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From the beginning of the church's life God has called persons, male and female to exercise leadership in the Christian Community. The purpose of that leadership in the language of the letter of Paul to the Ephesians has been "to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ", so that all may "live in love as Christ has loved us". We need also to remember that those who exercised this leadership in those days did not attend a seminary. Their training and development came from their Christian life lived in the local Christian congregation and their life experience as a Christian in a non-Christian environment.

Until recently, in the Diocese of Kootenay, this equipping has been carried out for the most part by full-time, seminary trained stipendiary priest. A variety of permutations and combination have been used to make this possible: one priest, one congregation; one priest, several congregations; Ecumenical shared ministries of one or more congregations with a seminary trained clergy person alternating between different denominations. Other styles have included one congregation, one priest and several retired priests volunteering their time; one congregation, one priest with paid lay staff support.

The weakness of this clerical model has been the inclination of those in the pew to see themselves as consumers of ministry and the ordained person as the minister, and clergy begin to see themselves in that light rather than one who is to equip others for ministry.

In more recent times to express the church's movement from the dangers of clericalism toward the rediscovery of the role of the laity in liturgy, lay persons are more and more exercising ministry in congregations as readers of scripture, leaders of prayer, communion assistants, and as lay ministers of word and Sacrament, to remind us as in worship, so in life all the baptized are called to be ministers of God's grace. A shift made clear by the Diocesan Goals proclaimed and Synod in 1991.

Many of the parishes in the Diocese today have lay persons, by the license of the Archbishop and under the supervision of the local priest, conducting services of morning and evening prayer, taking Holy Communion to the sick and shut-in, and conducting the liturgy of the word and communion from the reserved Sacrament in nursing homes and sometimes on a Sunday morning in the absence of the priest.

A weakness of this form of team ministry, stipendiary priest and lay people, is that the priest is still looked upon as the minister and the others as helpers, rather than as ministers in their own

right.

In the last twenty years another style of giving leadership to Baptismal ministry has developed. This style, called "Total or Mutual" ministry has been developed out of research into our early Christian roots.

When the Apostles visited local areas and began congregations, they, trusting in the Holy Spirit, encouraged the local growing community to identify those with particular gifts for leadership in the community and to raise up from within, priests, deacons, pastoral care persons, preachers, teachers, and administrators to enable the whole community to exercise their ministries as members of the body of Christ.

Based on the premise of the Christian Scriptures that every congregation has within it sufficient gifts to carry out its ministry, the contemporary Mutual Ministry model moves through the following steps.

The congregation first meets several times to explore what ministries are required in the church and in the community in which the church is located. Having identified the ministries it then meets to identify those members in the congregation with the gifts to carry out those ministries. Those identified are visited by the Wardens and Incumbent or Ministry Co-ordinator to see if the person chosen is ready to answer the call to the ministry for which they have been identified. Those who respond form a ministry support group and begin to train together for their area of ministry. Then, by their leadership together, the ministry of all the baptized can be enhanced. This training will include core material for all as well as additional training for special ministries including the ministry of locally nominated non-stipendiary deacons and priests.

Mutual ministry or Total ministry seems to work best in smaller congregations. It enables them to be outward looking and have pride in their ability to be an effective instrument in the service of their Lord without a full time seminary trained priest on site. Those who are keen on Total ministry would commend the same to larger congregations even those with full time clergy. The way of identifying ministries and persons for ministry may have to be varied somewhat in larger congregations.

A weakness of this style may be the struggle to make openings for new leadership and to provide a variety of leadership when communities are reasonably stable.

Which ever style of leadership is operating at present in the congregations of the diocese several things are clear. First, no one style is perfection. Each style has some weaknesses which need to be kept in mind. No one style is perfect for all situations. It seems clear that as we move out of one way of being the church into a future that emphasises Baptismal Ministry and the support of Baptismal Ministry, the name of the game is "Flexibility".

The 10th most important goal of the Diocese affirmed at Synod 1991 was "That by 1994 we will have the creative diversity to provide ministry in all communities."

Let us proclaim that diversity by adopting the following as policy for the diocese:

That Bishop and congregations be encouraged to develop a variety of leadership styles for the support and strengthening of baptismal ministry including clergy/lay, stipendiary/voluntary, seminary trained/locally trained and patterned after traditional, or Mutual/Total ministry forms or other experimental forms.

When a vacancy occurs there shall be consultation between the congregation(s) and the Bishop or those appointed by the Bishop as to the best way to provide leadership which will gather, train, encourage, and care for those engaged in Baptismal Ministry.

There shall be developed in consultation with the Bishop, a small training team, clergy and lay, to search out and/or develop resources and to provide opportunities for those called to give leadership and care for those involved in Baptismal Ministry.