

# Serving Together

## Celebrating - Sharing - Learning

*A summary from the consultation day held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June in Church House, Westminster.*

As part of the Renewal and Reform programme for the growth of the church, and in response to the Serving Together report of the Lay Ministries Working Group, the Ministry Council proposed a year of celebrating, sharing and learning around lay ministries, beginning in June 2017. The aim of the year is to build on the recommendations of the report and encourage an increase in the number and range of lay ministers, with an emphasis on encouraging mission, evangelism and discipleship.

The Ministry Council will be supported by a Serving Together Continuing Group chaired by Bishop Martyn Snow. This will oversee the development and implementation of the recommendations in Serving Together and encourage the process of celebration, sharing and learning over the year.

The discussions on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June provided an ideal opportunity to explore a variety of questions, gathering a diverse range of views and experiences. The main areas of work identified for the Continuing Group are laid out below, with comments and reflections from the day :



### Theology

*Stimulating theological reflection, thinking and writing on lay ministries in their own terms and in the context of mission and the church*

- Conversations around role, tasks and identity are important.
- What are the theological issues around switching emphasis in lay ministries from identity to tasks?
- We need to develop a proper theology of learning
- Throughout everything we must be clear that lay ministry is valuable in itself, it is not a consolation prize for those not being ordained.
- Understanding the role of lay ministers requires a proper understanding of the role of ordained. The two must be addressed together. More work is needed on understanding theology of the “laos”, the whole people of God.

## Vocations

*How do we open wider access into lay ministries and present them as attractive, especially to those who are currently underrepresented?*

- Our vocations work should consider vocations in the round, not just ordination.
- We have to demonstrate openness to different forms of ministry.
- In all areas we should be looking at developing discipleship.
- How useful are labels?

## Supporting Dioceses

*What makes an excellent “lay ministries diocese” and how can we help dioceses achieve excellence?*

- Emphasis on ministering locally.
- Support can be given through central resourcing, particularly through a central website, and encouraging dioceses to see the importance of resourcing.
- We can help spread initiatives through continual sharing of what other dioceses are doing, thereby boosting portability between dioceses.
- We should provide opportunities for sharing best practice, such as through national/regional forums, and by encouraging the networking of key people between dioceses.
- Continual liaison with senior diocesan staff.
- Promoting effective communication within each diocese, as well as between them.
- Simplifying papers for discussion.

## Emerging lay ministries

*How can these be encouraged and included in the plans which dioceses make for their mission and ministry?*

*How do we see the future of lay ministries?*

- We need to communicate effectively the desire for culture change, such as by circulating reports and sharing stories of lay ministries.
- Bishops have a key role to play in emphasising the importance of lay ministries.
- We could appoint ambassadors/champions of specific types of ministry whose task it would be to raise their profile within the church.
- There needs to be a greater emphasis on attracting younger people to lay ministries.
- Every minister, whether lay or ordained, is to some extent a pioneer. Pioneering should be authentically Anglican, whilst still being innovative.
- We should encourage those responsible for ordination training to include discussion of lay ministries, and the skills of collaborative ministry between lay and ordained working together, as well as facilitating conversations between the two.



## Strategy

*What are the strategic requirements of the dioceses and for the Church of England as a whole for lay ministries? What do we need to do to fulfil them?*

- Greater clarity is needed around the identity and tasks of lay ministers.
- The task of lay ministers should be looked at in the context of mission.
- How does Serving Together integrate with Setting God's People Free?
- It is important to develop a missional ecclesiology.
- We should be looking at reader ministry in the context of the national church.
- What is the role of lay in leading small churches?
- There is a lack of knowledge of the numbers involved at grassroots level.
- There is a need for in-depth diocesan survey to map requirements, as well as more data collection from parishes (maybe on the annual parish review) about the variety of lay ministries being exercised in their midst.
- Some dioceses have wide geographical areas, especially Europe.
- There are great differences between urban and rural contexts.

## Authorisation and Support

*What is the best framework for authorising, licensing and recognising lay ministers? How can we improve the terms and conditions of those who are paid? How should those who are volunteers be better supported?*

- Are current structures fit for purpose? Do they enable what God is already doing or instead form obstacles?
- It would be useful to offer models of paid lay ministers to deaneries as examples to follow.
- Should we look again at regulations requiring lay ministers to gain agreement from an ordained minister to act, particularly in multi-parish benefices?
- Licensing boosts accountability and authority.
- There is a tension between hierarchy and collaboration.
- Proper support is needed for those stepping into leadership roles.
- How local or general should commissioning be?
- We need to look at how we recognise the work which all Christians are already doing themselves, which the Church may be unaware of.

## Learning

*How can we improve learning for lay ministries and make it fit for purpose and properly resourced?*

- Learning should be embedded in the life of the church.
- What is the role of TEIs?

- We should explore a pooling approach to learning, such as having one platform for online learning, combining the buying power of all dioceses.
- Readers' training needs to be connected with diocesan vision.
- Training needs to be better integrated, there are currently too many different strands.
- Training has to be geographically accessible.
- Could we implement a new 2 year LLM training package?
- How can we better assess formation at various points throughout training and ministry?
- What is the best way of offering accreditation for prior experience?
- There needs to be a greater focus on continuing ministerial development, rather than expecting all learning to be done up front.
- Training for ordination should include collaborative ministry.
- There may be opportunities for lay and ordained to train together for certain areas of learning.