

# 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.*

## **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 the Committee (see inside rear cover).

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

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**Visit the CHRISM website:**

**[www.chrism.org.uk](http://www.chrism.org.uk)**

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**Copy deadline for the next edition: Friday 15th November 2011.** Please e-mail contributions to Peter Johnson at: [peter@seascape.ndo.co.uk](mailto:peter@seascape.ndo.co.uk)

## Editorial

### **Farewell (and thanks for all the fish)**

This will be my last editorial for Ministers-at-Work and so I thought I'd make it longer than usual: a parting shot as it were. Firstly I'd like to present four challenges to the new editor - Peter Johnson - and secondly to present a challenge to CHRISM as a whole.

First my challenges to the new editor. To remind you (I had to remind myself): I took over as editor in April 2008. It doesn't feel like more than three years. During this time I have, fairly deliberately, made no major changes to the journal: just kept it going – albeit taking longer and longer to get round to sending out editions (and hence this combined edition for July and October this year).

During my time as editor I have felt that maintenance rather than change was what readers wanted. I thought it would be a risk to change things. But things will have to change one day. Why not now? So my first challenge to Peter: do what I was not brave enough to do: change the journal!

Without change CHRISM will not grow – and I don't just mean grow in the number of members – but growth in the number of CHRISM members wouldn't be a bad thing, surely? The CHRISM membership isn't just the responsibility of the Journal Editor but of the whole CHRISM committee, but I am sure that if the journal could attract more readers then the CHRISM membership would grow (after all they are nearly the same thing). Lyn Page, our Membership Secretary, will be able to give you the precise figures but I suspect that membership of CHRISM/the readership of this journal is gently declining rather than increasing, and this seems to me a pity given the importance of CHRISM and its message. So here is a second challenge for Peter: increase the circulation of Ministers-at-Work.

But how? I think that it's the general 'look' of Ministers-at-Work that's the main problem rather than the content. Of course the

content is extremely variable – ranging from the dire to the extremely good – but the journal looks conservative and conventional. Now there is nothing wrong with conservation and convention (I for one quite like them) but these do not attract young people. Is it any wonder that the membership of CHRISM and the readership of this journal are getting, on average, older and older? It's from the young that new members/readers will have to come, not the old. Here is my third challenge: make Ministers-at-Work more attractive to younger people.

One thing we - CHRISM - have done during my editorship is begin to post copies of the journal on our website: [www.chrism.org.uk](http://www.chrism.org.uk). This has been thanks to our newish/joungish web master - Martin Dryden – and has been a really important if small step forward. However I look forward to: not just downloadable pdfs of Ministers-at-Work, but an attractive looking electronic version of the journal winging its way into my e-mail inbox/kindle instead of a paper copy to my physical door via snail mail. So this is my fourth challenge to Peter (or perhaps his successor!): stop wasting trees (except for those who don't have Internet access).

Look around: the paper-based journal has had its day. What other organisation regularly sends out a stiff back journal to its members? Even academics – that bastion of the conservative - hardly ever do so any more. CHRISM will at some point need to engage more fully with the electronic and in particular the new electronic social media: so I look forward to the creation of a CHRISM Facebook page, Twitter account and/or blog (or whatever is 'trendy' by the time CHRISM gets round to it).

Now to my challenge for CHRISM as whole but first a confession. I do not see myself as an MSE anymore but a Whole Life Minister – a WLM - well it's just as snappy as MSE! Now I am not suggesting that the CHRISM membership follows suit but I do propose CHRISM should become more S than E: more Secular/Sacred than Employment focused. (Actually I think this is probably happening anyway!)

My confession and challenge stem from what I have learnt over the past three years while I have been Journal Editor. These three years have coincided with the first three years of my ordained ministry. What I have learnt is this: that while I originally thought of myself as an MSE I don't any more. In fact I find I hardly do any ministry worth describing as MSE.

If this means being drummed out of CHRISM so be it: although the kind folk at CHRISM surely won't. CHRISM – to remind you and according to the inside front cover of this journal - is 'for all Christians who see their secular employment as their primary Christian ministry and for those who support that vision (my emphasis added).

Why my change of heart? I am not sure whether my experience will resonate with others' but it might so here it is. When I first started thinking about ministry with a 'vocations adviser' – nearly 10 years ago now - I realised that I didn't really see my ministry as being paid by the Church. I already had a job which I saw as a part – even a big part – of my ministry. My vocations adviser persuaded me that my calling was to MSE and hence – to cut a long story short - my involvement with CHRISM.

So that was then. And now nearly ten years later and more than three years post-ordination? Well now I see my ministry as being in and through the whole of my life and not just or even mainly in or through my employment. I am reading a book called the 'Stature of Waiting' by W H Vanstone at the moment. Vanstone rightly points out that for most of our lives we do no work: we receive rather than act, we wait. So now I wonder why I should see my ministry as being primarily through my work? Why not all of my life?

If you like I see myself as much more of a Secular Minister (as in CHRISM - CHRistians in Secular Ministry - and on the front cover of this journal) rather than as an MSE or someone who sees 'their secular employment as their primary Christian ministry' (as in the inside front cover). But a secular minister is surely a contradiction in terms (as many have pointed out in the pages of this journal

before). My ministry is sacred not secular. So this is why I would like to be called a 'Whole Life Minister' not a Secular Minister!

You might say but that what is secular about MSE is the employment not the ministry. Again I see my employment as sacred not secular. I recently put forward this idea - that all work is 'sacred' - at a meeting of parish-based church leaders and I was shocked to find how shocking the idea was to them! But don't we who have called ourselves MSEs collude with the assumption that it's only work for the parish church that is sacred?

And – before you jump to conclusions: it's not that I now don't have a 'secular job' or that I have begun to see my ministry in the parish where I live as my 'primary' ministry and that is why I want to call myself a Whole Life Minister. I am still in the paid employment of the University of Oxford as a Director of a research group in their Department of Public Health. I am also proud to say that I am the unpaid curate in the parish in which I have lived for the past 30 years but that's beside the point. I am not quite sure why I have to see my primary ministry as being located in any one place but if forced to do so I would say my primary ministry is, for the moment at least, 'in' and through food and art! By primary I mean the bit I feel most passionate about.

Are food and art anything to do with my paid employment? Well the food is but the art isn't.

Food for me is what I am paid to 'do' (as well as eat). The research which I 'direct' is mainly into food and health. And this has led to a developing interest in the connection between food and faith and in running conferences, giving talks and sermons on this issue. I also lead meditations around eating and making food. My latest experiment has been in running contemplative bread making sessions which seem to work quite well. (More perhaps in a future edition of Ministers-at-Work). But is what I do, by way of food research, at my work-place, distinctive enough to be called a Christian ministry? I am less and less certain that it is. Of course I try to bring my faith to bear upon what I do at work but I am not sure this counts as ministry. My main ministry though food has

been outwith my workplace and only a tiny bit subsidised by my employer. It has taken place mainly in churches or church halls and not where I work, or in connection with, my paid work.

And art? What is this about a ministry through art? Is that MSE? No I am not employed as an artist. I have an amateur interest in art that's all. And not in doing it but in receiving it (c.f. Vanstone again). I have always enjoyed going to art exhibitions but I cannot say art has been a particularly big thing in my life. But rather strangely (at least to me) I have found that I have developed an embryonic ministry 'in' art though a developing passion for giving 'art sermons'. As a substitute for the sermon in some of the services at our church we have been experimenting with activities – we call these zones – where people discuss, pray, watch a video, etc. instead. I've been experimenting with 'just' showing people six or seven prints of picture, by artists of all genres, generally but not always with a biblical subject, in an 'art zone'. I see this as using art as a way of 'celebrating the presence of God and the holiness of life and of telling the Christian story' (as it says in the CHRISM mission statement on the front cover of this journal). But again this is not paid work or not done in the context of paid work. It is clearly not MSE. Is it Secular/Scared? I think it is WLM.

So what about my ministry during my paid work? Of course this is still a small of my WLM? I have tried doing some 'churchy things at work' – running faith at work groups, etc. (see my article in the October 2006 edition of Ministers-at -Work) – which I know a lot of MSE's disapprove of. I have yet to baptise a work-colleague's baby or carry out a funeral for a work colleague. I nearly got to conduct the wedding service for a work colleague. I don't find people at work telling me their problems. But pastoral skills have never been my strong point and in any case I am, for many of them, their boss. In some ways I have given up trying to work out what my ministry at work means. It seems easier – more rewarding for the moment – to focus on food and art.

So what you might say has this got to do with CHRISM. This is just you. The rest of us see our 'secular employment as our primary Christian ministry'. But do you really, CHRISM members? Many of

you are retired for a start. CHRISM has long recognised that people who are retired still have a ministry! Then a lot of you only have unpaid work to do. I say 'only' but such work is surely just as important as 'employment'. And no I do not think a house-person, a student or a volunteer worker in a night shelter is 'employed'. Employed by whom? And then surely not all you see work as the most important thing in your life? Many of you have other interests besides work – can you not minister in and through these? And finally many of you will do some ministry in the parish in which you live. Do you really want or need to call this ministry 'secondary'?

Of course all WLMs will have widely different ministries but only some of us are going to see our ministry as being through our paid employment. It is time CHRISM explicitly broadened its remit. And the first step? Stop using that ridiculous term Ministry in Secular Employment!

Mike Rayner

## Hello CHRISM

It is often said that it can be good to start as you mean to go on – so here goes:

- I've never edited a journal before;
- I've just become unemployed after 36 years of work – so I'm a Minister in Unemployment;
- I've also just left the group of parishes where I was Associate Priest so am I now 'base-less'?

So it may be difficult to tell you what I am as well as who I am. However. I've been a member of CHRISM since my ordination to the Anglican diaconate in 2000. I've had the honour of being through the CHRISM tripartite office process of Moderator x 3 (Elect, Presiding, Past); helped to organise two summer conferences and led one reflection weekend. I have a lovely wife called Angela who said she would divorce me if I went into parish ministry and two great children and (at the time of writing) two grandchildren. I taught in primary schools for 28 years with the

final 11 as a head teacher. I was then in charge of pastoral care for head teachers and the wellbeing of school and social care staff in Cornwall. The occupation I have just left was as Head of The Living Centre at the University of the West of England responsible for services of faith, spirituality, health and wellbeing. I am looking forward to this new role as Editor – albeit nervously – and hope to be able to retain not only the good work of my predecessors but, in some small way, help to develop what is an essential part of our organisation.

Mike and I have designed this combined July/October 2011 journal as a 'handover' edition in part so that he could raise some issues as outgoing Editor and I could respond as the new Editor. Mike has put forth some thoughts, some challenges and some ideas for me as Editor but also for you the members and readers of our Journal. We owe much to the regular contributors, the past editors and to our CHRISM committee for keeping the Journal going – sometimes against the odds. I see the Journal as an important part of CHRISM offering a forum for thoughts, discussions, academic and anecdotal evidence of ministry in secular employment and as a means of communication with members.

I would be very grateful if after reading Mike's 'farewell' you wish to respond with ideas or views that you send them to me as soon as possible (contact details inside the front cover). I can then summarise them for discussion with CHRISM committee and for publication in the Journal. Naturally I have a few ideas myself of some developments but it is only right that I reserve these in order to see what you the members of CHRISM think.

To try to ensure the Journal reaches you every quarter it will be helpful if copy can be sent according to the timetable below:

January edition: copy by November 15

April edition: copy by February 15

July edition: copy by May 15

October edition: copy by August 15

Thank you Mike for your stewardship of the hot seat and for keeping the Journal going. I hope to do justice to the confidence

of the membership who have now elected me to the role as Editor. Do not hesitate to contact me with any ideas, articles, compliments or complaints – my email (now that I haven't got an office door) is always open – even if I'm not always there (as with work).

Peter Johnson

## Letters to the Editor

### From Keith Holt

Just to say that both Kathleen and I were impressed by the April edition! Donald Edie's contribution was great but all in all it was varied, interesting and enjoyable. Thanks to Mike and all others involved.

Looking forward, I wonder if it will be editorial policy to have a small space for sources of good stuff, even controversial material, including web references, books, and magazines? For instance, at one level I have noticed an enthusiastic review in Theology of a new book by one of the "team" at our Parish church. It is entitled: "Alive to the Word: A Practical Theology of Preaching for the Whole Church". The author is Stephen I Wright, and the publisher SCM Press, London. It was published in 2010 and the price is £19.99.

On another plane, perhaps, is "Green Futures" magazine containing news and debate on how to make the shift to sustainability (see [www.greenfutures.org.uk](http://www.greenfutures.org.uk)). The latest edition, called "Moving Mountains" is all about how faith can shape our futures. I was attracted to this concept because it neatly helps to duck under the barrier identified years ago by Hans Kung: "There can be no peace on earth until there is peace between religions". But there is nothing to stop each world faith discussing with others how the future might be shaped, in terms of sustainability, using the sacred references, beliefs, buildings and traditions of each of them. I see that it is possible to order more copies of Moving Mountains, from the web-site, but I have not yet joined, or asked about terms!

Lastly, do readers of the Journal know about “Resurgence” magazine? (See [www.resurgence.org](http://www.resurgence.org).) The September/October edition, number 268, has a splendid piece, very thoughtful, on “Ai Weiwei for all”, by Antony Gormley, the sculptor. There is also a snippet by Satish Kumar, the editor of Resurgence, it is called “Two sides of the same coin”. These small extracts show the nature of it: “The moment faith and sustainability are separated they lose power. But when they are united they become a force for good.” “[T]he scope of politics and economics to drive change is limited by external pressures and circumstances, as well as by vested interests. They are both utilitarian concepts: they teach us to value natural resources only in terms of their usefulness to people, and in particular, to the privileged and the powerful.” “Faiths too have a great responsibility to practise and promote sustainability. They need to transcend their narrow dogmas and institutionalised interests to do so.” There could be a few sermons around those bits alone!

## **CHRISM Officers and Committee for 2011 – 2012**

**Moderators:** Hugh Lee (Outgoing Moderator elected at an Extraordinary General Meeting in February 2010)  
Lyn Page (Presiding Moderator elected at the 2011 Annual General Meeting)  
Wendy White (Incoming Moderator elected at the 2011 Annual General Meeting)

At the 2011 Annual General Meeting the following were also elected:

**Secretary:** Margaret Joachim  
**Journal Editor:** Peter Johnson  
**Committee members:** Sue Cossey  
Mike Rayner  
**Membership Secretary:** Lyn Page  
**Publicity International:** Phil Aspinnall

Rob Fox is now Treasurer (this role is taken by the Treasurer of CHRISSET, the charitable trust which looks after CHRISM's financial affairs.). Rob has taken over from Susan Cooper. (Thanks Susan for all your hard work over the years.)

## CHISM Reflective Weekend 2012

Where has tha' bin since I saw thee? Yes, CHRISM descends on Ilkley for the weekend of 17-19 February, 2012.

Nestling in beautiful Wharfedale, in the shelter of the famous moor, Ilkley is a fine spa town with sturdy stone-built Victorian buildings. The weekend is hosted by The Briery Retreat Centre, which provides excellent facilities. Visit the website for further information: <http://www.briery.org.uk>.

Led by the Revd. David Simon, we meet to celebrate Ministry in Secular Employment and look to the future. David experience as an MSE is as - for many years – a lecturer in Accountancy and Finance at the University of Humberside. After retiring from education, he was Administrator and Assistant Warden of Rydal Hall, Cumbria, and is now NSM Officer for the Diocese of Carlisle.

Getting to Ilkley is straightforward. The town has a direct rail link from Leeds (26 minutes), which has services from King's Cross, two trans-Pennine lines, south Yorkshire, the Midlands, the North East and Edinburgh. Travelling by road from the north, south and east, Ilkley is 35 minutes off the A1M



(Wetherby). From the west, the A65 from Skipton passes through Ilkley, or use M62 / M606 / A650, via Bradford and Shipley.

The cost of the weekend – Friday dinner to Sunday lunch – is £140 for CHRISM members, others £150. Most dioceses/church authorities give grants for retreats and continuing ministerial development, so do enquire of them. Spouses are welcome too – to join in or to enjoy the delights of the area.

To book your place(s), contact Rob Fox, 36 Norman Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 1LY; [rob.fox36@gmail.com](mailto:rob.fox36@gmail.com) or fill in the flyer enclosed with this edition of Ministers-at-Work.

We look forward to seeing you. And don't forget your hat!

## **CHRISM Subscriptions 2012**

Please could all CHRISM members, including those who pay by Standing Order, please fill out the subscription renewal form enclosed with this edition of Ministers-at-Work and return it to Lyn Page (CHRISM Membership Secretary). This information will help us to keep up to date with you and the address you supply will be used for the journal mailings next year.

The Annual Subscription (payment due Jan 2012) is still £35 for individuals in employment and for organisations, £15 if you pay no income tax, and £15 for students.

## Obituaries

### Antony Hurst: A tribute from CHRISM and CHRISSET

#### Keith Holt

I first met Antony when he worked for a charity which came under the wing of the Home Office. This was back in the early 1970s when I was new to Whitehall, and keen to make my mark. I was regarded with great suspicion within the charity as they thought, quite logically, that the powers that had sent an accountant to look over their affairs and report what was found could not be good news! Antony was vociferous in attacking all that I suggested, so that brief meeting was a rapid learning experience for me. This evidence of his intellectual power remains in my memory over all these years.

God moves in mysterious ways so that the next time we met we had both been ordained, and both on SOC [Southwark Ordination Course] within a year or so of each other, but not meeting! That discovery was a memorable surprise for both of us. The other surprise was that Antony had joined the Civil Service during the 1970s and had become a senior civil servant very quickly. He was with the Department of Health and Social Security, as it was named at that time. His Anglican base was then St. Matthew's at Elephant and Castle, near his office.

I discovered later that Antony was an early member of the Wardrobe Group, an informal but influential group addressing issues arising from the Anglican decision to Ordain men (later, thankfully, women too) but allowing them to continue with their paid work elsewhere. The Group met mostly at Anthony Winter's flat in the city, and occasionally at St. Mary le Bow church. Later, the Wardrobe Group met for many years at Vicky and Antony's home in Victoria. He and I were at the Conference at Nottingham University in 1984, which led to the formation of CHRISM. Clearly Antony's links with CHRISM go back a long time. He was a keynote speaker at the second MSE Conference at Manchester, in 1986. More recently he addressed CHRISM's 20th Anniversary Conference

at St Catherine's Foundation, London. In his last active years Antony became a Trustee of CHRISSET, where I am sure his great experience was very valuable.

Antony and I ran a subscription leaflet called "Shades of Grey" in the late 1980s. This circulated quite widely in Whitehall, and helped interest those who knew that life could not be divided legitimately into "black" and "white" options. The theme was the relationship between Christian Faith and the work of Civil Servants. This group also had lunch-time meetings at St. Martin's in the Fields, with some interesting speakers including Sir Peter Baldwin, a retired Treasury Permanent Secretary.

But all of these links were not enough for Antony, who was always involved in so many extra-mural things, despite a very demanding post at the Department of Health. He became a member of the clergy team at St Martin's and privately wrote a great deal in the field of English literature. In 1986 he published "Rendering unto Caesar", an exploration of the place of paid employment within the framework of Christian belief. He was a regular contributor to the "Expository Times", for example "The contribution of N.S. Ministry" appeared in Jan.1988. I sense that Antony was, like most of us, learning by exploring as he went along his path of life. I shall miss his challenging and always informative conversation.

Antony's wife, Vicky, died in April 1998. Their immediate family, those of Miranda and Charlotte, follow in the spirit of energetic inquiry and amazing energy. We offer them our sympathy and wish them well in their rather different future.

## Celebrating MSE: Anthony Hurst's recollections of his time in this ministry

Rob Fox

Anthony trained on the Southwark Ordination Course, 1978-81, while working in the DHSS. "On ordination I felt anxious about my role at work and in the parish: I had told each the other would be the focus of ministry!" Gerald Hudson, Vicar of St. Mary, Bow, set up a group looking at the MSE role, which called itself the Bow Group. This later moved to St. Andrew's in the Wardrobe and became known as the Wardrobe Group. Fortunately this name was not changed on the later move to St. Andrew's in the Sepulchre! The group worked to enhance the profile of MSE and advocate the role. Graham Leonard, then Bishop of London, was not sympathetic so they approached a Suffragan, Ken Woolcombe, who became a member.

Two projects were undertaken in which the group were involved:

- \* A scientific review of non-stipendiary ministry, by Mark Hodge;
- \* Drawing up a protocol for MSEs which was adopted.

In 1984 it was decided to hold a national conference. They did not know how many would come, what to do or what the consequences would be. Ken Woolcombe wrote to all the Bishops in England, asking them to appoint an officer for NSMs and drawing attention to the Conference. He also wrote to Robert Runcie asking him to write a letter of support, which he did, and agreed to be Conference Patron.

The Conference duly took place in April 1984, at the University of Nottingham. The best guess on numbers was enormously exceeded, with over 150 attending. The University, to its credit, kept allocating more and bigger rooms. (The event made an enormous profit, so was therefore decided to establish a trust fund: CHRISSET). Attendees varied: there were six bishops (four local) and Ken Woolcombe chaired. Anthony remembers vividly other groups: some parochial, some pre-OLMs, some 'clergy under

discipline' – doing a secular job. The format, Friday evening to Sunday lunch, has been used at nearly all Conferences since.

Speakers at Nottingham included Clifford Longley, the Times correspondent, and Peter Baelz, Dean of Durham, and at the end a statement of MSE was produced. Many in parochial ministry could not go along with it, but MSE has ever since remained a distinct movement. The end Press Release was widely distributed and reported (with Clifford Longley's help). All who attended remembered the exciting fellow feeling generated.

CHRISSET, and the pattern of Conferences and Reflective weekends that grew out of the Conference, were the platform on which CHRISM was later built. Many who were present at Nottingham are still active in the MSE movement!

*Reprinted from Ministers-at-Work, October 2004 edition*

### ***Relations between Church and State today***

**Rob Fox**

I don't know. You wait ages for an Archbishop, then two come along at once.

For four days from 28 February, Manchester hosted the Archbishops of both Canterbury and York, on a Church and civic visit. I was privileged to be among the invited audience for a talk at Manchester University on 1<sup>st</sup> March with the above title, delivered by Archbishop Rowan (with at least one other CHRISM member), who was joined by Archbishop John for a question time afterward.

I think a better title would have been 'Relations between Church and civil society today', which reflected the content. This did though make it particularly relevant for MSEs. If I have misrepresented any of the content, my note-taking skills are at fault, not the speaker.

Archbishop Rowan set out the area he would cover, the creative overlap of political and religious thought, specifically how the Church contributes to the identity of a citizen. This raises the question of how we define a citizen. Here he went back to the ancient world, where a citizen was someone not a slave, whose destiny was not controlled by another. The citizen has a voice in the community, protected by law, able to make choices, having public and private dignity. The citizen has a public voice and is guaranteed a hearing, a contribution to the public project, and bears a responsibility for maintaining the personal and social environment. Paul was referred to as an example, in particular the right to be heard and treated with respect due to him as a Roman citizen.

To belong to the early church was to be a certain type of citizen. The main metaphor Paul uses, the body, is drawn from civic and political life. (Rowan could have made more of this, as it is a dominant motif in Paul's thought). 'Citizenship' in the church did not depend on status in the world, but brings a dignity as a citizen of the Kingdom; members of the church were citizens of it before anything else. This is one of the reasons why the early church was seen as counter-cultural: it afforded the dignity and voice of citizenship, among its members, irrespective of their civic status as citizens or slaves. It was an 'imagined community', defined by how the members saw themselves.

To belong to such a community is to develop civic virtues, refined in the internal debate within it, but transferable to the wider civic society without. Early Christianity was not an opting out of politics, but a living out of a different identity. This reminds us that part of the Christian community's responsibility is to treat people as citizens. It adopted the term *ekklesia* – citizens' assembly - to describe its gathered state, where we argue about what is good for humanity, in the light of God's calling. The church is thus a city with no ethnic or geographic boundaries.

To learn to be a Christian is to learn how to live decision-making freedom. This can lead to failures and mistakes. For example, the church can be seen as a rival identity to all other societies, such as

the western church in the Middle Ages, establishing a parallel state and government, and system of law. On the other hand, the new citizenship can be portrayed as internal only, used as justification for withdrawing from civic society or as a tool of oppression, through the promise of 'jam tomorrow' (my phrase).

There is a complex path between these errors if the new citizenship is to have a positive effect in the world, not competing with human citizenship but contributing to it. St. Augustine, in *City of God*, was concerned with how people live together. He set out two human options: living as fellow citizens, or in isolation – leading to indifferently controlled selfishness. To live for one another is to be torn out of selfishness by God's love, to bear one another's costs and burdens. The more one moves towards selfishness the more difficult, and more baffling, it is to think about the common good.

In modern society the one source for creative and dependable civic virtue is communities of faith, in which people learn to take the long view, to share one another's costs and burdens. In Africa and South America it is often the Christian churches where civic virtues are taught and learned. Faith communities are often the best too at delivering to the grass roots.

In the United Kingdom there are questions about where civic virtues are best learned and exercised, particularly relevant as society is "reeling under public spending cuts." As advocated 100 years ago by John Neville Figgis (a historian and later a member of the Community of the Resurrection), the Church should be canvassing public opinion on how to engender civic virtues. This is however different to an institutional programme: the Church's first role is to live differently, show that it is, and then become the motor by which people go out into wider society to argue about what is good for it, argue about civic virtue and the common good.

Rowan cleverly referred to a thesis proposed by Professor Graham Ward, who introduced the event, that there are fluid boundaries between social and spiritual bodies. The Church's role is to by action show that hope moves in and through them. If the Church still has a guaranteed public platform, the justification is that the

kind of argument within it about citizenship is the kind any healthy society needs. If that argument is marginalised, the social argument has an impoverished view of what a human being looks like. The Church needs to keep alive the vision that political arguments don't contain all that is true about humanity. (There is an implicit question raised by this important insight: does this cut both ways? Is it an implicit claim that the Church's view of what a human being looks like is whole, or at least more whole than another view? And if the latter, what are the criteria for understanding when parts of another view enrich, and when parts diminish, the Church's view? I think there is case that the starting point of debate within the Church is too often based on an impoverished view of what a human being is, too often political. As Rowan is CHRISM's patron, and receives this Journal, I'd be intrigued to hear more on this).

While it is the duty of the Church to join in the political debate, it cannot bind its vision to a particular political party. The Christian Gospel brings a motivation, a grass-roots movement, of generosity and mutuality, which involves reflection, risk, and sometimes mistakes. By doing so the Church gains the authority and experience to talk about this in wider society. It's commitment to civic virtue appears in all kinds of grass-roots ways as Church members undertake civic roles, such as school governors, volunteers in clubs. This commitment also shows itself in personal ways: because Church members are committed to political virtue. For Christians there is not a giant gap between personal and public morality, rather a continuum, in which there is the capacity to show the basic virtues of faithfulness, generosity, and sensitivity to the needs of the other. Christian citizens learn these virtues in the Church, then go on to employ them in the wider world, where they aren't taken for granted. The argument in public should be open and honest, asking the question: what is it that makes a good citizen, city, society?

There is a strong Christian dimension to citizenship. The Christian citizen is someone who recognises when another is using an image of what human beings are like that is less than what they are, for example politicians who use rhetoric to stir up fear. (Or, in my view, media editors who do likewise.).

Christians also have a prophetic role, however this needs to be used correctly. Being prophetic is not just about being critical, negative or loud. It means trying to identify what lies beyond winning and losing, being politically and civically virtuous. Our calling is a prophetic one, for which we need a great deal of self-awareness and patience, letting ourselves see the truths beyond the immediate and rhetorical. It also requires us to be, to some degree, contemplatives, “quiet enough to learn.”

Rowan finished by returning to the question, ‘how do we define a citizen?’ The Church’s role in answering this should be to treat everyone it encounters as potentially an adult agent, ready to take responsibility for making meaningful and creative decisions. It is to see and act and speak for the common good, using the model of the body of Christ. It is bold claim to make, but this kind of virtue is the basis of any sustainable society.

Two points that came out of the all-too-few questions are worth adding. One question asked if there should be any voices excluded from the debate over what society should look like. The answer from both Archbishops was unequivocal: those voices that are anti-political and seek to impose an exclusive view on all others; the BNP was referred to specifically. The other concerned the ‘Big Society’, the questioner holding up Uganda, where there is no welfare state, as an example of how such an idea works in practice. Archbishop John pointed out that the starting point was renewing our commitment to one another, noting that living in poverty does not mean you have dignity. The test here is whether, as cuts bite, we will look out for each other, whether civic virtues will guide what we do. Besides, he noted, the ‘Big Society’ has been around for 2,000 years. Archbishop Rowan agreed, adding that the welfare state in the UK came at the time when the motivation for mutual care was weakening; we need something like religious faith to recover that motivation.

There were intriguing glimpses here into how Archbishop Rowan thinks. He clearly regards virtue ethic as an important out-working of Christian faith, and sees that faith has consequences in our private and public lives. His analysis of the notion of citizenship in

the early church was perceptive and explained in a most accessible way. Perhaps the strongest implicit message was that he, indeed both Archbishops, are committed to a shared vision of what a virtuous civic society looks like, and to the contribution the Church can and should make. He is also clear that this process is iterative, an ongoing dialogue from which all parties can learn, but to which the critical contribution comes from those who understand and live out God's values. For MSEs this is particularly important, as we are – daily - in the thick of the civic debate.

## **The Kingdom at Work Project**

An initiative of the Methodist Diaconal Order Faith and Work Group, this project was launched at a meeting in Birmingham in March 2011. **Rob Fox** represented CHRISM.

### ***Background***

Traditionally, mission in the world of work has used one of two models: chaplaincy (or 'outside in') or by developing fellowship groups among Christians in a workplace or industry. Any new approach to mission in the world of work has a number of inherited problems with which to contend. First and foremost, it is an aspect of mission which has been much neglected by all denominations over the past half century. During this time the church has rowed back from the kind of energetic engagement with the working world epitomised by such people as Joseph Oldham, William Temple, Leslie Hunter, Ted Wickham, Simon Phipps, Mollie Batten, Ted Rogers and Bill Gowland. The result has been a church often out of touch with major issues within the world of work and ill-equipped to support its lay people in their ministry as the people of God in that context.

In the past couple of decades, there have been a number of individual attempts by theologians to produce a theology of work which could become a foundation for mission. Unfortunately, such endeavours have generally remained somewhat remote from the everyday challenges of working life and thus of relatively little help

to lay people seeking to live out their faith in the workplace. On the other hand, the few books or booklets which have been produced by those with first-hand experience of the working world, and which seek to describe what Christian ministry might look like in practice, have often been light on a theology of the world of work to underpin that practice.

The Kingdom at Work Project seeks to address these inherited problems. It takes mission in the world of work to be a key aspect of lay ministry and, especially in a supportive and educational sense, of ordained leadership within and beyond the local congregation. It also affirms, but at the same time seeks to develop in an innovative way, the role of chaplain and sector minister/minister in secular employment. To these ends the project offers a new and distinctive theology of mission for the world of work, and takes that theology as the foundation for a clear and comprehensive strategy for mission in the world of work.

### ***Mission statement***

The purpose of the Kingdom at Work Project is to enable those engaged in the world of work to build working communities transformed by the gifts of the kingdom community.

### ***Process***

The project will work to a theology of mission, and a strategy founded upon that theology, shaped by the image of the kingdom community. However, how such a theology of mission, and strategy based upon it, might be applied within the world of work they will be open to ongoing development and revision in the light of the insights and experiences of those actively involved in the working world, Christian or otherwise.

### ***Stages of the project***

#### ***Stage 1 – A theology of mission for the world of work***

The project rests on the conviction that for work and the workplace to be transformed, Christians need to understand and own a

dynamic theology of mission which can guide and inspire their ministry in the world of work. Stage 1 of the project will offer such a theology of mission founded on the concept of the kingdom community and its transformational gifts of life, liberation, love and learning. It is believed that these gifts are brought more fully to the fore where servant leadership is to the fore. The relevance of this theology will be applied and tested throughout the project.

### *Stage 2 – Discernment*

For a communal theology of the kingdom to shape the future of mission and ministry in the workplace, Christians at work need to practice the art of discerning where the gifts of that community are being affirmed or denied. This stage of the project will guide Christians in engaging in such discernment in a way which can inform and shape their strategy for mission and ministry in the workplace. This stage of the project will offer two practical approaches to discernment within the workplace:

- through critical incidents that might reveal the gifts of the kingdom community and servant forms of leadership;
- through signs that might point to the gifts of the kingdom community and servant forms of leadership.

### *Stage 3 – Intervention*

This stage of the project will be concerned with how the process of discernment can inform, guide and energise intervention aimed at building working communities transformed by the gifts of the kingdom community. It will entail exploring ways in which Christians at work can respond most effectively to situations where the gifts of the kingdom community and communal forms of leadership are discerned as being affirmed, or are being denied. Two key aspects of intervention will be explored:

- Implicit – where Christian faith is not referred to explicitly. The nature of intervention considered in this context will be:
  - through personal example

- through planned initiatives, individual or collective, to change workplace conditions or practices.
- Explicit - where Christian faith is openly expressed:
  - through different approaches to dialogue
  - through new initiatives in prayer, personal and collective.

#### *Stage 4 – Review*

This stage of the project will review whether or not the process of building the kingdom community within the workplace has been furthered, and what factors might have contributed to this outcome. In the light of this assessment, future initiatives needed to sustain or improve that building process will be formulated.

#### *Stage 5 - Equipping*

This aspect of the project will identify and develop the knowledge, skills and resources required to facilitate all stages of the project. It will suggest ways in which church leaders, working within and beyond the local church, can better support and equip lay people at work to fulfil their community building ministry. It will also explore the nature of training which church leaders require in order to undertake this role.

#### ***An invitation to participate in the project***

The Diaconal Faith and Work Group would welcome the participation of interested agencies or individuals in this project. The project is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2011 and continue for some twelve months. It is intended to publish the findings. For further details please contact Deacon Dr. David Clark (Convenor of the Diaconal Faith and Work Group) at Hill View, Burton Close Drive, Bakewell DE45 1BG (tel: 01629 810172 and email: [david@clark58.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:david@clark58.eclipse.co.uk)).

As CHRISM contact for the project, Rob Fox has full details and materials. He would like to know of any CHRISM members or groups interested in using this approach (contact details inside back cover).

## **News from local groups**

### **Faith and Work in Staffordshire and the Black Country**

#### **Bill Mash**

We haven't thought of a catchy title yet, but we are hoping to form a group of people in our area who are, as CHRISM puts it, are "active within their own faith communities" and who seek "to champion ministry in and through secular employment."

My predecessor as Team Leader of the Black Country Urban Industrial Mission drew a small group together, calling them "Faith and Work Representatives". It is on that we would wish to build. The group will be active, spreading the message about Christian presence and involvement in the workplace. It will also be supportive, discussing faith and work issues, the workplace with all its potential and problems, and the tensions which can arise where people combine two roles. Members would use their own contacts to keep this on the agenda at church and parish level, encouraging and equipping Christians to express their faith in and through their work.

Please contact me, Revd. Bill Mash: [bcuim@btconnect.com](mailto:bcuim@btconnect.com) or 01902 710407 if you live or work in Staffordshire or the Black Country (Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell) and would like more information.

#### **Oxford MSE group**

#### **Mike Rayner and Hugh Lee**

Here is an event those of you who live or work in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire might be interested in. It's for anyone interested in attending.

## Ministry at work: what is this?

When:

Saturday 19th November, 2011  
10am to 4pm

At:

St James' Church Centre  
Beauchamp Lane  
Oxford, OX4 3LF

The day is an opportunity to talk about what we actually do at work, and to explore how this might be ministry and how that translates into mission. As well as some input from the leaders, we shall work in small groups and allow time for individual reflection. There will also be time for prayer focussed on issues at our workplaces. We'll also explore how, as ministers at work, we can best support one another.

The day will be led by:

Mike Rayner is a Whole Life Minister who works at the University of Oxford researching into food and health. He is also Assistant Curate at St Matthew', Oxford.

Hugh Lee has been a Minister in Secular Employment in the coal industry for 30 years and was a part-time parish priest for seven of those years.

Tea, coffee and lunch will be provided.

To book a place on this course, or for further information please contact Carolyn Main on 01865 208257 or [carolyn.main@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:carolyn.main@oxford.anglican.org)

## Book Review

**“The Ethics of Executive Pay – A Christian Viewpoint”, Richard Higginson and David Clough. Grove Books, E159, 2010. ISBN 978-1-85174-771-9; £3.95.**

**Rob Fox**

Grove Books has established a well-deserved reputation for publishing informative and practical monographs on a wide range of subjects; this is an excellent addition to its ethics stable.

Richard Higginson, Director of Faith in Business, will be well known to readers. David Clough is Professor of Theological Ethics at Chester University, and a Methodist Lay Preacher. We should therefore expect an informed and closely argued case. Given the public attention executive pay has received over the past three years, it is also timely.

The writers’ first task is to cut through the emotive and identify what the issues actually are. The first section therefore looks at what executives (in the UK) are actually paid. A survey of FTSE 100 companies published by the *Guardian* in 2009 found that nearly a quarter of CEOs received remuneration packages exceeding £5m a year, while the average employee of these companies earned just over £26,000. The pay differential – top earners to average, was 100-1, compared with 10-1 in 1970. The greatest differential, 750-1, was found at Tesco. Comparison is made to the USA, where the differential at the largest companies is 250-1. The writers note that in France and Germany differentials are not as great, though they have widened in the last decade. They note though that they are “less marked in some developed nations, notably those with a stronger ethos of egalitarianism, such as Sweden” (p.4). Indeed, US and UK differentials are “astronomical by European and Asian standards” (p.6).

The next part looks at why this is perceived to be a problem, noting two waves of public objections, one prior to the recent financial crisis, the second related to the executive behaviours seen to have

contributed to that crisis. The first focussed on fairness and distributive justice – executives extracting and pay benefits disproportionate to their contribution to a business, such as receiving a bonus even where targets were not met. The writers point out, rightly, that this contributes to inflation and diminishes long-term shareholder value. The latter is a key point, picked up again later. The second was a reaction to the bonus culture seen to persist despite recession, particularly in the finance sector.

Public outcry at the recent financial crisis had three main foci: reaction against banks seeing themselves increasingly as money-making machines, the cavalier attitude to risk encouraged by remuneration policies (particularly the short-termism it promotes), and the seeming payment of bonuses for failure (Northern Rock and RBS are given as examples).

Defenders of high executive pay often cite the need to recruit and retain high quality staff in a globally competitive market. The writers expose this fallacy quickly and effectively, noting that the market in executives varies greatly from country to country, and there is surprisingly little global mobility. Most executive pay is set by the remuneration sub-committees of boards, which include non-executive directors, which have “a real choice about how much they choose to pay their senior executives” (p.5). A problem here though is that the non-execs, whilst ‘independent’, are largely drawn from similar business backgrounds to the executives whose remuneration they are setting; most are existing or former directors of other companies. The question is raised of whether these sub-committees properly represent shareholder interests over those of executives.

The writers make good use of recent international research to show how attitudes to executive vary by country. In some, high levels are seen to damage society, affecting national and corporate morale, and creating social divisions. Reference is made to a study by WHO (World Health Organisation) showing how there is a strong correlation between a country’s level of economic inequality and its social outcomes. (I note recent comparisons of social outcomes showing that the UK and US trail well behind comparable

economies in Europe and Asia in health, education and child poverty).

Next they highlight the assumptions that what motivates people at work is self-interest, that this is seen as not a matter of morality, and that it “consists essentially in a calculation of financial benefits” (p.7). The writers observe that while money can motivate, human beings are far more complex than simply being *homo economicus*. There follows a well-argued discussion of the wide range of factors that motivate people, including a comment from the CEO of Shell, noting that the size of a remuneration package doesn't change behaviours, and that non-economic concerns, such as fairness and morality do.

The middle part of the book looks at what Christianity has to offer. Here the focus is on Biblical teaching on justice and wealth. The writers note that there are four words used for justice, two Hebrew and two Greek, which between them occur over 1,000 times. Not always obvious, as they are often translated as ‘righteousness’ or ‘judgement’. The former “expresses the justice which looks to restore broken relationships and damaged community” (p.11), while the latter is the action that implements God's decision for justice. A small cavil here: it is assumed that excessive executive pay is unjust; I would have like connection made with the previous analyses.

We are then taken on a short but coherent tour of how Jesus used expressions of justice drawn from Isaiah, noting that he “integrates the notions of impartiality, rendering what is due, proportionality and normativity” (p.12), relating this to wages and reward. “Justice requires proportionality between labour and reward”, we are told (p.13).

On wealth, the Biblical material is “varied, complex, and not easily condensed” (p.14). The key points drawn out are:

- “material possessions are a gift from God, meant for his people to enjoy” (p.14);
- The rich are expected to be generous, “and the godly rich usually are” (p.15, Abraham, Solomon, Job; I'd add Boaz);

- While a blessing, material possessions are “one of the primary means of turning human hearts away from God” (p.15).

There is a clear analysis of the social and economic consequences of the idea of Jubilee in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The Torah “emphasises a delicate balance between economic freedom and social responsibility”. Ideally, “there should be no poor among you (p.16; Deut. 15.4). While faithfulness and hard work lead to God’s blessing, including material well-being, it is also noted that the poor are marked by integrity, while some of the rich are wicked and don’t deserve their success.

Contrary to some current perceptions, Christianity is not hostile to business and wealth, but rather promotes their positive sides. In the New Testament “generosity in giving is consistently taught” (p.19). The writers note that Jesus warned against making an idol of money, and ignoring the poor at the doorstep, and that the early church included many people of wealth and in business. They highlight the entrepreneurial role of monastic orders in the economies of Europe from c.500 AD onwards, and observe that “both Luther and Calvin advocated a re-thinking of the concept of vocation to include the use of God-given gifts in business” (p.19). They acknowledge that Max Weber’s Protestant ethic thesis contains some truth.

A second tour summarises the views of thinker from Plato and Paul, through Jerome and Augustine, and on into the Middle Ages, when the concept of the ‘just wage’, the market price agreed beforehand, often resulted in enforceable rates of pay. A key concept was that the parties to a bargain must freely enter into it; coercion results in injustice.

John Wesley, especially in the sermon ‘The Use of Money’, declared it is a Christian duty to give all you can, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a succession of Christian entrepreneurs were generous with their wealth, including Carnegie, Rockefeller, Salt, Cadbury and Rowntree. An important observation here is that when businesses, including those founded by these benevolent owners, moved

increasingly into “public ownership” (p.19; an odd use of the term, as publicly traded share ownership is meant) the ethos of generosity was lost. One possible response to executive pay levels is therefore to encourage the well paid to give more generously. Here the writers cite Robert Peston, that there is not a strong culture of charitable giving among the rich in the UK. There may be similar opportunities to the 19<sup>th</sup> century of making riches, but the habit of philanthropy has been lost.

The discussion now returns to asking where responsibility lies. The writers cite the recent Walker review’s finding that corporate executives are insufficiently held to account by non-executive directors and shareholders, a failure of stewardship, which mirrors a problem in humanity’s relationship with God. They call this the “Agency problem” (p.21), and note that Jesus uses four parables to explain it: agents are stewards, slaves, servants or tenants. The lessons taught are that the agents’ performance is judged over a long period of time – no short-termism, the judgement is always decisive, and it covers financial performance. Criteria for setting executive pay should therefore be long term, related to performance, decisive and rational.

Another recent report, this time from the FSA, highlights the lack of linkage between financial rewards and financial performance. Risk management in business is seen as weak, and there is widespread failure to communicate the firm’s values and objectives to employees. The report calls for executive pay to be consistent with effective risk management.

## **Forthcoming events**

### ***CABE (Affirming Christians in Business)***

9 November 2011 6.30 CABE Hugh Kay Memorial Lecture

This year's Hugh Kay Memorial Lecture is to be delivered by Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick, Global Head of Citizenship and Diversity at KPMG International. His talk is entitled 'Politics and Power – why business needs to lead change.'

Venue: KPMG International, 8 Salisbury Square, London.

For further information about all CABE events and to register for them, contact Jayne Payne e-mail: [info@cabe-online.org](mailto:info@cabe-online.org) or see <http://www.cabe-online.org/index.php>

## **And finally**

More bad economic news from Greece: the Government has announced that to help balance the books people will have to tighten their belts and cut down on food consumption: 20% less hummus, and 25% less taramasalata - as it's a double dip recession.

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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