

# Stages on the way

## (A reflection on training for ministry)

You can run but you can't hide. This has been the hallmark of my journey into ministry. I began my training at Northern College in Manchester in September 2010, following a thirty year career in social work.

Beginning my training was a relief, for as I look back over the years, I recall the many occasions I argued with God, believing I knew best, that I was in control and on the right path, feeling a sense of vocation in my "social work ministry," and not wanting to be diverted from this.

God had other ideas, I chose to argue. The persistence of God calling me, took me on a long journey, changing my job when the call became more urgent, busying myself with what I thought was important, but God pressed on with his quest. In the end I found doors closing in the social work world that forced me to listen to the God I was trying to ignore.

Sometimes God takes us on longer journeys to help us discover and prepare for the ministry he calls us to in his name.

Through prayer and reflection, training and college life is taking me into a deeper and more personal relationship with the God I seek to serve. My training is structured to encourage a sense of reflection through placement opportunities and academic study, and through developing relationships with fellow students, placement supervisors and college tutors.

God has taken me firmly by the hand and is leading me where he wants me to go. I have surrendered my life to his will and rather than resisting I am letting God "call the tune." I feel a sense of peace and fulfilment, mixed with some self-doubt and nervousness at the enormity of what God is calling me to.

The challenge is exhilarating, demanding and humbling. I am running the marathon race for God; I am relying on his strength and his direction. I am no longer seeking to do things in my own strength, but according to the will of God.

As for my arguing with God... I have no regrets, the journey and the wrestling with my sense of call have all been a significant part of my journey. I would not be the person I am at this point in my life without the experiences and the people I have encountered in my life. God is patient and faithful to me, walking a longer journey that has equipped me for the task of ministry to which I feel honoured and humbled to be called.