

Continuing Ministerial Development

As our Learning & Development Manager, I am very keen to support those who are in ministry, whether relatively new in the role or with many years of experience, both those who are accredited in active ministry within the Congregational Federation (CF) and those who are locally recognised.

We believe that in the coming years we will see people becoming recognised in the full range of accredited ministries, and we want to provide ongoing ministerial support for all. We are preparing to offer four ways of providing such ministerial support, and we think that each way is viable and potentially attractive. These ways are not mutually exclusive, of course. This is an optional provision, but we hope that this will serve to refresh, encourage and resource our ministers.

1. A Re-launched Ministries' Conference

Starting in early 2019, we are proposing re-launching a ministries' conference, specifically for those in ministry. This would be comprehensive, and inclusive of all seven accredited ministries on the Roll.

Sessions would be led by a mixture of people with expertise from within and without the CF.

The venue would be changed each year, so as to spread the time and cost of travel for participants.

Depending on the feedback which we receive from those who are in ministry in terms of what is desirable, manageable and affordable, these conferences could be held annually or in alternate years, and they could be planned over two or three days.

2. Ministry Workshop Days

Also from early 2019, we are proposing launching an ongoing programme of ad hoc workshop days, each focusing on a particular concern or matter of interest. These could be repeated in different locations, providing a forum in which people from different Areas would have the opportunity to reflect together and share ideas and concerns.

Workshop days would be led by a mixture of people with expertise from within and without the CF. Some could be ministry-specific, while others could be cross-ministry in intent.

3. Personalised Learning Journeys

Starting in late 2018, I am inviting those in active ministry to consider working with me to design a personalised learning journey for themselves. Each person will create a portfolio of learning opportunities and activities, designed to expose her/him to important perspectives, values and insights relating to current thinking and practice in a chosen area of concern or interest.

Possible Issues to Consider

Developing your counselling ministry

Leading Sunday worship without musicians

Planning and organising spiritual retreats / prayer days

Planning and organising innovative mission in your community

Developing your pastoral visiting ministry

Planning and organising discipleship programmes

Planting a new church

Turning church property into shared Christian hubs for different ministries

Developing effective leadership of church meetings

I will support each person in accessing an appropriate range of resources that will both stretch and encourage his/her growth in knowledge, understanding and perhaps competence. These resources can include books, films, music, art exhibitions, teaching events and other possibilities.

We have produced a handbook relating to this option, and copies are available from the Learning & Development Administrator at madeleine.varley@congregational.org.uk.

4. Empirical Research Projects

Starting in early 2019, I am inviting those in ministry who would enjoy becoming involved in small empirical projects to join with one or two others in designing and undertaking a research project which they will choose, will find satisfying, and which may also benefit the CF as a whole.

This kind of ministerial development will include the provision of training sessions dealing with appropriate research methods and how to undertake them responsibly and effectively.

This form of ministerial development could also support the CF Council's consultation with churches and Areas regarding the issues of where we want to be in five years' time, how we can prevent more churches from closing, and how we can plant successful new churches.

Funding

Both the conference and the workshop days would need to be self-financing, keeping our central costs to a minimum. The research methodology sessions for those wishing to engage in empirical projects would also need to be self-funding. But in these cases, we would keep all costs to a minimum.

As regards the personalised learning journeys, those taking this option would be responsible for the costs to themselves of any resource purchases, admissions to events, etc.

We will also be approaching Trusts to ascertain whether they would be prepared to support this continuing ministerial development programme.

Walter Riggans
Learning & Development Manager

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Possible Issues to Consider

Developing youth and/or children's ministry for your church and community

Developing 3rd age ministry for your church and community

Becoming more effective with the particular issues in rural ministry

Becoming more effective with the particular issues in very small churches

Developing ministry with those with learning difficulties and/or mental health issues

Developing ministry with those with physical disabilities and impairments

Working with your local media or with digital skills

Developing your preaching ministry