

Faith, Worship, and Ministry

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON PRESBYTERAL MINISTRY

Background

The work of this task force was mandated by the Recommendations of the *Final Report of the Primate's Commission on Theological Education and Formation for Ministry for the Priesthood*. This Report was received and commended to the dioceses for implementation. The full text of the resolution is below:

1. receive the *Final Report of the Primate's Commission on Theological Education and Formation for Presbyteral Ministry* and adopt *Competencies for Theological Education for Ordination to the Priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada* and commend this document to the dioceses for implementation;
2. a. request the Primate in consultation with the Council of General Synod to develop pathways to support implementation by dioceses of the *Competencies* and report on such implementation on a regular basis to the Council of General Synod.

b. *direct the Council of General Synod to build on the work of this Commission to fulfill its responsibilities for theological education by:*
 - coordinating a national register of recommended resource persons for ministry formation to assist in the achievement of the *Competencies*;
 - identifying and/or developing other resources to assist in the implementation of these competencies across the church, as appropriate, e.g. teachers, mentors, programmatic materials and centres of excellence in teaching and ministerial formation;
 - strengthening stewardship, including increased financial capacity to support ministerial development, and more effective approaches to the distribution of these resources.
3. *Direct the Council of General Synod to undertake the emergent work recommended during this consultation process, as follows:*
 - a. develop mechanisms to ensure that the *Competencies* continue to reflect the current needs of the Church;
 - b. develop ways to support the faith formation of the whole people of God, with a view to formation in community for discipleship and mission;
 - c. develop guidelines for competencies for the diaconate;
 - d. develop guidelines for competencies for the episcopate;
 - e. consider the development of a national roster of ordained ministry personnel;
 - f. continue to work in concert with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in all of these recommended initiatives, and to work more broadly ecumenically where appropriate.

4. request that the House of Bishops

- a. create regular opportunities to reflect together upon the meaning and significance of the *Competencies* and upon their implementation;
- b. develop ways of strengthening the mutual accountability of bishops in the exercise of their responsibilities regarding ordination within the mandates of the General Synod.

Follow up on the Resolution

Resolution Part 1 – to the Dioceses: The *Report* and the *Competencies* were sent out to all diocesan offices, bishops, and, where applicable, to diocesan personnel responsible for discernment and formation for ordained ministries, along with a request for feedback, and suggestions of how the *Competencies* might be implemented in discernment processes, in lifelong ministry reviews, and in self-review to discern amongst continuing education options.

Resolution Parts 2 and 3– to the Primate and Council of General Synod: The actions in all of Part 2 were at the time directed to the Primate and to the Council of General Synod because there was not yet clarity about how and to whom to direct actions. Eventually, the new FWM Coordinating Committee developed a mechanism for establishing Task Forces and a Task Force on Presbyteral Ministry was created.

The FWM Coordinating Committee determined that the scope of the actions requested and directed far surpassed the capacity of the committee, task force, and staff to implement. They narrowed the focus of the work to what they judged to be priority areas in which significant work could be done within the time given and the resources available. The Terms of Reference read:

The primary tasks of this group are to produce a web-based “toolkit” of resources to assist in the implementation of the newly adopted Competences for Theological Education for Ordination to the Priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada (res. Part 2.3); and to develop mechanisms to ensure that the Competencies continue to reflect the current needs of the Church (res. Part 2.4).

The work directed on the following items was, for b., dispersed as a principle for work across all areas of FWM ministries, and, for c. and d., the mandates given to two new task forces.

- b. develop ways to support the faith formation of the whole people of God, with a view to formation in community for discipleship and mission;*
- c. develop guidelines for competencies for the diaconate;*
- d. develop guidelines for competencies for the episcopate;*

Resolution Part 4 – to the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops was reminded of these requests on a regular basis throughout 2013 and 2014. They were engaged in a consultative process on the question of episcopal competencies, which helped to re-shape the focus of that project. We are unaware of any significant conversations within the House of Bishops that would have consequence or contribution to this work.

Course and Content of the Work undertaken by the Task Force

With the mandate to create a “toolkit” for implementation, and ways of keeping the *Competencies* current, the task force carefully agreed a process to gather information required in order to begin the work. In order to create and compile resources that would be useful to the dioceses, the task force needed to know what currently exists, and what the dioceses are currently using for the education, formation, and training of those preparing for presbyteral ministry. And in order to keep the *Competencies* current, they need to know how they were presently being received and used by dioceses. The following questions were sent to the dioceses in early 2014 in the form of a survey, with instructions to send to the person most qualified to respond, whether that would be the bishop, a diocesan staff member, or someone otherwise with responsibilities for formation and continuing education for priests.

Section 1. The Competencies

Are you pleased with the document Competencies for Presbyteral Ministry as adopted by the General Synod 2013? If not, why not?

Are you using the Competencies in your diocese...

<i>...in candidacy processes?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>...in ministry review processes?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>...in other ways?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

If “Yes,” to any of the above, please describe:

If “No,” please explain:

Have you developed tools based on or to make use of the Competencies, such as...

<i>...recruitment materials</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>...orientation with candidates or inquirers</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>...forms for regular ministry reviews</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>...discernment for continuing education</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>...other (describe)</i>		

We are aware that The Competencies are being used in many dioceses in candidacy processes and in ministry reviews. What have you done to implement? How are you using this document?

What might the Task Force provide that would be most useful to you, in relation to the Competencies?

...tools, as above, for...

<i>recruitment</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>orientation</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>ministerial review</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>continuing education direction</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>...commentaries, explanations</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>... other (describe):</i>		

Additional Comments:

Section Two: Formation and Education for Priestly Ministry

What are the ways in which your diocese is doing formation, education, and training for priestly ministry? If more than one, please provide rough percentages.

- Indigenous School for Ministry*
- Distance Education from a degree granting theological college*
- Locally developed School for Ministry (non-degree)*
- Locally developed programme within academic programme (diploma or certificate)*
- University based, non-MDiv, but degree programme*
- University based MDiv*
- EFM or other non-degree established programme of studies*

What percentage (roughly) of active priests in your diocese were trained and educated within a theological college, to the MDiv level?

under 10%; *10-25%;* *25-50%;* *50-75%;* *75-90%;* *100%*

Do you anticipate that the percentage of academic theological college trained priests (MDiv) in your diocese will rise, stay the same, or fall, over the next ten years?

Additional Comments, Questions, Information:

Of the five responses received: one indicated that the bishop was still very new and getting oriented to the dioceses; one objected to the whole project, expressing the view that the survey and the competencies as an intrusion into diocesan matters and was asking the ordained to take a vow of obedience to “the national church”; two indicated that the *Competencies* were not being used, that MDiv training was the norm, and that no change in that could be foreseen. One response came in the form of a request for a meeting, in which it was explained how parts of the *Competencies* had been incorporated into their diocese’s already very full guidelines.

Conversation also took place at the table of the annual meeting of the Heads of Colleges revealed that three MDiv-granting educational institutions were using the *Competencies* as guides for students in orientation and in review and assessment.

Task force members took the opportunity provided by this disappointing return to reflect on what could be done. Other, informal, ways were found to surface what was being done, especially in terms of local training, across the church. Some local initiatives (William Winter School, Henry Budd School for Ministry, the Kootenay School for Ministry, for example) were well known to the task force. However, what surfaced was a picture of a church in which, at an increasing speed, dioceses are turning away from the model of theological education that came

of age in the 1980s¹ (the residential Master of Divinity) and have implemented, or are starting to implement, or are thinking about implementing, local programmes either as full-training, education, and formation resources, or to complement existing distance education programmes and short term intensive course residential courses (for degrees, diplomas, or certificates). With no evidentiary information (what we were seeking from the dioceses), anecdotally it appears that the norm is presently for postulants, at the time of ordination, to have undertaken theological education, supervised pastoral work, skills training, Anglican formation, and spiritual formation from a combination of sources.

It also became clear that, while there is significant cross-pollination between established educational institutions and local programmes, there has been little, if any, strategic conversation amongst those working in local education, formation, and training. Informal conversations continued, principally with bishops, and by winter of 2015, a majority of bishops had expressed support for a national gathering of all those who are working in, or working at creating, such programmes and diocesan or regional schools for ministry.

Faith, Worship, and Ministry was successful in obtaining grants from both The Anglican Foundation of Canada and the All Churches' Trust to support such a gathering. Formal invitations were sent to all dioceses for a *National Gathering on Local Initiatives in Theological Education, Formation, and Training for the Priesthood*. To date, we have received commitment from the leadership of all but one diocese (and that due to leadership transition). The conference will take place in February of 2017.

The task force is particularly aware that the most long-standing local schools for ministry are those that came into being under the leadership of Indigenous Anglicans. There is very much to be learned from their experience and wisdom.

There will be a place for the MDiv granting institutions in these conversations, but they will not be leading the work. The established theological colleges represent one of many participants. In addition, institutions often ignored or forgotten about in formal conversations about theological education will be included, such as the Centre for Christian Studies and Threshold Ministries. The Centre for Christian Studies is particularly unique as it is the one theological college that is constitutionally tied to the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada (as well as to the General Conference of the United Church of Canada).

The work continuing for this task force, in addition to planning the conference, will be to conduct more research, learning about the programmes already in place, by correspondence and in person. Connections have been made with other parts of the Communion who are moving, or who have already moved, in these directions.

¹ It must be remembered that the Master of Divinity is a relatively recent phenomenon. Prior to that model, various forms of licentiates, bachelor degrees, and certificate – based studies were the norm. This is not to say that the development of the MDiv was not a good thing. It was, and still is. However, it is important to put this in perspective, and not think that the residential MDiv is the longstanding 'traditional model.'

Ecumenical connections are critically important, and will need more attention. With the dissolution of the Church's Council on Theological Education in 2013, there is no more a readily available ecumenical 'place' for these conversations. We have to create our own connections.

The task force itself is quite small in membership, and wide in consultative reach. We are grateful to all those who with wisdom and enthusiasm have been in conversation with them, the better to shape this important work. We look towards the engagement of additional working groups, both to prepare for the conference, and afterwards.

There remains the question of the other tasks identified in the 2013 Resolution of General Synod, with which the next Faith, Worship, and Ministry committee will engage.

As we reflect on the new ways of working in this triennium, it appears that this work is not tidily time-limited. What is a task force at present, could be a working group coordinating several tasks within the area of theological education (one of which could be planning the conference, another could be research, etc.). Whatever the particularities of structures, theological education – for all – has emerged as one of the top priorities in the sphere of Faith, Worship, and Ministry, and will continue to be so.

Members of the FWM Task Force on Presbyteral Ministry

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