

Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry

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

Editorial

There must be something significant about 'putting the Journal to bed' on April Fools' Day, but quite what eludes me. It is a good opportunity to remind myself of just what MSE is about. The last couple of months have been even more hectic than ever, and though I can't quite match the far-flung destinations some CHRISM folk have been to recently, I've seen the inside of plenty of trains and 'planes – but not boats (yet!).

This edition has very much been a case of an embarrassment of riches. The Journal has to end up in a multiple of 4 pages, so to include all the worthy items it has become rather large and danger of damaging your floor as it drops through the letter box. The main feature this month is the third and final part of Tim Key's item on the Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the United Reformed Church. If ever there is an objection that MSE is not a cross-church phenomenon, Tim's research roundly proves the opposite. It is both reassuring and disappointing that Ministers in Secular Employment across many churches experience the same frustrations and lack of appreciation by the church authorities, while making an inestimable contribution to the mission of God's people. It is too a very perceptive and enlightening piece that will provide food for thought for many.

MSEs occasionally strike back, which is just what Gareth Miller has done, with a radical blueprint for re-organising the Church of England! A summary is included here, with a link to the main article. I do think Gareth's ideas have merit, though when change is mentioned in connection with the C of E, the title of the official history of Manchester Diocese comes to mind: *Like a mighty tortoise*. For what it's worth, I think the highest hurdle is that the C of E is not really a national church, but a loose federation of dioceses. Anyway, Gareth does invite your feedback – so please give it!

Also in this edition is excellent article forwarded to me by our farthest flung member, Richard Spence, of Auckland (that's New Zealand, not Bishop). Richard's well-researched paper on training MSEs (or PSEs, Priests in Secular Employment) is very well worth reading.

Deirdre Palk has contributed a fine review of the new book from David Clark, formerly of CIPL, and there are a number of very useful resources identified, including links to the 2005 Hugh Kay (CABE) Lecture, the NASSAM (the National Association for the Self-Supporting Active Ministry) and NCL (National Center for the Laity) newsletters, and an article on spin by MSE George Pitcher.

The Reflective Weekend at Launde Abbey (one of the piles that *Thomas Cromwell* knocked about a bit) was top notch, with both a great deal of 'reflection' and outputs for a couple of CHRISM papers. Andrew Poole reflects on how he found it, and you can judge for yourselves from the photographs.

The first article is about the Summer Conference, on which the indefatigable Jean Skinner has been beavering away. The line up of speakers and visits looks particularly mouth-watering, so I do hope as many as possible will be able to make it to Newcastle. As well as being on the East Coast rail line, there are many flights into Newcastle airport that can be had very reasonably when booked far enough in advance.

The Summer Conference will of course include the AGM, which marks the final minuting as Secretary by Phil Aspinall. Our Constitution sets a two-term limit for the Secretary and Moderators, and since taking over from me Phil has done his two terms! We are therefore seeking a suitable and willing person to take up the quill and minute book. If you would like to know more about the post, please do contact Phil. Fortunately his expertise and experience will not be lost as we are proposing to create new role, Publicity Officer, and Phil has expressed his keenness.

A departure of a different kind is Jane Shaw, who is moving from Leeds to Lahore, as a mission partner with Church Mission Society and USPG. Her expertise in nursing training will be very much part of her role. We do wish her very well.

As ever, many thanks to all those who have contributed. It makes my role easier and most enjoyable.

Rob

CHRISM Summer Conference

July 14th -16th, Henderson Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Cultural Shift

Jean Skinner

The north East of England has undergone rapid changes over the last few years. Once the home of heavy industries, such as Ship Building and Coal Mining it has now become the centre of New Industries, and the Arts. The summer conference will be an opportunity to see how Newcastle and Gateshead are changing to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

I have tried to focus on the exciting and innovative way the North East is rising to the challenge of the cultural shift in working patterns and daily life. It is a vibrant place to live and work and our speakers include:

- **Jo Place**, from *One NorthEast*, will be speaking about the Innovations in Science and Industry. *One NorthEast* and partners are advancing a **Strategy for Success** to maximise use of our Region's research base to generate innovation, competitiveness and growth.
- **John Holmes**, Director for Regeneration and Tourism, will be talking about how we are promoting tourism in our region. In March 2004, Northumbria Tourist Board (NTB) was transferred to *One NorthEast*, which is now responsible for both the strategic direction and delivery of tourism services across the region.
- **Mary Coyle**, who heads up *Common Purpose in Newcastle*, will provide us with insights into how *Common Purpose* has made a difference in the region.
- **Bryan Vernon** is Lecturer in Health Care Ethics, the University of Newcastle Medical School. He was involved in establishing PEALS, the Policy Ethics and Life Sciences Institute, at the International Centre for Life; he is an MSE.

Visits are arranged to the following places:

- The International Centre for Life:
Learn about the philosophy and inception behind the centre, and why it is so important to stimulate science education for our young people.
- Eldon Square shopping centre...
has won an award for Heritage Led Regeneration.
- Aspers Casino:
One of the fastest growing industries in the region. This is a unique experience, being the only one of its kind in the country.

Arrangements are being made for visits to 'The Baltic', Gateshead's equivalent of The Tate Modern, and 'The Sage', Gateshead's new music venue, home of Northern Symphonia. It is a unique building and compares well with the Sydney Opera House.

Please come and see for yourself!

Henderson Hall is part of the University of Newcastle (see: www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation), and is set in beautiful grounds, three miles east of the city centre.

Cost, from dinner on Friday evening to lunch on Sunday, inclusive: £110 (members); £120 (non-members). If you would like to attend for part of the weekend, or do not require accommodation, a corresponding reduction will be arranged.

Bookings to Jean Skinner, details in rear inside cover.

The insights of Christians in secular employment are crucial to a Church that is increasingly losing its grip on the public imagination. Unless we can interpret the Gospel meaningfully in the secular context of work we have little chance of regaining peoples respect and commitment.

The Rt Revd John Pritchard Bishop of Jarrow

A Reflection on the Non-Stipendiary Ministry (3)

The following is the third article in a short series drawing on a Report written by Tim Key during a sabbatical, October and November 2004, from his 'usual' duties as a stipendiary minister in the United Reformed Church in Huddersfield. It takes a particular look at NSM within the URC but uses much wider experience, making it an excellent reflection on the experience of Ministry in Secular Employment. Tim has agreed to publication in "Ministers-at-Work", and well worth reading it is too! This final part is a reflection on Ministry and Leadership, drawing on the earlier research findings. It has been slightly edited to make it even easier to read.

Problems facing the church today

There are many problems that are common to so many churches and denominations, both in this country and in the wider western world, it is difficult to know where to begin. The root of these problems is often considered to be to do with numbers. Certainly, falling attendances at services and decreasing numbers of members have had a huge impact on the churches over the past twenty and more years. These undoubtedly contribute to a feeling of failure and uncertainty regarding the future.

The church is also facing a crisis, perhaps brought on by the above, regarding its identity and its continued relevance in a fast-changing and consumer-orientated world. This world has, on the face of it at least, little time for, or interest in, God, religion and, perhaps most especially, the church.

One might be tempted to say that the church has reacted badly to this, by retreating into itself and, possibly even more seriously, by forgetting what it is here for. Although not all churches have reacted in the same way, generally speaking the church as a whole has largely lost its way and does not know which way to turn next. It has put up the shutters to the world outside and instead has begun to put its efforts into its survival and the maintenance of its structures. Many ministers (perhaps especially the full-time variety) have reacted similarly and are increasingly out of touch with the

world outside the church. I know myself that it is easy to become so busy with church related matters that I can end up, if I am not careful, spending days and even weeks on end only speaking to and being with 'church people'. I am retreating into that which I find most comfortable and at home in. It is a safe place to be – it's familiar territory and I know where I am here and I know the people around and about me. Yet, the mission of the church is and never has been to do or be this. The mission of the church – the Christian mission is to the world at large.

Of course, it is not easy managing decline, which is what many ministers have to do today. We share the frustrations and the uncertainties faced by the church on a daily basis. Whereas the average church member is reminded of these things but once a week or so, the church minister lives with them every single day and this is the cause of much depression and 'burn-out'.

The URC – 'Ministry for Mission'

David Peel, in his book *'Ministry for Mission'*, says that the URC has a particular problem with regard to 'mission', in that the very nature of our reformed tradition means that we are better at 'gathering' than 'dispensing'. As he says, 'John Calvin's ecclesiology underpins the traditional Reformed model of the gathered church. The church, according to Calvin, is constituted where people assemble to hear the Word preached and the Sacraments properly administered.'

So the Reformed church has historically been a church that welcomes people into it, but is less used to searching them out. What David Peel suggests is a return to our 'ancient Catholic roots', whereby we recognise again that the 'church is found where Christ is present'. For Peel, 'the church is constituted by its missionary as well as its worshipping life'. We are challenged to become a missionary church, to be more outward-looking and less-inward looking: 'Our great challenge is to liberate the gospel from its institutionalisation in the church and in the process put a renewed sense of purpose back into being church'.

Peel gives examples from the New Testament of possible missionary models we might use, such as Jesus' call for his disciples to be like salt, light and leaven in the world. He also talks about some of the problems with the URC structures and what is meant by the oft-quoted phrase 'the priesthood of all believers'. Peel suggests that the word 'vocation' is better utilised here rather than 'priesthood' or even 'ministry', when considering the discipleship of all church members.

For Peel, the eldership is a ministry that needs to be rediscovered and properly utilised in the URC. This is 'one of the distinctive elements of Reformed ecclesiology that might commend itself to the other churches we meet on the ecumenical pilgrimage.' Peel even goes so far as saying that this model of Reformed eldership might be an example that other denominations may wish to copy in the future. However, I wonder how realistic this view really is? Most denominations find it strange, to say the least, that we ordain our elders and I think that the fact that the model has not yet been copied by any other denomination is indicative of the way in which others view it. Whilst the model of deacon is widely understood and accepted across the (Protestant) denominations, eldership is still only to be found within the URC.

Conversely, Peel has little positive to say of our NSMs (and also our SMs, at least in part). NSMs, he says, have been used too much to 'plug the gaps' within ministerial deployment, thus hiding longer-term problems. When they move on, they tend to leave behind vacancies that are subsequently difficult to fill. However, none of this is the fault of NSMs, it seems to me. It is, rightly or wrongly, District Councils that identify pastorates for NSMs and then place them there. It is, therefore, the District Councils who are 'plugging gaps' (if indeed that is what is happening), not NSMs. Most District Councils are only too delighted when a NSM offers their services freely to the District, but Peel seems not to recognise this fact at all.

His second critique of the non-stipendiary ministry is the way in which, through it, we have, 'openly encouraged the clericalization of some of our best lay people'. He goes on to say that, 'If elder-

ship means what it should mean then, surely, fewer people would feel drawn to non-stipendiary ministry'. But people who become NSMs are called to the ministry of Word and Sacraments, not to eldership, however highly we may view the model. Unfortunately, Peel here seems to be saying that the non-stipendiary ministry is a second-class ministry, mainly for lay-people to take up, probably in later life. He seems not to accept at all that it is as much a valid type of ministry as the stipendiary ministry and the URC has accepted this for many years. I am sure that many NSMs who read this in Peel's book would have been very surprised and disappointed by his attitude. Though he accepts that worker-priests (or MSEs) have a valid and prophetic ministry, he says finally, 'NSMs are of dubious worth to a strategy for the church which is bottom-up rather than top-down.' No wonder NSMs don't always feel their ministry is understood or valued!

Many URC ministers (I believe here he is speaking of SMs predominantly) have, says Peel, knowingly or unwittingly, changed their model of ministry, 'from preacher to counsellor, from teacher to therapist, from pastor to social and community worker; and, most hellish of all, from missionary to manager.' In addition, many ministers are over-burdened by having multi-church pastorates, which contributes to the task of ministry being less effective, especially where eldership is not functioning properly in the local churches. Again, Peel speaks up for a high view of eldership here: 'our ministers will only be able to be liberated to fulfil the requirements of the classic Reformed model of ministry when the eldership is restored, thus providing significant and strategic local church leadership.'

Yet is the classic Reformed model of ministry, with its emphasis on teaching and preaching, the only acceptable model for the URC today? Is it one that will encourage our ministers and our congregations to move away from the world of the church out into the mission field that is the real and secular world of today? I have my doubts about that. I think that this model of ministry still encourages us to be a 'gathered' church, which I thought Peel was encouraging us not to be at the beginning of his book. I also think that many NSMs are showing us another way, another model of ministry, that is much more outward looking, as well as being more acceptable and

readily recognised by our sister churches in many other denominations. It is also a model that was successfully utilised by churches and Christian communities many years before the Reformation.

'Invading Secular Space'

The above is the title of a book I found helpful in parts. It is by Martin Robinson and Dwight Smith and gives a very honest description of the church of today and how it might become transformed by becoming far less insular and much more outward looking. In the second part of the book, I thought that far too much space and detail was devoted to examples of the type of leadership needed for a strategy involving intensive church planting, which has been proven to be very successful in some parts of the world, but which I remain to be convinced could be as successful here, not least for the obvious and simple reason that we are already over-churched.

However, the basic premise of the book in the opening pages I very much agreed with, summed up on page 29: 'It can never be sufficient to constantly construct programmes designed to pull people into sacred space, we have to also consider how we might invade secular space.' We must learn to view the world around us differently in mission terms – seeing it as a place where God already is. It thus becomes for us not a place of threat, but a place of possibility. This sounds simple, yet might be the spark for the beginning of a paradigm shift for the people of our churches.

It was very early on in its life that the mission of the church began to change radically. Robinson and Smith suggest that it was perhaps as early as the fourth century that the Christian mission began to become the preserve of the institution rather than the whole people of God. Clericalism began and suddenly the church's mission was placed in the hands of professionals rather than the ordinary 'lay' person. Mission was suddenly something that someone else did – someone who was properly trained and prepared for the task. This, for Robinson and Smith, was a crucial change: 'The nature of the church began to shape the mission of the church rather than mission giving shape to the church'.

In many ways, our churches today still believe that mission is something for others, especially the clergy, to do, for, after all, they are the professionals. On my sabbatical, I met an Anglican (Revd John Goodchild) responsible for the training of OLMs (Ordained Local Ministers) in Norfolk, who said that one of the biggest mistakes the church ever made was the professionalisation of its clergy. This disempowered the rest of the church, the community of which suddenly began to look to others to do the things that they had hitherto always done and shared in together. What is needed is a return to the mission that inspires the church, not the church (and its associated professionals) that inspires (and does) the mission.

Francis Dewar also talks about this in his book *'Called or col-lared'* (also see below), where he also draws upon the writings of Edward Schillebeeckx, and especially *'Ministry, a Case for Change'*. In the first ten centuries of the church's history, it was the local Christian community that had the chief part to play in the choice of its leader. Ordination was seen in terms of an appointment and election of a local leader from amongst a local community. It had nothing to do with the bestowal of some special power, which was the recipients' personal possession for the rest of their lives. It was not until medieval times that there came about a change in people's understanding of what ordination meant.

So, in the early centuries of the Christian church, clergy were simply leaders drawn from the communities where they were to serve and in whose choice the community had a big say. Whether a person chosen in this way had an inward sense of calling to be a church leader was very much secondary, by far the most important thing was that a job needed to be done – by someone. If there was a change in the leader, then the new person became ordained and the one leaving the position simply became a layman again.

One significant effect of the lone leader in the churches is an obvious one, that so often the gifts of the many are not recognised and developed. In such structures (which are all too common in many churches) the goal very often becomes not empowerment but submission.

The short paragraph on page 104 of *'Invading Secular Space'* perhaps simplifies Christian history to a certain extent, but it also says a great deal about mission, thus I quote it in full below:

'Christianity grew in the first few centuries, not through the effectiveness of a professional leadership, but by the patient, consistent witness of ordinary traders, soldiers, civil servants and slaves, who carried the faith with them wherever they travelled in the world. The equipping of the saints to be active participants in the mission of God is a primary principle of mission.'

It is interesting to note that, whilst the authors of *'Invading Secular Space'* suggest that the main reason for the existence of the church is 'not bigger churches, more people, bigger budgets and more programmes' (pp. 92-3), all the examples they give later in the book are of very large churches, or churches that have closed and then re-opened and been very successful (like the [un-named] URC church quoted on p. 83). However, it is rightly pointed out that the 'Five Marks of Mission' make clear that 'the success of the church as institution must never be our focus, but (rather) the mission impact of what the institution of the church accomplishes'. As is stated later in the book (p.176), the success of a church is 'measured more by how many people and how much leadership a church is able to release into opportunities outside of the ongoing maintenance of church life.'

The authors suggest that the church needs a new missionary paradigm that centres neither on the church, nor the minister, but rather on the world outside. The new paradigm 'necessitates a shift from institution to movement, from structures that invite people into sacred space to an infectious spirituality that invades secular space' (p.109). The difficulty about embracing this new paradigm is simply that, for so many of us (but perhaps especially ministers), the old one constantly calls us back. The church so often thinks of itself as the reason, focus and end of ministry and mission. 'In truth, the church is not the object of ministry, but is instead the instrument of the ministry into the world, which is the true object of ministry of the church' (p.184).

In part reflecting upon 1 Corinthians 12:7-27, the authors' sum up: 'The goal of leadership is to empower and release the whole body of Christ in such a way that the creation of movement is the result. Mobilisation and multiplication, not attraction and addition, are the hallmarks of this kind of people movement.'

There is so much that I agreed with in this book that I very much warmed to its overall theme and critique of the church today. How strange, then, to come to the conclusion that what is needed today is a strategy of intensive church planting. Obviously, such a strategy can be very effective in some parts of the world. This has indeed been proven in such countries as the Ukraine and India (two examples highlighted in the book). Yet the culture and context of such large post-communist or un-churched countries such as these are very different from the UK. The last thing we need here is more churches!

To be fair, the authors do address this question. Their answer is broadly to suggest that church planting does not necessarily mean more churches, but the revitalisation of older congregations, or the planting of cell or house churches. Yet I still remain to be convinced on this point. What is right for Asia or the countries of the former Soviet bloc, is not necessarily right for us.

'In the Name of Jesus', by Henri Nouwen

I think I stumbled across this little book almost by accident, whilst searching for something else. Yet, as I began to read it, I realised that I'd picked up a little gem of a book. In only eighty pages of large-print type, there is so much said about Christian leadership and mission that I thought was very important.

Nouwen seems to have quite an insight into the current realities and oft-experienced pressures of Christian ministry within today's secular driven world. Ministers can indeed experience low self-esteem and depression. We can feel irrelevant, unwanted and worthless, as if nothing we try has any effect or impact upon people. Being a minister is indeed a challenge, to say the least, in today's world (yet I'd also want to say, incidentally, that so are many other people's jobs

and vocations). Nouwen's call to ministers is, however, to remain faithful to the Christ who calls us, even if we are not, on the face of it, very successful in the eyes of the world.

Much more the measure of a good minister is he or she who has a desire to 'dwell in God's presence, to listen to God's voice, to look at God's beauty, to touch God's incarnate word and to taste fully God's infinite goodness.'

In his further work, *'The Wounded Healer'*, Nouwen also calls Christian leaders to identify the suffering in their own hearts and minds with that in those they serve – indeed to make this the starting point of their service. As he says, 'The great illusion of leadership is to think that man can be led out of the desert by someone who has never been there.'

Nouwen states that all leaders are tempted by power and influence. Even Christian leaders face this temptation, perhaps because 'power offers an easy substitute for the hard work of love.' It is, he says, 'easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people, easier to own life than to love life.' What Christian leaders need to learn is to 'live the incarnation', i.e. to live in the body of Christ, the corporate body of the community and to discover there the presence of the Holy Spirit.

It may perhaps seem obvious, but surely those who are best able to live in the 'body of Christ' are those who also work and live within the broader 'body of the community'. As I have previously suggested, many ministers are simply cut off from the world of much of their community. I sometimes think that ministers have retreated into the world of their churches, perhaps because they feel safe there. Like the church itself, it is all too easy for us to retreat into ourselves, our limited world and then even to put up the shutters. Yet Christ calls us to be in touch with the world – the suffering world, the fearful world, the doubting world – and to begin to make a difference there. Yet we can only do this if we ourselves know suffering, fear and doubt. That is Nouwen's challenge and it is a very real one.

'Called or Collared', by Francis Dewar

This book is all about the nature and meaning of vocation, specifically the vocation to ordained ministry. What I liked about it was that it made no presumptions and did not attempt to define the notion of being called in any narrow sense at all.

Dewar talks a great deal about our own potential creativity as human beings and how these can be quashed by the expectations of others. He believes that every Christian has a personal calling to do something special for and with God. This can be interpreted in many ways, yet, when it is given voice within a church context, it is so often interpreted in one way, as a call to the ministry of word and sacrament.

Yet, as Dewar says (on page 8), 'You are called by (God) to deliver *your* message, to sing *your* song, to offer *your* act of love: and that is not a predetermined path.' Though we are called to total self-giving (as Christ was), this will mean different things to different people, depending upon 'the gift' that we have to offer. 'The inner sense of call is always something that will be drawn from within you, not something provided for you out there. It is always a call to take the risk of enacting your true self in some way for the enrichment of others.' Throughout our lives, says Dewar, God is always calling each of us to respond to him in a personal way, to give more and more of what we are and could be.

For Dewar, the personal calling of God arises from the interplay between three factors: the person you hiddenly are and could be; the needs of others; and God, whose invitation to you is to put the one at the service of the other. Yet so often the weight of other people's expectations and projections becomes so great that we give in and become simply what others expect of us.

I wonder if this is what has basically happened with me over ten years in the ministry. At the outset of responding to the call to ministry, I always said that I didn't want to become a 'churchy' person, even as a minister. Yet, try as one might not to, the truth of it is that

I have become moulded by others' expectations and demands into what many might see (from the outside) as a very ordinary minister. Not that there is anything wrong with being an ordinary minister, of course, it is just that at the outset of my journey to ministry, I could not have imagined becoming one!

Sometimes, says Dewar, congregations behave very much like children, 'and the clergy frequently collude with this by playing an unhelpfully parental role – usually in order to bolster their own weak sense of worth – and the effect of this is to prevent any real growth taking place at all.' Sometimes, it's not the clergy that people become dependent upon, but rather the church building, or the furnishings, or the choir – 'almost anything you can think of – except God.'

I found this book a challenging but enlightening read. It speaks to one at a very personal level, and the challenge throughout to be yourself – to 'sing your own song' (and no-one else's) – is one that spoke very deeply to me. I wish I'd read it years ago. God calls us to be none other than ourselves and if we find that suddenly we are ourselves no longer, then something has changed, something has gone away, something needs rectifying, before the spark that is 'me' goes out completely.

'Ministers at Work'

This is a title of a journal published by CHRISM (the National Association of Christians in Secular Ministry). I read many a back copy of this journal and was very much inspired by many of the articles I came across. Most were written by MSE's (Ministers in Secular Employment) in many and varying situations. The articles were equally varied, but also honest and informative. They were sometimes critical and sometimes humorous and yet always thought provoking. This is a journal very much for those who are enthusiastic (if not passionate) about their secular employment being their prime focus for ministry.

I particularly liked the phrase 'tentmaker', which is one of many terms used to describe ordained clergy who are engaged in work

other than full-time 'parish' ministry. The term comes from a biblical reference in Acts 18:3 where we learn that St Paul supported himself by making tents. The tentmaker perceives ministry as taking place in both church and secular contexts. Indeed, as Davis Fisher points out in an article in *'Ministers at Work'* (April 2002), 'The presence of the ordained tentmaker invites faith based dialogue in a neutral setting, especially with people who are not church-goers.'

I was also very interested in the following quotation, from the late Revd Michael Ramsay (the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury), quoted in the same article:

'I regard the contemporary development of a priesthood which combines a ministry of word and sacrament with employment in a secular profession not as a modern fad but as a recovery of something indubitably apostolic and primitive...

This is to say that what we call our tentmakers today belong most truly to the apostolic foundation, and we may learn from them of that inward meaning of priesthood which we share with Jesus Christ.'

Yet what so often seems to be the case is that this particular kind of ministry is 'hidden', not understood and not valued by much of the wider church. People do not always understand why it is that ministers working within the secular world need to be ordained – for they are not seen or recognised as doing 'church work'. It is this lack of understanding and recognition that so frustrates many MSE's (and NSM's).

What is often called for in *'Ministers at Work'* is not only an openness by the church to recognise MSEs, in all their varying roles, but that MSEs themselves should become a lot more visible than they currently are in the life of the wider church. I think that this is indeed vital for the church as a whole.

As Dr Forrest Lowry states in a further article (January 2003), "Tentmaking' in God's eyes is ministry..... We all need to remember that God called every believer to full-time Christian service. Every

believer is called to minister.... There is no 'secular' and 'spiritual' dimension in God's vocabulary.'

Conclusion

There is an interesting little paragraph in the book, *'Being a Priest Today'*, by C Cocksworth and R Brown, that talks about the role and calling of a presbyter (ordained minister). The authors write:

'Our calling to build up the life of the church is not an excuse to distance ourselves from the life of the world. In fact, it should propel us into the world so that we can model the priestly attention to the world which is the calling of all Christians as they serve the Christ who gave himself up for all.'

Yet in practice I would say that this rarely happens. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that more often than not the opposite occurs. Ministers become so fully immersed in the life of the church that the world outside can almost become alien to them. We may not want this to happen, but such are the pressures placed upon us by the church that it becomes almost inevitable.

And then another thing happens. This strange place we inhabit (the church) becomes comfortable and familiar to us. We know the people who come here and they know us. They also expect us to reside here and ask questions if we're not here. It is, in the end, far less challenging to be here, amongst friends, than a frankly quite scary world outside – a world we find we know less and less about. Yet, this is not good for us and it's not good for our churches, which is precisely why we so need the tentmakers, MSEs, worker-priests and NSMs. Indeed, I would say that the church needs them like never before.

Yet the church seems in many ways to be suspicious of MSEs and NSMs, despite the fact that, as long ago as 1972, Michael Ramsay (also quoted above) said in his classic work, *'The Christian Priest Today'*, that ministers in secular employment belong most truly to the apostolic foundation. It is surely well worth remembering that most of Jesus' followers were, by our standards, MSEs.

It is also interesting to note the results of a survey carried out in 1993 (*Ministers at Work*, Oct 2001). Of 400 working Christians, most thought that church life and work life failed to connect. Yet, 92% of those saw their work, at least in part, as a vocation, and 89% saw it as integral to the mission of the church. This is hardly surprising. Anyone with a reasonably strong faith will not want to confine it to Sundays, but the working NSM or MSE has a unique opportunity to make these connections.

So why the continuing suspicions regarding NSMs in the church? In another article in *Ministers at Work* (Oct 2001) Margaret Joachim (an MSE) points to a number of reasons as to why stipendiary ministers can be suspicious of MSEs. These include the following:

1. MSEs are amateur ministers.
2. MSEs don't understand the real pressures of clerical life.
3. MSEs want to bring secular management techniques into the church.
4. MSEs aren't involved in pastoral matters in the church.
5. MSEs are a threat to SMs, as they are unpaid – they do the work for free.

I think much the same could be said of NSMs and indeed some of these criticisms were alluded to in response to some of my questions in the questionnaire. This kind of suspicion and misunderstanding is not everywhere, of course. There are many NSMs in the URC, as no doubt there are in other denominations, who feel highly valued and accepted, but there is still an underlying suspicion and occasional mistrust of NSMs/MSEs.

It is in part because of this that there has been a slow but sizeable drift to the stipendiary ministry from those in NSM over the years (in the URC and in other denominations). NSMs/MSEs still very often feel frustrated and marginalized in their role. John Mantle makes a comparison here with liberation theology in an article in *Ministers at Work*. He says that as in South America in the 1960s and 70s, it is out of a similar experience of oppression and marginalisation that NSMs/MSEs are developing a new kind of theology, ministry and way

of being church, which is not widely recognised or affirmed by much of the wider church.

One misguided image that MSEs directly challenge is the view that clergy are primarily responsible for the church and laity primarily responsible for the world. This image is criticised by the Roman Catholic author and theologian E P Hahnenberg in his book, *'Ministries, a Relational Approach'*. Here he says that Vatican II challenged the whole church, but more especially the laity, to engage with the world outside the church. But highlighting the secular nature of the layperson also had the effect, in some parts of the church, of hardening the divide between a 'secular laity and the sacred priest'. Hahnenberg calls for a more relational and inclusive approach to ministry, whereby the entire people of God are characterised by a positive relationship with the secular dimension: 'Isn't the starting point for talking about ministry the whole church, the people of God and the body of Christ? And isn't it the entire church – clergy and laity – that has responsibility to serve the world?'

Hahnenberg reflects upon the doctrine of the Trinity, which, he says, serves as an example of a relational approach to ministry. A discussion regarding ministry should not begin with either 'the 'being' of the minister (ontology) or with the 'doing' of the minister (function) but with the category of relationship (which combines both)'. Ministers come to be who they are in relationships of service, and relationships of service shape a minister. 'These relationships flow from God, through Christ in the Spirit, and continue outward to others in the church and in the world – a movement that is celebrated in sacrament and liturgy.'

Clifford Bellamy (a Methodist minister and MSE) talks positively about 'Sector Ministry' (a now defunct Methodist term for MSE) in a short article in the book, *'What is a Minister?'*, by P Luscombe and E Shreeve. There are some very interesting insights within this article, including a summary of the reasons some people gave who felt called to MSE. For some, it was the need to fulfil a side to their calling they felt was impossible within the church. Others felt isolated from the everyday world in Circuit ministry, or frustrated at the traditional routine of pastoral ministry. Yet others wished to use the

expertise gained in the secular world used within the ministry in a particular way.

Also interesting is the description of an MSE as a 'bridge person' between the realms of church and world. However as is pointed out by Bellamy, a bridge needs to be supported at both ends – by the church and the world. Adequate support, as we have found, is not always forthcoming, but is very necessary in order for this ministry to grow and develop. If MSEs do not feel well enough supported by the church, there is danger that they may begin to become somewhat 'detached' from it. Feelings of isolation are a common problem for MSEs/NSMs. Bellamy quotes one such minister, 'I have no role in the Circuit.... I have felt underused throughout my ministry simply because Circuits are not structured to cope with people like me.'

Bellamy makes some telling remarks in the conclusion to his article that I very much warmed to. There is a great need today, he says, for ministers to be deployed in more imaginative, creative and flexible ways. The URC's *'Equipping the Saints'* report also very much affirms this and the proposed increase in the number of 'Special Category Ministers' (URC General Assembly 2005) should also allow this to happen. Bellamy quotes a former President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Dr Eric W Baker, 'The danger that may lurk in bold experiments is nothing like so serious as the certain disaster if we don't experiment.'

In the past, the church's mission has often seemed to concentrate on gathering people in, rather than being in the world where people are. As the book *'Invading Secular Space'* affirmed so well, this simply has to change. The church needs to continue, not to narrow, but to widen its perspective – to be more and more where the people are. It is no longer acceptable to believe that people will come to us in the church; we must go to them. In order to begin to do this effectively, we very much need 'those who can point to the sacred within the secular', or those who can 'keep the rumour of God alive' (Bellamy)

This is surely what MSEs and many NSMs endeavour to do in their ministry. They need our encouragement and affirmation, our support, understanding and prayers. They may still be treading a lonely

path in some respects, yet they are also pioneers of a ministry which is historically apostolic, often prophetic in the way it reaches out to people beyond the confines of the church today and which is thus vital to the future of the church of tomorrow.

A Personal Post-Script

As many will no doubt have realised, this has been, all along, a personal journey and exploration, as well as an 'academic' one. This has been a reflection upon my own call to ministry as much as an exploration of others' experience of ministry. I am still working through some of the issues and implications of my findings for me personally.

As the world is ever-changing, so the call to be involved somehow in God's wider mission to the world is an ever-changing one, leading people on to discover new things, new truths, new possibilities, new challenges. Sometimes it seems as if the church is slow to catch up with some of these challenges, sometimes it still seems as if the church is only interested in itself, in maintenance rather than mission, survival rather than a searching for new ways to be a pilgrim people of God.

It can indeed be very frustrating to be a minister in today's church – not always, of course, there are highs as well as lows as with almost anything in life – but sometimes it does seem as if nothing will ever really change in the life of the church which is struggling to make sense of its role and purpose in today's world. Perhaps it was ever thus, though the URC's *'Catch the Vision'* report also highlights the problems very honestly in its description of the current situation with regard to the church, and specifically ministry in the church, thus:

'Ministry (there) should be challenging and fulfilling. However, we still hear of churches that regard a minister as their private chaplain, or that refuse determinedly to engage with the complexities of mission in post-Christendom. Some ministers are in the difficult position of knowing that the secular institutions that they encounter and work with are much closer to the Kingdom of God than the

congregations to which they minister. Equally, some ministers are 'trapped' in the service of the church, bewildered by change, spiritually exhausted, yet unable to seek employment elsewhere because of the manse system. Others are strained and stretched by the complexity of living on the edge between viability and implosion on the shifting border between Christian spirituality and post-Christian culture.' (Para. 41)

It has thus been very gratifying to discover that there are other ways to respond to the call of God, whilst remaining faithful to oneself and one's understanding of the whole concept of vocation. I do feel as if I need to rediscover how to 'sing my own song' (F Dewar) again. I do feel as if change is in the air and I want to grasp it with both hands. I do think that the church has to 'get out there' (into the world) and find new ways of being church. I do think that we've still got far too many churches (and more especially church buildings) that are dragging us down and getting in the way of our mission.

Whilst I feel on the way to embracing some of this in a new way, I am not quite there just yet. However, writing this report, and the associated reading I have engaged in, as well as some of my other experiences on my sabbatical (such as the retreats I shared in and the people I met with along the way), have all helped enormously in enabling me to think seriously about the possibility of setting out in a somewhat new direction in my life. Although I have no clear ideas as yet about where this may eventually lead me, I do believe that this is still part of my vocation; that God is guiding me along every step of the way and that God is most certainly still full of surprises.

Faith Among the Doctors of Today...

... was the title of a talk given by **Nigel Rawlinson** to the Guild of Catholic Doctors, in April 2002,. It appeared as an article in the November 2002 edition of the Catholic Medical Quarterly. Nigel is Assistant Curate at All Saints Church, Weston, Bath and Consultant in A&E, Bristol Royal Infirmary.

For those with internet access, the full text can be found at www.catholicdoctors.org/index.html. If you do not and would like a

copy, please contact the Editor. It is balanced, informative, and a genuine MSE story.

Coventry Diocesan MSE Group

Felicity Smith

MSE is “loitering with intent” – it’s not about going in with all guns blazing.

The Coventry Group of MSEs met for an Away Day at Felicity Smith’s in January. The group, which has met for some 15 years, currently comprises seven members including the Chair of the Diocesan Forum for Ministry (equivalent to the DDO), and normally we meet for an evening every couple of months. We try, once a year, to have a longer meeting, often on a Saturday, to allow us time to take stock and consider our future.

In true MSE fashion we began our meeting (as we always do) by sharing our news and concerns. An Away Day gives us each more time to reflect at length on “what’s really been happening with me”, which proves particularly valuable when people have not been able to attend several evening meetings. But as well as our personal stories, some general issues inevitably emerge: the need for all MSEs to have a Working Agreement to show and let people know that we *are* Ministers in Secular Employment; the opportunities which arise to talk to people in churches about the possibilities of MSE; models of how a church can use an MSE in the context of enabled laity leadership and so show the MSE of all people

We also use an Away Day to allow ourselves more time to reflect on ourselves as a group and on our aims. We carried out a SWOT analysis and were surprised to see how much had changed – in terms of the churches understanding and support of MSE – since the previous time. We are now recognised in the Diocese as a regular well-established group, although we still do not know where other MSEs might be. We face the difficulty that, as busy people we lack the resources to tackle major projects and to attend events.

In the wider Church the term MSE is increasingly recognised (in some places) and there is more talk about “Spirituality” at work.

The decreasing number of stipendiary clergy presents, on the one hand, the possibility to rethink what “ministry” means, but, on the other, the pressure for MSEs to be drawn in to the parochial system, and expected to be parish priests in increasingly inward looking church congregations.

We reviewed our achievements of the previous three years under the four aims of the group.

- Support all who minister in their workplace. We have convened a series of meetings with people from the Diocese, from IM to parish clergy, with an interest in developing an understanding of work as ministry. These still need to be written up.
- Encourage theological reflection on this form of ministry. We created our Lent Course and ran it in parishes for the last 2 years – two more course planned this year and a leaders’ training day will be organised. We had continued our individual theological reflections, with one person taking time at each meeting to challenged by the others to explore theologically their own story and experience of MSE.
- Stimulate discussion within the churches. We have attended a meeting of the Vocations Advisors and made presentations at Vocation Days. One of our members is also a Vocations Advisor.
- Promote and Develop ministry in Secular Environments. We had hoped to be able to contribute to a revived Exploring Christian Ministry course in the Diocese, but there is at present no equivalent adult training programme – so it is not clear what opportunities people exploring ministry therefore have to learn about MSE.
- During 2005, we held a joint meeting with two members of the MSE group from neighbouring Leicester Diocese, including the stipendiary parish priest responsible for supporting MSEs and NSMs in the Diocese. We agreed that occasional further joint meetings would be welcome for mutual support.

We agreed that these were still our four key aims and suggested some tasks that we would consider further in order to carry on building the Kingdom:

- Organise a forum both for sharing what we have been doing, and to encourage others such as NSMs, OLMs and Readers into MSE.
- Help members of the congregations we serve to reflect theologically on their own MSE.
- Tell stories from individuals on the Lent course – to help others see how to do it.
- Turn the Lent Course into a “Do-it-yourself” book – we suggested a title “Exploring Christian Ministry”.
- Revive pattern of a theological reflection at each meeting – using an issue in our work (rather than generally what we do).
- Offer talks and addresses about MSE to other congregations.
- Offer more Lent Courses (and publicise and market more widely?).
- Arrange to give formal presentation / talk about MSE to the Forum for Ministry.

If you are passing through Coventry and have time to meet with us, do get in touch with me (details inside back cover) – you would be very welcome.

Headteacher to be ordained...

... proclaimed an article in the *Northern Echo*, Saturday 2nd July 2005. “A Headteacher will break new ground when she is ordained in Durham Cathedral tomorrow. Following her ordination, Durham High School for Girls headteacher Ann Templeman will become the only minister in secular employment heading an Anglican secondary school in the country.”

A mother of two daughters and a son, and a Reader in the Church of England since 1984, Anne told the *Echo*: “There has always been a very strong link between the Christian faith and education. I do hope, however, that all the good things about the school such as the care and concern for individuals will be further emphasized by the move.”

Good on you Anne!

CHRISM Reflective Weekend 2006 – A personal view

Andrew Poole

The best training courses are almost certainly those that leave one with food for thought and an inclination to continue to grapple with the issues long after the group has split up and the members have gone their separate ways. This was one such course.

We gathered at Launde Abbey in rural Leicestershire on 10th February 2006 for a weekend entitled “If I’d known then what I know now”. As a venue, Launde is well-known to me. During training on the East Midlands Ministry Training Course we met there once or twice a year. Launde was also the venue for my Diocesan Selection Conference, for my pre-ordination retreats and the place where I took my Oath of Allegiance some 5 years ago. For this weekend, we had the luxury of being the only guests and all 18 of us were accommodated in the main house.

Margaret Joachim encouraged us to look back over the journey that had led us – or in some cases seemed to be leading – towards ordination and to occupation as Ministers in Secular Employment. With a randomly selected partner we then shared that story: a process I for one found quite cathartic. Sharing experiences and feelings of each other’s success and failure was also an enormous privilege and one that, in common with the tone set by the entire weekend, reinforced the feeling that “I am not (even humanly speaking) alone in travelling this route”.

We discussed the marks of ministry exhibited by Jesus (High Priest, Good Shepherd, Authentic Teacher and Prophet) and considered the ways in which these are expressed within our own lives and whether the balance needed fine-tuning. The final group session gave us an opportunity to look collectively at our experiences and to set down some “handy hints” for those seeking to follow a path towards ministry in secular employment. In this we addressed the specific questions often asked of potential Ordinands for this branch of ministry,

as their vocation is tested by the authorities.

As all good courses should, we allowed ourselves time to look towards the future and to ways in which we might build on our experience so far. This was accomplished with the same partner with whom we had shared our own personal story.

Good food, pleasant and varied company, the services of a lively, well-organised and efficient leader/trainer/facilitator together with warm, comfortable and very peaceful surroundings made for an enjoyable and thoroughly worthwhile weekend, whose effects will be long lasting.

STOP PRESS: the 2007 Reflective Weekend has been provisionally booked for 9 – 11 February, at Holland House, near Evesham, Worcestershire. Put in your diary!



As is usual on CHRISM weekends, the local countryside proved an irresistible attraction!

For



some the pace was leisurely:



While others took it at greater speed!

***'Breaking the mould of Christendom:
kingdom community, diaconal church and the liberation of
the laity', by David Clark***

The last edition included details of the new book (above) by David Clark, formerly of Christians in Public Life. This review was written specially for MaW by Deirdre Palk, a long-time CHRISM member, Deacon and friend of David, herself now resident in Auxerre, France.

Many (most?) MSEs would agree with the following propositions:

- the Church has no reason to stay in business unless it recognizes that it is called to be the servant of the 'kingdom community'
- the Church cannot fulfil this calling unless it assumes a radically different form from that which has dominated the scene over many centuries of Christendom
- the transformation of Church and world alike depends on

the 'laity', as community builders, being at the heart of the Church's mission

- a new understanding of leadership in the Church is imperative.

In ultra-brief format - for this is a meaty work of some length - this is David Clark's thesis, which he subjects to a thorough, academically rigorous but very readable analysis and programme of action. It is not just a hopeful vision for the future of the church, but a statement of the absolute necessity of making the radical changes he outlines so clearly.

The distinction he makes, and carries through the whole of the book, between two models of the church - the past and present 'Christendom' model, and the 'diaconal' model which has to come about - are helpful. Both descriptions require, and receive, detailed 'unpacking' (but in the end maybe neither description is useful). Each represents entirely opposing notions about the church and its task. The one: exclusive, sacred, conservative, hierarchical, encouraging dependency, didactic - and so on (provide your own adjectives, but they are all there in David's diagrams). The other: inclusive, secular, transforming, people-powered, encouraging autonomy, a learning community. David makes it crystal clear that the mould of the former must be broken, not colluded and tinkered with, for the latter to emerge as the servant of the 'kingdom community'.

The description of the 'diaconal church' is hopeful and visionary and, again (most) MSEs would say 'yes' to it all. The exact meaning of this model of church is dissected and explained; the history of the diaconate across the churches is presented, together with the current thinking about diaconate, and the recovery of its essential meaning. There is much here which dovetails with my own long-term thinking about the nature of diaconate and a diaconal church. What is not being proposed is ordaining lots of deacons, but about transforming the church; this means a major shift for ordained ministers to a diaconal way of being church. The Christendom model has effaced both the deacon and the laity. Now both must be re-empowered and redeployed. To model servanthood is not just the deacon's job, but that of priests and bishops too. The deacon may

have a special enabling and focussing role but there can be no division of labour.

A significant proportion of the book is devoted to case studies of work in which David has been employed during his ministry, work in which he has come to recognise his role as fundamentally diaconal. Little wonder that, after so long a time as a Methodist sector minister/MSE as presbyter, he entered the Methodist diaconal order. Here is a valuable examination of the diaconal church at St Mark, West Greenwich, in 'The Christian Community Movement', in the Christians in Public Life (CIPL) programme, and in the Human City Initiative. Their successes and failures are discussed. It is sad to consider how the Christendom model of church ensured limited success and finally a largely negative outcome to these endeavours: '... how easy it is for little lights to be snuffed out by a national church still operating in Christendom mode, and consequently unprepared or unable to nurture the seeds of renewal' [p. 148]. A Christendom model of church, dominated by parochialism and sacramentalism, could not recognise the kingdom community in movements and networks of interest since they were not rooted in community of place. Clericalism hindered development of the diaconal initiative of the CIPL programme. The mainstream churches took 'only passing interest' and 'presbyters for whom the task of servicing the gathered church was all-consuming had little reason to take much interest in an initiative concerned to support the laity as the dispersed church' [p. 185].

A section on sector ministers, MSEs and industrial chaplains considers to what extent our understanding of our roles is diaconal. This reflection is attempted against the background of the Christendom model which besets us. Our attempt as MSEs to be diaconal has been circumscribed and sometimes negated by this model. 'Within a church where there is so much emphasis on the gathered congregation, ministers who do not gather, and thus do not appear to contribute to the maintenance of the gathered congregation, are regarded as something of an anomaly.' This can result in our feeling under considerable pressure to undertake overtly presbyteral duties over and above our work-related ministries. [p. 224]. Too many of us, it is suggested (quite rightly, I am sure) collude with

the expectations of the Christendom church, thus devaluing and undermining the role of the deacon, preventing the coming into being of the diaconal church. If we act simply as presbyters, we import the culture of the gathered church into the workplace; if we refuse this role, yet do not develop a diaconal role in its place, we are taken to be lay people with part-time presbyteral jobs.

Ideas are presented for how the diaconal church is to be achieved, even an outline for a training programme for those who have leadership roles. Arguments are provided for why the diaconate, and deacons in particular, are seen as the agents of change crucial to bringing about the new way of being church. All are arguments which I, as a (permanent) deacon am familiar, have reflected on and argued over with other deacons. Is the diaconate, as we know it, up to undertaking such a demanding task? The task is not to be left to deacons; there is a multitude of priests/presbyters engaged in diaconal rather than presbyteral ministry, there are lay people in leadership roles already exercising diaconal leadership - all constituting a 'hidden diaconate' which could effect the needed change and break the mould.

This book is a key text for all concerned about the urgent next steps to allow the church to be the servant of the 'kingdom community'. Reading David's clear, practical, challenging and immensely hopeful writing, gave me the hope that fellow MSEs would use it to inform many of their discussions, to enable them to reflect on their diaconal roles and get on with Breaking the Mould.

A Church simplified and renewed

Not surprising, given their range of expertise and experience, MSEs often have well thought out – and occasionally radical – views on how the churches can be more effective. Oxford MSE **Gareth Miller** sets out his blueprint for re-organising the Church of England at www.sarmiento.plus.com/documents/garethmiller.html

Gareth's central thesis is that the main financial burden on the Church of England is diocesan bureaucracy. He proposes moving

most of the administrative structures to Provincial See level and increasing the number of Provinces and Archbishops to ten. For example, Durham would become the Archbishopric for the North East of England, Liverpool for the North West. New diocese would be created, in line with local authority areas, and suffragen bishops would become unnecessary.

It is quite a well thought out scheme in the structural sense. He points out that at present the total number of bishops is 106 and archdeacons at present 114, and under his scheme they would number: bishops 114, archdeacons 114. There is however no real reference to finance or to the separation of cathedrals from dioceses (especially financial). My own view is that this is an area that needs to be addressed: the C of E is financially more a loose federation than a national church.

It is nevertheless an intriguing proposal—and Gareth does invite comments (Email: garethmiller@tiscali.co.uk).

Theological education for priests in secular employment: the why, the what and the how

Richard Spence

In this article, a priest in secular employment (PSE) is a person who holds a current bishop's licence to a function reserved to the priesthood, and is in full-time paid employment within an organization in whose organizational mission statement there appears no explicit reference to God or Christ. Other definitions are possible, but this is the one that informs the discussion which follows.

The necessary content

A former vicar of mine used to argue forcibly for his PSE to get the same book allowance that he himself received. 'There's no reason,' he would say, 'why Richard's theology should be any worse than mine.' In this he was articulating the principle that PSEs need to be fully formed spiritually and theologically. The PSE has a need for,

and a right to, the same theological education as any other priest. There is no case for lowering standards on the grounds that their ministry makes little demand on the finances of parish and diocese. On the contrary: for the foreseeable future the PSE, being an unfamiliar animal, needs the accreditation of the most conventional training available.

Theological education represents an overarching concern for continuity with the risen Christ¹. Such education originates with Jesus², Paul³ and the apostles who provided careful instruction for deliberately chosen persons so as to receive the Word entrusted to them and pass it on without undue distortion. The theological curriculum is an act of faith, giving order and substance to the Word of God for humanity. It expresses faith in the community of worship and scholarship as the nurturing body for the church's continuing ministry.

There is a quite uniform expectation in the church that before a priest gets up to preach, s/he will have become informed on the biblical and traditional sources which illuminate the topic, reviewed the positions that corporate Anglicanism takes in relation to it, reflected upon the significance of the theme for the life of the community and in their own life, and selected the communication methods and resources most effective for the message. In other words, to quote John Bluck⁴, the sermon will preach the Gospel; it will be a communication, a work of art, and a personal faith journey. The congregation may expect these things, and the preacher may expect to be equipped for the job. So long as preaching remains a priestly task, no PSE can sidestep that duty.

Similar considerations apply to how the priest prays, celebrates, sings and leads the liturgy. They apply no less in the pastoral sphere. The congregation's spirituality will not be well served if there are glaring deficiencies in their celebrant's priestly skills. The Anglican tradition possesses long established curricula for developing these skills. They are discussed and described in great detail in sources such as those cited in the endnotes. Key knowledge areas are the biblical text, church history, ethics, liturgics and systematic theology. Key skills are theological reflection, biblical exegesis, ascetical theology, homiletics and leadership.^{5,6}

Continuing education

In educational terms⁷, a programme of theological formation must take into account the needs and goals of both the institutional church and the individual⁸. It is in the nature of PSEs' existence that their theological education will need to be long-term and continuous. This is no bad thing. And fortunately, it is a diminishing problem to provide PSEs with theological learning opportunities at times outside their hours of secular employment and in places they have access to. Our cause is helped not only by the advent every year of newer and smarter technologies for delivering the material⁹. It's also helpful that the education environment has become market driven, and institutions are falling over each other to offer courses that are more relevant, attractive and accessible than ever before¹⁰. In respect of access to theological education, PSEs have never had it so good.

Short, focussed seminars on specific topics can also make a substantial contribution to a PSE's formation. A PSE can attend a seminar of one or two days by taking annual leave from their secular employment; provided certain conditions are met, the investment of their precious days off will be worthwhile. The conditions for success are these:

- the seminar needs to have clearly stated objectives and be faithful to them
- to enable PSEs to negotiate time away from their secular job, dates need to be fixed well in advance and adhered to. Postponements are too hard for PSEs to accommodate.
- the level of professionalism the instruction provides, needs to be commensurate with what the PSE experiences in industry training events.

Even when delivery and content is well provided for, however, the PSE's situation raises special challenges in respect of the time-span over which their theological education will run. If, as suggested, it is to cover the same ground as a four-year full-time degree course, then it will need to be spread over ten or fifteen years. With numbers of this order, by the time the PSE 'completes' a degree-level

course, some of the early material will be obsolete, and need to be revisited. The obvious conclusion is that the span of years for a PSE's theological education will be as many as the ministry itself. While the figure of perpetual student may not be much admired in our society, that is what the PSE needs to become. The concept of continuing theological education may be an ideal for all clergy, but in the PSE it is of the essence.

There are consequences. A parish that is stuck with the idea of vicar-as-professional-godman, will perceive PSEs as theologically half-baked — and in that they will be forever correct. Equally, those PSEs who cherish an image of themselves as professional-god(wo)man in the making, have a different prospect in view. Davis has alluded to PSE as providing a back door to a paid job in full-time ministry¹¹; where that is the case, we may doubt whether the call to PSE was ever authentic. While full-time paid ministry is perceived as a goal and unpaid ministries as a route thereto, any switch from PSE to full-time must arouse such a suspicion. The community that envisions itself as something other than a pilgrim band¹², and the PSE whose self-image is other than that of a fellow-pilgrim in a funny shirt, are doomed to disappoint each other.

PSEs themselves may be especially receptive to the notion of perpetual learning, for all its unfortunate associations. A mature-age PSE isn't working toward a job ticket, they have a secular job already and no theological qualification is needed to keep money flowing into their household. The times are right as well; lifelong learning is now a public concept, espoused by governments and institutions. And for those PSEs whose secular employment is skills-based, the round of training, re-training and re-re-training is a permanent feature of that job and they know it well. PSEs are likely to be relaxed about 'meeting degree requirements' and motivated more by the intrinsic value of the curriculum they receive, than which hoops they need to jump through to gain some necessary gong.

There are significant advantages to continuous learning as a model for clergy formation. Because the best teacher is the one who is concurrently a student, that priest who keeps on doing theological coursework is good for their congregation. If the coursework is cho-

sen from the church's approved list, then the priest who keeps on doing approved courses is good for Anglicanism. At a stroke, commitment to ongoing theological coursework averts both staleness and isolation from theological trends in the church to which we belong. The PSE is kept intellectually on the move, and kept in touch with mainstream Anglican thinking.

Good intentions will not be enough to make any of this happen. There need to be processes in place, otherwise, in the church as elsewhere, training will be pushed into the background when calls for 'busy work' become strident. All parties need to understand that there are times when exegesis of Galatians 3 takes higher priority than a cake stall or even a hospital visit. One mechanism that might be used where fixed-term licensing is the norm, would be to have a catch-up on the expired licence's training provisions as a condition of renewal.

An area that deserves to be explored is that of church authorities getting into dialogue with the secular employer over the PSE's ministry training. Is the employer willing to make some concessions in this area? To ask the question may be scary for the church, which has traditionally left the PSE to do that task unaided. But if the church really means to value the PSE's workplace ministry, then the church needs to engage with it in an explicit way, and this could be the exact place to start the dialogue. Who knows, there may be some pleasant surprises in store for us all. Where the challenge lies, is in convincing diocesan policy-makers that continuing theological education of a formal kind is not just a desirable adjunct to a PSE's ministry, it's a *sine qua non*.

Formation and ordination

A consideration that needs to be confronted is: at what point to ordain? Ordination has always been intrinsically connected with theological education. So, if the church abandons the idea that a PSE's theological education can ever be 'completed', then what becomes of the idea that a candidate should have it all behind them before they are ready to be ordained?

Let me interpose a personal experience that may suggest a way forward. I was enrolled in a course of study with Te Rau Kahikatea, the Maori theological institution, for their Licentiate of Theology, and I was getting on with the programmes. To my great surprise, when I was about half way through the curriculum, the bishop presented me with the licentiate's handsome certificate. When I asked why, when I had not completed all the courses, the bishop replied, 'Maybe not, but we know that you will.' Events were to prove him right, and I suppose he knew his man, but it was an unexpected move at the time.

The answer then lies squarely in the territory of discernment. The connection between date of completion of a theological course of study on the one hand, and date of ordination on the other, would be a matter for prayer and negotiation. There are implications for oversight, because the PSE will always be in a state of theological incompleteness (one might prefer to say of theological emergence) and need signals about what boundaries to observe, for example, in preaching. Candidate and congregation alike need to be reminded that ordination is not an achievement to be grasped at but a call — to which study is part of the response.

Calls of the already employed

Where the new priest is already halfway through their life's journey, equipped with a high level of secular professional experience, involving not only the acquisition of skills but also a significant course of education and expectations of training processes¹³ — in such a case, the personal background of the candidate will be of pivotal importance. Hitherto, this article has dealt with to what Pratt calls theological education as a matter of academic accountability¹⁴. Let us now consider the second half of his taxonomy: ministerial formation as a matter of ecclesial expectation. By this he means a broad-ranging life-shaping process directed toward a specific life-style goal ... a process of personal and existential grounding ... the acquisition of both practical skills and guiding essentials¹⁵...

The broad-ranging life-shaping process, the specific life-style goal, the personal and existential grounding to which Pratt refers, have

been traditionally catered for by an assistantship (what we used to call a curacy) which still has much merit. The institution of curacy as formerly practised, provided an opportunity not only for the vicar to acquire a cheap assistant and the curate cheap lodgings, but also gave the youngster time to grow up a bit before taking on the responsibilities of their 'own' parish.

Any candidate whose potential is discerned in a late-life call, is likely to exhibit already that life-style, personal and existential grounding which will make their ministry effective. Or else they never will. Putting it bluntly, among the over-40's the church can expect to get these personal life-skills by recruiting them rather than by developing them.

The PSE who has spent the greater part of a lifetime pursuing a worthy secular occupation is likely to believe that that occupation represents a significant part of God's plan for their life. Such a conviction may have guided them to prefer PSE over other forms of ministry. That is the point of being bi-vocational. Some occupations have particularly obvious connections to PSE — the 'helping' professions for example. But how to incorporate the numbers of secularly employed bankers, police officers and computer people offering themselves for ministry? In helping such people to exhibit 'practical skills and guiding essentials', the church will do well to re-evaluate those skill-sets it has traditionally sought for its ministers. Some of what they need, mature candidates should already possess in abundant measure.

Intentional bi-vocational training for seminarians

A distinction needs to be drawn between mature-age candidates for a PSE ministry and their younger colleagues. For example, the diocese of Auckland positively encourages its theology students to do conjoint degrees, and to maintain those skills that would equip them for concurrent secular employment. Bi-vocationalism by intent. In doing so that diocese is giving expression to Brushwyler's¹⁶ notion of bi-vocationalism as a sensible option for younger people. There is still a compelling case for providing young candidates with strong programmes encouraging personal growth. Almost certainly

such programmes need to be residential; almost certainly they need to last months rather than weeks. With the progressive fragmentation of employment possibilities for young people and the effective disappearance of the notion of an employment career, programmes of this kind are probably more feasible now than they have been in recent generations.

To sum up this reflection on formation for priests in secular employment, we conclude that formation forms an ongoing, permanent and integral part of any PSE's ministry. The content requires the same characteristics as a seminary-based programme, and though curriculum delivery will prove challenging we know how to do it. All this carries strong implications for the congregation the PSE serves, for the PSEs themselves, and for the bishop who manages their ordination.

Notes

1. Oden, Thomas C.: *Pastoral Theology - Essentials of Ministry* (New York, Harper-Collins, 1983) p.33
2. St Matthew: *Gospel* Chap. 10
3. St Paul: *Second Letter to Timothy* 2:2
4. Bluck, John: *Christian Communication Reconsidered* (WCC Publications, Geneva, 1989) p.39
5. See, for example, ü Niebuhr, H.R, Williams, D.D & Gustafson, J.M: *The Advancement of Theological Education* (New York, Harper, 1957)
6. In New Zealand we recognize that the list reflects the expectations of an Anglo-Saxon heritage. Maori Anglicans have a different set of priorities. For some detail, see ü Te Whare Wananga o te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa: *Te Taapapa o Te Upoko o Te Ika Course Information* (Otaki 2002)
7. Knowles, Malcolm S: *Modern Practice of Adult Education* (Chicago, Follett, 1980) p.27
8. In the case of PSEs, the needs and goals of secular society are relevant also. The Faith At Work movement is making significant inroads into this territory. A helpful secular source is ü Corson, David (ed): *Education for Work* (Palmerston Nth, Dunmore, 1988)
9. For example, internet courses such as those provided by the Anglican Church Divinity School of the Pacific: ü Online Courses for Academic Credit (online at <http://cdsp.edu/index.html>)

10. For example, group study courses like the University of the South School of Theology's internationally respected *Education for Ministry* (Sewanee, Tennessee)

11. Davis, Archbishop Brian: *The Way Ahead - Anglican change and prospect in New Zealand* (Christchurch, Caxton, 1995) p.72. Davis clearly imagines a hierarchy of doors to paid ministry, the front door presumably being by way of full-time theological college.

12. Anglican Church in NZ: *A New Zealand Prayer Book/He Karakia Mihinare mo Aotearoa* (London, Collins, 1989) p.389 (the baptismal rite)

13. Dawson, Jennifer: *The ordination training mat: Towards a coherent frame of priestly formation*. (MMin thesis, University of Otago, Dunedin, NZ, 2003) p. 7

14. Pratt, Douglas: "Theological Education and Ministerial Formation - Academic accountability and ecclesial expectation ..." *Colloquium*, v.24no.2, 1992, pp 98-105

15. Pratt, op. cit. pp 104-5 Pratt also lists spiritual formation, which is a separate subject in its own right.

16. Brushwyler, L. Ronald: *Bi-Vocational Pastors: A Research Report* (Chicago, Midwest Ministry Development Service, 1992)

A Church in Search of Itself

Is the new book from **Robert Blair Kaiser**, a US-based Roman Catholic journalist who has covered the changes in that church since Vatican II. Subtitled "Benedict XVI and the battle for the future", it is a well informed look at the intensifying struggle over the future of the Catholic Church.

Despite the popularity of John Paul II, opposition to many of his policies had hardened among Catholics by the time of his death. The Church had become more doctrinaire, the voices of millions of dissenters ignored. Kaiser examines the most important and divisive issues confronting the Church: the sex abuse scandal, a shortage of priests due to the insistence upon celibacy, the ban on contraception, the roles of women and gays in the Church, the failure to reach out sincerely to other faiths, the increased participation of laypeople in Church affairs.

He gives us in-depth portraits of six of the cardinals who gathered

in Rome in April 2005 to choose a new pope—Ratzinger from Germany, Mahony from the United States, Murphy-O'Connor from Britain, Rodríguez Maradiaga from Honduras, Arinze from Nigeria, and Darmaatmadja from Indonesia—and through them makes clear why Catholics worldwide are increasingly leaving the Church or defying Church doctrine. Finally, he explains why Ratzinger's ascendance was assured, and what this might mean for the future.

For those who are interested in finding out more, please go to the website www.takebackourchurch.org. The book is not yet available retail in the UK but can be obtained through Amazon.

Church of England MSE / NSM Officers network

The next meeting of the Officers will be held on Saturday 6th May 2006 in Birmingham. Around half of dioceses have attended previous meetings, so if you know who your Officer is, do check with them that they have been invited, are going, or if they can't are sending someone to represent them.

If you have any concerns or matters the network should discuss, please do draw it to the attention of your diocesan officer. If you don't know who this is the Editor may be able to help, or we can feed the information in through one of the CHRISM members who will be there.

More MSE resources

A US website well worth a visit is www.newlifeministries-nlm.org/online/links-bivo.htm. What makes this useful are the links to other sites and pages, including:

- a bivocational ministry discussion forum;
- a link into Rob Ross's website (www.crossspot.net/bivomin/); Rob is a Canadian MSE whom we have featured in previous editions of MaW);
- CHRISM!
- The US Bivocational ministers network;
- And articles on Bivocational ministry, getting the balance right, and a Certificate in Bivocational Studies.

I recently received by e-mail a link to the **Winter 2006 edition** of the **newsletter for NASSAM** (the National Association for the Self-Supporting Active Ministry). It includes an article by Rt. Rev. William D. Persell, Bishop of Chicago, about tentmaking ministry, based on his address to the November 2005 Tentmaker Conference in Chicago (attended by Phil Aspinall and Margaret Joachim). If you would like a copy, please contact the Editor.

The Tomorrow Project, www.tomorrowproject.net, is still well worth visiting. You can sign up to the network – and obtain “Tomorrow’s Workplace” at £12 instead of the usual £16! A number of other reports published by the project are also available.

CHRISM exchanges information regularly with the National Center for the Laity, a Roman Catholic body in Chicago. NCL publishes *Initiatives*, a bi-monthly newsletter, summarising various activities across the USA and beyond, reviews new publications, and sponsors networking among those promoting the link between faith and work. *Initiatives* can be read at <http://www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm>. NCL itself publishes a number of interesting papers, details of which can be found through the same link.

Cornerbar (www.cornerbarpr.com) caters for those in the PR industry, and one recent article, *The Origin - Or the Death? - of Spin*, is well worth a read for two reasons: it is clever and by **George Pitcher**, MSE in training, and “resident agony uncle of British Airways’ *Business Life*, where he settles the petty-minded vendettas of people who get up his nose. ... His day job is at issues management consultancy Luther Pendragon, which he co-founded in the early Nineties.” He was Industrial Editor of *The Observer in the 1980s*. Definitely worth a visit!

Diary

'Christian Mission in a Pagan Culture'
A day with Bishop Tom Wright
Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham
Saturday 17th June 2006 10am - 4pm

£18 (unwaged £12) - bring your own lunch.

Is British culture Christian, secular - or pagan?
How is paganism understood in the New Testament?
What is a Christian and a pagan worldview?
Is it constructive to talk, or think, of our culture as pagan?
How should this affect Christian living, church life and mission today?

To request a registration form, please e-mail: conference@gospel-culture.org.uk typing 'register' in the subject box.

Christians@Work annual conference and AGM:

'WALK WORTHILY (in your calling)'
11.00am, Saturday 17th June 2006
at
Rugby Evangelical Free Church,
Railway Terrace, Rugby

Speakers **Pastor Nick McQuaker** (Hayward's Heath) and **Dr. David Kellett** (Croydon)

Cost £25 each for non-members - £20 for CaW Associates
The price includes all refreshments and lunch.

The CaW website has 29 articles that can be downloaded as well as various other resources. Worth a visit.

30 June - 2 July: *ICOS 2006 - 3rd International Conference on Organisational spirituality*. "Leadership: The spiritual dimension - Our challenge for the 21st century". This conference is organised by the School of Management of the University of Surrey. Further details from www,icosconference.com.

CABE (the Christian Association of Business executives):

The **11th CABE Paper** will be given on **21 June 2006** by Peter Shaw CB, CABE Trustee, Praesta Partner, on 'How Tough Should a Christian Manager Be?' at 6.30 for 7.00 pm; the venue is to be confirmed (check with John McLean Fox on mclean.fox@btinternet.com.)

The **2006 Hugh Kay Lecture**: The 17th Lecture will be given by

Stephen Green, CABE member and Chairman, HSBC on **Thursday 30 November 2006** at 6.00 for 6.30 pm in the OBE Chapel, St Paul's Cathedral, followed by a Reception in the Crypt.

N.B. a copy of the **2005 Hugh Kay Lecture** can be downloaded from: <http://www.cabe-online.org/lectures.htm>

This was an excellent presentation, by **Dr Laura Nash**, Senior Lecturer, Harvard Business School, on *"Takeover by the Company? Finding personal wholeness at work"*, and includes a summary of the preceding Conference sponsored by the Co-ordination Group, of which CHRISM is part.

If you would like hard copy, this can be obtained from John McLean Fox, 101 Hadleigh Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 2LY (or e-mail as above) for a suggested donation of £1.

Laura Nash is also co-author, with Howard Stevenson, of *Just Enough – Tools for creating success in your work and life*, John Wiley, 2005, ISBN: 0471458368, £11.99.

CHRISM - CHRistians In Secular Ministry

Notice of the 2006 Annual General Meeting

**This will take place at 10.45, Henderson Hall, Newcastle,
Sunday, 16 July.**

The following business will be conducted:

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Note of the eleventh A.G.M., held on 23 July, 2005, at Plater College, Oxford.
3. Matters Arising.
4. Report of the Presiding Moderator (Adrian Holdstock).
5. Report by the Hon. Secretary (Phil Aspinall).
6. Report on Membership (Richard Dobell).
7. To receive the Report and Accounts of the Christians in Secular Employment Trust (CHRISSET), presented by Richard Dobell, and adopt said Accounts for 2005. Receive Report on financial arrangement between CHRISM and CHRISSET, and adopt a Motion to continue the arrangement with the

- CHRISSET trustees.
8. To set the rate(s) of subscriptions for the year to 31 December, 2007.
 9. To elect the following: *(see Note 1)*
 - (i) One Moderator (to serve for three years, Presiding from the 2007 A.G.M.);
 - (ii) Secretary (to serve for three years);
 - (ii) The Editor of the Journal (one year);
 - (iii) Three Committee members.
 10. To nominate a member of CHRISM, for appointment by the Trustees of CHRISSET as one of their number.
 11. To set the date and place of the next A.G.M.
 12. Remarks by the Presiding Moderator for 2006-7 (Peter King) and closure of the meeting.

If you have any additional matter of business that you wish to raise at the AGM, please contact the Secretary before 10th May, 2006.

NOTE 1

Management Committee - Present Members:

Moderators: Felicity Smith (elected until 2006)
 Adrian Holdstock (elected until 2007)
 Peter King (elected until 2008)

Secretary: Phil Aspinall (elected until 2006)

Editor of the Newsletter: Robert Fox

Elected members: Catherine Binns
 Ruth Brothwell
 Jean Skinner (co-opted)
 Wendy White

CHRISSET representative: Margaret Joachim

CHRISSET Treasurer: Richard Dobell

If you would like:

- to nominate someone to the Committee,
- further information on what being a Committee member involves (with a view to standing for election), or
- to send apologies,

please contact the Secretary.

I must resign....

Phil Aspinall

Now that I have your attention, let me explain. At the AGM in July, I shall have completed six years as Secretary to CHRISM. The constitution only allows an Officer of CHRISM to remain in the post for two terms of three years each – so someone else has to take over the job at the AGM. Those of you who were at last year’s conference may recall that I tried to resign then, but had to withdraw my resignation as no one else volunteered. But this year we must find a volunteer – could it be YOU ?

The role of the Secretary is, as the title implies, to communicate with committee members regarding meetings (preparing agenda, writing up minutes, and arranging venues), and to prepare external correspondence as required. If you would like to know more – as I hope you will – do please contact me and I can fill you on more of the details (details inside the back cover). This could be your chance to make a contribution to CHRISM and help to keep the wheels oiled.

And finally

... The animals’ parliament

Representatives of all the animal kingdom met to decide who was the most frightening.

First a bear rose on his
“When I growl, all the
the forest shiver at my



hind legs and declared:
leaves on all the trees in
presence.”

A shark responded:
swimmers see my fin approach they scamper from the water in
panic.”

“That’s nothing, when

Then a lion stepped forward, with a disdainful sideways glance at the shark. “Out on the plains when I **ROAR!** – every animal for miles around flees in terror.”

CHRISM

CHRistians In Secular Ministry

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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