

**ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
DIOCESE OF NIAGARA
TASK FORCE ON COMPENSATION**

Report to: Kirk Boyd (FAC Committee)
David Bucsis (HR Committee)
Lynne Corfield (Synod Representative)
Gordon Ross (Compensation Committee)
Sharon White (Compensation Committee)
David Long (HR Director)
Bob McKinnell (Treasurer)
Debbie Young (Secretary)

Re: Lincoln Region Clericus discussion on compensation

Prepared by: Jonathan Marler

Date: April 26, 2006

Gordon Ross and I attended a meeting of the Lincoln Region Clericus on Tuesday, April 25, 2006, to discuss compensation issues. In addition to a number of honorary assistants, the following paid Clergy of Lincoln Region (61%) were present:

Name	Parish	Town
Ian Chadwick	St. Alban	Beamsville
Stuart Pike	St. Andrew	Grimsby
Dorothy Hewlett	St. George	Homer
Philip Ruch	St. John	Jordan
Robert Wright	St. Mark	Niagara-on-the-Lake
Michael Mondloch	Grace Church	St. Catharines
Valerie Kerr	St. George	St. Catharines
Robert Fead	St. George	St. Catharines
Alan Cook	St. James	St. Catharines
Robin Graves	Transfiguration	St. Catharines
Nissa Bassbaum	Transfiguration	St. Catharines

The following paid Clergy of Lincoln Region (39%) were absent:

Name	Parish	Town
Trevor Jones	St. Philip	Grimsby
Robert Brodie	Good Shepherd	St. Catharines
Keith Whittingham	St. Barnabas	St. Catharines
Bruce McPetrie	St. Colomba	St. Catharines
Gordon Kinkley	St. John	St. Catharines
Michael McKinley	St. Thomas	St. Catharines
Cathie Crawford-Browning	St. John	Thorold

I gave a short introduction and referred those present to the Synod Council mandate, as follows:

Mandate of the Task Force on Compensation

To: examine the process and the criteria whereby recommendations are made to Synod Council for increases to stipends and housing allowances;

To: consult with all the regions of the diocese to re-examine the way clergy and lay-workers are paid including, but not limited to, the length and structure of the salary scale and the negative impact on clergy living in rectories;

To: make regular reports to all the bodies they represent and present a report to Synod Council at its October 2006 meeting.

I informed the group that we had not established any priorities, other than those set out in the Synod Council mandate, and, while all compensation issues were open for discussion, we were currently focussing on:

- (1) the minimum salary scale,
- (2) the question of housing, housing allowances and rectories and
- (3) travelling allowances.

The following should be noted:

- (1) Of the 16 parishes in Lincoln only four have rectories. The rectors of the four parishes (St. Andrew-Grimsby, St. John-Jordan and St. Mark-Niagara-on-the-Lake) were at the meeting and only one (St. Thomas-St. Catharines) was absent. [I believe there are some unusual circumstances relating to the rectory at St. Thomas];
- (2) The group included one clergy couple;
- (3) The rectors of three of the 16 parishes are women, one of whom is part-time;
- (4) One of the two paid assistants is a woman;
- (5) Two of the three part-timers are women;
- (6) The anomalies of the part-time female rector and the part-time male assistant are explained, in part, by the fact that they are a clergy couple.

The topics discussed included: the minimum salary scale (including the larger parishes/better paid clergy phenomenon and matching skills with size of parish); the negative financial impact of living in a rectory; the negative effect of low salaries on pensions; the part-time issue; and gender inequality.

Minimum Salary Scale (MSS)

The first question asked was: what is the ratio of actual salaries to the minimum salary scale in Lincoln Region? The answer provided by me with (Gordon Ross' concurrence), excluding the three part-timers was:

96/99% - 4,

100/110% - 7;

111/120% - 2;

121/130% - 2;

140% - 1;

The mean is 109%;

The median is 105%.

Considerable discussion revolved around the question of whether the employer is the diocese or the parish, how clergy and parishes are matched and whether or not clergy in wealthier parishes should be paid more than clergy in poorer parishes. Mention was made of the Ottawa model, where clergy salaries are apparently fixed on the basis of the year of ordination. Gordon and I agreed that the Task Force should make inquiries with respect to the compensation practice in Ottawa, as well as in other dioceses and other denominations.

Some discussion took place with respect to the length of the minimum salary scale. There appeared to be overwhelming support for Niagara's long scale and an apprehension that, if the salary scale were to be truncated, it would simply become, in the case of poorer parishes, a salary cap. Opinions were expressed that the MSS was too low in the lower range, because it did not take into account the debt with which new ordinands are often faced, and too low in the upper range, because it did not adequately reflect the value of experience. One retiree observed that a low salary results in a low pension, that can be a pensioner's principal source of income for three or four decades. One rector raised the possibility of an MSS plus a performance bonus. This idea did not seem to find favour with many of those present. The issue of too many parishes and not enough parishioners was raised, but not pursued, after the comment that Bishop Spence had been heard to say that he did not wish to be remembered as the bishop who closed parishes. One rector observed that the Bishop appeared to be ordaining a disproportionately large number of clergy, having regard to the limited number of parishes available. Another rector reported that the Bishop had said that the days of full-time clergy were nearing an end [see more on this under the heading part-time clergy].

Housing/ Housing Allowances/Rectories

The subject of housing was the second most discussed area. I raised the question of whether or not the salary and the housing allowance should be combined and clergy given the option of renting rectories, where they exist, or obtaining alternative accommodation. This question did not receive much discussion, although one rector made the observation that he had impoverished himself and his family to the extent of \$1,000 per month over 18 years of living in rectories. If that estimate is correct, a reduction of net worth of \$216,000, at the salary levels currently experienced by clergy is an alarming statistic. There is no doubt that the housing/housing allowance/rectory question is one that must be central to the work of the Task Force and is currently being addressed by Sharon White and Kirk Boyd.

The effect of low salaries on pensions

Apart from the aforementioned observation, which might have been better described as a warning, there was little discussion on that issue. Nevertheless, it is one that requires close examination. Pensionable earnings are currently fixed at 160% of salary. I expect there is an inadequate understanding by the members of the Task Force of the impact of salaries on pensions and I am pleased that David Bucsis has undertaken to educate us on this important question.

Part-time Employees

This matter was the subject of perhaps the most impassioned debate. It was proposed by one rector, with whom the entire group appeared to agree, that the move towards part-time clergy should be resisted at all costs. This sentiment did not appear to arise out of self-interest, but a fear that the quality of ministry would suffer. There appeared to be a general concern that part-time employment will be used to acquire full-time service for reduced pay: in other words, a belief that the diocese will attempt to balance its budget on the backs of the clergy, which will have a negative impact on the quality of ministry. This concern has been exacerbated by a statement attributed to Bishop Spence, by one of the rectors present, that the days of full-time clergy are nearing an end. It should be noted that of the 18 paid clergy in Lincoln Region, only three are part-time and of those three, two are the clergy couple.

Gender Inequality

It was observed that there is the appearance of gender inequality in the diocese on two levels: first with respect to compensation levels in the sense of a failure to adhere to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value; and, secondly, in the failure to appoint women as rectors of the larger parishes. One female rector observed that there was nothing that could be done about the second concern, as long as the larger parishes were unwilling to accept women as their rectors. It goes without saying that an examination of gender equality must be one of the cornerstones of the Task Force's report and I am pleased that Kirk Boyd has undertaken to address this important issue.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the many concerns raised, I had the sense that there is no general dissatisfaction with the current compensation practices in the Niagara Diocese. Concerns appeared to be largely related to particular circumstances that can perhaps be best addressed on a case-by-case basis. For example: the issue of part-time employment appeared to arise from a fear of what the future holds, rather than a current epidemic; the example of the rector who has lost \$216,000 in net worth, by living in rectories for 18 years, can perhaps be addressed on an individual basis, rather than by a new policy on rectories generally; and the issue of matching clergy with parishes might be best addressed by consulting with clergy in poorer parishes, who find that they are working harder and being paid less than the clergy of equal experience in wealthier parishes, on an individual basis, rather than by implementing wholesale changes in a system that, despite its theoretical incongruities, appears, on the whole, to be working well.

It has, of course, occurred to me that in writing this report on our meeting with the Lincoln Region Clericus, I may be perceived to be laying the groundwork for the final report of the Task Force, without having received and digested the reports from the other five Clericus meetings and the reports to be prepared by Sharon White and Kirk Boyd on Housing/Housing Allowances and Rectories, by David Bucsis on Pensions and Benefits, by Kirk Boyd on Gender Equality and by Gordon Ross on Compensation in other Dioceses and Denominations. Please be assured that my mind is still open on all issues and that my draft report will reflect the research and opinions of the entire Task Force.

Jonathan Marler