

# Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in  
secular ministry

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*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.*

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***Copy deadline for the April edition: Saturday 1st April***

The views expressed in items in this Journal are those of the author unless otherwise stated. If you would like to reproduce any items in another publication, please contact the Editor.

## *Editorial*

It was a pleasure to see several CHRISM members at St. Paul's Cathedral in November for the Conference, 'Takeover by the Company? Finding Personal Wholeness in the Changing World of Work', arranged by the collaboration group of organisations working in the faith and work field. Not surprisingly personal story featured strongly in both the speakers' presentations and the group discussions after lunch. Being in this role for longer than most Fleet Street editors, I know when to delegate a report, so Ruth Brothwell has contributed an elegant and informative summary of this rewarding event.

In the afternoon session I found myself in the group looking at the Quaker perspective on work, which stirred up some spirited discussion. Quaker contributions to applying faith in work have contributed significantly to our understanding of interdependence, social responsibility and living out our faith. I did feel a little uncomfortable with one or two assertions about the ethical standards businesses achieve however. I think this is down to seeing the ways in which some businesses and professions do not reflect the sense of contribution to society by those who 'have' that is at the core of Quaker social and economic practice.

Working for a our tax gatherers I see the extent of the individual and corporate tax avoidance that goes on in the economy and the 'professional' industry that has grown up to promote ever more ingenious methods of doing so. I do sometimes think that 'faith and work' too often becomes 'faith in business', and I don't have as much as some! I'd have rather more faith in business if less energy was expended on nest-feathering at the expense of schools, hospitals and public services. Enough of my New Year rant.

The conference was followed by the Hugh Kay Memorial Lecture, held in the crypt of St. Paul's, and delivered splendidly by Dr Laura Nash, Senior Lecturer at the Harvard Business School. Titled 'Reframing Faith and Work for Lasting Success', the text should be going up on website of the Christian Association of Business Executives (CABE), but had not done so at the time of writing this. When

it does it is well worth reading. The venue was interesting to say the least, amidst the tombs and memorials of numerous national heroes, including one large stone simply marked "Nelson".

That week was quite a trip: Southend on Monday; into London on Thursday morning; to Slough—staying with friends—that night; to Southampton on Friday, then back to Slough for an overnight so as to be in London for a CHRISM Committee meeting on Saturday. Still, very rewarding, in more ways than one.

This month sees the second instalment on Tim Key's study of NSMs (including MSEs) in the United Reformed Church: the questionnaire and replies. These make intriguing reading, and I found myself smiling a great deal. This is a genuinely useful piece of research and one question that arises "can we repeat this exercise within CHRISM?" Your views on this are much appreciated.

Our roving ambassador, Phil Aspinall, has been to international meetings in the USA and Germany, and we have reports on both. He sensibly persuaded Margaret Joachim, who also attended the US Tentmakers convention, to write the report on the former. I'm a trifle surprised that Phil did not ferret out the odd MSE on his recent trips (working, I hasten to add) to Angola and Azerbaijan.

Phil comes to the end of his second term as Secretary (and very able he has been in that role too; can't think who he took over from!) at the AGM this summer, so we are looking for a successor. Please do think and pray carefully about this, and indeed about serving on the Committee in any capacity. It is not a life sentence—though a few of us do seem to have been around for a while—there is a regular 'churn' of members, each bringing unique talents to the work of CHRISM and the cause of MSE. Speak to a member in confidence if you would like to learn more.

As usual there are some excellent book reviews, this month from James Francis, and notes on a number of resources for MSEs. I was also reminded that not everyone has internet access, so there are details of how to obtain hard copy of CHRISM publications.  
Happy New Year!

*Rob*

## *Cornish Cream*

Following his significant contributions to CHRISM nationally, former Moderator Peter Johnson has now turned his attention to building up MSE in his home diocese of Truro.

Throughout 2005 Peter convened a monthly meeting, God@work<sub>do</sub>.com<sub>e</sub>, of those interested in MSE to discuss issues faced in work and to compile a collection of MSE reflections (more information on how and when this will be available in our next edition). Each month the group discussed an issue related to our faith and the work we do.

At the first meeting they explored the parameters of discussion, using the four-fold framework of Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience to reflect on our Christian lives in the workplace and church, using this framework to try to discern some Spiritual Sense giving us some sort of grasp on

S cripture

T radition

R eason

E xperience

S piritual

S ense

in the workplace!

As Peter puts it: "As employees and employers in a workplace, or in any other occupation, the work we do, the situations we are in, the people amongst whom we work and for whom we labour all matter to God. They are the raw materials of our ministry and our part in God's kingdom and creation."

Further details of the group, and what they will be getting up to in 2006, can be found on the Truro diocese website, [www.truro.anglican.org](http://www.truro.anglican.org). Peter himself can be contacted at [godat-work@truro.anglican.org](mailto:godat-work@truro.anglican.org).

*Reports on the activities of local and regional groups are always welcome contributions to MaW! Ed.*

## ***A Reflection on the Non-Stipendiary Ministry (2)***

*The following article is the second in a short series drawing on a Report written by Tim Key during a sabbatical, October and November 2004, from his 'usual' duties as a stipendiary minister in the United Reformed Church in Huddersfield. It takes a particular look at NSM within the URC but uses much wider experience, making it an excellent reflection on the experience of Ministry in Secular Employment. Tim has agreed to publication in "Ministers-at-Work", and well worth reading it is too!*

*This part looks at the Questionnaire and responses. I have left it in Tim's own language, expressing as it does his reactions to the replies received. As you read this please consider what your own answers would be and why.*

I sent out 146 questionnaires (to all those NSMs in the URC who were thought to be active by the URC's Ministries Committee) and I received 73 back (exactly 50%). The following is a summary of the responses I received and some initial reflections. The questions in italics are the questions that were posed in the questionnaire.

### ***1. How would you describe your role as a minister in the URC?***

Although I did not directly ask the question regarding people's employment status, I was able to gather the following:

**29 were in paid employment (mostly full-time, but some in part-time work). Of these, most were in secular jobs, though 4 or 5 were in either paid chaplaincy work or theological education.**

**35 were either retired or not in paid work.**

**9 were of unknown status regarding their work.**

A wide variety of roles were outlined, many of which a stipendiary minister (SM) could have undertaken. There were a total of 11 people involved in a chaplaincy role of some sort.

**Observations:**

There was a larger proportion of people (NSMs) in secular work than I would have imagined. I had thought that MSEs (Ministers in Secular Employment) were a rarity in the URC and, though some NSMs in paid employment would not necessarily see themselves primarily as such, it was clear from the responses of many that this was a very important aspect of their ministry.

*2. Does your particular ministry fit into any of the following generally accepted models of non-stipendiary ministry in the URC and, if so, which one?*

*a) Service in a congregation as part of a team (the former Churches of Christ model).*

*b) In pastoral charge as part of a team.*

*c) In sole pastoral charge.*

*d) Exercising a ministry at District or Synod level.*

*e) Ministry in secular employment.*

*Or: f) None of the above.*

Many people ticked more than one box here. The numbers shown with an asterisk indicate that this was chosen along with at least one other category. 5 people chose 3 or more categories here.

a) 5 (6\*)    b) 10 (8\*)    c) 19 (11\*)    d) 9 (17\*)  
e) 2 (12\*)    f) 4 (1\*)

**Observations:**

It was interesting to note that a large proportion of people ticked more than one category in answer to this question. A number of people also added their own comments here, clarifying their own particular ministries and how they did (or often did not) fit in with the five models outlined in the question. NSMs are engaged in a very wide variety of tasks (as are SMs, I suppose) within their ministry. Yet while there are certain expectations of SMs, there is generally less for NSMs and they therefore have a certain freedom to develop their ministry in ways which suit them.

Of those who only chose one category, most people were in sole pastoral charge of a church or churches. A good number also exercised their ministry at District or Synod level. Generally, fewer people were involved in a team ministry than I might have expected, which I found surprising.

**3. *Would you say that your ministry is a) understood and b) valued by the URC, both locally and in the wider church?***

***a) Understood***

Local church:

Yes - 37

No – 9

Yes & no – 13

Wider church:

Yes - 30

No - 16

Yes & no - 18

***b) Valued***

Local church:

Yes - 48

No – 3

Yes & no – 11

Wider church:

Yes - 35

No - 11

Yes & no -18

A significant number (19) simply answered 'yes' to this question. I have taken these to mean 'yes' in each of the above four categories.

**Observations:**

I wish that I had asked this question in a different way, at least splitting it more obviously into two parts! It was not always easy to categorise what people were saying here, which explains why the above figures do not exactly add up. However, it is clear that far more people felt that their ministries were valued and understood by the church than not. It is, though, also noteworthy that people felt more positive about the local church than the wider church in this regard.

Revd John Proctor (Tutor at Westminster College, Cambridge and highly qualified statistician) commented thus regarding the above figures: 'Roughly speaking, the overall feeling of local church affirmation is about a third better than the overall feeling of wider church affirmation, and the overall awareness of one's ministry being



valued is about a fifth higher than the overall sense of one's ministry being understood.'

There were, however, some very definite negatives voiced here which also need to be noted. These were not solely reserved for the wider church, either. Locally, there are still some churches that still have a lot to learn about the value and importance of their NSMs.

**4. *Does the fact that you are an NSM present you with any particular opportunities for mission that may not be possible for SMs?***

I split the responses into two main sections, i.e. those with another paid job and those without.

***With employment:***

Yes – 22    No – 3    Sometimes, maybe or don't know – 3

***Without employment:***

Yes – 12    No - 16    Sometimes, maybe or don't know - 10

Some also (9 in all) in this second category said that, although it was now 'no', when they had had a job it would have definitely been 'yes'.

***Unknown status:***

Yes – 2    No – 7    Sometimes, maybe or don't know - 0

**Observations:**

The obvious thing to note here is that those with employment (or those recently retired) see their work as a place where mission can and does take place. Of course, it might be said that the way I asked the question was encouraging this response, but I genuinely believe that NSMs in employment have a firm footing in the world outside the church and this colours and effects their ministry in a very valuable way.

So often I think that SMs can, if they are not very careful, lose

touch with the world outside the church. We (SMs) are so busy with church matters and church people (at so many different levels) that we can begin to lose sight of the fact that the prime focus for the church is, or should be, away from itself to the world outside – a world so in need of God's love.

As the church continues to shrink (at least in terms of the numbers of people dedicated to its life and mission), so the temptation is to retreat into the church's self, to hide behind our humanly created structures and put all our energy into the maintenance and survival of those structures, which are wrongly seen as being all-important. Ministers themselves can fall into this trap, especially full-time SMs. I think it is far less likely that NSMs will do this, simply because they naturally have another focus in life and that focus is directed away from the church.

**5. *What (else) makes your ministry distinctive from the stipendiary ministry?***

From the many and varied responses given to this question, I note particularly the following:

***From those in employment:***

'We are a good example to the laity, because they see us sharing in the pressures of the work-place, yet managing also to make a full commitment to church life.'

'We have lots more contact (often very positive) with the un-churched. We are seen to have a firm foot in the real world.'

'There is less expectancy of us as the minister to do everything. Our churches are more enabled because of this.'

'Of course, our financial independence is matched by our geographical limitations - we are not usually in a position to be able to move easily to another area because of our work commitments.'

***From those not in employment:***

'We carry less 'baggage' and can therefore be more objective in our

work.'

'We are able to offer to the church skills acquired through our involvement (past or present) in the secular world.'

'We often have a much better awareness of the local situation than an incoming minister, assuming that we have lived in the local area for a long time.'

'We have a certain freedom due to the fact that we are not paid by the church. We are not really employees of the church as SMs are, therefore we can be more unconventional, radical and perhaps truly 'non-conformist'.'

### **Observations:**

There are some interesting words and phrases that are very often used by NSMs and many came to the fore here in answer to this question. Words like 'freedom', 'contact', 'understanding', 'independence' and 'commitment', for example, reveal the specific flavour of the NSMs ministry. I am not, of course, saying that these words could not also be applied to a stipendiary ministry's ministry – they might well be – but a SM might have to work very much harder for this to be so. A SM can so easily be 'devoured' by his or her local church, or the wider church's structures, such that the world outside of church can become a very scary or, at the very least, unfamiliar place. The minister can then begin to live up only to the expectations of his or her congregation(s) (and be seen to be very successful in so doing), which are, however, often very narrow and inward-looking. I will be looking further into this in the next section of this report.

### ***6. Would you rather be a stipendiary minister and if so, why?***

<b><i>With employment:</i></b>	<b><i>Without:</i></b>	<b><i>Unknown status:</i></b>
Yes - 2	Yes - 1	Yes - 0
No - 22	No - 28	No - 9
Maybe, not sure - 3	Maybe, n/s - 4	Maybe, n/s - 0

### Observations:

Many people did not just give a one-word answer here, but were quite adamant that they so valued their particular ministry they did not want to jeopardise it in any way. It was interesting conversely to see the way in which the SM was viewed by NSMs – they were, very often, sceptical to say the least. Why should this be, I wonder? Is it because too few NSMs work in teams involving other ministers, including SMs, perhaps? Do we really not understand each other to this extent?

Of course, there was a small minority of people who wished to become SMs for a variety of reasons (including the obvious financial one). Yet this was only a very small number in my survey (just 3 out of 73) and perhaps simply reflects the fact that, on average, every year some four or five NSMs do transfer to the SM for, again, a wide variety of reasons. Far fewer SMs transfer to the NSM, however, which again perhaps reflects our limited understanding of the NSM's role.

### *7. What are your support networks within your ministry?*

More than one was given by almost everyone.

Church/Elders - 25

Other ministers/colleagues - 39

Support Group - 8

Family/friends - 30

Special/Spiritual Director/Moderator – 25

None - 3

### Observations:

Although there were fewer NSMs working within team ministry situations than I might have thought likely, the majority of people listed other ministers and/or colleague as their most important means of support, closely followed by family and friends. I was surprised by the large number of people who had spiritual directors – I wonder if, proportionately, as many SMs have them proportionally? It was encouraging to see that only 3 people admitted to having little or no

support networks in place. This represents a very small percentage of NSMs. I wonder if it would be such a small percentage were the same question to be asked of SMS?

**8. *Do you have a proper contract and/or terms of settlement with your District/church and, if so, are you happy with it/them?***

Contract – 5      Terms of Settlement – 13      Both - 3  
Yes, but unspecified which – 29  
None, or not a formal one – 24

Four people said that, although they had a contract of sorts, they were unhappy with it.

**Observations:**

As mentioned in the last section, I was encouraged to note that a good majority of NSMs now appear to have a contract or terms of settlement in place. This appears to be different to the findings of four years ago in the URC's review of the NSM, when a recommendation was made encouraging the setting up of such contracts between NSMs, local pastorates and/or District Councils. I am sure that the guidelines set out at the time were helpful.

Those in secular employment or chaplaincy work also had contracts separate from those relating to any specifically church work undertaken.

**9. *On average, how many hours per week do you devote to your ministry?***

0-10 hours	11-20	21-30	31-40	40+
12	23	20	9	4

**Observations:**

The average time an NSM devotes to his/her ministry is almost exactly 20 hours per week. I am supposing that those working in secular employment did not include their time at their paid work in their answers to this question. However, I think that some very

busy NSMs (of which there are doubtless many) did not reply to my questionnaire because they did not have time to do so. I would therefore, somewhat tentatively, suggest that more than thirteen NSMs in the URC work on average more than 30 hours per week.

I also thought that it was encouraging to see that a good proportion (almost one quarter) of NSMs were quite prepared to say that they devoted ten hours or less to their ministry. Not all NSMs are overburdened by the ministry they carry out, which is exactly as it should be.

***10. As far as you are aware, has your District and/or Synod been involved in drawing up plans for 'developing opportunities for non-stipendiary ministry and for challenging suitable candidates to offer themselves for training to enable these plans to be implemented', as recommended in the Ministries Committee's Review of non-stipendiary ministry in the URC – General Assembly 2000? Are you involved in any such plans or discussions?***

Unaware or don't know – 63

Aware, but not involved – 8

Aware and involved – 0

**Observations:**

As commented on above, this initiative has apparently failed to get off the ground at any level within the church, with the exception of one or two Synods that were specifically mentioned. Not one NSM is or has been involved in this process, however, which was a specific recommendation brought before General Assembly in 2000. Is it any wonder that NSMs sometimes feel undervalued and misunderstood by the wider church?

***11. What do you think is the future for non-stipendiary ministry in the URC?***

Many and varied answers were again given here, but I have categorised them broadly into the following:

Positive about the future – 43

Negative – 4

Unsure - 22

**Observations:**

It was good that the positives outweighed the negatives by approximately ten to one in answer to this question. However, there was also a significant number of people 'unsure' as well with regard to the future, for a wide variety of reasons. Some of these 'uncertains' simply reflected people's concerns about the church as a whole and were not specifically to do with the non-stipendiary ministry. There were a number of people who were adamant that the non-stipendiary ministry is an important ministry for the future and it was awaiting rediscovery by the church. They were very keen that further resources be ploughed into it and that only then would we reap the obvious benefits it has to bring us, as well as the whole church.

***12. Any other comments?***

Again, a great many comments were made, including the following:

'NSMs need to be in employment to develop the role to its full potential.'

'Financial constraints and the reduction in the number of SMs mean that there will be an increasing need for NSMs, but the URC hierarchy has not fully recognised this yet.'

'Becoming ordained as an NSM in the URC enabled me to be recognised by other denominations in a way eldership does not and cannot.'

'There is a need to be aware of the limitations as well as the responsibilities and privileges of being an NSM.'

'If NSMs were paid (or at least given a housing and car allowance), perhaps then there would be more equality between us and SMs.'

'The whole church needs to be reminded about what being 'ordained' means. NSM should never be seen as second-class ministry.'

'There are severe time constraints faced by NSMs in secular employment, a fact which is often unrecognised by local congregations.'

'It is difficult for people in full-time work to train for the ministry. This needs to be accepted and more imaginative and creative ways of training need to be developed.'

'The fact that it is not now so easy for people to take early retirement (as it was in the 1980s and 90s) may make recruitment to the NSM more difficult in the future.'

'The URC should be a church with no SMs, except perhaps at Moderator or District level. This would both encourage more lay people to take up leadership roles within the church and solve the URCs financial crises at a stroke.'

'Payment for NSMs leading of worship still varies considerably across the churches.'

'NSMs are pioneering the way for how to move beyond the walls of our churches to building bridges with the world outside. But maybe the real answer is to have better trained and active church members more generally doing this.'

'I believe that the original vision for non-stipendiary ministry has been lost and that the role needs looking at afresh. In view of the increasing need for NSMs anticipated for the future I think there should be a greater flexibility, not just in the use of such ministry but also in the remuneration for it. This would open up possibilities for such service to many more people.'



### Observations:

It was good that so many people felt able to say exactly what they thought here and I think that all the comments above are noteworthy in different ways. There were many other things said in addition to the above that space precluded me from including. Many people commented on the financial difficulties faced by the URC at the moment and the way in which the non-stipendiary ministry can and does alleviate these pressures. This is one reason why it may well be the model of ministry for the future. At least two people were outspoken enough to suggest that all ministers in the URC should be NSM.

It was interesting that this was the only place where payment for NSMs was mentioned as a possibility. I was very interested in the comment shown above that said that there could be a greater equality between SM and NSM if both were paid ministries (though then, of course, we'd really have to change the name of our NSMs!). The comment about training was an important one (though perhaps surprisingly few people mentioned this), as was the comment made which compared NSMs with elders. The call for greater flexibility in ministry, training and remuneration is a call reflected in the 'Equipping the Saints' report (Recommendations 9, 10 and 11) and I hope that this is something that the church is going to take very seriously in the future.

### **Summary**

So what initial reflections can be drawn from the evaluation of the questionnaire? These are many, but may be summarised as follows:

1. An important part of many NSM's ministry is what they do away from the world of the church. This is so particularly for those who are in secular employment, but even those not in any kind of paid work speak of the 'freedom' they have as an NSM to develop their ministries in ways which many SMs would feel unable to do. Also, those who are retired speak of the importance and value of the skills they acquired in secular employment which they freely bring and

use within their ministry. However, it is clear that this is something which is not always valued by the wider church.

2. Many NSMs find themselves in sole pastoral charge of a church or churches, which does not fit in with the original vision the URC had for this particular type of ministry. Does this simply reflect the URC's shortage of ministers, generally, or is this symptomatic of the failure of the URC to view ministry in any other way than the normal model of one minister to one church? Of course, I discovered many NSMs who did not fit in to this 'normal' pattern and who were doing very interesting alternative things, but there were also a surprising number of those that did fit into the perceived norm, perhaps in part because of the constraints they felt the church had put on them.
3. Whilst there are many NSMs who feel perfectly valued and whose ministries are well understood, there is also a significant minority who do not and are not.
4. Less than 5% of the NSMs replying to the questionnaire would prefer to be SMs.
5. Most NSMs have good support networks in place, many seeing other ministers as a good and valued source of support.
6. Most NSMs have contracts or terms of settlement in place with their local pastorates and/or District Councils.
7. On average, NSMs devote 20 hours per week to their ministry.
8. Most Synods and Districts are not currently involved in any kind of recruitment campaign to encourage more candidates for the NSM.
9. Most NSMs are positive about the future for the non-stipendiary ministry in the URC.

10. There are still questions relating to both the training and payment of NSMs that the wider church needs to address. These are often very real, but unspoken, concerns for many NSMs, yet they are important nevertheless.

*The third and final instalment of Tim's paper, theological reflection, will appear in the April edition of "Ministers-at-Work". In the meantime please feel free to let me have any thoughts or responses to the first two parts. The Committee is considering running a slightly modified version of the questionnaire among CHRISM members to help inform our work in developing MSE during 2006 and beyond, in particular further to the meeting of four members with the Archbishop of Canterbury last autumn. If you have any thoughts or views on this do contact the Editor of any other member of the Committee. Ed.*

### ***Conference of MSEs of Old Catholic Church of Germany, October 2005***

*Phil Aspinall*

We are developing a reciprocal relationship with the MSEs of the Old Catholic Church of Germany - many of you will recall Thaddeus and Michael who joined us at our CHRISM annual conference in 2004. I had been invited for a second time to their annual conference.

This conference of the GiZB (ministers in secular occupation) of the Old Catholic Church of Germany (AKD) took place at the beginning of October in a delightful retreat house high in the Black Forest above Basel. The venue was built, post World War II, as a children's home but is now run privately for retreats and meditation – they have two very meditational chapels, and there is also the chapel of Mary, Queen of Peace, built on a little hill top a short walk from the house.

There were some 16 of us – a mixture of priests and deacons, men and women from a variety of backgrounds and workplaces – and we were, of course, accompanied by the Bishop of Germany. There is nothing quite like sharing a few beers with a Bishop in a

Bier Keller for developing community and celebrating communion! We met from Saturday to Monday (as it was the holiday for the Day of German Unity). Much of the Saturday was taken up with the Bishop's report on the state of the Church, which he delivers annually to each group he visits. This is an all-embracing summary of all the aspects of the life of the AKD, focussing on the work of the parishes, how to support them and the many subject or special interest groups.

But during the afternoon we got into the heart of the matter – what did it really mean to be a minister **IN** secular employment. What was different for them from their parish-based colleagues? For several of them this is quite challenging as they come from an NSM perspective, and some of them from former stipendiary work in a parish; people who find themselves in a church which is unable to pay full time parish posts. But others push forward the MSE agenda, and there was certainly some significant movement in people's understanding and perceptions.

We began with a very CHRISM-like sharing of our current situations and issues, and this was taken up further on the Sunday when, in smaller groups, we talked about our work and how we ministered in and through what we do. As always in such gatherings there are many glimpses of truth – the Deacon who declared: “in my work I am always there to serve others”. And this then triggered the question – if the role of the Deacon is to serve, what do we make of the complementary role of the priest – to bless. How do we bless in and through our work? – one suggestion was by not putting other people down but by always praising them and raising them up. They also talked about the need to reflect on what we see around us - “You are in your professional work also a theologian.”

In our groups, we also considered the question - how do we bring our secular employment into the parish? We talked about preaching from the experiences of everyday life. One priest had been unemployed for 5 months and was challenged over why he had not told the congregation. They also recognised that the realities of working life need to be fed into the project being run by the AKD on new ways of being church in the parish – MSEs could have a significant

role to play here.

I stayed over the Monday night with one of the two members from Frankfurt, who are the most keen on developing the MSE philosophy. We noted that evening that there had been an important change during the course of the weekend – from Ministers with Civil Occupation to Minister IN Civil Occupation. It was clear that they were pleased to have me there as an ally in developing in this way, and we reflected afterwards that there had been some notable “conversions”.

In terms of the developing relationship with CHRISM we agreed to continue the softly, softly contact, but several more people wanted to take up CHRISM membership. The paper, written by Thaddeus, on our 2004 conference was presented during the weekend. There was interest from three or four people in attending our weekends in February and July – I look forward to introducing them to you, and know that you will be most welcome at their conferences planned for 2006 and 7. Please do contact Phil Aspinall for more details.

### ***Invitation to international worker priest conference, Pentecost 2006***

*Phil Aspinall*

You are invited to join the group of CHRISM delegates who will be attending the international worker priest conference this summer.

It traditionally takes place at Pentecost, which this year is Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June. It will be organised by the German collective and take place in Herzogenrath, near Aachen. The themes were agreed at the end of last year's conference, and need to be considered in the context of social engagement in the working world:

1. What are the needs, concerns, cares which call out to us to go further, which urge us to do more – or go that extra mile?
2. We are not alone: with whom do we work to feed, satisfy, remove these needs and concerns? (NGO's, trade unions, politicians, church denominations etc)

3. What concrete goals do we want to achieve? (At local, national, European, international levels)
4. Where do we find traces of the Kingdom of God? (Around us? In our needs, concerns, cares? In our community engagements? )

Each individual participant is also asked to bring with them a symbol, from their personal milieu, which expresses for them the reality of the Incarnation of Christ. We shall share these with the group on the Friday evening.

We are asked to discuss these questions among ourselves and prepare a short summary paper for the UK delegation to present to the conference. **So, even if you are not able to attend the conference, I should be very grateful if you would send me your thoughts on any or all of these topics by the end of February, so we can send our paper by Easter.** Any personal stories of an experience connected with one of these headings would be particularly welcome – and probably make a point most effectively.

But the conference is not just about working on a theme. It is an opportunity to meet a stimulating group of people with diverse backgrounds, challenging views on the realities of our societies, and their own fascinating stories. It's also very enjoyable.

We hope you will consider joining us – do contact me if you would like more details.

### ***Tentmaking in America***

*Margaret Joachim*

On a chilly, damp, November night the University of St Mary on the Lake (Mundelein, Illinois) would make an eerie setting for a horror movie. Its brick and stone neoclassical buildings, with dark conifers planted too close to serried ranks of tall windows, are separated from each other by dimly-lit paths. It was built in 1921 as a Catholic seminary and the atmosphere remains – there is still a cross on

every door-handle and lamp-post, and bedrooms are named after ecclesiastical alumni. The plumbing is intriguingly antique, and the ghosts of ancient spiritual crises seem to hover in the long corridors. Or maybe it was the jet lag.

The number of seminarians has shrunk dramatically, and much of the site is now a conference and retreat centre for the diocese of Chicago. Its setting, on its own lake amid hundreds of acres of woodland, is quite splendid in daylight, and this was where Phil Aspinall and I arrived for this year's Tentmaker conference. It was my first visit, but Phil is a much-respected regular. Over dinner on the Friday evening I started to get acquainted with the thirty or so other participants, a mixture of Episcopalians and Presbyterians. "We don't talk about religion," said one, "we just talk about our ministry wherever we are." CHRISM members would clearly feel at home with this group – even more so when another gruff Midwesterner remarked: "I have to go to a lot of in-house meetings. This is an outhouse meeting!"

We started on a packed agenda with a session on comparative terminology (not English vs. American, but Presb. vs. Episc.) Some words (e.g. deacon, call) are used differently in the two denominations, while others (e.g. vestry, bishop, synod) are unique to one church – but everyone is familiar with their own jargon and naturally assumes that everyone else understands it too! The rest of the evening was devoted, as at our conferences, to introductions and tentmaker storytelling, which eventually adjourned for "social time" and refreshments in proper MSE fashion.

As with us, the conference (and tentmaking generally) has moved on from vague discontent to constructive dialogue. "There's something cooking here, much more than five years ago." Stories increasingly focused on relationships rather than "lone ranger" experiences, but it struck me that they almost all related to the ways in which tentmaking helped people to contribute to churches and congregations. The pressures experienced by small churches in isolated communities came through strongly, and the point was made that no-one in a rural area has only one job – so tentmaking seems quite normal in that context.

The Bishop of Chicago is a strong supporter of tentmaker ministry, so much of Saturday's programme had a local flavour. He and three other panellists (one Presbyterian working in congregational development, another who lectures at a seminary with a tradition of training for frontier mission, and the Dean of Seabury-Western Episcopal seminary) discussed and were questioned on various topics. Routes to ordination via various flavours of professional qualification loomed large, as did the inability of two-thirds of Presbyterian churches to support a full-time minister. All the speakers acknowledged the additional perspectives and skills that tentmakers bring to ministry – and the failure of many churches and seminaries to recognise this. But only Bishop Persell really emphasised the value of ministry in places of work, or acknowledged that this would be the only place that many people might now encounter a member of the clergy.

Two contrasted sets of stories followed. One was from new tentmakers, who described their various journeys towards ordination and the points at which they realised that full-time stipendiary ministry was not for them. There is no part-time ministry training in the US, and it can be an immense struggle for many people to attend full-time seminary training and keep a full-time job going – let alone, for some of the women, to keep in occasional contact with their families. This is one area in which the UK is well-ahead of our transatlantic neighbours.

The other stories, from established tentmakers, were equally fascinating. One woman has been specifically ordained as chaplain to a private company which places corporate and industrial chaplains around the USA. In Chicago Bishop Persell is experimenting with another form of tentmaker ministry, by putting a team of five into a semi-moribund church. We heard from two of this team, all of whom share ministry and administration and are working out whether the church should be re-launched or helped to die. The 25 current parishioners find it hard to grasp that no-one person is in charge, and that their priest may be any of five people, depending on the date and time. But the congregation benefits from a combination of inspiration, skills and commitment way beyond the ability of any single minister, and there are already hopeful signs of growth. It will be very interesting to hear how this develops.



One of the five, a professional spiritual director, ran an excellent session on “Finding our Voice”. This explored the relationship between theology, spirituality and religion and suggested some principles for making our voices (collective and individual) heard within our own organisations. Part of this may well feature in our February Reflective weekend, so if you want to know more there is still just time to book!

The conference concluded with various denominational reports (we gave a quick update on CHRISM’s activities) and business meetings, followed by the final liturgy during which, as it was All Saints Sunday, we had both a sermon and a hymn about tentmaker saints. And then it was back to Chicago, passing the offices of the splendidly-named Resurrection Healthcare en route and, as we walked through the long tunnels to find the Blue Line train for downtown, overhearing one traveller say to another: “O’Hare is a really neat airport. You ought to spend a few hours there sometime.”

There are clear differences and fascinating contrasts between American tentmakers, English MSEs and European worker-priests. The prime focus of ministry varies from helping a tiny rural congregation continue to meet and worship, to sharing work with the most exploited and excluded people in our society. Work may itself be ministry, or the means by which liturgical and pastoral ministry can be exercised. Our church hierarchies have differing views of us and expect different things of us. (I wonder whether, given the increasing shortage of priests in many parts of Europe, the Roman Catholic authorities will also begin to see worker-priests as a means of maintaining parish structures?)

We are at different stages of working out our understanding of this eccentric (*sensu stricto*) and intrinsically prophetic ministry. But the enthusiasm, the inclusivity and the commitment are the same in every group, and everyone’s determination to help build the Kingdom in offices, shops, hospitals, schools and factories overcomes any inadequacies of language. These international encounters are some of the most stimulating experiences CHRISM can offer. Why not try one – you’ll like it!

## *Takeover by the Company?*

*Finding personal wholeness in the changing world of work.*

*Ruth Brothwell*

This one-day conference at St. Paul's Cathedral took place on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November. It had been planned by a collaboration of Christian business groups as an opportunity for personal exploration by Christians struggling under pressure, to reflect with others on how best to hold everything together. I was certainly looking forward to it and was not disappointed.

The first morning session was titled '**what is work doing to us?**'. Sarah Jackson, Director of 'Working Families' and Paul Valler former HR Director of Hewlett Packard both addressed delegates providing an insight from their own experiences at work. The second session, '**from Baptisms to Burnouts**' considered the ministry that is going on to workers in two areas. Val Potter explained the role of counselor that she undertakes as a Director of 'wpcf counselling and psychotherapy' while Rev Sue Gent provided insights into the needs she comes across in her role of Chaplain to City Law firms. The ensuing Q & A session confirmed that experiences were typical of many and there was a general agreement and empathy in the conference.

Lunchtime provided an excellent opportunity for networking and meeting up with friends and strangers.

The afternoon session – Finding Personal Wholeness - divided us all into guided reflections in workshops using different approaches. These had been specifically thought through to enable delegates to take the opportunity to explore something new. I attended the Ignatian workshop, led very ably by Dr. James Hanvey, from Heythrop Institute. Choices included Benedictine, Biblical, Franciscan and Quaker. This was a real eye opener for me and I have been reflecting on what I learned ever since. About twelve of us gathered in the chapter house, itself a privilege. We contemplated the many sights the rooms had witnessed and how many decisions had been made within its hallowed walls!! Dr Hanvey introduced himself as a Jesuit priest and lecturer in Spirituality at Heythrop College. For the next hour and a half he led us into an understanding of Ignatius and his

spiritual approach to the issues of life. We practised a short meditation together. The message that stood out for me was that of 'attentiveness'. To be sure to be aware of what is happening around you – to be attentive to it as God and the Trinity is. On the train or in the office, what is going on here? How does the Trinity see it? As we considered the mess we had made of the world we realised that in response to God the Father saying what can be done? The Son replied, 'I'll go'

The conference concluded with feedback from delegates and Bishop Chris Mayfield chairing the afternoon session was asked to ensure that the wider church was made fully aware of the excellent work that was going on in the field of workplace ministry and understanding. Delegates departed for Cathedral evensong, which was followed by the High Kay Memorial Lecture.

## ***Resources***

***The Church Army*** ([www.churcharmy.org.uk](http://www.churcharmy.org.uk)) has a plethora of information and resource material available at present, much of it launched or adapted to fit in with the Mission Shaped Church (MSC) initiative. Under the general title "Encounters on the Edge" a series of 28 short resource books is available, with topics designed to fit the MSC categories.

Those of most interest for MSE are:

*Community Development Churches* No.1, No.2, No.6, No.14, No.18  
No.23

*Network Focused Churches* No.7, No.19

*The Arts engaging with the Church* No.25

*Workplace and Church* No.24

This last is largely the work of George Lings, a Church Army evangelist, and is best summed up in his own words:

"Distance travelled to work has lengthened, legislation has grown in complexity and hours worked have increased. Targets have become fiercer, regulations more complex, litigation much more likely in a world of rights not duties, computers and the internet have created

serious information overload, email peddles the illusions of rapid response and that those cc'd into correspondence even want to read it, while the mobile phone has created the culture of deferring decision making – I can always call you back and continue chat on what we might do. Downsizing over efficiency has led to fewer people being asked to do more, to less spare capacity in the system to respond to the unexpected, and competition internationally leaves all vulnerable to becoming unsustainable. Stress in the workplace may be higher than we have ever known. At the same time we are ambivalent about community, longing for it but increasingly unwilling to commit to it. Society is fragmenting, neighbours are becoming strangers and the lack of social capital is a live issue.

Managers are now taught that the world is not ordered and predictable. My thanks to Jim McNeish, Management Consultant with Cattle, for his list of what secular managers are taught to expect and live with in a world way beyond rules and procedures which feels more like anarchy: chaos, unpredictability, paradox, multiple agendas, complex communication, constant disruption, allowing emergence, unanswerable questions and new learning. For most, this is stressful.

The worlds of work and of church have intersected a little, in a selective way, but not nearly as deeply as may be necessary. This applies at many levels. Christians have been insufficiently encouraged to see their work as ministry in its own right and as part of their mission. Also because we have been “come-shaped” in mission, we have been unable usually to connect with the networks that the world of work consists of. Often urban people sharing the workplace live many miles from one another’s domestic address. A previous world in which most people lived and worked within one small town is past.

Mission-shaped Church (MSC) makes clear on pages 36-41 that there are different “tribes” in the UK cross-cultural mission field we face today and they need different approaches. [Information in MSC shows} ... that the proportion of people who have any kind of church experience is diminishing as Sunday school rolls continue to fall. So those who can be invited to return to hear the story they once knew

amount to a shrinking pond. The invite "come back to church" is bait that less and less fish will want to bite.

With these limitations and questions, I had been looking for examples of how church and work could be connected. A year ago, in the run-up to Christmas, I travelled to Edinburgh to meet a group of people in a work called OASIS, who I heard had gone further down this road."

*As with many previous material reviewed in this Journal, this looks useful – and if any have read and / or used the full booklet your thoughts are much appreciated – but suffers by being written from the outside looking in. Essentially this is about an OASIS church plant in a workplace: taking the Church there rather than looking for what God is already doing. 'Church' is essential in God's economy, but must we always reproduce its forms and categories? A complimentary copy of MaW will be on its way to George! Ed.*

The site also includes a number of resources on Mission Shaped Church itself, including presentations (in text and PowerPoint formats) by George Lings. These are well worth reading, in particular the discourse on Method in the section on Theology underpinning MSC (*a hobby-horse of mine, as poor method is a feature of much contemporary 'popular' theology, Ed.*).

Also accessible through the Church Army website (or you can go direct) is <http://onearthasinheaven.blogspot.com/>, a blog run by CA evangelist **Steve Hollingshurst**.

**CPAS Information Sheets** nos. (Non-stipendiary ministry) and 15 (Ministry in secular employment) are still available, at 90p each, from: Pauline Walden, CPAS Ministry and Vocation, Athena Drive, Tachbrook Park, Warwick, CV34 6NG

**Project Agora** runs a website, [www.agoraspace.org](http://www.agoraspace.org), including a discussion forum on a range of issues facing contemporary society, looked at from a Christian (not Churchy) perspective. Recent threads include "Power, Politics and the emerging Global Order" - where are we going? and 'Exploring the power of story to shape

society' – which we as MSEs know a bit about! There are a number of starter resources from small group discussion too.

*Fresh Expressions of Church* has taken to the web at [www.freshexpressions.org.uk](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk). It is not the easiest of sites to navigate, and you need good eyesight! But it does reward a little patience and contain a wealth of information. Not surprisingly much of this does what it says on the box – new expressions of being the familiar product. Nevertheless there are useful resources to download, especially on worship, and a booklist that pushes the envelope rather further than other parts of the site.

Just when the Alpha course is becoming old hat comes along *the Beta Course!* Not Alpha mark 2, the Beta Course is written and presented by Dr Sara Savage, Rev Dr Fraser Watts and Ruth Layzell from the Psychology and Christianity Project at the University of Cambridge. All three contribute presentations, blending together insights from the Bible story, theology and psychology as well as their own personal Christian/human experiences. For more information about the authors and course visit [www.beta-course.org](http://www.beta-course.org). The input is augmented and enhanced by a range of artists, dancers, editors and videographers. The use of creative arts, including some wonderful cartoons, is described as “very refreshing.”

*The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity* (LICC) has a new initiative. *The Imagine Project* was established to help Christians live an 'ordinary life in a robustly Christian way in today's new world'. At heart, Imagine is a missionary initiative which recognises that the only way to reach the UK with the Gospel is by making whole life disciples who can relate their faith to every aspect of their lives, and share that faith with the people amongst whom they live, work and have their being.

Imagine is led by Project Director Tracy Cotterell. There are two key publications that explain the Imagine vision and approach, “Let My People Grow” and “Imagine: how we can reach the UK”, both £3 through the ICC website: [www.licc.org.uk](http://www.licc.org.uk). The website also has a number of recent articles to download.

***The Scottish Churches Industrial Mission*** has recently launched it's own website, at [www.scim.org](http://www.scim.org). A number of articles are available to download, including one on corporate social responsibility. The section on the work of industrial chaplains includes the following, which will resonate with MSEs:

"The daily task of the industrial chaplain is sometimes described as 'doing theology on the hoof', telling the stories of faith and seeking to relate the ancient truths to modern conditions. Stories that tell of a creation that is good, a beautiful and fragile earth demanding our respect and touch a chord with the rising grasp of the importance of 'green' policies. Stories that tell of man, created from the dust of the earth and given life by the very breath of God in his nostrils underpinning the inalienable dignity of all women and men and of our crucial relationship with the earth we inhabit."

For those, like me, who like their websites simple, visit [www.imsy.demon.co.uk](http://www.imsy.demon.co.uk), the site of ***Industrial Mission in South Yorkshire***. It has the most straightforward explanation of industrial mission you could want, and the visitor can even take a 'bus tour'!

[www.alternativeworship.org](http://www.alternativeworship.org) is a website devoted to new patterns and resources for worship in new expressions of church. The aims of the site are to:

- Provide you with a point of contact for alternative worship and emerging church sites worldwide
- Direct you to resources for understanding what alternative worship and emerging church are (and are not)
- Route you through to places where you can find resources to help you and those with you to create your own new forms of church.

There is a directory of alternative churches, downloadable resources – including audio-visual, and guides on how to put worship together.

***Getting God to Work*** - A Workplace Ministry equipping Christians to live their faith At Work, is to be found at [www.gg2w.org.uk/index.html](http://www.gg2w.org.uk/index.html). The site was jointly developed by LICC and CVM (Christian Viewpoint for Men) and is now managed by the latter.

There is a section for workplace-related organisations and groups—which now includes CHRISM in the extensive and informative listing— and also for midweek meetings.

Finally, our antipodean cousins are well up when it comes to *Faith at Work*. Plenty to look into at [www.faithatwork.org.nz](http://www.faithatwork.org.nz), including books, downloads, courses and worship resources.

### ***Church e-mailings***

Does your Diocese / District / Circuit / Church send out regular news bulletins by e-mail? If so could they carry information about CHRISM and our activities and events?

Leicester Diocese has recently carried information about our 2006 Reflective Weekend, placed by Adrian Holdstock. If would like CHRISM information to be included in such a service, please contact Adrian or Rob Fox.

### ***Book Reviews***

*James Francis has contributed two excellent reviews for this edition:*

#### ***After Sunday: A Theology of Work***

Armand Larive, London, Continuum 2004 (ISBN 0 8264 1591 1); 198 pages with notes and an index. £12.99.

This book is a welcome exploration of the theology of work and, I suggest, should really be on every MSEs bookshelf. It is one of those rare and creative studies that holds together theological and philosophical insights with a profound regard for the sacred nature of work as human activity. The photograph on the back of the author, a parish minister and teacher of theology, obviously enjoying a complementary career as a carpenter gives promise of the content.

The book explores the nature of work within a Trinitarian framework. There are eight chapters in all, beginning with three that deal with work and the image of God, getting a focus on vocation, and making space for a theology of work. The topic is then explored through



three chapters: "The eschatological Christ and *homo artifex*", "The protological Creator and *homo conservans*" and "the Spirit, Pneumatology and *homo viator*". There are two concluding chapters on good and godly work, and on tying themes together.

In the author's sights throughout is a sustained wish to demonstrate how the ministry of the whole people of God in daily life encounters the presence of God. He explores and critiques "common assumptions among clergy and churches and church people ... that get in the way of honouring daily work". Paraphrasing slightly from the author's own words (page 149), amongst these assumptions is a tendency to perfectionism – an ideal construct, only roughly imitated on earth but found perfected in heaven. The contrary argument given in the book is that the Biblical use of "perfect" would be better translated as "mature" or "open hearted", and that perfectionist expectations about daily life tend to be the enemy of the good and the excellent. "Furthermore," Larive says, "Christ neither leads nor restores humans to the idyllic perfection of Eden, but leads instead toward new things". He argues that a theology of work requires a strong immersion in both culture and knowledge of nature, and he challenges the implicit assumption (however it is superficially denied) that the Kingdom of God is co-extensive with the church. He coins the term "*metemphatic*" (in contrast to *apophatic*: God is known by not being this or that; and *kataphatic*: where something visible may be held to point to the invisible). By *metemphatic* he means "the experience of satisfaction over something for what it is in itself, for its intrinsic worth" (pages 46-47). Moreover it is a spiritual affirmation that God takes delight in creation and in our creativity, in our valuing of what we do and make, "where an event or a thing is felt to be valuable in itself". So he claims "A *metemphatic* way of knowing occurs because human beings are as much children of nature as children of God and one be-speaks the other. A good worker is someone who can fit into the harmony of nature, taking, shaping, yet respecting what is there with a resourceful kind of familiarity" (page 70).

I hope I have conveyed something of the depth and richness of this book. In many ways in reading it I could not but help be reminded of Michael Ranken, whose own theological reflections helped to

shape the origins of CHRISM and ran along similar lines. So let me commend this book for its weight of insights and its practical wisdom. This book would also make good reading for a discussion group. What too appeals is its subversive potential to challenge the continual way in which the church fails to value the life of the whole people of God, engaged as it is with God in the challenges and opportunities of daily life.

***Do Christians Know How To Be Spiritual? The Rise of New Spirituality and the Mission of the Church.***

J. Drane, London, DLT 2005. ISBN 0 232 52632.

186 pages with notes and index. £12.95.

This book provides a detailed and thoughtful examination of spirituality in the contemporary world, and challenges the church to engage critically but creatively with it. MSEs, from their experience of the world of work, will warm to many of the insights provided.

The book is in four chapters, entitled "From religion to Spirituality"; "Spirituality in Everyday Life"; "New Spirituality and Christian Mission"; and "Creating Churches for Spiritual Searchers". The first charts the paradox of a decline in traditional religion and the burgeoning of diverse spiritualities, often associated with the description of "lifestyle seekers". In our age embracing meaningful experience has replaced belief in ideology. The reasons for this are explored from a number of different perspectives, historical, new science and psychoanalysis, and consumerism.

The second chapter is a study of aspects of, and approaches to, spirituality in daily life. There are examples drawn from the world of business, and there is an exploration, through the relationship of being human and being spiritual, of how biology and belief interact in the mystery of who we are. The author moves to offering sensible and sensitive insights around the issue of being spiritual and being Christian. He comes to the conclusion that discipleship is more a matter of experience than of assent to rational propositions. The more we realise this the more we can be in creative dialogue with the embedded spiritualities of the world around us.

The remaining two chapters explore how such an engagement might be constructed, particularly to avoid a “them and us” approach, and also how the church must transform itself if it is to be a more open spiritual community engaged with the world. There is much around at present about Mission Shaped Church and its outcome “Fresh Expressions of Church”, which regrettably has overlooked MSE as a (well established) contribution to what is now being called “pioneer” forms of ministry. This book offers an opportunity that enables us all to avoid the trap of church shaped mission, since it is already clear that any invitation to “think outside the box” is not really going far enough. The author’s breadth of thinking, though he does not mention MSE, provides a great deal of material with which MSEs will warmly identify. If this is taken up and used by MSEs themselves then it may help to strengthen their voice to help the church “to bear effective witness to the gospel in an ever-changing but increasingly spiritual culture” (page 164).

*Enclosed with this edition is a flyer detailing the new book from David Clark (guiding light of Christians in Public Life):*

***‘Breaking the Mould of Christendom:  
Kingdom Community, Diaconal Church and the Liberation of the Laity’***

*EPWORTH PRESS, Published November 2005; ISBN 0 71620 592 0. 300pp – (P) – Code ED473 - £19.99 (pp £3 Europe and £4 world).*

If you can write a review for the next edition of MaW please contact the Editor.

***Diary***

There are still a few places left on the ***2006 CHRISM Reflective Weekend, 10 – 12 February, at Launde Abbey, Leicestershire.*** If you would like to come please contact Margaret Joachim, details in rear inside cover.

To find out more about the venue, see the website, at:

[www.launde.org](http://www.launde.org), where the Abbey is introduced as “an Elizabethan Manor House surrounded by beautiful parklands, gardens and woodlands.”

The 2006 CHRISM Summer Conference is titled:  
***Cultural Shift - Changing patterns of Employment!***  
***Can we provide a workforce?***

Dates: 14 - 16 July  
Venue: Henderson Hall, part of the University of Newcastle  
(see: [www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation))

The Hall is “set in beautiful grounds, three miles east of the city centre.”

***Bookings to Jean Skinner, details in rear inside cover, and on enclosed flyer.***

### ***Doing The Work You Were Born to Do***

Is a conference run by WorkNet Partnership in partnership with New Wine, WorkNet, Faithworks, Premier Radio and St. Michael's, Chester Square London.

Details: March 4th 2006, at St. Michael's, 4 Chester Square London, SW1W 9HH (near Victoria Station).

Bookings can be made on-line, through the WorkNet website, [www.worknetuk.org](http://www.worknetuk.org)

### ***The Ridley Hall Foundation:***

***Past, Present and Future:  
Christian Faith and Business Practice***

The 2006 conference will be held from 7 to 9 April 2006.

It will be one of the events marking the 125th anniversary of the opening of Ridley Hall. Speakers include Peter Heslam, Eve Poole, Tim Harle, Jim Wright and – of course – Richard Higginson.

**Final date for receipt of applications 3 March 2006**

A booking form is available to download on the Ridley Hall website,

[www.ridley.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk). Please print out the form and return to:  
Janine Stewart, Ridley Hall Foundation Administrator, Ridley Hall,  
Cambridge, CB3 9HG

Tel: 01223 741082 Email: [jmps2@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jmps2@cam.ac.uk)

Also available on the website are the papers from the 2005 Conference, "What makes Trade fair?"

**'Christian Mission in a Pagan Culture'**  
*A day with Bishop Tom Wright*

**Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham**  
**Saturday 17th June 2006 10am - 4pm**

£18 (unwaged £12) - bring your own lunch.

Is British culture Christian, secular - or pagan?

How is paganism understood in the New Testament?

What is a Christian and a pagan worldview?

Is it constructive to talk, or think, of our culture as pagan?

How should this affect Christian living, church life and mission today?

To request a registration form, please e-mail: [conference@gospel-culture.org.uk](mailto:conference@gospel-culture.org.uk) typing 'register' in the subject box.

**Christians@Work annual conference and AGM:**

**'WALK WORTHILY (in your calling)'**

**11.00am, Saturday 17th June 2006**

at

**Rugby Evangelical Free Church,  
Railway Terrace, Rugby**

**Speakers Pastor Nick McQuaker (Haywards Heath) and Dr.  
David Kellett (Croydon)**

Cost £25 each for non-members - £20 for CaW Associates  
The price includes all refreshments and lunch.

The CaW website has 29 articles that can be downloaded as well as various other resources. Worth a visit.

### ***CHRISM Papers and merchandise***

The following Papers are available free to download from the CHRISM website:

<b>CHRISM 1</b>	<b>An Introduction to MSE</b> (this is also available in PowerPoint, from the Editor)
<b>CHRISM Paper 2</b>	<b>Care</b>
<b>CHRISM Paper 3</b>	<b>Spirituality for Work</b>
<b>CHRISM Paper 4</b>	<b>The Spirit of Sacrifice at Work</b>
<b>CHRISM Paper 5</b>	<b>MSEs and Retirement</b>
<b>CHRISM Paper 6</b>	<b>Training for MSE</b>
<b>CHRISM Paper 7</b>	<b>The Kingdom of Heaven is like.... MSE parables</b>

Hard copies are available from the Editor for those without internet access, at 50p (to cover post and stationery).

Also available, in hard copy only, are:

#### **CHRISM Paper 8      Making a Difference - an MSE journey of reflection**

Based on the CHRISM 2004 reflective weekend, this is a superb series of guided reflections on our ministry in secular employment. With Lent approaching, well worth using during this time. Copies from the Editor, £3, inc p&p. (£2.50 each for 10 or more)

#### **CHRISM Paper 9      Worship Resources**

Already drawing widespread praise, and not only from within CHRISM. An excellent resource, drawing together material used at CHRISM events over the last several years. Copies from the Editor, £3, inc. p&p. (£2.50 each for 10 or more)

#### **Theology Resource Book**

**What is theology for those who work and minister in secular**

## **environments?**

A resource booklet which poses some of the questions or reflections which face Christians working in secular environments. It offers some possible theological resources to address such questions and underpin the responses which a Christian in secular employment may make. Sometimes it may happen in reverse - theological considerations may raise the questions. Thus is theology applied.

### **Contents:**

- Reviewing the working environment
- Human Resources
- The nature of work
- Is there any work an MSE should not do?
- Is there any place in which an MSE should not work?
- Ministry and Management
- Should politics matter?
- Work place ethics
- Work place ministry
- Ordination and ministry in secular employment
- How does the ordained minister manage this ministry?
- What are your questions and reflections?

## **Theology Resource Book - Workshop Plan and Training Materials**

- a Users' Guide to enable you to lead and facilitate a workshop using the Theology Resource Book.

The TRB has been used widely and successfully as an aid in understanding MSE.

The Resource Book is published at £5.00 and the Workshop Plan at £4.00, both inc. p&p. Both are obtainable from the Editor.

We also have just 3 remaining CHRISM T shirts, all medium, light grey, printed with "MSEs do it at work!" Much prized, guaranteed to wind stipendiary clergy up, and even worn by bishops! Available from the Editor at the amazing price of £8 (inc. p&p).

## ***Church Watch***

An extra portion of Christmas pudding to the Anglican Dioceses of London and Norwich for not just knowing the difference between a Non-Stipendiary Minister and an MSE, but for actually publishing this in their websites ([www.london.anglican.org](http://www.london.anglican.org) and [www.norwich.anglican.org](http://www.norwich.anglican.org)). The Diocese of Worcester has cottoned on that there is a difference but appears not to be quite sure what it is—one for our local members I think!

Hearty congratulations to CHRSIM members Jane Fraser, Honorary Assistant MSE Priest in the Benefice of Upton-on-Severn, Ripple, Earls Croome with Hill Croome and Strensham, and Eric Knowles, Minister in Secular Employment, Honorary Priest-in-Charge of Little Malvern Priory, on being made Canons of Worcester Diocese in December.

The Canadian Tentmakers Network is a cross-denominational initiative that runs regular seminars and publishes an e-newsletter. It is linked to the international tentmaker network—supporting business professionals who act as informal missionaries during secondments in other countries.

## ***A Dieters Psalm***

*In this season of resolutions—still kept to I trust! - a little ditty of encouragement:*

Strict is my diet -  
I must not want.  
It maketh me to lie down at night hungry.  
It leadeth me past the confectioners.  
It trieth my willpower.  
It leadeth me in the paths of alteration for my figure's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the aisles of the pastry department,  
I will buy no sweet rolls for they are fattening.  
The cakes and the pies, they tempt me.  
Before me is a table set with green beans and lettuce.



I filleth my stomach with liquids,  
My day's quota runneth over.  
Surely calorie and weight charts will follow me all the days of my  
life  
And I will dwell in the fear of scales forever.

### ***And finally***

*Not surprisingly some hymns disappear from the collections in common usage. Usually because they are out-dated, but this one for political reasons: it was a marching hymn of the New Model Army. Apart from brief revivals in the USA late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and with the Sealed Knot and "Home Service" in the 1990s, it has been regarded as non-PC since the Restoration. Perhaps the time has come to restore it to the canon, as a critique of capitalism!*

### ***Babylon is Fallen***

Hail the day so long expected,  
Hail the year of full release.  
Zion's walls are now erected,  
And her watchmen publish peace.  
Through our Shiloh's wide dominion,  
Hear the trumpet loudly roar,  
    Babylon is fallen, is fallen, is fallen  
    Babylon is fallen, to rise no more.

All her merchants stand with wonder,  
What is this that comes to pass:  
Murm'ring like the distant thunder,  
Crying, "Oh alas, alas."  
Swell the sound, ye kings and nobles,  
Priest and people, rich and poor;  
    Babylon is fallen ....

Blow the trumpet in Mount Zion,  
Christ shall come a second time;  
Ruling with a rod of iron  
All who now as foes combine.

# CHRISM

CHRistians In Secular Ministry

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

Teilhard de Chardin