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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

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# The Role of Auxiliary and Supplementary Ministers

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DURING THE PAST TEN YEARS the auxiliary ministry has become an established feature of the Church of England. There is now a considerable body of men who have been trained and ordained to carry out a pastoral ministry in a parish or group of parishes while continuing to earn their living in secular employment. Its position as a form of ministry in the church was regularised by the publication of the Bishops' Regulations for the Selection and Training of Candidates for Auxiliary Pastoral Ministries in 1970. Its extent is indicated by the fact that in 1972 nearly one-fifth of the candidates recommended for training for ordination were for the auxiliary pastoral ministry.

A period of reappraisal has now been reached. On the one hand there is pressure for radical developments. A working party chaired by the Bishops of Stepney and Woolwich has produced a report (*Local Ministry in Urban and Industrial Areas*, Mowbrays 1972) urging a major development of the scheme in order to grapple with the problems facing the church in large industrial areas, and four men from the East End of London are at present being trained in a pilot scheme. (The London scheme is described in *Partners and Ministers*, Ted Roberts, Falcon 1972.) On the other hand a working party set up by the Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry to examine the role of auxiliary ministries could only offer qualified approval for the auxiliary pastoral ministry and was highly critical of the London scheme (*The Place of Auxiliary Ministry, Ordained and Lay*, CIO 1973). My own involvement with the scheme in the East End of London, when I led a short series of seminars for the men in training, suggested that there were certain important issues, both for this scheme and for the auxiliary ministry generally, which did not appear to have been raised by the reports referred to.

*The Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry*

One of the difficulties of describing the auxiliary ministry is that words are often given slightly different meanings when used by different people, but a number of common factors can be identified:

- (a) the men concerned are in holy orders, as priests (or deacons training to become priests)
- (b) they earn their living in secular employment, or in some cases receive a pension because they are retired, and are not paid (except for expenses) for their ministerial duties
- (c) they are not incumbents (rectors or vicars) of parishes, and do not expect to become such.

Within the auxiliary ministry two main groups may be identified. The majority of auxiliary ministers exercise their ministry in the context of parishes, and form the 'auxiliary pastoral (or parochial) ministry'. There is however a number of auxiliary ministers who see their secular employment as the main sphere of their ministry. This paper will concentrate initially on the auxiliary pastoral ministry, while a later section will examine the role of those in the second group.

The role of the auxiliary pastoral ministry was described in *A Supporting Ministry* (pp. 12, 13), the report of an earlier ACCM Working Party (published by CIO in 1968). It suggested it might take three possible forms:

- (a) general assistance within a parish, limited only by the time the man concerned has available
- (b) assistance over a specified area, such as the care of one church or area in a parish, certain groups of people within a parish, or in relation to institutions within a parish, such as hospitals or schools
- (c) assistance with special functions, such as taking services, the teaching ministry or spiritual guidance and counselling.

While the actual work each minister does varies according to the local circumstances of each parish, their work fits into this general pattern. The task of the auxiliary pastoral ministry may therefore be described as *to assist the full-time clergy in their parochial ministry*.

There has been relatively little discussion as to the nature of their work because it fits into an established pattern. It is the work of a part-time honorary assistant curate. Discussion has focussed on a number of other issues. Four particular issues may be distinguished.

The first is the theological issue, whether it is appropriate for a priest to engage in secular occupations in this way, and whether it is consistent with the promises he has made at his ordination to 'be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh'. (Ordering of Priests, *Book of Common Prayer*.) Reference is made to the way many ministers of the church in apostolic times and in the early centuries earned their living in

secular occupations. There is a distinction here, however, that is frequently not recognised. These ministers saw themselves primarily as ministers, in that their major decisions about where to live and what occupation to follow were determined by their role as ministers, and their secular occupations were a matter of necessity or convenience, the means of earning their livelihood. On the other hand it is anticipated in the case of the auxiliary pastoral ministry that for many ministers decisions about where they will live will be determined largely by their secular career. For example, concern has been expressed about the implication for a man's ministry of a decision by his employer to ask him to move to another part of the country.

This represents a major change in the professional commitment of clergy. In the case of all clergy it is recognised that the need to provide for his family may be a constraint on where a man carries out his ministry, and this may include a suitable environment to bring up children and the provision of suitable schooling. But these are constraints on his freedom of decision, not primary factors. When the demands of a secular career become the primary factor in such decisions, there has been a major change of principle. On the whole, however, there would seem to be general acceptance of the idea that clergy may earn their living in secular occupations. Resolution 89 of the 1958 Lambeth Conference is frequently quoted:

'The Conference considers that, while the fully-trained and full-time priesthood is essential to the continuing life of the Church, there is no theological principle which forbids a suitable man from being ordained priest while continuing in his lay occupation.'

The second issue debated concerns the standards to be required of men who are to be selected and trained for ordination to this ministry. This was the main concern of the working party which reported in 1968, and the Bishops' Regulations published in 1970 were designed to deal with this issue. The matter has been raised again by the proposals for the development of a local supplementary ministry from the Stepney-Woolwich working party, and discussion of it formed a considerable part of the report of the most recent ACCM working-party. There is concern that any lowering of standards for the ordained ministry, at a time when other professions are increasingly demanding higher standards, would affect the quality and standing of the ordained ministry as a whole. This concern has been criticised on the grounds that it represents an unchristian concern with the status of the ministry as a profession vis-a-vis other professions. There is however a valid reason for this concern, in that it is essential to the performance of the church's work that it maintains public confidence in the ability and competence of clergy to deal with the issues people look to them to deal with.

A third issue arises out of the distinctive character of this ministry and its implications for the internal organisation of the church. Ques-

tions have been raised about the capacity of men to give adequate time to this work in view of their other commitments, about the fact they may be required to move by their employment, and the problems this might cause, and so on.

A fourth issue concerns what has been called the principle of congruity, that the character of a priest's employment should be, and should be felt to be by those to whom he ministers, in keeping with his role as a priest. The issues are concerned with the relationship between his role as a priest and other roles which he carries out.

One further point concerns the reasons for the development of the auxiliary pastoral ministry. The ACCM working party received replies to a number of questions from 39 of the 43 English dioceses, and on the basis of these replies it concluded that it was introduced 'largely for reasons of expediency: a shortage of clergy and the difficulty of paying full-time clergy in an inflationary period' (p. 7). Some of its advocates would put forward quite different reasons for the auxiliary ministry, for example, that it provides new opportunities for taking the ministry of the church into the secular world or that it represents a return to a New Testament form of ministry. While people may advocate it for different reasons, it seems realistic to conclude that its growth is largely due to the practical problems the report refers to.

### *The Supplementary Ministry*

WHILE the auxiliary pastoral ministry now has ten years' experience behind it, the supplementary ministry is still at the stage of a single pilot scheme, in which four men have completed three and a half years of a five year training scheme and have now been deacons for about six months. The report of the working party, chaired by the Bishops of Stepney and Woolwich, *Local Ministry in Urban and Industrial Areas*, and the book *Partners and Ministers*, describe the aims and characteristics of the scheme. A considerable amount of material appears in both, which is not surprising since the author of *Partners and Ministers* who is engaged in the pilot scheme served on the working party.

The report *Local Ministry* makes it clear that in its aims and intentions the supplementary ministry is a much more radical conception than the auxiliary pastoral ministry. At present, however, the work of the four men in the pilot scheme is very similar to that of men in the auxiliary pastoral ministry, and they are being trained and working under the regulations for the auxiliary pastoral ministry. Much of what is said in the second half of this paper applies to both.

The driving force behind the development of the supplementary ministry has been the concern about the general estrangement of working-class people in large cities from the churches. The report

sees this as a result of 'the failure to produce indigenous leadership in churches in the great working-class areas' (p. 5). In trying to understand this failure the working party concluded that it is a result of cultural assumptions about the nature of leadership in our society. The upper and middle classes, who establish the cultural assumptions which dominate in the institutions of our society, make assumptions about leadership which embody academic standards and so devalue the leadership abilities of working class people. They argue that 'there is indigenous leadership with intelligence and ability which cannot be easily measured by academic yardsticks' (p. 7), and that the churches have been seduced into adopting upper and middle class assumptions about leadership. The ordination of local men with these leadership qualities to the supplementary ministry is seen as a way of grappling with this problem.

The supplementary ministry is therefore designed to meet a particular situation, and it can be defined in two ways:

- (a) the type of *areas* to which it applies—urban, industrial areas, by which it means working-class areas
- (b) the type of *men who might be candidates* for this ministry—working-class men who have lived locally for a number of years.

The report asks the question: what would such ministers do? and continues

'This is a question first about what the local church should be doing. It is possible to draw up an organisation chart of tasks which a church in an urban working-class community should be undertaking, and then to see whose name should be written against each task as Resource Person. For some of these, depending on those available, it would be appropriate to have someone who was ordained, for others, not' (pp. 10, 11).

The report then goes on to give a list of about forty different activities which might be included in such an organisation chart. These range from worship, house churches, Bible studies and church organisations for different age groups to caring for those in need, such as drug addicts or discharged prisoners, and participation in local organisations such as tenants' associations and the borough council.

It does not however give any indication of the basis on which one decides which activities are to be undertaken by the supplementary minister, and which are to be undertaken by the layman. The rest of the report suggests that this omission was not accidental. The working party did not have any clear conception of differences in role between the supplementary minister and the layman in relation to these activities.

Their view of ordination is not related to the functions that a person fulfills, but rather to his gifts. They argue:

'If God-given gifts of leadership are emerging in the local church, or among Christians in their work situation, who are we to withhold ordination? Compare St. Peter: "Is anyone prepared to withhold the water for

baptism from these persons who have received the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 10)' (p. 14).

Central to their argument is the belief that the recognition of the capacity for leadership among working class people through the ordination of some of them would encourage others to accept responsibility and take initiative in their locality. This would be the basis of the development of local churches which were firmly rooted in their own localities and could take responsibility for the mission of the Church in these areas.

Underlying this argument is a strong sense that, because the leadership capacities of working-class people have been devalued as a result of their lack of academic standards, many working-class people have lost confidence in the abilities they have. So Ted Roberts writes in *Partners and Ministers*:

'One of the basic arguments for an indigenous ministry rests upon the need to convince working-class Christians that they are trusted and respected. People who have grown used to the idea that they are the ones to be led, rather than the leaders, need to be convinced of their value' (p. 58).

The task of the supplementary minister, as proposed in the report, may be described as *to provide a model of Christian service, both in the church and in the local neighbourhood as a whole, which lay men and women in the locality follow*. The test of the success of the scheme will be whether or not other local people follow their lead, engaging in similar activities, so that strong locally-based churches develop in their areas. If this does not happen, the scheme will have failed in its aims.

The supplementary ministry, as the working party conceive of it, differs radically from the current shape of the ministry in three aspects. Theologically it lessens 'the rigid distinction of ordained and not ordained', and emphasises that 'every Christian is in the ministry' (p. 9). Secondly, while recognising that 'many laymen want to keep the clergy special, dignified and different' it seeks to change those aspects of the social role of clergy that make them 'a class apart' (pp. 13, 14). Thirdly, from the ecclesiastical point of view, the supplementary ministry would involve organisational changes in the Church of England. *Partners and Ministers* (pp. 18-20) describes six features in the pilot scheme which distinguish it from the normal pattern.

At present, however, the work of the four men is similar to that of other clergy in the auxiliary pastoral ministry. They share in the pastoral work of the parish, in the conduct of worship and preaching, in the leadership of discussion groups, in work relating to the occasional offices, such as the preparation of parents for the baptism of their children, and in the pastoral work that arises from people calling at their homes or telephoning them. Within the limits of the time they have available it is very similar to the work of a full-time assistant

curate. As deacons they are being trained by the vicar just as a full-time curate is trained.

Because they are still engaged in their five year training scheme they are committed to a weekly seminar and a programme of private study and reading. This means that at present they have very little time for involvement in other organisations of the neighbourhood (none of them works in the immediate neighbourhood of the parish) and this aspect of the supplementary ministry has not yet been developed. It is not yet clear how the need to withdraw from these organisations for the five years of the training scheme will affect their future involvement in them. In the discussion two of the men said they were under considerable pressure because of the competing demands on their time, and there must be considerable uncertainty whether, in addition to their paid employment and a share of the pastoral work of the parish, they will have the time to be more than marginally involved in other local organisations. The similarity of their work to that of other clergy in the auxiliary pastoral ministry may prove to be a more permanent feature than is at present intended.

The proposals in the report *Local Ministry* can therefore be seen to have two distinct elements:

- (a) an attempt to grapple with the failure of churches in inner-city areas by training and ordaining local men with Christian leadership qualities. This involves changing some commonly-held assumptions about leadership, establishing different academic standards and developing new forms of training
- (b) an attempt to change the concept of ordination and the function of the clergy in relation to these men. This involves a minimising of the differences in function between clergy and laity, the difference being found in their capacity to provide leadership.

### *The Problem of Role Confusion*

DISCUSSION with the four clergy in the supplementary ministry scheme indicated that after only a few months as deacons they were being widely identified as clergy in the neighbourhood. Although they seldom wear clerical collars or other indications that they are clergy, a lot of people whom they do not know greet them in the street. People look to them for the kind of help and support in times of stress that people often look to the clergy for, and call at their homes with the kinds of requests that often come to the vicarage door. The speed with which they have become known is probably partly due to the publicity given to the scheme in the press and on television. What is clear is that people are seeing them as clergy and treating them as such.

There are also indications of some uncertainty about their role. One of them had discussed his ordination with his manager, and in the

course of the discussion the manager said with some emphasis 'When you are here, you are an engineer.' The emphatic way he spoke suggested he was afraid that there might be some confusion about roles, and wanted to make clear the role in which the man came to work in the firm so as to establish his own authority in the work situation.

There was an instance of confusion about roles in another situation which took place a few months after the four supplementary ministers had been made deacon. One of them was told that a former friend of his had been admitted to a local hospital as a psychiatric patient. They had been friends some years previously through shared sporting interests, but had not been in touch in the last few years as the friend had moved to another part of London several miles away. (The man in hospital was also a distant relative of one of the other deacons.)

He thought it might be useful if he visited him while he was in hospital, and did so one Sunday. The visit proved a difficult one, and he was not sure if it had been of any value. A little later the other minister who was a distant relative received a letter from the man's wife saying that the visit had been no help, asking him to tell his colleague not to visit again and indicating some dissatisfaction that he had not asked her before visiting her husband, as other friends and members of the family had always asked her first. The minister who had made the visit wrote back apologising for the fact that he had not contacted her first.

In making his visit he wore his clerical collar and went at a time outside normal visiting hours, making use of the freedom clergy are given in visiting hospital patients. He went to see him in his role as a minister. However he did not go to see the man because he was a parishioner or a member of the congregation, but because he was an old friend. The personal friendship was seen as a way of helping him to carry out his pastoral work as a minister. This is something that often happens in the work of the ministry, as well as in other occupations.

The reason why the wife wrote to the other deacon, and not to him, about his visit is not clear. It may have been that she found it difficult to complain to him directly, or it may have reflected confusion about his role in visiting. By commenting that other friends asked her before going to see her husband she treated him in his role as a friend rather than as a minister, and in his letter apologising he replied to her in that role. In a difficult and embarrassing situation she seemed confused about his role, and by replying the way he did he changed his role, which suggests that he had become caught up in the confusion.

Another indication of the difficulty the clergy were experiencing came in the report of two of them that they were under some pressure because of the way friends and neighbours were calling on them. These visits were about pastoral matters (*e.g.* from a woman whose husband had left her and who was drinking heavily), and tended to go

on for a long time. The clergy were finding that these visits were taking up time they should have been spending on their study programme or on preparation for the following Sunday's services. Discussion of this problem indicated that they did not have a clear enough sense of their role as a minister as a working role to be able to say at an appropriate time that they had other work to do and end the conversation. Their relationships with these people in their role as neighbours undermined their sense of their role as ministers working with parishioners.

It is not unusual for clergy who have recently been ordained to experience some difficulty in situations like these. Where the pastoral ministry is their full-time occupation, they are usually able to grasp hold of this role and work out how to act in it fairly quickly. The importance of the role in terms of the amount of their time it occupies, the way it determines their life-style and the fact that people are constantly relating to them in this role, means that they are able to develop a strong inner sense of the role, so that in a stressful or confusing situation they are less likely to be inconsistent and step 'out of role'. Auxiliary and supplementary ministers, for whom this is a part-time occupation involving much less time than their paid employment, do not have this kind of support, and therefore it is more difficult for them to internalise this role. The part-time nature of their work means that at times other people are likely to be confused about their role, and because they do not have this support they are more liable to be caught up in the confusion.

This issue becomes important because of the very close relationship between the person and the role in the case of the clergy. In most occupations it is usually fairly easy to distinguish whether a person is speaking or acting in his occupational role (*e.g.* as an employee) or in a private capacity, and people are able to respond to what he does accordingly. This is not however true of clergy. A familiar example of this is the fairly common experience of clergy when relaxing in a collar and tie at some social occasion away from the parish. He gets into conversation with somebody he does not know and then, when it emerges in the course of conversation that he is a clergyman, finds that the other person is disturbed by this and gives a very clear impression that he feels he has been deceived, as though the conversation had been carried on under false pretences. It is clear that some people find difficulty in relating to clergy unless the person and the role can be treated as permanently tied together. Some clergy respond to this by wearing a clerical collar the whole time, so that anyone calling at the Vicarage on the Vicar's day off may find him digging the garden in his collar.

The strong feelings people have about clergy are connected with the role of religion in society. The religious institutions of a society provide people with the opportunity to become dependent, to feel that

they are being cared for and that the problems that threaten to overwhelm them are under the control of forces more powerful than themselves. In this dependent state they can recuperate and regain their strength so that they are better able to cope with the stresses involved in life in the secular world. For this reason it is at times of great stress, such as serious illness and bereavement, that many people who at other times have little contact with the churches look to them for help, while regular worshippers look to them for increased support. The clergy play an important part in providing people with the security, and the sense of being cared for, which enable them to become dependent, and to gain in this dependent state new strength to grapple with their situation. The strength of people's feelings about clergy reflects the intensity of the anxieties the churches are required to deal with.

Clergy become the focus of these feelings because of their role as the representatives of the major religious institution in our society. The feelings are the result of their role as clergy, rather than their individual personalities and attitudes, which are very varied. Some clergy resent being the focus of these feelings and the behaviour which arises out of them, but nevertheless find themselves unable to avoid them. Although people's feelings about clergy are the result of their role as clergy, their feelings are attached not to the role but to particular people they know or meet who occupy that role. The feelings someone has about a priest, if they are strong, cannot be 'switched off' because he now wants to act in a private capacity rather than in his role as a priest. They continue to pervade the relationship and the behaviour within it.

The importance of this issue arises from the fact that when people are dealing with clergy they are frequently in a dependent state. Often they are under some kind of particular stress, like the woman whose husband was a psychiatric patient in hospital. To cope with the anxieties involved, they require a situation in which they feel secure. Only in such a situation can they become dependent and so gain new strength to cope with the stress they are experiencing. Uncertainty or confusion undermines this process. They are not in a state to be able to cope with it. For example, if they feel the priest they are dealing with is in some way not a proper priest they are likely to be left feeling insecure and unsupported.

It is therefore integral to the role of the priest that he is a priest all the time. There is no such thing as a part-time priest. This does not mean that he does not need time for his other roles, as a husband and a father, for example, and for rest and relaxation, but it does imply that whenever people relate to him they are always able to relate to him as a priest. He is always ready to accept and work with the feelings people have about him because he is a priest. This indicates that it is very important for auxiliary clergy to establish their role as clergy very clearly in the neighbourhood where they live. One obvious way

is for them to wear clerical collars consistently when going around the neighbourhood (and cassocks as well, if this is in keeping with the tradition of the parish). It is clearly an advantage if they can be involved in the distinctive functions of clergy which bring them into contact with people in the neighbourhood generally, such as baptisms, weddings and funerals, and not only those which only bring them into touch with members of the congregation and those closely associated with it. It also suggests that auxiliary ministers, more than other clergy, need a very clear inner sense of their role, because they are more exposed to possible confusion about this than other clergy. Since they get less support for this than other clergy, opportunities to strengthen this, such as taking part in clergy chapter meetings, become more significant.

### *The Auxiliary Minister in the Secular Organisation*

IN addition to their work in the church, auxiliary and supplementary ministers are involved in the secular organisations of society. The employment from which they derive their income makes this inevitable. In the case of supplementary ministers this involvement is regarded as integral to their ministry. Their task is to give Christian leadership and provide a model of Christian action which lay men and women can follow. This includes both their paid employment and their work in the voluntary organisations of the neighbourhood. There are also the auxiliary ministers referred to in *The Place of Auxiliary Ministry* (p. 6), who see their secular employment as their sphere of ministry, and regard such involvement as integral to their ministry.

The discussions with the four supplementary ministers indicated the way their colleagues at work related to them now that they are clergy. This showed that they had expectations that as clergy they were responsible for looking after people in trouble. Two of them described incidents in which workmates made comments to them implying that they should take some action to care for people who seemed to need help. Christian lay men and women in their works were now looking to them to give a lead, particularly when they wished to act as a group of Christians. One said that the leaders of such a group in his firm were repeatedly checking back to get his approval for what they had planned, even though the circumstances of his work made it impossible for him to be involved regularly in what they were doing. This sense of dependence was more marked than they had anticipated. One of them said that he had seen himself as one of a group of Christians working for the same firm, but that the others were much more conscious that he was ordained and they were laity.

Because the role of the churches in society is concerned with providing people with opportunities to gain new strength through a temporary

period of dependence, the presence of clergy in a situation tends to encourage people to become dependent. Behaviour of the kind described might have been predicted. It underlines the point that to ordain a man changes his relationship with those he works with because it means he takes up a new role which has a pervasive influence on the way people treat him. Whether or not he wishes to act in his role as priest at that moment, he may well find himself committed to it by other people's actions.

In the report outlining the proposed role of supplementary ministers there is little recognition of the way in which these factors place them in a different situation from that of lay men and women. As ministers they will have opportunities the laity do not have. They will also face problems that the laity do not have to face. By suggesting that supplementary ministers will give an example of Christian action in the secular organisations of society that lay men and women can follow, the report diminishes the difference in function between clergy and laity. Historically the laity have not been expected to follow the example of the clergy in the sense of doing the same things as clergy do. Rather the emphasis has been that every man serves Christ in his own vocation and occupation. Clergy are to be 'examples and patterns to the flock of Christ' in terms of their obedience to Christ's doctrine, not in terms of the functions they carry out.

One of the features of the past twenty years has been the attention paid to the role of the layman, dissociating the word 'lay' from its connotation of 'amateur'. There has been a renewed emphasis on the role of the laity in the secular institutions of society. This emphasis can be seen as an attempt to assert the difference between the behaviour appropriate to the sphere of worship and the churches, and that appropriate in the secular world. The dependent state which is appropriate to worship should not pervade the whole life of the layman. In the secular sphere he has to act on his own authority and responsibility. If the churches are to carry out their task, they must not only provide a secure environment in which people can be dependent and gain new strength, but also enable them to move out of this dependent state and into one appropriate to their secular responsibilities.

To place emphasis on the involvement of clergy in secular organisations undermines this. Where clergy are involved, the laity tend to be pushed back into a dependent role and their authority is undermined. Where clergy place a special emphasis on the contribution their ordination makes to their secular work (as is reported in *The Place of Auxiliary Ministry* (p. 7)), they seriously undermine the position of the laity. The problem is likely to be particularly evident in voluntary organisations. Where people are being paid for their work, the financial relationship helps them to focus on the task of the organisation and the work for which they are being paid. Voluntary organisations offer other satisfactions to those who work for them, and these are

largely of an emotional kind. As a result people are generally less able to cope with stress in voluntary organisations than in paid employment, and in the face of stress are more likely to react by using the organisations to meet their own needs. It is easy for a situation to arise in which the satisfaction people get from a voluntary organisation is the emotional satisfaction they get from contact with clergy in it. If they meet stressful situations by seeking to preserve or increase this, the work of the organisation is hindered.

A parallel can be seen between this and the situation in a parish in which some people use their personal friendship with clergy as a means of avoiding worship. To take part in worship arouses in them disturbing and painful feelings which in the normal way are buried. Social contact with a minister can be satisfying in meeting their need to be dependent without causing them to face up to their negative feelings about some aspects of dependence. It meets a temporary need but fails to grapple with the fundamental issues. A pastoral relationship of this kind requires considerable care and skill. The local church provides a context in which this relationship can be worked with. In a secular organisation with another task it can only be done by distracting attention from the task for which the organisation was set up.

This leads to the conclusion that auxiliary and supplementary ministers are most likely to be effective if they focus on their pastoral role in the context of the local church. Their involvement in other local organisations is likely to have unfortunate side effects, weakening the authority of the Christian laity in them and tending to encourage a dependent relationship that may hinder their work. There are of course local bodies on which it is appropriate for the clergy to represent the churches in a formal capacity. There are also points of breakdown, or gaps in the provisions for social need, where local clergy can take the initiative in promoting action. Interventions of this kind, however, are best regarded as the exception rather than the rule.

As far as their paid employment is concerned, it is in many ways an advantage if this is located away from the immediate environment of the parish. This means that the people they work with in this capacity are a different group of people from those they work with as a minister. In this way the problems and disadvantages caused by role confusion are likely to be minimised.

### *Future Prospects*

AS the previous sections have indicated, men in the auxiliary and supplementary ministries are exposed to powerful pressures without some of the supports enjoyed by their colleagues in the full-time parochial ministry. It is therefore necessary to try to anticipate

some of the probable long-term consequences.

It seems probable that some of them, particularly those actively involved in secular organisations, will resolve the role confusion they experience by taking less and less active part in the work of the ministry. Their role as a priest will become increasingly marginal. There is already evidence of this happening to some auxiliary ministers. Their main energies are going into their work in secular organisations, and while this is frequently very valuable work it is no different from the work of Christian laymen. Their ministry is generally on an individual basis, largely unrelated to the life of the churches.

Other auxiliary ministers are likely to resolve the role confusion in the opposite way. Their role as ministers will become increasingly significant to them until they reach a point at which they wish to make the parochial ministry their full-time work. The Bishops' Regulations have anticipated that this will happen by providing that such men will be required to go through a further process of selection, and, if necessary, training, before becoming incumbents.

Other auxiliary ministers can be expected to work out a *modus vivendi*, separating out their roles sufficiently to make their position viable. Their ability to do this will depend on their own understanding of the differences in the roles they are carrying out and their capacity to vary their behaviour appropriately, as well as on the circumstances in which they exercise their ministry.

This however may give rise to a problem which has been foreseen but whose nature is not generally understood. As an auxiliary minister serves in a church over a number of years the feelings people have about their local priest will increasingly be focussed on him. If he is there over a period of ten to fifteen years in which there are two or three changes in incumbent there is likely to be increasing feeling that he is the parish priest. People will feel that 'He is more like the real vicar of the parish than the actual vicar' and that 'It is really *his* church.' A new vicar coming into such a situation will feel that his position is undermined. While he is given a vicar's responsibility for the church, at times he feels he is being treated like a curate who only stays in a parish for a few years.

To work together in such situations will require not only good personal relationships between the two clergy concerned, of the kind always required between colleagues in a team, but also a clear understanding of what is being done to them by the way people are treating them. Without such an understanding, a willingness to work together will not by itself be sufficient. In particular it will demand of the auxiliary minister that, while accepting the feelings people have about him because he is a priest, he deflects the feelings and behaviour focussed on him as if he were the parish priest, and refuses to respond in a way appropriate to that role although people at times put him under pressure to do so.

### *Conclusion*

THE Church of England is at present facing a serious problem in maintaining its ministry throughout the country, in terms of the number of clergy engaged in pastoral work and the finance available to pay them. This problem is a reflection of a more serious underlying issue, an increasing loss of confidence in the churches. The auxiliary ministry provides an important way of grappling with the immediate problem of maintaining the church's ministry. It is essential that the church has the integrity to acknowledge that this is the real reason why the auxiliary ministry has developed over the past ten years. The temptation is to conceal this by claiming that its development has been based on theological arguments. While people's theological convictions may lead them to support its development, it is very doubtful whether the theological ideas alone would have been decisive if there had not been urgent practical reasons as well.

Auxiliary ministers will make the greatest contribution if they focus on the distinctive role of clergy, *i.e.* worship and pastoral care. They also need to take every opportunity to make clear their role as clergy in the parish, in order to minimise confusion about their role which will hinder their work.

The strength of the report on the proposed supplementary ministry scheme is the way it faces up to the weakness of the churches in inner-city areas and makes a serious attempt to grapple with it, at a time when the relative strength of the churches in middle-class areas often enables them to evade or ignore it. Its weakness is that it does not take seriously the effect that ordination has on a man's relationship with his friends and neighbours, and the limitations this imposes on his capacity to provide a model of the kind they envisage. The report conflates two issues, the ordaining of local men who do not fit into the commonly accepted pattern of clergy, and the attempt to change the function of the clergy. This makes it difficult to disentangle the real contribution that could be made by such men to the work of the churches in inner-city areas from the problems that are likely to be caused if their role as clergy is not clearly distinguished from that of the laity.

At present the supplementary ministry is limited to a pilot scheme involving one parish and four men. It is unlikely that in the near future more than a small number of inner-city parishes would be able to produce a group of suitable men prepared to be trained and ordained for this work. The contribution of the scheme, while it may be important in the long run, will be limited in the near future. It is possible that ten or fifteen parishes in different cities around the country might be found in the next few years. If the Church of England is going to take the scheme seriously, it will need to set up a small group of people, who are themselves not involved in it, who will work with

those who are involved in monitoring its progress in these parishes. It will need to come to a conclusion about the key question: does the supplementary ministry support the development of strong locally-rooted churches in working class areas or not?