be more about interpreting the diocesan culture to the parishes than taking the parishes' case to the diocese.

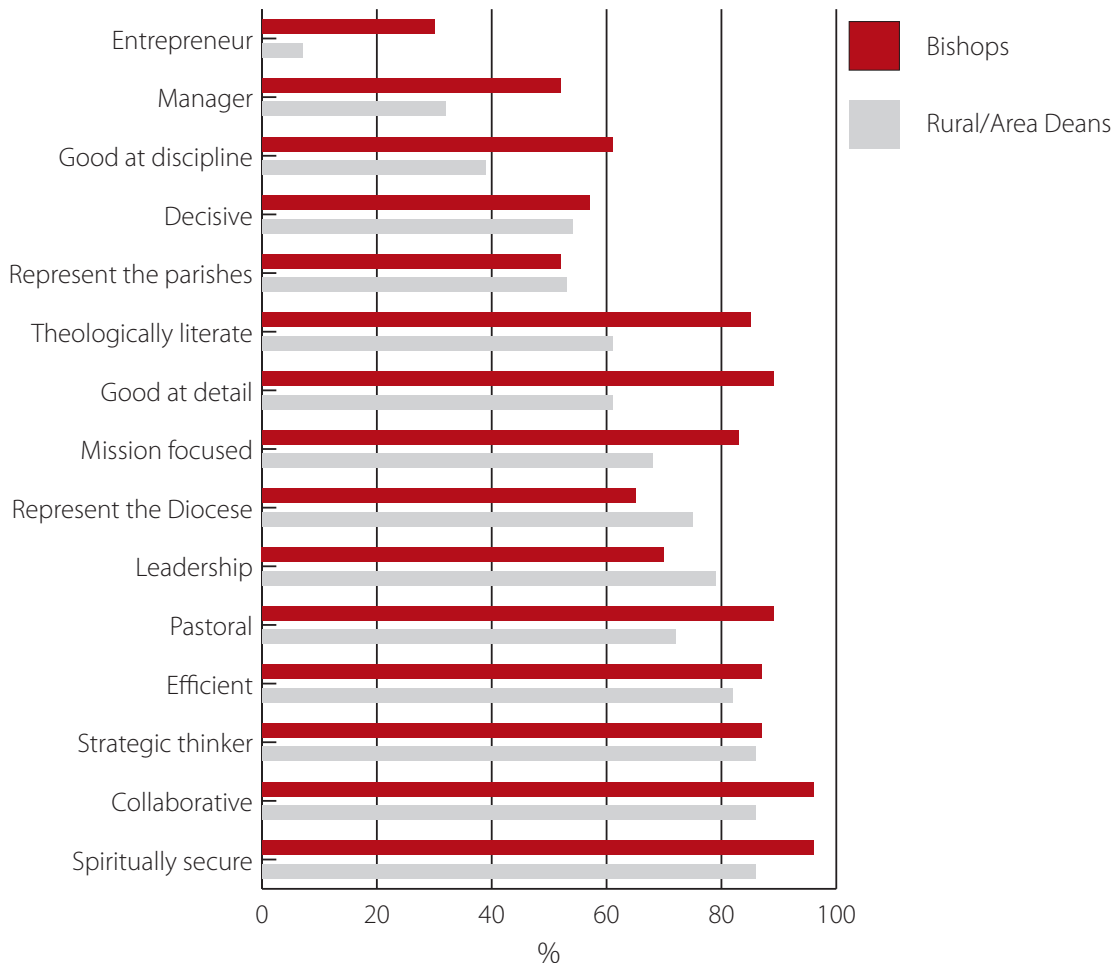


Table 6.6 The comparative responses between Bishops and Rural/Area Deans to the question, 'What characteristics do you expect in an Archdeacon?'

6.7 How do they know what to do?

Our evidence showed that Archdeacons are not given much help in understanding what they are supposed to do. Sources of information on this that were mentioned by interviewees or assumed to be standard in any role that we tested were the *role description, learning by doing, Archdeacon colleagues, diocesan officers* and the *Bishop*. Both Archdeacons and Bishops agreed that the most likely source was *learning by doing* (very or extremely useful in 95% and 91% of responses respectively). Although resourceful people like Archdeacons can be expected to work out much of what they do by working it out for themselves, there are risks of doing it wrong, doing the wrong thing or not doing the right thing. Some Archdeacons told stories of finding out what they needed to do only when they did something wrong and were quickly informed of their error. Archdeacons found their fellow Archdeacons, where they had one or more, the next most helpful (very/extremely useful 75%). Bishops said that they, as Bishops, were the next most helpful (very/extremely useful 71%) whereas the Archdeacons considered them fourth most helpful (very/extremely useful 31%) after diocesan officers (very/extremely useful 43%). Bishops seem to have greater faith in role descriptions (very/extremely useful 44%) than Archdeacons (very/extremely useful 19%). In dioceses where new ways of looking at the role of Archdeacons, for example, as Director of Mission or Strategy for the diocese, the role description can be a crucial basis for discussion about the purpose, shape and content of the roles. In one diocese where distinct roles had been created, the comment was made that 'the role description is proving very important and the Bishops are working

with the Archdeacons to help shape the roles accordingly'.

Numerous written sources were quoted which Archdeacons used to help them understand their work and how to do it. There is a significant body of material around church law and a growing library of church management books and articles on which the Archdeacons rely. The most commonly quoted was Mark Hill's *Ecclesiastical Law. The Canons and the Legal Opinions*, the *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* and James Behrens' *Practical Church Management* were mentioned by a good number of people. Others named were the *Pastoral and Mission Measure, the Church Representation Rules, House of Bishops Guidelines on various matters, the Churchyards Handbook*, and websites such as those of the Church of England, the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, and the Archdeacons' wit and wisdom website. *Oculus Episcopi* was mentioned a few times but is seen as needing updating. A significant number of Archdeacons also attested to the importance of continued theological study and reflection and reading texts on leadership, management and organisations.

A regular expectation in new role holders in an organisation, though perhaps not for most roles in the Church, is induction. For an Archdeacon there are generic areas of knowledge and skill which are new and areas of knowledge that are specific to the diocese in which they work. Induction on the generic matters is seen as appropriate subject matter for the national New Archdeacons conferences/meetings. In terms of what a diocesan induction might include, the following table shows the relative percentages between Bishops and Archdeacons for the items that were indicated in the interviews.

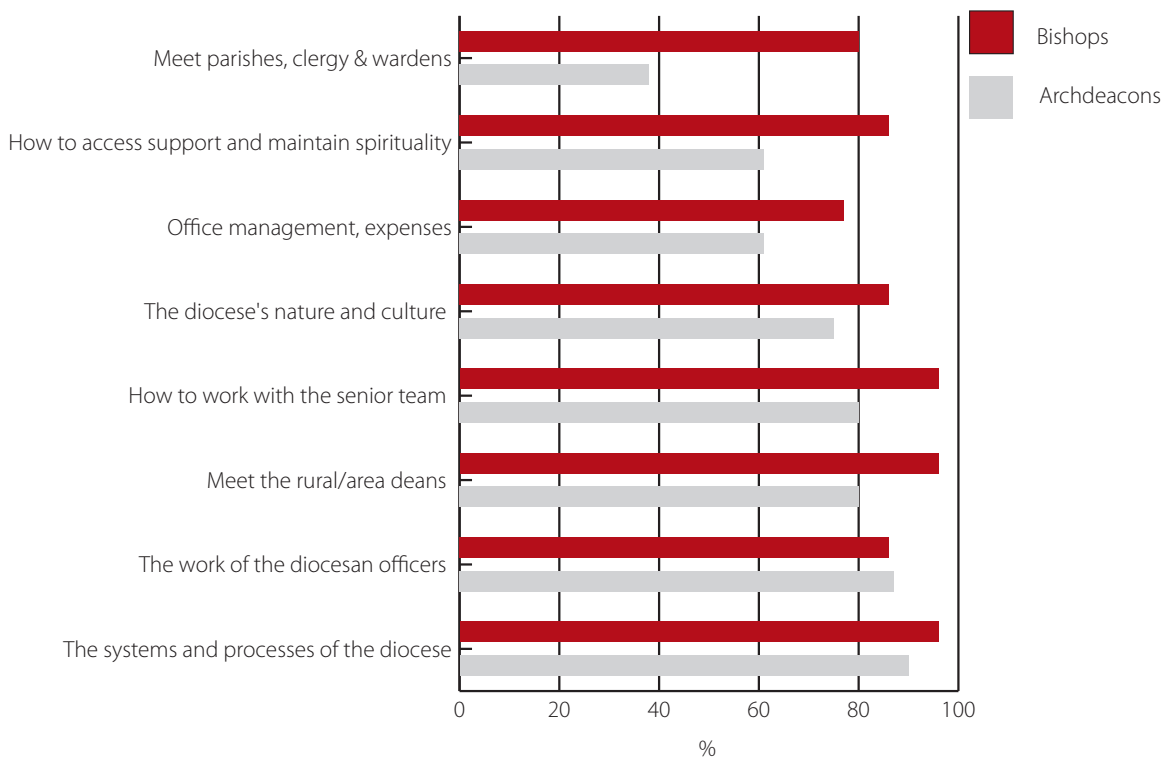


Table 6.7.1 The comparative responses between Bishops and Archdeacons to the question, 'What does an Archdeacon need in their diocesan induction?'

Of the sample of Archdeacons, 43% said they had had no diocesan induction. Of those who had, 52% said it was very or extremely useful. It appears from the percentages that the diocesan induction should be a significant activity majoring on a significant range of content. This is hard to match with the evidence of how poor Archdeacons' inductions can be at present.

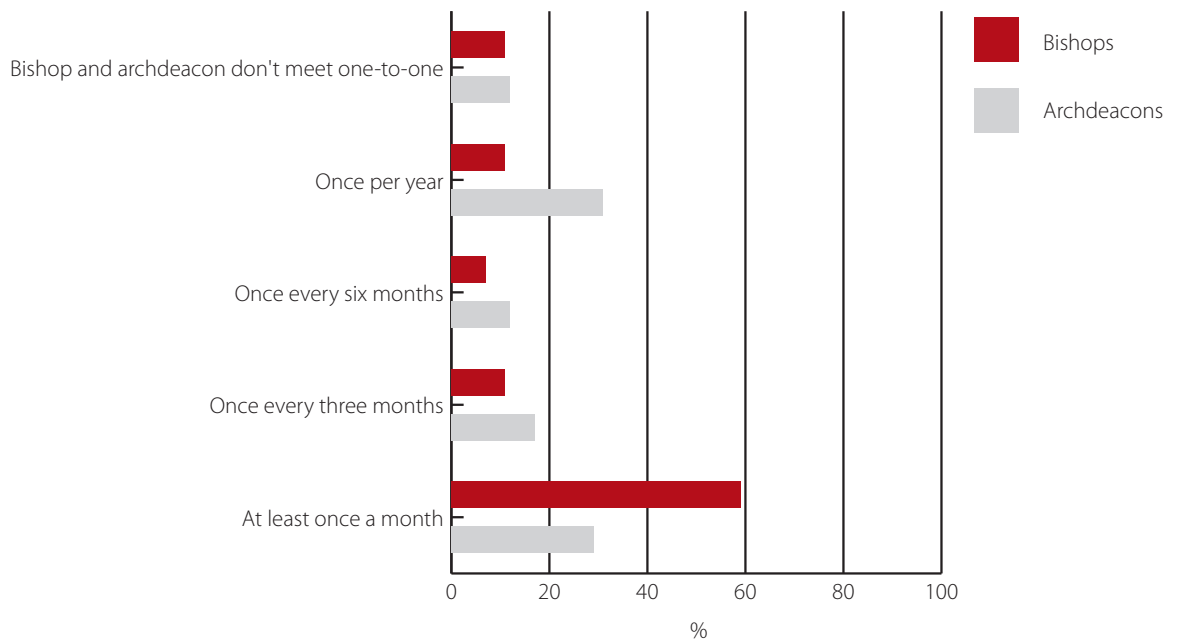
A normal way organisations check that workers know what they are doing is through the regular meetings between the worker and their manager. This helps in defining both what they are expected to do and how well they are doing it. From the interviews, it became apparent that many Archdeacons do not have meetings with their Bishops that support this need. Meetings to talk about what the work is and how it is going seem to happen more easily in area

based dioceses. In the questionnaire, we asked how often Archdeacons and Bishops meet one-to-one to talk about how the Archdeacon's work is going. The table 6.7.2 overleaf shows a significant difference in perceptions.

The reasons for these discrepancies may include

- Bishops not realising that they cancel more meetings than they think
- A misunderstanding of the nature of meetings that do happen
- Mistaken perceptions of interactions in corridors
- The MDR being seen as the only meeting in the year when this work needs to be done
- Bishops not seeing this work as a key part of their role
- Archdeacons not expressing their needs clearly

Table 6.7.2 The comparative responses between Bishops and Archdeacons to the question, 'How often do you meet your Archdeacon(s) one to one to talk about how their work is going?'



The interviews gave us strong evidence of the usefulness of Bishops' meetings with Archdeacons in terms of understanding the work and getting feedback as well as a general sense of being valued in the role.

A number of people in comments on the questionnaires and in the interviews mentioned the value of having an experienced Archdeacon to shadow or to use as a mentor, coach or consultant. One interviewee suggested that retired Archdeacons or those still in post are underused as a resource for new Archdeacons.

6.8 How do they know whether they are doing a good job?

In order for a role incumbent to be successful and to improve in their work, not only do they need to be clear as to what they are supposed to do, they also need to know what they are doing well and what they need to do differently. When

questioned about how Archdeacons know whether they are doing a good job, the most popular responses were their own assessment and feedback from the Rural/Area Deans. As the table overleaf shows, there is some discrepancy between which sources the Bishops assume provide feedback and which do so for the Archdeacons.

It is clear that being able to assess their own effectiveness is essential to Archdeacons. It may be that Bishops and Archdeacons need to discuss further what is the most helpful form of feedback in their interactions. The fact that feedback from Rural/Area Deans provides as much useful data for Archdeacons as their own assessment and more than any other source may indicate that this is who they see as the key beneficiaries of their work. We wondered if Rural/Area Deans realised how important their feedback is to Archdeacons.

It was evident from the interviews and from the comments box on the questionnaire that some Archdeacons just do not know whether they are doing a good job. This may be because no feedback is given or what is cannot be trusted, or insufficient weight is given to it because of its 'ad hoc' nature. It would appear that feedback through the MDR system is patchy at the moment as it is only now being implemented for Archdeacons in some dioceses.

6.9 What about their future?

If workers in organisations are to fulfil their role well, an often-underestimated area of understanding is what their future is in the organisation. In the case of the Church, thinking about the next move, particularly about promotion, is culturally difficult. Church workers focus on vocation, God's call, and sacrificial service. However, stewardship of talents as well as secular concepts like resource and succession planning, deployment, and talent management, as well as individuals' needs to feel they are

travelling on a productive journey in following their calling, means that conversations and systems around where an individual is going and how they are going to get there are important. As has already been said, many Archdeacons will stay in the role for a long time. In these cases, attention needs to be given to keeping those concerned attentive, enthusiastic and growing in their role.

When asked how they keep focussed or will do so in the future, the Archdeacons put great store on the quality of the working relationships in the senior team in their diocese and their meetings. Regular provision of training in new skills and updates on legislation and systems were seen as essential, as was personal theological and biblical study. Other sources of continuing enthusiasm mentioned were courses and conferences, support people and groups, networks and sabbaticals. A number of people pointed to the fact that it was possibly unhelpful to stay in the job too long. Some respondents

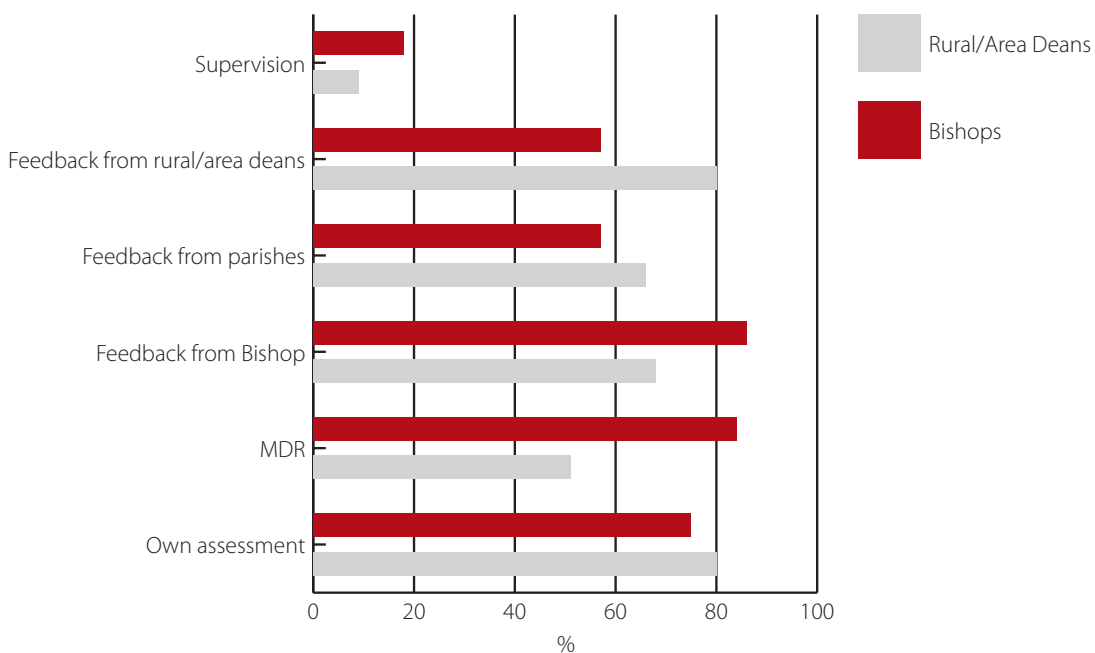


Table 6.7.3 The comparative responses between Bishops and Archdeacons to the question, 'How does your Archdeacon know if they are doing a good job?'

said that moving to another job or having their Archdeacon's role redesigned had been refreshing. In some responses, addressing the future seemed to be a luxury. One response was, 'Hard to say. I just feel overworked and dumped on at the moment!'

When asked what was in place to help Archdeacons along their future ministry path, 93% of the Bishops stated that it was done through development discussions with their Bishop. It is worth remarking that 22% of the Bishops who completed the questionnaire, including those who skipped this question entirely, did not answer that they have a role in their Archdeacons' futures. Other responses from the Bishops pointed to discussions with others and training. Several also said that this feature of development is not done well in many cases. Among the Archdeacons there was a variety of response, including conversations with Bishops, MDRs, use of work consultants, supervision, spiritual direction and other outside help, and undertaking further training such as in leadership. The national senior appointments system was mentioned several times, with particular reference to the Archbishops' Appointments Adviser with some dissatisfaction expressed here and with regard to the nature and implementation of this process. Some were concentrating on the job now. Some were near retirement. Others said they had never had any such conversations or were simply not sure how such development happens.

7. FINDINGS - TRAINING AND SUPPORT

7.1 General Findings

Although the discussion above is wide-ranging, it sets the context, and indicates the agenda, for

the provision of initial and ongoing ministerial development for Archdeacons. However, it is essential that any proposed training should integrate with a range of organisational factors, such as supportive systems and processes, clear role descriptions, performance reviews and effective managers. In church organisations, it is often difficult to construct the conditions under which a secular, employment hierarchy satisfies the needs of its employees. Sometimes leaders of organisations assume that training will solve all the inadequacies they perceive in the way people do their work and will transform their unhappiness into joy. This means that it is important to be realistic about how much help training and development can provide, if the organisation is unwilling or unable to change other counter-productive organisational constraints. One of the threads that runs consistently through the evidence we gathered is that the variety of understanding that Bishops have of their role as Archdeacons' managers can significantly help or significantly constrain an Archdeacon's ministry and their experience of the role.

A theme that came up several times in the interviews from all the groups was the fact that Archdeacons' training is not funded or provided by the national church. This is seen as significant because there is a national scheme funded by the Church Commissioners for Bishops. There were suggestions that more of the training could be done in common with the Bishops. A response to this is that the amount of money made available for Bishops' training is not large and that, if Archdeacons' training was provided by the Church of England nationally, the money would have to be found from the dioceses. Some national training around

new legislation and systems has been done in common with Bishops and members of senior staff teams. However, in an organisation that is used to managing symbols, the lack of understanding of how such a division impacts on Archdeacons is remarkable. A common story was that Archdeacons were invited to the national training if there were not enough Bishops to fill all the places – crumbs falling from their masters’ table. This serves to reinforce the feeling that development for Archdeacons is an afterthought and that they need to get on with it themselves. Organisational theory would predict that this could have an impact on an Archdeacon’s commitment to the Church as an organisation nationally, although in practice, they would probably see their rootedness and affirmation in their diocese as being a counterbalance to this.

The table below shows what training Archdeacons need in order to fulfil their role according to the Bishops and Archdeacons who completed the questionnaires. The categories again are developed from the interviews with all the groups.

A traditional view of what an Archdeacon concentrates on would suggest that technical training around finance and the law should have priority. However, it is clear from the table that people skills are the priority. It may be assumed that Archdeacons, being experienced priests, have significant people skills but the specific needs associated with the role - for conflict management, interviewing, handling the relationships in a senior team, reviewing people’s work and supporting people through change - are those identified most often. In the interviews and in the questionnaires, the



Table 7. The comparative responses between Bishops and Archdeacons to the question, 'What does an Archdeacon need as part of their further training?'

training that Archdeacons quoted repeatedly as the most useful was the conflict management training run by the Mennonites.

It is clear that the National Conferences are seen as useful and important. There was some discussion, as has been mentioned already, about the balance between technical input and input on people skills. The role of the conferences in providing inspiration and the opportunity for networking and support is valued.

7.2 Starting as an Archdeacon – initial training and induction

In the interviews, Archdeacons said that the New Archdeacons Conference was very helpful. In the questionnaires, of those who attended, 47% said they found it very or extremely useful with 28% thinking it moderately useful. However, there is an issue of timing. As the meeting happens only once a year, a number of people said that it came too early in their time or too late. If too early, the theory seemed dry without significant experience against which to match the input. It was suggested a number of times that the best time to attend was between three and six months after starting as an Archdeacon. A second issue was the balance between hard input and soft skills. There is a tendency for the new Archdeacons' gatherings to focus on ecclesiastical and other law, HR processes and inspection technicalities. Although this was welcome, interviewees felt that a better balance between such dry data and the skills needed to deal with people in this new role could be achieved.

The biennial National Archdeacons' Conference was seen by 48% of Archdeacons as very

or extremely useful when they were new in the role. The National Conference is seen as supportive and a place where people doing the same job can gather in an unthreatening environment to talk through issues and share insights.

The Regional Archdeacons' Groups were seen as very or extremely useful for new Archdeacons by 57% of respondents. Evidence from the interviews supported the view that these were amongst the most helpful provision both for new and for continuing Archdeacons. We understood that cell groups and mentors were available as an option to all new Archdeacons. The cell groups were said to be formed at the New Archdeacons' conference. 52% of these who were part of a cell group found them very or extremely useful. However, 52% of respondents said a cell group was not available to them. Similarly, 55% of respondents said that a mentor was not available to them. Of those who did have one, 80% said they were moderately, slightly or not useful. In terms of mentors, the interviews provided strong evidence that having a mentor was thought to be helpful as a national or diocesan scheme. It seems, however, that, in practice, given the evidence of the questionnaire responses, they may not be that useful.

As has already been seen, diocesan induction is in many places non-existent. Interviewees thought this could be done much better. For a new Archdeacon there are often assumptions that make people think induction is not necessary. These include the assumption that because the new Archdeacon has been an incumbent and Rural/Area Dean in the diocese they understand all the systems, policies and

rules and the way the diocese and the senior team works. A repeated suggestion was that there should be a national template for diocesan induction. This would not dictate precisely what should be done but would act as a guideline and a checklist in what is helpful or desirable in welcoming the new Archdeacon into their new role. It was also suggested that induction is not a short, say, weeklong event but a process that happens over a number of months, both before and after the appointment, with the Bishop checking that the new Archdeacon is receiving a satisfactory introduction to the range of work and personnel that is required. This gives the new Archdeacon time to discover what they do not know and formulate questions. We heard anecdotes where it seems that the culture is that you let people get on with it. One Bishop remembered not liking being told what to do in previous roles, so he left the new Archdeacon alone. There was also evidence that well run, regular meetings with Bishops, other Archdeacons and diocesan officers in many cases helped new Archdeacons access the information and support they needed.

7.3 Ongoing development

Given what has been said above about the ongoing training needs of Archdeacons, there is a question of whether training should be provided at a national or a diocesan level. Overall, Bishops and Archdeacons think that the Archdeacons' Conference should provide a large part of ongoing training. Fewer think that the diocese can and should provide it. This appears to be dependent on the size of the diocese. The national dimension to training is seen to mean that it is likely to be able to keep Archdeacons current with recent developments

in law and practice. Some suggest a mixture with a portfolio, directory or bank of resources that can be drawn on. The issue of the difference in dioceses and the background and expertise of different Archdeacons was repeatedly raised. It also seems to be appropriate that some training is delivered to whole diocesan senior teams rather than to Archdeacons in a national or regional grouping. The Archdeacons' Forum is seen as an appropriate body to oversee what happens in terms of training but with greater resourcing.

7.4 Resources

Archdeacons were asked to name any courses or programmes that they had been on that had been particularly useful. By far the most popular was Bridge Builders, the Mennonite programme on conflict resolution and mediation, followed some way behind by The Leadership Institute's Senior Leadership Programme. A number of people named the Ministry Division programmes for Common Tenure, Safeguarding, and MDRs. Others talked about the value of colleagues, both Archdeacons and officers. The Strategic Leadership Programme was mentioned by a number of people.

Other single mentions were given to the following:

- National Archdeacons Conferences
- Police – how to do an investigation
- Consultancy for Mission and Ministry at York St John University
- Work Consultant
- John Truscott on administration
- Senior Clergy Leaders, Anglican Centre, Rome
- Ecclesiastical law Society
- 3D Coaching

In the questionnaire section on how training should be provided and in the interviews, several people suggested going to agencies outside the church to get an outsider, more professional approach to the subject. It is interesting how few such agencies are mentioned as having been used or as useful.

There are regional meetings of Archdeacons from nearby dioceses, which vary from the inside of a day to residential. Archdeacons see these as highly valuable offering warm, creative and developmental support and input. They are well attended. There are helpful provincial conferences of Archdeacons, which happen in the intervening years between the biennial National Archdeacons' Conferences.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 General Principles

The preceding research and discussions provide an evidence base on which to draw up a series of proposal for the continuing development and support of Archdeacons. Any study will acknowledge the fact that it can only be a snapshot from a particular time. This is especially true for this study with new ways of understanding the role, person and work of an Archdeacon being tested in a number of directions.

In order to produce an effective set of proposals, we have based our recommendations on a series of principles.

- Continuing ministerial development for Archdeacons is a formational aspiration. It is as much about how to be a growing, integrated, spiritually secure Archdeacon as about

carrying out the tasks of an Archdeacon; as much about challenge and growth in the role as beyond it.

- The Church in the diocese and nationally has a duty to ensure good quality learning and development for its Archdeacons.
- Archdeacons have a duty to foster their own learning and development.
- Effective CMD depends, therefore, on the working partnership between the individual Archdeacon and the diocesan/national Church.
- Archdeacons are senior leaders in the Church of England. Within the context of continuing learning and development of all clergy, as laid out in the national Statement of Expectations for CMD (guidance issued under Regulation 19 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009 – see Appendix C), the support, learning and development of Archdeacons exists as a subset of that for the senior leadership of the Church of England, which also includes Bishops, cathedral Deans and diocesan secretaries/chief executives.
- If such a national, cooperative understanding is to be implemented, it depends on generous, farsighted collaboration between various bodies and personnel. This will include the Archdeacons' Forums and their equivalent bodies for the other roles as well as the Archbishops' Advisor for Bishops' Ministry, the CMD Committee of the House of Bishops and the Ministry Division. It will depend on a sensitive understanding of the nature of the Church of England as a federation of fairly

independent dioceses as well as being realistic about funding and its sources.

- Effective learning and development will be most effective if targeted to the right groupings within this cluster of senior leadership roles. This might be to an Archdeacon on their own, within the diocese, in a region, provincially or nationally. It may be appropriate to deliver training to the Bishop's senior leadership team in a diocese or in a regional partnership of dioceses. There may be occasions when it is appropriate to bring two or three of the roles together in the diocese, the region or nationally, according to the content of the training.
- Learning and development for Archdeacons (amongst others) needs to balance a series of factors:
 - Effectiveness and efficiency – getting the best out of the expenditure of time, effort and money
 - Inclusivity – doing together all except that which is best done apart
 - Confidentiality – respecting the space to reflect safely on my context
 - Good targeting – carefully matching support with individual and organisational needs
- Contextual changes in law, the Church's staffing, shape and strategy mean that the Archdeacons rely increasingly on highly developed people skills. Their CMD needs to balance this with the traditional emphasis on technical, legal knowledge.
- National guidelines and templates are made available which do not proscribe what must be delivered but provide reasonable expectations of good practice to minimise

the variability of developmental support that exists now.

- Learning development is a proactive activity, which benefits from conscious, careful planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Benefits from learning and development are crucially the result of informed reflection on daily practice.

8.2 Recommendations

The following sections set out the recommendations for the continuing ministerial development of Archdeacons that arise from the investigations and discussions behind this report. The recommendations recognise that effective development in role is a healthy combination of individual initiative, theologically informed, reflective practice, supportive oversight, constructive feedback, clear understanding of both the work to be done and what effective inhabiting of the role looks like as well as relevant, up-to-date input. As will have been seen from the report up to this point, there is much in what is already provided which is valuable and useful. This means that some of our recommendations are to keep doing what is already happening or to adjust it a little.

At present, it is recognised that Archdeacons are priests of their particular dioceses. The funding for their development comes from their diocese. This is in common with other senior leaders in the dioceses such as cathedral Deans and Diocesan Secretaries but in contrast to Bishops, the funding for whose development comes from the Church Commissioners. (The Commissioners' contribution pays for a national officer and her support as well as a modest, development grant

for each Bishop.) In order to support national initiatives such as the Archdeacons' Forum who oversee and coordinate Archdeacons' learning and development, events like the biennial Archdeacons' conferences make a small surplus. For the most part, what is recommended here demands no extra funding. If the principle that Archdeacons' development is a national Church concern is accepted, this will not undermine the current practice that it is fundamentally paid for out of diocesan budgets.

1. Develop the understanding and culture that Archdeacons' CMD is a national concern and a key part of Diocesan Bishops' work.

- Present this report to the House of Bishops and its Senior Appointments Group and CMD Committee in order to develop amongst the Bishops both an understanding of Archdeacons' CMD needs and the key role of the Bishops in supporting Archdeacons' work.
- Continue the regular meetings between the representatives of the Archdeacons' Forum and the Archbishops' Adviser on Bishops' Ministry to ensure close cooperation and sharing of resources and opportunities.
- Initiate regular conversations with the national forums for Deans and Diocesan Secretaries to ensure close cooperation and sharing of resources and opportunities.

2. Ensure the balance within CMD for Archdeacons reflects their needs.

Arising from the research there are three broad categories of ongoing training and support which have been identified as important to Archdeacons.

Specific resources can be grouped under these three headings:

1. Training and support in statutory duties, new legislation, leadership, people skills, sharing of good practice, etc.
2. Reflective spaces to facilitate self-development and learning – individually and in various groupings.
3. Regular MDR and oversight from the diocesan Bishop – for specific feedback, reflection on the development of the role, and development beyond the role.

It is clear from the research that Archdeacons see themselves as resourceful self-starters in relation to their learning and development and are keen to build on this approach while at the same time acknowledging their need to access learning and support from various sources.

It is also evident that the role of the Archdeacon has specific pressures arising from the 'in-between' and 'interpretative' (section 6.2) nature of the role which entails holding the balance between competing and, sometimes, irreconcilable interests, while at the same time bearing the discomfort of not being able to meet all expectations. Reflective spaces are therefore crucial in enabling those occupying these roles to be able to discern how to conduct and resource oneself in this role (professionally, spiritually, theologically, and emotionally) and how best to respond.

3. Construct shared, national best practice guidelines for the support which is provided.

Develop common guidelines for Bishops, Archdeacons, cathedral Deans and Diocesan Secretaries/Chief Executives on, for example, induction, work consultancy, mentoring, and coaching with the national staff at the Wash House (the office at Lambeth Palace which

is the base for national officers such as the Archbishops' Appointments Adviser, the Clergy Appointments Adviser and the Archbishops' Adviser on Bishops' Ministry). Some work on these for Bishops is already in progress and a sensible approach is to join in the creation of these guidelines or best practice guides rather than having to write specific versions for each category of senior leader.

4. Build a national Archdeacons' website using the Wash House App.

The Bishops have a national website maintained by the Wash House which provides information on current issues, resources, details of training and has spaces for confidential and other discussion and polls. We recommend that an Archdeacons' site is built as part of this. There would be a cost in terms of setting up the site and continuing to maintain it and supply it with up to date content. The officer who does this currently for the Bishops' site spends 20% (one day a week) of her time on this. If our subsequent recommendation to appoint an Archdeacons' CMD officer is adopted, it would be appropriate that this is part of their work.

5. Strengthen the quality of induction of Archdeacons.

It is recommended that a programme of induction is carried out for newly appointed Archdeacons. This should apply to those new to the role of Archdeacon and Archdeacons moving from one Archdeacon's role to another. Good induction is necessary for Archdeacons who are appointed from within the same diocese. It is sometimes assumed that those appointed from within the diocese already know all they need to know. Our research showed that this is certainly not the case.

It is recommended that the Diocesan Bishop holds the responsibility for ensuring that induction of new Archdeacons takes place with an initial meeting between the Bishop and the Archdeacon to clarify understandings and expectations of this process and subsequent meetings arranged for review and reflection on the process.

It is recommended that a specific person is designated (e.g., Diocesan Secretary, fellow Archdeacon) to draw up the induction programme in conjunction with the new Archdeacon and to monitor its progress and any issues arising. We offer the following guidelines:

- **Introduction to the diocese and role:**
 - clear job/role description
 - visit to diocese to meet key people prior to taking up post
 - meet individual members of Bishop's senior leadership team
 - meet diocesan secretary and diocesan office staff/tour around diocesan office
 - briefing on diocesan 'culture', structures and current vision/strategy
 - familiarisation with office procedures, expenses and administrative systems and policies
 - meetings with diocesan registrar, Chancellor, Chair of DAC and other bodies with whom the Archdeacon will be working closely
 - introductions to relevant civic people/bodies with whom the Archdeacon will be working (according to job description)
 - meet other key diocesan officers
 - introduction to the Cathedral
 - introductions to Area/Rural Deans
 - visits to parishes/deaneries in their Archdeaconry

- **Learning and development needs:**

- attendance at new Archdeacons' Conferences
- introduction to statutory aspects of role as 'ordinary'
- identify particular learning needs in relation to role/duties and how these will be attended to (in the light of reflection with the Bishop)
- attendance at seminars as suggested by John Rees (see Appendix B) on legal and statutory duties
- training in people skills and conflict transformation/mediation (e.g., Mennonite Bridge Builders course)
- induction into MDR system in the diocese and training on conducting interviews
- training in making appointments and processes used in the diocese
- mentor/work consultant in place?
- cell group in place?
- reflection with the Bishop on the job description as the role develops

- **Support in making the transition:**

- support for the family/spouse
- ensuring there is personal and spiritual support in place and someone to reflect with on the transition
- working in the senior leadership team
- establishing and maintaining a healthy work/life balance

- **Needs:**

- someone to oversee induction programme
- clarity about who the Archdeacon is accountable to for oversight and MDR, e.g., the diocesan Bishop, especially where Archdeacon works closely with a suffragan or area Bishop.

- clear and agreed programme of sessions with overseeing Bishop for purposes of induction, MDR, reflection on development of self in role and beyond it, and emerging development of role and responsibilities in the diocese and national church.

- **Support resources and networks:**

- Work Consultant/Mentor
- Spiritual direction/retreats
- meeting with fellow Archdeacons for business and support
- cell group
- regional group
- new Archdeacons' conference
- biennial Archdeacons' conference
- relevant literature
- training courses and workshops

The officers at the Wash House are developing guidelines for the induction of Bishops. The guidelines above, based on the findings of this study, will be of use in developing a common set of best practice guidelines for senior leaders.

6. Each Archdeacon should have a current development plan.

The findings of this study indicate that there is a range of technical knowledge and skills development, especially people skills, which all Archdeacons need to acquire over their years as an Archdeacon. Over and above the basic, generic fields, there will also be specific areas of knowledge and skill which apply to each role in the way its work is defined. Our recommendation is that each Archdeacon needs a development plan. This is primarily the work of the Archdeacon and the diocesan Bishop, although any plan will call on the assistance, expertise and input of other figures in the

diocese and the church nationally, for example, the Diocesan Secretary, the Chancellor and the Registrar, HR professionals, and the Archdeacons' Forum.

Development planning should form the basis of a conversation between Archdeacon and Bishop at least once a year in a progressive process that builds on what has been agreed and achieved in the previous years. The conversation contains the following elements:

- An understanding of the needs of the role of that particular Archdeacon in terms of knowledge and skills
- An understanding of the Archdeacon's present match with the needs above combined with an understanding of the Archdeacon's and the Bishop's objectives for that particular Archdeacon in the near, middle and, if possible, long term future.
- Review of how far the developmental goals set the previous time have been successfully met.
- A plan to work towards bridging the gaps identified above. The plan should contain short term and longer-term actions, which are realistic and achievable with funding and timelines articulated.

Initially this conversation will be concerned with issues of induction, that is, developing the knowledge and skills that are key as the Archdeacon takes up the role. This will change over time as the development planning conversation starts to concern development within the role as well as possibilities regarding moving on from that role. Some of this conversation will overlap with the Ministerial Development Review but is closely focused on future learning rather than the wide range of objectives MDRs seek to reach.

7. Continue the biennial National Archdeacons' Conference.

The National Archdeacons' Conference, which happens every other year, is seen as valuable and useful. It should continue.

8. Make the New Archdeacons' Conference a twice-yearly event.

Given the strong evidence of both the usefulness of the new Archdeacons' Conference and that some people missed its benefit by it coming too soon or too late in their first year as an Archdeacon, it is suggested that its content is divided into two and that each new Archdeacon attends twice in their first year. At each of these events the offer of support such as mentors and cell groups should be delivered more effectively and consistently.

9. Continue the regional Archdeacons' meetings

The meetings of Archdeacons in local groupings of dioceses and as provinces are seen as creative, supportive and useful. They should continue. It is important that these meetings are clear about what they can do most effectively. Each regional meeting should have a purpose statement that defines what they are designed to achieve.

10. The Archdeacons' Forum should continue to oversee Archdeacons' CMD nationally.

The Archdeacons' Forum has proved an effective, valuable and responsive body in providing a coherent organising function for the Archdeacons nationally. It is an appropriate body to handle cooperation with other national forums and learning and development providers. Whatever the final decision in terms of the way Archdeacons' development is managed at a national level, the Archdeacons'

Forum should continue its oversight of CMD. If the appointment of a national CMD officer is pursued, they would be the natural body to which the officer should be accountable.

11. Monitor the development of novel format Archdeacon roles.

It is unclear whether there is a generally shared theology and organisational/institutional understanding for the novel format Archdeacons' roles such as Archdeacon for Strategy or Archdeacon Missioner. The concern for pastoral organisation that supports mission and the equipping Deaneries and area/rural Deans and parishes and their leaders and clergy indicate that a similar range of technical knowledge and people skills as for traditional Archdeacons is necessary. However, it will be helpful for the Archdeacons' Forum to monitor the development of these new roles in order to ensure that specific provision can be constructed if it becomes necessary.

12. Ensure CMD addresses the needs of women and ethnic minority Archdeacons.

The Archdeacons Forum needs to monitor as a regular item on its CMD agenda the needs of women and ethnic minority Archdeacons and the adequacy of CMD provision for them.

13. Consider the best groupings of senior leaders for the delivery of input and training.

Some recent introductions to new legislation and national policies have been delivered in groupings of senior leadership teams from neighbouring dioceses rather than in

national groups of a single constituency. It is recommended that all providers consider the most useful groupings to which to deliver development and learning opportunities.

14. Consider options for the management of Archdeacons' CMD

The management of CMD for Archdeacons as outlined above will take considerable time and effort. There seem to be three options available. The first is to continue as now with the work mostly being divided between volunteers from amongst the Archdeacons and some administrative support being provided by the Ministry Division in return for payment. The second is to allocate the work to an Archdeacon as part of their role. This may be attractive as a development opportunity for an Archdeacon who has been in role for some years and who needs some variety to sustain their interest and focus. This would need to be funded by contributions from all the dioceses or by the generosity of the diocese from which the Archdeacon comes. The fee paid to the Ministry Division would be saved. The third is to appoint national officer for two or three days a week. Again, this would have to be paid for by contributions from the dioceses and by the savings on the present fee to the Ministry Division.

On examination of the range of tasks that this report assumes necessary at a national, coordinating level, our recommendation is the third option for the equivalent of two days a week.

ARCHIDIACONAL MINISTRY: A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

BY MARTYN PERCY

1. INTRODUCTION:

This brief theological reflection offers three key ways of seeing the role of Archdeacons:

- They are Skilled Exegetes of the Church – discerning, reading and interpreting local situations for the diocese, and the diocese for the local context.
- They are therefore Connectors – this is an ‘in-between’ role – that is vital to the proper organic, systemic and communicative functioning of the body.
- They are Leaders and Managers – this is a role that requires a subtle blend of gifts and competencies, and a developed form of ‘ecclesial intelligence’.

In this Reflection, I will propose that we try to understand the role and identity of Archdeacons as ‘nerve-rich tendons’ within the body of Christ, and that have a primary responsibility for being the proactive and reactive part of the body that moves and responds in relation to Episcopal intentionality. This takes us beyond the idea that Archdeacons are (merely) the ‘eyes and ears’ of the Bishop. The Reflections are divided into three short sections that address:

- I The Context for Archdeacons
- II Archidiaconal Character
- III Future Agendas

The intention of these reflections is not to dictate precisely how the role and identity of Archdeacons is to be understood, but rather, to open up a new range of hermeneutical portals and insights that can illuminate more fully the variegated and diverse ways in which the role is understood, is challenged, and also functions as an agent of change.

I THE CONTEXT FOR ARCHDEACONS

2. PRIMARY CONTEXT:

The Archdeacon’s work is responding to a theology of order...’

Statutory Functions of an Archdeacon
(Archbishops’ Council).

2.a. I suppose the first question is ‘what order’? The identity and practice of the Church of England is inherently contested, and sits within a variety of competing and complementary interpretative frameworks. The local and the catholic; the parish and the diocese; the laity and clergy; ‘formal’ or ‘official’ expressions of faith and those that may in fact be ‘operant’ and ‘vernacular’. It will not take any Archdeacon long to discover that for every strategy, vision, rubric and communiqué issued by a diocese, there is a local church that will be ‘interpreting’ such instructions – working out how best to fashion and adapt the catholic and universal into something particular and local. Because the church is an interpretative community at every level, any ‘theology of order’ will vary – at least in small ways – over place and time. There is no blueprint. The church works more through guidance and the range of responses to such initiatives, than it does by instruction.

2.b. Archdeacons, therefore, first and foremost, need to be Skilled Exegetes – reading how the catholic has been translated into the local. Whether this is on church order, discipline, guidelines for employment or buildings, Archdeacons will know, instinctively, that what has flowed from the top (or centre) will be interpreted and reified in distinctive ways on the ground. And what follows from this, immediately, is that Archdeacons need to

be skilled mediators, since they convey their findings (and often their meanings) back to the source of authority in a given diocese. The interpretative aspect of an Archdeacon's role is, in other words, dialogical. They both transmit and receive signals, mediating (though their office – both the symbolic and executive role) across the range of territories and issues whose order they are required to sustain. They oscillate between the general and the particular, the applied and theoretical, the abstract and the practical. In belief, practice, canon law and heritage (i.e., buildings), they are seldom applying principles in an abstract manner, putatively imposing order across the church. They are, rather, interpreting, responding, adapting and discerning; trying to find sufficient common order in the midst of diversity, and attempting to strike a balance between the catholic and local. The role of Archdeacon requires the holder and bearer of office to be flexible and firm; resilient, yet responsive.

2.c. If we are to understand the purpose and function of Archdeacons today, then knowing the roots of the role will give us (at least) a partial grasp of how it has arrived at its current complexity. William Fittall has noted (GS 1846B) that historically, Archdeacons were initially deacons who had not been ordained priests. The Archdeacon was therefore the principal deacon of a church (i.e. a diocese) and assisted the Bishop in a wide range of tasks. The Archdeacon was often chosen to succeed the Bishop who had appointed him and would then have received the orders of priest and Bishop. The practice of choosing Archdeacons from the order of presbyters, rather than from the order of deacons can be dated from around the end of the first millennium.

It was only after that that Archdeacons came to have an oversight role for fellow presbyters rather than only deacons. There are a number of reasons for this 'evolutionary shift' in the role of Archdeacon. One was the decline of the diaconate, and the relative expansion of numbers in the presbyterate. Another was the increased development of Episcopal authority, which probably necessitated Archdeacons to hold the same kind of rank or order as the clergy they were increasingly overseeing on behalf of the Bishop. This accounts for the resolution reached in 1840, on the qualifications for the appointment of Archdeacons contained in section 27 of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners Act 1840: '*No person shall hereafter be capable of receiving the appointment of... Archdeacon... until he shall have been six years complete in holy orders and... be in priest's orders at the time of the appointment...'* And hence to the slow development and the eventual crystallisation of one of the primary functions of an Archdeacon today: [they] *shall see that all such as hold any ecclesiastical office within the [Archdeaconry] perform their duties with diligence, and shall bring to the Bishop's attention what calls for correction or merits praise.*' (Canon C). The historical appreciation of the role and office is vital here.

2.d. These observations resonate with aspects and data that this Report has picked up in its fieldwork – interviews and ethnography that lead to a more intentional grounded ecclesiology. Following Robin Greenwood (*Parish Priests: For the Sake of the Kingdom*, London, SPCK, 2009), we might say that Archdeacons are comparable to Navigators (see 6.1) – or perhaps Pilots, guiding the details of the beginnings and end of a journey for a large ship, as it leaves or enters port. Robin

Greenwood, recognising the rich complexities of our institutional and organizational life, deploys the concept of 'navigator' for the public ministry of the parish priest. In this respect he draws attention to two things (a) the seafaring navigator's 'vital skill and commitment' providing the crew 'essential information and confidence for their survival and success' and (b) his or her dependence 'on those who collected food, cooked, made decisions about the direction and speed of travel, attended to discipline or maintained the ship's fabric'.

2.e. This metaphor when applied to the public ministry of the parish priest 'evokes wisdom and promotes the idea of purposeful, reciprocal communion'. As such episcopos is the navigating task of the priest. It is inherently relational and mutual in its dynamic with fellow Christians for episkopos, 'rather than being the central focus of the parish's ministry, is a lively stimulus for the building up of the whole body'. All are called to share in this building and growing being 'commissioned' in different ways. Greenwood wisely recognises that there 'is some tough thinking required surrounding the question of how the Church simultaneously affirms the ministry of all the participants in the local church and at the same time recognizes the specifically essential work of the priest'. We can also see that this ecclesial intelligence extends to the Archdeacon being willing to become a 'lightning conductor', earthing tensions operating in the system (see 6.1.3). And the Archdeacon, as a Principal Person in the ecology of Episcopal life with the 'in-between role' and 'connecting roles' (see 6.2).

2.f. So, we might say that there are inherent tensions in the body: between organisation

and institution, ecclesiology and ministry, mission and maintenance, static and dynamic order, change and continuity. The Archdeacon presides over these tensions. They are, classically, not problems, but more like a series of dilemmas. Problems can be solved. But dilemmas have to have competing convictions and interests balanced – so remain tense, and ultimately unresolved. This is not to say 'nothing can get done'; but rather, it recognises that the work of the Archdeacon consists in presiding over a range of dilemmas that exist through their tension, not in spite of them. The response of the church at the level of the Archdeacon may require sacrifice or compromise. It may not be possible to sustain all possible, desirable activities and approaches whilst maintaining the body's coherence. As Archdeacons are likely to be identified as the ones imposing or expecting sacrifice from some parts of the body, there are also likely to be the focus of blame and scapegoating. The church is a complex body, and such tensions are part of its nature.

3. ARCHDEACONS IN CONTEXT: THE NATURE OF THE BODY

3.a. But where would one locate such a ministry? If one follows Paul's metaphor of the church as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12: 12-26) there are some inferences that may be made, which might help us articulate a more nuanced theological understanding of the role of Archdeacon. Our attention to the idea of the church as a complex body at this point is hardly accidental. Bodies contain systems and forms of organisations that require meticulous regulative management. Not all of these will be consciously apparent to the mind. But a body is clearly more than one single form of

organisation. It contains naturally functioning parts that need no conscious instructions; it responds, reacts, grows and declines in relation to different circumstances and environments. It is something that can be trained and educated; yet is also in constant state of complex formations, which may involve instinct, wisdom, memory and innate calculation.

3.b. Thus, a body is a 'natural symbol' (Mary Douglas) as well as a single entity. Its identity, of course, is complex and contestable, yet obvious. It has to come to terms with the multiplicity of meanings that it inhabits, which vary across the range of discourses in which the body engages – medical, anthropological, sociological, spiritual, and so forth. The body is one, yet capable of multiple interpretative possibilities. Correspondingly, Paul's analogy of the church as the body of Christ allows us to reappraise the richness of the church as an institution. The human body is a 'natural symbol' by which people often order the systemic nature of their corporate life. The human body is often an image of society; how a group views and values its own members will reflect notions of corporate life. Therefore, to contemplate the church as a body is to invite reflection on the sensitivity of the church, its receptivity, its boundaries, barriers and definitions, all processes of exchange, as well as its natural death and replenishment. It is 'osmotic' in character: giving and receiving nourishment, identity and love. The body is inescapably part of its environment, as well as separate and distinct. The body – with all its members – is incarnate in space and time.

3.c. Why, though, do these reflections matter in terms of Archidiaconal leadership? Arguably because the leadership of the church requires

taking responsibility for a highly complex organism, where obvious clarity of intention and attention cannot be taken for granted, and are not always apparent. The systems and micro-organizations within the institution/body will maintain their foci in a dedicated (even myopic) manner, almost independent of any willed tactics or strategy that the body may consciously have articulated. Thus, the 'head' may well prioritize a range of tasks or opportunities. But the heart will still beat, and other micro-systems within the body will still carry on with their primary functions. This does not mean, of course, that the body is divided, or in any sense schizoid. It is simply the recognition that its complexity is part of its organic and mystical given-ness.

3.d. That is why most senior positions of authority within the Church of England require that individuals hold (with poise and care) a complex nexus of competing convictions and emotions that cannot be easily resolved on behalf of or within the institution. Leading a body or institution is not the same as leading an organisation. The latter can be lean, and easily directed. The former is an embodied form of existence centred on the shared holding of values and purposes, which sometimes conflict. Many Archdeacons understand the costly nature of this vocation, at least innately if not explicitly – a kind of servant leadership – in which the body must be both be led and be served. Moreover, this leadership comprehends that much of Anglican polity is open. It is, like a body, replete with creative dilemmas; checks and balances; the reactive and proactive.

3.e. A difficulty for some in discussing the role of Archdeacon, in common with roles such as Vicar, Rector or Dean, is that it is not seen

as having the same Biblical and early Church mandate as the three fold order of deacons, priests and Bishops. Some Anglican provinces do not have Archdeacons. However, on closer examination it becomes clear that it is necessary to have a senior, integrative role in a diocese that combines pastoral wisdom, legal expertise, strategic communication and enforcement of policies and rules. In some provinces this role has a different title such as Dean (as in the Scottish Episcopal Church) or Vicar General.

II ARCHIDIACONAL CHARACTER

4. DIFFERENT KIND OF BODY INTELLIGENCE: FROM 'THE EYES AND EARS' TO 'NERVE-RICH TENDONS'.

4.a. Richard Hooker, naturally in agreement with Paul's analogy of the body, notes that the 'bodie of Christ is a bodie mysticall, the parts thereof being all conjoined, and are proportionable'. Proportionality and conjoined-ness are, I think, central to the identity and healthy functioning of the Archidiaconal role. But what might this mean? In more ancient ecclesiology and Christian tradition, the Archdeacon was often seen as the eyes and ears of the Bishop: those extensions of the body for seeing and hearing. However, Bishops are not the 'brains' of this body, and nor are they the head of the church. In Paul's analogy, Christ is the head, and the church the body. But a Bishop needs to know the mind of Christ, and the role of the Archdeacon is, in part, the implementation of that mind, and registering the reception of its actual reification.

4.b. In practical terms, therefore, and bearing in mind what was implied earlier about Archdeacons – communicative and receptive,

proactive and responsive in the body – it is perhaps more useful to think about the Archidiaconal role in a richer analogical framework. Suppose, for example, one were to conceive of the Archidiaconal role as something like a vital nerve-rich tendon within the body: having its own 'local intelligence' (i.e., immediate responsive actions, or 'reflexes'), but also something the mind can instruct, and through which cause the limbs or body to act with clear intentionality. As such, the role of Archdeacon is both an expression of and a conduit to episkope; the nerve link and muscle that connects the intentions of the mind with the actual movement of the body. Or, put another way, the primary agent by which the body moves and acts within, and also responds to its local environment. This analogy is not intended to be definitive. The point being made is that the Archidiaconal role converts intention to movement; and also converts any external contact the body has into recognised sensation – or acts as a reflex. In one sense, we could say that the Archidiaconal role is comparable to the (so-called) 'motor strip' of the brain, connecting the two hemispheres, but is essentially responsible for making the limbs and muscles move as the mind intends. (NB: When the motor strip is damaged, or an individual has a stroke, the right or left of the body will struggle to move).

4.c. The work of the Archdeacon, then, is indeed a work of responding to order – and on all the levels that such a simple sentiment is capable of being interpreted. Here, we have an analogy that moves the role beyond being merely functional to something that is richly receptive, reactive and reflexive. It implies a role that is sensate – to the rest of the body, and its

external environment. And is also sufficiently intentional and independent within the body to be dialectical, mediating and interpreting the signals it receives and the actions it takes when interpreting signals it has been sent – both within and without the body. It can be passive and active, yet is, at the same time, never idle, since its constant ‘conjoined’ state means that it is an essential and major organ in the body, without which the body cannot carry out its basic intentions, or respond to any external pressures. It is the closest conjoined organ to the episkopos, and yet distinct from it, helping to both order both the inner life of the body, as well as regulating its responses to the pressures and challenges the body faces without. Put more simply, the intentionality of episkopos is reified in the Archidiaconal role, and becomes a materiality in the church.

5. IDENTITY AND VISIBILITY

5.a. With these reflections in mind, let us now turn to some of the more specific questions that this Report raises in relation to the role and identity of Archdeacons. For example, besides the tasks and roles that form part of the Episcopal portfolio, there are numerous questions of identity. Given the context of late modernity – replete with secularism and pluralism – many denominations have sought to consolidate and clarify their identity within an era of considerable cultural fluidity. It cannot be surprising that recent Anglican theology has invested more time and energy in deliberating on and defining episcopacy than in any other

generation. Indeed, and understandably, there have arguably been more deliberations on the nature, function and identity of episcopacy in the twentieth century than all those that were penned from the reformation to the end of the nineteenth century. So there appears to be no escaping questions of task, role and identity. Yet it is ironic that so little attention has been directed towards the role and identity of Archdeacons – something that this Report has both noted and addressed. The key problem, as we have already observed, is that the ‘order’ we might seek has to be enacted in a context where the nature and identity of the church is contested. Thus, tempting though an apparently rich theological modelling of the church might be, such as that proposed by Avery Dulles¹, for example, fails to come to terms with the actuality of leadership in denominations or congregations.

5.b. Correspondingly, the resulting analysis of a church or denomination, and suggestions for appropriate reform, emerge as detached ideologies rather than as engaged programmes exhibiting a deep understanding of the actual ecclesial context to be considered. Although interestingly, Nicholas Healy’s *Church, World and Christian Life*² has recently offered some focussed attention on the problematic gap between ‘blueprint ecclesiologies’ and the ‘concrete church’. He notes that most recipes or formulae that set out to improve or reform the churches fail to come to terms with the grounded reality of denominations and congregations. Thus, the reformers’ programme

¹ A. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, New York, Doubleday, 1974

² N. Healy, *Church, World and Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*, Cambridge, CUP, 2000.

will usually fail as a result, leading to a potentially deeper spiral of despair, and a continual and more intense hunt for that elusive formula that will provide the focussed leadership and direction that is perceived to be lacking. Those seeking to improve the church in apparently 'simple' ways do not understand the complexity that forms that church.

5.c. But what, if anything, is the nature of the Church of England? One key insight here is to recognise that the church is an institution, rather than an organization. The distinction between an organization and institution is a classic sociological paradigm.³ Philip Selznick, argues that organizations exist for utilitarian purposes, and when they are fulfilled, the organization may become expendable. Institutions, in contrast, are 'natural communities' with historic roots that are embedded in the fabric of society. They incorporate various groups that may contest each other, the institution, values and the like. Clearly, in Selznick's thinking, a church is an institution, requiring leadership, not mere management. So the church, when treated like an organisation, can only be managed. And such management will, inevitably, be somewhat deficient, since the church is an institution in

which only certain types of management will be possible.

5.d. A further problem for would-be strategic or tactical reformers of the church is that many of the recipes or formulas that purport to be able shape the church or improve leadership style actually begin with a deeply deficient ecclesiology: they do not understand the local or regional nature of the body. Typically, the programmes are too task-orientated, or too simplistic, based on deeply contested aims and objectives.⁴ Granted, part of this problem may lie in addressing some fundamental questions within ecclesial polity. If ecclesiologies (or theologies of the church) cannot be easily aligned, it is hardly surprising that a collective vision for leadership in the church cannot be easily achieved, and attain consensus. And if one cannot agree here, it is unlikely that the apparent common problems and issues that might need to be addressed will be easily identified. In practical terms, what we might term the 'descriptive dilemma' in everyday ecclesial polity, lies at the very heart of some of the most infamous cases of leadership or managerial failure known within the Church of England.

³ See Philip Selznick, *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*, New York, Harper, 1957. (c.f. P. Avis, *Authority and Leadership in the Church*, London, SPCK, 1992, pp. 107ff).

⁴ At the risk of a further caricature, one could say that majority of writing and research on leadership in the church is 'functionalist' rather than 'behaviourist'. Most of this is 'applied' in orientation: blueprints, aims, objectives and anticipated outcomes. Most of these fail to read or understand the complexity of the church in its dense and extensive catholicity, or comprehend the kind of local variables that can be located in ecclesial contexts. However, some studies do, in part, illuminate the kind of grounded ecclesiological approach we have taken in this research project. See for example M. Torry, *Managing God's Business: Religious and Faith-Based Organizations and their Management*, London, Ashgate, 2005. See also M. Harris, *Organizing God's Work: Challenges for Churches and Synagogues*, London, Macmillan, 1998.

5.e. That said, Paul Avis suggests that leadership in the church requires reconciliation with its roles and tasks. First, it has a symbolic role. In ecclesiological terms, the leader is a primary bearer of the institution's values, as well as someone to inspire faith in the common purposes of the institution. Here, the leader, in his or her symbolic role, functions as a catalyst – a major agent of transformation and transcendence. Naturally, this means that leaders will need to be attentive to the projections and unconscious assumptions that are placed upon the role by those within the institution. Second, the leader's priority is to focus the energies of the institution on its primary tasks. This requires the articulation of vision, identifying policies, exploring and implementing strategies, and engaging in tactics. Third, the leader will need to be a problem-solver. This requires the wisdom to distinguish between problems and dilemmas (the latter cannot be solved, usually – they express an endemic tension in the institution); determination to overcome contextual, environmental or institutional issues that inhibit the institution from flourishing; and identification of those factors that need addressing and the issues that need resolving.⁵ Of particular concern to Avis is the 'cognitive myopia' that can develop within institutions: 'responding only to the immediate, the visible, the palpable, rather than searching for the deeper, long-term causes and attempting to deal with them'. Put another way, do our leaders watch the waves, and perhaps ride them? Or, rather, learn to read the tides?

5.f. It is clear from the research and from evidence in the interviews that it is vital to the identity of Archdeacons that their leadership is an expression of their ministry as a priest. This encompasses the role of being a focus for the symbolic, an interpreter, inspirer and catalyst. At the heart of the priest's role, however, is the calling to 'make present'; working not only that God may be present in Word and sacrament and enabling people to be present to God, but also in enabling a congregation to be present to its context within and without the church, pursuing its primary vision in worship and mission with its members being attentive to one another. In this respect, the priestly role of the Archdeacon is key in enabling ministers and their congregations to be present and alive to their calling to participate in the mission of God as seen from the perspective of both the local and that of the diocese. It is the testimony of Archdeacons interviewed that the mechanics of the job done prayerfully and pastorally can become the means of grace and growth in the Gospel for ministers and congregations.

III FUTURE AGENDAS

6. ARCHIDIACONAL TENSIONS: TOP-DOWN OR BOTTOM-UP? LEADERSHIP OR MANAGEMENT? ECCLESIOLOGY OR MINISTRY?

6.a. 'Reading' the church richly and deeply is one of the fundamental tasks in any kind of senior ecclesial leadership. And perhaps what has emerged in recent years is that as the capacity

⁵ Avis, 1992, pp. 107-118.

of the church to read itself deeply in this way has in some respects depleted, so has it found itself reaching for more secular management templates to provide ordering. The problem with these is that they tend to be imposed on structures (e.g., dioceses), even though there is usually a basic disconnect between the espoused management template, the nature of life and ministry on the ground and the translation of the template into whatever form it assumes on the ground. However the fundamental problem remains. In secular management templates, the move tends to be top down rather than a mutual and interactive top down/bottom up. The Archdeacon, of course, is both at the top and the bottom of this spectrum, which is an unenviable tension to bear. (See 6.6 where basic move is representational role from diocese to parish).

6.b. A further problem arising from this dilemma is that much of the discourse in the church that is about leadership usually defaults to management, with minimal leadership. To some extent it has to, because life on the ground actually requires this. On the ground, so to speak, one finds complex informal and formal networks of people and ecclesial practices; pathways of influence both formal and informal, and so forth. It is a fascinating interweaving, often unformed and deeply reliant upon trust – and other forms of virtue and ecclesial character. Thus, it is also fragile and susceptible to distortion from within and without (e.g. imposition of top down templates of management/leadership). There is also a more fundamental error in much of what we have set out here. It begins with a focus on ministry and ministerial needs, and the management/

leadership discourse operating within this arena. This will only suit those who advocate certain policies and templates for management, because it means they can operate without attending to the particularities of the contexts and ecclesial frameworks.

6.c. Some years ago, the key document on theological education, ACCM 22, asked ‘what kind of ministry does the church require?’ This meant that ecclesiology was placed firmly on the agenda. A more specific form of this question for our purposes in this Report might be: ‘what kind of leadership/management does the diocese require?’ This implies an ecclesiology of the diocese as the fundamental issue. In other words we need to begin from what a diocese is in order to develop appropriate forms of ministerial leadership and management. Put another way, it is hard to say what an Archdeacon says and does until the role and identity of the diocese is clarified. Is it a conglomerate? Or is it an agglomeration, for example? The difference could be crucial.

6.d. In order to reflect adequately on the role and identity of Archdeacons, we shall therefore need an appreciation of ecclesiology as important. Indeed, it is as crucial as ministry, and indeed there is some dialectic between the two: the two inform each other, mutually. In order to explore this relationship further let us first focus on ecclesiology. There is a very interesting parallel here between the Roman critique of Anglican orders. Rome has traditionally found fault with our orders because our orders lack whatever is required to secure a valid ministry and this flows on to judgements regarding the ecclesial status of Anglicanism. In other

words ministry drives ecclesiology. Some contemporary Roman scholars recognise this theological error; the proverbial cart before the horse. Unfortunately the same mistake occurs when it comes to the above matter of ministry in relation to a diocese. Basically ministry and its forms remain in an ecclesial vacuum. Models of leadership/management in Ministry are run in parallel to a diocese.

6.e. The top down approach is politically useful because it masks the systemic problems associated with a diocese or rather masks the messiness and informal structuring of relationships amidst formal structures of a diocese. As soon as you begin to map a diocese in terms of energy flows and structuring you discover all kinds of interesting data that really needs a bottom up response as much as a top down imposed template. Now as soon as you move in this direction, there is the inevitable cry that comes up, that it is only a model that has to be adapted at the ground. This is interesting, because it relocates the really difficult work to those on the ground. Moreover, it can complicate their work because they now have to figure out what to do with a fundamentally alien template. The point of all this is that Archdeacons are in the mix on the ground at very particular interfaces. Models from the top down meet on their desk/life and they in turn belong to all the informal and formal operations at various levels in a diocese.

6.f. What is also rather striking here is the different perceptions of Archdeacons that emerge at this point, and in turn challenge previously held assumptions. These differences emerge at a number of levels. There is the

level of what each parish or diocese thinks Archdeacons are for, or what they need to do in order to achieve their purpose. Then there is a movement beyond these perceptions, and a necessary attendance to the realities of what Archdeacons do. We have seen that for many, the perception of this role is bound up in 'order', even if that is a rather instrumentalist view. Archdeacons are regarded as personas and roles that maintain and sustain what is conceived of as being set in place. But this is far more than being a mere functionary of the 'system'. This is why the 'organic' ecclesial model is perhaps better than a 'mechanistic' one. The church is a complex body. Whilst systemic thinking can help it to understand itself, it is flesh, blood and Spirit before it is an ordered organisation. The ecclesial intelligence that Archdeacons both have and need is a natural requirement for the healthful functioning of that body.

7. ARCHDEACONS: PERSONAL AND INSTRUMENTAL DILEMMAS

7.a. As I have suggested, Archdeacons maintain this order by encouraging, enabling, sustaining, challenging, developing, pastoring and the like. To achieve these ends, developing trust and friendship will be more important than exercising power and coercion. Here, we should perhaps recognise that highly personalist and life giving categories can end up being directed to somewhat mechanical ends. So there is the potential for an inbuilt frustration for Archdeacons here, because they may well expend significant energy (and with great competence and diligence) achieving such ends, and with as much personal warmth they can muster. But, they have to live with the fact

that Bishops will see them as instruments who are deployed in order to get a job done – that is, maintain an order.

7.b. This is part of the costly paradox of the Archidiaconal role, but it does allow us to identify what a really good Archdeacon does in the system, and with all this instrumentality within a context of maintaining order. Ideally, Archdeacons are weavers of grace within the fabric of formal, informal and fragmented structures we have. They move, like others through the forms of our structures, but they often sense the weight of this possibly more so because they are operating in between. Bishops ought to be empathetic at this point, because that is their lot as well too. But I suspect empathy may, in a handful of cases, be in shorter supply, because of the lack of perception about the shared nature of oversight, between Bishop and Archdeacon. This is a pity, because for every strategy in a diocese, and for all the sense and hope of order, Archdeacons and Bishops, together, must adapt as they go along. They have to re-shape their ministry and priorities, fixing and repairing what needs attention. Ideally, the flock stays as one. But Jesus tells us to divide our attention and time too, and look for the one that has strayed. Order and improvisation have to coexist in the body.

8. ARCHDEACONS WITHIN A COLLABORATIVE ORDER: MYTH OR REALITY?

8.a. Archdeacons, then, are indeed a form of response to a theology of order. But as we have seen, those theologies, and the shape and identity of order, is only worked out in communion, collaboration and conversation.

Archdeacons have a ministry of both communicating the intentionality of the Episkopos, and also feeding back to it from the body, and the wider external environment. As such, the role of Archdeacon is one of sensitive receptor, mediator, interpreter and implementer. One of the most vital kinds of organs in the body: nerve-rich tendons that feel and enact. As parts of the body, they are essential for its proper ordering.

8.b. We have discussed how Archdeacons and their role can be conceived of, and the language is intentionally vivid. To be sure, Archdeacons need to be skilled exegetes of the church; and they will need ample ecclesial intelligence and stamina for the sake of the body. They can also be imagined as ‘lightning conductors’ and ‘navigators’ (or ‘pilots’, to continue with the mariner theme – intricate guiding of a large vessel at the beginning and end of a voyage, which is arguably when the vessel needs the most careful and patient husbandry). We have also explored how the Archidiaconal role, in the context of an organic ecclesial narrative, is comparable to a ‘nerve-rich tendon’, or to the motor strip of the brain. Archdeacons are the ‘mechanism’ of the body for communicating episcopal intentionality. They are also the reflex that communicates the sensations of the body to the episcopal mind – receiving and translating the experiences of the body.

8.c. There is no question, then, that Archdeacons are inextricably bound into the body: they play a full and vital part in its collaborative ordering. This suggests some potential fruitful areas for further discussion, and I list them here to conclude:

It would be helpful to have a wider and deeper audit – and honest appraisal, indeed – of the systemic difficulties that Archdeacons face in their roles. This is something that this Report has only been able to briefly touch upon.

It would be good to have some focussed attention should be given to the kinds of people who might best operate in the tight institutional framework of ecclesial life, at this level. The role requires a developed ecclesial intelligence.

It would be good to explore, in more depth, how the selection of Archdeacons links up to their professional development. Mediation and conflict resolution are likely to figure prominently in the skill-set required for on-going development.

8.d. This Report ultimately opens a window onto the challenges and systemic problems that Archdeacons face. The actuality of the church will always, to some extent, shape the role and

identity of Archidiaconal ministry. However, we should also be mindful of the models that can call our attention to the calling and vocation inherent in the role: navigator, pilot and lightning conductor all figure here. But as a vital part of the body of Christ, the Archdeacon is that which responds to the intentions of the mind, and thereby moves the body. And, at the same time, experiences the world, and the sensations in the body of the church, and communicates and translates these for the mind of that body. Archdeacons are Connectors: this is an ‘in-between’ role that is vital to the proper organic, systemic and communicative functioning of the body. They are Leaders and Managers: this is a role that requires a subtle blend of gifts and competencies, and a developed form of ‘ecclesial intelligence’. It is one of the most liminal roles that we have in the Church of England. Seemingly familiar, and often in receipt of projections and subject to caricature, it is arguably the most important role in the Church that is seldom understood.

APPENDIX A

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF USEFUL SOURCES FOR ARCHDEACONS

* = Seen as particularly useful by Archdeacons

CHP = Church House Publishing

CBC = Church Buildings Council (formerly the Council for the Care of Churches)

Church of England Law

**Canons of the Church of England* Church House Publishing

**Legal Opinions Concerning the Church of England* Church House Publishing

The Regulations of your Diocese

*Mark Hill (2007) *Ecclesiastical Law* 3rd Edn Oxford University Press (contains the texts of many of the measures that you need to refer to – expensive but invaluable)

Newsom & Newsom (1993) *Faculty Jurisdiction of the Church of England* Sweet & Maxwell

Canons, Measures and Synod documents available at or via

www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis.aspx

Particular Legislation

PCC (Powers) Measure 1956

Churchwardens Measure 1964 & 2001

*Church Representation Rules (many amendments)

Human Resource Issues

Clergy Discipline Measure 2007

Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) 2009 and amendments – see www.cofe-ministry.org.uk on Common Tenure

Marriage

Marriage Measure 2008

Anglican Marriage in England and Wales: A guide to the Law for the Clergy 2010 The Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury

Faculty Jurisdiction

Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991, amended 1995(x2), 2003, and 2005

Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000

Making Changes to a Listed Church: Guidelines for Clergy, Churchwardens and PCCs 1999

Funding Church repairs; a simple guide CBC

Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (ppG15) HMSO

Copy of your local Pevsner guide Penguin

Buildings websites

Churchcare, the website of the Church Buildings Council: www.churchcare.co.uk - extensive advice, access to documents, guides and legal measures

Ecclesiastical Insurance Group website: www.ecclesiastical.com

Churchyards

The Churchyards Handbook CBC

Diocesan policy and guidelines on trees and memorials (from the Chancellor)

Quinquennial Inspection of Churches

Diocesan Scheme and policy

Inspection of Churches Measure 1955

A Guide to Church Inspection and Repair CBC

Church Property

The Church Property Register CBC

Church Log Book CBC

Registers and Records

Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978

Guide to the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 (1993)

Disability and Church buildings

Widening the Eye of the Needle CBC

Parsonages

Parsonages – a design guide Church Commissioners (aka the Green Guide)

Ecumenical

Ecumenical Relations - Canons B43 & B44: Code of Practice CHP

Constitutional Guidelines for a Local Ecumenical Partnership 1998 CTE

Pastoral Reorganisation

Pastoral Measure 1993 & its Code of Recommended Practice

Team and Group Ministries Measure 1994 and its Code of Practice 1994

Journals

Ecclesiastical Law Journal – the journal of the Ecclesiastical Law Society

Parish Management

*James Behrens, 2005 *Practical Church Management*, 2nd Ed, Leominster: Gracewing
Parson and Parish at www.clergyassoc.co.uk/content/parsonandparish.htm Journal of the English Clergy Association

On the Role of an Archdeacon

R L Ravencroft "The Role of the Archdeacon Today" in *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 1995 Vol 3 p 379
H Jones "Omnis Gallia or the role of an Archdeacon" in *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 1991 Vol 2 p 236.

References in the General Synod Report *Episcopal Ministry* 1990 London: CHP

Two papers by Bishop Alastair Redfern:

Archdeacons and Anglican Polity – Historical Background

Archdeacons in the Church of England – The Management of Change

APPENDIX B

LEGAL INPUT

John Rees, Southern Province and Oxford Diocesan Registrar suggests a series of seminars on the legal side of an Archdeacon's work and offers his and others' assistance:

1. The Archdeacon's Year

- Preparation of Articles of Enquiry (January/ February)
- Organising Visitation (February/ March)
- Visitations (May/June)
- Presentation of Candidates at ordination (June/September)
- Training of new Churchwardens (late summer/early autumn)

2. Church Buildings, Churchyards and Faculties

- church buildings
- property disputes
- reordering and redevelopment
- disputes over memorials in churchyards
- faculties
- DAC

3. Properties, Trust and Schools

- other church properties
- appropriate use
- charitable trusts
- trust and charity law
- being a school trustee
- the new academies
- educational and charitable trusts

4. Marriage

- being a surrogate for the Vicar General
- marriage law
- immigration

5. Clergy discipline

- bringing complaints against clergy
- clergy discipline processes

6. Clergy terms of service

- administering the Terms of Service regime
- how to cope with the volume of work this entails and the lack of resource
- selection and appointment processes

APPENDIX C

CONTINUING MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

This guidance is issued under Regulation 19 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009, and sets out advice in relation to arrangements for Continuing Ministerial Education and Development in dioceses.

The purpose of Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) is to strengthen and deepen a lifelong learning culture within each diocese. Good practice in both provision and participation are ultimately evidenced in spiritual and numerical growth with the Church's ministers more fully engaged in God's mission themselves, in the variety of roles they have been licensed to as public representative ministers, and better able to stimulate and enable the whole Church to respond to its call.

CMD focuses not just on learning and training but takes seriously the flourishing of the whole person in their ministerial context. It cannot seek to meet all the individual needs of everyone but aims to create a normative environment in which developmental learning is recognized as a hallmark of professional good practice as well as a central aspect of discipleship. It is also a means by which we exercise grateful stewardship of the talents which God has entrusted to us, both as individuals and as the Church.

Good CMD provision is characterized by:

- a prophetic focus on the needs of the Church of the future as well as the immediate needs of the Church of today
- a well articulated theology of CMD accompanied by a clear statement of expectation
- a responsiveness to national and diocesan vision setting and policy

- visible modeling of good practice by key people including senior staff
- appointment of qualified post holders
- allocation of financial resources in accordance to articulated priorities
- collaboration between Dioceses and ecumenical partners regionally
- shared delivery with other Diocesan departments
- alignment with IME 1 - 7
- alignment with Clergy Terms of Service and Ministerial Development Review
- particular attention to transition points in ministry
- integration of the needs of the individual with the strategic objectives of the Diocese and the priorities of the wider Church
- inclusion of all those exercising ministry in the name of the Church with attention given to their differing needs
- ready access to information and to personal advice and support
- provision of enjoyable, supportive and inspirational learning events
- regular review of provision

Good CMD participation includes:

- honouring of vocation to "be diligent in prayer, in reading Holy Scripture, and in all studies that will deepen your faith"
- for full time ministers taking personal responsibility in setting aside at least 5 days for CMD and the best part of a week for retreat each year and encouraging and enabling others to do the same
- positive engagement with ongoing developmental learning at all stages of ministry

- regular participation in Ministerial Development Review
- proactively planning one's own learning especially in response to Ministerial Development Review
- using Ministerial Development Review to assess and apply learning undertaken
- keeping abreast of changing legal and public responsibilities
- planning ahead for possible longer periods of developmental leave
- balancing individual inclinations and enthusiasms with the needs and demands of the present role
- willingness to share knowledge and skills in order to resource the learning of others

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