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Formation for Enabling Ministry

A TRANSFORMED THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR A TRANSFORMED CHURCH

everyday
faith

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A Transformed Theological Education for a Transformed Church

This paper is a contribution to the fourth strand of work to follow up *Setting God's People Free,* which addresses the changes required to align the selection, training and on-going ministerial development of clergy and licensed lay ministers with the priority of enabling lay discipleship in every sphere of life.

The paper offers insights and recommendations for all who participate in the formation of men and women for licensed and ordained ministry in Phase 1 of Initial Ministerial Education (IME 1), most particularly to the staffs of Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) but through them to all who contribute their time, experience, passion and expertise to this shared endeavour: volunteer tutors, training incumbents, placement supervisors and many others.

It is supported by a programme of online learning, 'Formation for Enabling Ministry', designed to be studied by individuals or in groups asynchronously, that is at a pace and at times to fit in with their existing responsibilities. The programme is available on the Common Awards hub via the drop-down menu under 'Staff Menu'.

The paper seeks to articulate the theological and pedagogical foundations of formation for enabling ministry. Alongside this a series of online learning activities has also been developed and will be available on the Common Awards hub, under the menu for Hub Plus. These offer a starting point for how theological educators, and ministers in training themselves, might grapple with the task of shaping a theological imagination for enabling ministry.

The paper was commissioned as part of the *Setting God's People Free* implementation work, in consultation with colleagues in the national Ministry Team. The insights and recommendations emerge from discussions between members of staff of three TEIs, Cranmer Hall, Sarum College and the Oxford Diocese Local Ministry Pathway, facilitated by Revd Dr David Heywood, who also authored the paper and designed the online learning programme.[1]

The paper is in three parts. The executive summary allows the reader to grasp the main points made in a short space of time. Then follows the main body of the report, intended to present the argument in less than 10,000 words. This is supplemented by a series of appendices, allowing the reader to follow up specific points raised in greater detail and at their leisure. Some of the appendices include links to material to be found online, which further amplify the paper's argument.

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[2] The aspirations of *Setting God's People Free* for which Nick was the Programme Director are incorporated into Vision and Strategy of the Church of England for the 2020s. See GS2248.

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Executive Summary

A general shift is under way within the Church of England which relocates, or for some releases, the role that lay and ordained ministers play in enabling the whole people of God in their wider vocation and ministry, in the whole of life. The report 'Setting God's People Free' quotes from Bishop Graham Cray: 'Churches have to realise that the core of their calling is to be disciple-making communities, whatever else they do.'

In the words of 'Setting God's People Free', a move to an enabling pattern of ministry entails a 'seismic revolution in the culture of the Church'. In pursuit of this seismic shift, Bishop Jonathan Clark calls for, 'a significant and concerted change in the learning and formation culture of the whole church.' This paper explains that the heart of this change is a shift of emphasis from the *content of what is taught* to the *process of learning.*

Setting God's People Free challenged the church to focus on fostering a culture where the whole people of God live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life, Sunday to Saturday. This work involves multiple dimensions. Not least how ministry roles enable such a shift.

The paper is addressed most particularly to the staffs of Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) but through them to all who contribute their time, experience, passion and expertise to this shared endeavour: volunteer tutors, training incumbents, placement supervisors and many others.

It identifies and explores the three communities of practice with which the trainee minister is called to engage:

a) The practice of 'everyday faith', which can be summed up as the desire to follow Jesus and identify his call in every sphere of life. Everyday faith is undergirded by a 'social imaginary' in which each sphere of life, work, family, voluntary activities and leisure pursuits, is interpreted through the lens of Christian belief and worship. The 'missionary disciple' consciously endeavours to live out their Christian identity and perspective in each of these spheres.

b) The practice of ministry. Until now, the Church's vision for ministry has largely centred around the activities of the Christian community gathered for worship. 'Enabling ministry' involves a rebalancing of ministerial vision in which equipping God's people for witness and service in the spheres of everyday life plays a major part. Ministry is undergirded by 'pastoral imagination', the minister's ability to integrate their understanding of God through Scripture and Christian tradition with their understanding of people, as individuals, in community and in wider society. A core ministerial skill is the ability to help disciples to reflect theologically on the challenges of everyday life.

c) The practice of theological scholarship. The knowledge of God mediated by Scripture and Christian tradition is a core element of pastoral imagination. However, theological scholarship as pursued in the academy is subject-centred and prizes abstract conceptualization, whereas both everyday faith and ministry are life-centred, emerging from and addressed to the messy and often conflicted nature of everyday life. While ministers are called to be knowledgeable in the tradition, the stance of enabling ministry entails that they draw on it as a resource for shared reflection on the challenges and tasks of everyday life rather than deploy it in the top-down manner of the theological expert.

The significant change in the culture of learning and formation called for is therefore a shift from the subject-centred orientation characteristic of academic scholarship to a life-centred orientation more appropriate to formation for everyday faith and ministry and more closely aligned with the methods and approach of adult education. It is vital that TEI staffs embody the kind of relationships

characteristic of enabling ministry: relationships of enabling and encouragement requiring companionship, trust, and vulnerability; demonstrate and teach methods of facilitation and shared reflection; and model ministerial identity grounded in friendship and interdependence rather than the professional distance of the expert. Whilst research from the Diocese of Oxford suggests that the traditional theory-into-practice methods of theological scholarship positively disable enabling ministry, research from the United States suggests that ministers thrive and grow when the horizon of their learning is consistently focussed on application to ministry rather than theological scholarship.

The report concludes with four far-reaching proposals intended to align the culture and practice of IME 1 with the vision of enabling ministry. All are easily achievable, given the will in the sector and the wider Church to embrace such a vision, though each requires an investment of time and effort. However, it should not be supposed that these proposals are all that is required to achieve a pattern of enabling ministry. IME 1 is only one element in the wider system that is the Church of England as a whole. Therefore the report also examines the cultural obstacles that need to be addressed if the changes we are proposing are to bear fruit.

The changes we believe are necessary in the wider Church include:

- further work to reimagine the nature of ministry and patterns of ministry
- greater resourcing for locally based 'education for discipleship' together with training for the ministry of the whole church
- attention given to the shape of IME 2 and CMD, which, as the responsibility of individual dioceses, currently presents a very mixed picture
- public repentance for the sin of clericalism through representational confession.

The proposals we make relating to IME 1 are:

1. Although the selection and formation qualities for ordained ministry make reference to everyday faith and include the qualities required for enabling ministry, neither concept emerges clearly from the wording, especially that of the 'top level' grids. We therefore propose a review of the wording of the selection and formation qualities grids to ensure that the references to everyday faith and enabling ministry are explicit and prominent.
2. Research in the Oxford Diocese suggests that few TEIs are intentional in forming candidates for enabling ministry. We therefore propose that TEIs consult all relevant stakeholders to ensure that their curricula, both explicit and 'hidden', meet the requirements of the completed formation grid and embed a vision of enabling ministry.
3. Although a high level of scholarly attainment is an expectation of all TEI staff, there is at present no corresponding expectation relating to teaching skills. We therefore propose that TEI staff be encouraged and, over an appropriate timescale, expected to become competent in the pedagogy of adult education.
4. If the modules of the Common Awards programme are to be fit for the purpose of forming candidates for enabling ministry, it is vital that the vision of enabling ministry is appropriately embedded in their aims and learning outcomes. We therefore propose that the Common Awards team draw together a group of appropriate size and mix to review the Programme Specifications and module outlines.

Revd Dr David Heywood, June 2022

Formation for Enabling Ministry

Introduction: A Transformed Theological Education

A gradual shift is under way within the Church of England towards a reimagined pattern of ministry for a post-Christian, pluralist society. This shift relocates, or for some releases, the role that lay and ordained ministers play in enabling the whole people of God in their wider vocation and ministry, in the whole of life.

In 2017, 'Setting God's People Free' expressed this challenge as one to:

> empower, liberate and disciple the 98% of the Church of England who are not ordained and therefore set them free for fruitful, faithful mission and ministry, influence, leadership and, most importantly, vibrant relationship with Jesus in all of life … not only in church-based ministry on a Sunday but in work and school, in gym and shop, in field and factory, Monday to Saturday.[3]

This challenge, the report goes on, requires two significant shifts in culture and practice:

1. Until, together, ordained and lay, we form and equip lay people to follow Jesus confidently in every sphere of life in ways that demonstrate the Gospel we will never set God's people free to evangelise the nation.
2. Until laity and clergy are convinced, based on their baptismal mutuality, that they are equal in worth and status, complementary in gifting and vocation, mutually accountable in discipleship, and equal partners in mission, we will never form Christian communities that can evangelise the nation.[4]

Together, the report states, these shifts represent a 'seismic revolution in the culture of the Church', which places enabling the ministry of the whole Church in every sphere of life at the heart of its vision for the ministry. The authors quote Bishop Graham Cray, 'Churches have to realise that the core of their calling is to be disciple-making communities, whatever else they do.'[5]

A revolution in the culture of the Church enabling it to become more fruitful in mission clearly has consequences for the ways in which lay and ordained ministers are formed. Responding to the vision expressed in the General Synod paper 'Ministry for a Christian presence in every community', Bishop Jonathan Clark writes: 'Putting this vision into practice requires a significant and concerted change in the learning and formation culture of the whole church.'[6]

'Setting God's People Free' surveys the factors that inhibit the Church's recognition of the vital importance of lay discipleship and implicates ministerial training in a variety of ways:

- the theology ministers are taught lacks a framework for understanding the ministry of the whole church (pages 15-16)
- the formation of clergy 'de-emphasises' a lay perspective (page 16)

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[3] Archbishops' Council, 'Setting God's People Free' (SGPF), 2017, p. 1. Available at gs-2056-setting-gods-people-free.pdf (churchofengland.org)
[4] SGPF, p. 2.
[5] SGPF, p. 21.
[6] Ministerial Formation for the Church of England: A Resource Paper on behalf of the Ministry Council, 2019, p. 4.

- some clergy feel inadequately trained to release the gifts of lay people page 17)
- and resources for training are still overwhelmingly devoted to training the clergy rather than the ministry of the whole Church (page 18).

Although this may be too sweeping a condemnation of all training in all places, it nevertheless behoves us to pay attention to the anxiety expressed and the real failings detected. In calling for a culture that 'embodies in every structure and way of working' the mutual baptismal calling of clergy and lay people, TEIs are clearly among the structures that are in view.[7]

A review of the considerable amount of work already undertaken, which forms the background to the changes this paper is proposing, including the Faith and Order Commission report 'Kingdom Calling' and changes to the selection and formation criteria for ordained and licensed lay ministry, is given in Appendix A. A brief account of research undertaken in the Diocese of Oxford which throws light on the some of the existing failings of IME 1 is given in Appendix B.

The question to which this paper is addressed is, 'How are lay and ordained ministers most effectively equipped to enable everyday faith, that is discipleship in every sphere of life?' Both discipleship and ministerial formation involve the whole person. Both are intended to lead to personal and relational transformation that impacts the disciple's or minister's intellectual understanding, affective commitments, values, behaviour and relationships. Accordingly, to understand how ministers are equipped to enable everyday faith, we need to address two questions: 'How do disciples learn everyday faith?' and, 'How are ministers most effectively formed for ministry?'

This entails a shift of emphasis: from the *content of what is taught* to the *process of learning*. Our goal is an approach to ministerial formation in which not only is enabling everyday faith central to the vision of ministry, but which also aligns with the ways disciples learn everyday faith and ministers learn ministry.

How do disciples learn everyday faith?

For many Christians, the idea of everyday faith may still be unfamiliar. Our understanding and experience of the life of the church centres on the gathered community at worship rather than the 'dispersed' or 'sent' community. In common with the wider society in which the church is set, our definition of a Christian may be someone who 'goes to church' rather than someone who 'follows Jesus'. We have few examples of what lay discipleship in every sphere of life might look like. And this lack of experience and the dearth of concrete exemplars affects ministers and theological educators as much as it does lay disciples themselves.

Appendix C provides some examples mainly drawn from the booklet *Calling All God's People*[8] and the work of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) together with some reflections on the nature of everyday faith. This introduction is further expanded in Unit 1 of the online programme, 'Formation for Enabling Ministry' available on the Common Awards hub via the drop-down menu under 'Staff Menu'.

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[7] SGPF, p. 5.
[8] *Calling All God's People,* London: Church House, 2019.

Everyday faith may briefly be defined as the intention to live out the values of the kingdom of God in every sphere of life: the workplace, the family, voluntary activities and leisure pursuits. By so doing, Christians act as both 'salt' and 'light' (Matthew 5:13-16): 'salt' as they influence the culture, relationships, values and goals of the communities in which they live, 'light' when opportunities arise to witness openly to their faith.

The formation of the disciples as followers of Jesus forms a major theme of all four Gospels. In each of the Gospels, Jesus is shown calling disciples who accompany him, learn the values, perspectives and behaviours appropriate to God's kingdom, and are trained to become ministers of the gospel. This learning takes a variety of forms:

- Formal teaching, in the form of memorable stories and brief summaries such as the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer.
- Observation of Jesus' encounters with a variety of people, from outcasts to people of high status, people in need, enquirers and opponents.
- Reflection together on success and failure, mistakes and misunderstandings, the challenges of opponents and the attitudes Jesus displays towards those in need, outsiders, Gentiles and people in positions of power.
- Challenging assignments, such as a mission journey, followed by debriefing with Jesus.

Together, the disciples formed a learning community, in which formal instruction took place in the midst of shared experience, action and reflection. Sylvia Wilkie Collinson draws attention to this as the heart of Jesus' approach, the key method by which he was able to facilitate the development of a genuine learning community among this mixed group of people: 'The action-reflection method … provides a solution to every caring teacher's problem, that of encouraging those not gifted academically to learn and operate successfully at their own level of giftedness.'[9]

A similar mixture of learning methods can be observed in the way discipleship is learned today:

- Formal learning takes a variety of forms, including personal Bible study, sermons, study groups and courses, conferences and festivals.
- Alongside these, there is a wide variety of informal ways in which Christians learn through participation in the life of the local church. A report of 2015 from the St Peter's Saltley Trust entitled, 'What Helps Disciples Grow?' lists over 30 potential sources of learning including sources of informal learning such as attending worship, close friendships, a direct call or experience from God, participating in the church's mission activities and campaigning for social justice other than through the church. Of over 1,000 participants, more than 95% listed more the five activities as sources of growth and over 50% listed between 14 and 28, with the average being 20. The report's findings are explored in greater depth in Unit 5 of the online programme.[10]
- Major and minor challenges including disappointment, failure, conflict and tragedy may lead to the questioning of faith and require the application of practical wisdom.

Thus, discipleship today is also learned through a combination of formal and informal learning, much of which includes reflection on action and experience. The outcome of this learning is what philosopher Charles Taylor has called a 'social imaginary', a 'largely unstructured' and socially held understanding of the way things are and ought to be: an 'implicit grasp of social space' supported by

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[9] Sylvia Wilkie Collinson, Making Disciples: The Significance of Jesus' Teaching Methods for Today's Church, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006 (previously published by Paternoster, 2004), p. 103-4.
[10] See https://www.saltleytrust.org.uk/whdg/ last accessed 12 May 2022.

a 'repertoire of collective actions', an internally held picture of what it means to live a Christian life.[11] Through participation in the life of both church and wider community, church members develop what, in theological terms, we have become used to thinking of as *habitus,* their own repertoire of habitual ways of thinking, feeling and acting. This will include a cognitive dimension in the form of what Jeff Astley has called 'ordinary theology' and Kathryn Tanner 'everyday theology', the beliefs of those without formal theological training.[12] However, intellectual belief is necessarily integrated with affective commitments, dispositions and habitual ways of behaving. In fact, without the dispositions expressed in ways of behaving – such as to love and worship God, oppose evil and injustice, care for one's neighbours, take little thought for tomorrow, be joyful in tribulation – the concepts involved can hardly be said to have been understood.[13]

The Church at local and national level thus forms a community of practice through which its members learn their faith. This approach to social learning, which is explored in greater depth in Unit 4 of the online programme, has been developed by Etienne Wenger (now known as Etienne Wenger-Trayner) and his colleagues. Its fundamental assumptions are these:

- Humans are social beings and learning takes place in relationships. As Wenger writes, 'Far from being trivially true, this fact is a central aspect of learning.'
- Learning is taking place all the time, motivated by our need to develop and maintain relationships and meet the challenges of everyday life. Knowledge is defined as, 'competence with respect to valued enterprises.'
- Learning is the product of active engagement with the world, or 'participation' in shared situations.
- The outcome of learning is meaning: our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful.[14]

Two vitally important insights emerge from these assumptions:

- The form in which our knowledge is held is practical know-how: knowing how to engage in shared situations. Much of this knowledge is held tacitly. In the words of Michael Polanyi, 'We know more than we can tell.'[15]
- Learning in community how to engage with shared situations is the way we develop a sense of identity. Our identity is related to the roles we play in communities of practice.

For most people, the earliest and most formative community of practice is the family we grew up in. There we learn how to develop relationships and what we should expect from them. There we develop our sense of identity: we learn how to *be* a son or daughter, brother or sister and, by observing our parents, a father or mother. Our identity develops as we identify with aspects of these roles and make them our own. Later, in work situations, we learn how to *be* a teacher, a hairdresser, a business leader, and these too become part of our identity to the extent that we identify with and value the role.

In the theory of learning through communities of practice, the focus is necessarily on the horizontal dimension in which people develop a sense of identity through participation in the life of the community. In relation to Christian formation, it is necessary to make room for a vertical dimension,

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[11] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age,* London: Harvard University Press, 2007, pp. 171-6.

[12] Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology,* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002; Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture,* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997.

[13] Dean M. Martin, 'Learning to become a Christian,' in *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education,* ed. Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis, Leominster: Gracewing, 1994, pp. 184-201.

[14] Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice,* Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 4.

[15] Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension,* University of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 4.

namely the action of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit may be understood as a gift of new identity received at the 'tacit' level of knowledge. The Holy Spirit witnesses 'along with our spirit' that we are children of God (Romans 8:16). The Spirit enables us to 'understand the gifts bestowed on us by God' (1 Corinthians 2:12). For this to become transformative, however, our tacit knowledge of who we are in Christ needs to become embodied in the life of the community and above all in the *habitus* of individuals. Spiritual disciplines, our engagement with the life of the community and our participation in God's mission are among the means through which our identity in Christ becomes real in experience and action.[16]

The Christian community is not the only community of practice to which Christians belong. Everyone belongs to multiple communities of practice and negotiating multi-membership is a fact of everyday life. Mark Greene of LICC, whose work has done so much to promote and resource everyday faith, is fond of saying that, 'Life is a peach, not an orange.' By this he means that we should not compartmentalise our lives into the 'sacred' and the 'secular' but recognize that Jesus is Lord of every facet of our lives and live them all for him. From the point of view of communities of practice, however, life is more like an orange, made up of segments, each segment a different community. This has several significant consequences:

- Our identity is formed in multiple communities. In one we may be daughter and mother, in another a hairdresser or headteacher, follower or influencer in an online forum, as a citizen a supporter or opponent of Brexit or of the Government, and as a church member the secretary of the PCC or a valued member of the choir.
- As well as learning to participate in a variety of different communities, we also learn to negotiate the boundaries between them, in such things as the way we dress, the goals we aspire to, the way we treat colleagues and friends.
- Some communities of practice are more important to us than others. A job may become a major source of identity or merely the way we earn a living. For church members, Christian identity may be their most important reference point or peripheral to the rest of their lives.

Living out everyday faith means negotiating the boundaries between communities of practice: applying the values and perspectives we develop as a member of our Christian community of practice in another community: seeing our business as being about people rather than profit, praying for customers, promoting kindness and justice in our school. It entails living out our identity as a Christian in a community where we may also have an identity as skilled electrician, part-time teaching assistant, senior consultant, mum at the school gate, chair of the committee or family carer.

An example given in *Calling All God's People* is Victoria, an apprentice hairdresser. When washing people's hair, she prays for them. She takes a Christian practice and does it in the workplace. She takes her beliefs that God loves people and that prayer can make a difference and finds a way of expressing this at work. This application of Christian faith may appear simple but in fact is far from straightforward. Victoria has had to work out what will be acceptable in her workplace. She can strike up a conversation with her clients, enquire about their daily lives, but not be too intrusive. She can pray quietly so that nobody notices but not out loud.

Negotiating the boundary between the Christian community of practice and the other spheres of life has to be carefully thought out and may well require the support of others. If ministers are to enable

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[16] For a more detailed exploration of the work of the Spirit in Christian formation, see David Heywood, *Divine Revelation and Human Learning,* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

everyday faith, they will need the skills to do this. In the terminology of communities of practice, this is known as 'brokering': making connections between different communities, helping people to negotiate the boundaries between them. Ministers who do this do not need to be experts in all the communities that church members belong to though a degree of 'knowledgeability' may help. But this is the sort of things that ministers can learn from their congregations, who, after all, are the experts on their own lives. What they need are skills of coaching or facilitation, the ability to help people to reflect on the challenges they face, to discover where God might be at work and how their Christian values and identity might be lived out.

Action and reflection, in particular the skills of theological reflection with the aim of discerning the presence of God and the signs of his kingdom in everyday situations, thus lies at the heart of everyday faith. Appendix D draws on recent research to explore the relationship between the theological reflection of ordinary Christians and its place in ministerial formation. It concludes that alongside the application of theological reflection as a tool for professional development ministers need to be equipped to lead others in theological reflection as a means of enabling discipleship.

Reflection is also required to address the considerable obstacles to everyday faith. These include:

- The 'immanent frame' of Western society's social imaginary. Some five hundred years ago in the West, observes Charles Taylor, it was virtually impossible NOT to believe in God. Belief in God was an accepted feature of the social imaginary that bound everyone together and made society possible. In our modern secular age, however, at least in the West, it is very difficult TO believe in God. And even for the staunchest believer, God is only one possibility among others. In the workplace we encounter people of all faiths and none. Our leisure activities may have little or no reference to faith. For the majority of our time, we engage with communities of practice in which the shared assumption is that God is hardly relevant.
- The ideology of pluralism. A pluralist society insists not only that different faiths and belief systems must be allowed to exist side by side but also that they may not interfere with each other. To express or be guided by Christian principles in the public sphere is to provoke lack of understanding, if not suspicion or outright opposition. Although it is true that there is a robust case to be made for a Christian contribution to public discourse, the sense that pluralism forbids the expression of Christian perspectives outside the sphere of faith was one of the three main obstacles to everyday faith expressed by participants in the Oxford research.

In addition to the obstacles encountered in a post-Christian, largely secular society, there are those to be overcome in the life of the church, arising from inherited models of ministry and ministerial formation:

- The 'professional model' of ordained ministry. Since the nineteenth century, the role of clergy in society has been closely aligned with that of professionals such as doctors, teachers, lawyers and engineers. Each profession acts as guardian of a specific field of expertise, supported and sustained by appropriate professional institutions. As a result, the clergy come to be seen as experts in the business of faith and the life of the church with the laity reduced to a dependent status as clients of the clergy.[17]
- The academic nature of theological training. Whereas the 'ordinary theology' of the laity is integrated with a knowledge of God that guides and gives life to a *habitus* or habitual way of

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[17] Anthony Russell, *The Clerical Profession,* London: SPCK, 1980. See also David Heywood, *Reimagining Ministry,* London: SCM, 2011, pp. 1-14.

life, the 'theology' that lay and ordained ministers are expected to study takes the form of a self-conscious scholarly enterprise. The differences between academic and everyday theology are explored in greater depth in Unit 7 of the online programme. Clergy and lay ministers need to draw on the Church's rich tradition of theology and biblical interpretation to inform and enable everyday faith. The danger is that their training inducts them into a world that is closed to the ordinary lay members of the church, conveying the impression that laity lack the tools to make decisions that are informed by their Christian faith.

To summarise, everyday faith is a practice developed in community through a variety of formal and informal learning experiences. Above and beyond the ability to participate with confidence in the life and mission of the church, it requires the ability to negotiate the boundaries between communities of practice, applying one's Christian identity and perspective in the context of other practices. Equipping disciples with the confidence and skills to accomplish this requires ministers, both lay and ordained, to play an enabling role. What, then, do we mean by 'enabling ministry'?

What is enabling ministry?

The practice of ministry requires a distinctive complex of knowledge, skills and dispositions. That complex or, to view it in another way, the 'social imaginary' that undergirds the practice of ministry has been described by the American Professor Craig Dykstra as 'pastoral imagination', the distilled experience that guides and resources the 'pastor' or minister.[18] Dykstra points to four elements in pastoral imagination:

- the minister's understanding of Scripture and theology and their ability to interpret and draw from them in the contexts of everyday life
- the minister's emotional intelligence, leading to 'an accurate sense of what makes human beings tick', which equips them for the task of enabling and encouraging individual discipleship
- 'a complex understanding of how congregations and other institutions actually work' and the ability that flows from this to shape the life of the church as both a worshipping and a mission community
- an ability to understand the wider society, the world the church exists to serve and the context in which mission and ministry take place.

Pastoral imagination is undergirded by 'practical wisdom', a kind of knowing that is 'morally attuned', that enables the practitioner to choose, 'the right thing, in the right way, at the right time.'[19] In pastoral or missional encounters, the minister draws on the practical wisdom of pastoral imagination to help them to make sense of the situation in all its complexity, to negotiate their role,

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[18] Craig Dykstra, 'Pastoral and ecclesial imagination,' in *For Life Abundant: Practical theology, theological education and Christian ministry,* ed. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008, pp. 41-61. See also Anthony Clarke, *Forming Ministers or Training Leaders: An Exploration of Practice in Theological Colleges,* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2021, pp. 7-13.

[19] Dorothy C. Bass, Kathleen A. Cahalan, Bonnie J. Miller-McClemore, James R. Nieman and Christian B. Scharen, *Christian Practical Wisdom: what it is, why it matters,* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016, p.5, quoting from Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics.*

recognise God's presence and action, decide on an appropriate goal based on their understanding of God's kingdom, discern God's present call, and to draw on a repertoire of possible responses.

Pastoral imagination is complemented by 'ecclesial imagination', the whole church's vision of its life and purpose. The minister's desire for the church to reach out in mission and to enable lay discipleship and ministry will be relatively fruitless if the congregation fails to respond to this call and vision. But when minister and congregation share a God-given vision and respond together to a God-given call, each animates the other, the minister enabling the congregation to become all it should be, the congregation affirming and animating the ministry of their leaders.[20]

In his seminal work on reflective practice, Donald Schön presents the analogy of two types of terrain, the high ground and the swamp.[21] On the high ground are situated 'manageable problems that lend themselves to solution through research-based theories and techniques'. In the swampy lowlands are found the problems of everyday life, messy, confusing and difficult to solve. The irony, he writes, is that the high-level problems are often those least important to society at large. It is the difficult problems of the everyday that are of most concern. Ministry, of course, is situated in the swamp. Its territory is the ill-defined and sometimes confusing situations encountered in everyday life, yet often of vital importance to ordinary people.

Schön concluded his study of reflective practice with some remarks on the changing status of professionals. In the traditional professional–client relationship – teacher and student, doctor and patient, architect and client – the professional functions as the fount of all knowledge by virtue of their technical expertise, enabling them to preserve their status and maintain distance from the client. The client, meanwhile, occupies a dependent relationship as a passive recipient of the professional's services. Schön suggested that professionals need the courage to move from the role of technical expert to become instigators of shared reflective practice. The doctor consults the patient about their treatment, the teacher acknowledges the questions they cannot answer and facilitates shared exploration, the architect explores the possibilities with their client. By seeking their client's cooperation, professional and client learn together, and real connection is established. The client moves from dependence to inter-dependence, drawing on the professional's specialist knowledge to grow in competence and confidence.[22]

If enabling ministry is to take root, ministers need to make a similar transition. Rather than playing the role of expert by virtue of their specialist training, clergy and lay ministers need to learn how to lead their congregations in reflection together, thus enabling both individual and congregational learning and growth. As Thomas Hawkins expresses it:

> When congregations become learning organizations, church leaders reframe their basic tasks and responsibilities. Pastors cease to perform ministry on the congregation's behalf. They instead foster learning environments where the whole people of God can shape and reshape meaning within a community of shared practice, continually clarifying those

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[20] ACCM Occasional Paper 22, *Education for the Church's Ministry,* 1987, paragraph 29.
[21] Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner,* Farnham: Ashgate, 1991, pp. 42-3; *Educating the Reflecting Practitioner,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987, p. 3.
[22] *The Reflective Practitioner,* pp. 290-307.

meanings in the light of a deeper understanding of the revelation made known in Jesus Christ.[23]

This move from the minister as expert to facilitator of shared ministry entails a far-reaching cultural shift. Writing about the introduction of the Shared Ministry scheme in the Diocese of Durham, Adrian Dorber reflects:

> In Shared Ministry parishes we have noticed a battle for the soul of the Church of England. There are those who want to maintain a Church that had its heyday in the 1950s. Its dependability and professionalism was the pastoral bulwark of the nation. It made few demands but it was worth supporting for its absolute accessibility. It was the Church in institutional form. Ranged against this ecclesiology is a model of a Church as communion. It prizes relationship, participation, faith, action and worship.[24]

Dorber is describing the shift from the 'professional model', in which clergy performed ministry on behalf of others, to shared ministry. A vision for mission and ministry with everyday faith at its heart entails an even greater shift in which the focus expands from lay ministry to lay discipleship. In this vision, clergy and licensed lay ministers serve not only as enablers and equippers of those with whom they now share ministry but as enablers of the whole church, helping each member to respond to their call from God to serve him not just in the church but in the whole of life.

One element of this shift is a change in relationships. In the model of church as communion, professional distance between expert clergy and their lay 'clients' ceases to be appropriate. The role of facilitator and enabler requires not only new skills but relationships of vulnerability and openness. Clergy share in reflection, learning with and from their fellow-disciples, seeking to discern the presence of God and the signs of his kingdom, exploring together God's call to mission in the context of their community and the spheres of everyday life inhabited by lay disciples.

The role of the clergy has thus changed. From exercising ministry on behalf of others, they move to a position of oversight of the ministry of the whole church. Steven Croft describes four aspects of oversight ministry:

- Watching over oneself: giving time and attention to rooting one's life in God, maintaining a healthy rhythm of work, prayer and rest
- Enabling and encouraging the discipleship and ministry of each church member
- Building up the congregation as a missionary community, expressing in its life God's pattern for relationships and love for the world
- Exercising leadership and influence in local communities and connecting local churches.[25]

These four aspects of the ministry of oversight are well represented in the new formation qualities, due to be introduced in 2022, evidence is required that ordinands and clergy at the end of curacy:

- nurture their private prayer life with regular spiritual practice; are growing in self-awareness and capable of reflecting on strengths and vulnerabilities; can balance the demands of

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[23] Thomas Hawkins, *The Learning Congregation,* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, p. 11.
[24] Adrian Dorber, 'Why is local ministry important?' in *Local Ministry: Story, process, meaning,* ed. Robin Greenwood and Caroline Pascoe, London: SPCK, 2006, p. 81.
[25] Steven Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions,* London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2nd edition 2008, pp. 154-92; and previously in 'Leadership in the Emerging Church', in Foundation for Church Leadership, *Focus on Leadership,* 2005, pp. 7-41.

> ministry, family and friends; can manage their time; and, while accepting the costliness of ministry are aware of the proper limits to that costliness and able to accept support

- have the capacity to encourage, enable and develop the leadership of others; can encourage others in everyday faith in school, workplace or family
- can draw on Scripture, theology and contemporary perspectives on leadership to inform discipleship, leadership and community formation; are developing skills in enabling others to assume roles of responsibility, in drawing together teams of volunteers and in mentoring and supervising others
- can understand the economic, social and cultural character of the context in which they have been placed and can respond in ways that correspond with the *missio Dei* and the five marks of mission; and are exercising representative ministry across a range of settings

The formation qualities can thus be said to cohere with a model of 'enabling ministry'. However, there is only one evidence statement that explicitly mentions 'everyday faith' and none in the 'top level' statements. This paper therefore proposes that slight changes be made to the wording of the formation qualities to give the task of enabling and encouraging everyday faith greater visibility and Appendix G contains some suggestions.

Encountering Theological Scholarship

We have described everyday faith as a practice learned in community and resourced by a Christian social imaginary. In a similar way, ordained ministry is a separate though related practice, resourced by 'pastoral imagination'. Both pastoral imagination and the Christian social imaginary integrate intellectual understanding with affective commitments, appropriate skills and dispositions and habitual behaviours, which together form and maintain the disciple's or minister's sense of identity and role. In the discernment process and then in ministerial training, the ordinand or lay candidate encounters a third practice, the practice of theological scholarship.

One of the outcomes of the Oxford research reported in Appendix B was that curates and lay ministers found the academic element of their training positively disabling in relation to everyday faith: that is to say, the effect of training in theological scholarship was to make enabling everyday faith more difficult. An analogous piece of research into practice-based education helps to explain why this should be.[26] The subjects of the research were healthcare support workers in training to become nurses. They were thus in transition between one community of practice and another, uprooting their identities from the one and re-rooting them in the new community they aspired to enter. Though their training was largely based in the workplace, the required qualification was a module in Health and Social Care shared with other students working in similar areas. Through studying for this module, students were introduced to a body of knowledge including frameworks and ideas derived from the scientific disciplines.

Typically, students valued this 'book learning' only to the extent that it could be seen to be related to caring for patients. 'In their essays, they had to express their competence through describing, comparing and contrasting models of care, rather than enacting these in the workplace. This did not

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[26] Mark Fenton-O'Creevy, Lindsay Brigham, Sylvia Jones and Ann Smith, 'Students at the academic-workplace boundary: Tourists and sojourners in practice-based education', in *Learning in Landscapes of Practice,* pp. 43-63.

fit with their emerging identities as a nurse, whom they saw as a carer and a doer rather than as an abstract thinker'.[27]

The research team were able to distinguish three types of response to the encounter with the requirements of the academy. A very small number of students chose a trajectory that took them to the heart of the academic community in the form of further study and higher qualifications. Some become 'sojourners': they were content to commit to academic standards and practices for the purposes of training though their ultimate destination lay in the practice of nursing. A third group the researchers described as 'tourists': 'they engage superficially in the academic practices but with no commitment to an academic identity and no engagement with the meaning of these practices.'[28]

Each of these identities is readily recognisable among students in ministerial training. None of those who contributed to the Oxford research focus groups had gone on to become academic theologians but some had evidently been sojourners:

> I loved it when I was doing IME 1; I enjoyed poring over books in the library and finding quotes and saying, oh that matches with that, and ooh, that relates to that, and that webbing of lots of … different parts of theology and how they all sparked off one another …

Others had clearly been 'tourists':

> The people that taught us are probably ministering in parishes but they seem to be more in their books and in what the Greek or Hebrew said, or what some guy with a German name said … It was books, books, books and dons and ivory towers …

> … a lot of the time we're thinking, this isn't really helping us for what we're actually going to be doing … what you're teaching us isn't actually what we're going to use …

Comments like these might suggest the ministers in question were poor students or simply rejected the relevance of their academic study. In fact, their response was much more nuanced than this. Like the health-care workers in training to become nurses, their intrinsic motivation and developing sense of identity lay in the direction of the practice they were joining. In relation to the ministerial community of practice, they were apprentices, working towards competence in the practice. In relation to the academic community, their participation would only ever be peripheral. Its value for them was the extent to which it equipped them for the practice of ministry. Comments reflecting this state of affairs abound in the focus group discussions:

> We all have to have an understanding of theology, obviously, and the Bible, and I do accept that, but I think a lot of the training could be considered to be very academic in comparison with some of the more practical things, and a lot of people in training prefer the practical stuff to the theoretical stuff.

And in fact, the ministers were able to discern relatively clearly the relationship between the academic demands of their training and the situations they found themselves in ministry:

> It's a kind of mode of discourse, basically … a mode of communication … that might be very helpful for us in a certain situation, but perhaps in everyday parish life it's not the way we should communicate with the people around us …

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[27] Fenton-O'Creevy *et al.,* p. 48.
[28] Fenton-O'Creevy *et al.,* p. 46.

> I think it can get lost for the laity, in the sense of, theological study is something that either clergy do, or is something that you do academically … They do kind of think theologically, but it's kind of broken up and we don't really help them understand that, and it can seem quite abstract to them as well …

What these participants are moving toward is a concept of the minister as someone with the ability to facilitate shared reflection. Laurie Green refers to such ministers as 'people's theologians', 'whose task is to provide appropriate learning exercises and opportunities for the group members to take up their responsibilities and make their own decisions.' Such people need to be steeped in the Christian tradition but act as servants of the tradition rather than controllers. Their task is to 'give the work to the people' in a way that liberates and empowers them (see further Appendix E).[29]

How then are ministers to be 'steeped in the tradition' in such a way as to be equipped to offer it as a resource to Christians engaged in the struggle to live authentic Christian lives in the spheres of everyday life? In the United States, Christian Scharen and Eileen Campbell-Reed have been conducting a detailed study of the way in which ordained ministers learn pastoral imagination.[30] At the five-year stage of the study, some significant findings emerged:

1. The practice for which ministers are being prepared needs to be kept in view at every stage of formation. A focus on abstract, decontextualised knowledge does not equip ministers to draw on Scripture and theology to resource practice.
2. Students and ministers are most helped by teachers and mentors who encourage them to integrate their understanding of Scripture and theology with real-life situations. Most of these will be experienced practitioners with skills of teaching or supervision. If students are to be taught by academic specialists, academic learning must be related to practice. They are not helped when the horizon in view is the purely scholarly pursuit of learning.
3. Pastoral imagination develops through a process of reflection over the long haul, punctuated by moments of crisis in which transformative learning takes place. Ministerial formation therefore needs to equip students to make theological reflection part of their habitual practice, whether through formal or informal methods.

These findings point to the need to focus not so much on the *content of what is taught* as on the *process of learning.* They suggest that formation for enabling ministry requires a shift from the subject-centred approach characteristic of the academy to the life-centred approach characteristic of adult education, in which application to ministry remains in view at every stage.

A Renewed Learning Culture for Ministerial Formation

If an enabling pattern of ministry is to become a reality in the Church rather than simply an aspiration, ministers will need to build certain kinds of relationships with their congregations: relationships of enabling and encouragement that require companionship, trust and mutual vulnerability. It is therefore vital that TEIs model relationships of this kind between staff and students. Ministers need to learn the habits and skills of facilitation and shared reflection. It is vital,

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[29] For a fuller account of this aspect of the Oxford research, see David Heywood, 'Why does academic theology disable ministry?', *Practical Theology 15.4,* 2022 (forthcoming).

[30] Christian Scharen and Eileen Campbell-Reed, *Learning Pastoral Imagination: a five-year report on how new ministers learn in practice,* Auburn Theological Seminary, 2016. Learning-Pastoral-Imagination.pdf (auburnseminary.org)

therefore, that staff demonstrate and teach these skills. Most important of all is the formation of ministerial identity. An identity that depends on distance, on the status of the minister as the expert on whom the congregation is expected to be dependent effectively precludes the possibility of enabling ministry and is toxic to mission. Ministerial formation therefore requires a pedagogy in which staff treat learning as a shared exploration, valuing and incorporating the experience and wisdom students bring.

Clues about the shape of this pedagogical style are to be found in the acknowledged characteristics of adult learners:

- Adults' orientation to learning is life-centred rather than subject-centred. We are all familiar with an educational system in which, from the beginning, knowledge has been divided into more or less discreet subject areas. However, adult learning is not subject-centred. Adults learn in order to solve problems, equip themselves for new tasks and to discover and develop their sense of identity and competence. Thus, ministerial students enter training to learn ministry rather than the subject areas into which the curriculum is divided. They learn effectively when the connections between the subject and the ministry to which they aspire are clearly apparent.

- Adults learn best when their existing experience is respected. In fact, 'deep learning' only takes place when the learner is given space and time to make connections between new information and their existing understanding. Staff need to recognise that students never come to ministerial training with no prior knowledge of the subject. All have experienced the Bible read in church and have a sense of how it functions for the congregations with which they are familiar. Most will have used the Bible in personal devotion. Some will have extensive knowledge of the Bible. All have learned through preaching and some through small groups some of the basic theological understandings of Christian faith. All have experience of making difficult decisions. Many are experienced leaders in the sphere of their previous roles. Teaching staff therefore need to respect this experience and avoid treating students as if they are novices who know little or nothing about their subject area. Jeff Astley draws attention to the dangers of this approach in trenchant terms. 'Much Christian and academic theological teaching,' he writes, 'seeks wholly to raze people's pre-existing theological fabrications to the ground, trampling their personal narratives and imaginative images, before attempting (often unsuccessfully) to build something entirely new and unrelated on the bulldozed site.'[31]

- Adults learn best when they can share ideas and reflect with others. Moreover, they are used to life in general being a shared task, to be tackled with colleagues and friends. Academic qualifications in which each person is expected to perform as an individual and receive an individual grade do not reflect the world with which are adult students are familiar. In the real world outside the walls of the academy most tasks require cooperation, and it is the wisdom of the team that matters most. Moreover, we are training students to work with and enable others. Ministerial formation thus requires an enabling and facilitating style in which students learn as much from one another as they do from the teacher.

- Adults learn best when they are enabled to evaluate their own learning. The tendency in academic learning to hold back assessment until the end of the course and expect the learner to be dependent on the assessment of staff is toxic to adult learning. Our students need to be empowered to evaluate their own learning. This means that assessment *for*

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[31] Jeff Astley, 'Ordinary Theology and the Learning Conversation with Academic Theology' in Jeff Astley and Leslie Francis (eds), *Exploring Ordinary Theology,* Farnham: Ashgate, 2013, pp. 47-48, 52.

learning needs to become a regular feature of ministerial training. Moreover, since giving and receiving feedback is a regular feature of ministerial life, learning how to do this constructively with one another is an essential preparation.[32]

All this requires a focus at least as much on the process of learning as on the content. It is the *way* students learn their theology rather than *what* they learn that will equip them for enabling ministry.

The requirements of the lockdown of 2020-21 have familiarised us all with the use of 'blended learning', in which students learn through a mixture of individual preparation and group sessions, whether on-line or in person. In fact, the work students put in to read and prepare for their assignments has always been an important part of the learning, so that 'blended learning' in this sense has always been a feature of student experience.

The three TEIs involved in the discussions that form the background to this paper all use a particular approach to blended learning known as 'flipped learning'. In flipped learning, students are expected to engage in individual learning in preparation for the group session, such as through set reading. The value of this is that the basic levels of cognitive learning, such as reading for comprehension, have already taken place before the shared teaching session. The shared session, in which the teacher is present to guide and direct, can then be devoted to more complex aspects of learning, such as weighing a variety of interpretations, integration with other areas of study, theological reflection, application to ministerial practice, or creative exploration.

Since adults learn best when they are enabled to integrate new areas of learning with their existing experience, it can be of benefit if the initial exercise in flipped learning consists not simply in taking in new information but being asked to respond to it in some way, perhaps with a view to drawing some initial conclusion to be tested in group discussion. Moreover, since both theological learning and ministry itself are self-involving, it is often valuable for the preparation to evoke a personal response so that values and commitments also become an element in the learning.

In flipped learning, the staff member (or members, since co-teaching can be of enormous benefit) do not cease to be experts in their subject area. They use this expertise to guide the learning process through the choice of initial reading, the learning exercises they devise, the way they lead the shared learning sessions, the assignments they set, and the comments they make on those assignments. However, they avoid reducing their students to dependence on this expertise. Instead, they actively facilitate exploration, encouraging students to engage directly with and respond to primary source material, and to work towards their own judgements and conclusions rather than merely echoing those of the teacher. In one institution in which flipped learning was used in some subject areas but not in others, the student verdict was unanimous: 'We have to work harder, but we learn more!'

For subject specialists, the transition from the pedagogy of higher education to that of adult education potentially poses a considerable challenge. Every practice operates according to its own goals and standards of excellence. In their personal study and engagement with other scholars, subject specialists are used to working to the standards of excellence characteristic of theological scholarship. In ministerial formation, they need to bear in mind the horizon of ministry, the goals and standards of excellence appropriate to ministerial practice. They need to devise learning exercises in which students engage with the whole person, affections and dispositions as well as intellectually; exercises in which they apply their learning to everyday faith and ministry;

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[32] Two short videos describing the characteristics of adult learners can be found at https://youtu.be/SArAggTULLU and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLJ7cRwKI-I. See also David Heywood, *Kingdom Learning,* London: SCM, 2017, pp. 38-59.

assignments designed to assess ministerial skills and outlook. They need to put on one side the teaching methods characteristic of the academy, based on the transfer of information, in favour of using face-to-face learning sessions for more demanding levels of engagement. In doing so, subject specialists have the opportunity to provide an example to their students of servant leadership, the willingness to step away from their natural areas of expertise and become vulnerable to provide formation of the highest quality.

Stage 3 of the online learning programme consisting of Units 9 to 12 provides the basic training required for this transition. A consideration drawn from Unit 12 of how to interpret the aims and learning outcomes of the essentially subject-centred modules of Common Awards for ministry-centred pedagogy together with an example of a learning session designed with this in mind is given in Appendix F.

Proposals

This paper has explored the 'significant and concerted change in the learning and formation culture of the whole church' that is required if lay and ordained ministers are to be formed for 'enabling ministry'. The proposals to emerge from this exploration in relation to IME 1 are these:

1. Although the selection and formation qualities for ordained ministry make reference to everyday faith and include the qualities required for enabling ministry, neither concept emerges clearly from the wording, especially that of the 'top level' grids. We therefore propose a review of the wording of the selection and formation qualities grids to ensure that the references to everyday faith and enabling ministry are explicit and prominent. Some suggestions for small but significant changes are given in Appendix G.

2. Research in the Oxford Diocese suggests that few TEIs are intentional in forming candidates for enabling ministry. We therefore propose that TEIs consult all relevant stakeholders to ensure that their curricula, both explicit and 'hidden', meet the requirements of the completed formation grid and embed a vision of enabling ministry. Some suggestions for such a process are given in Appendix H.

3. Although a high level of scholarly attainment is an expectation of all TEI staff, there is at present no corresponding expectation relating to teaching skills. We therefore propose that TEI staff be encouraged and, over an appropriate timescale, expected to become competent in the pedagogy of adult education. The online learning programme, 'Formation for Enabling Ministry' is provided as a means by which all involved in ministerial formation can develop these skills. It may be followed by individuals or together with colleagues over a timescale to suit each individual and institution. An outline of the programme is given at Appendix I.

4. Once a sufficient number of individuals and institutions begin to engage with the first three proposals, in particular the second and third, the momentum towards change in the culture of learning and formation will be under way. At this point, it will become appropriate to review the Common Awards programme itself, to ensure that the vision of enabling ministry is appropriately embedded in its aims and learning outcomes. We therefore propose that at an appropriate point the Common Awards team draw together a group of suitable size and mix to review the Programme Specifications and module outlines. Some suggestions for the way in which the modules and Programme Specifications might be modified are given in Appendix J.

Ministerial formation is only one element in the open system that is the Church. Attempting to change one element in a system is rarely effective because of the basic rule that any system is self-correcting. The change will always be opposed and undermined by the rest of the system.[33] Changes in our approach to ministerial formation will therefore only be effective to the extent that these changes are backed up by changes in the whole Church.

This paper is emphatically not produced on the assumption that by 'fixing' ministerial formation it is possible to 'fix' the church for mission. Rather, having explored the changes to ministerial formation that are needed to place enabling ministry at the centre of the church's vision for ministry, it is necessary also to take into account the cultural obstacles present in the church as a whole and the systems to which it is open, namely the academy and wider society, which, if they are not addressed, will frustrate the shift in culture for which 'Setting God's People Free' has called. Appendix K explores some of the most significant of these cultural barriers identified in the discussions with the participating TEIs that form the foundation for this paper.

In concrete terms, the changes in the wider Church that are required to make the proposed changes to IME 1 most effective and fruitful are these:

- further work to reimagine the nature of ministry and patterns of ministry
- greater resourcing for locally based 'education for discipleship' together with training for the ministry of the whole church
- attention given to the shape of IME 2 and CMD, which, as the responsibility of individual dioceses, currently presents a very mixed picture
- public repentance for the sin of clericalism through representational confession.

Over the past twenty to thirty years the Churches that have adopted the Common Awards as their framework for ministerial formation have seen far-reaching and fundamental changes in their understanding and practice of mission and ministry, changes that are still ongoing. The members of the small group of theological educators whose discussions have given rise to this paper believe that these changes do not simply represent an expedient or pragmatic response to the demanding context the church in this country is currently facing. Rather, they believe that they have taken place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to adapt to a post-Christian and pluralist society.

To respond to the challenges posed by 'Setting God's People Free' by placing everyday faith at the heart of the Churches' vision for mission and ministry entails a further process of change described by that report as a 'seismic revolution' in the culture of the (Anglican) Church. It is our belief that the proposals made here to frame ministerial formation around a conception of 'enabling ministry' will facilitate the cultural changes the report is calling for and open the way to 'fruitful, faithful mission and ministry' for Christian disciples and ministers, both lay and ordained, and that this will further facilitate the impact on our society for which we all hope and pray.

Revd Dr David Heywood, June 2022

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[33] Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation,* London: Random House, 2006, pp. 56-8; Edwin Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family process in church and synagogue,* New York: Guilford, 1985.

Appendix A

Theological Imagination for Enabling Ministry

That change is required in the way that ordinands and lay candidates are formed for ministry emerges from a series of recent reports that both critique our current process and begin to provide an overarching theological vision for a refocused approach to ministry.

- The General Synod paper 'Ministry for a Christian presence in every community' acknowledges the baptismal call of all God's people and declares that, 'Ministers serve God's mission by enabling the Church's participation, through the energising power of the Spirit.' It describes ordained and licensed lay ministers as 'disciple-making disciples' who, 'teach and equip lay people to follow Jesus confidently in every sphere of life.' It calls for a ministry that is, 'outward-facing, proclaiming the Gospel, making disciples and strengthening the whole people of God for witness and service.'[34]
- The booklet *Calling All God's People* encourages all those exploring vocation to see the life of the dispersed church, engaged in discipleship and ministry in everyday life as equally important as that of the gathered church.[35]
- The Central Reader Council document 'Resourcing Sunday to Saturday Faith', addressed to licensed lay ministers, sets out a vision for this ministry as teachers of the faith, enablers of mission in the spheres of everyday life and leaders in church and society. It thus invites and encourages lay ministers to practice everyday faith in their own lives and teach and enable it among their congregations. 'We believe that Lay Ministers are uniquely equipped to enable all baptised Christians to live out their Christian faith in the places where they spend the majority of their time. As people who daily move between the worlds of work, home, social networks and church, Lay Ministers can teach the faith and play a part in leadership such that all God's people grow in confident and humble witness to God's kingdom.'[36]

And yet, as 'Setting God's People Free' acknowledges, the call to the Church to acknowledge and empower the laity for their share in God's mission goes back at least to the 1946 report 'Towards the Conversion of England' and has been regularly renewed since then. There is an evident gap between the Church's 'normative' and 'espoused' theology, in which the whole Church, lay and ordained, participate together in God's mission, and the 'operant theology' embedded in its culture and structures, in which the role of lay people is overlooked and devalued.[37] And so, in the words of Eve Poole, a further report entitled 'Kingdom Calling', 'asks a very difficult question: what is the point of

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[34] GS Misc. 1224, 'Ministry for a Christian presence in every community,' 2019. Available at
https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/GS%20Misc%201224%20Ministry%20for%20a%20Christian%20Presence.pdf
[35] *Calling All God's People,* London: Church House, 2019.
[36] Central Reader Council, 'Resourcing Sunday to Saturday Faith,' 2019, p. 6. Available at
Resourcing_Faith_Booklet_April_19.pdf (netdna-ssl.com)
[37] For 'normative', 'espoused' and 'operant' theology, see Helen Cameron, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney and Clare Watkins, *Talking about God in Practice,* London: SCM, 2010, pp. 53-6.

all these worthy Church of England reports if they have no effect?' Can we, 'break the cycle and prove that we can plot an alternative future'?[38]

'Kingdom Calling' sets out to engage in, 'a different kind of theological work,' which it describes as 'diagnostic' and 'healing', its goal being to 'articulate a theological diagnosis of this enduring resistance'.[39] That diagnosis is discovered in the dynamics of secularization as described in the work of José Casanova. According to Casanova, the process of secularization has resulted in:

- the differentiation of social space into autonomous spheres, locking religious institutions out of public space
- the privatization of religion, with religious voices ceasing to have influence in politics and the public sphere more generally
- and the decline in religious belief, weakening the visibility and authority of religious communities and institutions.

Thus the idea of empowering lay people even to live as Christian disciples, much less to bear witness to Christ in the various spheres of everyday life runs counter to a powerful shared narrative according to which religious belief can and should have little bearing on these areas.[40] Our challenge is similar to that facing Isaiah of the exile, contemplating the impressive-looking gods of Babylon to whom Israel had fallen captive: to remind God's people of the enduring power and authority of God the Creator and Saviour of his people and of the whole world.

The danger highlighted by this diagnosis is that in its current state of anxiety over falling numbers and viability, the Church may respond in purely pragmatic ways. It may seek to encourage its members to engage in mission for the purpose of saving the Church from decline rather than to serve God's kingdom and bless the wider community. It may look to its lay members, who engage with the spheres of everyday life on a daily basis, to make up for the declining influence of the clergy in public space. Clergy struggling to maintain declining worshipping communities may look to the laity not only to draw in new members but to offer their gifts to share the ever-increasing demands of ministry. There is thus a very real danger of reaching for the right solutions but for the wrong reasons. The 'fundamental imperative' for a ministry of enabling must not arise from anxiety about the state of the Church but, 'from the heart of the Christian faith.'[41]

This calls for a broader focus than that which links the call to enable lay discipleship with the Church's ability to evangelise the nation. 'Setting God's People Free' is prefaced by a quotation from Colossians 1:28, in which the apostle Paul shares his passion for the growth to maturity of all Christians. In this and other epistles, as well as in the writings of the other apostles, the outcome of this is described: churches that are places of love and mutual upbuilding (for example, 1 Corinthians 12 -14; Ephesians 4:1-16) and society impacted as Christians practice the lordship of Christ in the spheres of family, work and citizenship (for example, Colossians 3:18 – 4:1; Ephesians 5:21 – 6:9; 1 Peter 2:11 – 3:7). Everyday faith is vital to the Church's mission just because it is normal Christian discipleship, without which the Church fails to reflect the purpose for which God calls it.

In the Anglican tradition, the call to everyday faith is clearly articulated in the liturgy of adult baptism and confirmation, in which the newly baptized promise to continue in the apostles' teaching and

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[38] Church of England Faith and Order Commission, 'Kingdom Calling', 2020, p. viii. Available at https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Kingdom%20Calling%20Web%20Version.pdf
[39] Kingdom Calling, p. 3,4.
[40] Kingdom Calling, p. 9.
[41] Kingdom Calling, p. 10-11.

fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ by word and example, to seek and serve Christ in all people and to acknowledge Christ's authority over human society.[42] These words of the 'commission' clearly form a foundational text for Christian discipleship, emphasising the centrality of everyday faith in the Church's espoused theology. Moreover, the words at the outset of the ordinal, 'In baptism, the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom,' fulfil a similar role in relation to ordained ministry.[43] The Church faces the challenge of bridging the gap between the espoused theology expressed in its liturgy and the operant theology expressed in the whole of its life.

'Kingdom Calling' proposes three avenues to healing whereby this gap may be overcome:

- a recovery of the doctrines of creation and salvation as the context for an approach to vocation in the whole of life
- a renewed ecclesiology that integrates both gathered and dispersed church within the overall context of God's mission
- and renewed attention to equipping Christian disciples with the wisdom to respond to the challenges of contemporary culture, discerning where the culture is to be affirmed and where it should be resisted for the sake of the kingdom.

Summarising the actions taken to implement the recommendations of 'Setting God's People Free', General Synod paper 2248, presented to the Synod in February 2022, reports strong evidence that the shifts in culture called for by SGPF are beginning to take place.[44] The paper sets out these changes under four headings:

- work in dioceses to prioritise and promote the practice of everyday faith for all Christian disciples
- changes in communication that, 'collectively shape a richer story of how all God's people are involved in transforming work in our world'
- small shifts in the worship of the gathered church to encourage worshippers to recognise and embrace the call to 'be' the church in our communities and the contexts of everyday life
- reshaping of the selection, formation and development of lay and ordained ministries to embed the practice of 'enabling ministry'

Together these responses begin to embed both an espoused and operant theology in which the mutuality of calling of lay and ordained is recognised and practised. In particular, the practice of enabling ministry addresses the 'ongoing confusion around the meaning of lay-clergy mutuality', by extending the theological imagination surrounding discipleship and ministry beyond the complementarity of lay and ordained ministry to encompass, 'recognition of the variety of kingdom callings that followers of Jesus Christ have across social setting and in family and community responsibilities.' Expressed more simply, 'enabling ministry' means more than the enabling of lay ministry in the life of the church. It extends to the enabling of everyday faith in all the spheres of life.

This renewed theological imagination is also expressed in the revised formation qualities for local lay ministry, published in November 2021, and ordained ministry, due to be introduced in 2022. Under 'Love for God / Christ' the headline qualities for LLM/Reader ministry include, 'Is reliant on God, and

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[42] Archbishops' Council, *Common Worship: Christian Initiation,* London: Church House, 2006, p. 205.

[43] Archbishops' Council, *Common Worship: Ordination services study edition,* London: Church House, 2007, pp. 10, 32, 55.

[44] Available at https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/GS%202248%20SGPF%20Report%20Feb%2022%20.pdf. References are to paragraphs 3,4,5,8,16 and 18.

lives out an infectious, life-transforming, everyday-focussed faith.' The 'second-level' descriptions include someone who, 'models everyday faith related to the world of home, work and society,' and has the potential to, 'inspire others to develop their vocation.' The formation qualities for ordained ministers include the capacity to, 'encourage others in their everyday faith, in the school, workplace or family.' Some suggestions for the ways the formation qualities for ordained ministry might be further revised to give greater priority to this aspect of ordained ministry are given in Appendix G.

Those involved in the creation of this report believe a central facet of this vision for enabling ministry lies with encouraging a renewed theological imagination – one that shapes the life of the whole church and one that drives a refreshed approach to pastoral and mission centred ministry.

Appendix B

What equips ministerial trainees to enable whole life disciples?

A mainly qualitative research study was undertaken over five months in spring and summer 2019 within the Diocese of Oxford. The research question above was addressed in three parts: a survey of diocesan Licensed Lay Ministers and Curates (76 responses out 226), interviews with 7 relevant personnel from all six Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) within the Diocese, and four follow-up focus groups with a total of 24 respondents to the survey, 12 curates and 12 LLMs. The survey and around 94,000 words of interview data were manually analysed and the results presented in the research report.

The research question, while seemingly fairly innocuous, in fact proved to be a 'threshold question' for the Church, in that the responses to it raised deep and searching questions for the whole Church system around God, purpose (especially regarding the institutional Church in relation to the world), theological education, training and organisation. The findings may be summarised as follows:

1. Both the ministers and the TEI representatives shared a strongly held 'espoused theology' of the importance of lay discipleship as a key element in God's mission along with a recognition that the Church does not do well in supporting whole-life discipleship. These are some comments from the focus groups:

> [The task of ministers] is to help people realise that what they do in their everyday life is shaped by their faith; it's not secular life and Christian life; it's life, all in one … we've been very good as churches at encouraging teachers and nurses. What church doesn't pray for teachers and nurses? How many churches pray for accountants and hedge fund managers, shop-floor workers, packers in a factory …

> It's priesthood isn't it … I think one of the challenges for the Anglican Church is that we've possibly elevated and put priests on a pedestal, such that it's disempowered the laity, whereas actually, the reality is that we're all called to be priests, a royal priesthood who offer glory to God and be a blessing to the world.

2. Spiritual practices are clearly seen as the most helpful factor in equipping ministers to enable whole-life discipleship. Given a list of possible factors, the top three were 'personal reading and reflection' (96%), prayer (78%) and Bible study (69%). Likewise, the TEI representatives all saw the context of prayer as vital for the work of ministerial formation:

> The practice of what we might loosely call theological thinking is … that these three strands [of the Benedictine rule], study, prayer and work, were stronger when woven together.

> We break down any kind of sacred/secular assumptions there might be simply by bringing prayer into the lecture space, into the pastoral space … into our meetings …

3. The three most significant obstacles preventing ministers from enabling whole-life discipleship were found to be: a) the culture of busyness in ministry including the requirements of administration; b) reluctance, fear or shyness about intervening in people's personal lives; c) the culture of pluralism in the wider society that actively discourages the mention of faith in connection with everyday life.

4. When asked about how the connection is made between theology and everyday life, all the TEI representatives and most of the ministers saw the practice of theological reflection (TR) as central.

However, the problem for TEIs is that, having taught their students how to reflect, few have any way of observing how this teaching 'lands' once they begin ministry. Discussion in the focus groups provided some insights that begin to answer this question and a fuller consideration of the role of TR in ministerial formation incorporating these and some recent research is given in Appendix D.

5. Ministerial formation concentrates on training for leadership in the gathered church at the expense of leadership for the dispersed church, and for leadership of an institution rather than of a disciple-making community. This was a frequent theme in the focus groups:

> What we do on Sundays is we give a lot of information and then we expect innovation. So, we kind of communicate a message and we say, right now, go out and live your lives differently … but we miss out the imitation aspect …

> I look at and research a lot of questions people are asking … and I make videos about them. And yet all of those questions you can easily find in a Google search we don't address at church. And that's why I say there's a disconnect: we're teaching from the Bible … but they're going, my friend's asking this question. You haven't equipped me.

The frustration was summed up by one curate in the questionnaire:

> Rather than equipping us to know how to enable a culture of disciples who make disciples, we are equipped to be experts in theology, lead worship within a rigid framework, to be 'the minister' for the occasional offices, and warned about the legal ramifications of getting it wrong. We then minister in a culture of bureaucracy, budgets and parish shares, with congregations who expect high standards and things to be done the way they like it.

The same frustration was shared by at least some of the TEI representatives:

> I think the way training is set up is very focussed on church-as-institution … and we forget that church exists only for the same of the world and for the sake of daily lives.

> I think what we're doing is preparing people to be priests in the Church of England, which, as far as I can see from the hidden and overt curriculum, means how to do it in church … but if that's all you think that faith is about, then to me that's about one tenth of the story.

Despite these reservations, in almost every case curates and lay ministers reported that ministerial training had increased their confidence in enabling whole-life discipleship. However, it was noteworthy that, when asked whether their training had increased their confidence to engage in eight skills or activities related to the ability to enable whole-life discipleship, confidence in skills to do with Sunday church, such as preaching a sermon related to everyday life, had increased by far more than skills exercised outside the Sunday context, such as 'enabling a Christian to make informed decisions about how they use their time outside of work'.

6. Of the five TEIs, only one was intentional about equipping ministers to enable whole-life discipleship. This was expressed in several specific ways:

- Ordinands and candidates for lay ministry train not only alongside each other but alongside 'interested learners', who enrol on a term by term basis.
- Individual learning programmes are carefully planned to take previous experience into account.

- Annual reporting is linked to experience in work and everyday life as well as progress in training.
- Teaching on ministry specifically emphasises its corporate and collaborative nature.
- TR is practised as a corporate activity and linked to issues that arise from everyday experience in the students' training contexts
- Students are offered opportunities to share and even teach what they have learned from their previous experience of work.

Above all, the representatives of this TEI pointed to the overall ethos of the course:

> I believe that I'm training people to equip others as a basic philosophy of what I'm doing … The whole point of having such courses is to teach them that they're there to teach others … We're trying right across the board to say, it's in order that you might serve the Body of Christ and equip it.

Further consideration of ways in which institutions might become intentional about equipping students for enabling ministry is given in Appendix H.

7. The teaching of theology has an adverse effect on ministers' ability to enable whole-life discipleship because it is taught in a way that fails to connect with everyday life or ministerial practice. This is summarised on pages 14 and 15 above and a fuller account given in a forthcoming article.[45]

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[45] David Heywood, 'Why does academic theology disable ministry?', *Practical Theology 15.4,* 2022 (forthcoming). A pre-publication version is available at http://www.davidheywood.org/home-page/articles/ministerial-formation/. The seven points given above are summarised from David Heywood, *Reimagining Ministerial Formation,* London: SCM, 2021, pp. 7-14.

Appendix C

What is 'everyday faith'?

It is likely that the idea and practice of everyday faith is unfamiliar to many because so few concrete examples exist. This appendix offers some examples of people living out their faith in the spheres of everyday life and some reflections on the nature of everyday faith. Two examples are offered in David Heywood's *Reimagining Ministry*:[46]

> When I served as Chair of Governors of a church school, I was privileged to work with a headteacher who saw her job as Christian ministry. Jayne had applied as a result of a sense of call to work in a Church of England school. As headteacher she was in a position to model the values she wanted to see underpin the life and work of the school. She was never tired of repeating, 'It's the children who come first.' She personally led an 'Anti-Bullying Council', teaching some older children the skills of peer mentoring, making them visible and available as points of contact for the younger children and, through this initiative, inculcating throughout the school attitudes of kindness, fairness and self-esteem. She modelled and worked to an ethos of 'everybody counts' – the cleaners and dinner ladies as well as the teaching staff and classroom assistants. Teachers, classroom assistants and parent helpers worked in teams with their focus on the best learning environment for the children. Her spiritual resources came from her own prayer life and Bible study, the fellowship of other Christians in the church and school and support from one or two particular church members. The church was also able to contribute by prayer for the school and support for open days. As a result, the school became a haven of order and even lobe in the midst of a community with multiple economic and social challenges. Teachers worked hard and rapidly improved their skills. Children loved coming to school. Their attitudes to learning improved, they developed social skills, their self-esteem rose, and their academic results improved (pages 60-61).

> On a training day in Dewsbury, I met Richard, who runs a business employing about 150 people. He had been able to introduce with the agreement of his employees a commitment to shared values, such as integrity in the workplace and a willingness to be held accountable for the way they lived out these values as part of their annual appraisal. The beneficial effect on his office had been so great that the company of which he was a part had introduced the same scheme for all their 1,200 workers (pages 171-2).

Further examples are given in the booklet, *Calling All God's People.*[47]

> Melanie says of her role in a bookshop: 'Bookshops are a special kind of place, where we can feel at home or safe, and find hospitality and welcome. So the bookseller can become a friend and confidant. I am privileged and blessed to share times of great joy and great sadness with many people as they come in for books or cards. I consider my job as a faith vocation. I live out my faith through my job, through the groups I'm active in and the conversations I have. So, I do church seven days a week' (page 10).

> Remmie works for London Underground in customer support and interacts with thousands of customers every day. He says, 'When I do my job I put God first and He directs me what to

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[46] London: SCM, 2011
[47] London: Church House, 2019.

do and say with all my customers – they can see this in me.' Working for London Underground has its challenges when things go wrong. 'When things go wrong the public go bananas. I let them know we are doing all we can and I give them alternative ways to travel, and ideas to get where they are going.' Key to surviving when it is busy is being secure in the knowledge that God is always with him. 'When I have little time, I think through Psalms which I have learnt. This gives me courage and extra instinct to do what God wants' (page 11).

Gary, a scaffolder, says his work is not a very Christian environment. 'For me, it's changed the way I react. That's a massive thing. To try and bring God into the workplace through people that I give jobs to. Ex-offenders people from the street, that kind of stuff. It's changed me in that way. I have a lot of employees and family members who say, "Why do you bother?" Because a lot of the time it doesn't go right, but it's because of God. In the office, if I get in a little bit earlier than what I should do, I listen to a bit of worship music and people come in and say, "What are you listening to?" I'm not shy about it. I get a great opportunity to speak to customers as well … I would say for me that Gid wants everybody to be saved. In that it's my opportunity as a believer of being saved to give other people opportunity. So, for me, my way of trying to be representing God in my workplace and make a difference is to give these people opportunities to work' (page 13).

When we think about how Christians might engage in seeking the kingdom, a variety of projects and initiatives might come to mind, but how about being a business-person? Cal, who has held senior roles in the construction industry, thinks we underestimate this aspect of God's transforming presence. 'Renewal begins by re-visiting purpose. Business is about using the wonderful resources of God's world and the skills of its people to provide a product or service people need and will willingly pay for. It's about serving people – and that's Christ-like. So, at its best, business isn't primarily about profit, but service. It's not about my benefit but the common good. We need to renew and re-equip the language of accountability and challenge the goals of businesses and their people: what, for example, comprises real wealth and true happiness, and how are you helping to provide it? The simple truth of business is this: it's the only way of helping people out of poverty and serving most of their basic needs: yet it is the unsustainable, inhuman and greedy face of business which deters people from pursuing careers there and leaves many in the church believing it can't be part of God's purposes in the world' (page 16).

Louisa, through her work as a community support nurse, knew that an unusually high proportion of young mothers had postnatal depression. She mentioned this to fellow-Christians Charlie and Charlotte, who lived in the neighbourhood. The idea emerged of inviting mothers and their young children to Charlie and Charlotte's home once a week to form a support group, with Louisa in attendance. It soon became clear that the mothers would value meeting for mutual support without their children. They were invited to a regular evening meeting, with a choice of formats, and the mothers decided to watch a video about lives that had been changed by God. Step by step, this group evolved into a new form of church. It you had asked Louisa to plant a church, she would have run a mile! But starting a support group was easy and enriched her and others (page 19).

Beth decided to follow God's call to transform communities through exercise and set about working with others to transform their local playground. She got a group of mums together to observe how our children played and researched what was on the market already but was unimpressed with what was on offer. Out of this came Parkletics, an outdoor gym that

combines the equipment, natural body weight resistance training and a bespoke app to help match people's fitness level to a suitable exercise routine. Parkletics has been installed in tough city estates and is positively impacting on people's mental health and fitness, helping those with low self-esteem and bringing people together. 'I didn't start this for the church but because I was following God's lead and call to transform a local playground. I can't separate God from my work life, family life and church life. For me, God is in everything that I do. It feels natural for me to want to bring the community together and to try to show love to people' (page 19).

Mark Greene of the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC) describes the dimensions of everyday faith in terms of '6 Ms'. These can be summarised as:

- modelling godly character
- making good work
- ministering grace and love
- moulding culture
- mouthpiece for truth and justice
- messenger of the gospel

Each of these can be seen in the examples given above. Remmie and Jayne model godly character; Richard makes good work; Jayne and Melanie minister grace and love; Cal, Richard, Jayne, Beth and Melanie mould culture; Cal is a mouthpiece for truth and justice in the business world; Gary is a messenger of the gospel when the opportunity arises. A core characteristic of everyday faith is the value placed on the world God has created and loves, coupled with the courage to discern how the lordship of Christ challenges culture as well as affirms it, and motivates us to reach out in love.

LICC have created a series of 2-minute videos following eight '6M people'. They can be viewed on YouTube as follows:

> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbBD-W50jLw
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iVzNp8b_cA
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jr8kia08VGw
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNRkFVLzHLc
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUaFVgoFfOU
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTmx8HPzPNg
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxVJx6010so
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxOo-h9kNfk

What are the ideal characteristics of everyday faith to be drawn from these examples?

> *They are resourced by regular spiritual practices.* Remmie prays for God's guidance in difficult situations. Jayne was sustained by regular prayer and Bible reading and the prayer support of another member of her church. Gary is learning to 'pray and give it to God'. These are an overflow from a deepening relationship with God nurtured through prayer and Bible reading. The call to 'abide in Christ' (John 15:4) lies at the heart of everyday faith.

They are learning to discern the presence of God in the spheres of everyday life. Beth discerned a need to be met in her local playground. Melanie sees her bookshop as a place of hospitality. Cal discerns the purposes of God in business. Each is engaging, formally or informally, in the practice of theological reflection, learning to see the dimensions of their everyday work and leisure situations through God's eyes.

They are responding to a specific call of God. Jayne saw her work as a call from God. For Beth, God is in everything she does. The authors of a report of 2016 from the St Peter's Saltley Trust entitled, 'What Helps Disciples Grow?' discovered a strong positive correlation between the awareness of God's call and the attitude of a learner that enables growth in discipleship. Those who did not agree that God calls everyone to a particular place, role or task, were far less likely to rate any of a long list of discipleship practices helpful or to benefit from Christian courses or literature.[48]

They are guided by a vision for God's kingdom in public space. Cal is motivated by a sense of the roles of business in God's purposes. Richard saw the possibility of introducing a set of kingdom-focussed values in his workplace. Jayne embodied kingdom values in the way she led the school. Melanie sees her bookshop as a place of hospitality. Beth is promoting well-being and belonging. Each in their own situation is learning to discern, often with the help of others, where the culture of society can be affirmed and where it needs to be challenged.

Their kingdom vision often involves the 'opposite spirit' to the vision of the wider society. Cal says, 'It's not about profit.' Remmie thinks of others when the pressure is on. Gary gives jobs to people others might overlook. The kingdom values Richard introduced proved attractive for his employees.

They are practising love, including towards those hardest to love. Jayne's mantras are 'everybody counts' and 'the children come first'. Remmie is patient with customers when they lose their cool. For Beth, bringing people together feels natural.

In most cases, these examples of Christian discipleship impact the contexts of everyday life not so much through an explicit proclamation of the gospel but through a challenge to the 'principalities and powers' the shared mindsets that govern people's sense of what is normal and possible, the values and goals to be pursued and the kind of behaviour that is acceptable.[49] In the New Testament, the powers and principalities are presented as malign spiritual forces (for example in Ephesians 6:12) and in theological commentary on these passages, for example in the work of Walter Wink, they are described as corporate personalities, which may affect institutions, such as schools, hospitals or businesses, neighbourhoods and whole nations. The reason these shared mindsets have a spiritual dimension and exercise spiritual power is their effect on identity, both personal and corporate, as we will discover below when we explore the role of communities of practice in learning.

The practice of everyday faith thus entails engagement with the powers and principalities. Christians are impacting these shared mindsets in at least four ways:

- through their prayers
- through speaking and witnessing to the truth, in which explicit gospel proclamation may form one element

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[48] St Peter's Saltley Trust, What Helps Disciples Grow? p. 5.
[49] David Heywood, *Reimagining Ministry,* London: SCM, 2011, pp. 91-108.

- through acting in the opposite spirit, such valuing the customer over profit, demonstrating compassion toward those who fail to make the grade, training children in kindness and fairness and building their self-esteem, remaining patient in times of stress
- and in a way for which we have no examples in the stories above, being willing to suffer as a result of their words, actions or lifestyle.

Thus, even where the practice of everyday faith does not include explicit evangelism, Christians are nevertheless claiming their family, their workplace, their neighbourhood, school or sports club for God's kingdom. By doing so, they influence the 'atmosphere' of such groups and places, making it easier for others to act generously and with integrity. And this may have the further effect of removing the cultural barriers that prevent people from believing in a God who loves them.

An important factor for many in the practice of everyday faith is the awareness of God's personal call. For many years, Francis Dewar ran courses under the title 'Journey Inward, Journey Outward' encouraging people to discover their God-given call and training clergy in the skills of encouraging them. Dewar understood vocation as consisting of two elements: an inner sense of call linked to a particular area of passion or gifts, and an outward call from the church to fill some evident need or to affirm the inward sense of call. In this way, Dewar avoided the tendency towards ownership of 'my' call by requiring an ecclesial element in the affirmation of vocation. He describes the characteristics of God's call in the following way:

- It will always involve taking some initiative, doing something new – part of a journey to a new land
- You will be doing what in your heart of hearts you love to do.
- It will always involve risk of some kind.
- It will always be a generous giving of what you truly are and could be.
- It will always be prompted by God.
- It will be something which in *some* way enriches to impoverished, or gives sight to the blind, or release to the prisoners, or freedom for the oppressed (using these categories in a very wide sense).
- It is more likely, statistically speaking, to be in the secular sphere than in the Church, simply because there is more of it.
- It will not be life-long but something that changes and develops.
- It will not, in most cases, be full-time.
- You will be fortunate if it is something you are paid for.[50]

Dewar's approach thus affirms the importance of social and relational vocation as laid out in 'Kingdom Calling' but also moves beyond the analysis given there, as indeed do the examples of everyday faith given above. While Jayne and Melanie see their work as their call from God, Gary, Richard and Beth have experienced a call from God to some specific action *within* their work or community situation: to witness to their faith, introduce a commitment to shared values, or initiate a programme of physical and mental well-being.

A theological foundation for this approach to vocation is found in the work of Miroslav Volf on 'work in the spirit'.[51] Volf acknowledges the importance of both the doctrine of creation and the Christological focus in the work of Luther and Calvin. Everyday life is a domain of God's activity because the world is God's creation and because Jesus is lord over every aspect of life. But Volf adds

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[50] Francis Dewar, *Called or Collared?* London: SPCK, 1991, pp. 5-6.
[51] Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work,* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1991; 'Work as Cooperation with God', in *Work: Theological Foundations and Practicql Implications,* ed. R. Keith Loftin and Trey Dimsdale, London: SCM, 2018, pp. 83-109.

to these an eschatological and pneumatological dimension. In the new age ushered in by Jesus' resurrection, the Spirit is at work in the world for the transformation of creation. Our work therefore becomes a sphere through which we can cooperate with the Spirit in the coming of God's kingdom, and he equips us to do this through specific gifts. From a kingdom point of view, therefore, it is likely that the gifts the Spirit gives and the passion the Spirit nurtures within us are the key to God's specific calling: to lead a school, found a business, or start a programme for well-being.

Appendix D

Theological reflection for discipleship and ministry

The practice of theological reflection (TR) has long been recognised as an essential tool for the professional development of ministers and is an essential component of all Common Awards programmes. The examination of everyday faith in this paper reveals that (TR) is also essential to the translation of Christian belief into everyday practice in all the spheres of life. The implication of this insight is that lay and ordained ministers need to learn TR not only as personal discipline but as a way of enabling their congregations to live out their faith in everyday life. The following is a summary of the 'state of play' in our understanding of TR drawing on significant recent research. It features in Unit 6 of the online programme, 'Formation for Enabling Ministry.' It refers to experiential learning, which the subject of Unit 3 of the programme.

Theological Reflection for Discipleship and Ministry

What are we thinking about when we think about theological reflection (TR)? What exactly is TR and what is its role in discipleship and ministry? It may seem strange that there should be uncertainty about these questions, especially when we consider that some acquaintance with TR has been a requirement for every student since the inception of the Common Awards programmes and that TR is the core practice of the relatively new but increasingly established discipline of practical theology. Yet such has been the case. The past twenty years have been marked by uncertainty about the scope and methods of TR, its usefulness or otherwise, and its standards of good practice.

However, in this essay I hope to show that recent research has gone a long way to clarify and distinguish between the different ways in which it is possible to speak of 'theological reflection' and the contribution of TR to the practices of both discipleship and ministry. By the end, I hope that you will be able to:

- describe the outlines of the conversation about TR over the past twenty years or so
- describe the relationship of TR and experiential learning
- describe the relationship between TR in everyday life and the formal exercises in TR used in ministerial formation
- identify, describe and provide a rationale for the features of 'good TR'

A feature of most of the standard textbooks on TR is that they begin with illustrations of TR in everyday discipleship or ministry and then proceed to describe a more formal process of TR as a tool for learning. Thus Laurie Green shares the story of 'Freda', who is asked to make a member of staff redundant,[52] Paul Ballard and John Pritchard begin their explanation of the pastoral cycle with the story of 'Sheila', a minister whose local school is threatened with closure,[53] and Judith Thompson distinguishes between, 'any ruminative activity making connections between life and faith,' and a, 'more precise and disciplined activity undertaken methodically and rigorously … to integrate faith and practice.'[54]

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[52] Laurie Green, *Lets Do Theology,* 2nd edition, London: Mowbray, 2009, p.6-9.

[53] Paul Ballard and John Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action,* 2nd edition, London: SPCK, 2006, p.83-7.

[54] Judith Thompson, Stephen Pattison and Ross Thompson, *SCM Studyguide to Theological Reflection,* London: SCM, 2008, p.7-8.

Behind this distinction lies another equally, if not more significant distinction between theology as a way of life and theology as an academic discipline. Summarising his survey of the development of theology, Edward Farley writes:

> First, theology is a term for an actual, individual cognition of God and things related to God, a cognition which in most treatments attends faith and has eternal happiness as its final goal. Second, theology is a term for a discipline, a self-conscious scholarly enterprise of understanding. In the former sense, theology is a habit (*habitus*) of the human soul. In the latter, it is a discipline, usually occurring in some sort of pedagogical setting.[55]

These two related distinctions lie at the heart of the confusion of the last twenty years or so about the role of TR and help to explain why, for so many people, not least ministers in training, the concept of TR has been so difficult to grasp. When Ballard and Pritchard write that TR, 'is simply the art of making theology connect with both life and ministry so that Gospel truth comes alive,'[56] they are using the idea of TR in both senses at once, *both* as an activity in everyday life through which people come to recognise the theological dimensions of their situation *and* as a formal exercise by which academic theology can be made relevant to life and ministry.

The early years of this century saw the inception of a powerful narrative about TR, based on numerous observations, to the effect that, while the staff of the training institutions in which TR was taught were fully committed to its vital importance for ministry, students failed to make use of it in the daily challenges of ministry and were, if anything, bewildered by the concept. In 2003, Stephen Pattison, Judith Thompson and John Green reported that the ministers they interviewed saw TR as, 'a technical term that is essentially mystifying, alienating and non-specific.'[57] Should students grasp what TR is all about, their next problem is learning how to do it; and among those who did master the process, few went on to make TR part of their regular practice. As Janet Henderson wrote in relation to the pastoral cycle, 'Theological students would be hard pressed to end their courses without exposure to it, yet many leave unconvinced by its value and puzzled by the true nature of the theological reflection it requires.'[58] The problem was summed up by Pattison, Thompson and Green: 'While professional theological educators see TR as the jewel in their disciplinary crown, a good number of their students regard this activity as an irritating and inhibiting pebble in the ministerial shoe, to be discarded as quickly as possible once pre-ordination training is complete.'[59]

This narrative, emphasising complexity, mystification and the failure of theological educators to get their message across, has proved persistent, at least in some quarters. Drawing on the title of an early article by Stephen Pattison, critics suggest that training students in formal methods of TR is akin to Pharoah's requirement of the Israelites to produce bricks without straw. Thus, Pete Ward criticises the pastoral cycle for including theology at only one stage of the process, thus allowing the use of insights from other disciplines to escape theological critique.[60] Gary O'Neill and Liz Shercliff point to the lack of clarity between 'models' and 'methods' of TR, doubt the usefulness of the

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[55] Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education,* Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983, p.31.

[56] Ballard and Pritchard, p.127.

[57] Stephen Pattison, Judith Thompson and John Green, 'Theological reflection for the real world: time to think again,' *British Journal of Theological Education* 13.2, 2003, p.123.

[58] Janet Henderson, 'What is wrong with pastoral theology?' *British Journal of Theology* 13.2, 2003, p.110.

[59] Pattison, Thompson and Green, p.127.

[60] Pete Ward, *Introducing Practical Theology,* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017, pp. 101-2.

pastoral cycle and offer their own alternative approach.[61] Helen Collins also takes the earlier narrative for granted and adds to her critique a lack of emphasis on the role of the Bible among more theologically liberal practitioners. Collins' proposal is to 'reorder' TR by starting with Scripture instead of with experience.[62]

And yet despite the level of uncertainty surrounding TR, some acquaintance with its rationale and techniques is a requirement of every student completing a Common Awards programme. The Programme Specification for the BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission assumes that students will learn to 'reflect on experience and practice in the context of discipleship, mission and ministry', that they will be 'introduced to the subject specific skill of theological reflection,' and specifies that at levels 4 and 5 at least 10 credits will be gained from modules in the category, 'Theological Reflection and Reflective Practice.'[63]

The Preface to the Common Awards locates this insistence on the centrality of TR in a broader theory of knowledge and learning:

> A wider and deeper epistemology that also embraces affective knowledge underpins the Common Awards. Such knowledge shapes the emotions, hones virtue and fuels passion after the pattern of Christ. It is not acquired simply by putting theory into practice but is generated by the very process of learning ... The methodologies of theological reflection are an important - and developing - facet of this kind of learning and therefore feature extensively in the Common Awards.[64]

Some recent research suggests that the decision to provide a guaranteed place to the 'methodologies of theological reflection' may be bearing fruit. In an article of 2020, Pippa Ross-McCabe compares the marks gained by students in a variety of modules requiring skills of TR with a selection of modules in which TR does not figure. She found the marks for the modules requiring TR to be only very slightly lower overall than those where TR is not involved. Although reporting these results with appropriate caution, Ross-McCabe does suggest Common Awards may be achieving its aims in relation to the formation of skilled theological reflectors.[65]

In 2019, a research project in the Diocese of Oxford set out to discover, 'What equips ministers to enable whole-life discipleship?' Questionnaire responses from 33 curates in the early years of ministry and 43 lay ministers whose training may have taken place at any time in the past twenty years suggested that the response to having been trained in techniques of TR fall into three distinct categories:

- those who found TR a revelation and embraced it enthusiastically
- those for whom TR was something they had always been used to doing and intended to continue
- those who were put off by experiencing TR as another academic exercise.

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[61] Gary O'Neill and Liz Shercliff, *Straw for the Bricks: Theological Reflection in Practice,* London: SCM, 2018. Pattison's article is 'Some straw for the bricks: a basic introduction to theological reflection,' *Contact 99,* 1989, p.2-9.
[62] Helen Collins, *Reordering Theological Reflection Starting with Scripture,* London: SCM, 2020.
[63] Prog_Spec_BA.pdf (durham.ac.uk)
[64] Preface to the Common Awards (churchofengland.org)
[65] Pippa Ross-McCabe, 'Straw for the bricks at last? Theological reflection under the Common Awards,' *Practical Theology 13.4,* 2020, p.413-26.

All three of these responses have significant implications. First, they demonstrate that it is possible for students to learn the techniques of TR and apply them in their ministry. In *Kingdom Learning,* I shared the response of a former student:

> I found that the Pastoral Cycle can be a quick response in any situation, even simply taking a pause in proceedings to re-centre yourself theologically. I have found that using the Pastoral Cycle in a structured way means it is weaving itself into my everyday life.[66]

Another student at a different institution testified,

> 'When I consider my use of this method over the last three years, I am struck as to how much it has, almost without thinking, shaped my reflections and in turn my actions and thus the narrative of the communities in which I have been placed.'[67]

So firstly, it is possible to teach formal methods of TR and for these to become part of a minister's regular practice. Secondly, the outcome of the research reveals a significant number of students already familiar with TR and using it in their everyday lives, suggesting that TR may be a natural process that takes place without anyone needing to teach it. And thirdly, learning formal methods of TR and being required to produce these in essay format may be experienced as antipathetic to the reflection that is taking place in everyday life.

These potentially contradictory findings are in fact tied together by the observation that, by paying attention to experience, reflecting on it to arrive at an insight about its significance and deciding how to express this in action, TR echoes the cycle of experiential learning. It can be described as ordinary learning in which there is an attempt to discover God's presence and discern God's mind in everyday situations. Whether consciously or not, TR is the way people learn to think theologically outside the academic context, by taking the insights they have gleaned from Bible reading, Christian books, sermons, hymns and songs and applying them as best they can to the challenges they face in everyday life. Experiential learning in the course of everyday life involves a variety of processes including formal learning and learning with others, may take place over a long period of time, and may result in either small shifts of understanding or moments of revelation when the 'penny drops' and a new perspective is formed. All these things are likely to be true of the 'ordinary' everyday TR of Christian disciples.

The crucial difference between the natural processes of TR by which people learn their 'ordinary' theology and the ways in which theology is learned in the context of ministerial formation is that the traditional pedagogical approach of the academy frequently fails to engage with all four phases of the learning cycle, concentrating almost entirely on conceptualisation. TR is therefore required if students are to complete the learning cycle and apply their theology to experience. In this context, the pursuit of TR becomes an academic exercise, designed to enable the application of theological thinking particularly to ecclesial and ministerial experience. This disjunction between the way theology is learned in the academy and the way it is learned in everyday life can explain all three observations of the Oxford research: the joy of those students who discover a means of applying their newly learned theology in experience, the observation of others that formal methods of TR are an echo of the way they have been theologising in everyday life, and the complaint of a third group

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[66] Ripon College Cuddesdon student assignment: used with permission.
[67] Jane Leach, 'The End of Theological Education: An Analysis of the Contribution of Portfolio Learning to Formation in Ministry within a University Context', *Journal of Adult Theological Education 7.2,* 2010, p. 117-204; quotation from p. 135.

that the 2,500 word 'theological reflection' reduces what should be a natural process to an academic exercise.

We therefore arrive at a new starting point: all Christian disciples engage in TR, though not all realise that this is what they are doing and not all do it particularly well. There is therefore considerable scope for equipping students with models and methods that will enable them to engage in TR intentionally and to a high standard; and will further enable them to equip their congregations to reflect with them. But just as all effective teaching must engage with the students' existing knowledge and attitudes, the teaching of TR in the academic context must engage with the informal processes of TR that students bring with them into training, help them to recognise what these involve, and use their existing experience as a starting point.

It is also necessary to identify the barriers to learning that students may bring. In research with his students on the Peterborough Diocese Lay Ministry Course, Quentin Chandler discovered several obstacles to effective TR, overcoming which was the equivalent of passing through a 'threshold' to a new understanding not only of TR but of vital aspects of Christian faith:[68]

- The 'pervasive' threshold. Students would come to focus groups believing they had no relevant experience on which to reflect. But this was because they came with the assumption that 'relevant experience' encompassed only the narrow field of ecclesial or ministerial experience. Crossing the pervasive threshold involves the realisation that God is present in the whole of life and that any and all experience can become the subject of TR.
- The 'interpretive' threshold. Some students would approach TR in the belief that the task was to apply the teaching of Scripture to experience. This 'one-way' approach frequently prevented them from arriving at a satisfactory insight about the experience. This group needed to recognise that any use of the Bible in TR involves interpretation. Not infrequently, the most significant outcome of TR is that it calls us to reconsider the way we have always interpreted a particular passage or even a major theme of Scripture.
- The 'complexifying' threshold. Experience of TR also taught students that the outcome is rarely a simple straightforward answer. Especially in groups, TR throws up a range of viewpoints and draws attention to previously unconsidered factors. Crossing this threshold can mean for some students a reappraisal of the nature of faith and discipleship.

Perhaps even more significant were the thresholds crossed by Chandler himself as he wrestled with the outcomes of his research. The first was the recognition that TR, 'is not merely a cognitive activity: it is also a dispositional and spiritual one.' Simply put, Chandler discovered that a significant number of his students were already familiar with TR because it was what they did in prayer. As he puts it, 'Prayerful attention to experience is part of theological reflection: it is not a separate activity.'

Secondly, Chandler discovered that students for whom prayer was a way of seeking out the presence and guidance of God brought into the process of TR a 'set of durable dispositions' that could be called a *habitus.* These dispositions had been formed by internalising the voices of those who had been influential in the formation of the person's faith. Chandler lists Sunday school teachers, priests, ministers and theological educators, to whom we could easily add the voices of parents, friends, mentors and the authors of Christian books. These along with their personal reading of Scripture form those dispositions and habits of interpretation that are brought to reflection on experience.

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[68] Quentin Chandler, 'Cognition or spiritual disposition? Threshold concepts in theological reflection,' *Journal of Adult Theological Education 13.2,* 2016, p.90-102.

Chandler's research fully bears out the basic proposition: TR is a natural process, an extension of experiential learning, in which most Christians habitually engage. It adds substance to the idea that learning formal methods of TR can be compared to coaching. In training, a tennis coach takes apart the player's stroke, forcing them to concentrate on details like the positioning of the feet or acceleration into the ball, enabling the player to take improvements into their next game without thinking. In a similar way, the learning of formal methods of TR has the potential to develop students' capacity to reflect in everyday life.

Sarah Dunlop, Catherine Nancekeivill and Pippa Ross-McCabe take this observation one step further in a piece of research funded by a Common Awards seedcorn grant.[69] Their aim was to discover just how well ordinary believers reflect, with the aim of resourcing knowledge of how TR skills can be developed in both informal parish settings and in formal ministerial education. To do this, the researchers needed to set out their understanding of the appropriate standards of excellence to be applied to the reflections of their subjects. The discipline of practical theology, in which TR is a core practice, is by now sufficiently well developed for them to be able to do this in an uncontroversial way, taking for granted a significant degree of consensus. They suggest that 'good' TR can be described as follows:

- It displays openness to a divine agent: an assumption and dependence on divine participation, an attentiveness to the presence and participation of God
- It wrestles with Scripture and Christian tradition
- It connects with everyday reality / experience / context and/or a specific problematic
- It seeks and assumes transformation of persons and practice – at the very least moving towards naming of some provisional outcomes of the reflection
- It includes self-awareness and reflexivity, a move 'beyond' reflection which challenges the tendency to see what we expect to see
- It displays an awareness of complexity, ambiguity and the provisional nature of knowledge.

The sample was small: 18 people balanced between women and men of whom some were exploring licensed ministry. However, in-depth interviews and follow-up exercises with this group exposed several areas where intentional training in TR might yield fruits for discipleship. For example, surprisingly few made any use of the Bible in their reflections. Although nearly all reported some change in their practice or theology after processing a significant life-event, few of these changes involved a reconsideration of an existing theological framework. There was very little increased awareness of the ambiguity or complexity of situations or of ways of knowing God.

They also noticed that at least half of their sample were hesitant about the possibility of God's direct involvement in the process of reflection and suggested that the reason for this might well be the prevalence of the 'immanent frame' limiting people's 'social imaginary' to the natural rather than the supernatural realm. Their suggestion is that in learning together to discern God's presence and guidance Christians need to be encouraged to expect God to 'talk back', to take an active role in the process of reflection.

These findings pose a challenge to church leaders to find ways of equipping their communities to wrestle together to discern where God may be present and active and to engage with Scripture and Christian tradition; to encourage and enable an expectation of engaging with God directly when processing issues of all kinds; and to nurture environments sufficiently challenging and yet safe

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[69] Sarah Dunlop, Catherine Nancekievill and Pippa Ross-McCabe, 'Exploring the practice of Anglican laity: finding manna in the desert,' *Practical Theology 14.4,* 2021, p.309-22.

enough to allow for change, not least in people's understanding of God. The relevance of these findings to everyday faith is clear: all these are among the requirements of a community supporting its members to engage with the spheres of everyday life in a Christian manner.

There is likewise a challenge to theological educators, to acknowledge and build on the experience students bring of having previously reflected theologically in the course of their everyday lives and to make the connection clear between this experience and the learning of formal methods of TR. The researchers suggest that this requires a clear distinction between the technical (or academic) and the discipleship nature of the practice, and propose that written work might be called a 'theological integration essay' to distinguish it from 'theological reflection' in everyday life. They conclude with the suggestion that, rather than applying the image of having to make bricks without straw, a more appropriate image is the provision of manna in the desert, 'an abundant, wondrous gift from a loving God.'

> It seems that the task for church leaders and theological educators alike, is to enable a deepening dialogue with this generous God. It is about encouraging dialogue with God within the rich tradition of Scripture and the Christian church. It involves giving opportunities for such dialogue in the community: encouraging the asking of questions, expressions of lament and acceptance of uncertainty, but all in the context of confidence in the transcendence and divine meaningfulness of everyday life. This moves away from ministers doing all the reflecting in their study and then giving the answers from the pulpit. It also challenges the conception of theological educators simply as those who offer expert answers. Instead, people in the pew and in the classroom are encouraged to talk together to find a way forward.

In conclusion, the recognition that TR shares the characteristics of experiential learning draws attention to the prevalence of TR in daily discipleship and the vital role it plays in enabling everyday faith. Just as experiential learning may include formal academic learning but is rarely complete until this learning has been tried out, discussed with others and integrated into habitual practice, so the training in formal methods of TR students receive as part of their ministerial training needs to be anchored in practice if it is to take root. Just as TR can enable 'gospel truth to come alive', so it can play a vital role in rooting the self-conscious scholarly enterprise of academic theology in the *habitus* of students as disciples and ministers.

Moreover, as 'disciple-making disciples', ministers need to become reflectors who teach others how to reflect. This means taking TR out of the formational context, where it functions as a tool for professional development, back into the church and using it as a means of enabling individual Christian disciples, groups and whole congregations to wrestle with the issues of everyday life.

Appendix E

The 'people's theologians'

The following is an extract from Laurie Green's '*Let's Do Theology'* in which he describes the role of the minister (lay or ordained) as she enables the church (or any small group wanting to discover a Christian perspective on their practice) to reflect together. Perhaps most significant is his identification of the way the laity are disabled by traditional forms of ministry as a form of oppression.

Who should do theology?

The people who are best placed to do theology, and to tell the Church what our Scriptures mean for us today, are those who know God best, and 'God is known in proportion as he is loved', not in proportion to our erudition, nor the validity of our ordination. So the academic and the ordained have no special claim to be our best theologians. It seems to me that theology, this privileged instrument of the Church, should be in the hands of the whole Christian community acting together and incorporating into its deliberations the special experiences of many different types of Christian people. This calls for an 'every member ministry' or 'lay apostolate'. Nor does this mean that the laity should share the vicar's ministry, but that every Christian has a vocation to discipleship – and a responsibility to be theological by virtue of their baptism. Vocation, ministry and theology belong together to all the people of God. The question that the Church therefore has to struggle with through each generation is, in what way should the inevitable diversity of an incarnate Church be held together by unity. How do we 'discern the Body'? This is a perennial question.

I have argued that vocation, ministry and theology belong to all Christians by virtue of their baptism, but I would also affirm that in pursuance of each of these responsibilities – and also in order for us to hold together as a family – there will be specialists who help to promote and focus each of these aspects of Christian life. In the theological sphere there should be those who immerse themselves in the Christian faith traditions – some seeing themselves primarily as 'technicians' who encounter the complexities of the texts, the histories, language and so on, using all the scientific and critical tools available to them to do their work. Their task is to excavate the traditions, that they may be put at the disposal of those who are seeking to 'do' theology. In addition to these theological technicians, there will be others who seek to act as bridge-builders, making the connections between these specialist researchers of the theological traditions and those doing theology in the field. These bridge builders will need to have a number of specialist skills and a great deal of sensitivity. I like to call these enablers, the 'People's Theologians', and I suggest that their task is fourfold.

The People's Theologians

First, the People's Theologian works within and as a member of the group, and will have a role somewhat akin to the animator in community work, whose task is to provide appropriate learning exercises and opportunities for the group members to take up their responsibilities and to make their own decisions. This will call for the skills of the adult educator. Bibliodrama, expressive arts, charting, brainstorming and so much more – all these will be elements of the repertoire which the People's Theologian can offer.

Second, in order to fulfil this role, the People's Theologian will need to be soaked in the tradition sufficiently to be able to draw upon it liberally and to know what the theological technicians are saying about it. If they have imbibed the fruits of theological scholarship, they will be better able to check out the imaginative leaps the group makes. But the People's Theologian will never have the final judgement in anything, for that authority must always remain with the group itself. They will have a responsibility to be servants of the Christian faith tradition and not controllers of it. There has been, it must be said, a tendency both in human relationships training and participative Bible study for specialists to make great claims for themselves and their expertise, and the People's Theologians will be under the same pressure to forget that they are only there as servants. This will call for considerable spiritual depth.

Third, the People's Theologians must have integrity among the poor and be acceptable to them. We might say that such theologians need more street cred than restaurant presence, and the acquisition of this integrity will very often require an option for downward mobility on their part, and a preparedness to learn the language of the downtrodden – if it is not already their mother tongue. Only then will the People's Theologians be able to help their group see society from the perspective of the marginalized, and to communicate with members of groups who find themselves in those situations.

Finally, the People's Theologians must affirm the theological responsibilities and abilities of the group and never allow a group or its members to give the theological task away to others. It is in the nature of oppression that the oppressed begin to think in the same categories as the oppressors, and so group members will themselves believe what they have been told for so long – that they are not academic enough to handle theology not 'ordained enough' to be theologians. So the People's Theologian must be constantly vigilant lest he or she be considered by participants as the only theologian in the group. Each and every group member will be bringing specific gifts to the shared theological task – and so they must own that they are all theologians together.

Very often the local ordained minister will in fact prove to be the People's Theologian for a group, for he or she will have spent many years studying the work of the specialist theological technicians, will know their own local context and be at home with the local people, trusted and welcomed by them. It is important, therefore, that all clergy have learnt how to put themselves at the disposal of those who wish to engage contextually in the Doing Theology Spiral.[70]

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[70] Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology,* 2nd edition, London: Mowbray, 2009, pp. 134-6.

Appendix F

Interpreting Common Awards aims and learning outcomes

This paper has called for a shift in emphasis in ministerial formation from the *context of what is learned* to the *process of learning,* a shift from a higher education model of learning to an adult education model. Stage 3 of the online learning programme 'Formation for Enabling Ministry' is designed to enable those engaged in ministerial formation to adopt this pedagogical approach with confidence.

One aspect of this shift is a reinterpretation of the aims and learning outcomes of many of the Common Awards modules. Where the modules have been designed using the assumptions of higher education, these need to be reinterpreted for the approach of adult education. The following is one of the learning resources from Unit 12 of the programme designed for subject specialists. It both examines the aims and learning outcomes of two representative modules and provides an example of the alternative pedagogical approach.

Interpreting the Common Awards Aims and Learning Outcomes for Enabling Ministry

Subject-Centred or Life-Centred Learning?

In the previous units in this programme, we have come to recognise that everyday faith, ministry and theological scholarship form separate though related practices. As practices, each has its own tradition and goals, each its own standards of excellence and each is learned in a community of practice. Thus, although there is a high degree of overlap between the concerns of everyday faith and those of theological scholarship, their goals and standards of excellence are not the same. Nor is the very meaning of the term 'theology' the same for these two practices. For everyday faith, theology is a 'habit of the human soul', a cognitive, affective and behavioural response to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, bound up with a 'social imaginary' in which Jesus is Lord of all the spheres of human life. For theological scholarship, theology is a self-conscious academic discipline, which employs the tools of intellectual enquiry to explore the Church's tradition of faith and practice.

It is quite possible for one person to be a member of multiple communities of practice and in the case of Christian discipleship, ministry and theological scholarship, this is almost always the case. Virtually every Christian theologian would also think of themselves as a disciple, as of course would every Christian minister, and some may belong to all three communities. However, the goals and standards of excellence that they pursue as members of one community will be different from those in the other community or communities. Perhaps the most outstanding example of this is the difference between the way Scripture functions in the life of the Church when compared with its place in theological scholarship, an issue the Church is still some way from resolving despite the millions of words written on the subject.

The situation poses a specific problem for subject specialists in ministerial formation. When you engage in the study of your discipline, reading, researching and writing papers, you will be using as your reference point the standards of excellence internal to the practice of theological scholarship. However, when you engage in activities related to ministerial formation, such as designing learning, teaching and marking assignments, you need to be working to a different reference point: the

standards of excellence that belong to the practice of ministry. To give just one example, the academic community tends to place most value on the ability to demonstrate understanding by communicating with a specialist audience, the audience of theological scholars. But the most valuable skill for ministry is the ability to communicate with a non-specialist audience. In most cases, this is a far more demanding task, both for the student asked to design a resource for others in preference to a straightforward essay, and for the tutor marking it. In fact, the prevalence of the standard academic essay as a means of assessment for ministerial formation may be unconsciously intended to make life easier for theological educators rather than to serve the church.

Although the idea of a university originated in the middle ages, the traditions and goals that guide the contemporary university date back to the Enlightenment and are usually traced to the founding of the University of Berlin in 1810. Accordingly, since then the work of the university has been guided by the epistemology of the Enlightenment, in which 'real' knowledge is understood to consist of a complex, multi-faceted and inter-related theory. The task of the university is to refine that theory through the work of research, to initiate people into the world of theory-making through a university education and to influence the life of the wider world through dissemination of the knowledge gained through research.

According to this model, 'practice' is the application of theory, from which it follows that knowledge of the theory equips the practitioner for the practice. This understanding is embodied in the architecture of the university in the form of lecture theatre, where students are inculcated with largely theoretical knowledge. In the case of ministerial formation, the assumption that theological scholarship forms the essential knowledge base for the practice of ministry has led to a strategy in which IME 1 is seen as the stage at which the theoretical foundations are laid, ready to be built on during IME 2. One correspondent of mine offered a musical analogy, in which 'ministerial training is perhaps best understood as learning scales, notes and music theory for a lifetime of musical improvisation.'

In fact, her analogy provides an excellent illustration of the fact that practice is *not* simply the application of theory. It is doubtful whether anyone has ever learned music in this way. Typically, people learn the rudiments of music through learning how to play an instrument. In other words, they first engage in the practice, learning the theory as they go. And this reflects the real nature of knowledge. We now know that the Enlightenment view of nature of knowledge is a gross over-simplification. Real knowledge is not held in the form of abstract theory but rather in the form of the practical know-how required for participation in practices.

The minister sits at the intersection of three practices: ministry, everyday faith and theological scholarship. One of the principal tasks of ministry is to draw on the traditional theological disciplines, Old and New Testament, doctrine, ethics and church history, to nurture everyday faith. However, these disciplines inhabit the 'high ground' of defined problems and precise answers whereas ministry takes place in the 'swampy lowland' of messy and confusing everyday problems. To be expected to learn the disciplines for their own sake proves disabling for ministry and especially for a ministry whose goal is conceived as enabling everyday faith. Rather, ministers in training need to engage with Scripture and Christian tradition in ways that equip them to enable discipleship and mission.

In other words, their learning needs to be life-centred rather than subject-centred. Ministers learn 'pastoral imagination' most effectively when the horizon of their learning is the practice of ministry. They are not helped when the horizon in view is the purely scholarly pursuit of learning. And as we have seen, this requirement matches the approach of adult education, in which the emphasis is on

learning rather than teaching, on practical application rather than storing up knowledge for future use, and in which the learner remains in control of their learning.

The challenge for subject specialists, therefore, is to teach our subjects in life-centred ways, to teach theology as 'habitus' rather than scholarly discipline, in tune with the methods of adult rather than higher education.

The Common Awards Aims and Learning Outcomes

The Common Awards programmes are modifications of traditional programmes of academic theology in the direction of application to ministry and discipleship. They therefore occupy a rather ill-defined middle position between the 'high hard ground' and the 'swampy lowlands', between theology as an academic discipline and theology as 'habitus' or 'social imaginary'. This is embodied in the aims and learning objectives of many of the modules, which express *both* a subject-centred orientation to the discipline in question *and* a desire for application to ministry and discipleship.

We can take TMM 1131, Introduction to Christian Doctrine and History, as an example. The aims are these:

- To offer students a broad introductory overview of the history and doctrine of the church.
- To show students how particular Christian theologies exist within their historical, social and cultural contexts.
- To introduce students to theological sources from different periods of Christian history.
- To excite a passion for historical and doctrinal thinking and equip students for further study at level 5.
- To encourage students to begin to integrate critical thinking about doctrine and history into their own spiritual formation and ministerial development.

We note that these aims are expressed in terms of what the teacher will teach rather than what the learner will learn. Moreover, they embody the assumption that ministerial students must first be initiated into the practice of theological scholarship, and even develop a passion for further study, while the ability to apply their knowledge in personal spiritual formation and ministerial development is something to be 'encouraged' rather than the principal purpose of their learning.

This assumption then leads to a subject-centred teaching strategy in which the purpose of level 4 in particular is to offer a 'broad overview' of the subject area. In practice, this content-centred approach often means presenting students with vast amounts of detailed information only marginally related to the purpose for which they are training and for which they have no prior context. In the light of the learning in this programme, we can see that this is a poor strategy, entirely inappropriate for adult learning.

The same tendencies are visible, albeit not to the same extent, in TMM 1031, Introduction to the Bible, for which the aims are expressed as:

- To enable students to have an overview of the purpose and content of the Old and New Testament, and representative texts within them, placed within their broader contexts.
- To enable students to become familiar with and evaluate the concepts, principles, methods and tools of modern scholarly biblical interpretation.
- To enable students to consider how these texts might be engaged appropriately and faithfully in the life, mission and ministry of the church today.

- To enable students to recognise and engage with questions and insights for faith raised by this study.

In contrast to the aims for Doctrine and Church History, these are expressed from the point of view of the learner. Moreover, they seem to place engaging with biblical texts in the context of the church's life and mission and recognising the questions and insights for faith that emerge from Scripture side-by-side with acquaintance with scholarly procedure.

Both modules represent a hybrid approach that seeks to retain the traditional subject-orientated approach to the discipline while allowing the importance for ministry and mission of applying the Bible and Christian tradition to issues for life, faith and ministry. However, neither can be said to be well-adapted to equip ministers for an enabling style of ministry.

What then can the subject specialist do if he or she desires to teach in a life-centred way in which the horizon in view is the learners' future ministry? Since there is little prospect in the short term of revising the aims and learning outcomes for the module, the answer is to *reinterpret* the aims and learning outcomes in a way that expresses the goal of enabling ministry. For TMM 1131, this might look something like the following:

- students can describe a variety of ways to draw on the history and doctrine of the church to resource them in the practices of Christian discipleship and ministry
- students develop a passion for drawing on history and doctrine to resource their understanding of issues relating to Christian ministry and the spheres of everyday life
- students gain a sense of the outline of church history and the development of doctrine
- students become familiar with a selection of historical sources from different periods of Christian history
- students can explain the ways that selected Christian theologies exist within their historical, social and cultural contexts

And for TMM 1011:

- students develop the ability to draw on the Old and New Testaments to reflect on issues in discipleship, mission and ministry
- students can recognise and engage with questions and insights raised for the practice of Christian faith by study of the Bible
- students grasp a sense of the overall narrative of the Old and New Testaments and can place representative texts within their broader context
- students become familiar with and evaluate the concepts, principles, methods and tools of modern scholarly biblical interpretation

These alternative lists are not a departure from the module outlines. In both cases, the content of the original aims has been retained. However, they have been re-expressed to place students' ability to draw on these subject areas to resource mission and ministry, including everyday faith, at the heart of their learning. The order of the aims has been altered to place this ability first, with the other aims serving that over-arching goal. Knowledge of the 'broad outline' of the subject areas has been made to serve the more important goal of being able to draw on a selection of the content with scholarly integrity (with the overview of the purpose and content of the Old and New Testament re-expressed as a grasp of the Bible's 'grand narrative').

It is necessary to make the same adjustment when it comes to the learning outcomes, bearing in mind that students are required to fulfil these to gain their qualification. For TMM 1131, these are as follows:

By the end of this module students will be able to:

Subject Specific Knowledge [SSK 2]

- Investigate and describe competently one or more major areas of Christian doctrine.
- Investigate and describe competently one or more major developments in church history.
- Discuss intelligently some key issues in contemporary Christian thought about these areas of doctrine and history.

Subject Specific Skills [SSS 3]

- Describe how aspects of Christian doctrine and history can be appropriately related to experience and practice in the context of discipleship, mission and ministry.

Key Skills [KS 1, 2, 3]

- Identify, gather and evaluate source materials for a specific purpose.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches, communicating their findings sensitively and respectfully, showing self-awareness about their own beliefs, commitments and prejudices.
- Carry out a guided task that involves: independent inquiry; management of time and resources; using IT; meeting deadlines; evaluating the task and learning from it

And for TMM 1031:

By the end of this module students will be able to

Subject Specific Knowledge [SSK 1]

- Discuss diverse Old and New Testament texts intelligently and place them within their broader contexts.
- Demonstrate knowledge of some of the underlying concepts, methods and tools associated with the study of the Old and New Testaments.

Subject Skills [SSS 1]

- Identify the context and genre of selected biblical texts, and comment intelligently on their significance for the texts' interpretation.

The Key Skills are the same as those for TMM 1131.

One of the problems in both cases is that some of the aims are not represented in the learning outcomes: in the case of Introduction to Christian Doctrine and History the desire for passionate commitment to the subject area, and in the case of Introduction to the Bible application to life and ministry. Although these may not figure in the final assessment, they cannot be allowed to go absent from the classroom. In adult learning, it is essential both to honour the students' goals (in this case, to be effective in ministry) and to retain an awareness of the ultimate purpose and immediate relevance of the learning. It is necessary, therefore, to teach to the aims, as reformulated in the teacher's mind, as well as the learning outcomes.

Moreover, as in the case of the aims, although the rubric for Common Awards allocates equal value to each of the learning outcomes, the subject specialist who wishes to equip their students for ministry will distinguish between the different learning outcomes *in her own mind*, allocating priority to those that serve the ultimate goal of the learning. In general, this means bearing in mind at all times the 'So what?' question: 'What is the application of today's learning for ministry?' and carefully defining the objectives of each learning session and learning task with this in mind.

Learning Tasks for Enabling Ministry

To give an example, suppose the topic for study is the two creation narratives that appear side by side in Genesis 1 and 2. The study of these texts potentially fulfils all the learning outcomes of the module: placing the texts in their broader context, identifying their genre and using appropriate tools to interpret them. But the objectives for the learning session will need to range more widely, encompassing questions about the purpose of the texts in the context and their interpretation for today. They might be expressed as follows:

As a result of this session, student will be able to:

- describe the genre of each of the creation narratives
- explain the purpose of these texts in their contemporary context
- explain and compare the theology expressed in each
- describe how they would draw on these texts to resource Christian discipleship

Using a flipped learning approach, in which students engage with the information content of the session in their own time and class time is used for more demanding levels of learning, the session might be designed along the following lines. One element of learning design absent from this example is timings for each of the learning tasks. This is because these will depend on variables such as the context in each institution and the size of the group.

Task 1: Responding to God the Creator.

An 'inductive' learning task to help students become aware of their existing knowledge, feelings and values about the topic.

Make a list of the ways in which you think your life is affected by your belief in God as Creator of the world. If you are now in residential training, extend the list to include the ways your working life prior to training was influenced. How satisfied are you with your list?

Task 2: Responding to the biblical creation narratives

This is the first stage of engaging with the information content of the session, allowing students to bring their existing knowledge and skills of biblical interpretation into play.

Read carefully the two accounts of creation in Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a and Genesis 2:4b-25. What features of these two accounts stand out for you? What differences do you notice between them? What questions do you wish to bring to the learning session? Make full notes on these and any other questions you think may be relevant to bring to the session.

Task 3: Who wrote these texts and why?

Having prepared the ground with the previous two learning tasks, the student is now invited to engage in in-depth study of the topic. The objective is that they are equipped to explain the origin and purpose of the texts in question.

The teacher will specify passages from commentaries and other texts that address these questions. When I was teaching Old Testament to reader trainees in the 1990s, I might have asked them to read Norman Gottwald's The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction, *sections 13.1, 13.4, 49.1 and 49.2. Old Testament specialists may like to substitute some alternative reading. You may also decide to signpost the Bible's third creation narrative, those references to the cosmic sea-monster that crop up in passages like Psalm 74, and the perfect miniature summary of Hebrew anthropology that occurs in Psalm 8. Reading alone is not sufficient, however. Students will need some questions for reflection to focus their attention and prepare them for the session.*

Make notes on the following:

- What do you find most interesting in this reading?
- What questions does it raise for you?
- How would you summarise the theology of each of the creation narratives? Write a short paragraph for each.
- How would you describe the potential impact of these ways of understanding the world for discipleship in contemporary society?

Task 4 (in the face-to-face session): What are we dealing with?

This task prepares the ground for the detailed discussion of their learning so far by introducing the concept of the 'creation myth' in a way that requires students to work with it in creative ways.

Ask students: 'If you had to give an account of the origin of creation on one side of a piece of paper, what features of the world would you choose to include?'

'What media would you use to do it? Art, poetry, story, scientific description, etc?'

Ask them to discuss the answers to these questions in small groups. Take a sample of the responses from the groups. Ask for observations comparing the class responses to the content and genres of the Genesis narratives.

Task 5: The theology of creation

This task focusses on students' understanding of the texts. It prioritises the purpose *of the texts over text-critical issues, so that these are placed in the context of application to ministry.*

Ask students to share their summaries of the theologies of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. Record the key features of the theology of each on separate flipcharts. The teacher may comment or challenge if appropriate.

Provide time at the end for students to modify their own account of the theologies if they wish.

Task 6: What questions arise?

This task now focusses on the text-critical issues that may have arisen from students' individual study.

Ask students to contribute the questions that their reading of the texts and commentaries raised for them. The teacher may suggest some that students ought to have recognised, thus

ensuring that the text-critical issues are covered. Identify together the key questions or groups of questions. Divide the class into small groups to discuss each of the main questions identified.

After brief group feedback, ask each group, 'How would you go about investigating the answer to that question more fully?' with contributions from the class.

Task 7: What difference does it make to believe in creation?

Having reflected on the texts and drawn conclusions, the session moves on to the fourth phase of the learning cycle: application.

Ask students to share their answers to the fourth of the questions in task 2, writing these on the flipchart. After a selection of answers, ask the students to discuss in small groups what points they would make in a sermon on one of these passages.

There are several observations to be made on the design of this learning sessions:

- The teacher supplies almost none of the information content directly. Instead, she acts as a facilitator of learning, using her expertise in the subject to signpost the most helpful reading and design the learning session.
- The students are in control of their own learning throughout. This is achieved through the use of open questions exploring their response to the information content and encouraging questioning.
- Space is included for students to become aware of their previous relevant experience, in this case the way belief in divine creation has affected their lives to this point and their existing skills in biblical interpretation.
- Space is included for students' affective responses and the personal impact of the learning.
- All four phases of the learning cycle – experience, reflection, conceptualisation and application – feature in the design of the learning session.
- There is plenty of opportunity for students to try out new insights with others and to learn from others.
- All the learning outcomes for the module are fulfilled and the relevance of biblical scholarship affirmed.
- The learning is placed in the context of the major 'So what?' question to arise from the passages in question: 'What does it mean for Christian discipleship to believe in a divine Creator?' thereby creating a direct connection with everyday faith.

In addition to all these points, this session illustrates a way to draw on biblical scholarship to resource everyday faith. The key is to focus on the theology and purpose of the texts in question. As Joel Green remarks, foregrounding the theology of the texts creates a link across the centuries between the writers and compilers of Scripture and the contemporary student, which spans the cultural distance between them.[71] This is achieved without ignoring the way the texts functioned in their original cultural context. In fact, it provides a concrete exemplar of the relationship between biblical scholarship and the way the Bible functions in discipleship and ministry.

The twin insights behind this approach are these:

1. The reason that any text of Scripture was originally spoken, written or recorded, and included by the editors or compilers in the books as we now have them was to answer the

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[71] Joel Green, *Practicing Theological Interpretation,* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.

question, 'What is the outward form and inner character of a faithful response to God in our situation?' This means that the Bible may justifiably be understood as theological reflection, taking a variety of different forms. It is traditionally assumed that the earlier of our two creation narratives is part of the 'J' source and was the creation of the wise men of Solomon's court. In that period of confident internationalism and openness to the other cultures of the Near East, one can imagine these scholars collecting the myths of the surrounding culture and rewriting them to reflect Israel's characterisation of God and guide its common life. Likewise the priestly writers of a later age created a narrative to commend, in Gottwald's words, 'a stable cult in a stable cosmos.' This approach to the Bible as theological reflection demands an account of the situation for which the texts were written precisely to make their theology available in the contemporary context.

2. For most texts, there are indications of what Umberto Eco called the 'model reader'. This is the reader whose interpretation of the text echoes that of the author who originated it (and in the case of Scripture compiled and edited the text). Green suggests that our willingness to put ourselves in the position of the reader to whom the text is addressed is the key to reading the Bible as Scripture: for example, to see ourselves as the 'twelve tribes of the dispersion' whom James addresses, that is God's chosen people in exile and awaiting restoration; the 'exiles of the dispersion' of 1 Peter, 'chosen … destined … sanctified … and obedient to Jesus Christ,' or the reader of John's Gospel willing to believe that 'Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.'

To summarise, the subject specialist in ministerial formation will not approach their teaching role in the same way as they might in the university context. They will not be seeking to induct students into the practice of theological scholarship but rather to make the Bible and Christian tradition available to resource the practices of ministry and everyday faith. This is achieved by reinterpreting the module aims and learning outcomes in a way that prioritises practical application to ministry. In this context, the teacher's authority is not that of the expert inducting students into the pursuit of the discipline, but their skill in facilitating the learning of theology as 'habitus', something that cannot be learned through instruction but only through practice.

Appendix G

Proposal 1: Changes to the formation qualities for ordained ministry

At the time of writing, the table of selection qualities has already been introduced, the table of formation qualities for IME 1 is due to be introduced from September 2022 and a review of formation qualities for licensed lay ministry is ongoing. These tables set out to describe in general terms the qualities of the 'ideal' ordinand, curate, incumbent or lay minister. If enabling everyday faith and lay ministry is to become an integral element of the Church's and each minister's theological imagination for ministry, this needs to be reflected explicitly in the tables.

In their present form, there is just one explicit reference to everyday faith in the formation qualities for ordained ministry. It occurs in one of the evidence statements under Fruitfulness/World, asking that the ordinand:

> shows how their IME 1 training is preparing them to encourage others in their everyday faith, in the school, workplace or family,

and the curate:

> shows how they have nurtured others in their everyday faith, in the school, workplace or family.

There are several places in which the wording surrounding discipleship would benefit from making it explicit that 'discipleship' refers to everyday faith. For example, in Love for God/Christ, by replacing

> shows a vibrant faith that can speak about their own joys and disappointments, experience of change or failure and is able to interpret how grace is at work in their life,

with: can speak about the way they have practised their faith in the context of everyday life, their own joys and disappointments, experience of change or failure and is able to interpret how grace is at work in their life.

It would also be an advantage to complement the statement under Wisdom/Church:

> shows initiative, drive and creativity in implementing growth so as to encourage, enable and develop the leadership of others,

with a matching statement in Wisdom/World, such as:

> demonstrates the capacity to encourage and enable others to live out their faith and discern God's call in everyday life.

Most disappointing, however, is the lack of explicit reference to everyday faith in the top-level statements. Although at the time of writing, the wording has been agreed by the House of Bishops and is intended to be set in stone, the following suggestions are offered (with additional words in italics):

In Love for God/Christ:

>   is reliant on God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and lives out an infectious, life-transforming faith *in every sphere of life*.

In Fruitfulness/World:

>   shares faith in Christ and can accompany others in their *everyday* faith.

And in Call to Ministry/Christ

>   Responds to the call of Christ to be a disciple-*making disciple.*

The importance of these suggested changes is that the formation qualities are an expression of the Church's normative theology of ordained ministry. Unless the aspiration of enabling ministry is explicitly owned, it is unlikely to take root and become part of its operant theology.

It might also be worthwhile, before the formation grid for IME 1 is finalised, to compare it with the work currently being undertaken on a formation grid for Reader / LLM candidates. There, the top-level description under Love for God/Christ reads:

>   Is reliant on God, and lives out an infectious, life-transforming, everyday-focussed faith.

And the evidence statements include some useful examples in which everyday faith is explicit:

>   Has a faith that is enriched by Christian tradition, is rooted in the world and the everyday, and has sustained them through life's challenges (Love for God/Christ).

>   Can connect gathered worship and Christian tradition and ethics with everyday faith and experience, equipping people to face challenges in the world (Wisdom/World).

>   Can share their faith in a way that enables others to relate it to the whole of their lives (Fruitfulness/Christ).

Appendix H

Proposal 2: Becoming intentional about enabling ministry

'Organizational culture shapes every aspect of learning that takes place in a programme of theological education. Consequently, the first step in promoting intentionality … is developing a shared language and culture … Transformative theological education can only take place when these issues are not only fully embraced by the faculty and board, but also understood and applied by staff, such that a healthy culture permeates every crevice of the organization.'[72]

This quotation is from the first paragraph of Perry Shaw's influential book, *Transforming Theological Education.* However, Shaw goes on the suggest, there are major obstacles in the path of an institution wishing seriously to examine and critique its own culture. The most serious of these are internal in the form of inertia and positive resistance to change. Because institutional culture is the water we swim in, the assumptions embedded in our practices, it can be difficult to recognise the hold they exert.

The Oxford research discovered that, of six theological colleges or courses operating in the Diocese of Oxford, only one was intentional about the task of equipping its students to enable everyday faith. The others appeared to assume that the course of training they offered would automatically provide the equipping needed, despite the research for 'Setting God's People Free' suggesting that the opposite is, in fact, the case.

Hence, the suggestion that institutions seriously examine their organizational culture, asking whether they are equipping students as enablers of whole-life discipleship. The following brief outline of what might be involved includes the questions offered by Shaw in his opening section, a consideration of the hidden curriculum of the institution, the way institutions equip students to engage with the many 'threshold concepts' they encounter in the course of formation, and some additional questions focussing specifically on everyday faith.

Asking the right questions

Shaw begins with the theological foundations that should undergird any programme of ministerial formation. For Shaw, the most important are the mission of God, the role of God's people in that mission and its incarnational nature. But he also suggests the perichoretic nature of the Trinity, the Bible as the story of God's saving acts, the cross and Jesus' self-emptying, the work of the Holy Spirit and the nature of discipleship as worthy of consideration. He suggests that institutions think about the implications of each of these 'not so much the content but the philosophy and approach to curriculum; implications for the administrative structure, for the person of the teacher; for the instructional methodology.'[73]

For our immediate purpose, in focussing on equipping students for enabling ministry, 'Kingdom Calling' presents some important ways in which the Church is called upon to reassess its theology and this report seeks to build on this in the way it argues for a shift in educational culture and methodology.

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[72] Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education,* 2nd edition, Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2022, p.15.
[73] Shaw, p. 25.

Shaw goes on to suggest nine questions for any theological education institution and summarises them as follows. Many institutions will consider that they already have a fully worked out response to some or all of these questions, but they are nevertheless given in full:[74]

1. What is the ideal church in our context? What would the ideal church look like – one that is sensitive to God's mission and able to empower all of God's people to be significant ambassadors for Christ and his gospel.

2. What are the contextual challenges? What are some of the challenges that confront the church, that hinder it as an effective agency for the proclamation of Christ? Consider external challenges (how societal context hinders proclamation) and internal challenges (particular chronic weaknesses within the Christian faith community).

3. What might an ideal Christian leader look like? [For those uncomfortable with the ideology of 'leadership', substitute the term 'minister'] For your own specific local context, what are the chief characteristics of the ideal Christian leader, the sort of person who would be able to lead the church through its contextual challenges towards the accomplishment of the general goal you have articulated? What sorts of character traits, skills and knowledge would be needed to best accomplish the task of Christian leadership in your context? On the basis of these reflections, develop a 'profile of the ideal graduate'.

4. Who are the learners? What are the sorts of communities from which they come (urban, suburban or rural; monocultural or multicultural)? The levels and types of religiosity of their upbringing? The sorts of churches they come from?

5. Where do the students go? What kinds of roles do your alumni have? What sort of people do they serve? Are they wealthy, middle class or poor? Level of education? Urban, suburban or rural? Individualistic or communal? Religious or a-religious? What do your alumni describe as being some of the greatest challenges they have faced? The greater the diversity in alumni ministry contexts, the greater the need for diversity in the curriculum.

6. When? The Time Frame. An endemic problem in curriculum design is allocating too much 'what' for the 'when'. The 'when' includes all potential formal times (classroom or equivalent, non-formal times (structured but non-classroom – e.g. mentoring, discipleship groups, internships) and informal times (e.g. general time over meals, trips together and casual encounters that hold potential for informal learning).

7. Where? The Learning Environment. What are your material resources? To what extent does the physical context help or hinder learning? How do physical limitations impact the educational possibilities?

8. Who will facilitate the learning? Who are your human resources? How many people are involved in facilitating the learning? What is the nature of their training? How much do they know about teaching? Capacity is a significant element in curriculum design.

9. What and How? Once the initial eight questions have been answered, you will be in an adequate position to consider what the actual curriculum might look like.

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[74] Shaw, pp. 52-3.

The 'Hidden Curriculum'

Institutional culture is conveyed to students and others through aspects of the 'hidden curriculum' embedded in aspects of community life, such as patterns of relationships, choices within the explicit curriculum, and the vision for ministry modelled by staff. The pictures displayed on the walls may say more about what the institution thinks ministry is about than the explicit curriculum. Staff 'asides' in the course of a teaching session reveal and convey to students the areas of their greatest concern.[75]

The 'null curriculum' also speaks powerfully. If there is no mention of everyday faith, just as if no space is given to environmental awareness, students are effectively taught that these things do not matter in ministry. Where there is no acknowledgement of lay discipleship and ministry, no mention of the importance of 'ecclesial imagination', where patterns of worship exclusively or mainly reflect the expectations laid on clergy, ordinands are effectively being socialised into a clerical caste rather than formed for enabling ministry.

Perhaps the most important issue any institution has to resolve is the relative importance of the academic as against the formational curriculum. The fact that students will receive a numerical mark for some areas of their learning and that others will figure only as a tutor's remark in their final report presents every student with a challenge to their maturity. Which do they most value: the paper qualification or the effect of formation on their character?

In the last resort, a vision for enabling ministry depends on the culture of the institution more than any other factor.

In discussions between the TEIs involved in the project, several of elements of hidden curriculum through which students were prepared for enabling ministry were shared:

- on non-residential courses, candidates for lay and ordained ministry train alongside each other and sometimes alongside other 'interested learners'
- non-residential students are asked to form a local group, consisting not simply of members of their home church but also friends who may be members of other faiths or none, who share the students' work for their modules and assignments (e.g. thinking through the language of mission, taking part in sermon preparation) so that students are thinking at all stages how their learning 'lands' in everyday life and are enabling the everyday faith of others throughout their training
- residential students may be asked to form a mentoring relationship with a member of the congregation as part of a church placement
- giving high priority to theological reflection; all three institutions employ a 'flipped learning' approach in which students are expected to do preparatory work before each teaching session, creating time for theological reflection as part of the collaborative learning that takes place in the session (see further below on both TR and flipped learning)
- teaching on ministry specifically emphasises its corporate and collaborative nature and includes an emphasis on enabling everyday faith
- individual learning programmes are tailor-made to value previous experience
- methods of assessment include assessed conversations, resources for others and theological reflection
- in assignments requiring students to apply their learning to ministry, making it explicit that 'ministry' includes enabling everyday faith

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[75] *Whole-life mission,* pp. 128-30.

- annual reporting is linked to experience in work and everyday life as well as training
- students are offered opportunities to share and teach from their areas of previous experience and expertise
- leading and modelling in the institution in such a way as to increase students' agency and minimise differences in status
- encouraging students to take responsibility for their own issues, thereby modelling a 'pastoral equipping' model of pastoral care.

We commend these to colleagues as ways in which a vision for enabling ministry is made visible and may be strengthened.

'Threshold Concepts'

Ministerial formation is intended to be transformative. Students encounter situations, ideas and practices that may be unfamiliar and challenging, engaging with which has the potential to leave them with a changed outlook. The world looks different, their attitudes change, and they begin to act differently.

A vital part of this process will be the encounter with 'threshold concepts', described by Meyer and Land as, 'akin to passing through a portal' that opens up 'previously inaccessible way(s) of thinking about something.'[76] They describe threshold concepts as having five characteristics. Their negotiation is:

- transformative, changing the learner's perception of the subject matter, discipline or even worldview
- likely to be irreversible: once learned, they are difficult to unlearn
- integrative, in that it creates a new appreciation of the area in question that brings together and provides a context for previous knowledge
- bounded, in that it delineates the conceptual boundaries of a subject discipline or captures its essence
- troublesome, and may initially be resisted, since it may lead to the disorientation of the previous knowledge or worldview.

Eeva John, Nick Shepherd and Naomi Nixon present some examples of 'meta-level' threshold concepts concerning the process of ministerial formation as a whole. Students may come to realise that Christian learning:

- involves character as well as knowledge and skills
- is wider than theological discourse and that theological discourse is a frame of interpretation
- is deeply contextual
- changes the way we *feel*
- is relational.[77]

As well as these fundamental realisations about the process on which they have embarked, students regularly encounter subject-related threshold concepts in the course of their learning. For example, the module TMM 1231, Human Identity, Theology, Vocation and Professional Practice potentially

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[76] Jan Meyer and Ray Land, 'Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: linkages to ways of thinking and practising within the disciplines' *Occasional Report 4,* 2003. ETL Project: Universities of Edinburgh, Coventry and Durham. report 2 (ed.ac.uk)

[77] Eeva John, Nick Shepherd and Naomi Nixon, 'Life-changing learning for Christian discipleship and ministry: a practical exploration', *Practical Theology 11.4,* 2018, pp. 300-314.

offers the following, any one of which has the potential to challenge a student's existing outlook and rearrange their thinking:

- *imago Dei*
- personality type
- the disposition to attentive listening
- the priority of communion in the face of the individualism of society
- personal vocation, and the vocation of the Church
- theological reflection
- the recognition of boundaries.

Or the short module TMM 1717, Introduction to Growing in Faith:

- recognising the place of children and young people as part of today's church
- recognising the importance of foundational spirituality via study of children's spirituality
- intergenerational worship not as an optional and occasional event but potentially as the norm for the church's worship and learning not only techniques but a way of being required for leading intergenerational worship
- learning the approach of Godly Play to the shared heritage we have in the Bible, based around the 'I wonder' questions – a clear contrast with the way children are often taught didactically
- recognising the responsibility of parents to nurture the faith of their children, coming to understand some of the ways in which this needs to take place
- recognising their role in equipping parents to nurture faith in their children and learning some ways of doing this, which might lead on to …
- learning the specific approach of *adult* education, which values the experience and goals of the learner and in which the teacher is more a facilitator than an expert
- learning to inhabit the role of 'broker' between communities of practice, in this case the church and the church school
- learning how to lead cultural change in a church.

Or the much more commonly used TMM 1361, Mission and Evangelism:

- the *missio Dei*
- encouraging discipleship as part of mission
- Sam Wells' idea of ministry *with* rather than *to* or *for*
- justice as mission, care for creation as mission

And to all these, a focus on enabling ministry adds to the number of potential threshold concepts:

- everyday faith itself
- the two cultural changes called for in 'Setting God's People Free': empowering lay discipleship, seeing lay ministry as equally important as ordained ministry
- recognising the equal importance of the dispersed church in mission with the gathered church at worship
- ministry as a collaborative practice involving partnership with others
- leadership as holding a space for others to step into
- facilitating TR by individuals, groups and whole churches
- the 'pervasive threshold': learning to see the presence of God in the whole of life

- learning to see experience *through the lens of* the Bible and Christian theology rather than simply learning *about* the Bible and Christian theology
- learning for competence in practice rather than simply for conceptual understanding
- learning as something that takes place in the whole of life rather than only through formal learning opportunities

Given that threshold learning may be troublesome and that students are faced with so many threshold concepts in the course of formation, the question arises how students can best be supported as they encounter these thresholds. In some cases, however, experience suggests that students find these concepts liberating. An example is the experience at Sarum College in relation to TMM 1231. Students enter training after a period of discernment in which they are asked to focus on the responsibilities attached to their individual call and recognising the corporate dimension of vocation may come as a relief. Likewise, to realise that God's call embraces their everyday life and work may redress an unbalanced focus on their ministerial vocation.

For the threshold concepts that students find troublesome, there are strategies that can reduce the tensions. Cranmer Hall offered some strategies for enabling evangelical students to encounter the ideas that mission is broader than evangelism and that the Bible is subject to interpretation:

- avoiding the language of a hierarchy of knowledge (i.e. presenting new concepts as deeper or more academically acceptable than previously held understanding) and making connections between the potential thresholds and what has gone before, e.g. for those for whom the 5 marks of mission might be a stretch, emphasising that evangelism is enriched, locating the marks in Scripture
- awareness of the pastoral implications of threshold learning, never forgetting that people are encountering this for the first time
- willingness to engage critically with the concepts, e.g. not presenting the contested authorship of NT documents as incontrovertible truth
- warning that a concept may take some getting used to, e.g. the hermeneutic of suspicion
- in the life of the institution as a whole, being explicit that students will discover things for the first time, rooting them in prayer and worship, giving permission in lectures to find things hard

A key strategy in helping students to engage with threshold concepts is the facilitation of 'deep learning'. This is the learning that results in transformative change, whether to concepts or dispositions. It can be enabled by providing learning tasks that invite the students to focus on their previous experience and existing understanding of the topic and in some cases their feelings about it. This is to bring the 'troublesome' aspect of threshold learning to fore and make it specific, enabling the student to acknowledge what may need to be 'unlearned' as well as what is to be learned. It requires teachers to go beyond the transfer of information and to make space in the learning for students' previous experience.

It is important to realise that several of the thresholds associated with everyday faith may be troubling to members of staff and volunteer colleagues as well as to students, especially those who are used to and even find their identity in a subject-centred rather than a life-centred approach to learning. Formation for enabling ministry calls for an approach to the traditional subject areas of Old and New Testament, Doctrine, Ethics and Church History that differs from the subject-centred approach characteristic of theological scholarship.

Incorporating everyday faith into the curriculum

Institutions that adopt this second proposal, examining their own core assumptions and becoming intentional about their hidden curriculum, and the third proposal, adopting a pedagogy of adult rather than higher education, will have gone a long way towards becoming intentional about equipping their students for enabling ministry. The final step is to explore those opportunities to make direct reference to the ministerial task of enabling everyday faith.

As has been suggested in Appendix F and will be further explored in Appendix J, despite their espoused purpose of resourcing discipleship and ministry, many of the modules of Common Awards continue to embed the theory-to-practice orientation of a traditional Theology degree. Accordingly, module aims and learning outcomes routinely refer to the 'application' of theoretical study to the contexts of discipleship and ministry but without providing concrete examples of that application or specifying how it is to take place. Incorporating everyday faith into the teaching and learning requires teachers, in partnership with their students, to make specific connections between theology and life. It will mean devoting a proportion of teaching and learning time, using case studies and other methods, to exploring what a genuinely biblical or theological approach to everyday life might involve, and the issues arising from discipleship and ministry that may affect the way the subject area is to be understood.

It has already been suggested (in Appendix D) that training in theological education needs to include the use of TR in helping individuals and congregations to reflect as well as a tool for professional development. The sample learning session given in Appendix F includes an exercise designed to help students reflect on the consequences for all Christians of belief in a divine Creator. Use of the methodology of the flipped classroom in this way potentially provides opportunities for the implications of any subject for everyday faith to be explored.

Alongside the provision of the online programme 'Formation for Enabling Ministry', whose aim is to teach the rudiments of an adult education approach to learning, goes the provision of sample learning tasks under the heading of 'Everyday Faith'. These are available to staff to use or adapt and as inspiration to devise their own.

It is also suggested that institutions might monitor the extent to which everyday faith is explicitly addressed in formal and semi-formal curriculum time, through placements as well as in classroom time. In addition, they might explore the ways in which questions of everyday faith impact on choices of module and topics within modules across the curriculum.

Assessment

The topic of assessment appears at the end of this Appendix in keeping with the principle that 'last' is seldom 'least'. In fact, the way an institution handles assessment is one of the most important aspects of its hidden curriculum. Fulfilling an assignment and receiving feedback on completed assignments often generates more learning for students than teaching in a given subject. Well-designed assignments convey to students a sense of the shape of a subject area and direct them to the reading and other resources most valuable. Since adults learn best when they have the opportunity to assess their progress, regular feedback on assignments is vital for motivation and guidance.

The idea that enabling lay discipleship should form a central part of the Church's vision for ministry requires TEIs to attend carefully to the balance in the methods of assessment used between

communication for specialist and non-specialist audiences. The assessment guidelines for Common Awards state: 'When deciding how to implement the chosen pattern for any given module, TEIs should think carefully about the audiences that each component should address, in the light of the module learning outcomes. Is an essay addressed to a specialist audience what is needed, or an article for a church blog?'[78] An aspiration to place enabling others at the heart of ministry suggests that the balance should shift towards non-specialist audiences, with the greater use of methods such as oral and group presentations, assessed conversations and resources for others.

When considering this balance, there are several factors to be considered:

- The practice for which students are being prepared is not theological scholarship, for which the ability to communicate to a specialist audience is usually given priority, but everyday faith or ministry, in each of which ability to communicate to non-specialist audiences is essential. Whilst assignments for specialist audiences might be retained to assess students' grasp of basic concepts, the balance is likely to be towards non-specialist audiences.
- The balance between audiences is also a balance between the 'rigour' required in the 'high ground' of scholarly endeavour and the 'relevance' required to address the 'swamp' of everyday situations. Communication to non-specialist audiences may not require so much in the way of familiarity with abstract concepts but is almost always a more complex performance, requiring adaptation to context and a range of communication and possibly collaborative skills.
- The ability to explain a concept to another person is often a useful measure of how well the students has understood it.
- Communication to a non-specialist audience may be more difficult for a subject specialist to assess, in that it tests their familiarity with the contexts of ministry to which the assignment is directed. The ability to move beyond the strict confines of their specialist area to explore how it applies to everyday faith and ministry should be an aspiration for all theological educators.
- Methods such as assessed conversation and discussion, oral and group presentations may require more of a TEI's resources than straightforward written assignments. However, it should be remembered that well-designed and relevant assignments are usually the most valuable element in any teaching programme and that the main aim in any module is not coverage of the subject area so much as grasp of its basic principles.

The Oxford research suggested that a proportion of students respond negatively to theological reflection (TR) because they encounter it as another academic exercise with little perceived relevance to faith or ministry. We also saw reasons to consider TR as less a method and more an element of a student's *habitus* or habitual orientation to life. This suggests that it would be valuable to consider ways in which TR might become less a technique on its own and more an element in every assignment.

Already, the marking criteria for oral presentations with commentary, portfolios and practical skills include assessment of theological reflection. Practical skills and portfolios look for persuasiveness, self-awareness and reflexivity, while assessment of oral presentations includes integration of theory and practice. Tellingly, however, the criteria for essays and other written assignments and for assessed conversation and discussions do not include TR in the assessment.

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[78] Assessment Design Guidelines - Durham University

What characteristics of students' thought and practice might come within the purview of assessment for the ability to reflect theologically as part of these and other assignments? These might include:

- the ability to *make connections* between theology and other areas and between theology and practice
- their *self-awareness* and *reflexive ability*
- their ability to *discern a challenge to their theology or interpretation of Scripture* from experience or events
- as reflective practitioners, the extent to which their focus is on their personal performance, meeting the needs of others, their ability to reflect on process, or their ability to place all these in a wider context.

As with all the specific suggestions in this Appendix, these are offered for discussion and discernment by the staff and other stakeholders of each TEI seeking to place enabling everyday faith at the heart of its vision for ministry.

Appendix I

Objectives of the online learning programme 'Formation for Enabling Ministry'

The programme is available on the Common Awards hub via the drop-down menu under 'Staff Menu'.

The outline of the online learning programme and the objectives for each unit are as follows:

Unit 1: What is Everyday Faith?

AS a result of this unit, learners will:

- explain the idea of 'everyday faith' as the Church of England is coming to understand it
- be able to recognise, describe and evaluate examples of everyday faith
- be challenged and inspired to place everyday faith at the heart of their vision for ministry

Unit 2: What is a Practice?

As a result of this unit, learners will:

- describe the concept of a practice as introduced by Alastair MacIntyre
- be able to use this concept as a lens through which to understand discipleship, ministry and, for those who are teachers in theological training, their own academic discipline
- explain the theological foundations for the concept of a practice

Unit 3: Experiential Learning

As a result of this unit, learners will:

- explain the nature of experiential learning
- reflect on their own experiences of informal, experiential learning
- describe and explain the learning cycle and the learning styles associated with it
- be equipped to draw on their understanding of experiential learning when thinking about pedagogy in Stage 3 of the programme

Unit 4: Communities of Practice

As a result of this unit, learners will:

- describe and explain the concept of communities of practice
- be able to recognise examples of communities of practice
- describe a community of practice they belong to in terms of the theory
- explain the philosophical and theological foundation for the concept of communities of practice

Unit 5: Learning Everyday Faith

As a result of this unit, learners will:

- explain the concept of a 'social imaginary' and be able to connect this with what they have learned about experiential learning, practices and communities of practice

- be able to identify and describe the four pathways by which disciples grow in maturity and confidence
- apply their understanding of experiential learning to the way Christian disciples learn everyday faith
- apply their understanding of communities of practice to the way Christian disciples learn everyday faith

Unit 6: Theological Reflection

As a result of this unit, learners will:

- describe the relationship of TR and experiential learning
- describe the relationship between TR in everyday life and the formal exercises in TR used in ministerial formation
- identify, describe and provide a rationale for the features of 'good TR'
- describe the role TR has played in their own journey of faith
- begin to describe how they might use TR as an element in formation for ministry

Unit 7: Academic and Everyday Theology

As a result of this unit, learners will:

- explain the difference between academic and everyday theology
- describe the role of the 'people's theologian' as described by Laurie Green and explain the part this role plays in enabling ministry

Unit 8: Learning Ministry

As a result of this unit, learners will:

- explain the concepts of 'pastoral imagination' and 'practical wisdom'
- describe and explain the way lay and ordained ministers learn, drawing on their understanding of experiential learning and theological reflection

Unit 9: Teaching Adults

As a result of this unit, learners will:

- describe the characteristics of adult learners
- identify and explain the assumptions they make about the nature of adult learners
- become committed to an adult education approach to ministerial formation

Unit 10: Designing Learning

As a result of this unit, learners will:

- explain the uses and limitations of lectures
- describe a range of alternative methods for learning
- explain the use of 'aims' and 'objectives' in designing learning
- explain the advantages of 'blended' and 'flipped' learning
- be equipped to design a variety of learning tasks
- develop the confidence to shift from a pedagogy of higher education to a pedagogy of adult education

Unit 11: For Supervisors

As a result of this unit, supervisors will:

- accumulate a list of concrete ideas for learning activities that will help their trainee ministers to enable everyday faith
- grow in confidence about resourcing the learning of their supervisees

Unit 12: For Subject Specialists

As a result of this unit, subject specialists will:

- recast their teaching as a series of learning tasks whose purpose is to immerse students in an approach to their subject areas that will resource them for enabling ministry
- grow in confidence in becoming adult education practitioners

Units may take up to 4 hours of individual study. They may be studied either individually or in groups. Studying the units with colleagues will enhance the quality of the learning and enable institutions to embrace the recommended approach to teaching and learning relatively seamlessly.

Appendix J

Proposal 4: Reviewing the Common Awards Programme Specifications and Module Outlines

In Appendix F, the suggestion was made that the aims and learning outcomes of certain modules need to be reinterpreted if they are to serve a pedagogy of adult learning rather than higher education. Since it is possible to use the current module outlines to serve a transformed pedagogy, it could be argued that there is no need to review the module outlines since it is perfectly possible for institutions to foreground the issues of application arising from the traditional theological curriculum should they wish to do so.

On the other hand, the arguments in favour of a change are that:

1. in their current form the module outlines allow and even encourage a subject-centred approach, which has been found to be disabling for enabling ministry, and
2. that what the Church is calling for is a profound cultural shift, and in relation to ministerial formation this implies and even requires a review of the way the aims and learning outcomes of Common Awards are expressed.

The same arguments apply to the Programme Specifications as a whole. If the modules are to be reviewed, it would be appropriate for this to begin with a review of the Programme Specifications to ensure that they too express the culture of enabling ministry the Church wishes to embrace. In what follows, before raising some concerns about a selection of individual modules, some concrete suggestions are offered for a revision of the Programme Specifications. Page numbers refer to the Programme Specification for the BA. Any changes to the Specification for the BA would, of course, need to be echoed for all the other programmes.

Our starting point must be a recognition that the Common Awards already aim to serve, 'those who wish to be more fully equipped for Christian life and service in the world' (page 3). In other words, formation for discipleship is already in view, although it may be advantageous to substitute a phrase such as, 'the spheres of everyday life and work' for 'the world', since the phrase 'the world' when used alongside 'the churches' could easily be taken as signalling a sacred-secular divide.

However, despite its title of Theology, Ministry and Mission, the Common Awards programme is a development and extension of the subject-centred approach of a traditional Theology degree, whereas both everyday faith and ministry are life-centred. There is therefore a major underlying pedagogical issue embedded in both the shape and wording of the programme aims and learning outcomes (LOs), since they imply a theory-to-practice approach in which students are first initiated into the disciplines of the Theology curriculum and then learn how to apply these in practice, whereas growth in everyday faith and learning to enable everyday faith are, by their very nature, praxis-based and life-centred.

Moreover, the Programme Specification declares at the outset that, 'The aim of this programme is to equip Christian disciples and ministers to develop as competent and faithful reflective practitioners.' Reflective practice is not a theory-to-practice activity but proceeds from practice to reflection in the light of theory to reflected practice. Consequently, a programme that embeds a theory-to-practice approach to learning will struggle to equip learners as reflective practitioners.

Thus, the overall issue would seem to be whether and if so how to express the programme aims and learning outcomes (LOs) in a life-centred way, thus completing the process of transforming the traditional Theology curriculum into one that serves everyday faith and ministry and genuinely equips reflective practitioners. Because Common Awards already aspires to prepare students for both everyday faith and ministry, this may not require drastic changes. As we saw in Appendix F in the case of individual modules, it can be accomplished by changing the order of aims and LOs to place the practices of everyday faith and ministry at the head of the various lists, with slight but significant changes in the wording of the other aims and LOs to reflect the change of perspective thus brought about.

A further major issue to arise from these observations relates to level 4. Because the embedded philosophy of the programme is still largely subject-centred, several of the introductory modules at level 4 consist of surveys of the subject-matter. This is rarely a fruitful pedagogical approach, since it requires students to assimilate large amounts of knowledge for which they have little or no meaningful pre-existing context. The result is that students quickly forget much of what they are taught, since their interest is not in becoming theological scholars for whom this basic information will be in constant use but in growing in discipleship or becoming ministers. The appropriate foundation level for the study of Theology, Ministry and Mission lies in learning how to draw on the insights of Christian tradition to grow in the practice of everyday faith. This requires a pedagogical approach in which the study of the Bible, theology, ethics and church history is related to the issues of everyday life and faith from the very start.

In what follows, the specific suggestions are to be compared with the wording of the Programme Specification for the BA. An ellipsis indicates that no alteration is required.

People (page 3). It might be appropriate to reverse the order of the two groups. At present, the order could be taken to imply that the second group, whose aim is to prepare for lay discipleship and ministry, consist of those not preparing for licensed or ordained ministry. If so, it might also be taken as strengthening that lack of equality between lay and ordained ministry to which 'Setting God's People Free' draws attention. In fact, *all* students, whether or not their goal is licensed or ordained ministry, are preparing to live as disciples in the world. For the reasons given above, the phrase 'world' might be altered to read, 'the spheres of everyday life and work.'

Pedagogy (page 4). The order of the three points might be changed to begin with orienting students towards the field of (discipleship) ministry and mission for which they are being prepared, followed by the outcome as an orientation to lifelong reflective learning and finally the ability to draw on the disciplines of scholarship including theology to accomplish this. The wording might be:

> The aim of this programme is to enable students to engage … by offering learning and teaching that:

> 1. are constantly oriented towards the fields of discipleship, ministry and mission for which students wish to prepare
> 2. by their modes of assessment and methods of learning and teaching enable students to develop as lifelong reflective learners
> 3. draw on a variety of theological and other disciplines and bring those disciplines together to inform and enrich one another.

Purpose (page 4). It might be appropriate to place learning for discipleship on an equal footing with ministry and thus rephrase the first sentence as:

>The purposes of the programme are to satisfy the aspirations of those students who wish to enhance, broaden and deepen their discipleship and to equip women and men for ministry in a range of contexts.

A further suggestion would be to amalgamate the 'professional' and 'personal' lists, and within a unified list to bring aims 4 and 5 in the 'personal' list to the front. The unified list might be seen as an attempt to describe what is involved in learning a Christian 'social imaginary'. The wording might be:

>The purpose of this programme is to develop dispositions that are congruent with and necessary for Christian discipleship, ministry and mission in both the church and the spheres of everyday life and faith. Learners completing the programme will have become:
>
>1. clearer about their vocation in the context of their everyday lives and in the church and more determined to pursue personal and corporate lifelong learning as disciples of Christ
>2. passionate and prayerful advocates of the mission of God with the ability to recognise the activity of God in the contexts of everyday life
>3. able to draw on insights and ongoing formation generated by attentive study of Scripture, willing to go on being transformed by their engagement with Scripture and alert to the questions generated by their study
>4. aware of the skills and dispositions needed to interpret themselves and the contexts in which they live, work and exercise ministry in the light of Christian doctrine and worship, and to explore Christian doctrine more deeply in the light of experience and practice
>5. deeply aware ….
>6. open to the insights …
>7. capable of meeting the range of professional and vocational criteria for the ministries for which students are being prepared
>8. capable of pursuing further study ….

Programme Learning Outcomes (pages 5 and following). The main issue to address is again the embedded subject-centred approach of the traditional Theology curriculum. As with the aims, the LOs ought to be describing a Christian social imaginary, whereas the focus at present is on the disciplines of theological scholarship. Further, since the LOs are limited to subject-specific knowledge (SSK), subject-specific skills (SSS) and key skills (KS), it is difficult to find a place to express the disposition statements included in the aims. This becomes even more important if the suggestion of giving these statements greater priority by moving them to the beginning of the aims to provide a context for all the other aim statements is accepted.

One possibility might be to create an additional category of subject-specific dispositions, placing it before SSK, SSS and KS. Another might be to expand the concept of SSS to include dispositions, since, when it is seen as an element in a practice, the satisfactory exercise of a skill practically always requires an appropriate disposition. In either case, it would be appropriate to place the disposition statements first as the context for the rest of the learning. This could be seen as better reflecting the idea that learning through the Common Awards is best described as 'formation' and aspires to an ideal of *paideia* for contemporary Christians.

Adopting the second proposal (treating the dispositions expressed in the aims as an aspect of SSS), the programme learning outcomes for level 4 might be expressed as follows:

Subject Specific Skills (SSS)

On successful completion of the level, students will be able to

1. demonstrate how the habitual pattern of their lives expresses their passionate commitment to the mission of God and describe how this affects their engagement with the spheres of everyday life
2. engage in reflective practice, individually and with others, to resource the practices of discipleship, mission and ministry, with guidance from an experienced practitioner, drawing on appropriate methodologies and relevant disciplines, and communicate this accurately and reliably in a range of contexts
3. identify the context and genre of selected biblical texts, and comment intelligently on their significance for the practices of discipleship, ministry and mission and for the texts' interpretation

Subject Specific Knowledge (SSK)

On successful completion of the level, students will be able to:

1. discuss knowledgeably some core aspects of Christian discipleship, such as everyday faith, spirituality, worship, mission or ethics, and the questions to which they give rise
2. discuss intelligently a range of biblical texts …
3. investigate and describe competently …

Key Skills (KS)

On successful completion of the level, students will be able to:

1. recognise key issues for their own growth in everyday faith and ministry and, where appropriate, their ability to enable everyday faith in others
2. identify, gather …
3. evaluate the appropriateness …
4. carry out a guided task …

One consequence of this modification of the way the programme LOs are expressed would be the need to adopt the ordering of SSS, SSK and KS in every module. A consequence of the alternative proposal would be to introduce subject-specific dispositions for every module. This was an aspiration at one stage in the creation of the Common Awards modules but proved too difficult to accomplish at that stage. Although the revision of every CA module might appear to be an enormous task, it should be remembered that the Church is calling for a 'revolution' in its culture to effect a change that has hitherto proved to be beyond its capacity to embrace. Thoroughgoing revision would therefore seem to be more appropriate than small adjustments.

Modification to the programme LOs at levels 5 and 6 would follow the pattern agreed for level 4, with similar changes to the wording. Likewise, modification of the Specifications for the other programmes would echo the pattern presented here for the BA.

Outline syllabus (pages 9 and following). The first issue is the length of time allowed for completion of the level. The University is likely to be understandably hesitant about increasing the timescale for qualification, not least because this entails the logistical problem of administering requests for temporary suspensions and following up inactive students. Nevertheless, if the programme is to be offered to people not sponsored by their churches to train for ministry but wishing to be more fully equipped for Christian life and service in everyday life, it is appropriate to allow a longer timescale.

One possibility might be three years for each level, with a minimum of 60 credits over a two-year period to allow for fallow periods in study due to individual circumstances.

The second and major issue is the subject-centred description of Level 4, which is unsatisfactory for a programme geared to equipping students as reflective practitioners. The terminology of 'subject specific' knowledge and skills might need to be retained in relation to the LOs, but the description of the skills and knowledge required needs to change to reflect a life-centred rather than subject-centred approach. The descriptions of levels 5 and 6 would then change to reflect this. In the suggestions that follow, two further alterations are proposed:

- Theological reflection is viewed as integral to learning rather than an additional specific skill
- Synonyms are proposed for the word 'professional' with a view to avoiding the implication that ministry is always a 'profession' or that a Christian disciple's work situation is necessarily a 'professional' one.

The description of the syllabus might be framed along the following lines:

At level 4 students learn to draw on theological and other disciplines to resource everyday faith and ministry, including, where appropriate, resourcing everyday faith in others. The modules at this level equip students to reflect on their experience in the light of Scripture and Christian theology and worship. Students are introduced to the methods appropriate to the disciplines on which they learn to draw to provide a framework enabling them to progress to further study at level 5. Study might include a range of interdisciplinary modules designed to support ministerial practice and possibly with a denominational focus.

At level 5 students continue to engage with theological and other disciplines to resource everyday faith and ministry over a broader range and at greater depth. For example, by the end of the level students will have engaged with a range of texts from both Old and New Testaments. The learning emerging from interdisciplinary modules designed to support ministerial practice will continue, embodying a 'spiral' approach that enables increasing depth of learning in these areas.

Students will hone the skills of reflection on issues of everyday life and ministry in the light of Scripture and Christian theology and worship. They will engage with the methods appropriate to the subject-areas on which they draw at a higher and more critical level and engage with more complex situations relating to their working or ministerial practice either through a short-term placement, through work-based learning or through a sustained placement that lasts throughout the student's programme of study.

In addition, students will have the opportunity to study in specialist areas such as inter faith engagement, environmental theology, science and faith and education, or to specialise in the study of a theological subject area. Students may offer an independent study module and/or an integrative learning module that further enhances the breadth of learning available to them.

At level 6 students will have a much greater freedom in choosing areas of learning. A dissertation or extended project ensures that students have an opportunity to demonstrate independent learning at this level. The project may be directly related to the practical element of the student's programme or may involve research in practical theology.

Some students may choose …

At all three levels, the programme offers students the opportunity to engage with their ministerial or everyday working situation either through short-term placements, through work-based learning or through a sustained placement that lasts throughout the students' year or programme of study.

The value of any process of revision lies not merely in the final outcome but perhaps to a greater degree in the sense of common purpose and specific insights thrown up by the process itself. At a time when the Church of England, one of the main participants in the Common Awards, is recognising the need for a major re-evaluation of its ministry priorities, a review of the way the Common Awards programmes can best serve this has the potential to add energy and direction to the process.

The overarching reason for proposing a review of the modules is to ensure that these align with the revised Programme Specifications. In addition, there are some relevant considerations in relation to individual modules:

- Small changes may be needed to modules concerned with mission and leadership (such as TMM 1361 Mission and Evangelism; TMM 2211 and 3191 Leadership and Theology for Ministry and mission) to ensure that everyday faith and enabling ministry are central to the vision for ministry.
- Several modules address discipleship but in different ways. TMM 1631 explores the theology of vocation. TMM 1171 and 2171 link discipleship with the study of ethics. TMM 1521 and 2591 link it with spirituality. TMM 2181 links it with life in community. Some discussion is needed as to whether a unified approach is necessary or desirable.
- The integration of placement with classroom learning. In relation to placements, small changes can make a big difference, such as a policy of asking each student on placement to become a mentor to a member of the placement congregation. Perhaps more significantly, in current practice, students tend to reflect on placement experience outside the placement context itself, thereby reflecting *about* congregations in their absence rather than *with* them in context, a practice which works against enabling ministry and reinforces clericalism. Inserting a requirement for reflection in context into appropriate modules would help to reverse this tendency as well as contributing to the embedding of TR across disciplines.
- Several modules either directly or indirectly address and help to form ministerial identity (for example, TMM 1231 Human Identity, Theology, Vocation and Professional Practice; TMM 1461 and 1661, 2181 and 2551, 3511 Corporate Engagement with Context). A review of these should ensure that enabling everyday faith is central to the vision of ministry presented in these modules.
- In modules concerned with pastoral care (such as TMM 1417, 1421, 1661, 2471, 2491, 2551, 3511, 3521), there is a need for engagement with what Neil Hudson calls the 'pastoral care contract', which encourages congregations to expect pastoral care in return for support for the priorities of the church's leadership. Hudson suggests that a 'pastoral equipping contract' in which congregations are equipped to live out everyday faith is much healthier.[79]
- Several modules offer opportunities for students to experience negotiating the boundary between the Christian and other communities of practice. For example, TMM 1717 Introduction to Growing in Faith addresses the relationship between the church and Church school; any treatment of leadership allows students to compare Christian approaches to leadership with those with which they are familiar in their previous roles; any treatment of

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[79] Neil Hudson, *Imagine Church,* Nottingham: IVP, 2012, pp. 116-22.

dying and bereavement will touch on the relationship between the Christian approach to death and resurrection and that of other communities, such as hospices and funeral directors; modules concerned with inter-faith relations explore the boundaries between faith communities. Each of these is an opportunity to help students develop the skills of boundary negotiation.

There is therefore a case for extending a review to every module both to ensure that everyday faith and enabling ministry are central to the embedded vision for ministry and to ensure overall alignment between the revised Programme Specifications and each individual module.

Appendix K

What cultural obstacles stand in the way of the changes we are recommending?

Ministerial formation is only one element in the open system that is the Church. Attempting to change one element in a system is rarely effective because of the basic rule that any system is self-correcting. The change will always be opposed and undermined by the rest of the system.[80] Changes in our approach to ministerial formation will therefore only be effective to the extent that these changes are backed up by changes in the whole Church.

All three of the institutions that contributed to this report identified the Church (rather than the wider society) as the place where the most significant obstacles are encountered. All three were aware that their efforts to create a culture and design a curriculum to equip students to enable everyday faith are likely constantly to be undermined by the culture of the surrounding Church. Their students come from sending churches, encounter churches on placements and are licensed or ordained into churches in which everyday faith is an alien concept. Moreover, because CMD has is both undervalued and under-resourced, clergy whose initial training took place some years ago may continue to practice the approaches to ministry then current, but which are now proving themselves to be ill-adapted to the challenges of the current time.

When he was working for the Diocese of Oxford, the writer of this report was tasked with consulting area deans from around the diocese on the possibilities of promoting locally based training for discipleship and ministry, that is the kind of Christian learning that might be provided on a deanery or similar geographical basis to fill the gap between what a local church could be expected to provide (Lent groups, Bible study, etc.) and the training provided by dioceses for authorised, licensed or ordained ministry. At every gathering, these clergy acknowledged that what we were talking about was a fundamental change in culture: that while there are some churches in which learning in adulthood for discipleship and ministry is an accepted practice, the idea of smaller churches lacking the resources for such programmes banding together to provide them falls well outside the average member's understanding of church life.

By contrast, in 2017 'Setting God's People Free' included as one of its stories illustrating the shifts that are needed the example of a diocese engaging with the issues:

> A Diocese recognised that there were likely to be many fewer ordained stipendiary clergy in 2020 than at the start of the decade, so challenged each of its 10 deaneries to come up with a mission deployment plan on that basis. This involved re-thinking benefice and team ministry structures of course, but more radically deaneries began to think in new ways about the needs and opportunities of each area and to propose how a richer variety of ministries (lay and ordained) might be nurtured and deployed. Meanwhile, it was decided to 6 use some of the money released from selling surplus vicarages to create a diocesan 'Growth Fund' to give grants for investment in mission through people.

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[80] Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation,* London: Random House, 2006, pp. 56-8; Edwin Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family process in church and synagogue,* New York: Guilford, 1985.

What no-one expected was the scale of the dramatic and rapid transformation of the ministry landscape this would bring about – within five years, although the diocese had 12 fewer ordained stipendiary clergy, over 40 new paid lay ministry posts had been created, sixty new Fresh Expressions had been started and the diocese became one of just a handful in the country showing net overall growth.[81]

These contrasting stories reflect a Church facing the need for 'adaptive' change, the kind of change in which long-held assumptions are re-examined in the light of (and to some extent under the pressure of) fundamental and far-reaching changes in the context of the church's mission and ministry. The past generation has seen the breakdown of many if not most of the assumptions associated with Christendom. The decline in requests for baptism and confirmation, weddings and funerals reflects a situation in which the institutional presence of the churches is increasingly seen as irrelevant. We are now into the third or fourth generation with little or no knowledge of the Christian story. In some surveys, more than 50% of respondents profess 'no religion'. Acceptance of an ethic of pluralism and individual rights has taken the place of adherence to Christian faith as the guarantee of social cohesion. To simplify somewhat, there are in general three responses to this situation:

- Denial. This view ignores the extent to which society has changed insists that the best way forward is to go on doing what we have always done. Dioceses should be reducing central costs in order to provide vicars in every parish, who should be out and about making themselves known. This view ignores the fact that there are not enough clergy to do this and that, even if there were, people would not respond to them in the same way they did fifty years ago. Claims that the 'Anecdote to Evidence' report demonstrates that churches grow when there are sufficient clergy, fail to recognise that in a system that revolves around the ministry of the clergy and denies a significant role to the laity this is bound to be the case.

- Restructuring. Several dioceses are now following the example of the one described above by attempting to reduce the number of clergy in a strategic way and create a greater role for lay ministry. Although this approach goes some way to recognising the realities of the situation, there is a danger that it may represent little beyond managed decline. Moreover, rather than recognising the equal worth and status of lay discipleship and ministry, lay ministry may be valued for its role in 'keeping the show on the road'.

- Reimagining. This approach seeks to understand both the changes taking place around us and the assumptions that hold us back. It is willing to re-examine both theology and practice, trusting in the promise of the Holy Spirit's guidance as we seek to be faithful both to the tradition we inherit and the challenges we face. One key foundation of this approach for the present age is the nature of the *missio Dei,* in which God calls the church to reflect God's nature and participate in God's work in the world. Another is the value of empirical research in discerning and then interpreting just how both church and society are changing. Ways in which the twin pillars of this approach have borne fruit include the recognition of the role of reflective practice in learning for ministry; of the changing nature of church planting in the *Mission-shaped Church* report and its follow-ups;[82] of the way in which, in complex organisations, leadership emerges from bottom-up rather than being imposed top-

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[81] SGPF, pp. 5-6.

[82] For example, *Mission-shaped Church,* London: Church House, 2004; *Fresh Expressions in the Mission of the Church: Report of an Anglican-Methodist Working Party,* London: Church House, 2012.

down;[83] of the nature of innovation;[84] and of the significance of church leaving for our understanding of mission and ministry;[85] to name but a few areas.

Adaptive change is a journey into an unknown future, which requires both courage and patience. This paper has called for further work to reimagine the nature of ministry and patterns of ministry; greater resourcing for locally based 'education for discipleship' together with training for the ministry of the whole church; and attention to the shape of IME 2 and CMD. These are to be understood in the context of the 'reimagining' outlined above as areas in which it is necessary to pay attention to the deep-rooted assumptions on which our present practice is based. Underlying all these is what 'Setting God's People Free' has called 'the spectre of clericalism'. However, the report goes on to point out that neither clergy nor laity can be definitively said to be at fault. Rather, the problem lies in the way that, 'existing structures, language and practice unintentionally damage healthy clergy-lay relationships.'[86] What, then, is clericalism and how is to be addressed?

Clericalism

'Setting God's People Free' is clear that lay discipleship will not flourish unless the 'spectre' of clericalism is 'named and addressed'.[87] Even more concerning, the IICSA report points to clericalism as an aspect of the Church's culture that has allowed widespread abuse to flourish.[88]

And yet, it is not easy to discern how clericalism is to be addressed. As 'Setting God's People Free' makes clear, 'from the lay perspective, the issue is usually perceived to be one of empowerment and disempowerment.' The sacramental authority and ecclesial power of the clergy can reduce them to, 'pew-fodder whose task is to give money, receive teaching, sing nicely and comply meekly.'[89] Yet for all this, the report acknowledges, the issue cannot be summarised as a power struggle. Clergy do not always feel powerful, especially in the face of lay resistance.[90]

The reason that clericalism is not a straightforward issue of power between laity and clergy is that it is a mutually shared corporate mindset. It is one of those 'half-hidden habits of thought' referred to by Christopher Cocksworth in the Preface to 'Kingdom Calling' that 'inhibit the realization of our theological ideals'.[91] The deepest level of any culture or system is the shared mindset, those things that everyone simply takes for granted, and which make sense of any particular action or series of actions. Clericalism is a shared mindset, which infects us all, even those of us who most strongly resist it. And since it is an aspect of the Church's embedded culture, it can be difficult to discern whether a specific instance or expression of clericalism is cause or effect.

In what does the mindset of clericalism consist? Perhaps it is best summed up as anything that contradicts the aspiration of 'Setting God's People Free' that laity and clergy are to be seen as, 'equal in worth and status, complementary in gifting and vocation, mutually accountable in discipleship and

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[83] For example in Stephen Pickard, *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry,* Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
[84] For example in Michael Moynagh, *Church in Life,* London: SCM, 2017
[85] Steve Aisthorpe, *The Invisible Church,* Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 2016.
[86] SGPF, p. 4.
[87] SGPF, p. 4.
[88] Executive Summary | IICSA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse
[89] SGPF, pp. 16-17.
[90] SGPF, p. 4.
[91] 'Kingdom Calling', p. vi.

equal partners in mission.'[92] In relation to patterns of ministry, it might be the assumption that ordained ministry (or more particularly, the ministry of the parish clergy) is the standard form of ministry with all other forms of ministry auxiliary optional extras.

The effects of the clericalist mindset are to be seen at every level in the Church, disabling its mission and ministry:

- The idea that 'doing more' for Jesus can only mean ordination.[93]
- Lay people who feel disabled and disempowered, including a significant and possible growing number who feel the need to leave the Church in order to devote more time to mission.[94]
- The huge disparity between the resources devoted to the training of the clergy compared with those allocated to equipping for lay discipleship and ministry.
- Schemes of pastoral reorganization that focus on the deployment of the clergy rather than the shape of shared mission in the parishes affected.
- Clergy burnt out by the impossible task and dysfunctional role that results from the expectation that they take sole responsibility for the life and mission of their churches.

It is possible that some of the other habits of mind and embedded practices standing in the way of enabling ministry are also to be seen straightforwardly as the outcome of a shared clericalist mindset:

- the focus on gathered community and relative neglect of the dispersed church in mission
- not simply the lack of resources devoted to equipping everyday faith and lay ministry but the lack of a culture of lay discipleship
- the tendency to cling to institutional definitions of ministry and resistance to understanding ministry in the context of the Spirit's work in mission.

Perhaps the most insidious aspect of clericalism is that it is a form of oppression: a system in which the disempowered majority come to accept the self-definition imposed on them by the powerful few. One of the pitfalls of shared theological reflection, notes Laurie Green, is that lay people may see themselves as, 'not academic enough to handle theology and not "ordained enough" to be theologians.'[95]

How is clericalism to be addressed? We need to recognise that shared mindsets that imprison people and blind them to the truth are what the New Testament means by 'principalities and powers'.[96] In other words, the hold of clericalism on the Church is too strong to be removed simply through resolutions and actions. Only God can set the Church free from the shared mindset to which it is enslaved.

For this to take place, the Church needs to repent. Clericalism is not simply a mistaken viewpoint. It is a grievous sin, which has led to immeasurable human suffering and seriously disabled the Church's ability to respond to God's call and participate in God's mission. This sinful mindset is not the responsibility of any one person or group of people. It has been embedded in the culture of the Church for centuries. The answer, then, is not personal repentance but 'representational

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[92] SGPF, p. 2.
[93] SGPF, p. 5.
[94] Steve Aisthorpe, *The Invisible Church,* Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 2016, pp. 167-84.
[95] Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology,* London: Continuum, 2009, p. 135.
[96] David Heywood, *Reimagining Ministry,* London: SCM, 2011, pp. 91-108.

confession'. This form of prayer, aimed at 'healing wounded history', has had remarkable effects in many places over the past decade or more. [97]

Representational confession is an action in which a person or people in appropriate positions take responsibility for the sinful actions not simply of themselves but of their predecessors. Examples are found in Daniel 9, Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 1, in which Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah are portrayed as confessing the sins not of themselves but of the people of Israel as a whole. In doing so, they also take responsibility: the key words in their prayers are 'we' and 'our'. In relation to clericalism, it is important to recognise that even those most opposed to it are nevertheless affected by it and share the mindset at least to some extent.

At a recent service in Christchurch Oxford, the congregation was invited to express penitence for the decrees of the Synod of Oxford of 1222, which imposed a series of humiliating conditions on Jewish people, discrimination which culminated in the expulsion of the Jews in 1290. Those attending the service were reminded that the actions of the Synod were an egregious failure to follow the command of both Moses and Jesus to love our neighbour as ourselves. Since we all fail to love our neighbours as we should, all who were present were invited to identify with the sins of the generation of 1222 and express their penitence.

In a similar way, if the 'spectre of clericalism' is to be addressed, this will require the bishops and archbishops to lead the Church in an act of public representational confession, acknowledging our shared responsibility and asking God to release us from the power of this mindset.

Pluralism and the Sacred-Secular Divide

We live in a period of rapid cultural change, in which what appeared reasonably certain as little as 12 months ago can no longer be taken for granted. The cultural factors at play – social class, ethnic background, generational cohort, gender and identity politics – are so diverse and so intertwined that it is difficult to estimate the impact of any one development or to predict future patterns of change.

Mark Greene of the LICC points to the pervasive influence of the 'sacred-secular divide' in people's thinking:

> SSD has affected every aspect of our church life and the operational understanding of almost every doctrine. SSD shrinks our ecclesiology by putting more focus and value on the gathered church than the sent church. It shrinks our pneumatology by inadvertently limiting our expectation of the action of the Spirit to particular places and particular kinds of tasks. It shrinks our soteriology by focusing on individual conversion rather than on whole-life disciple-making and the *missio Dei* … and so on.

In a recent project involving 38 participants involved in theological education across 23 countries, it was agreed that the sacred-secular divide was alive and well in different forms in all these places.[98]

As we have seen, the analysis presented in 'Kingdom Calling' draws on the work of Casanova and lists the effects of secularization as the differentiation of social space into autonomous spheres, the privatization of religion, and the decline in religious belief. The Oxford research supplies some evidence to illustrate the effects of these. One of the factors most frequently mentioned as

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[97] Russ Parker, *Healing Wounded History,* London: SPCK, 2012.
[98] *Whole-Life Mission for the Whole Church,* p. 12.

discouraging ministers from enabling everyday faith was a reluctance to engage with what they saw as the private sphere of religious belief and practice. Another was the pressure exerted by wider society to remain silent about matters of faith.

And yet, these factors will affect people differently depending on the mixture of social factors listed above. The Oxford research sample was too small for analysis by age, but it may be significant that most of the participants were drawn from the baby boomers or Generation X. For younger people, these factors may prove very much less of an obstacle. Rapid changes in culture also mean that the factors that have inhibited the practice of everyday faith in the past may be breaking down.

One of the features of Christendom was that, although the vast majority of the population professed Christian belief, discipleship in the sense of focused attention to one's relationship with God was seen to be the province of a small minority, chiefly the clergy and members of religious orders. This mindset persisted until relatively recently and is reflected in the lack of a culture supporting whole-life discipleship and lay training. And yet, not only might this aspect of church culture be reasonably attributed to clericalism as much as to the influence of wider culture, but it is beginning to change. The Church's rediscovery of the centrality of mission has led gradually to a realisation, tacit or explicit, that mission requires discipleship. With that realisation has come the growth of new monasticism in a variety of forms through which lay people consciously or unconsciously repudiate the legacy of Christendom and embrace rules of life, together with a plethora of resources to enable them to do so.[99]

Similarly, the dominance of Enlightenment thinking, which proclaimed the hegemony of human reason and banished religion from the public sphere, has also begun to unravel over the past fifty years or so. Critical theory demonstrated that every position expresses an interest. Pluralism recognises the existence of multiple interest groups and sub-cultures. However, in a pluralist context, social cohesion depends on an ethic of toleration. Such toleration may now be in the process of breaking down as competition between interest and identity groups comes to the fore, fuelled by the phenomenon of social media harassment.[100] Given such competition, it becomes possible for populist governments to maintain their support by fuelling 'culture wars', and this in turn leads to a search for the restoration of harmony so that, in the aftermath of the racist abuse suffered by black England footballers after Euro 2020, one journalist could speculate about the possible roots of a 'kinder, inclusive England', citing not only the 'deep work ethic' and 'close family ties' of footballers Marcus Rashford, Bukayo Saka and Raheem Sterling but also their Christian faith.[101]

All this suggests that a Church with the courage to be true to its calling ought to find opportunities as well as obstacles in the culture of society. The problem lies in discovering the shape of that calling. Three questions stand out as needing an answer. They are questions the Church has been wrestling with for the past two generations and to which the answers are slowly but gradually becoming clearer:

- What is the relationship between the Church and society? Gradually we are learning that the Church is not called to be an institution serving as a pillar of society and guarantee of social cohesion but rather a mission community serving and proclaiming the kingdom of God. The

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[99] Graham Cray, Ian Mobsby and Aaron Kennedy (eds.), *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: New monasticism as fresh expression of church,* London: Canterbury Press, 2010.

[100] Morally Motivated Networked Harassment as Normative Reinforcement - Alice E. Marwick, 2021 (sagepub.com)

[101] A kind, inclusive England is stirring – and as usual, our politicians don't get it | John Harris | The Guardian

ways in which it is called to do this, through evangelism, community engagement, church planting, chaplaincy and now through everyday faith, have gradually become clear since the 1990s.

- What is the relationship between clergy and laity? This paper is the latest in a long line of publications exploring this question, to which again the answers are beginning to become clear. The role of the clergy emerges to serve the mission of God. Clergy animate the mission of the whole church through enabling, empowering and equipping and are in turn animated by the whole church through shared vision and willing action. Pastoral and ecclesial imagination resource one another.

- What does it mean to practise Christian faith in a post-Christendom age? This, the most basic of the three questions, has been slower to surface, but is now beginning to be addressed. *Calling All God's People* articulates a new shape to church life, in which the dispersed community in mission is given equal emphasis with the gathered community in worship. We can look forward to a time when the conventional definition of a Christian as someone who 'goes to church' is replaced by 'follower of Jesus' in every sphere of life, Sunday to Saturday.

The 'Scholarly-guild Mindset'

We have examined the obstacles that exist in the Church and potentially in wider society. There remain the obstacles whose source is the academy. Perry Shaw reports, 'I am frequently surprised when conducting workshops at the level of resistance I experience from instructors who are unwilling to shift from a teaching paradigm to a learning paradigm … Frequently, the dominant voices in our theological schools ae faculty who are more comfortable in the academy than they are in the local church, and who are theoreticians more than practitioners.'[102] It should be acknowledged that Shaw's experience chiefly relates to countries other than Great Britain. Those of us who teach the Common Awards are becoming habituated to its emphasis on reflection and application to ministry and the flexibility of its modes of assessment.

Nevertheless, for the subject specialists among us there is a difficult transition to be made across the boundaries between communities of practice. As scholars engaged in the study of our subjects, we are used to adhering to the standards of excellence that pertain to the community of theological scholarship. In teaching our subject areas, however, we are required to adapt to the standards of excellence relevant to ministry. The temptation will always be there to apply the standards of one practice to formation for a different practice, a temptation made even more powerful by the relative influence of the scholarly community, based on its control of rewards and prestige.

The mindset of the scholarly guild was identified as a source of resistance to reform by Edward Farley in his magisterial survey of theological education in the United States.[103] By it he named the assumption of the subject specialist that their discipline as currently practised in the academy is appropriate without modification as an element in ministerial formation.

For this academic specialist, the validity and relevance of their scholarly discipline is guaranteed by the annual cohort of students who graduate after carefully moderated assessments according to standards mutually agreed by practitioners of the discipline; by the intake of new graduate researchers, whose proposals are agreed by boards of study; and by the regular publication of articles in peer reviewed journals. In all these ways, the community of practice validates itself from

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[102] Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education,* 2nd edition, Carlisle, Langham Global Library, 2022, p. 29.
[103] Edward Farley, *Theologia,* Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983, p. 19.

within without asking questions about its relevance to practices other than its own. Since the rationale of the Enlightenment university is to develop the knowledge base required for the functioning of society, it becomes possible to assume that any scholarly discipline capable of maintaining itself in the university must perform that function.

However, we have seen reasons to believe that the academic pursuit of theology may not be suitable as formation for ministry without extensive modification. Everyday faith, ministry and theological scholarship are three separate though related practices and ministers are called to sit at the intersection of the three, drawing on the disciplines of theology but for the purpose of ministry, which includes enabling everyday faith. Whereas everyday faith and ministry are essentially life-related, situated in the 'swamp' of messy, everyday issues, theological scholarship tends to inhabit the 'high ground' of defined subject-related problems. However, since their everyday practice consists of the pursuit of a scholarly discipline that is essentially subject- rather than life-centred, it may be difficult for the academic specialist to discern the difference between the two.

In this paper, two suggestions have been made, which may enable theological educators drawn from an academic background to overcome the scholarly-guild mindset and adapt their teaching to formation for ministry. One is to become involved in ministry themselves on a regular basis and develop the habit of theological reflection on their experience, thus learning the praxis methodology appropriate to ministry. The other is to add to their academic specialism a training in the theory and practice of adult education. It is to this that the online learning programme, 'Formation for Enabling Ministry' is addressed. This is an invitation to all who teach in theological education to spend a relatively small amount of time, working individually or together, to learn the basics of life-centred teaching and learning in order to train ministers who will be more effective as ministers of the gospel and enablers of lay discipleship.

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