

General Synod

COMMUNICATIONS: A Policy for The Church of England

A Paper from the Church of England
Committee for Communications

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PART I - LOST OPPORTUNITIES

A. Introduction

1. Broadly speaking, the Church of England is locked into words - mostly written, mostly dense and 'not understood of the people.' Many reports published by the Church are unread, create little impact and do not percolate to the people who matter - those in the pews and, more importantly, those who never sit in a pew. An exception, the report 'Faith in the City,' was well marketed in popular digests and is still being followed up (e.g.the Church Urban Fund) but it gained its initial momentum by being dubbed Marxist and thus attracted much media attention.

2. So this paper is about the Church's opportunities in the days of the communications revolution. It is about 'a revolutionary takeover of society, accomplished without a shot being fired.' (Dr Colin Morris, 'God in a Box', p7.) No one has compelled the average Briton to watch twenty seven hours television a week, but this social change has affected family life and almost all corporate activity, including churchgoing.

3. Writing about a poorly attended parliamentary debate on nuclear energy, William (now Lord) Rees-Mogg suggested that the real public debate would be on television and "I do not believe that Parliament can re-establish its proper authority except through television." (The Independent, 17 March 1987.) Lord William Whitelaw in an Open University television programme

(DE3533/08) said: "It's far more important to do three minutes on the television screen at a news time or a peak-viewing time than it is to make a speech of half an hour in the House of Commons."

4. Today's media have groomed us to expect instant reporting and instant comment. TV-am suffered badly when it was unable to match its rival's pictures of the 1984 Brighton bombing of the Conservative Party Conference for breakfast time viewing. The BBC was recently disadvantaged when Independent Television had a documentary crew already near to the blazing Piper Alpha platform. Newspapers and radio stations have complex networks of mobile reporters to relay what is happening as it happens. Though television is more cumbersome and more costly, it normally manages to give the impression of being equally flexible and according to the most recent survey conducted for the Independent Broadcasting Authority, 62% of those questioned selected TV as their 'prime source of information for what is going on in the world.' When the television viewer hovers over a wrecked airliner, the news is both immediate and demanding.

5. Although all journalists are accused of preferring news which is bad, it is worth remembering that pictures of the Vietnam War helped sway American public opinion to end their part in it. And the Bob Geldof initiative in Ethiopia was prompted by a BBC '9 O'Clock News' item in October 1985.

6. The uneasy history of the churches' relationship with broadcasting authorities (necessarily the BBC until 1956) has been

chronicled by Kenneth Wolfe ('The Churches and the BBC 1922-1956') The best known story is that of Dean Ryle's refusal to let the 1923 Royal Wedding be broadcast for fear men in public houses would listen with their hats on. The legend does conceal a truth, though. So long as the editorial control of radio and television programmes and newspaper articles is not in the hands of the churches, they will have to accept others' treatment of what they regard as precious material.

7. There are times when this lack of control may cause us to wonder if we are casting our pearls before swine. The absurd treatment of biblical scholarship in the Channel 4 trilogy, 'Jesus - the Evidence' in 1984 and the vastly expensive and idiosyncratic BBC television series 'The Sea of Faith', the same year, which were not balanced by representations of the orthodox position, tended to cast doubt on the common claim that broadcasting is even-handed.

8. Conversely, the sensitive handling of the quest for faith in 'Priestland's Progress' (BBC Radio 4, 1981) produced such a response - 24,000 letters - that it seems reasonable to suggest that the churches themselves could not have matched it. Currently, the combined audience for Radio 4's 'Sunday' and Radio 2's 'Good Morning Sunday' is well over 2 million. These programmes are broadcast simultaneously and are in competition with dozens of popular local radio religious magazine programmes. On Sunday evenings, up to a quarter of the UK population is watching either 'Songs of Praise' or 'Highway' and although these programmes are

sometimes criticised for the blandness of their content, the size of their audiences reveals at least a vestigial interest in religion which the churches themselves are not realising.

[The fact that religious programmes are broadcast at all in the United Kingdom is one of the advantages of the commitment to a 'public service' role by both BBC and the Independent Broadcasting Authority. But senior personnel in some independent television companies are now showing their irritation at this restriction on their competitive ambitions.]

9. The latter half of the 1980s has also seen more interest in Church affairs by mainstream news and feature programmes and national newspapers. Sometimes the reporting has been ill-informed although not often as inaccurate as when Spanish newspapers claimed that the Bishop of London ordained 72 women priests in 1987. Almost invariably the media demand controversy. A television crew pulled out of a General Synod debate on the Welfare State as soon as the main speaker said his purpose was not to criticise the government. Nevertheless, it is our contention that a live church is a newsworthy church; we resist attempts to deem the Christian Faith "a minority interest," for it belongs in the market place and can stand its rough and tumble.

11. The Church has shown how it can adapt to a variety of media: symbols, painting, architecture, stained glass, music. It was slow to accept drama because of its tarnished associations with the pagan games.

12. Here it will be argued that the media are God's gifts. They can be abused. Distorted reporting can confirm prejudice, pornography can inflame passion, gratuitous violence may breed imitation. Yet the media can also be used to broadcast weather reports to sailors and farmers, to appeal for the week's good cause, to lighten the burden of the lonely, to broaden international horizons and to explore and even inspire human spirituality.

13. The car radio or the television set in the corner are not pulpits. In Britain, those who attempt to preach from them, as some politicians have done, invite ridicule and abuse, for the listener/viewer has no opportunity to answer back. A sympathetic broadcaster will be just that: one who stands alongside the listener and speaks of shared experience. It should not be difficult for Christians to aim at equality with their audience, for they speak of One who "pitched his tent alongside ours." (John 1:14).

14. History may show that the churches, and the Church of England in particular, have led a charmed life as guests of the communications industry. But clouds loom on the horizon.

B. Signs of the Times

15. Outlets of communication proliferate, even - and on a comparatively modest scale - in Britain. The Wapping revolution has enabled newspaper management to expand, experiment and innovate. Daily and particularly weekend papers are expanding

rapidly in size (often with several sections) and in the use of colour in their pages. Free newspapers vie with or are owned by long-established publications. BBC and ILR provide distinctive local output. National radio channels are to increase. New levels of community radio are proposed but already exist, illegally. Cable television, as yet in its infancy and not wildly successful, provides alternative channels. And microwave technology will enable many cities and towns in the UK to have their own multi-channel local TV stations by the early 1990s. The cheap domestic dish aerial is ready to be marketed - an open hand to receive the satellite television offerings of so many media moguls, propagandists and communications consortia.

16. So the market place is large. Some would say this has meant a lowering of standards of production and often a more utilitarian approach. But even by present standards in the United States we have seen nothing. The home communications centre, a slimline television screen hung on the wall, will not only provide the traditions of education, information and entertainment, but will also provide automatic banking, betting, shopping and an alarm system for the house. Such interactive systems are readily available now and it only remains for the business communities to pick them up. There are signs that government support for this information technology will be increased; in the trading of information Britain has much leeway to make up, even in Europe.

17. The media are shaping our perceptions of culture, politics, economics, ethics and aesthetics. The media are the real world -

and not just for those who watch and listen and read but for everyone. Kojak is the reality of America for many Africans. Conversely, the African may be better informed because, perhaps not trusting his local outlet since it is government controlled, he is satiated by international radio - all of it propaganda, but some of it of good quality. The BBC's External Services are propaganda for a democratic way of life but are nonetheless quality broadcasting. Sir Denis Forman called them "Britain's Exocet and Trident in the way of affecting men's minds." (Dimbleby Lecture, July 1987) How shall we react to all this? After all, the media are creating their own language, their own power (I have appeared on television, therefore I am), their own community, their own prescribed portrayal of humanity. In all this, the media are providing what soul-food most people digest. And community is no longer what community was; in some cities in recession in Britain, there is evidence that people are shutting their doors and just watching television.

18. In the face of such a revolution, there is a tendency amongst Christians to be confused or resigned - or to abdicate. This is simply not Christian: after all, look at the world into which Jesus came. And is not the whole point of the birth of Jesus that he trusted human flesh? But it is not only a question of involvement - a blessed nineteen sixties word - it is a question of mission, of active communication of the truth. For example, in our experience, local newspapers will print Christian contributions provided that they are good stories, accurate and decently written. Local radio offers endless opportunities for news, comment and religious entertainment (there is an authentic

religious entertainment.) Originality of idea brings everyone running. So does extreme or exaggerated statement or happening. But our point is that the whole market place of Christian comment provides opportunities that are insufficiently grasped and yet constitute ideal gifts for the commendation of the faith that is in us. And such commendation today must be straightforward and full of content; the days of wrapping up the content in a whirl of chocolate are gone. Such apologising is neither desired nor heeded since a whole generation has grown up which knows nothing - or very little - of religious language or Christian doctrine.

19. Our contention, therefore, is that we must mix with this media world and not only take what is offered by way of reaction, but rather go out and create the message in the market place.

C. Church and Media: Past

20. The Church of England has had neither the power nor the need to present its own programmes on networked or regional radio and television. Its affairs and beliefs are covered by specialist programmes and are also reported in news bulletins and documentaries. The two Anglican weekly newspapers in the U.K. are published independently.

21. The birth of local radio, where costs are great and income is small, has bred a new strain of broadcaster: the unpaid professional. Many dioceses have seconded clergy, full or

part-time, to work with teams of volunteers to compile and present religious programmes in character with the style of their local radio station. In the same way, local and regional newspapers may offer a weekly column for Christian comment.

22. Control of content remains in the hands of the newspaper or station editor who usually requires the presentation of balanced opinion: the proponent of capital punishment is given as much space as his opponent. Though this observance of balance may irritate the committed, the alternative is government or partisan control of the media and the end of free speech. There are already signs in the U.K. media that he who pays the piper insists on calling the tune.

23. The churches in this country have made few formal decisions about their role in the media. Those that have been made have been 'reactive' - the establishment of a Press Office to respond to enquiries, the acceptance of invitations to take part in programmes. There has been the vocational commitment by a few to become professional programme makers - no less than six bishops, deans and provosts are former BBC personnel - but in general we have acted in response to demand. Even the Central Religious Advisory Committee to the BBC and IBA, whose members represent a wide spread of religious groups, is a body appointed by the broadcasting authorities rather than the churches.

24. A more conscious acceptance of responsibility towards radio and television is indicated by the churches' nominations to the

Churches' Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting (CACLB) which fosters relationships between local radio stations and the churches in their catchment areas. The British Churches' Committee for Channel 4 (BCCC4) is another ecumenically-inspired group which attempts to encourage independently produced programmes for that channel.

25. The Roman Catholic Church has established the National Catholic Television Centre with studio, training facilities and accommodation at Hatch End and is supported by an annual collection. The Church of Scotland funds an extremely busy audio visual unit currently costing £137,000 per annum; in addition its television equipment has just been converted so that it can make programmes to broadcast standard, at a cost of £160,000. The late Lord Rank, a Methodist, funded the Foundation for Christian Communication (CTVC) in Bushey which has taught thousands to broadcast and has made many films for television in its superb studios. The radio studio in Church House, constructed from two offices in 1977, cost £8,600 which was raised from donations and is used for regular training courses and recorded interviews. There are several small video production houses, financed by individual Christians and societies, and a plethora of new organisations claiming to represent the churches' interests in the media.

26. To summarise, the attitude of the churches to the media, which began with suspicion, has developed into a relationship of habit. It has evolved gradually as a result of incidental

decisions and has been enriched by individual commitment and private enterprise. This has worked, more or less, where the press has been willing to co-operate and because broadcasters include religion as part of their public service responsibilities. We could have been more co-operative in the past and in any event a less favourable era may be dawning.

D. Church and Media: Present

27. At Church House, the former Church Information Office has been split up into its constituent parts. The Enquiry Centre has been attached to the General Synod office and continues to deal with calls from the public in person, by telephone and letter. Publishing is a department of the Central Board of Finance.

28. The Press Department manages the relationship between newspapers and the General Synod and its Boards and Councils. It also has the responsibility for public affairs. The Broadcasting Department, formed in 1983, does the same for radio and television interests.

29. The Archbishop of Canterbury has his own secretary for the media, as has the Archbishop of York. The Bishops of London and Durham have their own press officers, but their dioceses are without communications officers. Most dioceses have a communications officer, though job descriptions and duties vary enormously. There is strong evidence that dioceses get a better 'press' when they have a well-informed and experienced

Communications Officer who will handle awkward situations and generally promote the diocesan cause.

30. The functions of the two Communications departments in Church House are still largely determined by the demands of the media. Questions are answered, information provided, spokesmen suggested. To this end, the departments run regular training courses to teach simple journalistic and broadcasting skills. They also produce and disseminate news releases to explain or promote General Synod publications and policies. Present day coverage of Synod business may seem slight - even superficial - to the initiated, but it has undoubtedly increased over the years. However, it has to be said that the most popular newspapers rarely touch on the Church's official business. But they are communicating with millions through an entertainment-led style. While we may find some of their articles salacious, we must not dismiss the idea of popular journalism.

31. The growing number of local radio stations, daytime television and split-frequency transmission have all created more spaces to fill. These, coupled with the rediscovery of the Church of England by news and documentary programmes, to which reference has already been made, places an ever-increasing workload on a hard-pressed department. Promising contacts have been established with many of the new programmes. Unexpected demands have also been made by foreign news media. American, Austrian, Canadian, German, Irish, Spanish and Swiss cameras or microphones were trained on the February 1987 General Synod debate on the

Ordination of Women and each of the reporters had to be carefully briefed and serviced. In all, over fifty broadcast interviews were arranged that week. Seventy newspaper reporters were either present or in touch over this item.

32. Non-specialist reporters, be they visitors or home-grown, often have no understanding of the Church and its beliefs. Their need for information is instant and constant. Recent courses about the Church of England for trainee newspaper and radio journalists have been well received.

33. Given more resources - manpower and money - even more use could be made of these opportunities. We could and should suggest programme ideas to producers; we should be researching the human interest stories in which the Church abounds and which make the best radio and television programmes. We should be commissioning articles to place in supermarket and airline magazines, in the expanding field of free news-sheets, and alerting correspondents to reply to critical and often inaccurate letters to the editor. And we need to keep a sharp eye on the future so that we know what is happening to satellite broadcasting and community radio and how churches fare with them in other countries.

34. With the impending fragmentation of media outlets, the public will be faced with multiple choices of channel. So there will be more programmes but smaller audiences. Those who supply news or programme items to the media will have to put in far more effort to reach the same number of people. And already we have to run to stand still.

E. Church and Media: The Immediate Future

35. It cannot be said that the Church of England is seizing the opportunities held out by the media. Currently there are insufficient resources to underwrite an adequate policy. The Church responds piecemeal, to gifts handed out, to individual entrepreneurial activity, to opportunities for secondment. In other words, there is no concerted approach such as can be seen recently in the mainstream churches of North America. There is little knowledge or understanding in the Church of England of the power of the electronic church or the so-called television evangelists.

36. The present government wants new media services to be predominantly commercial - paid for by direct means, eg advertising. In the future, therefore, there may not be the obligation to provide religious broadcasting. And sponsored programmes will be either denominational or redolent of an interest-group and some will need to carry a health warning of imbalance. Money will talk. It already does. But, by comparison, money will shout in the future.

37. Although the relationship of the Church of England with the media has worked well because it is all that has been necessary, it is time now to make formal decisions against a new scene and an even broader horizon.

38. These decisions must be made nationally but they will affect the mission of every parish in the country. They will enable the Church to take more of the initiative with the media: by promoting participation in community radio, by offering articles to magazines not usually associated with Church affairs, by floating programme ideas to broadcasting stations, by recruiting and training more people in media skills, and by helping to forge a coherent editorial policy for Church communications.

39. If this policy were implemented in full, no aspect of the Church's work would be untouched, but it would be presumptuous at this stage to address anything but the communications work in Church House. It is hoped that this convention will be accepted by those who otherwise might have regarded it as a loss of nerve. At the same time, such a limited aim should be capable of speedy implementation.

PART II - THE INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW. A BY PASS?

40. The Infrastructure Review is welcome. It recognises the urgent need for radical reorganisation of the communications work 'at the centre'. It also stipulates that substantial, though unspecified, increases in resources will be required. The Review appears to be flawed however because it seems to imply that the communications function is somehow secondary to the main work of the Church. What can be more mainstream than the communication of the Christian faith - and yet a communications presence is not even deemed necessary at the level of Standing Committee?

41. There is general agreement that some rationalisation of the communications work of Lambeth, Synod and Church Commissioners is essential, and we support the proposal for a single Department for the whole Church of England. However the recommendation that one person could combine the work of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Press Secretary with the management of an enlarged, unified department betrays a misconception of the volume of work currently being undertaken.

42. It would be much better for the Archbishop's Personal Media Secretary to be based permanently at Lambeth Palace in order to handle day to day media enquiries and liaison, but that the Church's senior media adviser (perhaps called the Church of England Director of Communications) while being available to the Archbishop should be based in the new Department to give essential management and supervision.

43. The Lay Assistant/Press Officer to the Archbishop of York should also be a member of the Communications Department with fax and/or computer link for efficiency of communications.

44. It would be important for a new enterprise to be clearly defined and recognised, with freedom to initiate forward looking communications strategies and to grasp the opportunities offered by technological developments. We are firmly of the opinion that this could not be achieved if it were to remain simply as a sub-committee of the Standing Committee, and we urge that further consideration be given to recognising Communication as the responsibility of a Board or Council of the General Synod.

45. While there is agreement that a sub-section (called a 'news room' in the Review) should carry out all the department's press, broadcasting and public relations functions, it is felt that within it there should be specialist staff for press and broadcasting to cater for often differing requirements.

46. The pro-active function of the proposed features and development sub-section needs amplification. For example, should it be ecumenical in its research and 'political' role? And a proper specification for 'Development' would build on a theological foundation if it were to provide the Church with an authentic media strategy.

47. With proposed unification of a Communications department, it may be difficult to justify the retention of the two specialist broadcasting and press panels. We feel, however, that the suggested appointment of ad hoc working parties may not produce, as the panels have done, senior professionals in press and broadcasting willing to offer their experience to the Church on an organised basis. There is certainly a case for slimming down the present CECC and for it to be specialist, composed of professionals covering all aspects of the department's work but shorn of most of its assessors and staff members who currently increase - significantly - the numbers attending meetings of the main Committee. It is suggested that the proposed terms of reference for this reconstituted committee are unduly restrictive.

48. We welcome the suggestion that the Diocesan Communications Officers' Panel be retained. But we are concerned that the Review misunderstands the role of the DCO.

49. The main priority for most DCOs is to be an officer for the Bishop and the diocese in communication with the world outside through the media. Though communications within the diocese may run this a close second, DCOs are never appointed as interpreters to the dioceses and parishes of the work of General Synod's Boards and Councils. The kind of 'communications' envisaged by the Infrastructure Group is more to do with organisational structures and management skills than with the tasks of a DCO.

50. We accept that the Enquiry Centre should be linked to the proposed Communications Department rather than to the General

Synod Office. But there is concern lest the implied advantages of staff cover might be detrimental to the staff of the News Room, and we are certainly unhappy about the proposal of one of the two staff members of the Enquiry Centre being 'shared with the rest of the department'. This could result in News Room staff spending an undue amount of their time answering outside enquiries.

51. Whilst it is recognised that there is considerable scope for rationalisation in the future handling of 'Clergy register' enquiries, we are concerned and sceptical about the suggestions for reducing the work of the Enquiry Centre. If there is to be such a centre, callers should be able to expect an answer. They do not want to have to phone another number and they do not expect to be told to go to the local library.

52. While the Review stresses urgency in dealing with the Church's central communications, the emphasis of its recommendations is on greater efficiency and streamlining, and fails to recognise the Church's opportunities in the days of the communications revolution.

53. The Review attempts to put right the errors of the past; it does not prepare for the challenges of the future.

PART III - ORGANISATION. A MODEST EXPANSION

54. The case for a new communications policy for the Church of England is argued in Part I of this paper. Part II is a commentary on the Infrastructure Review. This final part offers reflections on organisation.

55. There are three possible ways forward which are not in themselves mutually contradictory. The first would require major investment to pay for the production of radio and television programmes. The second would move the centre of our activities into a new ecumenical endeavour. The third is a modest extension of our present activities. Each of these ways forward is now considered in turn.

56. There is a strong argument, which would attract considerable support, for the Church of England to make a major redeployment of resources in order to address the British people via radio, television and the non-electronic media. We venture to suggest that such a platform would be supported in the parishes; people can see the limited opportunities from the platforms that are already in place.

57. Large scale investment in plant would be unwise now, since broadcasting technology is advancing so rapidly that today's technology is tomorrow's obsolescence. Therefore, let others invest and the Church hire their facilities. After all, government is committed to independent producers and they have

proved to be inventive when it comes to programming and fleet of foot when it comes to hardware investment. Even so, costs are high as shown by the size of budgets which Channel 4 needs to offer to freelance practitioners.

58. To create an in-house production facility would cost millions as it has, for example, at the CTVC studios in Bushey, Hertfordshire. Capital investment is huge, so also are running costs. The average half-hour television programme may cost £30,000 to make.

59. Nonetheless, it has been suggested that the Church of England should raise the money by the sale of a City church. The case was argued by Mr (now Sir) David Wills in Appendix 3 of Broadcasting, Society and the Church - a report of the Broadcasting Commission of the General Synod in 1973. Sir David argued that City churches which are little used or for which there are alternatives or which have no exceptional artistic merit could be 'exchanged for an ever increasing and effective capability by the Church both in radio and television' [pp 95, 96]. Sir David asked Synod to introduce the necessary legislation, but this was never taken up.

60. Another way of at least supplementing the financing of production would be to follow the Roman Catholics who, on one Sunday in the year, hold a special collection for this ministry out of the Radio and Television Centre at Hatch End.

61. American groups have raised vast sums of money for their kind of religious broadcasting and are already crossing the Atlantic.

Perhaps churchmembers in this country would like the opportunity to compete with them.

62. Our own inclination, however, is to be aware of current financial stringency and to suppose that, were such an approach to be adopted, large capital and running costs could mean the diminution or even cessation of other centralised ministries. However, we welcome the initiative of those dioceses producing evangelistic and training videos and their willingness to share these. We should like to be in a position to commission a modest amount of complementary material, both video and audio, and we believe that a substantial sum of money should be sought for funding a pilot project.

63. We have paid equal attention to the possibility of greater co-operation with those of other churches. If the hopes of the Inter-Church Process are fulfilled and the BCC is replaced by new ecumenical instruments, it could be strongly argued that an ecumenical communications division should co-ordinate and extend the fragmented efforts of member churches. After all, the people who matter are those outside the churches and they neither know nor care about the subtleties of denominational flavour. The creation of an ecumenical enterprise could take a considerable time and might emerge in complex, time consuming bureaucracy, but there are those who would say "so be it - it is worth the struggle even if the product is diminished". We understand that Christian Aid is considering closer working or merging with CAFOD. This could be a model for a communications division.

64. Deregulated broadcasting invites partisan expression. The competition will be - to some extent already is - from groups sponsoring full blooded credal systems beside which the current offerings will look pallid, vague, indefinite.

65. There are many groups now being formed to capitalise on the openings offered by cable and satellite television and also if sanctioned by the government, by deregulated radio stations. These groups are non-denominational in character, ambitious in their aims and short of money. They are already asking for the wholehearted support of the Church of England and are disappointed when they do not get it.

66. In an ecumenical venture, there are obvious questions about editorial control, about composition of management, and the possible emergence of a bland product. And which churches would be included, which excluded?

67. Nevertheless, this approach is being explored post-Swanwick. And, after all, the Church of England is an ecumenical movement in itself.

68. We suggest a two-fold advance in ecumenical communications work in the spirit of the Inter-Church Process. The first must wait for the establishment of the new ecumenical instruments. However it is presumed here that a Media Development Officer will be appointed by one of the new bodies to gather and sift technical

information about the new media so that all the churches may share an essential common resource. The second requires a larger investment in the Churches' Advisory Committee for Local Broadcasting (CACLB). This body is probably the most widely representative of all the present church groups in this country. It has links with almost all the local radio stations and has provided a forum for the churches for 20 years. Its officers have been volunteers, with an honorary secretary provided by the BCC until recently. CACLB is now establishing a professional secretariat in order to maintain and improve the churches' work. Thus it will extend its activities on behalf of the churches into local television broadcasting and community radio where and when these come on stream. The increased costs of about £23,000 p.a. will at first be underwritten by a Trust. After two years the churches will be asked to take over this responsibility and the Church of England's share will be approximately £6,200 p.a. We believe that it is essential that we play our part in this.

69. The third way forward would require the restructuring and co-ordination of the present operation in Church House with a comparatively modest increase in costs. This accords most closely to the recommendations of the Infrastructure Review, but attempts to correct the inadequacies which have been highlighted in Part II of this paper. The new operation should be able to commission video production, with an eye to the increased demand by BBC and ITV for independently originated material. It should also be in a position to generate and commission the writing of feature articles. For each 30-minute video of broadcast quality a figure

of £30,000 could be required. One full-length feature article with photographs might require the outlay of £500.

70. If we go along this path we envisage the establishment of a new General Synod Board of Communications - a single unit - which would be pro-active. Such a Board, under a single director, would inspire small 'guerilla groups' operating with and for radio, television and the press.

71. A later development would be the establishment of a larger programme-commissioning group, leading in due course to our own production unit using the 'hardware' and facilities of independent studios. This is not costed here.

72. Our vision is of a group of people writing articles for every kind of newspaper and magazine (or commissioning them) offering ideas to radio and television and responding to their ideas and requests, being sensitive evangelists to the general public and inspiring those who must take the lead in public worship - musicians, dramatists, readers, presenters, dancers and so on.

73. This realisable task would require a new staffing structure. It would be unfortunate if the note of urgency sounded in the Infrastructure Review and in this paper were lost in lengthy synodical procedures which are likely to be required for the implementation of any of the recommendations of the Infrastructure Review Group report.

74. In order to give practical expression to our preferred option a model for a new Communications enterprise has been devised and costed carefully in consultation with the Central Board of Finance. Using figures available for 1989 this would require a budget of £257,000 (an increase of 23% on the approved estimates for 1989.) It is envisaged that an unspecified proportion of the total costs of the new Board of Communications will be borne by the Church Commissioners, as recommended by the Infrastructure Review, p 212 sect 20.11.

75. Those who share the vision of a reinvigorated communications policy for the Church of England, as it is pictured in Part I of this paper, will see these proposals are cautious but practicable and capable of speedy implementation.

76. The direction which the British media will take in the future cannot be predicted with certainty. Whether public service broadcasting, for example? So this paper is not intended to be the last word on the subject. Acceptance of these proposals does not in any way pre-empt a decision on the issues covered by the two alternatives which have been presented above - capital expenditure on media plant and new ecumenical communications endeavour. But at least they are a move in the right direction.

Published by the General Synod of the Church
of England and available from the Church House
Bookshop, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN

Price: £1.00 (By post: £1.30)