

The Church in Wales Review: 2020 Vision

Ministry Areas

I. Transforming the Life and Ministry of the Church

The central vision of the Church in Wales Review is the hope of a re-energised and reinvigorated Church; one in which responsibility for the Church's mission and ministry to the wider community is shared among all the baptised. At the start of its report, it sets as its text a passage from the beginning of the First Letter of John:

Our theme is the Word which gives us life... the eternal life which was with the Father and was made visible to us... It is this which we have seen and heard that we declare to you also, in order that you may share with us in a common life (koinonia), that life which we share with the Father and his son Jesus Christ.

At the Governing Body's meeting in April, one group talked about the Church being "the prayerful heart of the community".

To achieve this vision it will be necessary for the Church to:

- Transform the culture of the Church in Wales
- Re-imagine the local church as Ministry Areas;
- Broaden ministry to include all members: Ministry Area Teams, incorporating lay and ordained ministers working to a collaborative model;
- Equip laity and ordained ministers for new models of ministry through the introduction of an integrated programme of training, with an emphasis on the development of leadership skills and collaborative working practices.

At this meeting, the Governing Body will be asked to discuss the concept of Ministry Areas and Ministry Area Teams.

2. Ministry Areas

i) Why Change is Needed

- For the Church to better engage with the communities it seeks to serve. The Church in Wales Review calls dioceses, area deaneries and parishes to look afresh at those communities and to consider how the Church should serve them.
- To address the key questions raised in the Governing Body debate in September 2011 on the Membership and Finances report, in particular:
 - Why does the Church appear to be engaging less effectively than it should with the wider community?
 - How can it be that a Church so greatly blessed with resources – people, buildings, money – is struggling to “keep the show on the road” in so many areas and at so many levels?

- To address the weaknesses perceived by the Review Team in our current parish system:

The parish system, as originally set up, with a single priest serving a small community is no longer sustainable. It was put in place when people lived and worked in the same parish, when they did not travel except occasionally to the local market town and when it was assumed that church and nation were of one faith. All this has changed. The communities to which people now belong are very varied and people travel freely.

The Church in Wales Review, July 2012 page 6

- To avoid the problem of single parishes working alone becoming vulnerable, and to make use of the potential for greater co-operation between churches.

ii) Implementing the Vision

The Review Group proposed a new model that is committed to growth. As the Archbishop explained in his Presidential Address to the Governing Body in April 2013, this is crucial because it will assist the Church's mission and model the belief that ministry is to be carried out by all the baptised. It is not an approach of last resort intended to reflect loss of members, clergy, wealth and confidence.

The Archbishop also quoted from the booklet on Ministry Areas produced by the diocese of Monmouth:

Ministry Areas are incarnational in that they are rooted in local communities with local leadership. They are apostolic in having leaders with responsibility for teaching, fostering vocations and empowering others for ministry. They are missional in seeking new opportunities for ministry and evangelism. They are prophetic in that they recognise the signs of the times and plan for the future. They are visionary in that they require a new way of responding to God's call to extend his Kingdom.

Ministry Areas: A new approach to parish ministry (Diocese of Monmouth, 2013)

The key concept is that the local Church unit should reflect the wider community more closely, with the recognition that this will also result in coverage of a broader geographical area: a Ministry Area. Rather than relying on individual clergy to minister to an increasing number of congregations, the Ministry Area would be served by a mixed ministry team of lay and ordained ministers, some of whom would be stipendiary ministers but most of whom would not. These teams would enable specialisation in different types of ministry, and in particular the Review has recommended the nurturing of ministers to connect with young people and those with little or no connection with the church. Individual congregations would still have local leaders, who would be part of the ministry teams.

Although some indications are given in the Review report about the possible size and make-up of Ministry Areas, in reality there are likely to be a number of different models for Ministry Areas depending on the local context. What might be appropriate in rural Snowdonia might not work in an industrial town. It may also be the case that, in some areas, the local community is best served by a Ministry Area which straddles existing diocesan boundaries.

iii) The way ahead

The Review provides ideas for the way in which dioceses might manage the process of moving towards establishing Ministry Areas, and Ministry Areas Teams, in each locality. Key to this process will be a local assessment of resources and needs, and this should not be restricted to congregations but include also where possible the whole community (including other denominations present locally).

The conclusions of the Church in Wales Review Group very much reflected current thinking in many parts of the Province. The concepts set out in the Review's report are consistent with the plans contained in diocesan strategies published in recent years or following the Review. Some dioceses are well-advanced in implementing these plans already.

In addition, the Bench of Bishops is currently reviewing training for ministry in the Church in Wales, with that review very much informed by the need to equip lay and ordained ministers in future to work in larger units as part of (and leading) Ministry Area Teams.

iv) Provincial Endorsement

Although by its very nature the exercise of reorganising the local church and ministry to meet community needs must be a local task, it is also important that the Governing Body gives Provincial endorsement to such a significant development in the life of the Church in Wales - still taking care that such endorsement does not cut across or unintentionally limit diocesan plans.

Included in this report is a proposed Provincial Framework for Ministry Areas in the Church in Wales, the purpose of which is:

- To provide Provincial endorsement for and a clear expression of this important new development;
- To give permission to dioceses to develop the concept of Ministry Areas in a manner that best meets their local context;
- To provide guidance for those seeking to develop or implement the Ministry Areas concept in dioceses;
- To provide a mandate for future work at a Provincial level to identify and deal with potential Constitutional or legal obstacles to the development of the Ministry Areas/Ministry Area Teams concepts.

3. Motion

That the Governing Body:

- (i) ask dioceses to embrace the vision commended by the Church in Wales Review of a re-energised Church and to develop and enhance its ministry by the development of Ministry Areas;
- (ii) adopt *The Provincial Framework for Ministry Areas (August 2013)* as an expression of Provincial endorsement for the concept of Ministry Areas;
- (iii) commend the development of specialised ministries, especially to young people, to reach those currently outside the regular worshipping community of the Church;
- (iv) request Provincial Bodies to continue to provide all reasonable assistance to dioceses in this work;

- (v) ask dioceses to report to the Standing Committee annually on progress in developing Ministry Areas and Ministry Area Teams;
- (vi) ask the Standing Committee to bring forward proposals for any Constitutional changes necessary to enable the implementation by dioceses of plans to introduce Ministry Areas and Ministry Area Teams;
- (vii) remind all members of Governing Body to accept their responsibility to engage with, communicate and support this process.

The Provincial Framework for Ministry Areas

The Governing Body of the Church in Wales welcomes the recommendations made by the Church in Wales Review (July 2012) for the establishment of Ministry Areas served by Ministry Area Teams.

The Governing Body encourages and supports dioceses in taking forward these recommendations, and gives permission to develop the concept of Ministry Areas creatively to best meet the needs of the local church and the wider communities it seeks to serve.

In doing so, the Governing Body provides the following framework within which dioceses should work.

Ministry Areas will:

- Give new energy and impetus to the Church's ministry to all the people and communities of Wales, building on the strengths of the existing parish structure;
- Be a reflection of the communities in which they are set, and seek to meet the spiritual, liturgical and pastoral needs of those communities;
- Be identified and established in accordance with criteria set by each diocese, taking into account the views of the local church and wider community, including other denominations present in that community;
- Be established with the intention that they will in time meet the whole costs of their ministry;
- Be served by a Ministry Area Team.

Ministry Area Teams will:

- Consist of lay and ordained ministers, who may be stipendiary or non-stipendiary;
- Provide ministry to local congregations using local leaders, who will be members of the Team;
- Be led by Team Leaders who receive appropriate leadership training. The Team Leaders will encourage discipleship among and nurture the ministry potential of all within the Ministry Area. Team Leaders are to understand their calling as being to work through other people as, for instance, a Bishop works through others to bring the message of Christ to the Diocese;
- Develop specialised ministries to reach young people and those currently outside the regular worshipping community of the local church;
- Be formed taking into account the presence of other denominations in the area.

Implementation Group
August 2013