

Voicing a Vocation

Project Report

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Introduction

In this paper, I explore contemporary Anglican language and theological frameworks used to talk about Christian vocation to ministry, and compare them with the way in which four groups of people describe their personal experience of vocation to ministry: those involved in vocational discernment, those exploring a calling, those in training, and those engaged in ministry within the Church of England.

The project arose from involvement with two committees: The Ordained Vocations Working Group (formed as part of Reform and Renewal and tasked with increasing vocations to ordained ministry by 50% by 2020) and the Durham University Common Awards Management Committee. I realised that in both contexts I was using the terms ‘vocation’ and ‘ministry’ quite loosely. I also suspected that each of us around the table meant something slightly different by them. Moreover, it was unclear how closely any of our ideas about them related to practice ‘on the ground’.

My aim was twofold. First, I wanted to make the language of vocation and ministry more accessible to those new to the subject, especially those in the process of exploring their vocations. During a previous piece of research into best practice in encouraging vocations, numerous respondents had highlighted instances where candidates had found difficulty in articulating their sense of calling, and had become frustrated at not being able to find the language to ‘convince the gatekeepers’ of their vocation (Myers 2016). Second, I wanted to understand more fully the different theological ‘voices’ speaking in the discussions in which I am privileged to participate.

The theoretical framework underpinning the following analysis is a combination of Brunerian constructivism, which recognises both paradigmatic and narrative modes of representation within individual and collective meaning-making¹ and an approach to language based on Wittgenstein’s ‘*meaning as use*’, ‘*language games*’ and ‘*rule following*’².

The OVWG is, by definition, concerned with vocations to ordained ministry. However, even if there were not live matters of equity, recognition and appropriate distribution of nurture and resources to be considered, there are major theological problems in thinking about ordained ministry as being disconnected from either licensed lay ministry, or the wider ministry of the laity. In any case, a call to explore ordination always emerges from, and remains part of, the laity. I have therefore sought to include attention to this throughout, even though it is not the primary focus of this paper.

¹ Bruner 1986, 1990, 1991

² Wittgenstein 1922, 1953

Methodology

I used two different methods to collect data, a survey of the reading recommended to candidates exploring vocation and ministry, and a questionnaire sent to groups of people representative of those involved in vocational discernment or ministry within the Church of England.

The literature survey comprised the books recommended to those exploring vocation on three websites: the main Church of England website³; the Church of England Vocations Hub⁴; and “Call Waiting”⁵, the Church of England website aimed at younger people. I surveyed 26 further books, which did not appear on any of the websites. I also looked at the text used to talk about vocation and language on the websites themselves.

The questionnaire sought to elicit the lived experience of those involved in vocational discernment and ministry. I sent questionnaires to four groups of people who were representative of: those professionally involved in discernment; those currently within the discernment process; those in training for ministry at Theological Education Institutes validated by Ministry Division and Durham University Common Awards and; those licensed or ordained within a single diocese.

I then tested my findings and understanding by means of conversations with theological educators across a range of ecclesiastical traditions. Finally, I compared the findings with the Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England and the Common Worship ordination and licensing liturgies.

³ <https://churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/vocation.aspx>

⁴ <http://vocation.churchofengland.org>

⁵ <http://www.callwaiting.org.uk>

Literature Survey

I am calling this a survey rather than a literature review because I deliberately tried not to assess or argue with any of the books or documents I read. Rather, I wanted to read them on their own terms. I therefore focused on the authors' own approach to vocation and ministry, and the 'voice' they used. I began with the recommended reading on the national Church of England vocations websites.

Recommended Reading

The 'Reading List for Those Exploring Vocation' on The Church of England Ministry Pages is the longest list of recommended books. This list comprises 148 books grouped under 12 headings. Of the 45 books listed under 'On Vocation' and 'On Ordained Ministry', 3 were written in the 1970s, 7 in the 1980s, 18 in the 1990s and 17 in the 2000s. The earliest book was written in 1972 (revised 1985), and the latest in 2007. The Church of England Vocations Hub recommended ten of the same books, including the youngest and oldest from the main list, and added four new ones from 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2014. Call Waiting recommended eight of the Vocations Hub books, two of the same new books, and one new one from 2014.⁶

The recommended reading on the Church of England website seems to be a reasonable selection of the relevant books available on vocation and ministry at the time the three lists were compiled. The books chosen would nevertheless have reflected the bias of, and time available to, those who selected them. They also reflect issues that were contemporary at the time of writing. The recommended reading, by definition, only lists books. This might be said to be culturally biased.

I also looked at 26 further books on vocation and ministry, most of which had been published more recently. I tried to be as comprehensive as possible in terms of the extra books considered. However, they did at one point seem to be being written quicker than I could read them, and so if I have missed any, my apologies to the authors. (Please get in touch.)

An annotated list of all the books surveyed is included as Appendix 1.

For each of the books I have tried to offer an overview of the author's approach. I have then drawn some direct quotes from each book as examples of the sorts of voice used. The object of the exercise was to map rather than to assess the different approaches and voices, and so, intentionally, no critical analysis is offered. It is important to note that the quotes chosen will inevitably nevertheless have been affected both by my conscious intention in this research and by my own unconscious bias.

⁶ All websites were accessed between December 2016 and August 2017

Results

Most of the books surveyed do not really explore theological frameworks around vocation and ministry directly. That is not a criticism; it is just to note that is not what they are about. There are a few that are intentionally about the history and doctrine of vocation, and others that offer a deeper consideration of vocation in scripture. However, most, although they might refer to these, do so within a different overall brief. The themes that emerge from these are considered in more detail below. To assist future research I have divided and coded the books in the appendix as follows:

Subject	Code	Summary
Exploring Vocation	(EV)	These are about finding and exploring personal calling. They include appropriate scripture, inspiring stories and methods for reflection, in varying degrees of emphasis
About Vocation	(AV)	These differ from the above in that they are less subjective and offer a more scholarly approach to the subject.
Personal Stories	(PS)	These are largely autobiographical, offering insights into the author's calling, faith journey or day-to-day ministry.
Ordained Ministry	(OM)	Some explore theology to varying depths. Others focus on the day-to-day life as a parish priest.
Different Forms of Ministry	(DF)	Some are focused on individual story, others look at biblical precedence and recent evolving practice.
Ordination of Women	(OW)	These explore the arguments that took place around the Synod debate and the period immediately after.

In addition to this categorisation I have coded the more theological books (T) in Appendix 1. The coding is based entirely on my own opinion. Others of course may disagree.

I then looked at the prose on the same three websites. The text I considered can be found in Appendix 2.

The websites are friendly and encouraging. They are warm and easy to navigate. I was looking at the detail of theological wording used on them and the following assessment is based on that alone and is in no way critical of the websites themselves.

Each of the websites had an introductory note by the Archbishop of Canterbury and material on vocation, ministry and ordination. The Church of England Ministry pages included some confusing and inaccurate use of words, which were unfortunately duplicated on the Church of England Vocations Hub. These were well-intended and aimed at being inclusive, but were not helpful for someone trying to understand the differences between vocation, discipleship and ministry. The Call Waiting website had corrected this and provides an excellent summary, although there remains some confusion about roles and forms of ministry, and who is tasked to do what.

Analysis

It is fair to say that I did not discover a definitive theological account or framework to think about either vocation or ministry in the recommended reading lists or on the websites. Perhaps I was naïve in thinking I might. The clue is in the word: *theos – logos*, and in a sense, it has been a real joy to be reminded that as Anglicans, we don't have theological frameworks, we have conversations and liturgies! The question I moved forward with was: What approaches are shaping conversations about vocations and what voices can be heard?

I began by looking at the points of agreement and disagreement between the approaches and voices already contributing to the conversation. I found what appeared to be a remarkable amount of agreement among those contributing to the literature, with points of difference seemingly to be more about language and priority, than substance:

Vocation

Points of agreement:

1. Vocation is fundamental to our God-given humanity.
2. All people have a vocation as part of their dignity and creation.
3. The church has a vocation.
4. The whole earth has a vocation.
5. Finding and following vocation is about authenticity and being fully alive.
6. A person has a vocation as a human being, but also then upon baptism, as a member of the church.
7. The vocation of the baptised only exists and makes sense in the context of the vocation of the whole church.
8. The church has a corporate vocation; the individual joins in.
9. Redemption is the work of Christ; the church joins in.
10. Scripture offers excellent examples of calling.

Points of difference:

1. Is calling an internal 'nudge' (God direct to individual) or an external 'shoulder tap' (through others, principally the Church)?
2. Are people called into the church or out into the world?
3. Is vocation granted in revelation or human response to revelation?
4. Is vocation rooted in Christ, or Christ's body the Church?
5. Is it about who God calls or who the church wants?
6. Should ordination be openly advertised or should people be talent-spotted?
7. Should quality or quantity be prioritised?
8. Should we select for the church we have or the church we want?

Ministry

Points of agreement:

1. There are lots of different gifts and ministries.
2. All should be valued as part of the Body of Christ.
3. The priesthood of all believers confers individual responsibility through baptism.
4. Ordination is about public representation.

Points of difference:

1. Is ministry humanly invented or God-given?
2. Eschatological timing: is redemption completed and so needs to be shared; being completed and so needs to be joined in with; or to be completed in the end times and so needs to be prepared for?
3. Is ministry about 'being' or 'doing'?
4. Does ordination infer and/or confer ontological change?
5. Does ordination infer and/ or confer permanent authority or can it be time limited?
6. Is the authority given at ordination derived from God or the church?
7. Is the church a fellowship of followers of Christ or his continued incarnation?
8. Does a minister instantiate or proclaim absolution?
9. Is there a shape of ministry or ministries discernible in scripture?
10. If so, is it fixed or should it evolve to meet new demands and fit new contexts?
11. Should those ordained be set apart, or be one of the people?
12. How can the church best be in the world but not of the world?
13. Should ministers be in-gatherers or outward looking?
14. What takes priority, communion or mission, church or context?
15. What is more important, sacramental priesthood or missional leadership?
16. Which ministries should be officially recognised and which not?
17. Which ministries should be paid by the church and which not?
18. "Does the ordained minister /church exist for the building up of the whole people of God or do the whole people of God / church exist for the propping up of the ordained!?"

Even where there were points of difference most agreed it was not a case of either/or but both/and. On the surface then, it appeared that there was general agreement about the basics when it came to vocation and ministry, with disagreements simply reflecting different church traditions resulting in different emphases being given to scripture, tradition, reason and experience. However, this apparent agreement began to break down when it came to real-life context. Upon analysis, it became clear that some people were using the same words, but understanding them to mean different things. Agreement was only superficial. For example, whilst most agreed with point 9 in vocation, that ‘redemption is the work of Christ; the church joins in’, there was not agreement about what constituted redemption, or how it ‘worked’.

I decided to go back to the root of the most basic words to try and get some clarity.

- 1) ‘Vocation’ from the Latin *vocare* – means call, with the word ‘call’ in English being from the Old English *callen*. To say that everyone is called but only some have a vocation is inaccurate and divisive. Rather, all the baptised have a call / vocation to a state, action or role. For some people that call / vocation may be to a recognised and affirmed public state, action or role as a representative of the church.
- 2) Calling / vocation are not the same as discipleship. Discipleship is from the Latin *discipulus* meaning pupil or apprentice. The Greek word *mathetes* means disciple or learner and is the term used most often in the New Testament. So, all are called / have a vocation to be disciples of Christ i.e. his learners and followers, whatever else they may or may not be or do.
- 3) The phrase ‘priests, also called presbyters’, with the last three words often in brackets, appears frequently in Church of England documents. The etymology of the two words is different and this is confusing. Presbyter is from the Greek *presbuteros* meaning elder. In English, the one word ‘priest’ is used to translate both the Greek *presbuteros*, and the Latin *sacerdos*, meaning priest or priestess. Priesthood in the former sense refers to the wise one who oversees or presides over a community. The latter sense refers to the sacerdotal function of an intermediary between humanity and God. ‘Priest’ is also used to translate the Greek word *hierous* meaning sacred or supernatural. This is usually understood to be concerned with offering sacrifices. This is used rarely in the New Testament, and almost exclusively about Christ himself. The Greek *hierateuma* meaning act or office of priesthood is only ever used in the New Testament to describe the whole church’s ‘spiritual priesthood’ (1 Peter 2.5,9)
- 4) The Greek word for ‘minister’ is *diakonos*, meaning servant. This is the common New Testament term, and is frequently used in Paul’s writings. Minister is from the Latin: *minister* meaning subordinate, servant, attendant or assistant. To use it in the same way as the contemporary word ‘leader’ is perverse.
- 5) There is a tendency to use the words authorised, licensed and ordained interchangeably. They refer different role and levels of authority in different contexts and this is not helpful. Authorisation seems simple enough, but some dioceses have Authorised Lay Ministers. They are not recognised by, nor do they come under the authority of Canon Law. They are not the same as Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers or otherwise). These ministries are recognised by, and come under the authority of Canon law, as of course do ordained ministers.

I think some clarity and consistency around the above will help the conversations move beyond the superficial and get to what is underlying at least some of the deeper points of difference. Whilst there is some superficial agreement, there are fundamental disagreements about what the vocation of the Church is, who should be recognised as officially representing the Church, how that should be discerned, who should be paid for what they do for the Church, and indeed, what they should be doing.

However, there is an even more fundamental issue beyond trying to find a common understanding of a common language that will help those already around the table to help sort out their disagreements. That is the missing voices and approaches.

Missing Voices

Out of the 45 books on the main vocations reading lists titled ‘On Vocation’ and ‘On Ordained Ministry’ 3 were written by women, with a further 3 being co-authored by a woman. By Call Waiting 6 out of 28 were written by women. (There were also chapters in some of the multi-authored books that were written by women, but again a very small percentage.)

The books written by women tended either to be personal stories or focussed on how women might be ‘fitted into’ the existing understandings of vocation and ministry. Only one considered how women might think about vocation and ministry as women. There was not, as far as I could tell, any book on any of the recommended reading lists written by a BAME theologian or minister. Nor did I see anything written by and for either a young or older person. Nor did I see anything written by and for a disabled person. Nor did I see anything written by and for someone from the LGBT community. Nor was there any discernible diversity in terms of social background.

If we are serious about enriching our church with real diversity it is not enough to have a few politically correct photographs on the websites. We need to make a real effort to enable all people to properly imagine engaging in ministry authentically as themselves, rather than simply inviting them to act their way through someone else’s script.

This is about both language and how it is spoken. A BAME incumbent described to me how her (white) husband always knew who she was speaking to on the phone at home because she used her own voice when she was speaking to family members, but she deliberately adopted a ‘BBC accent’ if it was someone in the church. She described how people are always surprised when they meet her because she doesn’t ‘sound’ black. Those were my words. Here are hers:

“I must learn your language but you don’t need to learn mine.”
“You are in the privileged space. I need to fit to get into it.”
“I am adapting myself so that I can be what you want me to be.”
“I know God has called me and this is what I have got to do.”
“Surely, I have got to be me, but the system won’t allow me to be.”
“People have perceptions before I even open my mouth.”

*"I can't be angry because that will make people think all black women are like that."
"I worked hard to get my qualifications because I was determined I was going to succeed...I needed more qualifications than white people. I have a MA so I am equal to a white person with a BA."*

This need to 'fit in' is not confined to BAME candidates but includes all the other missing voices listed above (not to mention of course, the ones of which we are not yet conscious).

People talk openly about the fact that we expect our candidates to learn what I have come to term 'BAPSpeak'. This language is currently overwhelmingly white, conventionally able-bodied, middle class, mostly male and only really understood in Anglo Catholic or sometimes (although not as commonly) Evangelical dialects. This is of course part of a wider cultural issue for the church which is hindered from flourishing by monologue language games with sometimes seemingly surreptitious hidden rules. But that is for a future project. To flourish the church needs all her members, including those exploring a vocation to public licensed or ordained roles, to speak with their authentic voice. It is not the answer (because it is still initiated by the privileged on their own terms) but as a step towards mitigating the problem I recommend we commission work amongst appropriate scholars and practitioners to teach us the languages and dialects of the missing voices so that in mutual understanding we might all be enriched. The Pentecost Project perhaps?

Missing Approaches

As above, one of the key areas of contention is around the use of the word 'priest'. There are obviously very many variations in this and what follows is necessarily un-nuanced and binary for brevity.

The first use is rooted in the Old Testament understanding of a priest as the minister of divine worship who mediates between humans and God, and who presides over the act of sacrifice. The Old Testament priesthood is understood as pointing forward to the perfect sacrifice of Christ. In this understanding a priest is commissioned to lead the baptised, as the priesthood of all believers within a community, in offering themselves as an instantiated 'Body of Christ' in the act of the Eucharist, which joins with and perpetuates Christ's own sacrifice. This commissioning is understood to be visibly public, permanent and operating within a given context.

The second use is rooted in the New Testament assemblies. The word is used to describe the elders who led the emerging Christian churches in various locations as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. The role is understood to be that of oversight and is concerned with order and right understanding of the emerging faith. The terms 'minister' or 'presbyter' are used more often than the translation 'priest' to describe an individual who is commissioned to be the head of the baptised, as the priesthood of all believers within a community, leading and nurturing them in mission, truth and good order.

Set out like this there is much in common between the two approaches it is just that the first is based on a model that precedes the Gospels and the second on a model that emerged from the Gospels. However, there is a glaring omission if we limit our understanding of vocation and ministry to these two models; the sandwich is lacking a filling!

As demonstrated above and in the recommended reading, we have quite well thought out theological understandings of vocation and ministry based on what happened before and after the Gospels, with a focus on Christ’s death and resurrection as the pivotal moment for those two approaches. Celtic, liberation and many other theological approaches to vocation and ministry are not represented in the official reading lists. More than that however, Jesus’ own ministry on earth has been given much less attention. I have tried to express this in the table below:

Gospel infused sacerdotal ministry	The Gospel accounts of Jesus’ ministry	Gospel informed presbyteral ministry
Rooted in the Old Testament	Rooted in the Gospels	Rooted in the Epistles
Initiation Reconciliation Solemnising Sacrifice of the community of believers	Care of the poor, captive and oppressed Sight-giver Teacher Healer Exorcist Prophet Social and personal transformation Engagement with the disciples and with the many	Right order Right understanding Praise Nurture of the community of believers Mission
Concerned with adoration and liturgy	Concerned with care for individuals, especially the poor and marginalised	Concerned with mission and evangelism

I am not suggesting for a moment that the two other traditions have not engaged effectively and generously in ‘Gospel’ work. That would be very far from the truth. Rather, when it comes to thinking and talking about vocation and ministry it is not where they start. I am suggesting however, that an approach to thinking about vocation and ministry deliberately rooted in Jesus own ministry on earth, is largely absent. This finding influenced part of the next stage of the research.

Questionnaires

I then turned to explore the lived experience of those involved in the discernment and practice of ministry. Clearly, this did not include those who had not entered the discernment process, either through choice or exclusion. Researching this group would be an extremely important piece of work, but was beyond the scope of this project.

I chose questionnaires for this part of the research as I wanted to canvas a healthy sample set across several constituencies. Questionnaires were distributed by hand to those professionally involved in discernment, and sent by email to selected discernment groups, students at Theological Education Institutes representing a range of traditions, and to ministers registered on the database of Lincoln Diocese. In total 130 responses were received. The highest percentage response rate per group came from those who had received the questionnaire by hand. The electronic method of distribution had three distinct disadvantages: it relied on accurate information about email addresses; it favoured those who habitually use email and; an accurate response rate could not be assessed as most of the questionnaires were distributed through third parties. Nevertheless, it was judged to be the best way of canvassing experience from so large and disparate a dataset. The questionnaire was also obviously optional and so only representative of those who chose to respond.

Results

Those professionally involved in the discernment process

A Growing Vocations Conference was held in January 2017, and was attended by a range of people formally involved in discerning and promoting the vocations of others in the Church of England. All attendees of the conference were given a questionnaire and invited to respond. 17 responses were received.

Role	Responses
Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands	1
Diocesan Director of Ordinands	7
Director of Lay Ministry Development	1
Director of Vocations	2
Member of a Religious Community	2
Vocations Advisor / Mentor / Officer	4

The first question related to their own theological approach for thinking about vocation, and the second asked what approaches they recognized other colleagues might be working to.

Question:

How would do you describe your own understanding / theology of vocation to ordained ministry?

Question:

What other understandings / theologies of vocation to ordained ministry do you recognise?

Words and phrases used:

Own understanding / theology	Recognized understanding \ theology of others
<p><i>Representative of the church and Christ</i> <i>Set aside for a specific purpose</i> <i>Distinctly sacramental</i> <i>As in the Ordinal with several complementary facets</i> <i>Feeds the church through preaching and teaching</i> <i>Discovers the gifts of others</i> <i>To enable the people of God to be all that they are called to be</i> <i>Functional</i> <i>Facilitator</i> <i>Express God through word and sacrament</i> <i>Play part in healing</i> <i>Nurturing</i> <i>Servant leadership</i> <i>Mirrors Christ</i> <i>All are called to discipleship; some to do this in licensed public ministry</i></p>	<p><i>Priestly / ontologically different</i> <i>Sacrificial; representing Christ</i> <i>Others have a much higher view</i> <i>Pastor</i> <i>Servant</i> <i>Shepherd</i> <i>Chaplain</i> <i>Pioneer</i> <i>Theologically educated</i> <i>Cannot be a woman</i> <i>Bridge: pontifex, representing God to the people and the people to God</i> <i>Lead</i> <i>Manage</i> <i>Be a sacrament for God</i> <i>Functional – to be a Gospel person</i> <i>Mission</i> <i>Services</i> <i>Uphold the tradition</i> <i>Sophisticated pastoral care</i> <i>Exercise power and authority</i> <i>Hierarchical</i> <i>Dominical</i></p>

The responses to both questions correlate broadly with the understandings and theologies that were found in the literature. What is interesting to note is that the respondents' own views are nuanced and generally concerned with pastoral care and the nurture of others. The second

list, where they are listing the approaches that they believed other colleagues have, contains much more formal theology, and more formally defined ministries.

I then asked them about their experience of what candidates at an early stage of exploring say about their sense of calling. I was interested to find out what sort of language the candidates used to describe their experience and what they believed they were being called to, before they were formally involved in the process and had begun to read the recommended books. The first question sought to elicit a general impression of how people reported experiencing calling. The second was concerned with finding out whether they came with pre-existing theological understandings of ministry.

Question:

How do people typically articulate their calling when you first speak with them?

Quite hesitant
Want to explore more about God
Want to explore vocation
Some are quite clear they want to be a vicar
Sacramental if from a catholic background
Vague sense of called to something
Sent by vicar or others (calling seen as being from outside)
Within story of faith journey
Following incidents where they have felt ill-equipped to deal with or make sense of something
Sense something
With difficulty at first
A feeling won't go away
Often with difficulty!
There is 'something more'
I want to give God everything, which they equate with ordination
Nudging
Desire to preach or teach or be a pastor

Question:

Have you ever spoken to people who have not been able to find a theological framework to articulate their calling? If so what happened?

I have recorded a representative sample of the answers given in fuller form below.

"They feel a definite sense of call but tend not to think in theological terms until the selection process prompts them to think in this way." Vocations Advisor

“Often very hard for evangelicals to describe why ordination.” DDO

“This is the most frequent occurrence. It takes a lot of reading, written reflections, conversations, for people to be able to explore a theological framework other than, ‘I feel it is so’, ‘it won’t go away’.” DDO

“Many talk about teaching, preaching and pastoral care; sharing God’s love; the excitement of seeing lives transformed and wanting to be more fully involved in that.” DDO

“People quite often can get no further than God is calling them to ‘something’.” Diocesan Discipleship and Vocations Advisor

“They find it very difficult...I’ve often heard, ‘I’ve got this funny feeling’ or ‘it’s a niggles that won’t leave me alone’.” DDO

“Just because they don’t have the language for a theological framework doesn’t mean that their sense of call isn’t authentic – it is often intuitive and needs drawing out.” DDO

“Nearly always they express a call from God (or others) to be ordained in order to carry out a role or function often which they are already practicing in some degree, e.g. leading worship, bible study, preaching.” DDO

“Vocation can too often be understood in terms of function rather than being. The Church of England still suffers with vocation to ordained ministry being seen as hierarchical or authoritarian rather than the clergy serving the people of God.” DDO

“Yes, frequently. Many come from an ‘unchurched’ background with little grounding in any church, let alone the Church of England. They have heard God’s call while emerging from the pit.” Assistant DDO

“It’s also sometimes expressed as a call to Reader, or other lay ministry because they can’t see themselves as being ordained (or want a stepping stone).” Director of Lay Ministry Development

“Yes – and many of them end up in ordination training, still wrestling with what ordained ministry means. The discernment process teaches them to articulate a sacramental view of priesthood, but that doesn’t mean that they internalize it.” Director of Vocations

“I do think people find it helpful to do some study on what it means to be Anglican! People are often liberated to know that it is an emerging moving evolving thing. It can’t be easily defined.” DDO

It was overwhelmingly the case that the potential candidates described their experience hesitantly and have very little idea as to what was happening to them. They struggled to find words to describe how they felt. Where they did, what they said related to their immediate church experience. It was also clear that those responsible for the discernment process

understood it, at least in part, to be about teaching them how to articulate their calling in ways that the church already understands. This means that the candidates will draw from the resources available to learn the language, and to develop their approaches and theology. As will become clear, the church is currently not able to articulate a comprehensive range of approaches to vocation and ministry, or able to hear voices that are different. Therefore, it is not currently able to nurture those vocations or release those ministries.

Those already in discernment, training and ministry

I then sent a questionnaire to groups of people at different stages of discernment and ministry asking about their experience of calling and how it related to their ongoing experience.

A separate questionnaire was sent to further three groups of people: a) those exploring a calling; b) those in training; and c) those already in authorised, licensed or ordained ministry.

Among respondents there was a fair balance between genders overall: 52% self-identified as male, 47% self-identified as female, and 1% self-identified as ‘non-binary’. This was not true of ethnicity. 99% self-identified using various words that amounted to ‘White-British’ 1% self-identified as BAME.

The gender percentage breaks down as follows:

	Male	Female	Non-Binary
Those in discernment or training	24%	71%	5%
Lay ministers	43%	57%	
Ordained ministers	79%	21%	

The same questions were asked of each group. The first aimed to elicit the same information as above in that it asked the respondents to describe their calling. The results below are set out to facilitate comparison of each different groups’ response.

Question:

Have you ever experienced God calling you to a line of action or place?

Please describe your experience.

Candidates in discernment (D)

*Strong sense –confirmed by scripture / other Christians / apparent coincidences
Sense**

Someone else said ‘I think God is calling you’.

It came upon me

It was discombobulating

I came to a realization

It... has been constant from an early age

Constant niggle
*Obedient to the nudge**
Overwhelming sense of this being where God wanted me and where he had things for me to do
*Nudge**
Inner voice – reinforced by family and friends
Feeling 'at home' in the church
Makes sense of my story
Guided by bible and others
Ultimately, I have felt compelled
It is not about individual callings or gifts. It is about what the church wants
*Felt a call**
Definite sense
*Felt a profound sense**
*Felt called**
Epiphany moment
Light and hearing a word
Response to perceived need
I became very convicted
I felt God was leading me
The idea....simply popped into my head and felt right and timely

*These phrases appeared multiple times

Candidates in theological training (TEI)

In a dream
Direct message through another
Sequence of events
Sense of the presence of God
*Felt God was asking**
Felt God speak to me 'serve and care'
Heard God speaking; almost audible voice
Sudden feeling of joy, love and affirmation
Drive to serve God and be useful after retirement
Became concrete inevitability
*Feeling**
Other projects hit a brick wall
Feeling of emptiness
Just felt like a mighty push
Increasing desire
Not seek but respond

*These phrases appeared multiple times

Authorised Lay Ministers (ALM)

Strong sense
Urge
Act of kindness
*Was drawn**
I was asked because I had the skill necessary
Suddenly aware
I felt I had to... compulsion
*Need to do more**
An obvious need waiting to be met
An invitation by someone to accept a position
The way circumstances fall
Inner desire
I felt the need to...
Inner promptings
*Felt called**
Came about in a set of circumstances
Responding to need
I imagined I heard a call
I get a name or a picture – promptings
God pushes
An internal feeling
A few times there has been a light and a certainty that a path is the right one
God affirmed a practical decision
*Nudged**

*These phrases appeared multiple times

Licensed Lay Ministers/ Readers (LLM/R)

*Called to more**
Compulsion
Request from others
Responding to a need
I felt I needed to get actively involved
Difficulties with the current situation
Come about in a set of circumstances rather than experience of calling
*Felt called**
...one of God's pushes in the back
God affirmed
An obvious need waiting to be met
An invitation by someone to accept a position
The way circumstances fell out
An inner desire to do something
Through three people, separately, during a week

*These phrases appeared multiple times

Ordained Ministers: Active (OM/A)

A persistent nudge
*Nudge**
A feeling that I would not be the person I am meant to be unless I respond
It would not go away
A longer-term sense of vocation to be myself
Sometimes a sense of urgency
Clear and profound sense
Fill the gap
Nagging sensation within that wouldn't go away
Wrapped in self-interest
Occasional promptings, or sense of promptings
A clear voice in my head saying...
Through a prophetic word of a charismatic friend
Usually via dreams
Life events
An overwhelming sense of being called beyond myself

*This phrase appeared multiple times

The clear majority within each of the categories above used language which indicated a personal encounter with, or call from, God. I got a strikingly different response from retired clergy. When it came to the earlier generation of clergy, the call had almost always come through others. This wasn't absent in the other categories but it was by no means as defined as it was in this one. I have included some fuller quotes as these more accurately reflect the responses.

Ordained Ministers: Retired (OM/R)

"To describe it is difficult for my words are a bad fit for the actual experience. The best I can do is say that it is an experience when I have a deep but fuzzy conviction arising within me, which is not the conclusion of clear steps of thought."

"Vocation was determined by what was allowed at the time. 'God can't be calling you to the priesthood – it doesn't exist for women!'"

"... fulfilling a predetermined role."

"[Now I am retired I can] rediscover vocation with a new kind of freedom."

"I've learned to adapt and be a priest rather than just a service taker."

"Having an experience is one thing, presuming to say it is God speaking is quite another... Better would be to say that I have tried to keep faith with my ideas of a God of truth, love and justice... the question rather assumes it is all about inner spiritual experience. The

church called me to priesthood, I didn't call myself, or claim that God was talking in my head. If God called me, he did it through the church and in a very human way with many people involved in the process."

"I have long been persuaded that God's call to me came through other people."

There appeared to be a generational gap in terms of the direction and confirmation of calling. Most of the respondents described a personal sense of calling that was then later confirmed (or not – but for most of the respondents in this study, by definition, it will have been) by the church. For the retired clergy, the call came much more often directly from the church, and they then confirmed it personally (or not – but again, for most of the respondents in this study, by definition, this will have happened), or at least learned to grow into it.

The next sets of questions sought to elicit how well the different groups felt that their callings and gifts had been recognised and supported. The questions only elicit subjective 'feeling' and do not intend to comment on objective reality. The aim of these questions was to determine whether the sense of individual calling had been recognised and nurtured by the church. Again, the sample set only included those who were in or on their way to some sort of recognised ministry. It isn't therefore representative of those whose calling had not been recognised at the point of discernment.

Question:

To what extent do you feel your specific gifts and/or calling have been recognised by the church?

The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they believed their gifts and/or calling had been recognised and/or valued. 45% believed they had been 'recognised'. 42% believed that they had been 'valued'. 2% felt they were 'not recognised'. 11% felt 'discouraged'.

Question:

To what extent do you feel your specific gifts and/or calling have been supported by the church?

Again, most of the respondents answered positively. 48% answered 'very well'. 35% answered 'well'. 7% answered 'not at all'. 10% answered 'discouraged'.

Below are some quotes from those who believed their gifts and/or calling had been unrecognised and/or discouraged.

'If you are older and have professional or life experiences, these seem to be completely discounted. One of my tutors at theological college said to me to my face, "We don't want to know what you did before...I feel that the church doesn't expect me to be able to contribute anything during my training and during my curacy, and will only start thinking that I may have some gifts when I am an incumbent.' TEI – Female, (aged 50)

'I have the strong impression from my experience, and from discussing it with other people, that the church as a corporate body does not really understand how to handle the issue of health conditions and disability particularly within the context of vocation, and that it responds by immediately putting the brakes on and setting limitations on what can be achieved, instead of pursuing the discernment process to identify the vocational calling and then deciding whether and to what extent the disability will affect the way that that calling will be lived out.' TEI – Female

'I feel called to be different, to be an advocate for those who are marginalized within the church. To speak for those people with the aim to one day give them their voice that is heard and taken seriously by the church...There are very little resources and training for the ministry I feel called to do. It's very hit and miss, and down to personal experience, exploration and research' TEI – Non-Binary

'The "world" obviously includes all ethnic groups. Yet, the Church of England still discriminates minorities, like me, women, like me.' TEI - Female, BAME

'Well most of the time as long as it does not change anything. Our church does not like change. There is always support for maintaining the status quo but opposition if it results in change.' ALM - Female

'I have struggled with the church side, I feel that some Priests find it hard to nurture people who have started ministry later in life and also you have the male v. female ego where women are still not looked upon fairly.' ALM - Female

'Mixed. I am recognised as useful in several roles in the Church and I fulfil these as best as I can. I don't feel my true calling has been recognised and some of this is ageist and sexist which distresses me. I think many of us function as God's servants but struggle with the Church.' LLM/R - Female

'Under most rectors very well – under one not at all.' LLM/R - Male

"The church does not really support gifts and calling – it uses them when they are useful, but does not appreciate them." LLM/R - Female

"It is entirely in the hands of the parish priest, or succession of priests, as gatekeeper(s), and a matter of chance and personality, whether one turns out to be useful, or troublesome, or totally ignored." LLM/R - Female

"I also feel that my own sense of vocation, and what I see as ministry does not fit neatly within the parametres the church lays out for it. I suspect this is a wider issue and I think the church desperately needs to grapple with identifying and nurturing different types of vocation and ministry. A key part of this is giving people confidence and encouragement in

articulating their own sense of vocation, without first imposing a pre-existing model.”
LLM/R - Female

“I think the church needs to have more confidence in its lay leaders and ministers and articulate this. There is a widespread assumption that a lay minister with leadership skills should be ordained. The church needs gifted lay leaders as well as priests. We need to develop truly collaborative ministry teams where all can flourish.” LLM/R - Female

The next set of questions are based upon ideas used in Ignatian spiritual discernment. They are intended to get at the heart of the individual's calling by asking what it was that attracted and inspired them about Jesus' ministry; the reasoning being that this will reflect their own vocation.

Question:

What part of Jesus' life and ministry most inspires you?

Candidates in Discernment

Ministering to people on the edges and in extremis
Compassion for individuals
Hope and promise of a renewed world
*Healing**
Bringing light into the world
Teachings
Humility
Social justice
Eating with everyone
Being homeless with muddy feet: down in the dirt with the people
Not being afraid to throw the tables over
Ability to see things in a different way
Simplicity
Is for everyone
Not afraid to relate to those at the edges
Lived the things he spoke about
Strong words, quietly spoken
Chose to be born among the least, the lost and the lonely
Proclamation of the kingdom
*Ministry among the marginalised**
Friendship with ordinary people in ordinary situations
Life of service
Responding to need; especially poor, marginalised and outcast
Resurrection as reason for faith and church
A fifth of the gospels are associated with healing
Compassion and thirst for justice
Ministry with children
Justice and fairness

Giving hope

*These words and phrases appeared multiple times

Candidates in Theological Training

How he led and inspired others
Care for the downtrodden
Healing and compassion
Discourses in John's gospel
Calm in the face of hostility
*Love **
Foot washing
Individual conversations
Speaking truth in all circumstances
Reconciliation
Feeding
Healing
Total commitment to God's will
Path towards contentment
Lived for others
Strong, pithy one-liners
Care for individuals
Gethsemane
Get alongside others and show them a different way
Pioneer
Teaching
Ready to admonish; tough love
Ministering to the outcast
Prepared to die for me
Interaction with those outside the church
Helping the distressed
Care for the marginalised

*These words and phrases appeared multiple times

Authorised Lay Ministers

Quiet, yet firm authority
Abiding love for everyone
Readiness to forgive
Ministry to those shunned by society
Work with those with terrible illness
Not afraid to challenge the powerful
Love of people
Serving with passion
His simplicity of life
His teaching: love one another as I have loved you

Promises about the Holy Spirit and gifts
His inspiration
He related to and focused on those in need
He made all feel welcome
Parables and healing ministry
He needed to withdraw and be alone sometimes
Love and patience
Friendship and forgiveness
Explained complicated concepts and teachings in parables and stories which everyone could understand

Licensed Lay Minister / Reader

Love of outcast
Love one another
Sheep and goats
Love of people who are different
Quiet determination to address difficult issues
Ability to mediate
Related to and focussed on those in need
Gave people time and space
Treated people as individuals and important
Allowed people to fail but never condemned them for it
Manner in which he related to those he met on the way
Love and devotion to Father
His enabling of people to become whole and holy
Wise dealings with people
His total inclusivity
Reaching the fringe people
He worked for many years before he began his ministry
How he dealt with adversity and conflict
Use of prayer
Pastoral encounters

Ordained Ministers

Healing ministry
Love and care for ordinary people
Met people everywhere, where they were
Spoke to them in their language
Gave them insights into the love of God
Message of hope and forgiveness, joy and peace, reconciliation and love
Storytelling and teaching

Ability to relate to ordinary people in ways that made them feel valued and made them think
The way he challenged old institutional ways of doing things
Freeing people to be who they really are
Healing to the marginalised and excluded
Offering people hope and love
Living what he taught
Showing that love is transformational
Foot washing
Good news for the poor
Embracing the marginalised and outcast
Spiritual teaching
Healing and miracle working
Always had time for those in need
Advocacy for the Kingdom
Humanity and engagement
His intelligence and compassion
Refused to be put on a pedestal
Radical nature in treating everyone as precious
His obvious quality of being fully alive, even death could not overcome this life force, and his desire to bring that same vitality to all people.

Question:

If you had no constraints, what would you really like to do in response?

Candidates in Discernment

*Be a Reader**
*Be a vicar**
*Become ordained**
Preach

Explore healing and deliverance ministry
Share the Good News ...especially with people at the edges
Be a priest in a small rural village
Lead worship well

*These words and phrases appeared multiple times

Candidates in Theological Training

Give up my job and preach
What I am doing
Spend time with people – not get caught up in church politics
Be more like Christ in conversations

Sell our house and give the money to the poor
Work part time in both ordained and paid employment
Live in a hermitage
Go off in mission
Share with others what I have discovered
Join / start a 'community of practice' that looks at how people learn in church
Pray unceasingly
Set up a charity to support transgender/genderqueer/non-binary Christians and ministers in the C of E
Encourage people in their gifting
Open the church daily for lots of different groups
Be part of a project that built-up relationships with those who don't know Jesus' gentle and non-threatening ways
Prison chaplaincy

Authorised Lay Ministers

Be a story teller – talk and write books
Continue his teaching through modern parables
Open our church up to be a bright, warm, welcoming environment rather than a cold, dark museum
Have more time for reading, being quiet and prayer
More time for prayer
Open our church in uninhibited / spontaneous praise
Healing and personal testimony
Work with groups that had problems being accepted by 'normal' society, those with addictions and disease
Stand up for those that are persecuted for their beliefs

Licensed Lay Minister / Reader

Concentrate more on prayer
Lead quiet days
Work with people on the margins rather than stick within my comfort zone
Do something for people on the edges of society
Teach people that being a Christian is not about ancient laws... and take that message into schools and clubs
Develop more Fresh Expressions
Go to Africa and ...help Christians, Muslims and others to live together
Feel a valued member of our team and not so isolated
Keep on going
Be part of an honest conversation with those in leadership
Study as a priest
Serve Him as a priest

Become ordained
Be a fulltime Reader
More of what I am already doing and doing it better

Ordained Ministers

I hope I do likewise
Go somewhere Northern and remote
Be me!
*What I am doing **
Be the same! Fill in fewer forms and get out among people more in my parishes
Rebuild community
Dispense with the constraints of money
There are always constraints...you have to learn to live with them creatively
Spiritual teaching
I did it!
See the C of E become a missional movement

*These words and phrases appeared multiple times

This was the least successful question in terms of eliciting response. Many clergy left this question blank or said that they didn't understand what it was getting at. This was also true of the other groups, but to a lesser extent. The way the question was phrased was influenced by my earlier findings. Had I asked what inspired them about for example the ministry of St Paul, or perhaps even ministry in the bible, I might have got different responses.

It is interesting to note that the answers given correlate with the way that those professionally involved in discernment describe their own theology and understandings, i.e. not with those that they recognise others may have. There was little to no evidence of formal theological language. This again suggests a missing theological framework to think about vocation in terms of emulating Jesus' own ministry. Several the respondents sensed this void. One talked of yearning to 'interrupt the narrative' of oppression and the arms trade by 'non-direct action'. Another talked about being a peace-maker and bridging 'the divide'. Another talked about 'simply wanting to help Mrs ***** get out of the house'. As above, very many people expressed the urge to emulate Christ's pastoral and healing ministry.

Analysis

I analysed the findings from the questionnaires against the Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England and against the primary source of Anglican doctrine, its liturgy; specifically the introduction to and liturgies for the Ordination of Deacons, Priests, (also called Presbyters), and Bishops, and for the Admission and Licensing of Readers.

I began by considering the findings above alongside the Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England (Criteria). The Criteria describe the function of a Bishops' Advisory Panel as follows:

At a Bishops' Advisory Panel, there are two discernment processes at work: The **first** is vocational discernment – does the candidate possess the potential to exercise ordained ministry in the Church of England? The **second** is deployment discernment – does the candidate, at the point of selection, possess the potential to exercise the focus of ministry for which they have been sponsored? (p. iii)

There then follows a list of nine criteria. These are concerned rightly with personal potential and suitability for ministry. They are also concerned however, with testing the candidates' understanding of vocation and ministry.

Candidates should show an understanding of their own tradition within the Church of England, an awareness of the diversity of traditions and practice, and a commitment to learn from and work generously with difference. They should be able to speak of the distinctiveness of ordained ministry within the Church of England and of what it means to exercise public ministry. (p. 11)

It is assumed then, that the candidates will have gained these understandings from their DDOs and the recommended reading. I can't comment on the former, but in my view, it is unlikely that they will have got it easily from the reading. Also, there is an assumption that these are indeed understood by the assessors themselves. If all of that has happened, then both the candidate and assessor will be reproducing the same language games.

The Criteria document asks advisors to consider diversity. Specifically, it recommends 'particular care' be taken in assessing BAME candidates and candidates with disabilities.

Particular care is needed in assessing candidates from a minority ethnic background to ensure that ethnic and cultural aspects are taken into proper consideration. Bishops' Advisers should be aware of the danger of having expectations of candidates which are inappropriate to their ethnic or cultural background.

Particular care is also required in assessing candidates with disabilities to ensure that their situation is taken into account in a realistic way. (p. 8)

The inference is that allowances must be made, rather than the candidate's authentic voice be listened to.

I then looked at the introductions and liturgy of the Common Worship Ordination services, and the introduction to the Admission and Licensing of Readers service. The parts of the liturgy considered can be found in Appendix 3. It was not within the scope of this project, but I have included the same material from the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) in the appendix, and have set it out so that the different texts can be compared for interest.

I first compared the relevant parts of the liturgies for the Ordination of Deacons, Priests, (also called Presbyters), and Bishops, and the Admission and Licensing of Readers. To assist this, I produced a table which sets out the different language used, and tasks assigned to each form of ministry this can be found in Appendix 4. Setting the tasks outlined in each liturgy out side

by side allows the distinctiveness and focus of each ministry to be drawn out, and makes clear the range of responsibilities in each ministry.⁷

The liturgies of the ordination and licensing services offer a simple template for understanding what vocation and ministry are and who is responsible for what. The place of the traditional understandings is spelled out. There is also more resonance with Jesus' own ministry on earth in the liturgy for all the different ministries, although it is within the liturgy for ordaining Deacons that it is most prominent. What is clear is that all the roles are about the ministering to and leading and equipping of God's people, so that in turn those people can minister to each other and to the world. How the church is led and enabled on the ground is not spelled out. Again, there is theoretical agreement but further work and honest conversation is needed about how this is worked out in practice. This is not just about properly understanding and valuing the prominent traditions and including some new voices within the conversations (vital though that is). There are difficult questions to be asked? Which activities need to be the work of someone permanently set aside? What needs to be public? Which roles should be paid? Is the time and energy of our paid ministers being spent fully engaged in the work of the Kingdom as spelled out in the ordinals? If not, we need to talk frankly about how resources and energy should be deployed.

⁷ Incidentally, the introduction to the Ordination of Deacons says, 'To serve this royal priesthood God has given a variety of ministries'. In the same place in the service, the Ordination of Priests, also called Presbyters and Ordination of Bishops liturgy reads 'To serve this royal priesthood God has given particular ministries'. I am not sure why.

Key Findings

This study found that amongst those who responded almost all people who had experienced a calling struggled to describe what had happened to them. They learnt to do so using the approaches and voices within the recommended reading and those responsible for discernment within dioceses. The reading, whilst very interesting, is unwieldy and largely represents traditional approaches to vocation and ministry. There are an embarrassing number of missing voices within it.

Among a representative group of people responsible for discernment in dioceses, almost all reported that they believed their peer's theologies of vocation and ministry to be more formal and rigid than their own.

Within the discernment process the Criteria for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England seems to be the centre of attention, with those discerning vocations appearing to be trapped in a situation that requires them to perpetuate 'BAPspeak' in order that their candidates can demonstrate to others that they meet them. BAPspeak is a limited language game that has become polarised into notions of *priest* rooted in the Old Testament and *presbyter* rooted in the Pauline Epistles. It effectively excludes different approaches to vocation and ministry.

The notion that people might be called to a Gospel ministry that emulates that of the Gospels' account of Jesus ministry before his death, is largely ignored. This type of Gospel ministry is however, deeply embedded in the ordination and licensing liturgies, especially that of the Deacon. In addition, the overwhelming evidence suggests that people are inspired by this type of Gospel ministry, and it is what they try to engage in when they 'get through the gate'.

There appears to be a generational gap with retired clergy reporting having been called by the church, and younger ministers reporting an experience of calling that they describe as being internal.

Recommendations

- 1) The quickest way to recognise which tradition a writer is rooted in is to notice which words they capitalise. I recommend that official literature follow a neutral convention.
- 2) Clumsy use of language can be confusing and lead to misunderstandings. The meanings of some words are disputed. I recommend the adoption of a common language protocol on official documentation, and brief explanations of alternative meanings where necessary.
- 3) The recommended reading, certainly on the main website, is unwieldy and difficult to navigate without a 'map' or explanation. It could usefully be supplemented by other forms of communication, for example short teaching videos. I recommend a review of the resources offered to candidates to help explore and discern vocation and ministry.
- 4) There is a dearth of diversity in the recommended reading. I recommend this be actively found or commissioned.

- 5) It is good to be transparent about the Criteria for Ordination in the Church of England. However, they do not help a candidate think about vocation, rather they measure whether they have done that. I recommend that the ordination and licensing liturgies be more intentionally central to the discernment process.
- 6) There are well-developed theologies of vocation and ministry rooted in Old Testament priesthood and Pauline leadership models. I recommend work be commissioned to explore ways of thinking and speaking about vocation and ministry that are explicitly rooted in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry before his death.
- 7) The two well-developed theologies focus on those to be ordained to the priesthood. I recommend work be commissioned to explore, consolidate and develop the evolving role of the distinctive diaconate.
- 8) It may be timely for the Church of England to consider its institutional vocation. I recommend a way be found to bring representatives of both existing and missing approaches and voices together, to prayerfully consider the matter; The Pentecost Project perhaps?

Revd Dr Sally Myers
September 2017

Appendix 1

An annotated bibliography of books written about vocation and ministry

Below is a survey of the books recommended to those exploring vocation on the three Church of England websites: a) Ministry Pages, b) Vocations Hub and c) Young vocations website, Call Waiting (as of 23/12/16). Also included are 26 further books, not on those lists. These have either been published more recently or were recommended in conversation.

Each annotation focuses on the authors' approach to vocation and ministry and the language they used to describe it. It begins with an overview of that approach and then offers some direct quotes as an example of the sort of language the author uses. The object of the exercise was to map rather than assess the different approaches and so, intentionally, no critical analysis is offered. I have listed the books by author in alphabetical order, by list. Each is coded as follows:

Subject	Code
Exploring Vocation	(EV)
About Vocation	(AV)
Personal Stories	(PS)
Ordained Ministry	(OM)
Different Forms of Ministry	(DF)
Ordination of Women	(OW)

More theological books have also been coded (T).

Church of England recommended reading lists

Church of England Ministry Pages

“Reading List for Those Exploring Vocation”

“On Vocation”

Adair, J. (2000), *How to Find Your Vocation: A guide to discovering the work you love*, Norwich: Canterbury Press

EV

This book is something of a vocational workout. It examines what vocation is and looks at the characteristics of those who have found it; it looks at vocation in all life and helps individuals to locate their own inner vocational ‘compass’. The short but intense chapters are full of inspiring stories and exercises, complete with summaries of key points. It is a combination of a secular and biblical approach.

‘The concept of vocation or calling implies a sense of something or someone *other* than yourself which is doing the calling. That may or may not be illusionary, but it is how people talk about vocation.’ (p. ix)

‘The journey is your destination, for in time it becomes your vocation. It is a slow transformational process, one that calls for your patience as well as your creativity. For it is more like painting a picture than trying to work out the answer to a difficult sum. The beauty of it, the final blessing, is that the journey never ends. “There is no stopping place in this life,” wrote Meister Eckhart. “No, nor was there one for anyone – no matter how far along the way they’ve come. This then, above all things; be ready for the gifts of God and always for new ones”.’ (p. 144)

Boulding, M. (1982), *A Touch of God: Eight monastic journeys*, London: SPCK

PS

This is a book about the experience of those committed to and living religious communities. Eight Benedictine monks and nuns share their stories. The autobiographical accounts are rich and personal.

‘This is often a hidden process, even from oneself, but there are moments and experiences which are a sign of its truth. A sort of test of its genuineness is that gradually God becomes more real and known and other people become closer.’ (p. 91)

‘I think celibacy is a more difficult ideal to take in and a more demanding way of life to lead these days than when I was a novice. The absence of intimate sexual relationships has always been hard, but the modern emphasis on personal fulfilment, on developing and exploring one’s talents and endowments, on shying away from suffering and on avoiding frustrations, all tend to accentuate acutely the negative aspects of celibacy. Added to this, our increasing dependence on material and physical comforts and supports to living makes celibacy seem icier than in previous times.’ (p. 163)

Buchanan. S. (2001), *On Call*, Oxford: BRF

AV, T

This book considers the diversity of biblical characters (and personalities) called by God, what they were called to, the God who called them, and what that might mean for those experiencing a call today. It traces calling in the bible through a broad brushstroke of history, including an analysis of the characters themselves, and their context. The author argues that calling today, of whatever shape, will fit the biblical mandate of restoring the personal, social, healing, and environmental relationships.

‘The writers of the different parts of the Bible generally describe the experience of perceiving that God is communicating with an individual as God “speaking” to that person. If we read the Bible looking for a simple formula, so that we can be absolutely sure whether or not God is speaking to us, then we will be deeply disappointed. Usually the authors conclude that “God said...” and leave us with no hints about how the hearer perceived that they were experiencing a word from God. When we begin to look more deeply at some of the passages, we realise that God can speak to these people in very different ways.’ (p. 8)

‘As individuals, we gain new and exciting understandings of how God is working within his world. It is essential that these insights are integrated into the thinking of the church.’ (p. 132)

Dewar, F. (1988), *Live for a Change: Discovering and using your gifts*, London: DLT

EV

This book invites the reader to set aside time for personal reflection on life and calling. It uses stories, insights and exercises to enable and guide deep consideration of God’s gifts and invitation, by listening to feelings and being open in prayer.

‘We are not just what other people see of us. We are not even, just what we know of ourselves. There lie hidden within us enormous creative possibilities of which we are largely unaware. Most of us do only a fraction of what we are capable of doing.’ (p. 2)

The author advises,

‘...the process is not linear, to be gone through once so that you emerge at the end with complete clarity about your sense of direction. The present-day cult of instant and effortless answers is very unhelpful in this. Nor is this process a painless solution to the world’s ills – “take two milligrams a day and in your battle against the dead hand of tradition you will be protected against the slings and arrows of the frightened or the vicious”. Individuals and institutions resist change actively, not just through inertia. We human beings wage war against life. We are as deeply afraid of living as of dying. So the journey that is offered is neither speedy nor pain-free. But it does lead to life – for you, and sometimes, through you, to others.’ (p. 189)

Dewar, F. (1991), *Called or Collared: An alternative approach to vocation*, London: SPCK

AV, T

The author writes on the back cover,

‘Our notion of calling or vocation has become very narrow, and is often taken only to mean the calling to be an ordained minister. I want to rescue the idea from all those assumptions because I believe that God calls every human being to some particular self-giving task at each stage of their life.’

‘The church’s muddled ideas about vocation...have certainly contributed in the minds of most church people to a fundamental confusion between the calling to a role (the second sense) and personal calling (the third sense).’ (p. 8)

‘A person chosen for the ordained ministry does not need an inward sense of vocation to the basic task. What he or she does need are the right qualities for it. That is why the choice needs to be made by others, by the duly appointed representatives of the institution.’ (p. 13)

‘...a very common reason why people offer themselves for ordination. They see it as the only way to get a proper theological training.’ (p. 21)

‘Remember, you do not choose yourself for the ordained ministry. Nor does it depend on your personal feelings about it. “You did not choose me: I choose you.” It is Christ in his

Body, the Church who chooses you. Rest in that assurance, and know that if you are chosen, he will be with you in your heart and beside you in those who are, please God, pastors to you.’ (p. 116)

Dewar, F. (1996), *Invitations: God’s calling for everyone*, London: SPCK

EV

A collection of quotations, bible passages, prayers and exercises to assist in discerning vocation.

‘This collection is designed to be a companion for you as you listen for what God may be inviting you to offer, that task, small or great, which is uniquely yours to do at this point in your life.’ (p. 4)

Guinness*, O. (1998), *The Call: Finding and fulfilling the central purpose of your life*, Nashville: World Publishing

EV

This book comprises 26 individual chapters on finding and following vocation. Each chapter is designed as a meditation and intended to be read in isolation. They include stories and reflections, scripture and challenge. Each ends with a provocative thought, question, or poem etc.

‘Deep in our hearts we all want to find and fulfil a purpose bigger than ourselves. Only such a larger purpose can inspire us to heights we could never reach on our own. For each of us the real purpose is personal and passionate: to know what we are here to do, and why. Kierkegaard wrote in his *Journal*: “The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wants *me* to do; the thing is to find a truth which is true *for me*, to find the *idea for which I can live and die*”.’ (p. 3)

‘In any and all situations, both today and tomorrow’s tomorrow, God’s call to us is the unchanging and ultimate whence, what, why, and whither of our lives. Calling is a “yes” to God that carries a “no” to the chaos of modern demands.’ (p. 180)

(*Website lists author as Clarke)

Richardson, R. Ed. (2004), *This is Our Calling*, London: SPCK

EV

This book aims to enable people to explore their calling from many different perspectives. It has chapters on call through “creation”, “a people”, “others”, “Jesus” and “baptism”, and specific calls of the church, “to pray and work”, “to ministry” and “to carry on”. It poses questions at the end of each chapter to help individuals or groups to reflect on what they have read.

‘Our vocation arises out of our humanity and our humanity gives us a particular place in the world.’ Richardson, C. (p. 8)

‘The call is dramatically heard by some, but inherited by others who then have to make it their own.’ Allain Chapman, J. (p. 13)

‘Christians are often told that they need to be Christ-like. This can be confusing because no ordinary human being can be God.’ Scully, K. (p. 43)

‘How do we know that our decision-making is in accord with God’s will? The insights of St Ignatius of Loyola are particularly helpful in the process of the discernment of spirits. St Ignatius taught that as we choose a particular course of action, we should try and discern how it makes us feel. Does it fill us with a sense of joy, peace and consolation or does it make us feel ill at ease, restless and disconsolate?... For Ignatius, knowing our true self and knowing God are closely interlinked.’ Fern, S. (p. 126)

“On Ordained Ministry”

Allan, P., Gray, C., Greener, J., Guiver, G., Peebles, D., & Seville, C. (1993), *The Fire and the Clay: The priest in today’s church*, London: SPCK

OM, T

This book considers what it means to be human, church, and priest, and then considers aspects and attributes of a priestly life.

‘The ministerial priesthood takes its place in the dance of the people of God. Here we have not any old roles, but an articulated ensemble which is all sacrament. To be sure, we see the kind of personnel structures found, say, in an army or a district council: the roles fulfil a *function*, particular *values* come to be attributed to them, they influence *character*, their holders can come to be closely *identified* with them, and they can function as a powerful *symbol*. But all of this is lifted into the sacramental order and transformed. There are clergy who claim they are no different from anyone else, but that is a claim they are not free to make. On the other hand, simply to say that the priesthood is ontologically distinct is an unhelpful distortion. All we can do is ‘map’ what we can, and accept that we can only see as human beings see, not as God sees.’ (p. 39)

‘It is not *me* at prayer, it is not *us* at prayer, it is the Church at prayer, the voice of Christ in his Church.’ (p. 85)

‘Pastoral care is rooted in the common life of the Church. It is the responsibility of the whole body of Christ, but within the body the priest is called by God to fulfil a particular role; that of making present and representing the person of Christ to his people... the Church is *koinonia*, communion... it is only through that communion that priesthood makes sense, and priests begin to understand who they are.’ (p. 118)

Barr, L., & A. (2001) *Jobs for the Boys?: Women who became priests*, London: Hodder & Stoughton

PS, OW

This book tells in some depth the stories of 12 of the first women to be ordained priest.

From the back cover,

‘Jobs for the Boys tells the stories of what it has been like on the inside for some of the remarkable women who have been ordained and started working as priests in the last ten years. Some of them are battle-scarred warriors who were only ordained after years of campaigning...but this book isn’t about the struggle to be ordained. It is the story of the changes these exceptional women are making to the church.’

‘At the time I think I was the third woman to go as a vicar into a church in the diocese, and the other two women had gone into quite difficult parishes, inner city and struggling churches...[Overheard in the bar at the clergy conference]... “So-and-so will be good in such-and-such a church, and so-and-so will be good in such-and-such a church...but why is Maxine going to *****? That’s nice church!”.’ (p. 129)

‘After the vote in November 1992, someone wrote to all of us about it in the ***** Diocese, telling us not to be triumphalist about it. Could we please rejoice quietly, remembering the pain of others. I wrote back saying, “Hey, you’re not even allowing us to celebrate.” Nobody else questioned this pastoral letter that had come from Diocesan House, but I questioned how pastoral it really was.’ (p. 175)

Bowden, A., & West, M. (2000), *Dynamic Local Ministry*, London: Continuum

DF, PS

This book is a series of short chapters, each offering insights into local ministry from a wide variety of perspectives.

‘The changes that have transformed society and the Church in recent years have made it imperative that the Church’s ministry should evolve and adapt. Whilst older styles of ministry, particularly those in rural areas based on *George Herbert’s The Country Parson*, are deeply valued, it is acknowledged that such patterns of ministry cannot be replicated in the modern Church.’ (p. iv)

‘Local ministry is hard to define because it is not a programme or a movement. Rather it is a collection or family of beliefs about the nature and work of the Church and the way that ministry is understood and expressed in the local church. At the heart of local ministry is a vision of the Church as a priestly and prophetic community which values and honours the ministry of each of members.’ (p. viii)

“‘A boat is safest when it is at anchor in a sheltered harbour. But that is not what a boat is for.’ Local ministry is about taking risks and trusting the Spirit.’ (p. 1)

‘The rejection of “old authority” has naturally included the churches. And to all but the most conservative it has become apparent that the structures of the institutional church which we have inherited are no longer appropriate if we are to preach the gospel in pluralist society. By contrast, “base communities” who together share the “burden of ministry” and of whom one may be ordained – collaborative all-member ministry – not only offer us a structure which resonates with the early church; they also offer a real hope that in this way the gospel may be “gossiped” in small groups and so listened to again.’ (p. 213)

Bowering, M., Ed. (1994) Priesthood Here and Now, Newcastle: Diocese of Newcastle

OM, OW

A collection of 20 essays from priests serving in the Diocese of Newcastle in response to the questions women deacons awaiting ordination following the 1992 Synod vote were asking about the differences they should expect, if and when they were ordained priest.

‘The essence of priesthood is to stand before God on behalf of another, so that others may meet God face to face. That is true for us all, at the altar and in daily life. Those in the ordained ministry have the task of keeping the whole Church responsive to the presence and calling of God.’ (p. 12)

‘In a sense clergy receive a degree of ‘ecclesiastical authority’ at ordination, since they are given leave to preach, to exercise pastoral care and to celebrate the sacraments. But what about ‘spiritual power’? Where is that closeness to Christ, that prayerfulness and devotion to the Spirit which seems so closely woven into the lives of those who exercised any form of ministry in the New Testament?’ (p. 40)

‘The sacraments are about growth, development, and change of human souls. When I hear occasionally people say “the only difference between a priest and a deacon is that a priest can preside at the Eucharist, and pronounce the absolution and blessing”, I wonder at the “only”.’ (p. 51)

‘If...you should be called to high and spiritual work, you may indeed fear and tremble, but you are not permitted to refuse, as though you doubted your own powers, for you ought to be quite sure of your own capacity – and of God’s strength.’ (p. 97)

Brown, R. (2005), *Being a Deacon Today: Exploring a distinctive ministry in the Church and the world*, Norwich: Canterbury Press

DF

This book draws together insights from scripture, tradition and experience to explore the diaconate as a distinctive ministry. It considers: the place of diaconal ministry in the Church, the world and at the margins; its essential elements as liturgy, pastoral care and teaching; and its vital actions as praying, loving and remembering.

‘Deacons are lovers – lovers of God, lovers of God’s Church, the body of Christ, and lovers of God’s world. Diaconal ministry has three particular strands – enabling people to worship, providing pastoral care and proclaiming the gospel.’ (p. iv)

‘[Taking the theological underpinning of the diaconate as the incarnation] ... deacons are in one sense a prism through which the light of the incarnation shines, and a challenge to the Church to live in and engage with the world which God so loved, seeking and finding God’s presence in all of life. Ester de Waal writes of “unearth(ing) God in our midst”, which is a very diaconal and incarnational thing to do.’ (p. xiv)

‘Deacons keep before the church the truth that all humans, not just Christians, are made in the image of God.’ (p. 20)

‘Deacons make connections for the church and the world, speaking theologically of contemporary society, asking how and where God is in this situation, acting to bring about God’s life.’ (p. 33)

‘In leading the intercessions the deacon brings the needs of the world before the church for prayer, and then leads the church in prayer which scoops up all aspects of life before God.’ (p. 54)

Carr, W. (1985), *The Priestlike Task*, London: SPCK

OM

This book focusses on what priests “actually do”, and their place in their communities and society.

‘Even in a complex society with a proportionally lower level of church attendance, the church and its ministers seem expected to stand with and for people at ultimate and transitional boundaries of life and death. The sense of affront when these hopes are dashed, whether by a refused baptism or demolished church, seems out of all proportion to the public association with the church and allegiance to it. It is upon the basic offering of this ministry that varied activities which the church will quite legitimately wish to engage are founded.’ (p.11)

‘All ministry is an engagement between the church and its environment or between a Christian and his neighbour.’ (p. 13)

It then goes on to explore the structure and training for facilitating ministry.

Clitheroe, A. (2001), *Into Your Hands: Prayer and the call to holiness in everyday ministry and life*, London: SPCK

OM

This book offers an in-depth consideration of the spiritual authority of the priest. It considers the importance of prayer, including honesty in and regularity of time spent with God. It looks at spirituality through different lenses, for example the ‘dying seed’, the ‘dark night’, ‘commitment’ and ‘saying yes’. It also talks about the importance of spirituality in ‘managing a vocation’.

‘To manage a vocation on the other hand, is to be grounded in prayer as the principle way by which we align ourselves to the will of the Spirit. Such ‘management’ will have at least three components: trust, discernment and the willingness to move and be moved’. (p. 26)

Cocksworth, C., and Brown, R. (2004), *Being a Priest Today: Exploring priestly identity*, London: Canterbury Press

OM

With the focus on the word ‘being’ this book considers: the root of priestly life – being called, being for the other, being for God; the shape of priestly life – being for worship, being for the Word, being for prayer; and the fruit of priestly life – being for holiness, being for reconciliation, being for blessing and being sent. Each chapter begins with the lyrics of a hymn written by Brown.

‘The people of God are called to make music for the world. It is a music that sounds freedom in all the corners of the earth. It is the music of Jesus Christ – God’s gift of life for the world. The pastors of God’s people are called to help the Church enthral the world with the sound of Christ. Sometimes they are like the person who sweeps the floor making the place ready for the performance. Other times they are like the restorer, who skilfully repairs the instruments when they have been damaged. All of the time they are like the conductor whose overriding passion is to draw the best sound from each person, and to bring the sounds of each uniquely gifted person into an ordered whole, so that together and in tune, the people of God can play the score of God’s mercy, truth and goodness to a world battered by its own noise but starved of the sound of God.’ (p. ix)

‘Presbyters are not a caste outside the *laos*, they are a category within the *laos*. They are members of the *laos* who are placed in a particular pastoral relation to other members of the *laos*.’ (p. 15)

‘... there is no one way to be a priest. The way we live our priestly vocation is unique for each of us as, with God, we shape the dance, the picture, the story, the garden that is our expression of the fully alive person who is the glory of God. And yet we are inheritors of and participants in a long tradition that spans not only centuries and continents, but the denominations into which the Church has divided over the years. It is into this tradition that we are woven, and into this tradition that we bring the unique gift of our own lives and ministry.’ (p. 223)

Cotter, J. (1992), *Yes... Minister?: Patterns of Christian service*, Sheffield: Cairns Publications

OM

An anthology of prose, poems and prayers which explore, illuminate and challenge received patterns of ministry.

‘How can the corporate life of the People of God be so shaped as to reflect and not deny what you most deeply believe to be true about God? And what is – or might be – your contribution to that life?’ (p. 3)

Quoting the Church times:

‘In commuter parishes there are whole streets empty all day of parishioners what are at work; who ministers to them? Is it the incumbent... or the non-stipendiary minister sharing the same bench or desk?’ (p. 39)

‘“Priest” and “Minister” carry different weight and different associations according to denomination – “priest” sounds more Catholic, “minister” more Protestant... Might it help if we confined the use of the word “priest” to refer to a) the sacrificial character of Christian life, i.e. “priestly”, b) the calling of all Christian people to be a “royal priesthood”, c) the priesthood of Christ as a metaphor of expended love... “minister” may best be used as a verb to indicate the servant character of Christian life.’ (p. 101)

Countryman, L., W. (1999), *Living of the Border of the Holy: Renewing the priesthood of all*, New York: Morehouse Publishing

OM, T

From the back cover:

‘Living on the Border of the Holy offers a way of understanding the priesthood of the whole people of God and the priesthood of the ordained by showing how both are rooted in the fundamental priestly nature of human life.’

‘...two fundamental human priesthoods coexist in the life of the church – the fundamental priesthood and its sacramental counterpart, the priesthood of religion.’ (p. xi)

‘The secrets are never taught, in the sense that one can be taught, say, the name of plants. They are only experienced. But they require interpretation...The communion with the HOLY and with one another that characterises priestly ministry is not only a means to some further end, but a participation in the goal itself. To be intimately connected with one another, to serve as priests to one another, together in the gracious presence of TRUTH, of REALITY, of the HOLY, of GOD – this is not only the way we grow in apprehension of the arcane border country; it is already, in itself, a taste of human life as it was meant to be from the beginning.’ (p.12)

‘Hence the creation of priest-specialists, whom we might also call “priests of religion”. Their office comes into being in order to replicate or reproduce on the level of religion, the role of the fundamental priest in life itself.’ (p. 37)

‘The fundamental priesthood is the central thing; but, because it is so universal and inevitable in human life, it forgets itself if it is not represented in concrete and accessible fashion.’ (p. 45)

‘Jesus’ priesthood is not limited to his death and resurrection. Such key shaper’s of Christian tradition as the Pauline school and the creeds tend to focus almost exclusively on the end of Jesus’ earthly life, but the Gospels assume that his meaning is equally to be known through his daily works and his dealings with all sorts of people.’ (p. 52)

Croft, S. (1999, revised 2008), *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and leadership in the local church*, London: DLT

OM, T

This book outlines the many challenges to the Christian Church since New Testament times, and then goes on to explore issues and threats in current times. Following a strong caution about clergy stress, and over-reliance on secular thinking about leadership, it offers a comprehensive study on ministry in three dimensions, i.e. *diakonia*, *presbyteros* and *episcopo*. The new edition includes a chapter on fresh expressions of church.

‘Different times and seasons in the Church call for different patterns of ministry and of mission, even though the gospel message itself may be unchanging.’ (p. 3)

‘A new understanding of ordained ministry is called for which makes sense of our changing situation, yet remains faithful to our roots and our rich inheritance.’ (p. 21)

‘We see the leadership of the emerging nation of Israel change and adapt as the community changes and grows from an extended family, to a collection of tribes enduring slavery, to a redeemed community on a continuous journey, to a people settled in the promised land. Whenever the dominant pattern of ministry and leadership changes, the biblical authors take the time to pause, to tell the story and to justify what is happening. They often emphasise the degree to which God himself is involved the transition and the discovery of new patterns of ministry.’ (p. 30)

The Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England (2007), *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church*, London: Church House

OM, DF, T

This comprehensive report is offered as ‘... a resource for ongoing discussion as the Church of England responds to challenges to renew its ministry for the twenty-first century’. It does so particularly in light of three factors: ‘a renewed understanding of Christ’s call to mission’; ‘ecumenical dialogue, interaction and partnership’; and ‘developments in biblical scholarship’. The latter is particularly concerned with the words ‘deacon’ and ‘diaconate’. (p. iv)

‘All ministries, whether ordained or lay, comprise specific work for the kingdom of God that is recognized and owned by the church...when a ministry is entrusted to an individual in a form that is permanent and lifelong, public and representative, by a solemn liturgical action of the church, we call that an ‘ordained’ ministry. Ordination carries a lifelong calling and permanently identifies the recipient...And it brings a ministry that relates to all three dimensions of the Church’s task – to the word, the sacraments and pastoral care, and oversight – not simply to one or two of these components.’ (p. 67)

Francis, J. M. M., & Francis, L. J. (1998), *Tentmaking: Perspectives on self-supporting ministry*, Leominster: Gracewing

OM, DF, T

This book explores the Pauline precedent for self-supporting ministry, followed by a comprehensive consideration of historical, social, psychological and world-wide perspectives. It then offers some personal perspectives from those called to and engaged in self-supporting ministry. Theologically it begins by investigating whether the major traditional functions of priesthood, which it defines as, preaching, teaching, spiritual guidance (requiring specialist knowledge and training), and administration and presiding at the Eucharist, need to be exercised or symbolically held by a single individual. It then explores the underlying quality and authority of the President of the Eucharist as residing in someone who has the natural authority to preside over the community.

‘Proponents of the non-stipendiary ministry have tended to offer it to the churches as an economic expedient in a time of rapid inflation and declining resources. Opponents have tended to see it as a second-class ministry, based on thoroughly inadequate training and unrealistic expectations of how much time someone with secular employment can really offer the churches. Yet few have engaged in serious theological debate.’ (p. 267)

Fuller, J., & Vaughan, P., Eds. (1986), *Working for the Kingdom: The story of ministry in secular employment*, London: SPCK

OM, DF, PS

This book offers a diverse range of material including, history, verbatim recorded interviews and written reflections as it explores the stories of those who are ordained and involved in secular employment. Areas covered include conflict and resolution and challenging values in the workplace. While individual stories are at the heart of the book, it also explores scriptural, historical and social factors surrounding working and ministry, looking at monastic as well as Pauline models.

‘...for the individual person God’s call is to see one’s work as ministry, both creative, and where redemption is involved, painful. To fail to see it as ministry is to try to live one’s life in isolation from God.’ (p. x)

‘Priest and priesthood are fairly elastic terms...the terms may be used in a narrower or wider sense. In the narrower sense their reference is to a particular ‘order’ of pastoral and cultic significance within the Christian community, or even (following 1 Peter 2.9 “you are a royal priesthood”) to the community itself. In the history of religions generally they may refer to those with special responsibilities for sacrifice. In the wider sense the word ‘priest’ is popularly used to describe any apparently official religious functionary of any religious body, particularly those who are charged with responsibility in the field of worship, teaching, rites of passage and pastoral care. Thus *rabbis* and *imams* and ministers of churches whose very *raison d’être* is the rejection of any idea of priesthood find themselves described as ‘priests’...In this second, wider sense the language of priesthood is, roughly speaking, a sociological rather than theological term.’ (p. 88)

‘Systematic theology is not easy to produce in a society which lacks any unified culture or agreed philosophical framework of thought.’ (p.92)

On conflict, ‘...it shows the Church struggling to find a balance between society’s need to have a class of holy men who were a caste apart, and a community’s need to have pastors who were ‘of the people’; it shows the Church struggling to express the paradoxical truths that the world and its affairs are to be valued as part of the Creator’s intention, and on the other hand that Christians are not to let their minds be conformed to this world.’ (p. 120)

Giles, R. (2006), *Here I Am: Reflections on the ordained life*, London: Canterbury Press

OM

This book works its way through significant words and phrases in the ordinal and applies them to the day-to-day business of being a priest with advice, anecdotes and references to scripture. For example, from the ordinal ‘...to search for his children in the wilderness of this world’s temptations, and to guide them through its confusions’,

‘Presbyters of the Church of God are pro-active interventionists in the seeking-out business; the mountain rescue team of God’s kingdom. Trained to be ready and alert when we see others attempting feats too difficult for them, ill equipped and unaware of the dangers faced or the lives of others put at risk. However bad the weather, the mountain rescue team is ready to turn out, to seek the needle in the haystack that is one fallen climber on a black mountainside.’ (p. 49)

Greenwood, R. (1994), *Transforming Priesthood: A new theology of mission and ministry*, London: SPCK

OM, T

This book offers a theological reappraisal of the role, present and future, of the parish priest in Britain. Following a thorough and detailed chapter tracing the theological influences on Anglican priesthood 1900-1970, including précis of key thinkers. The book goes on to consider present and possible models and realities for parish priesthood.

‘What has passed for a theology of priesthood in the Church of England this century has often been confined to a review of New Testament texts and phrases designed to endorse contemporary Anglican practice.’ (p. 7)

‘[There were] ...two closely linked dilemmas. First, there was the question of how to speak adequately of the roles of clergy and laity as representatives of Christ, and second, how to discover an appropriate balance between the Church’s internal and external relationships.’ (p. 29)

‘In summary, each member of the Church, whatever their particular ministry, is at heart a disciple of Jesus Christ through the work of the Spirit. Alert to the significance of their baptismal commitment and gift, church members share a common responsibility and commissioning to witness to God’s love. To root a conceptuality of ordination in an eschatological-trinitarian ecclesiology, mirroring the ontology and passionate cause of God, provides a coherent path towards the goal of the modern Church of recognising all ministries as equally representative of that Christ in the character and task of the Church. Ordained ministers should be encouraged to understand the nature of their vital and unique authority in terms of relatedness. They have no existence outside of a relationship with their fellow members of the baptised community; their uniqueness is created and sustained within relationships of mutuality with their fellow ordained ministers.’ (p. 151)

‘In particular I advocate an understanding of priestly ministry in terms of sharing the task of overseeing with the bishop as one who presides through discernment, blessing and witnessing.’ (p. 182)

Greenwood, R., & Burgess, H. (2005) *Power: Changing society and the churches*, London: SPCK

This book isn’t really about ministry other than as it relates to what the author’s call ‘the self-generating power of God’. The notion of power is explored with chapters about authority, energy, capability, capacity and adaptively.

‘Power is a pivotal concept with myriad associations and definitions...in everyday practice “power” is often solely associated with ideas of domination, authority. Control, hierarchy or similar definitions...But for Christians, notions of power go far beyond this, touching gentler, mutual, holistic and inclusive ideas that recognise the contributions of the apparently powerless: power understood as the energy that invigorates, restores, renews and makes it possible for the powerless to have a voice and to achieve great things even in the face of huge challenges.’ (p. 2)

‘The primary argument has been that power does not belong to individuals or groups. Rather power, understood as the relational energy generated and maintained by the triune God, is to be comprehended and entered into as contextual, that is, through radical patterns of mutuality.’ (p. 168)

Greenwood, R., & Pascoe, C. (2006), Local Ministry: Story, process and meaning, London: SPCK

OM

An exploration of ‘Local Ministry’.

‘The essence of this book is the search for clues for how to be Church now as an echo of God’s own activity and ways in the world... [it] is a combination of celebrating, reporting and investigating the meaning of the energy and hope released in recent decades by collaborative ministry and mission and the formation of intentional Christian community. “Local”, “total”, “mutual”, “shared”, “total life caring” and “collaborative” mission and ministry are ways of labelling approaches to Church envisioned as the people of God working together and sharing responsibility for the mission that God has entrusted to them.’ (p. viii)

‘Local Ministry is nothing in itself but it is a way of asking the right questions. What kind of Church might we become if intimacy with God, present, open to all and active in all places, were to become our greatest desire?’ (p. 17)

‘Altogether, this means that as God is, so God acts in Christ, and – by the Holy Spirit – in the Church where the Church acts in its mission to the world in accordance with God’s activity. While it is common enough to judge churches, their ministry and their mission by the first two criteria, it is the third level which uncovers the full distinctiveness of the Church among the plethora of social institutions in the world, and also the nature of its deep involvement with them.’ (p. 137)

Guiver, G., Allan, P., Sister Barbara June, Gordon-Taylor, B., Cribben, J., Henshall, N & C, Pickstone, C., Selby, M. (2001), Priests in a People’s Church, London: SPCK

OM, T

The book begins with articulating a regret that Vatican II did not offer the ‘same radical reappraisal and renewal’ of the theology of priesthood as it did of many other important ecclesiastical concerns. It notes that the time has passed when priests,

‘...were officially encouraged to be the spiritual and ministerial elite, with effective and absolute control over all aspects of parish life... In general, lay people tended to be liturgical spectators and the *recipients* of teaching and pastoral care...[when there] was little or no sense of baptism being more than an impoverished badge of membership, the mere passport to *reception* of the other sacraments, instead of a disclosure of the paschal mystery that enabled *participation* in them and which held the possibility of active lay ministry in the Church.’ (p. 5)

It also notes in comment on the debate about women priests,

‘Wherever one stands in whatever debate, responses to the question “Who *may be* a priest?” do not in themselves answer the underlying, primary question, “Who or what *is* a priest?”’ (p. 7)

‘What is entrusted to the priest at ordination indeed has visible attributes in terms of function, but it is ultimately wrapped up in and serves to disclose in a limited but gifted way the mystery of God.’ (p. 14)

‘The function of the priest of the Church is to help the Christian congregation become more fully what it is already – a people who love and serve God.’ (p. 27)

‘Priests, even parish priests, are inevitably to some extent outsiders to a society. Priests have a vocation to a particular ecstasy, an *ecstatis*, a standing outside, which puts us in a good position both to challenge predominant forces, but also to be in solidarity with others as they are thrown out too.’ (p. 47)

The book then goes on to explore the priest in relationship to self, family, church, society and several specific issues.

Hacking, R. (1990), *On the Boundary: A vision for the non-stipendiary ministry*, Norwich: Canterbury Press

DF, T

This book offers a history of, and biblical precedent for, self-supporting ministry and then explores it through the different relationships it exists within.

‘Non-stipendiary ministry was a long time coming. Or perhaps, we should say it was a long time reappearing, for it could be said that it was the original model for ministry, at least as far as the New Testament is concerned.’ (p. 7)

‘Perhaps the happiest consequence of changes in thinking about ministry that have been absorbed by the churches in recent years has been the liberation of the word ‘vocation’ from a certain coterie which seemed to claim it as their own.’ (p. 28)

‘Ordination is not a matter of personal fulfilment; no one is ordained priest or deacon purely to satisfy their inward needs or wishes. It is an ordination *by* the Church *for* the Church and the only meaning the diaconate and priesthood has lies in that recognition.’ (p. 34)

‘There are two models which have been predominant in the history of the Church. The first is that of “in-gathering”, essentially seeing the task of the Christian as being that of drawing men and women out of the world into the fellowship of a particular society...the second model...has been much more concerned with “out-going” into the world to work within the prevailing culture and seeking so to direct it that it accords with God’s will.’ (p. 57)

Hall, C., & Hannaford, R., Eds. (1996), *Order and Ministry*, Leominster: Gracewing

OM, T

This book explores the contention that almost every dispute in the Church comes down to disagreement as to whether ministry is God given or man-made. Six authors deal with this question from different perspectives.

‘The problem is that the doctrine of ministry has customarily proceeded from the hierarchy rather than ecclesiology. The net effect is a narrowly one-sided and distorted view of ministry which is divorced from the collective life of the whole Church. In overcoming this we need to show that a theology of ministry, understood as action for and on behalf of the Church, is consistent with an understanding of Church as an organic community, where ministerial differentiation contributes to and does not diminish the unity and coherence of the whole body.’ (p. 26)

‘Instead of seeing *charisms* as sparks of supernatural power or energy erupting against the strain of communal life we should see them as a gift of the Spirit that has ministry as its goal. ‘Spirit’ as O’Meara puts it, ‘leads to ministry’. *Charisms* are expressions of the Spirit-filled life of the ministerial community of the Church.’ (p. 51)

Hollings, M. (1977), *Living Priesthood*, Great Wakering: Mayhew-McCrimmon Ltd.

OM, PS

In this book the author shares some of the day-to-day experience of his life and ministry and his ideas on what it means to be a priest in ‘the modern parish’.

‘...the centre and core of the whole priestly life is the relationship with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit...this relationship is to be so deep, strong and all-pervading that it is the very pulse, life-blood, heart of his whole being. Without it he is empty, a functionary only, wrongly balanced and so ineffective.’ (p. 42)

‘With the ear attuned to love, the call is more than ever the simple ‘follow’, and the essential part of ‘doing’ is that every day we get up listening, catch the thread of the voice of God, grasp how to respond to what his will is for us, and then get on with doing it...All the way through, there also runs the thread of choice, with each of us gradually becoming in practice more and more limited in our options – and as the choosing goes on, so we either come closer and closer to the will of God, in love, or move away seeking ourselves, consciously or unconsciously.’ (p. 234)

‘And that is really what I want to say – Love Him and let Him love you, so that we may all grow to love each other.’ (p. 247)

Hume, B. (1991), *Light in the Lord: Reflections on priesthood*, Slough: St Paul’s Publications

OM, PS

In a series of fifty short chapters this book presents the Cardinal Archbishop’s view on numerous aspects of life and work in the Roman Catholic priesthood.

‘A priest is an ordinary man called to an extraordinary ministry. Like everyone else he is himself in search of God and in need of redemption.’ (p. 7)

‘First and foremost we are called to do God’s will and not that of ourselves and others. We are priests for his sake not for our own. It is natural but quite misleading to talk as we do about “my” priesthood, “my” parish, “my” people. We have to be reminded always that we are priests for him and for others. That calls for an interior freedom.’ (p. 26)

Kuhrt, G. (2000), *An Introduction to Christian Ministry: Following your vocation in the Church of England*, London: CHP

AV, T

This book offers a guide to would-be ordinands at a time of transition in the Church's history.

'What is ministry?...The short answer is that ministry is service to God and others.' (p. xiii)

'Our thinking about ministry requires an understanding of God's calling to the *whole* church. For too long ministry has been thought of as the preserve of the clergy, the ordained ministers.' (p. 7)

This is followed by exploration of four key ideas: *laos*, priesthood, ministry and spiritual gifts.

'Firstly, ministry (*diakonia*) is used for all God's people. They are expected to exercise ministry /service through the spiritual gifts given to them by the ascended Christ. After a reference to hospitality in verse 9, we read in 1 Peter 4.10. "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve {the verb from *diakonia*} others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms".' (p. 10)

'[From the second century...] The bishops/presbyters represented more than one local church. They represented the Church universal – both in history and geography'. (p. 48)

Drawing on Romans chapter 12, 'We are reminded that all Christians are called: to serve – sacrificially, their minds renewed and discerning the will of God (vv1-2); to modesty and realism (v.3) about themselves and the limits of their abilities; to recognise the gifts, skills and functions of others (vv.4-6).' (p. 83)

Kuhrt, G., Ed. (2001), *Mapping the Trends: Ministry issues for the Church of England*, London: CHP

OM, T

A very comprehensive study of the policies, issues and data surrounding ordained ministry at the time of publication. Numerous contributors offer wide-ranging perspectives on context, strategy, minority ethnic concerns, education, lay ministry, remuneration and many more.

'The clerical role has passed through five identifiable stages: the clergy as upper servants; the clergy as occupational appendages of gentry status; the clergy as professionals; the clergy as church managers; the clergy as community development officers.' (p. 28)

'The ordained, however, minister in the name of Christ and with his authority in a publicly representative way.' (p. 35)

'To represent Christ and his Church through a ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care requires authorisation (the giving or sharing of authority) from those one represents... The Canons of the Church of England describe the bishop as "the chief pastor of all that are within his diocese, as well laity as clergy, and their father in God" (Canon C18). The bishop shares his ministry of oversight, with its responsibilities for the ministry of the word and the

administration of the sacraments with the parish priest in a cure (or care) for souls that is “both yours and mine”.’ (p. 36)

Moody, C. (1992), *Eccentric Ministry: Pastoral care and leadership in the parish*, London: DLT

OM, T

This book ‘...faces fully and honestly many of the feelings which trouble priests and ministers today...sensitive to the lack of clarity and certainty about our role, the conflicting voices and sources of authority in society, the confused expectations and the lack of valuation by many...it rejects many of the current polarities for example that between pastoral work and evangelism [arguing]...pastoral work, properly understood, is inevitably evangelistic.’ (p. vii)

It elucidates three models of pastoral care: the incarnational and sacramental; the redemptive model; and what it coins the wilderness model.

‘The wilderness model recognises that the world is full of presences, some of them divine, some of them demonic.’ (p. 13)

‘Pastoral activity is purposive, not reactive. It is undertaken trusting that God is present in the community of faith and in our experience of the world, and works towards the coming of his kingdom. It is an activity meant to provoke change rather than maintain stability. Its medium is faith, not the competence of its ministers. It is most effective and most productive of change where the sense of the presence of God is most alive and sensitive.’ (p. 37)

Nouwen, H. J. M. (1989), *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian leadership*, London: DLT

OM, PS

This book is the story of Nouwen’s reappraisal of his vocation, told in his own words.

‘After twenty-five years of priesthood, I found myself praying poorly, living somewhat isolated from other people, and very much preoccupied with burning issues. Everyone was saying that I was doing really well, but something inside was telling me that my success was putting my own soul in danger. I began to ask myself whether my lack of contemplative prayer, my loneliness, and my constantly changing involvement in what seemed most urgent were signs that the Spirit was gradually being suppressed. It was very hard for me to see clearly, and though I never spoke about hell or only jokingly so, I woke up one day with the realisation that I was living in a very dark place and that the term “burnout” was a convenient psychological translation for a spiritual death.’ (p. 10)

‘I am deeply convinced that the Christian leader of the future is called to be completely irrelevant and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own vulnerable self.’ (p. 17)

‘The leader of the future will be the one who dares to claim his irrelevance in the contemporary world as a divine vocation that allows him or her to enter into a deep solidarity with the anguish underlying all the glitter of success and to bring the light of Jesus there.’ (p. 23)

‘Thinking about the future of Christian leadership, I am convinced that it needs to be a theological leadership. For this to come about, much – very much – has to happen in seminaries and divinity schools. They have to become centers where people are trained in true discernment of the signs of the time. This cannot be just an intellectual training. It requires a deep spiritual formation involving the whole person – body, mind and heart.’ (p. 69)

Pritchard, J. (2007), *The Life and Work of a Priest*, London: SPCK

OM, T

This book considers the principles and practice of a priest’s life and work. Pritchard takes as his starting point a quote from Bishop Jack Nicholls, who was once told by his Spiritual Director,

‘...that the only things he had to be concerned with as a priest were the Glory of God, the pain of the world and the renewal (repentance) of the Church’. (p. x)

The book considers this threefold division from the perspective of the various roles of the priest.

Glory: President, spiritual explorer, story-teller, interpreter, learning

Pain of the world: pain bearer, wounded companion, witness, presence, irritant

Renewal of the Church: creative leader, witness, faith coach, mature risk taker, flower arranger (church manager)

‘God’s call to a priest comes at a number of different levels. If we had to put them in order (which we don’t) we would have to say that the first call is to be a human being, the second to be a Christian, and only then, third, to be a priest.’ (p. 149)

Ramsey, M. (1972, revised 1985), *The Christian Priest Today*, London: SPCK

OM, T

This book comprises a series of addresses given by Ramsey to those about to be ordained in the Church of England. Especially relevant are two new chapters added in the revised edition.

‘The God of the old and of the new covenant called the world into existence as Creator, and calls men and women to himself as Redeemer... Within the people of God whom God has called, there are specific calls to particular actions, works and ministry.’ (p. 100)

Ramsey asserts that vocation is about God who calls and the meaning of theology imparted during training (a specific theology of vocation is not mentioned). The pattern of ministry in the gospels is of being with Jesus, sent out in mission, and then returning to Jesus. After his death, resurrection and ascension, there was no returning as Jesus was always with them the Holy Spirit. Their relationship to him and their sharing in his ministry deepens. (p. 104)

He also notes that the books of new testament never describe apostles, bishops or presbyters as ‘priest’, and that the only use of the word is about Jesus himself as priest (cites Hebrews), and the whole church as a priesthood with ministry and apostolic authority as one part of that, with the ordained minister serving both Christ and Church. (p. 106-9)

Redfern, A., (1999), *Ministry and Priesthood*, London: DLT

OM, DF

In the words of the back cover, this book,

‘...explores the nature of the Christian church and the place of ministry and priesthood within the church. [It] examines the local and universal aspects of ministry, the place of non-stipendiary and stipendiary ministry, [and] the role of lay ministry and ordained ministry.’

‘[The] book is not designed to be simply read through: it needs to be worked through. The ideas, experiences and aspirations of the reader are an essential ingredient and need to be put in dialogue with the material in each chapter. The aim is not to give answers but to offer suggestions, some of them deliberately unfashionable, drawing upon the insights of previous ages alongside those of contemporary thinkers and documents.’ (p. ix)

“The Porvoo Common Statement between British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches (Council for Christian Unity, 1993),

‘We believe that all members of the Church are called to participate in its apostolic mission. All the baptised are therefore given various gifts and ministries by the Holy Spirit. They are called to offer their being as a ‘living sacrifice’ and to intercede for the Church and the salvation of the world. This is the corporate priesthood of the whole people of God and the calling to ministry and service (1 Peter 2.5).’” (p. 2)

Russell, A. (1980), *The Clerical Profession*, London: SPCK

OM, T

This book sets out a historico-sociological account of the development of the “clergyman’s” role alongside the theological literature on the nature of priesthood. It examines “the clergyman’s role and the professional ideal”, and “the professionalization of the clergyman’s role” in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century.

‘...[the book] seeks to be at one level a monograph on the clerical profession and a contribution to the sociology of professions and to nineteenth-century church history.’ (p. 8)

‘In the dramatically altered social circumstances of the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Church is being called to examine the vehicle of its priestly ministry and to discover whether there is not much in the received pattern which, having been taken for granted for so long, merely serves to reinforce the marginality of the contemporary Church. For it is ironic that a part of the reason that the Church is now less able to exercise the priesthood of Christ in English society is because its own ministry has become trapped in an increasingly problematic institutional form.’ (p. 305)

Vanstone, W., H. (1997), *Fare well in Christ*, London: DLT

PS

This book is a mixture of anecdote and homily as Vanstone reflects on his ministry, and the ministry of the Church, in light of the ministry of key characters in the New Testament. It is

almost as if he is passing on his wisdom to the next generation. The book ends with a poem, written by the author.

Joseph of Arimathaea's Easter

“He’s gone” say Joseph, and, with Pilate’s leave
Eases the nails and lowers him from the Tree,
Wraps him in reverent and tender thoughts
And lays him in the cave called memory.

That cave is deeply hewn in Joseph’s heart:
All that’s within will always be his own:
In memory’s cave the treasure of his past
Is safe forever, walled and sealed by stone.

“He’s safe”, says Joseph, “safe in this cool place
And no one now can take my Lord away.
In years to come I’ll still see his dear face
As clearly as I’ve seen it this day”.

“He’s gone!” cries Joseph at the empty tomb:
But Mary says, “He’s left a word for you:
He cannot rest content to be you past,
So he has risen to be you future too”. (p.147)

Vanstone, W., H. (1977), *Love’s Endeavour, Love’s Response: The response of being to the love of God*, London: DLT

AV, T

From the back cover,

‘Through the experience of human love’, writes the author, ‘I have argued in this book that the love of God must be infinitely more costly, more precarious and more exposed than it is commonly represented to be; and that it is the divine self-exposure which gives meaning to nature, to human freedom and to the being of the Church.’

‘If the love of God is altogether different from human love, then it would be better to use for it the name of something from which it is not altogether different.’ (p. 39)

‘We have detected three marks by which the falsity of love is exposed – the mark of limitation, the mark of control and the mark of detachment.’ (p. 53)

Church of England Vocations Hub

“General Vocation – Called by God”

As above:

Adair, J. (2000), *How to Find Your Vocation: A guide to discovering the work you love*, Norwich: Canterbury Press

Dewar, F. (1988), *Live for a Change: Discovering and using your gifts*, London: DLT

Dewar, F. (1991), *Called or Collared: An alternative approach to vocation*, London: SPCK

Richardson, R. Ed. (2004), *This is Our Calling*, London: SPCK

Also:

Magdalen, M. (2008), *Vocation: Exploring call and identity*, Cambridge: Grove

EV

This book explores vocation from the perspective of a member of an Anglican religious community. It punctuates these explorations with questions for reflection.

‘Vocations are not mutually exclusive. One might be called to marriage *and* the teaching profession, to religious life *and* ordained ministry. Many clergy (especially non-stipendiary clergy) fulfil three vocations at once – their particular professional work, parenthood and ministry.’ (p. 4)

‘The realisation that it is God who is calling is awesome.’ (p. 7)

‘Do we ever feel truly worthy of a vocation from God? Our consciousness of our many weaknesses and inadequacies is a good sign. St Paul reminds us that God actually rejoices in our weaknesses since he is able to do so much more through them than our supposed strengths on which too often we foolishly rely.’ (p. 10)

‘“No” might not be about the vocation, but the timing.’ (p.19)

‘The vocation to which every human being is called, and perhaps the hardest, is the vocation to be.’ p. 22

Torry, M. (2005), *Diverse Gifts: Varieties of lay and ordained ministries in the church and community*, London: Canterbury Press

OM, DF

From the back cover,

‘In *Diverse Gifts* we hear the voices of a wide variety of men and women engaged in complementary aspects of the of the life and work of their local churches – stipendiary and self-supporting priests, readers, youth workers, evangelists, pastoral assistants, children’s leaders, musicians, chaplains in hospitals, prisons and places of work, and more... This book will be especially helpful to anyone involved in local church and who is thinking of ministry in any form.’

‘We have called this book *Diverse Gifts*... diverse ministry is God’s gift to the Church. There is a diversity of labelled ministries, and within each one (whether it be labelled ‘prophet’, ‘evangelist’, ‘Reader’ or ‘Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary’) there is a diversity of gifts, for every practitioner brings something different to the exercise of that particular ministry... One of our hopes is that this book will enable its readers to discover the diverse gifts God has given them and that they will be better equipped to find the right context in which to make use of those gifts.’ (p. xix)

Towards the end of the book two questions are posed:

‘Which ministries should be licensed and which not?’ (p. 205)

‘Who should be paid for what they do?’ (p. 206)

‘In the end, this book is less about ministries than it is about ministry: God’s people serving God’s world and God’s Church. For this ministry we give thanks, and to it we commit ourselves.’ (p. 207)

“Ordained Ministry”

As above:

Brown, R. (2005), *Being a Deacon Today: Exploring a distinctive ministry in the Church and the world*, Norwich: Canterbury Press

Cocksworth, C., and Brown, R. (2004), *Being a Priest Today: Exploring priestly identity*, London: Canterbury Press

Croft, S. (1999, revised 2008), *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and leadership in the local church*, London: DLT

Guiver, G., Allan, P., Sister Barbara June, Gordon-Taylor, B., Cribben, J., Henshall, N & C, Pickstone, C., Selby, M. (2001), *Priests in a People’s Church*, London: SPCK

Pritchard, J. (2007), *The Life and Work of a Priest*, London: SPCK

Ramsey, M. (1972, revised 1985), *The Christian Priest Today*, London: SPCK

Also:

Billings, A. (2010), *Making God Possible: The task of ordained ministry present and future*, London: SPCK

OM, T

This book asks, ‘What are clergy for?’ Billings argues that the ministry and mission of the ordained and the whole church is to ‘make God possible’. The book looks at some of the challenges for the church today including time, ecumenism, indifference and cynicism, and the movement towards people being their own authority rather than looking for that external guidance. He then explores the history, strengths and weaknesses of four models of

priesthood: the classical - parson, the evangelical – minister, the catholic – priest, and utility – the social activist and personal therapist.

‘...the sense of crisis is not related to any one model of ordained ministry but to the very idea of ordained ministry as such.’ (p. 6)

‘in broad terms...the task of the clergy is to support the mission of the church in making God possible, making God findable.’ (p. 49)

‘It was not just that people stopped going to church in any numbers but that Christian assumptions and Christian values were ceasing to have any influence over all aspects of life.’ (p. 156)

‘...the ordained minister must understand the seriousness of the intellectual challenge from secular humanism on the one hand and on the other, what it means to offer ministry to all, in the way that Jesus offered ministry to all.’ (p.161)

Lawson, J., & Muresell, G., Eds. (2014), *Hearing the Call: Stories of young vocation*, London: SPCK

EV, AV

In this book, each chapter begins with a story of calling from scripture. The authors, who are professionally involved in encouraging and discerning young vocations, then recount conversations they have had with candidates exploring their calling. They recall questions they have been asked and answers they have given (or sometimes the questions they have asked in reply). Each biblical passage is then explored to see what it might mean in a broader context, and what message it might have for the world.

‘It is a very common reaction to a suspicion of God’s call to be afraid, maybe even terrified.’ (p. 40)

‘I have used the language of vocation as becoming what God made you to be, and finding the place where you can most become that. One quite obvious aspect of discovering more about who you are as a person is the realisation that you are different from others, and to be true to that takes courage.’ (p. 55)

‘When we gain a true sense of our own poverty, as well as the fact that God loves us beyond anything that we can imagine, then we have what you might call “startled joy”: even I can serve God, and he can work through me, even me, if I let him!’ (p. 88)

Call Waiting Website

“On Vocation”

As above:

Adair, J. (2000), *How to Find Your Vocation: A guide to discovering the work you love*, Norwich: Canterbury Press

Dewar, F. (1991), *Called or Collared: An alternative approach to vocation*, London: SPCK

Lawson, J., & Muresell, G., Eds. (2014), *Hearing the Call: Stories of young vocation*, London: SPCK

Richardson, R. Ed. (2004), *This is Our Calling*, London: SPCK

“On Ordained Ministry”

As above:

Billings, A. (2010), *Making God Possible: The task of ordained ministry present and future*, London: SPCK

Cocksworth, C., and Brown, R. (2004), *Being a Priest Today: Exploring priestly identity*, London: Canterbury Press

Croft, S. (1999, revised 2008), *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and leadership in the local church*, London: DLT

Pritchard, J. (2007), *The Life and Work of a Priest*, London: SPCK

Ramsey, M. (1972, revised 1985), *The Christian Priest Today*, London: SPCK

Redfern, A. (1999), *Ministry and Priesthood*, London: DLT

Also:

Tomlin, G. (2014), *The Widening Circle: Priesthood as God’s way of blessing the world*, London: SPCK

OM, T

This book is concerned with the identity of the priest in relation to the priesthood of the whole church. It sets out to find a way of thinking about priesthood that can be recognised by both Catholic and Protestant traditions.

‘Christ the Son of God is the incarnate Word, the one in whom ordinary humanity and divine presence come together. As the true High Priest, he feels weariness, hunger and pain; yet he also walks on water and raises the dead. In him we see both strands of priestly reality, the mundane and the heavenly, the routine and the remarkable, the normal and the numinous.’ (p. 9)

‘...priesthood, as understood through Christ consists of the following three elements: *mediating...perfecting...offering.*’ (p. 48)

‘Priesthood can be described therefore as the irreducibly personal way in which God relates to the world. There are, of course, other mediating elements within Creation that mediate God’s will and blessing to Creation, such as time and space themselves. These, however, are

not priestly because they are not personal – they do not reflect Christ the true High Priest who is himself nothing less than personal.’ (p. 49)

‘God’s desire is to bless his creation and bring it to its fulfilment. He does that through Christ, the one Mediator between God and Creation. And yet he chooses to involve us in various ways in that priestly blessings. That is our privilege, as human beings, as the church, or as priests.’ (p. 157)

Additional Books Surveyed

Badcock. G. D. (1998), *The Way of Life*, Cambridge MA: Eerdmans

AV, OM, T

This book considers scripture, philosophy and doctrine as they relate to vocation. Badcock proposes that having and living out a vocation is essential for human dignity and full human life, that can be best understood as a response to God. He quotes the great commandment (Mark 12.30),

‘The word *vocation* in the broadest sense is one that corresponds to all of these, for the fundamental human vocation is to do the will of God’. (p. 15)

‘[It is] possible to approach the theology of vocation from a more strictly theological angle, relying less on historical reconstruction and sociological analysis and more on the structures of Christian theology itself’. (p. 29)

‘... because of the common priesthood of all and the denial of the medieval view that some are priests and some are not, it is no longer possible to conceive of ministerial office as involving a different *status* from the rest of the church, but only a different *office* or *work* within the context of the priesthood of all. Luther’s claim is that out of the common priesthood, leaders may be chosen by all and delegated to fulfil certain responsibilities on behalf of the rest: all have the right and duty to preach the gospel, to celebrate the sacraments, and to pronounce absolution, but because we live in a world where labour is divided, and because of the need for good order, it is best that some people be appointed to fulfill the priestly responsibilities of the whole people of God on a regular basis.’ (p. 91)

‘The Christian calling is to love’. (p. 108)

Evans, N. (2012), *Developing in Ministry: Handbook for effective Christian learning and training*, London: SPCK

AV, OM

This book is essentially about developing those already involved in ministry. It also offers however, a particular view of ministry.

‘Our Christian faith is, at its heart, relational.’ (p. 23)

‘At the heart of the Christian gospel is the concept of call; every person is called to vocation and ministry, and each of us continues to be called throughout our lives... God calls humanity

first and foremost into being...God calls by name...God calls us into relationship...God calls us to be fruitful and to be messengers of his gospel.’ (p. 78)

‘The last quarter of the twentieth century saw, in theological writing and debate, a revival in the exploration of Trinitarian theology, from all traditions of the church. It was almost as if there was a recognition that the various traditions had for too long been too strongly emphasising one of the persons of the Godhead (to caricature, Catholics on the Fatherhood of God, Evangelicals on a personal relationship with Jesus and Charismatics on the gifts of the Holy Spirit).’ (p. 99)

‘So if we take it that ministry should be seen in the light of the relational theology of the life of the Trinity, it would seem natural and appropriate that priesthood and Christian ministry should be seen as essentially participative rather than individualistic.’ (p. 100)

Greenwood, R. (2009), *Parish Priests: For the sake of the Kingdom*, London: SPCK

OM, T

This book considers the changing nature of the role and task of the priest, and the different skills that may be required to keep up with that change. It works from,

‘...the basis that, as God’s triune life invites all creation into mutual play, the practice of the church and theology has always to be reconstructed within the particularities of neighbourhood, society and world. An essential part of the task of theology is to be aware of situations where unexamined concepts of God breed attitudes of domination rather than liberation for people and the natural world.’ (p. xv)

‘The idea of ‘navigator’ offers a deep insight into how the local church can be stimulated by the *episcopate* exercised by the parish priest.’ (p. xii)

‘...it is theologically impossible to understand the work of the parish priest, except in dynamic relationship with:

An understanding of the triune life of God;
God’s purposes for creation;
The character and task of the local church;
The particular context in which the church is set.’ (p. 52)

‘...a central focus of the understanding of the work and life of the parish priest in the local church today can be drawn from a redevelopment of the concept of *episcopate*.’ (p. 87)

Heywood, D. (2011), *Reimagining Ministry*, London: SCM

OM, T

This book proposes a new model of ministry, with mission at its heart. It explores how ideas about mission have developed over recent years, but without the concept of ministry keeping track. It suggests that with the move from ‘inherited’ to ‘emerging’ church, ministry needs to be reappraised and reimagined.

‘...“ministry” describes the church’s participation in the mission of God...since mission is the task of the whole church, the model of ministry we need for the church of the twenty-first

century should apply to the ministry of the whole church rather than the ministry of the ordained.’ (p. 182)

‘First, the role of the clergy in this new model of ministry requires of them *more* professional expertise rather than less. But second, their social role is no longer to be understood as that of the ‘professional’, whose status is based upon the possession of a specialist knowledge. Instead, their calling is to give away the status and power their training might qualify them for by using their expertise to empower the whole church. And third, no one person is required to display all the expertise required for ordained ministry because the leadership of God’s people is to be seen as collaborative.’ (p. 183)

Hodge, M. (1983), *Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the Church of England*, London: CIO Publishing

OM, DF

This book traces the historical background of non-stipendiary ministry in the Church of England, including the changing ecclesiastical and social context.

‘A priest is a priest twenty-four hours a day, and in the light of this it is difficult for a non-stipendiary minister in secular employment to claim that he does not exercise a ministry, however minimal, in his place of work.’ (p. 52)

‘The main impetus to the development of non-stipendiary ministry may have been given, and may continue to be given, by the church’s shortage of stipendiary clergy to staff the present parochial system. However, it has always been suggested that this form of ministry should be able to make a distinctive contribution in extending the church’s mission to areas of society lying outside the parochial structure.’ (p. 86)

Hoyle, D. (2016), *The Pattern of our Calling: Ministry yesterday, today and tomorrow*, London: SCM

OM

This book explores calling through the lenses of personal stories, history and theology. Among other things it considers tasks in ministry, holiness and gifts. It also offers helpfully succinct summaries of the views of numerous key thinkers, classic and modern; from Irenaeus and Ignatius, to Keble and Gore, to Ramsey and Williams, and many more.

‘Holiness is *distinctiveness*; it is what the word means. Something Holy is “different”, it is “set apart”. We have to turn aside to find holy places, holy people do things differently.’ (p. 88)

‘The collar is a kind of constraint, accept it and other possibilities have to be excluded; life acquires a particular direction. Summoned into the life of Christ, I will become fully human, but first I will have to master my desire to settle for less. My formation will be lifelong and it will not be easy. You do it because it is worth doing; you do it because you are called... The story is not about us, it was never just about us.’ (p. 186)

Jamison, C., Ed. (2013), *The Disciples' Call: Theologies of vocation from scripture to the present day*, London: T&T Clark

AV, T

This book offers a scholarly theological anthology of the tradition and history of vocation in the Catholic monastic tradition, as well as considering the meaning of vocation in the present day. It explores how each human being has a vocation to respond to God in love and freedom. It offers a thorough grounding of vocation in biblical and monastic texts and distils the thinking on vocation of range of writings including those of Aquinas, Ignatius, Reformation and Post-Reformation scholars and Hans Urs von Balthasar.

‘The authentic self is the person to whom the call is addressed... To help people hear this call the church needs to offer them a clear understanding of the Christian way of discerning vocation. The Christian way is not narcissistic but rather a way of discerning that leads people into what Newman calls ‘some definite service.’ (p. 2)

‘What we ordinarily name our ‘vocation’ is in reality a particular way of perceiving God’s purpose for us. It designates the divine will as it relates to who the Lord desires us to be, how we are to become that unique person and what we are sent forth to do for God and others. Thus, the Lord wills us to be transformed in God, wills us to become our transformed selves through a certain lifestyle and wills us to accomplish some mission.’ (p. 30)

Fathers, ‘...had a conception of vocation but that vocation is not something special to the religious life, but is the call to repent and follow the Gospel that is addressed by Christ to the whole of mankind.’ (p. 40)

‘While Vatican II taught that the members of the laity, no less that the ordained were called to participate fully in the mission of the church, it envisaged ‘the world’ as the proper sphere for the action of the laity.’ (p. 56)

‘Balthasar distinguishes three different stages of vocational call. There is a baptismal call to the family of the Church, then to a particular state within the Church, and finally to a concrete situation within that particular state.’ (p. 128)

‘The gift of a vocation is never just for the individual nor for the individual as part of the Church but it is an invitation to enter into the redemptive work of Christ for the salvation of the world.’ (p. 137)

‘The holiness of the priest, in other words, comes through his pastoral ministry, not before it or after it or despite it.’ (p. 176)

Jones, S. H. (2014), *Listening for God’s Call*, London: SCM

EV

This book describes itself on the back cover as ‘a general introductory text for theological reflection on the call of God’. It is an accessible, well-researched consideration of God’s call in scripture. It considers a range of different contemporary ministries, which are examined individually. The book is interwoven with personal stories and offers frequent quotes, exercises and spaces for reflection.

‘While this book is written for the solitary reader to read alone, it may be even more profitable if it is read as part of a local education group. Some of the reflective tasks are suitable for wider discussion in such groups. Our eyes can be opened to the revelation of God by going deep within ourselves and by listening to our own deep reflection. Yet often we need to be startled, challenged or provoked by someone else saying something we had not ever really considered saying ourselves but that instantly helps to make sense of what we have been trying to articulate.’ (p. 3)

Ling, T., & Bentley, L., Eds. (2012), *Developing Faithful Ministers: A practical and theological handbook*, London: SCM

AV, T

This book is about the ongoing identity and calling in ministry.

‘Our confidence is in the God-who-calls, not in the calling itself. The call is not something we have, it has no deed of title, for it is a life born every day, and in every post, and in every setting.’ Emslie, N (p. 14)

‘The ordinal uses a number of phrases that emphasise the communal nature of the church: “the body of Christ”, a “royal priesthood”, a “holy nation”.’ Bentley, L. (p 111)

‘The clergy’s identity in the context of late modernity is characterised by ambiguity and uncertainty. A role that could once be located at the centre of society now finds both an absence of society and an experience of marginalization. This has been accompanied by increasing demands, particularly with the growth of ministry across multiple parishes and expectations that ministry should be shared, i.e. ‘collaborative’. The solo pastoral ministry lived within a particular community is a feature of a bygone era and now rarely possible.’ Ling, T., (p. 179)

Martin, J., & Coakley, S. (2016), *For God’s Sake; Re-imagining priesthood and prayer in a changing church*, London: Canterbury Press

OM, PS

This book acknowledges and considers the evolving nature of the church through the eyes of numerous priests. It consists of stories of (mostly) parish priests as they go about their day-to-day, ordinary and yet extra-ordinary ministries, exercising their gifts and care for the people God has given them.

‘*For God’s Sake* is a book about the Anglican priesthood, particularly in the contemporary context...[which] may look to be a very recognisable type of book, belonging to a long tradition of writing on Church of England parochial ministry... [but the authors note] We write this book conscious that we are perhaps the last children of such a tradition, seeking to see how we may be faithful and creative in an uncertain future.’ (p. xi)

‘We need the new initiatives of evangelization now beginning. We need them to re-imagine and reconfigure our system so that they assist rather than hamper the vocation to prayer, study and speaking the good news of Jesus Christ, to those around us and to those who come after.’ (p. xviii)

‘At the same time there is the pressure to adopt forms of mission nearly devoid of spiritual content, in a false attempt to placate or amuse, or simply to raise funds... There has never been a renewal of the Church without a renewal of prayer.’ (p. 174-5)

Mourant, J. (2016), *Listening to your Life: 30 ways to discern direction in your life*, London: Canterbury Press

EV

From the back cover,

‘...this book will help you understand your desires and longings, and recognise where you may find meaning, purpose and fulfilment... A series of thirty simple spiritual exercises, using images and objects from everyday life, enables us to connect with that wellspring of wisdom within and hear what our inner selves may be saying.’

‘Vocation is not about ‘what I want to be when I grow up or finding a better job, but a rich tapestry that draws together experience, gifts, relationships, learning and context. It is not about fulfilment in just one aspect of life, but about the fullness of becoming all that is God-given within us. It is possible to live vocationally, with a sense of meaning, purpose and direction, even in circumstances where there is little choice or control over the details of our lives. Sometimes what we need is not external change but an inner change of perspective. Conversely, an inner change of perspective can liberate and motivate us for change in ways we never imagined possible.’ (p. vii)

Percy, E. (2014), *What Clergy Do: Especially when it looks like nothing*, London: SPCK

OM, T

This book explores how the language of motherhood can be applied to the calling and ministry of a parish priest.

‘Like mothering, the role of the parish priest does not fit into many of the modern ideas about work and professionalism. It is a commitment that does not lend itself to targets and easily measurable outcomes. Neither role can be done by formula; there is not a definitive right way to do it but lots of shared wisdom, which can help.’ (p. 3)

On Donald Winnicott’s ‘good enough’ mother,

‘Being “good enough” does not mean being mediocre or simply satisfactory. It is a term which acknowledges the relational nature of the role and the complexity of all the demands. A good enough mother is one who responds appropriately to her child, offering enough for him to feel safe and secure, but not in a way that smothers him.’ (p. 4)

‘A parish priest is in charge of a parish or set of parishes. This does not mean that she is the boss... [she is] more akin to a mother who maintains a home in which her family can be fed, nurtured, loved and cared for and from which they can go out into the wider world. In that wider world they will bear the stamp of the home that formed them and continues to sustain them, living out of the beliefs, values and behaviour they have learned to inhabit. As in any home, many tasks can and should be shared, ideas and ways of behaving are debated and sometimes modified and the whole is a constantly adapting community as its members grow in mutual understanding and care.’ (p. 21)

Platten, S. (2007), *Vocation: Singing the Lord's song*, London: SPCK

OM

This book takes a musical theme from the start. Platten talks of the church being in 'cultural exile' and needing to sing the Lord's song in chorus in a new world. He uses popular songs and classic poetry to reflect on world events, personal stories, church and ministry.

'The church too is called to stand wherever the world (in things great and small) stands on the brink of triumph or tragedy; it is called in yet another sense to stand on "both sides, now". God and the world are brought together whenever these vulnerabilities manifest themselves. They stand on the *human side* of God and *Godward side* of humanity.' (p. 11)

'The essence of priesthood is *being there* with people, not only in times of tragedy, but also in times of joy and, just as importantly, in the more mundane periods of people's lives.' (p. 57)

'[The deacon] ought to be able to respond positively to the metaphorical challenge: "Go on, be an angel". The deacon should be free of administrative responsibilities in the parish and be positioned as a "messenger" who can work on and from the margins.' (p.79)

Price, K. M. (2015), *I Think it is God Calling*, Abingdon: BRF

PS

This book recounts the personal journey of a young woman from call to ordination.

From the back cover,

'All Katy Magdalen really wanted was an easy life, but something was nagging away at her...God was calling – and God is nothing but patient, as she discovered. And then everything changed...a lively personal account of one young woman's journey from atheist to curate in the Anglican Church.'

'One of the main ways to test a vocation, I learned, is to ignore it. Give it time. Push it away. True vocations, it seems, are plants that flourish with neglect. Not for the C of E the divine impatience of St Paul, or the passionate urgency of the prophets. This is England, where queuing is an endurance sport. I needed to hurry up and wait.' (p. 28)

'It wasn't so much that I didn't know if I was cut out to be a priest. I doubted whether I was cut out to be a Christian at all. On bad days, I wasn't even sure if I was up to being human.' (p. 130)

'Ordained ministry is not what I expected. I'm not even sure I can say it's what I wanted – which is probably exactly as it should be. People ask me if I feel like a different person. The answer is yes – but again, not in the way I expected. I don't feel like some newly empowered super hero. I feel like I've just regenerated, Doctor Who style, and have to get my tongue around a new set of teeth.' (p. 170)

Rees, C. (2002), *Voices of this Calling: Experiences of the first generation of women priests*, Norwich: Canterbury Press

OW, PS

This book offers a brief, yet poignant and passionate recounting of the events that led to the 11 November 1992 General Synod approval of the ordination of women to the priesthood. It then goes on to invite readers to listen to many of the first generation of women priests, along with contributions from male colleagues as they tell, in their own words, their vocational stories.

‘The voices contained in this book, and the voices of so many others, are those who continue to live and work and hope for wholeness. They, and people of faith the world over, continue to keep fresh and alive the vision of the kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice and mercy, mutuality and service, giving and receiving, dignity, worth, joy and freedom, compassion and love. This is the vision to which they are called – this is the vision to which they remain true.’ (p. 30)

Reiss, R. (2013), *The Testing of Vocation: 100 years of ministry selection in the Church of England*, London: CHP

AV, T

This book begins with an introduction to vocation, which is explored as both an inner call and an external summons in theological, pragmatic and practical detail. Different perspectives on vocation are explored including ideas that individual and church vocation are set within the wider vocation of God, and therefore cannot be reduced to human choice, the notion of freewill, and the role of the Church in calling forth vocations.

‘Vocation as a concept is multifaceted and, some might argue, even a muddled one. At the basic level there is the call to respond to Jesus’ summary of the law, to love God and to love your neighbour. That is a call directed to the whole human race if they have ears to hear. More specifically there is the call to respond to Jesus’ request to follow him. That is directed to the church... the call is to the Church to be the Church.’ (p. 3)

‘What kind of theology is it which suggests that God does not act through human agency, so that only those can be called ‘acts of God’ for which we have no rational explanation. This may be the theology of insurance companies, but surely it is not that of the Christian Church’ (p. 16)

Shaw, P., & Douglas, H. (2016), *The Reluctant Leader: Coming out of the shadows*, London: Canterbury Press

AV

This book is, as the title suggests, primarily about leadership. It offers practical advice on self-reflections and overcoming obstacles to would-be leaders. It has one chapter on vocation, which observes,

‘A sense of vocation is stronger for some than others... For some people the language of vocation is important. The appropriate language for some is about making a difference to other people’s lives. For others the language might be about finding a higher purpose that is relevant for you. Believing you have a calling or vocation can give you a strength of

commitment and resolve that will take you through difficult times. The risk of believing you have a strong sense of vocation or calling is that you can become too single-minded for your own good.’ (p. 26)

Smith, M. (2014), *Steel Angels: The personal qualities of a priest*, London: SPCK

AV, T

This book considers the nine Selection Criteria of the Church of England and uses them to reflect on day-to-day ordained ministry using film, art, poetry and novels.

‘This book is an attempt to reflect on the qualities needed for being a priest in a *real* rather than ideal Church, as well as offering reflections on how it really feels to ‘do ministry’ in the twenty first century.’ (p. xii)

‘Embracing our Church through leadership means really loving it with a renewed sense of pride in our heritage as Anglicans. Talking about loving an institution may not be a very contemporary or popular idea, but regenerating faithfulness to this flawed and frayed Church while walking the line between healthy critiquing and loving embrace provides a counter-cultural mode of leadership.’ (p. 31)

‘Affirmation: naming God in Tesco.’ (p. 33)

‘Clergy have the unique opportunity and privilege to provide pastoral opportunities for people to come and talk. People need to be listened to for all sorts of reasons – sometimes simply and literally, to unburden themselves (the original idea of confession), to let off steam or to share secrets that are weighing them down.’ (p. 54)

Stancliffe, D. (2003), *God’s pattern: Shaping our worship, ministry and life*, London: SPCK

AV, OM, T

This book explores worship and prayer, discipleship and ministry, relationships and life through the fourfold pattern of the Emmaus road story: engaging, attending, transforming and energising. It traces the pattern through worship and in reflections on the liturgical year. The book covers a lot of ground, including an in-depth consideration of the distinct but complementary ministries of Deacon, Priest and Bishop. It has one particular chapter on calling.

‘In the end the request for more clergy has meant turning the idea of vocation on its head. The local church needs to take a lead... The key question is, ‘Who does the calling?’ We need to say to the local church, ‘It is your responsibility. Look carefully at the gifts that each person has, and then call one of them to lead your church life, be a focus for pastoral care and to be the principal minister at worship.’ (p. 8)

‘How much time and energy is it right to spend on maintaining the inherited patterns on the Church’s life and ministry? And how much are we as members of the Church, when we look at our individual calling, aware that as a nation we have a calling to carry out our vision of a just and caring society?’ (p. 122)

‘Vocation is an important word for us, because a calling – ‘a vocation’ – is something that is not self-generated. Whether it is God who is doing the calling, or the church, or the community, or even an awareness of our own gifts, a vocation – a calling – comes from beyond us and demands a response.’ (p. 124)

“What the church is doing in ordaining those it has chosen and formed is not merely authorising them to do what the Church believes they are functionally competent to do; it is also saying that these ministers are being put on a public lampstand so as to hold before the Church something that is – or should be – generally true of all the baptised. While we are all called to minister, not all are called to be public, representative ministers. Ordination makes visible in a particular person a distinctive call to the universal ministry of the Church. (p. 127)

Thompson, J., and Thompson, R. (2012), *Mindful Ministry: Creative, theological and practical perspectives*, London: SCM

AV, T

I have included this book in this section rather than that on priestly ministry as it is essentially about ongoing mindfulness of and reflection on calling. In its own words,

‘This book aims to affirm and encourage mindful ministry in this sense – ministry in which lay people and those ordained inter-illuminate and awaken the sparkle of Christ’s *charismata* in one another. It does so by reflecting theologically on the different ministries to which people may be called, and which the ordained minister is called to weave together that they might reflect the glory of the rainbow which is Christ.’ (p. viii)

A chapter is devoted to each model considered, and a reflective learning cycle is then employed to offer input, exercises, and time for imaginative reflection to prompt personal growth. The models are:

The apostle: Mindful representing
The holy one: Mindful praying
The pastor: Mindful serving
The teacher: Mindful nurture
The leader: Mindful oversight
The co-between: Mindful collaboration
The herald of Good News: Mindful evangelism
The liberator: Mindful subversion.

Tomkinson, R. (2015), *Called to Greatness: Reflections on vocation and ambition in the local church*, Stowmarket: Kevin Mayhew Ltd.

AV

This book seeks to name, and if not celebrate, then at least rehabilitate the notion of ambition within the church. There is one chapter dedicated to vocation.

Of a priest, ‘...he is a human being before ever he is a human doing’! He is not identified by what he does, or is he? ...so often our vocational identity is spoken of, or thought of, in terms of what we *do*, and the seeming worthiness of what we do is given its own hierarchical status.’ (p. 40)

‘Our personal vocational pathway is not always characterised by what we have chosen to do or felt drawn to. Sometimes it has been influenced by what we were driven to do by circumstances. There can be real and continuing inner conflict between doing what we need to and what we aspire to. We ask, ‘Is this really what God wants me to be doing right now?’ (p. 41)

‘The call to become a disciple of Jesus Christ is a very personal one, and no two accounts of how that happened will be the same.’ (p. 43)

Ward, R. (2008), *Growing Women Leaders: Nurturing women leaders in the church*, Abingdon: CPAS

OM, OW, T

This book explores issues of biblical interpretation and translation in the passages in scripture often thought to bar women from leadership. Ward then offers an overview of women leaders in scripture, and throughout church history. The second part of the book looks at the way women lead and the issues that they face.

‘Christian leadership is a servant-orientated relational process, whereby those who lead, under God’s leadership, using their God-given capacity, seek to influence others towards a kingdom-honouring goal’ (p. 108)

Ward, R. (2011), *On Christian Priesthood*, London: Continuum

OM, T

This book argues for a realignment of pastoral theology, liturgical practice and contemporary spirituality towards the exercise of “ministerial priesthood”, with a renewed emphasis on the offering of sacrifice, the anticipation of heaven, and sacramental reconciliation.

‘If Christianity is a religion, then it is one which communicates grace and participation in the divine by sacramental signs.’ (p. 3)

‘The priestly character of the people of God designates them as living a cultic life through their incorporation into Christ who alone is the definitive high priest by virtue of his obedience and atoning sacrifice. But this is not to exclude the ordination of a priestly character which is subsequent to Baptism and which subsists in the Church as a result of the Lord’s commission to offer the sacramental sacrifice and the sacramental forgiveness of sins.’ (p. 5)

‘The fundamental priesthood which all humankind is able to exercise before God is that of Jesus Christ. His person and work are definitive in showing what priesthood is, just as his Passion is definitive in showing what sacrifice is.’ (p. 75)

‘However, the fact of incorporation into this priesthood does not give to the baptised Christian the ministerial character of a priest. This ministerial character derives from the call of Christ to be conformed to his priesthood in the sacramental order, which is a commission

in particular to consecrate the Eucharistic sacrifice and forgive sins by means of reconciliation with the Church.’ (p. 145)

Woodcock, M. (2016), *Becoming a Reverend: A diary*, London, CHP

PS

This book is the story of one man’s journey from Bishops’ Advisory Panel to ordination, as told through his diary.

‘So this is it. The next three days will decide whether I ever wear a dog collar for a living. About 30 of us are holed up in a large house somewhere in Ely. A panel of “*bishops’ advisors*” are tasked with discerning whether we are called to be priests. They’ve studied our forms They’ve analysed our references. Now they will monitor our every move for the next 72 hours. Our personal and spiritual lives will be explored in fine detail. We’ll be questioned, poked and provoked in all manner of ways. It feels like Big Brother without the searing celebrities walking around in their underwear.’ (p. 1)

‘My clerical clothes arrived today. I stared at the Matrix-style robe with the 39 buttons, the white, flowing surplice, black shirt and dog collar for a long time before trying them on. It doesn’t feel real. It doesn’t feel right. No matter which angle I posed at in front of the mirror, I still felt utterly ridiculous.’ (p. 203)

‘I woke up a Mr. I’ve come to bed a Rev.’ (p. 223)

Worthen, J. (2012), *Responding to God’s Call: Christian formation today*. London: CHP

AV, T

This book considers how formation relates to and is part of vocation. It begins by focussing on formation within the context of three specific ‘crosscurrents’: vocation and selfhood, traditions and rationality, and love and duty. It looks at call in creation, call in Christ and our response as Church to the world. It then explores formation as and through remembering, understanding and willing.

‘Within the formational experience that is common to the people of God there often arises the possibility of a distinct vocation which requires specific elements of formational experience. One of these vocations is to ordained ministry.’ (p. ix)

‘The purpose of our calling can be summed up as becoming conformed to the Son of God, which means renewal of the image in which we were created, participation in God’s eternal life and following Jesus day by day. Our response to this calling comes from us as human persons, with others in the life of the Church and for others, not just in the Church but the whole world.’ (p. 97)

‘Formation takes time. Is there an internal sigh when we hear that? Modernity encourages us to see time as a limited commodity for our use, to be ready to protect ‘our’ time from those things that might ‘take’ it from us, and to find satisfaction in accounting for the use of our time in terms of productive output. Christian doctrine, however, teaches us that time is an integral part of the goodness of God’s creation: it is space for growth into the fullness of God’s purpose...’ (p. 171)

Reports considered and books referred to in the text

Church of England Reports

These are the reports that I looked at alongside the books above. I have listed them in chronological order.

2006 Education for Discipleship Implementation Task Group

Shaping the Future: New patterns of training for lay and ordained

2007 The Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England

The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church, London: Church House

2015 The Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England

Senior Church Leadership: A resource for reflection

2016 Lay Leadership Task Group

Theological resources for lay leadership

2016 Synod Report GS2020

Renewal and Reform: Resourcing ministerial education

2017 The Lay Leadership Task Group

Setting God's People Free

2017 The Lay Ministries Working Group

Serving Together

Previous research

Graveling, L. (2015), *Women and Leadership in the Church: Insights from gender and management literature*, Ministry Development Working Paper

Graveling, L. (2015), *Young Vocations: Journeys toward ordination*, Research Paper

Myers, S (2016), *Good Practice in Encouraging Vocations in Parishes and Diocese*, Research Paper

Bruner, J. S. (1986), *Actual Minds and Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Bruner, J. S. (1990), *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Bruner, J. S. (1991), The Narrative Construction of Reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18(1), 1-21

Wittgenstein, L. (1922) *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*

Wittgenstein, L. (1953) *Philosophical Investigations*

Appendix 2

Website texts

Below is the text concerning vocation and ministry from the same three Church of England websites.

Church of England Ministry Page

“All who are baptised are called to ministry, whether that is lay or ordained. The Church needs a wide variety of ministers in order to serve all people. God calls young people and older ones, wealthy and poorer. The Church's ministers come from all walks of life, social classes, ethnic backgrounds and educational abilities.

You may be feeling excited, anxious, uncertain or inadequate but the Holy Spirit will lead, prepare and equip you as you move forward in faith and obedience. Above all be open to God's surprises!

But there is a further calling, a particular calling, sometimes called a 'vocation' which is not for everyone but may be for you. This particular calling is to serve God and all people through one of the Church's authorised lay or ordained ministries. For this particular calling you have to allow your sense of vocation to be tested by the Church through its discernment processes.

Many people feel called to serve God through ministry in various different forms, some of these may be Ordained Ministry, Reader Ministry, Church Army Evangelist or as a monk or nun within the religious life community.”⁸

People are then directed, depending on age, to one of the two newer websites.

Church of England Vocations Hub

A Message from the Archbishop of Canterbury

“All who are baptised are called to ministry, whether that is lay or ordained. The Church needs a wide variety of ministers in order to serve all people. God calls young people and older ones, wealthy and poorer. The Church's ministers come from all walks of life, social classes, ethnic backgrounds and educational abilities.

You may be feeling excited, anxious, uncertain or inadequate but the Holy Spirit will lead, prepare and equip you as you move forward in faith and obedience. Above all be open to God's surprises!

Do you have a calling?

“The good news is Yes! You have!

⁸ <https://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/vocation.aspx> accessed 24/08/17

Our first calling is to live life in all its fullness and to represent Christ in the world.

This is our common calling as Christians.

But there is a further calling, a particular calling, sometimes called a 'vocation' which is not for everyone but may be for you. This particular calling is to serve God and all people through one of the Church's authorised lay or ordained ministries. For this particular calling you have to allow your sense of vocation to be tested by the Church through its discernment processes.

What are the marks of a vocation?

An internal sense of call.

This is a strong persistent conviction that God is calling you

Your call is recognised by others

People close to you, who know you well, recognise God's calling in you

Your sense of call is realistic

It is possible for you to fulfil the ministry you feel called to.

Your sense of call is informed

You have some understanding of the demands and expectations of your calling

As you begin to discern what it is that God may be calling you to, consider a variety of options. Here are some possibilities for exercising an authorised ministry within the Church of England. Explore these – and see if any strike a chord with you. But remember God may use your gifts, skills and commitment best in another way yet to be discovered.”⁹

Ordained Ministry

“Is God calling you to Ordained Ministry?

Most ordained ministers are priests (also called presbyters).

All those who are ordained spend a period of time, usually a year as a deacon before they are ordained into priestly orders. Some who are called to ordained ministry remain permanently as a deacon. Find out more about this here: [Distinctive Diaconate](#)

Priests build up the Body of Christ in the Church to serve the world by:

Celebrating the sacraments

Leading worship

Teaching and preaching

Pastoral care

Mission and Evangelism

Presiding over a community

Pointing to the life of Christ

Priests serve in a variety of roles including:

Parish Ministry

Chaplaincy (Education, Prisons, NHS, The Forces etc)

Diocesan & National Responsibilities

Workplace based Ministry

Pioneering & Fresh Expression Ministry

⁹ <http://vocation.churchofengland.org/menu> accessed 24/08/17

Priests can have full-time or part-time ministerial roles. They can be paid a stipend, or work voluntarily. They can be called to serve in an Assistant or Leader capacity, in their local home context or deployed nationally.”¹⁰

Call Waiting

A Word from Justin Welby

‘It is my hope that as people discover that they are loved by God, they will start out on a journey that enables them to grow and flourish, to become the people that God has called them to be. This journey is one of discipleship; it involves following Jesus and discerning his will for our lives. And it’s a journey of vocation, listening for God’s voice and following where he leads.

For every Christian there is a calling to be salt and light, to carry the transforming presence of Christ into the places where we study, work or relax and to discover how we can use our gifts and skills to serve God’s world in need. We live in challenging times and so much of our society, the Church included, needs the new life that Christ brings.

In the light of this need the Church wants to welcome young people and the charisms they bring, gifts which will help us to meet the challenges we face with creativity and innovation. For some this will mean ordination. Mission needs young people at the forefront to express the gospel afresh for this generation in ways that can inspire and attract those who are currently far from the church. As young people see themselves reflected in the leadership of the church, they in turn may be inspired to start out on their journey of faith.

God is no respecter of age, he calls both young people and older ones, men and women. I hope and pray that all Christians will be attentive to God’s calling and that through the call waiting initiative many more teenagers and young adults will be enabled to respond to that calling for the good of the Church and the world which God loves so much.

So I hope and pray that this CALL WAITING... initiative will enrich the whole of our Church and allow more people, old and young, to grow into the fullness of the gifts God has given them.

+Justin Cantuar”¹¹

“What is a Vocation?

People use these terms a little differently. But let’s start by saying what a vocation isn’t.

Firstly, it’s not discipleship.

All Christians are called to be disciples – people who learn from Jesus and who want to live our lives according to his will, being Jesus’s followers in our everyday life at school, college, home and work and when we are out with friends. God wants all of us to know him better, love him more and become more like Jesus. Discipleship is very important, but it’s not the same as a vocation.

Secondly, vocation isn’t Ministry. By Baptism, all Christians are brought into the body of Christ – the Church. Each person has a part to play in their local church and perhaps you have particular ways that you help there, by playing in a worship band, serving at the altar or

¹⁰ <http://vocation.churchofengland.org/ordained-ministry/> accessed 24/08/17

¹¹ <http://www.callwaiting.org.uk/justin/> accessed 24/08/17

helping to lead the youth group. Those are all examples of ministry, that is, ways that we can serve in the life of the Church.

Vocation isn't discipleship and it's not ministry. Vocation means being called by God to some specific role. This could be to all sorts of things – like translating the Bible, being a teacher or nursing. In this website we're thinking specifically about a vocation to ordination as a priest or deacon in the Church of England.

Testing by others

If you feel you have a strong sense of a vocation to ordained ministry, you'll need to see if other people in the Church of England agree. There are people employed in every region (Diocese) to help, and they will ask themselves two crucial questions:

Are you being called by God and his Church to ordained ministry?

Do you have the necessary gifts and potential to fulfil your vocation?

In answering these questions, they will want to focus on nine aspects of your life, called the 'criteria for selection', which you can read more about [here](#).¹²

“Is God calling you?

Absolutely! God calls everyone who loves Him into some kind of service. But service can take many forms, so where is God calling you?

We are all called to a deeper relationship with God and with each other, reflecting His love to others—wherever they are and whatever they do in life. For most of us that means getting involved in our local church. For some, the calling is leading the Church, and involves being authorised to minister in a public capacity.

What is a vocation to ordained ministry?

Having a vocation means committing yourself to service of God. For some, that will be to ordained ministry as a deacon or priest - who do a [wide range of roles](#) from leading a parish church to chaplaincy and much more besides.¹³

¹² <http://www.callwaiting.org.uk/calling/howdoiknow/> accessed 24/08/17

¹³ <http://www.callwaiting.org.uk/calling/> accessed 24/08/17

Appendix 3

Ordination Liturgy: Book of Common Prayer and Common Prayer The admission and Licensing of Readers: Common Prayer¹⁴

Deacon

Book of Common Prayer

IT appertaineth to the office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and specially when he ministereth the holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof, and to read holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church; and to instruct the youth in the Catechism; in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants; and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop. And furthermore, it is his office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the Parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the Parishioners, or others. Will you do this gladly and willingly?

Common Worship

Introduction

God calls his people to follow Christ, and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom.

To serve this royal priesthood, God has given a variety of ministries. Deacons are ordained so that the people of God may be better equipped to make Christ known. Theirs is a life of visible self-giving. Christ is the pattern of their calling and their commission; as he washed the feet of his disciples, so they must wash the feet of others.

Ordination Liturgy

Deacons are called to work with the Bishop and the priests with whom they serve as heralds of Christ's kingdom. They are to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God's purposes of love. They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people. They are to work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible.

¹⁴ © The Archbishops' Council 2000

Deacons share in the pastoral ministry of the Church and in leading God's people in worship. They preach the word and bring the needs of the world before the Church in intercession. They accompany those searching for faith and bring them to baptism. They assist in administering the sacraments; they distribute communion and minister to the sick and housebound.

Deacons are to seek nourishment from the Scriptures; they are to study them with God's people, that the whole Church may be equipped to live out the gospel in the world. They are to be faithful in prayer, expectant and watchful for the signs of God's presence, as he reveals his kingdom among us.

Priest

Book of Common Prayer

YOU have heard, brethren, as well in your private examination, as in the exhortation which was now made to you, and in the holy Lessons taken out of the Gospel and the writings of the Apostles, of what dignity and of how great importance this office is, whereunto ye are called. And now again we exhort you, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge ye are called: that is to say, to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.

Have always therefore printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The Church and Congregation whom you must serve, is his spouse and his body. And if it shall happen the same Church, or any member thereof, to take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence, ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider with yourselves the end of your ministry towards the children of God, towards the spouse and body of Christ; and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.

Forasmuch then as your office is both of so great excellency and of so great difficulty, ye see with how great care and study ye ought to apply yourselves, as well that ye may shew yourselves dutiful and thankful unto that Lord, who hath placed you in so high a dignity; as also to beware that neither you yourselves offend, nor be occasion that others offend. Howbeit, ye cannot have a mind and will thereto of yourselves; for that will and ability is given of God alone. Therefore ye ought, and have need, to pray earnestly for his Holy Spirit. And seeing that you cannot by any other means compass the doing of so weighty a work, pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the holy Scriptures, and with a life agreeable to the same; consider how studious ye ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures, and in framing the manners both of yourselves, and of them that specially pertain unto you, according to the rule of the same Scriptures: and for this self-same cause, how ye ought to forsake and set aside (as much as you may) all worldly cares and studies.

We have good hope that you have well weighed and pondered these things with yourselves long before this time; and that you have clearly determined, by God's grace, to give yourselves wholly to this office, whereunto it hath pleased God to call you: so that, as much as lieth in you, you will apply yourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all your cares and studies this way; and that you will continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost; that, by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, ye may wax riper and stronger in your ministry; and that ye may so endeavour yourselves from time to time to sanctify the lives of you and yours, and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that ye may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow.

And now, that this present Congregation of Christ here assembled may also understand your minds and wills in these things, and that this your promise may the more move you to do your duties, ye shall answer plainly to these things, which we, in the Name of God, and of his Church, shall demand of you touching the same.

DO you think in your heart that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this Church of England, to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood?

Common Worship

Introduction

God calls his people to follow Christ, and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom. To serve this royal priesthood, God has given particular ministries. Priests are ordained to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel. They share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church, delighting in its beauty and rejoicing in its well-being. They are to set the example of the Good Shepherd always before them as the pattern of their calling. With the Bishop and their fellow presbyters, they are to sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament, that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ and be a living sacrifice acceptable to God.

Ordination Liturgy

Priests are called to be servants and shepherds among the people to whom they are sent. With their Bishop and fellow ministers, they are to proclaim the word of the Lord and to watch for the signs of God's new creation. They are to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord; they are to teach and to admonish, to feed and provide for his family, to search for his children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, and to guide them through its confusions, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. Formed by the word, they are to call their hearers to repentance and to declare in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins.

With all God's people, they are to tell the story of God's love. They are to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith. They are to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season, and to declare the mighty acts of God. They are

to preside at the Lord's table and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. They are to bless the people in God's name. They are to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need. They are to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death. Guided by the Spirit, they are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people, that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.

Bishop

Book of Common Prayer

There is no equivalent passage. Instead candidates are examined 'in certain articles'.

Common Worship

Introduction

God calls his people to follow Christ, and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom.

To serve this royal priesthood, God has given particular ministries. Bishops are ordained to be shepherds of Christ's flock and guardians of the faith of the apostles, proclaiming the gospel of God's kingdom and leading his people in mission. Obedient to the call of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, they are to gather God's people and celebrate with them the sacraments of the new covenant. Thus formed into a single communion of faith and love, the Church in each place and time is united with the Church in every place and time.

Ordination Liturgy

Bishops are called to serve and care for the flock of Christ. Mindful of the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his sheep, they are to love and pray for those committed to their charge, knowing their people and being known by them. As principal ministers of word and sacrament, stewards of the mysteries of God, they are to preside at the Lord's table and to lead the offering of prayer and praise. They are to feed God's pilgrim people, and so build up the Body of Christ.

They are to baptize and confirm, nurturing God's people in the life of the Spirit and leading them in the way of holiness. They are to discern and foster the gifts of the Spirit in all who follow Christ, commissioning them to minister in his name. They are to preside over the ordination of deacons and priests, and join together in the ordination of bishops.

As chief pastors, it is their duty to share with their fellow presbyters the oversight of the Church, speaking in the name of God and expounding the gospel of salvation. With the Shepherd's love, they are to be merciful, but with firmness; to minister discipline, but with compassion. They are to have a special care for the poor, the outcast and those who are in

need. They are to seek out those who are lost and lead them home with rejoicing, declaring the absolution and forgiveness of sins to those who turn to Christ.

Following the example of the prophets and the teaching of the apostles, they are to proclaim the gospel boldly, confront injustice and work for righteousness and peace in all the world.

The Admission and Licensing of Readers

Introduction

My brothers and sisters, God has gathered us into the fellowship of the universal Church. As members together of his body, Christ calls us to minister in his name and, according to our gifts, to be instruments of his love in the world. Within this ministry, Readers are called to serve the Church of God and to work together with clergy and other ministers. They are to lead public worship, to preach and teach the word of God, to assist at the eucharist and to share in pastoral and evangelistic work. As authorized lay ministers, they are to encourage the ministries of God's people, as the Spirit distributes gifts among us all. They are called to help the whole Church to participate in God's mission to the world.

Alternative Introduction

My brothers and sisters,

God has called us into the fellowship of the universal Church.

As members of his body, Christ calls us to minister together in his name and, according to our gifts, to be instruments of his love in the world. Readers are called to a ministry of the word,

preaching and teaching,

inspiring others to follow the way of Christ,

and calling them to share in the good news of the kingdom.

They are called to a liturgical ministry,

leading worship,

proclaiming the gospel story

and helping God's people to greet their living Lord,

so that they may worship him, praise him and live by his commands.

Appendix 4

Language used and tasks assigned in Common Worship ordination and licensing liturgies¹⁵

Introduction			
			<i>In the licensing service the charge is contained within the introduction rather than appear later in the service.</i>
Deacon	Priest / Presbyter	Bishop	Reader / Licensed Lay Minister
<p>God calls his people to follow Christ, and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom. To serve this royal priesthood, God has given a variety of ministries.</p>	<p>God calls his people to follow Christ, and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom. To serve this royal priesthood, God has given particular ministries.</p>	<p>God calls his people to follow Christ, and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom. To serve this royal priesthood, God has given particular ministries.</p>	<p>My brothers and sisters, God has gathered us into the fellowship of the universal Church. As members together of his body, Christ calls us to minister in his name and, according to our gifts, to be instruments of his love in the world.</p>

¹⁵ © The Archbishops' Council 2000

<p>Deacons are ordained so that the people of God may be better equipped to make Christ known. Theirs is a life of visible self-giving. Christ is the pattern of their calling and their commission; as he washed the feet of his disciples, so they must wash the feet of others.</p>	<p>Priests are ordained to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel. They share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church, delighting in its beauty and rejoicing in its well-being. They are to set the example of the Good Shepherd always before them as the pattern of their calling.</p>	<p>Bishops are ordained to be shepherds of Christ's flock...</p>	
		<p>...and guardians of the faith of the apostles</p>	
	<p>With the Bishop and their fellow presbyters, they are to sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament, that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ and be a living sacrifice acceptable to God.</p>	<p>Obedient to the call of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, they are to gather God's people and celebrate with them the sacraments of the new covenant. Thus formed into a single communion of faith and love, the Church in each place and time is united with the Church in every place and time.</p> <p>... proclaiming the gospel of God's kingdom...</p>	
		<p>... and leading his people in mission.</p>	<p>[..and to assist in] evangelistic work...</p>

Ordination Liturgy			
Deacon	Priest / Presbyter	Bishop	
Deacons are called to work with the Bishop and the priests with whom they serve as heralds of Christ's kingdom.	Priests are called to be servants and shepherds among the people to whom they are sent.	Bishops are called to serve and care for the flock of Christ. Mindful of the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his sheep, they are to love and pray for those committed to their charge, knowing their people and being known by them.	Within this ministry, Readers are called to serve the Church of God and to work together with clergy and other ministers.
They are to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God's purposes of love.	With their Bishop and fellow ministers, they are to proclaim the word of the Lord...	Following the example of the prophets and the teaching of the apostles, they are to proclaim the gospel boldly...	
	They are to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord...		
	...they are to teach and to admonish, to feed and provide for his family, to search for his children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, and to guide them through its confusions, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.		

	Formed by the word, they are to call their hearers to repentance and to declare in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins.		
	With all God's people, they are to tell the story of God's love...		
They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people.			
They are to work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible.	They are to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need.	They are to have a special care for the poor, the outcast and those who are in need... ... confront injustice and work for righteousness and peace in all the world.	
		They are to seek out those who are lost and lead them home with rejoicing, declaring the absolution and forgiveness of sins to those who turn to Christ.	
Deacons share in the pastoral ministry of the Church...			
... and in leading God's people in worship.			They are to lead public worship...

They preach the word...	They are to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season, and to declare the mighty acts of God.		... to preach...
... and bring the needs of the world before the Church in intercession.			
			... and teach the word of God...
They accompany those searching for faith and bring them to baptism.	They are to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith.	They are to baptize and confirm, nurturing God's people in the life of the Spirit and leading them in the way of holiness.	
They assist in administering the sacraments...	They are to preside at the Lord's table and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.	As principal ministers of word and sacrament, stewards of the mysteries of God, they are to preside at the Lord's table and to lead the offering of prayer and praise. They are to feed God's pilgrim people, and so build up the Body of Christ.	... to assist at the eucharist...
...they distribute communion and minister to the sick and housebound.	They are to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death.		... and to share in pastoral...
Deacons are to seek nourishment from the Scriptures...			
... they are to study them with God's people, that the whole Church may be	Guided by the Spirit, they are to discern and foster the gifts of all	They are to discern and foster the gifts of the Spirit in all who follow	As authorized lay ministers, they are to encourage the ministries of God's

equipped to live out the gospel in the world.	God's people, that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.	Christ, commissioning them to minister in his name.	people, as the Spirit distributes gifts among us all. They are called to help the whole Church to participate in God's mission to the world.
They are to be faithful in prayer...			
...expectant and watchful for the signs of God's presence, as he reveals his kingdom among us.	... and to watch for the signs of God's new creation.		
	They are to bless the people in God's name.		
		They are to preside over the ordination of deacons and priests, and join together in the ordination of bishops.	
		As chief pastors, it is their duty to share with their fellow presbyters the oversight of the Church, speaking in the name of God and expounding the gospel of salvation. With the Shepherd's love, they are to be merciful, but with firmness; to minister discipline, but with compassion.	

