

**You are invited to the next meeting of the Brixworth Deanery Synod**  
at 7.30pm – Wednesday 23 April 2008 at Harlestone Village Institute  
Guest Speaker: The Very Revd Charles Taylor – Dean of Peterborough  
*Refreshments available from 7.10pm*

## **If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?**

... was one of the many challenges offered to January's Deanery Synod by Revd Barry Osborne – a rural ministry specialist from the United Reform Church. Barry talked fascinatingly about rural mission and evangelism today, and the specific challenges and distinctions of ministering to rural communities as opposed to urban. Column space precludes reproducing his presentation here, but we do include some of the bullet points. More information can be found by checking the website [www.ruralmissions.org.uk](http://www.ruralmissions.org.uk), or by emailing Barry direct [sunrise@ruralmissions.org.uk](mailto:sunrise@ruralmissions.org.uk)

Here is a snapshot of some of his challenges:

- *'A good mission strategy is more than a bright idea: it must combine an appropriate response to the cultural context, sound theology and good practice.'*
- *Preach the Gospel of Life. If necessary, use words.*
- *Start evangelism with WHO you are*
- *Partnership works – use and share*
- *Too many rural missions are staring at the place where yesterday's sun went down. But a new day is dawning and we must turn and greet the sunrise.*
- *90% of the UK's land area is rural*
- *1 person in 6 (17%) lives in a rural community of 5,000 people or less*
- *10% live in communities of 1,000 or less*
- *1.4% live in communities of 1,000 to 2,000*
- *5% live in communities of 2,000 to 5,000*
- *Rural populations are growing.*

### **'Releasing Ministry'**

*During 2008, the Diocesan Strategy focuses upon 'Releasing Ministry' – and, as we were reminded at Bishops' Lent Meetings, this means first identifying the Gifts of each church member, before helping them to recognise and accept their 'vocation' or calling. For some, a key part of the ministry to which they are called will be active synodical membership. Parishes are asked to bear this in mind in careful selection of their Deanery Synod Lay representatives for the new three-year term.*

## **'End of Term'**

**PCC SECRETARIES & CLERGY**  
**PLEASE NOTE & ACTION**

### **TERM OF OFFICE ENDS/STARTS**

Parish representatives on Deanery Synod are elected for a three-year period, which means that this year is election year as the new period commences on 1 June 2008 until 31 May 2011. This means that the term of all existing lay members of Deanery Synod ends on 31 May 2008, irrespective of when they were elected. All existing members are eligible for re-election, provided that they are still on the parish's electoral roll.

### **ROLE OF DEANERY SYNOD REPS**

Deanery Synod plays an increasingly important role in the decision-making of the Diocese. In the past year Synod has seen the development of the Deanery Mission Plan and has a key part in recommending future staffing of the Deanery as well as having an increasing role in allocation of parish shares.

### **ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Some members of the Deanery Synod are elected to take specific roles, representing our Deanery on Diocesan Boards (eg Finance) and Committees (eg Pastoral) for 2008-11. Then in 2009, Deanery Synod will elect lay members to Diocesan Synod for 2009-12, and in 2010, members will be elected to the General Synod for 2010-15.

### **FUTURE BRIXWORTH DEANERY MEETINGS**

Your standing committee tries to keep business relevant to our rural parishes, and taking into account that we are one of the largest Deaneries in England. Looking ahead to business in 2008/9, we have the following on our agenda:

- Finalisation and ratification of the Deanery Mission Plan, following responses from parishes (see overleaf)
- Presentation by the Vice President of Save the Children Fund (also Chair of Church of England's Ethical Finance Cttee) – 9 Oct 2008
- Helping members understand all aspects of the ongoing debate on Women in the Episcopate in advance of a possible request

from General Synod in 2009 for a vote on the subject

- Presentation and talk by The Very Revd Charles Taylor, Dean of Peterborough – 23 April 2008
- Talk on 'Vocations' by The Revd Sharon Goble – 25 June 2008
- Deanery Confirmation Service at Walgrave on 22 June 2008
- Deanery Evensong at Holy Cross Daventry on 13 July 2008, with the Most Revd Dr Francis Park, Archbishop of Seoul, and Primate of the Anglican Church of Korea

In addition to these keynote topics, Synod will continue to cover topics of interest to parishes so that meetings are relevant to PCCs.

The number of representatives eligible to sit on Deanery Synod is relative to the numbers on your electoral roll. (There is no parish in the Deanery with more than 80 on the Electoral Roll.)

- 1-40 ER members = 1 Deanery rep
- 41-80 ER members = 2 Deanery reps

Our key message to clergy, PCC Secretaries and current Synod representatives is this: *please ensure that your PCC is aware of the responsibilities and role of Brixworth Deanery Synod, and encourages the election of a representative to our Synod.*

*Equally important, then, is to let us know who will be representing your parish by emailing the Deanery Secretary, Sam Dobbs – email address: [brixworthdeanery@aol.com](mailto:brixworthdeanery@aol.com)*

### *Farewell, John & Madeleine*

*On 29 February, the Deanery lost an active member of the House of Clergy and Synod Standing Committee when The Revd John Tarrant retired from parish ministry, leaving Guilsborough Vicarage, and his parishes closer to forming what he termed the 'Guilsborough Eight'.*

*With The Revd Glenn Martin holding the fort from Spratton Vicarage, so begins another interregnum whilst the new pastoral scheme is explored. John and Madeleine will be missed for many reasons, and we send them our best wishes for retired life.*

### **Deanery Mission Plan (DMP)**

Synod representatives and PCCs are reminded that they should be discussing or have discussed the DMP so that Deanery Synod can hear views before adopting or amending the document. It is hoped that the Plan can be adopted at our June Synod, so we are asking Lay & Clergy Deanery Synod representatives, and PCC Secretaries to ensure that this is covered in parish business prior to June 2008. Please remember that if you wish to see the DMP, it is available online: [www.brixworth-deanery.org.uk](http://www.brixworth-deanery.org.uk)



### **Results of Feasibility Study for Deanery Youth Church and Children's Worker**

Following a suggestion by the Standing Committee at the end of 2006, we embarked on a feasibility study for a Deanery Youth Church and appointment of Youth Worker, funded by an application from the Diocesan Mission Fund. Amongst the measures taken:

- We gave a presentation at Deanery Synod meeting January 2007, and began the process of sending out a questionnaire to all parishes.
- We evaluated the parish profile forms, with regards to youth and children
- Met with Tim Sledge, Diocesan Missioner
- Met with Rick O'Donogh youth worker at Long Buckby
- Met with children's youth worker based at Long Buckby Primary school
- Sought support/partnership from Guilsborough Secondary School

Financial support and partnership from Guilsborough Secondary school was not forthcoming.

Although we discerned a need and this was recognised in many of the parishes, there was really a lack of enthusiasm, which is required to make such a project a success.,

After much prayerful deliberation, we have come to the conclusion, that in our opinion, now is not the time to start such a venture. We could and did, meet much of the necessary criteria to receive a grant from the Diocesan Mission Fund.

However, it was necessary to deliver a business plan and evidence of a group who would practically support and monitor the employed Youth Worker.

Any such undertaking, as outlined in the original proposal, would take a great deal of time and energy from those enthusiastic about the aim. We do not feel that at the moment, such support is visible and have therefore decided that we ourselves, can not take this forward.

We feel that an across Deanery approach is possibly not the best when raising support and also taking on and employing a worker puts things on a very different footing.

**Sheila Robertson**

on behalf of Phyllis Annis & Liz Thake

