



OUR LIFE IN CHRIST THE BISHOP'S CHARGE 2015

RE-IMAGINING MINISTRY

I. Introduction

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2.42)

This post-Pentecost statement is heavily freighted with allusion to the character of the early Church. In order to understand the scope of this text, we need to read it as an extension of Luke’s gospel,¹ in which the teaching of Jesus is interwoven with his participation in the public worship that was part of the holiness code of the people of Israel.

When Luke describes the life of the early Church, we should expect the framework of Judaism that had shaped the practice of Jesus himself to continue as a significant influence on his disciples.

Inevitably, the early years of the Christian mission witness the emergence of different forms of ministry, with the familiarity of inherited patterns contributing to its shape. The twelve, whom Jesus collectively called apostles (Luke 6.13) hold a particular place within the company of his followers. Their designation by number of the tribes of Israel is an obvious expression of both continuity and difference, with the church emerging as the new Israel of God.

The gospels record that Jesus was regarded as a teacher. He is addressed as “Rabbi” (John 6.25), a role that drew together and shaped a distinctive group and body of teaching. An example of this in the Greek culture that permeated the age was the school that gathered around Socrates. Another example that was contemporary with the ministry of Jesus and located in Palestine, is the ascetic group known as the Essenes. They were probably the community at Qumran who followed the Teacher of Righteousness and they are known to us from the Dead Sea scrolls.

¹ “In my first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning” (Acts 1.1).

The teaching of Jesus is recognised by the crowd as being distinctive; “They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mark 1.22). Jesus understands that he himself, in his own identity and being, is the person who authenticates the authority of his teaching. So he says to his critics, who suspected him of blasphemy in healing the paralytic, “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins – he said to the paralytic – ‘I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home’” (Mark 2.10).

The apostles’ teaching is similarly authenticated by their personal authority and ministry; “Peter said, ‘I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong” (Acts 3.6-7).

One of the earliest Christian documents outside the collection that form the New Testament is known as the *Didache* – a Greek word that means “teaching”. It is thought to have been written in Syria in the first century. It gives us an account of Christian ministry in the celebration of baptism, the Eucharist, fasting, prayer, and the ministry of travelling apostles and prophets. Evidence of the very early date of this document is the description of Christianity as the *Way*, the term by which Paul knew it prior to his conversion (Acts 9.2).

In his book, *The Rise of Christianity*, the historian WHC Frend describes two models of ministry within the New Testament church. He describes the first as the Jerusalem model, with “James presiding over elders who formed a kind of Christian Sanhedrin”. The second was Paul’s model. This was outwardly similar to the Jewish Synagogue, but with peripatetic office holders who were apostles, prophets, and teachers, and presbyters and administrators who were rooted in serving the local congregation. Both models had their roots in Judaism.²

Here, again, we see that teaching is fundamental to the life of the Christian community, and the authentication of a community lies in its claim to continuity, to being apostolic, part of the fellowship of those who received the teaching of Jesus. “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received” (1 Cor. 15.3) Paul writes to Corinthian Christians.³

A distinguishing sign of this teaching is the fellowship that it forms. The Greek word for this is *koinonia*, derived from the word *koinos*, meaning something that is held in common. The Latin equivalent derives from *communis* and enters our language as communion.

This sense of solidarity is what we mean when we speak of “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” in what is known as “the Grace” (2 Cor. 13.13). The Holy Spirit is the agent of unity and fellowship, but also the giver of different gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul lists these gifts and describes the ways in they are to be used “for the common good”. But the more excellent way of doing this is through the release of love that animates our delight in the

²WHC Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, DLT, London (1984) pp 106-107.

³ “Paul was a Christian rabbi, handing on a body of established truth within the circle of his pupils, but at the same time he was an evangelistic preacher; he preached what he taught, and he taught what he preached.” CK Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, A&C Black, (London) 1968, p.337.

vision of God: “for now I know only in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Cor. 13.12).

This sense of becoming part of God’s life is described in the Orthodox tradition as *theosis*. It suggests that we can join in the gaze of rapt attention of love that characterises the life of the persons of the Holy Trinity, one absorbed in looking upon the other. In this way we might imagine ourselves into being the body of Christ upon which the Father looks with delight and love.

The process of “becoming Jesus” corporately and collectively gives us an indication of the way that our apostolic life and ministry is constituted by who Jesus is.

Jesus is described in the letter to the Hebrews as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. He is the Apostle, sent by God to teach us the truth, and he is the High Priest who offers the sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world. By virtue of our baptism into his life, and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we all participate in the exercise of his apostolic and priestly ministry.

Paul understands this completely, and urges this self-understanding upon the Christians in Rome when he exhorts them “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12.1.1).

The allusion to the central elements of the old covenant are never far away from this language. But in the new covenant, the elements of the old are given a “living” quality because they are taken into the person and actions of Jesus himself. So he becomes both temple and priest, the place of sacrifice and the minister by whom it is offered.

This is somewhat to the consternation of the twelve disciples: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’...But he was speaking of the temple of his body” (John 2.19, 21).

The image of Jesus as temple slips easily into the way Peter describes the Church and the individual Christian as a “living” temple: “Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2.4-5).

This passage points very clearly to the power at work in us through the grace of God (“be built into a spiritual house) which is revealed both in what we are (“a holy priesthood”) and what we do (to offer acceptable spiritual sacrifices).

The language that Peter uses here also confirms Paul’s understanding of the nature of the church, outlined in his letter to the Christians in Corinth. His analogy of the body, with its different parts but essential unity, explores both function and identity at the same time. So Paul can say that “there are varieties of gifts” (function), “but the same Spirit” (identity) and “just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.” (1 Cor. 12.1,12).

In the list of ministries that concludes Paul’s observations on the nature of the body of Christ, the role of the apostle a primary one. It has a quality about it that touches not simply on function, but also the very nature of the church as the body of Christ. To be apostolic is to be grounded in the company of those who know Jesus and his teaching. “For I

received from the Lord what I also handed on to you” (1 Cor. 11.23), Paul writes, in order to authenticate his apostolic teaching and identity.

2. Apostolic ministry: Immersion in the Bible

As we look to the presentments that outline the nature of our apostolic life, the issue of teaching and rootedness in Holy Scripture is of profound importance. It is through our engagement with the Bible that we expand our knowledge of the apostolic nature of our calling, our being and our function.

Articles 44 and 45 inquire into this very straightforwardly: “What assessment would you make of the level of Biblical knowledge and understanding that the people of your congregation have?” and “In what ways do you think it is possible to extend Biblical literacy across the spectrum of age and ability?”

The presentments make it clear that a high degree of energy is being expended in this area and that clergy are aware of the diversity of need and aptitude in any congregation.

By far the most common way of promoting Biblical literacy is through groups. 95 presentments make reference to group work, though of differing kinds.

Many speak of home groups, which might meet weekly, or monthly and are generally mid-week, though Sunday is also a time for regular group meetings in some places.

The use of Advent and Lent groups clearly serves a similar pattern, though the focus here is less clearly or consistently on the Bible. It’s also encouraging to see that there are groups for young people that look specifically at the Bible the use of the Lion Storyteller Bible being a useful gift promoted by one parish.

Providing people with some form of biblical text is something that features in a variety of ways. One presentment speaks of giving away “some unused NTs” to people in an Alpha group. “Training parents to teach their children” is mentioned in one presentment. It is another aspect of facilitating the communication of Biblical literacy to children and it might well be a very effective way of doing the same for the parents.

Similarly, the imaginative use of artefacts and attractions was mentioned. Presentments made reference the use of Godly Play, drama and puppetry, and exploring film, and literature. One person cited “a visit to the British Museum”. It’s the only place I know where you can see the Cyrus cylinder (2 Chronicles 36.22-23), dated 538 BCE, and an actual denarius – “bring me a denarius and let me see it” (Mark 12.15).

There is no doubt that gaining the knowledge of Biblical facts and stories provides a good foundation for understanding the richness of Christian language, image and symbolism. However, this approach can also fail to teach the meaning of a Biblical text or the force of revelation that the Bible unfolds for us.

The *Bible in One Year* app, which comes from Nicky and Pippa Gumbel and the Alpha network, makes a very attractive invitation to recover the sense of journey through the Bible and the story of salvation that it tells. The promotion of a culture in which Bible study is attractive and relates human experience to the mystery of God is one of the benefits of

the festivals such as Soul Survivor, Greenbelt, and Spring Harvest, all mentioned in presentments.

Some more thorough-going engagement also emerges from presentments that refer to think-tank type organisations and Christian centres. Examples include the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, with its free weekly emails on engaging with the Bible, and resources from the Bible Society, including its journal, *The Bible in Transmission*.

The ways in which information is communicated are often unpredictable and we need to be imaginative about them. Often the imagination is prompted by demands that catch us unprepared. Only one parish mentioned the need for provision of a biblical literacy programme for people with learning difficulties. Lack of attention to this need diminishes the scope of our capacity to learn well. Those whose spiritual, emotional, intellectual and cultural lives are too easily overlooked so often have a great deal to teach us.

We ought also to be alert to the impact of music in songs, hymnody and liturgical texts. A few presentments mentioned this, but not many. A similarly small number mentioned the obvious use of the lectionary in Sunday worship as an opportunity to promote Biblical literacy; some indicated the importance of having pew Bibles and insisting that people “follow the text”.

Exposition of the text is covered in a major response that cites preaching as a vehicle for deepening people’s knowledge of the Bible. One person was brave enough to suggest a regular Q&A after preaching. But if the experience of Sunday worship is the only means by which Biblical literacy is nurtured, it is not surprising that another person says that a more creative use of Sunday mornings is important, but “I still feel daunted” at the prospect of how to do that effectively.

That sounds a loud note of caution. It was underlined by a very thoughtful observation on the context in which we are seeking to operate. “Culture exalts individual conscience and reason over the Bible as an authority source, which leads to a lack of serious desire to engage with the texts.”

In the present context of aggressive secular consumerism, we are hard pressed to find sources of authority that command widespread assent. Books such as Callum Brown’s *The Death of Christian Britain*⁴ (first edition), identify a decline in church-going that is bound up with the loss of a common moral compass. But the death he describes does not eradicate the human capacity for faith.

The need for engagement with the Bible reverently and intelligently, with a proportionate reference to the authority of scripture, is an urgent one. We are committed to the sufficiency of scripture as “containing all things necessary to salvation”, while also aware that “whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man” (Articles of Religion VI). Fidelity to what that means for the service of God’s mission of love and salvation is not an easy struggle. But the uncommitted world does know when it sees the love of God in action, and it responds with wonder and attraction.

⁴ London, (Routledge), 2001

The presentments for articles 44 and 45 do reveal a degree of energy in our attention to the expansion of Biblical literacy, but I suspect that quite a lot of it is nervous energy. The task of promoting a culture of learning within our congregations is a challenge that is baffling, demanding and complex in a culture that has little patience with inherited wisdom, faith commitment, and a sense of absolute truth.

Part of the challenge is honesty about the general depth of apostolic understanding in many of the most committed disciples, and perhaps even in ourselves. This confronts us with the task of ensuring that we ourselves are constantly being evangelised and that we are creating a culture in which our congregations are as well.

The task of re-imagining ministry must focus on our capacity as bishops, priests and deacons to nurture the people we serve in ways that build our confidence and ability to account for the apostolic teaching and fellowship that we share. We need to identify the gaps in our provision for growth in learning, to explore how we fill them imaginatively, and to nurture a sense of excitement about theological learning that is accessible and appropriate for the needs of every congregation.

In order to build confidence in our apostolic identity, we need to be clear about the mandate, freedom, and support we can give to those who are within our household of faith, in ways that sustain our common purpose and identity. In many cases this will be about identifying and celebrating the ministry that many people are doing already. It will be about capacity to deliver locally what is characteristic of the household generally. It will also be about widening choice in response to calling, and having available a wide range of training opportunities for recognised forms of ministry.

3. Apostolic ministry: The gift of being an evangelist

The presentments reveal a remarkable capacity to identify those who are gifted in a ministry that can be described as primary evangelism. In many cases this identification is about pointing out a person who will make a commitment and use whatever gifts she or he might have.

The role of an evangelist lacks precise definition in the New Testament. It is quoted by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. The list of ministries diverges from the list he outlines when writing to Corinth and it seems that an evangelist in Ephesus is not necessarily the equivalent of a teacher in Corinth.⁵

Philip is described in the Acts of the Apostles as an evangelist, but with no details of what that means. Timothy, who is a peripatetic assistant to Paul, is likewise described as an evangelist. But Paul's charge to Timothy also identifies the apostolic nature of Timothy's authority and credentials: "Continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 4.5; 3.14-15).

⁵ Ephesians 4.11, cf 1 Cor. 12.28.

Timothy is a person who seems to be comfortable in his own skin. He knows himself and is easily able to account for his faith. He is a person capable of commitment and displays the humility of learning and discipleship. This is not an exhaustive list of requirements for being an evangelist, but it is an indication of the qualities that enable us to recognise someone whom we would describe as a primary evangelist.

105 presentments identify a wide range of people who could be described in that way. The readiness and certainty with which this identification is made suggests that being an evangelist it is a gifting, rather than the outcome of a training.

Easily the largest group of those identified as evangelists were “specific lay people” who have no title or status. So they might, or might not, be on the PCC, for example. But they do have a particular role or identity, such as being a lunch club worker, a young parent, a local businessman, an 87 year old woman from London, a retired missionary, a married couple, a head server, the leader of a prayer group, a Sunday welcomer, lay people who bring their friends. And so the list goes on. The most accurate general description was, “those with a gift of evangelism”.

The importance of this identification is the way in which it says something about the representational dynamics of the church. For example, the church is described as the bride or spouse of Christ,⁶ drawing on Paul’s reference in Ephesians.⁷ Married Christians therefore represent something that is characteristic of the whole organisation, but is given specific expression in their lives. In a similar way, we say that the church is priestly.⁸ But what is true of the whole body of the church is demonstrated by those who are ordained to exercise in a specific way the priestly office of Jesus, and who thereby enable the church as a whole to be itself in being priestly.

So it is with those who have the gift of being evangelists. Their exercise of that gift is a way of demonstrating specifically what must be true of each of us in some way. At home, in the workplace, among friends and neighbours, at school and college – wherever we are, every Christian is to be evangelistic according to personal gifting, ability, temperament.

But we should also be agile in recognising that to some people God has given the particular gift of calling to faith those who are not Christians. This reminds us that we all have a part to play in creating the community, the environment of godliness or the seedbed of good soil, in which the seed of the gospel can grow and become fruitful.

As in other parts of these presentments, there is considerable attention to the gift of evangelism that is evident in those who work with young people. This includes those who lead junior church, Sunday school, youth clubs, uniformed organisations; it was also evident that music leaders often had an important role in this area, and one presentment mentioned the leader of the bell ringers as also being an evangelist among young and old alike. Some presentments mention the newly confirmed (who could be of any age, of course) and, some specify young people themselves as a category of evangelist.

⁶ See above, p. 2.

⁷ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5.31-32)

⁸ “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.” (1 Peter 2.9)

It is a common observation that young people are part of the church of today, not simply the church of tomorrow. What they can teach about how to learn, how to pray, how to serve as Christians today is of major importance in the catalogue of sources of wisdom that we need to deploy evangelistically.

Ensuring that our congregations reflect the complete age range of the communities that they serve is an anxiety that many presentments identify, and many deanery Synods echoed. Finding the resources, which generally means the funding for youth workers, or for young evangelists, is one of the challenges that we need to address as a matter of urgency. But this does depend upon more than funding.

Nurturing the vocations of those who are free and willing to commit to this ministry is also a priority. It is one that sits alongside, but must not be confused with, the urgent task of praying for vocations to ordained ministry, a work that also needs to have a special focus on young Christians.

4. Apostolic ministry: Priest as enabler

It was very heartening, I think, to read that in 70 presentments the clergy were listed among the evangelists. One presentment very accurately listed the vicar and 12 lay people but made no mention of the curate. In some cases the clergy thought that they were alone in the category of being an evangelist: “Me” was the shortest response to this article!

Some of this begs a number of questions about aspects of the ordination rite that are being overlooked. The public declaration that “with all God’s people [priests] are to tell the story of God’s love” commits us as clergy to a collaborative exercise of the enterprise of evangelisation.

How we are to harness the gifts that God has given to the whole community for the work of evangelism is an apostolic task that the church lays upon us who are ordained. The infrastructure for the delivery of resources is a challenge that emerges only slowly from these articles of inquiry. One of the most insightful presentments makes this observation about a very lively parish: “we have more strategies and plans than we have volunteers and resources”.

It seems that we have invested heavily in the deployment of ordained ministers in stipendiary ministry, our most expensive and valuable resource, but have not necessarily provided them with the initial and continuing formation that they need for delivery of the ministry that we expect of them, and that they expected to be able to deliver.

Commitment to the vocation of ordained ministry remains strong, impressive, and rich in its diversity of theological tradition within this diocese. It is still very unbalanced in its gender ratio, and we have to continue to work towards redressing that so that we achieve a recognisable equilibrium within the life of the Church of England. We should also pray for vocations to ordained ministry. I urge you to look out for committed young Christians whom God might have gifted for future ministry among us. Do not hesitate to set the very highest standards of ability, commitment, resourcefulness, and the simple quality of being an outstanding person.

The response to articles 68 – 73, under the heading “Giving of self”, suggests that generally the clergy are resourceful in establishing structures and relationships that sustain the apostolic ministry entrusted to them. 94 presentments mention the support of a spouse, 73 mention the support of the family, 17 mention support of friendship networks, one presentment observing, “I have ridiculously good and patient friends”. But the life/work balance is not always good. Only 67 were able to say categorically that they were fulfilled in their ministry; 21 specifically stated that they were unfulfilled; 18 felt under-utilised or unappreciated.

The issues that contributed to these demoralising aspects of the life often centre on expectations that are confounded by experience. “Too much time doing routine tasks and paperwork which is not really what I was ordained to do.” That view, or something like it surfaced in some other presentments. This comes to mind when I deliver a licence and am reminded that we are, in law, clerks in holy orders. It is, perhaps, a capacity for clerking that fits us for the position of steward in the household of faith.

Similarly the observation from another presentment that there are too many meetings and we are immersed in “far too much management and organisation” reminds me of the Rule of St Benedict which faces head on the necessity of decision-making processes in any community.⁹ “Battling with a vindictive collection of people” was also mentioned. It is a commonplace in apostolic ministry, and advice on how to tackle it was given as long ago as the 6th century in Gregory the Great’s *Rule of Pastoral Care*, warmly recommended in the last century by Michael Ramsay.¹⁰

Among other responses worth noting was the importance of a sense of humour. 24 mentioned this explicitly, though I felt that many more demonstrated it in other ways. Keeping fit was mentioned specifically by 17 but references to walking (the dog, in many instances) and cycling indicated wider commitment to some degree of exercise.

This perception was also reinforced by the hugely impressive and diverse range of interests that keep us cheerful: skiing, watching Man United win (rare), a pint of Harvey’s, harvesting home-grown veg, scuba diving, grandfather clocks, canal boat, music, windsurfing, decent claret, vocation as a painter, flying kites (real ones), clouds (?), malt whiskey [are these two connected?] golf, flying, DIY, theatre, mountain climbing, film, dancing, my animals, a good book and chocolate, archery, motorcycling, brewing beer, composing music. No doubt there are others!

This is a very positive expression indeed of investment in life and, especially in your life as a child of God and minister of the gospel. The care of that person is no less important than the care of those to whom you minister.

This list of interests also indicates another imperative for us: the capacity to engage regularly, widely and well, with other people who are not Christians. This is a means of

⁹ “When any important business has to be done...let the Abbot call together the whole community and state the matter to be acted upon.” Rule of St Benedict, chapter 3.

¹⁰ “The quarrelsome are to be admonished to know for certain that however great the virtues which they have, they cannot become spiritual at all, if they disregard union in concord with their neighbours, for it is written: ‘But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace’” (3.22) St Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Care*, Newman Press, (NY), 1978, pp 162-163.

schooling ourselves in life outside the church, an important implication for apostolic life if we are to meet on equal terms, as friends, with those who have no interest in church and be a good advert for the fruits of Christian commitment. Jesus was known and loved in his humanity because it revealed the best that we can be (Luke 2.52).

Article 55 asks, “What is your strategy for growth?” The presentments reveal a wide range of strategies but also beg the question about resources for delivery that was articulated above. In many respects, the responses to this article also give a synoptic view of this charge in its entirety.

Starting with the issue of ministry, it is very clear that good leadership is crucial in the formation of a healthy, outward looking, and expanding apostolic community. 127 presentments mentioned this. 122 presentments also noted the importance of worship, the quality of welcome, a focus on family and young people, and the presentation of the church building.

Looking at the range of people who would be involved in this aspect of leadership, we see just how diverse it is, and how skilled clergy are, and need to be, in gathering together and sustaining a team.

That team could include musicians, technicians, administrators, flower arrangers, cleaners, safeguarding officers, youth leaders, child minders, junior church leaders, tea and coffee makers, caterers, servers, sacristans, sidespersons, wardens, car park monitors, minibus drivers, financiers, administrators, auditors, lawyers, PCC volunteers, and churchwardens. And there might be a curate.

Improving the noticeboards (a point already mentioned) was not a flippant comment in a presentment from sequestrators who were examining the capacity of their building to communicate its purpose. Presentments also made reference to use of website, social media, and live streaming into care homes all indicated that the ministry of information technologists, geeks – to be impolite, must surely be a contemporary expression of what Reader ministry was 100 years ago.

This represents an existing capacity on the part of many incumbents who are already overseeing a community of apostolic teaching and fellowship in which there is a great diversity of ministry. Sustainability is a critical issue, at the levels of spirituality, prayer, formation in faith, supply of ordained ministers, and apostolic outreach into the world.

We should also set in this context the challenge of church planting and other ways of expanding the number of congregations and the number in congregations. In many cases, the demands of sustainability can push down the list of priorities the risk of embarking on any new venture, and doing so with confidence.

There is no such thing as a safe risk, but there is such a thing as foolhardiness. Church planting is always a risk, but the wise leader who gathers and builds a team knows that preparation is part of the discipline of apostolic enterprise. It is also increasingly clear that the revitalisation of congregations that have dwindled to unsustainable levels is unlikely to be accomplished by the enthusiasm of a newly appointed, lone incumbent.

However, there was evidence from the presentments of an appetite for embracing the risk. This comment reveals a perception that is steeped in the scriptures and prayer that is characterised by waiting upon God: “We have to keep giving away what we’ve got in order to grow. There has to be an outlet for God’s blessing and we need to keep putting out ‘empty jars’ (2 Kings 4). We keep doing what we’re doing and incessantly tinkering with it to improve.”

Here is a vision for our future ministry. It is inspired by the ancient scriptures, and attentive to their fulfilment, revealed through the love of Christ, so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3.19). In the exercise of apostolic ministry, let us together explore the “tinkering” that seeks the perfection of love and service, as we value the deployment of each other’s gifts in learning to know, love, follow Jesus.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Apostolic ministry: Immersion in the Bible

- 5.1.1 The department for apostolic life will undertake a review of licensed and authorised lay ministry (including Reader ministry), noting the wider processes of review called for within this diocese and developing across the whole of the Church of England.
- 5.1.2 In the light of this review the training and authorisation of those who preach and teach in our congregations will be re-assessed in order to make best use of the gifts that God has given us and their use in worship, in catechesis, and in evangelism.
- 5.1.3 The department for apostolic life will establish a network for lay people engaged in the ministry of teaching and preaching. It will regularly review the scope of this ministry, monitor its effectiveness, ensuring the provision of continuing growth, mutual support, and encouragement of vocations to it.
- 5.1.4 The Diocesan Youth Officer (DYO) will review and report on the needs of young Christians in developing their Biblical literacy and make recommendations for how those needs are to be met.
- 5.1.5 The DYO will also review the opportunities for young Christians to be involved in a teaching and preaching ministry, and training that would equip them for it.
- 5.1.6 The DYO will bring forward plans for a forum through which young people can be informed of and contribute to the decision-making processes of the diocese.
- 5.1.7 The department for apostolic life will undertake a consultation across the diocese on the resources that would be most useful in deepening our knowledge and understanding of the Bible.
- 5.1.8 In the light of this consultation there will be a review of the provision of material for adult learning, drawing on the best practice, experience and provision in other dioceses and church networks.
- 5.1.9 There will be an extra-ordinary Diocesan Synod in 2017, to which every parish will be invited to send a delegate. This will be a teaching Synod, following the pattern used in the General Synod, and will launch a programme of material for the extension of the lay apostolate in the diocese.

5.2 Apostolic ministry: The gift of being an evangelist

- 5.2.1 Each parish will be invited to draw up a list of those who exercise a ministry of evangelism that is the gift of the Holy Spirit and has been developed without the need of training or authorisation.
- 5.2.2 The list should be reviewed and updated each Lent and the celebration of Pentecost used as an opportunity to renew commitment to the diocesan strategy, *to know, love, follow Jesus* and to give thanks for those who have exercised the gifts and ministries in the church during the past year.
- 5.2.3 The department for apostolic life will undertake a survey of parishes to assess what resources would be welcomed for training and strengthening those engaged using the distinctive gift of being an evangelist that God has given them.
- 5.2.4 Information about this form of ministry should be available and regularly updated in each archdeaconry, as a means of promoting the diversity of ministry that is apostolic and evangelistic.

5.3 Apostolic ministry: Priest as enabler

- 5.3.1 The introduction of a new provision of Ministerial Development Review will seek to encourage clergy to explore their capacity to sustain a congregation that celebrates, nurtures and expands the diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit in all its members.
- 5.3.2 All clergy licensed to parochial or pioneer ministry will take part in a programme of renewal in order to the demands of contemporary ordained ministry. The programme will be tailored to meet the needs of those in sector ministry and self-supporting ministry. It will be specifically designed for the diocese of Chichester. The bishops and archdeacons will also take part in it.
- 5.3.3 There will be a clergy conference in this quinquennium.

5.4 The Year of Holy Scripture: 2017

In 2017 the diocese of Chichester will launch a Year of Holy Scripture. This will provide a range of resources that will enable existing Christians to undertake a health check on their knowledge and understanding of the Bible.

The Year of Holy Scripture will be an opportunity to explore its stories, famous characters, and the familiar phrases of the Bible; to put into historical context the books of the Old and the New Testaments, and to remind ourselves of the huge range of literary material they represent.

There will be a more detailed survey of the New Testament, with material that illustrates the gospels and their distinctive authors, the life and thought of the writers of the epistles, and the impact that they have had.

Most importantly, the Year of Holy Scripture will invite us to renew our appreciation of the Bible as revealing to us the mystery of God, the Holy Trinity, and the mission of love and salvation, the narrative that spans the history of creation.

The Year of Scripture is an invitation to renewal and rediscovery for all Christians in the diocese of Chichester. It is also intended as an introduction to the Bible for those who have never read it before – the greatest invitation we can offer.

You are at liberty to reproduce the text of this Charge. However, please acknowledge Bishop Martin as its author.