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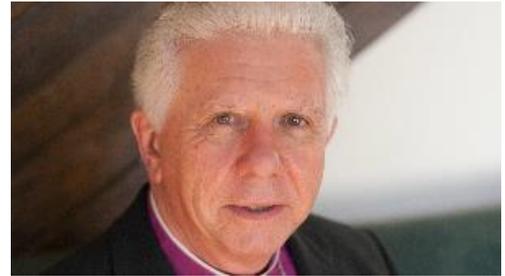
Registered Charity No. 1172186

Spring
Newsletter
2020

from the chair

Dear Friends,

It is a little hard at this time not to be overwhelmed by daily reporting of the effects of Coronavirus and the increasing restrictions it will place on us all in the coming weeks, particularly those of us over 70 years of age. Sensible and measured response both in the imposition of these restrictions and in our receiving them is, I am sure, the right and proper thing to do.



But we must try not to feel oppressed by them and I for one certainly anticipate spending more time doing some reading, gardening and possibly golfing on my own! There will be ways our ministry in our parishes can still be effective. As I write it is not yet clear whether church services will have to be suspended or limited to specific numbers – not a problem for some. Certainly it would seem foolish to take unnecessary risks and we should set a good example of self-care. Our ministry may now have to take a more limited but still vital part in the life of our parishes. I would like to suggest the following, even in self isolation:

1. A Ministry of Prayer each day for all aspects of our society, especially for those in the front line of health care.
2. A Ministry by telephone, text and email to those who need support or who are vulnerable.
3. A Ministry via social media, where this is appropriate.
4. A Ministry via articles written on the parish website.

I am sure there will be other ways and other means that you will find which could be of benefit to those to whom you minister. You could also consider writing an article on your experiences for this our RCA newsletter.

Having mentioned the Newsletter I wish to pay tribute to our editor Robin Isherwood, whose last edition this is. He has done a marvellous job and produced a really high quality and attractive magazine. Thank you, Robin! Now we shall be looking for a new editor. Is there anyone out there who would like to turn their talents to editing? It could be for a fixed term of say three years and Robin would be willing to help in the handover and to answer any questions. Please be in touch if you would like to do this.

Meanwhile don't be overwhelmed or oppressed by the news – limit your news intake to twice a day! Keep calm, carry on praying and let us recognize the Spring that is now all around us and which we shall now have extra time to appreciate. May the remaining days of Lent and the anticipation of Easter fill you with hope and promise in the joy of God's new creation.

Every Blessing, *+Ian Brackley*

‘So you have retired now, Padre?’

In response to your article on priestly retirement I share my experiences of a life seeming to have ‘retirement’ as a feature. After my call to ordination I ‘retired’ from a successful teaching career and entered parochial ministry. This call led on to 18 years of serving as an Army Chaplain. At 54 I ‘retired’ from the Royal Army Chaplains Department and found myself as the Warden of a 55 – bed retreat house. My first monthly stipend from the Church of England was less than I had paid in tax the month before! After doing the agreed 3½ years there I moved to be Rector of 5 parishes with 6 churches, soon became Rural Dean and then Canon.

We have experienced many changes and challenges. At every stage we have had to adjust and sort out our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual priorities. It has sometimes been hard to readjust to a new life and deal at the same time with the responsibility of caring for our family. As our children grew up they were both at boarding school for stability of education. For them ‘home’ was where their ‘things’ were. Each time we moved they felt secure that wherever we went we would have their belongings ready for them when they came ‘home’. Often away from home on duty ‘home’ was a special place my wife maintained for me too. When tired, stressed and strained ‘home’ provided that safe space and ‘balm of Gilead’.

Retirement at 65 was not at the right pastoral moment and I was not ready to retire. My wife and I continued in the parish until my 68th birthday. Moving to our own house in Scotland we properly retired, and I found myself welcomed into retirement ministry. Here I am able to help out by presiding at services, preaching, taking retreats, marriages, funerals, being a member of the Vestry (equivalent to PCC in England) and Treasurer of the Congregation’s accounts. Recently I have been asked to become a member of the Diocesan Standing Committee and bring my experience to this. So, when asked about our retirement my wife always replies, ‘What retirement?’ as a salutary message! Fortunately, my Bishop is sensitive to this and although I assist with PTO I have no responsibilities other than those which come from roles as a member of the congregation.

Our retirement ministry evolved out of our membership of the local congregation where we chose to worship amongst the local community. In a real sense we have ‘come home’. Ministry is focused in our theological understanding, ‘once a priest – always a priest’. Others do not share this view and a good friend of mine who has retired from ministry has now chosen to play no part in church life at all.

Spiritually I miss the regular round of the daily office with my ministry team and the mutual support and encouragement they shared with me. Learning and working together they taught me a great deal. My wife and I are now somewhat isolated. Prayer and preparation time is a balancing act. Thankfully we have our own motorhome which enables us to travel and visit family and it serves to remind the local congregation that we are free to go away whenever we like and not tied down to their diary; but this sometimes needs tact and diplomacy.

Yet God still draws both of us on together in our vocation. God gave us both to each other in the sacrament of marriage and my wife has dedicated her life to Christian service by totally supporting me in my priestly ministry with love and dedication. For her this has meant significant sacrifice – especially her own teaching career interrupted by our frequently moving home. For this I am deeply indebted and thankful. We have always been a team and without her love and support with the many gifts of the Holy Spirit along the Way we could not have done all that we have been privileged to do. Undoubtedly fresh challenges await as the Holy Spirit moves our shared vocational life ever onwards and upwards.

So then I need to remember to ask myself the question, 'Padre, have I retired now?'

Who says retirement is dull?

Revd Canon Alec Boyd

A Couple of Recommendations from Gordon Dey

JESUS SHAPED PEOPLE(JSP) www.jesusshapedpeople.net

I retired from full-time ministry in 2011, and since then have overseen the steady development of JSP, following the formation of a Charitable Trust in 2016. About 180 churches across the UK have 'tasted' JSP and we have recently appointed a new full-time Team Leader plus part-time children and Young People leader and administrator to take this forward. We have begun to grow a team of Regional Coordinators across the UK, and I've been wondering if there might be retired clergy who would like to be part of this exciting adventure. Do you have any suggestions as to how we might encourage this to be explored?

HOLYHOLS www.holyhols.org.uk

Lis and I own a holiday flat in Pembrokeshire that used to benefit from an on-line service called 'Offduty'. When this ceased to function in early 2018 I linked up with a friend whose husband is also a retired clergyman, and we created HolyHols. The number of subscribers, and the use of this service has steadily grown, but it may be that there are still many more subscribers and customers who could benefit from it - including some retired clergy. Do you have any suggestions as to how we might 'reach' such people?



I'm not ready yet

That is what some would- be residents say when they are invited to move to Fosbrooke House in Lancashire: I'm not ready yet.

Not ready for what? A walk along the promenade for miles by the seaside? A regular visit to the cinema, less than a mile in one direction or just over a mile in another? Or are they not ready to share the delights of best quality theatre and West End shows just a bus ride away in Blackpool? The Lake District is just an hour's drive away and the Yorkshire Dales slightly more. The Trough of Bowland is on our doorstep. Wouldn't most people look forward to that?



Bowland

Perhaps it is that clergy nearing retirement have the wrong idea about the Pension Board's Supported Housing Scheme. We have an adequate small flat which is our home for the rest of our lives. One recent resident went to the USA to join relatives for Thanksgiving. When they returned there was no fear that their home was damaged by fire or flood. No burst boiler with frozen pipes. Very occasionally we might have a problem with the heating or the electrics or water but it is always quickly sorted out and someone else has the responsibility not us. We are free to enjoy all that the area has to offer - an open air theatre in the summer, plenty of good restaurants, community activities like U3A and Probus. One recently bereaved resident found comfort and companionship in the local bowls club.

Perhaps the wrong impression is created because visitors see people in wheelchairs. That is the guarantee that we have a home for life. When old age catches up with us and we lose some mobility we will not be thrown out into the street or asked to find alternative accommodation. Only if we suffer from the dreaded dementia and need 24 hour care will other arrangements have to be made. For this is not a Care Home.

If illness strikes, what then? Earlier this year I had a stroke. Previously, in our old house, I would have been largely confined to staring out of the front room window at passers-by on the street and looking forward to the occasional visitor. In Fosbrooke House I can have as much or as little companionship as I like. I can still enjoy our communal activities like the Poetry evening, the film night, the curry club, the games evenings. I can also use our library for the U3A Book Reading Group which I lead. What on earth is there not to like?

Moving here from our retirement house in Cheshire was the best move my wife and I made. And like most residents we state that we wished we had moved here earlier. Not ready yet? If you don't come while you are still active you might never come. We residents look forward to welcoming newcomers who come here to live not to die!

Colin Crumpton

Tears in the rain

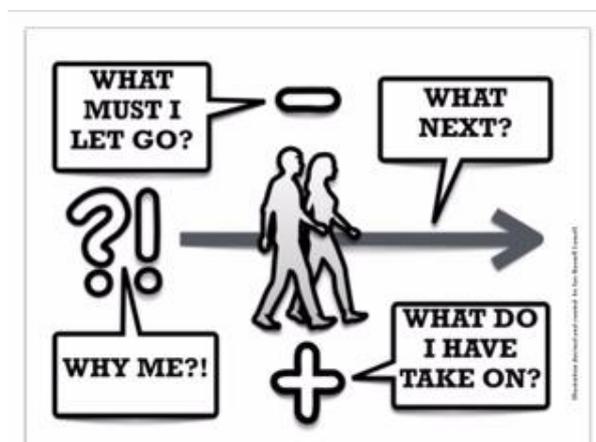


Tears in the rain — Rutger Hauer as Roy Batty, *Blade Runner*, 1982

Near the end of Ridley Scott's seminal 1982 film *Blade Runner*, is a soliloquy spoken (and part-written) by Rutger Hauer, playing a dying replicant: 'I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All these moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. Time to die.'

As far as I am aware none of us might be replicants (android automata or simulacra) as in the film created by Ridley Scott, and inspired by Philip K Dick's 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Nevertheless the sentiments expressed in this speech near the end of the film might well connect with our own experience of being priests in retirement. We may well have seen things other people wouldn't believe. And, if not shared, equally these 'moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain'.

The 'moments' I am particularly thinking off are not necessarily personal visions but rather personal and practical experiences and praxes. Let me give you an example: a model for ministering to patients which I developed when I was a full-time hospital chaplain. It also served me in my parish ministry.



Axes of Angst — Dilemmas & Decisions

Many of us may preserve such 'moments' in diaries or journals, and some of us may have written articles or even books. Many if not most of us will have utilised such experiences in preaching and teaching, or through pastoral intervention. But we might equally sense that once we entered retirement and moved to a new diocese not only have we become invisible but also our experiences have no apparent use for our still active new colleagues in parish and chaplaincy ministry.

Certainly, in my own situation, after taking early retirement, my emails to the Canon Theologian of my new diocese evoked no response, and no one (apart from the chaplain for retired clergy) bothered to contact me.

What I want to propose is to create a simple and accessible data base from our expertise so that our 'moments will' not 'be lost in time, like tears in the rain'. Contact me if you are interested: ianlowell@btinternet.com

Ian Lowell

des res



An Almshouse charity in the north Herefordshire hamlet of Leinthall Earls is looking for a new single beneficiary resident aged over 55 years who lives independently and has a car.

Applicants must be living in, or have family connections to, the area and be of limited financial means.

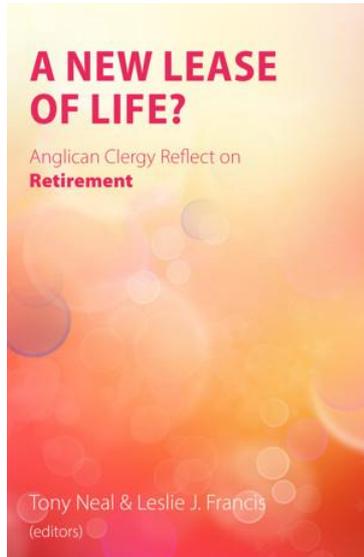
Recently refurbished this detached cosy cottage has a new kitchen, modern shower room, sitting room with wood burner, one bedroom, separate utility, fresh décor and new electric heating. There is a manageable, south – facing garden and off road parking. Residents will pay a maintenance charge (similar to rent but different in law) of £395 pcm. Private water supply included. 7 miles from Ludlow and 2 miles from the village facilities of Wigmore. Council tax band B. EPC: Listed building.

Enquiries via agent@gatley.biz or 01568 770183 on Tuesdays and Thursdays

**Please send items for the next Newsletter
to Malcolm Liles at
malcolm.liles48@gmail.com before the end of July 2020**

Review: A New Lease of Life? Anglican Clergy Reflect on Retirement

by Tony Neal and Leslie J Francis



Whatever practical steps are taken towards preparing for retirement, its emotional and spiritual reality can still come as something of a surprise or even a shock, feeling either like an ending (maybe even like a rehearsal for earthly death), or a new beginning (possibly glimpsing resurrection life) or, what is more likely, a combination of the two. It strikes me that the question mark in this book's title is thus deeply significant. The driving force behind this book is the realisation that, as there are now more retired clergy than stipendiary clergy (retirement for clergy at 70 having been introduced back in 1976), it was important to explore “how clergy retirement may be impacting on the lives of individual clergymen and clergy women” and how this “may be affecting the life of the church” (Neal and Francis 2020, p.iii).

Having first asked diocesan bishops for their response, it was then felt important to ask retired clergy themselves, which is what this book seeks to do. In it the editors, Neal and Francis, are to be commended for providing a forum in which fourteen retired clergy, from a variety of ministerial backgrounds and traditions, are actively encouraged to tell their own stories of their retirement experiences in the sure knowledge that they will be listened to. The editors' hope is that they will not just be listened to by them or even their readers, but that the wider church may listen to what they say and take them seriously too. Whilst acknowledging “the important contribution being made by retired clergy”, Neal and Francis articulate two problems that diocesan bishops perceive that they can highlight. First, *they* can lose touch “with the developing shape of ministry within a constantly changing church” (Neal and Francis 2020, p.3). Second, their availability and enthusiasm to minister in retirement can “detract (the church) from dealing with the long term strategic problems of planning for sustainable ministry in the future” (Neal and Francis 2020, p.3).

Chapter 1 examines a quantitative survey of 784 actively retired clergy (comparing and contrasting those in their 60s, 70s and 80s). Chapter 16 reflects on the narratives of the 14 retired clergy. But the bread and butter of this book is to be found in the 14 narratives themselves (of 10 men and 4 women) which are to be found in the intervening chapters (2 – 15). Retirement from stipendiary ministry is variously viewed as: bereavement, disruption, causing a crisis of identity, an opportunity for letting go and preparing for a good death; *and* as a chance (in reflecting on the past, even on the passion which drove vocation in the first place): to refine one's sense of vocation, to pursue new opportunities and try new things. Retirement can be experienced as: a change of function but not from being a priest; loss which also heralds a wisdom that comes with ageing; pain and loss with the offer of new beginnings. There is then indeed a sense here (as was suggested earlier) in which retirement is seen as marking an ending or a new beginning or a combination of the two.

In my opinion, this is an excellent book. I think it would encourage those already retired to tell their own stories and those preparing for retirement to think through how they might best make the transition. I hope it will also be read by bishops and their senior teams and, in consultation with their clergy retirement officers, help them to think through their own policies and support concerning retired colleagues, and to think through what is understood by the concepts not only of retirement but also of priesthood, by them and for those for whom they exercise oversight and care.

The Rev'd Dr. Gregory Clifton-Smith

RCA Council Member for the Dioceses of Guildford, Portsmouth and Winchester

Another review, of the same book, written by [Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Grundy](#) for *Rural Theology*

This book has significance on a number of levels. Fourteen Church of England clergy, male and female priests, have contributed descriptions and reflections on the experience of retirement. They write from the mid and later years and as such a helpful perspective is achieved.

Those of us familiar with the demanding questionnaires which Leslie Francis with many colleagues have distributed over the years will be intrigued to observe him engaged in this qualitative research. Significant across the contributions is the clear sense that there remains a 'culture' of Anglican clericalism which forms our priests, influences and affects their families – and continues to make a largely unrecognised contribution to British public life.

Francis begins with statistics emphasising the 'elephant in the room' about ordained ministry in today's Church of England; that there are considerably more active retired clergy in almost all the English dioceses than there are stipendiary clergy. Evidence demonstrating how surprisingly little attention has been given to their potential supports one of the book's arguments.

***there are considerably more active retired clergy
in almost all the English dioceses
than there are stipendiary clergy***

Contributors are wide-ranging though many or most seem to have an attachment to Cornwall in some way. Perhaps this is the network which Neal has. It in no way detracts from the range of experience offered. Women priests make a particular contribution with Katy Morgan, Judy Howard, Nancy Johnson and Pat Robson bringing their past professional and religious experience and present dilemmas to the fore in telling ways. The community priest David Peel describes the enormous incarnational advantage of staying alongside the same people in a working life and in retirement.

In contrast, other contributors debate the wisdom and the pain of having to retire from communities where they have been so engaged. Each debates their interior spiritual life in perceptive ways, either from the single life, or after divorce or from a gay perspective. Those with a spouse include their joint contribution to ministry and the sense for both of identity loss when trying to settle in a new place.

David Phypers, sometime Secretary of the Retired Clergy Association, writes from the experience of renting a house from the Church of England Pensions Board. John Holmes writes movingly about a new life after the death of his wife and a ministry shared and of how he then finds a way to pursue the way alone. David Jennings gets to the heart of the ministerial transition, emphasising that who we are in retirement needs to be contiguous with what we have been and at its best confirms our identity (p.79).

A reflective and theologically aware contribution comes from Anthony Phillips. Most of his ministry had been in academia and at 80 he writes about the 'final homecoming'. Other contributors also engage with the many faceted dilemma of how priests might prepare for their own death. Tellingly, Phillips mentions his experience of suggestions by colleagues on his first retirement that he might move to a senior ecclesiastical post. This former headmaster of a prestigious school and Canon Theologian describes the bruising experience he had with the C of E's Senior Appointments Adviser. He speaks for many who live through their retirement years with the lack of debriefing about possible moves and the scars which remain.

The book has an opening chapter by Leslie Francis summarising a *Church Times* survey about clerical attitudes to many moral and ethical issues as they work in retirement. In this he illustrates an attitude gap between many older clergy and those currently in ministry. The final chapter is by David Walker. Since much in every contribution, and at one level the aim of the book, is for senior clergy to develop the resource of the retired it would have helped to know that he is a serving diocesan bishop. Walker's final comment is salutary and needs to be internalised by serving as well as retired clergy, that with the ebbs and flows of varying Anglican traditions those in authority at any one time may not share the same assumptions about the nature of priesthood as themselves.

This book opens a splendid window into the rich spiritual and priestly culture which Church of England clergy have developed through the centuries and which sustains them today. The possible play on words in the title of the book is a reminder that these graciously leased retirement years can be among the richest.

A note from our former Secretary

Thank you so much for the Christmas Newsletter. I'm really enjoying the reviews of supported housing schemes, and look forward to more in future issues.

However, I must express my keen disappointment that BOTH annual meetings next year will be held during Spring Bank Holiday week, making it highly unlikely I shall be able to attend either. I'm wondering if I'm unusual, but, for as long as I can remember, we've always used this week as an opportunity spend time with family members who, for some or all of the week, are often on holiday themselves. I know only too well the difficulties we have in arranging annual meeting dates. Perhaps, in this respect, Spring Bank week is mutually convenient for most.

You might be willing to print this email in the next Newsletter to see if it provokes a response.

With every good wish, *David (Phypers, RCA secretary until last year)*

Provincial Meetings in 2020

The current crisis over the Coronavirus outbreak has caused the national council at its March meeting to postpone the Provincial General Meetings, perhaps until November. Please watch the newsletter and the website for fresh dates. *Malcolm Liles*

Vacancy

We have a vacancy on the national council for a representative from London and Southwark dioceses. Generally speaking the role involves being in touch with the retirement officers for those dioceses and members within them. The council meets twice a year in London in March and October for 4/5 hours, there is also a provincial general meeting once a year in the southern province, again over the same time span. Expressions of interest in the role to the secretary who will supply further information on request. All expenses are paid.

Malcolm Liles

Editor's note

I fear I've not been doing this job very long. However, I undertook it as part of an anomaly by which I was a member of the RCA Council without actually being retired. My situation has now changed, so I'm asking for a successor to take over the compilation and editorship of this newsletter. I could at a stretch prepare the summer edition, but by then at the latest we'll need to have replaced me. Please don't hesitate to contact me at revslob@gmail.com if you're interested.

Encore La France

I was very interested in Fr Geoff Smith's experience of Ministry in France. My family and I moved to France in 2004 and we lived there until we came home to UK because of illness in 2015. For the first two years we were there I worked for what amounted to a House for Duty priest in the Diocese of Europe. For the remainder of our time there I worked with Permission to Officiate.

We lived in a small village (population 125) but close to a large town, where the Parish Priest served 55 parishes. Soon after we got there I contacted him and he was very happy for us to receive Communion, and I was asked to come and talk (in French!) about Anglicanism. As a result they couldn't see any difference from the church in France except for the Pope. As one priest observed to me, Rome is a long way away and there are no divisions in the Kingdom of Heaven.

After delivering this address I was invited to concelebrate whenever I went to Mass. To begin with I did this on a week day; after I ceased being the Anglican Chaplain I concelebrated on most Sundays. On two occasions, when the parish priest was unable to get to his church, I was asked to celebrate and preach. The first time was Pentecost in our village church, and the second time was Tous Saints, All Saints, where I celebrated and preached with a congregation of 400! I was accepted as a priest by the laity and clergy of the Deanery and was invited to Chapter.

I think the French RC church sets us an example, and having returned to UK, I find the attitude of the RC church here very sad.

John Porter, Madeley, Staffs



3rd Century Christian catacomb of San Callisto

Counting the Cost

Mine won't have been the only eyes watering at the apparent cost, recently reported in the *Church Times*, of funding a priest in the Diocese of Chelmsford.

When I was still in parish ministry, six years ago, I maintained that we could not realistically regard ourselves as being in business unless we were covering the cost of our vicar from the regular giving of our congregation. In principle, then, I'm in agreement with the Bishop of Chelmsford – that parishes who want a priest must pay for one. However, when I was an incumbent the costs of my office were calculated at around £55,000. The £81,180 quoted for sustaining a priest in Essex in 2020 represents a very hefty increase, and reminds me of the issues we had to discuss on our PCC.

Perhaps the most obvious one is that of creeping congregationalism in the Church of England. Wealthy parishes have for decades been more or less autonomously recruiting their own clergy. The distance from 'you must pay for your own priest' to 'you may have as many priests as you can afford' is a short one, and we've witnessed a number of developments of church within Church as a consequence of the loosening of the bonds of mutual support which used to dictate the parish share calculation.

'Congregationalism' conjures notions of local, independent gatherings, but some manifestations of church within Church are national or international in their reach. In organisational terms, they're like a franchise, and I find it helpful to think of the fissiparousness which now characterises Anglicanism as something like privatisation. We're used to entities within the Church of England acting independently for theological and ecclesiological reasons. We're now being invited to rationalise independence for financial reasons.

If I were a PCC treasurer in Chelmsford Diocese I would welcome the principle, Parishes Who Want a Priest Must Pay For Them. But I would question the costings and I would want to open a conversation about getting better value. If the provision of clergy is to be provided on terms dictated by the market, there's a logic which suggests that the Diocese must not expect to operate a monopoly.

In (privatised) areas of Anglican ministry, alternative market forces have been in operation for many years. (I'm thinking in particular of chaplaincies in private schools and charities.)



Lancing College

It can be argued that these organisations hijack the Church of England's resources. (Think, for example, of the priest going from residential training and a funded degree into a two-year curacy and then straight into a boarding school chaplaincy.) But that argument is not going to deter the practice any more than it prevents the NHS from recruiting staff from other countries who not only have paid for their training but who have desperate need for their skills.

If I were that PCC treasurer I might begin by finding out how the local university finances its chaplain, or what it costs the town almshouse to employ one. I might compare notes with the Methodists down the road about the costs of housing a minister. I might with my fellow deanery treasurers raise yet again with the Diocese the tiresome matter of overheads – and I might even find myself introducing the proposal not that we enter the marketplace reducing the overall costs but increasing the stipend.

There is another, more general, issue: if a band of faithful folk find they're capable of raising over £81k per year, is a vicar the best Christian way of spending it? Imagine if someone gave you 80 grand and said, Spend this on the Kingdom. Would you really think: 'We'll get a vicar!'

***Is funding
a vicar
the best thing
a group of Christians
can do
with £81k?***





Chester Cathedral

In my last parish we had over 150 regular givers. But only four (and I was one of them) gave more than £20 a week. Some of those givers were unrealistic, and some were mean. But many of them simply couldn't afford £1,000 a year.

I have to say I find something offensive about pressing over 80 people for £1,000 per year for their vicar before they can begin to think of doing anything else.

When I think back to the happy day of my ordination to the priesthood, 25 years ago, a busload of friends from the congregation in Bramhall supporting me in Chester Cathedral, I find it deeply embarrassing to imagine that it was going to cost them more than most of them earned to keep my family and me in my curacy. Or maybe it's that I find overwhelming the idea that I would have to provide 80,000 quids' worth of ministry. At any rate, I don't believe I would have the cheek to pursue ordination at all on the terms proposed by the Bishop of Chelmsford. (And I wonder what he costs the congregations of Essex per year.)

Robin Isherwood

Vocation in Retirement - some thoughts in response to Bishop Ian's invitation

These come from a priest who was made a Deacon in 1967 and has worked mostly in one diocese in four different parishes and has been retired in the same diocese for 16 years. Having moved parishes, on taking early retirement on health grounds, I now have the privilege of living next door to my daughter in the last parish I served in as the incumbent.

For the most part my retirement years have been enjoyable and fulfilling with my being able to feel useful to my local parish church as well as in local deaneries. In addition after retiring it has been possible to continue - and develop – various extra- parochial aspects of ministry that I have fully exercised since finding myself in my first two rural parishes with a total population of under 600!

My own thinking about this subject was stimulated by the Rural Dean asking me to lead a discussion among the seven retired clergy of my first deanery following retirement. This began with a brief Google search for thinking about this at General Synod. It was fairly minimal being first done in 2007 with a sequel in 2014.

There were several points made in our Deanery discussions that I set out below. They were forwarded to our Bishops but I am unsure about any changes that were made.

1. There was, perhaps not surprisingly, a difference in experience between those clergy who retired within a diocese where they had previously worked and probably, as in my case, where

they had a network of contacts as and having chosen the parish where they had decided to retire and/or worship.

2. One priest, who had moved some distance on retirement, said that he found not knowing how the diocese worked and not knowing local clergy led to it being a whole year before he was even asked to take a funeral. (I suspect he hadn't offered himself to local funeral directors!)

3. There was a suggestion that each diocese should have a senior staff member – i e an archdeacon – who would take responsibility for the care and use of retired clergy. Most dioceses appoint clergy, who are also retired, to exercise the pastoral care of their colleagues but in several cases, although they have been pastorally sensitive, they have shown little willingness to take note of retired clergy dissatisfactions and communicate them effectively to the diocese.

4. Although it would no doubt be unwise for bishops to attempt to direct clergy to retire to particular parishes or even areas within their diocese, we found several examples of parish priests who were without any nearby retired priests to call on for holiday or illness cover. Several in the group said they would, on approaching retirement, appreciate a conversation about parishes where they might be welcomed - or even needed.

5. Whilst the increasing tendency to license retired clergy as honorary assistants to particular parishes is a way of dealing with the issue raised in No. 4, there will always be clergy who prefer their retirement ministry to be under a PTO so that they have a greater freedom to choose where they help - as well as being able to engage in specialist forms of ministry that they enjoy and may already be involved in.

6. An important part of the vocation of retired clergy is normally, although not exclusively for most, to be able to offer more than simply acting as 'a mass priest.' In addition to being invited to preach many are willing to be involved in leading Bible and other study groups, being involved in pastoral work and being invited (as I have been) to be part of the local parish ministry team.

7. Attendance at Clergy Chapters is sometimes a more contentious matter (and absence is not common among the retired alone!) which is not always solved by excluding the retired from some Chapter meetings. However there should always be opportunities for all clergy to meet on a regular basis for social reasons and for study as well as for worship and prayer. RD's should have this within their job descriptions.

8. Should retired clergy be involved in Synodical Government? Few appear to be interested in being so and for many synods are something that is least missed on retirement.

Roger Knight

Newsletter circulation

As you will know our newsletter is now mainly distributed by e-mail which gives us a considerable saving. However we can send out hard copies to those who need to receive it in that format. There are currently 80 distributed in that way to people who have let me know that they wish to receive it in this way. If you know of any members who are now missing out on this mode of delivery could you please encourage them to write to me requesting a postal copy.

Malcolm Liles

RCACOE branches

From time to time I receive e-mails, especially from newly retired members, expressing sadness that there is not an active RCACoE branch meeting in their area. There still are a number of branches around the country who provide an enjoyable round of meetings through the year for discussion, prayer and mutual support. There is no single pattern but I do have examples of the years events for some of these.

If there is no branch in your area have you ever thought about trying to start one? You could start quite simply by contacting your Diocesan Retirement Officer or using the Diocesan e-mail system to invite members (and their partners?) to a simple coffee morning to discuss the possibilities with those who attend. I can supply examples of branch activities on request.

Malcolm Liles

Facebook Group Page?

Our March Council meeting discussed the possibility of setting up a group Facebook page for RCACoE members to provide an additional avenue for members to express their joys and frustrations, etc. This could also be another way of seeking and offering mutual support and matters for prayer. If there is sufficient interest in starting one we shall need 2/3 people to act as moderators for the page. We have one person who is willing to act as moderator. So what about it, would you be likely to use such a facility if on was available? Expressions of interest to me as secretary.

Malcolm Liles

Interested in Almshouse living?

You will have seen the notice earlier in this newsletter about the availability of an almshouse in Hereford. Around the country there are a significant number of almshouses which might be available to clergy and their partners in retirement. Many are members of the Almshouses Association which has a web-site which can be searched for availability and location. Some almshouses have governing documents limiting them to offering accommodation to those who already live in the locality, or have particular social or financial needs; others have more general availability.

If you know of any almshouses, which may not be members of that association, in your locality which offer housing for retired clergy and their partners please let me know. It may be helpful to have a register of these.

Malcolm Liles

Two important reports

In the last newsletter our Chairman mentioned a piece of research by Julian Hubbard commissioned by our council. This has now been published and sent out to Bishops and Archdeacons to encourage greater use of, and opportunity for, retired clergy as resources for parishes and dioceses. Entitled *Retired Clergy in the Church of England Now* it is attached to this mailing for those who receive the newsletter by e-mail, along with a sabbatical report by Tim Hurren of Leeds diocese, *Nurturing the vocation of retired clergy*. Do please ponder both, and let us know what further research you would like to be carried forward arising from these two documents. Members who receive hard copies can be sent these reports by request to me.

Malcolm Liles

Changed your printer lately?

I did recently, as a result I have a number of Canon Pixma compatible inkjets (CL-551) which I cannot use in my new printer. Is there anyone out there who would like them for postage cost only? They are dated for late 2021.

Does anyone have any spare inkjets as a result of replacement for a Canon Pixma TS6250 (C-580 or C-581)? I would pay the postage if you have any.

Malcolm Liles

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Please note that views expressed in this newsletter are those the authors and should not be understood as in any way reflecting the position of RCACoE