

An alternative training and deployment pathway

My training

My name is Merv Kissoon, I'm 38, married to Lynn and we have 3 lovely young daughters. After graduating from university, I trained through the TeachFirst programme and served in inner city London schools for 9 years, both in the classroom and on the senior leadership team. After doing a local church ministry training scheme, I very quickly realised, and was encouraged by feedback from those who'd trained and observed me, that serving in full-time ministry was the best way to use my teaching and pastoral gifts for God's glory.

This led me to pursue further training. I was particularly attracted to the option of being trained through excellent Bible training, alongside my ministry role, offered by Cornhill Plus. I found that my training immediately informed the ministry I was involved with, and the ministry fuelled my desire to train!

Commissioning for future ministry

Previously, I was interviewed, and references were taken, when I was selected for the local church ministry training scheme. Following that, in all good conscience, I would not have been able to put myself forward for ordination in the Church of England at the current time. The option of being commissioned through the New City of London Chapter Alternative Selection process was made available to me, and I was encouraged to apply by the Rector at my church. The selection panel requested 3 further references (1 from the senior minister and church wardens, and 2 from members of the church who knew me well, one of which had to be a woman) as well as the completion of an extensive application form. The panel comprised 4 men (including one former bishop) and 2 women (including one former consultant psychiatrist). Over 7 hours, the panel assessed me personally (faith and calling), theologically (suitability for Word ministry, and pastorally (character and approach to others), as well as through a case study discussion. Following the day's panel, I received a report detailing my suitability for commissioning/ordination in future.

In late July 2024 I was commissioned publicly for future ministry. My commissioning was alongside six other men for us to serve in seven very different local churches across four Church of England dioceses led by revisionist Church of England bishops. While it is a matter of public record that one of those churches was St Helen Bishopsgate, I and others serve different congregations and indeed one of the churches had to fundraise externally to be able to employ their additional gospel worker. We are grateful for an alternative pathway being made possible so we could continue to train and be publicly commissioned for gospel ministry. Personally, I am hoping and praying that there will be an opportunity to be ordained in the future!