

Report by Polly Mason
on Further Education Chaplaincy 2010-2011
for Churches Together in Lancashire

The objectives for the CTL post of Co-ordinating Chaplain are-
Working two days per week, term time
Supporting Chaplains
Creating fresh opportunities for networking
Sharing good practice across all the College links
Involvement with others, eg. Student Services Managers, College Principals, and 'The National Council for Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education'.

Blackburn College

In my work this year, I have continued to support the College Chaplains with regular visits. Blackburn is in the process of undergoing building work, to provide a new Student Services Centre, which is due to open in September. Gail Pegg, the Methodist Community Lay Worker, is still working as a Chaplain for the College for one day per week, with Rev. David Roscoe offering five hours per week and Rev. James Terry continuing to take the Christian Union.

Burnley College

After serving seven years as the Chaplain of Burnley College, Andy Williams has decided to lay the ministry down, also Mary Cliffe, the other Chaplain decided that it was time for her to move on to new pastures. They are both leaving at the end of this academic year. On behalf of Churches Together in Lancashire, I thank them for their faithfulness over the years to be present week-by-week, befriending students and staff, of all faiths and none. I am working collaboratively with the College and Churches together in Burnley to provide suitable candidates for interview, and hopefully in July to appoint someone to take on the role of Chaplain to the College. Our plan is for the person to start at the beginning of the new academic year in September.

Preston College

My main responsibility this year has been to offer support to the College and the Chaplaincy through of period of uncertainty and change. The

Chaplain, due to ill health, needed to take a break from Chaplaincy, during which time I have offered on-going support to him and the College. Together we have continued to explore the best way forward for everyone. Sadly, after a further period of illness, the Chaplain has resigned from his post. On behalf of CTL, I thank him for all his hard work and wish him well in the future.

I have recently met with the Student Services Manager, along with Bishop Geoff, to plan-out the next phase, to recruit a new Chaplain. I hope in the future to work alongside Churches Together in Fulwood and Preston College to guide and support them throughout this process of change.

Runshaw College

My CTL role at Runshaw covers the multi-faith chaplaincy work, organising various events around the faith calendar. Other aspects of the work are to encourage and involve students and staff in the use of the multi-faith room, for example, a bi-monthly staff communion and prayer meeting held in the new multi-faith room.

Last December I organised the Runshaw 'Big Sing Carols' accompanied by the Salvation Army Band. Some very good outcomes has resulted from their visit, in that catering students are now regularly involved in the preparation of soup for the kitchen in Preston, and some students have volunteered to work in the Salvation Army charity shop.

The College Principal, Kathy Passant, recently opened the new 'Multi-Faith Room'. It was a wonderful occasion with the various faith traditions taking part in the service. Bishop Geoff said a few words at the end and encouraged us to offer a sign of peace in our own particular faith tradition. Christian, Muslim and other faith students attended the service, and the feedback has been very positive. I am now planning to take a group of students, both Muslim and Christian, on a visit in the autumn term to Southport Synagogue, to help them to better understand Judaism as part of their own faith history.

Chaplains Annual Quiet Day

Once again, CTL offered the Chaplains a quiet day at Tabor Retreat House, led by Martin Wray. The day is a time for quiet reflection, prayer and sharing fellowship; appreciated by all who attend. It is with sadness that we bid goodbye to one of the Chaplain's. Margaret from Myerscough

College will be retiring at the end of academic year. At the quiet day, we thanked Margaret for her contribution to the group over the past several years, sharing with us her experiences of serving as the Chaplain of Myerscough College.

National Council for Faiths, Beliefs in Further Education.

On behalf of CTL I have continued to attend the North West Chaplaincy Forum meetings, set up to promote good practice and to keep in touch with what is happening at a local level. I have visited Church House in London twice in this 2010/11 year, to meet with other senior Chaplains from around the country. In March, I attended a meeting at St. Helen's College, with FBFE's Chief Executive, John Wise, who came to discuss how we might best implement Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) skills into the College curriculum. Both Runshaw and St. Helens College are pioneering this student enrichment activity, based around SMSC, awaiting approval, to start at the beginning of the new academic year.

Planned visits

During most of my College visit's I shall be working with those Colleges wanting to continue with Chaplaincy in the forthcoming academic year, with Burnley, Preston and Myerscough Colleges. In July, I shall be attending the three-day FBFE national Conference in York.

Achievement of Objectives

The above summary demonstrates that each of the general objectives are being met. Although I would say that the scope of my work has somewhat shifted away this year, from that of general networking to one of supportive care and supervision.

I am passionate about serving in the role of Further Education Coordinating Chaplain for Churches Together in Lancashire. As Churches Together, we have the opportunity to reach out and make a difference to the lives of students, uniting us together to build a better society, grounded in values and ideals shared by us and the communities to which we serve; all in the spirit of friendship, working for justice, respect, and peace.

10th June 2011