

Ministry Division

Guidance Notes for DDOs, Bishops' Advisers and Principals of TEIs on Handling the *Five Guiding Principles* in the Diocesan Discernment Process, at Selection and Prior to Ordination.

At its meeting in September 2014, the Ministry Council approved a proposal to require all candidates coming to BAPs and at the end of their training to indicate their assent to the *Five Guiding Principles*; and it also approved that assent to the *Five Guiding Principles* become an additional core element of Criterion B (Ministry within the Church of England) in the Selection Criteria and become an additional core element of Criterion G (Vocation and Ministry within the Church of England) in the Formation Criteria. The proposal was agreed by the House of Bishops in December 2014.

What are the Five Guiding Principles?

The *Five Guiding Principles* which have been affirmed by the House of Bishops establish a settlement within the life of the Church that fully supports women as Bishops while providing for the flourishing of those opposed on the grounds of theological conviction. The House of Bishops is clear that the *Five Guiding Principles* 'need to be read one with the other and held in tension, rather than being applied selectively'. The *Five Guiding Principles* are:

- Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;
- Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;
- Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;
- Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and
- Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.

What are the implications for DDOs?

The expectation is that DDOs discuss the *Five Guiding Principles* with candidates in the same way as they discuss *Issues in Human Sexuality* with them. Candidates should be given a copy of the *Five Guiding Principles* and asked to reflect upon them and whether they are prepared to assent to them. One of the key points that the House of Bishops makes is that the *Five Guiding Principles* '**need to be read one with the other and held in tension, rather than being applied selectively**'. Thus DDOs need to make it clear to candidates that all five of the *Principles* need to be assented to and that candidates cannot separate out and cherry pick the particular *Principles* which appeal to them or which reflect their own ecclesiological perspective. Candidates should be encouraged to reflect on what assent to the *Principles* might mean practically for them in their training and ministry. The *Principles* are about working with and respecting diversity within the life of the Church (one of the key themes which undergird the Criteria for Selection) and DDOs need to be persuaded that candidates are genuinely prepared to live contentedly and respectfully with that diversity. If candidates assent to the *Five Guiding Principles* in their entirety, that assent would be acknowledged by the DDO in the BAP Sponsoring Papers under Criterion B (Ministry within the Church of England) with a statement such as 'X has read the *Five Guiding Principles* and I have discussed them with him/her and s/he has indicated that s/he assents to all of them'. If a candidate was unable to assent to the *Five Guiding Principles* pre-BAP, the matter would be referred to the Sponsoring Bishop as to whether or not the candidate would be sponsored for a BAP.

What are the implications for Bishops' Advisers?

With the task of questioning candidates on the *Five Guiding Principles* falling to the DDOs, ordinarily Bishops' Advisers at a BAP would not question candidates on the *Five Guiding Principles*. This would follow the same practice as *Issues in Human Sexuality* where ordinarily candidates would not be questioned in this area at a BAP. However, if at a BAP a candidate expressed a significant view or attitude which suggested that the candidate did not genuinely assent to the *Five Guiding Principles* in their entirety or was dismissive of one or more of the *Principles*, Bishops' Advisers would be at liberty to question the candidate in interview on their views on the subject. Any observations or concerns arising from such questioning would be reflected in the Bishops' Advisers' report to the Sponsoring Bishop under Criterion B (Ministry within the Church of England).

What are the implications for TEI Principals?

The expectation is that TEI Principals handle the *Five Guiding Principles* with ordinands in much the same way as the DDOs outlined above i.e. in the ordinand's final year of training to check that s/he is aware of the *Five Guiding Principles* and is prepared to assent to them in their entirety. If an ordinand indicates their assent, that assent would be acknowledged by the TEI Principal in the ordinand's Final Report under Criterion G (Vocation and Ministry within the Church of England) with a statement such as 'X has read the *Five Guiding Principles* and I have discussed them with her/him and s/he has indicated that s/he assents to all of them'. If a candidate was unable to assent to the *Five Guiding Principles*, the Final Report to the Bishop would make this clear. It would be a matter then for the Bishop to decide as to whether the candidate proceeded to ordination or not.

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