

resource sheet 10

church army: pioneering evangelists

Church Army has been at the heart of evangelism, within the Anglican Church, since it was founded in 1882 by the Rev Wilson Carlile, then a curate at St Mary Abbots in Kensington. His vision was to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to those people who did not have contact with the Church, particularly those on the fringes of society, and to enable others to do likewise. Wilson's sister Marie worked alongside him from 1888, and men and women have worked side by side throughout Church Army's history.

Since then Church Army has been involved in a wide spectrum of evangelistic ministries, but often in pioneering situations well beyond the fringes of the Church, and always with the aim of making the gospel challenging and relevant to an ever-changing world. Its roots lie deep in a ministry to those who have little or no connection to the life of the Church. It is committed to the mission-shaped agenda of the Church and to Fresh Expressions of

mission and church, creating new pioneering projects and opportunities in partnership with other agencies.

Currently Church Army concentrates its work on five different areas:

- **Area evangelism** Working across parish boundaries, for example in a town centre, deanery or a whole diocese.
- **Children and young people** Working in a particular church or in a much wider context.
- **Church planting** Establishing new forms of church appropriate to the community, re-energising declining churches, and offering training and advice to church leaders.
- **Homeless people** Working in a particular project or helping the wider Church to respond to the issues of homelessness.
- **Older people** Helping older people develop in their faith journey and reach out to their peer group, and also offering guidance to the wider Church.

Today there are over 350 full-time Church Army evangelists spread across the United Kingdom and Ireland, working alongside the Anglican Church, sharing the Christian faith through words and action. There are also a number of sister societies in other countries across the world.

To find out more about the work of Church Army, visit www.churcharmy.org.uk.

Selection and discernment

The process for selection is thorough and may sometimes seem frustratingly long. It can take anything from four to eight months. Our approach is to gather evidence to help us decide if you have the calling, qualities and potential to be a pioneer evangelist. There are four distinct phases in our process.

Phase 1

First you must complete an application form and a series of exercises. Church Army gather three

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references. You then have a home interview and an interview with a representative from your diocese.

Phase 2

We ask you to complete a portfolio which comprises of three reflective exercises which explore your experience of evangelism, teams and spirituality. You will then be invited to a panel where you present your reflections on evangelism and engage in a round table conversation with selectors on your portfolio. These panels happen in early summer and mid-autumn every year.

Phase 3

You will complete a psychometric questionnaire (sometimes known as a personality test). Applicants engage in a project visit and complete a medical.

Phase 4

Every March we hold a final panel. At this panel candidates have a mental and emotional assessment with a qualified counsellor; engage in a group exercise and have some interviews. This is the panel which selects trainees for the next September.

Throughout this process you will be supported and receive feedback.

Church Army recognises that the ministry often impinges upon the life of the whole family. Therefore, if you are married your spouse will take part in all the meetings throughout the process so that their thoughts and concerns can be heard.

So what makes a Church Army evangelist?

There is no such thing as a typical candidate. People come from incredibly varied backgrounds, academic abilities, theologies, spiritualities, ages and experiences. We look for candidates who can evidence the skills and qualities that we look for and/or the potential to fulfil those criteria.

However, here is a summary of our criteria:

Calling

You must be an evangelist, who has a calling that is realistic for someone considering full-time ministry. That call must be evidenced by a practical love for people, and owned by the candidate's family and affirmed by others.

Pioneering evangelists

We look at how you currently engage in evangelism, how you operate as a leader and a team member, and how you reflect in your practice. We look for people who can start things up, often see things in a different way and have good communication skills.

Ministry

We will assess your emotional, mental, physical and spiritual capacity to cope with the demands of pioneering ministry.

A learner

We will need to see evidence of your ability and willingness to learn, and that you will benefit from our training.

Mission based training

Church Army has been training evangelists for over 125 years. Throughout this time, we have remained committed to four core principles:

- integrating practical experience and academic study

- being innovative with both methods and contents so that we are relevant and appropriate to the contexts our evangelists are working in
- being professional in delivering training
- working together with the wider Church.

To reflect these principles, we have adopted a new approach to training. We have replaced the residential model with a new programme called 'Mission-based Training'. This is a four year programme in which the trainee, based at a centre of mission, is apprenticed to an experienced evangelist who provides coaching and supervision. The trainee will be closely involved in local mission and will have opportunities both to practice what they are learning and to feed their experience into their learning. The course comprises 12 modules in subjects such as working with others, contextual communication, enabling Christian community, building and facilitating teams and change management. Theology, biblical studies and theory are interwoven with the practical content of each module. The whole process is facilitated by theological educators and regular group residential meetings.

This programme is currently in the process of being validated as a foundation degree in evangelism by York St John University and approved by the Church of England Ministry Division. For further details please email: mbt@churcharmy.org.uk

What next?

There is a network of evangelists across the country who are happy to meet you to talk about the society and their experiences. You can also contact the candidate secretary.

Other opportunities to explore the ministry of an evangelist include:
Xplore – an international gap year and discipleship programme

For further details please contact:

The Candidates and Vocations
Department
Church Army
Marlowe House
109 Station Road
SIDCUP
DA15 7AD

T 020 8509 3506
E vocations@churcharmy.org.uk
W www.churcharmy.org.uk

Captain Ray Khan CA is Church
Army's candidate secretary

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resource sheets

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