

Blackburn Cathedral Music & More online Supplement No. 19

The Reverend Dr. Mike Kirby
the Cathedral's new Assistant Curate



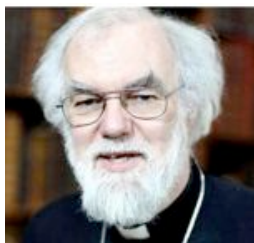
Dr. Kirby, whose ministry amongst us began the day after his Cathedral Ordination on Saturday 29th June, writes:

How did I get here?

It's a question I've often asked myself, especially over these few years preparing for ordained ministry! After 22 years in the National Health Service, and a Christian life which was always filled to overflowing with activities and responsibilities within the church, particularly in the realm of directing and singing music, I thought that that was my only vocation.

But I thought wrong! God had (indeed probably always had) a calling for me to fulfil my own self; to be, as **Rowan Williams** once so eloquently described it, *'called by God to be distinctly themselves, to exist as themselves.'*

So where I am now is probably just a part-fulfilment of that call, which happens throughout our entire lives.



I was born in Denton, Manchester – when it was still officially part of Lancashire – so I am a Lancastrian, born and bred! My parents had just emigrated from Ceylon, and I was born into a loving, prayerful family in the Roman Catholic tradition – a 'cradle Christian' is how some might describe it.

My parents worked really hard to give my brother and me the opportunities that they simply never had. So we both went to Manchester Grammar School, and then were educated to doctoral level at University; myself in Physics and Medical Physics at Durham, Birmingham and Manchester.

My Christian wings were fully exercised at Durham when, contrary to the popularly held belief that I would ditch God in favour of the truth of Physics, I was parachuted into a college life filled with the Spirit, music, worship and praise in all styles and traditions (which is me through and through); a full experience of God's goodness through bible study, prayer and lots of music – and Physics too!

But the vocation was only just developing spiritually; professionally it matured through work as a Radiotherapy Physicist, starting in 1988 at the Christie Hospital in Manchester, which is one of the largest cancer treatment centres in Europe. I then moved up to Preston as part of the team which set up the **Rosemere Cancer Centre** at the Royal Preston Hospital; I was made Consultant a few years later, and then my job moved back to the Christie as Head of Radiotherapy Physics for the Satellite Centres. (I was, and still am, happily living in Ribchester.)



My worship life has centred on St. Wilfrid's Church in Ribchester, where **Andrew Hindley** was Rector from 1991-1996. I have been helped there enormously (along with my ecumenical choir in Manchester) in my vocation to ordained ministry. This came in 2010 with a move to full-time training and education at Westcott House and Cambridge University.

Now I'm back associated with Cancer therapy, but in a teaching capacity as lecturer in Medical Physics at Liverpool University – a fulltime position which I will hold during my curacy here at Blackburn Cathedral.

There is much more to share, but little space in which to do so, for these matters are quite often best shared face to face; and so I sincerely hope and pray that in the months and years ahead we can do just that – find out more about each other and, together, see and hear just a little bit of the work God has been doing for so long, is doing right now and will be doing long into the future here in the heart of Blackburn and within our cathedral community.

I am deeply honoured to be part of that community and with the opportunity to serve you here in the Cathedral as a brother in Christ.

With my love and prayers;

God bless,

Mike (Assistant Curate)

