

Multi-Parish Ministry – a Comparative Study

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Study Leave Report
June 2011

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This report is a study of the comparison between the Southland Regional Resource Ministry and Multi-Parish Ministry in Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches of England, Scotland and Wales.

A Brief Background

In 2010 the Southland Regional Resource Ministry was established by the then Southland Presbytery to provide Resource Ministry for nine parishes in Southland, who are led by members of those parishes, in Local Ministry Teams or Ministry Teams comprising of Session Elders or Parish Councillors.

These teams had been established in each of the parishes over a number of years, but more recently it was identified that there were twelve parishes in the previous Southland Presbytery that were led by members, without a Parish Minister, but with oversight from an Interim Moderator. This situation had come about during a period when congregation numbers were in decline, finances were insufficient to employ an Ordained Minister and ministers were reluctant to accept a call to rural parishes in Southland. The four streams of ministry were being developed at this time and the option of commissioning a team of lay leaders to take key roles in the church became, for many, a viable option.

While the requirement for these Lay Teams is for them to have a Resource Minister¹, it was identified that there were very few Ordained Ministers in Southland, or willing to move to Southland, who could undertake this role. The position was advertised, but there were no applicants, which was not surprising as very few would have a concept of what the role entailed.

As it became clear that someone was needed to undertake this role, sooner, rather than later, it was thought that someone already resident in Southland might be able to take on the role. As Rev. Ian Crawford and myself were then in a situation of having to change our employment status, it was mooted as a possibility that we could take on the role, jointly, of Resource Ministers for Southland parishes that did not have a minister.

All parishes without an Ordained Minister were invited to commit to this initiative and a rationale of contribution towards the funding was calculated. An application to the Synod of Otago and Southland gain major funding for three years of the project. Nine of the twelve possible parishes committed to the partnership proposal and after a couple of meetings, agreed to proceed with Rev. Ian Crawford supplying quarter time and Rev. Heather Kennedy half-time. They were duly inducted in a Service of Induction on 2 February, 2010, at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Invercargill.

The member parishes of the Southland Regional Resource Ministry are; Oban (Stewart Island), Bluff Greenhills Co-operating, St. Paul's, St. Stephen's, Wallacetown, Limestone Plains, Otatau-Waiono, Waiau Valley and Mossburn. Those opting out were; Knox, Oteramika-Kennington and Woodlands. If their current arrangements change in the future then they may have to consider joining the Regional Resource Ministry as one of their

¹ PCANZ Book of Order, Chapter 9.23, 9.24, 9.25, 9.26, 9.27, 9.28, 9.29, 9.30, 10.18 & 10.19
[Http://presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/for_parishes/Book_of_Order_2010_corrected_March_2011.pdf](http://presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/for_parishes/Book_of_Order_2010_corrected_March_2011.pdf)

options for providing ministry in their parish. Currently Knox Church are in a process of review and Wallacetown are seeking Local Ordination for their current Lay Pastor.

As the Resource Ministers were commissioned to their role, there was no Job Description and no outline of expectations. Parishes were asked what they thought the role entailed and what their specific ministry needs were. Some of the roles that were identified were:

- Taking services of worship, as and when able, on a pulpit supply roster
- Pastoral care, supervision and support of Local Ministry Team members and members of Parish Council lead parishes.
- Training for Team members, especially for Licensed Communion and Baptism Elders, for those with specific responsibilities
- Providing resources, educational opportunities and networking

Since then the Resource Ministers have lead Workshops on a variety of topics and sought to resource the laity. Rev. Ian Crawford leads worship once a month in one of the nine parishes and Rev. Heather Kennedy, twice a month.

They also attend various committee and team meetings as able, or by request.

After one year the Southland Regional Resource Ministry held its Annual General Meeting and the roles undertaken by the Resource Ministers were affirmed. The nine parishes continue to support the Ministry and a review was held at the end of 2011, to gauge support for continuing the Ministry beyond the initial three year period.

During the first year, when arranging to hold training workshops, I identified a need for training for the role of Resource Minister. Most of the information and training provided for the Resource Minister was either academic theory or experience based learning, neither of which were specifically about multi-parish ministry or rural ministry. I then sought an avenue for obtaining some input on these forms of ministry, which would be easily transferable to the Regional Resource Ministry situation. I was able to find a two-day workshop in England, run by the Arthur Rank Centre for Rural Ministry Training, on the topic of Multi-Parish Ministry.

Workshop on Multi-Parish Ministry

**held at Offa House, Offchurch, Diocese of Coventry, Warwickshire, England
attended June 15-16, 2011.**

This Workshop is held twice a year to provide training and a forum for Ordained Ministers who are in Multi-Parish Ministries in the United Kingdom. It was a residential course held in a retreat centre, and at times we shared the facilities with other small groups on guided or silent retreats. There were a total of thirteen participants on the course, all the others being Priests in the Church of England. Four of us were women. The seven sessions were lead by Rev'd Canon Jeremy Martineau, Director of Studies for the Centre for Studies in Rural Ministry on behalf of the Arthur Rank Centre and the University of Wales, Bangor. He is a noted and prolific writer on Rural Ministry concerns. Those attending came from various parts of England, Midlands, Yorkshire, Essex and Cambridge. Many of them knew of others who had previously attended the workshop and came on their recommendation, some had been advised to attend by their Bishop. Most of the others had at least two parishes they served, the most being seven parishes, not counting the nine parishes I serve in.

Shared stories of the situations we ministered in.

While some had quite a few parishes to minister to they were predominately in a small area, some of which were in the edge of cities, with the greatest distance travelled to a parish being approximately five miles. One minister told of travelling around all his parishes by bicycle, even biking for two hours to come to the workshop.

I spoke of the setting up of the Southland Regional Resource Ministry and the need for some training to for me to be better equipped for the role of Resource Minister. Most were horrified at the prospect of having to travel 100 kilometres to my northern-most parish (Mossburn), or of having a half-hour drive then a hours ferry crossing to the southern-most (Oban, Stewart Island). However, when discussing the reason for the setting up of the Regional Resource Ministry many related to the issues of congregation decline, changing rural scene, lack of financial means to employ a minister and the effects of an aging population, especially in rural churches.

The roles of Leadership and Collaboration with the Laity.

One of the themes discussed was 'the future of the Parish System' which in the English Anglican context was quite different to New Zealand, but the discussion revealed many helpful insights. One of the main concerns is that there is insufficient and inadequate research carried out on what the future options are for the church, in light of the issues currently being encountered.

As ordained ministers called to serve our Lord, Jesus Christ, the church is seen as the tool in which we serve God's Kingdom. Helping the church to live the gospel, in order to be effective in the community in which it is situated. Rural churches are often lead by local lay people, who are supported by a minister – who usually lives somewhere else. Multi-parish ministry is seen to be at the cutting edge of church identity. Where the old vision of church equalled minister (or priest), does that mean that if there is no minister then there is no church? The answer is an emphatic NO! Therefore the minister becomes the visitor who enables ministry in the church. Finances that would have previously been used almost exclusively for the employment of an Ordained Minister can now be used to obtain resources for both Ministry and Laity.

Multi-parish ministry therefore has a unique characteristic that does not fit the traditional concept of church. Multi-parish means that across the spectrum ministry is also multi-faith (ie many various understandings and interpretations of theology) and multi-cultural, often including urban, semi-urban along with the rural context. As a result God is seen to be present, alive and active in a multitude of contexts, throughout the area or region. One of the tasks of the ministry is to find out what God is doing in each place and join in, which could even mean the ministry has global implications.

Some of the difficulties of multi-parish ministry is that the Minister has to spread their time and resources widely, over a great area, over a diverse peoples and theologies. This risk is in not being able to connect with some, and of be less visible to others. There is an understanding however that the Resource Minister is not the Parish Minister, so is not part of the local framework. Therefore the minister is not so much the 'salt' but the 'light' for the community. There is a sense of not being very far from the Kingdom of God, of helping neighbours, of acting with God's authority and discovering that sometimes mistakes are made.

Our basic humanity as neighbour can lead us in various directions and is shared by all those who are baptised as a ministry of fulfilment in partnership with the Minister. This can be a spontaneous response to the needs of our neighbours and not one of waiting to be asked to help or of sitting back and saying who else could do this or thinking that someone else might be doing it already. In responding we will then find out if others are there as partners in this ministry. Which may lead us on to partnering with other groups and agencies in the community, such as District Councils, Grey Power, Environmental groups, Women's Institute, Rural Women, Federated Farmers, schools, sports clubs, community newspapers, shops and pubs.

God's laity are found in all walks of life, in all sectors of the community. Churches need to reconnect with those in the community who represent the Christian voice, who may not be regular church attenders, but who have a really connection with the community. Daily living is the core of Christian living, not what happens on a Sunday morning – even previous life experiences, knowledge and skills of ministers needs to be rediscovered and used in community outreach. (My past experience as a Registered Nurse with 22years working with the elderly, is a real connection with those in hospitals and aged care facilities.) Our resourcing and enabling of the laity acknowledges a true partnership in ministry with those who are employed by the church, in a variety of roles.

The effective church of the future will be founded on the strengths, interest and visions of locals who are supported by the minister for their parishes. Members need to identify their strengths, interests and vision in order to identify their resourcing needs. The Resource Minister is not seen then as the 'great I-am' or the 'be-all and end-all', or a manager, but as a teacher, facilitator and inspirer.

Worship and Pastoral Care.

Our central mission is to proclaim the Good News of God's Kingdom, in worship, preaching and administering the sacraments, to teach, baptise and nurture Christian faith. As well as responding in service to humanity in pastoral care, healing and support. To transform communities and to sustain creation. All aspects of which are outlined in the PCANZ Five Faces of Mission². All of which need to be undertaken in small areas as well as larger ones. There needs to be a process which identifies how mission is enabled and what impedes mission initiatives from being undertaken; hindrances such as small congregations that are made up of very elderly folk, who are tired out from doing this for

² PCANZ, Worship and Mission, Ch 7.1

many years. This will also result in a loss of the history of investment in that community by those who have contributed to the life of the church and the churches connection with the community.

As a result of visions of Christians in their community many 'Fresh Expressions' of church have evolved. These new phases, which identify the church's desire to move on from what they were to something new, have attracted many members of the community who would not have otherwise considered attending church. These fresh expressions are such ventures as, soup kitchens, community meals, house church groups, developing a local care ethic, and identifying each others giftings which contribute to the resourcing of such ventures.

Ministers serving in Multi-parish ministry situations need to get to know the gifts, interests and vision of the members of the parish and the community to assist them to work towards achieving the visions they have, especially if a fresh expressions is planned. To be a beacon of light, shining on the future and future possibilities.

Leadership

A session on leadership considered whether models of leadership were top-down or not. The top-down model is likened to the pyramid ▲, with implications of being entombed or buried. The Jesus model ▼ could be seen as unstable, ready to topple over.

A model of leadership was proposed that was based on the parts of the bicycle. The centre frame is stable with three equal sides, representing the Trinity. The crank is where the drive comes from – the (Bishop) Presbytery, the pedals that work the bike are the (Archdeacons and Vicars) Ministers, the forward momentum is potentiated by the axle and hub, the members of the church. Dynamism in the church is the result of the friction generated as the rubber meets the road, showing that the church is 'going somewhere'.



Leaders in the church should welcome hostile criticism as helpful and developmental, just as a cyclist overcomes nervousness and fear as they master their skill. The people of the church are there in equal value to work together as do the ball-bearings in the sprocket. All are equipped and enabled by the three persons of the Trinity – the three in one all, as lubrication. The spokes on the wheel all radiate from the hub, criss-crossing each other in their role, being the out-workings of the church in the community; rubber hitting the road. (It was Dunlop who invented the Newman – tyre). No-one is expected to do more than another as the rim is equidistant from the hub. The tuning spanner keeps all in tune with each other, maintaining good communication, maintaining an even tension.

Questions were then discussed; How many spokes are you working with?
Are you the hub or one/some of the spokes?
Is your Trinitarian frame even or wonky?
Does the bike ride the road all the time?
Is it possible to leave the bike in its stand occasionally?

*Leaders are best when people barely know they exist,
not so good when people acclaim,
worst when they despise them,
but of a good leader who talks little,
when their work is done,
their aim fulfilled, their people will say
'We did this ourselves'.*

*Tao-Tse
Ancient Chinese Philosopher*

Models of ministry were discussed that included Collaborative Ministry and Shared Ministry, acknowledging a rapidly increasing willingness of the laity to be involved in the day to day leadership of the parish. However, in the Church of England, leadership is still thought of as the role of the most visible, those that wear clerical collars, which is sanctioned by Bishops. Those who aspire to and seek training for lay roles are hampered by top-down authority of clergy, who might like to empower the laity but are 'not allowed to'. The leadership style of the clergy model carries with it a time-honoured authority of teaching, modelling, facilitating, being the hub of over-lapping boundaries, having many fingers in many pies and of being a trouble-shooter. The time has now come whereby many clergy are having to be 'change-facilitators', training the laity in readiness for their roles to be sanctioned.

Those of us on this course were then invited to consider our own style of leadership; and of the elements of leadership that are expected of us, to look out the over-lapping boundaries in our roles, the pies we have fingers in and how we spread ourselves across wide areas. For those of us who are having to be 'change-facilitators' we discussed the facets of lay ministry that we empower, enable and resource and what we might be able to bring to our roles in the future.

"What we say and do now, may have results in 20 years time".

*Shepherds in the West have at least two sheepdogs, who drive from behind.
Shepherds in the East know their own sheep and when they call, they follow.*

The impact of the role of being Clergy on our lives.

The impact on our lives, by the role of being clergy is mostly determined by our personality; the kind of person we are, not by how busy our role is. Our personality is also variously affected by those things that we have and retained within ourselves as well as the events and expectations from without. This is influenced by our varied gifts, strengths and the many things we focus on. All of which leads to the Minister having to juggle their workload, their responsibilities, commitments and what others expect of them. Ministers serving a number of parishes are particularly affected by the various pressures from parishes and the need to juggle commitments in their diary. External support is often needed to prevent overload and/or mental breakdown (burnout). Any signs indicating this eventuality should be detected by a Supervisor or Reviewer.

All Ministry positions and contracts of employment should be reviewed regularly, possibly every two to three years, by experienced reviewers, without fear of criticism. This could be a peer review, though this may not be as beneficial, as one would need to be aware of the danger of transference in the review process. Using an independent reviewer guarantees confidentiality, where nothing is reported to anyone other than those that need to know that the review has been undertaken. Only comments made at a short meeting by those invited to be present would be recorded by the reviewer. All present at the meeting need to agree to the process. Any consultancy fees would be paid by the parish.

Therefore all clergy need to be open to the Ministry Development Review process as well as undergoing regular Supervision. Another useful tool for lessening the impact of Ministry is to meet with colleagues, other clergy, to share quality theological expertise, to let off steam, to share stories and frustrations and give each other support.

Being in the Community

Many roles for clergy in a parish have been to undertake ceremonial functions in the community, especially in a small community, with close links to events held at the local school in the town hall. The position of the Parish Priest was one of historical attachment

to the community and all its affairs. Many small villages were administered by the Parish Council, especially where the Church of England was the Parish Church in the village. In some instances the Church of England was the link between the Roman Catholic church and the Protestant (Reformed) churches in a larger community.

However, with the changing role of the church in the community this has also changed the role of the clergy. One of the main outcomes has been a decline in applicants for ordination (though this is less so in churches with an evangelical theology).

Certain changes in the role of the church in the community, have led to the change in the role of the clergy. This has meant that there are now areas with declining church membership with a subsequent recent history of there being no clergy resident in the local area. This often means that any clergy serving those areas are living elsewhere and are spread further apart, having to move about in order to serve the communities they are responsible for. Sometimes this leads to confusion over the clergy's role and conflict over the best use of the clergy in the area. One therefore does one's best, in the love of God. A minister needs to be the light shining into the community, not the salt or yeast within that community. Those serving a number of parishes across a variety of communities need to resource those in each place, to do the best they can, to be church. The Minister needs to be an infectious model, spreading themselves as wide and resourcefully as is possible.

Parishes in grouped arrangements could work together in collaboration or work apart on separate projects. In order to achieve the best outcome for the group or each parish, the Minister could assist in mapping the community, to identify the parishes place within their district, town and the wider community. The Resource Minister is in an ideal position to bridge the gap between parishes, communities and the wider church, being a conduit for information, the sharer of possible points of connection and the person who helps in assisting those in the parishes who are carrying out ministry roles.

For example, once a year it may be that parishes will get together to share ideas, visions, plans and possibilities with each other, so that they do not feel like they are working in isolation and that they are in a collaborative relationship across a wider field. Those parishes that are excelling at specific undertakings could act as consultants for parishes that which to attempt similar undertakings, as well as brainstorm why certain activities have not been successful.

The main role of the Minister is to be intentional in relationships with parishes, to offer resources, support the laity, provide focused training, keep in communication, share information, attend meetings and events as able and include colleagues.

Multi-Parish Ministry Structure

Discussion on whether to combine all parishes into one entity can be helpful. There are two sides to the discussion on the possible benefits or not for grouping parishes together in one unit.

Points in favour include:

- less administration
- fewer offices needed
- amenities used locally
- shared ministry
- shared resources
- strength of shared ideas

Points to the contrary include:

- no less administration
- shared ministry
- lack of coherence
- lack of common ground

loss of local identity
loss of local membership
loss of building heritage

There is also the fear that a top-down decision regarding geographical boundaries and parish amalgamations will be imposed on existing parishes. Whereas the fostering of existing links and the development of those relationships would make the most sense. The question then becomes, how can those connections be formalised?

The recommendation is; that everyone continues to do what they are now, to continue to maintain links and relationships with other parishes until the whole idea of the collective parishes being one unit becomes woven into the psyche.

Within the structure of the Multi-Parish Ministry is the need to identify the role of the Ministers. Ministers of Word and Sacrament who are Resource Ministers in a Multi-Parish arrangements offer Supervision, facilitation and training for the laity (Local Ministry Teams / Shared Ministry Teams), and maintain links and relationships across the whole area. Resource Ministers need to work on concretising support for themselves and the ministry they undertake.

Relating this workshop to the Southland Regional Resource Ministry

Throughout the workshop and discussions with those attending there was the constant impression that what was being shared was significantly relevant to the Southland situation. Whereas many of those in attendance were Anglican clergy who served in arrangements of 2-8 parishes these were mostly close together (up to five miles apart) in rural or semi-rural areas and of similar worship style as each other. Some Parish Councils also served as the governing body of the village. Most parishes had volunteers who filled the roles of Sexton, Deacon, Reader and Parish Councillors, carrying out age-old responsibilities.

Southland parishes however are spread over a large geographical area (up to 100kms apart), of rural and urban situations, are of diverse worship style, have a variety of team leadership models and many leaders are new to the church. Many have lost significant membership, their role within the community and connection with the wider church. Many are also faced with urgent decisions needing to be made on the maintenance or insurance of church buildings.

The role of the Resource Minister in Southland is one of a juggling act, to help leaders in parishes make significant and wise decisions, help with the regular provision of worship services, the training and resourcing of lay leadership and the connecting tissue with the wider church.

Interviews: with Ministers of Multi-Parish Ministries in the United Kingdom

While on Study Leave in the United Kingdom, I also made it known that I would be interested in visiting and interviewing ministers in Multi-Parish Ministry situations. I was encouraged by the response (mainly from names recommended by Rev'd Canon Jeremy Martineau) from those who had previously attended the MPM Workshop. I also contacted the Church of Scotland Head Office in Edinburgh and received responses from Ministers in parishes that are linked with a number of others in their region. In order to save time, I circulated a questionnaire for Ministers to complete and return to me by e-mail so that the interview process only required clarification and expansion of the issues that emerged in the questionnaire³.

Six questionnaires were completed, twelve interviews were conducted (some of whom had completed questionnaires, some had not), information of a similar nature was provided by twelve participants at the MPM Workshop, attendees at a Rural Ministry Day in North Devon, a Ministry Formation Day for the Presbyterian Church of Wales, in Bala, and three other interviews were conducted with administrators in the Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

Interviews included: (those underlined completed questionnaire)

Rev. James 'Paddy' Kyle, Methodist retired Minister, Chilsworthy, Devon. (25 parishes, urban and rural – Bude Circuit, 11; Holsworthy Circuit, 19, as roving preacher / celebrant, 2 other fulltime clergy)

Rev'd Hugh Ellis, Church of England Vicar, Huish Episcopi, Langport, Somerset (Senior Minister for 5 parish Benefice, one urban, 4 rural, 2 other part-time clergy)

Rev'd Graham Dodds and Rev'd Jennifer Cole. Staff at Ministry Formation Centre, Wells Cathedral, Diocese of Bath and Wells, Somerset. (Ministry modules on-line)

Rev. Jenny Gerrard, Llanidloes, Wales. (Resource Minister for 17 rural parishes in Central Wales, working with licensed lay volunteers.)

Rev. Scott McCarthy, Langholm, Dumfries, Scotland. (Minister for four linked parishes, one urban, three rural)

Rev. Dugal Cameron, Oban, Argyll, Scotland. (Minister for three linked parishes, two urban, one rural)

Rev. Rob Rawson and Bill Murray, Rural Churches Ass., Scotland (at Rural Churches stand, Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh).

Rev. David Currie, Church of Scotland Head Office, George St., Edinburgh. (New Frontiers Development Director)

Rev. Pauline Steenbergen, Church of Scotland Head Office. (Leadership Development)

Rev. Sheila Moir, St. Boswells – Newtown, Roxburgh, Scotland (Minister for four linked parishes, two semi-rural / urban, two rural)

Rev. Tim Morris, Foulden Newton, Northumberland. (Retired Episcopal Church of Scotland, recently worked in Canada resourcing Multi-parish ministry).

Questionnaire only:

Rev. Dr. Dagmar Winter, Kirkwhelpington, Northumberland (Vicar of four parish Benefice)

Rev'd. Martin Clacker, Fromeside Partnership of Churches, South Gloucestershire, UK

³ Appendix Two

Summary of Questionnaire responses:

Only a few of the ministers were working with other Ordained clergy; most were in sole charge of the benefice or group of parishes.

The number of parishes grouped or linked together varied from 4 to 25, with 4 being common (especially in Scotland), 17 and 25, the exceptions. Churches are mostly rural, with the largest urban (semi-rural towns) being less than 8000 people. Many of the rural parishes had monthly services and some were only used for Baptisms, Weddings etc. The groupings were reasonably well established, some as long ago as 30 years, with others more recently, though the larger groupings were in a period of re-configuration. Most of the group arrangements had come about as a way of providing Ordained Ministry across a wider area, thereby allowing churches to avoid closure and remain an entity in their community. In some cases amalgamation had freed the Church of the responsibility of maintaining buildings.

Geographically parishes are mostly clustered closely together, with the greatest distance to a linked parish being 20 miles.

Most of the clergy lead worship services every Sunday, in one or more parishes, and conducted others services eg Weddings as required. Many parishes had teams of Lay members who lead worship services, after training and licensing. Some clergy acted more in a free-lance manner, covering a large number of churches, as and where needed.

There emerged certain points in favour of this form of ministry which included: the variety and freedom to come and go, whereas the points against are: the variety and the lack of continuity or connection with the local community and the people of the parish.

A comparison with Southland Regional Resource Ministry of the Southern Presbytery of Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

One of the most significant differences between Multi-parish Ministry in the United Kingdom and what we have established here in Southland is the geographical distance encompassed by our arrangement, where the spread of parishes would cover an area of approx. 300sq kms, which includes Stewart Island. The time taken to travel to the furthest parishes is upwards of an hour and / or a one hour ferry journey after driving half an hour to the port of departure (though to fly over is quicker, and more expensive).

The other most significant difference is the sense of disconnection with parishes. The Resource Ministers both live in the city of Invercargill, two (to become three) parishes are in the city, but, the rest are rural or semi-rural, being in small towns some distance from the city. There is little sense of being present or significantly connected with any one parish, but of being more like a roving consultant.

Other small differences include; the history of the churches in the area, the history of the Southland Presbytery, the lack of need for clergy to conduct weddings, baptisms, funerals and other significant services, the lack of the need to undertake pastoral visiting and the sense of parishes still wanting to retain their own identity and a reluctance to amalgamate or co-operate with neighbouring parishes.

Common factors include; declining church membership, building maintenance costs, lack of communication between parishes, precious memories and acute sensitivity to change.

Summary

Overall I have formed the opinion that in setting up the Southland Regional Resource Ministry we have been able to meet the needs of the participating parishes and in comparison with my research are well on the way to making this Ministry a permanent arrangement.

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Appendix One

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
Book of Order (Chapters 9 & 10)

Local ministry team

9.23 Processes leading to identifying a local ministry team

(1) A call to serve in a local ministry team can be identified in one of the two ways described in subsections (2) and (3).

(2) During the course of its work, the ministry settlement board may discern that particular ministry roles could be shared among members of a charge in order to offer leadership and further the worship, life and mission of the charge.

(3) Members of a congregation or charge may feel that they can offer particular ministries together within their congregation or congregations and approach the ministry settlement board.

9.24 Process for establishing a local ministry team

(1) The ministry settlement board may recommend a local ministry team to the charge or congregation if it is satisfied as to

(a) the suitability of the candidates for the particular charge or congregation, and

(b) the suitability of the skills of the proposed team to the mission and ministry needs of the charge or congregation.

(2) If the charge or congregation accepts the recommendation of the ministry settlement board, presbytery must satisfy itself that

(a) the ministry settlement board has made a thorough examination of the ministry needs of the charge or congregation, and

(b) the proposed local ministry team is appropriate and sustainable, and

(c) training can be provided in accordance with section 25.

(3) If either a congregation, charge or presbytery is not satisfied that a person or persons on the team are suitable for a local ministry team, the ministry settlement board must re-examine its recommendation.

9.25 Training of the local ministry team

A presbytery may require any member or members of a local ministry team to

(a) serve a probationary period, or

(b) undertake such further training and assessment as presbytery specifies.

9.26 Commissioning of local ministry team

(1) If presbytery is satisfied

- (a) with the recommendation of the ministry settlement board, and
- (b) that presbytery has set in place training and probationary requirements for the local ministry team, the presbytery must conduct a commissioning service for the team.

(2) At the end of the probationary period specified under paragraph (a) of section 25, presbytery must

- (a) review the performance of the probationary member or members, including their suitability as member or members of the local ministry team, and
- (b) satisfy itself that the charge or congregation accepts the ministry of the local ministry team.

(3) If presbytery is satisfied with its review, it must confirm the commissioning of the local ministry team.

(4) If presbytery is not satisfied with the final review it may

- (a) extend the probationary period of the member or members of the local ministry team, or
- (b) terminate the probationary period.

(5) If presbytery terminates the probationary period, it must

- (a) charge or congregation, and
- (b) reactivate the ministry settlement board for the charge or congregation.

Training and support systems

9.27 Continuing ministry formation for local ministry team

(1) When a presbytery establishes a local ministry team, it must ensure that training for the members of the local ministry team

- (a) addresses the ministry leadership needs of
 - (i) the individual members of the team, and
 - (ii) the congregation,
- (b) ensures that the team functions well together, and
- (c) ensures that the local team ministry provides leadership which furthers the worship, life and mission of the congregation.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), presbytery must

- (a) ensure that each person in the local ministry team has a training agreement relevant to his or her ministry and, as a component of each training agreement, must provide for the appointment of a training enabler or appropriate resource person, or both, for each person, and
- (b) review the training programmes of the team once a year.

9.28 Other assistance for on-going training of local ministry team

In addition to the training requirements set out in section 27, each presbytery must ensure that it has training enablers available to

support and resource the ministry of a local ministry team.

9.29 Role of training enablers

- (a) help to negotiate the training agreement between presbytery and the members of the local ministry team,
- (b) review the training agreement once a year, and
- (c) report to presbytery twice a year on the progress and work of the team.

9.30 Responsibilities of members of local ministry team

Each member of a local ministry team must

- (a) take responsibility for his or her continuing ministry formation, and
- (b) reflect on his or her ministry experience and learning by consulting the teaching enabler on a regular basis.

Limits to scope of ministry

9.31 Withdrawal of a member or members of a local ministry team

If during the tenure of a local ministry team, a member or members withdraw from the local ministry team,

- (a) the charge returns to the status of a charge seeking ministry settlement, and
- (b) presbytery must establish a ministry settlement board, or in the case of a co-operative venture, proceed according to the Guide to Procedures in Co-operative Ventures.

9.32 Appointments outside local ministry team

(1) No individual ordained member of a local ministry team which presbytery has commissioned is eligible for call or appointment to another congregation unless

- (a) he or she is a national ordained minister, or
- (b) he or she proceeds to satisfy the requirements for the national ordained ministry.

(2) However, if a ministry settlement board wishes to appoint as a local ordained minister a member of a local ministry team from another charge, the provisions of sections 14 to 19 apply.

Local ministry team

10.18 Responsibilities of presbytery on receiving a recommendation for a local ministry team

(1) If the report submitted to presbytery under section 8 (5) recommends a local team ministry, presbytery must proceed as set out subsections (2) to (5).

(2) Presbytery must meet

- (a) the proposed team members named in the recommendation, and
- (b) examine their suitability for local team ministry.

(3) If presbytery is satisfied that the proposed team members are suitable for local team ministry, presbytery must follow the procedures set out in sections 23 to 32 of chapter 9.

(4) Presbytery must not approve the recommendation unless it is satisfied

(a) that a local team ministry recommendation will further the mission, life and worship of the congregation, and

(b) that all members of the team are suitable for local team ministry, or

(c) on any other matter, including any stipendiary responsibilities submitted in the recommendation.

(5) If presbytery does not approve the recommendation, it must refer the report to the ministry settlement board to recommence procedures for ministry settlement.

10.19 Proposal for local team ministry approved by presbytery

(1) If the presbytery approves the recommendation for local team ministry and commences the procedures in sections 23 to 32 of chapter 9, subsections (2) to (6) apply.

(2) Presbytery must arrange a service to commission the team members to undertake local team ministry.

(3) The Interim Moderator must continue as Moderator of the church council until

(a) all members of the team have satisfactorily completed their periods of probation, and

(b) presbytery has accepted the local team ministry, and

(c) presbytery has confirmed the commissioning of all members of the team.

(4) Presbytery must ensure that the congregation has access at all times to the talents of a minister.

(5) Upon completion of the periods of probation of all the team members, presbytery must confirm the commissioning of the local team ministry unless any member of the team

(a) fails to pass the required standard, or

(b) withdraws from the probationary process.

(6) If presbytery does not confirm the commissioning of the local ministry team, it must refer the report to the ministry settlement board to recommence procedures for ministry settlement.

Appendix Two

A Questionnaire for Multi-Parish Ministry

Please insert Parish or Area name for your role...

1. How would you describe the ministry situation you are currently in?
2. How many parishes are in your jurisdiction? If only one parish, how many worship centres in your parish i.e. places where you regularly lead worship.
4. If you work across a group of parishes when was this arrangement established?
5. What was the main reason this came about?
6. What size is the geographical area you cover? Eg the furthest distance you travel to take worship or attend meetings.
7. Does this include rural, urban and or city parishes?
8. If there are more than one ordained ministers in this arrangement what is the ratio of workload for each?
9. If there are lay ministers employed in this arrangement how is that administered?
10. Does your ministry work with teams of voluntary lay ministers? If so, describe the nature of these teams?
11. How are the laity trained, equipped, resourced for ministry?
12. What are the pluses of this form of ministry?
13. What are the minuses of this form of ministry?
14. What helpful information do you wish you been told before you took on your role?

Do you agree to have your name, parish etc. referred to in my Study Leave Report. If you prefer names and specifics could be left out.

If you would like a copy of the Study Leave Report when it is completed please supply, Name, Address, and/or email address.