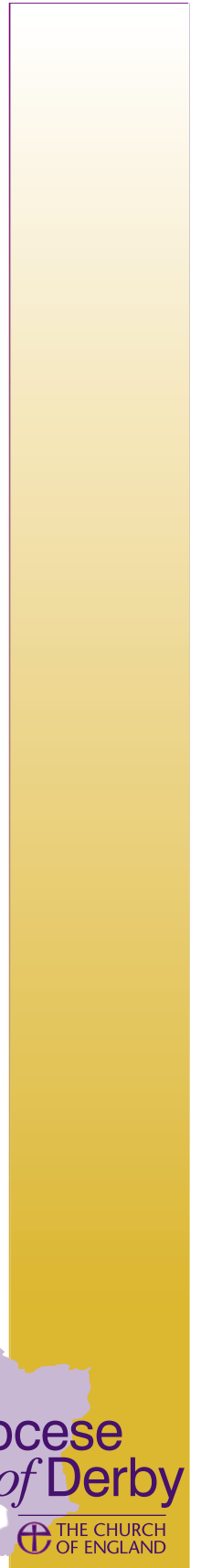




RENEWING
Ministry



Doing less Better



July 2006

Canon Andie Brown
Continuing Ministerial
Education Adviser (Clergy and Lay)

Diocese
of Derby



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

There is an old adage from industry: "People don't leave jobs – they leave managers". Time and again I hear the cry that there is no clear leadership, no re-vitalising vision at the heart of the church. Folk recognise that this may be because the parish clergy are too busy trying to do too much. (What Carl George calls "the church's over dependence on an over-functioning clergy") In which case they are frustrated at not being allowed and enabled to do what they feel they could do very well: pastoral visits, chair meetings, prepare and lead the intercessions in worship etc. And they sense the void left when dynamic, proactive leadership is replaced by stressed and wearied reactive leadership, as the clergy bounce from crisis to crisis.

We need to do less, better.

Doing what we do best

The beginning of this is to set aside time, even if it's just a few minutes, right now, to ask ourselves a fundamental question - and to begin to answer it: **what is it that excites me? What lights up my life?** Ask this first of all as a human being, and don't try to make the answer fit the religious framework of ministry or even spirituality.

When you have the beginnings of an answer, you should begin to ask yourself

- why is it that this matters so much to you?
- What is this saying about you and the sort of person you are?

After you've thought of the things that really matter to you as a human being, you might move on to deal with the aspects of ministry and church life that really excite you. The two may well overlap, in the area which will speak about your spirituality, your being before God as a creature before you stand there as a priest or minister.

In the answer to that fundamental question lies a vital truth about who you are and what makes you tick.

The most obvious examples of this might be as to whether you're a people person or not. Does an encounter with others energise you or drain you? Is paperwork satisfying or stultifying? The ramifications are obvious; within an MMA, within the diocese, within the Church of England we need folk who are energised and energising in their encounters with other people – and we need folk who can administer this public ministry. Each of us has professional responsibilities we can't duck, but whereas no one person is perfect and complete, a team can be, and a well-managed team can allow us all to play to our strengths.

Ministry will take better shape, and require less effort, if you work with the grain rather than against it.

Doing less, better

John Finney's classic book *Church on the Move*¹ is helpful. He has chapters on Strategy for Evangelism, which includes the six questions which need to be answered (Appendix 1 below); Leading for Mission, and Managing for Mission. In his chapter, Clearing the Undergrowth, he raises the key issue - how do I do less better?

He gives –some very useful tips² which I am summarising here, and five frightening questions, which I'm not:

1. Managing time is really a matter of managing your own behaviour
2. If feeling unwilling to work, start with the easy tasks to motivate yourself, if eager to get going, do the tough stuff
3. Cut down interruptions wherever possible. Write down the source of interruptions, identify the three worst and consider what can be done about them (eg, do preparation elsewhere)
4. Procrastinators work best when a deadline is looming because the adrenalin is flowing. If this is you admit it, don't fight it. Ensure realistic deadlines are set, don't feel guilty about not being 'organised' - use the way you work to work effectively. Or conversely, of course, if you hate last minute working! But work to your own style, not someone else's.
5. Time will be wasted if personal and church/ organisational goals are unclear. Without them we cannot distinguish what is important from what is trivial. Spend time with your church leadership getting to know one another, and working out goals.
6. Someone needs to check that the decisions agreed have been carried through. The clergy need not be either (let alone be both) the doers and the checkers! But make sure everyone is clear who is supposed to be doing something and who is checking they've done it (eg PCC minutes should have an action column, lines of responsibility should be clear – e.g. "Fred will clear the gutters and tell the Wardens when he's done it. **Action** : Fred")
7. Beware of fatigue. "Tired doctors make errors, take short cuts, are forgetful and perform at less than their best" (Editorial in *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners* 1989). You could read 'vicars' for 'doctors, and one could add that tired vicars are likely to be crabby and less Christ-like in their dealings with people.
8. Delegate wherever possible, both to share work with others AND (even more importantly theologically) to develop their skills, gifts and humanity.

9. Identify those people who take up the most time. Often they are people with real problems. The pastoral relationship needs to be professionalized, on both sides. Sometimes a part of the problem can be the pastor's need to be needed, and this leads to an unhealthy interdependency – allocate them a reasonable slot every 4 or 5 weeks when they can have undivided attention within specific boundaries.
10. Holidays need to be of a decent length to get any real benefit. My boss used to say three weeks minimum for the summer holiday – one week to wind down, one week to enjoy one self and one week to begin to pray and prepare oneself emotionally for re-entry.

Another tool for working effectively is the Priorities Matrix.

The material concerning the Priorities Matrix is derived from Stephen Covey's 'First Things First' by Rob Mackintosh of The Leadership Institute and forms a part of the Clergy Leadership Project which we run in the East Midlands each year – please speak to the CME Adviser if you would like to know more.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant 1 Crises Pressing problems Deadlines	Quadrant II Prevention Preparation Clarifying values Building relationships
Not Important	Quadrant III Interruptions Some phone calls, mail, reports, meetings Other people's agendas	Quadrant IV Time wasters 'Escape' activities Junk mail Trivia

List all the things that need doing (I know this can be a job in itself, and I know it can be daunting – but it will help you to take control of your life and ministry again!)

Then assign each to one of the quadrants in the diagram below:

I. Urgent and Important Activities

These activities that are the ones that are important to us. In other words, they are important because they contribute towards the fulfilling of our own goals and so ultimately our calling, and which are also urgent, requiring immediate attention - crises, accidents, deadlines.

II. Important but not Urgent

This is the most crucial quadrant. Paying attention to Quadrant II activities reduces the amount of time we need to give to Quadrant I, because fewer crises arise. The activities that occupy this area are those that make the most contribution to our goals, relationships, effectiveness, and well being. All of the disciplines are in this category. None of them needs to be done immediately, but each one is a major contributor to our

lives - part of the 20 per cent that makes the 80 per cent contribution.

Most of the activities essential to both character-and trust-formation, discerning one's vocation and life-roles, drawing-up a personal mission statement for any or all of these roles, identifying long-range goals, nurturing relationships, and obtaining regular, physical, spiritual, mental and social/emotional renewal, are ALL Q.II activities. They are important -- but not usually urgent, and therefore mostly don't get done.

III. Urgent but not Important

These are activities, time-demands, that are urgent in their insistence to be dealt with, and are important to someone else but not to us. This category typically accounts for the largest drain on our time and energies for no productive purpose.

IV. Neither Important nor Urgent

These are typical time-waster activities that we engage in as 'dead-time' or 'down-time'. They may be necessary on occasions, but they are not typically large consumers of our time.

Where to find help

The CME Adviser may be able to help clergy and licensed church workers with the funding for works consultancy and suitable courses.

The Leadership Institute

Hilgay Rectory, Church Rd.,
 Hilgay, Downham Market, PE38 0JL
01366 382969

Headed up by Rob Mackintosh they run courses nationally and regionally called The Clergy Leadership Project, including here in the E.Midlands. Ask Canon Andie Brown for details (01332 388671). CLP seeks a revolution in the way the church seeks to serve God and the world based on the Rule of Benedict.

The following folk are available for personal and parish consultation. CME funds and possibly other funds, can be made available to help cover costs.

3-D Coaching

Diane Clutterbuck **0845 458 0156**
+44 28 9066 5980
 email diane@3dcoaching.com

John Truscott

69 Sandridge Rd., St. Albans, AL1 4AG
01727 832176
 email john@john-truscott.co.uk
 web site www.john-truscott.co.uk

John has a wide range of papers and training resources on management and leadership which are freely available to download from his web site

Rob Norman – Matter Arising

62 Farm Road, ROWLEY REGIS, B65 8ET
 email mail@mattersarising.com
 Tel. **0845 128 5177**
 Fax. **0845 128 5178**

Appendix 1

The Six Questions which need to be answered

From "Church on the Move – Leadership for Mission" (Finney) p. 78ff.

1. What is the church's policy on evangelism?
 - a. If there is one
 - i. Has it a 'bias to the excluded'?
 - ii. How many in the church know what this policy is – and do they agree with it?
 - iii. When was its effectiveness last evaluated?

2. In the community in which you are situated
 - a. Where do people meet?
 - b. What are their main motivations and concerns?
 - c. How much basic Christian knowledge has each age group?
 - d. What is the image of the church in the neighbourhood?

3. How does God seem to be working in the present?
What means is he using to bring people to himself and who are they?
 - a. What was the main factor that led to them turning to God?
 - b. Has their conversion been gradual or sudden?
 - c. What proportion have had a Christian upbringing?

4. Do the structures of church life help or hinder evangelism?
 - a. Are the existing organisations the right ones?
 - b. Is the overall pattern of organisations and groups correct?
 - c. Do the structures look outwards

5. Have the evangelists in the church been identified?
Are they being set free? ... trained?... affirmed? ... encouraged? ... used?

6. Are people praying so that they can hear the guidance of God?
And of God says 'Go!' – does anything happen?

(Endnotes)

1 John Finney Church on the Move Darton, Longman & Todd/Daybreak, 1992. Now out of print.

2 John Finney p.130ff