



press release
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Find your 'S.H.A.P.E.' for ministry with new CPAS web tool

A new online tool to encourage people to explore their vocation has been launched by CPAS, the Anglican evangelical mission agency.

'Your S.H.A.P.E. for ministry' only takes a couple of minutes to complete and provides advice and a series of next steps for people who are interested in pursuing what they feel God may be calling them to, including ordination.

The online exercise at www.cpas.org.uk/shape poses five short questions to gauge how confidently users understand themselves in the areas of spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality and experience (SHAPE).

The resultant five-sided shape is then displayed to illustrate how users perceive themselves, with a series of recommended resources and links as useful ways of further exploring each topic. Users can also get their complete SHAPE report emailed to them.

This has been created as part of CPAS' vision to encourage more under 30s to offer themselves for ordination, including pioneer ministry, although people of all ages are able to use the new web tool.

Mark Norris, CPAS leadership development adviser for vocations, said: 'At CPAS, we want to help young people consider their vocation and encourage more mission-focused leaders towards ordination. This new web tool has been created in order to engage with younger people, making the vocation journey more relevant and accessible.

'The statistics speak for themselves. The average age of clergy is 51, and nearly 60 per cent of those recommended for ordination in 2008 were already over 40. The latest figures from 2008 show that there are only 86 clergy under the age of 30 working in parishes and dioceses across the country, which is about one per cent of the total number of clergy.

'One of the primary aims of the SHAPE exercise is to encourage people to initiate conversations with other trusted leaders. It helps people ask how well they understand themselves in five key areas, with suggestions, resources and links of how they can develop a clearer sense of vocation.

'Helping more young people to explore their vocation assists them in their discipleship and helps them realise, whatever their vocation, that they have something to offer in the service of Christ. It is also vitally important because younger leaders are more likely to relate to contemporary culture and enable effective mission among young people.'

While answering the SHAPE questions, users can view a series of stories from different church leaders, along with the illustrations of how they viewed themselves at the start of their vocational journeys.

Laura Betson, assistant curate at Aston cum Aughton with Swallownest and Ulley, in Sheffield diocese, is featured as one of the leaders' SHAPE stories. She said: 'God's call became clearer once I began to talk with people about ordination, and when people started to ask searching questions, forcing me to think, pray, and wonder harder about what I might be called to do and to be.'

CPAS also provides a range of other online resources for those considering their vocation, as well as running *You and Ministry* weekend conferences (www.cpas.org.uk/vocations). There is also advice for leaders who are helping others along their vocational journeys.

Ends

For further information please contact Olly Du Croz at CPAS on 01926 458443 or oducroz@cpas.org.uk.

Notes to Editors:

CPAS (www.cpas.org.uk) is an Anglican evangelical mission agency working with churches, mainly in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. It enables churches to help every person hear and discover the good news of Jesus Christ.

Your S.H.A.P.E. for ministry (www.cpas.org.uk/shape) is a free online tool to help men, women and young people explore whether or not God is calling them to ordained ministry.

CPAS *You and Ministry* weekends (www.cpas.org.uk/vocations) have helped more than 10,000 people, over more than 45 years, to engage with issues about calling and full-time ministry through a helpful mix of specialist knowledge, good listening skills, practical advice and encouragement.