



New MA for developing research-based reflective practitioners

The St Mary's Centre welcomes the opportunities provided by an exciting new MA programme, which focuses on developing research-based reflective practitioners from a wide range of Christian faith-related contexts, including (among others) church, school, and chaplaincy.

The MA programme, entitled MA Religions, Society and Education (Christian Education pathway), has been developed by the Revd Canon Professor Leslie J Francis and the Revd Dr Tania ap Sion in the Centre for Education Studies at the University of Warwick, and builds on almost two decades of experience in delivering postgraduate programmes within this sector. The programme also draws on the expertise of a number of the St Mary's Centre adjunct faculty members.

The Rt Revd David Walker, Bishop of Manchester has described the programme as encouraging “lay and ordained Christians from many denominations to investigate the contexts of their places of ministry, to apply the best academic resources to that study, and to become better vicars, school teachers, readers and bishops.”

Distinctive to this new MA is the pedagogical approach grounded within the facilitated Learning Community, which meets three times a year in a church-related environment. The Learning Community nurtures academic, personal, and professional formation within an intentional environment as participants shape their own research questions drawn from their professional practice and experience. Bishop David Walker, commenting on the January seminar of the Learning Community held in St Michael’s House at Coventry Cathedral said:

“Earlier this week, I spent two days with the research-based Learning Community in Coventry. Along with me were around thirty men and women engaged in the programme of study. We discussed the challenges faced by vicars who have multiple churches in their care. We looked at how an Adventist pastor might conduct a survey to explore the contrasting pastoral expectations of two congregations whose majority memberships were drawn from different continents. We explored the subject of the spiritual pain experienced in the context of a hospice, and how a chaplain might respond. We helped a member think about a project to explore whether and how it might be possible to ordain someone with learning disabilities. We looked at the link between ethos and spirituality in schools. And we launched a book about the experiences of young people being educated for life in religiously diverse societies.”

The MA Religions, Society and Religion (Christian Education) has been designed in conversation with a range of partners who help to promote special interest groups within the research-based Learning Community. Coventry Cathedral promotes cathedral studies and reconciliation ministry, the Arthur Ranks Centre promotes rural ministry, and the Alister Hardy Trust promotes religious and spiritual experience.

For more information about the new MA programme visit:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ces/prospective/postgraduate/taught/christianeducation>