

Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry

Number 116 January 2011

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.

CHRISM is the National Association of CHRistians In Secular Ministry

for **all** Christians who see their secular employment as their primary Christian ministry, and for those who support that vision.

To further this aim, CHRISM publishes a quarterly journal, releases occasional papers and organises an annual retreat. Conferences are held regularly and worldwide links pursued.

CHRISM welcomes members, both lay and ordained, from all Christian denominations, encourages them to be active within their own faith communities and to champion ministry in and through secular employment. If you would like confidential support as an MSE, please contact any member of of the Committee (see inside rear cover).

Further information about CHRISM may be obtained from the Secretary or other members of the Committee

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Copy deadline for the next edition: Friday 15th April 2011
Please e-mail contributions to Mike.Rayner@dph.ox.ac.uk

Editorial

Here is the latest edition of Ministers-at-Work. 'Latest' also in the sense that it's now nearly April when you'd be expecting your April edition. Ah well! I've been busy working.

There are lots of good things to be found in this edition but please note in particular the notice of this year's CHRISM Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting, 15th – 17th July 2011, in Liverpool. A booking form is enclosed with this mail-out.

Enclosed with this edition you will also find the latest CHRISM paper (No. 11), written by CHRISM member, Richard Spence from New Zealand. This is on spiritual direction for MSEs: clearly an important issue and a paper that when I have time I'm going to read (and hopefully learn from).

The next edition of Ministers-at-Work will be devoted mainly if not exclusively (we'll see) to the excellent CHRISM Reflective Weekend some of us have just attended at Holland House, Pershore, Worcestershire, lead by Donald Eadie. Reports of past events aren't always very interesting, in my view, but I am hoping that you'll find this edition proves to be somewhat of an exception. Watch your mailboxes.

Meanwhile we (the CHRISM Committee) are still looking for a replacement (and more efficient) Editor of this journal. News soon I hope!

Mike Rayner

Letter to the Editor

From Rob Fox

This year being the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, I thought it appropriate to remind readers of a short passage close to my heart as an MSE, as it is rendered in that translation.

What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth?

I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.

And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

Ecclesiastes 3:9-13

CHRISM Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting, Liverpool, 15th – 17th July 2011

This year CHRISM visits the fair city of Liverpool, home to two football teams, two cathedrals, and four Beatles.

The conference is held over the weekend of 15th – 17th July, on the theme “You’re a Christian doing what!?” We will explore the question of whether any types or sectors of work should be off-limits for Christians generally and MSEs in particular. Should MSEs work choose to work in particular areas of the economy but not others? Are there any “no-go areas”? We will also pose the questions of how we can influence the business or organisation we work for, and our position within it.



A range of guest speakers from differing positions in business, public service and the charity sector are being invited to stimulate our thoughts. The weekend will also include visits to varied workplaces in and around the city. The

weekend will incorporate the CHRISM AGM and visits to local places of interest and of work.

Our base will be Roscoe and Gladstone Hall, University of Liverpool, situated in wooded grounds on the Greenbank site, some three miles east of the city centre, and at the north end of Penny Lane. Accommodation is in single study rooms with washbasins (shower/bathrooms shared between small clusters of studies). Further information on the venue can be found at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/greenbank/randg/index.htm>.

Liverpool is well-served by transport links: there is a direct bus to the venue from the airport, several buses from the main rail station, Lime Street, and easy access from the M6/M62 motorways. For further advice on travel see <http://www.liv.ac.uk/greenbank/travel/findingus.htm>.

In addition to the attractions above, this historic city contains much of interest, including the National Maritime and Beatles Museums, the oldest Chinatown in Britain, and – at Formby – one of the few red squirrel colonies in England. It is a lively city for an extended break, and partners are welcome too!

Rates for the weekend are £135 for members, £145 for non-members. Day rates are available on request.

Bookings, by 28 May, to: Rob Fox, 36 Norman Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 1LY; or rob.foxesbridge@tiscali.co.uk.

New for 2011 – CHRISM Membership Incentive Scheme

Three things are true:

- CHRISM needs, and will benefit from, more members
- Only a comparatively small proportion of people who exercise a secular ministry are CHRISM members
- The easiest way to get more people into CHRISM is for existing members to recruit them – because you know who they are and how to persuade them!

But MSEs are also very busy people (it goes with the calling), so the CHRISM Committee thought that a little encouragement would be in order. We are therefore rolling out a Membership Incentive Scheme – anyone who recruits a new member will be rewarded with a £20 reduction on the cost of attending the next CHRISM Annual Conference or Reflective Weekend.

It's easy to get your discount. All you have to do is:

- Persuade someone to join.
- Send an e-mail or letter to the Membership Secretary (details below), giving the name and the address of the person you have persuaded, and your name and address.
- When they pay their first subscription, the Membership Secretary will send you a £20 voucher.
- When you book for the next Annual Conference or Reflective Weekend, enclose your voucher with the booking form.

The (legible) small print:

1. The new member must be a first-time joiner, not someone renewing their subscription.
2. The voucher is valid for either of the next two residential events from the date of issue.
3. Only one discount voucher can be used when booking any event.

Lyn Page, Membership Secretary, CHRISM, at Willowbank, Hawkey, Nr. Liss, Hants GU33 6NF, or Lyn.page@willow-bank.co.uk

Tax relief when giving to CHRISM through Gift Aid

Gift Aid increases the value of donations to UK charities such as CHRISM by allowing us to reclaim basic rate tax on your subscriptions and donations. This means that if you give £10 using Gift Aid, it's worth £12.50 to CHRISM; that's 25%. For donations between 6th April 2008 and 5th April 2011 CHRISM will also get a separate government supplement of 3p on every £ you give.

If you pay higher rate tax there is a benefit too as the amount of your income taxed at basic rate is extended by the amount you pay to CHRISM. If you claim age-related allowances or tax credits, Gift Aid donations can sometimes increase your entitlement. To benefit from these you need to contact your tax office and have a record of the gift aided donations you have made in any one tax year, see the guidelines on the website below.

In order to make a Gift Aid donation you'll need to make a Gift Aid declaration by completing the CHRISM Gift Aid form distributed with the last edition of this journal. Additional forms can be downloaded from our website <http://www.chrism.org.uk>. One form can cover every gift made to CHRISM for whatever period you choose and can cover gifts you have already made and/or gifts you may make in the future. You can decide that your Gift Aid declaration covers previous years' CHRISM subscriptions and donations.

The Gift Aid declaration must include:

- your full name
- your home address
- the name of the charity 'Christians in Secular Employment Trust' CHRISSET (incorporating CHRISM).
- details of your donation, and it should say it's a Gift Aid donation

For more details about Gift Aid you can find a comprehensive guide on the following government website:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/ManagingMoney/GivingMoneyToCharity/DG_078490

The new context for risk taking

Keith Holt

Thanks to Jim Cummins, Issue 115 of "Ministers-at-Work", who challenged me and increased my hope for CHRISM and the world! It also drove me to switch on the computer.

On the darker side of the context we see unprecedented challenges facing the human race. They are unprecedented because they are all global and all potentially threatening to the continuation of human life on planet Earth. On the brighter side we can reflect that somehow or other, in much earlier dangerous circumstances, our species has found ways of adapting, and continuing to thrive. Moreover, in a variety of areas, including law and science, there is evidence that risk-takers are already daring to show the sort of totally new thinking that we humans need to ensure our survival, and the flourishing of the life of the whole planet, on which we depend completely.

The still amazing findings of quantum science indicate that, over the next hundred years or so, all scientific endeavour will go through a process of being re-written. This has been called a paradigm shift. But that shift cannot be restricted to science, as Galileo found to his cost. All branches of human learning and activity will be swept up in the new cosmic view.

On a lighter note, I remember visiting Michael and Barbara Ranken at Hythe and having an hilarious account from Michael of his personal love of shopping and risks. He had recently acquired a motorised electric buggy to help do their local shopping, and was just realising that the machine had a reasonable turn of speed, if the way was clear. Whether it was his RAF spirit we will never know but he described cornering at speed having bought (for the front basket) several items including a dozen eggs. Yes, he misjudged it. The eggs went everywhere along the street and he narrowly avoided a serious accident!

The other reflection that Jim inspired concerns Keswick Anglican Training College for Teachers. It happens that two of my relations (now retired teachers) did their basic training at Keswick. Undoubtedly, when the risk taker Alan Robson produced the address we have been privileged to read from, there were students, and others, who were upset by his words. Doubtless they had not expected this approach from a rather safe Anglican college!

On the other hand history shows that we, as individuals and as communities, local and international, occasionally need strange ideas to shake us! As the Christmas story at the back of the last journal illustrates we find faith based Christianity much more difficult than religion based versions! That may be why Gandhi (often encouraged to become a Christian) said: "Christianity is a wonderful idea. Unfortunately no one has been able to practise it yet!" That seems harsh but it underlines the point made in that address at Keswick.

Time for another story! Years back there was an MSE in Croydon who was also a very good actor. He (colluding with the Vicar) and not at Christmas, played out the scene from our recent journal, dressed up as a tramp! Then he waited restlessly, seated near the front as the Service got under way. As the time for the sermon approached he had to be physically prevented by several large men from climbing up to the pulpit in an apparently drunken state. As officials struggled to turn him towards the door he caught the vicar's eye, tore off some rags to display a clean "dog-collar"! Silence and embarrassment followed. This brave cleric was another "dangerous" risk taker of course.

Several CHRISM folk and friends also have links with the Iona Community. A day or two after the arrival of our journal along came "Coracle", the magazine of that Community, which also makes me think, and disturbs my complacency. In its Winter 2010 edition there is a contribution from an author I find helpful, John Shelby Spong. (He is retired Bishop of Newark, New Jersey.) His piece is entitled, "Stephen Hawking and the death of theism". One of his insights there is that, "Whatever God is, I believe that I am part of that, and whatever I am or can be God is present within it."

It seems to me that there are now long-standing and persistent tugs and stresses felt by many Christian clergy and people. Perhaps they indicate what might be called a movement of the Spirit, or a movement towards change in that part of us that deals with "God matters" . I say that through awareness of key issues touched upon by the US author, the late Thomas Berry, in his seminal offering "The Great Work" (ISBN 978-0-609-80499-5) 1999, the sub-title of which is, "Our way into the future".

As some will know Berry entered a Christian monastery in 1934. He received his doctorate in Western Cultural History in 1948, from the Catholic University of America. For 25 years between 1970 and 1995, his main concern was to clarify the role of the human community within the more integral community of the earth itself. One influence upon him was Teilhard de Chardin; many of us know a bit about him! In a phrase, Berry's proposition/thesis was that we are now at the beginning of the Ecozoic Era, the period when human beings would become a mutually beneficial presence on Earth. Yet another sign of hope for those with eyes to see!

Strange how such good news echoes down the years of my mind. Nearly 40 years ago I heard/saw a former Bishop of Croydon demonstrate in church the then amazing proposition that, "Our God was not big enough!" Small children helped him do that. A familiar tale I think. It led me to return to consider again offering for ordination!

Years ago George MacLeod, founder of the Iona Community, wrote a line not published until much later in "Coracle" that: "God is Life; the Life of life!"

I guided a day for Iona folk in South East England several years ago, attempting to take George's theme. The reaction was typically polite, interested, but shocked by the discovery that our liturgies and readings did not connect with modern life. In short our God was too "Churchy"; not readily available to the stranger. George was a very brave, and at times difficult, man! Yet that exercise just showed the extent of the problems arising within organised religion. The challenges of this time in history far exceed any

anxieties about liturgical forms and credal statements. They go to the root of human life on our planet.

As Thomas Berry, the former monk, repeatedly pointed out: the issues bearing down upon our human existence cannot be ignored. In the field of religion no writer has been more risk-taking, and brave than Hans Kung. One of his much quoted phrases is: "There can be no peace on earth until there is peace between religions." Clearly that seems like a crazy pipedream as we read/watch the media every day. Kung and Berry would have agreed that religions have to alter drastically their understanding of everything they stand for if we are to make a response to the challenges that is proportionate and helpful to life in all its forms.

I have been around long enough to realise that this reflection may seem fanciful, unrealistic, and disturbing. It is not directly helpful. That is part of the price of the risk taking in which we are surely called to engage? No doubt the Editor will be glad to take responses, especially if they keep us going for a long time! If only we human beings, hopefully inspired by faith, and (one day) belonging to an intellectual and spiritual world in which all science and new ways of seeing ourselves are accepted and discussed, we will have helped set the direction of travel for the future. This is a huge opportunity time for those faith communities, prepared to trust in the "Life of life".

Keith Holt is a retired Anglican priest in the Southwark Diocese, former Hon. Treasurer, and founder member of CHRISM. A professional accountant (also retired!) he spent 40 years in the Civil Service, in various parts of England, with the last 20 years in London. In Southwark he was, with Barry Nichols and Adam Scott, one of the three original "Deans for MSE" created by Bishop Ronald Bowlby.

Secular ministry in a spiritual market-place

Peter Johnson

I was ordained to Ministry in Secular Employment in 2000 through the Anglican church and since then I have often viewed my ministry in the 'traditional' MSE way as a spiritual ministry in a secular market-place. Now, as with the traders in the Temple, the tables have turned. My work is now at the University of the West of England in Bristol as Head of The Living Centre. This is both a building and a service for the 30,000 students and 3,500 staff offering opportunities to explore and experience faith, spirituality, health and wellbeing. This was once a chaplaincy service and whilst we still offer the usual provision associated with that role we also offer complementary therapies, personal development forums, teaching seminars and modules. Our strap line is 'The Living Centre – exploring the essence of being human – helping you find your own living centre'.

We summarise this as 'humanessence' incorporating eight aspects of what it means to be human: spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, recreational, vocational, social and environmental. On a typical week at the Centre we would see Hindu Arti, Islamic Prayers, Christian Mass, Pagan Seminar, Buddhist Mindfulness, Quaker Reflection, Pranayama Yoga, Shiatsu, India Head Massage, Ear Candling, Reflexology, Yoga, Acupuncture, Student Union Prayers and Bible Study, Recitation of the Names of Mohammed, discussions on faith and belief, health and wellbeing and humanessence and many sessions of pastoral care and counselling.

We have three teams of people offering information, advice, guidance and access to faith and belief, health and wellbeing and pastoral care. Apart from me our core team consists of an Anglican Chaplain and an Administrator. Our teams include a Buddhist Monk, a Hindu Lecturer, two Moslem Lecturers, a local Catholic Priest, Sikh, Quaker, Pagan and Atheist community volunteers as well as wellbeing practitioners and ten university staff offering pastoral care as part of their voluntary and recognised work.

My role is to develop and facilitate the opportunities for students and staff and manage the practitioners, the service and the Centre. As Head of the Centre my job and my ministry is to help students and staff understand their humanness and ensure the people working for the service have the chance to exercise their ministry. This is a secular ministry within a context of a variety of spiritualities, philosophies and beliefs.

'The glory of God is Man fully alive; Man fully alive beholds God'. St Irenaeus had it right – now the challenge is to have the confidence and faith to affirm God manifest in varieties of ways appropriate to the needs of revelation and God's people. My priestly ministry is now to exercise the faith in God that requires no temple to worship and facilitates the glory of the nations being brought into the kingdom so that God can be written on the hearts of each human – then are they fully alive.

The Revd Dr Peter Johnson can be contacted at peter5.johnson@uwe.ac.uk. For further information of The Living Centre go to www.uwe.ac.uk/student-services/thelivingcentre.

Common Tenure – the tale continues

Rob Fox

With information coming in from an increasing number of dioceses on how Common Tenure (CT) is being implemented, the picture for MSEs (and other styles of self-supporting ministry) is mixed.

The standard template from the House of Bishops is aimed primarily at addressing the situation of stipendiary clergy. Some dioceses have taken on board that self-supporting clergy should be made aware of what parts of the guidance apply to them, and which don't.

The diocesan websites of Oxford, St. Alban's and Southwark do address the implications of CT for the self-supporting. Others – London and my own diocese of Manchester, for example – have not

thought about this at all – on the evidence of the published documents and guidance. In particular the interaction with the Working Time Regulations (WTR) has not been thought through fully, despite tell-tale signs that the House of Bishops did take them into account for stipendiary clergy.

CHRISM has taken the initiative by producing a model CT Role Description, using good practice from several dioceses, and a short guide to the Working Time Regulations. These are available on the CHRISM website, under 'Latest'. If you don't have internet access and would like hard copy, please contact Rob Fox (details inside the back cover).

It is worth summarising the WTR here. These date back to 1998, and stem from the EC Working Time Directive. There are some exemptions, but generally workers are expected to work an average of not more than 48 hours a week over a rolling 17 week period. This is inclusive of meal breaks, and applies to all work, whether paid or not. It is possible for an individual to opt out of the WTR, but this must be voluntary, in writing to the principal employer (all others must be informed), and renewed annually. Consequently, an MSE working a 40 hour (including meal breaks) week has an average of 8 hours available for other work.

What then counts as work? The best definition here is: whatever is done that would normally be undertaken by someone in return for payment. For the MSE this is whatever tasks are undertaken as ministry that are undertaken by a stipendiary colleague as ministry. This includes: leading services (including occasional offices), preparing and delivering sermons, study undertaken for a specific ministry purpose, pastoral visiting, and travel necessarily undertaken in the course of all these. The list is not exhaustive, and each person should evaluate what they do realistically. Voluntary activities are by no means all work, but some should be so regarded.

The official guidelines include the WTR requirement for workers to enjoy a weekly period of 24 hours uninterrupted rest (and recreation); for most MSEs this will be Saturday. The WTR

entitlement to paid leave is also reflected, though the guide 28 days a year (including public holidays) is extended to 36 days for stipendiary clergy.

CHRISM is also keen to hear of your experiences of CT, especially where lessons can usefully be shared with other MSEs. My inbox is always open ...

To work and to live

Rob Fox

'What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil - this is the gift of God.' (*Ecclesiastes 3: 9-13; NIV*)

Who says work–life balance is a modern concern? As the Anglicans among us enter Common Tenure, it seems an opportune time to re-visit aspects that are particularly pertinent to MSEs. I stress at the outset that the views expressed are my own, not an official CHRISM 'line'.

In the July 2010 edition I looked at what Common Tenure meant for MSEs, and advised that CHRISM would be producing a template for role descriptions, which is now on the website. The previous model working agreement has been left on also as there are a number of features that remain relevant.

Also now on the website is a short guide to the Working Time Regulations (WTR). I say short, at 6 pages you may not think so, but each of the 14 sections is important and we have sought to be comprehensive. More on the WTR later, but first more about Common Tenure (CT).

Firstly, it is worth saying again that whilst CT is a Church of England development there are many important principles in it that have a wider value. Particularly welcome are the emphases on mutual responsibilities (church and licensed minister) and care.

The documentary side of CT is two-fold: a statement of particulars and the role description. The former expands on the minister's licence (title, place licensed to, time, procedures for review) while the latter details the particulars of the ministerial role each fulfils. The template produced by CHRISM is intended to cover the second, however how the content of each part is split will vary between dioceses.

Typically, the statement of particulars is modelled on stipendiary, parochial, posts, adapted for others, including non-stipendiary ministers of all kinds, as necessary. The title normally follows from what is on the minister's licence: I'm interested to know what CHRISM members are described as (contact details in the rear cover). It will also set out:

- annual leave entitlement (not, of course, in addition to that from our paid employment – but remember: leave from work is for refreshment, not so we can use it working elsewhere);
- entitlement to an unbroken period of 24 hours rest each week (MSEs should protect their day off – which will generally be Saturday – even more zealously than stipendiary colleagues);
- arrangements for expenses, reviews, CME, an annual retreat (of a week), complaints handling, and inadequate performance.

The draft statement may also include a proposed time available for ministry in the licensed context. It is here where the interaction with the Working Time Regulations comes in.

The WTR set out a maximum time for work, as a protection against exploitation by employers and overwork by individuals. This is an average of 48 hours a week, measured over a rolling 17 week period, and covers all work, whether paid or unpaid. The time is

gross – including meal breaks - so, for example, an employee working a 40 hour week has an average of 8 hours available for other work. It is possible to opt out from the WTR. If used, the opt-out must be freely entered into, made in writing, reviewed regularly, and expires after 12 months. Please think long and hard before choosing to use the opt-out, make sure you follow all requirements set out by your employer, and make your church authorities aware that you have done so.

What is 'work'? I hear you ask. The paid employment part is straightforward, and I'd like to offer the following as a simple guide for MSEs' unpaid activities. If an activity we undertake as part of our licensed ministry would fall within the scope of 'work' for a stipendiary colleague in the same context, it is work for the purposes of the WTR. The following, for example, should thus be regarded as work:

- preparing for and leading worship;
- attending meetings (PCC, Chapter, Synods);
- pastoral visiting;
- travelling to and from the above.

This is by no means exhaustive, nor is it prescriptive, more a plea to be realistic about what we can and cannot do, that is consistent with maintaining our effectiveness in each work context, and a sustaining work-life balance.

A final word - for the self-employed. You will know better than I the consequences of being your own boss, and the drive to work long and hard. Please use the principles underlying the WTR as a touchstone for your own work-life balance. Again as you well know, burn-out directly affects your business as well as your ministry. Take time to rest, refresh and re-evaluate; you know it makes sense.

Notice of a new book in French: *Les invisibles* by Gérard Mordillat and Joël Peyrou, (112 pages), 2010

A writer and a photographer bring together stories and pictures about worker priests in France.

'Invisibles' because the spirit of the times is that those who work day and night in the workshops, factories, sorting offices, garages, building sites, should keep quiet and disappear silently.



Nevertheless the carpenters, postmen, metal workers, cleaning contractors are present around us and at their duties.

These worker priests are:
forgotten,
small in number,
far from ordinary blokes,
always unobtrusive,
sometimes rough and ready,
shoulder to shoulder with their companions at work and
in their locality.

They do not possess any light of their own – they look for it.
They are to be found in the storms of life and in carrying out
actions of solidarity.

The word "struggle" does not fill them with fear.

They are there where confidence is born, where the human
spirit is built.

Gérard Mordillat is a writer and film producer. He has written several novels, including the Living and the Dead (Calmann Lévy). Joël Peyrou is a photographer. For five years, an agnostic curious about other people, he has captured the daily lives of seven Worker Priests in different regions of France.

Book review: *About my Father's business: taking your faith to work* by Regi Campbell, Multnomah, 2009, pp237 (including study guide)

Rob Fox

So, what is my Father's business? Three aspects emerge from this book: creating a business environment that is Christian friendly, building a business based on Christian ethics (such as probity and trust), and making all people disciples of Christ. We hear much of the third, but are given only tantalising glimpses of the other two. I was left wanting to hear the stories that did not find their way into the narrative.

Regi Campbell was a successful sales executive with AT&T, who had a spiritual awakening at 33, leading him to re-assess his life and relationships, including with God. He first became a self-employed consultant before going into a start up company venture – which proved successful in his three terms above. This company grew, was very successful, and sold to a national group for a large sum. Further start ups followed, with similar consequences. Regi is now owner of Seedsower Investments, specialising in investments in start up ventures.

Small venture capital companies are not uniquely Christian, so Regi's account of what set his ventures apart would have been interesting, as would a discussion of how the employees felt about the change of ownership when the start up ventures were sold, and whether that affected how Christian-friendly the company was afterward. As a reader I felt Regi would have much of interest to say, so if there is a sequel, I hope he does.

There is also a weakness in the context. The setting is Georgia, and Regi appears to have little experience of multi-culturalism or other faith groups. One wonders how he'd write if the context had been Leicester. Indeed the one reference to a colleague of another faith does not reflect well on him. He started to find that a room he regularly booked for prayer meetings was being double-booked. He found that the colleague responsible for bookings was a Jewish lady who was unhappy with Christians meeting across the corridor

from her office. He therefore arranged for the room-booking task to be transferred to someone else: not exactly engaging with her.

Chapter one discusses our attitudes to work: “It is a common sentiment that work is something to be avoided”. Although conventional, the analysis is clear and insightful, especially in looking at definition of people by what they do, rather than who they are. There is also a simple but clear look in chapter two at an important consequence of moving from an agricultural to an industrial society: greater human control over the working environment and thus the structure of work. Not only work, but our lives became more structured and compartmentalised as a result, with faith and work becoming two of those compartments. Faith becomes much more a matter of what we believe than what we do. (In a different context, it occurs to me that Islam presents itself as not suffering from such compartmentalising. Yet the social background to migrant Islamic communities in western Europe is overwhelmingly agricultural. If any reader knows of a study of the impact of living in an industrial society has on Islam, I’d be interested to know).

Here Regi introduces the concept of ‘venue’: where we live out our lives. Each of us lives in a number of venues, but we have one life. In the work venue, he poses two questions (p39):

- How can I do my job and do it well?
- How can I make a difference for Christ in the lives of the people I meet today?

He is clear that they must be answered together, and regularly emphasises the importance of relationships in doing so. This is a good platform for any MSE or Christian at work.

The chapter closes with Regi noting that he is not a fan of the prosperity gospel, “but ...”. He then makes a justification of it. A number of friends clearly read the book draft before publication; I’m surprised this got through in the way it did.

The bulk of the book is then devoted to making disciples for Christ. Many readers will wince at much of what he has to say, but to

dismiss it is too simple and misses some challenging points, not least an implicit addition to the second question above: how do we know we are making a difference? Yes, it can be argued that we don't need to know, but, as the book implies, if we don't know if a business is producing goods or services customers need, how do we know if it is effective?

The reader is invited to draw up an IMAP (Intentionality MAP), and there is a website to accompany the book, www.amfb.org, providing a template and further information. The idea is to list all those we relate to at work – within the firm but also among suppliers and customers. Each name is placed in one of five categories:

- Apathetic As – those with no obvious interest in faith.
- Beginner Bs – those aware of spirituality and searching.
- Confessing Cs – what he refers to as “passive” Christians, professing faith in Christ, and even church members, but consumers only.
- Developing Ds – actively seeking to grow their faith, but still focussing on own their own needs and wants.
- Excelling Es – Christians whose lives are marked by selfless love and service of others.

If at this point you feel the blood boiling, sit down, count to ten, and read on. Yes, the thought of categorizing our friends and colleagues is disturbing, but don't we adapt what we say and how we say it to what we know of where the other person is? This is systematic, and could be oversimplified, but as a concept it is not that strange. Regi is at pains to point out that what we are seeking is to walk alongside our work colleagues on their journey, offering help and support in any way we can, according to their needs and progress in their journey. We are invited to help the other to move incrementally, one step – or category at a time.

They are examples a-plenty, well illustrating these points, and including when the author has got it wrong, and what he learned as a result. This is no untested theory; evidence is provided that it works.

There is also evidence of realism and Christian maturity. There is a simple statement on p137 worthy of pondering: "spiritual gifts belong to God. They are given to us for a period of time to accomplish His purpose in that moment. We never take title to a spiritual gift; it's never ours, it's God's."

In the end, I was left lamenting what might have been included but wasn't. The "movement of God in the marketplace" the author senses is illustrated with examples of churchy activity in the workplace. We are not told how companies were operated on Christian principles and made "Christian-friendly". The study material too is a disappointment: designed to cover six sessions, there is 2-3 hours worth provided for each. More thought could be given to presenting this.

This book will have its fans and uses, but it could have been so much more.

CHRISM Annual Conference 2010, 'Being human at work', The Living Centre, University of the West of England, 16th – 18th July 2010.

A further reflection from Peter Tibke *

When is being alone not being alone?

Phil Aspinall has been asking me to attend these conferences regularly for over the last two years – he deserves a medal for endurance. We actually first met in 2009 when I was seeking employment when my time with Anthony Collins, Solicitors had come to an end. We had lunch together and discussed at length the overlaps of non stipendiary ministry - particularly in the Church of England - with the role of Permanent Deacons in the Roman Catholic Church. There are so many that we should now establish a method of sharing our experiences.

*Reflections on this conference were also published in the previous edition of Ministers-at-Work

At last I built up the courage to ask my wife's permission to attend the conference at the UWE in July of this year. I say asked permission a little tongue in cheek, only a little mind, because when you have a full time professional role and parish duties, it's absolutely vital that you make family time, and Saturday is the day we have tried to keep clear while not always succeeding!

The Conference itself was on the topic of being 'Human at Work' and trying to explore in a practical sense what that really means especially as those present carry the badge of Christian Minister 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

I suppose a number of things came out of the weekend to me, the main three being that:

1. We as ministers of the Gospel are called to go out into the workplace and in our behaviour, knowledge and skill bring Christ to people who do not know him. And yes that is a duty of all baptised Christians but for us who are in ministry perhaps that is a special focus of our mission in life.
2. We have a balance to strike between mission and maintenance. Certainly Permanent Deacons have a responsibility to care for the parish flock and the parish buildings and plant but there is so much to do in an evangelical way of Gospel proclamation in the work-place and in other social contacts that our Priests cannot get to. At ordination we were proclaimed by our Bishop to be heralds of the Gospel. What an opportunity we have!
3. The social problems in our families caused by our time in ministerial activity are common to all Christian denominations and it's a joy to be welcomed into another group that can share that.

What was clearly interesting was that the ministry/work/life balance that we have committed ourselves to does involve people at a high level in their professions – High Court Judges, Tax Professionals, Directors of Firms, Management Consultants, etc. Perhaps these folks are examples of those to whom God offers talents and expects those individuals to use them successfully, that is, to his greater glory.

I look forward to attending other gatherings of CHRISM in the future and in the meantime, I will seek to link the Roman Catholic Permanent Diaconate with the organisation. Brotherly and sisterly gatherings in communion with Christ are so valuable.

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International Conference of the European Worker Priests, Pentecost 2010, Groot Bijgaarden, Belgium,

Georges SainteMarie (Translated by Phil Aspinall)

About 20 delegates, of which five were from the French collective, joined in this weekend and shared in the contributions from each country: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and England. Only the Spanish collective were absent, but they still sent a contribution.

Work in advance was important. For the French, different regions had joined in the discussion on the theme: the many contributions sent before the conference had enabled a rich synthesis.

On our arrival, Jaak welcomed us in the name of the Belgian Worker Priests and quickly presented the situation in Belgium with the linguistic problems which divide the country: Flemish and Walloon. We were several days away from the elections.

Our times of work, of sharing, of reflection began like this: starting with the papers contributed by each country, each participant was invited to pick one sentence which seemed to them to be important. Here are some of them:

Finance dominates politics.

If we, the North, are in difficulties, the people of the countries of the South suffer the weight of the crisis like a general epidemic. Capitalism does not resolve the problems but creates them.

A humane society is a society of the future.

There are other dimensions to the crisis - food supply, environmental...

The crisis is an opportunity.

We have need of artisans, of those who can work with their hands, in practical work. It is necessary to give the same value to all types of work.

Images in the Gospels support us: the calm in the middle of the storm, the house built on the sand, Christ resurrected after the terrors of the cross.

Then, starting again from the contributions, each participant was invited to formulate a question:

The ideology which leads the world today is liberalism: do we see the birth of a current ideology capable of replacing this dominant one?

What is there that could replace this ideology economically, ecologically, politically?

Against the Europe of Capital, how to construct a Europe of Labour?

In the increase of flexible working and of uncertainty, how to live in solidarity?

How to fight back in a climate of fear and distrust?

Where is God in this crisis and the chaos?

The times of the essential... The church is called to travel again through the desert. What can we let go? What is it necessary for us to give up?

Are we the salt of the earth?

There is no love without solidarity. How does our Church give the signs of this?

Starting from these phrases and these questions, we worked in four small groups:

1. Finance dominates the world. Many people are living through a huge crisis. The ecological balance of the world is upset. Do we have the political means to change this state of things? Is another society possible? How? By what means?

2. Our engagements are directed by a wish to show solidarity with the poorest, the victims of the crisis. How are we to live in our societies in crisis? What signs of hope do we see?

3. The Church in whose service we are engaged seems far away from the realities of daily life of those people who suffer this crisis. How can we help her to be more truly a sign of Jesus living in our humanity?

4. We are Christians, believers, present in this world. What are our faith and our hope? How can we be signs of Jesus living today alongside those suffering because of the crisis?

In the plenary session which followed, I held on to several phrases: Many workers are preoccupied with survival rather than becoming activists.

We share in the concrete reality of the people with whom we are and with whom we live.

We do not depart from the idea of life shared. So it is in the Bible and the Gospel.

What signs of God do we find in the crisis? To read again in the crisis: 'Creation from Chaos'.

Come to Jesus for life, in order that people can regain their voice.

The importance of being present, as a believer, in unions, organisations, political parties, which are the places of faithfulness.

And also, in the face of this crisis we find ourselves in many different situations and places, but if we are united together we have great power. What can call us together, to unite us in the struggle?

At the end, we had a time to say how each of us would take part, concretely, in the building of a New World, in the places where we are:

I shall organise the workers to give them back their voice.

Live in the present moment – and listen.

A new government in England – a new opportunity?

Respond to the questions of workers made redundant, and

refer back to our union groups, members of our organisations, politicians.

Listen and help everyone to find their true talents in this moment of Crisis – it is perhaps an opportunity.

Be present and take action with those who defend the workers who are victims of the Crisis.

Within the small group of the Union, to be attentive to those who are in most difficulty after the Cuts to ensure they don't disappear.

We shall meet at Pentecost 2011 with the German-speaking group

The proposed theme is “the depolitisation in society which is perhaps a consequence of the current crisis: how shall we involve ourselves with new forms of engagements and new ways of doing politics.”

This word “depolitisation” is ambiguous and needs a little explanation. The small European group met again in November to firm up the questions. It would perhaps be good if the political workshop of the Worker Priests in France were to look into this question.

Thank you to our Belgian friends who received us well and surprised us by many good things, for this convivial and friendly conference with a balance between the times of relaxation, of visits, of reflection, of celebration, and of course, without forgetting the beer

International Conference of the European Worker Priests, Lucerne, Switzerland, Pentecost 2011

Phil Aspinall

The small planning group met in Paris in November and has confirmed that next year's conference will be held in Lucerne, hosted by the Swiss group, over the Pentecost Weekend, 10th – 13th June. The theme of "Depolitisation" has been developed into four questions:

1. Can each delegation describe one or two events which we have recently lived through, and which seem to us to carry political significance?
2. Why have some people stopped their [social and political] involvement? And why do others not get involved? *
3. Where do we find, in the Bible or elsewhere, the strength to escape from powerlessness?
4. How can we encourage ourselves and other to work together to find new ways of participation?

* It was suggested that we should find some answers to Question 2 by talking to people outside our immediate circle.

As ever, I would encourage you to attend the Pentecost conference – it is always an opportunity to expand our horizons, to meet old and new friends, and to be challenged. Please contact me if you are interested and would like more details, before 17th April (contact details inside back cover).

We shall prepare a two-page paper with our responses to the questions. So even if you cannot attend, we would welcome any thoughts or comments you may have on this theme. Please send these to me by 17th April 2011 - and please remember that we have to write the paper in French, so please keep contributions short and in simple English.

And if you have never attended one of these events – please do consider it!

The Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers and the National Association for the Self-Supporting Active Ministry (US) Tentmaking Conference, 2010, University of Saint Mary's of the Lake, Mundelein, 12th – 14th November 2010.

Lyn Page

The annual Tentmakers' conference was held on the university campus of Saint Mary's of the Lake in Mundelein just outside Chicago, set in parkland with a lake, boathouse etc. It was jointly hosted by NASSAM, National Association for the Self-Supporting Active Ministry (Episcopal Tentmakers) <http://www.nassam.org> and APT, Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers <http://www.yaphankpc.org/tentmakers/index.htm>.

It was good to meet the people at the conference who were also CHRISM members, who look forward to hearing from us and seeing the journals and papers. It was an opportunity to share information about CHRISM and MSEs in the UK.

The topic of the conference was Emergence Christianity, the way in which Christianity is changing with today's culture. The main speaker, Phyllis Tickle, set the theme in the wider context of the phenomenon of 'Emergence Culture' encompassing all aspects of society, including religion. Phyllis is founding editor of the Religion Department of Publishers Weekly, a lay eucharistic minister in the Episcopal Church and a senior fellow of Cathedral College at the National Cathedral in Washington. She is a respected author and speaker on religion in America today. I found her presentation stunning. On the first evening I heard more than I would expect from most speakers over several days.

In a nutshell, the theories of emergence suggest that every 500 years there is a major change in the structure of society in those parts of the world affected by "western" culture and particularly in the source of authority. We are said to be living in such a time, although the transition period often lasts about 150 years. These

changes in society are mirrored in religion and we are now moving away from a top down hierarchy to bottom up self-defined and self-constituted groups. There is an inevitable reaction to the trend: 'Fresh Expressions' might be an example of the hierarchical structure trying to emulate the movement.

I won't go into more detail here, it would take too much space, and Phyllis has written a book on the subject: 'The Great Emergence - How Christianity is changing and why'. There is also a website where you can see more information <http://www.phyllistickle.com>. Phyllis is also on the board of the 'Explore Faith' organisation; for more details see <http://www.explorefaith.org>.

As you would expect, most of this information is American-centric and Phyllis uses some colloquialisms in her book that don't immediately translate into UK English. This aside, the theme of The Great Emergence is something that affects most of the western world and Phyllis recognises that it was clearly active, and discernible in the UK at least twenty years before it was nearly so visible and coherent in America.

On Saturday afternoon we heard from Johnny Campbell, speaking on the subject of Social Media Marketing (see <http://socialmediasalestrainer.com>). Johnny talked us through the social media such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and blogs. He

explained how these are used by the emergence generations and how tentmaker organisations can find people and answer the needs that are there. He



emphasised that consistency and reputation are important to a successful dialogue.

Phyllis followed on with an explanation of the increasing use of virtual reality on the net. With sites such as 'Second Life' <http://secondlife.com> , it is estimated that 20% of Christians in the US only have experience of Church on the net or in a cyber church. The interest in virtual reality is also reflected in the popularity of the film Avatar, which portrays a virtual world. Phyllis explains that the people using virtual reality are typically under the age of 45, without families of their own. This illustrates a split in society between virtuality and physicality, but it is important to remember that both are equally 'real'.

Tentmakers work alongside people of all ages everyday and are ideally placed to connect with all the forms of emergence culture and the many Christian groupings within it. After all, we have been doing this for many years. This is equally true of MSEs.

Phyllis concluded by saying the biggest challenge for the established church is to find a way of interfacing with emergence culture. The church is handicapped in this in the hierarchical understanding of authority that is in opposition to the emergence culture which is deeply suspicious of figures of authority. They prefer a flat organisational structure where the authority lies within the group.

In the conference workshops, a list of actions was put together for the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches in the US. This is in response to requests for deliberations, outcomes, and recommendations to see how these can benefit the wider church. The defined actions will be reported back to the General Assembly of PCUSA in Louisville and the Episcopalian Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori who has an interest in the ministry of Tentmakers, as she was one for many years.

This list may be of interest to our churches here, although we may focus on slightly different priorities. The first three items were:

1. Model, teach and inform congregations, providing a realistic vision of tentmaking.
2. Call the church to look at a broader view of church and clergy.
3. Work with seminaries and preparing bodies for tentmaker's ministry.

So in summary, the traditional forms of ministry do not use the same ways of communication as those who are in emergence culture, and emergence culture represents the majority of the population. A large proportion of this majority are engaging with and searching for forms of 'church' in virtual reality. Traditional ministers are treated with suspicion because they act as figures of authority when adopting a leadership role.

Although I don't think we use social networking as much as most emergence people, as MSEs we do have the advantage over parish ministers of not being typical church leaders by being 'out there' and part of an emergent group.

Personally this conference was a rare opportunity to meet with like-minded people (the Tentmakers) and learn more about how others are engaging with the challenges that lay ahead of us both in the US and the UK.

I appreciate the opportunity to join this annual event and enjoyed the hospitality and fellowship afforded to us. I wish to thank the members of APT and NASSAM for hosting such a stimulating and enjoyable weekend.

And finally

A minister was completing a rousing temperance sermon. With great emphasis he said, 'If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river.'

With even greater emphasis he said, 'And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river.'

And then finally, shaking his fist in the air, he said, 'And if I had all the whisky in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river.'

Sermon complete, he sat down ...

The song leader stood very cautiously and announced, with a smile, nearly laughing, 'For our closing song, let us sing Hymn 365, 'Shall We Gather at the River'.

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

Teilhard de Chardin