

Glasgow & Galloway in the Twentieth Century: A Dynamic Mission Field



Aim

This briefing paper analyses the morphology of the diocese of Glasgow & Galloway between 1900 and 1999. It examines the patterns of church formation and church dissolution. It goes on to analyse the flow of priests through the diocese.

Method

This is a preliminary analysis of patterns of behaviour using a robust and straightforward sampling methodology. The charges were examined on a decade-by-decade basis. In the case of priests, a two-year sample was examined from each of the nine decades under review. The sample size is regular and comparable across the decades. The data was acquired from David Bertie's book, *Scottish Episcopal Clergy 1689-2000*, published in 2000.¹

Analysis

1. *Opening Doors, Closing Doors*

The analysis demonstrates that the diocese of Glasgow and Galloway has had a consistent record of opening new charges. This record was maintained unbroken for ninety years. The final decade of the twentieth century stood out as the one decade where no charges were opened.

	1900-1909	1910-1919	1920-1929	1930-1939	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999
Number of charges opened	15	13	9	5	5	4	8	6	3	0

¹ Bertie, D.M, *Scottish Episcopal Clergy 1689-2000* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).

The diocese has also had a consistent record of closing charges that were judged to have become unsustainable. However, the rate varied at which it did so. The third, fourth and fifth decades were remarkable for the small number of charges closed. The number of charges closed during the last two decades was almost identical to the number closed during the first two decades.

	1900-1909	1910-1919	1920-1929	1930-1939	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999
Number of charges closed	8	15	3	4	2	15	13	9	10	10

2. *A Mobile Priesthood in the wider Anglican Communion*

The following table shows the number of priests appointed to charges in the diocese during a two years sample taken from the beginning of each decade.

	1900-1901	1910-1911	1920-1921	1930-1931	1940-1941	1950-1951	1960-1961	1970-1971	1980-1981	1990-1991
Number of priests appointed to charges	12	25	31	21	27	31	13	18	13	6

There was a consistently high turnover of priests. The table below shows that incumbencies were short: the longest average incumbency in the sample being just seven and a half years.

	1900-1901	1910-1911	1920-1921	1930-1931	1940-1941	1950-1951	1960-1961	1970-1971	1980-1981	1990-1991
Average length (in years) of these appointments	3.6	5.6	6.4	4.2	6.1	4.4	6.7	5.8	6.3	7.5

There is a consistent record of making appointments from outside the diocese. The analysis shows that between approximately two fifths and a half of the priests taking up appointments came from outside Glasgow and Galloway.

	1900-1901	1910-1911	1920-1921	1930-1931	1940-1941	1950-1951	1960-1961	1970-1971	1980-1981	1990-1991
Coming to this appointment from outside G&G	50%	40%	41%	38%	40%	54%	46%	44%	53%	50%

The diocese also has a consistent record of recruiting from outside the Scottish Episcopal Church. It was generally the case that between 20% and 40% of the priests came to take up these appointments from outside the SEC.

	1900-1901	1910-1911	1920-1921	1930-1931	1940-1941	1950-1951	1960-1961	1970-1971	1980-1981	1990-1991
Coming to this appointment from outside SEC	41%	36%	32%	20%	33%	38%	46%	11%	23%	33%

A significant percentage of the priests left the diocese of Glasgow and Galloway after these appointments. No less than a third and as many as 68% of priests in the sample left the diocese at that point.

	1900-1901	1910-1911	1920-1921	1930-1931	1940-1941	1950-1951	1960-1961	1970-1971	1980-1981	1990-1991
Leaving G&G after this appointment	58%	68%	51%	57%	51%	54%	46%	55%	53%	33%

A smaller yet still significant percentage of the priests left the SEC after these appointments. Two of the samples have atypically low percentages – 1930/31 and 1990/91. Typically, the numbers leaving the province ranged from just under a quarter to just under a half.

	1900-1901	1910-1911	1920-1921	1930-1931	1940-1941	1950-1951	1960-1961	1970-1971	1980-1981	1990-1991
Leaving SEC after this appointment	33%	40%	48%	14%	29%	32%	30%	38%	23%	0%

The proportion of priests that spent the whole of their ordained ministry within the diocese has generally been low. The earlier samples show a particularly low proportion. At no time was the proportion as high as a fifth of the priests appointed.

	1900-1901	1910-1911	1920-1921	1930-1931	1940-1941	1950-1951	1960-1961	1970-1971	1980-1981	1990-1991
Entire ordained ministry within G&G	8%	4%	3%	19%	11%	9%	7%	11%	15%	16%

The proportion of priests whose whole ordained ministry was within the SEC was always less than half. Typically the proportion ranged from a fifth to a third of those in the sample.

	1900-1901	1910-1911	1920-1921	1930-1931	1940-1941	1950-1951	1960-1961	1970-1971	1980-1981	1990-1991
Entire ordained ministry within SEC	25%	20%	22%	28%	40%	19%	30%	22%	38%	33%

Finally the following table shows the percentage of these priests that spent some time in ordained ministry abroad; that is, outside Britain and Ireland. This is not a consistent pattern. Two of the samples – 1960/61 and 1990/91 – stand out because so few of the priests fell into this category. The first sample – 1900/01 – also stands out because half of the priests did. Otherwise, however, about a fifth of the sampled priests experienced ordained ministry overseas.

	1900-1901	1910-1911	1920-1921	1930-1931	1940-1941	1950-1951	1960-1961	1970-1971	1980-1981	1990-1991
Spent time in ordained ministry abroad	50%	17%	22%	19%	15%	22%	7%	22%	30%	0%

Conclusions and implications

The Scottish Episcopal Church has claims to be a unique and special church and the diocese of Glasgow and Galloway claims a unique place within the SEC. The diocese has a particular pattern of life that has lasted for a hundred years. This pattern of life is characterised by the following:

- The regular opening and closing of charges
- Recruiting clergy from outside the diocese and from outside the province
- Clergy remaining in post for relatively short periods
- The expectation that clergy are likely to leave the diocese to continue their ministry elsewhere

This pattern of life came under strain during the 1990s. Most significantly of all, this was the only decade during which no new charges were opened.

Some implications for the future of the diocese are these:

- Accepting that the diocese has been an unstable, fast-moving and dynamic mission field
- Having confidence in this tradition
- Accepting that a significant proportion of priests will leave the diocese
- Being affirmed in appointing priests from outside as well as inside the diocese and the province
- Realising that we should not expect to find this model replicated elsewhere in the province or in the wider Anglican tradition
- Celebrating this pattern of life – it is our model and it has made us what we are
- Having the courage to open some new charges

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