

National Unitarian Fellowship

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Viewpoint



Ministry Retrospectives

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Introduction

Many people coming into our Unitarian ministry are 'second lifers' who like myself had spent many years working in various sectors of the commercial world before answering the call to ministry. We had the advantage of worldly experience and probably some confidence that we might be strong enough to take on the challenge of ministry.

Before we came along ministry was a calling to young people and they have devoted their whole lives to serving the Unitarian Movement. It must have taken some courage, I thought.

I asked three such ministers who have recently retired if they would look back and share with us what I called a 'Ministry Retrospective'.

Rev Alun-Wyn Dafis began his ministry in 1982 and served congregations in Wales. Rev Peter Hewis began his ministry in 1962 and his name still crops up from time to time and you wonder if he really is retired. Rev John Midgley began his training in 1960. His wife Celia is also a minister and I thought there might be additional challenges in such a situation.

I am grateful to them for their honest accounts.

Rev Alun Wyn-Dafis

I still find it difficult to come to terms with the fact that I'm supposed to be retired from the ministry. Exactly ten years ago, in early 2004, my wife and I came across premises to let which seemed ideal to try out an idea which we had dreamed of for years; opening a restaurant.

The opportunity was too good to miss, and I decided to ask the six churches in which I served as minister for three months unpaid leave in order to help my wife, who had given up her career as a nurse, to start the business.

I had spent 22 years in the ministry straight from school and college and had never really done anything else; so I figured that it would be a good experience for me if nothing else; a kind of 'sabbatical' which I remember was a popular concept at the time. The three months disappeared in what seemed like three days of constant work and worry and I soon realised I would have to ask the churches for a considerably longer period of absence.

And that's how it happened, almost without knowing. It did not properly hit me, however, until I received the usual copy of the GA directory some months later, and to my great surprise saw the little letter 'r' next to my name i.e. retired. I don't know to this day who decided to place the letter, there, but ten years later, I have to admit, they were probably right!

Not that any minister is ever properly retired. After all, when you have lived amongst people, the same people in my case for some twenty odd years as a minister, neither your own or their attitudes are going to change over night. I still take between one and three services most Sundays, occasionally funeral and remembrance services, and I am meeting young couples to discuss their wedding services. It still gives me great pleasure to be involved with all of this and I still feel very privileged to be invited to be with families and individuals at some of life's most important moments.

I don't know if it's a record, but I belong to the fourth consecutive generation in our family to have a full time minister. But if anything, growing up in the Manse and having to be involved in countless church activities, Sunday School etc. served to put me right off.

At the age of fourteen, like most teenagers I was ready to turn my back on the whole thing, but for some reason, when I got to sixteen I decided that I would become a member of my father's church, the Graig Unitarian chapel in Trebanos. I began to go to the six o'clock service each Sunday night, and really enjoyed the hour there, which I found a calming and peaceful influence particularly during the stressful period when I was studying for A levels.

The one thing I missed greatly later on when I had become a minister, was the opportunity to go to church and just be a member of the congregation. Since being 'retired' I have become a member in Llwynrhydowen Chapel, and when possible, I take great enjoyment in attending the Sunday service once again, under the leadership of 'my' minister now, the Rev. Wyn Thomas.

The second massive influence on my eventual decision to become a minister was the amazing work that the Rev. Eric Jones and Dr. Beverley Littlepage did at the Unitarian Young People's Holiday in Llanmadog. The contribution that this annual week long event made to the Welsh Unitarian cause cannot be underestimated and every time I meet someone to this day who used to go to Llanmadog it is always the first topic of conversation.

It enabled young Unitarians from all over Wales to get to know each other and create what we call today a social network. Crucially also for me, was the opportunity to learn that a Unitarian service can be anything we want it to be; under the guidance of Eric, Beverley and the team, everyone was encouraged to take part in the short morning and evening services we had in Llanmadog; it didn't matter what anyone was wearing or what language we spoke, we could use music or even just silence, and these simple but very spiritual services were to inspire me greatly later on in my own ministry.

The third thing that happened to set me on course for the ministry was hatched by my father. I had just turned seventeen and had passed my driving test when one morning my father casually mentioned to me that his colleague, the Rev. Aubrey Martin, was taking his annual holiday and had asked him if he could take three services for him while he was away. My father explained to me that he was not able to do it, but to help Aubrey out of his predicament, and as I was now able to drive, perhaps I could do it for him!

He explained to me that he would write out everything I needed so that all I had to do was to read through the script and that would be that. I tentatively agreed to the plan.

I will never forget that first Sunday morning. I drove the hour and a

quarter journey from Swansea into the depths of the 'Black spot' and arriving at Pantydefaid chapel I stopped the car a 100 yards from the building. I remember being terrified and excited at the same time, and I was torn between turning the car around and fleeing back to Swansea or driving into the church car park and getting on with it. I did eventually find the courage to go on, take the morning, afternoon and evening services and drive back to Swansea, thoroughly exhausted but wonderfully happy.

I often think back to that day and remember the kindness of the people in those congregations around Llandysul for putting up with what must have been terrible, but at the same time, giving me the confidence and support that ended up changing the course of my life. Within two weeks of arriving home that Sunday evening, I had informed the University at Aberystwyth that I would no longer be taking the history degree course in October as I'd planned, and had arranged a meeting with the principal of Memorial College, Swansea, to study for the ministry.

At the end of the three year course I was awarded a Bachelor of Divinity degree and had accepted a 'calling' to three Unitarian churches in the 'black spot' - namely Alltyblaca, Bryn and Cwmsychant; the same three churches that my great uncle the Rev, Jacob Davies had been minister at until 8 years previously; churches he affectionately referred to as the ABC, and indeed, for me it was a return to ABC as I was at the ripe old age of 21 being thrown into the deep end!

In retrospect I think I was far too young. I often felt totally inadequate when trying to comfort an eighty or ninety year old parishioner dying in hospital, or trying to answer questions from a parent whose child had committed suicide and countless other difficult situations.

Thank God, the members of the ABC were wonderful and patient, and they supported me through those early years when, just like that first Sunday morning outside Pantydefaid chapel, it would have been so much easier to turn around and run! Also I was fortunate to have two ministers at the end of the phone when I was at my wit's end. My father back home in Swansea, but also my colleague in the 'Black

spot' the Rev. Goronwy Evans. There were periods when I wouldn't see or speak to Goronwy for weeks or even months, but when I was stuck, I would pick up the phone and he'd always be there; never telling me what to do, but supporting and advising if I asked him for advice, and for that I am massively grateful.

There were many happy times as well of course; concerts, coffee evenings, sales of work, fun runs, discos, treasure hunts, singing festivals, radio broadcasts, Christmas plays, musicals, quizzes, dinners, BBQs, sports and countless other fun things; most of them things that I had no idea how to do or organise, but I quickly found that all you have to do is ask for help, and generally everything will come together because people like to be involved and to make a contribution.

I am very lucky in that I have always loved music, and though I can't sing, I love to play instruments. During my ministry I played keyboards for at least three different local bands playing gigs every weekend, and this allowed me to get to know many of the younger generation in the area. Many of them were fascinated to learn that I was a minister (or 'the vicar' as I was quickly nicknamed) and although I never saw any of them in a church service I spent many hours on weekend evenings talking to people about Unitarianism and religion, many of whom were very interested and had quite definite religious ideas and beliefs although they had never been in a church.

But some of the most important things that I learned came through adversity strangely enough. In 1993 I suffered a very bad road accident resulting in multiple injuries the most serious of which was a broken neck. I was very lucky not to be paralysed but the injury necessitated many weeks in intensive care and hospital wards and a drug induced paralysis to enable the various fractures to heal.

From being a minister used to visiting the sick in hospital, the tables were now turned! I was also on intravenous morphine for pain relief which had the effect of causing me to hallucinate. I can laugh now when I look back, but at the time it was anything but funny. One day I remember vividly being in a cave through which ran a stream, and every minute or so a collection of brightly coloured pixies would

row past me in a boat. Another time I remember being in an upstairs room and trying to warn other people that there was a hoard of pirates, all wearing skull and crossbones hats, on ladders trying to break in through the windows.

To this day I swear that that these visions were real! A doctor explained to me later that the only thing in front of my eyes was the white plain ceiling of the intensive care ward and the visions were all caused by the drugs. But the important point I wanted to make is this. Whatever strange visions my brain conjured before my eyes, the one sense that always stayed true to reality was my hearing. I could always hear the conversations of relatives, nurses or friends around me though I couldn't see them. I can even remember today much of what was said in my presence. The experience has made me acutely aware whenever I visit people in a hospital especially, when the patient is heavily sedated or receiving strong painkillers, although they might seem to be unconscious and unable to respond, it is quite likely that they are able to hear and understand most of what is going on around them, and that they may be very frustrated at not being able to communicate.

After I was released from hospital I was confined to a wheelchair for many weeks as I had broken both legs, a period which made me look at people's disabilities in a very different way. The tears, frustration and sometimes anger that comes from not being able to do the small and simple things that we all take for granted can be very difficult. Also the terrible prejudices people have with regards to disabled people is incredible. I remember being pushed in the chair along the local high street and often when we would come across people that I knew, they would politely ask the person pushing the chair "Oh how terrible, How is he ?" and totally ignoring me as if I was not there! Sometimes I would go into a shop to buy something, and after handing the money to the shop assistant, the change would be handed back to the person pushing the chair, not to myself. Perhaps the best one of all was the visit I made to a restaurant one evening.

My wife and I sat at a table and were casually reading the menu. But, when the waiter saw that I was in a wheelchair he hurried over, snatched the menu from my hand and came back with a large print

menu for me! I could go on, but I often think that a day in a wheelchair out in the community would be a useful module in the ministerial training programme!

As I look back over my years in the ministry a couple of the high points for me were helping the Unitarian young people of the district write their own musical and stage it to two full houses at our local theatre. Also being asked to prepare, edit and publish our new Welsh language hymn book which in 1997 replaced the original book that had served our Welsh speaking congregations since 1928. I am very proud to have my name on its pages and hope that this hymn book will still be useful to our congregations for many years to come, when I am long gone! But the biggest high points of all cannot be mentioned, as they were the private, precious and confidential moments that I spent as a minister with individuals and families over the years.

There are also some regrets of course. Many mistakes that I made, some things that make me cringe when I remember them, some things I didn't do which I should have, and some people that I failed, and all I can do is to apologise sincerely.

I do worry about the future of our churches, and I sometimes think that our wonderful, lovely buildings can be a bit of a hindrance. I wonder what the thousands of people who walk or drive past our churches each day think they are about. Many of them having never been inside a chapel or attended a service anywhere. There is a danger that we can become exclusive little secret clubs, hidden away inside our buildings, while people outside have no idea about what goes on inside, who goes there, and even worse, don't care. I still remember my father constantly reminding me that the New Testament Greek word for 'church' is 'Ek Kaleo', hence our Welsh word 'eglwys', or the French 'eglise' or the English 'ecclesiastical'; the Greek is literally two words - Ek - Out, and Kaleo- calling. Not a calling in my father would say, but a calling out to the World!

Husband and Wife in the Ministry by John Midgley

There have been husband and wife couples in the Unitarian ministry in the UK for some generations. Who were the first? It would take some research to discern that, but looking through the GA Directory today makes me think that there are more couples now than ever before. Some are active, some are designated retired and some couples consist of one of each.

We have John and Beryl Allerton, Richard and Jopie Boeke, Alex and Jean Bradley, Brian and Lena Cockroft in Northern Ireland, James and Anne McClelland, Brian and Kathy Packer, Don and Linda Philips, John and Daphne Roberts and John and Celia Midgley. That's nine couples, and if we add David and Elizabeth Shaw, Elizabeth having Lay Charge at Great Hucklow, that makes ten. That's quite a proportion. Each of these couples will have their own stories as to how it came about that, as well as sharing their lives as marriage partners they also shared a commitment to the same calling or career.

In our case, there are at least two unusual features to this shared life. The first is that when Celia set off for Unitarian College to begin her ministry training course, we were already married and I was a member of the College's teaching staff. That might have been an invidious or even difficult teaching and learning situation, but we decided to just get on with it. There were one or two tricky moments, but in the end it all flowed through satisfactorily.

On completion of her course, however, Celia was confronted with what was to be a serious problem for a time, namely geography. Finding a ministry that was geographically convenient to my already established ministry in Altrincham and Urmston was, for a while, impossible. We struggled with the fact that Celia was unemployed for the first two years, until a part time vacancy at nearby Monton became available. This she filled for close on three years.

The second unusual feature was that when I decided that, after twenty years, both I and also the congregations at Altrincham and Urmston were ready for a change, a most uncertain future loomed

above us for a while. I became the GA Development Officer, and managed to persuade the then Development Commission to allow me to keep my office at home, rather than move in to Essex Hall. The Altrincham and Urmston congregations had then to appoint my successor, and after due process, Celia was appointed. As far as we know, we are the first British instance of one spouse following another directly in a ministry.

It meant that we could stay in our home, The Parsonage at Altrincham. This meant, however, swapping studies. The Parsonage had a built in study close by the front door, so that visitors could come and go to see the minister without intruding on the family. Upstairs was a small spare bedroom that served as a second study which Celia had occupied. When I relinquished the ministry and Celia took over, it was quite an upheaval to transport books and papers, as well as furniture, up and down the stairs to make the swap.

Another factor that needed some careful handling was the Sunday morning situation. There is a long-established convention that, when a minister leaves a congregation, he or she should stay well away so as to leave the situation clear for his or her successor. In our instance, I wanted to attend Celia's Sunday services to support her and be a member of the congregation. So, for the first twelve months I would attend on most Sundays but not stay for the socialising at coffee time after the service. There were one or two instances when someone would begin a conversation with me, and ask about something or someone in the congregation. I would take great delight in answering, "I don't know. You'll have to ask your new minister!" But for the most part the transition all went very smoothly, with no serious issues to contend with.

It should not be thought, however, that the takeover from me by Celia simply meant that things would carry on exactly as before. We are different persons, and have our different views. As I sometimes said to the members of the congregation, "Celia and I are not carbon copies of each other." Celia had her interests and priorities, and I had mine. She had to build up her relationships with the congregations in her own way, and this took time. Whether the congregation saw the change-over as an improving situation or not, is for others to

say! No-one ever said anything to give us a clue to that.

So we have enjoyed the advantages and struggled with the frustrations of being closely involved in the same profession. The frustrations are actually few, consisting mostly of trying to juggle with time management. Many times we have had to sit down at a table and try to co-ordinate our diaries. Finding time for one's personal life or family matters or holidays, often proved difficult.

To be the sort of minister who is sensitive to people and their needs, and at the same time be able to say 'No' is far from easy. So we have often found ourselves in situations where one of us has a period of time when we are not so busy, only to discover that the other has a plate that is very full of ministerial work of various kinds.

And it is that variety of work that is both the joy and the complexity of the life of a minister. Worship preparation is, of course, the main task, but there is so much more. There are rites of passage, funerals in particular, which can occur at any time and, usually, take priority. Then there is pastoral care of the congregation, particularly the elderly and housebound but also men and women of all ages and situations, who need someone with time available.

It is crucial and continuous work, coping with a busy life without appearing to be so busy that people are reluctant to share important matters, because, as they will often say, "Well, I know you're very busy."

Then there is correspondence of various kinds, committees to attend, perhaps even serve as an officer, at local, district, national, international, ecumenical, or interfaith levels. Making time to meet with other ministers, perhaps serving as a mentor or supervisor for a student, attending and contributing to ministers' conferences, writing articles for the church magazine, the Unitarian or The Inquirer or even NUF Viewpoint! On and on the dimensions of ministry go, as well as what is often referred to as 'self care', that is, attending to one's own emotional and spiritual nourishment.

To be a married couple involved in all of these can sometimes

seem like a doubling up of the workload and commitments. But there are advantages too. Sharing resources is a fairly obvious benefit. Celia and I both have extensive libraries and in particular a wide array of worship materials. So, the cry will often go up, "Have you got a good poem about..." whatever the subject is this week. Or, "I need a children's story about...." or, "What hymn would you choose to go with...?"

Not that we always agree about such things. One will suggest a suitable reading or propose an idea or line of thought, and the other might well reply, "Well, thanks, but that's not what I'm looking for at all!" But more often it is a case of sharing thoughts that prompt other thoughts that lead through to something else. It's sometimes called 'striking sparks off each other', and when it works, it can be quite wonderful.

The other benefit is mutual support. To be told that one has done well, or done a good job, by someone close, who shares the knowledge and experience of the work, can be deeply supportive. And there are many difficult and stressful situations that occur. To come home after a difficult committee meeting, or after a visit to a seriously ill person, or a funeral preparation meeting with a distressed family, and have someone there who knows and can listen and offer 'tea and sympathy', is a huge benefit. I often think of those ministers who, at the end of a stressful day, go home to an empty house and I wonder how they manage that. Fortunately Celia and I both enjoy cooking and are able to share household and gardening tasks.

Retirement has brought a new set of challenges, such as where to move to, which congregation to join, and what commitments to take on. I enjoy writing for the Inquirer as well as serving as chair of its Board of Directors. I have published a book of sermons, and I also edit the Ministerial Fellowship's professional Journal, as well as the Viewsletter of the Unitarian Renewal Group.

Celia serves as secretary of both of these groups, and these are demanding jobs. We have taken on joint pastoral oversight of Pepper Hill Chapel, and by contrast, both of us enjoy the international Unitar-

ian scene. Celia has served on the Executive of ICUU and we have visited Europe, the US and South Africa since we retired.

So, we look on this ministry of the double life with a host of memories and much gratitude. It would be inappropriate to say, "We recommend it." Personal circumstances differ so greatly that each situation has to be judged individually. But certainly we have no regrets about being together in our chosen career. We'd do it again, if only.....

Rev Peter Hewis **WE ARE TEAM WORKERS**

In September 2013 I was invited to give my Odyssey at the Ministers' Conference and began with the words of a Greek poet Constantine P. Cavafy from his poem 'Setting Out on the Voyage to Ithaca'. His poem suggests that the journey itself is what really matters so here's a short portion of that poem. At the beginning he writes this:

*When you start on your journey to Ithaca,
then pray that the road is long,
full of adventure, full of knowledge...*

Then he ends with these words: -

*And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not defrauded you.
With the great wisdom you have gained, with so much experience,
you surely must have understood by then what Ithacas mean.*

Well I'm not sure about gaining great wisdom but the experience of serving four congregations has certainly been enjoyed.

For more than 40 years of ministry I have retained in my mind the words of the first Unitarian Minister that I ever heard, Joyce Hazlehurst. As she spoke of her beliefs I suddenly realised that her Unitarian beliefs were mine. Briefly this is what I heard: -

- Jesus was a human being, a great and noble prophet, teacher, leader but still a human being and just one of the children of God.

- All the great religions have something good in their essential teachings but not in the fanatical elements.
- We should all think for ourselves on matters of religion and faith.

Later on contacts with other great faiths, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam confirmed for me the goodness at the heart of all great religions when the people of those faiths follow the best teachings of their faiths.

Now let's move on to the churches I have served. Each congregation was in a very different situation but contained human beings on a journey from birth to death and maybe beyond. The function of my ministries has been to help and support them on that journey.

MANSFORD STREET IN BETHNAL GREEN. East London was and still is one of the poorest areas of London and after they had not had a minister for ten years I served for seven years. During my own ministry there the congregation encouraged work in the wider community and on one eventful day we took direct action after a child was killed after falling from a derelict building next to the church. A year of letter writing to the council had brought no action so we blocked the road in protest and within forty-eight hours the council acted and quickly knocked the buildings down. For many years we took children from the area on the Send a Child to Hucklow weeks and we built up a large Junior Club and Youth Club.

Following housing clearance the Council named all their new flats after eminent Unitarians. The Cockneys and Bangladeshis must have fun pronouncing Gwilym Marles House but they will find Adrian Boulton House easier. The newly formed Gwalia Choir gave their first ever concert in the church and the Secretary asked if I would mind his sister singing some solos. His sister was the renowned soprano Anne Evans who was then at the start of her career, Anne became a leading Wagnerian singer. It was also in Bethnal Green that I

began to know several Jewish people, attended some of their synagogues and respected their faith.

Mansford Street was and is a community church, the last in the line of Domestic Missions and still doing splendid work. In my time there we also created the Hibbert House hostel in Albert Street Camden Town, much of it paid for with profits made at Hibbert Houses in Cyprus.

HINCKLEY in Leicestershire was the next church where I spent twenty-nine happy years. The chapel dating from 1722 is a beautifully kept building but in 1972 had no modern facilities, not even a hot water supply. During my stay we modernised the premises, transformed the finances and landscaped the grounds. The chapel had excellent trustees, officers and members who showed great responsibility. It has had and still has a major impact on the town.

Over the years members founded the hospital, library, Co-operative Society and one of the building societies. During my own ministry in the congregation we had the Secretary of the constituency Labour Party, an Independent Borough Councillor, a Conservative County Councillor and I was a Liberal Borough Councillor but we never discussed politics on Sundays! Three members of the Chapel received MBEs for their services to the wider community. In the wider field I served as Chaplain & Welfare Officer to Davenport Knitwear plc, a company owned by a Chapel member. The factories had predominantly female workers and over the years I probably knew more about female problems than any other Unitarian minister, including our female ministers.

One of my policies was to encourage people to be part of a team and have a go at many things. To raise money for the organ restoration I wrote a simple booklet 'Things of Value' and with the help of a newsagent friend and the local paper around a thousand copies were sold. We also created several anthologies, 'Circle of Life', 'Seasons of Life', 'This is Our Chapel' and 'Favourite Prayers of Hinckley Unitarians'. After 25 years I produced an A4 sheet on Changes in Chapel Life and Society 1972-1997 and that helped us to move forward with courses, Building your own Theology, Confidence in

Speaking and Preparing and conducting a service.

The local funeral directors would often phone to tell me they had a funeral and that I was the only minister in the town who could cope with it, the funerals ranged from one for a Hindu to one for a man who had undergone a sex change.

Amongst our successes were modernisation of the premises, transformation of the finances, landscaping of the grounds, greater use of the premises by non-Unitarian groups, including something of interest to the wider community in every issue of the newsletter and, best of all, seeing many people fulfilling something of their potential. Over the years we welcomed many Hungarian speaking students and ministers to our home plus several Indian Unitarians.

OXFORD. Manchester College, now Harris Manchester, has an amazing history but in no way could it justify a full stipend for a Unitarian Minister to be just the tutor for a handful of Ministerial students so my post was four fold, Tutor in Ministerial Training, Chaplain to the college, Minister to the Unitarian congregation and amazingly the post of Bursar, responsible for running all the non-academic side of the college - but delegating to superb department heads of accounts, admin, catering and maintenance.

One of my first tasks was to sort out the investments after I discovered that for four years the college had been paying fees to an Investment Manager for losing us money! We took the investments out of their hands, handled the investments with our own team and did far better.

We had some amazing people in the Unitarian congregation. Paulette Micklewood had been a founder of the Alzheimer's Society, Richard Symonds had been a friend of Gandhi, Alan Bullock was a former Vice-Chancellor of the University and Peter Burgess had solved the technical problems of the gadget that terminally ill patients can use to control their pain.

They have all died but we still have amazing people in the congregation! We held courses similar those in Hinckley and included one on Everyday Spirituality. At least a dozen people in the chapel now conduct services and one of my delights was in conducting many interfaith weddings.

INTERNATIONAL.

The International aspect that had the greatest effect on me has been through America. In 1971 whilst at Bethnal Green I had an exchange with Ken MacLean who was then in Knoxville, Tennessee. The exchange started a friendship that has lasted for more than forty years. In 1971 if I had a Biblical reading one woman would walk out of the church but when I undertook an Interim Ministry in 1981 several requested Biblical readings. As part of that ministry I ran a course on Health Care and had speakers ranging from the head of a psychiatric hospital to the Medical Officer of the American Mineworkers' Union. The first exchange also introduced me to Canadian Unitarian Universalists when I spent a month at the Universalist Church in North Hatley, a beautiful church on the shores of Lake Massawippi. Since returning from my first exchange I seem to have persuaded at least four British Ministers to undertake exchanges and not one of them has regretted their decision, we can all learn from each other.

DENOMINATIONAL.

Over the years I have served on many committees and most achieved little. The two where I made a real difference was as Secretary for twenty years of the former North Midland District and for twenty years as Secretary of the Ministers' Benevolent Society. A third success came on a small working party with Jim McClelland and the late Gerald Whitaker when we concluded the denomination should have a brand new hymn book with music, that recommendation eventually led to Hymns for Living.

That's something of what has been achieved through team work with members of congregations and throughout I have

valued the Unitarian liberal approach to religion.

Our approach might only appeal to a minority but as the anthropologist Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

On my journey with several congregations we have shared a human and religious journey, at times even mystical although some would use different words. I believe that we provide a home for many who are journeying through life.

In pondering what my ministries have achieved I return to hymn 284 in Hymns for Living and the words of Peter Galbraith,

*To you each, my friends, tonight
I give thanks for company;
We have shared the inner light:
May that light go forth with thee,
May we give each other power –
Live with courage every hour.*

Comments -

We welcome your comments on this issue. With your permission your comments might also be included in the NUF Newsletter.

Please send your comments to the editor,

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