

Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry

Number 110

July 2009

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

CHRISM is the National Association of CHRistians In Secular Ministry

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

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

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

Further information about CHRISM may be obtained from the Secretary or the Journal Editor

Submissions for the Journal should be sent to:

Mike Rayner
Editor: Ministers-at-Work
198 Marlborough Road
Oxford, OX1 4LT

E-mail: Mike.Rayner@dphpc.ox.ac.uk

Visit the CHRISM website:

www.chrism.org.uk

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Copy deadline for the next edition: Friday 3rd October 2009
Please e-mail contributions to: Mike.Rayner@dphpc.ox.a.cuk

Editorial

The last edition of Ministers-at-Work seems to have provoked a bit of reaction. Hurrah! One of the most gratifying aspects of editing this journal is getting letters in response to the items I've included. This time there were three. Thank you very much Dierdre Palk, Eric Knowles and Michael Powell. Readers of this journal, please keep these letters coming! And also please feel free to write to me with suggestions for things that you think I should include.

I find receiving letters from readers reassuring because otherwise I cannot really tell whether anyone is actually reading the journal. There's always the fear - as you stuff another issue into an envelope and attach its address label - that you are sending it off straight to a dustbin. So getting letters is pleasing but they also give me a bit of a handle on what you find interesting, useful, provoking, etc.

Since I haven't been Editor for very long, what provokes a reaction is always a bit surprising, so I confess that when I received two letters about MSE in retirement - in response to a letter in the last edition from Graham Cornish - I was mildly shocked. I guess it's because I do not really want to contemplate my own retirement but I realise, of course, that many of you, already are doing just that or are already retired.

And so keen to supply readers with what I think they might want I have included - in this edition - an interesting article on ministry in secular retirement by Dorrie Johnson - previously published elsewhere.

This edition also sees another contribution from a bishop - Chris Edmonson, Bishop of Bolton. One of my aims as Editor has been to increase the number of contributions from church leaders because we all know that MSE has low visibility within the church and I think that getting church leaders to focus on it for a moment at least might be productive. In the process it should also generate ideas, from a different perspective, that we MSs might find thought provoking.

There is besides, lots of other interesting items in this edition. At least I hope so. Please note in particular the notices of CHRISM's Summer Conference, Annual General Meeting and our urgent need of a new Membership Secretary (see page 10).

I hope to see many of you at the Summer Conference: it should be good!

Mike Rayner

Letters to the Editor

Two replies to Graham Cornish

1. From Deirdre Palk

Graham Cornish raised a number of issues in his letter in April 2009's edition of *Ministers-at-Work* and asks for responses from other CHRISM members similarly wrestling with them. My response involves the issue of 'MSEs when retired'. Since I am, for the present, living in France, I am not competent to comment on the other two issues.

A category of 'the retired Minister in Secular Employment' certainly needs to be added to our agenda for reflection. There are a lot of us, and there will be an increasing number of us who have been particularly active in exploring, articulating and practising this form of ministry. Graham is right to ask what form this ministry takes when employment/self-employment/'work' ceases as part of our lives. There is, of course, the option of reverting to the ministerial norm and offering to be parish- or congregationally-focussed ministers. And why not, if that is where we fit? Most churches will find a place for us, and our past working history will be of benefit in carrying out a locally based role. The house for duty option mentioned seems like a nice reward (perhaps?).

However, I think that many of us would not want to take that route, or would feel uneasy with it. Our focus has always been

beyond the local church and I sense that we may well feel that is where our focus should remain in retirement. For me it is a 'wrestling' matter and I would appreciate connecting with others in the same boat. For some years (I retired from paid work in 2002) I have been puzzling over it. My work made sense of my ordination and the ministry to which I felt called. Now, my life is about historical research, writing and editing historical works; I do my best to integrate into French society, and I can see my Christian ministry in my work for Amnesty International (France). I have not found a home in the local catholic church, my nearest Anglican church is 150 kms away in Paris. So making sense of retirement and ministry is doubly difficult. I plan to return to live in England, probably during next year, so I have to think this through in a UK context. I would like to continue the wrestling with others in CHRISM, so count me in in any reflecting on the subject. I think this is an issue which involves a significant number of us, and it would be good to share the experiences and thoughts of other retired MSEs.

2. From Eric Knowles

I thought I would offer a response to the letter from Graham Cornish regarding MSEs when retired in the last edition of Ministers -at-Work

I have spent all my ministry in the working environment (40+ years), both before ordination when I was a Methodist Local Preacher and afterwards for the last 27 years as an Anglican Priest. My vision for my life and ministry has been modelled on Teilhard de Chardin's view of the sacrament of Holy Communion in the Mass of the Universe, the broken bread on the altar of the world together with the blood of the New Covenant. I have been fortunate to be able to balance my Ministry in Secular Employment by having the care of a church. I am the Priest in Charge of Little Malvern Priory (www.littlemalvernpriory.co.uk)

Last year, as a Project Manager, I took voluntary redundancy. I was due to retire this year at 65 anyway so I was coming to the

end of the race. From the time I first volunteered for redundancy I have asked a question. I have put this to a number of people including my Spiritual Director and my Diocesan Bishop. The question is this: "With a view of ministry that sees my work as an offering to God what do I now offer on the altar of the world?" I did receive some helpful comments but essentially I am left to trying to work it out for myself in the context of the circumstances in which I find myself and the opportunities that are available to me.

The following are the results to date:

There seems to be a distinct advantage to understanding the language and the pressures of the working environment. MSEs acquire that knowledge and speak with the voice of experience. That is a valuable asset. I believe that it should be put to use.

I have taken on the role of Wing Chaplain in the Air Training Corps. This gives me direct contact with people in a 'working' environment. It also provides me with contact with youngsters (13yrs - 18yrs) who have very limited contact with religion. This is an environment in which I have lived all my life. In this role I think I can offer a sharing of my experience and pass it on (for what it is worth) to others. Being with the youngsters also continues to challenge me.

There is also the possibility of an Industrial Chaplaincy to a small local organisation. This may be an area where MSEs can make a real contribution when they retire from their employment.

Having spent so much time in the workplace I am avoiding being drawn into the ecclesiastical world of the church. I am regarding the time I have available as being the same as if I were at work. So I do not attend any daytime meetings and limit my evening commitments. My wife has been extremely supportive over the years and we have had to sacrifice a great deal of our "together" time. So that is now a priority. This is currently a target rather than an achievement. A life at home is taking me a great deal of adjustment after 45 years of a life at work.

I now also find that I have more "thinking" time. This is showing itself in whatever I am undertaking. There is more time for preparation. (That doesn't necessarily mean that I am better at what I do, just that I am more aware of what needs to be done). I have also undertaken a creative writing course. This I regard as ministerial training.

So, at the moment it looks as if this is a time for learning, recreation, teaching and applying my experience. Perhaps the offering of "work" is now no longer appropriate for me. It may be that that aspect of my ministry has finished and it is time for something new. Perhaps this is a question that is to stay with me for the remainder of my life? I will probably have to find another answer when I can no longer "do" things and have to accept the ministry of others.

The question is unique to MSEs. Stipendiary priests are used to working from home. That does not change when they retire. They do however face moving from their home in their final parish whereas the MSE does not necessarily have to do that. When they retire they can still exercise the same form of ministry albeit at a reduced level.

It'll be interesting to see how other MSEs are dealing with the change from paid employment. By the way; here is a comment I received the other day after talking to someone about being made redundant four times in my career: "Eric remember this, you'll never be out of work while you're prepared to work for nothing!"

From Michael Powell

Herewith a 'blast from the past' sparked off by the April Newsletter (sorry, Journal!).

Alan Wearmouth asks whether Michael Ranken was a guru. I think maybe yes in a way, but much more practical than that might imply.

What has stayed with me about Michael is that he was unswervingly proud to be a chemist within the food industry, earlier in large companies and latterly in his small consultancy. That focussed, positive attitude had the effect of making me persevere in being proud of my industry, the building industry, and not to be afraid of talking about the many good things that it does.

In the same edition Pauline Pearson quotes from the 1937 Oxford Conference: "The Church must have at least some adventurers... who will stand on the other side of the gulf". Michael was undoubtedly one such adventurer. He, I am sure, would push us towards being today's active adventurers in our own specific contexts, whether food, building or whatever. He certainly would not want us sitting around, like stereotype disciples of a guru, listening to him!

Perhaps CHRISM should have a year when 'church' is not mentioned at all. That I believe would move us a long way towards the place where Michael would want us to be!

CHRISM Summer Conference 2009
25th - 27th September 2009, St Chad's College, Durham

Ministry in Recession: Living in an uncertain world

The conference will tackle issues such as: sustaining work in a time of economic decline, making people redundant and being made redundant and will seek to answer questions such as: 'When we are walking the tightrope of economic upheaval, can a theological analysis help?'

Speakers include:

Ruth Brothwell
Business Outreach Manager,
Olympic Delivery Authority
London 2012

Andrew Woodward
Commercial Relationships
Director,
Lloyds Banking Group

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

St Chad's College is centrally located in mediaeval Durham City, directly across from Durham Cathedral. Accommodation is in single-bedded accommodation (some twins available on request), and a number of rooms have en-suite facilities.

Cost, from dinner on Friday evening to lunch on Sunday, inclusive: £110 (members); £125 (non-members).

Please return the enclosed registration form, by the 27th August to:

Pauline Pearson,
3 Belle Grove Place,
Spital Tongues,
Newcastle, NE2 4LH.



CHRISM Annual General Meeting, 27h September 2009

Notice is hereby given that the 2009 Annual General Meeting of CHRISM will take place on Saturday 27th September, at 8.00 pm, at St Chad's College, Durham.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of AGM held on 6th September 2008
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Presiding Moderator's report
- 5 Hon. Secretary's report
- 6 Membership report
- 7 CHRISSET financial report
 - Adoption of Accounts for 2008
 - Motion to continue the arrangement with the CHRISSET trustees
- 8 Subscriptions for 2010
- 9 Election of officers and Committee members
- 10 CHRISM nomination of a CHRISSET Trustee
- 11 Date and place of next AGM
- 12 Remarks by the in-coming Presiding Moderator

CHRISM Reflective Weekend 2010

This will be held from 26th – 28th February, 2010 at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, Flintshire, CH5 3DF.
Put the date in your diary! More details to follow.

CHRISM Membership 2009 and CHRISM Membership Secretary

Included with this edition of Ministers-at-Work there is a membership renewal form. If you haven't already renewed your membership for 2009, and you don't pay your membership subscriptions by standing order, please could you fill in this form and send it with a cheque to Mike Rayner, 198 Marlborough Road, Oxford, OX1 4LT.

We also have to announce that Elizabeth Bonham – the CHRISM Membership Secretary – will be stepping down from this position at the 2009 AGM. Thanks Elizabeth for all your hard work in sorting out the membership records over the past year. This means that CHRISM urgently needs someone to take this important job on. Any volunteers? Please contact any member of the CHRISM committee (contact details inside back cover)

Applied theology for the retired Minister in Secular Employment (MSE)

Dorrie Johnson

This article originally appeared in the July 2008 edition of Modern Believing (49:3) and is reprinted here by kind permission of the Editor.

Has the theological thinking applied in Ministry in Secular Employment, any relevance for the retired Minister in Secular Employment (MSE)? The MSE works by certain theological principles. These are applied to work, the organisation (or system) and the society in its widest sense, in which that organisation functions. For me, these principles were honed over many years. Over those years they changed their nature from the desire to work as well as I could – in George Herbert's words,¹ 'to do it as for God' – to wondering, questioning, not just the work itself but the rationale for it and its theology.

We claim, I think, as MSEs, that theology:

- starts with our own experience;
- is something that affects all of our lives;
- should be active in what we know, feel or believe about the love of God and God's will for us or what we recognise as outside ourselves and to which we respond with our senses or feelings;
- should be something to do with a just, participatory and sustaining society;
- involves wholeness of self.

Elsewhere² I have spoken about the difficulties we face as Christians in starting with secular experiences and describing them firstly in secular language and only secondarily in traditional religious terms. A couple of examples will suffice: market forecasting, risk analysis, projecting, estimating, predicting, calculating, assessing are secular words but the exercise is one of prophecy. This is a necessary activity if the organisation is to

continue its business. A second example lies in mission statements, organisational principles, stance, tenets, policy, marketing strategies, memoranda of agreement; and these are credal. They are what the organisation believes in and in which, hopefully, the people working within that organisation also believe.³ How closely do these accord with what we believe to be the nature of the Kingdom of God?

Theologians are exploring the relationship between the working world and the Church, spirituality or the theology of work or the organisation. Bodies of like-minded people have formed around these issues. One such is MODEM which came into being in 1993. The acronym stands for Managerial and Organisational Disciplines for the Enhancement of Ministry. In its early days, however, it also was seen to stand for Ministerial and Ontological Disciplines for the Enhancement of Management. This was a welcome interpretation as it suggested a dialogue between Church and Management. Websites have been developed focusing on faith and work issues.⁴ Very few theologians, I believe, have explored the interpretation of secular words, beginning with the secular experience, to relate them to religious terminology.

I spent years, while employed, trying to discern – and name – the signs of God through the secular – secular language, secular activity, secular beliefs. What interests me is that the manner in which our language is used can liberate or enslave us. This is seen in the working context. Discussion of titles, roles, status, name plates, who has access to passwords, how management structures are introduced and so on, are all linked in some way with our own self image. What boosts that image? What belittles it? On retirement such discussion can become irrelevant. With its passing, too, go all the virtual accoutrements, the unspoken but recognised attributes that determined our public personae. What takes their place? How do we build and maintain a self image? Do we need to? Retirement, rather than obviating my need to ponder this, has enhanced it.

Retirement has been briefly considered in the Christians in Secular Ministry (CHRISM) Journal⁵ but what I have been considering is the

relevance of the theological principles directed towards a work-based life when redirected to life in retirement. Are those principles still applicable?

During a long-past reflective CHRISM weekend, I was privileged to be leading on Spirituality and Work. That was its essence, though I may misremember its title. The group considered the subject through eight words: reflection, redemption, inspiration, aspiration, meditation, metanoia, contemplation and consecration. I revisit them but from the perspective of a retired MSE.

Reflection

There is much more time to reminisce when retired and, of course, more to reminisce over but that is not the same as reflection. Reflection is more about looking into, seeking a depth, going beyond the surface to understand the underlying meaning. Reflection needs stillness, quietness. In the deep of a pool there can be a reflection – the surface light does not blind, the reflection appears deep, appears dimensional. But it does need stillness – in moving water the images are unclear, unformed.

That call for depth of reflection does not cease with retirement. Its focus may change but living in new circumstances has a new relevance for reflection. People – men, women, you, me, are, we are told, made in the image of God. When we look at our own reflections in the mirror, even increasingly wrinkled reflections, then, we can dare to say we see God. God is seen in our own reflections – yes, the image is marred – we have yet to become whole and perfect, but . . . in the image of God and of infinite value.

Retirement is often portrayed, especially in some of the pre-retirement courses, as having time hanging heavily, the advice being that a hobby should be chosen before work ceases. There may be truth in that but I urge caution. Let time have its place. Take time to reflect. Be still a while. Let us hold our experience in that stillness.

In retirement the potentially-false self images are lost – manager, worker, secretary, miner, teacher or whatever. We make false images of ourselves and possibly we carry images of each other that we have made up. We can take time to reconsider those, too. There is loss but there may be, also, a deliberate and thoughtful ‘putting down’. As Christ accepted the Good Friday and Holy Saturday experience so too, may we. And after Holy Saturday comes Easter Sunday.

After the stillness, after the absorption of the experience, when we’ve had the courage to look at ourselves without any trappings, as indeed God may see us, then it may be that the time is right to discover a new activity or to continue in some form of the work one had, if that seems appropriate. Reflection goes on.

Redemption

I have said before⁶ that I believe that the word ‘redemption’ is often understood, religiously, as meaning only personal salvation. I want to challenge that concept and suggest that it should be understood as a restoration to wholeness – the image of God made good – not just for the individual but also corporately. Not particularised salvation but a restoration of the whole of life which implies social justice, political and economic justice. Organisations can be redeemed from poor practices, introduced to new and life-enhancing policies.

If redemption means being redeemed – freed, liberated, then might this be a good word to apply to retirement? Retirement frees us from so many constraints. Obviously, retirement has its own enslaving, poverty, of course, but also in stereotypes, attitudes, expectations. These corrupt, deny, limit and, far from enhancing life, they can destroy it. The signs of God in redeemed retirement are in the voluntary activities, in the creative opportunities, in the intellectual pursuits previously prevented by lack of time. For many people retirement itself as a release from work, is a relief, a liberation.

Perhaps also, finding redemption in retirement is the acceptance of time as a gift. Can we forgive ourselves for enjoying it, lose the guilt that accompanies the pauses in the day? The newspaper headline – ‘55 year old rescued from accident! An elderly woman was today saved from further harm when . . .’ – demonstrates a prevalent belief of society (or at least the media) that chronological age can be used as a label for its own ends. In retirement, perhaps, we can be gracious and tolerant and work to deconstruct some of those assumptions – that indeed would be redeeming.

Inspiration

The biblical images of wind and fire are signs of the energising of the Spirit. Those touched by wind or fire, are moved, are not left unchanged. Those touched by the Spirit are not left unchanged. I am sufficiently liberal to believe that the Spirit works outside the church environs. I believe that the creativity exhibited in, for example, architecture, music, dance, art, garden design, mathematics, demonstrates that. We are offered so much in the macroscopic and microscopic, in virtual worlds and possible alternative universes – it must be inspiring! Almost at the very beginning of *The God Delusion*⁷ (and I take it out of context) Richard Dawkins quotes Carl Sagan – ‘How is it that hardly any major religion has looked at science and concluded, “This is better than we thought . . .”.’

Some people are very fortunate and find awe and wonder within their working lives, their work is absorbing and exciting. Most of us, I suspect, might have odd moments like that but much of our work is inhibited by the work place policies and our roles within the organisation/system. Retirement offers choices! Limits may be determined by mobility, health or finance – they are outside this paper – but within those limits there are so many opportunities. So in retirement there is space and time for that energising, for imagination, for creativity, for vision, for relatedness. We can still be agents for change, use our ingenuity, be inventive and we need that resourcefulness.

Aspiration

Aspiration is the hope, the leaning towards things hoped for and unseen. It is a belief in things coming right, a transformation, and perhaps, a passion or desire to bring it about. We have the Spirit and the calling – we are offered an eschatology: the end time. What do we know about the end time? It was the mid 1800s, I believe, before the word eschatology hit ordinands' ears. The Parousia trumpeted by Paul did not arrive as expected. Probably many of us have conducted funerals where the mourners have needed us to reassure them that there is a place where all ills cease, where we are reunited with those we loved and see no more, where we meet and worship the ever living God. We have also met those who have so dealt with the physical conundrums, that the fact that the word 'heaven' generates 'there is something' is enough. And we have met those who just dismiss all that as rubbish.

I am not trying to, and I hope I don't, belittle anyone's faith or beliefs. That is not my intention. What I want to point out is that we don't know. We can't know. Keith Ward⁸ has spoken of the mind of God of which, if I understand him correctly, our consciousness may be seen as an extension. This concept is one I find appealing and exciting and helps me to make sense of many things but it would not please everyone. But something in the human spirit looks to something more, something outside humanity's limitations, something beyond – whether perfection of this world or its attainment in the next or something else again.

So as an MSE I could find an eschatology of work. The hope of a just society, of sustainable and participatory ecological and environmental systems is all very well, but, in retirement? Is there only physical death as an eschatological expectation? I think that we can still have that same passion for justice, that same hope for things coming right, as much involvement as we desire and, indeed, an obligation to future generations to be living and playing to those ends. In Romans 8:24-25 Paul talks of the hope for what we do not see and that we wait for it in patience. Patience is not apathy. It is not merely sitting back and waiting. The Christian

hope is focused not just on life after death, but the Kingdom here, now. In that optimism we should be saying thank you and looking for the signs of it. It may make demands on us but I am not yet ready for the sofa and afternoon TV.

Meditation

Is this only devout reflection or thinking about a chosen biblical passage or 'religious' book to glean topics for praise and thanksgiving? If you look up 'meditation' in the 1969 (that's the edition I bought – age showing?) Dictionary of Christian Theology⁹ it refers you to 'contemplation'. I would have liked a separate entry although I can understand why the two have been linked together. I have linked the two¹⁰ in a previous paper. Meditation is not an exclusively Christian practice. What I think is held in common, is the mental focusing onto some object, perhaps on holy writing, perhaps on a piece of art or music. The mind is stilled, concentrating on the attributes of the object, exploring it, 'letting it speak'.

I used to advocate such meditation in a work-based context when faced with a particularly knotty problem or, in a more religious sense, deliberately to bring that dilemma before God – letting God into our thinking. I have suggested that we could meditate upon our work to glean topics for praise and thanksgiving. What about in retirement?

There are still not only opportunities but requirements for thoughtful decision-making. Thinking is still the prelude to action and there can be more time for that. Thought mapping, usually a work-related activity, can be just as useful – meditation to mediation, to interceding (practical involvement not just handing over to God) for others. Perhaps we need to think about possibilities more carefully. We are still called upon to make value judgements and many of us continue to read and write.

Metanoia

I believe that there are two very similar Greek words – one for repent or repented and the one for repentance which carries the idea of turning from one direction to another, a conversion, a change from self-centred living to God-centred living. More than just being sorry about something it has an active sense of movement, of change, of a change occasioned by the sense of regret and wishing to do things differently or be different. A realisation of a situation that makes us pause and change course.

When were we last stopped in our tracks? The tracks along which we were rolling when employed have certainly come to an end. With different thinking, alternative action to follow that thinking is inevitable. Again, in retirement we have an element of control over this process. We really can take some responsibility for our own change, it is not necessarily imposed upon us. It is a time, maybe, for taking stock, for clearing the attic, for naming all those old photographs, for making that phone call, for the recognition that (society's assumptions about age apart), we have fewer years left than those that have passed. Let us use them well.

Contemplation

Contemplation. – the intuitive way of approaching God in prayer that is not necessarily rational or thought out. It is a more spiritual, or at least, a less intellectual activity. We know the most usual ways – revelation, prayer, scripture, a life of faith which bring people to a life of contemplation, of withdrawal. I used to speculate how this related to work. If one had to withdraw from work to contemplate did that mean work was beyond contemplation? But contemplation does have its place, I believe. My argument was that if time was so spent, then when faced with the need for immediate decisions or issues of conflict, the stillness and preparation would have been completed, the benefits having been absorbed into our being.

How might it relate to retirement? There could be ample time to listen to music or poetry, to lose oneself in a picture or a landscape,

free to let the holy, the unthinkable move in, letting be Retirement is often notorious for two things. One is that either we are asked to do many things by people who know that now we have so much time, or we do so many things quite voluntarily – for mixed motives. Weeks fly by and the list of things-to-do gets longer. The idea of sitting down and doing nothing becomes laughable. How does this happen? What happens to our contemplative time? Are there other ways in which that contemplation can take place – losing oneself into something that takes us out of ourselves be it poetry, music, art or icons – that links us with the transcendent? Shouldn't retirement be a time for that 'par excellence'?

Consecration

Consecration – something sacred, something special, finding the special in the ordinary. Identifying the holy things of God in the working context was both difficult and delightful. Alan Ecclestone¹¹ wrote:

'A new look at the ground we stand on is a must if we are to know ourselves in the presence of God in the factory, laboratory, farm, city, all of which have their particular problems of right and ultimate purpose.

Seeking signs of inward and invisible grace in the working environment was an enlightening and worthwhile task.

Where are they in retirement? Can there be that particular consciousness of God when the parameters are less clear? We don't stop living when we retire, we change the context and we are freed from the strait-jacket of working systems. There is time, perhaps, for that speculative prayer which moves away from Daily Offices and becomes a growing relationship without the fear which comes from not knowing.

Looking through a telescope, a microscope, a kaleidoscope or placing a prism on my kitchen windowsill and seeing the refracted

light play over the sink, create a humility in me that I can only associate with the sacred. Finding the special in the ordinary starts with our own experience; affects all our lives – seeking the special in the everyday. Within the mundane, the ordinary, lies the potential for the transformation, the miracle, the opportunity to see things differently, to recognise the possibility that God is transforming, is consecrating our retirement for a purpose outside our understanding.

I offer a definition of Grace. Grace is that love, stemming from God's love, which enhances life, giving it beauty and blessing, charity and dignity. That is the sacredness of life in work or in retirement. Grace be with you.

And as an afterthought for those still working I wrote the following:

The Future

By rights, this poem should remain a blank
for no-one can predict, describe, their fate.
But yet we have to live as if we can,
and use demography – that is, the date
and place of birth, the accident of genes,
the current policies and social norms.
They'll all, collectively, provide the means
by which the scientist foretells, informs.
Investments, unit trusts, insurance schemes,
forecasts of climate change, consumer trends,
depend on looking forward, acumen
to calculate the course for looked-for ends.
So we can't predict, but your intention
should be to make quite sure that you've a pension.

Notes

¹ George Herbert as in Hymn No. 240, Hymns Ancient and Modern Standard Version (London: Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd, 1988).

- ² Dorrie Johnson, 'Mind your language', Ministers-at-Work The Journal for Christians in secular ministry No.80 (CHRISM January 2002), p21.
- ³ I have designed an exercise to assist this association which was used in Coventry in a Lent course arranged by the local MSE group. For further information: Phil Aspinall, CHRISM Publicity Officer (contact details inside back cover).
- ⁴ www.easyforumsco.uk/clergytalk established by Hugh Valentine and the names of many others are listed in Ministers-at-Work The Journal for Christians in secular ministry No 90 (CHRISM July 2004,) p47.
- ⁵ Keith Holt, 'MSEs and Retirement' in Ministers-at-Work Paper 5 (CHRISM 2001) and Jim Cummins 'When I'm 64', Ministers-at-Work No 88 (CHRISM January 2004), p21.
- ⁶ Dorrie Johnson, 'Ordained Ministers in Secular Employment', Theology January/February 1998 Vol C1 No 799, p26.
- ⁷ Carl Sagan, Pale Blue Dot (1995) in Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion (London: Transworld Publishers, 2006), p12.
- ⁸ Keith Ward, MCU Conference, 2005.
- ⁹ Alan Richardson (ed), A Dictionary of Christian Theology (London: SCM Press, 1969,) pp 211 and 73.
- ¹⁰ Dorrie Johnson, 'Ordained Ministers in Secular Employment', p. 25.
- ¹¹ Alan Ecclestone, in Spirituality and Human Wholeness by A Ecclestone, Y Sheldrake, M Walker and FG Wakefield (London: BCC, 1986), p7.

The Revd Dorrie Johnson was a Minister in Secular Employment when her focus of ministry was in and through secular work. She was employed full-time in the National Health Service, firstly in the clinical field and later in management. She has an MTh in Applied Theology and a particular interest in the church outside the Church.

What God has joined together...: Reflections on MSE in Manchester?

Chris Edmonson

It was the summer of 1997, and change was in the air at St Peter's, Shipley, the parish where I served as Vicar from 1992 – 2002. That change was in the form of three new staff appointments, including two women about to be ordained Deacon. One had been trained at a theological college, was in her mid 20s and was to serve in a stipendiary role; the other was in her early 50s, a member of the congregation for the past three years, had been trained locally on the Northern Ordination Course and would continue her work as a lecturer in Nursing Studies. To my knowledge, the term MSE was not officially around then, but for Pat her primary ministerial focus was to be the workplace.



Working out appropriate patterns of training and support for these new colleagues, and managing expectations both among the staff team and for the church was not always easy. However, I believe we all learned and gained a great deal from the experience. Twelve years on, each of those three new staff members has gone on to have very significant and fruitful ministries in different contexts. In particular through Pat's calling, I believe members of the church were helped to have a much greater understanding of what I would call 'whole life discipleship'. This it seems to me is one of the key gifts a MSE can bring.

Arriving in Manchester as Bishop of Bolton at the end of April 2008, I was delighted to find that there were varieties of expressions of ordained ministry in evidence: stipendiary, non-stipendiary, non-stipendiary MSE, and ordained local ministry (OLM). In my first year in post, I have been privileged to license two of the MSEs into

new local parish contexts. The liturgy was deliberately designed to incorporate clear expressions of that 'secular' aspect of their ministry, as well as what they would offer as time limits allow in the local parish.

So, just over a year from my arrival, what is the picture like for MSEs in Manchester? How is the role working for them? What difference is it making both in their working contexts, but also for the congregations to which they are licensed?

What follows is inevitably a snapshot. However, it is based not only on my own observations and reflections, but I am also grateful to five of our MSEs who have shared with me something of their own experiences, which are incorporated into this article.

To begin positively, all those to whom I spoke indicated that from a work point of view, there was affirmation and appreciation – even if not always understanding – of their priesthood! In some instances, having a priest 'in the midst' opened up significant pastoral opportunities, and indeed invitations to be involved in the occasional offices for work colleagues, their families and friends.

Working, as many clergy do in the Manchester Diocese, in a multifaith/multicultural context, one MSE commented that to his surprise and delight, he was seen as being able to speak for and make decisions on behalf of people from other faith communities in his workplace. "In many spheres of my work the 'dog collar' now speaks for the Hijab, the Kippah and the Turban in a confused and secular world".

Another MSE described his experience in these words: "Being a priest outside of the church setting for some transforms the hard edge of religion that many find difficult to cross, into a creative expectant and welcoming space".

It seems to me, also that an MSE can model something which is often talked about by those of us in stipendiary posts but are less good at practising: namely, that priesthood is as much about being as doing.

From the church aspect of understanding and supporting those who are MSEs, the picture was not surprisingly much more mixed. In terms of what the local church offered personally, one MSE priest reflected that: "In church I feel I carry with me and lay before God all those who I have met during the week". Another's positive personal experience was of church being "a petrol station where I am topped up for the week ahead".

But three out of the five expressed in different ways frustration and disappointment that their local congregations really didn't understand MSE. This seems to be due largely to unrealistic expectations, which can be both on the part of the congregation and the MSE priest's own expectations of themselves! It is also clear to me that some congregations need 'continuing ministerial education' themselves, going on the understanding that an MSE priest, whom they might only encounter on a Sunday, really does have a different role from their parish priest.

So what might help?

From the perspective of a local church, the incumbent or their equivalent has a key role in offering support as well as accountability to the MSE. This should include ensuring the PCC in particular, and the congregation as a whole understands that this priest's ministry is primarily work focused.

At a Diocesan level, our practice here in Manchester is that all clergy, including those involved in chaplaincies, NSMs and OLMs, are a full part of the regular Ministerial Development Review process.

In practical terms for the local church, a growth in understanding might be helped simply by the MSE sharing or being interviewed from time to time in church about their work, within the context of a service. I would also want to ask, whether there are regular reminders in the parish magazine or church notices, as to the MSE's main focus, as well as they themselves offering topics for prayer as appropriate.

Going back to what I wrote earlier from my own experience, this greater acknowledgement of who and what an MSE is and does, could in turn lead to regular slots such as at one church I know which held a TTT slot in their morning services. TTT stands for 'this time tomorrow'. Here members of the congregation were interviewed by the vicar for a few moments: "This time tomorrow where will you be, what will you be doing, and what difference might being here in church have made? How can we pray for you?" This offers a further underlining of, and commitment to, a life discipleship for all God's people.

From the point of view of the MSE priest, it seems to me that a key to sustaining a healthy life and ministry could hardly have been better summed up than in the words of one of my respondents: "I see my ministry as full time, but carried out in different situations". Such an approach and understanding might also help to further bridge the gap between so called 'sacred' and 'secular'. Or to put it another way from the marriage service 'what God has joined together...'

Rt Revd Chris Edmondson is Bishop of Bolton in the Diocese of Manchester, and is the author of a number of books in the area of leadership, mission and community. In particular, his book Fit to Lead first published in 2002, has recently gone into a third edition.

Organisation of MSE Associations

Phil Aspinall

During the CHRISM Strategy Day back in November, someone asked if there was anything we could learn from the ways the other national "MSE" groups with whom we have contact are organised. I gave a brief answer then, but promised that I would give more details, so here is a summary of their structure and organisation.

Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers (APT) - USA

A membership organisation with some 27 members but with a wider mailing list of about 60 contacts - about the same ratio as CHRISM. Attendance at conferences is usually in the mid 20s. It is a membership organisation and members pay an annual subscription fee. Conference fees are fixed and published in advance of each event.

At an annual conference, which takes place in a different part of the States each year, they elect an executive committee whose members sustain the organisation between meetings, publish a four-monthly newsletter, maintain the website and organise the conference (delegating where necessary). The theme and venue for the following year's conference are discussed at the end of the annual gathering, but eventually depend on work by the committee. Candidates for the committee are put forward by a nominations committee formed of past moderators.

Tentmaking is an official part of the structure of the Presbyterian Church of the USA (PCUSA), and officials from the central offices in Louisville usually attend their conferences. APT occasionally undertakes projects which may be funded by PCUSA or, increasingly, through external funding.

National Association of Self-Supporting Active Ministry (NASSAM) - USA

A network of clergy with a tentmaking ministry from the Episcopal Church of the USA. A steering group provides contact information and maintains the website. In areas where NASSAM members are most active, such as the Diocese of Chicago, occasional seminars are organised. NASSAM does not hold its own annual conference but operates jointly with APT, and, when members attend, has a session on NASSAM business.

Working Brothers and Sisters - Germany

A network of like-minded people with a focus on social justice, and support for the marginalised and excluded. Many members live and work in low paid jobs in the most deprived parts of cities and countryside. They include priests, members of religious orders and laity, catholic and protestant, men and women. At the last meeting five nations were present (Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands and UK). They meet every six months and for many members this is a significant support network.

There is no organisational structure, and it would be against the political and ethical structure of the group to have a “president”, “leader”, or “management committee”. There are, however, some functions which are allocated, such as maintaining the lists of contacts, and looking after the deposit account. They have undertaken projects, such as running a module in a university course. The meeting venue is always the same (outside Frankfurt) but the organisation of the theme and programme is given to one of the local groups in Germany or Switzerland.

There is no membership fee. Conference fees, and total travel costs, are calculated at each event using a formula which relates the fee for each individual to their income. Each event is self-funding, but they have accumulated a small surplus which is held in a deposit account. They have a contacts list which consists of two parts – one of some 46 core people who are likely to attend, and a

second of a further 35. Cards are sent from each event to people on the first list who are unable to attend.

International Worker Priests - Pan-European

This grouping also has no formal organisational structure, and as with the Germans, it would be contrary to their ethos. The annual conference always takes place at Pentecost and brings together up to five delegates from a range of European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK and formerly Switzerland, Austria, Catalonia and the two parts of Belgium). Although most participants are catholic priests, there are often protestants from Germany and also some women from Germany, Belgium and the UK.

The venue, which rotates around the countries, is agreed at the end of the previous conference, along with suggestions for the next theme, and the responsibilities for organisation. Up until about eight years ago, the responsibilities for domestic arrangements, content and worship were each allocated to different countries on a rotating cycle. However now, although the practical arrangements fall to the host country, a small preparation group is selected to meet once during the year to finalise details.

The cost of each conference is calculated during the course of the event, and the delegates' fees are set to cover all the costs. There are no central funds.

French Worker Priests - France

There are some 350 "prêtres ouvriers" in France, organised according to regional groups and each of these meets on a regular basis. They are supported by a national office and a national team with a Secretary based in Montreuil, which also publishes the quarterly journal, often featuring reports on activities from a regional group.

Every three (or so) years the national office organises a conference bringing together all the members. All the French *prêtres ouvriers* used to have “blue-collar” jobs but most of them are now retired. There is also a sub-group of some 80 – 90 “Priests in Professional Activity” (i.e. those who actually work) who meet once a year, and are often joined by others from around Europe. All the administration for these events comes through the national office.

The membership of all the groups is inevitably male, but some people have set out to broaden the attendance at conferences by inviting deacons and lay people with their wives, and women from religious orders who share the aims and lifestyle of the *prêtres ouvriers*.

MSEs of the Old Catholic Church - Germany

All non-stipendiary clergy (Priests and Deacons) of the Old Catholic Church of Germany, some 35 people, form the membership of this group and meet approximately once a year. They are very much an integral part of the church, and the Bishop of Germany usually attends each event. Each conference is funded by registration fees.

Their discussions often concern relations with the paid clergy, but there are several members who pursue the vision of MSE. The network is maintained and the conferences are organised by a formally elected committee - the elections take place every five years to coincide with the Synod of the whole church - and committee members are automatically members of the Synod. The theme for the next conference is discussed at the end of the previous one.

Conclusions

I have presented these different models in order to stimulate further debate, and it would be good to hear your views on any particular aspects which you think might help CHRISM grow and

develop. There may be some structural changes which we could make quickly, but I believe most of the conclusions we could draw are by way of aspirations:

- To have all CHRISM members in self-sustaining local groups which get together occasionally for conferences and where each conference is organised by each regional group in turn.
- To have a system (even post cards like the Germans) for maintaining contact with people who are unable to attend any bi-annual meeting.
- To have less responsibility resting on the committee for deciding and arranging conferences and weekends – but to get proposals at the end of the preceding event.
- To have CHRISM recognised by the mainstream churches so that each member of the committee is by right a member of the churches governing body (“Conference” or “Synod” etc) or where the church actually nominates and appoints someone.
- To establish a “Nominations Committee” of past Moderators of CHRISM to sound out and put forward proposals of candidates for election to the committee (or does that smack of self-perpetuation?)

News from local groups

The CHRISM committee has agreed that this should be a regular section in this journal and so we would very much welcome submissions from local groups saying what they have been doing, what they propose to do, etc., to include here.

Here is a list of local groups of MSEs that we know of. If you are a member or convenor of another local group not shown here, please do not take offence, but send us your name and contact details, with some information on the things you have been doing and propose to do.

Place	Contact person	Contact Number	E-mail
Coventry	Felicity Smith	01926 492 452	felicity@fandi.me.uk
Ely	Richard Worsley		richardjworsley@btinternet.com
London (West)	Margaret Joachim	0208 723 4514	revdrmouse@ntlworld.com
Manchester	Rob Fox	0161 338 8481	rob.foxesbridge@tiscali.co.uk
North East	Pauline Pearson		p.h.pearson@newcastle.ac.uk
Oxford	Hugh Lee	01865-316245.	hugh.lee@btinternet.com

If you are not already involved in the local group in your area, do please contact the person on the list. They would like to hear from you. Local groups exist to give support to anyone involved in MSE; to provide a place for people to share the joys and problems of their daily work, and the challenges and opportunities – and time to think theologically about their ministry.

And if there is no local group near to you? Please consider meeting up with one or two other MSEs you know in your area, and think about who else you might invite to join you.

Reports of past events

International Worker Priest Conference: Migration in this globalised world, Pentecost 2009, Bergamo, Italy

Introduction

Phil Aspinall

The annual international conference of worker priests took place over the Pentecost weekend in Bergamo, near to Milan. Susan Cooper, Peter King and I attended as the English delegation, meeting up with some 25 representatives in total from Spain, France, Germany, Italy and Belgium.

The theme for the conference was our experiences of migration and of immigrants, and as always we were asked to prepare a paper for distribution to the participants before the conference. The translation of the English paper follows this introduction. If you would like copies of all the papers, do please contact me (contact details inside back cover).

We met in a former seminary now used as a conference centre, and were entertained lavishly with excellent food and seemingly unending supplies of local wine and grappa. As well as the working

sessions, in which we picked out and expanded on key themes from the different papers, we spent some time working in small groups. These took three themes: Migration and Spirituality,



Migration and the Environment, Migration and Society. We also had a choice of visits: one to a 19th century village created by a textile factory owner to provide good homes and a pleasant environment for his workers (or was it just social manipulation and oppression?); the other to a social project providing housing for migrant workers in the city. We also had time to explore the hill-top city of Bergamo.

The worship throughout the long weekend was led by different national groups (we did Monday morning) and the Eucharist for Pentecost, led by the Italians, focussed on images of immigrants arriving on the beaches of Europe and of our common humanity. The conference was not just about working on a theme. It gave us an opportunity to meet with old friends and make some new ones and to be stimulated and challenged by their experiences, Christian commitment, and perspectives on the world in which we live. We also had fun together – including a concert of workers' songs led by a local choir who came to join us for a festive evening on the Saturday (see picture).

Contribution from the English Group

Migration is a phenomenon that touches all of us – through television and newspapers, in the areas where we live, in our work and in organisations with which we work.

How do immigrants impact on us in our work, in our social involvements and in our spiritual life?

Economic immigrants and refugees have looked for a new life in England for many hundreds of years (people such as the Jews and the Huguenots). There is nothing new under the sun!

We live in a globalised world in which many people travel in many different countries. Migrants look for new work, for new opportunities – 500 million people are living now in a country in which they were not born. And in our work, above all, we work

Some questions on the subject of immigration:

1. Europe is one of the world's most popular destinations for asylum seekers. According to 2007 statistics, which was their most favoured EU destination?
a. Sweden b. France c. England

2. In 2007 there were nearly 30,000 applicants for asylum to the UK, but where do the greatest number of applicants come from?
a. Turkmenistan b. Pakistan c. Afghanistan

3. Over half a million people came to live in the UK in 2007, but it is not all one way, how many left?
a. 140,000 b. 340,000 c. 640,000

4. If you enter the UK illegally how long do you have to contact the authorities and claim asylum?
a. 24 hours b. One year c. No limit

5. Over 7% of people living in Britain were born abroad, most of them from India and Pakistan, but which is the third most common birthplace outside the UK, for Brits?
a. Canada b. Germany c. Australia

For answers see page 38

BBC Television March 2009

with them and meet many people who are immigrants. For example, Phil has a colleague in the company for whom he works who comes from a Palestinian family, was born in New Zealand, has worked in Singapore, the USA and now works in their office in Abu Dhabi. He gives some more examples below.

Immigration impacts on us in different forms. There are economic immigrants who work in the industrial, economic and social aspects of life, in the same way as others and as the indigenous population. They work like the others – only marked out by their skills and talents. During our work we meet with one another, we share in our different cultures and we learn from each other.

Phil says:

- Last week I was course director for an industrial training course and, as I looked around the room, I was amazed – in a group of 20 people there was a Palestinian, an Indian, three French, a German, a Canadian, two Danes, a Pakistani and a Chinese, as well as the Scots and the English. Many were immigrants.
- I participated in the annual dinner of the Chemical Engineering Society at Birmingham University. I was seated at a table with some of the students – to my right were several from Kazakhstan, supported by their government to make their studies in England. And to the right was a group of friends who talked very openly and naturally about their different faiths - Christians, Muslims and Hindus – of their festivals and their laws regarding foods.
- During last summer I worked for four weeks in Egypt, for a business producing liquid natural gas just outside Alexandria. During such a visit, I was truly immersed in the Egyptian culture – in my hotel, beside the pool, life was marked by the calls to prayer from the two nearby mosques. And in our work together, we made a pause during the times of prayer (called automatically on their mobile phones). These times of prayer gave to our meeting room an air of silence and tranquility – of profound spirituality. And we had many opportunities to speak of our faith – someone said to me: “We are not very far away from each other”.

There are those immigrants who work in the service industries. We have the possibility to make contact with them, but too often they remain below the level of our gaze. But if the immigrants and the foreign students disappeared, the hospitality industry of London (the hotels and restaurants) would have to close down.

There are those immigrants who come looking for asylum – the refugees who have left their own country because of insecurity or out of fear for their lives. There are those who have to move because of drought, famine and wars.

And there are those illegal immigrants who are unable to work, who remain always hidden and invisible. Perhaps they remain solely within their own groups, because of language and culture.

Rob says:

On the Channel Islands politicians demand controls over those who want to live and work there, to protect “Jersey Jobs for Jersey People”. If you do not have the right to live on the islands, you are not allowed to buy a house and are limited in the possibilities for work – for example, you are allowed only to work in a job that is designated as “necessary for the local economy”. I have such a job.

But immigration goes on. Formerly, most immigrants were those who came to work in agriculture. Before 1939 they came from France, but since 1950 most are Portuguese and they have effectively stayed permanently. So the population is now 10% Portuguese – and they have made their mark on the economic, cultural and religious life of the islands (for example in the Catholic Church). They work in the service industries: cooking, hotels, cleaning.

The financial sector has many immigrants who stay for long periods – they come from the UK and are integrated very quickly into the social life of the island. Others come from Australia and South Africa, but they tend to remain in their own groups and cultures.

There are, in addition, immigrants from Eastern Europe, principally from Poland and Slovakia who are staying longer and longer. There are others from Africa. They work in hotels and bars, illegally – and often arrive in the Channel Islands in order to travel on to England.

In summary – immigrants are well regarded by the inhabitants of the Channel Islands when they take the jobs that others do not want to do, but they must stay in their place in the social structure.

Peter says:

- In my office there are 26 judges among whom one is from Ghana and one from Pakistan. But the majority of the 150 support staff comes from African or Caribbean families, or from Asia. Almost all were born in England, but everyone celebrates their different cultures with the food brought to parties in the office.
- In the town of Hounslow, near to London, there was a “witness of faiths”, bringing together activities in Churches, Mosques and Temples. People of many different faiths joined in communal events, where they could talk about the things that were important and listen to each other, to gain a better understanding of each other and their ethical and cultural systems. This gave a great richness in its diversity.

Stan says:

In our town of Chesterfield there is a Rumanian woman who would like to find work. But because of the immigration system in England this is not possible – so she is unable to do anything other than sell the weekly magazine “The Big Issue”, an enterprise which supports those who are unemployed or homeless.

There are many illegal immigrants who are unable to work, or others who do find work, but are very badly paid at a rate much less than the minimum wage. There are others who have found legal work (for example, as teachers) but remain illegally and so can be thrown out of the UK to return to their own country of origin. But people demand that it would be best to declare an amnesty – to say that all those who are here illegally should be

During the 2008 national conference of CHRISM (the association for “Worker Priests” in Great Britain) we met a large number of immigrants. The conference took place in Leicester, 150 km north

of London – a city well known for its population of many different countries, cultures and faiths.

In Leicester there are 250 different faith groups. The population comprises:

- 45 % Christian
- 15 % Hindu
- 11 % Muslim
- 17 % « No religion»

6% of the population comes from the Indian sub-continent and in, perhaps, three years the city will become the first in England where the majority will belong to other ethnicities

We listened to the witness of an Imam and to Hindus and Christians who live and work in the city. We visited a Hindu Temple, dined in an Indian restaurant and visited the police to enquire how they support the life of this very mixed city.

Answers to the questions on page 33

1. Sweden received more applications than any other European country with 16% of all applications to the EU27. France and Britain shared second and third place with 13% each.
2. Of the 28,300 applicants, most came from Afghanistan, of which 63% were refused. You are most likely to be refused if you come from China, with over 90% of Chinese applicants refused.
3. An estimated 340,000 people of all backgrounds left the UK for twelve months or more in 2007 compared to over 500,000 who came and stayed.
4. Under the Geneva Convention there is no time limit on one's ability to claim asylum within a country, so it's possible to be here illegally, to be discovered and then claim asylum.
5. According to the 2001 Census, the third most common birthplace outside the UK for British residents - excluding Ireland - is Germany, with over a quarter of million

Forthcoming events

The Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers (APT)

Invites you to the 2009 Annual Tentmaking Conference:

Doing Ministry With Muddy Feet

Friday (dinner) 30th October to Sunday (lunch) 1st November

At: The Center for Development in Ministry, The University of St. Mary's of the Lake, in Mundelein, near Chicago, Illinois.

At this conference, you can expect to:

explore how to help yourself and others apply what you talk about and learn in our head into experiences beyond the pews.

Doing Ministry With Muddy Feet might include:

- getting out of our comfort zone
- learning about something new
- working alongside 'the other'
- listening before speaking
- straining some muscles
- getting our hands dirty (not just church clean-up)
- travelling to new places
- committing to a risky or long-term project (other than capital improvements to our sanctuary or Christian education wing)
- thinking like an idealistic teenager (we can change the world)

The Agenda will include

- Colourful video and photos
- Inspiring stories of non-profit work in Haiti and local communities you can be involved in
- Hands-on stimulation
- Small interactive group discussions

- Bible study
- Creative worship and Eucharist
- Time to interact with Chicago-based seminarians
- Fresh air time

Speakers include:

- Lea McCloud, MATS, President of Alternative Gifts International, Wichita, KS
- Frantz Cole, Development Officer for the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti and Priest-in-Charge of multiple parishes, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- Dr. Linda Wygant, Planter/Founder of Grace Seeds Ministry in Chicago.

Visit the APT website: www.pcusatentmakers.org for additional information and to download the registration form. Send registration form by 1st October 2009 to Fred Bunning e-mail: fcvlbunning@msn.com. Alternatively contact Phil Aspinal (contact details inside back cover) for further details.

The Ministers in Secular Employment of the Old Catholic Church of Germany

Invite you to their Annual Conference to be held from the 23rd – 25th October 2009, in Speyer, Germany.

The diocesan house stands in the middle of Speyer close to the main streets and squares and the Cathedral, and offers many opportunities for exploring the city. At the last meeting in October 2007 they decided to invite male and female partners as well, and so more double rooms have been reserved. The participants in 2007 also agreed that the theme would be:

**What does Spirituality mean for us?
What marks out our spiritual identity?**

We have formed a very strong link with the Old Catholics and some of them have attended our conferences in the UK. The group is always very open and welcoming, and many speak very fluent English. As always, it would be good if new people were able to join with them.

Please contact Phil Aspinall (contact details inside back cover) as soon as possible if you are interested or would like more details of the programme.

Other dates for your diary

Christian Association of Business Executives (CABE)

16th September 2009: CABE Network talk: Deciding Well - A Christian Perspective on Making Decisions as a Leader with Peter Shaw CB, Partner at Praesta Partners, 6.30pm, at the Hoop and Grapes, 80 Farringdon Street, London EC4B 4AL.

14th October 2009: CABE Network talk with Paul Chandler, Chief Executive, Traidcraft, 6.30pm, at the Hoop and Grapes

3rd November 2009: CABE's 20th Hugh Kay Lecture with John Varley, Group Chief Executive, Barclays plc, 6.00pm, at St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, more details to follow.

(See: www.cabe-online.org for more details of these and other events.)

Cliff College

23rd - 27th November 2009 (Teaching week) 26th - 30th April 2010 (Reading week): Mission and the World of Work Programme: Master of Arts, Postgraduate Diploma, and Postgraduate Certificate. The purpose of this programme is to enable participants to explore, clarify, develop strategies for and access resources to further mission in the world of work. Course leader: Deacon Dr. David Clark. At Cliff College (accredited by the University of Manchester). Further information from the Postgraduate Administrator, Cliff College, Calver, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S32 3XG, tel: 01246 584216, email: postgrad@cliffcollege.ac.uk.

(See: www.cliffcollege.ac.uk.)

St Paul's Institute

St Paul's Institute's 2009 series of events will address the moral questions raised by the dramatic financial situation, and whether opportunities for society's good can come from the economic crisis. At the centre of the programme are five public debates, one that was held on the eve of the G20 summit, and the rest that will be held in the autumn. In addition, there will be study days for clergy, public and sixth-formers, meditative services, a retreat and other events.

The public debates will be held on the following dates with the following subjects. They will all be held from 6.30pm - 8.00pm, at St Paul's Cathedral. Admission is free.

6th October 2009: Money: a crisis of value?

13th October 2009: Work and human flourishing

20th October 2009: Regulation, freedom and human welfare

27th October 2009: A new global order'?

(See: www.stpauls.co.uk for more details of these debates and the other events in the programme.)

Transform Work UK

14th November 2009: National Conference: Does God work here? A conference aimed at energising Christian impact at work. 9.00am – 5.00pm, at Birmingham Christian Centre, The Parade, Birmingham, B1 3QQ. Cost: £25 (standard delegate), £35 after 31st August, concessions for group bookings.

(See: www.transformworkuk.org.uk for more details and for booking.)

And finally

A Poem by Pete Hammond (from: *Lessons, Prayers and Scripture on the Faith Journey*, IVCF, 2007)

Faith practised at work turns
Bosses into people developers,
Business leaders into job creators,
Educators into spiritual directors,
Financial advisors into stewardship counsellors,
Grocers into health and nutrition suppliers,
Insurance agents into wise advisors,
Journalists into voices for the least among us,
Politicians into justice brokers,
Technology experts into relationship managers,
Writers and publishers into dream weavers,
And all Jesus' followers at work into developers of the
kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

Source:

www.catholiclabor.org/NCL%20Initiative/March%2009.pdf

CHRISM Committee members:

Moderators

Margaret Joachim 8 Newburgh Road, London W3 6DQ
Manager, IT Services Co. revdrmouse@ntlworld.com 0208 723 4514
Pauline Pearson 3 Belle Grove Place, Spital Tongues, Newcastle,
University Lecturer NE4 4LH P.H.Pearson@newcastle.ac.uk
Rob Fox 36 Norman Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 1LY
GST Specialist, Jersey rob.foxesbridge@tiscali.co.uk 0161 338 8481

Secretary

Catherine Binns 23 Scott Street, Ringley, Radcliffe, Manchester,
Nurse Practitioner M26 1EX revcathfrog@talktalk.net 01204 707922

Treasurer

Susan Cooper 28 Headstone Lane, Harrow, HA2 6HG
Actuary scooper@hedstone.demon.co.uk

Journal Editor

Mike Rayner 198 Marlborough Road, Oxford, OX1 4LT
Researcher Mike.Rayner@dphpc.ox.ac.uk 01865 727482

Committee Members

Paul Romano 63 Westfield Drive, Cardonald, Glasgow, G52 2SG
Solicitor paul.romano@btinternet.com
Phil Aspinall 139 Wiltshire Court, Nod Rise, Coventry, CV5 7JP
Principal Consultant PhilAspinall@vectragroup.co.uk 024 7646 7509

Patron

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury



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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