

# Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in  
secular ministry

---

Number 84

January 2003

---

*To help ourselves and others to celebrate the presence of God and the holiness of life in our work, and to see and tell the Christian story there.*

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<i>Editorial</i>	2
<i>2003 CHRISM Weekends</i>	3
<i>What on earth!?</i> Peter Johnson	4
<i>Just One Of The Team</i>	
- <i>Reflections of a Laboratory Assistant</i> Colin Hull	6
<i>Readers as MSEs</i>	7
<i>An encouraging sign?</i>	9
<i>A working spirituality - a secular sacrament</i>	10
Heather Pencavel	
<i>No Musts and Oughts!</i> Phil Aspinall	12
<i>"Rumour of Angels":</i>	
a response from Michael Ranken	14
<i>Whitehall-Wide Network</i> Anna Nemeth	16
<i>International Worker Priest Conference</i>	
<i>Input from the English Group at Bergamo,</i>	
<i>Pentecost 2002</i> Phil Aspinall & Stan Frost	18
<i>International Co-ordination of Worker Priests</i>	
<i>Proposal presented at WP Conference,</i>	
<i>Bergamo 2002</i> Phil Aspinall & Stan Frost	21
<i>European Worker Priests 2003</i> Phil Aspinall	23
<i>An American in Paris</i> Phil Aspinall	23
<i>From the Other Side</i> Dr Forrest Lowry	26
<i>Book Reviews</i>	28
<i>2 books by Bishop Jack Spong,</i>	
<i>reviewed by Keith Holt and Stan Frost</i>	
<i>Church watch</i>	34
<i>Oh Sister!</i>	35
<i>Grants for Women!</i>	35
<i>Work – Life balance: the importance of managers</i>	36
<i>Diary dates</i>	38
<i>'How to get the job you'll love'</i>	39
<i>Harry Hill – an appreciation</i>	40

**Copy deadline for next edition: 4 April.**

*(The views expressed in the various articles in this Journal are those of the writer, unless stated otherwise. If you would like to reproduce any of the articles, please contact the Editor).*

## *Editorial*

Judging from the various items in this edition of "Ministers-at-Work" the pot is not just stirred up, it is a-boiling!

Michael Ranken has been inspired to take up the quill in response to October's article on the Sociology behind Spirituality in the Workplace (which was recommended by Michael!). This one has sparked more than one hearty debate, and I shall be entering the lists myself in the next edition. Phil Aspinall's article on 'musts and oughts' (or should that be mustn'ts and oughtn'ts?) similarly takes up themes from the July edition and touches on some of the same issues. Both are thought provoking and good reads.

I am grateful to Colin Hull for his article, "Just one of the team", and to Heather Pencavel for "A working spirituality - a secular sacrament". These are MSE story at its best, and complement the enclosed CHRISM 7 publication, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like ...", admirably. Also included is an item on the Reader as MSE, culled from recent material published by the Church of England. Leafing through early editions of the Newsletter (as this Journal once was), I was struck by a number of articles on the Local Preacher and Sector Minister as MSE the Methodist Church. The parallels were striking.

I should point out at this stage that if an item is not attributed it is because:

- § I don't know who the original author was,
- § It is put together by myself or another from publicly available information, or
- § It is the product of a number of people at different stages of gestation.

(The distinction between the second and third may seem obscure, but in practice there is one!)

Another striking feature of the early Newsletters is the importance in the early 1980s, as now, of International links. It is quite easy for us to become so engrossed in our own 'patch', whether that be workplace or local church (I have Phil Aspinall's article in mind with that last phrase!), that we forget that MSE is truly international. How it

manifests itself in different countries and different denominational traditions does vary, but the similarities are even more striking. I have enjoyed and learned much from e-mail correspondence with MSEs in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Scandinavia. From across the Pond, Dr. Forrest Lowry's call to what we know as MSE is one of the most rousing I have heard.

An MSE in the UK is certainly not a Worker-Priest in the French mould (or even British: see John Mantle's informative book, "Britain's First Worker-Priests"), but the ways MSEs minister in the type of work and workplace in which we find ourselves differ little. This edition continues the tradition of placing 'our' MSE-ery in its international context.

My thanks to all who contributed to this and earlier editions. Curiously, the more material I have the more time-consuming the task of editing becomes (offers of assistance are always welcome), but it is a most enjoyable and rewarding task. And it means I get to see and treasure the pearls of wisdom first!

**Rob**

### ***2003 Reflective Weekend***

#### ***The Grain in Winter***

*Looking for the hidden activity of God in our Work and Role as MSEs*

A Reflective Weekend based around the book by Donald Eadie.

14 - 16 February 2003, at Holland House, Crophorne, Worcestershire. CHRISM Members £100 (others £110).

Contact: **Sue Gibbons** (details in rear cover)

### ***2003 CHRISM Conference***

This year's Conference and AGM is to be held on the weekend of 11 - 13 July, at the **Crossroads Hotel, Redruth, Cornwall**.

Projected cost is £120 per person (members). Accommodation in Cornwall is at a premium in summer and if you are considering coming please let **Peter Johnson** know by the end of February. If you are a couple and would like a twin room, please also let Peter know. See the **flyer** with this edition for further details.

## *What on earth?!*

*Peter Johnson  
Presiding Moderator of Chrism*

In the last Journal I wrote of the ministry of all believers – ordained and lay – in the secular workplace. I want now to focus primarily on the training for ministry of Anglican priests. This emphasis comes from a recent experience and because of the latest deliberations of the Church of England about training for the ordained ministry.

A friend of mine has just been ordained deacon and will be “priested” next June. She is a full time teacher at a comprehensive school and intends to continue her teaching career. She came and spoke with me about Ministry in Secular Employment and was extremely enthusiastic about the ministry and how she felt it would answer her calling. When she discussed this with her tutors on the ministerial training course she was told the “MSE is not a real ministry”. She was persuaded to become a Non-Stipendiary Minister and has since been given charge of two small rural churches. When discussing her training curacy under the incumbent, she was expected to meet daily with the parish priest for Morning Prayer. On reminding those in authority that she had a full time job and could the expectation be adapted was told that this way of training curates had worked for hundreds of years and they could see no reason for changing it. She now feels uncertain of her capabilities to fulfil the expectations of her parish priest, the congregation of two churches and of those in authority over her to say nothing of her own full time teaching work and her family.

What on earth is the Church of England doing to these people? Why do those in authority continually insist on repeating the mistakes of years past? There seems to be a wilful blindness to the obvious or incompetence in the training and understanding of real life.

The Church of England’s latest document on training for ordained ministry fails to recognise the legitimacy of such a ministry even though it is happening within its structures. The document seems to insist on perpetuating a system that is in need of urgent devel-

opment. The development of the worker-priest movement is not a threat to the parish-based structure of the Anglican Church.

This theme is especially relevant to CHRISM at the moment. Two past moderators and I had a very useful meeting with Rt Revd John Gladwin – Bishop of Guildford – Chairman of the Ministry Division of the Church of England. We met him at Church House in Westminster to talk about a Bishop Sponsor for CHRISM and the place of our organisation within the Church of England. We found we were “pushing an open door”. The Bishop is not only supportive of our ministry – ordained and lay – and our organisation, but hopes to begin discussions with CHRISM about the organisation being a reference point for the Anglican Church when considering ministry in secular employment. To this end he will bring the organisation to the attention of the Ministry Division and to the Bishops’ meeting later this year. This, we hope, would help to start the process of addressing the uneven approach to the ministry across the country that your responses to our questionnaire revealed.

The Bishop also expressed the wish to meet with as many MSE’s as possible and hopes to attend our reflective weekend in Worcestershire in February and/or our Annual General Meeting and Conference in Cornwall in July. To this end I encourage you to attend these gatherings not only for your own refreshment and support but also because they could signal a positive development within the attitude of the Anglican Church towards the ministry.

*You will also find a membership list in the journal. I commend this list to you for your intercessions as discussed in the last journal.*

The West of England Ministerial Training Course handbook glossary includes the following:

**MINISTER IN SECULAR EMPLOYMENT (MSE):** An ordained minister of the Church of England whose principal focus of ministry is their place of employment, (e.g. a school), rather than a local parish. (*Why is ‘school’ so often the example workplace? Ed.*)

***Just One Of The Team  
- Reflections of a Laboratory Assistant.***

***Colin Hull***

I have been licensed as a Reader in St Albans Diocese of the Church of England for 14 yrs. I'm preaching and assisting in one of three local Churches on a regular basis. A few years ago at a Reader conference I was challenged to take a look at what I do during my major non-church activities, including Mon-Fri at work. This was to begin to see Reader Ministry as also work based and not just what we do on church based duties.

During all my 14 yrs as a Reader I have been employed as a Senior Laboratory Assistant for a small independent polymer research facility and polymer materials consultancy. My main area is chemical analysis as part of a small team. Although a church minister I have no formal chaplaincy role but am just part of the work team. Many of my work colleagues know I have a church ministry connection but I am like most of my regular church congregation folk simply trying to be a Christian presence within my place of work. Among my colleagues in other departments there are a few other Christians of various church backgrounds and we meet fairly frequently to pray for each other and for our other colleagues about work based and personal situations.

A good proportion of my immediate colleagues in my analytical team are atheists. Others had church influences and connections in the past but do not want to belong to the institutional church now. They may have varying levels of Christian belief and moral principles derived from those former connections. In this setting I feel I am first and foremost a listener to hear their objections to formal religion and where appropriate offer a personal and reasonable defence of my faith. Many speak of a church that somehow failed them in some way, failed to live up its ideals and therefore seeming hypocritical. My response is often silence and later reflection on how we as the church often do fail to live up to our calling and by

doing so confound someone else's budding belief and commitment to God.

Another personal response to my colleagues is simply to take their troubles, comments about the church and the world back into my own prayers and offer them up to God in my private devotions. Also to offer and show an genuine concern for their lives and troubles inside and outside work.

Over the years I have had questions directed to me from the point of view of serious enquiry and wanting to understand. More recently after being professed as a member of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis I started to wear my professional cross to work. One colleagues have asked why I wear it and this has provided a small opportunity to talk about living under my particular Franciscan rule of life. One work colleague is a fan of the cult TV series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer". He made a remark that my cross slightly alarmed him. "I expect you to be out slaying vampires!" Well I'm not slaying vampires exactly but hopefully over time I can slay some misconceptions about Christian faith and discipleship. I hope I can also continue to find ways to show a person can be a thinking person, scientist, analyst and be Christian.

### ***Readers as MSEs***

*Readership of the Journal has since the start included a number of Church of England Readers, several of whom have made important contributions to the growth of MSE and of CHRISM. With the recent attention on Worker Priests, both in Britain and Europe, what follows is a timely reminder of the Readers' role in the development of ministry at work, and of the Church of England's confusion as to how Readers can be used. Ed.*

There have always been conflicting statements in the literature about Reader ministry on whether the Church of England wanted Readers to prioritise their ministry inside the church as preachers and teachers or to act as missionaries, evangelists or theologians in the world. Whilst some of the references to preaching and teaching suggest a ministry to the church community other texts provide a different picture. This is illustrated in a comment by Bishop Christopher Mayfield (until his recent retirement, Episcopal Officer for



reader Ministry) that Readers can be "builders of bridges between the believing church and the unbelieving world" and the ABM view that Readers should move out of the church into the world because they had "the opportunity to bring a theological resource to people whom the clergy never meet". There is however a difficulty with the presupposition that the laity have extensive non-church based contacts — church growth studies have shown that members of the laity who have been active church members for some time are just as likely as the clergy to have limited non-church relationships.

'A Church For The World' states that: "Readers have been treated more and more as substitute clergy" rather than "the representatives in worship of the engagement of Christians-in-the-world". The report particularly stresses the desire that Readers would become preachers and teachers who stop being focused on the pastoral activities of other members of the laity, and become people who can interpret the gospel in the light of their experiences in the world. This view was partially endorsed by the Report On Bishops' Regulations For Reader Ministry where Readers were seen as preachers and teachers with liturgical responsibility. A further example is the Bishop of Southampton who believes that the Reader has a responsibility as a lay-theologian to work out the practical implications of the interaction between the church and the world.

The survey clearly showed that 73% of respondents preferred Readers to bring their experience of work and the world into their preaching and teaching ministry within the church. There were, however exceptions, who saw the mission and outreach, function as more important.

The role of the Reader in the workplace highlights the distinction between the functions that Readers carry out because they are Readers and what they could have done without their licence.

The evidence gathered in the survey suggests that the Reader's licence is 'at best' a discussion starter in the work place. This implies that the idea of a bishop's licence enabling Readers to become an outward looking 'bridge builder between the church and the world' is somewhat optimistic. This position agrees with research on NSM, which identified that ordination as a priest gives a person

in secular employment far more visibility than that experienced by Readers, which may lead to opportunities and hostility.

The fact remains that a Reader, and equivalents in other denominations, is theologically trained and authorised. They are 'representative' and equipped to 'do theology'. As with NSMs (of various titles!), the Reader has as much ministry at work as they are prepared to take on!

### *An encouraging sign?*

The 'Church Times' recently included an interview with the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams by Paul Handley (*drawn to my attention by Michael Ranken – Ed.*). The following extract is worth quoting:

*\*PH\**: ... and the invitation [to ministry] doesn't have to be to a particular congregation.

*\*RW\**: No, there are forms of ordained ministry that are not bound to parish and committed community. I suspect we are going to see more people in the next 20 years or so ordained to positions and responsibilities more on the margins of the system.

*\*PH\**: And you'd welcome that?

*\*RW\**: Yes. And that is not in any sense derogating from the parish system: that is the mainstream, the majority of people bedded down in the Christian faith, the Christian community. Some people sense a deep call to ordained ministry, but can't see themselves exercising that straightforwardly in the parochial system as it now is, because they feel a call to the marginal settings.

*\*PH\**: Those people are unlikely to be paid by the Church of England, are they? The money still attaches to parish ministry.

*\*RW\**: Again, I suspect we are moving towards quite a varied pattern of how clergy are resourced, with all the difficulties that brings about how and where lines of accountability run.

*(We're ahead of you Rowan! Ed.)*

## ***A working spirituality - a secular sacrament***

***Heather Pencavel***

*A long-standing member of CHRISM, Heather explores what being a Minister in Secular Employment has meant for her. Lay or ordained, in paid or voluntary work, her insights can speak to all 'members of a royal priesthood'.*

In the 'secular' context in which I tried to explore ministry for over eight years, my company knew I was 'some kind of vicar', but that was considered no more than an eccentric hobby. The workplace required my professional skills - no need for spiritual skills here! Yet I found it was possible to explore and sometimes to offer ministry in this context and to develop a working spirituality.

There was first a ministry of **identification** by which as an ordained person I shared the same pressures and stresses, the same sense of achievement and satisfaction as the people with whom I worked. When we were privatised, in 1994, my salary and working conditions [like everyone else's] were at risk: when the company's major contract had to be renegotiated three years later my job and my income were again on the line. And I shared in the bonus when the contract was won! This intimate sharing of common life is also a sharing in the Incarnation: God present in the flesh and fabric of the world. Out of it, for me, came a way of praying that was less a disciplined exercise and more occasional 'orgies' of thought, reflection and writing. God, I discovered, seemed to live somewhere in the innards of my computer!

I found too a ministry of **Proclamation**; the Ministry of the Word. Proclamation is perhaps stretching it a bit. The Word of justice and love was usually scattered among many other words, spoken where ever possible in interviews, conversations, training sessions and meetings; told in language which ranged from that understood by students with special educational needs to the more obscure reaches of 'management speak'. One of the techniques used in the planning in my company was 'envisioning', imagining what as

professional people we would like to offer as good service, if we had no limitations on resources. The Chief Executive liked to suggest that we 'know what good looks like' when we begin to plan. On one occasion he wrote the phrase on a flipchart but he made a spelling mistake and wrote 'Know what God looks like'. He nodded to me and said 'That's more your department than mine I think.' In the work environment it's vital to 'know what good [God] looks like' and to affirm that vision for other people, and try to hold the love and justice of God before them when they are in danger of following some lesser purpose.

Out of this day to day reflection comes the deep conviction that God and good are 'not far from every one of us.... in whom we live and move and have our being'. I also found myself 'exploring' the **confessional** aspect of ministry: wrestling with the fact that we live in a world of compromise and sin, and, more often than not, the company, and I along with it, fail to make decisions based on principles of love and justice. There are always ways to justify such decisions, and sometimes I knew that I had to accept what was done. But I was clear that as a Christian minister I must not bow before the company image without being aware of the need for penitence and of the mercy and forgiveness of God. I can understand how Naaman felt when, he realised that he would still be obliged to accompany his king to the temple of Rimmon and bow to the false god when his master did. 'May Yahweh forgive your servant for doing this,' he prayed. And so sometimes, did I.

It was important to be clear with myself and with others that a necessary decision may not always be an ethical one, and that we are dishonest if we persuade ourselves otherwise. Of course this may not always make one popular! I'm rather tentative about this aspect of ministry, because I know how easy it is to fail in it.

You may wonder that I have so far made no mention of a **pastoral** ministry. This is the aspect of ministry that fits most comfortably with most people when they think of ministry in secular employment. Surely the problems and stresses of working people, of unemployed clients and young people embarking on career decisions, must offer plenty of opportunity for pastoral care. Well, yes. There was cer-

tainly a good deal of personal pain and distress among both staff and clients and I, and others, did what we could to care for people with love and patience. That was no more than part of our human responsibility towards one another. We were, after all, in one of the 'caring' professions. I do not think that I was called to a pastoral ministry in my work place than any other person: if I were no doubt God would have provided the skills and the inclination!

I discovered too that in the workplace I had a profoundly Eucharistic ministry. We are ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament- if the ministry I offer in my daily work is to be properly identified with the ministry to which I was ordained, there needs to be a sacramental dimension. I believe that work can be sacramental a vehicle for encounter with God but that it is not always so. Bread and wine only have sacramental significance in the context of the 'liturgy of the offering of life'. Sometimes even among a demoralized and cynical workforce coping with almost continual restructuring, there were moments of deep encounter when laughter was close to tears. In this context, work is a sacrament offered in and for the broken structures of the world's economic systems, so that they can be redeemed and the ministry of offering that sacrament and affirming its reality is one which I was privileged, for eight years, to call mine as a Minister in Secular Employment.

*(This article appeared first in IMAgenda and is reproduced here by kind permission of the author)*

## ***No Musts and Oughts !***

***Phil Aspinall***

It was only when I had the opportunity (afforded by trans-Atlantic flights) to read the July 2002 Journal from cover to cover that I noticed the striking inconsistency.

Peter Graves (p 42 ff.) points to the "musts and oughts" which drive many in ministerial roles – and drive them often to the extremes of stress and the depths of depression. He talks of the incongruity of the MSE – being expected to contribute because of these "musts and oughts" within an irrelevant system. And he goes on to warn of the dangers of projecting the same "musts and

oughts" on to lay teams in the parish model.

We were, no doubt, all told during courses of theological training and ministerial formation to be on the look out for the "musts and oughts" which, either imposed by others or by ourselves, would lead to internal conflict, burn out and that sense of failure which comes from unachievable expectations.

I was therefore concerned to look back and see the "musts" in Rob Fox's article (p 17). The assertion that the MSE "must be rooted in a local church" does not do justice to the very different ways in which MSEs, worker-priests and others perceive and exercise their ministries. Rob did go on to explore some of these models in the concept of the many and different communities in which we live and flourish. The communities in which some of our European colleagues work may be very far from conventional church, but they are not I believe outside "the relationship between God and his people".

We should also remember there is a growing number of MSEs who have come into this way of working from the role of stipendiary parochial ministry. For them, the function of being rooted in a local church may well be one of the areas they wish to explore.

I was also struck by the observation noted from correspondence in the October 2002 Journal, that we were "too clerical". Now clericalism is to many a dirty word, although we do, perhaps, need to be clear about what is meant by it. To many of our European friends, it speaks of a church where the clergy form a powerful hierarchy which becomes the be all and end all of the organisation - and in which status, and indeed the purpose of existence, is demonstrated only in relation to the organisation.

The role of the minister (lay or ordained) in the local church gives status in a similar way – and may often feed the controlling power of The Minister. In a Church where the work focus of MSE is not understood or valued, it is unsurprising that it is all too easy to cling to the role and status afforded by a role in the local church.

One of the liberating things about being an MSE, is that we have the freedom to work outside this clerical hierarchy – to be part of the

Church but not dependent upon it. Thankfully, MSEs are some of the least clerical people I know!

***“Rumour of Angels”:  
a response from Michael Ranken***

Dear Editor.

I am pleased that you reprinted Emma Bell and Scott Taylor’s article on Spirituality and Work Organisations, with their permission. I think my tongue was slightly in cheek when I sent it to you, for it does seem to me to raise more questions than it answers, as good research so often does. So, like you, I hope that it will stir up fruitful thought and discussion among your readers. Let me make a contribution.

Bell and Taylor do indeed refer to Peter Berger’s “Rumour of Angels”, but only as words in the title and a brief comment in the penultimate paragraph. I haven’t read the “Rumour”, nor any of Berger’s other writings since “Games People Play” (was that the same Peter Berger?), so I don’t know if that is where he sets out the view which now appears repeatedly in much post-modernist thought and which you report with approval in your last Editorial – that “ ‘reality’ is a social construct ... objectified in the experience of individuals [and which varies] according to the ‘cognitive communities’ to which an individual belongs”. So truth is different everywhere and for everybody and none of us can fully know what another considers to be the truth.

I believe that to be a grave misunderstanding. I believe that there is a ‘reality’ which is ‘really’ True, independent of anything which individuals or cognitive communities may think about it. Many call it ‘God’. I also believe that anything that we as individuals or as cognitive communities may see or understand of that reality cannot help but be a ‘social construct’, conditioned by our own history and circumstances, a view of Reality which is therefore both partial and defective. That is, Reality is not a social construct; every human perception of Reality is.

So where you wrote, in “MSE and the scope of Ministry” (Ministers-

at-Work No 82, page 16), of the “real dichotomy of the people of God being both the Body of Christ and ‘organised’ (in an institutional sense)”, I see no dichotomy. I see a state of affairs (a reality?) in which the people of God (whoever they may be) experience themselves, quite positively even though incompletely and defectively, as part of a reality which they call the Body of Christ and simultaneously as part of another related but not identical reality which they call the institutional Church. (I don’t have any difficulty, by the way, with the necessity for an institution, or a body, to be ‘organised’; I suspect you don’t either.)

I believe that it is only by understanding ‘reality’ in such a way that we can begin to live well with others in a world which is already multi-faith, multi-cultural and certainly (as the MSE knows well) multi-functional. When we accept that our own views of Reality are incomplete and defective and that the different views which other people have of the same Reality are likewise, then we need no longer spend our efforts in trying to convince the others to adopt our ways of seeing and describing things which are true for all of us, rather we may come to appreciate some at least of the beauty of the others’ quite different perspectives. Then, I believe, we shall have taken a great stride along the way to the Kingdom which we pray will one day come on all the earth.





## ***Church of England publishes new MSE guideline ... Whitehall-Wide Network***

***Anna Nemeth***

*No, not something from 'Yes Minister'! Out in the wilds of Wigan (where I work) I do not get to meet large numbers of fellow public servants (and certainly not from other departments!). Getting to know other MSEs through work is not therefore terribly easy. I recently saw a notice for a gathering of Christians in the Civil Service in London (to hear a former politician talking about how he found faith while doing porridge) and asked the author to write a piece about the Christian network in Whitehall. I find the reminder to pray regular for our political masters and senior management particularly chastening! Ed.*

### ***History***

The Whitehall-Wide Network arose out of a vision to bring together the Christian fellowships in the central London Departments and agencies, not in an organisational sense but into an informal network. There are Christian fellowships in nearly all of the major departments and in some of the smaller offices but until recently the groups have done nothing together nor even (generally) been aware of one another's existence. Our first event was an Easter celebration at the Cabinet Office in 1999.

### ***Objective***

The objective of the Whitehall-Wide Network is to link the Christian fellowships in the departments

- In relationships
- In information
- To promote prayer
- To promote outreach with the message of Christianity to fellow-civil servants.

### ***Activities***

Our main emphasis is to support the fellowship groups in the departments, most of whom organise programmes and events of their own. We also run central events nearly every month – normally a praise and prayer meeting but sometimes a guest speaker event –

rotated round the departments. For example in October 2001 we invited Baroness Cox to speak from her experience of human rights issues in developing countries. Our biggest speaker events over the last 3 years have been at Easter and Christmas and “the Whitehall Carol Service” has now become a regular and unique event for the civil service, which we feel privileged to arrange. The 2001 Whitehall Carol Service was attended by Sir Richard Wilson. More recently, in November 2002, we were able to host a talk by Jonathon Aitken entitled ‘From Power to Prison to Peace’. We also have social events and held the first-ever “Whitehall garden party” (as far as we know), in July 2001. These central events are advertised through the departments.

### *Prayer*

Prayer is really important for the Christian and for us as a network. We have a conviction that our leaders, whoever they may be, need our prayers and that, as the Bible puts it, “righteousness exalts a nation”. We therefore pray regularly for the Prime Minister, Government Ministers and the individual Departments as well as for the Christian fellowships. We also bring before God the needs of colleagues and friends, on the basis that everyone matters to God and He longs for us all to have a personal relationship with Himself.

### *For more information*

People are recommended at first instance to contact their departmental fellowships. Information about the fellowships and about forthcoming Whitehall-Wide Network events can be obtained from [Julian.Shellard@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Julian.Shellard@hse.gsi.gov.uk).

### ***'The Christian Business Magazine'...***

... is a new publication 'applying Biblical Principles to the world of business', costing £2.50. Issue 4, Autumn 2002, includes items on: Sales and Marketing (looking after the customers), the hallmarks of a Christian business, personal development (concentrating on the 'art of true negotiation') and business planning. It is aimed at those running their own businesses or in a key position to influence the way in which a firm carried out its business. Further information can be found on the web site at [www.christians-in.com](http://www.christians-in.com).

### ***International Worker Priest Conference***

#### ***Input from the English Group at Bergamo,***

***Pentecost 2002***

***Phil Aspinall & Stan Frost***

*The following formed the submission of the British delegation.*

We begin by picking up some of the themes we identified at Strasbourg [2001], but in the context of the theme for Bergamo: "A new world is possible."

#### ***1. We live in a new world.***

The ways of work today are very different from 1960 or even 1970. Today Global companies are part of the way many (most?) of us live our lives. For example, many of us work in companies that have offices worldwide and which mean we have to work globally. We all benefit from the effects of globalisation – think of how this conference has been organised over the Internet. In Britain many of our public services – hospitals, prisons, railways, metros – are organised through Public Private Partnership (PPP) and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). In the UK the Industrial Mission Association has produced many papers about the new way of running our infrastructure. The company I now work for [Phil] is a leading player in this world of private capital and public services; for example, we maintain part of the railway network.

We need new models; new ways of thinking that understand this

new world and are not rooted in the large collective labour of the 1960s.

## ***2. Who holds the power?***

In this new world I have described: where are the sources of power? Who is in control? The democratically elected governments or the large companies, which work in the background? How are individual workers to find their own sense of security and ensure that their basic needs are met?

## ***3. Where should a new worker-priest (PO) choose to work?***

As the old world of large factories with many manual workers has disappeared, where are the new places for a PO to “be with” other workers? Now that many people work for themselves, as self-employed, perhaps Pos should show solidarity with this way of working. Young people work in large numbers in ‘fast food’ outlets. The remaining places where many people work closely together are often the call centres – where work is often under great time pressure and stress. Maybe this would be a good place to “be with”.

How can the PO movement encourage and develop ministry in these new forms of mass working?

## ***4. Are some truths unchanging?***

It is important to say that, whilst we should look critically at many of our old assumptions, we should not forget those things that may still be of value today and in this new world of work and society. Particularly, how can we translate the models of organised labour into a form relevant today?

## ***5. The presence of God.***

Our faith depends significantly on the incarnate God and his presence in and through the world. We must continue to be alert to the presence of God and the way he is at work around us. This may be

perceived in several different ways: in doing our daily work, in the way a group of people work together or (perhaps occasionally) in helping a co-worker in a time of difficulty. But above all, we should always be alert to the presence of God in new and unexpected ways- outside the life of the formal church – and in ways that we might not always see.

Do we have the courage (and faith) to expect to encounter God in the unexpected?

## **6.     *Relations: North – South, East – West.***

All this we must put in the context of a world united in many ways: North – South, East – West, but also very divided. Our work and our chosen life places put us in the position of often crossing those divides. How are we to carry others with us? In these times of increasing concerns by many about ‘immigration’, how can we encourage others to think of newcomers not as ‘immigrants’ but as ‘new citizens’?

How in our work and in our many contacts, can we affirm the status of ‘new habitants’?

### ***Three final thoughts:***

Policies on immigration have been quick to welcome those whose professional skills are needed where existing resources are failing the system (for example, doctors).

On the other hand, large numbers of unskilled immigrants are perceived by the existing population as taking ‘their’ own jobs. (Despite the fact that many new inhabitants take low paid jobs that others might refuse to do. *Catering in London could not survive without them. Ed.*)

In the ‘other world’ that we are seeking, we must be careful to remember that we are all beneficiaries of the present system(s). If

we change them we need to guarantee the continuation of the benefits which we receive, such as pensions, health care, subsidised energy, cheap clothing and food. Our 'other world' must find ways to provide these same benefits, with equity to all.

## ***International Co-ordination of Worker Priests***

***Proposal presented at WP Conference, Bergamo 2002***

***Phil Aspinall and Stan Frost***

For many years a delegation of worker-priests (WP) from several countries have met together over the Pentecost weekend to share their experiences. Each country has organised one of the conferences in turn: one year the conference took place in a country and the WP of another nationality have organised the reflection; the next year those who had been the hosts organised the reflection and another country hosted. This way of working has shown its effectiveness.

Because of the decision to hold an international meeting in Strasbourg for all WP together, this way of working was not used: it was necessary to find another organisation.

The meeting at Pentecost 2001 was put together by an international co-ordinating committee, composed of representatives from each country. This conference was a success. The groups from each country were conscious of the importance and of the enrichment that came from such collaboration. Our differences are not as great as appears at the beginning. The realities lived by each of us in our place of work, our neighbourhoods and associations are very similar, whether in Brussels, Rome or wherever.

The frontiers are no longer obstacles to the circulation of people, ideas, information and technologies. Today, globalisation is a phenomenon, which imposes itself on everything with both positive and negative aspects: what can we do so as not to be ground down and swallowed up.

In order to continue that which has already been started in Stras-

bourg, and for greater efficiency, we suggest putting in place an "International Co-ordination of Worker Priests". The future and the development of the ministry of Worker priests must be the business of us all.

### ***Objectives of the Co-ordination***

- § Better knowledge of our different groups and their ways of working
- § More collaboration and friendship between the WP of different countries
- § To raise awareness of the importance and the usefulness of WP with church leaders and the whole of the churches
- § Promote the WP ministry among young people
- § Support the WP who are isolated in some countries
- § Deciding on and organising the international meetings (at Pentecost)
- § Make known the research and writings being done in each country

### ***Functioning***

- § A delegation from each country composed of 1 or 2 WP elected or appointed
- § A meeting once a year (at a minimum)
- § The establishment of
  1. Internal rules for working
  2. A method of financing
  3. The designation of a Secretary
  4. The duration of the mandates

### ***Aspirations***

Promoting communications by the publication of an " International WP Journal", creation of an Internet site, and many more!

## ***European Worker Priest Conference. Pentecost 2003***

The CHRISM Committee is making plans for our contribution to the European Worker Priest Conference at Pentecost 2003. This year,

the weekend will be in **Barcelona**, hosted by the Catalan group. It runs from **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June to Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June**, with the opportunity to stay over the Friday and Monday nights also.

This is a delegate conference, so we are looking for 3 or 4 volunteers to attend as the representatives of CHRISM. Would **you** be interested in going ?

Let me convince you, by selling some of the key opportunities which a conference like this offers, which many of us have experienced already:

- § Making contact with Worker Priests from other countries, cultures and political perspectives
- § Experiencing a different national culture with the “insiders”
- § Seeing a broader vision of MSE in the ways others live their lives and their ministries
- § Making new friends and contacts
- § Engaging in dialogue about the issues which influence the way we and our colleagues live our working lives
- § Learning about the breath-taking range of “second engagement” in which the European Worker Priests work with their communities
- § Time to explore a city like Barcelona (and maybe even tag on a bit of holiday)

The language of the conference is French, and I expect many of you are much better qualified than my poor “O” level. If you would like more information, or are interested in going, please contact **Phil Aspinnall**.

## ***An American in Paris***

***Phil Aspinnall***

It was entirely by chance that two international MSE meetings fell in the same week in November. After a weekend with the Presbyterian and Episcopalian Tentmakers in sunny Southern California, I returned to a rain-drenched Paris to join Stan Frost for the first meet-



ing of the new International Co-ordination for Worker Priests.

Two convents in a week! In Orange, we were using the well-appointed guesthouse of the Sisters of St Joseph's hospital. In Paris, the Accueil Barouillere is home to the Helpers to the Holy Souls, and conveniently only 5 Metro stops from Notre Dame. We also enjoyed some wonderful Parisian hospitality from our French hosts.

With two such meetings a few days apart, there were some interesting contrasts and surprising parallels. The two obviously served very different purposes. That in the US was a residential conference, with time for sharing news and views, and some working sessions built around the theme "Marching to a Different Drummer" – when asked to draw our own individual drum, I gave them a drum of chemicals. There were also loads of worship sessions – led by a lay pastor who, with his son, formed an excellent jazz combo.

The Paris meeting was intended for business – to take forward the proposal made in Bergamo which is included elsewhere in this edition of the Journal. But there was also pressure to use it as a forum for sharing recent experiences and events. And with this fascinating collection of Worker Priests, with their strongly politicised agendas, even the simplest matter of business seemed somehow to generate intense, passionate and often heated theological, philosophical and political debate (and all in French of course!)

The Europeans were asking me to tell more of what I had experienced while in the States – but time did not permit. The hot issue was the looming War in Iraq (which may well be overtaken by events by the time you read this). What views – I was asked by Worker Priests who had been on street protests against any aggression on the part of the US – had I heard while in California?

Well, the first time I mentioned to someone in Orange that I hadn't heard anyone talk about impending war, I was told: "We don't talk about things like that here". I was amazed – not least at the implied separation of a conference of a religious group from the events of the world around them, but more particularly, that this

should be said in a meeting of Tentmakers, who are by definition engaged in the world outside church.

But as the weekend progressed, I did find people talking – and I did not find anyone expressing views in support of the intended action of their government, and many were firmly against war. Yet the contrast was palpable – I could not envisage any of these folk engaging in the protests I was to encounter at the European end of my journey.

The European groups are also heavily engaged in work with and for the immigrant communities in their localities – the nationalities may differ, but this is also a keenly felt issue in Southern California. One of the participants in the conference told his story – a young newly appointed Presbyterian Minister, who was indeed of Mexican origin (and a fellow Chemical Engineer). And he had come into the country as an illegal immigrant - arrested for visa violations, deported back to Mexico, guided across the border, dodging the border patrols, and entering the country illegally. The harrowing journeys eventually led to “green card” status, after having lost everything. You could tell that this was not a comfortable story for many in the room.

Also among the speakers was the deputy principal of the San Francisco Theological Seminary. He described with great joy, the enthusiasm which had been generated by the first part-time training course they had run in Claremont, south of LA. All the participants remained in their secular work and some 75% were not Caucasian and 75% did not have English as their first language. It seemed a novel concept to the Americans, so I drew some parallels with the courses many of us have experienced here in the UK. It is a development to be watched, as it continues to break the hold of residential seminary training.

These are but a few glimpses of the issues which are thrown up by such a full and interesting week. I could say more – but I would rather encourage you to be part of these meetings, either in Europe or the USA, with the Presbyterians next autumn or the Episcopalians in Chicago in the spring.

## ***Theology Resource Book***

CHRISM receives regular feedback from users of the TRB and how useful it is! Dorrie Johnson recently pointed out that it is an ideal aid for anyone teaching ***Applied Theology***. This includes not only ministry training colleges and courses but also mainstream educational establishments. Copies of the TRB and accompanying ***Guide*** are available from Phil Aspinall (details in rear inside cover). If you know anyone who teaches Applied Theology, please recommend it!

### ***From the Other Side***

***Dr Forrest Lowry***

Houston - For over 30 years I have served Southern Baptist Churches of all sizes and shapes as Senior Pastor. For the past 14 years I served as Senior Pastor of Spring Baptist Church, a large Southern Baptist congregation of nearly 5,000 members in the growing suburbs of Houston, Texas. With an average Sunday School attendance of nearly 1,600 (and growing) we were one of the largest churches in the area. It is the kind of church we all dream about as young pastors – great location, great people, great staff, great opportunity. New subdivisions going in all around you in one of the fastest growing areas in the Houston area.

I thought I would be there for the rest of my ministry, but God had something far different in store for me. I still don't understand all that lies ahead, but He has definitely changed my life and my perspective. That is the reason I entitled this article – From the Other Side.

God called me to ask our great church to phase me out of salary and support and send me out to facilitate church planting. I had a vision to see businesses started that would dedicate a portion (and when possible all) of their profits to fund ministry projects that would otherwise go unfunded.

I also believe we must have a saturation church planting movement in America if we are going to see our cities transformed. For that to occur, we will have to have men and women who already have their financial support secured so they will not have to take their primary salary and support from the church.

But this cannot happen if the traditional mentality persists. It cannot happen as long as we believe that "tentmakers" are not "full-time" ministers. It cannot happen as long as we hold up the "fully-funded" model as the best - indicating that our "first-choice" should always be the "full-time" pastorate or staff position.

Far too many bivocational pastors and staff members are made to feel that if they do everything right and they are blessed by God they will one day graduate – to the other side – they will be allowed the privilege of serving in “full-time Christian service.” Others refer to the “vocational ministry” as the goal of every God-called man and woman. I understand what is meant by all these terms – but I believe that God has a “new paradigm” for these last days – and it may resemble the first century pattern much more than we ever imagined.

Paul chose to make tents to support his ministry. I am sure that many of the elders in the early churches were businessmen and leaders in the marketplace. “Tentmaking” in God’s eyes is ministry. We all need to remember: God called every believer to “full time Christian service.” Every believer is called to minister. As Pastor, I am not “more called” than anyone else in the body of Christ. Every member of Christ’s church is uniquely gifted for ministry and as such they need to be equipped and empowered for their unique and special ministries. The Christian life and ministry is 24 hours a day 7 days a week; everywhere we are; ministering God’s grace to anyone we may be with at the time; whether at work, at home, at play, in the workplace, in the neighborhood – always ready to give an explanation for the difference Christ is making in our lives. There is no “secular” and “spiritual” designation in God’s vocabulary. The Great Commission is not limited to the Church building or the Church program.

Since people spend from 65% to 70% of their time at work – just maybe the most important ministry is the one that is being done by what we have labelled the “bivocational minister.” After all, these men and women are interacting with unbelievers continuously – and as “salt” and “light” they are living and sharing the Gospel with the people who need Christ. What we may need is not “less” bivocational pastors and staff members – but “more” Bivocational pastors and staff members. With 50% to 60% of the average growing church’s budget going for salaries and support for “fully funded” staff members – just maybe God will raise up more “tentmakers” freeing up more and more of our budgeted funds to go into missions and evangelism and ministry projects. It is time to encourage, equip and empower visionary laypersons to “do the work of the ministry.” It is time to empower these visionary men and women to make the necessary adjustments to get in on what God is doing - which may be “outside the box” and which may not originate with the Pastor and Staff.

I am also convinced that we need to validate the godly men and women serving in “full-time ministry” positions that we refer to as bivocational pastors and staff members. Rather than trying to find ways for them to leave the workplace – we need to help them grow their churches using a “team ministry” approach as they continue to minister “in the workplace” as well as “in the church.”

So, as one who has come “from the other side,” God is teaching me a lot about what can be accomplished through an army of men and women willing to serve in the exciting arena of bivocational ministries. “May their tribe increase”.

## ***Book Reviews***

### ***“A new Christianity for a new World ”***

*(Why traditional faith is dying and how a new faith is being born)*  
by ***Bishop John Shelby Spong.***

Published by Harper San Francisco, 2001 ISBN 0-06-067084-3.

For \$24.00 the hardback has 246 pages, plus notes, biography and index.

***Keith Holt***

For readers new to Bishop Spong's writing help is at hand in his autobiography also featured in this edition by Stan Frost. The appendix thereof contains the 12 theses that Spong – Luther fashion – posted on the internet, giving rise to world-wide comment.

I found this book more positive and exciting than his "Why Christianity must Change or Die" (1998). Bishop Spong rejects the so-called five fundamentals of Christianity, published early in the twentieth century, as naïve, unsupported by reputable scholarship, hopelessly unbelievable, and not representing the essence of Christianity at all! The question then arises: "Can a person claim with integrity to be a Christian and dismiss much of what has traditionally defined the faith?" Spong's answer is "yes". His main goal is "to go behind the institutionally developed religious system and explore the power which that system sought to explain, and organise" (page 19). He looks for a reformation which will be greater than that of the sixteenth century. This reassessment of Christianity will be evolutionary, profoundly theological, and courageous.

In chapter three he calls for a new exploration of the divine: "Are we not now able to open ourselves in new ways to discover the Ground of Being that is met and known in the self that is emerging as expanded consciousness?" So the next chapter argues that true God cannot be confined by our concepts of theism. In a very personal declaration the writer finds his mind, integrity, intellectual questioning, and God-experience coming together. He has a sense of God met not outside of life, but at its very heart.

A central issue is the Christ story. Since the writer has found there is no theistic God then Christ cannot be the incarnation of a theistic deity. The historic interpretation of Jesus in the New Testament has theistic distortions. When these are removed we still have that "something", says Spong, that God-presence we seek. The Christ figure is an image, sign, and promise of a new humanity. That includes literally giving ourselves away to enhance the lives of others. Spong argues that the Christian future is grounded in our Christian roots, yet the doctrinal foundations are no longer adequate to convey meaning in a world with a totally different knowledge base. The

shortcomings of doctrines, including those of the virgin birth, ascension and atonement are given as illustrations of the difficulties. A key sentence in his treatment of the church is: "Human beings will always worship, seek the Holy together in community and gather, as a family might, to remember who they are, to recall their origins, and to seek help in becoming all that they can be. It will be in the doing of these things that the church of the future will be born."

The demise of the theistic God also requires letting go the exclusivity and other power claims made in the name of that deity. Provocatively for some, Spong states that "Christians know that they do not possess the sole pathway to God, for there is no sole pathway." The implications for mission, evangelism, inter-faith relations, scripture, and the creeds are profound.

Spong strongly affirms the reality of human evil with which the Christ he has found engages. He looks at the nature of human evil and its origins. The Christianity of the future must take evil seriously. However he believes that the idea of original sin should be replaced by original blessing.

Spong asks: "Is not the depth of life (present within each one of us and in the gathered community) what God is? As we grow into maturity we begin to entertain the possibility that to discover the fullness of our being is also to discover the meaning of prayer." Readers of this Journal might particularly note (page 197) Spong's discovery that "actions, engagement with people, the facing of concrete issues, all these became for me the real time of prayer."

This book is an invitation to explore. It is an opportunity for those who find religion difficult to discover fresh possibilities about God. He asks: "Why does it matter?", meaning if the new God concept does not affect the world in some positive way then who cares. Spong reminds us that Christianity cannot be solely a private affair. It must be in the public arena, but without trying to dominate there. Politics is how to get things done. God is experienced as life. It does matter how one thinks of God. This book is written with great courage, a sense of Godly awe, and a compulsion to fol-

low where the truth leads. His vision is not a new religion but renewed Christianity with its roots in the tradition that began 2000 years ago, able to live in the world we experience. I commend it to you.

### ***Here I Stand***

- ***My struggle for a Christianity of integrity, love and equality***

***John Shelby Spong***

***Stan Frost***

Published: Harper San Francisco (a division of HarperCollins Publishers), 1999. ISBN: 0-06-067539 (International paperback). Cost: £16.99. 464 pages

When I mentioned to the editor that I wanted to review this autobiography there was a reformist quip commending Martin Luther. Like the abandoned steam traction engine, called Luther because it can go no further in the Namib Desert, I am sure that Jack Spong the Bishop would see himself in a different but parallel league from Martin Luther. However, time may eventually show that he is prophetic in the provocation he generates through his writings and speeches. Currently though, he has a reputation, with some, for being the Bishop with his knickers in a twist.

By the early 1990s, he had alienated all but a few of his fellow bishops who were refusing to communicate with him. I suspect that the situation is not much different in 2003. During this time however he has generated a remarkable and international following, especially in the Antipodes and more recently in Britain.

For those who have sympathy with his views and campaigns, he is a significant figure - projecting reality for the church of the 21st century and beyond. He began adult Sunday classes, which in the early 60s attracted impressive numbers of participants from affluent congregations he worked with. Sharing biblical insights, demolishing presuppositions and expounding on the mythologies of traditional perspectives he involved and encouraged his congregations to engage realistically with biblical material. He talked and debated with local Rabbis and his reputation grew as he moved from parish to parish. Despite Episcopal resentment, he was appointed as Bishop



of Newark - both opponents and supporters sharing the joy of the appointment. Newark, New Jersey, was something of a bed of nails - or perhaps a poisoned chalice, with a largely black and diverse population. The opposition waited for the worse at the appointment of a white Episcopalian from the southern states to this troubled diocese in the north!

His experience and the early years spent within the heavily segregated communities of the southern states of America gave him first hand experience of the politics and controversies of the McCarthy era of the fifties and the aftermath of the sixties. His opposition to segregation has been part of a continual campaign for belief with integrity. It has been a difficult mission within communities with entrenched conservative opinions expressed in racial hatred and homophobia.

His family life was deeply affected by the ministry it has shared and the chronic depression experienced by his first wife. He seems to have endured and survived through the classic stoicism of the parochial clergy person. His story exposes his concerns and the pain of his family, as they had to learn to live with the reality of someone not only at odds with life mentally but also suffering from cancer.

This biography is challenging but readable and honest. It documents details of personalities who are listed amidst a few other subject headings in the 9-page index. Everyone from Ralph Abernethy to Lawrence Zulu is there - symptomatic of a meticulous diary and a squirrel mentality which has refused to throw away anything of historical merit. It also reflects dependence upon good secretarial backup and a research team, which are acknowledged in the preface. Here is authenticity for the book and endorsement for its credibility; a valuable documentary base for those who come later seeking to research the intricacies of church politics. In some cases, though the detail of the personality clashes might be of little interest to those who are outside the particular communities being described.

Don Cupitt is acknowledged as Jack's mentor and fellow traveller - with visions of a meaningful church addressing current issues and

absorbing contemporary knowledge. It is this, it is claimed, which makes the traditional formularies extinct and so presents a major challenge - a stumbling block- to those who adhere to what has always been. He was a close friend of John Robinson and 'Honest to God' was a turning point for him - and others in the '60s.

In the 1970s, there was inherent opposition to women's ordination and he was present when the first 11 women deacons were ordained by a group of retired, renegade bishops. He records that Barbara Harris (now Bishop of Boston) was the crucifer at the ceremony. It was Jack Spong, with Mervyn Stockwood, who ordained Elizabeth Canham from Southwark to the priesthood at Newark as the first English Anglican woman priest on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1981.

Earlier he took an extensive pre-consecration tour. Before visiting Israel and Palestine he went to Geneva, Rome, East and South Africa. He was there in Johannesburg for the memorial service for the victims of Soweto and attended the consecration of Desmond Tutu as Bishop of Lesotho in St Mary's Cathedral. Bishop Tutu has been a frequent visitor to Newark and in 1984 spent time there soon after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

Jack Spong has generated much hostility and survived misunderstanding, blatant opposition and general bloody mindedness with regard to his international profile, his theological pronouncements, his support for women, his acceptance of homosexuality and his criticism of Roman and other traditional ecclesiastical practices. He is searching for truth and seems to be driven by a concern to create an inclusive church and society where everyone is treated with justice and respect - and that cannot be all that bad! There are aspects of his life and ministry that certainly resonate with what Martin Luther was about - and also with what MSEs sometimes do, think about and aspire to be.

*Postscript:*

*Bishop Spong is due to lead a conference at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden (May 2003), but this is already fully booked (Nov 2002).*

### ***'Questions of Business Life:***

***Exploring Workplace issues from a Christian Perspective'***,

Is the latest book by ***Dr Richard Higginson***, published by Spring Harvest. Further details as they become available. (If you have read it, could you write a review for MaW? Ed.).

### ***Rene Hery***

A regular visitor to CHRISM Conferences and long-standing international friend to CHRISM, Rene succumbed to cancer soon after the last Journal went out. Please remember Gerard in your prayers.

*(She was truly a lovely lady and we will miss her. Ed.)*

### ***Church watch***

The **Church of England** has recently published a report on the **Structure and Funding of Ordination Training**.

The "draft final report" is now published and can be downloaded from the Church of England website. It is twice as long as the Interim draft CHRISM was asked to comment on. *(A tidied up version, so it consumes less paper, is available by e-mail from the Editor, .doc or .rtf).*

Most of the points CHRISM raised in a letter from Sue Gibbons have been incorporated, though none very prominently. Even 'MSE' turns up once, near the end. But the category 'permanent non stipendiary' (PNSM), implicitly including MSE, seems to have stuck.

As foreshadowed by the earlier draft, the report as a whole is very centred upon parish/'church' clergy but there are a few favourable nods to ministries (and experience) outside the structures and heartening references to the place of laity both in receiving theological education and in contributing to it.

The emphasis appears to have shifted also from formal ecclesial needs to a broader and deeper view of ordained ministry primarily in the service of God - surely something that should be fundamental to all MSE thinking.

*(I am grateful to Michael Ranken for the above evaluation. Ed.)*

The **Swedish Lutheran Church** is taking a serious look at Non-Stipendiary Ministry. The Church was officially disestablished on 1 January 1999, which had deep financial implications. Prior to this, every registered Lutheran (over 80% of the population) paid income taxes to the national and local governments, and to the Lutheran Church. From what is a cost-led exercise, a real opportunity to promote MSE has arisen. If you have any useful contacts in Sweden whom CHRISM could approach, please contact the Editor.

### ***Oh Sister!***

The BBC recently interviewed Ernst & Young partner Anne Redston about her journey from a convent to tax. "There were the three vows - poverty, chastity and obedience," said Anne. "Contrary to popular belief, I found obedience the most difficult. "My instincts rebelled against not being able to follow my own judgement. That doesn't go down well in a convent." She added: "As a woman and a nun, you are four squares off the board."

Anne suggested "tax is really a game. You know the rules and the grey areas - and the best game takes part around the edges. Jousting with the Revenue and advising clients on neat manoeuvres to avoid tax are more satisfying than studying theology."

Anne explained that "the gap between theology and ordinary life is quite big. It's the same with tax. Nuns and tax specialists bridge the gap and make it understandable."

The BBC even had the temerity to suggest that Anne had actually missed her vocation, because dissatisfied nuns usually throw off their habits to become cabaret singers or fashion models!

*(Perhaps Anne should join CHRISM! Ed.)*

## ***Grants for Women!***

If you could use financial assistance for developing your ministry (by, for example, attending a CHRISM weekend!) – you may be eligible for a grant from the ***Women's Continuing Education Trust***.

Details from:

Miss Rose Miskin, Women's Continuing Education Trust,  
Church House,  
Great Smith Street,  
London, SW1P 3NZ.

## ***Work – Life balance: the importance of managers***

*(The information below was recently passed in my direction. The issues it identifies are very much those faced by MSEs. Ed.)*

New research apparently finds that regardless of whether formal policies are in place, it is the attitudes, skills and behaviours of line managers that ultimately determine the success of flexible working arrangements. However, it also finds that managers themselves are having to work under pressure, frequently trying to meet tighter deadlines with fewer staff, so the task of enabling better balance for their remaining employees is often an unwelcome burden.

The factors that influence managers' attempts to enable balance for themselves and their subordinates are identified as: the organisational culture and the parameters within which managers are empowered to support balance, the nature of the employee base, and the personal characteristics and skills of the manager.

"Organisations should recognise that they have a moral responsibility to ensure their staff have a reasonable quality of life. For many

employees, the organisational culture is embodied in the attributes and behaviours of their immediate line manager. The problem is that many line managers are caught between pressure from above to improve productivity and pressure from below for greater understanding and flexibility. Even the best managers will only be able to work towards balance if they are in an environment where the organisation has demonstrated some commitment to the value of employees' lives outside of work and where the managers themselves are not overwhelmed with heavy workloads."

The research recommends that to achieve more flexible working arrangements, managers should maintain open lines of communication with their teams; they should have a good understanding of the personal situations - as well as the capacity, skills and workloads - of their direct reports; they should demonstrate trust and empower employees to make decisions about how and when they complete their tasks.

To achieve this, managers need to be able to cope with their own workloads and plan, schedule and delegate effectively; they need good communication skills, an ability to handle staff as individuals and they also need the courage to 'push back' up the chain of command by explaining to their superiors when workloads are getting out of control. In turn, organisations should support managers by adequately staffing departments, by providing appropriate training policies and by helping to create a culture where work-life balance is respected and employees feel comfortable voicing their personal needs.

Excessive workloads, under-staffed departments and last minute, unpredicted tasks are the main factors that impinge on work-life balance, sometimes creating a vicious circle. Where there are too few staff, the remaining employees have to compensate by working longer hours, encouraging greater staff turnover. Yet where staff numbers are adequate, and work-life balance is achieved, staff turnover is reduced.

The extent to which a manager trusts and empowers employees is heavily influenced by the culture of the organisation and its attitude to employee empowerment. Some managers are by nature more

controlling than others and need help in learning how to let go. The behaviour of senior executives within the organisation also has a powerful impact on whether work-life balance needs are acknowledged and respected.

"There is no 'one size fits all' solution to balance," says the research. "Formal policies appear to be most effective in organisations with fixed hours cultures, where employees work 9-5 or set shifts. In long hours cultures, a more flexible approach is needed to help people combine work with their other responsibilities or aspirations. It's about giving people the freedom to choose what is best for them within the constraints of the business."

## *Diary dates*

*Christians@work* are involved with three Conferences during 2003:

- § **Saturday 26 April** – a regional CaW Conference at Garforth Evangelical Church, Leeds. Roger Carswell is the guest speaker.
- § **Saturday 17 May** – CaW Annual Conference, at Rugby Baptist Church. Speaker: Andy Christofides.
- § **Saturday 14 June** – Regional Conference at Parklands Independent Evangelical Church, Swansea.

Further info. from the CaW website: [www.christiansatwork.org.uk](http://www.christiansatwork.org.uk).

*The Ridley Hall Foundation* poses the question "*Can Business be Christian?*" to a Conference at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, over the weekend of 20-22 June 2003. Dr Richard Higginson invites contributions to form an outline: e-mail to [rah41@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rah41@cam.ac.uk). Details will appear in the next edition of '*Faith in Business Quarterly*', and in the next MaW.

'*Work – Life Balance*' is a Conference organised by Churches Together in Ross-on-Wye and sponsored by ICF, on Saturday, 8

February, 2003, at Merton House / Christ Church Centre, Edde Cross Street, Ross-on-Wye. Further details from Denis Claringbull, 01989 567 771.

*'Meeting the Challenge of Being a Christian at Work'* is an on-line course on Faith and Work, sponsored by ICF, starting on 1 February 2003. It has two five-week levels and sample material can be viewed at [www.e-quip.org.uk](http://www.e-quip.org.uk). To enrol visit [www.allbelievers.org](http://www.allbelievers.org).

*The John Ray Initiative* is hosting a day Conference on 8 February, 2003, at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, entitled: *'Jesus and the earth – the Gospel and the environmental crisis'*. Speakers include Rt Revd James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool, and Revd Dr Michael Northcott, University of Edinburgh. For more information contact JRI at [jri@glos.ac.uk](mailto:jri@glos.ac.uk), or 0124 254 3580.

*The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity* continues its series of lectures by CEOs on 25 March 2003, at St. Peter's, Vere Street, London. The speaker is Clive Mather, Chairman of Shell UK, on *Globalisation: a business view*.

The Pentecost 2003 Conference of the *European Worker Priests* is held in Barcelona, 7 – 9 June. If you are interested in attending, please contact Phil Aspinall or Stan Frost (details in rear cover).

### ***How to get the job you'll love',***

by CHRISM member *John Lees*.

McGraw-Hill, £12.99. One of the UK's top 6 selling career books.

New edition published, January 2003.

The new edition contains a considerable amount of new material, including:

- Exercises on constraints, Time Balance, 6 Steps To You Plc
- A new chapter for graduates and college leavers: Where Next After Qualifying?
- Information on negotiating a better future, a promotion, or a pay rise....
- A section on how to find a careers consultant in the UK and



Eire

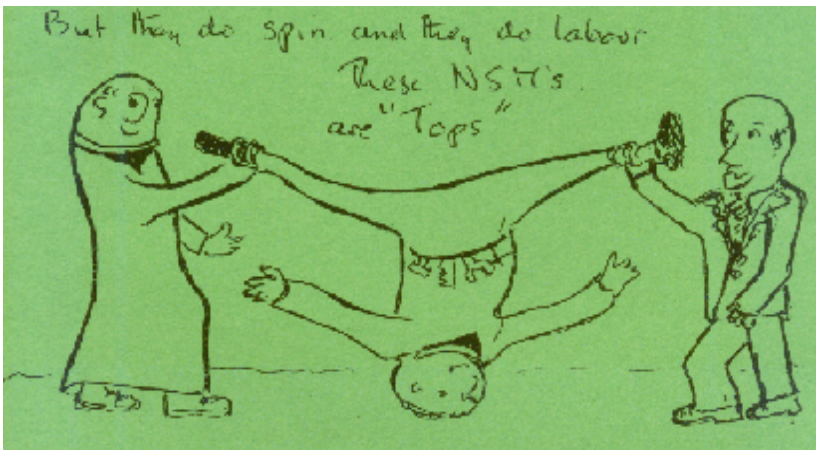
See web site <http://www.johnleescareers.com/> for further details,  
or contact John at:  
John Lees Associates,  
37 Tatton Street,  
Knutsford,  
Cheshire,  
WA16 6AE

### *Thought*

"It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question."  
*Eugene Ionesco*

### *Harry Hill – an appreciation*

*Jim Cummins*



A pioneer MSE, Harry died on Tuesday, 15 October, not so long after his wife, Jo (7 March). They were both very remarkable people. Harry, whose cartoons adorned the cover of the early Newsletters, remained faithful to Christ. His intercessions for us all were continuous and often accompanied by a postcard plus very apt cartoon and/or quote from the Psalms or elsewhere and some other

# CHRISM

CHRistians In Secular Ministry

---

ISSN 1460-8693

---

*Our faith imposes on us a right and a duty to throw ourselves  
into the things of the earth*

Teilhard de Chardin