

MISSION AND MINISTRY COMMISSION

THE COMMISSION'S WORK

The Mission and Ministry Commission exists to support the General Synod by considering matters of our life in mission and ministry. Particular areas of work delegated by the General Synod have been in Professional Supervision, Ordained Local Ministry, and Pioneer Ministry. Recently the Commission has been spending time thinking about mission effectiveness and mission culture in the ACA.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

The Current members of the commission are as follows:

The Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Condie (Chair)
The Ven Dr Wayne Brighton
The Rev'd Kate Beer
Canon Michael Ford
The Rt Rev'd Dr Timothy Harris
The Rev'd Anthea McCall
The Rev'd Gary O'Brien
Ms Vaishi Rajanayagam
Mrs Monica Short
The Rev'd Dr Max Wood

Since the last General Synod, the Commission farewelled Mr Paul Cavanough, The Rt Rev'd Ivan Lee, The Rev'd Canon Dr Richard Trist, The Very Rev'd Mary Lewis, Ms Sue Williams, The Rev'd Mark Charleston, The Rev'd Canon Zoe Everingham.

PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

GS17 referred work on clergy professional supervision to the Commission. This work was eventually taken up by the Safe Church Commission and the MMC has worked cooperatively with them on the project. The Standing committee have recently requested the commission to oversee the implementation of the Clergy Wellbeing and Development Policy, Guidelines and Resources – Professional Development, Professional Supervision and Ministry Reviews.

The Commission will try and assist and resources dioceses in the implementation of the policy and conduct a 3 year review of its operation. We are particularly interested in thinking how models of supervision might be developed for under-resourced, rural and indigenous ministries.

The Commission affirms the principle of pastoral supervision of clergy and licensed lay ministers, and, being aware of the reality of the situation, suggests a broader strategy to encompass flexibility of provision, regional contextual and financial concerns, while also stipulating supervisory conversations on more difficult topics – power relationships, sexuality, and personal disciplines. We also suggest that professional pastoral supervision be provided at critical points in a ministerial career eg early in a person's ministry experience, and for those

who have had particular struggles, followed by peer supervision as modelled by the professional health sector.

ORDAINED LOCAL MINISTRY

The Ordained Local Ministry workgroup were tasked to examine the various current models of OLM and non-stipendiary [ordained] ministry (NSM) in the Anglican Church of Australia. They have surveyed the Dioceses and have followed up the survey with further enquiries.

OLM continues to be used across the Australian Church, especially in under-resourced and rural areas. In 2017 OLM was used formally in 7 dioceses, informally in 5 dioceses and not at all in 11. There is some evidence that some dioceses are moving away from its use in 2019. It is understood that this is due in part to the aging and tiredness of the local ministry teams. Unlike a traditional Vicar/Rector, there is no process for the refreshment of leadership.

This project started at the end of 2014. To date there has been significant changes in the landscape – especially as diocesan bishops change, as well as generational changes. The Commission observes the rise of “self-supporting ministers”, and “self-funded ministers” providing ministry in under-resourced contexts. The changing environment in rural areas means more SFMs are being utilized to provide ministry into remote areas.

Especially as church attendances decline in rural areas, alternative models of ministry provision are being considered and are indeed necessary for the continuation of worship. The Commission has considered how it might support OLM and NSM across the church and will continue with this work into the future.

A detailed report on OLM and NSM practices across the ACA can be obtained from the Commission for those who are interested.

PIONEER MINISTRY

The Commission has attempted to bring together a network of pioneer ministers over the last three years without success. Some of the challenges have been due to the workload of the Commission members, but also the nature of pioneer ministry. It is clear that those doing pioneer ministry mostly have their own organic networks, and it is hard to bring them together into a more formal network within the church.

MISSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The Commission hosted a roundtable discussion on mission in the Anglican Church of Australia in Melbourne in October 2019, with representatives from 18 Dioceses participating. The Forum was titled “Disruptive Ideas and Dangerous Questions” and explored avenues for disruptive innovation in the mission of the ACA.

Specifically, we curated conversations on the following topics:

- NCLS research relating to Australian Social change, Churches in Australia, and the Anglican Church of Australia (with Sam Sterland from the NCLS)
- Models for stimulating innovative change
- The role of the laity in growing missional effectiveness
- Reaching millennials and young adults
- The place of smaller communities in mission
- The role of the bishop in hindering or promoting mission

- Crossing cultures for mission
- Pathways for developing entrepreneurial mission leaders
- Different Parish models for mission

Each conversation was wide ranging and canvassed ideas and opportunities, and the experience of the participants.

We realised that at times it was hard to move into “disruptive innovation”, and some of our ideas are simply evolutionary innovation, but the conversation was stimulating and embraced by all participants.

Key Messages from the Forum

If we are going to meet the missional challenges of the future and embrace the change that we need, then we need foster greater relationships of **trust** and **respect**. We recognised that these would need to be organic and built over time, but that the lack of trust and respect for each other across the church was hampering our efforts. We acknowledge the challenge of **widening our worldviews** to enable this to take place.

These attitudinal changes would need to be undergirded by **humility**, **courage** and **bravery** to have conversations with each other about what missional changes would be required.

We noted the importance of **discerning the traits of pioneer ministers** in our midst, and then committing to **training** and **developing** them. We recognised that much of our current training was not well suited to the pioneers, and many of them move from Anglican circles to other denominations due to our inability to accommodate them.

A lot of discussion took place about the role of **specialist leaders** and especially **bishops** in mission. We specifically thought that developing Bishops and other leaders as **permission givers** was critical to allowing missional innovation to take place.

We recognised that **crisis leads to opportunity**, and that understanding the missional crisis facing our Dioceses would be a critical step. Many of us found the “brutal facts” of the decline in our effectiveness demonstrated by NCLS quite confronting.

We recognised the differing needs of the majority of our dioceses over the needs of “Big 4” major metropolitan dioceses. The complexities in each place require adaptive mission strategies according to the context.

Major Disruptions

1. **Cultural Change** – we recognised that in all organisations, disruption comes from the fringes rather than from the centre. Innovators disrupt the status quo, which is counter to much of our settled Anglican culture. We need to recognise this and welcome it in our Dioceses with the cultural change that it brings – moving from “no” to “yes”, cultivating nimble reactions to change, and empowering and releasing the laity. Developing a culture of willingness and openness to change and innovation is going to be key in our adaptation in mission.
2. **Reward Innovation** – linked to this permission giving culture we wondered if could consider how we might reward the innovators among us. Often these innovators do not conform to the norms of our diocesan administration processes and end up being treated as “problems” by the centre. Rather we need to create an environment where innovation is rewarded. eg Dioceses could award “innovation grants” to new missional endeavours.

3. **Rethinking the Formation and Training of Clergy** – We generally train ministers to be settled conformists, rather than missional innovators. We recognise the importance of theological education but suggest we should consider reversing the order of selection and training

FROM: SELECT -> TRAIN -> DEPLOY
TO: DEPLOY -> TRAIN -> SELECT.

When we use model 1, we tend to crush the pioneers and they become impatient. But model 2 allows pioneers to be deployed in ministry with their passions and gifts being used to build the church, training can take place either concurrently with deployment in ministry, or during an interval from it. Only then should we consider their selection for ordained ministry in the church.

The Commission notes the importance of including and highlighting missiology as part of the formation program of our clergy and lay leaders. It is not sufficient to assume we know how to reach our own culture without some specialty training in mission.

4. **20% Time** – We noted that many innovations in the IT industry come from free time allocated to workers to explore their own personal projects. Eg Gmail is the product of a person at Google using the 20%-time policy to work on projects of their own that might benefit the company. While this would be hard to apply to ministry positions, the idea is to create permission structures necessary for ministry practitioners to think creatively about how to reach Australians with the Gospel.
5. **Speciality Bishops** – while all bishops should be leaders in mission, we realised that we neither often elect innovators nor resource and release them. Given our episcopal structure, the suggestion was made that we support the deployment of a specialist bishop for church planting and innovation as a national bishop. This would help resource and network the missional innovators across the national church.
6. **Pioneering Conversation** – there was a lot of energy in our gathering around continuing a pioneering conversation across the national church.

The Commission is sponsoring a discussion at the National Bishops' Meeting on this topic. A full copy of the report is available from the Commission.

NATIONAL MISSION CONFERENCE

The Commission has been considering the need for helping focus the Anglican Church of Australia on its core mission by holding a national conference on mission in the next few years. The planning is in the early stages, but we hope to sponsor some significant conversations about our missional challenges and objectives.

The Right Rev'd Dr Richard Condie
Chair, Mission and Ministry Commission