

**FAREWELL** to Anne Mulley & Ed who have moved on to Coventry Diocese

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Feb 21 Deanery Synod at Shroton Church

"Every Member Ministry". This meeting is open to all PCC members

Come & see this church for yourself which has recently been imaginatively re-ordered with portable, stackable pews!

March 7 INSTITUTION of Alan at Winterborne Whitechurch

June 26 Deanery Synod at Sixpenny Handley November

November 21 Deanery Synod at Blandford

### **A USEFUL EXERCISE FOR A GROUP OR PCC**

from Richard Impey in "How to Develop your local church".

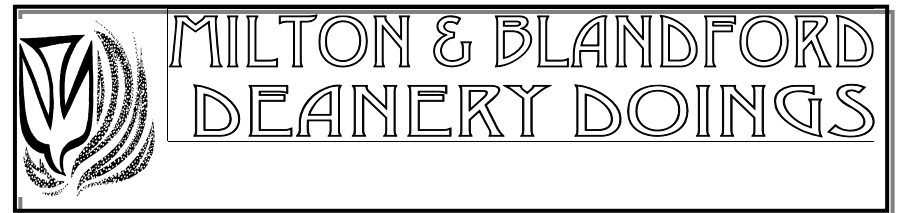
- 1) List on a flipchart the skills & abilities which are valuable in the church e.g. ability to listen, welcoming, finance, artistic, practical, full of good ideas, organising events, cooking, speaking, prayer, singing, musician, cleaning, mowing, reading aloud, sick visiting, counselling etc.
- 2) Give every person a set of blank cards – as many cards as there are people present.
- 3) Write your own name on the first card & three things which you like doing, preferably from the list on the flip chart.
- 4) These cards are now collected up without others seeing what you have written.
- 5) Write everyone else's name on the remaining cards – one for each person. & then up to three things you feel that that person is good at.
- 6) Put all the cards together, including the first set & shuffle.
- 7) Give out to each person the cards with his or her own name on them. Everyone will recognise their own card, but others do not need to know which one it is.
- 8) Have a look at what gifts you are listed with. Some will surprise you, others may well disappoint.

You now have the group's perception of each others gifts

You may discover:

- 1) You are not using the gifts that people think you are good at.
- 2) You are being expected to do things that you are no good at!  
Perhaps you should change roles around in a way that is liberating for everyone?
- 3) What gifts are missing from all of you? – try to find someone who could do a particular thing. Appoint a member of the group to contact and invite them to help.
- 4) You may find people in the group with gifts that are as yet unused – is this an area for development?

*DEANERY DOINGS is published by Jimmy Hamilton-Brown the Deanery Information Officer and Adviser in Mission to the Milton & Blandford Deanery. Feel free to copy or quote from it. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Rural Dean or the Synod. Contact Jimmy at April Cottage, Winterborne Stickland DT11 0NT 01258 880627 or jumperhb@btinternet.com*



**Spring 2013**

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### **A SPIRITUAL PEOPLE?**

A lot of people today claim that they are not religious but spiritual.

Alan Miller, an American lecturing at the Barbican states, *"Spiritual but not religious people are especially prevalent in the younger population in the United States, although a recent study has argued that it is not so much that people have stopped believing in God, but rather have drifted from formal institutions."*

*It seems that just being a part of a religious institution is nowadays associated negatively, with everything from the Religious Right to child abuse, back to the Crusades and of course with terrorism today."*

Some, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, go further and say there is a "higher power". What are we to make of this? I think we should be delighted. It gives us something upon which to build.

Christians believe that this "higher power", which we call God, is the creator. If that is true then it means that God must be "personal" – rather than just a vague power rather like electricity. God must be greater than everything created. The highest part of creation that we know about is humanity - personalities.

The uniqueness about being human is that it includes the ability to think, to decide, to love and to pray. We have within us the ability to become friends with this "higher power". We can only do this because this "higher power" has revealed him/herself, in particular for those of us who are Christians supremely the person of Jesus & in the holy scriptures.

If God really is "personal" and loving then it is entirely logical to assume that he will want to communicate with his creation.

We go back to the words of St. Paul when he preached in Athens to the people around the Areopagus, where he came across the altar "to an unknown god".

***What therefore you worship as the unknown god, this I proclaim to you.  
Acts 17 23***

## **METHOD in CHURCH LIFE.**

I am personally all in favour of Fresh Expressions of Church where we try to bring the Good News of Jesus to those who have little time for traditional church life. However I believe it does have its dangers, especially in creating communities which have little or no connection with the community that Jesus founded.

I am indebted to Prof William Abraham who in his book "The Art of Evangelism" emphasises that evangelism (telling the good news) includes six aspects summed up in the word METHOD. (He is a Methodist!) We need a genuine balance of all these dimensions in our church life

### **A MORAL** Dimension

Those who insist only on the adoption of Christian morality, produce Christians who are morally upright and pharisaical but spiritually blind and intellectually malformed.

### **An EXPERIENTIAL** dimension

Those who insist only on New Birth and Conversion, produce Christians who are born again, but who are morally weak, anti-intellectual, and ineffective in ministry.

### **A THEOLOGICAL** dimension

Those who insist only on the creeds, produce Christians who are intellectually alert but spiritually dead.

### **A HORIZONTAL** dimension

Those who insist only on social welfare, produce Christians who leave God out of the picture.

### **An OPERATIONAL** dimension

If we insist only on spiritual gifts we shall have activist Christians who are lacking in understanding and love

### **A DISCIPLINARY** dimension

Those who insist only on Baptism and the use of spiritual disciplines, produce Christians who are outwardly religious but inwardly unsure of their salvation and intellectually confused.

Let's face it all Christians and churches are unbalanced. Examine yourselves to see what you have left out in your own Christian life; find out the sections where your own church is weak. Concentrate for a period of time on what is weakest in your life & message.

## **TOTAL MINISTRY**

For years now I have been going on about involving ALL Christians in Ministry, & last Autumn with my encouragement Parish & People produced a Manifesto on Lay ministry. As a result of this various important matters have been drawn to my attention which are worth passing on for further thought.

1) A lay person pointed out that it is a mistake to think of lay ministry in a vacuum, we must think at the same time of the vital part clergy still have to play in the life of the church.

2) This all calls into question the matter of leadership and how it can be done. No longer can we assume that it is only the clergy who lead. We can see this most clearly in small villages where church leadership is becoming more and more dependant upon lay people. If that is true what leadership is expected of the clergy?

3) John Saxbee former Bishop of Lincoln warns us that the worst of all scenarios is that a priest should be put in charge of up to 6 parishes. Doing that means that the villages can (just!) expect their incumbent to carry on in the same old way. After that (such as our Chase Benefice) it is obviously no longer possible

4) *"The addiction to hierarchy is very deep seated & will not easily be overcome. The problem lies not just with clergy who are reluctant to adapt to a collaborative way of working, but also with the laity of the local churches who seem to be happy to return to old ways".* Clergy and churches need to work together to find the best way forward for them.

5) When we talk about the ministry of the laity we often imply that this is a church centred thing, with lay folk being trained & authorised as mini-clergy. No! The main thrust of the ministry of the laity is not in the church but OUT in the world at large.

JJHB

**WELCOME** to Joe Edwards who becomes priest in charge of Blandford St. Mary, Charlton Marshall & Spetisbury. Joe is already priest at Sturminster Marshall, with Shapwick & Kingston Lacy.

**WELCOME** also to Alan Ryan who becomes priest in Charge of the Winterborne Valley in March.