

Synodman on dioceses' 'motivation structure'

From Professor R. G. Faulkner

Sir, — The letter from Virginia Stourton ([28 April](#)) asks what the C of E has done to its parish clergy. The simple answer is that dioceses have devalued the most important position in the Church. The mission statement of the Church should be to bring people to God through worship in their community. The central officer responsible for this is the parish priest.

Dioceses have progressively developed management structures in which it is seen as a promotion to be relieved of these front-line responsibilities. Add to that the creation of many well-meaning and well-paid posts dealing with inclusivity, social responsibility, mission, safeguarding, youth work, environment, PA work, and archdeaconry, and you have a recipe for disaster.

The salary and motivation structure of dioceses needs to be turned on its head. Potential candidates are completely demoralised by the recruitment techniques currently used by dioceses.

Rules need to be introduced whereby no employees in diocesan offices are paid more than traditional front-line parish priests. This will release much money that is currently being wasted in diocesan administration to provide proper funding for more parish priests. The recent increases in the parish clergy's administrative workload is also a disincentive to potential new recruits to parish ministry.

Since most of this additional work has originated from the diocesan office in the form of surveys and box-ticking exercises, potential incumbents will be further encouraged to join an organisation that puts first its main mission statement: that of bringing people to God in the community.

I hope to raise these issues in a private member's motion in the General Synod in July.

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