

**Recommendations  
of the Consultation on Discernment for Ordained Ministry  
as reviewed by the Council of General Synod, November 1997**

The recommendations from the Consultation on Discernment were reviewed and amended by the House of Bishops, and sent to the Council of General Synod. The recommendations in sections A, B, D, and E were accepted by the Council. The recommendations in section C were modified as noted in that section.

A. Concerning the Role and Governance of ACPO

ACPO is advisory to bishops. We recommend that ACPO continue as a national process, accountable to the House of Bishops. We recommend that the budget should be set by the Council of General Synod and administered for the House of Bishops through the Primate's office.

There are 4 arenas of discernment: the parish, the diocese, the theological college/training institution, and ACPO. While each arena of discernment will assess a wide range of criteria and gifts, each has an area of particular responsibility. It is the primary responsibility of the parish to assess a candidate in the areas of spirituality, leadership, and Christian lifestyle with the noted concern that a parish needs to work at objectivity. It is the primary responsibility of each diocese to assess the particular gifts of the candidate in the context of its own diocesan needs and ministries. It is the primary responsibility of the training institution/theological college to assess competency in academic and professional skills. It is the primary responsibility of ACPO to assess for the wider church on issues related to character, charisms, and call to ordered ministry. All arenas report to the Bishop.

ACPO's primary task is to assess for suitability for postulancy for the priesthood. ACPO can identify areas in which the candidate needs to grow. We recommend a new parallel process to assess for the vocational diaconate to be developed for the year 2001. Faith Worship and Ministry will oversee the new process which will be developed by the ACPO secretaries in consultation with the House of Bishops.

It is the responsibility of the Bishop and training institution/theological college to make decisions about programs of education and formation suitable both for the candidate and for the particular form of ministry for which he/she is preparing. An intentional process is suggested.

In order to facilitate clear accountability and structure, we recommend that ACPOs be established and held accountable to the House of Bishops through provincial structures, e.g. the Metropolitan and Provincial House of Bishops. We recommend that each Province have one ACPO coordinating group, consisting of a bishop, Secretary and lay

assessor. We recommend that the bishop be chosen by the Metropolitan, and that the Secretary and the lay assessor be chosen by the Provincial House. The suggested length of term is three years, renewable once, and we recommend staggered appointments.

We recommend the establishment of a national ACPO coordinating group which would include the members of the coordinating group from each Province. This will meet not less than once in the triennium.

A pool of assessors needs to be maintained in each Province by the Secretary and the lay assessor, on nominations by the diocesan bishops. The pool needs to be diverse, including individuals representative of and/or sensitive to the varieties of cultures present in the Province, and familiar with the diverse forms of ordered and lay ministry present and evolving within the Province.

Training for assessors is essential. General standards for this training need to be set by the national coordinating group. Detailed standards need to be developed by the Provincial coordinating group (bishop, Secretary, lay assessor). Training should include an exploration of the assumptions assessors are bringing to the task, developing clarity and consensus about the task, the theology of the priesthood as found in the ordinals, cultural sensitivity training, sensitivity to the particular ministries and cultures in the Province, discernment processes and skills, sexual harassment training, and confidentiality.

We recommend that the “Checklist of Indicators” presently in use by ACPO be revised as amended (*Appendix “C”*). This Checklist is to be used by ACPO assessors in their evaluation of candidates, and is commended to other arenas of discernment for their use.

We recommend special care be taken in the various processes of discernment for the selection and screening of postulants for the ordained ministry around the issues of power, trust and sexual misconduct. This is in reference to potential abusers and to those in the midst of working through personal experiences related to these issues.

We recommend the national coordinating group to set standards for background checks, reference checks and psychological testing in accord with legal counsel. These would normally be undertaken by dioceses. It is the responsibility of Provinces to ensure that appropriate information arising from these is communicated to the Secretary before the ACPO event.

The entire process needs to be communicated clearly to the candidate at every stage, including the fact that there are no guarantees that approval at any stage will lead to ordination and/or employment. Recommendations from each arena need to be clearly communicated to each of the other arenas, stating what is affirmed, what recommendations for the future are being made, and if the candidate is recommended for postulancy to the priesthood or not. Use of a release of information form signed

by postulant/applicant should be encouraged.

We recommend that, the ACPO contribution occur at an early stage of the overall discernment process, as outlined in the 1986

Prerequisites for Ordination document.

#### B. Concerning Discernment for the Episcopate

Recognizing that the exercise of the work and office of the bishop is increasingly complex and that less is known about this ministry than either the priesthood or diaconal ministry, we recommend that the current national guidelines for the selection and screening of nominations for the office of bishop be revisited/updated by the House of Bishops.

#### C. Concerning National Standards for Theological Education for Ordination

**The Council of General Synod authorized Faith, Worship and Ministry to undertake a feasibility study in order to do more concentrated work on the issues raised in these recommendations. This study would include participation from the House of Bishops, theological colleges, those involved in the training of people for alternative and complementary forms of ministry, and lay people involved in the life of the Church with gifts in the areas of adult education.**

1. We recommend that a basic minimum core curriculum be established for all being prepared for ordination to the priesthood.
2. We recommend that a national core curriculum committee be established consisting of:
  - a) 3 representing traditional divinity schools
  - b) 2 representing alternative training models
  - c) 2 lay persons with a good understanding of today's Church and expertise in teaching and learning
  - d) one bishop per province
3. We recommend that appointments be made by the Council of General Synod on the recommendation of the Faith Worship and Ministry Committee in consultation with the House of Bishops.
4. We recommend that the areas of concern for the committee include, among other matters (See the 1986 document):

- a) the identification of a core curriculum for all to be ordained to the priesthood
  - b) modes of delivery: residency/non-residency
  - c) modes of evaluations and examination
  - d) consideration of the manner of assessing readiness for ordained ministry  
after all component requirements are met
  - e) consideration of whether there is a role for basic competency evaluation before  
a candidate begins their theological education
5. We recommend that the committee consult with the House of Bishops and submit its recommendations to the Council of General Synod through the Faith Worship and Ministry Committee.
6. Intentional education about issues of power, trust, sexual harassment and abuse need to be part of theological education, training for ministry and the professional and vocational growth of all clergy.

#### D. Concerning Continuing Education

1. In accordance with the Continuing Education Plan and with the knowledge that intentionally addressing professional and vocational growth leads to enhanced capacity in carrying out the work of the Church, we recommend that all clergy and bishops design, carry out and evaluate an annual individual professional and vocational growth plan. Ideally this work will be done collaboratively with their supervisor/metropolitan/bishop, or his/her designate, in a spirit of mutual inquiry and support.
2. We recommend that diocesan leadership publicly articulate
- a) the importance of and benefits accruing from professional and vocational growth
  - b) that professional and vocational growth is part of ‘the work’ of the clergy
3. We recommend that diocesan leadership assist in resourcing professional, vocational and spiritual growth.
4. We recommend that in the area of professional and vocational growth, dioceses and theological colleges work in stronger partnership.
5. We recommend that the recommendations from the Mutual Ministry Review report (Committee on Ministry, General Synod 1995) be revisited and form part of the development of annual evaluation strategies for clergy and their parishes, to be implemented by 2001.

6. We recommend that bishops and dioceses encourage Sabbatical leaves.

E. Concerning Discernment and Theological Education with and for Aboriginal Anglicans

1. We recommend that there be consultation with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and representatives from other diocesan indigenous groups, in the spirit of the Covenant, as to how the issues and proposals raised in this report can be addressed appropriately in aboriginal contexts. All bishops for whom this is a particular concern should have opportunity to be engaged in this conversation.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON POSTULANTS FOR ORDINATION  
The Anglican Church of Canada

**CHECKLIST OF INDICATORS OF THE POTENTIAL OF PROSPECTIVE POSTULANTS**  
(For use in ACPO Interviews and Assessments)

Bishops and others responsible for the acceptance or the training of postulants for ordination find it helpful to receive evaluations of the potential of prospective postulants for the ordained ministry of the Church. The following listing identifies the kinds of indications of potential about which the ordaining or educational authorities would like to know. This listing is meant to serve only as a guide to ACPO Assessors and staff, and it will need to be adapted to the specific characteristics and history of each person assessed. It would be helpful to relate suggestions and prescriptions for the future to these indicators:

1. **Spirituality and Church Life**

- (a) **Understanding of and commitment to the Baptismal covenant.**
- (b) Understanding of and sense of call to the ordained ministry, and of the relation of ordained and lay ministries.
- (c) Participation in the Church, breadth of Church experience, commitment to the Anglican tradition in an ecumenical context.
- (d) Patterns of worship, prayer, Bible Study and the integration of faith and life leading to an ever-deepening spirituality.
- (e) Understanding and articulation of how God has worked in this person's life and the lives of others.
- (f) Sense of mission to the world.

2. **Pastoral and Social Concern**

- (a) Commitment to serve and help others.
- (b) Openness and sensitivity to others emotionally and socially, ability to listen, ability to care.
- (c) Commitment to social justice, awareness of social issues.
- (d) Leadership: pastoral leadership, initiative and responsibility in situations of shared ministry, administrative talents.
- (e) Potential to build community, welcome newcomers.
- (f) **Ability to deal with conflict.**

3. **Personal Characteristics**

- (a) Personal and moral integrity.
- (b) Physical and emotional health; ability for self care and self esteem.
- (c) Quality of social relations and acquaintanceships: with women; with men.
- (d) Ability to form close, continuing, confiding, but non-sexual friendships (peer relationships): with men; with women.
- (e) Ability to sustain stable, committed, marital relationship, if such is applicable with this candidate.
- (f) Potential for educational preparation: commitment to ongoing education.
- (g) Flexibility, toleration of differences, creativity, sense of humour.
- (h) General life history: anything special to note.

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