



RENEWING
Ministry

Getting Started

So you are a Mission and Ministry Area!
What do you do now?

REEM

Diocese
of Derby



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

You have spent the last year prayerfully considering the community you serve. Some parishes quickly discovered the shape of their MMA, for others it took much longer and the process was difficult. Some will feel excited at the prospect, others will feel anxious, and probably most will still be wondering quite what it is all going to mean in practice. The notes that follow will give you some information about MMAs and will take you through some of the key areas that need to be considered as your MMA gets underway.

There are a variety of MMAs:

- single parish MMAs
- multi-parish MMAs
- Deanery MMAs
- Non-contiguous MMAs

If you are a single parish MMA, or a Team Ministry or United Benefice where no other parishes are joining, then it would be tempting to carry on life as normal, but please note that you are part of a Diocese that is in a time of change and real opportunity, and please use the notes that follow as a chance for reviewing how you are delivering mission and ministry in your area. All other MMAs will involve a process of bringing churches together into a new working unit.

Key Values

At the outset it is worth reminding ourselves of the key values of Renewing Ministry outlined in the original report and which can be summarised in the following 'MCC':

Mission

We need to hold before us the 5 marks of mission ensuring that the ministry we offer has a mission outcome as we engage with the community that our MMA serves.

Collaboration

Ministry in MMAs will be delivered by teams of people working together sharing their gifts and abilities.

Care

The churches in the ministry will be working with a commitment to care for one another and support one another and work together to care for those in the communities they serve.

At every stage of the development of the MMA it is important to remind ourselves that we have a need and opportunity to offer ministry in new ways following the principles in this 'MCC'.

Developing a Ministry Team

There needs to be some sense of being together for those who deliver ministry in the MMA. Such a group is likely to include the stipendiary and non-stipendiary clergy, Readers, and any other stipendiary or non-stipendiary lay workers. There are no rules about this as the system is designed to be flexible so as to suit local needs. The Area Vicar (see *The Role of the Area Vicar* Toolkit Paper, especially 2ii) will be the convener of this group.

An Opening Meeting

The Ministry Team arranges a meeting where the churches can come together. This could either be an open meeting for all, or it may be for those in leadership positions. This may well be determined by the size of your MMA. Again, the options are open and you will know what is right for you.

Each church may give a short presentation about its life and ministry, to help others get to know it. Once this has happened, then you might like to try the following activity, which is designed to open an honest sharing of thoughts and feelings about how people are feeling about the emergence of the new MMA. Someone also needs to note the answers to questions 3 and 4, as this will help guide the development of mutual care and support within the MMA.

Ask the following questions:

1. *What do we think our church will gain by being part of this MMA?*
2. *What do we think our church will lose by being part of this MMA?*
3. *What does our church bring to this MMA?*
4. *What does our church need from this MMA?*

These are simply foundational questions and you may well have others that would suit well in this situation and will provide some material for the public launch of the MMA.

A temporary Steering Group

In time a MMA Council will need to be formed, but you may find it helpful to set up a Steering Group to help plan a structure for the Council that is suitable for the vision of the MMA. This Steering Group is likely to be the Ministry Team plus some lay people who have gifts appropriate for this initial job. The tasks of this Steering Group will be to

- facilitate a process for the member churches to discover an overall vision statement for the MMA (see below)
- recommend a structure for a MMA Council that will serve the vision
- plan for the public launch of the MMA

MMA Council

The MMA Council will be the umbrella group that will aid the coordination of the churches within the MMA and help the member churches to work with an agreed vision. The PCC of each church may wish to nominate a representative(s) from their church for the MMA Council, but it must be emphasised that such people are those who have the enthusiasm and skills to facilitate the life and ministry of the MMA. They do not need to be members of PCCs, but will need to report to PCCs. It needs to be made clear that this is not a representative committee with voting rights; it is a group of people drawn from the member churches whose task is to listen to God and one another to help form the life and structure appropriate for the MMA. We need to resist these councils becoming another layer of bureaucracy. Further guidelines for MMA Councils will be produced as we go along.

Vision Statement

Many churches have their own vision statements, and for those that don't now is a good opportunity to develop one. At an early stage it is important for the various vision statements to be gathered together, listened to and understood. All the partner churches, including those with whom there is ecumenical partnership, should contribute to this exercise. The MMA Council will then need to consider these vision statements carefully and begin the task of working out some kind of shared MMA Vision Statement. This is a very important activity and involves listening carefully to each other and to God, as a process of discerning his will for how he wants the churches of this group to focus their ministry and mission. Such a process should not be hurried and may take up to six months. It is worth giving time to this, and the process will enable churches to really listen well to each other and their communities, and give opportunity to pray together and listen to God for how he wants this MMA to offer its ministry to the community.

This vision statement will be the creative influence of the MMA and will shape what kind of Council is required with what kind of membership etc. The Ministry Team will also want to use this Vision Statement to give guidance to how local ministry is offered and deployed, as well as identifying what other ministries need to be grown. Engaging with the community is a vital ingredient in this process.

A Service to launch the MMA

The churches in a MMA can start working together now, but there will be value in having a high-profile united service that celebrates the beginning of the life of the MMA. Such a service could happen at any time, but there would be some advantage in waiting until important features of the MMA are in place. An inaugural service is the opportunity to recognise that:

- the Area Vicar is appointed
- a Ministry Team is established
- a commonly owned vision statement is identified
- the membership and role of the Mission Council is becoming clear

An autumn date may be the most suitable for this, but you will judge your own situation best. The service will be the public launch of the MMA. Probably most will choose to hold this in one of the churches, but remember MMAs are mission-focussed and there may somewhere else in the MMA which might suit best. The Worship Advisory Group is preparing a suggested form of service that is part of this pack. The inaugural service could include the following:

- **music** that reflects the style of all the churches, which means in some cases there will be a real variety of style.
- **creative storytelling:** each church to find a way to briefly tell its story – how it started, key features of its life, important moments in its history, its vision statement, how God has led them etc. Each church is invited to bring a symbol of its life to place on the altar.

- **confession:** if it felt appropriate, each church may like to offer a confession prayer (see 'history' section below)
- **intercessions:** focussed on the needs of the local community, and prayers that God will use the MMA to be a means of bringing his life and healing to the places of need in the community.
- **commissioning:** normally it will be the Rural Dean who will commission the Area Vicar at this service. S/he may also be invited to pray for God's blessing on the ministry team
- **sermon:** invited preacher, or rural dean, or why not an imaginative co-operative presentation by all the preachers in the MMA!

Some MMAs have a significant ecumenical element. Whether this is the case or not, representatives of partner churches in the Area involved should be invited and preferably given a role in the service, especially our Methodist Covenant partners. Above all, the occasion needs to be a celebration. The service signals the effective beginning of the MMA, even if some of the finer details have still not fallen into place.

History

Within every church's history there are events that can be remembered and celebrated, and others that are best forgotten! However, it is not always easy to forget, and wounded history has a habit of not only being remembered, but also adversely affecting the church's life and witness. Starting a new venture such as joining a MMA is an opportunity consciously to let go of old wounds and offering them to God. This will be especially important if part of that wounded history is to do with relationship to the community the MMA is serving, or relationship between the member churches of the MMA. If this is the case, then some act of acknowledgement, confession and healing could form part of the inaugural service of the MMA.

Ministry and Mission

At the earliest stage the ministry team and the MMA council need to give careful thought and prayer to the ministry needs of the MMA. We are working towards 2008 and need to be asking the question, 'What ministers do we need to fulfil the mission to which God has called us in this community'. You have already engaged in this exercise to a certain extent, and now is the time to take this further. The instinctive way is to say 'what have we got, so what can we manage?' However, the way of faith asks the two questions: 1) To what is God calling us? 2) What do we need to fulfil this calling? So, on this basis, the exploration is a three-stage one:

1. The Shape of the Mission:

How do we feel God is calling the churches of this MMA to share in mission to this community? The Council of Social Responsibility provided a Toolkit Paper ('Local Social Audit: Getting to know your area') and are working on a further resource to help with this exercise of listening to our community. Listen to your community and listen to God and discern how he is leading you. Once you have clarity about this, you then ask:

2. Deployment of Existing Ministries

There will be a series of questions to address how the various ministries are deployed in the MMA. For example:

- How do we most effectively share ministry with member churches?
- What opportunities are there for ecumenical sharing, especially through the Anglican-Methodist Covenant?
- How do we best use the core stipendiary ministry we have (and this will need to take into account any clergy reductions from your MMA)?
- How do we best use the current available non-stipendiary ministers, Readers, retired clergy etc.?
- How do we best use the other volunteers with their particular ministries?

It is likely that there will still be some gaps after this exercise, so the next questions are:

3) Ministries required

- What ministries do we need to grow to fulfil the vision for mission and ministry in our Area
- What opportunities are there to develop shared ministries with member churches and ecumenical partners?

The answer to these questions may include the need for some kind of paid ministry (eg. Administrator, Evangelist etc.), in which case there will need to be discussions about raising funds for this.

Training

The Renewing Ministry Project Officer along with colleagues in the Training and Development Team are working on a package of resources to respond to the many training needs that are inevitable in such a time of change as this. You will be kept informed of the training events and toolkit papers as they are published. Where you are aware of particular training needs that do not appear to be addressed, do contact the TDT team.

What About...?

a) Money

The financial workings of MMAs will begin in January 2008, but shadow figures will be provided for 2006 and 2007, so you will get an idea of how the new system will work and can begin to budget accordingly.

b) PCCs and parish boundaries

PCCs continue to meet and are the legal body for discussing parochial matters. The opening years of a MMA need to be free of legal constraints so that there is plenty of opportunity to learn from experience, so MMA structures are deliberately not legal ones in this settling in period. There will come a time when it will be appropriate to regularise them, and at that stage parishes may wish to consider the nature of their PCCs. Parish boundaries continue to be legal boundaries, but it is expected that within a MMA these will not be like high walls and it is likely there will be a sharing of ministry across these boundaries. Again, in time a MMA may wish to review the boundaries.

c) Deaneries

If your MMA is one which includes parishes from two Deaneries, then there will be discussion at the Archdeaconry Pastoral Committee about where MMAs might most naturally lie. Any arrangement at this stage will be informal. Should situations arise where the Deanery Synod needs to take a vote, then your vote will be registered in the Deanery that you are currently part of, and this will be the case until Deanery boundaries are re-ordered.

d) The Timetable

There is no set timetable for getting MMAs started, but here is an example of what could happen:

Feb 05	Clergy attend Clergy Conference at Swanwick
Mar 05	Ministry Team of MMA meets and plans the first stages of the emerging life of the MMA
Mar 05/Apr 05	Steering group set up to formulate a plan for developing the MMA, including the MMA Council
Apr 05	beginning of training programme
Apr 05 onwards	Life of MMA gradually evolves.
Autumn 05	Service to Inaugurate MMA

God is with us

This is a time of real opportunity, to explore how we can offer ministry and mission in new ways. We serve a mission-minded God who is committed to equipping his church with the gifts and ministries that are needed to fulfil his call. Our task is to 'Find out what God is doing, and then join in' (Archbishop Rowan Williams).

Renewing Ministry Prayer

*Gracious Father
by your holy and life-giving Spirit
open our eyes to your vision
and strengthen our commitment to your service;
that the ministry of your Church may be renewed
and its mission be made more effective,
the glory of your Son
Jesus Christ
Amen.*