

Challenging Clerical Stereotypes

- reflections on the genesis of NSM

Preface

Rob Fox, September 2011

This paper began life as a lecture given on 25 June, 2011, by Patrick Vaughan on the occasion of the EMMTC Day of Celebration, marking the closure of the East Midlands Ministry Training Course (EMMTC, 1973-2011). Patrick was the first Principal of the Course, from 1977 to 1990.

His interest in self-supporting ministry was expressed in his Ph.D. thesis, entitled 'Non Stipendiary Ministry - the development of an idea'. In it, Patrick analysed the factors which created a favourable context for the establishment of NSM in 1970. He also noted two constant restraints which inhibited its development, namely the protective reaction of the clerical profession and the over-riding influence of the parochial system.

Many Ministers in Secular Employment possess well-thumbed copies of "Working for the Kingdom — The Story of Ministry in Secular Employment", edited by John Fuller and Patrick Vaughan (published by SPCK), which drew together many of the key writings and sources on MSE. I was delighted therefore to be contacted by Patrick early in 2011 and asked if CHRISM could assist him with information on the current state of MSE for a lecture he was preparing to mark the winding up of EMMTC. Even more delighted when he sent a copy of the lecture - its appeal to a wider audience was clear. With our daily experiences set in the present, we often forget how we, as MSEs, got here. This paper is a timely and thoughtful reminder of that journey, and a guide to illumine our paths as we continue it.

Introduction

Back in January 2011 the Principal of the East Midlands Ministry Training Course suggested I might offer some reflections on the origins and development of NSM and its promise for the future. I responded affirmatively because, while I was Principal here, I had explored in my doctoral research why NSM did not seem at the time to be operating very satisfactorily. I thought it would give me a good opportunity to revisit this topic. It could be interesting to check out how far conclusions reached then still feel convincing now.

As preparation, I thought I would update myself on the current state of NSM. A Google search quickly directed me to the huge on-line databank of evidence about the NSM experience of ministry which has recently been assembled by Dr Teresa Morgan of Oxford. I wondered: would this recent material show similar problems to those we were encountering a quarter of a century ago? Or would it show that NSM has come of age, as an integrated sector in the Church of England's clergy?

Let's begin with an overview of what I want to say. The Welsby Report, *A Supporting Ministry*, published in 1968, changed the shape of the ordained ministry in the Church of England by the introduction of what was at first called 'Auxiliary Parochial Ministry' (APM). It was accepted by the Church Assembly (predecessor of the General Synod), and at that point the Church of England immediately began to train and ordain what we later called NSMs.

As a historian, I want to look at the forces which were at work at that moment in time. Why did this idea succeed in 1968 when it had been discussed extensively for over a century, but was

consistently rejected? What compromises were made by the Welsby Report to ensure acceptance? What areas were left ambiguous? And how has the messiness of all this church community politics affected what is now happening today?

I suggest there are two key sociological factors to keep an eye on.

The first is **professional status**: the continuing dominance of the interests of the fulltime professional priest - the stereotypical English parson. Keep an eye out for the way this dominance has affected (and limited) the development of NSM.

The second sociological factor is the **organisational structure** of the Church of England into the sub-units we call **parishes**. These parishes are the local unit to which the church members belong. To an increasing extent, these members are financing the national church out of their personal pockets; so naturally each member's primary concern is to see the survival of their own local parish.

The Church's governing body (General Synod) is inevitably influenced by what its grass-roots constituency members desire. So keep an eye out too for the way in which the historic parochial system causes a "gravitational pull" on any creative planning about clergy deployment.

Put simply, history seems to show that when proposals about NSM appeared to threaten the professional status of parochial clergy, it was (and is) viewed with suspicion. But if there were explicit safeguards to protect this status, NSM was considered an acceptable option. Likewise, when shortage of clergy was threatening the parochial system, NSM tended to be viewed as a lifeline for the system. On the other hand, in periods when the parochial system

was functioning reasonably well, NSM tended to be dismissed as irrelevant.

How non-stipendiary ministry developed

Now let me outline the way I want to proceed. Historically you can divide the development of NSM into 4 stages. Stage 1 was in the 19th century, and I shall refer to it only briefly. Stage 2 was 1900 to the Lambeth Conference of 1930. Stage 3 takes us up the Church Assembly debate (already referred to) of 1969. Stage 4 is what has happened since then - including the entire lifespan of EMMTC.

Stage 1, the 19th century

So let's begin by looking at Stage 1. Only a very limited kind of NSM was under discussion in the 19th century: whether it could be right to ordain to the Diaconate men who were employed in secular occupations. This did not threaten either the parochial system or full-time priests - which is why it got off the starting block at all.

The context was England's mushrooming population, especially in the industrial towns. Just as the Great Reform Bill of 1832 was bringing a new class of person into Parliament, the issue for the Established Church was how on earth it might connect with what were termed 'the lower classes'. The following year the radical thinker Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School (and of Tom Brown) started a debate on the Principles of Church reform. He floated a radical idea: if suitable men in secular employment were ordained to Deacon's orders, a cluster of related problems would all be alleviated. Here are some of them:

- the shortage of clergy would be alleviated especially in industrial towns;
- the false division between clergy and laity would be bridged;
- the spectrum of social class represented in the clergy would be widened;
- the cost of providing an increased clergy would be removed;
- the world of business would be sanctified.

The attraction of his proposal was that no change of principle was involved, only alteration to custom.

Over the next 60 years, these ideas were widely debated by Bishops in Convocation, by laity at Diocesan Conferences, and by academics in Oxford. But by the end of the 19th century absolutely nothing of significance changed with regard to the ordained ministry. On the other hand a major change in the Church's pastoral ministry structure did take place through the creation of the role of Lay Reader. This new role was widely acceptable because it assisted hard-pressed clergy, without trespassing on their professional and sacramental status.

To summarise Stage 1 of the NSM Story:

- no structural change happened to the ordained ministry in the 19th century;
- but a new structure of lay ministry was created;
- the positive outcome was that radical and controversial ideas about ordained ministry were widely disseminated in

Church circles. They were all ideas which were to bubble up later on, and indeed are still current.

Stage 2, 1900 – 1930

Stage 2 of the NSM story takes us up to 1930, when NSM achieved a high profile by featuring significantly at the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion's Bishops that year.

You may ask: how exactly did such a novel idea as NSM get onto its agenda? The surprising answer is - through the persistent labours of one individual. That individual was the priest Roland Allen (1868-1947). So great is the respect for him now in America that ECUSA has recently included him in their liturgical calendar. His feast day is 8th June.

As a result of a few years experience as a missionary in China, Allen was convinced that the then current missionary strategy was wrong, and bound to fail. It was a mistake, he believed, to found indigenous churches which afterwards continued to be led by Western professional clergy.

In 1912 he published an influential book with the famous title ***Missionary Methods - St Paul's or Ours?*** Extraordinarily, this book has been reprinted decade after decade, and is still readily available. In it, Allen showed how Paul had succeeded in founding self-sustaining and self-funding church communities, led by the natural leaders in each community.

The basis of Paul's success was that he trusted the Holy Spirit to guide each local Church. Being a high-churchman, Allen argued that these local leaders needed to be ordained so that each community could be self-sufficient in provision of regular Sacraments. This was

the very opposite of current missionary policy. The British Empire was then at its zenith, led by an army of graduates recruited by the Colonial Service.

Unquestioningly, the spreading Anglican Church copied this model. The inherited assumption was that highly trained and educated professional clergy should be the overseas Church's leaders.

For the next 15 years or so, Allen devoted himself to propagating the Scriptural principle of church leadership. He wrote articles in church journals, he corresponded directly with individual bishops both at home, in the mission field and in newly forming dioceses in the white Dominions. Again and again he pressed bishops to trust the apostolic principle and to ordain men who could earn their own livelihood through ordinary work in the secular world.

It was particularly from his book entitled ***Voluntary Clergy*** (1923) that his ideas were picked up. During the 1920s, Allen's ideas began to be discussed all over the place. He was invited to visit and talk to dioceses in remote Western Canada, in India, and South Africa. But although he found allies among some bishops, including Bishops Headlam of Gloucester and Temple of York, no bishop would act on his own and actually ordain such a voluntary priest. In the end it was decided that the topic should be put on the agenda of the forthcoming Lambeth Conference of world-wide Anglicanism in 1930.

This was good news for Allen - it seemed like the breakthrough he had been seeking. Even in England, pressure for the introduction of Voluntary Clergy was mounting: the Church Assembly had asked (1929) for a Commission to report on the staffing of parishes, possibly utilising Voluntary Clergy. Allen went into overdrive,

producing his definitive *The Case for Voluntary Clergy* to coincide with the preparations for the Conference. He corresponded with each bishop individually, forwarding to them a personal copy of his book. It really did feel in 1929 that a sea-change in perception of the ordained Ministry was about to take place.

However, an analysis of the records of the Conference show that while there was widespread desire for granting permission, a very small conservative minority succeeded in so muzzling this desire, that the resultant resolution (which actually allowed the development of voluntary clergy) appeared strongly to discourage it. The final phrasing - *'The Conference ... cannot recommend a widespread adoption of the proposal'* - effectively sounded the death-knell of voluntary clergy for the next 20 years.

Now let's summarise Stage 2 of the NSM story:

- The younger Anglican dioceses overseas were calling the shots. They were finding that the inherited pattern of f/t professional clergy was not working well in the missionary situation.
- Many church strategists both at home and overseas recognised the similarity between their own setting and that confronting St Paul. Roland Allen's challenge seemed to be a prophetic word for the moment. Implementing it, however, involved altering a centuries-long tradition.
- The attempt was made at the highest level to moderate inherited concepts of ordination. But it failed because of the power of tradition, custom and parochial structures.

However, all was not lost. History shows that a topic once introduced to the Lambeth Conference tends to recur on the agenda of succeeding Conferences. And this was indeed to be the case.

Stage 3, 1930 – 1969

After 1930, there followed a period of dormancy - not least because WWII intervened, completely upsetting normal community life. However, Allen's idea of voluntary clergy had taken root in the mind of a nationally influential English priest theologian - F.R. Barry (who would later become Bishop of Southwell). He had already published a very favourable review of Allen's *Case for Voluntary Clergy* in which he asked

Is it certain that the 'historic ministry' must involve a 'clerical profession'? ... Is the notion of a clerical caste, of men who specialise in religion, really compatible with Christian life?

Barry developed this idea further in his book *The Relevance of the Church* (1935), where he was actually the first to coin the phrase 'non-stipendiary ministers'. He claimed that there would be a beneficial and **sacramental sign** to the church and world if some ordained clergy were engaged in secular employment:

What is really important about this suggestion is not the alleviation which it might offer to the problem of staffing the parishes ... It would save Christianity from becoming a caricature of itself as something that people do after working hours.

Barry's imaginative insight was remarkable. He had deftly put his finger upon an issue which was to consume the attention of the post-war Church of England: the inability of professional clergy to communicate with the world of work - especially with industrial life.

But all this was theorising. How was the theory to be tested in practice? There needed to be a pilot project. And that is exactly what happened - though it was completely unofficial.

A very tiny number of radically-minded clergy decided to take up labouring jobs in industry. One such was Michael Gedge, who wrote about his experiences in 1951 under the title *Priest-Workman in England: a study in life*. Fundamentally, Gedge wanted to discover the answer to the pastoral question:

How is it that ... our most faithful Christians so often frankly admit ... that one cannot be a real Christian at work?

Gedge had been inspired by something much more ambitious that was happening across the Channel in France: a few French priests, with the initial encouragement of their hierarchy, had deliberately taken up factory jobs as a model for evangelising French industrial society. The journal of the first pioneer, Henry Perrin, was published in English translation immediately after the War in 1947.

Was this the way for the Church of England to engage with working class society? Opinions were divided - because at the very same time another significant theological shift was taking place, giving new priority to the ministry of the laity. The result was that the Church of England was unable to act decisively. Some bishops (notably Bp Leslie Hunter of Sheffield) took the line that what was needed was not labouring worker priests, but Industrial Chaplains - ordained professional priests, who with the permission of works owners entered factories, and aimed to set up cells where the relationship between Christian faith and working life could be explored.

However, an alternative vision was provided by a small group of clergy and laity (often their wives) - all from middle-class backgrounds, with good education. They chose to devote their lives to the working class, taking labouring jobs, and living a working class lifestyle in Council housing. They formed themselves into the Worker Church Group, and hoped that their special experience could be fed back to the Church as a whole. They wrote, talked, and held conferences, as time allowed. But in the end, their influence on the Church of England was minimal, demonstrating yet again that the Church of England is at root a middle-class community.

The Worker Church Group has now wound up; but their experimental contribution to the Church of England has recently (2000) been ably captured by John Mantle - as a kind of obituary to them. Their vision remains inspiring - though the industrial factory economy in which it grew has of course now collapsed.

I've jumped a bit ahead of myself here. So let's return to the post-war reconstruction period of the 1950s. Just as in national life generally, there was an upsurge of energy in the Church of England: many new parishes were formed as new housing estates were formed on green-field sites, with the corollary that country parishes needed to be amalgamated so that the finite supply of clergy could be redeployed from country livings into the towns. Clergy numbers were a continuing matter of concern.

The 1950s was the decade when the antique Canons of the Church of England dating from 1603 were rewritten to take account of modern life. During this process the opportunity was seized to remove the ancient Canon's restriction on clerical employment in secular pursuits. The potential value of NSMs had been noted.

Meanwhile a lot of innovative things were taking place in the Anglican Church abroad - particularly in the missionary diocese of Hong Kong. Bishop Ronald Hall of that diocese had taken advantage of the grudging permission of the 1930 Lambeth Conference, and by 1960 had ordained 13 Chinese auxiliary priests (as he called them) - mostly university graduates. The result was that every single parish in the diocese had regular and frequent celebrations of Holy Communion presided over by a priest who belonged to the parish.

Back in England, this case provoked much interest. Was it a policy that should be followed in the home church? This is where F.R. Barry - now a leading Bishop - comes on the scene again. His book *Vocation and Ministry* appeared in time for the Lambeth Conference of 1958. In it he argued cogently that for both theological and practical reasons the Church of England should accept 'supplementary ministry' into its system. No new arguments were invoked. What was new, however, was that they were coming not from an outrageous, marginal prophet. They were coming from a much respected theologian and diocesan bishop.

The upshot was that when the Lambeth fathers pronounced on the topic of NSM, its statement was really positive:

There is no theological principle which forbids a suitable man from being ordained priest while continuing in his lay occupation. The Conference now wishes to go further and to encourage provinces to make provision on these lines...

Thus, all of a sudden, there was a gathering momentum in favour of recruiting ordinands who would continue in secular employment. We are now almost in the 1960s - an extraordinary decade in the social and political life of Britain, where old moulds of every kind

were being broken, and new patterns of living emerging.

Roland Allen's writings came to the fore again. An abridged version of the *Case for Voluntary Clergy* appeared in 1960, and within two years its printing of 3,500 copies had sold out.

But critically, once again the mould-breaking focussed on an individual personality. Mervyn Stockwood - flamboyant, outspoken, radical, socialist - was appointed Bishop of Southwark in 1959. At his enthronement in Southwark Cathedral, he enunciated from the pulpit this remarkable vision:

From my own experience, I know that it is almost impossible to bridge the gulf between the parochial system and the world in which so many people have to live. That is why I should like to see cautious experiments with a new type of priesthood and a new type of organisation. Is it possible, for instance, that a man who works in industry and is also ordained will be better able to understand the needs and outlook of his associates than one who because of his status as a parochial clergyman is inevitably, to some extent, segregated?

Stockwood immediately appointed as his suffragan the Cambridge theologian Dr John Robinson, whom he believed would support his radical plans with academic rigour. Within a year, they had launched the Southwark Ordination Course (SOC) - the first part-time course designed to offer ordination training. By September 1960 SOC was inducting its first batch of students. The course, though part-time, included all the subjects other ordinands would have had to study in residential Colleges. They were presented in a mixture of weeknight classes and residential weekends and summer

schools. In setting these high standards of training, the Diocese was leaning over backwards to counter critical jibes about second-class priesthood, or backdoor entry to the ordained ministry.

We are now virtually at the end of Stage 3 of the NSM Story. There was a need for the Church of England as a whole to clarify its position. Did it want to have what some people derogatorily called 'Part-Time Priests'? If so, what was their relationship to be with the parochial clergy? How should they be trained? What checks of control should bishops have over them? Should the Church encourage priests whose focus of ministry was in their workplace?

Once again, the Lambeth Conference pronouncements proved formative. New patterns of ministry had by now become a regular feature of Lambeth Conference agendas, and at the 1968 Conference a very affirmative statement was made about the complementary value of new patterns. Here is the Conference resolution - and notice the language used:

In order that the Church may be continually renewed for mission ... parochial and non-parochial, full- and part-time, stipendiary and honorary clergy are all needed. In this variety of ministry the part-time non-stipendiary priest is in no way inferior to his full-time brother... In some areas the part-time non-stipendiary ministry could become the norm. Such ministry does not contravene any doctrine of the universal Church ...

With this kind of very positive encouragement from the Churches international leadership, a report was produced entitled *A Supporting Ministry* - otherwise known as the Welsby report. It systematically laid to rest the anxieties of traditionalists by

proposing strict selection procedures, and being specific about the style and length of part-time training courses.

It was to prove a turning point in the NSM Story. On the basis of it, ACCM Council prepared specific proposals for the establishment of an Auxiliary Parochial Ministry. The Church Assembly debated this at length over three days in February 1969, and the outcome was agreement to proceed. Consensus was eventually reached for four reasons:

- because the form of APM proposed stressed the support such a ministry would give to the parochial system;
- it did NOT refer to ministry in the workplace;
- presentation to benefices was protected by safeguards;
- it sought to regulate and control experiments (such as SOC) which were beginning to mushroom round the country.

To summarise Stage 3 of the NSM story:-

- in the aftermath of the War, the institutional Church was forced to recognise that it was more than ever out of touch with the working population of England;
- various visionary small-scale local experiments were tried out;
- the Church Assembly attempted to regulate and control these experiments so that they worked to the benefit of the parochial system.

Stage 4, 1970 to the present

After 1969, APM became a reality, in principle acceptable to all dioceses in England. The Bishops immediately drew up Regulations, standardising requirements for selection and training for this new ministry. But in the process they deliberately left an ambiguity unresolved. There was a fudge!

The APM that the Church Assembly had discussed and accepted was for the development of an Auxiliary Parochial Ministry. There was an understanding that at a later stage a separate discussion and decision would be made about work-focussed ministry. But the Bishops short-circuited this process. While keeping the acronym APM, they named the new ministry Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry - a phrase which allowed the possibility of work-focussed ministry, without defining it further. As a result MSE has never been formally adopted by the Church of England as a church-wide strategy. This lack of clarity has been a cause of frustration ever since.

In parenthesis, we may note that ACCM did indeed draft a report on ordination to a work-focussed ministry. But it was never published, and still sits in draft form in Church House archives. The block on publication was caused by a strategic disagreement. Ted Wickham, leader of the Sheffield Industrial Mission, argued that ordaining men specifically for ministry in the world of work would undermine the mission of all the laity. His chaplaincy work in Sheffield's heavy steel industry was highly respected, and so his strongly expressed opinion carried the day. Ever since, MSE has languished like a prematurely born child, and has never thrived.

As we know, most NSMs have perceived their ministerial role to be in their local home parish. However at all times there have been a

few NSMs who have expressed a conviction that their vocation is primarily within their workplace. Sometimes there has been a happy conjunction of secular employment and pastoral ministry - as for example when the job in question is in one of the caring professions such as health or social work. But in the experience of NSMs with this vocation, it has become clear that Bishops and parochial clergy simply take no interest in what they are doing.

To counter their sense of discouragement, an enterprising ordained food scientist called Michael Ranken started a national network of MSEs in 1982. There was a regular Newsletter, sharing ideas, and a well-attended annual conference. The objective was mutual support, with the hope that the wider church might come to recognise their ministry. They were constantly surprised how corporate businesses often welcomed their ordained presence, when their parent church disowned them.

This network still exists as CHRISM (CHRISTIans in Secular Ministry). Their strap-line is:

To help ourselves and others to celebrate the presence of God and the holiness of life in our work, and to see and tell the Christian story there.

Their membership is quite small - but being largely fully trained articulate clergy - often highly placed in their secular profession - it can be argued that they are probably in the best possible position to help ordinary laity struggle to express their Christian conviction in the world of work.

This has been a diversion. But I've given space to it, because as the recent SSM survey shows, it is still a live issue for some SSMs.

Let us return now to 1970. Once the Bishops' Regulations were in place, the next task confronting the Church of England was to set up a national network of regional training facilities. In the end, a total of 15 emerged.

Training Courses

There were several distinct models of training course. Some (like the West Midlands Course) were attached to their local residential Theological College. Others like the St Alban's Course were free-standing.

Alone among the 15 Courses, EMMTC was from the beginning fully integrated into a University. Its administration was actually located in the Department of Adult Education's office accommodation, and its central staff (though paid by EMMTC) were treated as honorary members of the Department's staff. The Principal of EMMTC was entrusted by the Department with the day to day running of the University Certificate Course.

The three dioceses of Lincoln, Southwell and Derby quickly decided in 1972 to collaborate with the Department of Adult Education in Nottingham University. (Leicester was not to join until 1982). A leading personality in this process was Dr Alan Rogers, reader in the Department of Adult Education. He was a member of Southwell Diocesan Board of Education, and a lay representative on General Synod. As such, he was well aware of the recent discussions about APM.

Throughout 1972 planning proceeded and certain fundamental decisions about shape and content of the course were made: it would not be exclusively Anglican; nor exclusively for ordinands; and

it should use the best methods of adult education.

There would be a Certificate in Theological & Pastoral Studies offered through the normal Extra-Mural provision of the University. Weeknight classes were to be run in the Department's Adult Education Centre in Shakespeare Street, Nottingham. The fees charged should be sufficiently modest to be well within the pockets of non-ordinand students.

From the outset, the myth of 'coverage' was abandoned. What was more important was that students should learn how to learn. The vision was that the Course would help students to become lifelong learners. There was firm agreement that the best of adult education techniques should be adopted - short direct tutor input, coupled with immediate group discussion and involvement. The assumption was that the mature students would have experience and insight to contribute to the whole group. Thus any thought of distance learning was ruled out from the start.

As for the curriculum, it was initially separated into two parts: a University component and an additional pastoral component provided by the Churches.

Canon David Wilcox of Derby Cathedral (later Bishop of Guildford) was appointed Warden of the Course with responsibility for the pastoral component which was timetabled at residential weekends and at the Summer School.

The initial idea was that non-ordinands, who simply wanted to study for the University Certificate, need not attend the residential periods. In practice, however, it was found that the class group learning ethos was so strong that the lay students voluntarily

attended (and paid costs of) the residential components.

So as the Course developed, no distinctions were made between the University requirements and the ACCM ordination requirements. It would not be right to suggest that we (the staff) played one authority off against the other, but we certainly manoeuvred sufficient space to organise a curriculum entirely of our own devising - which was coherent, and which forced students to think through the connection between their intellectual studies of Christian Tradition, their pastoral practice, and their personal faith formation.

Numbers remained steady, with an average of 22 students in each year's intake. From 1981, there was an annual intake of new students, thus making a total student body of about 65 at any one time. Additional teaching centres were started in Lincoln (at Bp Grosseteste College) and in Leicester (at Vaughan College). The intention was that a teaching centre should be within one hour's travelling time from any student in the four counties.

The personal support of each of the four diocesan Bishops ensured that the Course established itself quickly. Bishop Cyril Bowles was particularly helpful in securing ACCM recognition that the Course was acceptable training for the stipendiary ministry (1978) and for deaconesses (1980). The Methodist Church quickly recognised the Course as adequate part-time training for their new part-time ministry (1978). The United Reformed Church became a participating Church in 1980. All these developments confirmed the viability of the Course and its reputation.

The ecumenical nature of the course was very marked through the 1980s, not just within the student body, but within the tutorial staff

and on the governing Council. Students often remarked how fortunate they felt themselves to be compared to ordinands attending residential colleges of a fixed ecclesial tradition.

The gender mix (it was pretty close to half and half men and women), the churchmanship mix, and the spirituality mix, all contributed to personal formation - especially on residential Sunday mornings through challenging experiential sessions.

I think it is fair to say that by the 1980s, EMMTC was having a considerable influence on its surroundings. For instance, we celebrated our 10th birthday with a volume of essays, published in the Department's series on the Education of Adults. It was read in Church House, London, and influenced the Board of Education. I myself was invited by ACCM to contribute to Mark's Hodge's important survey of NSMs in 1983.

Together with colleagues in the Southern Dioceses Course at Salisbury, we interviewed 32 NSMs, inviting them to tell us about occasions when they considered they were exercising a ministry in their world of work. This led to an SPCK book which influenced strategists in ACCM and more widely.

We had a network of chaplains (about 40 at any one time). Each chaplain chaired a student's Support Group, and came to understand at considerable depth what was going on in their student's life as a result of his/her study on the course. This reflective work influenced the chaplains themselves, and the diocese in which they were located.

But perhaps the most significant influence on the wider church came through our students. They had been trained in an evenly

balanced community of women and men. Some were lay people, who continually raised radical questions about the need for ordination. There were quite a few Methodists and some URC students - whose traditions fed into discussions. Friendships were formed across churchmanship divides. Vocations nurtured in this rich mix hopefully produced ministers with broad sympathies. EMMTC grew as a creature, a structure, of its immediate era. Those of us from the staff and students of that era are proud of what was achieved then.

But now times and contexts, especially economic contexts, are quite different from those of 1973. Now new structures of theological training and indeed new structures of Church are emerging, and EMMTC is about to morph into a different shape with a different structure and governance.

The future for NSM

I want to end with some reflections on the likely future of NSM in the Church of England. Will it win greater acceptance as an authentic form of ordained ministry? How will the MSE vision fare?

My first reflection is that the situation has changed dramatically since that of the 1980s which I have been describing. The parochial system is currently in crisis. In particular, staffing it now requires a strategy different in kind from anything we have known. Everything is being driven by falling clergy numbers, and ever rising stipend and pension costs.

Within this changed context, let's look at what is happening to staff

recruitment - to ordinations. Here are some of the statistical facts:

- 2004 was the worst in the last 10 years for ordinations - only 469 new deacons. But what is fascinating is that exactly half (1 in every 2 deacons) were ordained for SSM.
- In 2006 and 2007 for the first time in the history of the Church of England more people were ordained to SSM than to Stipendiary Ministry.

So the proportion of NSMs in the rising generation of clergy is dramatically different from that of the 1980s, when only about 1 in 4 (25%) were ordained for NSM.¹

On the assumption that this trend of equal numbers of stipendiary and NSM ordinands entering the clergy continues, one might speculate what this means for the future staffing of parishes in say 20 years time. These new clergy who are now mostly in their late 30s or 40s will then be in their 50s and 60s. They will be the most experienced senior parochial clergy - and half of them will be NSM.

So the question arises: is it likely that their opinion, and their experience of NSM, will then be more likely to be listened to? Will it be less likely to be smothered under the over-riding influence of the f/t professional clergy?

¹ Details from Church of England Statistics of Ordinations 1994-2009. See this link

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1243316/ordinations%20and%20reader%20admissions%201994%20to%202009.pdf>

And what about the vision of MSEs? Is their experience more likely to be listened to - and become an integral part of the Church's witness?

The beginnings of an answer to these questions may be sought in the evidence supplied by SSMs themselves in the large scale survey conducted on-line last year. I refer to the recent on-line survey of SSMs, whose initial results were published in the *Church Times* in April². The really interesting thing about this survey is that the initiative for it has come directly from SSMs themselves - indeed from a woman SSM. The support of the Ministry Council was sought and readily granted.

So now we have a massive data bank of the actual experience of NSMs and MSEs which everyone can explore on the designated website - which happens to be the website associated with Newman's old parish of Littlemore in Oxford. Its there because that is the parish in which Dr Teresa Morgan is the licensed SSM. And she, like Newman, is an Oxford don, well able to articulate her position.

On this website there are now posted the responses of 858 NSMs currently active in parish ministry. Several hundred of them have taken advantage of a final open question to tell the stories of their NSM ministry. They are worth reading carefully.

² Teresa Morgan, "Survey of SSMs 2010: The Results", *Church Times* 1 and 8 April 2011

Many tell stories of fulfilling ministries, and good co-operation with their vicars. But there are also a considerable number of less happy stories:

- some NSMs have clearly been side-lined by their incumbents;
- many have not been offered any 'career development' and are still doing the kind of ministerial work they were doing when first ordained a dozen or more years ago;
- some are excluded from discussion with fellow clergy at deanery meetings, which continue to be scheduled in the working day.

I could go on illustrating from this databank of testimonies how professional resistance to NSMs is still at work half a century after SOC started training for Mervyn Stockwood's 'cautious experiment' in 1960, and 40 years (a whole working life-time) after APM first became official in the Church of England.

So I would suggest that the great increase in the proportion of NSMs within the clergy is not of itself going to bring about a change in the status granted to NSMs. For this to happen there needs to be a sea-change in the way the senior management of the Church of England plans the deployment of its clergy - NSMs need to be integrated into the power structures, and the career and deployment strategies, of the whole Church.

That at any rate is the case being put forward by the articulate SSM priest at Littlemore. She argues that the Church's management is wasting one of its major staff resources through lack of an adequate deployment strategy. Could it be (I ask) that under the winning advocacy of this articulate woman priest, NSM is at last taken seriously in the strategic planning of the Church? Is there about to be a sea-change in the way the Church's ordained ministry is organised? Will SSMs be better able to share with the laity in their parishes fruitful reflections on their experience of Christian faith in the world of work? Will the Church's senior managers (the Bishops) give credit to ministry outside the parochial system and traditional chaplaincies?

I have argued that history suggests that when new options present themselves, the interests of the professional f/t parochial clergy usually come out on top. It will be interesting to watch whether the increasing proportion of SSMs within the clergy (and especially the increasing proportion of women in the clergy) will in fact alter this traditional balance of power. Since the future staffing and survival of the parochial system will from now on depend on NSMs as much as stipendiary clergy - NSM just might come into its own!

But it's too early to hazard a guess as to whether this will actually happen. History will be the judge.

APPENDIX

Milestones in the Story of NSM/MSE in England

1841 Thomas Arnold, *Order of Deacons* - floated idea of ordained Deacons in secular employments.

1912 Roland Allen (1868-1947), *Missionary Methods - St Paul's or Ours?* - made a case for self-sustaining local churches with regular sacraments celebrated by indigenous ordained leaders. [Reprinted many times. Still in print.]

1923 Roland Allen, *Voluntary Clergy* - revised in 1930 as *The Case for Voluntary Clergy*.

1930 Lambeth Conference resolution 65 - '...cannot recommend a widespread adoption of the proposal'.

1935 F.R.Barry, *The Relevance of the Church*

1947 Henri Perrin, *Priest-Workman in Germany*.

1951 Anon. [Michael Gedge], *Priest-Workman in England*.

1955 Convocation Report on Canon 83 - wide-ranging discussion of desirability and practicality of ordaining men already in secular employment.

1958 Lambeth Conference resolution 89 - 'now wishes to go further and to encourage provision.'

- 1959 Mervyn Stockwood appointed Bishop of Southwark - 'cautious experiments with a new type of priesthood'
- 1960 Southwark Ordination Course (SOC) set up - first part-time Course.
- 1960 Robin Denniston, *Part Time Priests? - a discussion*.
- 1961 David Edwards, *Priests and Workers: an Anglo-French discussion*
- 1965 John Rowe, *Priests and Workers: a rejoinder*. [See also John Mantle, *Britain's First Worker-Priests: radical ministry in a post-war setting* (SCM, 2000)].
- 1968 D. Paton, *Reform of the Ministry: a study in the work of Roland Allen*
- 1968 Lambeth Conference resolution 33 - recommended 'a wider and more confident use of this ministry'.
- 1968 *A Supporting Ministry* (the Welsby Report).
- 1969 Church Assembly resolution in favour of Auxiliary Parochial Ministry (APM)
- 1970 *The Bishops' Regulations for the Selection and Training of Candidates for the Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry*.
- 1973 East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme established (EMMTC from 1980).
- 1982 First *Newsletter among Ministers-at-Work* (ed. Michael Ranken). Annual conferences of MSEs organised, now under

auspices of CHRISM (Christians in Secular Ministry).

1983 Mark Hodge, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the Church of England* - report of a survey by a professional social scientist funded by ACCM.

1985 *Ministers of the Kingdom: exploration in non-stipendiary ministry* (eds. P. Baelz & W. Jacob).

1986 *Working for the Kingdom: the story of ministers in secular employment* (eds. John Fuller and Patrick Vaughan).

1987 Patrick Vaughan, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the Church of England: a history of the development of an idea*. Ph.D. thesis accessible at <http://etheses.nottingham.ac.uk/1248/1/380134.pdf>

1998 *Tentmaking: Perspectives on Self-Supporting Ministry* (eds. James Francis & Leslie Francis) - a 'reader' for ordinands and others.

2006 First year in which more ordinations to SSM than SM.

2010 On-line survey of SSMs. Initiative by SSMs. Excluding the retired, 858 English NSMs respond. Data on-line at <http://www.1pf.co.uk/SSM.html>

2011 Teresa Morgan publishes results in *Church Times* and makes submission to Ministry Council.