

Consecration of Women Bishops Legislation - developing the idea of religious communities to provide for those of the “traditional integrity”

1. Evangelicals of the “traditional integrity” responded positively to the earlier T.E.A. proposals but requested that these be strengthened by use of statutory transfer rather than delegation or reliance on codes of practice.
The Bishop of Dover has suggested using the model of religious communities and allowing the proposed legislation to establish certain communities. This is an approach worth exploring.
2. The Measure should provide for the establishment of religious communities (probably 3 geographically based).
3. The constitutions of these Communities should be agreed as part of a Code of Practice and should come into force at a specified date.
4. The Governing Body of each Community should be an ecclesiastical charity.
5. From a given date PCCs may by resolution opt to become members of their local Community.
6. Likewise individuals may join their local Community.
7. At a certain date a meeting shall be held of representatives of all PCCs which have joined the Community to elect a Governing Body and make arrangements for the exercise of episcopal ministry.
8. The Measure shall provide for each Community to have at an episcopal visitor who shall be stipendiary and a member of the House of Bishops. They should be nominated by the Community to the Crown for appointment.
9. In addition the Community should be empowered to nominate to the Crown an assistant episcopal visitor who may hold another office or be employed by the Governing Body of the Community. It may be appropriate to permit the Community to nominate further assistants (say for each complete 100 parishes over 100).
10. A schedule to the Measure should set out the Canons and pieces of legislation for which episcopal ministry will be exercised by the episcopal visitor.
The schedule will be in various parts:
 1. Relating to benefices in which all the parishes are part of the Community.
 2. Relating to parishes in a multi-parish benefice not covered by 1 above.
 3. Relating to individual clergy and others holding a bishop’s licence not serving in benefices covered by 1 above.
 4. A reciprocal list relating to clergy and others serving in benefices covered by 1 which join a Community but where the individual wishes to continue to receive episcopal ministry from their Diocesan Bishop.The starting point for the Schedule should be those items specified in the current Annex to the Code of Practice but it may need to be extended.

11. Any office holder required to make an oath of obedience shall make such an oath to the Diocesan Bishop and to the Episcopal Visitor but a pre-amble to the Oath should explain that each Oath is made in the context of the Measure and the Schedule.
12. The episcopal visitor may make arrangements to delegate ministry to an assistant episcopal visitor or to any other Bishop who is a member of the Community.
13. A Community will be responsible to make provision for the cure of souls within benefices that have joined the Community.
14. Two particular issues flow from the provision of souls, deployment and funding. If the Community is to take responsibility for deployment then it must also take responsibility for the stipends of those it deploys. To meet this responsibility the Community would ministry support payments from its supporting parishes who would therefore not make such payments to the Diocese. However, in this situation equity would imply that the Community should either receive a portion of the grants from Diocesan Endowment and Glebe, or that identifiable assets from the Endowment and Glebe should transfer to the Community. The ideal scenario is for there to be full co-operation between the Communities and each Diocese and wherever possible for deployment and funding to be by mutual agreement but legislation must take account of the consequences of such co-operation proving difficult.

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