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**CHRISM** is on **Facebook**, 'Ministers at Work':  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/129656640430436/>  
 And **LinkedIn**, at:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=3756477>

## ***Editorial***



## ***2016 Conference and AGM***

### ***What we did!***

Foxhill Retreat and Conference Centre is a delight. Operated by Chester Diocese, it is sited on a wooded hillside, surrounded by beautiful grounds, a few minutes' drive from the small market town of Frodsham, north Cheshire.

The theme was 'MSE in a changing world of work'. With work and workplaces continuing to change apace, we looked at what is changing around us, and the effects on work of Globalism, Pluralism, Individualism and the death of the Institution.



Group visits were made to:

**The National Waterways Museum** at Ellesmere Port (<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/museums-and-attractions/national-waterways-museum>). At the northern end of the Shropshire Union Canal, Ellesmere Port was built as the 'port' for transshipping farm produce brought from Ellesmere, Shropshire, to the growing towns of the North West in the Industrial Revolution. Not only is the old canal basin impressive, but the much larger Manchester Ship Canal – still much used – runs by it, lined with

petro-chemical plants (these days mostly US or Indian owned). The town grew up around the basin, which soon became the transhipment point for Cornish China Clay bound for the Potteries. Other industries followed, particularly ironworks; one that re-located from the Black Country, complete with the workforce – who were housed in purpose built terraces around the factory - still ran coaches to Wolverhampton Wanderers home matches into the 1960s.



### **Delamere Forest – Forestry Commission**

([www.forestry.gov.uk/delamere](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/delamere)).

Managing a forest is far from simple, given the competing interests of visitors (on two feet, four feet or two wheels), the need to generate commercial income (from timber products, franchises and camping) and nature organisations. A group from CHRISM met one of the Wardens, leading a working party of paid employees and volunteers restoring a bog (!), gaining insights into what it is like to work there and the opportunities for work and leisure.



**Port Sunlight** ([portsunlightvillage.com/](http://portsunlightvillage.com/)), the village built by Lord Leverhulme (and his wife) for workers at the nearby soap works. Well planned and with amenities for living and leisure, the community was closely regulated, in the paternalist tradition. Nevertheless the quality of life was – in the 1890s – and still is of high quality.



## ***Modern Beatitudes***

The Beatitudes are among the best known and most valued passages of the Gospels. We considered what Beatitudes for today might look like, and offer the following.

1. Blessed is the country which welcomes the outsider and the disposed;  
For it shall receive new talents and diverse ways of living.

Blessed is the household which is open to share its meals with the lonely;  
For they shall receive the mutual support of others.

Blessed are the locals in a pub who care for one another and their families;  
For they shall be close to the Kingdom of God.

Blessed are the members of a class at school who respect and welcome their differences;  
For they shall go on to build a fair and just society.

2. Blessed are those who encourage and guide, for they shall receive encouragement in their turn.

Blessed are they who give up their place in the queue, for there will be enough to go around, pressed down and brimming over.

Blessed are those who say: 'Come and stay at my house', for they will never be left out in the cold.

Blessed are they who know that they already have enough, for they shall have treasure in heaven.

Blessed are the cracked, for they let in the light.

Blessed are those who expect little, for they shall not be disappointed.

3. Blessed are they who can see the glory of God in all around them; for they can become God's eyes in the world.

Blessed are they who can hear with the ear of the heart; for they shall discern God's calling.

Blessed are they who can delight and rejoice with God; for they shall be free.

Blessed are they who can walk cheerfully over the earth greeting that of God in every one; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (George Fox)

4. Blessed are those who pick up rubbish that others have dropped, for they might give people a sense of shared responsibility.

Blessed are the active for they keep things going.

Blessed are the thoughtful for they observe the World.

Blessed are those who use buses for they shall reduce congestion.

Blessed are those who eat slowly for they shall avoid indigestion.

Blessed are those who have grandchildren for they can see the future.

Blessed are those who lobby MPs for they can start change.

5. Blessed are the bog restorers for they shall renew the face of the earth.

Blessed are the cooks for they shall feed the hungry with their 5 a day.



Blessed are those who pray for others for they shall remember YOU.

Blessed are the geeks for they have an alternative reality.

Blessed are those who teach the children as they will show them how to love you.

Blessed are those who challenge the politicians for they will preserve our nation.

Blessed are those who lead saintly lives for they shall be our role models.

Blessed are the cleaners for they keep returning to dust.  
Blessed are the allotment holders for they will show others how to be self-sufficient.

Blessed are those who exercise for they shall be fit enough to care for others.

Blessed are those who tell stories for they shall teach many truths.

6. Blessed are those who hear God's laughter in a world full of noise.

Blessed are those who pause .....

## ***The AGM***

### ***Financial report***

Rob Fox reminded the meeting that CHRISM's financial affairs are handled by Christians in Secular Employment Trust (CHRISSET).

The 2015 accounts show a healthy surplus, largely accounted for by the recovery of £2,077 in Gift Aid repayments for the preceding three and a half years. They also include pre-payments in 2015 for the 2016 Reflective Weekend.

For accounting purposes subscription income is divided 2:1 between journal costs and membership support, the latter covering committee and general administration costs. Further costs are incurred to pay for public liability insurance and the website.

In answer to a question from the floor Rob observed that even without the additional Gift Aid recovery, the 2015 accounts would still show a surplus, completing the finances' recovery from losses in the two previous years. Consequently he proposed that no change be made to the current subscription rates.

### ***Elections***

Rebecca Craven was elected as Incoming Moderator (to Preside in 2017-18; Mike Harrison is Presiding Moderator for 2016-17). Having become the second person to have completed the two terms permitted by our constitution as both Moderator and Secretary, Margaret Joachim stood down from the latter post, to be succeeded by Sue Cossey. Margaret remains on the Committee as one of the three members elected for a year, along with Ruth Brothwell and – welcome addition – John Lees.

Phil Aspinall was elected CHRISM representative to CHRISSET, and as Treasurer Rob Fox is the Trustees representative to CHRISM. This just leaves the role of journal Editor, which Rob is happily handing over to Pauline Pearson! A smooth handover is aided by them now living a few minutes away from each other.

### ***Presiding Moderator's Report***

*Margaret Yates*

It has been a privilege to have spent the last twelve months as CHRISM's moderator. I feel that there has been more honour attached to the role, rather than real effort on my part due to the great team of people who actually make CHRISM work as an organisation.

First I would like to thank Margaret Joachim for the years of service that she has given to CHRISM in so many capacities, most recently as secretary. It was only on becoming moderator that I became

aware of the extent to which she holds CHRISM together. And this is always achieved without fuss, or bother, with superb efficiency and a light-humoured touch. It is a joy to work with Margaret.

Secondly there is the journal and I would like to thank Rob for once again stepping up to the plate and editing the journal for us. An editor's job is dependent on others - especially submission of quality copy and punctual delivery - otherwise the task is onerous and I fear that there have been times in the past when it has been. Thank you, Rob, for bearing with us all. Nevertheless, the committee over the past year have supported Rob by devising a number of topics related to work-based 'Rites of Passage' as themed issues for the journal (in addition to the current material) and then commissioning people to write on the topic. I hope that you enjoyed 'Exploitation' in April coinciding with the Pentecost reports. July is in press and is on 'Starting'; January will be 'Doing'; April 'Parables' and July 'Ending'. These journals provide a rich resource for those trying to make sense of today's world from a faith perspective, so thank you everyone.

Mike Harrison deserves our fulsome thanks for the meticulous and time-consuming work that he has undertaken in rationalising the membership lists of CHRISM. As a result we only send journals to people who have paid their subscriptions! The positive financial impact that this has had is of benefit to all of us.

Looking beyond the committee to our wider interdenominational community, I can report that Sue Cossey has been active in promoting and supporting MSEs in the URC, forming an NSM working group to this end.

Phil Aspinall has driven the international agenda with great energy and panache and we all owe him a debt of gratitude. I became aware of how much cajoling and encouragement was required by Phil and underpins the Pentecost weekends, this last year in Drogen. The topic of modern slavery was stimulating, refreshing and invigorating, providing material for the journal. We must continue to be outward looking and engage with the big issues confronting today's society and, dare I say it, prevent us becoming too 'parochial'.

Before I hand over to Mike I would like to share some reflections with you. In a recent article in *Church Times* (8 July 2016, p.21) Canon Alison Adams spoke of the important contribution to the Church made by people who bring "an injection of something from outside." "There's always an advantage to the Church if it has people who come from different backgrounds, at different times in their lives. People who are part of the way through their working lives are part of our rich tapestry. We need that tapestry for our future." Here, here say we at CHRISM. But she also talked about the difficulties and loneliness of this position. We need mentors and support systems so that we can fulfil God's calling. This is where regional networks such as Sue is developing within the URC, and those in the Church of England - such as in the dioceses of the north and in western-central England which includes Oxford - are so important. It is where members of CHRISM can play a role.

Within CHRISM we need to continue to provide pastoral support for each other. MSE can be a liminal and often isolated situation and the awareness of fellow Christians working in secular environments can help to break down individualism and create communities of faith, despite the institutions - to use the headings from our conference.

It has been a very good year. Thank you everyone.

### ***Incoming Moderator's Remarks***

Mike thanked Margaret Yates for her cheerful presence and ability to keep committee meetings moving.

He then posed the question: 'What time is it?' Where are we in history and what does it look like 'from the outside'? What time is it for MSEs, and for CHRISM? Have we matured? Do we still have the original pioneering zeal? What time is it for the church? There are reorganisations, new initiatives and decades of evangelism, but it is still a solid, old institution. What time is it for society? Amos used the metaphor of the plumb-line to measure Israel against the straight and narrow. How would our society measure up? Is it past recovery? Amos observed that God had given up and moved on. Jeremiah said the same a century later, but when the people asked him what they should do, his answer was to carry on as normal and keep on

witnessing. What should our witness look like in a (possibly silly) and chaotic society?

Mike observed that on paper the only duty of the Moderator is to conduct four committee meetings and an AGM. He hoped that members would take the opportunity to tell him what he could most usefully do in addition. As an Anglican but not a member of the Church of England, there might be times when he could claim not to be aware of the conventions.

***Litany for those who work in Commerce and Industry***<sup>1</sup>

*Contributed by Phil Aspinall*

For the gifts of knowledge, skill and innovation upon which our industries are founded, let us bless the Lord.     **Thanks be to God**

For the opportunities to work and for the ability to enjoy the fruits of our labour, let us bless the Lord.     **Thanks be to God**

For those who pioneer the technologies to enhance design, production and transportation, let us bless the Lord.     **Thanks be to God**

For those whose skills are in commerce, finance and the service industries, let us bless the Lord.     **Thanks be to God**

For those in positions of authority in government and industry, that they may use their power for the benefit of the whole community, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer**

For economists and those who seek to understand and influence the development of the global market, let us pray to the Lord

**Lord, hear our prayer**

For all the leaders and members of Trades' Unions, that the weak may be protected from exploitation and discrimination, and that all may receive the due reward for their labour, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer**

For those whose livelihoods and communities are affected for good or ill by the liberalisation of trade and the changing nature of the workplace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer**

For those whose work exposes them to danger, that they may benefit from the best health and safety practices, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer**

For the victims of unemployment and those who feel they are not valued by society, that they may be given new hope and purpose, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer**

For all who suffer, particularly as a result of industrial accident or diseases associated with their employment, that they may receive care, appropriate help and opportunity for meaningful work; let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer**

### ***A Blessing*<sup>1</sup>**

May God our Father, source of all creation and creativity, pour his blessing upon you in all your daily life and work. **Amen**

May our Lord Jesus Christ, who came that we may have life in all its abundance, transform your lives with the joy of his presence. **Amen**

May the Holy Spirit, who gives us such a diversity of gifts, inspire and guide you in all your ways. **Amen**

### ***Prayer at Work*<sup>2</sup>**

Some prayers for use when thinking about the world of work.

#### **- Our daily Work**

Heavenly Father, who knows all our thoughts and actions, grant that we may sincerely and honestly serve you in our daily work. Help us always to strive for justice, to show love, and to

demonstrate that in all we have to do, we are your faithful servants. This we ask in your name. Amen

- **For young people leaving school**

God of love and Father of all, we pray for young people leaving school to take their place in the wider life of the world. As they face the challenges of the future, give them your support in all their worthy activities. Help them to discover their vocation and the joy of service to others. This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

- **For work done in the home**

Lord of all wisdom, be with us in our homes as all of us, women and men, face our daily tasks. Guide us when we are tired and feel impatient. Help us in all we have to do – housework, caring for young and old, gardening and maintenance – and show us the ways in which shared duties in the home can bring love, tranquillity and peace. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

- **For Forgiveness**

When we put unfair burdens on people we work with, our customers or clients and the people who serve us, forgive us Lord. Amen

- **For unemployed people**

Lord God, our heavenly Father, we commend to your care all who are unemployed or facing redundancy. Grant that no bitterness may blot their lives, but that they may experience inner peace and discover new opportunities for fulfilling your purpose in a rapidly changing world. Show to them your love, and help us to understand their anger and frustration when their energy and skills are unused. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

- **For those who work in caring services**

Almighty God,

- For the work of people who supply our everyday needs,
- For the work of people who care for the elderly, housebound, handicapped, and the very young in our community,
- For the work of people who help fight illness, and those who provide care and support in hospital,
- For the work of people who voluntarily give of their time and skills to the benefit of those who are disadvantaged,

We want to say "Thank you, Lord". Amen

Acknowledgements:

1. From the Opening Service of Industry Year 1996, Lichfield Cathedral
2. Prepared by Birmingham Industrial Chaplains for Industrial Sunday 1996

### ***Hymn for care for resources***

*(Several tune options, but goes well with 'Slane')*

1. Lord, you have given this world to our care;  
in all we do Lord, may we be aware  
of our own riches and curb any greed.  
May we not claim, Lord, any more than we need.
2. May we discern, Lord, when policies hold,  
risks for the helpless, less able or old.  
Are scarce resources unthinkingly used,  
terms and conditions of workers abused?
3. If there are times, Lord, when something seems wrong,  
forces against us feel potent and strong;  
if we feel side-lined and have little choice  
despite the challenge may we find a voice.
4. Give us the wisdom when power's in our hands  
to exploit it; may we understand  
all its seduction, its drive to control -  
keep loving justice as our central goal.



5. Help us to think, Lord, what our aims should be, what counts as progress and what sets us free, help us determine where true value lies. May all our actions be right in God's eyes.

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### ***Create Some Spiritual Space***

*Peter King*

A number of us from the Parish attended the Licensing of Stuart Lee as Chaplain to the Richmond Charities. It was a simple but moving service. The reading from Micah 6:6-18 reminded us "to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God". The second reading from Luke 12:22-34 reminds us that we should not be anxious about our life, in particular what we should eat or what we should wear. We should not be of an anxious mind for God knows of our need and will provide. These were not only wonderful words for the start of a new ministry but wise words for us all.

The warm summer days of holiday are fading into the past; the new changes at school have taken shape and study has begun in earnest. The Universities are gathering in their students. The schedule and demands of employment and working is in full swing and domestic responsibilities have resumed their normal busy routine. Cold temperatures are approaching and long dark days of winter are not far off. It is so easy to feel to be on the treadmill or to be confined by duty, responsibilities and a hundred and one pressures on our purses, time and commitments. It is in those situations that our faith gives us the freedom to "be" as well as "do".

It is so easy to worry and to fret, particularly about the future and things to come but little will come of it other than more anxiety and upset. I have a real fear of being late so I try to set off early, looking at my watch every second in case I am behind schedule. I usually arrive very early and wonder why I risked a heart attack on the journey!

There was a well-known advertisement which said "an X a day helps you work, rest and play." Hopefully that X is our Faith to give us that space to wonder; to pray; to be in awe of the wonders of creation,

and to rest in the freedom and warmth which love and hope brings. The weeds of care drag us to the earth limiting our experiencing the liberation promised to us by Christ if we trust in his love and support.

We often pride ourselves of being independent and self-made individuals but the reverse is mostly true. We depend on the love and support of others to grow and become creative. Let us trust in our loving Saviour a little more for in our Faith he gives us the grace to be and to grow in his light, even through the dark days of winter.

*(Editor's note: The Richmond Charities is an alms-house charity based in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames with its origins dating back to 1600. The charity provides affordable housing for people in housing need. It also administers two relief-in-need welfare charities, a relief-in-sickness charity and a very small charity that awards small quarterly grants to four deserving spinsters!)*

## ***Faith and Work***

*Peter Green\**

*Reflections on the inter relation between work and faith in the field of international education.*

Writing "to all God's people scattered over the whole world" James [1] has little time for a faith that is merely an egotistic expression of self-reflection and perhaps, even, ambition. In his very practical manner the concepts of faith and of work are inseparable. Work is the word made flesh and we are implored not to deceive ourselves "by just listening to his word", instead we are to take the word beyond itself and "put it into practice". For James, faith becomes authentic only after it has been tested by its conscious application in the inferno of experience thus developing a Christian maturity that reflects God in Christ.

Forty-six years in the relative peace and quiet of academia contrasts starkly to the experience of working in some thirty-six countries of the world of which probably twenty-eight would fall into the category of poverty stricken when contrasted to the other eight opulent places

within six of the seven continents. In more ways than the obvious geographical distance it's a long way from Durham to the Islamic University of Gaza, from the stick schools of the Namibian desert to the towers of Moscow University, from wealthy America to impoverished Ghana, from the enchanting natural beauty of Papua New Guinea to the human ugliness of refugee camps that disgracefully lie dotted around our world. On almost any scale that may be chosen, these places and the people who live and die in them, are extensively different. However Christians should be aware of the danger of what James [2] twice refers to as "partiality". This is perhaps more plainly stated in modern translations of his letter, as "never treat people in different ways according to their outward appearance" for, when he repeats the warning he adds, that if you do "you are guilty of sin".

Fortunately in-flight restrictions on baggage relate only to the physical belongings that one can carry; there is, as yet, no way in which limitations can be extended to the spiritual and psychological luggage that one takes on board at the beginning of a journey. Returning, after the completion of an overseas assignment, the physical baggage is rarely the same either in content, size or weight; neither, for that matter, are one's spiritual effects. After innumerable visits to some of the world's poorest countries trying to assist them in their development I look back on my experiences and ask how they might have influenced my faith and, secondly, how my faith might have influenced those experiences. How has this work moulded my ministry as a Christian, my work, my mind, my self?

Some experiences have been very intense indeed. It was on Tuesday, 24th. August, 1976 that I underwent, what I record in my daily journal as, "one of my most disturbing experiences" for it was on that day that I literally came face to face with leprosy. Since then I have never heard any of the numerous scriptural references to leprosy (whether or not that is an accurate description is irrelevant) without seeing vividly those that I met on that day in Bots'abelo Leprosy Hospital, Lesotho. I do not now have to imagine leprosy; I don't have to try and picture what the 'Good News' translation insipidly calls (if it was leprosy) "a dreaded skin disease" [3]. The ravages of leprosy are imprinted; I have seen clawed hands, rotting flesh, deformities; I've smelt it; I've talked with those who suffer;

what *was* the young eighteen-year-old girl thinking behind that sad countenance? That night I suffered with them but in my clean, comfortable bed where my mind was in turmoil as I thought and cried. Two years national service in a Royal Naval hospital had made sure that I was no stranger to death, illness and disease: my reaction to leprosy was not the anguish of innocence. My faith strengthened me to perceive these sufferers without partiality, to think of them in the image of God, to talk with them, to pray for them realistically and to work for them and those that might have the misfortune to follow them. I was to return to Bots'abelo many times to see how others had exercised the hands of Christ in that place: my faith in the capacity of men and women who are unreservedly committed to working as Christ on earth has been strengthened [4]. James' message that work is a necessary accompaniment to the insufficiency of words came to life in practical compassion; this *was* the word in the flesh.

It could have been otherwise. Such a personal, directly intense, experience might have shattered a weak faith to the point of destruction so I came to the uncomfortable realisation that my faith must be kept in pristine condition: it had to be exercised. I learned to be tenacious in the working out of my faith; I would not be torn apart by the challenge of doubt. There is nothing wrong with the questioning of an enquiring mind indeed "absolute certainty makes faith redundant" [5] but the Christian academic mind especially has to recognise the pre-eminence of spiritual faith over human intellect. Even if the concept of Christian faith is that of a belief that cannot be cognitively proven I nevertheless recognised that faith is a trusting dependence on the unqualified reliability of another. If I were to distrust the veracity of Christ then my Christianity is as nothing; so my faith becomes the motivation of my Christian living wherever in the world I might find myself. Emulating God in Christ Jesus demands a conscious effort to lead a life of faith. A practising Christian takes their faith into every human activity; therefore, faith becomes part of the experience itself. This is what Motyer calls "the life of active consecration" [6].

In that life of vigorous dedication both faith and work have direction and strength. There have been many occasions, in various locations,

when challenged by a problem, that I have implemented the gospel of possibility. What God's omnipotence makes possible we so often make improbable. Unable to see clearly the way forward through some difficulty it is all too easy to confine human thinking to the boundaries of human capacity when we should be exercising our Christian faith breaking out beyond these incarcerating limitations. We bind ourselves prisoner when we should be excelling in the liberty of obedience so that we can be blessed in what we are doing [7]. Prayerfully initiated this is not to be irresponsible: it is to be faithful.

For me this was reinforced in Zambia in 1987 when I had to advise three Christian farmers that their vision for a small correspondence based secondary school for twenty-five pupils was not practical and that to be educationally viable the proposed school needed to be at least ten times that size. I placed a new vision before them that they implemented with sacrificial vigour so now a multi-ethnic, co-educational, Christian school is firmly established providing high quality education for some 380 pupils from ages six to eighteen. Chengelo School (Chengelo is a local word meaning 'As a Witness to the Light') [8] has now served the gospel of Christ for nineteen years but it could have floundered before admitting its first pupil. The original vision needed releasing from the constraints of caution so that the faith of those three Christian farmers, who are all men of prayer and strong faith, could be liberated to work for Christ who has proved to be utterly faithful and trustworthy. If it is accepted that faith has direction it might be, because of its personal nature, that the route points to oneself.

This is certainly not a matter of faith *in* oneself but faith in the purposes and spirit of Christ working *through* oneself. Am I sufficiently strong in my faith to exercise Christ's purposes? When under severe pressure it is understandable for anyone to question their ability to undertake the task Christ has set before them because sometimes that can seem monumental. I did wonder what the outcome of being held by the South African Defence Force during the apartheid days would be and, sometime later, when held at gunpoint on the border of Botswana, how this fitted into my Christian ministry!

Often have I questioned my ability to contain Christ's demands within my human personality and abilities but time and experience has shown that Christ never asks of his disciples anything that is not within their combined efforts to complete. There have been times when the question posed by Paul, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" [9] has upheld and sustained me when I was confronted with the unusual, the potentially dangerous and the downright offensive. One monumental task to confront me was the founding of the Durham-Lesotho LINK that I started in 1986 and which has just completed twenty-one years of service to the Gospel of Christ. The first six years of its work is recorded in a small publication, significantly entitled, "One in Word and Work" [10] in which Christians in both countries exclaim in word and song "We are one body in Christ". It is sometimes quite difficult for erudite academics to accept that *impartiality* means the recognition of faith and abilities in others who must be allowed to exercise their ministry to us. I had to learn to receive gracefully and gratefully. I rejoice that in January 2008 one of the activities of the LINK is to be an evangelistic mission in Durham to be led by a team of Basotho. Africa coming to Europe to preach the Gospel may sound to some like turning tradition on its head but this is *impartiality* in action.

Faith, not surprisingly, is rather like love in that it cannot be seen, it cannot be touched, or measured and it only becomes evident as it is exercised. Hence the importance that James gives to it being accompanied by works. "As the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead" [11]. Faith is not some emotional sentimental feeling though some do tend to reduce it to that level. It is much more substantial than that. In its subjective form (the manner in which it has been used in this article) it is the childlike trusting acceptance of the Gospel message and, as such, is a tough and very often acutely uncomfortable phenomenon that requires us to make conscious and rational selfless decisions. This does not mean that faith is the unquestioning, passive acceptance of something that we don't quite understand but it is the recognition of its presence as a means to believing the message of the Gospel. That genuine faith, like genuine love, will test the most

committed Christian person is undoubtedly true but what might not be so immediately apparent is that the work that follows will be equally demanding.

We ought not to forget that testing will undoubtedly come in a variety of ways, some of them rather uncomfortable. On the way back to the UK after a particularly gruelling medical assignment in Uganda in the time of Idi Amin's reign of terror I missed a connecting flight in Brussels and was accommodated in a luxurious airport hotel. That evening at dinner I calculated, on the back of a paper serviette, that the meal I was eating was costing slightly more than one month's wage earned by the nurse with whom I had been working just the day before. Being aware that financial contrasts can be invidious it is often helpful to reverse the elements of the equation so I recall asking myself if the meal in front of me was really worth one month of my salary which at that time was around two thousand pounds a month! Such is one distance between Uganda to Durham via Brussels. As I write the leader of Her Majesty's UK opposition political party is studying poverty in Africa, and what to do about it, but poverty is only one component of a problem that has not been fully identified. My experience suggests that he should also study the more uncomfortable, and related issue of wealth in Europe, and what to do about that, which is likely to be a much more protracted difficulty because then we, personally, become part of the problem. The 'Make Poverty History' campaign had one very weak fault on which it will inevitably wane; it ignored the uncomfortable obverse of the dilemma, affluence.

The concepts of faith and work as exercised in Christian experience are inseparable and when prayerfully used without the partiality despised by our Lord's brother provide a liberation of possibilities and unrealised capabilities. Working for Christ as his hands is, of course, an enormous responsibility that demands of each Christian a humility that, however uncomfortable, recognises weaknesses both in others and ourselves. For the Christian the interaction between faith and experience is a continuous relationship and an unremitting encounter between two powerful fundamentals of the Christian life. I cannot claim that my faith sustained me because that would contain an element of me; I had to be completely and utterly reliant upon Christ using such faith, knowledge and skill and ability that he had given

me and which I brought to the work around the world. I knew that Christ would be faithful; what I had to do was to be personally faithful to Him.

*\* Dr. Peter Green studied education and theology at Keswick Hall College of Education, and after a short period of school teaching continued his studies in cognitive psychology and philosophy at the University of Nottingham where he developed an interest in the educational influence of ethnocentrism. For ten years he was Vice-Principal of St. Hild's College and then Deputy Principal of the College of St Hild and St. Bede, University of Durham. He also served on the General Synod of the Church of England and its Board for Higher Education. As a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Newcastle he expanded his doctoral research into ethnocentrism, ethnic self-concepts and their influence on cognition contributing to the Government report "Education for All" under the chairmanship of Lord Swann. Although Peter has also carried out professional consultancies in higher education for the World Bank, the European Commission and various national Governments mostly his work has been voluntary. He was awarded the MBE in 1994.*

[1] James 1:1 (TEV)

[2] James 2:1 and 2:9 (RSV)

[3] Luke 5:12 (TEV)

[4] Phillips, Margaret: "Do not unsaddle your Horse"; Mathabo Press, 2002.

[5] Carey, George: "My Journey, Your Journey"; Lion Publishing, 1996. p.75.

[6] Motyer, J. A.: "The Tests of Faith"; Inter-Varsity Press, 1970. p.59

[7] James 1:25 (RSV)

[8] Collingwood, Jeremy: "As a Witness to the Light"; Terra Nova Publications, 2006.

[9] Romans 8:31 (TEV)

[10] Astley, Jeff and Green, Peter: "One in Word and Work"; Durham-Lesotho LINK, 1992.

[11] James 2:26 (RSV)



***European Worker Priests:  
Papers from the 2016 Pentecost gathering***

***Paper from England***

**Towards Liberation from the new forms of Slavery in our world of today: in work, through immigration, among women, among young people and others .....**

**1. How do we experience these people in our lives ?**

Slavery is illegal in all the countries of the world, but nevertheless it exists: some frankly criminal, among exploited immigrants, through economics, because of religious codes. It is estimated that there are more than 27 million people in slavery world-wide – more than throughout human history. And in the UK, between 10,000 and 13,000 (but there are perhaps others, more hidden)

They are people who are compromised, as immigrants, perhaps without papers, or who have been the victims of trafficking for prostitution or for non-regulated work. They are the victims of criminal actions; those who carry them out should be punished, and we should report traffickers to the authorities.

They work under zero-hours contracts, especially in the conditions of poverty which exist in many districts. These people, bound to a single boss who has no obligation to give them work or to pay them, are unable to work elsewhere. Often their papers are held by the employer.

There are some, in families, where their freedom is limited by the practices of some religious groups, particularly women and young girls.

Our consumer society wants always to buy goods as cheaply as possible. So those who make these goods often work under conditions of slavery (in the UK and overseas). But the problem is wider than simply these articles, frequently large international companies have divisions where the workers work under slavery. For example, the newspapers tell us of the fishing industry for

prawns in Thailand, the production by Nestlé of coffee in Brazil and of chocolate in the Ivory Coast, and for workers from Myanmar who work in Qatar.

In Saudi Arabia, and some other states in the Gulf Region, the faith, interpreted strictly by the Wahabists, tolerates slavery and those who do not agree are condemned as heretics.

### **Examples given in a TV programme "The Business of Slavery in Great Britain", 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

An English firm called "Kozee Sleep" supplied beds to many large well-known chains of shops (Next, John Lewis etc). The workers came from Hungary – the traffickers had promised them € 250 per week; they received € 12. The owner of the business paid the traffickers 4 per hour for each worker – and the slaves worked over 60 hours per week, often 15-16 hours a day ! Fourteen people lived in one small house – they could not escape, as the traffickers "know your families and where they live". The traffickers and the owner were arrested and convicted.

In the fishing industry in Scotland, there are immigrants (for example, from the Philippines) who remain for 9 – 12 months on a boat. They work 100 hours per week – 7 to 10 days at sea and then a brief return to port, with the sole purpose of delivering the catch to shore. They must stay on the boat – like prisoners – as they do not have a visa to permit their entry into the country. The traffickers had promised them € 1250 per month; they had received € 600 – and they have to accept it in order to support their families back home.

In many English towns there are now many hand car washes. They are not controlled. The owners are only concerned for the money – not for the workers. For example, young Poles who live in a derelict house and work without papers are paid €50 for a 10 hour day.

This slavery is all around us – on our streets and in our towns and cities. We support it when we go into shops, cafes, car washes.... No one can say "I did not know".

## **2. How can we construct together a sustainable world for us and for future generations ?**

Under the Directive 2011/36/UE made in the European Parliament on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 "concerning the prevention of the traffic of human beings and the fight against this phenomenon, as well as the protection of the victims" we have in England the law on "Modern Slavery" made in 2015. The similar law in Northern Ireland, from 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015, contains several important aspects:

- The representation of interests and rights of child victims by an independent Guardian,
- Aid and support for those who want to get out of prostitution,
- A minimum of 2 year sentence and maximum life sentence for those convicted of trafficking offences,
- The criminalisation of the purchase of sexual services,
- Statutory support by the Department of Justice for adult victims of human trafficking,
- Statutory defence for those victims forced to undertake criminal acts caused by exploitation.

This law in Northern Ireland was based on the faith of Christians who had worked together with the regional government. And they have influenced the legislation in the other countries of the UK.

### **What can we do ?:**

- Be conscious of the abuses we encounter in our own lives : in restaurants, those who do jobs for us, in the house or garden or in our buildings. We should assure ourselves that they work under good contracts and that they are paid correctly.
- Not buy those goods where we are uncertain of their origin.
- Not to be involved in companies and businesses which are associated with slavery, as shareholder or employee, and to avoid buying their products where possible.
- Engage with campaigns against slavery, for example, Amnesty International, Oxfam, Labour behind the Label etc.

"Walk Free" is the name of a global movement fighting against modern slavery. The production of cotton is one of the industries where there is much slavery. For example, in Uzbekistan thousands

of people have to leave their houses and their own jobs to work in the cotton fields – at the command of the Uzbek government. “Walk Free” want to stop this, by exercising financial pressure on this government.

Stan explained: “During several visits to India I have seen things going on in houses which have disturbed me. But, as a visitor, one can do nothing except perhaps to make suggestions to encourage a different way of life (but without causing offence). But our hosts sometimes give a little smile and explain that, without this job in their house, the young people would have no work. And they receive food and accommodation.”

### **3. How do we discover and live the elements of faith and Christian hope in our lives engaged in this world ?**

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke,  
set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter –  
when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn  
away from your own flesh and blood?

*Isaiah 58 vv 6-7*

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.

Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

*Proverbs 31 vv 8-9*

### ***Morning Prayers for the Feast of Pentecost, 15th May 2016***

A poster, published by the local authority and the local Anglican Diocese of Derby asks the question: What are the signs that the person you are with is a victim of Modern Slavery? The worship is based on the poster and initiative Derby diocese is a partner in.

Details of this can be found at:

<http://www.derby.anglican.org/en/news/human-trafficking/tackling-modern-slavery-together-one-year-on-event.html>

We sing together:

**Kyrie kyrie eleison, kyrie kyrie eleison**

***"Does not know their home / work address."***

Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.

***Ruth 1v16***

I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.

***Ruth 2v11***

My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

***Is 32v18***

**Kyrie kyrie eleison, kyrie kyrie eleison**

***"They express fear, distrust, anxiety."***

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

***Acts 7v54***

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!

***Luke 12v22-24***

**Kyrie kyrie eleison, kyrie kyrie eleison**

***"Limited contact with family and/or friends"***

Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"

***Matt 12v48***

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."  
***Jn 19v26-27***

**Kyrie kyrie eleison, kyrie kyrie eleison**

***"Money deducted from their salary for food"***

Those who were full hire themselves out for food, but those who were hungry are hungry no more.  
***1 Sam 2v5***

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.  
***Is 55v1***

**Kyrie kyrie eleison, kyrie kyrie eleison**

***"Passport / documents held by someone else"***

Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.  
***Matt 26v48***

The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ***Jn 10v3***

**Kyrie kyrie eleison, kyrie kyrie eleison**

***"Their movements restricted by others"***

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!  
***Phil 2v8***

Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.  
***Jn 21v18***

**Kyrie kyrie eleison, kyrie kyrie eleison**

## **Psalm 103**

***Response: Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the Earth***

**A Reading:** Acts 2, 1 – 8, 12

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?"

*Syrians, Africans; those who live in Turkey, the Balkans, Greece, in the "Jungle" of Calais; those who come from Afghanistan, Sudan, of all faiths and of no faith, from all different cultures, how do we hear them speaking in our own languages of the wonders of God ?*

Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

**Chant: Veni Sancte Spiritus; Veni Sancte Spiritus;  
Veni, veni Sancte Spiritus; Veni Sancte Spiritus**

**Let us pray :**

- For those who live under slavery
- For the groups, charities and organisations who work to fight slavery
- For those people with the courage to save and liberate those in slavery

- For our colleagues and neighbours, that we may see the new forms of slavery – and react
- For ourselves, that we may receive the energy to fight against all forms of slavery

## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Two Readings**

You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know

"There is a principle above everything that is political. And when I reflect on the command that says, 'Thou shalt do no murder', believing the authority to be divine, how can I dare set up any reasonings of my own against it? And, Sir, when we think of eternity, and the future consequences of all human conduct, what is there in this life which should make any man contradict the principles of his own conscience, the principles of justice, the laws of religion, and of God?"

William Wilberforce, "Against Slavery", 1789

"But why does the New Testament not fight against slavery. The most far reaching conclusions have been drawn from this one single fact, with a complete disregard for all the New Testament statements of principle. The usual explanation by reference to the expectation of the immediate return is not conclusive. Either the fact of the dominion of Christ over all fields of life was to be taken seriously, in which case the expectation of the impending end could only call for an even quicker realisation of this dominion in order to prepare the way for the coming of Christ, or else it was not to be taken seriously at all."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, «Ethics»

### ***Moving experiences***

*Rob Fox*

Louisa and I are probably fairly unusual in that we haven't moved house since we married in 1984. We have had a long-term aim to move to Louisa's native North East (Durham), where family members



still live. That our son, David, decided to stay following university in Newcastle was another nudge; but the arrival of no.1 grandchild (Benjamin; 1 in September) renewed interest in migrating.

That it was the right move at the right time quickly became apparent when I asked my line manager to alert his opposite number that should any vacancies arise in Newcastle I was interested. Expecting a timescale of several months imagine my surprise when he came to me the following day saying, "As it happens ...". Formal processes were of course observed but there wasn't much doubt of the outcome, and from 1 August I was officially 'on the books' of HMRC's Large Business outpost in Newcastle. Work could not have been more helpful (short of funding the move, but that is as rare as hen's teeth in the public sector these days). I was able to split my time between the Manchester and Newcastle offices for several weeks and given every practical support in handing over my existing work cases in Manchester and adopting another set in Newcastle. The settling into the new post has gone so smoothly I've even been asked to judge the offerings in the office 'Bake Off' competition twice! Being compelled to thoroughly sample nine drizzle cakes is just one of those crosses one has to bear!

The parish we are licensed to in Manchester (Louisa is a Reader) has also been very supportive, notwithstanding the playful exclamations of 'Traitor!' from some. 25 years in one parish is a long time and many had, I think, assumed we would be there for keeps. But after the initial shock we have been sent on our way with on a warm breeze of love and goodwill, with adjustments made to service rotas to give us space for the practical arrangements.

The experience of dealing with the Diocese has been something of a contrast. Having written to the Archdeacon and Area Bishop within days of learning the timetable of the move, and asking what formalities needed to be completed, I had a lovely letter back from the former, thanking me for my various contributions to the diocese and support for MSEs. It didn't however answer the questions I'd asked, and not a dicky bird was heard from the latter. The Team Rector twice reminded the Area Bishop that he hadn't relied to me and, after nearly three months, I received a letter from the Diocesan

Secretary's secretary asking me to write a formal letter of resignation to the Diocesan Bishop. This done I was then asked to return my License to the Diocese for cancellation (it arrived back, cancelled, the day I wrote this article). Finally, a two sentence letter arrived from the Area Bishop wishing me well.

I still haven't heard anything from the Chapter. But then I haven't been to a meeting for two years as it insists on only one evening meeting a year, and a work trip prevented me making the October, 2015, meeting. At least I know that my work colleagues value my presence and support.

Whilst I appreciate that the Diocese has greater legal obligations to its employees than for its volunteers, I still feel to have been treated as a 'none person' in this process. What I've experienced from my employer, my work colleagues and the marvellous folk in the various congregations of the team parish I've just left is in marked contrast with that of the Diocese. As the Church of England (and not alone here) becomes more dependent on voluntary ministers to keep its worship and public functions going, isn't it about time it appreciated and supported us a little more?

### ***John Atherton, 1939-2016 – an appreciation***

*Rob Fox*

At some time many of us will have encountered the Revd Professor John Atherton: through his books (such as 'Christianity and the Market', 1992; 'Transfiguring Capitalism', 2008), his contributions to *Faith in the City*, his work for the *William Temple Foundation*, or, like me, in person.

John was one of the leading figures in Anglican social theology, in particular ethics and economics, and worked tirelessly for the *William Temple Foundation* to the end. He trained at Mirfield then served in Glasgow and Aberdeen before transferring to Manchester in the 1960s as Rector of St. George's, Hulme; at the time the community was being ripped apart by one of the largest urban redevelopments

in Europe. At the same time he was also Missioner with the Greater Manchester Industrial Mission, a focus dear to his heart.

In 1974 he joined the *William Temple Foundation*, with David Jenkins (whom he succeeded as Director), shortly after its move into the Manchester Business School (which has itself exerted a global influence in the past 40 years). He then succeeded another mentor, Ronald Preston, as Canon Theologian at Manchester Cathedral, a post he excelled in for 20 years. Nationally, John served on the Church of England's Board for Social Responsibility, contributing especially to Industrial and Economic Affairs sub-committee. This work led to *Faith in the City* (1985), which is well worth re-visiting.

John's Doctoral thesis was on R H Tawney (*Religion and the rise of Capitalism*, 1926), supervised by Ronald Preston, who had known both Tawney and Bishop Temple. (CHRISM 'old-timers' may remember Michael Ranken waxing lyrical about Ronnie, whom I also had the privilege of meeting several times).

John was an engaging speaker, cogent debater and passionate about applying our faith to every part of life, as individuals and society. He will be sorely missed and will continue to challenge.

## ***Events***

### ***Godly responses to the passing of Christendom: reality, lament, promise***

A public lecture by the Rev Professor Pat Keifert, Luther Seminary, St Paul Minnesota. 7 November 2016, 7.30pm, at Harriet Monsell Lecture Theatre, Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford. This is a joint event with the Church Mission Society and St Benet's Hall, Oxford University, with a response from Professor Werner Jeanrond, St Benet's Hall.

Patrick Keifert is professor of systematic theology at Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota, USA. He is also president and director of research of the Church Innovations Institute, a church-related non-profit organisation. Patrick has been working

in congregational development towards mission for **more** than 30 years on four continents. For the last six years he has worked in the UK, developing the Partnership for Missional Church process with more than 60 congregations. His publications include: *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism* (1992), *Testing the Spirits* (2006) and *We are Here Now* (2006).

Werner Jeanrond is master of St Benet's Hall, Oxford. He teaches contemporary systematic theology, hermeneutics, theological method and German literature. His most recent publication is *A Theology of Love* (2010).

The evening will be chaired by Rt Rev Humphrey Southern, principal of Ripon College Cuddesdon.

To book contact Gill Keeble at Ripon College Cuddesdon  
[gill.keeble@rcc.ac.uk](mailto:gill.keeble@rcc.ac.uk)

### ***Research into ministry***

A day conference to share **research into ministry and ministerial formation** will take place at Regent's Park College, Oxford, on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The purpose is to test out the possibility of an **ecumenical 'Centre for Ministry'** encouraging the sharing of academic research in these areas and complementary to the work of the Theological Educators' Network and the theological educators' network within BIAPT.

There will be a number of short papers given which arise from current research and writings projects, but also significant time for a conversation about whether this possibility has a future and what it might look like. To book a place or for more information contact: Anthony Clarke, at Regent's Park College,  
[anthony.clarke@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:anthony.clarke@theology.ox.ac.uk)

### ***The Kingdom of Heaven is like ... Parables of MSE***

## ***CHRISM Reflective Weekend 2017***

This year we return to ***The Briery, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, 24 - 26 February, 2017***, ([www.briery.org.uk](http://www.briery.org.uk)), a lovely venue many will remember from 2012.

Though situated in the picturesque Yorkshire Dales, beneath the eponymous Moor, Ilkley is surprisingly easy to reach, being about half an hour off the A1M, half an hour by rail from Leeds (itself a major rail hub), and about 20 minutes from Leeds / Bradford airport (an option to consider if you are travelling a distance). Most rooms are single and en suite. Cost for the weekend (dinner Friday to after lunch on Sunday) is £140 for members and spouses, £150 for non-members. Please return the enclosed booking form to Rob Fox (details on the form and the inside rear cover).

**Please advertise this event as widely as possible locally – especially among MSEs / SSMs you know, and your local / regional ministry advisers.**

It is more than 10 years since looked at what a Parable of the Kingdom might look like today.

Storytelling is tremendously powerful. It is one of the oldest human traditions – way back at the dawn of human history we can picture the family huddled in a cave, or the tribe around a big fire, listening to a story. Stories passed the time and were entertaining, but they were much more than that. History, culture and religion were enshrined in story, essential knowledge was passed on through story, genealogies established and remembered, old friendships and hatreds rehearsed and renewed or lamented.

At the very beginning of the Bible, the first three chapters of Genesis preserve two different stories of the creation, one originating from a nomadic desert tribe (for whom the Garden of Eden would naturally be an oasis in the desert) while the other came from an agricultural people living in a fertile coastal land with rivers and ports, whose idea of Eden was an island in the sea.

Jesus was a natural storyteller. Again and again, when seeking to make a particular point, he seizes on the device of a story to illustrate his meaning. His stories are invariably built round everyday situations and experiences which would be familiar to his audience. Sometimes he uses well-known stories of the day, but adapts them to give a sting in the tail, jerking his hearers from comfortable enjoyment to consideration of something new and surprising. He signals his stories clearly: "A man was building his house...", "A sower went out to sow his seed...", "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho...", "A woman had ten silver coins...", and, most directly and most frequently, "The kingdom of heaven is like...". Sometimes he explains the story; sometimes he leaves his listeners to work the meaning out for themselves.

We who minister in secular employment find ourselves required to use the everyday language of the workplace to "see and tell the Christian story there". We cannot hide behind the language of theology when talking to our colleagues. Story is an important tool for us too, and we find ourselves using twenty-first century examples to help us put our points across.

### ***Advance dates for 2017!***

***CHRISM Annual Conference – 14-16 July, at Westminster College, Cambridge. (<http://www.westminster.cam.ac.uk/>)***

***CHRISM Reflective weekend – the old favourite, Holland House, near Evesham, Worcestershire, 23-25 February 2018.***

### ***Resources***

***The Trove*** (<http://www.discipleshiptrove.com>) is an on-line portal for Christian resources, listing various types of resource (books, courses, materials) that can be downloaded free from this site or ordered / bought from a supplier partner.

It is searchable by 'All', Age Groups, Course length, Group size, Theme (the most useful for faith and work, for example), Tradition,

Denomination. Some 'test' searches revealed it has a considerable body of material available.