

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 the Journal Editor

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Hello readers! Yes, I'm back, but hopefully not for too long. I'm very grateful to the two previous editors, Mike Rayner and Peter Johnson, for keeping the show on the road and perking things up.

One important development is that when he passed on the Editor's red pen, Mike did stay on as production and distribution manager. In other words: I now edit, Mike arranges printing and mailing. This makes the Editor's job rather less complex, so my successor's role will be simpler than when I took over from Dorrie Johnson in 2000. (That long ago? A frightening thought).

After an encouraging start, personal circumstances curtailed Peter's tenure of the role, and I stepped in as a temporary measure at the AGM.

Which brings me to the point: we therefore invite expressions of interest in taking on the pleasure of editing this journal. I'm more than happy to speak to folk on a confidential basis – my contact details are on the inside cover.

There are a number of good reasons why someone else should be Editor, not least that there is only so much of my sense of humour readers should have to put up with!

On to this edition. The 2012 CHRISM Conference produced even more challenging material than usual. There is a summary of the event, with written up talks from Bill Mash, Black Country Urban Industrial Mission, Dr. Adrian Miles of Transform Work UK, and Deborah Walton from ChaplaincyPlus, an innovative approach to mission in the Birmingham business district. Reports from other speakers will appear in future editions.

There are also reports on the 2012 AGM and finances.

In 2013 CHRISM is running four events! More details are given below and it is worth noting the dates. The Reflective weekend is over the weekend of 8-10 February, at Launde Abbey, deep in rural Leicestershire. On 18 May we are running a one day event in London to coincide with the annual meeting of the European Worker Priests, which we are also hosting. It will be a great opportunity to meet with delegates.

The 2013 Conference will be a one day event at Carr's Lane Church, central Birmingham, on Saturday, 14 September.

Also in this edition:

- A review of the latest book by Richard Higginson.
- A response to Franz Segers article in the last edition.
- A round up of more resources for MSEs.
- Forthcoming events.
- News and views.
- And the kind of tailpiece I know you expect from me!

A final note for now. A point not to be forgotten as the Church of England seeks the next Archbishop of Canterbury is that Rowan Williams is our patron. So in praying for guidance, remember also to pray that his successor will be someone not just sympathetic to MSE, but who will actively support it.

At a more local level, we are just about to start seeking a new Bishop of Manchester. Nigel McCulloch has proved to be a worthy successor to William Temple; may his successor also be.

CHRISM Conference 2012

This year's summer Conference was not short of input from inspiring speakers, many active MSEs. In addition to the three whose contributions are included below, we were challenged and informed by:

Mo Trudel (Bishop of Stafford's Lay Chaplain to Business at Ministry at Work, and a businesswoman),

Sarah Hayes, a solicitor and MSE,

Alan Fraser, Chair of Birmingham YMCA and MSE,

Bill Anderson, Chair of the West Midlands Methodist District,

David Clark, currently leading the 'Kingdom at Work' project.

More from them in a later edition, but we have space here for three items.

1. Transform Work UK

Dr. Adrian Miles

Transform Work UK (TWUK), is a small Christian charity which believes that the ***world of work*** remains very much a part of God's Kingdom today. It is committed to the principle that Christians have a key role to play in the workplace by being active witnesses to God's message and influence upon both colleagues and the organisations within which they work. TWUK does not see a distinction between being a Christian at home, at church or in the workplace. TWUK believes that for Christians there is no separation between the secular and the sacred. If we are actually working for employers, we are working as Christians in a place where God has called us. We don't switch off at work and become a Christian when we go home. Being a Christian is a 100% commitment wherever we are.

TWUK's overall aim is, ***'Inspiring Christians to transform the workplace and the nation'***. This aim is supported by TWUK's key objectives which are to:

- *help and support Christians establish and grow effective Christian Workplace Groups (CWGs) in their places of work;*
- *encourage CWGs to engage effectively with management and their work colleagues;*
- *assist Christians in becoming effective and confident witnesses of the Christian faith in their places of work;*
- *help Christians in the workplace deal effectively with workplace pressures such as the threat of redundancy; stress at work;*
- *raise the profile nationally of the positive contribution that Christians can make to the workplace;*
- *assist church leaders equip their congregation to make a positive difference where they work.*

These aims and objectives may seem ambitious, but there are many encouraging signs that suggest employers are increasingly open to supporting and encouraging staff network groups in the workplace and this includes Christians.

TWUK has had contact with over 100 workplace groups which include: BT Christian Network; Christians in the Audit Commission; London Councils Christian Network and Christians in Government. In addition, TWUK is also connected with over 70 national professional groups such as Christian Firefighters, Christian Lawyers Fellowship, and Christians in Probation. In many organisations there are active Christian presences in the workplace. This is good news!

CWGs can bring many benefits to organisations, such as providing support to other Christians, other colleagues and to the organisation as a whole. CWGs are active in different ways. For some, their main activity is meeting together, often in the lunch hour on a regular basis,

to pray about a whole range of issues, many work related. Some distribute a regular devotional 'thought for the week' via e-mail. Others invite speakers to talk on relevant workplace issues such as 'Christian approaches to managing stress'. Some hold special events such as hot cross bun coffee breaks, when colleagues from the whole organisation are invited. Alongside this social occasion, information about the Christian understanding of Easter is displayed and made available. Others arrange carol concerts and some have implemented a number of 'Alpha in the Workplace' events. In some cases managers have involved CWGs, along with other staff network groups, in contributing to and shaping organisational policy development.

There is then much to feel encouraged by as more and more employers are prepared to recognise the added value that CWGs can bring to the workplace. Much of this trend has taken place under the umbrella of organisational diversity schemes, as the value of staff groups has been seen to provide added value to the workplace.

It is of course not always plain sailing. There are occasions when individuals and groups find it difficult to be Christians at work. Sometimes there are specific issues which may need addressing, such as being able to talk openly about faith, or perhaps a number of Christians simply want to know how to go about getting recognised as a workplace group so that they can meet on a regular basis. TWUK tries to provide advice and support to both individuals and groups sometimes by visits to the workplace, running workshops or publishing relevant guidance leaflets. TWUK's website also provides a range of useful resources for Christians in the workplace.

Christian Workplace Groups are not meant to be 'workplace churches'. They are what it says on the label, groups of Christians coming together in small or large numbers to bring God's Kingdom Values into

the workplace; to exert a positive influence on colleagues and the organisation as a whole. They do however, need support and encouragement. Whilst TWUK is providing significant help to many CWGs and individuals, other agencies too have a major role to play. This includes those churches who are 'on the ground' in localities and closely in touch with their fellowships. TWUK recognizes how important it is to work in partnership with churches, other relevant agencies and in particular workplace chaplaincies.

The TWUK team believe that God has plans for each and every Christian in whatever situation He has called them to. He wants all of us to live out His values in our daily lives with joy, enthusiasm and commitment. This includes the workplace! TWUK is a ministry committed to supporting to helping and supporting Christians and CWGs in active workplace witness. If you would like to get involved with TWUK or find out more about our work, please have a look at our website at www.transformworkuk.org or give us a ring on 01480 390 165

2. ChaplaincyPlus

The main work of **ChaplaincyPlus** is to serve the fast moving Birmingham business community by giving people time. This is the 'one to one' pastoral work of Chris and Deborah and Clair's counselling. Around this we seek to resource, encourage and support Christians in this business community so that we all realise that:

- Jesus is present in our workplace.
- Jesus is passionate about our work.

And as we do this we trust that we will all become better disciples who by our actions and our words follow God's commandment to love Him

and our neighbours in our places of work where we can make a difference!

Over the past nine years contacts have grown from 110 to over 700 and are still growing. Deborah Walton works on a part time basis to develop and expand the work of ChaplaincyPlus, especially amongst 'City Lights', the young adults of ChaplaincyPlus.

ChaplaincyPlus

- has 'time' for individuals through either pastoral care or formal counselling.
- Combats feelings of isolation in the workplace by sending out a monthly email, with weekly reminders, letting Christians know the resources available to them in the city centre.
- 'Connects' people by hosting different types of 'Gatherings.'

Larger 'Gatherings' are usually quarterly. National speakers have included J. John, Mark Greene, Geoff Shattock, David Prior, Nick Cuthbert and Paul Valler.

Carols for the Business Community are held annually in the Cathedral. We now hold two services, one after work and one at lunchtime. Over 750 business people attend.

Spring Gathering – in the past we held gatherings such as the Midlands launch of the '*God at Work*' course in Birmingham Cathedral.

Annual Celebration. Speakers have included Beverley Shepherd who spoke on 'Being a Christian at Work'.

The Birmingham Prayer Breakfast in the Banqueting Suite of the Council House is hosted jointly with Birmingham Cathedral. Malcolm Duncan will speak this June on 'Faith in a Flourishing City.'

We also host '*City Women*', who meet 3-4 times a year for teaching and networking and monthly with *Workspace*.

'*City Lights*' a group for Young Adults. It has its own monthly *Prayer Breakfast* and there is also monthly *City Lights Light Lunch*.

Light Read Plus this book group met with Andrew Watson, Bishop of Aston to review his book, *The Way of the Desert*, after Lent.

Examples of smaller 'Gatherings' are:

- '*Questions of Faith*' - there have been two courses following Carols for the Business Community.
- 'God at Work' – two courses have been run. One specifically for City Lights, the other open to all.
- A Lent "Retreat in Daily Working Life".
- Lunchtime Gatherings for Christians in 13 firms or in geographic or peer groups.
- Lunchtime Gatherings to support the facilitators of over 20 Christian groups that meet in firms.

There are also talks to various groups about being a disciple in the workplace.

ChaplaincyPlus works alongside other churches, in particular in the Cathedral, to develop the work amongst the business community. It has also established good relationships with just under 30 church

leaders and chaplains many of whom have members who work in the city centre.

It costs around £80,000 per annum to run ChaplaincyPlus. The funding is handled by the Trustees. Finance, for which we are so grateful, comes from individuals within the Birmingham business community - who receive a fund raising letter from our Trustees once a year, Charitable Trusts and churches.

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3. Bill Mash - Black Country Urban Industrial Mission

As a vicar in Yorkshire and then in Staffordshire, I was responsible for two parishes. That meant that at any given time, I had two PCCs, four churchwardens, two treasurers, two PCC secretaries, and various Sunday school leaders, vergers and sacristans. Other denominations will have their familiar pattern. It meant that for just about half my time, there was some vacancy that needed filling. When you add rotas for flower arranging, refreshments, sidespeople, and people to look after church hall bookings and car parks, to say nothing of the music group, organist and choir and you'll soon see that a well-run church

can quickly swallow up an enormous amount of the free time of its members.

When we geared up for Mission, we generally meant recruiting the people of God to use some more of their leisure time to join the missionary initiatives of church paid workers.

Then I was converted – well, converted again. In November 2010, I became Team Leader of the Black Country Urban Industrial Mission and Lichfield’s Diocesan Officer for Mission in the Economy. I moved from being right at the centre of church life to being rather on the edge. For the first time in over 20 years my wife and I had to join a church as members. No longer did I find myself standing in front of the same group of people week by week, but I had the opportunity to minister in a different church most weeks.

And I was on the edge when it came to my new role in industry and commerce. People would ask me, “What’s a vicar doing here?” They just didn’t think there was any connection between what they saw as a local leisure club for members and their working world. They might visit a church for a christening, wedding or funeral, but it didn’t belong to their Monday – Friday life.

One answer to the “What’s a vicar doing here?” question is, “We have been trading for longer than the rest of you put together and we have seen off a few minor recessions, like the fall of the Roman Empire, the Dark Ages, the Black Death and the Peasants’ Revolt”

And what was the result of my conversion? I began to realise that church was not there just to keep its own show on the road. As in any conversion, I looked back at my former sinful ways with shame. If we had somebody in church who was good at working with children,

capable with figures, or who had a nice smile, they would be given jobs – Sunday School, treasurer or welcoming team.

It occasionally crossed my mind that the church was there to equip people to be effective as Christians out there in the world, in their workplace, or, in more general terms, what the LICC has called their “front line”.

To quote Patrick Vaughan’s excellent paper in CHRISM 12:

As we know, most NSMs have perceived their ministerial role to be in their local home parish. However at all times there have been a few NSMs who have expressed a conviction that their vocation is primarily within their workplace. Sometimes there has been a happy conjunction of secular employment and pastoral ministry – as for example when the job in question is in one of the caring professions such as health or social work. But in the experience of NSMs with this vocation, it has become clear that Bishops and parochial clergy simply take no interest in what they are doing.

Those who have served a curacy had a training incumbent to guide them in celebrating communion, performing a baptism or visiting people. But most incumbents don’t find it easy to work through the issues which confront people in their work. In a time when churches share in the financial difficulties of society, we become more and more focused on things that would obviously maintain the life of the local church.

Many churches run courses for people who want to share in leading worship or other church activities but these are all about the spare time that people can give to the life of their church.

Of course churches need a certain level of organisation and structures, but we have to ask how efficient they are. How does what you get out of a church in terms of service to the community and witness to the gospel of Christ compare with the energy that is put in? One of the very welcome things about fresh expressions of church is that they are able to travel light, and can help their members to focus outwards.

When we do combine the ministry of scripture and sacrament in a way that intentionally equips people to live and work to God's praise and glory, then we see some positive results. Patrick Vaughan remarks about NSMs in the workplace, "They were constantly surprised how corporate businesses often welcomed their ordained presence, when their parent church disowned them."

This experience of welcome is noted by people who go into work places as chaplains. Many people seem to feel a little guilty about not being in contact with the church, and they are glad to have a chaplain's presence as a sign of stability in a rapidly changing world, as sign that there are other values beyond making money, and that ultimately it is the human issues which really matter.

Could we have a church where this pattern of ministry by MSEs and Chaplains, and by the whole membership of the church, is more normative? A church which realises that its members are involved in mission as soon as they leave the service on Sunday, and especially in their workplace. Do we have time and resources to make the changes necessary for this to happen? The Church of England still has the parish system. This worked well in medieval England where the priest lived and worked alongside his people in the fields. But time has moved on from the Black Death and the Peasants' revolt, and I would like to see a church which realised that.

CHRISM Events in 2013

1. Reflective weekend

Some of the best Reflective weekends have been those where lead it ourselves, so in 2013 we are returning to Launde Abbey, Leicestershire, 8th – 10th February.

This “home-made” reflective weekend is built around the structure of a Eucharist: gathering - confession - word - reflection - credo/creation – intercession - peace – offering - eucharist – dismissal. Reflections, discussions and activities will be led by a range of different CHRISM members.

Launde Abbey is situated in beautiful Leicestershire and Rutland countryside, and provides excellent facilities. There are a number of interesting walks on the doorstep - but please bring walking boots and suitable outdoor clothes. Visit the website for further information: <http://www.laundeabbey.org.uk/>

The Abbey is on the Rutland/Leicestershire border, within easy reach of Leicester and Peterborough, and accessible from the A47, M1 and A1. Lifts will be arranged from local railway stations.

Cost, from dinner on Friday evening to lunch on Sunday, inclusive is £155 (members); £165 (non-members).

Grants should be available from your Church to cover all or part of the cost – apply now to get their support!

Contact: Phil Aspinall. Details in rear cover.

2. Pentecost

The Annual Conference of European Worker Priests takes place at Pentecost each year and is planned to be in England in 2013 over the weekend 17th – 20th May.

The delegates to the conference come from Belgium, Catalunya, France, Germany, Italy as well as the UK. Some 30 people are expected. The conference venue moves around each of the participating countries and is hosted by each in turn.

Worker Priests arose out of the intention of the French Church in the 1940s to send priests in to the large industries of manual labour, such as the docks, mining, steel making, and manufacturing industry. The tradition has been carried forward by those who have followed, and many choose intentionally to take the lowest paid jobs, to be alongside the most excluded in society. This continues in their social engagements in the poorest quarters of large cities, with those who are unemployed or homeless and with immigrant communities. The group no longer includes just those who are ordained, but many lay and members of religious communities who share this same ethos of being with the marginalised.

The conference runs from Friday to Monday and includes, among other things, discussion on the papers prepared by each national delegation before the conference, visits to activities, businesses and projects related to the theme, and often input from outside contributors. It is a delegate conference, with a small group from each nationality.

In 2013, with the meeting in the UK, there will be in parallel a day conference for CHRISM on Saturday, 18 May. This will give an opportunity for many others from the UK to meet with the international delegates at a special evening event - to share more of

their vision and to build links. Further details will be in the January Journal, but please put the date in your diary now.

For more information, please contact phil.aspinall@arcadis-uk.com

Phil Aspinall, CHRISM International Officer

3. CHRISM Conference 2013

This will be a day event, at Carr's Lane Church, Birmingham, on Saturday 14 September. Details will be in the January edition.

Carr's Lane Church is 10 minutes' walk away from New Street and Snow Hill rail stations, and even closer to Moor Street.

Put the date in your diary now!

2012 AGM

1. Secretary's report

Margaret Joachim

Ten members convened for the AGM on July 14th; unfortunately this did not constitute a quorum so a brief EGM will be held at the next Reflective Weekend to ratify the decisions that were taken. The meeting heard reports from the Presiding Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary; these demonstrated that CHRISM is in good financial shape, is maintaining a reasonably stable membership and continues to support its members via the journal and the two residential weekends which are held each year.

Our attempts to give MSE a higher profile in our respective denominations continue, but at times this is an uphill struggle.

We expressed our thanks to the outgoing committee members: Hugh Lee, Mike Rayner and Peter Johnson. Hugh's willingness to host committee meetings at his home has saved us a considerable amount of money on room hire in recent years.

Sue Cossey was elected as Incoming Moderator and Phil Aspinall, Ruth Brothwell and Margaret Yates were elected to the committee.

Margaret Joachim is now in the final year of her three-year term as secretary. Rob Fox has agreed to act as interim editor of the Journal, but it is important that we find a new editor as soon as possible.

2. Financial statements

	A	B	A - B
	Incoming Resources	Resources expended	
	2011	2011	2011
	£	£	£
Journal	2,433.33	2,201.57	231.76
Membership support	1,216.67	756.05	460.62
Conference/AGM	1,500.00	1,567.17	- 67.17
Donations	206.50	0	206.50
Weekend courses	3,990.00	3,267.19	722.81
Gift Aid	0	0	0
Interest income	0	0	0
Theological Resource	0	0	0
Website	0	166.58	- 166.58
Sales (books & papers)	<u>552.34</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>552.34</u>
TOTAL CHRISM	<u>9,898.84</u>	<u>7,958.56</u>	<u>1,940.28</u>

2011 was a healthy year financially. However the figures above disguise two factors. Firstly, only three editions of this Journal were

published. In addition, Committee meetings (included in 'Membership support' above) were held at Hugh Lee's house in Oxford, meaning we did not have to hire a meeting room. CHRISM is very grateful to Hugh for his generosity; now he stood down from the Committee at the AGM we are again paying for room hire.

Finally, we pitch event prices at a level to break even with the anticipated number expected. The 2011 Reflective weekend at Holland House drew more than anticipated so we made a welcome surplus. Without these factors the surplus would have been about £500.

Based on this, I recommended to the AGM that we could freeze subscription rates for 2013 and this was passed unanimously. Income from subscriptions is shown split (two thirds / one third) between two heads above: Journal and Membership support.

Finances are managed by CHRISSET, the charitable trust behind CHRISM, so the Treasurer acts as a Trustee. Which leads me to a reminder: if you are a UK taxpayer, please Gift Aid your subscription, as this allows us to recover an amount equivalent to 25% of the amount from the Treasury. If you are a Higher Rate payer, it also extends the amount on which you pay Basic Rate tax, and it helps us keep the subs down!

If you have any questions relating to the accounts, please do contact me (details in rear cover).

Rob Fox, Treasurer

In 1910 a London newspaper ran the following advertisement:

WANTED: volunteers for a hazardous journey. Small wages. Bitter cold. Long months of complete darkness. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.

There were 10,000 applications for the 20 positions available, on Shackleton's expedition to the South Pole. We know too about all the people who signed up to be missionaries to central Africa in the late Victorian era. When they travelled, they took their coffins with them because life expectancy was so short, yet people queued round the block in London in the hope of being chosen for a task we might today consider as fatally dangerous work.

What this shows us that previous generations had a very different idea what work is all about. Christians have always had a contradictory picture of what work is. To some it's a punishment. When Adam is evicted from Eden he is told that he will need to till the soil. Work is therefore what humans have to bear because of the way we have been parted from God. Interestingly, Jewish tradition sees this story very differently, placing much more emphasis on the gift of creation to humankind, with work being seen as our way of engaging with the resources that God has placed at our disposal. In some ways this is picked up in the Benedictine understanding of manual labour as potentially being a form of worship and prayer.

In later Christian tradition work is associated much more with duty and providence – God helps those who work hard, and diligent commitment to an occupation is seen as a Christian virtue, the Protestant work ethic.

So, we have a range of extremes. Work as necessary suffering, work as duty, work as joyful engagement with everyday revelation. Those varying modes speak to today's worker. In the last 20 years or so we have seen a culture of overwork – long hours, increasing workloads and pressures, and an overwhelming invasion of so-called leisure time by work-related activity in the age of the Smartphone. We're working all the hours God sends – if not physically in work, then a great deal of time goes into thinking about work, planning for it, worrying about it, or complaining about it. More than for many generation work occupies a huge amount of human energy and talent.

I have yet to discover the person who came up with the definition of 'job' as *what you do to support your vocation*. It's the way we used to work. Keep your head down for 35 to 40 hours a week and then go home to have a life. In the 24/7 economy people are working, working, all the time. You'll commonly hear of executives going in to work on Sunday mornings to 'get things done while things are quiet'. Self-employed people and salaried professionals can easily clock up more than 60 hours a week – it seems that for many the European Working Time Directive offered a momentary pause before we entered the 24/7 work culture.

It wasn't so long ago that as a nation we were interested, if not obsessed, with work-life balance, leading to increased flexible working. This has of course made a difference, but being allowed to work from home or go in later might make it easier to juggle responsibilities, but usually the net effect is that we start to put even more into work to compensate for the lack of 'face time' in the office.

Clergy often add to the problem rather than challenging it. They're often working just as hard as anyone else, wearing their long working week like a badge of honour. Those who put in these hours often

explain that they do so out of guilt, wanting to honour all the voluntary hours that others with busy careers give to parish life.

Another distinctive feature of modern work is that we're less happy doing it than we were 10 or 20 years ago, and the biggest factors include longer working hours, increased work pressure (including a worrying rise in bullying in the workplace) and less and less choice about how the work is done. Daniel Pink in his book *Drive* shows that even people doing routine work are often motivated by mastery (learning and getting better at the job), autonomy (having some degree of control over when and how you perform the tasks allocated to you), and purpose (you feel your work makes a difference – to a customer, your team, your organisation, or your community).

Purposeful work, then, seems more inaccessible and yet more important than ever. Behind every media story of people who gave up high pressure jobs for something fulfilling is what appears to be a deep-felt need to get something more out of our working life.

Which takes us back to the idea that work might be a vocation. It's interesting that when society today talks about meaningful work it reaches for religious language, just as it so often does about things that matter. A course that is designed to link directly with the world of work is described as 'vocational'. People talk readily of wanting work which they feel 'passionate' about, or something that feels more like a calling than a 9-5 job. In popular usage a 'vocation' feels different to an occupation. Not only have we redefined what we mean by 'career' in the last 50 years, we have redefined what we mean by 'vocation', too. Some feel a 'vocation' towards working as a carer, working with animals, being a chef, being an artist, or serving in the armed forces.

Sometimes the word *vocation* is used to describe a job, either professional or voluntary, that is poorly paid but makes an important contribution in society. It's something we feel 'called' to do – we feel a sense of commitment stronger than ordinary levels of motivation, and a sense of 'rightness' in our choice. The term can also be used to describe any occupation for which a person is specifically gifted. .,

Language is of course slippery, and it's tempting to believe that any job can be a vocation if you look at it in a certain light, or if you are sufficiently obsessed with it. Perspective matters here. When people talk about 'calling' in a world driven by consumer choice the emphasis is nearly always, initially at least, on *me* – the way *I* feel called. Anyone who has had the task of discerning a vocation to priesthood knows that an authentic sense of calling often places much more on the One who calls than we who receive the message. Calling is about gifting, enabling, about what God hopes for the world, and what he might achieve through the most ordinary people.

Spend time with others who have given themselves to a deeply held calling and you know that a vocation is not just a strong career impulse, not just this year's big idea. To choose a vocation often implies turning your back on conventional career satisfiers such as money and status, but it usually also means commitment to a long process, a path that may have no discernible destination. A true calling often takes years to explore and resolve.

There is however an interestingly strong idea around that to follow a calling means putting aside work satisfaction. This old-world view asserts that vocation is about duty, not about personal choice. Those who work alongside those exploring vocation meet people with a strong sense of purpose and visible dedication, perhaps even self-sacrifice; however they also look for some indication that following the

vocation will be healthy, fulfilling, and a good experience. ‘Good experience’ isn’t the same as ‘fun’, but shouldn’t be a million miles from it. Peter Sinclair, originator of the ‘After Sunday’ movement, is fond of reminding people that one of the clear signs that you’ve found a vocation is that you should look as if you are happy, at least most of the time. There are an awful lot of glum-looking people in clergy, teaching, nursing or charity jobs. Living a vocation may fulfil a useful social purpose, but if it makes you miserable it’s probably a poor long-term match.

Those who express their vocation with some sense of joy seem to have some experience that commitment matches response –you’re fully drawn to something that feels not just attractive, but important. You will probably also find the role satisfying, at least most of the time. Those living out vocations will admit that they are not 100% committed to their calling all of the time. The difference is they keep to the path, trying to be authentic to that original calling, and to live out long-term life choices even when things are difficult.

If you feel a calling to a particular kind of work there will usually be a growing sense that this is where you fit, that this feels like where you will be most authentically you. Archbishop Rowan Williams wrote “when the games stop, what is left is vocation”. Sometimes what develops is a sense that we are called to account for the way we spend our three score years and ten. Just to put ‘calling’ back into the context of faith it comes from, the most important thing about the word is not the one who is called, but what calls us. Our calling is less important than the call itself, even if that call requires us to be the best version of ourselves.

Perhaps the biggest difference between a career and a vocation is that it is focused on others rather than self. Most vocational choices that

lead to the commitment of decades rather than weeks months arise out of a strong sense of personal values or a sense of service. So, three benchmarks which might help if you think you're considering vocation rather than a job:

- 1 Your gifts will be recognised by others as well as by you;
- 2 You understand, and commit to, a long game which may include fallow years;
- 3 What you will be doing will be, one way or another, a life lived for others.

In addition, let's not ignore some of the obvious clues that God throws our way about the kind of work that we might be useful in. Dick Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute*, is a firm believer that the reason we gain huge satisfaction from using certain skills is that human beings have a kind of built-in response mechanism: the skills you enjoy using may well be the ones God wants you to use.

The highly successful fashion designer Oswald Boateng was interviewed on BBC Radio 4 in March 2012. He mentioned that his father's career advice was "if something comes easy to you, stick at it". So he did, switching from a course in computer studies to fashion. His father quickly said that this wasn't what he had in mind, but Boateng stuck at it and has built a highly successful business with an international reputation. Your talents are not always evident until you discover them, but if you discover something that "comes easy", it's often a great place to start.

John Lees (www.johnleescareers.com) is an MSE based in Cheshire with a focus on the world of careers and work. He is author of a range of books including *How To Get A Job You'll Love*.

Debate

When is an MSE not an MSE?

Rob Fox

In the last edition of “Ministers at Work” we featured a reasoned response by Franz Segbers (Old Catholic priest, and Social Ethicist at the University of Marburg) to an item in the April edition on the new President of Germany, Joachim Gauck. The points raised by Franz are both well-made and serve to highlight differences in how ordained ministry at work is experienced in the UK and in continental Europe.

To re-cap, Joachim Gauck is an ordained Lutheran priest who served in a parish in the former East Germany. In the crisis of Communism in 1989 he was a leading figure in the movement for democracy, in opposition to Erich Honecker’s government. Readers may recall the vigils for peace and democracy organised by Lutheran churches in ‘the East’ that played a significant part in the events leading to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

As Franz pointed out, Gauck left his parish post after re-unification.

He then became head of the Commission researching the Stasi (East German Secret Police) files, working to bring justice where it was due, and reconciliation where needed. He has since been active in the Liberal party (or FDP, the centrist party generally in coalition government with either the rightist CDU or left-leaning Social Democrats since the 1950s), and was chosen as Presidential candidate as someone acceptable to all the mainstream parties, who had a distinguished record of serving his country.

Franz objected to the description of Gauck as an MSE. He drew attention to a declaration shortly before the Presidential election by a number of leading churchmen in the former East Germany attacking

Gauck for declaring 'freedom' whilst – in their view – neglecting (social) justice. They contend that Gauck's view of freedom is more about conformity to western capitalist economics, and to be individualistic, conservative and privileged. They point out that Gauck did not criticise the capitalist economy during the financial crisis. In turn they criticised the Liberal party for putting forward Gauck as a candidate in preference to Wolfgang Huber, a former President of the Evangelical Church of Germany (Lutheran), someone who has spoken in favour of a minimum wage (Germany does not have one) and tax increases.

For these reasons Franz does not regard Gauck as an MSE. The problem I find with this is that MSE is a role description peculiar to the UK – with a few scattered in the English-speaking world. It is not the same as worker-priest, the role description our colleagues in continental Europe live out. I agree that Gauck is not a worker-priest, but contend that if he were in the UK he would be seen as an MSE.

This begs a further question: is being an MSE – or a worker priest – determined in part by our political beliefs? Or is an ordained minister who remains in secular employment out of the conviction that they bring their faith to that role an MSE irrespective of their politics? Or employment?

Let me draw a parallel. A Conservative Minister in the current UK coalition government is an ordained Church of England priest. He has said publicly that he took on the role because he believes his faith and experience mean he can discharge the office effectively. He 'owns' the label Minister in Secular Employment. I strongly disagree with many of the social and economic policies of the Conservative Party; should I therefore cease to regard him as a fellow MSE?

Before his current role, he was CEO of a major international bank, and Chair of several subsidiaries now in the spotlight for facilitating tax avoidance, and one under investigation in the USA for money laundering. Sections of the UK press have asked whether these former roles were consistent with being an ordained priest in the Church. Again, should I cease to regard him as a fellow MSE?

Last year I left long employment with the tax administration to work for a large accountancy and advice firm that is often castigated as a fellow-traveller to financial institutions in causing the economic crisis. Does that make me less of an MSE? (Gamekeeper turned poacher, perhaps).

CHRISM has long cherished and been enriched by its links with worker priest groups in Europe. I hope the feeling is mutual. There is, though, an obvious difference in outlook between UK MSEs and European worker priests. Most of the latter take 'low status' manual jobs, seeking to make a difference by being alongside those in economically and socially vulnerable positions, those at the bottom of the pile. I have learned much from meeting and talking with, for example, a mechanic maintaining dustbin lorries and a hire car attendant. Worker priests I have met have often been inspired by liberation theology, are themselves inspiring, and politically of the left.

By contrast most MSEs in the UK are in 'white collar' jobs (notwithstanding a dustbin man and a couple of bus drivers). Many are in positions where they can influence organisations as well as individuals. Many are well paid. Those (many) I have met hold political beliefs covering a broad spectrum.

I have also had the privilege of meeting MSEs from the USA; some Democrats, some Republicans.

What we all have in common with the worker priests is that we are all actively serving in God’s ministry at work, where we are, among the communities of working people God has called us to. Our way is not superior to theirs, nor theirs to ours. Both are of real value to where we are. And we should always be open to new ways of serving God.

Is Joachim Gauck an MSE? On our definition of what an MSE is, I think so. We may not agree with all he has said or done, but if he followed God’s call to minister in the way he thinks best, we may certainly criticise if we disagree, but should we condemn? Is he a worker priest? No; not because of his politics, but because he has not been active in that style of ministry. Will having a Lutheran priest as President of Germany make a positive difference to people’s lives, especially those at the bottom? I hope and pray so.

Book review

Rob Fox

“Faith and Hope in the Global Economy: A power for good”

Richard Higginson, IVP ‘Faith and Work’ series, 2012; ISBN 9-781844-745807. £8.99 from Amazon.

Richard Higginson is Director of ‘Faith in Business’, based at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. This is one of five books currently in the series, each by different authors, and addressing different aspects of faith and work. The series preface, by Mark Greene, of LICC, sets the tone: “Work is the primary activity God created us to pursue – in communion with him and in partnership with others.”

As Higginson puts it in the final chapter, this is a “rehearsal of the Biblical story as it advances in seven parts”, relating each to the

contemporary scenes of work, business organisation, and community (p.217). Overall it succeeds in its aim of showing that, despite recent calamitous events, our best hope of bettering the lives of people throughout God's world lies in having faith in the global economy to do so, directly and indirectly. There are weaknesses, to be sure, and I'll pick some out, but these do not detract from what is a carefully researched and balanced account of faith, work and the economy.

As well as a perceptive survey of the Biblical approaches to work and the economy, Higginson has a firm, and not over-simplified, grasp of how the Christian and other faiths, as economic institutions and thought leaders, have shaped and influenced how the global economy has developed, its forms and structures, and why some expressions of faith have been more influential than others. He also summarises a number of possible explanations as to how faith has influenced our attitudes to work and business, and why this influence has waned over the past 100 years. He notes however that while this is our experience and perception in Europe, it is not true of other parts of the world. For example in Korea and parts of South America evangelical Christianity is seen as an economic driver, in much the same way as Max Weber described the role of the 'Protestant ethic' in driving the 17th century commercial expansion of the Dutch Republic and the 18th-19th century industrial take-off of Britain

Higginson asserts (p.20) that "Christian faith is a power for good when it":

- Stimulates enterprise.
- Reduces poverty.
- Promotes integrity.
- Encourages sustainability.
- Fosters discipleship.

There is a contemporary feel about these, but while others may wish to add to the list, I doubt any would take away. The rest of the book shows how this has worked out in practice historically and is still doing so. However he qualifies what he means by identifying three types of theology that he considers more of a hindrance than a help in the global economy: 'prosperity', anti-capitalist, and assertion of a sacred / secular divide. In unpacking each there is sharp criticism for churches that promise material blessing (noting that it is often the pastor who is so blessed), for some expressions of liberation theology, and pietism. "They are all distorted views which leave Christians seriously misled and poorly equipped to serve in God's world" (p.20). In the following chapter, "Theology in business: hindrance or help?" - which I found one of the most engaging in the book - he explains why in clear and unequivocal terms. There is much food for thought in here.

There is much – too - in the book drawing on Higginson's long experience of faith and business, with numerous illustrations from his own travels and study, and from those who have attended weekend consultations at Ridley Hall. They all serve to illustrate the points made and are used effectively. My one cavil is that whilst there is much on alternative forms of business organisation and finance, there could have been more on how to help 'mainstream' business work in harmony with the five bullet points above. At times there is a feeling of 'micro-finance good; big finance bad.'

Higginson does acknowledge that the Plc is the dominant form of business organisation that touches our lives, and of people almost all over the planet. He also notes (p.219) UN research estimating 100m people are employed by co-ops, 800m are members and 3 billion lives are affected by them. Good, but what about the rest of us? While it is heart-warming to read of the success of employee-owned businesses, it is notable that nearly all the examples he uses of businesses 'done

well' are the result of paternalism or co-operativism. Unfortunately, whilst we are called to be salt in the world, few of us can emulate Titus Salt.

It is a similar story with working for big companies, although in fairness this is not intended as a central theme. Less than three pages, and one anecdotal story of an employee confronting corporate dishonesty, hardly begin to address the employment relationship many of us are in. Whilst there are books aplenty on personal ethics in the workplace, I think there is scope for showing how Christians can influence businesses and the work community for good. Salt works slowly and quietly to produce a 'cure'. Note to the series editor: there is a big gap here that ought to be filled.

A book to add to your reading list? Without a doubt. It is informative, well-researched, reflective and challenging. I think Higginson's summary of Reinhold Niebuhr's approach in "Christ and Culture" sums up all that is good about it. Niebuhr critiqued four different typologies of the relationship between the Christian faith and culture: Christ against culture, Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox. It is not difficult to see Christians taking up one or other of these stances. Higginson however points out that Niebuhr offers a fifth alternative: Christ the transformer of culture. It is that transformation we are invited to participate in.

Other books in the series are:

Working without Wilting: Starting Well to Finish Strong, Jago Wynne

Ten at Work, John Parmiter

Working it out: God, You and the Work You Do, Ian Coffey

Get a life: Winning Choices for Working People, Paul Valler

Resources

Instant Apostle is a new publishing house with a vision to engage both the Christian and non-Christian community through books, booklets and pamphlets in both printed and kindle formats. As well as using CLC for distribution in to the bookshops, its titles are also available form www.instantapostle.com and Amazon.

It is run by Bridget Adams, a priest in the Church of England, and Manoj Raithatha, who is involved in running a property company as well as heading up the South Asian Forum team at the UK Evangelical Alliance (www.eauk.org/saf).

In addition to being a priest in the Church of England and a lecturer, Bridget helps Christians wanting to start a business through Work Place Inspired (www.workplaceinspired.com).

Current books on offer include:

- *Building the Kingdom through Business: a Mission Strategy for the 21st century world*, written by Bridget and Manoj.
- *A Book of Sparks* by Shaun Lambert, a study in Christian mind fullness.
- *A Thorn in My Mind* by Cathy Wield, an in=depth look at the stigma often attached to mental illness in the Church.

A Right Relationship with Money, was the title of a talk given in Edinburgh by Professor Charles Munn, 27 June 2012, under the auspices of the **Business Matters Trust**.

Professor Munn is the retired Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland and Chair of the recent Church of Scotland Special Commission on the Purposes of Economic Activity.

There is a summary of the key points at <http://www.businessmattersedinburgh.com/events/reports-on-talks/rtrlnmny/>, and a link to the recorded talk (21 minutes).

The talk made reference to a book written a few years ago by Professor Munn entitled *Ethics for Bankers*, and discusses the recent banking crisis in the light of this.

There are a number of other informative talks summarised on the website, including:

- Coaching in the workplace
- Coping with stress - 2007
- Debt
- Enriching relationships
- Ethical health
- Finding your purpose at work
- Handling conflict - 2011
- Helping colleagues who are carers
- Helping colleagues with depression
- Helping colleagues with stress - 2006
- Lone Working, Freelancing and Self Employment
- People Make the Business
- Profit, Performance and Christian Values: Friends or Foes?
- Rebuilding Trust in Business
- Survive the Recession at Work and at Home
- Transforming Capitalism
- Work-life balance - 2008
- Working comfortably

Sinai in the City (<http://sinaiinthecity.co.uk/>) bills itself as “A Modern Monastery Without Walls”, aimed at families, individuals and couples living their daily lives but looking for companionship on a spiritual journey.

One of the prime movers behind Sinai in the City is CHRISM member Emma Loveridge, who writes of the members’ area, “This members’ space is meant to bring people together on their spiritual journey. It gives a sense that, while everyone’s journey is at their own pace and in their own style, there are others who are looking, thinking, dreaming and seeking something similar.” Members can make and read posts, which include:

- Transformation – Stories from the Sinai
- Hospitality – Stories from the Sinai
- Engagement with the human struggle – Stories from the Sinai
- A Toy Boat
- Poet in Residence
- The Journey by Mary Oliver
- Love after Love by Derek Walcott
- The House of Belonging by David Whyte

As well as the website, the venture also embraces The London Refectory, a pastoral team working with families who benefit from a modern concept of extended family in which to set and manage their own lives. It also hosts a meal once a week.

River in the City is a new initiative in Liverpool led by the city centre chaplaincy team (who hosted a visit by CHRISM during our 2011Conference) and Rev. Keith Hitchman.

River in the City seeks to serve those who visit, work and live in the Liverpool ONE shopping and business development but it will also be there for anyone in and around the Liverpool city centre. The slogan for Liverpool ONE is 'Love the City'; the aim of River in the City is to follow Jesus' lead and to love the city in his name, demonstrating that love in useful and practical ways.

Keith comments: "The Diocese of Liverpool is looking at a model of church that doesn't involve a large number of people coming together in one place but sees groups being established around a common interest – whatever that interest may be. In a world of choice and change, people form groups with others who share the same interests and views on life. It is through these groups that they discuss and ask the big questions and I want to help people to do that."

"This is about taking church out of the church building and into the workplace environment. It's about growing faith where life happens and life happens in the workplace and places like the city centre."

Supporting Christians at Work is a useful course for Christians at work, from the Diocese of Hereford: "The workplace is where many of us spend much of our time and it is often where people who don't know Jesus can be found, it is an ideal place for 'appropriate' mission, ministry and witness. Thus our Christians at work need our support, encouragement and prayers."

Download from: <https://www.aftersunday.org.uk/courses/faith-work/supporting>

After Sunday (<http://www.aftersunday.org.uk/about/resources>) has a range of resources to support Christians in ministry at work and in the community, ranging from books to links into websites, and ...

A prayer for our Daily Work

God of grace and goodness
who made us body and spirit
that our work and our faith may be one:
may we, by our life and our worship,
join in your labour to bring forth a
new creation in justice, love and truth;
through Jesus our Redeemer

Amen

Working Discipleship is a similar course from Peterborough Diocese, at <http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/workingdisciple.htm>

“Many of us spend most of our waking hours involved in work or activities that are not directly church related, yet they are an important part of our discipleship journey and experience. This course is an opportunity to value, share and explore the work and activities we are engaged in, and to reflect on the Christian perspective on work in the Gospel message.”

The William Temple Foundation has recently published a report on spiritual and religious capital, which can be downloaded at <http://www.wtf.org.uk/documents/faith-in-action.pdf>

Christians in the Workplace is a resource pack from the Diocese of Chelmsford, <http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/CITW.html>

“The resource pack takes a broad non-prescriptive view of what being a Christian at work can mean by exploring ethics, mission, spirituality, transformation, values and witness among others issues and approaches.”

Urban Ministry and Theology Project, <http://www.umtp.org/>

The UMTP is a project of the Newcastle East Deanery in the Church of England diocese of Newcastle. It aims to live out a style of Christian Ministry that assists local churches and communities to engage effectively with the processes of social and economic regeneration in the East End of Newcastle upon Tyne

WorkPlace Inspired, <http://workplaceinspired.com/>, is a Watford based organisation for Christians in the workplace. It acts as a hub for Christians in business, and as an incubator for Kingdom Businesses. The website includes plenty of resources, many of them by Bridget Adams (who unfortunately died in June), including:

- A Theology of Work
- An Introduction to the Theology of Work
- Business Matters!
- The Quaker Example
- What is Kingdom Business?
- What is a spiritual bottom line?
- Christ in the Marketplace (a book which examines where the Church meets the world of business in order to develop an authentically Christian model for business chaplaincy)

Useful websites:

Industrial Christian Fellowship, <http://www.icf-online.org/>

Industrial Mission Association, <http://www.industrialmission.org.uk/>

Newcastle City Centre Chaplaincy, <http://www.nccc.me.uk/index.php>

The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity,
<http://www.licc.org.uk/>

Faith in Business, <http://www.fibq.org>

Spirit at Work, <http://www.spiritatwork.org>

Christians At Work, <http://www.christiansatwork.org.uk/cgi-bin>

WorkNet UK, <http://www.worknetuk.org/partnership/>

US Presbyterian Tentmakers, <http://www.pcusatentmakers.org/>

www.Nassam.org, website of the National Association for the Self-Supporting Active Ministry (Tentmaking Clergy of the US Episcopal Church)

www.globalopps.org/stories.htm. Stories of tentmakers, both past and present.

Other events

CABE (Christian Association of Business Executives. Talk by Philippa Foster Black, Chief Executive of IBE, on *Ethics at Work: Considering the current issues*. 18.30 to 21.15, Wednesday, 24 October, at The Hoop and Grapes, 80 Farringdon Street, London. Free, and refreshments served. Details at www.cabe-online.org/events.php, or from Jayne Payne, 01480 428344.

LICC (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity), *Good Work?* Discussion led by Cal Bailey, Sustainability Director at NG Bailey, on what it means to be involved in 'good work'. Cost £7 (£5 concessions), at LICC, St. Peter's Church, Vere Street, London, Monday, 29 October, 18.30 – 20.30. Booking details at www.licc.org, mail@licc.org.uk, or 020 7399 9555.

Quakers and Business Group – *Quakers Working Together*, day conference at Friends House, Euston, London, 09.00 to 17.00, Wednesday, 7 November. Cost: £25, including refreshments and lunch.

CABE (Christian Association of Business Executives. Lecture prepared by Paul Polman, Chief Executive of Unilever IBE, and delivered by Doug Baillie from Unilever's executive team. Wednesday, 14 November, 18.30 to 21.15, at Unilever's offices, 100 Victoria Embankment, Blackfriars, London. Free, with refreshments. Details at www.cabe-online.org/events.php, or from Jayne Payne, 01480 428344.

News and views

The new Bishop of Swaziland looks to be a first in two respects: she is the first woman Anglican bishop in southern Africa, and she is an MSE! The official announcement reads:

“The Archbishop has announced that at the Elective Assembly in Swaziland, Ellinah Ntombi Wamukoya was elected with more than the required two thirds majority in both houses of laity and clergy. The assembly was rigorous and spirit – filled.

Ellinah Wamukoya, 61 years old will succeed Bishop Mabuza. There was great rejoicing when the outcome was released, making Ellinah, the first woman bishop-elect in our Province and within CAPA. Of course, she still needs to be confirmed by the diocese and bishops before we announce further details.

The Archbishop thanks everyone for all the prayers and support.”

What the announcement omits to mention is that Ellinah is also CEO of the City Council in Manzini, Swaziland’s second city. CEO of Kent County Council as next Archbishop of Canterbury? Now there’s a thought.

Newly ordained MSEs

Teresa Laybourne was ordained at Durham Cathedral this summer and will be Curate of Holy Trinity Washington. She is a mother of three children, two of whom are married and has two grandchildren. Teresa trained part time with Lindisfarne for three years and in that time she continued to work full time as Executive Head Teacher of two Primary

Academies in Sunderland. Teresa's work at Bexhill and Town End Academies has been very successful in an area of high socio-economic deprivation, encouraging parents and the community to get involved and make a difference. She will combine her ministry in secular employment in two vibrant school communities in Sunderland with parish ministry in Washington.

Also ordained in Durham were **Lesley Jones** and **Sarah Jay**. Lesley works at the Venerable Bede School, Sunderland, as Extended School Co-ordinator - organising activities for students, their families and the wider community ranging from holiday clubs to adult learning. Sarah is the Equality and Diversity Lead, at Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, which provides mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services for Durham, Darlington, Teesside and parts of North Yorkshire.

David Black, Executive Chairman of MB Learning, was ordained at Chester Cathedral, while **Sacha Slavic** was ordained at Coventry and will continue as the Director of Transition, Pastoral Director and Head of Philosophy at the Westwood Academy in Coventry, now also as a Minister in Secular Employment.

Mass? That will be 8% please

In the face of declining revenues, the Roman Catholic Church in Germany recently decided that members who ceased to pay Church tax would not get the benefits of membership.

Since the early 19th century members of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches in Germany have paid Church tax, which supports the religious and social programmes of their churches. It comes in the

form of an additional 8% income tax. In recent years many Church members have been opting out of paying (readers may recall two well-known tennis players who did so in the 1990s).

Now, Bishops have decreed that if members don't pay up, they will not be able to receive mass, be buried in consecrated ground, send their children to Church schools and so on. An earlier decree was challenged in the courts by Hartmut Zapp, a retired professor of church law, who argued that under Catholic doctrine, Church membership was determined by a person's beliefs and not by a financial relationship. Judges at the Leipzig Federal Administrative Court, however, disagreed with Prof Zapp and ruled that there could not be partial Church membership, adding that refusal to pay Church tax should be seen as a serious act against the community.

(Somehow I can't see charges for confirmation and communion catching on in UK churches. Ed.)

And finally ...

One Sunday a Catholic priest was surprised to see – as he welcomed the congregation to the service – that a Higgs Boson had taken its place at the back of the church.

Keen to know why the Higgs had come, he asked after the service, “Lovely to see you, but tell me, what led you to come to the service this morning?”

The Higgs replied, “Ah, that's because you can't have mass without me!”

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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