

# The Central Readers' Council – what is God calling us to be and to do? (Draft 3 – November 2017)

## **1. Mission and Ministry in a changing context**

The context in which CRC is working is changing rapidly. Throughout the past century, church attendance and the influence of Christian faith in the lives of individuals and communities have been in rapid decline across much of Western Europe. It is important to understand that the church has not in itself caused these changes: we are caught up in much larger movements. And the appropriate response is neither a sense of failure nor of blaming one another for the situation we find ourselves in but rather an enquiring and questioning interest in what these changes mean for the church and its mission.

A key response to the changes around us has been the steady realization that we are now in a new kind of mission context, that much of our nation needs to be re-evangelised and that we need to shape our common life and ministry more intentionally as a movement of people in mission. Our understanding and structures of ministry in the Church of England have evolved for hundreds of years with an emphasis on pastoral ministry: sustaining communities of Christian people in a stable context. As social bonds and communities have become less stable over the past century, there has been a need to catch again a vision of God's mission to the whole of our society. The full implications of that vision for our approach to mission and ministry have not yet been fully worked out, but there is an increasing appetite for discerning the movement of God's Spirit.

Alongside these wider societal changes, there have also been significant changes within the Church, not least a recovery of the theology of baptism. So, we are recovering an understanding of every baptized Christian being called to live out their life as a disciple of Jesus Christ and to serve according to their gifts and vocation. We are recovering a language of discipleship and exploring how churches teach the faith and enable formation of character in a society where most people now grow up with little exposure to the stories that once shaped our values and practice.

These themes of mission, baptism and discipleship are now finding expression in another area of change: the increasingly wide variety of recognised and authorised lay ministries across the Church of England. Dioceses are training people to lead worship, conduct funerals and care for people pastorally – roles which until recently were fulfilled only by clergy and Readers. And many other forms of ministry are 'bubbling up' as individuals,

churches and ecumenical groups set up new initiatives such as Street Pastors, Foodbanks, Messy Churches and Open the Book teams.

## 2. Celebrating diversity

The recent report *Setting God's People Free* represented this diversity of lay ministry in the diagram below. It illustrates well the huge numbers now involved in ministry and also the huge variety in ministries.

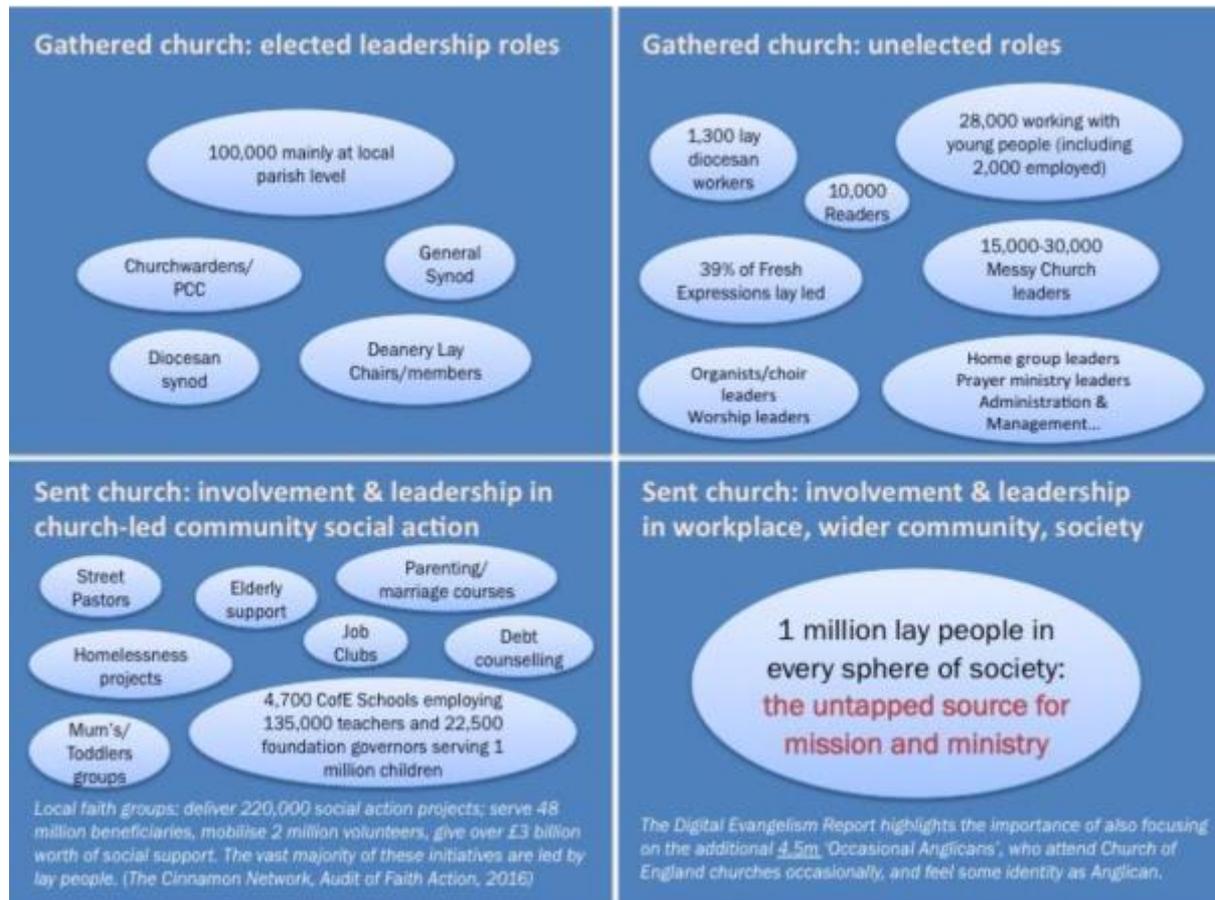


Fig 1: *Setting God's People Free* p 10 Current scale of lay involvement and leadership

Arguably, the biggest shift in recent years has taken place in the “gathered church: unelected roles” or what is elsewhere referred to as “recognised, authorised and licensed lay ministries”. Even as recently as fifty years ago, the vast majority of lay ministers were Readers. Now Readers are a minority, still very significant but relatively small alongside Pioneers, Pastoral Workers, Evangelists, Home Group leaders and many more.

In one sense, there is nothing new about this diversity of ministries. For over 150 years the Church of England has licensed Readers but we know that there has always been huge variety in the ministry undertaken by these gifted lay people. The first Readers were true pioneers, as are many today. Many Readers have felt called to focus their ministry with

children or young people, others on preaching or visiting. The diversity of ministries therefore has been hidden under the title Reader. Now this diversity has surfaced and is being officially 'recognised' by dioceses.

There is evidence to suggest that this increase in the diversity of lay ministries has also led to an overall increase in the numbers of people getting involved in ministry<sup>1</sup>. It would appear that people are joining Open the Book teams and Messy Church teams who would never have considered Reader ministry. They have been attracted by a specific vision and a specific sense of vocation. So, we should see this as a sign of God's Spirit renewing the church and a cause for great celebration.

However, for existing Readers, this increase in diversity can be seen as a threat. What now is the role of the Reader? What is it that sets Reader ministry apart from other ministries? Readers have often struggled with these questions (witness the different statements in different reports and books<sup>2</sup>) but the questions have become even more pressing when other lay ministers are preaching, leading worship, taking funerals and they are also being authorised or licensed to do so (meaning that Readers are no longer unique in having a 'recognised status' as licensed lay ministers deployable across the Church of England).

In addition to these questions, the average age of Readers has been rising (it has for some time been regarded as a 'third age' ministry) and all this has left some to wonder if Reader ministry will eventually die out while other ministries come to the fore. This is far from certain (there is evidence of some dioceses attracting good numbers of younger Readers) but it undoubtedly suggests there is an urgent challenge to review Reader ministry and discern what God is saying to the church at this moment in our history.

### **3. The urgent task facing the Central Readers' Council.**

While we may be agreed on the need to review Reader ministry and its place within the plethora of lay ministries, the reality of doing this will be complex. Forty-two dioceses (in England and Europe, and CRC also covers Wales with its six dioceses) each have their own approach. So, while Reader ministry is nationally recognised (under Canon E4, 5 and 6) and this allows Readers to transfer from one diocese to another, the dioceses vary enormously in their vocations work, Reader training, Reader deployment and support.

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<sup>1</sup> To take one example, in the Diocese of Leicester, although there has been a reduction in the number of stipendiary clergy in recent years (12 fewer since 2010), and a small reduction in the number of Readers, there have also been 40 new paid lay ministry posts created and there are approximately 80 new fresh expressions of church which are predominantly lay led.

<sup>2</sup> Compare for instance the exploration in the report *Reader Upbeat* with C. Rowling & P. Gooder, *Reader Ministry Explored* (London: SPCK, 2009), and P. Tovey, S. Buck and G. Dodds, *Instruments of Christ's Love* (London: SCM 2016)

There is a danger therefore of spending a lot of time discussing, writing reports and seeking to reach consensus, only to find ourselves no further along (if we are honest, previous reports have attempted something like this, and taken huge amounts of time and energy while achieving little in the way of discernible difference).

However, CRC has the advantage of being an independent charity. We have great freedom (within our charity purposes) and while we would be foolish to do anything without consulting dioceses, we do not need to wait for a consensus to emerge before proposing changes to the way we work.

I am therefore wanting to propose that we should be bold and use this next year to clarify our own work as CRC, and by implication, our own understanding of the focus of Reader ministry for the foreseeable future. We will then have to test this with dioceses and see whether, even amid complex differences in understanding and practice, we can offer something which truly supports what dioceses are already doing, while also adding value.

Our offer to dioceses will need to be very clearly defined, with an impact which can be measured and of a quality which dioceses will struggle to provide themselves. Some comparable examples might be:

- The SDLP Learning Community (for clergy with potential for 'wider ministry') and the learning programmes developed for Bishops and Deans. Participants have almost universally given very positive feedback both about the content of the programmes (very different to the CMD offered in most dioceses) and to the relational approach which has engendered a culture of collaborative working and mutual learning. Again, this work does not cut across each diocese's own approach to CMD but it does add additional value. Meetings of the House and College of Bishops are being restructured as a direct result of the learning from these programmes.
- The Pioneer Network - which has just been officially launched but which has been in existence unofficially for some time. This network has a very simple structure (there are no committees or officers) but it has organised both national gatherings (very well attended) and regional hubs for mutual learning and support. Most dioceses have now set or are working on goals for increasing numbers of Pioneers, and while they organise their own training, they also link Pioneers with the national network.
- Church Army and the Church Mission Society have both become 'acknowledged communities' within the Church of England, with their own 'rule of life' and accountability structures. They have not changed their vision (Church Army exists "to enable all people everywhere to encounter God's love and be empowered to transform their communities through faith shared in words and actions") but they have changed from being membership organisations to mission communities.

#### 4. Three areas for exploration

When the CRC Trustees met in July 2017, we agreed to explore three possible areas of work. These have now been discussed by Ministry Council which commended them for further exploration.

**Consultation Question 1:** Is CRC being called to focus our work on equipping Readers to be *encouraging enablers of mission*?

As formally trained lay theologians, Readers have a unique perspective on the changes taking place in society. How can Readers be equipped to enable all God's people to be fruitful and faithful in their own Monday to Saturday contexts?

Could CRC provide specialised training to envision, empower and equip Readers with the biblical foundations, the practical skills, and the spiritual disciplines to enable them to be fruitful and faithful in their own Monday to Saturday contexts, and to pass on these skills to others?

Initial conversations with the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) suggest they could be an ideal partner in preparing resources and delivering training in this area. They have been doing this sort of work with parishes and dioceses since 2006 and they are open to working with us to tailor their resources to Readers. They are also involved in the *Setting God's People Free* follow-up work with dioceses - 20 dioceses have signed up to be part of learning hubs for SGPF and the closer CRC can tie in our work to this, the better it will be received in dioceses. (See appendix 2 – outline proposal from LICC).

**Consultation Question 2:** Is CRC being called to focus our work on equipping Readers to be *inspirational teachers of the faith*?

As formally trained lay theologians, Readers are ideally placed to undertake the work of *catechism* (teaching the faith to those new to the faith), and to enable new Christians to be incorporated in to the body of Christ. How can Readers be equipped to be inspirational teachers – with a good understanding of adult education and pedagogy – and an infectious joy?

Could CRC provide specialised training to help Readers develop as teachers?

Initial conversations with Paula Gooder (Reader, and Director of Mission Learning and Development for the Diocese of Birmingham) and Norman Ivison (Bowland Media and formerly Fresh Expressions) have led to an exciting proposal for a series of teaching modules which could be delivered on-line or in residential conferences (see the mock-up website

<http://wix.to/LcDNABs>) The proposal recognises CRC could ‘add value’ to what dioceses are already doing by focusing on pedagogy and adult education. The paper is also ambitious in suggesting that, in time, CRC might be able to offer more. (See appendix 3 – outline proposal from working group)

**Consultation Question 3:** Is CRC being called to focus our work on equipping Readers to be *skilled mentors or coaches for others*?

As formally trained lay theologians, Readers are ideally placed to offer mentoring and coaching to other lay ministers. How can Readers be equipped to be skilled mentors and coaches, concerned not only with their own learning and development, but also committed to developing the people around them.

Could CRC provide specialised training to help Readers develop as mentors and coaches?

Could CRC provide a mentoring / coaching service to help Readers develop their role as mentors and coaches?

Initial conversation with the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS) suggest they could be an ideal partner in preparing resources and delivering training in this area. They already produce a resource called *Mentoring Matters* which is designed to help local churches establish their own mentoring scheme, and they run training courses in a number of dioceses (see Appendix 4 for their offer to dioceses in regard to training clergy as mentors – this could easily be adapted for Readers). In addition, they run the website <https://www.mentorconnect.org.uk> which helps people find a mentor with particular skills and experience. They are open to exploring a partnership with CRC and tailoring their materials to Readers.

## 5. Some further questions

**Consultation Question 4:** Is this for all Readers, existing as well as new, or should we target certain groups?

In speaking to people about these early ideas for CRC, one of the common responses has been to question how many Readers will be responsive. Take up for Reader CMD is very low in many dioceses and there is a perception that many Readers are quite happy doing what they are currently doing and will not therefore be interested in these changes. I believe this perception needs testing, but even if it proves to be true, there is still a case for working with Readers-in-training and newly admitted and licensed Readers.

Reshaping the role of Readers (with an emphasis on Readers as teachers of the faith) will provide a new impetus for vocations. If this was also combined with new approaches to training (allowing for more flexibility) then it is possible to envisage a younger, more diverse group of people offering for Reader ministry. It also offers Readers a clear place in the emerging ecology of lay ministries, encouraging individuals and dioceses to be specific about spiritual gifts and how these fit with particular ministries.

**Consultation Question 5:** Should we pursue all three areas together or focus on one or two? If together, do we ask one organisation to be our lead partner, or work with both organisations as well as a group of key individuals?

If CRC Trustees were to agree to all three proposals (after consultation with dioceses), we might envisage the following:

- Employing a Programme Manager to lead on the process of implementation.
- Forming a new Programme Board to oversee the process (or reconstituting the Executive Committee of CRC to be the Programme Board).
- Partnering with LICC, CPAS and key individuals (e.g. Paula Gooder, Norman Ivison) to start producing training resources. Each organisation / individual would be asked to produce particular modules / courses and CRC would act as ‘editor-in-chief’ and facilitator. Alternatively, we might ask one organisation to take a lead both in the production of resources and delivery of training, while others act as consultants.
- Training resources might include:
  - Individual modules which are delivered through weekend training courses offered regionally; Readers pick and choose which modules they undertake (and dioceses might choose certain modules to be part of their foundation training for Readers).
  - Individual modules which are offered online, with teaching videos, virtual learning hubs and tutors; (again Readers and dioceses pick and choose)
  - A three-year learning community targeted at younger Readers (under 40?) including the modules offered to all, but with additional mentoring, coaching and placement opportunities.
  - A year-long course which can be delivered locally (along the lines of the Mission Shaped Ministry course produced by Fresh Expressions) i.e. we produce the training material and then train the trainers who deliver the course in a diocese and/or region.

In future, we might also:

- Explore options with dioceses for initial training for Readers e.g. dioceses offering their own ‘foundation year’ training, followed by provisional licensing and entry in to a CMD programme jointed run with CRC leading to full licensing and admitting.

**Summary of consultation questions.**

**Consultation Question 1:** Is CRC being called to focus our work on equipping Readers to be *encouraging enablers of mission*, enabling all God's people to be fruitful and faithful in their own Monday to Saturday contexts?

**Consultation Question 2:** Is CRC being called to focus our work on equipping Readers to be *inspirational teachers of the faith*, undertaking the work of *catechism* (teaching the faith to those new to the faith)?

**Consultation Question 3:** Is CRC being called to focus our work on equipping Readers to be *skilled mentors or coaches for others*, committed to developing the people around them?

**Consultation Question 4:** Is this for all Readers, existing as well as new, or should we target certain groups?

**Consultation Question 5:** Should we pursue all three areas together or focus on one or two? If together, do we ask one organisation to be our lead partner, or work with both organisations as well as a group of key individuals?

+ Martyn Leicester

November 2017

### **Central Readers Council - 4 Key Tasks for 2017/2018**

- a) **Clarify our purpose** - in the light of our changing context and the increase in diversity of recognised and authorised lay ministries; and in the light of the increase in diversity of diocesan provision for Readers – what now is the role of CRC?
- b) **Set some clear priorities** – how might we discern one or two key areas of work and do these really well in a way which makes a difference to Readers and to the health of the church and the growth of the kingdom?
- c) **Begin to communicate our “offer”** – we need to be clear with dioceses on what ‘added-value’ we offer i.e. what does CRC do which dioceses can’t do? We need to communicate clearly with Readers about what we are offering to them.
- d) **Streamline our structures** – once we are clear on our purpose and priorities, we need to ensure our structures work together for this purpose. Our constitution will probably need a major overall, as may our financial model.

### **Central Readers’ Council – Process for 2017/2018**

5<sup>th</sup> July 2017 - CRC Trustees considers initial proposal from +Martyn and begins follow-up work on details

28<sup>th</sup> October - CRC Executive to agree more detailed proposal which will then be tested at regional meetings of Wardens between January and March 2018.

8<sup>th</sup> November - Ministry Council considers outline proposals.

First edition of Reader magazine in 2018 to focus on proposals, preparing for...

21<sup>st</sup> April 2018 CRC AGM - action plan and new constitution agreed.

June 2018 - Lay Ministries celebration at which Reader ministry can be celebrated and affirmed and CRC “offer” communicated.

# Reading, and Leading, in two Worlds

Making the most of the distinctive contribution that Readers can make to the life of the Church and the Mission of God in the nation

## An Outline Proposal from LICC

Bespoke Training & Resource Development

**DRAFT Discussion Document**

### First Thoughts

For many years now the team at LICC has been convinced of the vital, distinctive role that Readers could play in the local church. In 2012, for example, we addressed the Rochester Diocese Readers Conference. Here is an excerpt:

“Now I recognise that the title ‘Reader’ covers a multitude of roles and activities – some of you have plenty of opportunities to teach and preach in local congregations; some of you never get near the pulpit but lead in prayer, some of you perhaps have no up-front role in worship services but responsibilities elsewhere. But most of you are dual citizens, with roles to fulfil both in the local church and in workplaces, schools, hospitals, clubs...

Now the reality that you have dual roles, that most of you spend or have spent most of your time in non-church paid occupations is not a disadvantage to your ministry but a huge benefit.

A reader should not merely see themselves as being a kind of surrogate vicar or curate in training or a low-cost, fuel-efficient but slightly under-powered, under-dressed priest, but rather as someone whose experience and context uniquely provide them with opportunities to enrich both the devotional and missional life of the congregation ...”

Our conviction about this has only grown since then, as it has become clearer and clearer that whilst the church overall has shown great creativity in neighbourhood and community outreach, and in mobilising local congregations for social action, formal and informal, we have been much less good at envisioning and empowering lay people for Monday to Saturday mission and fruitfulness.

This challenge, and the massive opportunity it represents, has now been recognised by the Church of England through the unanimous endorsement of the report *Setting God's People Free* and indeed of the plan that is now being implemented nationally. For example, 20 Dioceses have volunteered to join 3 year learning hubs to learn how lay people might be liberated for a richer walk in Christ in their Monday to Saturday lives.

Readers surely have a vital and strategic role to play in this.

And this outline proposal offers some possible pathways to explore and discuss. That said, we do not pretend to be experts in Reader Ministry across the church, or in how Readers have been trained or are being trained now. Our assumptions may therefore be wrong but we hope that this will help clarify what assumptions should be made and therefore what actions might best strengthen Readers and the churches they serve.

### **Overall Goals**

Overall, theological colleges in the UK have not been proactive in training clergy to envision and empower congregations for their mission in their Monday to Saturday contexts. This may be changing in some contexts but it is probably still fair to say that overall the modules that Readers do reflect that reality.

Similarly, it would be rare for Readers to have been encouraged to reflect prayerfully and theologically on the contexts they have been in outside the church as part of their training, or to have been specifically trained to see how that experience and those perspectives might enrich:

- Preaching
- Teaching
- Visiting
- Leading prayers and worship

As such, we see two overall needs that would apply to the various streams of contemporary Anglicanism:

1. To develop contexts and resources that envision, empower and equip Readers with the biblical foundations, the practical skills, and the spiritual disciplines to enable them to be fruitful and faithful in their own Monday to Saturday contexts
2. To provide bespoke training and resources that enable Readers to pass on this vision to others and enable them to live it out – whatever the stream of the Church they are in.

We would hope that we might make a contribution to those objectives.

The Report recognises that overall what is required is a profound shift in the culture of the church, and that new vision would need to be communicated. At the same time, a whole

variety of topics might need to be covered over time, depending on where the gaps are. Below are some starter examples that may or may not be required, depending on broader Reader training, scope, time, etc:

### **Theological Foundations**

- Theology of vocation and calling – clergy and lay, equal and complementary
- The Mission of God – God’s comprehensive purposes in time and eternity and our role
- A theology of work and its role of work in the mission of God
- Church gathered and sent – ecclesiology for the whole of life
- Biblical approaches to understanding and engaging with culture
- Jesus as the disciple-maker and implications for today’s Reader
- The Sacred-secular divide – the impact of dualism on discipleship and mission

### **Skills**

- How to read the Bible with Monday to Saturday eyes
- How to reflect on daily life with Biblical lenses and help others do the same
- Understanding the many ways people can be fruitful in Christ
- Developing your Monday to Saturday ministry

### **Ministry Skills**

- How to find out what’s going on in people’s Monday to Saturday lives – pressures, opportunities, etc.
- Leading worship with Monday to Saturday in mind
- How to preach with Monday to Saturday eyes
- Helping people see where their mission might be and grow in their Monday to Saturday ministry
- Integrating pastoral care and whole-life equipping in visiting and counselling
- How to read your church’s culture and how to contribute to change one little step at a time
- How to contribute to your incumbent’s understanding of the congregation’s Monday to Saturday lives
- Creating a Monday to Saturday consciousness in small groups
- How to teach relational, holistic evangelism

### **Spirituality & Formation**

- Spiritual rhythms and disciplines for, and on, the frontline

Naturally, sometimes materials designed to teach others actually also serve to teach the teacher, so not everything will necessarily need two strands.

## **LICC Experience**

The *Imagine Church* team at LICC has worked with lay people, church leaders and Dioceses on most of these topics in a variety of contexts – conferences, hubs, training days, etc. And we have been doing it since 2006. Nevertheless, we recognise that whilst some of our published resources may well be helpful to Reader training and Reader ministering, new materials will almost certainly be required and need to be set within an overall integrated plan.

This is particularly the case given both the diverse nature of the Church and the need to offer interventions that serve both

- Readers in training
- Licensed readers

## **Methodology**

LICC's primary methodology is to work in learning partnership with those who are likely to have longer term responsibility for transferring wisdom and skills to others. We have for example done this with Chester in relation to helping Readers empower others for workplace ministry. And the new material is being piloted this year by the woman in charge. The same applies in our work with the Dioceses of Carlisle, London, Lichfield and Bristol where our contributions are shaped by the skills and gifts of those on the ground.

If you decide to work with us, we would appoint a Project Leader to spearhead the initiative and to draw in others from the team as required.

As you may know, we do have some expertise in developing both physical and online resources but before going far it would be important to have a reasonably clear idea of:

- How wisdom would be transferred, over what periods of time, and in what ways, given that in the short-term it may be difficult to change the emphasis and content of the College courses.
- What the role of various initiatives are in contributing to the overall goal for the various people

In that regard there are many initiatives you might take:

- Pre-licensing conferences
- Pre-licensing 'whole-life' assignments required before licences are given

- Offer a framework for a three year curriculum for Readers' AGM Conferences
- Publish A Reader's Guide to Reading by Bishop Martyn
- Ready to use group studies in Reader magazine or on the web
- Reader of the Year competition with an emphasis on Monday to Saturday equipping etc

LICC might have no role to play in any of these but it is helpful to have the bigger picture when developing particular material.

It is worth noting that we do not necessarily require our material to be branded as LICC or authorship to be acknowledged. We recognise that sometimes that is helpful and sometimes it is not – and we can point you to a range of resources in current use that have no LICC branding. Our heart is to serve the Church, not our institution. At the same time, we seek to cover our costs in any partnership arrangement.

### **Next Step**

Readers to review this outline proposal and respond:

- Are the general objectives rightly expressed?
- What are your strategic needs?
- What initiative might best be prioritised?
- Might LICC be a good partner?
- Would the Council value a deeper understanding of LICC's understanding of Monday to Saturday mission?
- Would the Council value references from Anglicans we have worked with?

Naturally, you may decide that we are not the right partner for you but we would nevertheless value a way to engage with what you are learning along the way so that we might do all we can in our other arenas to maximise the synergy between Reader ministry and initiatives in the *Setting God's People Free* arena.

All grace and shalom to you as you consider these initial ideas.

Mark Greene  
 Exec Director  
 LICC  
 October 2017

## CRC sub-group meeting report

*Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017: Diocesan Offices, 1 Colmore Row, Birmingham*

Present: Gertrud Sollars (vice-chair of CRC), Paula Gooder (Director of Mission Learning and Development, Birmingham Diocese), Ruth Haldane (Deputy Warden of Readers, Blackburn Diocese), Norman Ivison (BowlandMedia).

**1.0 The aim:** to examine the following question from +Martyn's paper, *The Central Readers' Council – what is God calling us to be and to do?*

- Is CRC being called to focus our work on equipping Readers to be *inspirational teachers of the faith?*

We see this as being inextricably linked to the other two questions (Readers being mission enablers and coaches/mentors) and agree they point to a significant way forward for CRC.

**2.0 The issues:** we identified five issues which need addressing as part of this move<sup>3</sup>:

- The decline in numbers of those offering for this particular focus of lay ministry within the Church of England, and particularly the lack of young vocations.
- The increasing average age of active Readers.
- The very limited take up of CMD amongst active Readers<sup>4</sup>.
- The issues surrounding the initial training of Readers<sup>5</sup>.
- Rebranding 'Reader Ministry' and much better communication about this focus of lay ministry, its distinctiveness and why it is so important.

We recognised that if Readers are to become local mission enablers and inspirational teachers, as well as exemplars of life-long discipleship, they are going to need significant resources, encouragement and training. But the current training models tend neither to focus on contextual mission and teaching skills, nor attract Readers in significant numbers.

**3.1 The proposal:** we suggest a significant shift in the way serving Readers are continually trained, and the possibility of a shift in initial Reader training too.

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<sup>3</sup> We realise these issues are being addressed by +Martyn's paper, but they need to be acknowledged alongside any discussion on training.

<sup>4</sup> In one of our dioceses, an annual Reader weekend attracts only 25 out of 170 Readers and a typical day training event 35 out of 170.

<sup>5</sup> In the same diocese, the number of those doing the 'occasional preachers course' vastly outnumbers those on the initial Reader training course.

- There is a need to move from *just in case training*, which aims to cover as much as possible in a set period of time; to *just in time training*, which equips Readers for the task in hand. Clearly a balance needs to be struck between these two models.
- There is a need to move from *broadcast learning*<sup>6</sup>, ‘everyone in one place at one time’, to *interactive learning*, ‘learning in a virtual community, and gathering only when that really helps the formative and educational process’.
- There is a need to shift from *instruction*<sup>7</sup> to *discovery*, with less emphasis on the lecture or seminar and more emphasis on personal research and investigation.
- There is a need to shift from *individual* to *collaborative* learning, with more time to discuss face to face and online, share life experience and work through issues facing Readers in their ministry.

**3.2** One way forward, and one which we want to endorse, is to develop a series of online modules for the development of Readers, focussing on the two questions put by +Martyn in 1. above. We envisage a growing cache of modules on, for example:

- *How do adults learn?* (looking at learning preferences and styles and their implications for the way the majority of teaching takes place in church)<sup>8</sup>
- *Engaging the unchurched* (examining ways in which new forms of church are reaching those with little or no church or biblical background and again reflecting on the implications for Reader ministry).
- *Disciples for life* (encouraging Readers to see Monday – Saturday life as the main focus for ministry for them and their congregations, empowered as it is by worship and teaching received on Sunday)<sup>9</sup>.
- *The ministry of encouragement* (the role of the coach or mentor in the life of a parish)
- *Refreshing the faithful* (the crucial role Readers can play in encouraging fresh growth in those who have been attending church for many years)

**3.3** The proposed online course<sup>10</sup> needs to be:

- easy to use and to navigate through
- clear in its demands on time and ability
- conscious of the various learning preferences/styles of its users

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<sup>6</sup> This and the following shifts are based on the work of Tapscott. Tapscott, D: *Grown up digital* (New York, McGraw Hill, 2009)

<sup>7</sup> One member of our group described getting pages and pages of college notes from a tutor on a recent, local course, and being told simply to absorb them...

<sup>8</sup> For example the model suggested by David Kolb which suggests there are four overlapping preferences: concrete experience, active experimentation, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation. Kolb D: *Experiential Learning* (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1984)

<sup>9</sup> LICC’s *Life on the frontline* could be useful here

<sup>10</sup> By ‘course’, we simply mean a series of modules which could be taken in any order and quantity

- devised as an *online* course, with excellent content, and using audio and video clips as well as links, and exercises to be completed<sup>11</sup>.
- cognisant of the limitations of virtual learning and formation, and therefore providing opportunities to engage in discussion on closed social media sites and occasionally face to face
- aware that any training for Readers needs to be a spiritual as well as an educational experience and therefore provide appropriate support and the opportunity, for example, to journal throughout the course
- designed to attract younger candidates and work on mobiles, tablets, smart TVs and PCs
- potentially self-financing
- devised with possible accreditation in mind
- more widely applicable than just to those in Reader ministry (and advertised as such?)

*See footnote 8 below to go to a sample module*

#### **4.0 Possible next steps:**

- Assuming broad agreement with the concept, then appoint someone to head up a small team and the project
- Take soundings, then scope the project, its potential and likely take up
- Develop a project budget and timeline
- Secure funding
- Appoint an Editor in Chief
- Identify module authors and research already existing material (eg. Rochester Diocese)
- Identify champions and supporters (ABC, for example?)
- Identify suppliers (audio/video, website, promotion etc)<sup>12</sup>
- Begin to develop modules, building in a testing phase pre official launch.

Helpfully, we could progress initially with one or two modules, road-test and revise them before launching. But it would be good to launch with a substantial amount of material, giving the clear impression that this form of learning is here to stay and that a mind-shift on the part of CRC has taken place.

Our hope is that, having established an excellent series of modules for Reader CMD, those responsible for initial Reader training might look to us for a series of initial training modules, thus making that training much more accessible and attractive to younger candidates.

*Gertrud Sollars; Ruth Haldane  
Paula Gooder; Norman Ivison*

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<sup>11</sup> We have developed a sample module to give an impression of what such a course might look like. It is not fully functional and the content is for purposes of impression only. Go to: <http://wix.to/LcDNABs>

<sup>12</sup> We suggest that an initial contact with the digital team at Church House, Westminster would be wise. We understand they are keen to develop online training of this sort.

## Diocesan Mentor Scheme

### Equipping mentors



#### Background

A number of dioceses have approached CPAS to enquire if we could help with training mentors for clergy. We already train mentors in a number of settings: for our *Arrow Leadership Programme*, through the *Growing Leaders* suite of resources, and most recently, through the training course at the heart of the *Mentoring Matters* resource. More recently we have run a training process for clergy mentors in Chelmsford, Carlisle, London, Bath and Wells, and Truro dioceses.

#### Approach

Here are some core questions that help clarify our approach.

##### How do we define mentoring?

Mentors offer encouragement, perspective, support, challenge and accountability, but the word is used in a number of different ways, so here is what we mean by mentoring.

- **Definition** A dynamic, intentional, voluntary relationship of trust in which one person (the mentor) enables another person (the mentee) to maximise the grace of God within their lives and develop their potential in the service of God's kingdom purposes.
- **Relationship with other helping roles** We have worked out a way of making some distinctions between a wide variety of helping roles that helps clarify the particular distinctive of mentoring (available as a pdf).
- **Focus** Mentoring is not simply about the clergy person's ordained role, but the whole of their lives and how the different parts interact with one another.
- **Timescale** Mentoring relationships are normally between six to 24 months, meeting on a monthly basis.

##### What does CPAS offer?

In consultation with Diocese we've identified a three stage approach to train mentors of clergy:

- **Identify** How to identify the right people to act as mentors.
- **Equip** A training process tailored to the needs of the diocese.
- **Deploy** Suggestions on how to link mentor with mentee with supporting materials.

Our desire is to work alongside the diocese in working out the particular approach that will be of greatest benefit to you. We can provide a trainer for the training element, and some additional materials to help with other aspects of the scheme.

We are clear what we are not offering is training for those involved as MDR reviewers or supervisors.

### Why might clergy need mentors?

There are many reasons why someone might seek a helping role. Key to ensuring people get the most appropriate help is to try to ensure the need matches the help offered (see Helping Roles – an Overview). For mentoring the triggers might include:

- **Transitions** For example from curate to incumbent, from one size of church to another size, from one tradition of church to another, from SSM to stipendiary.
- **Development** A growing desire within a person to develop/grow beyond where they currently are.
- **Life-stage** Navigating a new life stage and the changes it brings.
- **Vocation** A sense of wanting to explore new possibilities in vocation.
- **Isolation** Many clergy feel isolated and long to have someone to explore issues, discuss concerns, and share thoughts.
- **Opportunity** As clergy consider new possibilities a mentor provides a safe place to share dreams and ideas

### What are the benefits of mentoring?

Our experience is that the benefits are two way.

- The **mentee** benefits from having someone to talk with about important matters who is outside of their immediate situation and can provide a safe context for support, encouragement, challenge, perspective and wisdom. Mentees get 'unstuck', find new direction and energy, grow and develop.
- It is also true the **mentors** benefit from the experience, although it is clear that they don't focus on themselves in any way through the process. They often find themselves challenged by the openness of the mentee, or the issues they are tackling. They gain new insights, enjoy the opportunity to invest in someone else.

### Who do you envisage being the mentors?

Generally they will be existing or recently retired clergy who are further down the track than those they are mentoring. It is possible that a mentor may not be ordained, but we are clear in making a distinction between a coach and a mentor. A coach brings certain professional skills to the role that means they don't need to have experience of the area they are coaching in, because their contribution is mainly to the process. A mentor draws on their experience and from it offers perspective and wisdom. Ideally the diocese will seek to match mentor with mentee, and we will provide guidance on how best to do this.

## Way forward

### Timeline

The timeline would be agreed with the diocese, but might look something like this

Sep-Oct 2015 Finalise and agree proposal.  
Nov 2015 Identify and approach potential mentors, including dates for the training.  
Dec-Jan 2016 Identify the process to be used to link mentors with mentees.  
Spring 2016 Initial training for mentors (two days overnight).  
May-Sep 2016 Linking of mentors with mentees.  
Nov 2016 Review and further training of mentors (one day, this could be early 2017).

### **Cost**

CPAS currently charge £350 per delivery day plus expenses, which include transport and handouts/materials for training.

### **The Rev James Lawrence**

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