

Diocese of Oxford Common Vision Process
Discipleship Working Group Research Programme

RESEARCH REPORT

What equips ministerial trainees to enable whole life disciples?

A mainly qualitative research study carried out between May and September 2019 in Oxford Diocese with particular respect to identifying the elements of good practice in Initial Ministerial Education Phases 1 and 2 that equip future clergy and lay ministers to enable others for 'everyday faith' (to draw on their Christian faith to form habits of life and make decisions relating to work, leisure and family life Monday to Saturday). To identify those elements of IME 1 and 2 that may hinder or discourage future clergy and lay ministers from enabling others for everyday faith.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What equips ministerial trainees to enable whole life disciples?

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

Four main findings emerged from the research with strong supporting evidence for them;

1. The research question, while seemingly fairly innocuous was in fact a 'threshold question' for the Church in that the responses to it asked many more deep and searching questions for the whole Church system around God, purpose (especially regarding the institutional Church in relation to the world), theological education, training and organisation.
2. A strong, theologically grounded and critical understanding of the issue addressed by the research question was present in the TEIs and the ministers, while there was recognition that the local church does not do well in supporting its people for life in today's world. The ministers present at the Focus Groups represented a significant number of people who could make a difference to the enabling of everyday faith in Oxford Diocese, especially those who we might call 'cross-over' ministers who have roles in both the world and the church.
3. The development of spiritual practices which enable the discernment of the presence and activity of God are reported to be *the key factor* in enabling whole life disciples and the development of everyday faith. This is ultimately a theological task which has to do with embodied knowledge (rather than just cognitive knowledge) of God and God's mission in the world. Such knowledge is focused primarily on the world, not the institutional Church.
4. Certain aspects of current TEI practice support the enabling of whole life disciples, but there is an underlying assumption in TEIs that current practice will be adequate for the task. The requirement for demonstrating ability in theological scholarship via an academic award is reported to adversely affect the equipping of ministerial trainees in this area.

Factors which equip ministers to enable whole life disciples;

1. Spiritual practices (e.g. personal reading, reflection, prayer, bible study, spiritual direction etc.).
2. Imitation / modelling on the basis that people learn more by watching and copying the behaviour of others.

3. Some methods of theological reflection (which are best attended to prayerfully and spiritually) and which become habituated in the minister such that they can be passed on.
4. Some courses and process interventions around whole life discipleship were mentioned positively; London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC), Cursillo, Personal Discipleship Plans (PDPs) and Partnership for Missional Church (PMC).

Factors which disable, discourage or hinder ministers in enabling whole life disciples

1. There are fault-lines which disable the practice of everyday faith discernible in the qualitative data here:
 - a) Between a focus on Sunday worship and delivering “Church” over against the activity of God and an agenda set by listening in the world through Monday-Saturday. This is true of how TEIs were reported to operate, both from some staff interviews and the ministers – there is a reported clerical/ordained and Church focus across the training to the detriment of ministerial practice.
 - b) Between clergy and laity with an emphasis on continuing clericalism and an expectation of an ‘expert’ culture from disempowered lay people
 - c) Between an individualised culture in training and churches set against the need for corporate discernment and action which understands the Church as a public body acting in step with God’s mission in the world.
 - d) The sacred / secular divide was also noted to be alive and well, particularly in churches, though there were some excellent examples of how it has been overcome in the lives of the ministers interviewed.
 - e) Between the ‘academic’ and practice – this was not a simple fault-line by any means but it was one that the ministers referred to frequently – see the final question at the end of this summary.
2. A culture in the church which finds it difficult if not impossible to talk about the activity of God and the spiritual life in public.
3. A perceived (at least) culture of pluralism in the world that is thought to stifle attempts at everyday faith – there were good examples of ministers debunking this however.
4. Lack of confidence in ministers to intervene personally in the lives of parishioners around questions of discipleship though there is some reporting that Oxford Diocese’s Personal Discipleship Plans help here.
5. Further fault lines between IME 1 & 2 and the complex system of training in the Church of England between Dioceses, TEIs and the National Church.

A question opened up by the research

Finally and because it is possibly controversial and somewhat tangential to the research there are questions this research raises about the nature of theological reflection. Does doing theology (or prayerful talk about God and what God is up to in public) – does it feedback to the theologian/practitioner’s beliefs about God and theology itself in a mutual two-way process? Or is it more of an ‘applied’ one-way process, which may be arising out of a ‘theory-to-practice’ understanding of learning. This discussion also needs to be set within an ‘anti-intellectual’ background in certain parts of the church and confusion about what ‘academic’ theology amounts to. However a theory-to-practice approach may be another disabling factor in the research.

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1.0 NOTES FROM THE RESEARCHER ON METHODOLOGY

Some readers may be interested in this short section, others may wish to skip it.

The approach and steps in this research journey have been as follows;

- a) A clarification and summarising of the research question and working hypotheses with the commissioners of the research – the discipleship strategy group at Oxford Diocese
- b) Creating, administering and analysing initial surveys arising from the research question
- c) Using the findings to create four focus groups for Curates and Licensed lay Ministers. The Focus Group interview questions included some which picked up themes from the survey.
- d) Conducting the four Focus Groups and interviews
- e) Visiting the five TEIs in the research area and interviewing relevant personnel who were all theological educators
- f) Reading and manually analysing the qualitative data collected
- g) Report writing based on facts, observations and themes arising from the data analysis.

The research question was defined closely, in consultation with the commissioners of the research as reported earlier in this document. Underlying the question was a desire on behalf of the commissioners to identify the elements of good practice in Initial Ministerial Education Phases 1 and 2 that equip future clergy and lay ministers to enable others for 'everyday faith' (to draw on their Christian faith to form habits of life and make decisions relating to work, leisure and family life Monday to Saturday). In addition we set out to identify those elements of IME 1 and 2 that may hinder or discourage future clergy and lay ministers from enabling others for everyday faith.

Inherent in the research question is a dilemma or conundrum for the researcher. The research subjects are mainly new Licensed Lay Ministers or ordained clergy, but the question is about how they enable others to be whole life disciples. These people are not present in the research.

This was deliberate on the part of the commissioners of the research since they felt they already had extant research from LICC in 2009 on the experience of church members. The key finding here is that "59% of Christians surveyed (in a sample of 2859) said their church does not equip them well for life in today's world."

This research then addresses a question as to what might be behind that statistic in the training of ministers. This does not, however, change the 'once removed' nature of the research question which is focused on how ministers are equipped to enable others.

I quickly made what I felt was a reasonable hypothesis that these ministers, as disciples themselves both before and after training had experience of the question of how they, in their turn had been enabled in whole life discipleship. I suspected this would spill over into how they enabled others. The research was therefore designed around this premise. Largely the data confirms this, not least in the way the ministerial participants self-selected for engagement with the research.

The idea of a 'threshold question' is one I have developed out of this research. It is not unrelated to the idea of threshold concepts in educational fields. These are particular issues which present barriers to learning, but which when overcome allow the student access to much more wide and deep learning in the chosen field. Thus the question of how to enable whole life disciples in everyday faith seemed to go to the heart of the question of the being and purpose of the Church in our current time as the research unfolded.

In reporting the TEI interviews and Focus Groups when a large amount of data was collected I have taken the view that lengthy quotes from the data are worthwhile including in the report since they need to do justice to the richness of what was offered by those who took part. I do believe the 'thickness' of this data is worth persevering with, despite the length of the report overall.

There are clear limits to this research, given it was conducted in only one of 40 or so Church of England dioceses and that the qualitative data analysis, given time and financial constraints was conducted manually. I make no claims therefore that it is in any way perfect and hope it can be received in the spirit of 'good enough' for the purposes of answering the research question for those who commissioned it.

1.1 Acknowledgement;

I should like to acknowledge here the hard work of Joel Denno, an LLM in the Oxford Diocese who acted as a research assistant with me. He was invaluable in organising the Focus Groups and transcribing all the interviews as well as commenting on the process helpfully and critically along the way.

Nigel Rooms
October 2019

2.0 RESEARCH ANALYSIS OF MINISTERIAL SURVEY

2.1 Demographics (Qns. 1-9)

A survey was prepared in consultation with the Oxford Diocese staff and we used the Oxford Diocese's *Survey Monkey* account to administer it. The questions and results are found in Appendix IV. The survey was sent to all 'active' Licensed Lay Ministers and all Curates. These amounted to 137 LLMs and 89 Curates, a total of 226 people. We had 76 responses which is a healthy 34% response rate for this kind of unsolicited survey.¹ 43 LLMs responded (31%) and 33 Curates (43%). Just over half of the respondents identified as female and around a third of the curates had trained residentially with 56% of them being in full-time stipendiary ministry.

The survey cohort was overwhelmingly White British and around 70% were over 50 years of age. On church tradition the group was representative of all Church of England traditions and there was significant cross-over between them. Respondents could identify with any tradition on the survey and 72 of them recorded 145 responses – around two each on average. Both for those in work and when recording previous employment the vast majority noted some kind of professional or higher professional job. Education and academia were prominent. Around 50% of those surveyed had been licensed for more than three years and so a good number were fresh into licensed or ordained ministry as we had expected and desired.

2.2 Theological Position Statements (Qn. 10)

The survey continued with twelve 'position' statements which were responded to with a five-point agree/disagree scale. The statements were prepared to relate to the research question in broad terms especially around how the respondent was thinking about the relationship between Church, Kingdom of God and 'world' and the sacred / secular divide.

Uncontroversial were that religion and Christianity in particular have a public and political role to play in wider society. In addition the vast majority agreed that Christians' behaviour and decision making about the use of their time is based on and grounded in their faith and with the idea that worship continues outside the church in everyday life. The respondents have a clear 'espoused' understanding of everyday faith here.

On clergy/laity relationships there was an interesting dichotomy. A large majority agreed that the clergy's task is to "enable the laity in being the Church in the world", but when asked whether the clergy lead the church enabled by the laity (a clear hierarchical statement) the group was split about this statement (weighted average 2.8 / 5). The same was true when asked whether the sacred and secular 'completely overlap' (weighted average 2.5 / 5) and whether the Kingdom of God and the Church are "one" (weighted average 3.0 / 5) although that result needs to be laid alongside a later statement claiming that "the Kingdom of God includes, but is wider than the Church" which almost everyone agreed with. This may indicate some misunderstanding of these questions by respondents which needs further investigation.

¹ Though not every respondent answered every question – the lowest response was 70 to any of the questions.

The data here is not that conclusive however there are hints that, while ministers' espoused views on this subject are what we might expect to 'enable everyday faith' helpfully and constructively there are some underlying questions around the role of the clergy and the relationship of church and world, sacred and secular. This may support findings elsewhere in the research that 'training' is partly formation for the religious institution of the Church rather than for joining God in the world.

2.3 Experience of Ministerial Training – then and Now.

We then created statements around the experience of respondents before and at the end of their ministerial training as well as their current experience (again on a five-point scale; Qns. 11-13). This time the statements related directly to the research question both in terms of their own experience and the experience of enabling others in whole life discipleship. There is positive movement on most fronts through the training and again the 'espoused' understanding of addressing the question of enabling the everyday faith of others is strong.

Two caveats are worth noting. First and consistently through these responses the ability of the respondent's church to "connect Sunday worship with people's lives from Monday – Saturday" was reported to be lower – though there was a slight improvement to the present day (2.7 weighted average before training to 2.3 in the present). Also when asked whether "I [Now] enable others to draw on their Christian faith to make decisions about work, leisure, their community and personal relationships" the weighted average between whether this was all the time or never was 2.0 – thus not entirely supporting the earlier espoused understanding with actual operant practice. Whether this is a knowledge, confidence or skill issue was not clear at this stage. The question of why the ability of the local church to connect with people's lives was consistently lower was addressed in the Focus Group questions.

The next question (Qn. 14) however did address confidence and how that had built or otherwise through ministerial training. There were eight skills or actions all related to the ability in the minister to address the research question. Hardly anyone's confidence had decreased through training though there were differences in the scaling weighted averages² towards "no change". It is not entirely surprising that people were most confident after training to "Preach sermons that connect the bible, Christian faith and life in the world." The least confidence was in "Visit with a Christian at their workplace and help them to make connections between work and their Christian faith" (weighted average 2.4) and "Enable a Christian to make informed decisions about how they use their time outside of work including voluntary service and leisure" (weighted average 2.3). Thus (and this is significant as it chimes with other data) *skills with the worship of the Church gain a higher confidence rating through training than those directly related to the everyday lives of Christians in the world.* Both of these positive and more negative effects were taken to the Focus Groups for further exploration.

2.4 Being equipped or disabled in enabling others' everyday faith

We then asked a very specific question (Qn. 15) in relation to the research question and offered a choice of options as to the response plus a section for other ideas. "What has equipped you to enable Christians to live as disciples of Christ in the whole of their lives?" This was very revealing for the research. 72 respondents made 400 responses to the options (an average of 5.5 each). The top three responses were "personal reading and reflection" (96%), prayer (78%) and bible study (69%).

² We wondered, on reflection if we had the scaling title "no change" quite right.

The next closest responses were 'imitative' – the example of a minister and of the local congregation. Thus spiritual practice and imitation emerge here as the ways people learn to enable others in everyday faith. This is backed up with further evidence from the option to offer an 'other' response. Spiritual direction came out strongly here (5 occurrences from 21) plus other more specific approaches (PMC, Alpha, LICC, Cursillo). The Focus Groups explored these findings further.

Question 16 was the opposite and asked what disabled ministers in relation to the research question. While a full analysis of this qualitative data has not been possible three themes clearly emerge;

a) time, 'busyness', administration requirements.

b) reluctance, fear, shyness around 'intervening' in people's lives – e.g. "fear of getting it wrong for them"; "fear of coming across as being invasive in someone's life."

c) a culture in both church and world (perhaps implying somewhat 'militant' secularism and pluralism) that works against making these kind of connections e.g. "Discussion of faith in the workplace appears to be actively discouraged"; "Sensitivity to other faith positions."

Again this was taken into the Focus Group interviews.

44 people took the opportunity to add a further reflection in the final Qn.17. Again while it is hard to summarise these wide-ranging responses small groups, technology, better 'teaching' and particular initiatives like Personal Development Plans (PDP), London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC), Cursillo and Partnership for Missional Church (PMC) etc. also get a mention. There is some criticism of theological training, e.g.:

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

2.5 Summary Points of the Ministerial Survey

1. The *Setting God's People Free* agenda was recognised widely in the survey (while being aware that the respondents were self-selecting). The respondents espouse many of the important ideas behind creating a culture which enables whole life disciples. There is some evidence that what actually happens (the operant) is sometimes quite different from this ideal.
2. Theological training did make some reported difference to the respondents in equipping them for enabling others. However the local church's ability to make the right connections seems very mixed. In addition the most difference training made was in church-related activities whereas when focusing on enabling laity in the world respondents said they were less well supported.
3. Perhaps the most interesting and even surprising discovery on the whole survey is where people find the equipping for this work; in what we might call the "spiritual practices" of personal reading and reflection, prayer and bible study.
4. Being disabled in equipping others came through; a lack of time; reluctance, fear, shyness around 'intervening' in people's lives; a culture in both church and world that militates against making these kind of connections.

3.0 RESEARCH ANALYSIS OF TEI INTERVIEWS

3.1 The Interviews

Personnel from all 5 Oxford Diocese TEIs were interviewed; Church Mission Society; Local Ministry Pathway, South-Central TEI (Oxford Centre); Ripon College, Cuddesdon; St. Stephen's House; Wycliffe Hall.

Since these institutions are known to most readers individual responses will not be attributed even a number or letter to anonymise them. This is to comply with the ethical statement under which the research was conducted (see appendix I).

What can said about the interviewees is the following;

Of the five TEI's three have significant residential elements and the others run courses which are taken wholly part-time. It is worth noting even at this stage that the interview data shows that a residential element in a TEI seems to 'drive' the ethos and activity of that TEI even where part-time students do participate.

There were seven interviewees in total, but were six actual people since one represented two separate TEIs. Three came from one TEI because one of the interviewees was fairly new to post there. Those three people were interviewed separately. One other TEI offered two people who were interviewed together at the same time. The other three TEIs offered a single person to be interviewed.

There were four men and two women interviewed. Four of the six are ordained. Three Principals offered to be interviewed and the others were part-time or full-time staff with relevant expertise in the subject of the research. One person stood-in for a colleague who was unavailable at the last minute and canvassed opinion about the questions. All interviewees saw the main questions (not supplementaries) for the interviews in advance and most had prepared in some way.

The qualitative data analysis was conducted manually by examining the transcribed interviews (total 43.3k words). Disfluencies (er, um, etc.) from the interview speech were included in the transcripts, but have been removed from this report as not relevant at this level of analysis.

The analysis is broadly collated under the questions that were asked (see appendix II) in this document always bearing in mind the research question;

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though on occasion other data from a different part of the interview is introduced where relevant to the subject under discussion.

3.2 Understanding of the terms 'Setting God's people free' and 'everyday faith' in theology and practice

There was a universal recognition of the question by the respondents and everyone desired a joining up of faith across the week. Two typical examples would be:

I don't see a lot of difference between the two terms; I understand them to mean that the aspects of theology and faith are not isolated and separated from day-to-day activity. And day-to-day activity is not just about what we do on Sunday, but what we do throughout the whole of the week.

I would understand those [terms] to mean a practice of Christian faith that imbues all aspects of our life; that doesn't just take place on Sunday in church, or when we're in obviously ecclesial context, doing churchy kind of things. So I would assume that includes things like, how does it pervade our vocation as a mother? Or, what does it mean to be a disciple while we're engaging in our leisure activities? As well as, what does it mean to be a disciple when we sit in a pew on a Sunday morning?

Two respondents did however question the premise of the research itself and the question as it was asked. The first critiques the novelty of what is being addressed and the current context:

... in some ways it feels a little bit old-fashioned to be making a sort of distinction between Sunday faith and the rest of the week faith. Not least because Sunday faith is an expression that's beginning to feel a bit quaint, to me ... just in terms of people's patterns – of worship for instance – and their patterns of church belonging and the expression of that.... I suppose my instant reaction might be that it feels a little bit tautologous to me ...[explains own understanding of whole life discipleship]....So, if there's something distinctive about this that goes beyond all of that, that I haven't seen, then I've got a problem. If there isn't then, then I applaud a new way of trying to state it, but I wonder how new it is.

The second wishes to problematize the notion that a divide between Sunday worship and everyday faith exists in the way it is formally presented:

... they [authors of the SGPF report / Oxford Diocese] seem to be saying there are people, in our pews, who think that what they believe is limited to what they do in church on a Sunday and it doesn't impact on the rest of their life. I don't recognise that. I don't think there's anybody there who thinks, what I do the rest of the week is ... has nothing to do with what I do on a Sunday. What I do think – and the way I diagnose the problem – is they're just not being excited about God. And therefore, it's not having an impact on the rest of their lives, but that's not because they are putting up an artificial barrier between Sundays and the rest of their life.

These would seem to be important points. The issue of 'everyday faith' is not novel. Reports have been written every ten years or so for the last forty years in the Church of England about the importance of lay discipleship and very little has changed as the authors of *Setting God's People Free* pointed out. In the light of other evidence in this research this second respondent may be on to something important. And the interviewee anticipates the significance of theology in response to the research question which arose more strongly in the supplementary question about the place and purpose of the laity in the world. Several theological points are made here;

- a) Most respondents spoke of the *laos*, the whole people of God and that there is theologically no 'hierarchy' within the church. Here are three examples:

... the *laos* is the whole people of God – and so witnesses, agents, signs of the activity of the incarnate Christ.

...we are all called and gifted through baptism in the Spirit and that's our base level, not the fact that there are clergy and a hierarchy... some people are called to [presumably ordination], but actually the whole church is called ... it's what the whole church is called to. And, in fact, the clergy shouldn't be doing anything that is separate from that.

I don't necessarily see the laity as any different from clergy, in the sense of what we're called to do in our lives.

- b) Secondly the place and purpose of the people of God are understood within a theology of creation and of human becoming and flourishing. Four separate but very coherent responses offer a strong consensus here:

... to be a Christian where they are, is to, I guess, work for the slightly clichéd phrase Now, of human flourishing; trying to make the world a better place, but basically, just to be a human being, according to ... to be the person God created them to be.

... what we're here to do is to praise God and to live out his purposes for us ... we have some signs of what that might mean in practice: you know, feeding the hungry; ministering to the sick; loving, you know, seeing our fellow human creatures as made in the image of God.

I think we are made in the image of God; we are there to reflect God. And that's why, I think, if we're not exciting people about God, they won't know how to do that; it won't have shape, it won't have content, it won't have passion, it won't have coherence. But, at basic, they're there to – as all human beings are – to reflect the nature and the reality and the love, and the goodness and the truth and the beauty of God.

Christians as a subset of the whole of humanity, are there hopefully ... I think we're called to live and exhibit the glory of God, and to grow into the full people that God has called us to be. And that we do that in different ways in our life.

- c) The people of God participate in the coming Kingdom and the mission of God – no-one explicitly referred to the *missio Dei* but it is clearly referred to in two quotes here:

... they're a witness to Jesus in expanding the kingdom of God.

As Christians they're also called to be agents of the kingdom, God's restored image, God's restored society. So I would put it in terms of the calling to every human being to reflect who God is, through every word, action, thought, assumption, and to be an agent of that renewal of creation which God initiated through the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

... essentially, it's representing – the body [of Christ]– representing Jesus in that place, and being God in that place, seeing where God is at work in the world and joining in with what he's doing in the workplace.

[as part of a summing up to a later question but nevertheless relevant here] Watching for God's work in the world; accompanying people to discern where God is moving in their lives.

What we have here is evidence that demonstrates a strong 'espoused' theology of the laity – which places them as created in the image of God participating in the ongoing redemptive activity of God in the world – the *missio Dei*.

3.3 The relationship of theology to the practice of everyday life

This question takes the previous theological position and asks how does a theology of the people of God cash out in the everyday – how are the connections made? Here we will offer responses to both the initial question and the supplementary about practice in the TEI's learning environment together since they became intermingled in the interviews.

a) Theological reflection

A majority of the interviewees went straight to the value of theological reflection in answering this question with some exceptions:

Well partly through theological reflection; I think partly because ... How do they learn it? I think some people just come with it; some people just get it naturally, and, I think because they want to be involved in the world; they want to make a difference; they want to make the world a better place. They're excited about making connections, about what it means to be a Christian in the world ...

It is offering God; that is theology; if we're not equipping people with a profundity of theology, we are not equipping them to be human, let alone to be agents of the kingdom.

It is put most strongly in this interview:

We've tried to put theological reflection as central to our methodological approach.

One respondent used a recent experience of reflecting on the Rule of St Benedict to place theological reflection in the tradition. The interviewee recalled that:

...the practice of, what we might loosely call theological thinking, is... that these three strands [in the Benedictine Rule] study, prayer and work, were stronger when woven together, kind of almost unbreakable in a way.

This leads to the next sub-theme that emerged here – of prayer.

b) Prayer, spirituality and spiritual practices in relation to theology and everyday life.

An interviewee noticed that reference to prayer had been missed out of a response around a definition of theology and corrected themselves:

... how you ensure that there is a proper connection between the, as it were, academic – the thought, and explored and articulated – exploration of the mystery of God, which is also spiritual and prayed – *“he adds, perhaps should have put that first”* – to the lived apostolic life of service and witness in the world. (*my emphasis* but present in the recording)

Another emphasised frequently the formation of the priest in a life of prayer through the daily practice of prayer and worship (including the biblical content of that worship) and the importance of prayer in the life of the TEI was affirmed by another:

our practice ... is very much about giving students – our ordinands – a framework of prayer and devotion, which is a daily one.

We – I think – break down any kind of sacred/secular assumptions that might be, simply by bringing prayer into the lecture space, into the pastoral space of the tutor/tutee relationship, into our meetings; so if we're having – you know – a meeting with ... our education committee and we have students present, we pray at the beginning of that; we may pray if difficult things come up. That's a way of saying that prayer is not kept within any particular categories or boundaries.

In a later question, but again relevant here the experience of theological reflection was reckoned to be deepened and 'thickened' through spiritual practices:

...not just in terms of the models of theological reflection, but also looking at prayer as a model of theological reflection, and this is ... you know, there are spiritual exercises like the Examen and stuff, which actually are, you know, a way of theologically reflecting and joining up the dots.

c) Theological reflection – one way, ‘applied’ theology or mutual dialogue?

However the question of theological reflection (TR) was complexified in interesting ways in the interview data. Hidden somewhat in a few responses was an underlying assumption that TR remains a one way process of ‘applying’ theology to everyday life. For instance in a tutor group learning TR the following observation was made about the student’s inability to ‘do’ theology, the tutor was asking of the students:

“but where’s the theology; where’s the sense of trying to apply wisdom about God into that observation?”

And further another was defending the teaching of theology in a TEI in this way:

I would say, we give them a lot of theology. I think – this is a polemical point – you can’t do as much theology one day a week as you can six days a week; I actually think that’s rather important. And ... so, we give them a lot of it and obviously, that theology needs to be applied. In fact, I don’t think there is such a thing as unapplied theology.

The question which ‘applied theology’ creates (we understand that one of the awards that ordinands undertake through Oxford University is an M-Level award in Applied Theology) is whether it is a one way (theory to practice) method or whether there is feedback from experience which modifies theology. In a fascinating section of an interview one respondent narrated a ‘conversion’ experience on this very question when they themselves were studying TR for the first time:

I came from a very much an applied theology background where you work your theology out and then you apply it and really struggled at college with the notion of theological reflection. I’m one of those people that’s come through a sort of conversion process there, and one that I’ve embraced. And the reason I struggled with that was this concept of two-way correlation. I mean, OK, the one-way correlation until it talks about – you know – the questions are raised by ... via life and experience, but in a sense, the answers are still fairly one-way: that I could cope with. But once you start getting into Tracey and Co. the idea of the bible being corrected, if you like, by experience, that was a step too far.

Another clearly articulated an understanding of mutual two-way TR which created a theological ‘voice’ in the student – which was generally surprising and rather beautiful:

... the idea that you might have a theological voice is quite ... that can be quite: you know, “Wow! you mean I don’t just quote Barth?” You know, the idea that actually it’s about you reflecting and your relationship with God affecting your understanding of who God is and how God acts in the world.

In defining TR as theology the same respondent reiterates this position earlier in the interview:

... theology, the way that we understand, talk about God, what we believe, sense, God to be, affects the way we live our daily lives, and that our experience of daily life, as we grow and change and learn through that, affects our theology, our talk about God, our understanding of God.

These issues are entirely pertinent to our research question since some of the 'everyday faith' the Church needs requires deep thinking about situations that have never occurred before – and 'applied' theology is not up to this task:

I was getting the [students] to work on a series of things to do for climate change. And there's no simple passages in the bible – there are bits – but making some pattern out of it is really quite hard, but, you know, it's probably the biggest issue that we're facing and we need to have some sort of theological response to that and so I think that TR gives you a method to actually deal with that and I think that's why it's really important.

And here as an aside in describing the complexity of TR is a critique of applied theology with a simple example:

You know, I'm a mother of [XXX children]; it's not a question of me then going to parents and thinking, oh, has somebody told me something about parenting that I can apply to the parenting part of my life?

d) What is theology and how important is it to the Church?

Two other themes emerge around the question of what theology actually is and the context in the Church in which theology takes place. The question of what is "academic" theology constantly arises in this research and the TEIs are no exception, but first some comments on the 'climate' for theology:

I think that, you know, theology has a very bad name ... using your brain is something that is to be cultivated and indeed there seem to be some parts of the Church which are positively anti-intellectual. Very much a personal opinion, that one.

There's always been anti-intellectualism in the Church, but this is a new kind and it's a sort of mission-shaped anti-intellectualism, which says, we don't need all this highfalutin theology; we need people who will go out there and do the job. What is the job? It is offering God; that is theology.

In speaking about the whole of theology this respondent notes:

Yes, there is a, sort of, more rarefied end to it [theology], which is more theoretical and speculative and academic....

And here is an exchange about 'academic' theology and theological reflection:

I think some people think that theological study is all about learning academic theology. So, how does that actually apply to...

Interviewer: So tell me what you mean by academic theology

I suppose I'm meaning theology for the sake of it; it's not necessarily for transformation. It's just for learning more and knowing more.

Interviewer: Right.

Which – you know – is fine, but it's not fine if it doesn't lead to ... I would say it's not fine if it doesn't lead to some sort of transformation or engagement or change. So, that's what theological reflection is all about really, isn't it?

And an impassioned plea against understanding the 'academic' world as an 'ivory tower':

I think my particular ministry as I see it, has always been to try and bridge the academic world and the church and to keep the two in conversation, or reach, of each other, rather than see them drifting off further and further apart to their mutual impoverishment. And one of the things one hears a lot about the academic world is, you know, the talk about academic ivory towers. And you get that from the whole of society, but you get it in a particular form in the Church, which is cut off from real ministry and real ... I want to say passionately: there is no such thing as an ivory tower. Human beings have problems wherever you put them, human communities have fissures and problems and tensions wherever you put them, whatever form they take; you do not get away from those issues, in the academic world any more than anywhere else.

This question has both thickened an understanding of theology and theological reflection from the TEI respondents and complexified and demonstrated some clear fissures and fault lines in how it is understood. The importance of prayer and spiritual practices is noted while the methodology is not agreed upon. A line between 'academic' theology and transformative TR is drawn by some, while others defend the academic for its own sake. These are serious questions which will not be resolved by this research, but which clearly need more open and engaged dialogue around them.

3.4 Methods of Theological Reflection employed in the TEIs

All the respondents were aware (at varying levels) of the different methods of Theological Reflection (TR). Some recognised that students arrived with widely differing degrees of ability in TR and some felt it was 'natural' for a section of the people joining their learning, while others really struggled with it. A good account was given of different approaches to TR and the following were mentioned by the respondents;

Critical Incident Analysis

Critical Conversations

The Pastoral Cycle

Image based methods – Killen & De Beer [*The Art of Theological Reflection*]

Whitehead & Whitehead [*Method in Ministry*]

Some referred obliquely to the Graham, Walton & Ward book *Theological Reflection: Methods*. Two questions were raised about how TR is taught – the first is, how the student gains the experience to use the TR method to reflect on in the first place - especially in a residential institution. The second is how does doing TR become a ‘habit’ that will endure beyond the IME1 training setting:

I think that it’s hard to do it in a place that’s quite isolated and I think residential communities, residential theological communities, such as [XXX], find that challenging, because the whole world is limited to where they’re living here. So they have placements, have community placements on [XX] afternoons ... and church placements on Sundays, so I suppose that is how the college tries to ensure that students have some engagement with the world.

... but it [the whole placement exercise] does all feel a bit pretend somehow.

Whereas part-time courses have a claimed distinct advantage here:

the teaching’s from eleven ‘til four, instead of – you know, at a residential college you might have sixty or seventy, or ninety minutes, so – you got a whole day to think about something, so you have longer, and obviously you do more group work ... I think they ... you know, they do theological reflection exercises, so there’s a bit more time to absorb it I think, and challenge it, and question it ...

But then the extra bit, that we’re starting to do Now a bit more, is allocating study-day time, or time over residential day weekends, to the ordinands, to consciously bring up ... bring an issue and work through it as a group. And it’s in that, that we’re modelling for them how you could use it in a parish situation, asking all the critical questions as we go, but what’s happening is that, by enforcing them to inhabit the model themselves, and critically question it as they go through it and spend an hour and a half doing it, in a group, with people; you know the whole pedagogical context of that: you learn it by doing it.

In addition how TR is taught varies enormously – in contrast to the extended work done in the quotes above when the respondent had asked around in the TEI about this question:

what the students said was, something along the lines of, they gave us a big book, described seven different methods and said we had to try and see which one suited us best.

On the second question it is clear that the ‘gap’ between IME 1 &2 and the lack of feedback loops between the two leaves TEIs with very little knowledge about how TR has ‘taken’ as a habit with students – one however has contact with curates and had this reflection:

... they've [curates] basically been taught an applied theology model – but they don't know they've been taught an applied theology model because nobody told them that – and some of them ... some do it. Yes. But, I have to say, in reality, I would say, quite a lot of the whole package is ... fades, quite fast. And I think it's actually a key area of research that we need to do more work on. 'Cos we're spending a lot of money on initial training, making the assumption that, afterwards that that's all remembered somehow and used, but actually, in reality, over fifty per cent of it disappears as soon as they leave the college course, or scheme or whatever, and there's a degree too of, I'm not really interested in writing your essays on TR or something like that, because I want to get on with the real thing.

The picture here therefore is mixed and the call for more research from this respondent is surely apposite.

3.5 Transitions into TEI study

We were exploring here whether and how students' previous experience of life and work was taken seriously by the TEI. There were some outstanding examples offered when requested, but these generally referred to 'extra-ordinary' previous roles such as during combat in the army or high up in the judiciary. The general feeling was that not enough happens and there is a clear de-skilling, especially residentially (both these comments are from respondents referring to their residential TEI):

The place where I don't think we do enough – and I said I don't think it's good enough – is the deskilling thing: that people have been performing in all sorts of jobs, getting affirmation for that work in all sorts of way, not least money, and suddenly they're not and they're back in the classroom. And I'm not sure we prepare people for that, adequately.

...we have, you know, fellowship groups and everybody has a personal tutor and all that stuff that you would expect, but students always say that they feel infantilised; I never quite get ... Well, I do get it, because obviously it's like a boarding school, in there's something about reverting to old patterns I guess. So students say they feel infantilised and that they feel they ... all the skills that they bring with them are not appreciated or used. Um, so I try to tell them to resist that, but I don't – and we don't – set out to infantilise them, but somehow they are, whether that's the bricks and mortar and the context ... I think it is partly the architecture, the structures, the portraits on the walls, systems; so it's a lot of the kind of hidden curriculum, isn't it, that I think probably helps infantilise them.

There is a 'tacit' understanding that this kind of question comes under the heading of 'formation'. This seems to cover everything that occurs in the training experience that is not geared to the academic award (this would seem to be further evidence of an unhelpful fault line):

Most [fellowship] groups often begin by people telling their story and reflecting on that, in the kind of corporate context in the fellowship group.

... we have a sort of personal tutorial ... there's a formational handbook, which contains, sort of, ideas of what happens at different points in the year, that was put together by [XX – previous tutor], and it has the different sections that follow the formation criteria.

There is some evidence therefore that this leads to a situation where the 'world' has been left behind and the focus of the students' lives becomes increasingly on the church through their training period - even in part-time ordination courses such as in this first example:

I think I would also say – I don't know whether you want to say this, but ... – I think that the ordinands who come, as ordinands, get churchier over the time. ... and maybe that's a good thing, maybe they have to, 'cos after all they are going to work for the church. But it feels like their focus and their, kind of – what's the word? – their focus and sort of the tipping point of their balance, their emphasis, changes. Which maybe is natural and maybe it should be like that, but it is kind of interesting to see that happen.

The second example is from residential TEI;

... I think the way the training is set up is very, very focussed on church-as-institution, that actually we're about training ministers for the church and we forget that the church exists only for the sake of the world and for the sake of daily lives, so ...

However in another part-time TEI there was evidence of the tutors being taught by the students about models of reflective practice which one tutor learnt in a module on preaching (another example compared the annual workplace appraisal process to the regular monitoring of student progress):

I teach advanced preaching, which is about reflecting practice in preaching – and two of the answers I got [from students] had used models from [their] work that I'd never even heard of. It was really quite interesting. And was suggesting that actually we learn something ... learn a new model and this was one that I got from work and it works really well and this is how I analyse my preaching ministry, using this method.

The question of the focus of theological learning on the Church and/or world is clearly one which arises from this research.

3.6 What equips students to enable the everyday faith of others?

This was the closest and most direct question in relation to the overall research question. Overall there seemed to be an assumption that current practice will fulfil this aim of theological education, while there seemed to be just one TEI that specifically set out *intentionally* to meet this objective and another where it could be assumed due to the nature of some of the students:

I believe that I'm training people to equip others, as a basic philosophy of what I'm doing, and I think, even when we're talking about courses like the – we have a course on, sort of lay ministry or the course on ordained ministry – the whole point of those sort of courses is to teach them that they're there to teach others, so to speak. I think there is a real problem with people that want to get a dog-collar or a blue scarf, full stop, and that their aim is just to 'become a ...' And I think we're trying, right across the board, to say, no, it's not in order that you might become an LLM or you might become a priest, it's in order that you might serve the body of Christ and equip it.

Well, I think for the pioneers, that is pretty much their passion. I don't think we have to work too hard at that; we probably need to work harder at actually helping them learn how to preach, but I think they don't need to ... they don't need encouraging to make the connections because that's basically why they are pioneers I think.

Much more typical are these examples:

I think quite a lot of that happens through the practice and the discipline of their [the students'] inter-relationships with each other – so it might happen at a sort of slightly unconscious level.

... never forget the bottom line, if ... they're people who are formed by this habit of frequent and regular public prayer – that's very important – and also within that, the spaces they have for their own prayer life.

I don't think that's the framework we use ... which isn't to say it's not happening, but that's ... you know, there's not a course on that; I'm not sure it's a goal in any of the modules, in that kind of sense ...

... and finally one more critical voice which questions again the focus of training on Church (which, it is worth noting here connects with the comments of the lay and ordained ministers in the Focus Groups):

That is a very hard question ... I don't see much of it happening, but I have a very different take, I think, on what 'Everyday Faith' means. So, I would be wanting the students to ... I mean, I'm always saying to the students, you need to get out more; so, I want the students to be – the students who are going to become priests – to be encouraging the people in their congregation to be Christians where they are, in their workplaces, or at home, or wherever they happen to be. And I think a lot of our focus is on what it means to be church, so I think there's just an irreconcilable clash. Because if you're just focussing on what it means to be church, and how to do church, that isn't – I think – enabling people to live out an everyday faith in the world.

3.7 Leading and preaching in worship in relation to equipping for everyday faith

The answers to this question were equivocal in the main. Again there was an assumption that of course leading and preaching need to connect and they are taught in all the TEIs so why would the students not make the right connections. Inevitably, depending on the tradition some TEIs emphasise worship or preaching and some mentioned the lack of time for going into depth. This response to the question in relation to leading worship perhaps sums up the reactions here:

Well. I mean, obviously, that happens, almost *de rigueur* by intercession for the world. People [students] do read the news, and do pray about the things that are happening in it. So that kind of ... that happens naturally in that slot. We have a kind of ... a different cycle of different styles of the worship that we use, so we have liturgical worship, divided into common worship and BCP; we have reflective worship, which is, kind of, more contemplative; and we have more kind of, creative, contemporary, experimental, whatever ... and hopefully that encourages people to make those links more explicit.

3.8 Could more be done?

Every TEI noted the pressure on the curriculum and the sense that this is somewhat imposed from the outside. What might be dropped in order to include more was occasionally mentioned although the suggestions for changes seemed to be rather cosmetic than ground-breaking. Here were some interesting suggestions (which it was made clear were only aspirations):

I would also do more in the way of talking about, kind of, societal trends ... you know, so I would love to have a group that ... went through the history of classical music – for instance – just to alert people to ... you know, that's because it's a passion of mine; I'd love other people to do passions of theirs. I would love to have a group that occasionally met to read a modern play together, or a modern novel.

This interviewee had possibly the most radical suggestions:

...courses, or at least classes or discussions, on contemporary issues. And how is the church engaged in these things? and what is the church saying about these things? and where are we in the conversation about sex trafficking or ... you know, abuse, or carbon footprint and ...? But ... there is ... you know, in a way the system's against us, because those are not, actually accredited courses.....

I would definitely cut down worship. So I'd do less worship and do things like: why could we not have a community allotment, for example? Or something like that. So, I'd cut down the time we spent in church, or in chapel. Um, what else would I do to enable everyday faith? An example I read recently, which I would love to try, but I – you know, it would never fly – is ... so we have themed study weeks, actually, which the students really like – I guess it's a slight change of focus and pace – um, and in a way, I was wondering if you could do something like that for half a term.

3.9 Final Reflections

Inevitably at the boundary of the interview some interesting summarising and new ideas were presented. These are a selection of them:

a) **The fault line between IME 1 & 2**

I think I just want to emphasise, slightly, the importance of integration of IME1 to IME2. I think that we are still, to a much greater extent than I would like, teaching into a void, in terms of the next step So, I think there's a huge amount about the relationship between IME1 and IME2.

b) **Underlining the church/world split**

Because I think what we think we're doing is preparing people to be priests in the Church of England, which, as far as I can see, from the hidden and overt curriculum, means how to do it in church. And, to a certain extent that's fine, because they do have to be able to do it in church, but if that's all you think faith is about then, to me, that's like one tenth of the story.

c) **Re-imagining the whole shape of the Christian life in the Church of England:**

I think I would want to say, spend a lot less time worrying about the institution; let's spend a lot more ... and a lot less time with such an anxious place as the Church of England at the moment; such an anxious place, all about bums on seats and getting people in. Watching for God's work in the world; accompanying people to discern where God is moving in their lives, and helping them, you know – yes, through preaching, but also just through going and being involved – and not making people come in and not forcing them that the Sunday morning Eucharist ... when actually, they need to take their kid to football, because that's actually, where ... where creativity – which is a divinely given thing – where health and wellbeing, where their community is, and to actually start joining in some of that stuff.

3.10 Summary Points from TEI interviews

- a) The espoused understanding of the theological grounding of 'everyday faith' is very strong and evident. The *laos* is understood as participating in the creating and saving activity of God in the world.
- b) The 'default' position is that what we are Now doing in our TEI will implicitly form the ability in the students to equip others for every day faith. There is an understanding of the TEI curriculum as a fixed 'cake' which can only be cut in certain ways.
- c) Theological reflection plus informal 'formation' are at the heart of this assumption of the inherent viability of the training. TR and its methods are well-known and taught in every TEI and much weight is given to placements and group work when bringing experience and reflection together.
- d) How TR 'lands' with students seems to vary enormously and there is little knowledge of what happens beyond the IME1 period – there is a notable fault line between IME 1 & 2.
- e) In addition there are questions about the nature theological reflection – does it feedback to the theologian and theology itself in a mutual two-way process or is it more of an 'applied' one-way process?
- f) The discussion of the nature of theology needs to be set within an 'anti-intellectual' background in certain parts of the church and confusion about what 'academic' theology amounts to. Other data from the Focus Groups shows that there is a 'threshold issue' here about the purpose of training in TEIs – is it primarily for the Church or the world? It is possible to claim that the focus of TEI work is overwhelmingly the Church to the detriment of experiencing and reflecting on the world.
- g) Prayer and spirituality emerge once again as the connectors or glue in this research question. Prayer connects us to God who 'so loved the world' which enables the one praying to connect in the same way – participating in the *missio Dei*.
- h) Some more radical voices call for a re-imagining of both the relationship of Church and world and how the training is envisaged as beginning with God's love for the world as opposed to the current focus on the Church.
- i) Picking up the 'fault-line' mentioned above this might be extended to the whole 'training system' in the Church of England, which as some interviewees pointed out is highly complex and very hard to influence given the complexities of how dioceses, TEIs and the national church relate to each other.

4.0 RESEARCH ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

4.1 The Interviews

We conducted four separate Focus Groups, two in the daytime and two in the evening to allow people in full-time work to attend. They were attended by five or seven people (twice each) which created a good group dynamic every time. The invitation to join the Focus Group went out with the Survey and people responded voluntarily. This inevitably involved a further level of self-selection in that those who attended desired to be there as they were interested or even passionate about the subject.

24 people altogether attended, 10 men and 14 women. There were 9 more recently licensed LLMs (< 10 years) and 4 who were much longer in ministry. 2 part-time and/or SSM curates were present and 9 full-time stipendiary curates.

Of the Oxford TEIs only St. Stephen's and Church Mission Society trained ministers were not represented at all. Some of the LLMs and Curates had trained outside of the Diocese. The interview questions are found in Appendix III and a similar ethical statement was administered to everyone (available on request).

The questions were created to connect with the research question, the TEI interviews and the initial findings of the survey. Once again we report on the themes emerging which were manually discerned from the 50,000 plus words of transcribed Focus Group data. And we give examples quoted as before.

4.2 Introductions

It was clear that virtually everyone attending the Focus Group could give a good reason why they wished to be present. Some of the most passionate were people who had 'cross-over' lives and shared their time between work in the world and in the church. These are two good examples:

I'm Now CEO of five schools in XX [area of] London, and they're approved schools, so the kids ... a lot of the kids are involved in the knife crime, the CSE, the violence, the drug taking, really working with the very hardest to reach families. You know, in XX London; it's one of the most difficult boroughs in London. I'm also on safeguarding board; I've been on select committee for safeguarding.... And absolutely passionate about we're the church; we need to be out there doing things and not just turning up on Sunday

I still have a day job. I do, four days a week in my day job and I say its three days a week in the ministry role, because I see the ministry work as not necessarily a burden. My day job is as a corporate benefits consultant and wealth planner; so it takes me all over the place, although I'm based in the office in XXX, which is about twenty miles from where the ministry takes place. But, I spend a lot of the time – funnily enough – with the staff in the office – there's about fifty people in the office – and when I'm out visiting clients it's interesting how often opportunities arise to discuss faith issues.

Others had noticed the disconnect demonstrated in the research question and wanted to do something about it:

I feel the church I'm in at the moment is a nice little Sunday club, quite frankly. So I'm here, because I'm interested how people, my age, who are perhaps busy with families or work: why they aren't in the church, why it has no relevance....

Some full-time curates drew on their previous careers such as this person:

What's brought me here today is that my background is in education, I'm passionate about discipleship, giving people the opportunity to speak about their faith ... about this sense of being able to empower and to give people opportunities to speak about their faith. So, I've used the Personal Discipleship Plans, but not sitting down slavishly, but rather just using those as a scaffold to help with conversations.

Other curates came because they had been given a brief for the discipleship agenda in their training period;

... in my curacy have had a focus on developing whole life discipleship, particularly using a model that we've called 'Missional Community', where we've created an alternative, alongside our traditional home groups, where we piloted communities that are missional in their focus and vision, with a, kind of, real family-focussed approach, where we look at sharing life together.

4.3 Understanding the terms – everyday faith / whole life discipleship and the task of the *laos*

This question often opened a fruitful conversation about what 'everyday faith' actually looks like from the experience of the participants. For example (and there were others) the culture of religious pluralism is the context for this interjection:

I think an awful lot of Christians are frightened to say that's what they are, because they've been fed this idea that other people will, by definition, be offended by this; and, actually, it's usually people who don't have a particular faith home who take it upon themselves to be offended.

The participant was then able to give a concrete example:

... one of the people that I line-manage is a very pious Muslim, who comes to me with issues because he knows that I take faith seriously on an everyday basis. So, if he has an issue which has an impact on his faith, I'm not going to pooh-pooh that, even though I hold a different faith.

Everyday faith was understood helpfully to start both in God and in the world and to proceed via fairly ordinary spiritual practices (as noted in the survey), but the different generational approaches to faith and religion do not help us here:

I also think we take it back to the first ... the two really important commandments of love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your neighbour ... we are Now dealing with four generations who have not gone to church. Ok? Four generations.... And I believe that, actually, how we lead and live our lives and actions out there in the community, they need to speak volumes, and we need to get alongside people and that's ... people don't automatically go to a bible Now, and things like that, so we need to meet people where they are, whether that is out, down the pub, or it is playing football, tennis, whatever, I think that's where we start our discipleship.

A very similar if more, possibly traditional even 'biblical' approach is found in this response:

... we're wanting people to fulfil the Lord's will, to glorify him, to love him and to love those around them. You know, that's the point of our life, if you like. And so, the goal, I think, of discipleship, and of everyday discipleship, is to enable and equip the whole church to fulfil that remit, if you like; to love the Lord Jesus more deeply, to become more like him, and therefore to be able to love God, to glorify him in everything they do, and to love people around them, so for me it, kind of, it filters down from the, kind of, top. The biggest picture possible, down to that: well, how do we do that? And so, you know, my view is that that happens through becoming more like the Lord Jesus, and the way that we become more like the Lord Jesus is through bible study and prayer, community and mission.

And a succinct definition of everyday faith again borne out of experience:

Living and breathing your faith; not just turning up on a Sunday and just listening, or doing things, around the building, but actually going out there and looking for opportunities, and seeking opportunities to live it, and to be a model; not just talking about it, but actually living it, through your actions ... that's how I came to faith; I used to go church and didn't really feel anything; it was watching my RE teacher and how he coped with unruly kinds and – including me – and actually coming back with humility, with love, and, you know, resilience, and actually acting those Christ-like things. So I think it's about that; it's about an integrated, authentic faith, that it's not just something you: oh, it's a Sunday morning, I need to do this and ... But it's actually every morning; it's waking up and it's living and breathing it.

The theme of breaking away from 'Sunday Church' is a strong one:

To me, it's trying to break out of the idea that faith and Christianity and church is what you do on a Sunday, and actually it should be something that flows throughout the whole week, the whole of our lives.

And I think clergys [*sic*] have very much run Sundays around equipping people to be Christians and to know their bible, to pray and to do things on Sunday: to be on the junior church rota and to make the coffee and read the bible, forgetting that normal people have normal lives Monday to Saturday and indeed, people are working on Sunday much more regularly Now as well.

As in the TEI interviews the participants had a strong espoused sense of the task of the *laos* and the nature of human becoming and flourishing in discipleship:

Everyone is called to be a disciple, that's what ... and we're all disciples of Christ, so I think ... I think of Colossians 3:23, 'whatever you do, work it with all your heart, so you work it for God and not for men', so ... And I think our role is to help people to understand and to be able to grasp that relationship with Jesus so that they can live out their lives; so that whatever they're doing, he's at the heart of what they're doing, so, whether they're teaching, or whatever they're doing, they're doing it with God in the midst of it ...

.... they become [through discipleship] more the person that God would will them to be

And here are two people following each other on the question of the purpose of the whole people of God:

Our purpose is to make Christ known and to live in communion with Christ.

Its priesthood, isn't it? And priests ... I think one of the challenges for the Anglican church is – and other ... and possibly Catholic as well – is that we've possibly elevated and put priests with a collar on a pedestal and, such that it's sort of disempowered the laity, whereas actually, the reality is, that isn't it, we're all called to be priests. Priests ... a royal priesthood who give glory to ... offer glory to God and be a blessing to the world.

4.4. Theology and the practice of everyday life

In Focus Group One as soon as this question is asked someone refers to the lighted candle at baptism saying the task is to "shine as a light in the world" for which, it is remarked, not a great deal of theological *knowledge* is required. When the use of the word 'knowledge' is questioned someone points out that in the process of theological training "we've been knowledged," when actually lay people don't require knowledge but more *confidence*. Which occasions these interjections which then came close together:

... if we change theology to theological reflection, then you don't need knowledge; all you need – if you like – is the freedom, the courage to engage with scripture and to engage with the environment you find around you, and to try and make sense of that.

And also perhaps the validation of your experience

... you don't probably, generally, need a theology degree, or a post-graduate degree, or an MA, or anything else, to be able to offer into the pot that you think you've seen God at work somewhere ...

Thus interestingly for this research the task has become discerning the presence and activity of God in the world and being able to notice and point that out (the *missio Dei*). The reference to the activity of God was reinforced elsewhere:

There is just something quite powerful about ... sitting down and saying, what's God up to with you at the moment? How's God calling you at the moment? And some people found that much more easy to answer than others.

This discussion also points to the beginnings of a conversation as to what theology is which we shall return to.

The 'cross-over' ministers were able to give, again concrete advice and examples of everyday faith, which are also noticed by others:

It's bringing God out in your actions ... it's when people see that you're different.

... the way [as a Christian] I launched an exercise where twenty-eight people are going to lose their jobs yesterday is different from how others might do it.

... it is simply making a relationship between our faith and whatever it is we're doing: that is doing theology. And it's something that I think, within the Church of England, possibly we're not very good at doing, in general.

And finally the sacred/secular divide is broken up by this response to the question of theology and everyday life and work – especially in relation to less 'vocationally driven' work:

... [the task of ministers is] to help people realise that what they do in their everyday life is shaped by their faith; it's not secular life and Christian life; it's life, all in one and you do everything – like you say – theologically, even if you don't realise. The way that you make your sums balance if you're an accountant, or the way that you give your medication if you're a nurse. And we've been very good, as churches, at encouraging people who are teachers and nurses. You know, what church doesn't pray for teachers and nurses? How many churches pray for people who are accountants and hedge fund managers, and shop-floor workers, or packers in a factory, recognising that they are Christians in their everyday life, as well as those who traditionally have more of a vocational work?

4.5 Methods of Theological Reflection (TR) and their continuing use. The “academic” discourse.

It is at this point that the most direct comparison with the TEI data is possible. Are the expectations of TEI’s around the use of TR met in these actual (mostly new) ministers? The picture is very varied as we might expect.

Some people love and have taken to TR as a way of life and want everyone to know about it even if the use of the words TR should be avoided when practicing it with people:

... it [TR] was something that absolutely stunned me and I’ve been a pew-sitter for years and years; that I’d never heard of it; and I went on this, sort of, not expecting anything and I was, like, wow this is amazing ...I’ve got a science background ... my degree is physics and maths and stuff like that; I’d never sat down and reflected, never come across these little circles that people go through. I know an awful lot about conveying and teaching and how you communicate, but I’d never done any of that. And I was like, well, why isn’t this being preached? Why aren’t we teaching anyone to do this?

I don’t call it theological reflection – but trying to get people to talk more about God ...

Others are equally enthusiastic but saw it as something they do ‘naturally’ (which was echoed elsewhere in the interview data) and is therefore part of their lives and has become habituated for them even offering it beyond the church:

I was amazed, when I started training, that actually I do it quite naturally: reflect (laughs). And I think probably, most people do. I tended to use the – when I had to formally submit my personal reflections, and we went through at Cuddesdon different methods and I just picked the one that was closest to what I do naturally – and for that exercise used the pastoral cycle, basic pastoral cycle. I ... yes, I found it quite a shock that this was a big part of the training, because it was something that I actually do anyway, and when you speak to most people they ... they reflect as well.

I think it’s a skill, once you’ve learnt, you tend to have at the back of your mind; so you can use it then, as a way of actively reflecting on an event, or even preparing for an event by going through that process. And every time you go through that cycle it kind of sparks you off again I find. I’ve used it, and explained it a little bit with a colleague; she actually understood how powerful it can be, without being too biblical, at the same time, because she was a Muslim, but she could see how we use it and how it could be helpful for her as well ...

At the other end of the spectrum TR clearly left some participants cold and they have not returned to it:

I remember the pastoral cycle; I know there are others, but I found that module really boring and I didn't retain a lot of the information. But the pastoral cycle was drummed into us; I can't remember how it works, but I know the phrase, pastoral cycle, and it's a circle.

Remember the terms. Long time ago.

I would say a flat, no. Which is not to say that that aspect of the training was not useful, but I don't find it helpful to sit down and look at a ... a passage of scripture, or an issue, an incident, whatever, and say, ok, which of the models will I use for this one?

There were several people who questioned the way it was taught:

I was put off theological reflection, big-time, by the way it was taught. Because we then had to go away and 'do' one and then ... and I'd never done a formal theological reflection before, although I'd done a lot of informal theological reflection. And the problem was that then you had to come up with something that fit the structure for a two thousand word [essay].

[Despite finding learning TR useful] ... we had to do so many reflections – little sort of five hundred word ones – about your personal development and ... you had to do one at the beginning of a portfolio and one at the end of a portfolio, and you felt as if you were disappearing ... a narrow ... a smaller and smaller hole into yourself, because it wasn't really related to you and the outside world; it was just a five hundred word thing that you had to do to get the portfolio finished. And it was a bit of a waste of time...

When pressed, some people did offer examples of continuing to use TR in their ministry:

... a really serious incident happened and actually, you know, it's just really easy ... I had to write it out, because I'm a person who writes and actually it was brilliant and I ... that's why I just go to it; I don't sit down and think, Now, how shall I reflect on this? It's just like an intuitive bit that happens.

We've had a few, like, challenges. And, yes. Yeah, I've used it, because actually it's my way of thinking and that's helpful, especially the pastoral cycle ...

Across the four focus groups there are 34 instances of the use of the word "academic". It was not introduced by the interviewer but the groups were pressed on its use when they used it in certain ways. Here is an example of the academic / formational split in theological training (and the discourse is presented as if the academic isn't inherently formational):

And there was the academic side of it, which was – you know – your ten sessions over ten weeks, or three weekends, in reading these books and then regurgitating an essay and then there was the formational aspect, which was partly the residential weekends, but the perception was that the vast majority of the formational aspects would be done by your training minister, in your home parish.

The groups were asked when the subject came up to define the ‘academic.’ Here is a sample of the responses in one group some of which show the ‘hidden formation’ going on in academic awards:

Ivory towers.

I was coming at it from the point of view of someone who’s late to her first degree, and is Now serving in a parish where twenty five percent of the working age population have no academic formal qualifications. Not an O level, not a GCSE, not a I’m aware that when I use complicated vocabulary – because I’ve just come out of theological college and that’s what I’ve been trained to do in essays – that I’m speaking in a language that has vocabulary that they just don’t understand. So, I have been mentored through three years of: use more complicated language; get your sentence structure right, you know, and ... and I’m speaking to a bunch of people who don’t know what I’m saying anymore. I’ve been over-educated to connect with my population.

I suddenly found I was reading books with words in it that I didn’t understand, and having to extend my vocabulary and sometimes felt like you were being ... I mean, ok, the people that taught us are probably ministering in parishes, but they seem to be more in their books and in what the Greek and Hebrew said, or what some guy with a German name said ... You know, it was books, books, more books, dons and ivory towers; that’s what I mean by academic and I thought ... I would have said I was more academic than not before I started and discovered, I’m not really, compared to Anglican ... some Anglican circles.

The feeling that the theological / ‘academic’ training is disconnected from the tasks of ministry was widespread:

And I actually believe that would be helpful across the whole training is ... you know, instead of all the academic stuff, which, yeah, is important – some of it – is actually to do some practical things, a bit more on the practical side, for all of us who learn that way

Well, there’s a lot of emphasis on essay writing and attending, you know, five to ten weeks’ worth of evening course, followed by, sort of, quite tricky questions sometimes. And they don’t always – when you look at the questions – help you to answer that very question. They seem more to give you a theological background than to make you a better minister in that sense.

The question of how book reading was introduced (and is therefore formative in a certain way) was also connected to the 'academic' question. Books become a utilitarian resource as a means to end of writing the essay which here (and elsewhere) is described as "regurgitation":

... you're presented with a bibliography that's sort of, like, three pages long, of books upon books up... and I was ... I thought of myself as a great reader, and – again, until I started this course – and found myself drowning in a ... in piles of possible books to read and not really knowing which ones are going to click with me and usually ended up reading, either the one that I found on the shelf in Cuddesdon – that was on the bibliography list – or that my vicar happened to have. And maybe, when I get out the other side of this then I will find some useful books that I can read that will connect with me and my situation, but through this last three and a half years, it's been more that the ... it's been so many books to read, that are useful for writing the essays, but maybe not for anything else.

I mean there were academic books and there were other books, and I've got a whole pile of books that looked interesting but weren't relevant to the essays, which I really need to get stuck into.

... the way we all did our training involved a large number of books, most of them not the most accessible books, that we had to read and regurgitate for the essays.

And finally the whole question of the 'end' of the academic award is called into question:

And I often thought – you know – who cares whether I get a degree? Does God care? Is anyone actually going to ask me: where did you get your degree and do you ...? And of course I'm not saying that it's not helpful for those who enjoy that pursuit, but whether it's essential for our learning to be assessed in that way, for ministry, is a question I have.

There is therefore little sense from the interviews that these ministers have had their formal theology shaped by feedback from their experience. Many are working with a theory-to-practice paradigm which as we saw in the TEI interviews is often the case there too.

4.6 Exploring the disconnect between Sunday and everyday faith found in the Survey

From this point onwards in the interviews the questions referred back to the survey findings. It is fair to say this revealed a weakness in this research tactic since the people in the room represented a more passionate and committed set of respondents than the whole cohort who answered the survey. Thus the data here is not always so revealing for some of the questions and will be reported therefore more sometimes briefly.

The clergy are reported as a 'problem' in some places:

I think by and large, because our vicar is full-time a vicar, and we know he's been a vicar for at least ten years or more, he's way out of touch with working life. I wouldn't take a problem that I had with a work colleague necessarily to my vicar, because I wouldn't expect him to really understand the pressures that I'm under on Monday, Tuesday and Friday, because if ... if he sends me an email on Monday, Tuesday or Friday he often expects it back within ten minutes, the same as he gets it back on Wednesday or Thursday. He has no understanding of other people's working lives.

... my church is XXX [tradition] and so it's very much, well there's one right answer coming from the pulpit.

This develops into a question of what Sunday is for and sometimes an (overly?) sharp criticism of the laity from these new ministers, which seems to exacerbate the sense of clergy/laity divide:

I think there's something about: where does Sunday fit into the cycle of the week? If you see what I mean. Is Sunday the response to what the community has done during the week? Or, to what extent is it that and to what extent is it sending out to go and do the next week? And is that balance right? 'Cos there's something about ... it almost seems to exist in a little bubble of churchiness – I go on a Sunday and I've done my thing ...

I think, unfortunately, a lot of people have just been left, and thinking they're going every week and ... they haven't engaged deeper; they haven't been prodded towards a house group, or the right house group, and they haven't engaged with scripture say, everyday ... that would be a bit scary. In our church we had a, like ... and we have bibles in the pews, and this lady was trying to find John's Gospel and it's almost hysterical, but gave up and it's like ... So, Now we have to say, the New Testament section, and you think, these are people that have been in the church thirty/forty ... what's been going on? In any other walk of life that is failure.

I think it's because people are very good at going out and doing things, but when it comes to the spiritual, that is still regarded as 'clergy'; so, whereas Jesus said, go into the world, preach the gospel, heal the sick, cast out demons that would be the last that people in the congregation would think of doing. And yet, that is the first thing ... you know, the spiritual life is the most important, but there's ... I think they're not taught that: this is you; this is your task. It's still the: oh, make sandwiches, make meals for somebody who's sick; it's all the practical things, but the spiritual isn't emphasised

But, in terms of translating a sense of my confidence in Christ and the activity of the Spirit to my elderly congregation, that's where I see the fear and the reluctance and the shyness. I think a lot of them, generationally, would say: yeah, religion, politics, sex, are all off the discussion topic for polite conversation at the dinner table. Yet there's me

standing, preaching at them saying, go talk about Jesus in the street. And, if you happen to be having a retired people's gathe... cup of coffee, let's bring Jesus into it, because he's the one who's going to bring us hope and light, isn't he? And they're looking at me, like, have you got seven heads? Really? (laughs)

In one group a really interesting discussion began on how imitation (rather than the show/tell required of, say preaching or even 'teaching' – there were several other occasions in the data where this 'one-way' method is critiqued) might be much more fruitful in dealing with the research disconnect, and this is related to how clergy can 'model' or otherwise life in the world:

So ... and yet, what we do on Sundays is we give a lot of information and then we expect innovation. So, we kind of communicate a message and we say, right Now, go out and live your lives differently, kind of thing, but we miss out the imitation aspect and yet that is ... you know, in the journey of a parent/child that is so key. My son forgets most of the things I tell him, but he actually copies a lot of what I do by what he sees, and I think that's possibly what's missing in some of our churches.

[Therefore] I don't think it's so much the ordained and lay; it's between the full-time and the part-time. That ... if you're a vicar, well of course you do it all day every day; that's your job, that's what you do, whereas if you're ... if you have a job, another job, then ... then that's different and in many churches there isn't that opportunity to see that imitation, because you've got the vicar, and everybody else, and it's ... it's getting laypeople, and lay ministers are one of the more visible groups of people who are showing that they're actually doing this in their everyday life ... I mean, people keep saying to me, how do you ... gosh, all the stuff that you do; how do you find time to do it? I just make time to do it, but that's a conscious decision that I've made and other people don't necessarily see the same ...

And finally there is how the Church could be led by the world:

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

4.7.1 Gaining confidence through training in preaching sermons that connect

In this question (and in the survey) it is hard to separate the generalised training on preaching that occurred and the specific question of being equipped to preach sermons that connect with everyday life. The sense of the feedback in the Focus Groups was that preaching training was rather 'hit and miss' and that with these people they had learnt through practice to make their sermons connect.

Thus we have these two negative comments:

Yes, we did preaching and that was in various, sort of, different forms, wasn't it? But, I wouldn't say my training at college actually informed how I necessarily relate to everyday life Now

I don't think the training did help me.

And this traditional understanding of the importance of the sermon as application:

I think our church is quite good at doing that, because, you know, we focus on the sermon and on, you know, and listening to God's word and applying it to our lives; you know, that's one of the most important ... the most important part of the act of worship is to hear what God is saying into our lives, and so naturally that will be ... a big focus of the preaching is, what does this mean for you when you leave church today and you live the rest of your life, this week?

And here is one of the 'cross-over' ministers explaining sermon preparation that draws from working life experience:

I was certainly taught to be open to listening to God and, to me that means God speaks to me through other people, as well, like the Muslim lady in the office. ... I'm blessed because I have an active working life.

4.7.2 Least confidence in supporting parishioners at work and helping them make decisions about time outside work

It is notable here that in some of the Focus Groups this question occasioned a comparison between pre- and post- At licensing or ordination/ordination training with some people noting an unhelpful overlap and repetition between the two and others appreciating the more practical 'hard skills' days that are part of the "IME-2" process in Oxford Diocese. This was slightly at a tangent to the actual question and in one of the groups the discussion reverted back to that of sermons again. Perhaps this was evidence that these questions were difficult for the ministers to address and supported the survey findings. However here is a direct response in how one might visit a parishioner at the workplace:

Would I feel confident to ... Yeah, I think I would. Yeah. I mean, a lot of people in our congregation work in London, so it'd be a bit of a pain in some ways, but, you know, it's a ... I know it's really powerful when ... and a retired clergyman told us that he used to do that with people.

Another participant had tried visiting but it hadn't quite worked out in the way it might have:

If I'm honest, they didn't feel as relaxed as it might have felt if we weren't in their workplace. I think they felt distracted and there was, obviously ... you know, they were in work-mode, and they probably couldn't give full attention to what ... It was much more of a showing me round their workplace, rather than us having a meaningful dialogue about how they were really doing.

4.8 The top three equipping actions; personal reading and reflection, prayer and bible study

Again the Focus Groups found it quite hard to stick the question, perhaps evidence for the surprising nature of the finding. Occasionally the finding really resonated:

We've got to start from God, and the word, and Jesus and the Spirit, and then go on to other resources that might help us. I think that's really encouraging.

However especially around "personal reading" the question raised reflection on the use of books. It turned out that, despite their reservations about the 'academic' actually these ministers did read and use books as resource in their ministries, but they distinguished them from 'academic' books (see earlier discussion on that subject):

They make you think; I think that, you know, the good books are the ones where you look at this and say, oh right, this applies to me. Or, oh gosh, right; I need to really think about that and some of the ... some of the books that we've ... that I've read have been highly academic and some have been, you know, very popular and I'd find it difficult to say which I've found most useful, because actually in different ... it's the mix of thinking deeply, and academically, and thinking very, very practically and they do ... they support each other

And maybe, when I get out the other side of this then I will find some useful books that I can read that will connect with me and my situation, but through this last three and a half years, it's been more that the ... it's been so many books to read, that are useful for writing the essays, but maybe not for anything else.

Some understood their task as filtering or distilling the relevant parts of books and presenting or communicating them in helpful ways:

I'm the person who reads that interesting book, and then somebody comes to me with a problem and I say, ah, you remind me of ... oh, I don't know: you're an Enneagram three in this situation and, did you know what an Enneagram is about? And I've just given them that tiny detail because I happened to read an Enneagram book because I love reading. And it doesn't matter what it is. So, like, you asked about theological reflection; you know, Green's book is a good one, but I prefer Killen and De Beer. But I know where those books are on my shelf; I can talk about them and it says in Proverbs like, you're a fool if you ... if you talk when you don't know that stuff, then you're a fool; but, you know, if I know about it then I'll say it. And that's my job; I see it as I'm the

person who reads the books, but then I give them the single book, the single bit that they might find helpful in their life.

In two Focus Groups the question of spiritual direction was raised, both solicited and unsolicited with these insightful responses both in terms of discerning God and enabling others:

I've had one [a spiritual director] ... well, various ones, for over twenty years, and I think it's good to see where God, or where you might ... because when you say things to somebody else, or you're actually speaking, then, you know, they can ask those probing ... you've got to have the right person, but the right ... the probing questions and what to ... you know, that's discernment on their part, what to probe ... you know, prod and what to say: why did you do that, or say that, or what do you think Now?

I meet with a spiritual director and actually I'm able to unpack everything. Then everything is seen, I suppose – or up for grabs – theologically or spiritually, and I think that helps in terms of how I then go back and relate to other people in their lives. If it's to do with I'm feeling really lonely at the moment well all of a sudden I'm able to relate on a whole ... on a new level to ... to Doreen, who is very lonely having moved into her nursing home, or whatever. And having a spiritual director to unpack what's going on with me, enables me to recognise ... and again, it's about sharing of resources, so – you know – one of my spiritual directors might say, oh, you should read this book, or, you should do this, and I'll say, oh, that's a great idea and I can pass it on to somebody else.

4.9 The disabling reasons from the survey.

This question comes near the end of the interview and did not occasion much depth of discussion. It was difficult for these more passionate respondents to identify with the issues raised, but some did resonate with both the reluctance to intervene and a culture in church and world (where it might be more perceived that real) that militates against 'every day faith.'

... it's out of my comfort zone to say, you should definitely start praying daily – for example – or, you should check out this book ... And actually, it's much more been: you should check this out, or give this a go, rather than making, ... giving people rules for their life, as it were.

... in my particular setting, [there] has been there for years and years: an old catholic, sort of, sensibility where you would never dare mention the name Jesus on a visit. You know, it really has been that with church members, and so that's been the disabling factor for me: is just a culture where that hasn't been anticipated at all.

I don't think we should take it for granted that all members of the church think it is a good thing to talk about Jesus, you know, in your workplace.

However for one respondent the Oxford Diocese's 'Personal Discipleship Plan' had been very useful:

... as a benefice, we've tried also the PDP scheme and that's been going really well. I remember one conversation with somebody, who had said that they'd ended up going for coffee with somebody else from the church and they'd been buzzing about their PDPs.

4.10 Any other points

There was not much to report here after a fairly long interview. However there are two other issues that occur in the data that have been mentioned occasionally above but haven't been reported fully yet and should be aired here;

4.10.1 The understanding of the leader as 'expert'.

There is a culture in churches of disempowerment amongst parishioners who expect trained leaders to have the 'answers'.

I think some of it [the lack of connection to everyday faith] is about there being a perception out there that there is the right answer in every situation. And that the person in the room with the dog-collar, or whatever, has the right answer and you're just trying to fish it out of them, so that you know what to do tomorrow.

So, I [an LLM] went along to a bible study – lay-led – because I thought, oh, I should go along; it's something that we can do in the parish ... the dynamic of the group changed completely when I walked in, and people started expecting me to express a definitive opinion on things or ... Some of it was asking questions, because they knew, from knowing me, that I would know what they were talking about, but it was ... and so I kind of, pulled back very gently throughout this meeting to make sure that I didn't take it over.

4.10.2 The individualised nature of how TR is taught in TEIs.

Two people made the important point that if discernment as related to TR (however conceived and whichever methods are used) is key to this work the individualised nature of how it is taught in TEIs is problematic for parish ministry which is collaborative and corporate.

to be useful – certainly in my setting – it [TR] would need to be with the team that I work with, because it's no good me going off and reflecting on my own and coming up with a bright idea, because I don't think they'd necessarily understand that. We'd need to learn to reflect as a team and the only, sort of, time we touched on working in teams in the whole three years [of training] ... there was the half a day, which my vicar couldn't come to anyway. Which ... the three of us that went felt it was really useful, but we needed to do more as a team, like that, and ... if you're reflecting about what's going on in your ministry and it's a group ministry; we're in a team, we need to reflect together so we can come to a conclusion together that you can put into practice.

Otherwise, if it's a conclusion you come to on your own, then you ... that maybe will end up in frustration because you won't get anywhere with it ...

... the more concrete reflection about a specific experience [in LLM training] was much more useful, and it would have been even more useful if somebody in my parish had taken any notice of the reflection, but erm ... you know, that's life. And my incumbent: he'd never heard of it, because he's just retiring, so, you know, to him it was one of those fancy, new-fangled things that you were doing these days, and so he couldn't even help me with the ... when I was struggling with doing a reflection about my own progress.

4.11 Summary Points from Focus Group Interviews

- a) The 24 people gathered for the interviews represent powerful advocates for the agenda of 'everyday faith' in the Church. From many and various routes and traditions they had come to care deeply about the issues presented by the research question. If there are more such people, especially 'cross-over' ministers and we suspect there are, 'setting them free' to enable others would be a helpful step forward.
- b) There is also here, as might be expected from this cohort a strong espoused understanding of the nature of everyday faith and how theology informs it. Several concrete examples were at the fingertips of some of these ministers throughout the interviews.
- c) Once again spiritual practices, however conceived in particular traditions plus the use of TR where it has become habitual are ways in which everyday faith is enabled, both in the leaders and in enabling others.
- d) The interviews draw into the light the many fault-lines which disable the practice of everyday faith;
 - a. Sunday / rest of the week
 - b. Clergy / laity with an emphasis on continuing clericalism and an 'expert' culture
 - c. Individual / corporate
 - d. Sacred / secular
 - e. 'academic' / practice
- e) Initial Ministerial Education seems to have been "hit and miss" with regard to the research question, especially given the committed nature of the participants. When the focus is on God and the world (rather than the 'professional' delivery of the Sunday worship event) and it is from these places that both questions and answers are sought within the Church then something new and enabling seems to be possible.
- f) There is an implicit critique here of the hidden or unconscious formation of people who are asked to pass an academic course for an award while at the same time addressing their continuing formation as disciples, lay ministers and priests.
- g) The question of the efficacy of the sermon in enabling everyday faith is left open by the evidence here. "Cross-over" ministers who have current experience to relate seem to have the most to offer.
- h) The possibilities offered by 'imitation' (and therefore at another level spiritual direction) are suggestive for the research. Visible modelling of everyday faith which can be imitated could be very fruitful.
- i) The culture both in the church and the world are also disabling factors. An inability to discern and speak about the activity of God amongst church members and the pluralist and secular nature of society conspire against everyday faith.

j) Lack of confidence amongst some ministers in this area is evident in the data. The introduction of PDPs by the diocese has helped in some cases.

Appendix I Ethical Statement to TEI Interviewees

Diocese of Oxford Common Vision Process

Discipleship Working Group

Research Programme

My name is Nigel Rooms and I am a freelance researcher conducting this study on behalf of the Oxford Diocese's Discipleship Working Group. The research aims to identify the elements of good practice in Initial Ministerial Education Phases 1 and 2 that equip future clergy and lay ministers to enable others for 'everyday faith' (defined as the ability to draw on their Christian faith to form habits of life and make decisions relating to work, leisure, community and family life Monday to Saturday). We are also looking to identify those elements of IME 1 and 2 that may hinder or discourage future clergy and lay ministers from equipping others for everyday faith.

Our research question is: What equips ministerial trainees to enable whole life disciples?

The information you give will be on the following basis:

- Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- You are free not to answer any question you don't wish to.
- You are free to withdraw from the research at any time.
- You answer the questions as a representative of your TEI and its 'position' unless you state otherwise in the interview.
- The information given in the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Individual results and excerpts from the interviews may be made part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics of you or your institution be included in the work.
- The final research report will be available through the Diocese in due course.

Thank you for participating in this project.

I am directing the research and can be contacted, should you have any questions at:

53B Jarrom St.
Leicester
LE2 7DH
07920 292956
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Appendix II - Enabling Everyday Faith in TEIs – An Interview

1. The recent *Setting God's People Free* report to General Synod spoke of placing a priority and emphasis on 'whole life disciples.' In the Oxford Diocese the phrase 'everyday faith' has been coined to complement this concept. We'd like to know how you understand these terms both theologically and in practice.

Supplementary: How do you understand the place of the laity in the world from Monday-Saturday – what are they there for?

2. What would you say is the relationship of theology to the practice of everyday life; at home, at work, in our leisure activities and in public as citizens and members of a local community?

Supplementary: And how does that work out in the learning environment for the students?

3. What major method or methods of theological reflection do you routinely teach in your TEI? {at undergraduate /post-graduate levels}?

Supplementary: How do you encourage students to carry these methods into their ministry/working lives?

4. Could you tell me about the experience of a student transitioning into training? What is in place to manage this transition?

Supplementary: What opportunities within your curriculum are there for students to reflect theologically on their current or previous employment (either paid or voluntary)?

5. At what points in your TEI's ministerial training process do you think your students are equipped to enable others for 'everyday faith'?

Supplementary: Could you give me some examples of how students have learnt and grown in this area?

6. How do you equip students to connect their learning of leading and preaching in worship with everyday faith from Monday to Saturday?

Supplementary: How do you consolidate, validate and encourage good practices that they may have learned prior to theological training?

7. Is there any more you would like to be doing, given opportunity and curriculum time to equip your students to enable everyday faith in others?

Appendix III - Focus Group Interview Questions

1. For the sake of the recording I am hoping you might introduce yourself by name, your current role/s (at church and/or at work) where and how you trained and what brought you to sign up and attend this focus group today.
2. The recent *Setting God's People Free* report to General Synod spoke of placing a priority and emphasis on 'whole life disciples.' In the Oxford Diocese the phrase 'everyday faith' has been coined to complement this concept. I am hoping we can have a discussion on how we understand these terms both theologically and in practice.
Supplementary: How do you understand the place of the laity in the world from Monday-Saturday – what are they there for?
3. What would you say is the relationship of theology to the practice of everyday life; at home, at work, in our leisure activities and in public as citizens and members of a local community?
4. What major method or methods of theological reflection did you learn during your training?
Supplementary: How often do you deliberately use these methods in your work and ministry these days?
5. What was interesting in the Survey when we asked about what happened around the question of the research before, during and after your training was that all the figures "improved" as it were, but the way the Church engaged with the question was consistently worse; "My Church connects/ed Sunday worship with people's lives from Monday – Saturday". Where do we think the disconnect might be between your developing understanding and approach to enabling everyday faith through training and where the local church is?
6. a) Respondents had gained most confidence through their training to "Preach sermons that connect the bible, Christian faith and life in the world." How do you think this came about – what helped you to gain this confidence?

b) Respondents had gained least confidence in helping Christians make connections at their workplace and about how they might use their 'free time' outside of work. Again what is going on here – where is this lack of confidence founded? What is going on here?
7. The top three things that had equipped respondents to enable others as whole life disciples were; personal reading and reflection, prayer and bible study. I'd love to hear more about what you think was the connection between these practices and being equipped for this task.
Supplementary: Spiritual Direction was the most frequently mention 'other' source of equipping – why do we think this might be?
8. The three most disabling things seemed to be a) time, b) reluctance, fear, shyness around 'intervening' in people's lives and c) a culture in both church and world that militates against making these kind of connections. Could we discuss any or all of these please?

Appendix IV

Ministerial Survey Questions and Results

Total Respondents: 76

Gender			Ethnicity		
	Male	33		White	71
	Female	41		Mixed race	1
	No reply	2		Black	
				African/Caribbean/British	2
				No reply	2
Age range			Church tradition		
	21-30	2		Open Evangelical	28
	31-40	7		Conservative Evangelical	13
	41-50	13		Traditional Catholic	5
	51-60	23		Modern Catholic	18
	61-70	28		Liberal	22
	71+	1		Central	27
	No reply	2		Charismatic	23
				Other	9

Not ordained		43	Ordained		33
Length of time ordained or licensed			Ordained status		
	less than 1 year	15		Self-supporting minister less than one day per week	0
	1 – 2 years	10		Self-supporting minister between one and three days per week	7
	2 – 3 years	14		Self-supporting minister more than three days per week	6
	more than 3 years	36		Minister in secular employment	3
	No reply	1		Full-time stipendiary minister	18
Ordained training				Other	1
	Residential	11			
	Non-residential	13			
	Mixed mode / context	5			
	Oxford Local Ministry Pathway	5			

Question	Strongly Agree	Wholly/ Agree All the time	Mostly/ Neither Regularly Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat/ Disagree Some of the time	Hardly at Strongly all Disagree	Not at all/ No reply Never	Total
Tell us where you stand on the following statements:							
The sacred and the secular completely overlap – i.e. they are indistinguishable	11	29	15	15	1	5	76
The Church is led by the clergy enabled by the laity	4	35	11	18	5	3	76
For Christians behaviour within personal relationships is grounded in their Christian faith	34	35	3	1	0	3	76
All Christians have a public role in society	22	35	10	5	0	4	76
The Kingdom of God and the Church are one	3	27	14	23	6	3	76
Work (paid or voluntary) contributes to growing the Kingdom of God	31	31	10	0	0	4	76
The role of the clergy is to enable the laity in being the Church in the world	31	28	9	4	1	3	76
Politics and religion are to be kept separate	0	0	6	45	21	4	76
Making decisions about how to use our 'free' time needs to be based on our Christian faith	17	41	10	4	0	4	76
The Kingdom of God includes, but is wider than the Church	34	37	1	1	0	3	76
Work and leisure are worship just as much as formal liturgical worship	19	35	14	4	1	3	76
Christians have a public duty and role as citizens of the society they live in	37	31	4	0	0	4	76

Question		Wholly/ All the time	Mostly/ Regularly	Somewhat/ Some of the time	Hardly at all	Not at all/ Never	No reply
My vocation in work, at home and in my community was informed by my Christian faith	Before training began	29	32	6	2	2	
	At licensing or ordination	41	28	0	1	1	
	Currently	47	22	1			
I was enabled to draw on my Christian faith to make decisions about work, leisure, my community and personal relationships	Before training began	27	33	8	3	1	
	At licensing or ordination	30	35	4	2	1	
	Currently	17	36	17	1		
My Church connected Sunday worship with people's lives from Monday – Saturday	Before training began	8	24	21	17	1	
	At licensing or ordination	10	30	21	10	0	5
	Currently	13	31	24	4	0	4
I saw enabling whole life disciples as part of my vocation to licensed/ordained ministry	Before training began	27	27	12	5	1	
	At licensing or ordination	30	32	8	1	0	4
	Currently	17	36	17	1	0	4

Question	Much more	Slightly More	No Change	No reply	Slightly Less	Much Less
My ministerial training to date has made me much more confident to:						
Visit with a Christian at their workplace and help them to make connections between work and their Christian faith	13	18	40	5		
Create intercessions where the concerns of the whole congregation and the wider world are fully present	24	24	24	4		
Preach sermons that connect the bible, Christian faith and life in the world	36	26	9	4	1	
Notice and point out where God is at work in the world	22	30	19	4		1
Enable others to reflect theologically on their lives in the world	19	37	16	4		
Discern the vocations of other Christians with them	10	40	20	6		
Enable a Christian to make decisions about their personal relationships	7	43	21	5		
Enable a Christian to make informed decisions about how they use their time outside of work including voluntary service	6	37	28	5		

What has equipped you to enable Christians to live as disciples of Christ in the whole of their lives?			
Ministry of Home Church	48	Personal reading and reflection	69
The Example of a Tutor	11	Prayer	56
The Example of a Minister	40	Bible Study	50
A New Theological Perspective	21	Retreat	18
Your Peer Group	17	A supervisor or training incumbent	19
A Placement	13	Your present congregation	30
An Academic Module	23	A diocesan training event	8
A Practical Course	14	Your local community	13
Online Ministry Forums	7	Other	21

Name one thing that disables you in this same task	
Lack of time (too busy with other demands and in three cases not making it a priority)	16
Lack of opportunity (to come alongside people)	5
Fears and sensitivities surrounding intervening in other people's lives	6
Lack of confidence (including lack of training)	6
Resistance from church members (not seeing the need for everyday faith)	7
The wider culture	6
The culture of the Church (division, Church politics, lack of emphasis on everyday faith)	13