

Ministers-at-Work

*The Journal for Christians in secular
ministry*

*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

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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

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Editorial

Well, the last 3 months have certainly been eventful! July saw the annual Conference, at High Leigh, Hertfordshire, of which plenty of reports below. Pleasant as the surroundings were, the general feeling was that being in a large conference centre with several other groups didn't work as well as being on our own. So: content excellent, venue mixed. By contrast the venue and setting for our next Reflective Weekend, in Glastonbury, look idyllic. I'm really looking forward to it

One thing that struck me on a visit to the Synthomer chemical plant in Harlow is how similar the process for making adhesive precursor chemicals is to making whisky! Not sure that the end product is as tasty though.

The Ministry Division of the Church of England has been busy recently, producing new guidelines for the professional conduct of clergy. I've included a review of these for MSEs in this edition. There is also a summary of a paper on young vocations – encouragements and barriers. Though limited to ordinands in training it does highlight a number of pertinent factors and is worth extending as a study of the discernment phase. A concern for CHRISM is that while we know of various groups of often younger MSEs not many are joining us and contributing to the wider debate on the breadth of self-supporting ministry. Consultations of the kind MinDiv has been holding on SSM of their nature largely through existing structures and groups, so the next generation of MSEs are under-represented. Having said that, as we learned in May from MinDiv, the average age at ordination in the Church of England is now 52.

On a personal note, I'm busy getting used to being a grandad. Benjamin Fox, first of the next generation, arrived on 20 September, in Newcastle. The disadvantage is that it's over 3 hours each way.

Numbers of pages dictate I keep my bit to one page this edition. Count your blessings readers!

Rob Fox

The ABC of MSE
CHRISM Conference 2015

Pauline Pearson

How do we think about our ministry in secular environments? How do we connect with the aspects of ministry encompassed by the ABC – Absolution, Blessing, Celebration? How do we as ministers in a variety of secular environments understand these concepts? How are these embodied in our workplaces? These were the questions, broadly, that Richard Collins - Diocesan Director of Ordinands for the Anglican Diocese of Durham - was asked to explore during our summer conference this year at High Leigh.

Richard began each of his three sessions with a reading from scripture and a piece of related art work. After some reflection and discussion of points arising from each, he asked us to work on three questions:

- Produce a definition (of A, B, or C) that is intelligible to people with whom you work in your context
- Produce a definition (of A, B, or C) that you believe will be intelligible to people with whom you work in your context in ten years' time
- Relate these definitions to what might be called a 'standard church' definition.

This approach generated a rich discussion, drawing on a variety of contexts and experiences, and significantly informed the visits which took place on Saturday afternoon (after A and B but before C).

A IS FOR ABSOLUTION (OR ASSURANCE)

To begin this session, we heard a reading from John 8.1-11 (the woman caught in adultery) and received Guercino's picture of 1621, *Christ with the woman taken in adultery*. In this, whilst the woman's eyes are downcast, Jesus is looking sadly at her accusers, and pointing at her as if to say, you - *you?* - have come to accuse her in public of this? We talked about blame, and self-delusion, human error. Why was the man involved not brought - perhaps the loyalties of the accusers lay with him and their expectations of a woman were low. Perhaps she was disposable in the great scheme of things? We

began to explore errors at work, and the way in which they might be managed.



Working in small groups to answer the questions, we identified elements of what might be absolution for us now and in the future.

Root cause analysis can be used to develop shared understanding of a problem and its effects, what must be done to correct it, and how to prevent it happening again. It may need mediation. There is a shared humanity in error. We need to keep on asking why errors happened. Relationships may need 'resetting':

- Seeing: actions that detract from wholeness or health. Things that hurt or damage people in the setting.
- Making space: for those who have 'sinned' to recognise and reflect on their attitudes or actions.
- Offering a new start: a way of moving forward which values each person.

The ideal is a no blame culture - but sometimes people are foolish or manipulative. There is a need to keep talking openly, to address root

causes, and offer support. There is potential for us to become complicit in organisational 'sin'; unless we say something we need to admit it - and we need to look for the big picture. Saying to people 'it's OK, it's finished' as an issue, but what can you do differently next time? We can help information flow and address the perception of wrongdoing.

Examples which emerged from our visits (reports below) included a sample point left open, with a health and safety executive inspection in prospect. The person 'held his hands up'. He 'thought he'd walk', but he was thanked for 'confessing' and a new, better, automated system resulted.

It was noted that fifteen years ago the culture was very different, and that might not have been the case. A previous error, less significant, had led to a final written warning, 'they weren't interested in the person'.

B IS FOR BLESSING

This session was introduced by a reading from Matthew 5.1-12 - the Beatitudes. The picture provided was a very modern one, painted in 2010, by Laura James. Christ is shown towering over a diverse crowd (young and old, multi-ethnic) on a hillside, in terms of perspective, his back to the crowd, but his arms clearly outstretched over them in blessing.

In the whole group we talked about the overwhelming sense that God loves them - of nurture, care. And as we examined the text, we talked of the Kingdom - which is being built and will *be...* Working in small groups to answer the questions, we identified elements of what might be blessing for us now and in the future:

- Affirming that what we are doing in our work is good.
- That it contributes to building a world of justice and peace (noted that there are some jobs where this is hard to say, reminding us of previous discussions as to whether there are no-go areas for MSE).

- Being ministers of secular encouragement - and organisational encouragers. (We noted that we find affirmation very hard to hear)
- Blessings can come to us through others - for example vulnerable people in our contexts.
- Realising that God is present, and making him known
- Helping people to recognise Gods action. Using the G word!



Examples which emerged from our visits included:

- People have developed processes and products which contribute to our lives.
- They are actively concerned to care for the environment (as well as to make money!)
- The manager who showed us round still finds chemistry exciting! (He bubbled with enthusiasm!)

C IS FOR CELEBRATION

This session drew on a reading from Luke 24.13-35 (the road to Emmaus), together with Caravaggio's famous painting *The Supper at Emmaus* (1601). The feast is set out, fruit, meat, bread, and the

picture shows Jesus raising his hand to bless the food, and the two disciples leaning forward out of their seats as they recognise him. We considered companionship at times of transition and change. Moments of revelation when something previously half understood makes sense.



Working in small groups to answer the questions, we identified elements of what might be celebration for us now and in the future:

- Affirmation in celebration of where we have been, what we have done, together, what we have overcome to get here and what we have achieved.
- Sharing the love of God.
- Sharing coffee and cake together in the work day - a bridge to come together and talk, build relationships (Noted that space to share cake in the working day may be being reduced by focus on productivity).
- The cake maker - may be a partner or friend - becomes part of the team.
- Seeing and celebrating new possibilities when something has gone wrong.
- In secular environments often celebrate people saying goodbye.
- Journeying with broken / confused people; explaining / translating God's activity; staying with them, when asked;

- sharing what you have; transforming everything (situation, people, attitudes, possibilities)
- Creating space to be together, to get to know each other, to break bread together, and to learn how to be. A party can broaden peoples' connections and viewpoints.
- Sharing what we do together - how shall we celebrate?
- Kool and the gang...
- Up-building.

Examples which emerged from our visits included breaking chemicals - losing something to be transformed – which seemed Eucharistic. The work is quite individual; corporate and informal social events (barbecues, parties, Facebook groups and local networks) are important in building a community.

LOOKING AHEAD

Discussion of how these might differ in ten years proved difficult to envisage. Workplaces change. Cultures evolve. We thought that work will be harder / starker, people may find themselves 'hung out to dry'. We considered questions of accountability and responsibility - quality may drop, but what if we haven't been given the resources to achieve? Are we in a climate of risk aversion? Or of Regulation? What is the approach to corporate governance? Can we create an environment in which people aren't blamed for mistakes?

Overall, the sessions generated plenty of food for thought!

Visit to Welwyn Garden City

Ruth Brothwell

We set out for our visit to this nearby 'garden city' to explore it and take note of a few things about it.

- Had the intention for 'garden cities' worked here?
- What was the difference?
- Where was the ABC for this City and its people?

It was a Saturday afternoon and sadly because of that we had not been able to find anyone in any of the major companies in the town

to meet with us. But we were aware that people existed such as the Community Manager in the major retailer, John Lewis and a Town Centre Partnership Manager,

It was evident when we arrived that the town was laid out well, parking was easy and there were green spaces in abundance. Many people were walking about. Families meandered across the greens towards the shopping area. It sounds cheesy but we really did notice that people seemed happy. It felt like a young person's town. There were not many older folk around. Perhaps the working environment lent itself to young families? However, while this was a car friendly town centre, we hardly noticed any public transport although the website had assured us that it existed. The houses we passed on the way there and back were too far away to make walking comfortable. It was also fairly evident to us that this was a wealthy place, the houses we saw were all suited to professional people.

Had it worked as a Garden city?

Well, it was all very present and correct but there was a feeling that it was a bit contrived. People lived here and enjoyed it so who was I, for one, to judge. But I felt as if the town had no soul. It had not evolved but been created (is there a sermon in there?)

What was the difference?

Perhaps that everything seemed to be planned, to be provided. It had not yet had time to develop its 'lesser' parts and there was no 'poorer' part on view. However, the 'pound shops' and charity shops existed across the road from the coffee shops so all society was here. Because people hadn't been there throughout history, there was no depth. We had to assume that people came in order to work there or for easy access to work in the capital. The architecture was early 20th century and renewed in part, nothing older of course.

Where was the ABC?

Perhaps the fact that it had not worked completely as 'garden cities' were intended to do but had become a dormitory town for commuters to the capital was a source of concern and needed absolution. The neatness and the greenness were a blessing for the

people. The presence of work and leisure was a blessing as was the presence of community thinking. The apparent contentment of the people we saw is something to celebrate.

It is certainly challenging and stimulating to look for the ABC in our everyday life and surroundings. Perhaps something we don't do enough and need to think about doing more?

Visit – High Leigh Conference Centre

Sue Cossey

High Leigh is a conference centre run by CCT, The Christian Conference Trust and hosts conferences for up to 220 delegates. All groups have to be faith based.

Our visit – designed for those who didn't want to travel far on a free afternoon – was hosted by the deputy manager Ruth Mabey, who lives on site.

She showed us warm hospitality – and she saw that as the factor that distinguishes High Leigh as Christian as opposed to a secular hotel. Little touches that she feels make a difference includes leaving notes under the door for people who have been bereaved and postcards for birthdays etc.

We spoke to her about absolution, blessing and celebration.

Absolution – this appears to be needed for some of the guests staying at High Leigh. We were astonished to hear that most of the young people who work at the centre are put off Christianity by the behaviour of about 25% of the groups who visit, who show little consideration to the staff and other guests. For example, to keep costs down, the duty manager overnight will be on call rather than on reception – so will hopefully get a chance to have some sleep. There is a phone for emergencies, but like 999 calls, some people's idea of an emergency varies. Recent calls in the early hours included requests for an ironing board (at 3 in the morning) and a person very worried about the funny noise (4 in the morning). The noise was eventually identified as the dawn chorus.

Blessing – as we accompanied Ruth around the centre, we could see the blessings that she gave to all she met – nothing too much trouble and every person given her full attention. Afternoon tea? No problem. Directions? Sorted. Show 3 people round the centre? A pleasure. You could see that she loves her job and thrives on the business. Indeed, although she was due to finish her shift when she left us, she was still in her office some time later.

Celebration – There’s a celebration in so many faith groups coming together in one place and for all to see the diversity of those with faith. Perhaps at times, the place was too noisy and the dinner queue too long, but let us not always be closeted away in our own small bubble, but share the good news – so many with faith, the different ways that we celebrate, and to let more people know about CHRISM.

Visit - Synthomer

Another group visited a chemical plant in Harlow. This article first appeared in the company newsletter; it is an interesting and fresh perspective on a visit.

Harlow Entertains Ministers

On a warm Saturday afternoon at the end of July, Synthomer entertained 5 accredited church ministers in a visit to the Harlow site as part of their organisation’s annual conference. The 5 were from a variety of backgrounds and included Phil Aspinall, a consultant who frequently organises HAZOP training for Synthomer. After a site briefing, we discussed the chemistry carried out on site using some videos to illustrate the polymerisation process and then talked about the ways the site worked together as a team to achieve a common goal.

A site tour was scheduled to take about 90 minutes but such was the interest shown by the group that it wasn’t until well over 2 hours later that we reconvened for a welcome cup of coffee and another half hour of chat and discussion.



CHRISM AGM

Presiding Moderator's Report – Ruth Brothwell

Being a Chrism Moderator has opened doors. It has also enabled me to walk through some doors which might have been closed to me before. As Chrism members affirm the agenda of supporting priesthood within working life, so being the Moderator of this organisation has provided me the courage and the imperative to speak out both within and outside of 'church' circles.

I believe we are needed within our greater society more than ever and I also believe that our message is finally being heard. The Church of England, to mention only one denomination, moves very, very slowly but it IS moving as our consultation day for Self-Supporting Ministries demonstrated. It was a great privilege to be there as a Chrism representative amid so many called from the Dioceses within the Church of England. And....almost everyone present, selected as a self-supporting minister actually went to work and brought up all the issues which we as MSEs had been talking about for ages. The privilege extended to making contributions and

I hope to continue to build on these both within my own Diocese and the greater church.

During the year we have held committee meetings in Birmingham, a central location for our committee and it is always a joy to meet up with other Chrism folk and share our experiences. We meet, to plan and we planned and held a wonderful reflective weekend in Northumberland in the shadow of Hadrian's Wall. There, we explored what it was to be a prophet – MSEs are prophets within our land. But how is this ministry accomplished? We received much food for thought and as always went away empowered within ourselves for ministry in the year ahead. Then in July we met again for our annual conference and this time it was Hertfordshire's turn and we explored the ABC of MSE. I think we will hear this phrase used more and more.

As one conference issue builds upon the next, as we explore together the solutions that God brings to us and the blessings brought to bear upon so many varied and valued ministries in our land, I really think we can look forward to future years. Our numbers may not seem huge, our concerns loom larger than life but our God walks with us. It has been a pleasure to walk with you.



Treasurer's report – Rob Fox

As many readers know, CHRISM's financial affairs are handled by CHRISSET (CHRistians In Secular Employment Trust), the charity sitting behind it. Particular concerns in 2014 were: tidying up the mailing list (many thanks to Mike Harrison for the considerable work he has put in to that), seek to reduce the costs of producing this journal, and catching up with Gift Aid refunds. The last eventually came through in this year so will be reflected in the 2015 accounts.

Overall we spent a tad over £360 more in 2014 than came in, an improvement on the previous year. The cost control is paying dividends and 2015 is looking healthy. Overall subscription income did not quite cover journal and committee costs, but a small surplus on the 2014 Conference and some donations largely balanced this and covered recurring costs such as insurance and the website. The AGM agreed to hold the current subscription rates for 2016.

Three reminders if I may:

- If you pay by standing order please review the amount and amend to the correct level if necessary. There are two **subscription** rates: full and concessionary, the latter being for students and those who live in the UK but do not pay Income Tax (rather than 'retired').
- If you are a UK taxpayer and don't **Gift Aid** your subs already, please think about doing so. You can download a form from the website, or ask Mike to send you one.
- We are receiving income now from an as yet small number of folk shopping online signed up to **easyfundraising.com**. If you sign up and choose CHRISM as your favoured charity, we gain a % donation each time you buy from a retailer (there are several thousand) operating the easyfundraising scheme. The range is considerable and includes train and 'plane fares, music downloads, white goods, clothing, hotels, theatres. Well worth using, and, to borrow a phrase, every little helps ...

2015 Annual General Meeting

Margaret Joachim

At the 2015 AGM we elected the following:

Incoming Moderator: Mike Harrison

Journal Editor: Rob Fox

Committee Members: Pauline Pearson, Sue Cossey and Rebecca Craven

CHRISM nominee to CHRISSET: Phil Aspinall

Margaret Yates is now the Presiding Moderator, and Ruth Brothwell becomes Outgoing Moderator. Mike Harrison continues as Membership Secretary and Margaret Joachim as Secretary (but she will have to be replaced next year, having served the maximum period our constitution allows)).

The good news is that we agreed that there was no need to increase the subscription, so it will stay at the same level for next year.

International Meeting of Worker Priests, Pentecost 2015 - English Contribution

Based on the propositions made at the conclusion of last year's conference in Turin, the international group selected a theme based on a quotation from Pope Francis in The Joy of the Gospel:

It kills, this Economy

The economic system which now dominates creates destructive consequences in many areas of human life. This paper is a translation, from French, of the contribution prepared by the delegation from England and distributed to all the participants in advance of the conference.

We are writing during the days before the General Election in the UK [by the time of Pentecost all was revealed!]. It seems to us that a phrase of the prophet Samuel speaks of the current political situation in England: "those who have much have to work for bread; but those

who go hungry do not need to work" (1 Sam 2 v 5). There are many people who have much – possessions, houses and work – but they believe that they must work harder and harder to retain what they have acquired. It is the Idolatry of Consumption. They look at the others "the poor", "the immigrants" as those who do not work and do not want to work, as those who receive much money from the state, paid by taxes, taken from them, the majority. This is the current structure of social class in England (and perhaps in the other countries) – and it is the motivation for political struggles. We have to choose between two futures: "to acquire and protect what is mine", or "to support and help the others". [We spoke further during the conference of the state of current politics].

In England there are many food banks where those who have little to eat can find some food. Many are found associated with Churches. But this situation has come about because of the decisions of the UK government and (for the most part) the Churches do not fight against the causes of this poverty. For example, in the church which Margaret attends the congregation supports a foodbank and a winter shelter for the homeless, but they do not consider why such poverty exists in England today.

1. These economics have created new types of relations in business and in society: Unemployment and Precariousness are key words.

Phil tells of the situation in his firm. "During the months of November and December I was, with all my colleagues, at risk of redundancy. It is the reality in many businesses, particularly in this period of austerity, but above all at this time when the prices of oil and gas have fallen dramatically. It is the reality of being a Worker Priest to remain among other people, affected like them by the same realities of the evolving economics. The business had decided to make redundant about the same number of people in each of the levels of the organisation – from the directors to the young. Before Christmas several people left (among them, some good friends), but I have remained there". [But not for long – preparing this translation in September, I too am at risk again!]

Phil has several young friends who work under contracts which are very short term and very insubstantial. Trevor started work as a Kitchen Porter in a Golf Club. But after three months his contract was not renewed and his work ended – he has not found a new job and had to go every morning to the Job Centre.

John had started work in a car showrooms – he had to wash the cars. After a probation period of three months he was not given a permanent contract and had to look for a new job. Currently he is doing odd jobs for people, but has gained a zero-hours contract in a pub.

During the 1980's, the Conservative government reduced the grants paid to Universities. The University of Salford, where Stan had worked for many years, lost 40% of its state funding – it responded with redundancies, and many people over 50 took early retirement. Perhaps this was a wise decision because it gave to the younger academic staff the chance of staying and progressing into the upper ranks. Some of those who left found new work in other universities or in industry – Stan was retained, but on a reduced hours contract. And now the young academics have reached the higher ranks – let us hope that they have learnt from their experiences and will steer the university to protect the employees and improve the conditions of work.

Pauline tells of the university where she works, which underwent a radical reorganisation in recent years. Many jobs were lost – voluntary redundancies and early retirement for the teaching staff, reductions in numbers among the administrative staff who had to reapply competitively for the fewer new, less well-paid posts. More recently a subsidiary company has been created to which all the grades below professional staff have been transferred, with new terms and conditions. They have less hours of guaranteed work, no paid annual leave, must be available for work at weekends, and work at different sites, often at some distance. The directors do not take into account their personal lives: single parents who have several jobs; those on minimum wage who must now take additional bus journeys everyday etc. But the aims do not change: the same quantity of sales, of customers served, of rooms to be cleaned.

We have often spoken of the need for worker Priests to place themselves in all levels of the world of work. We believe it is necessary to “be with” all those who work – all the levels of an organisation are vulnerable and insecure. We can help those who have lost work and remain unemployed. But, we wonder, where are the young Worker Priests who want to work in shops and supermarkets, call centres, catering, cleaning, caring etc. – without fixed contracts and in these unregulated structures.

Supermarkets fight with each other to gain financial advantage – there is always competition. So there is always pressure on the workers – they must be flexible, work variable hours; one day on the cash desk, another filling shelves, another collecting trolleys. But there are some businesses, and some organisations which try to protect employees against exploitation and pay them a living wage. We (as all customers) can observe what is happening and support the most favourable shops and avoid the exploitative. And there are some people in our English group who have chosen to work alongside those in shops.

2. Because of the principle of competition in the search for maximising profits, this economic system leads to confrontations between the dominant players: we see “Financial Wars”. But sometimes the struggle for raw materials leads to real wars.

This situation has been developing for a long time – in those regions of India where there are poor supplies of water, there are towns which keep the river water for themselves although it is needed for use by those who live further downstream on the river. It is very easy to steal the raw materials which should be shared by all. We should fight for a just distribution.

A business in the USA called the police to arrest a woman who had survived the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh, which killed 1138 people. She wanted to protest in front of the head office of the firm “The Children’s Place” in order to demand a contribution to support the victims of the disaster and their families – the firm had offered some \$450,000; the protesters wanted to demand \$7.5 million. She

was arrested along with colleagues from groups showing solidarity from Bangladesh and the USA. She was supported by the English organisation "Labour behind the Label" of which Phil is a member.

3. What new forms of economies do we see coming into being? How can we contribute to them? But there is a changing future! There are victories!

The people of Mahan in India celebrated because 500,000 trees have been saved. The Indian government decided to save the ancient forest where they live and work, and rejected the proposal to create a huge new open-cast coal mine. The organisation Greenpeace in the UK supported their colleagues in India, and their members sent more than 80,000 emails to the Indian minister to demand that he stop the commercial business fighting against the people in the region. And the judges of the Indian High Court decided that all the new mine workings since 1993 should be stopped in order to protect the environment, the trees and to reduce global warming.

The Union of which Phil is a member announced a victory for the colleagues who work in the Dulwich Museum in London. Before December 2014 there were no union members in the museum. But the directors had proposed to make most of the workers redundant and replace them with apprentices and insecure contract workers. They organised, and unionised, and they proposed unanimously to strike. Faced with this solidarity, the directors were persuaded and accepted their proposal for a new structure of the organisation which reduced costs and gives a better service to visitors.

Papal impact

Readers will have noted the recent visit by Pope Francis to the USA. Our mainstream media have given it some decent coverage, however two significant aspects have been somewhat under-reported here.

Firstly, the numerous comments Francis has made around social justice, building on his long-standing concern, expressed, for example, last June thus:

"Working for a just distribution of the fruits of the earth and human labor is not mere philanthropy. It is a moral obligation. For Christians, the responsibility is even greater: it is a commandment. It is about giving to the poor and to peoples what is theirs by right. The universal destination of goods is not a figure of speech found in the Church's social teaching. It is a reality prior to private property. Property, especially when it affects natural resources, must always serve the needs of peoples. And those needs are not restricted to consumption. It is not enough to let a few drops fall whenever the poor shake a cup which never runs over by itself. Welfare programs geared to certain emergencies can only be considered temporary responses. They will never be able to replace true inclusion

There is an excellent article on the Pope's meeting with Barack Obama, written by Eric LeCompte, Executive Director of Jubilee USA Network, at <http://www.indepthnews.info/index.php/component/content/article/42-viewpoint/2436-pope-francis-in-his-own-words>

When he addressed Congress, Francis left many members agape when he named listed his four greatest Americans. Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jnr were no surprises; Thomas Merton perhaps, but most listeners will have recognised the name. But who was **Dorothy Day**, most wondered?

Born in 1897, Dorothy Day was a pacifist who protested wars and fought for social justice for those living in poverty. In 1933, she founded the Catholic Worker Movement, using her passion and energy to transform a tiny, 1-cent newspaper (most of which she wrote) into an organization that today includes soup kitchens in cities across America and aid centres around the world.

In a 1971 interview, she urged:
"If your brother is hungry, you feed him. You don't meet him at the door and say, 'Go be thou filled,' or 'Wait for a few weeks, and you'll get a welfare check.' You sit him down and feed him. And so that's how the soup kitchen started."

When she died in 1980, TIME magazine explained that her take on Catholic activism was anything but uncontroversial:

"To admirers like Historian David J. O'Brien, writing in Commonweal, she was "the most significant, interesting and influential person in the history of American Catholicism." If so, it is because her Catholic Worker movement blended zeal for reforming the whole social system with practical concern for helping the individual poor. She was arrested a dozen times, the first as a suffragette in 1917, the last during a workers' demonstration in California in 1973, and took part in scores of labor and antimilitary protests."

In recent years, many members of the Catholic left have been urging sainthood for Day, even though some of her friends and supporters said she wouldn't have cared.

"The important thing wouldn't be that," former Catholic Worker editor Patrick Jordan recently commented. "The important thing would be how well are we doing the work that we're supposed to be doing, you know? How well are we living a gospel life?"

The pope's inclusion of Day in Pope Francis' speech is also notable because she had an abortion early in her life — something that's become more controversial as her supporters have pushed for canonization.

The movement she founded has a main website at <http://www.catholicworker.org/>

There is also an allied group in London, website at <http://www.londoncatholicworker.org/>

A Change of Direction

Catherine Binns

After 18 years of working on the Neonatal Intensive Care unit as a Specialist Surgical Nurse I handed in my notice in July. It's been a hard decision after so many years in a job I loved. But sometimes you become too comfortable and begin to get a little complacent. Then you get a nudge from God.

Last summer I met up with a good friend of mine - we used to work with each other at St Mary's Hospital, so she knew exactly where I worked and what the job entailed. She asked me the question 'What do think God is saying to you?' I have to say I was unsure; I wasn't sure where God wanted me to be and I was confused. I loved my job as a neonatal specialist surgical nurse but I felt there was something God had in store. That night I got home and decided to look on-line at NHS jobs; there was a post for a chaplain local to me. Closing date tomorrow – arghhhh! Burning the midnight oil, I applied. Testing the waters. To my surprise I got an interview!

Scary stuff. I was in my comfort zone but actually I was beginning to feel uncomfortable. I think God was giving the nudge but like all of us do at times I was resisting. I was trying to go my own way, ignore the sign posts and heading in the wrong direction.

I didn't get that Chaplaincy job. I wasn't too disappointed as it didn't feel completely right. So life carried on with it's challenges as I faced other stuff. All in God's timing.

I kept looking. One day there were two more chaplaincy jobs that came up both but were interviewing on the same day, so I applied for one over the other. Just as I was looking at the full time job, someone close to me texted and told me a post at Bolton was being advertised and to apply for it. A nudge from God perhaps? Only I wasn't even short listed. I found out because I saw it re-advertised. Both a part-time and full-time role were re-advertised, so I made enquiries about part-time one, thinking I could carry on as neonatal nurse but gain experience in chaplaincy – a perfect combination, I thought - so I applied. God had other ideas. Meanwhile, I was encouraged by someone to reapply for the full time post, so I strengthened my application with guidance from a friend and re-applied for that.

I was interviewed for the part-time chaplaincy post but was unsuccessful, but got some great feedback and advice. Then I was offered an interview for the full-time post. I was still unsure about the whole situation because I love my job as a Neonatal Nurse but

deep down I wasn't really happy anymore. I had to put my trust and faith in God.

I was short listed this time, interviewed and offered the job as Deputy Head of Chaplaincy at Bolton Foundation Trust.

It felt so right God given, but in the back of my mind I wondered if I was doing the right thing. But when you hear the same bible passage in 3 different places in the same weekend, I got the strange feeling that God was telling me it was part of His plan.

Saturday 1st August 2015 was my last formal shift at St Mary's, though I hope to go back and do some bank shifts. 18 years have seen many ups and downs both personally and professionally. I have many happy times and some sad times, been through a lot with the old Neonatal Surgical girls and they will remain at heart my family.

6 years ago two units merged together to make a new family, which was tough going, but we got through. I was remembering the other day; I took my Priestly Jelly Babies round as the peace offering to both sides of the line. The unit became a different family; I have worked with the most amazing people over the years and I won't forget them. I have learnt lots, developed skills and grown as a person over the years and this won't go to waste in my new job.

Many have asked what does a Chaplain do? Well keep reading my blog and you'll find out. People, as in nurses, at Royal Bolton are already finding out that I am a nurse - they know I know how it feels to be at the coal face - so one of my main things to do is support staff, cake and chat with the Chaplain. Emergency Fredos will be in my bag at all times! Supporting families on the premature baby unit will be another, as well as much, much more. I will have lots to learn in the next few months.

I started at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust on Monday 3rd August. I had two weeks to learn the ropes before Nev, the Head Chaplain, went on holiday leaving me in charge. I have settled in so far but still lots of things to learn and get used to. It's a good team to work

with and for, very welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. We spend a lot of time laughing. We have lunch together each day. I will be on call about 1 week in every 8 weeks and I will be covering Sunday mornings about once a month. In August I covered two Sundays and have been on holiday for two, in fact I am finishing this article whilst on Holy Island on way back from Scotland. The working hours are better so now more available on weekday nights, for fellowship group and worship and reflection - plus dancing!

I still plan to keep my nursing registration up but need to work out how I am going to do this. I will also continue to be SSM officer for Bolton Archdeaconery.

I will be writing a blog on a more regular basis when I pass it through Nev and communication officer, so those who are Internet bods will be able to follow me. Blog: revcathfrog.blogspot.co.uk



Catherine with Richard Coles at the recent Northern dioceses SSM conference in Manchester.

New guidelines for the professional conduct of clergy

Rob Fox

The Church of England has just updated its guidelines, which can be found in full at: <https://churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/about-general-synod/convocations/guidelines-for-the-professional-conduct-of-the-clergy.aspx>

As one would expect, the guidelines are very much geared to traditional patterns and contexts of ordained ministry. However many are of general application (and wisdom). They are linked to the ordination charges and develop these for both general and specific circumstances. The guidance that has direct relevance to MSEs I've picked out below, with italics emphasising the relevant wording.

4 [Clergy] are to tell the story of God's love ... they are to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season, and to declare the mighty acts of God. They are to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith ... they are to preside at the Lord's table and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

4.1 Mission belongs to the whole church worldwide and is a primary calling of the clergy. Parish priests are charged with the "cure of souls", not solely the chaplaincy of congregations. As such, they have a clear responsibility, with their people, to develop appropriate practices of mission and evangelism in their parish, *network or other context*.

4.3 The clergy should ensure that appropriate and accessible courses and discussion groups on all aspects of the Christian faith are available at regular intervals to parishioners seeking to explore, deepen or renew their faith.

4.5 *The clergy should recognize, affirm and encourage the ministry and witness of lay people. This should include acknowledging their mission in workplaces and communities.*

4.7 *In an increasingly "mixed economy" Church, which fosters pioneer ordained ministry and Fresh Expressions of Church as well as traditional parish ministry and mission, ministers who lead such pioneering mission are subject to the same call, responsibility and accountability.*

6 Guided by the Spirit, they are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people, that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.

6.1 The clergy are called to servant ministry and leadership within the Church *and the wider community.*

6.3 *The clergy should recognize and affirm lay ministry that already exists and encourage new ministries, both lay and ordained. They should be ready to assist others in discerning and fulfilling their vocation. They should actively prompt and encourage new vocations in the Church and in the world.*

7 Will you be diligent in prayer, in reading Holy Scripture, and in all studies that will deepen your faith and fit you to bear witness to the truth of the gospel? Will you lead Christ's people in proclaiming his glorious gospel, so that the good news of salvation may be heard in every place?

7.7 The clergy should set aside time for continuing ministerial education and development, *including the consideration of contemporary issues and theological developments, so that their faith engages with the perceptions and concerns of this generation.*

14 Brothers and sisters, you have heard how great is the charge that these ordinands are ready to undertake ... Will you continually pray for them? Will you uphold and encourage them in their ministry?

14.6 *The clergy should be encouraged to develop opportunities for mutual support and pastoral care within chapters, cell groups, or other peer groupings.* All the clergy should also be encouraged to have a spiritual director, soul friend or confessor to support their spiritual life and help to develop their growth in self-understanding. If required, help should be given in finding such a person.

14.7 *In ministries where the clergy have both a sector and a parochial responsibility, there should be a clear understanding between diocese, parish and the minister concerned about where the boundaries lie.*

Young Vocations: Journeys towards Ordination

Ministry Division has also recently published the outcomes of research by Liz Graveling, with the above title. The research sought to identify factors that encourage or discourage younger people from considering ordained ministry. As this constituency also includes future ordained MSEs, it is worth summarising the findings.

The research was limited to students currently in 7 training institutions, so there is perhaps a further piece of work to be done on discernment and selection. Facilitating factors were found to be:

- ❖ Practical experience (adult and childhood)
- ❖ Vocations conferences
- ❖ Internal prompts (convictions, engagement in ritual, divine guidance)
- ❖ Other people - such as
 - Role models (inspire vocation, remove perceived barriers)
 - Seed-planters (actively encourage vocation)
 - Mentors (formal, informal; disciple, counsel)
 - Supporters (emotional, financial; church leaders; DDOs; family)

Barriers were found to be:

- ❖ Social difference (focus on gender), influencing:
 - Perceptions (of self and ministry, especially female roles)
 - Lack of opportunity
- ❖ Access to Organisational networks (*a message for CHRISM here; Ed.*)
- ❖ People (women have fewer role models, less access to mentors, family responsibilities)
- ❖ Active discouragement (especially from family)
- ❖ Rejection and hostility (gender-based)
- ❖ Official process (finance, movement between dioceses, institutional identity, coaching)

The implications of the research are grouped under 5 heads:

Enhance communication and sources of information relating to: successful initiatives (e.g. opportunities for practical experience and vocations events); specific areas of candidate concern; role and life of female ministers; information for families (parents) of younger candidates; financial provision and systems; communication between dioceses; communication with university Christian societies.

Review and develop structures and schemes in the following areas: practical experience; vocations events; placement of curates and ordinands; mentoring for women and men; vocational counselling; maternity, paternity and childcare.

Increase or improve training relating to: identification and nurture of young vocations (church leaders, HE chaplains); discussion during IME of gender issues in ministry; discernment and engagement by DDOs and Vocations Advisers, with increased numbers and resources.

A shift in culture may be required regarding: ongoing and wide-ranging vocational discernment in churches; discipleship of and ministry experience for young people; involvement of and investment in children; use of language familiar to young people; gendered role distribution in churches.

Further research is necessary in order to: map existing practical experience schemes and vocations events; investigate good practice (dioceses, churches, chaplaincies); understand reasons for withdrawal from the discernment process by those who have not pursued a vocation.

It is notable but not surprising that there is nothing specific to MSE, or even wider Self-Supporting Ministry, here, however if the findings are to result in positive changes to discernment, selection and training, MSE needs to be modelled, mentored and supported as part of the process.

Events

50th Anniversary of the Reinstatement of the Worker Priests

A reminder of the invitation to join the French Worker Priests and their friends at a **University Colloquium, Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th December 2015.**

Worker-Priests: a past and a future

Labour Exchange, St-Denis 9/11 rue Grenin, 93200 Saint Denis.

The Worker Priests after 1965: Issues from social and religious history. Challenges for social and religious history.

The programme includes: a day to reflect on the issues of the religious, social and cultural history which led to the presence of priests in factories during the second half of the 1960s; a Festival Evening; and round table discussions with contributions from Trade Unionists, active Worker Priests, theologians and philosophers:

“Work and workers today”. “Worker Priests – a ministry for the present”

For more information, please contact Phil Aspinall (see back cover)

Shared Ministry Network – 2015 conference: ‘God’s Call – Our Response: Making Mission-Shaped Shared Ministry Work’

Formerly the Local Ministry Network, the name has recently been changed as above. The website is well worth visiting:
<http://www.shared-ministry.net/>

Lunchtime Thursday 19th to lunchtime Saturday 21st November, at Britannia Country Hotel, Manchester. Full Board for £185.
Contact: Revd Dr Colin McCarty, 1 Seymour Close, Newmarket, CB8 8EL. test_and_eval@btinternet.com





Modem 2015 Conference

Faith in the Future: Organization, Power and Trust

Thursday 3 December - Friday 4 December



Keynote speakers:
Professor Veronica Hope Hailey
on Faith for the future: learning to trust



Revd Dr Justin Lewis Anthony
on Faith for the future: power, authority and clerical confidence

Early Bird discount until 30th September
£95 residential, £45 non-residential

To reserve your place(s) contact Alison Ogden at Sarum College
courses@sarum.ac.uk, tel +44(0) 1722 424826

2016 CHRISM Reflective Weekend

***26th to 28th February, at Abbey House Retreat House,
Glastonbury*** (<http://abbeyhouse.org/>)

Sue Henderson will lead us exploring moving from the desert places created by our hectic life-styles towards the streams of living waters, following themes from Scripture.

A Minister in the United Reformed Church. her first pastorate was in the Wiltshire United Area, then serving in Bath and Sanderstead. She retired from full-time ministry in December 2013.

She also recently retired as Convenor of the URC Retreats Group. She trained Spiritual Director in Bristol and has also trained in Ignatian Spirituality at the London Centre for Spirituality. In retirement she continues to lead worship, be a spiritual guide and lead Retreats and Quiet Days.

Sue is married to Patrick and they have two grown up sons, two daughters-in-law and 3 grandchildren.

In her spare time she loves walking and cycling, painting, needlework and being a 'hands-on' grandparent to her youngest granddaughter.

Rates for the weekend (17.00 Friday to after lunch Sunday) are £160 for members, £170 non-members. The weekend will count towards your CME and grants may be available from your church.

Resources

Patheos: Faith and Work

... is based in the USA and the website is a full of useful resources for faith and work (<http://www.patheos.com/Faith-and-Work>).

It is not exclusively Christian, representing a variety of faith views, which is itself of interest. The current affairs articles and commentary (Pope's visit, the shootings in Oregon) are fresh, and there are intriguing items such as Dr Seuss and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Yogi Berra's enduring wit.

'The Kingdom at Work Project - a communal approach to mission in the workplace', David Clark.

Peterborough: Upfront Publishing (£14.99 paperback; £8.99 e-book).

Available to CHRISM members for £10 + £2.80 postage, from David. Cheque to 'David Clark' at Hill View, Burton Close Drive, Bakewell DE45 1BG.

'This book 'may represent the beginning of another stage in the historic and contemporary Christian engagement with work' (*Crucible*)



Unique in literature on faith and work in that its focus is the transformation of the workplace - founded on an innovative theology of the kingdom - 'profoundly lay-centred' - a wealth of resources for practice - a radically new role for chaplains and ministers in secular employment - a clear and comprehensive mission agenda for the local church.

'A brilliant work-book for the servant leader' (*Peter Challen - Sloan Fellow of London Business School*)

A Lent Course with a difference!

Joined up living – Weekday Faith

Are you looking for ideas for Lent 2016? Starting from the day-to-day events of life, this Lent course is designed for use by small groups

during 5 sessions in Lent. The course follows a pattern used by many of us in reflecting on our daily work (paid or unpaid).

We offer it for use in Parishes and workplaces, to enable those who take part to:

- learn more of what they each do in their day to day work
- understand and support each other in their daily work
- articulate more fully the connections with their faith
- understand how the Gospel relates to what they do day by day
- appreciate how their work may truly be their ministry

The course consists of five sessions:

- Week 1 What's happening for me
- Week 2 What's going on in some situations at work
- Week 3 How can we talk about God in all this
- Week 4 What about God in our work situations
- Week 5 So what does it mean for what I do

This course, designed by the group of Ministers in Secular Employment in Coventry Diocese, has been run in several different settings. This is what some participants said:

- Good to look closely at situations and see what is really going on - bringing out the positive and finding God in that situation.
- It really changed the way I look at things.
- The sessions have given me the courage to carry on.
- The starting point for the course was grounded in our own experience - in everyday life outside the church

- I was concerned about where I spend 60% of my waking life i.e. at/doing paid work and saw it as an opportunity for ministry to both me and the people I work with.
- Small group, helpful workbook, supportive and listening 'co-workers' - an opportunity to share my real issues

- Fellowship with others in the course was good - the discussions, the atmosphere and the leadership.

The course is designed to be led by a leader who has a background in MSE or has similar relevant experience. Each participant is given a course handbook, and there is a manual for leaders, which guides you through the programme for each week. Master copies of these are available from the Coventry MSE group, for a small fee, to enable you to produce the handbooks for your participants.

For more information, contact Phil Aspinall (details inside back cover).

The CHRISM Library – your thoughts, please

Margaret Joachim

Have you used our library? Are you likely to? Who might find it useful?

CHRISM owns and maintains the Michael Ranken Library of books and a bibliography relevant to MSE. Many of the books came from Michael himself, and we set up the library as a memorial to him. He was one of the first MSEs, a founder-member of CHRISM and our Moderator Emeritus for many years. The library is currently housed at the Royal Foundation of St. Katharine, in east London, where it is available for consultation by (easy) arrangement. However, it is little used (if at all), except accidentally by people who happen to be staying at St. Katharine's for other reasons.

At the AGM the Committee was asked to consider setting aside a budget for regular book purchases to keep the library contents up to date. Before we do this, we would like your thoughts on the usefulness and practicality of the library, given the extent to which material is now also available in other ways. Please would you think about and respond to the following:

- Who is likely to make use of a library of MSE-related books? Where should the books be, so that they are most easily accessible by as many users as possible?
- Should CHRISM continue to maintain a library of actual books? If so, what would be the purpose of this in years to come?
- Should we spend money to keep the collection up to date? How much would be reasonable, given our finances?
- Would it be more useful to put time and effort into maintaining an on-line bibliography?

Please take a few minutes now to think about this and send any thoughts, comments, suggestions, brainwaves etc. to me at margaret.joachim@london.anglican.org We'll be discussing this again at our next Committee meeting, so I'll collate the responses to take to the meeting. It's your subscription money we could be spending, so we want to do so in the most appropriate way.

Curiosity Corner

The Beaker Folk of Husborne Crawley

Margaret Joachim recently drew attention to an interesting and entertaining blog, run by the eponymous Beaker folk, at <http://cyber-coenobites.blogspot.com/>. Describing itself as "An Oasis of Fuzzy Thinking", the blog rewards exploration. The varied contents at time of writing include:

- The Man with a Child in his eyes – a reflection on Mark 10: 2-16
- Who will Jose Mourinho blame this time? (*Who indeed! Ed.*)
- The Beaker Common Prayer (available to download as an e-book)
- One Giant Hole in St. Albans (*I thought St Albans WAS a giant hole – Ed.*)
- People with guns kill people.

Margaret was particularly taken with 'The Consultant's Confession':

Hi God

Just pinging you to touch base
to regret our downside behavioural synergies
and request your assistance in our resolution process.

We've crossed your red lines
and gone outside tolerances.
So we're flagging a downgrade RAG-wise.

So we've actioned you here
as rectifying our own negative benefits
is above our pay grade.
It's a competency issue, really.

So we're reaching out to you knowing
that you'll align us with your governance going forward
help us not to have all our balls in the air
or be short-suited at the final wash-up
and before close of play
get us over the line.

It has been far too long since we visited the ***Ship of Fools***
(<http://ship-of-fools.com/>). As usual, the Ship is full of news (much
of it scarcely reported by mainstream media), views, and
amusements, including:

- A report picked up from The Times of Israel about the torching a church by the Sea of Galilee, believed to be at the site of the feeding of the 5,000.
- Debates on the Discussion Boards about freedom, Jeremy Corbin, nuclear deterrence, and the Pope in the USA.
- Items on digital bread and wine and on-line sacraments.

And a final tit-bit: a survey of Christians finds that 48% would be happy to have Rev. Adam Smallbone, from the BBC comedy *Rev*, as their minister.

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 below).

**Further information may be obtained from the Secretary or the Journal
Editor.**

Membership Secretary

Mike Harrison 15 Vicarage Gardens, Llandudno, LL30 1RG
mikeonorme@gmail.com 07910 141410

**Submissions for the Journal (if written: A4; if electronic:
.txt, .rtf, or .doc format) should be sent to:**

The Journal Editor,
36 Norman Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 1LY
E-mail: rob.fox36@gmail.com

Patron

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

Visit the CHRISM website: www.chrism.org.uk

CHRISM Committee members:

Moderators

Ruth Brothwell Foxgrove, Burnt Common Lane, Ripley, Guildford, GU23 6HD. ruthbrothwell@yahoo.co.uk Business support manager

Mike Harrison 15 Vicarage Gardens, Llandudno, LL30 1RG
mikeonorme@gmail.com 07910 141410

Margaret Yates 5 Halfway Cottages, Bath Road, Newbury,
Retired History lecturer RG20 8NG 01488 658092 m.h.yates@reading.ac.uk

Secretary

Margaret Joachim 8 Newburgh Road, London W3 6DQ
Retired IT manager and student 0208 723 4514
Margaret.joachim@london.anglican.org

Treasurer and Journal Editor

Rob Fox 36 Norman Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 1LY Tax Adviser
rob.fox36@gmail.com 0161 338 8481

Committee Members

Sue Cossey 1 Bye Mead, Emerson's Green, Bristol, BS16 7DL.
Insurance underwriter sue.cossey@yahoo.co.uk 0117 957 4267

Phil Aspinall 139 Wiltshire Court, Nod Rise, Coventry, CV5 7JP
PhilAspinall@vectragroup.co.uk 024 7646 7509

Pauline Pearson 3 Belle Grove Place, Spital Tongues, University lecturer
Pauline.pearson@northumbria.ac.uk

Rebecca Craven 201 Thornton Road, Manchester, M14 7NS
Dental lecturer rebeccacraven@gail.com

Web Master

Martin Dryden Mont Ube House, St. Clement, Jersey, JE2 6QT
mont.ube.jsy@gmail.com