

Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry

Number 90

July 2004

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.

Editorial

It is always good to receive feedback from readers of this Journal appreciative of an article or some aspect of CHRISM's work, so letters or e-mails from Nigel McCulloch (Bishop of Manchester), Mike Rayner (Oxford) and David Taylor (North Devon) in recent weeks.

It was equally good to be able to meet up with one of CHRISM's farthest flung members, David White, who hails from near Perth – Western Australia! David was on the UK leg of a business trip that was to take him across the Atlantic, arriving back home after a circumnavigation of the globe. I met David as he flew into Manchester on his way to spend a few days with relatives near Derby and enjoyed an excellent couple of hours conversation with a man clearly committed in his faith and to the practice of ministry in secular employment. Keith Reyner, Bishop of Adelaide, was prominent in the launch of MSE as a movement 20 years ago, but progress has been slow in Western Australia so David is building up an MSE cell there. Support at that distance is not easy, although e-mail does help. The most valuable support though is undoubtedly prayer, so please remember David.

The importance of prayer is something that Peter Johnson has stressed throughout his stint as Moderator, and as he steps down from his term at the forthcoming AGM, we launch the next occasional paper, CHRISM 8, with this mailing of the Journal. "Making a Difference" is based closely on the 'journey' Peter guided us on during the CHRISM Reflective weekend at Hemingford Grey in February this year. His notes have been re-written and edited to make this journey available to a wider audience. It is a fine aid to reflection on how our faith and work inter-relate and I heartily recommend it.

Like Topsy, this edition has grown and grown as it has taken shape (as I write this I still don't know just how many pages it will be). A couple of items have been squirreled away for October, but such is the wealth information and contribution it is proper to make this a bumper edition – some reading for the beach perhaps?

John Mantle has turned his penetrating mind to a reflection on the recent Church of England publication *Mission Shaped Church*, which makes thought-provoking reading. Also included is an article based on the excellent contribution of Andrew Britton, formerly a Treasury economist, to last year's CHRISM conference, on the Future of Work. The importance of international links are emphasised by reports on meetings over the past six months attended by CHRISM representatives.

Resources for MSEs figure prominently too. Three courses, in London, Salisbury and Bangor (all of which can be undertaken remotely) are featured, as well as two book reviews, references to other books and a list of websites provide support and resource materials in the faith and work arena.

Hugh Valentine (London) has recently written an informative piece for the website of St. James in Piccadilly entitled *Worker-priests / Priest-workers, Failed experiment – unanswered challenge – future possibility*. As clear an explanation and advocacy of MSE as one could wish for, it is reproduced here by kind permission. Hugh has also informed me of a useful looking new web forum for ministers, especially so as he has instituted an MSE section!

Another Hugh, Lee, has beavered away quietly but effectively on Church of England General Synod in the MSE cause; his recent exploits are described below. There is also a report from the redoubtable Jean Skinner about recent happenings among the North East MSE group. And of course no edition of "Ministers-at-Work" would be complete without both the Diary and another dose of my sense of humour.

One thing is missing. Having received too few contributions to the **MSE 11th commandment competition**, I am extending it to **1st October**. This means that I expect to receive many more contributions (please! Or I'll enter it myself, and you really would not want that to happen).

Rob

Mission Shaped for Humanity

John Mantle

Archbishops' Advisor for Episcopal Ministry and author of 'Britain's First Worker Priests'

I couldn't help very strong feelings of *déjà vu* – or perhaps it was just age – as I read through *Mission Shaped Church*, with its updating on 'church planting' and 'fresh expressions of church'. Yet if that is the intention, discussions across the church must still take account of a whole range of other enterprises and movements – unmentioned in *Mission Shaped Church* – where Christians have found other ways of 'being church' for more than half a century! Many are ignored or treated as 'failures' as the institution in the last few decades has busied itself with liturgical revision, internal restructuring and ministerial wrangling.

Take, for example, the entire history of Industrial Mission: surely one of the most remarkable attempts to engage with the culture of the industrialised west. More than forty years ago and before many of us were in ministry, Archbishop Michael Ramsay and others talked about 'going to where people were' rather than expecting them to 'come to us'. *Mission Shaped Church* makes never actually claims the notion is new – but it gets close to making it sound as if it might be. The real difficulty is putting the idea into practice and accepting failure. It was 'Ted' Wickham, appointed by Bishop Leslie Hunter, who really believed there was a mission-field out there in Sheffield's Steel works and who led chaplains directly on to the shop floor. He invited workers to 'join God's union' not by sending them 'back' to local parish churches but by trying to help them *be* community in one of their networks – their place of work. Yet the mission was often met with discouragement and disapproval from those who saw the parish model as the only way of 'being church.'

Alongside that, there continue to be developments in sector ministries. In shopping centres, commercial centres, schools, prisons, hospitals, academic institutions, in barracks and battlefields you'll find chaplains hard at work. But they're sometimes treated as if they are not quite engaged in the church's mission at all, working perhaps at some kind of 'holding operation' until people can later

'return' to the 'real church'. Yet they too are *being* church in a different way.

Then there have been religious orders and other individuals rooting themselves in other people's territory. They're a presence in disaffected old pit villages, run-down housing estates and in a variety of other urban settings where partnership work goes on in addition to, and collaborating with, dedicated parish clergy. It continues to be a ministry engaged as a presence in local culture, but it's unglamorous, often hidden, frequently costly.

And what about the church's 'entry' into the most obvious of networks – people's places of work? The Church of England has Ministers in Secular Employment. *Mission Shaped Church* only mentions them in a footnote and then gets the definition wrong! They understand their ministry *at work*. They currently minister in hospitals, schools, laboratories, on farmland, and in public utilities all the time being a presence that at any hour of the day may lead from human engagement to gospel comprehension. But the institution is entirely two-faced about them and they're often ignored. Why? Because they don't help prop-up the parochial system. Yet, if its right to challenge that 'propping-up' – and *Mission Shaped Church* does so – then the ministry of the MSE must be heard, encouraged and embraced. What can we learn from the presence that they try to be? What is their understanding of 'being church' and 'being Christian' in human networks and in cultures far removed from the parish church?

When all this is put together with industrial mission there are other things to consider. What are our different interpretations of mission? What do we mean by 'success' or 'failure'? What criteria do we use to determine these things and discover the difference? Are there ways of being church out there we haven't even thought of? Above all, how do we engage with structures good and bad, with the large-scale stuff, with a divided Britain, with social exclusion and social injustice? It's many of the long-standing enterprises already mentioned and rooted in communities for decades that can help to give us some of the painful answers.

Mission Shaped Church sometimes gives the impression that mission

is essentially about evangelism, proselytising, conversion, the gathering in of the lost for fellowship and praise, rather than a living and often painful engagement with humanity out of love. Better surely to enter the real world of café and club culture than set up your own non-alcoholic versions.

But *Mission Shaped Church* does make helpful theological points and especially its reminder of the incarnational thrust of Anglicanism: we are about God's mission, not our own; the community exists because we have a mission not 'vice versa'. But that's precisely what many in the church have been trying to do in the second half of the 20th century. But having reminded the reader of Anglicanism's incarnational emphasis that focus suddenly evaporates! Yet we cannot afford to ignore examples and lessons especially when they've apparently 'failed'. So often ventures have been dropped or strangled in adolescence because they didn't 'succeed' or because they threatened the parochial model and *Mission Shaped Church* rightly warns against taking such a narrow view. But that's the whole point – that's precisely what 'incarnational' mission will often be about. Some of these ministries in the eyes of the world (and especially in the eyes of some Christians hell bent on 'going for growth' or 'success') will always be 'failures'; some will get smashed up, others won't reproduce and we'll have to start all over again. If *Mission Shaped Church* is suddenly being seen as giving the church permission to do 'new' and engaging things, lets at least embrace and learn from the wealth of engagement that developed in the past and continues in the present.

We should be thankful that *Mission Shaped Church* will encourage a dialogue long overdue. But let's also find some common understanding of God's mission to humanity in other people's territory, our part in that, and the right criteria for measuring success and failure. And in trying to do so, let's engage with and learn from all those courageous men and women past and present whose work in the world never gets a mention. Not to do so will prove catastrophic. As one of my old teachers has said, 'in its mission, the church and its eucharist is not a club for the redeemed, but for the healing of humanity'.

MSEs and the Church of England General Synod

Hugh Lee (Oxford) and Sallie Bassham (Bradford) are active in the MSE cause on General Synod. Hugh was recently appointed to DRACSC (the Deployment, Remuneration and Conditions of service Committee, whilst Sallie was unsuccessful by one vote in seeking election to the Theological Education and Training Committee. Sallie recently e-mailed Hugh (copying the Editor in): "I'm delighted at the way you keep getting MSEs positively onto Synod's agenda. You have actually changed the way people think and that is a considerable achievement. Well done!"

Hugh recently wrote to the Archbishops' Council regarding the lack of coverage of work and MSE in the recent report "Mission-shaped Church". The reply included the following.

"I take your point about the lack of space given in the report to the world of work, and I agree with you that the footnote on page 155 does not express a full understanding of the calling of Ministers in Secular Employment. [An MSE known to the writer who worked in a brewery] would have said that he was called to be salt and light in Guinness, but perhaps salt more than light – in other words for him the implicit, incarnational and institutional dimensions of ministry were more significant than developing what we would now call a fresh expression of church in the brewery. Thus his emphasis and that of the report are complementary but not identical. I don't know whether the same would be true for members of CHRISM more generally.

"For the purposes of following up the report it would be very helpful if I could gather some case studies of the emergence of fresh expressions of church in the workplace, so as to share examples of good practice across the Church. If you or colleagues in CHRISM have any cases of this kind, reflecting that part of CHRISM's purpose which is concerned with "seeing and telling the Christian story there", may I ask you to send them to me?"

Action point: If you can contribute such a case study, please contact the Editor, or Hugh directly at hugh.lee@btinternet.com.

The Future of Work

The following article is based on a presentation at the 2003 CHRISM Summer Conference by Andrew Britton, a former Treasury economist. Andrew was a member of the Enquiry below and has maintained a keen interest in this area.

The Churches Enquiry into Unemployment and the Future of Work (UFW) was launched in the early 1990s to ask whether mass unemployment was inevitable and, if so, how it could be made a more acceptable way of life. The outlook at the time was pessimistic: Charles Handy, 'The Future of Work' and Jeremy Rifkin, 'The End of Work'.

We found however, on economic, political and religious grounds, that there is no real substitute for paid work. Our main conclusion was that there could and should be 'enough good work for all'.

By the time we reported in 1997 there was a broad consensus in favour of this proposition. The figures for unemployment, in the UK at least, seem consistent with that view.

Unemployment (as a standardised percentage):

	US	Canada	Japan	France	Germany	Italy	UK	OECD
1993	6.9	11.4	2.5	11.7	7.9	10.3	10.5	8.3
1997	4.9	9.1	3.4	12.3	9.9	12.1	7.0	7.4
2002	5.8	7.6	5.4	8.7	8.2	9.0	5.1	6.9

Whilst the quantity of work has undoubtedly increased in the UK, this article is more about the quality of that work, the unfinished agenda from UFW. So: what is 'good work'?

Newspaper quotes, cited in 'The Work Revolution', by Craig Donnellan.

"People have to understand that there is no such thing as a job for life any more and that it is no longer a bad thing to move quickly from job to job."

“British workers work by far the longest hours in the European Union – with a third doing more than a 48-hour week.”

“For most people personal life comes before their career, with only 28 per cent getting more satisfaction from their work.”

“Our present way of working is unsustainable, the cost is too high in human and business terms. Business will have to work with employees to balance work and life for compassion and for competitiveness.”

“People can juggle their hours to get out to the shops when it is less busy, to fit in with child care hours, and to make sure they are at home when the plumber is due to call.”

“Half a million workers are affected every year by stress, which can contribute to asthma, heart disease, arthritis, migraine, depression, and other mental health problems.”

“Women over 35 are the new financial force to be reckoned with as they reap the rewards of an amazing transformation in earning power.”

“Perhaps the message is that while employers can help working mothers, the only real answer is that men should be encouraged or persuaded to take greater responsibility for their children.”

Like all economic forecasting, this is not really about the future – it is an interpretation of recent trends. We should try to assess as well as to describe or predict.

What kind of work?

Employees (Millions)	All	Manufacturing	Services
1992	23.2	4.1	17.4
2002	25.8	3.6	20.6

Nowadays most jobs are in the service sector. In terms of employment manufacturing is going the way of agriculture. The growth sectors include health care, childcare, security, consultants and advi-

sors of many kinds, marketing, and tourism. These areas are less at risk from new technology and foreign competition. Some involve the transfer to the market economy of activities which were once performed in the household.

Work is becoming more human and creative, more dependent on relationships, less mechanical, less dependent on patience or manual dexterity. We might say therefore that it has more potential to be 'good'.

Is work sufficiently well paid?

In [classic] economic theory pay is the sole motive for work. 'Good work' then means work that enables one to maintain a good standard of living. In our society pay is also an important determinant of social status. Low pay is not just a hardship, but also seen as an insult.

Hence the demand for a minimum wage. The National Minimum Wage has been introduced, and generally enforced. It is at a level higher than in the US, but lower than in most of Europe. It does not seem to have destroyed jobs, or to have caused general wage inflation.

The dispersion of pay widened greatly in the 1980s and has not narrowed since then (*the UK has the widest gap between average pay in the top and bottom deciles in the EU. Ed.*). This contributed to an increase in the dispersion of household incomes. It might also have weakened 'social cohesion'. The emphasis on individual rights and the weakening of social solidarity (such as union power) has resulted in a closer link between pay and the market value of output. We live in a market economy and the labour market in particular has come more into line with [market economy] theory. This is 'good' for those who can look after themselves!

Is work sufficiently secure?

In 1994 the OECD produced a major report called 'The Jobs Study'. It concluded that labour markets, especially in Europe, were insuffi-

ciently 'flexible'. Firms could not hire and fire as readily as they needed to do in the interests of economic efficiency. In the long run, job security resulted in less employment, not more. The UK was commended for having a more flexible labour market than most of Europe.

In the 1980s there was a fall in the proportion of the workforce in what could be described as 'full-time tenured employment'. According to one estimate the fall between 1975 and 1993 was from 55% to 36%. The experience of employment and of self-employment became much more similar, as people moved, or at least contemplated moving, jobs more frequently. (self-employment accounts for about 11% of the workforce. There was a significant increase in the 1980s, but not subsequently).

Some people flourish under these conditions, but there are perceptible adverse effects on the health of the average worker. Studies of civil servants being privatised show psychological and physiological damage, especially for men (cf. Jane Ferrie, 'Labour Market Status, Insecurity and Health' *Journal of Health Psychology*, July, 1997). For them at least work is not as 'good' as it was.

Do we work too much?

At one time what was most admired was 'effortless superiority'. Now we take pride in working long and hard. Have we, as a nation, adopted the 'Protestant Work Ethic'? What has become of the Sabbath rest? Is work becoming compulsive? We appear to be imitating the US rather than the rest of Europe.

The longer-term trend has been for activity rates to fall, but in the last few years this has levelled off. Perhaps much of the trend to earlier retirement reflected redundancy policy or increased stress at work. Now there is to be legislation against 'ageism'. Longevity and the lack of adequate pensions may result in a reversal of the trend. Would we welcome this? Perhaps voluntary work would be better for this age group.

Work activity rates, 1994 and 2002:

	1994	2002
All 16+	62.6	62.9
Men 50-64, Women 50-59	68.5	70.4
Men 65+, Women 60+	7.9	8.8

Recorded hours of work per week are not rising on average, although unpaid overtime by those in more demanding jobs does seem to be on the increase. Many people say that they are working longer hours than they would wish and that family life suffers. Over-work can be both a cause and an effect of family breakdown.

Working mothers still face problems in finding good childcare and co-operative employers. It is an open question whether the 'business case' for family friendly employment policies has really been made. (Firms that are too kind will attract employees that are too dependent). The effect of mothers' working on their children's subsequent progress is also unproven. As the child-care industry develops, some of the stresses associated with female employment may be reduced.

Do we work too hard?

Employers are becoming increasingly aware of the problems of stress at work. Headlines in a newspaper recently: 'Employers who ignore stress face legal action.' The article gave six guidelines to avoid stress, noting that 85% of employees say they can cope with the demands of the job, 65% say they understand their role and responsibilities. An HE spokeswoman said, 'They will be the equivalent of the Highway Code. It will make it easier for employees to bring actions and our inspectors will be able to go in and see if companies are up to our standards'.

Why do people work so hard? Overwork may be a symptom of job insecurity. It may also reflect the increased competition between firms and within the labour force. In other words it may be the result of 'economic efficiency'. The customer is being better served – but at the expense of the producer, who is in fact the same person.

Economic theory offers a possible definition of overwork. Happiness depends not on the level of consumption, but on comparisons with the living standards of others. Hence the competition for status may lead to increased activity without increasing average well-being. That would indeed be 'over-work' and would not be an efficient use of time and resources. Most religions would support some concept of sufficiency. Work motivated by the desire for excess may not be called 'good'.

Values at work

A gap is said to be opening up between consumer and producer values. Individual v collective. Summed up as 'I want' v 'We serve'. It is assumed that friendly workplace communities are efficient as producers. Moral values are seen as a source of competitive advantage – as a means by which firms may attract good workers in a tight labour market.

Are there three possible outcomes to this tension: coercion, carrots or consumerism?

Economic theory does not however recognise this 'gap'. Individuals maximise their own utility, both as workers and as consumers. They work in order to consume. Firms maximise profits. They do not aim to serve their customers, except as a means of increasing profits. They often compete by cutting costs, including labour costs. If managers serve the interests of employees, then the shareholders will replace them. Producers may learn to co-operate with their workforce and there may be some degree of mutual trust and recognition of a common interest. But this is not the same as altruism or social cohesion. The market does not reward compassion.

This is, of course, a very incomplete account of human motivation. It may however be closer to the truth than it once was. The experience of living in a market economy may make people behave more like the theory predicts.

Conclusions

In preparing *Unemployment and the Future of Work* we found it most difficult to agree on the theology. Yet there is some 'distinctly Christian' about our work in the New Testament. Good work is service to God and to one another, on the pattern of Jesus washing his disciples feet – the work of a slave. It should be an expression of love and generosity.

There is also a calling to particular tasks, including the preaching of the Gospel and the support of the church. It is possible to see many, if not all, secular work as vocation, but in many service sector occupations the term is especially easy to apply. This might then be the 'Future of Work' we would like to see.

The question is whether this model of work can survive in a market environment. Can notions of accountability and incentives, taken from the business world, be applied to work like that of a teacher, a doctor, a care worker or indeed that of a financial advisor?

Similar issues arise within the church in relation to conditions of service of the stipendiary clergy. Should they have the rights and responsibilities of employees? Should their stipends be regarded as living allowances, or as remuneration for office – or both? (*I don't think the Inland Revenue has a problem with that one! Ed.*)

We should assume that the market economy is here to stay, although its precise boundary might shift. The danger is that the model of loving service gets marginalised into a relatively small 'voluntary' sector, whilst the motive for all 'serious' paid work, and the measure of its effectiveness, is seen in terms of profit and of pay. That is an issue that we, as Christians, urgently need to engage.

Further reading:

The Tomorrow Project publications:

'Tomorrow' (2000), 'Tomorrow's Workplace' (2001).

'Work and Worth – A New Agenda', Church Action on Poverty, 2001.

'The Work Revolution', Craig Donnellan, 1999.

Chapter on work in *'Economic Theory and Christian Belief', Britton*

and Sedgwick, 2003.

So how about a WorkLife Toolbox?

Well the Southeast Christian Church (that's the USA, not the Home Counties) have put one together. As they say, "Our church is committed to supporting and helping you in this sometimes crazy and challenging life at work - where most of us spend most of our time. Your work is ministry, and God sees your work as a form of worship to Him."

A free on-line service is offered of:

"THE WORKLIFE TOOLBOX:

Your Free online weekly Toolbox will be an important connection for you. Its purpose is to help you grow spiritually for life in your workplace. The tools and ministry will be balanced with training, practical strategies, resources, and community building for your workplace.

YOUR WORKPLACE SUPPORT CENTER:

You also have an online worklife support center at www.SoutheastatWork.org.

Check back often for updates and new articles and tools for your use. The links on the side of each WorkLife Toolbox will help you access these."

MSE with a difference, but definitely MSE! Ed.

E-poll on work/life balance

Your intrepid Editor recently signed up on a panel to respond to canvassing of opinions on topics being debated in Parliament, undertaken by the local MP. The first was on work/life balance, a subject close to MSEs interests! Do any other readers have similar initiatives by elected representatives?

MSE Studies with The University of Bangor

A reminder of the Studies in Self-Supporting Ministry (Postgraduate and post-experience qualifications in Self Supporting Ministry) available, as reported in the Journal last year:

Postgraduate Certificate in Self Supporting Ministry;

Postgraduate Diploma in Self Supporting Ministry;

MTh in Self Supporting Ministry;

MMin in Self Supporting Ministry;

DMin in Self Supporting Ministry.

The Centre for Ministry Studies offers a flexible part-time programme of study for those involved in self-supporting ministry from Christian denominations who have successfully completed initial ministerial education or who are of graduate or equivalent status. Some will be actively engaged in self-supporting ministry; some will be equipping themselves to move into self supporting ministry; some will be pursuing the course for other reasons.

The course aims are:

to reflect critically on the various forms and styles
of non-stipendiary ministry;

to give particular opportunity to reflect on context with
reference to Ordained Local Ministry;

to give particular opportunity to reflect on context with
reference to Ministry in Secular Employment;

to apply theological resources to issues to do with self supporting
ministry;

to develop research perspectives on self supporting ministry;

to encourage self supporting ministers to be reflective
practitioners;

to develop empirical research perspectives on self supporting
ministry.

Core staff:

Course Director, The Revd Professor Leslie J Francis

Director of Studies, The Revd Canon Dr James Francis

Course Coordinator, The Revd Peter Francis.

Further enquiries can be made to:
The Revd Professor Leslie J Francis
Centre for Ministry Studies
University of Wales, Bangor
Normal Site (Meirion)
Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PX
www.bangor.ac.uk/rs

Equipping Christians for Public Life

Sarum College offers a wide range of part-time courses by distance learning to equip Christians for participation in public life in our ethically and religiously plural society. Applications for study in the 2004-05 year are invited. Start date: September.

Students' comments:

"Much more use to me as a practising Christian in the world than anything else I have come across".

"An excellent course, well thought out".

"I have found it to make a real difference in my grasp of both theological and political ideas. It has helped me enormously in my job and on related issues."

See <<http://www.sarum.ac.uk/society/prospect.htm>> for full details of the Politics and Theology Programme.

Or please request a hard copy of the prospectus and an application form from Mary Winters on 01722 424818 or at ptp@sarum.ac.uk.

Distance Theology course

The University of London is offering a course leading to Diploma of Theology or Bachelor of Theology using distance learning, which may suit MSEs. More details at:

www.londonexternal.ac.uk/undergraduate/divinity

Another new take on the Lord's Prayer

Rob Fox

Kathleen Jones, Professor Emeritus of social policy in the University of York, recently proposed a version of the Lord's Prayer designed to remove elements seen as problematic to under-25s. It reads:

*Holy Spirit,
Our Creator and Redeemer,
Beyond our experience of time and space:
May your name be held holy,
May your society of peace and love be achieved,
May your purpose be accomplished
On our planet as beyond it.
Give us today our daily bread,
And forgive us what we do wrong
As we forgive those who wrong us.
Shield us from harm
And deliver us from evil.
So be it.*

A number of objections might be made (what happened to 'Father'? Should we not stick to what has been recorded?), but I can't help thinking that anyone familiar with 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' would end in "make it so". But then again: that was late 1980s – so what do I know? At least I'm not old enough to be Emeritus.

Thought

The human urge to work is itself part of God's creation and creativity. It is marred by fallen humanity, which abuses the relationships of work, direct it towards destructive ends, and interpret work in terms of its reward, not the activity itself.

Ship of Fools ...

... has recently introduced a **virtual Church**. Visitors can enter the church through an avatar and participate in a virtual service. Security was tightened fairly quickly after its introduction due to gate crashers abusing the facility. Additional churchwardens have been appointed to eject abusers. Visit it at www.ship-of-fools.com.

The winners of the recent competition for an **eleventh commandment**, run with the **Methodist Church**, have also been announced.

The chosen entries were:

Thou shalt not worship false pop idols

Thou shalt not kill in the name of any god

Thou shalt not confuse text with love

Thou shalt not consume thine own body weight in fudge

Thou shalt not be negative.

Speaking of which, the best positive suggestions included:

Thou shalt... commit random acts of kindness... respect the earth...

indicate at roundabouts... smile at the person opposite.

MSEs at Greenbelt

The Co-operation Group is planning to run a Faith and Work resource and information stand at the forthcoming Greenbelt festival, 27-30 August, at Cheltenham Racecourse.

The Group exists to coordinate activities with the following organisations:

- 1 CABE - Christian Association of Business Executives,
- 2 CHRISM,
- 3 ICF - Industry Churches Forum,
- 4 MODEM – the management and ministry think-tank,
- 5 Ridley Hall Foundation - based at Ridley Hall, Cambridge,
- 6 Faith in Business - the joint publication of ICF and Ridley Hall Foundation.

If you are going to Cheltenham, look out for us. Further informa-

tion about this year's Greenbelt at: www.greenbelt.org

Worker-priests / Priest-workers

Failed experiment – unanswered challenge – future possibility

Hugh Valentine

Also known as Non-Stipendiary Ministers, Ministers in Secular Appointment, Self-Supporting Ministers, Tent-makers, Bivocational ... (aaarrgh! Stop, stop!).

My formative spiritual development took place amidst the hospitality of the Quakers (Society of Friends). I became a Friend in 1976 (Sheffield's Hartshead Meeting) and I remain in membership but via various (unexpected) steps was ordained priest in the Church of England in 1989. I am cautious about talk of 'vocation' but when the question concerning ordination took up residence in my mind, I was troubled. I soon realised that the disquiet I felt came not so much from the possibility that I should or might be ordained, but from the social and professional setting I assumed it demanded. That setting was what we regard (unhelpfully) as normative for those ordained priest: stipend and housing from the church; assignment to a particular parish; and end to any previous work or employment, and some kind of elemental separation from others.

My disquiet slipped away when I stumbled on the existence of what the church called non-stipendiary ministers (NSM). This is bad nomenclature: it is generally discourteous to describe people by what they are not. To describe someone ordained to 'the office and work of a priest in the church of God' by saying they are not paid is clumsy, at best. So far as I could tell I had trained for professional social work from a sense of vocation and I believed that since the possibility of an additional vocation to the priesthood had arisen in that setting then it made sense to assume that was where I was to exercise it. I am grateful to the then Bishop of Stepney (Bishop Jim Thompson) for supporting me in that.

This process seemed to me to link directly to the experience of my spiritual formation amongst Quakers. British Friends have no ordained or paid priesthood - emphasising instead the 'priesthood of

all believers'. Whilst I had to recognise that becoming an episcopally ordained priest in the 'one holy catholic and apostolic church' was a step too far for some Friends to stomach or support, I saw that being a worker priest did contain some acknowledgement of Quaker doctrine on ministry, and its position on what the founder George Fox dismissively called hireling priests.

I trained part time for three years on the Southwark Ordination Course whilst working as a social worker in Bermondsey and Westminster. I chose to reject the 'non-stipendiary minister' title and use worker-priest instead. This was not to offend stipendiary clergy colleagues (though a few were offended, for they supposed it implied that they did not work), nor was it to suggest that I was following the model of the French clergy who adopted that term. Their enterprise made mine look feeble.

The French Experiment

In France in the 1950s the Roman Catholic Church approved as a missionary experiment a novel deployment of some of its priests. They were to work alongside 'ordinary' people in large factories, share their lives and thereby reverse the tide of secularisation and 'win men (sic) over to Christ'.

From all accounts, it did not quite turn out like that. One thing it did do was to radicalise some of the priests involved. Their consequent involvement in trades unionism and in the daily demands and compromises most working people face alarmed the hierarchy of the Roman church. It is claimed that the Vatican ordered the experiment to cease. Whatever the actual reasons, they were clothed in the assertion that paid 'secular' employment was inconsistent with the calling and office of a priest.

The Church of England

Canon Law and the Bishops' Regulations were changed in the 1960s to allow men (it was only men at that time) to be ordained priest and continue in 'secular' employment. It would seem that the main

driver was not theological but practical - there were insufficient priests to support all the parishes (if some reader believes this is untrue and unfair please let me know). So the 'normative' model of priesthood (stipend, parish, separation) was maintained and there was no explicit theological assertion that it might be right for a number of working men and women from all professions and jobs to be ordained.

Since then the Church of England has ordained many 'NSMs'. They provide immeasurable additional resource. Yet the majority of dioceses do nothing to provide specialised support to them and instead appear to treat them as 'assistant' clergy. There are very few deans or dedicated clergy chapters to support these 'tentmakers', no approach to theological formation or ministerial review which really engages with the issues raised for those who work in so-called secular employment, and very little by way of the recognition handed out to 'full timers' - the honorary canonry or position of helpful influence in such things as candidate selection, bishops' councils or cathedrals.

Part of the responsibility for this state of unrealised potential must rest with those of us who believe ourselves called to exercise a priestly ministry outside the traditional structures of parish and church. In England at least we appear not to have found a coherent voice, or to articulate a convincing case, or to have mounted an effective challenge (friendly, of course) to the 'normative' model of priesthood or (more necessary still) the creeping condition known as 'clericalism'.

Failed Experiment?

No. It is clear that the aspirations of the first worker priests were not realised, and that a great gulf remains between the world of work and the priest's calling as presently understood. But the answer to the question has to be no because so little time has passed. I remain optimistic that the future may yet surprise us. So I prefer to think of it as an experiment that has got off to a poor start, and awaits another gust of inspirational wind.

The obstacles

Like all institutions, the church is concerned with control and survival. These are often buried motives - subconscious - so this ought not be read as any criticism of individuals or a comment on their considered actions.

Organisations tend to be self-replicating. Candidates for non-stipendiary ministry in England tend to be like those doing the selecting - safe, middle-class and mainly conformist. We lack models of ordained men and women who manage effectively to discharge their duties as priests and who operate in a range of posts, jobs, roles and professions and who see these as being the places they pray, witness and celebrate the link between the transcendent and immanent.

The living out of the priest's office seems often to drift from the ontological and inspirational to the functional and tired. Of course there are exceptions, but many parish clergy drift towards becoming museum attendants: preserving the artefacts, discouraging innovation and preferring well behaved visitors who admire the exhibits.

The possibilities

We never know when a new, vibrant wind will blow through our tired lives and structures; so there is always room for a realistic hope and confidence in humankind and in God. There may emerge one or more bishops and others with a sense of what is possible in this sphere, and start a ball rolling.

When we get tired of postmodernism and start digging around in the muck and muddle of human possibility, the mystery of God and the promises of the Gospel, we may see developments we cannot now dream of.

Hugh Valentine, hugh@st-james-piccadilly.org

(This article was written by Hugh for the St. James in Piccadilly website and is reproduced here by kind permission. Ed.)

North East MSE Group

Jean Skinner

The North East MSE group met on the 11th May, focusing on a discussion with Revd Dr Nick Chamberlain, Continuing Ministerial Education (CME) officer for Durham Diocese. Nick had agreed to meet with us following an invitation by Jim Francis (Durham Diocese) to explore some of the issues relating to MSE and CME.

Nick led the discussion by introducing the following reflective comments.

1. Establishing a roll
2. Formation in Early Years of ministry
3. Supervision
4. Role Models
5. Creating Space

Nick was interested in whether as Ordained ministers there was a need for a formal role within the workplace, and should this be negotiated between the church and our employer?

Our response to this was that we would not find a formal negotiation useful and should certainly not be done without the MSE's approval. We all felt that the church needs to acknowledge in some formal way at ordination services the diversity of the MSE's ministry and recognise their daily work as ministry.

We discussed how CME is not always accessible to MSE's, it still being geared to stipendiary clergy. We all had different experiences of this. In Newcastle they do try and accommodate NSM/MSE where as in Durham it seems less flexible. This was born out by Nick asking whether we would attend CME if it were offered at times when MSE's could attend i.e. evenings and weekends.

This led to discussions around supervision mentoring and work consultancy. One member who had not been able to attend CME train-

ing had asked the diocese if the money could be used for her to pay for a work consultant of her choice, this was granted. Nick was genuinely interested in how Durham diocese could better support its MSE's, especially as there were 6 prospective MSE's currently in training.

The group were keen to point out that we did not want to feel that we were living in compartments, dividing time between work and church activities. We also pointed out the importance of what we brought back to the church and the churches need to recognise and affirm this. It was felt that each MSE should be asked what they would find useful in terms of their ministerial growth rather than having to fit into a rigid mould. It was thought that less emphasis on supervision (usually carried out by the incumbent) and more on mentoring might be a more helpful approach.

Jim Francis suggested (as a result of many conversations) that whilst ordination training undoubtedly helped people engage with issues between faith and daily life perhaps something more might be done to help MSE's articulate sufficiently the rationale for this particular ministry. He went on to say that he suspected most MSE's were left to get on with this themselves, and observed that the dioceses do have an obligation to support MSE's in their reflective task. As Bishop's advisor for NSM in Durham diocese Jim has written many papers reflecting on NSM/MSE, and organised occasional conferences and consultations.

Nick invited us to reflect on who might be our "heroes and heroines" in relation to our ministry. MSE in some ways is a 'lonely calling' and a 'frontier' ministry. It was also identified that this was also a growing perception amongst a new generation of stipendiary clergy. So there are some things in common here that might usefully be explored and shared in CME at large and in doing so might benefit MSE's.

We went on to discuss vulnerability that runs through all forms of ministry. It was pointed out that in working life anyone could experience vulnerability within the pressures of a job, not least in jobs where we are dealing with the public. Librarians were cited as a

case in point. Within CME it was highlighted the need for all clergy to be helped to 'find themselves'. Nick asked if MSE's addressed the place of peer groups in finding "oasis time"? At this point I highlighted the importance of Chrism as an opportunity to meet peers nationally. The Conferences and Reflective weekends contribute to my oasis time.

Ordained ministry accepts vulnerability more particularly as rooted in both following Christ and in expressing and exploring incarnational "presence". In the end titles relating to different kinds of ministry do not matter since this relates to all ministry in its diversity of forms. There does however remain the importance of clarity and accountability as necessary for right understanding and good working.

The meeting left more questions than answers as usual, but it was productive in the sense of starting a dialogue. Jim Francis agreed to follow up some of the issues with Nick and bring them back for further exploration at our group meetings. Some of the suggested ideas are

1. Some input into CME into understanding MSE
2. Meetings between MSE and their incumbent
3. Appropriate forms of mentoring for MSEs

At our annual NSM retreat in February the following suggestions were also put forward:

- 1 To do a profile of NSM/MSEs for the Durham and Newcastle diocesan newspapers.
- 2 We agreed to keep addressing theology in the exploration of MSE, and to publicise Chrism amongst the two dioceses.
- 3 To consider an opportunity to engage with the Chrism Theology Resource Book as a theological tool.
- 4 Consider visiting places of work
- 5 Consider a visit to the Newcastle Urban Theology Unit.
- 6 Meet with Industrial Chaplains to explore the links between MSE and Industrial mission.

International Meetings November 2003

Phil Aspinall

Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers Bangor, Maine

This was the usual annual conference of APT. The venue, in eastern Maine, meant that I was probably closer to home than many of the people present ! I had a glorious drive along the coast up through New Hampshire from Boston with Charles Ayers, whom many will recall from his thoughtful presentation to our day conference in London in 2000. The numbers at the Bangor Seminary were less than usual, and although the conference was billed as a joint meeting with NASSAM, there were significantly fewer Episcopalians this year.

The theme was rather local church focussed, although the keynote speaker raised the key question as a challenge to APT: "What is the vision for your organisation ?" But there were many interesting sub plots:

- 1 what does it mean to be an estate agent whose role is to evict sitting tenants ?
- 2 how do you build team ministry between different local churches when their neighbourhoods relate to rival sports clubs (and all that means in American school culture) ?
- 3 what is there to supersede the out-dated model of the "heroic minister" ?
- 4 what kind of ministries do we need to minister in the World ?

The crowning experience, for me, was meeting Sr. Lucy from Home-workers Organised for More Employment, and visiting the HOME ranch in the coastal hills. One of the two sites was a place of hospitality, welcome and housing – a commune of an extended family. The other, a industrious place for outsiders and rejects, linked with the Emmaus movement here in the UK, providing workshops, craft works, a timber yard – and employment for people who would be without.

November was a very busy time on the international scene, with some important new developments with implications for CHRISM.

Somehow I managed to arrange to get to three significant events.

The 2004 conference will be held in late October. The venue is yet to be decided, but they are hoping that, in consultation with the Episcopalians, it will be in Chicago (Mundelein). There have been significant developments in the support for MSEs in the Diocese of Chicago, so this has the potential to be a very interesting conference. I would encourage you to consider whether you could get over to meet with them.

Old Catholic Church of Germany Friedewalde

I had been invited to the annual meeting of the Ministers in Secular Employment (GiZB) of the German Church through a connection with one of the German Worker Priests in Frankfurt. Their interest in CHRISM was at several levels: some 30 out of 106 Old Catholic clergy are in secular employment; many of those present are committed to an idea of MSE; they are in communion with the C of E; their work tends to be more "middle class" than the Worker Priests (although many are in types of social work). The Bishop of Germany was present throughout, and although obviously concerned with his parishes, came out in favour of ministry on the edges in his sermon at the Sunday Mass.

What I thought was simply an invitation to be present, turned out to be a 3-hour talk (in German) by me on the Saturday morning. But I got them talking, and tried out the Theology Resource Book method on them – they were familiar with something similar in the Cardijn method.

Because of the perceived commonality, they are interested in forming an organic link with us. We agreed that we should take this in stages (a bit more courtship before we enter into marriage!).

The CHRISM committee has therefore agreed to include the Bishop and some of the leading champions of MSE on our mailing list. Several of them expressed an interest in attending our annual conference (especially if it is in London, where one or two have

worked). Their next annual conference will be at the same time as the conference of the whole German Old-Catholic church, 13th – 16th May 2004, in the protestant conference centre at Friedewalde, and we hope CHRISM will be represented.

Inauguration of Belgian Worker Priest Archives Louvain-la-Neuve

This event had originally been planned as a Study Day on the archive materials which have been collected together from the Worker Priests of Belgium. However, this had to be postponed – but it may form part of the 2005 international meeting. This day at the French-speaking university at Louvain-La-Neuve therefore comprised:

- § A sociological analysis of the 329 Belgium Worker Priests from 1922 to the present – a factual analysis of what they did, where they lived, and of their priorities. Some of the participants found a purely factual analysis rather difficult and wanted more of the personal stories which lay behind it.
- § A presentation on the process of bringing together and organising the Worker Priest archives. After a search, they had settled on putting their materials in the Archives du Monde Catholique at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve.
- § Representative examples of the papers contained in the Worker Priest archives. A perceptive commentator noted the difference between the memoir presented by the documents, the oral memoir, and the real story which will only emerge from further analysis.

The discussions raised a whole range of issues and questions for our intention to establish an archive of UK MSEs. The Belgians have collected and systematically indexed **all** the papers of **all** the Belgian Worker Priests – they have found that many have already been lost due to disposal by relatives. We shall need to think about how we would go about something similar, and how we integrate this with any existing archive materials.

Someone will need to carry out the process of collation and indexing.

In Belgium, this was done by one individual over a three year period. The search for a suitable location had identified ARCA as ideally set up for handling this sort of material – to safeguard and to keep – and to provide access to researchers to facilitate the “meeting between the historian and the actors”. A strong strand in the continental movement is the social context, and what it says of the life of workers, of the struggles of the Working Class etc. All this archiving needs to be done before someone can systematically write anything like a definitive history of MSE and CHRISM !

One key message emerges, as noted in the previous issue of the Journal – please, DON'T throw anything away !

International Worker Priest Co-ordination Louvain-la-Neuve

Following the archive day with the Belgians, the international representatives stayed on in a delightful purpose-built convent for discussions about future international events. There were delegates from Germany, France, Italy, Catalonia, Spain, Belgium, and the UK. We began by sharing news from our different countries. This was at the suggestion/insistence of the Germans - the first of many examples of differences in ways of working between the “member states”. After this we turned to two key matters of business:

§ There was no consensus on the “new European constitution” but we agreed that this November planning meeting would continue (with 1-2 reps from each country) in order to decide the theme, venue and organisation for each annual conference. One person will be charged at the Pentecost conference with convening it, and a multinational group will be formed to organise each annual conference. It was a key requirement that this must contain someone who is in paid work !

§ The International conference for Pentecost 2004 will precede a French national gathering to which the delegates will also be invited. This will be Thursday 27th – Saturday 29th May. The theme was thrashed out and refined down to:

Exploitation:

- What exploitation do I suffer, am I a victim ?
- In what exploitation am I complicit (do I cause) ?
- With whom do I work to understand and to find a way out ?
- Against what exploitation do I struggle ?
- How are we signs of liberation from exploitation in this world ?

International Meetings – Pentecost 2004

The first of the following to pieces is from the meeting of the European Worker Priest Conference, attended by Phil Aspinall, Margaret Joachim and Peter King.

Exploitation

This paper from the English group is presented as a collection of reflections from several members. They do not give a single political/philosophical analysis but do reflect the diverse and fragmented society in which we live, work and meet with God.

What are the exploitations to which I am subjected ?

Many of us in paid work write of the expectations that we must work more than reasonable hours to complete the output required. We have the law for limiting Working Hours, but there is always pressure that comes from “company loyalty” and from our colleagues with which we must conform.

But the Church exploits us in the same way. There are more demands for involvement - but no offer or assistance to balance or to limit my voluntary work for the church with other demands (such as paid work, family life, social life and fitness). There is much to say here about how the Church gives value to and uses people like us who are not always in the parish church.

In addition, the way work is organised by an employer increases commuting times and peoples’ skills and experience are not well used. There are in addition exploitations in minor ways: of those

who not drive, or of those we get older.

Political / Economic exploitation affects us all: successive Govern-

I am a Retired person. I live in an economy driven largely by the market - but with little choice. My income does not reflect rising living costs and advertising exploit fears about the future, health & wealth! We are exploited psychologically by the image of the vulnerability of the retired. Adverts seek to sell me things that I do not need, and try to make me change the source of everything – telephone, newspaper, electricity, motor-car, insurance, etc.

Pensioners - and others excluded - have been seen as people without political power. Their needs and their votes are not a concern to governments!

ments over the last 25 years have pursued policies that have sharply increased social exclusion. And now in the UK we have the second greatest between richest and poorest in the world.

In which exploitations am I complicit ?

There are many times at work when we find our decisions involve exploiting others: for examples, in our Departments when we make misrepresenting business cases to obtain funding for capital projects; in the prices we ask from our customers in order to maximize our own profit on a job. We are complicit in the pressure we impose on other people for their time and the demands we make on them.

There are many workers around us in the service industries – they are exploited, and paid the lowest rates of all. For example, many businesses employ contract-cleaning companies. In one example – there is a woman who works as a cleaner. She is not paid for days when she is sick. So she has had to save up her holidays to have an operation. Unfortunately the wound has not healed so she is now unable to work and must take time off with no earnings.

There are many examples; we are complicit when we try to protect “our” side of town, our town, our country, the UK, Europe, and the EU etc. Our actions are often at the cost of the exploitation of weaker placed people and countries. We continually search for new markets for “our” products and our services onto other communities, although that puts ordinary people out of work elsewhere in the world; although it makes them starve. We are complicit in such things through EU and UK political processes, through the WTO and the World Bank and the IMF ‘s requirements imposed to get access for “our” industries. The natural resources of the planet are exploited – and they will perhaps be destroyed – and we are complicit.

I work as a civil servant to collect the taxes so that the Government can implement their policies. Taxation itself is morally and ethically neutral; but the fault lies with the difference between the taxes which different people have to pay, and in the way in which tax revenues are spent. For example, there is a great difference, which has grown under this government of New Labour, between the taxes paid by those who are self-employed, those in receipt of dividends, and those who are employees.

When I have to collect taxes I am complicit because the taxes are not equitable or are not well spent – for example the war in Iraq, or for subsidising profits of private companies through rail

With whom to seek to understand and to find a way out ?

We can work with all those who show the same vision - people of all faiths and none ! To struggle forever with these exploitations is to try to be more human, and for Christians to become more complete in our relationships – that is to say, more “holy”.

We can work with those who also see the social, political and economic implications of the Gospel. Above all with among younger people who are perhaps more oriented with the questions, and idealism, for the whole world.

In business, we can take the opportunities offered by Company AGMs and other occasions can be used to inform and stimulate investors. We can encourage Companies to recognise the importance whole world and to accept their Global responsibilities.

Above all, in our daily work, we can encourage and support our colleagues. And it becomes more possible to disturb the exploitation of others with through the growing policy of “whistle blowing”. (To be able to challenge inequalities, but without fear of punishment). And, of course, through the way we see our work as Ministry.

How can we resist and struggle ?

We must inform ourselves ! We must read and understand the influences which are most important – and most sinister. And then we can influence our representatives - in Church, in government, in business and International bodies and Agencies. Internet based interest groups, are often well- informed, and are beginning to influence policy makers and leaders of all kinds.

We can use our political power and influence, no matter how small, to support justice in all its forms and to oppose inequality and discrimination on the basis of social class, wealth, gender and race.

We can gain strength by sharing experiences of how we feel, by publicising successful outcomes from resistance, and to use our place in Church to preach and teach the tactics for resisting

How in this exploitation are we signs ?

Jesus' teaching and His death and Resurrection were revolutionary – no one had done what He did before, nor anyone since. When we proclaim, teach, persuade, plead, preach and believe this radical message, then God can make a difference through us. If we remain silent we are complicit in a world run on injustices.

We can welcome strangers e.g. people of other faiths and none as

having views which count. We can encourage understanding and tolerance between the peoples of the planet, recognising the different priorities and concerns of the many cultures.

We can be a need to create and support groups which seek to examine the issues independently and change the ideas of Governments and Companies and Institutions! We can be signs when we join them or use their publications. We can be signs when we act personally to influence others, perhaps other managers where we work, but also through our own actions. We can proclaim the truth - but not only tell the truth but also by our actions to help put things right.

Of Bishops, Beavers and Boddingtons

Margaret Joachim

This Year's Rencontre Internationale des Prêtres-Ouvriers took place just before Pentecost at La Pommeraie, a hotel, conference and leisure centre near Angers. It brought Phil Aspinall, Peter King and me together with 20 other POs – seven countries and seven languages altogether. Fortunately we were all prepared to have a go at making ourselves understood in French. This can be more difficult than it sounds – long-distant school French just about copes with a Frenchman speaking the language, but is severely stretched when it comes to equally long-distant Catalan or Italian school French.

The theme for the meeting was Exploitation, and each national group had prepared a paper, structured around five questions exploring our experience of and collusion with exploitation, and our attempts to signal and combat it. Most papers (including the English one – and thank you, Phil, for extracting diverse contributions, assembling a coherent narrative and managing to translate it) ran to a couple of sides of A4, and all had been distributed in advance.* So it wasn't too difficult to follow what was going on, except for the Italian contribution. This ran to 13 pages, including everything from a detailed analysis of industrial unrest at Fiat, fierce condemnation of market economics and globalisation and repeated swipes at Berlusconi, to the need for eco-tourism and comprehensive "social impact" product labelling. When they not only read most of it aloud, but also added numerous additional examples, some of us began to feel that

our patience was being somewhat exploited. (But we were too polite to attempt to combat it.)

Much of the ground covered during the introductory sessions was familiar, but proceedings livened up for me when, during the small group session, five of us debated enthusiastically whether real change could be initiated and driven from within a system or organisation (and thus, by extension, whether anyone in a managerial role could be a legitimate worker-priest.) Having had one aspect of my priesthood challenged this way, the rest of it came up for inspection later. It was the turn of 'les Anglais' to organise the Eucharist, and the suggestion that I should preside had to be carefully considered. We were the only non-Catholics present, but that, of course, was not the issue.

This was genuinely new territory for the meeting, and the debate was measured, careful and refreshingly non-dogmatic. Opinions varied from cheerful acceptance (from, among others, a stalwart German Jesuit), through "Well, I'd have no particular objection but others might feel differently", to a legitimate concern (given the Pope's recent pronouncements) about what might happen if the press got to hear about it. (Not as unlikely as it sounded, given that the French were encouraging several journalists to take an interest in this and the French PO meeting which followed.) The eventual consensus seemed to be that it would be acceptable for me to 'animer' the Mass but not to 'presider' at it. I may have missed some of the subtlety of this distinction, but as 'presider' clearly implies a hierarchy and the POs are anything but hierarchical, I concurred. (Maybe we should have proposed to celebrate instead!) I am still wondering whether I bottled out. During our own campaign for women's ordination we had tremendous support from the Catholic women, and this would have been a good opportunity to reciprocate. But, with the able assistance of my colleagues I animated a Mass based around a rainbow of intercessions (as at a recent CHRISM reflective weekend) and it was well-received. Even the Italians can't write 13 pages of supplication on a PostIt note.

As has become traditional, the evening became a party fuelled by 'specialités de pays' – assorted bottles of wine, smoked ham, sa-

lami, prosciutto, biscuits, chocolates, cans of Boddingtons – and lively conversation. The best parts of these gatherings are the informal encounters over drinks and meals; this was no exception. It is always a challenge to contrast my life and the way I exercise my ministry with the lifestyles and ministries of the Europeans, and to compare the attitudes and opinions of the increasing number of retired POs with those of the much smaller group who are still working.

We were treated to a boat trip on the Loire, a river with an impressive past in economic and social terms, but not much of a present. After much consultation of pocket dictionaries, we realised that 'le Castor' which featured so heavily in the commentary was a beaver. This was followed by a presentation from a French PO who had become involved with groups of Indian and Romanian workers hired to help build the Queen Mary II at St. Nazaire. Many of them were stranded there, in appalling conditions, when their contract agencies went (deliberately?) bankrupt and their gang-masters disappeared. As an insight into the economics of present-day large-scale construction it was fascinating. However, as far as I could make out there was a much stronger emphasis on what the Trade Unions had done to resolve the problems (and on a disquieting level of inter-Union rivalry) than on any specific PO input.

On the last morning there was feedback, further discussion and initial planning for next year, before our meeting closed. As I left, dozens more casually-clad French POs were arriving for their national meeting, which Phil and Peter also attended. Two bishops also appeared (having apparently extracted a promise that the Sunday Mass which they would attend would be conventional in form and have an uninterrupted prayer of consecration said by one person alone.) Both wore their collars, pectoral crosses and dark suits. It is not only we who sometimes wonder whether our church is out of step with us.

*Copies can be supplied if anyone would like them.

Book Review 1:

Work: Prison or Place of Destiny?

***David Oliver, Authentic Publishing, 1999/2002, pp218,
£4.99, ISBN 1-86024-340-1***

Rob Fox

Whatever else it achieved, Mark Greene's book *'Thank God it's Monday'* opened up the Faith and Work field to the Charismatic / Evangelic constituency. There is a growing genre of books addressing this theme written from and primarily addressed to this constituency, this one from the particular viewpoint of those emphasising the importance of the 1994 dispensation of the Spirit.

David Oliver is "an associate director of the Marketing Guild and senior partner of 'Insight Marketing'", a similar working background to Mark Greene. He is a leader at Basingstoke Community Church (what used to be called a house church, before they greatly out-grew houses).

The book has 19 chapters and 6 appendices, so each is fairly short and enables the reader to take regular and convenient breaks. This is valuable as the style of writing is quite didactic - each chapter reading like a sermon, the structure loose and not always easy to follow, and key ideas often repeated or broken up into different chapters. At times the reasoning comes across as mechanistic and deterministic; at others there are moments of deep insight. Another irritating feature is the use of throwaway comments without development or citation (for example, "Jesus operated in all the gifts of the Spirit", p.41; "the concept that work is secular is a pagan Greek concept", p.49). These stand out all the more as developed arguments are an important element in the book. On the plus side the use of story and anecdote is usually helpful and illustrates points well.

The best way to describe the book is therefore through themes:

- 1 Breaking down the church = sacred / work = secular myth;
- 2 Seeing work as a valid place of ministry and not merely as a means of supporting church based activities;
- 3 Personal morality in the workplace;
- 4 Bearing witness to the Gospel in word and deed.

David Oliver is keen to emphasise that a balanced Christian world-view sees the Kingdom of God in all places, not just those defined as sacred, rightly identifying (particularly in Chapter 2, 'Overview and trends') the increasing pressure on work patterns in modern society that blur traditional time boundaries. 'The Church', he notes, has been slow to take on board the rapid changes to work patterns of the last few decades and has not supported its members in their ministries 'in the world', being rather concerned with "sucking their members into ever increasing – and sometimes increasingly more irrelevant – meetings" (p.33). As he puts it, "the Church gets into trouble whenever it thinks it is in the **Church** business rather than the **Kingdom** business" (p.37). In this context 'full-time' Christian work is not only that which is paid or directly supported by the Church, but what all Christians do by virtue of their calling. "Church can never be the full expression of my calling, it is the equipping centre to enable me to fulfil it" (p.52).

Work includes voluntary work, and David Oliver notes well the central role played by workers in the Old and New Testaments, whether it is using their gifts of craftsmen to build the Temple, or delivering God's word to His people as Prophet. "The Old Testament was, in the main, was written or dictated by working men who we would say were in 'secular' employment" (p.43). He also notes (p.44) that we could learn much from the way in which Islam holds work and those who carry it out in respect. He calls 'The Big Lie' thinking that work is firstly a means of earning to support church-centred activities: "The issue is not 'sacred or secular?'. The issue is, 'Is what I do in the flesh or in the Spirit?'" – a classic Pauline perspective. He notes that most of us will spend most of our time in the service of Christ outside the Church – so rather focussing on serving it, it ought to be focussing on ensuring we can serve God wherever He has called us. There is an engaging discussion in Chapter 6, 'Six months without pay', on the motives for work, identifying many errors and pointing to some more valid reasons.

One issue that recurs in the book but is never satisfactorily dealt with is that of the 'link' between faith and prosperity. David Oliver is at pains to criticise the mechanistic view that material prosperity is a

sign of God's blessing on the believer, devoting Chapter 12, 'Money!' to it: "If you believe that godliness is a means to financial prosperity – it's a lie, it's a delusion, it's a deceit" (p.124). Prosperity may be a by-product of godliness, but to pursue it for its own sake is to fall into the 'love of money' trap. Yet he asserts (without supporting it) a page later that "poverty was a curse under the law, so we are redeemed from that", implying that presence of poverty (material and / or spiritual) indicates the absence of a right relationship with God. Prosperity is "something God adds, rather than something we take If we are kept in a constant place off need, then we need to check our attitude – God may be keeping us there for a reason." The question 'from whence cometh poverty?' appears to be answered by from the poor themselves and from God; deeply unsatisfactory.

That there has been so much to say about this book shows how thought provoking it has been to read it. Even if you do not share all (or many) of David Oliver's assumptions, it is worth venturing into the local branch of Wesley Owen, and the modest outlay, in order to learn where this constituency are at on faith and ministry in work, and use it as a critical tool in your own journey.

Book Review 2:

After Sunday: A Theology of Work

Armand L. Larive, Continuum Books, (US)

ISBN: 0826415911, pp208

Rob Fox

With all the recent attention on the spirituality of work it is easy to overlook the paucity of studies of the theology of work. The appearance of this book, by an MSE, is noteworthy enough to flag up at the earliest opportunity. I make no apology for reviewing this book unread, and am very grateful to the National Center for the laity, Chicago, for drawing attention to it in the May edition of its newsletter, *Initiatives*. I also draw on the publicity material from Continuum. The ISBN given is for the US paperback edition, published in April this year, priced \$21.95, and available from through the publishers on-line shop at www.continuumbooks.com. UK publication was due in June 2004.

Larive is a retired Episcopalian priest and carpenter, living near Seattle, and he draws on this and his earlier experience as both a University lecturer and Rector of St. James' Church, Pullman, Washington, to chart out what he sees as challenges and directions for further study in this field. In the Introduction he writes that the book is *"meant to be provocative, written with appreciation of what has gone before, together with the hope that more will be studied, discussed written and refined."*

The discussion begins with observations on the ambivalence of organised Christianity towards work. The heart of the book lies in the three following chapters on the relevance of the Trinity to work in the world. It concludes with a meditation on the meaning of 'good work' and suggestions for tying together work and Christian ministry.

Along the way Larive endorses the central conviction of the National Center for the Laity that *"the best place for the laity to exercise their Christianity is in their occupations."* He continues that the laity are meant to be the core of the church *"but in actual practice the laity are the clientele of the ordained. They are [assumed to be] people who need to be nurtured and assisted into a spiritual mode at worship, a social and ecclesiastical mode, and ushered toward heaven in the mode of a flock. The result is a church that is mostly self-absorbed with its own activity ... If the church manages to break out of self-absorption and move outward toward the world, it usually does so with counselling and health efforts. These are very laudable measures, but alas little or nothing is left for ... the arena of secular occupations. Yet this is precisely where the most unique gifts lie among the laity. If the church is to look outward toward the world, then this unique gift must be given a place of honor and articulated in the church"* Those who work – in paid jobs, in the community, around the home - are, Larive affirms, co-creators and co-redeemers under God. The church too should affirm this.

Continuum describe the book in the following terms:

Many people devote themselves to their work. And it is an easy step from there to show that this devotion has a strong religious bent. But does it follow that devotion to work is bending the knee to idolatry, giving service to mammon? This book says no, not necessarily.

In many cases human work is co-creative with the Creator. Why, then, is there so little effort to explore the theological dimension of everyday work?

The principal impediment to a proper theological understanding of work is the church's voracious appetite to concentrate everything onto Sunday and its own institutional needs. The kingdom of God gets foreshortened to ecclesiastical boundaries so that the shop floor, the foundry, or the lumberyard and all other places of work are out of bounds. Another impediment keeps the doctrine of the laity too anaemic to possess a creativity of its own.

This book lays a positive theological framework for a Christian understanding of work, be it manual, intellectual, service-related or not. It does this chiefly around the doctrine of the Trinity. It then turns to show how this system can underpin an ethics and spirituality of work.

Book Review 3

Phil Aspinall

Fifty years after the suppression of the Worker Priests....

**Priests and Workers – a double faithfulness put to the test,
1944 – 1969**

Charles Suaud & Nathalie Viet-Depaule

It was from the end of the war, and the profound changes that it set in motion, that priests and seminarians felt the pressing need to leave the habitual places of the sacerdotal minister. Suddenly confronted by the radical divide between the world of workers and the world of the clergy, their conscience made it necessary for them to become priests in a different way. Without a preconceived plan, they progressively realised their "intuition" and renounced traditional forms of priestly ministry to go into the factories and workshops – not to be among the workers, but to make their lives as workers.

To say of the Worker Priests (Prêtres Ouvriers) that they wanted to be priests *and* workers locates the principal objective of this book:

to understand from the basis of some thirty interviews the conditions in which these candidates for the priesthood, already changed despite themselves by the seminary, were converted for a second time by learning what it meant to be workers. How did these priests want to break the barriers between a priest separated - as they had first learnt - to be exposed to the physical risks and tiredness and the long hours of work? How did they express a double fidelity: to the Gospel and to the Working Class? How do they explain the suppression by Rome since 1949, which struck down the PO on 1st March 1954? Why did they live with the interdiction to work in factory and with Unions - an irreparable condemnation, which dramatically put before them an impossible choice?

This book concludes with the important question of the transmission of the model of Worker Priest, which finds itself made more fragile by a series of institutional obstacles and social and religious changes. A type of prophetic ministry was nevertheless sufficiently present to raise up new vocations, at the cost of an inevitable repositioning of the PO in the Church, post Vatican 2, which was more open to the mass of people, but also desiring to control the internal forces for change.

“Priests and Workers” addresses itself to those who are still the players and the witnesses to this pastoral innovation. More widely, it speaks to those who wish to know better this moment in the history of Catholicism, by means of appropriate tools (notices, documents, glossary, index) set in their necessary context. One can also read of the extension of a sociology of conversion and of the incorporation of a religious culture.

The book of 600 pages is available in French from Editions Karthala in Paris at € 35. www.karthala.com. Phil Aspinall and Peter King both have copies.

More new books

"Invading Secular Space: Strategies for Tomorrow's Church",
Martin Robertson and Dwight Smith, Monarch Publications, 2003,
218pp.

CPAS describe it as "a 'must read' for all church leaders and Christians wanting to grapple with the challenge of becoming a relevant church for the twenty-first century." It promotes a new, missionary paradigm, "that beckons to us, necessitates a shift from institution to movement, from structures that invite people into sacred space to an infectious spirituality that invades secular space" (p.109).

(A welcome book, but is it just me, or do other Journal readers feel exasperated when others think this is some kind of new discovery? Coo-ee guys: MSEs have been at this for decades. Ed.)

"After the Market: Economics, Moral Agreement and the Churches' Mission",
Malcolm Brown, 2004, Edited by James M.M. Francis, ISBN 3-03910-154-4, £37, 321pp.

(Hopefully a review of this one to come in the October Journal). Malcolm Brown is Principal of the East Anglian Ministry Training Course and until 2000 was Director of the William Temple Foundation. He co-edited Putting Theology to Work with Peter Sedgwick, 1998.

(Malcolm: is a paperback to follow? Ed.)

"Towards the Abolition of the Nation State? European and National Identity in Christian Perspective",
by Canon Richard Franklin, has recently been published by Sarum College Press in partnership with the think-tank Ekklesia.

Drawing on fundamental Christian biblical and theological affirmations, Franklin argues against the nationalist position (now represented in British politics by UKIP). He contends that nation-states, such as the UK, "must not view themselves as 'ends in them-

selves'. They are a phenomenon of political history which have many defects. In Christian perspective they can have practical, but only transient, value as a step on the road towards the wider political unit implied by the gospel."

Copies of the booklet are available for sale from Sarum College Bookshop (01722 326899; bookshop@sarum.ac.uk), price £3.95.

Canon Richard Franklin is European Officer of the Church of England Diocese of Salisbury. The booklet publishes a lecture given at Sarum College on the day of EU Enlargement, 1 May 2004.

For more information, see: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/article_040601.shtml>.

A new web forum for Ministers ...

Hugh Valentine

... has been set up to provide a place for clergy and ministers to meet and talk ("narrative, prayer and argument" as Dorothee Soelle describes the essence of Christian communication and dialogue).

If you have time, please:

- 1 take a look (address below) and
2. please consider forwarding this to others who may be interested.

I have set up an MSE/WP/NSM etc category

It's simply a place to engage with others involved in Christian ministry. A key reason for setting it up is to explore ways in which clergy can support each other. It's for men and women in ministry, whatever their tradition or location (though it's UK based, others are very welcome). It is not intended for the like-minded. Do please support it by using it - it is completely free.

<http://www.easyforums.co.uk/clergytalk/> (if clicking on the link does not work simply copy and paste the following into your web browser: www.easyforums.co.uk/clergytalk)

Church Watch

1 - Welsh support for MSE

The Most Rev Dr Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales and Bishop of Llandaff, recently licensed Rev Dr Peter Sedgwick as took up post of Principal of St Michael's College.

In his sermon Archbishop Morgan noted that:

"The job of a theological college is to persuade people who believe that they have some ready made Gospel to apply to the world, to realise that, in fact, clergy exist to help people discover God in the world and to alert them to signs of transcendence in everyday experiences and encounters."

And where better to do that from than amongst those everyday experiences and encounters. More MSEs please, and not just for Wales!

2 - The United Catholic Church ...

... (USA, Old Catholics) actively fosters vocations to worker-priesthood, albeit with a preference for "those already ordained as Catholic Priests who for one reason or another (other than moral turpitude) have left their Parish, Order, or Diocese. Many leave to get married or because they feel so restricted in their ministry due to Diocesan rules and regulations. The United Catholic Church offers a venue for these Priests to continue their ministry while working secular employment similar to Protestant Ministers who are generally 'part-time'."

It is further noted: "the Worker-Priest movement is fast growing and there is a serious need for more Priests as more and more Catholics leave the Roman Church. Most Priests can make excellent money through their secular employment rather than try to live on their small salary and stipends as full-time Priests. Most Priests are well-educated holding several degrees and can easily obtain employment in colleges and universities as Professors." For those who are not Priests already there is a programme of preparation for the ordained ministry that can be completed totally on a part-time basis under a Bishop or Priest mentor.

Faith and Work Websites

This is an extensive list of websites in the field. If you can comment on their usefulness for MSE, please send them to the Editor.

Avodah Institute

www.avodahinstitute.com

The primary purpose of The Avodah Institute is to help meet the spiritual needs of people in the marketplace. Its mission is to help leaders integrate the claims of their faith with the demands of their work.

Bivocational Ministry

Site run by Canadian Bivo Rob Ross, with articles on various aspects of faith and ministry at work. Still in construction but includes interesting links to related websites.

<http://www.crosspot.net/bivomin/index.htm>

Christian Faith and Action Trust Bibliographies

<http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~faithact/biblios.htm>

General and occupation-specific bibliographies available for issues concerning faith at work.

Christian Professional Societies

<http://tycho.bgsu.edu/~dlaire/christprofsoc.html>

Links to professional Christian websites in US.

Christians at Work

www.christiansatwork.org.uk/cgi-bin/caw.cgi

Christians at Work is helping to mobilise Christians to live out their faith in the world of work: workplace groups established and supported; individuals encouraged; local churches; resources made available.

Christians in Science

www.cis.org.uk/

Exploring God's work in creation; encouraging concern for the environment; applying biblical principles to science and technology.

Christian Vocations

www.christianvocations.org/online/cv.nsf/home?openform

Christian Vocations exists to challenge Christians to discover and practise their God-given vocation and to mobilise them for his service. The site provides lots of information about the different options and the issues involved. Whether you're 'called' to serve God within an overtly Christian context in something like cross-cultural mission or church based ministry or whether it means using your gifts in industry, commerce, the arts, education, etc. in a normal context, we believe we should be serving as unto God.

Christian Workplace

US based (in Sarasota) and including a 'Workplace Clinic'

<http://www.christianworkplace.com/>

Faithworks

www.faithworks.com/index.htm

FaithWorks is a lifestyle magazine for Christians committed to engaging a post-Christian, post-modern culture. Its goal is to help contemporary Christians integrate their faith and life. Bimonthly, non-denominational, full-colour magazine covers a broad range of faith and lifestyle topics. We are committed to responsible journalism for a mainstream Christian audience.

Faith @ Work (NZ)

www.faithatwork.org.nz

Faith at Work (NZ) provides training and resources related to career and life planning, the theology of work and vocation, everyday spirituality, ethics for business and the marketplace, and the ministry and mission of the laity in daily life from a Christian perspective.

Faith @ Work (US)

www.faithatwork.com

Faith at Work is an ecumenical network of progressive Christians at the growing edge of the church. We are... grounded in Biblical faith; related to God, self, others and the earth; sustained through intentional community; committed to faith at work in the world.

Forum for Faith in the Workplace

www.faithintheworkplace.org/default.htm

The Forum for Faith in the Workplace is an ecumenical Christian association whose mission is to assist individuals in fully applying their personal faith to their work experience, and other aspects of daily living.

The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business

www.cedarville.edu/dept/ba/jbib/

The JBIB serves as a refereed forum for discussing faith-learning-life links in business.

Marketplace Christian Network

www.marketplacechristian.net/index.html

For All Christians to see themselves as Full-Time Ministers of God and to Adopt the Marketplace as their Missions Field.

Marketplace Leaders: Os Hillman

www.oshillman.com/homepage6

Marketplace Leaders was founded by Os Hillman in 1996 to help men and women identify and fulfil their God-given calling by applying biblical faith to their life and work.

Marketplace Ministries Inc

www.marketplaceministries.com

Marketplace Ministries exists to share God's love through chaplains in the work place by on-site Employee Assistance Program for client companies.

The Marketplace Network

www.marketplace-network.org

The Marketplace Network is a non-profit organization whose primary mission is to motivate and equip Christians to apply faith to work. Our Vision ... The Marketplace Network will be a national organization that challenges and equips Christians to integrate their faith and work. We will do this by providing relevant resources, encouraging mentoring relationships, and building partnerships with churches and other organizations.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates

www.meda.org/index.html

The mission of MEDA is to bring hope, opportunity and economic well being to low income people around the world through a business-oriented approach to development. Another goal of MEDA is to help Christians connect their faith and work in the marketplace. For MEDA, Christianity is not just for Sundays; if our faith means anything it all, it needs to be active every day of the week. In other words, we take our faith to work with us.

Ministry in Daily Life

www.ivmdl.org

InterVarsity's Ministry in Daily Life Resource Group (USA) exists to help the church recover the biblical truth that God calls all Christians to minister daily in the places they live and work.

Mockler Centre

www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/mockler/index.html

The Colman M. Mockler Center equips the church and its members to bring the work of Christ into the activities of daily life, especially life in the workplace. It engages in education, direct ministry, and research to bring the resources of Biblical interpretation, Christian theology and ethics, and practical ministry into the working world.

Needle's Eye Ministries, Inc.

www.needleseye.org

We view ourselves as bridge builders, serving as a spiritual connection between marketplace people and matters of faith. As such, we are not a church or a membership organization. Our mission is simple. Needle's Eye Ministries, Inc. is an interdenominational ministry. We seek to present Jesus Christ to persons in the workplace, to encourage the development of their Christian lifestyle and leadership, and to support the local church in marketplace issues.

The Regent Business Review

www.regent.edu/review

The Regent Business Review is an electronic magazine published by the Regent University Graduate School of Business. The mission of RBR is to equip and encourage Christians to be more God-honoring

leaders and managers. As such, we offer practical guidance about what it means to be an authentic Christian in the workplace, as well as tools for better communication, for character development, and for other building blocks of leadership excellence. Driven by a calling to make disciples in the marketplace, we seek to exhort and coach Christians to "excel still more" (1 Thess. 4:1) in their roles as leaders and managers.

Scruples

www.scruples.org

Are you a Christian in business, professional practice or career employment? It is designed to equip with: helpful information, biblical principles and practical skills to enable you to succeed as a Christian in the marketplace.

Workplace Ministry

www.hischurchatwork.org

Our Mission: Empowering Churches for Workplace Ministry. It fulfils this mission by helping local congregations build sustainable workplace ministries that help their members understand, experience, and carry out their God-given calling of "work as ministry". The effect is strategically mobilizing your Church in the world.

Workplace Wisdom Interactive

www.wowi.net/wowi/

WOWI is a global Christian alliance dedicated to teaching individuals how to integrate and effectively apply Biblical principles in the workplace by helping them to strengthen their relationship with God. Their mission is to encourage individual believers to make a positive difference in their workplace and community and to encourage unity in the body of Christ.

Editor's note:

Some of the above is what the sites say about themselves and the organisations that sponsor them. If you find any are seriously misleading, please let me know.

Boris Trajkovski

Macedonian President, Boris Trajkovski was killed, aged 47, on Thursday 26th February 2004. His plane crashed in mountainous terrain during fog and heavy rain near Stolac in southern Bosnia and Herzegovina on his way from Skopje, Macedonia to Mostar, Bosnia. He was a prominent Methodist, and had long standing links with Ley Hill Methodist Church in Buckinghamshire.

The Methodist Church released the following statement on 2nd March:

“We join with the United Methodist Church in expressing our heart-felt shock at the news of the death of President Boris Trajkovski of Macedonia. Inspired by his Christian discipleship he was a tireless worker for peace and reconciliation in the midst of the most recent political and social upheaval in the Balkans. His commitment to the unity and stability of the people of Macedonia meant he lived his own life under pressure and not without threat or risk from those who wanted a different outcome. Yet his love of God meant he could do no other. In recognition he was presented with the Peace Award of the World Methodist Council in 2002.”

(An MSE who made a real difference. Ed.)

Back to Church Sunday

The Church of England Diocese of Manchester is sponsoring a 'Back to Work Sunday' on 26 September. Based on 'Real Christmas', with the aim of every churchgoer inviting a friend to church that day, the message of the campaign is 'Missing You' and full colour resources feature the slogan 'Back to Church Sunday 26/9/04'. The Diocesan Liturgy Committee is compiling the service resources, which will give the flavour of an open day for those who are there for the first time. The materials will be backed by service outlines with a thanksgiving theme. Churches will have the option to use Back to Church Sunday as Harvest Sunday if they wish.

Businessman Robert Hicks is underwriting the cost of the resources. He said: "I want to use my publishing work to produce high quality

material for churchgoers so they can invite a friend back to church." Diocesan Canon Evangelist Robin Gamble said, "There are loads of people who for whatever reason have lost contact with their local church and who would come back with a personal invitation."

The idea is being looked at as a trial for the diocese and the results will be monitored to assess the impact. The University of Wolverhampton will be working with the diocese to assess the results of Back to Church Sunday, looking at how effective it is in encouraging people back to church and the effect of this, particularly in the lives of people over 50.

The resources can be ordered through the diocesan website:
www.manchester.anglican.org

Diary

2004 CHRISM Conference and weekend

30 July – 1 August, at The Royal Foundation of St. Katharine, Limehouse, London. Day attendees are welcome. Contact Jean Skinner (details in rear cover) for further information.

Global Structural Injustice: what it is and how to overcome it

Conference: Fri 30 Jul - Sun 1 Aug. Venue: Sarum College, Salisbury
Keynote speaker: Prof Michael Taylor,
former Director of Christian Aid and well known writer on the churches and poverty.

Other speakers include:

Matthew Bishop, Business Editor, The Economist;

Tim Cooper, Sheffield Hallam University and
Chair of Christian Ecology Link;

Prof Mary Grey, University of Wales Lampeter.

A weekend conference that will address global poverty, analysing

what is meant by 'structural' justice and injustice, and how unjust structures can be made just.

For details, go to <http://www.sarum.ac.uk/society>

Christians@Work

South East Regional Conference at Banstead Baptist Church on Saturday 30 October. Speaker: Robin Scurlock.

St. Paul's Institute

Two short courses coming up this autumn:

Connecting with the global economy: a Christian Exploration,

Weekend of 8 – 10 October, at St. Katharine's, Limehouse (residential). Course leaders:

Revd. Sabina Alkire, Research Fellow at the Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University, and Canon Edmund Newell, St. Paul's Institute and former Research Fellow in Economic History at Nuffield College, Oxford. £120.

Perceiving Aright: Humanity and the Global Environment,

30 November – 2 December, at St. Paul's Cathedral (non-residential). Leaders:

Margaret Barker, former President of the Society for Old Testament Study "and author of ten books in the field", Claire Foster, National Policy Advisor to the Church of England on environmental issues and Deputy Director of St. Paul's Institute, and David Shreeve, Director of the Conservation Foundation. £150 (£100 concessions).

Further details on both from:

Elizabeth Foy, St. Paul's Institute, 3b Amen Court, London, EC4M 7BU. Or institute@stpaulscathedral.org.uk.

***** Stop Press! *****

CHRISM Reflective Weekend 2005

***18 – 20 February, Morley Retreat and Conference Centre,
Derby, www.morleyretreat.co.uk.***

Morley Retreat House is owned by the Diocese of Derby, and is an attractive Georgian former rectory set in five acres of gardens and surrounded by farmland. All bedrooms (bar one) are centrally heated and have hand basins with hot and cold water. It is 5 miles north east of Derby (nearest rail station), easily accessible from the M1 and a quarter mile from the Three Horseshoes pub!

***Full details will accompany the October edition of the
Journal, but put the dates in your diary now!***

And finally ...

Pope John Paul II arrives back at Rome airport after an overseas trip. His limo is waiting to take him back to the Vatican and after getting all the luggage loaded into the boot (that's trunk to our trans-Atlantic readers!), the driver notices that the Pope is still standing on the kerb. "Excuse me, Your Eminence," says the driver, "Would you please take your seat so we can leave?"

"Well, to tell you the truth," says the Pope, "they never let me drive at the Vatican, and I'd really like to drive today."

"I'm sorry but I cannot let you do that. I'd lose my job! And what if something should happen?" protests the driver, wishing he'd never gone to work that morning.

There might be something extra in it for you," says the Pope. Reluctantly, the driver gets in the back as the Pope climbs in behind the wheel.

The driver quickly regrets his decision when, after exiting the airport, the Supreme Pontiff floors it, accelerating the limo to 105mph.

"Please slow down, Your Holiness!!!" pleads the worried driver, but the Pope keeps the pedal to the metal until they hear sirens.

"Oh, dear God, I'm gonna lose my license," moans the driver. The Pope pulls over and rolls down the window as the cop approaches, but the cop takes one look at him, goes back to his motorcycle, and gets on the radio.

"I need to talk to the chief," he says to the dispatcher. The Chief gets on the radio and the cop tells him that he's stopped a limo going a hundred and five.

"So bust him," says the Chief.

"I don't think we want to do that, he's really important," replies the cop. The Chief exclaims, "All the more reason!"

"No, I mean really important," says the cop.

The Chief asks, "Who ya got there, the Mayor?"

Cop: "Bigger."

Chief: "Prime Minister?"

Cop: "Bigger."

OK," says the Chief, "who is it?"

Cop: "I think its God!"

Chief: "What makes you think its God?"

Cop: "He's got the Pope for a chauffeur!"

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