

The Rev. Dr. Richard Topping
Principal, Vancouver School of Theology
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC

Regarding the position of Anglican Director of Denominational Formation:

Resumé for the Ven. R.H. Grant Rodgers

Ordained Deacon for the Diocese of Qu'Appelle in All Saints, Saskatoon, May 28, 1981

Ordained Priest in St Paul's Cathedral, Regina, December 8, 1981

Education:

B.A. University of Saskatchewan, 1976

M.Div. College of Emmanuel and St Chad, 1981

Also:

Certificate in Spiritual Direction, Pacific Jubilee Program, 2004

Two units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

I have taken numerous courses over the years, most recently in VST summer school and Native Ministry Consortium, courses on grief, as well as course work at Mount Royal University in Calgary for mediation and conflict resolution

I am currently involved in the Parish Development School of the Diocese

Potentially relevant and related experience, activities, skills:

Since ordination, I have served in three dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada: Qu'Appelle (Qu'A); Calgary (Calg); New Westminster (NW). I have served on the Diocesan Council of each diocese, and my time in each diocese has been characterized by significant involvement in the mission, ministry and committee work of the wider church, for example:

- served as a university chaplain for six years (Qu'A)
- elected to General Synod twice (Qu'A and Calg)
- chaired the Committee on Ordained Ministry (Examining Chaplains) (Qu'A)
- mentor, Education for Ministry (EfM) (Qu'A)

- Lecturer, Lay School of Theology (Qu'A)
- supervising priest for newly-ordained clergy (Calg)
- Intern supervisor of priest and deacon postulants numerous times (Qu'A, Calg, NW)
- served as an ACPO assessor four times; I was asked again this year
- chaired/coordinated the diocesan Marriage Preparation Program for 14 years (Calg)
- currently chair the Ecumenical and Multi-Faith Unit (NW)

I have served as a Regional Dean in each diocese, and am currently serving as an Archdeacon in the Diocese of New Westminster.

As an ordained person, I have served in six parishes, one as curate and five as Rector. Two of those parishes were rural parishes and four have been urban; two were multi-point parishes, two were medium or pastoral-size parishes, and two were large, program-size multi-staff parishes. I have had incumbencies of 5, 6, 11, 6, and now 7 years. In three of the parishes, I inherited substantial levels of conflict. I am very aware of the complexities of parish life, the administrative and personal demands on clergy, and the need for their theology and spiritual practice to be sustaining in a meaningful way.

In each parish, I have done my best to provide relevant opportunities for learning and an environment of growth, support, openness and mutual respect. I have designed and led courses on such subjects as: the spirituality of aging; the impact of the residential school system; Anglicanism; Hollywood's portrayals of Jesus; Christian meditation; Following Jesus; radical welcome; and the spirituality of golf; as well as conducting courses such as Living the Questions, Saving Jesus, EfM, Disciple Bible Study, Boundaries, and Animate, other courses by people like Marcus Borg, Bart Ehrman, Harold Kushner, Thomas Green, etc., and countless Bible studies.

In every parish, I have tried to instill a sense of social conscience and responsibility. For example, while in Regina, we initiated, planned, advocated and saw to completion two low-income housing projects (of 120 and 90 units), and were working on a third when I left that parish. We also developed a team of volunteers for the Marian Centre, an inner-city soup kitchen and social centre. We operated a thrift store, partnered with a Montessori School and developed a parish-based pre-school in another parish. We volunteered at Ronald McDonald House in another parish, preparing meals and supporting parents and children. In my current parish, we have re-defined and improved the existing food bank, which now fosters

an environment of hospitality, fellowship and personal care, rather than merely dispensing food, or serving as a hobby for parishioners.

Retreat work seems to be an important aspect of the work of the Anglican Director of Denominational Formation. I have made many guided retreats over the years, at least one a year for the last 35 or 36 years. I have led many retreats as well, including the pre-ordination retreat for clergy in this Diocese.

I have a wide range of experience regarding liturgy, and have always been as creative and innovative as I can be within the liturgical guidelines of the Anglican tradition.

For instance, I put together a Lenten series a few years ago that included Labyrinth, Dance, Art, and alternative forms of meditation.

Generally, I would say I am passionate about the life of the church, comprehensive in my approach, appreciative and respectful of the various strands that comprise the Anglican tradition. I have an ability to articulate the faith in ways that make sense to people. I also have a sense of humour which keeps me from taking myself, and life in general, too seriously. I have contemplative tendencies, but I see my life centered in community and the Eucharist is a key part of my spiritual practice.