

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.

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Editorial

One thing I have carefully managed to avoid since being 'done' at the Manchester Cathedral Petertide ordinations in 1991 (oh dear! That makes me feel old) is to go back and sit among the clergy at one of these occasions. Being a loyal supporter of (and occasional lunch-buyer for) Catherine Binns, I swallowed my aversions and duly sat amongst the ring of confidence brigade. There were so many it was a wonder there were services anywhere in the diocese that day. The watchword was of course "Don't mention Sony!"

Not that we had to make our own amusement: it was a joyfully light-hearted occasion. Bishop Nigel rather enjoyed himself with a range of quips, having delegated the touchy-feely bits to the Bishop of Bolton. And the packed congregation it went smoothly, apart that is from most of the 'supporting' clergy not being in the right place at the right time, which drew some rather non-ecclesiastical words from a member of the cathedral staff. Adrian Holdstock came up from Leicester too, and it was great to see Catherine's father proudly acting as her sponsor before the Bishop. There being no 'As', Catherine was first up, and presented as an MSE – very powerful.

After the service Adrian and I had some time to use before the bun fight (and there were several hundred buns!) at the Church Catherine is licensed to. After lunch at Sinclair's Oyster Bar, only metres from the Cathedral, Adrian asked me to give him a tour of the city centre, which provided some unexpected delights. In addition to the Chinese arch and heavy shower, we were treated to the Italian community's Whit Walk, complete with tableaux of Christ and the Virgin, born aloft on straining shoulders and accompanied by pipe and brass bands. It is a tradition that goes back well over 100 years and is particularly poignant at the moment as the community campaigns for the re-opening of the 'their' church, St. Michael's, Ancoats. After calling at the most famous letter box in Manchester – it survived the IRA bomb without a scratch – it was up Bury New Road to a mountain of sandwiches.

The welcome service at All Saints, Stand, was delivered in that style

peculiar to these parts, Lancashire Low, which is quite Lancashire but not exactly low. It was as positive and joyful as the morning had been, and very personal. Catherine is in good hands there. I was eagerly anticipating the sermon, delivered by the hospital chaplain alongside whom Catherine already works in her role as a neo-natal nurse. I remember Sue, for it is she, well from our days in training together – and I still have plenty of stories I can embarrass her with. It was a delight to hear, and, as I observed afterwards, it could almost have been preached by an MSE (and yes, I do plan to ask Sue to write up her experiences as a chaplain working with an MSE).

“What’s that?” is still a common response when people learn you are an MSE, but as often as not these days people in Church circles do know a little of what it means. More importantly a great deal of the suspicion has evaporated; those who earn their corn working for the church are increasingly realising that we are ‘in it together’. Our role in ministry may differ but that ministry has the same aim: to tell of the Kingdom of God and of His love.

There is a great deal in this edition that does just that, and I am grateful to all those who have contributed. Of course the one thing that has overshadowed us in the last weeks has been the untimely death of Richard Dobell. Richard was warm, funny and deeply caring. The tribute herein draws from a number of different sources and I hope it does him justice. No there was someone who lived the Kingdom of God

I’m rather anticipating that the next edition will be my swan song as Editor. Seven years is quite long enough and a fresh approach would do us all good. Having said that I have not – yet – had any nibbles, so if you are harbouring dreams or fears of editorship I recommend you contact me discreetly. I’ll be up front: this is a time consuming and occasionally frustrating role, but at the same time immensely rewarding. It isn’t one either that could just be picked up – a handover period is essential. You know where I live.....

Rob

Sacred Spaces and Special places

Peter King

Most of us all seem to live such busy lives with every spare moment filled with activities and action. It is often so difficult to slow down. We often find our energies channelled in many directions, with new demands being made upon a scarce amount of free time. It is nice to feel wanted or needed but it is important not to lose the sense of self. There is so little time or space to be or to discover the real "me".

We are reminded in the Gospel that we should take a holistic view of our lives as being body, mind and spirit. The body generally makes its demands known to us. Art, music, books, newspapers, conversation and TV help to inform or feed the mind but what of the spirit and our spirituality? How often do we take time or make time for reflection or prayer? What feeds our spiritual needs and recharges our spiritual batteries?

Standing in Richmond Park, looking across the sweeping landscape with the skyline of the City in the distance, I was led to reflect upon how many spiritual experiences are said to happen on hilltops or mountain-tops. The promised land was seen from Mount Nebo. Moses and God met on Mount Horeb and the Ten Commandments were delivered on Mount Sinai. Many a time Jesus preached and taught on the hills, indeed the Transfiguration took place on one. To stand on a hilltop is to experience something of the awe and beauty of creation and to feel for a moment the freedom of the real without distortion or illusion. It is to be a part of a greater whole and to regain a sense of perspective, being connected to the larger patterns of living.

Why not walk among rocks or contemplate standing stones, mountains or cliffs? Think of the forces which created them so many millions of years ago and call to mind their strength and permanence. To do so is to draw strength from the power of creation and to experience eternity, a "forever moment".

Why not walk beside the River Thames or past flowing water and

contemplate its movement, its vitality, its power? Give thanks with your whole heart for being alive and rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit. If you are standing by a well, so much the better. The Bible speaks of many creative and spiritual meetings by wells. Look into its darkness and depth so as to feel its mystery and its history. Try also to recognise its life giving qualities shared with those who make the effort to request what it gives. Boundaries, crossing places, groves and springs also carry in their physical nature spiritual power.

July and August is a time for holidays with loved ones or friends to see and explore new and exciting places or to visit or be in special ones. When you are there take time to look for the sacred spaces, they are all around you. If you are staying at home go for a walk in Richmond Park or gaze at the Thames from the top of Richmond Hill.

Attending a Bishop's Advisory Panel

Helen Hayes

The words 'Bishop's Advisory Panel' have the most amazing effect on those who have been through it or are about to! For those who have experienced it and come out the 'other side', it is incredible how experiences differ. For those about to go through the process, the fears and apprehensions are immense. I am writing to share my experience - hopefully to encourage both sides!

I attended a Bishop's Advisory Selection Panel at Shallowford House near Stone on Monday 23rd April. I can still hardly believe that I am writing these words as I have been "on the run" from a calling into ordained ministry for a long time and it is only just dawning on me that I have been well and truly 'caught'!

My own particular 'calling' is to non – stipendiary ministry. I am a Choral Animateur (conductor) and do not believe that at the moment God wants me to stop using this gift. I very much feel that I am being called 'into' my profession, not 'out' of it. The nature of my job means that I have a lot of time available in the week and it is in this time that I feel called to work on the 'edge' of the church, not 'in' it! Much of my 'running' has been to do with questioning the Church of

England itself. Did I want to still be a part of it, never mind a priest within it! Many of my friends are on the edge of society never mind Church and my views on how the church accepts people like this are not always positive. I feel the church very often fails those on the 'outside' and that there is much more to be done. I knew I had to be honest about this at my panel, which I knew might not go down too well!

So off I went – reluctant but obedient (I'm not normally good at obedience!) What followed was a completely amazing three days. I met with other candidates who were utterly awesome and I thought "well if this is evidence of where the C of E is heading I want to be part of it! (That was doubt No 1 gone!) The advisors were some of the most gracious people I have ever met. We were encouraged to be completely free in our worship, whatever style that might be and the various styles supported this. We were encouraged to relax and be ourselves and make good use of the bar in the cellar in the evening (out of bounds for all panel advisors!) This particularly encouraged me (Speckled Hen being a favourite of mine!) and without doubt was the place where the candidates drew close together and shared their journeys - in a 'safe' place. Here I felt I could completely relax and this gave me the strength to truly be myself and be honest in my interviews.

These interviews without doubt were grueling, as the advisors turned you inside out to discover who you were. No stone was left unturned, but I felt 'safe'. I wept at all three of my interviews as they dug deep and unturned things that have been painful in my life. I knew I would and had been concerned that this might be a problem. I need not have worried. This was not frowned upon, in fact I was encouraged again that this was fine.

I had also prepared myself with my reasons for opting for non-stipendiary ministry. I had my argument ready – I never had to use it! My vocational interview was about my calling to the priesthood – full stop! This was a revelation to me and to NSM's I have spoken to since. I was completely able to be me. I aired most of my views at some point, either in interview or out and I was honest. I really had not imagined that I could be that open. Others shared this

view; this was not just my experience.

For any one reading this who is considering going forward for selection - be encouraged. We all said that we trusted the process. It was so thorough and done in such a prayerful way that we all said that it was the discerning moment that we had all waited for, to finally help us know whether this 'calling' was what God wanted for us. We all felt that the advisors had prepared our hearts just as much for a No as for a Yes!

This was the Church of England at its absolute best - embracing the differences in each one of us without prejudice and complete acceptance. I have never felt so affirmed to be the person God created me to be and to trust that He can use us as we are. Thank you somehow does not seem enough!

A Reflection on the Reflective Weekend

Anne Burgess

Having travelled through a snow-clad Vale of Evesham with the white of the snow reflecting against the dusky sky and creating an awesome light, I wondered if this was a reflective sign of things to come! This was a new experience for me and, being a very recent member of CHRISM, it was a great delight to be welcomed with such warmth and acceptance on arrival at Holland House.

The house was a convivial setting. Extensive thought and planning ensured that everything ran smoothly with wonderful periods of reflective and contemplative worship, culminating in the Sunday morning Eucharist led by Peter King.

It was a privilege to experience the wisdom and generosity of spirit of Donald Eadie, who shared with us many personal anecdotes and introduced me to some new and exciting pieces of music. He encouraged us to reflect on where we find our altars, and who are priests to us; some of my resultant thoughts were uncomfortable, but provided material for continuing reflection.

Being able to meet and share with so many interesting people from such varied backgrounds and professions encouraged me at a time when there was (and still is) uncertainty as to where my title parish will be. The opportunities to chat over coffee and meals offered me valuable insights into how ministries, often on the borderlands, develop and how priestly formation develops.

The chance to relax; to learn a little more about 'being' in silence, and to share what gave each of us 'a sense of joy and wonder' offered us a special way of getting to know more about each other. It was a most enjoyable and fun way to spend a Saturday evening, and a rich opportunity to consolidate much of what we had thought about during the day

I recognise that events such as this will be imperative in sustaining me as an MSE. This was a well-structured event, with good people and was a good example of meeting the aim of CHRISM. The response and encouragement from other participants made me feel 'grown up'. I came home feeling more confident about my future ministry – thank you.

He'brews

If you thought the "amazing Ale, how sweet the round" used to promote William Wilberforce Freedom Ale was a trifle corny, this is positively good taste compared to several products of the Shmaltz Brewing Company, of New York.

Dedicated to "He'brew" beers, the range includes:

- 1 Origin Pomegranate Ale
- 2 Genesis Ale – "our first creation"
- 3 Messiah Bold – "it's the beer you've been waiting for!"
- 4 Monumental Jewbelation – a celebration of 10 years brewing
- 5 Genesis 10:10 – "Creation, Evolution, Revelation, Inebriation"

See even more at <http://www.shmaltz.com/>. You have been warned!

***International Worker Priest Conference
Pentecost 2007***

This year, the annual Pentecost conference of European Worker Priests was held in the UK, at Oak Hall, in Otford, Kent.

The themes for consideration were agreed at the end of last year's conference, and needed to be considered in the context of social engagement in the working world:

Vivre avec – to live with.

In our meetings with many cultures and religions :

In these times of globalisation, racism, nationalism, individualisation of groups, immigration.....

What changes are there in us ?

What sort of society is being built ?

What prophetic signs do we see / show ?

What God ?

What do we, in our national groups, have to do ?

This is the contribution of the British delegation, which included several CHRISM members.

“Living with”

In our interactions with many cultures and religions,
In this time when racism, strong group identity and nationalism are developing:

- 1 What changes are there in ourselves?
- 2 What sort of society is forming?
- 3 What prophetic signs can we see?
- 4 What God?
- 5 What are we, collectively, going to do?

Since the expansion of the European Union in May 2004, some 510,000 immigrants have come to the UK. Romania and Bulgaria

joined on January 1st 2007. This raises many questions: the right to regulate the influx of immigrants; the various methods of regulation (e.g. a points system or sponsorship); regularisation and control which encourage trafficking of people and drugs. We don't know how many people working in the black economy are themselves the victims of exploitation, abuse and coercion.

What changes in ourselves?

I look at the people in the train to London. Few of them are white. There are many different colours and faces. Migrants and citizens merge. Nationality is unimportant in the face of global movements of people. Our identities are challenged from the perspectives of culture, citizenship and religion. Who are we? Who am I?

We must become more open to change and diversity.

More willing to accept difference and challenge.

We must question our own preconceived ideas of nationality, societal norms and standards of tolerance, understanding and acceptance of others.

What society is being built?

Illegal immigration and migration frequently create a new form of slavery for the most exploited and vulnerable people. Those for whom legislation offers no protection are faced with racism, discrimination and the loss of their human rights.

There is a great global movement of people. They are looking for a better quality of life, and we must recognise that greed and corruption impede fair trade and equality for all.

We must find ways of providing work and restoring the human dignity of those who want to escape poverty.

We must establish peace, and build the confidence and restore the human dignity of those who are escaping from violence.

We must create a society free from long-established prejudices, stereotypes and generalisations.

We must remember and tell the stories of individuals, to encourage hospitality, compassion and solidarity, and to demonstrate that migrants are global citizens.

What prophetic signs can we see?

There are prophetic signs when we speak and work with other people. We have a “bi-directional” Father who is in the world blessing and giving a language to his work, and who is also in the church when she connects with things in the world.

Signs can be seen in the dialogues and co-operation between different communities, especially faith communities. They are in the understanding and co-operation which takes place at local and international levels. There are signs when people acknowledge human rights and take responsibility for enforcing them. The merging of national and global boundaries, conversation and friendship, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity are all prophetic.

What God?

God is everywhere, in everything, and Christ is in all people of faith. God is inclusive – faith, rights and human dignity are inter-related.

We must discover and work with those things that we have in common, rather than those which are different and sow discord.

God is creative, recognising the value of human effort and the dignity of work.

God is just, and gives justice without exploitation.

God is for everyone, regardless of language or creed.

God is a witness for our world that faith is a normal human activity.

This God lives with his people, sharing their joys and their struggles, rejoicing in their festivals and neither making rules nor controlling us.

We must let God be God, and not constrict him by our own limited perceptions. We must see the God who, in Christ, embraces diversity, sinners and Samaritans alike. We must accept our own responsibility as guardians of his world, not owners of it.

What are we, collectively, going to do?

We must embrace diversity, becoming aware of our prejudices of identity and religion. We must reflect on relativism, recognising its risks and our vulnerability, living with uncertainty and in a common adventure. We must see faith as the fabric of civic life, within the context of human dignity and liberty. Our political habits and religious convictions are not merely local peculiarities, but part of one single story of the world. We must struggle for a decent living wage, not just for the bare minimum.

We must recognise languages and cultures as colours in God's tapestry. We must recognise our own presence as Worker-Priests as being interpreters of the language of God's handiwork and as prophets proclaiming the relevance of the church to the world.

In England we are seeing change in the church, and bishops are now encouraging dialogue through a "Muslim-Christian Forum".

It is important that Worker-Priests who function at the margins of the church encourage the congregations to develop their own vision of the future. It is too easy to do nothing. We Worker-Priests must motivate others to meet the needs of society's outcasts. In Chesterfield we have an old bus which serves as a church (the "Mission Bus"). On two nights each week a number of volunteers are there to serve sandwiches and hot drinks to the unemployed and the homeless. It is parked outside the Town Hall.



Worker Priests from Belgium, Spain, Germany and Italy

Richard Dobell

21st April 1953 – 20th April 2007

By now many will have learned of the unexpected death of our Treasurer, Richard Dobell. For those who had not met Richard, what follows will give a little flavour of the man, but only a little. Richard was one of those rare people whom you really had to meet to appreciate the depths of thought, humour and humanity. Our continuing thoughts and prayers are with Jan and all his family and friends. He will be much missed, and always remembered with a smile.

As well as his day job as Bursar of the grammar school in Alcester, Richard was an active and enthusiastic MSE, an accomplished musician a member of the Alcester Singers and *The Rackets* (he was “the rocking vicar”), and a genuinely funny man.

At school, Richard volunteered to take assemblies, and did so the day before his marriage. He arrived in the Hall, stomped to the lectern, put his papers down and glared at all 800 students (and all the staff). Most of the students would not have appreciated the imminence of the wedding. He said nothing for about 30 seconds – until every one began to feel uncomfortable – then, leaning forward, he bellowed, slightly off key, at the very top of his very deep voice: “I’m getting married in the morning” – the whole verse. His reputation for repartee was such that some people said that they went to the concerts just to hear his linking comments. Alcester Singers recall how, at a rehearsal and to demonstrate some point about rhythm, he just spontaneously grabbed a young lady and whisked her round the room in a wild polka. He was always full of surprises, but in a sense, never surprising, because he was all of a piece – a man of utter integrity – what you saw was what you got.

The school’s website invited tributes to Richard, which quickly came in aplenty, with students calling him: “an absolute legend”, “always positive”, “warm”, “passionate”, “outgoing”, “energetic”, “a fantastic mentor”, “inspiring”, “a shining light”, and one said: “Isn’t it wonderful to leave a legacy behind like this, that even when this event is so tragic, we can’t help smiling over all that he did and meant to us.”

As a music teacher he is described as “wacky”, “endearingly eccen-

tric", "colourful", "infectiously enthusiastic". Several people have said things like: "he didn't care how good or bad you were as a musician, you didn't have to be a shining star to be in one of his concerts; he wanted everyone to join in." and he put himself out to make sure that students could get to concerts and rehearsals, often taking them in his own car.

In the latter years of his work, as the person in charge of school finances, with responsibility for several million pounds, Richard was absolutely meticulous and scrupulously honest. Even at the end of his life, only a few weeks ago, he left everything in perfect order, explanatory notes in files, lines drawn under crucial processes. In dealing with financial matters, he had the happy facility to see both the wood and the trees – the strategic direction and the detail – and this easy command extended to his stewardship of CHRISM finances too.

Richard was, above all, a man of faith, who carried his faith in active witness into the world. He was one of those rare people, in whom the love of Christ really shone. Congregations soon found him completely committed and completely loveable. He spoke of his work as a minister of the church in secular employment in this way:

"First, I see myself as a church of England cash point on site. If anyone wants to access this cash point, I am there to be accessed, as best I can be amidst .." (and here he listed the latest exciting government initiatives besetting education). "I try to help by listening, by empathising, and most importantly by understanding. Secondly, I can draw parallels between Christ's earthly ministry and life at school, and I can largely rejoice. I see so much good in so many young people. I also see in my community, the poor helped, the sick cared for and the sinner loved."

It is typical of Richard that he entered the process of selection for ordination with great diffidence. Jan was typically blunt, but lovingly encouraging with him, as he wrestled – in the end she used words which suggested "put up or shut up!" He found it hard to accept that he was of value to anyone, and in a paradoxical way, whilst being certain of God's love for him, and of his calling, he remained humanly dubious. After his selection to go forward for ordi-

nation he was quite low – “What – me?” he asked.

That humility was utterly clear, and its genuineness drew people to him. We all recognised in him someone we could trust, because there seemed to be very little self-interest in him. So many felt that he was their friend: as a patient listener, quiet adviser and, above all giver of his time – an ‘alongsider’ of people. His humility was also recognisable in that he didn’t mind asking the questions, which would others would have been embarrassed to ask – because they feared appearing idiotic. Richard didn’t mind – it was another way in which he had absolute integrity – he was the person you saw, with all his doubts and fears, love and concern.

Richard’s faith was transparent. His certainty made us sit up. He had no fear of death. He knew where he was going after death. He made real the Christian belief that in Jesus, God came alongside us, and suffered with us, and died amongst us, and died for us – and that in doing so, he showed us that he stands beside us now – and Richard believed that we, too, should stand alongside those who suffer in this world, and make clear that no-one is beyond God’s love and forgiveness. This strong hope, shared by many of his family and those he knew, - this strong hope, made Richard one of the most truly alive people I’ve known. He knew that new life – resurrection - is possible for all of us, both in this life, as we put past behind and commit ourselves to fresh beginnings, in following Christ – and in the life to come. Richard knew that for all his own faults, (and he did have a few!) God loved him unconditionally, and in absorbing that love, he tried to radiate it out to those around him. Richard lived out his faith and gave meaning to our lives, for if they are not lives of service and love, then what are our lives worth?

To finish, some words from Richard himself, spoken at his final assembly, just before Easter:

“Underpinning all of this is the fact that I am loved by God. There’s a passage in the Bible that says: ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.’ That love cost Jesus his life. He was crucified on a cross so that you and I could have life abundantly.”

“This is what the church is celebrating over the next week or so.

Yes! Christ is risen from the dead, but in order to rise, you need to die (“and this”, said Richard, “can be the less attractive bit”). The complete story includes Jesus Christ riding into Jerusalem on a donkey; Jesus washing his disciple’s feet, Jesus commanding people to break bread and drink wine in remembrance of him at the last supper, Judas Iscariot’s betrayal of Jesus, Jesus’ arrest, his mock trial before Pontius Pilate, his torture and whipping and his crucifixion, with two common criminals.”

“Yes! His sacrifice for you and me cost him dear.”

“He sacrificed himself for you and me, whether we are healthy, ill, or wealthy or poor. The only requirement on our part, is that we believe and trust in him.”

And Richard asked: “Do you?”

A number of CHRISM members attended the funeral. This note from Ruth Brothwell captures the occasion admirably:

“I am sure there will be more messages from those of us who attended but just to say it went off very well and was a wonderful day in a strange kind of way.

“The church - which was not small - was packed out with standing room only when I arrived at 10.15 (for 11 o'clock). Later people stood outside. The service itself was highly musical, lots of hymns and near the end a rendering of 'English Country Garden', as this was often the piece Richard used to pick out on a piano when he sat down to play. There was a very amusing and informative tribute. I am not sure I have ever experienced spontaneous applause during a funeral before. It happened twice. Lots of clerics there from all the stages of Richards life, as well as students from his school and many music groups, attesting to the regard in which he was held.

At the very end it took awhile for the cars to move away, but the high street came to a standstill with people lining the pavements to pay their final respects. The police momentarily paused the traffic

so the procession could make way. I think Richard would have been humbly amazed and dumbstruck.

For me it seemed as if I had watched him go off on a journey somewhere nice. I knew we would see him later!!

Afterwards we gathered for excellent cakes and coffee in the town hall opposite. Some small CHRISM business was discussed, including donations to funds and flowers for Jan. Alcester is a wonderful place by the way and well worth a detour on anyone is charge up or down the M40.

Go well Richard. May you rest in peace...and rise in glory

Ruth"

M without the SE?

Margaret Joachim

"I've called this meeting", said Steve, "to discuss your separation from the company." I looked at him. He'd been a colleague for years. He was reading from a script and wouldn't meet my eye; nor would the ludicrously youthful girl from HR sitting beside him. At the point in his script where it said to hand me a letter, he passed it over. Had I any questions? Yes – but as they were not in his script he would not answer them. "I want to make it clear that we are offering you more money than you would get if you went to an industrial tribunal", he read out. Then he took my building pass and demanded my phone and laptop. Going back to my office to get them, I discovered that my email access had already been withdrawn. I was then escorted off the premises. Here ended eighteen years with the company. I was within three years of retirement age, but early retirement was not an option.

It quickly became clear that I was not the only one. Within a month we realised that more than 100 people had been sacked. I found myself co-ordinating an informal support network for the newly-shafted. Over the next few weeks I drank a lot of coffee and white

wine while listening to people talk about their various situations. We had to be careful. The “compromise agreement” on offer (although there wasn’t much compromise in it) contained numerous conditions, one of which forbade each of us to talk about it to anyone except our own close family and a solicitor. Those who needed the money most were terrified they might lose it. Those who wanted to challenge what had happened were thought by others to be putting everyone’s payments at risk. I decided to fight anyway, as I was fortunate enough not to need money immediately. The company required us to show the agreement to a solicitor before signing it, so I decided to show it to a very good one. He confirmed my suspicion that the company had made procedural mistakes. I made sure people knew.

I had to buy my own laptop in a hurry. My already-retired husband had married me for better or worse, but possibly not for lunch and definitely not for me to conduct all my correspondence on his computer. I drank more coffee, more wine, listened some more and reviewed people’s CVs. We organised a wake for the people who had worked most closely with us. We hadn’t been allowed to say good-bye to our colleagues, so we invited them all to a pub session. We invited the chap who had sacked us too, because we knew he hadn’t made the decisions but had simply been drafted in to do the dirty work. He didn’t come.

Gradually people settled with the company. It became clear that any challenge produced an immediate minimum 25% increase in the money offered. People heard of job opportunities, and were generous with this information. The woman I’d mentored on a leadership course for the preceding year landed a project manager position – the first of our number to move on. Others sorted themselves out too; our previous employer might not have wanted us, but experienced IT professionals are highly marketable. Within six months, everyone who wanted another job had one, and the network gently

folded.

Is this an MSE story? Would anything have been different if an MSE had not been involved? Probably not, though it was natural to get the support going, and my colleagues were happy for me to do so. It seemed right to challenge the compromise agreement too – unfair treatment is unfair whether you're in or out of a job. Being able to slide into a pastoral (and knowledge-sharing) role helped me to get past the immediate limbo of being jobless. I could still use leadership and organisational skills at a time when others were floundering, because I had a framework from which to start. I could recognise the need for structure when this had been abruptly removed, and see that this was a bereavement that people had to acknowledge and mourn.

But this is only one level, and a superficial one. What else was going on? When “they” took away my job, they cut off what I thought was my ministry. It endured for a while, fading away as people moved on. Later I speculated on who ministers to the unemployed MSE. It had all happened at the beginning of August, so a lot of people were on holiday. Out of courtesy I notified the Bishop. His emailed reply said: “Blimey! That’s a bit of a shocker. Assume you have Union representation.” But that was all I heard. My spiritual director had retired a month earlier and disappeared into deepest France. Those CHRISM colleagues who were not on holiday were sympathetic (though at the time I could cheerfully have strangled the one whose response was: “You must write it up for the Journal.”) But by the time people reappeared, the immediate shock was past. Not being someone who asks for help easily, it seemed that the opportunity for that had passed too. But parish duties felt, for the first time, like duties. Preaching and celebrating Mass had always been a joyful offering of the circumstances of my colleagues and our work, together with the lives, work and needs of the congregation. Now I had lost my context. It felt hollow. I’d just

been elected CHRISM's next Moderator, but could I honestly be, with no job?

I got a new job within a couple of months, doing much the same as before but in a different corporate culture. I thought that I could walk in, pick up the reins of a new programme team, gently spread the word about my other commitments, and all would be well. I would be an MSE again. Not so. In a new organisation you are no-one. You don't know how anything works, who the key people are, or which rules matter. You have no reputation. No-one knows you at all, let alone whether you can be trusted. You have no network either; no-one to ask for advice, to grumble to, or to put the word around that you're OK. How does one start from scratch in a new environment? No-one licenses an MSE to a new job.

The company I have joined takes a very different approach to people-management from the one I left. For eighteen years I had both task management and pay and performance management responsibility for the staff reporting directly to me. This gave lots of opportunities, if I chose to take them, for conversations that might end up having an MSE flavour. It also meant that I could build and run teams according to the principles I felt were important. So long as we delivered what the organisation required, didn't break the rules and remained good corporate citizens, I had a relatively free hand.

Now, each member of my team has an assignment manager (me), a practice manager (for pay, rations and future deployment), and a career advisory manager (for appraisal and career development.) The rationale is that assignments change frequently, but people need consistency around performance and career planning. In practice, assignment managers drive their teams as hard as delivery requirements dictate, while practice and career managers pick up the pieces. Stress is widespread, is recognised, and people openly take time off for it, but nobody seems to be trying to prevent it (maybe by having a more integrated approach to management?) I know what I would have done if faced with this situation in my old company. I do not know how to do anything effectively in the new one.

My first task has been to lead a programme which has got into a disastrous state. I was its sixth programme manager in eighteen months (which was one of the problems), so would have no credibility at all until I had simply survived for a while. The team views programme managers much like missed buses – no need to bother, there will be another one along in a minute. In six months we have started to build a good working relationship – but I have just found out that I am being moved. The beginnings of trust will be snuffed out. My initial attempts to rebuild some sort of ministry have come to nothing.

I'm struggling to work out what is happening, and where MSE is taking me, or I'm taking it. What is God doing with the vocation to which I was sure he had called me? I've realised that I should have given myself time to mourn the ending of an eighteen-year relationship. I resent greatly that there was no acknowledgement of eighteen years' work. I've also realised that I did not use the opportunity, with God, to evaluate the new situation before jumping headlong into another job. I am beginning to recognise that MSE from a position of insignificance will be very different from that which is possible from a position of authority. I have two years to go before retirement – will it be possible to build anything worthwhile in that time? And – given that in the end my solicitor did extract an early retirement deal from my previous employer – should I even be trying?

Answers, on a postcard please.....

Buyer beware!

(I'm sure Richard would have appreciated this one. Ed)

Many years ago a vicar sold his horse. He explained to the buyer that the mount responded to two commands: "Praise the Lord!" for go, and "Hallejuah!" for stop.

On his first outing the new owner tried out instructions. "Praise the Lord!" elicited a brisk trot, a second a canter, and a third a full gallop. Suddenly he noticed they were heading straight for a cliff and blurted "Hallejuah!" - bringing the nag to a halt just feet from drop. A relieved rider uttered a thankful "Praise the Lord!"

Book review:

“God at Work: Living every day with purpose”

Ken Costa, Continuum Books / Alpha, 2007; pp193; 1

SBN 0-8264-9635-0

Rob Fox

The facts are always a good place to start. Ken Costa is Chairman of Alpha International and a driving force behind the Alpha programme and Holy Trinity Brompton. Born, raised and educated in South Africa, he has been an investment banker in the City of London for over 30 years. As well as his initial degree in Philosophy, Ken has studied both Law and Theology at the University of Cambridge, where he committed his life to Christ. This information alone tells you a great deal, but of course the picture is wider than that.

The book is divided, after the introduction, into eight handily sized and thematic chapters, each fitting nicely into a medium length train journey. In the introduction Ken sets out his intent and assumptions. For example he notes that living as a Christian in the workplace has become more difficult over the last 30 years, so (p.15) “this book is for those who are already engaged in the exciting challenge of living out their faith at work ... [and] those exploring the bigger questions of life who would describe themselves as sympathetic to Christianity, but not quite as shareholders.” The last allusion is in line with both Ken’s own experience of work and his conviction (p.5) that “democratic capitalism ... was the economic system that best served the common good and best reflected the New Testament principles of justice, individual freedom and responsible risk-taking.” This is a book by and for those who have gained most from democratic capitalism; not a judgement but an observation.

The first chapter, “Work matters”, treads the path worn by a succession of books over the past dozen years, not least Mark Greene’s “Thank God its Monday”. Ken makes the point forcefully that work is central to faith, not marginal, and draws attention to God’s creation and relatedness as Trinity as the paradigm for our work and

interdependence. He is realistic, noting the downsides of work throughout the book, such as the fine line between fulfilment and futility, stress, and work – life balance. He points out (p.21) that our role as Christians at work is to “influence the world for good.” And work is not an ‘add-on’ but “is a ministry, empowered by God, for the benefit of ourselves and others, and ultimately for his glory.” Neither is there a pecking order of jobs; to act as if there were a sacred / secular divide is “disastrous” (p.25). All good MSE stuff.

To make this ministry real, Ken offers three analytical tools (p.30):

- 1 Understanding the world
- 2 Critiquing the world, and
- 3 Drawing the world to Christ.

He seeks to use these tools himself as the case is developed. If there is a drawback here it is that his ‘understanding the world’ is quite narrow. The examples he gives do not venture away from his own background as a banker or the Christian circles in which he clearly moves. Stories by or about others there are a-plenty, and most are apt and well used. It’s just that they are about other bankers, solicitors, CEOs, stockbrokers. My heart leapt at one point when the story of a printer was introduced, only to fall as it became clear he was director of a printing company. Stories are at their best when the reader (or hearer) can relate to experiences of the characters.

There is too a great deal of discussion on practical issues, such as ambition and life choices, stress, making hard decisions, disappointment and giving. Again the illustrations and interpretations, while uncomplicated, are from a milieu reflecting the life experiences of a small part of the population, for example comparing Jesus death in the cross to City trading – a “Royal Exchange” (p.138).

One illustration did bother me. Early on (pp.44-47) Ken tackles the hoary question of whether a Christian should leave their work and ‘go into ministry’. Regrettably the merchant banker whose story he tells to send the message that we don’t have to leave our secular job in order to serve God where we are *leaves* his job to become Chairman of Alpha Asia Pacific.

It is not scholarly work and doesn't pretend to be; the theology is basic and not developed. It is rather an exhortation and encouragement to see our lives as a whole and not as separate compartments. It is strong on what personal commitment and holiness mean in our work, though rather less so on the corporate aspects of our faith.

Nonetheless, this is a book that will be widely read within the constituency whence it comes, because of that and who has written it. It deserves to be read too: despite the limitations above it is written in an easy, almost chatty style, and it will, with God working through it, lead to a shift in how the relationship between faith and work is realised in the lives of many. But for those who can identify with it, it could be the starting point for taking seriously the challenges of ministry at work.

Other recent books ...

... to look out for:

"God at Work", David Miller, Oxford University Press, 2007.

Miller is Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture and this book is a survey of faith and work groups in the USA. He knows of over 1,200.

"Responsible Labor: A Theology of Work", David Jensen, Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Jensen is a professor at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and his aim here is to dispel the myth that "What *really matters* for the life of faith is the time spent away from work: in church, in prayer, in contemplation." He uses Genesis, the Trinity and the liturgy to build up a theology of work, showing that it is not the consequence of the Fall. There is a fuller review at the website of the National Center for the Laity:

<http://www.catholiclabor.org.NCL.htm>.

NCL publish a monthly newsletter, *Initiatives*, which regularly contains useful information on websites, books and initiatives. Many thanks to Editor Bill Droel for his piece in the April newsletter about CHRISM and the 100th Journal.

Resources

The After Sunday Project aims to bring together a range of materials and resources that can help people to strengthen the connection between faith and work. The website is well worth a visit, <http://www.aftersunday.org.uk/>, and on the front page is a link to an interview with John Holmes, Director of Regeneration and Tourism at One North East, who was a guest speaker at CHRISM's summer conference in Newcastle last year. The project is sponsored by the Diocese of Durham Mission Fund.

There is an expanding resource section, a discussion forum, plus a section on exploring vocation – expressed in a pleasingly wide sense. Several stories provide an excellent resource too, enabling others to identify with real people working out their faith at work.

GG2W – Getting God to Work – is remodelling itself as a one stop shop, “the portal to which every Christian in the UK aspiring to make a difference @ work comes for relevant resources.” GG2W is therefore now primarily a clearing house enabling communication and coordination between the various groups and individuals working in the faith at work arena (*I've already had several contacts through GG2W, Ed.*) The website, at <http://www.gg2w.org.uk/>, is well worth visiting regularly.

Workplace Chaplaincy is an important part of the work of **St Peter's and All Saints Church**. The church is located in Nottingham City Centre and the services offered include:

- 1 visiting workplaces and informal chats
- 2 individual support by appointment
- 3 training and personal development workshops
- 4 practical support and advice at times of change
- 5 advice on CV writing, interview techniques, etc.

An important aim is to help humanise the workplace. “Work is a significant area of life - when we are at work it is hard to leave problems, stresses and big questions at home.” So if you work in or near Nottingham, get in touch. The website is found at <http://www.stpetersnottingham.org/>

Tax and Corporate Responsibility

Rob Fox

I'm sure those whose encounter with tax is a deduction line on their pay slip will allow me a little indulgence on a topic not only dear to my heart, but by which I earn a meagre crust. This is also one of the ways I can *do* MSE, and doing will re-appear later.

The Law Society on Chancery Lane was a suitable venue for what proved to be a well-attended half-day conference organised by the Chartered Institute of Taxation. The accountancy and tax adviser professions were well represented in the close on 100 audience, but there were many from industry too, plus a handful from the 'good guys' of HM Revenue & Customs. This particular aspect of corporate responsibility is, frankly, still a minority subject and does not yet register on the radar of many Chief Financial Officers in the corporate world, let alone the media. It is nonetheless a legitimate area of concern as the how much tax is paid, where and when has far reaching consequences, especially for national economies.

The first speaker was **David Hartnett**, Director General of HMRC, whose major theme was the nature of the relationship between the taxed and the tax authority. He noted the move in recent years to greater transparency in business towards stakeholders, including the tax authorities, adding however that the peak years for tax avoidance were 2002-5, when disclosure rules were implemented and the UK courts started to apply a purposive approach to interpreting legislation. He noted that both 'sides' wanted a relationship based on trust, transparency, certainty, a risk-based approach, and dialogue. This mirrored the wider trend in the business world to consider corporate responsibility and the ethical aspects of business impact. As part of considering shareholder value companies now look at the impact of reputation and public perception on that value. Paying tax that is properly due is part of this.

What can business expect from HMRC in this developing landscape? A tough stance on non-compliance, consistency, clarity of roles, good guidance, faster responses and a link-up between top level thinking in HMRC and delivery. (It has to be said that the last one

is the trickiest; those at the top level need to discern “you can’t do that” from “you can’t do that now like that, but give us a little time and we can do more than you ask”).

Next came **Richard Murphy** of, among other roles, the Tax Justice Network (http://www.taxjustice.net/cms/front_content.php?idcat=2; see also <http://taxresearch.org.uk>; look out for Richard’s blogs). I think its fair to say that Richard is a controversial figure among tax accountants and advisers, with many forthright and well worked through views. It is also true to say that many professionals have a growing respect for him and PricewaterhouseCoopers recently co-sponsored a project by SustainAbility (<http://www.sustainability.com/>, see page on *Taxing Issues – Responsible Business and Tax* and link documents) to which he was a major contributor. He started by addressing the three questions begged by the conference theme:

- 1 What is a company? A legal fiction, an agent for its owners, the sum of its parts. Richard noted that he had heard a company described as a collection of assets or contracts, but never of people – and the term comes from the breaking of bread. The law recognises companies because society created them, and they consequently have duties.
- 2 What is responsibility? A duty, obligation or liability – but not just reporting it – ‘doing’ is required. Not ‘greenwash’ but action.
- 3 What is tax? Not just Corporation Tax but any charges due to governments (including local), which are a cost to the company or for which it is an agent.

Richard then went on to pose six further questions to relate tax and corporate responsibility:

1. Why are corporations responsible for tax?
Tax is central to the social contract between a company and its host society, which is embedded in its licence to operate (implied to otherwise), a licence that is embodied in the legitimacy of the state.
2. To whom are corporations responsible for tax?
Their stakeholders – all of them – because they each participate in some way in the company.

3. How do they act responsibly?

By balancing the conflicting claims made by the stakeholder relationships, which is the key obligation of management. He noted that this is more about politics as economics and the company is a moral agent (he was the only speaker to acknowledge a moral dimension here; three others used 'ethical') in the process of deciding when to pay tax, where to pay tax, and therefore who will benefit from that tax. Here and elsewhere Richard used examples of how multi-national companies exercise a great deal of choice on the how, when and where of paying tax, moving profits between countries to pay less and later. His native Eire came in for some forthright criticism, and the Democratic Republic of Congo much sympathy.

4. How do you know you are responsible?

A company is responsible when it ignores the power (or lack of it) of the claimant but acts in accordance with the legitimacy of the claim. Does it smell right?

5. How do you decide?

By being tax compliant, paying the right tax (but no more) in the right place at the right time. And 'right' means that the economic reality coincides with the form of tax reporting.

6. How do you evidence responsibility?

Richard is very keen on multi-nationals preparing accounts on a national basis so that taxing authorities can see more easily that the tax that should be paid in their regime is. Also by saying who is responsible for tax and by disclosing how they decide what tax gets paid where and when, because this is the reality and it should be transparent.

Clearly there is still a long way to go to achieve this but given the response to this presentation at least some in the UK are willing to go down this road. Richard is certainly willing to show the way and both his formidable grasp of data and his ability to put across complex points incisively equip him well. The Tax Justice Network is due to publish a Code of Conduct for taxation in October this year.

After a much needed tea break (I think some drank that stuff that

comes from beans) we were given an industry perspective by **Ian Brimicombe**, Head of Tax at AstraZeneca plc (well known to me!). He started by putting tax within the broader considerations of corporate responsibility, for any company has responsibility for the conduct of its business to customers, suppliers, general public and government. The underpinning principles are transparency, openness, honesty and accountability for actions. Tax is one area of this and he set out a spectrum of responses to this aspect:

- 1 Pay a fair share;
- 2 Pay to the letter and spirit of the law;
- 3 Pay in accordance with advice as to the most likely legal interpretation of the law;
- 4 Pay as little as possible as tax is just another cost.

He hears the last infrequently these days!

In recent years businesses have become increasingly aware of the impact of taxation on shareholder value and the company's reputation. The former requires a sustainable tax rate that adds predictable value to business earnings. Tax is seen in relation to 'peer' businesses operating in the same environments. To be able to predict and control the future tax burden brings a greater degree of certainty to business planning. Tax planning is therefore legitimate, but should proximate to the business objectives (or economic reality). In conclusion he noted responsible tax management is shaped by all stakeholders and is a balanced response to deliver a competitive, sustainable contribution to earnings and enhance the company's reputation.

It was a useful contribution to the debate for the tone as well as the content. A great deal of what Ian said was in the context of responding to events such as Enron, Sarbanes Oxley and changes to financial and tax reporting in the UK. I came away with the impression that while the corporates are willing to be responsible, the driver has been external.

Ian was followed by the always-entertaining **Michael Conlon QC**, a tax barrister, who gave a survey of what the authorities call tax avoidance and the taxpayers good planning. He did agree that there is such a thing as 'unacceptable avoidance', and therefore implied that some planning was not responsible. In particular he drew attention to a number of ECJ decisions on tax in the last three years. Disappointingly though he did not really address the main themes.

The final speaker was **John Whiting**, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), who gave the tax advisers' perspective. Tax he said involves a tripartite relationship between the taxing authority, the taxpayer and their professional advisers. He too noted that the tax environment is changing, with concerns about the competitiveness of that tax system, Government attacks on 'unacceptable' tax planning, a wider stakeholder interest in tax, a link being made between tax and corporate responsibility and a lack of transparency about tax paid by companies. A response is needed and John drew attention to the CIOT's high professional standards and rules. He then mapped out the main stakeholder groups, internal and external, observing that realistically meeting the competing demands is tremendously difficult.

PwC has responded to the changing landscape by developing the Total Tax Contribution framework, to enable companies to understand how much tax they bear, how much they collect of behalf of others, and the costs of tax compliance. It takes the widest view of what is a tax, so including statutory licences and fees, for example, and enables a company to the picture at local, national and transnational level. The framework also enables the company to assess the wider impact on society and economy of the taxes it pays. It therefore informs tax strategy, which should include:

- 1 Clear discussion of the company's tax objectives and strategy;
- 2 Disclosure of how the tax strategy and function is managed and who in the organisation has responsibility for governance and oversight;
- 3 Clear disclosure of the material tax risks faced by the company.

Where the Corporation Tax actually paid differs from the rate of CT there should be clear disclosure of the reasons and a transparent reconciliation of tax paid and the tax charge in the income statement. The TTC should also include details of how tax impacts on: the wider strategy and results of the company, shareholder value, and the economic contribution to society and economy that the company makes. (I could see Richard Murphy smiling and nodding at a great deal of what John said).

Corporate responsibility as a whole, and in relation to tax in particular, is very much a work in progress. It looks well on the way to rising up the agenda over the next few years, having been the preserve of NGOs until very recently. It is clear that for progress to be sustained all parties with an interest must work as closely as is reasonably possible to create an environment in which responsible action is rewarded. And action is the watchword; unless faith leads to action it is a dead thing. There look to be interesting times ahead, and some entrenched cultures to challenge. Comforting to know there are others out there committed to doing it.

I intend to follow this article up in the coming months with pieces on 'Tax and the Tax Authority's Responsibility' and 'Tax and the Individuals Responsibility'. All comments and contributions welcome.

Children of the children of the desert.

Dorrie Johnson

The whimpers have quietened
but they're not asleep.
Eyes red-rimmed, sand-sore,
dry, empty,
expecting nothing.

Babies, bewildered, brown and skinny.
in skin-scratching shawls.
Tinies suck
maternal, saliva-soaked matza
stale, tasteless on the tongue.

Encrusted canvas
bleeds calloused fingers.
Bread, mats, clothes
sand-coated.

Thinking as shapeless as the sand
without form
shifting,
freezing
scorching
minds.

The Vatican, the Road, and Pastoral care

Many may have noticed the recent Vatican publication "The Pastoral Care of Road Users", dubbed by the press as the Ten Commandments for motorists. Far from being an item to poke fun at this is a serious, well thought through and timely document. And even if we do not work 'on the road', we'll certainly use to it get to and from – and as we are well aware of the effects a tedious journey in can have!

The document does in fact have a much wider scope than just Road users, the first is devoted to this while further parts cover itinerant and migrant workers, and one wonders whether binding these together is itself a message.

The first "Road user" section shines Biblical light on the road and travelling, followed by an insightful section on the psychology of drivers and driving, noting how it does tend to bring out the worst in people: it warns that driving can bring out "primitive" behaviour in motorists, including "cursing, blasphemy, loss of sense of responsibility".

It then moves on to the moral aspects of driving, noting that driving means coexisting and controlling oneself. Further paragraphs are devoted to the ethical aspects of driving a vehicle and the risks entailed, the mandatory nature of road regulations and the moral responsibility of road users.

Cardinal Renato Martino, who heads the Vatican's council, said it was important to address the issue because driving had become a big part of contemporary life. "We know that as a consequence of transgressions and negligence, 1.2 million people die each year on the roads," he said. "That's a sad reality, and at the same time a great challenge for society and the Church."

The Ten Commandments are introduced by an explanation of how the Christian virtues of prudence, justice and hope apply. And those commandments in full:

- 1 You shall not kill

- 2 The road shall be for you a means of communion between people and not of mortal harm.
- 3 Courtesy, uprightness and prudence will help you deal with unforeseen events.
- 4 Be charitable and help your neighbour in need, especially victims of accidents.
- 5 Cars shall not be for you an expression of power and domination, and an occasion of sin.
- 6 Charitably convince the young and not so young not to drive when they are not in a fitting condition to do so.
- 7 Support the families of accident victims.
- 8 Bring guilty motorists and their victims together, at the appropriate time, so that they can undergo the liberating experience of forgiveness.
- 9 On the road, protect the more vulnerable party.
- 10 Feel responsible towards others.

Roman Catholics are encouraged to make the sign of the cross before setting out on a road journey (*which is what I thought anyone intending to drive in Rome did anyway – Ed.*) Though it does seem that the Vatican has already taken the commandments to heart: there is a 30kph speed limit, and the last recorded motor accident was over 18 months ago. Finally, there are short sections on the Church's mission as it relates to road users, including evangelisation. For the full document, go to:

http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/

Worknet (<http://www.worknet.org>) is coincidentally running a short series entitled *The Roads Best Travelled*, which also addresses the issues of driving and faith-full behaviour. Check it out.

Diary

The *Christian Association of Business Executives* (CABE, <http://www.cabe-online.org/>) has it's usual busy programme of events, including a *Supper Fellowship* on **17 September 2007** at 7.00 for 7.15 pm at 24 Greencoat Place, SW1. All are welcome to this enjoyable meal plus informal discussion but please let Clive Wright know in advance at clive.wright6@btopenworld.com that you

will be coming. Finish is prompt at 9 pm.

2007 Hugh Kay Lecture: "Religion in the Workplace" will be delivered by Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach on **16 October**. Look out for details on the CAFE website: <http://www.cabe-online.org/>.

London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) is running its 'Toolbox 1' 5-day course on 17-21 September. The course is designed for Christians in the workplace and covers such topics as Understanding Work, Globalisation and the Global Disciple and Corporate Culture and Values. The course fees are £295, which does not include accommodation. Further details at <http://www.licc.org/toolbox>, or <http://fibq.org/events.html>.

St. Paul's Institute is running a series of events in the autumn of the theme '**A Good Childhood? Growing up in the 21st Century**'. There is a series on four public debated at the Cathedral each week from 16 October, and four meditative services each week from 7 October, with further activities following. More information at <http://www.stpauls.co.uk/institute>.

CHRISM Summer Conference 2007

When: 28-30 September 2007

Where: The Royal Foundation of St Katharine, Limehouse, London

"Our Work – Our Ministry"

**Sharing and proclaiming Ministry in Secular Employment.
What Challenges and Opportunities for our Ministry for the Church ?**

What Challenges and Opportunities in the changing nature of work ?

**Where does this lead - How do we support others in all this ?
*Is MSE the Oldest Fresh Expression ?***

The weekend incorporates the CHRISM AGM and visits to local places of interest and work. The Royal Foundation of St Katherine is a charitable conference and retreat house situated in the heart of London Docklands, 3 miles East of the city centre. It offers modern en-suite single and shared standard accommodation set around an attractive garden and blending in with its historic buildings.

St Katharine's, one of the oldest religious foundations in Great Britain, provides a refreshing oasis of tranquillity amidst London's urban turmoil. Docklands is a vibrant and developing area of London – a centre for commerce, industry, leisure and living. The Docklands Light Railway at Limehouse links St Katharine's within minutes to the City of London.

Cost: from dinner on Friday evening to lunch on Sunday, inclusive:
£145 (members); £155 (non-members)

CME grants should be available to cover all or part of the cost – apply now before your diocese uses all its allocation! CHRISM will provide a receipt if required.

Bookings and enquiries to: Pauline Pearson, 3 Belle Grove Place, Spital Tongues, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4LH

If you can come for part of the time only, please contact Pauline. Terms according to meals etc.

2007 Annual General meeting of CHRISM

This will take place on Saturday 29 September 2007, at 8 p.m. at the Royal Foundation of St Katherine, Limehouse, London.

Proposed Agenda:

If you have any additional matter of business that you wish to raise at the AGM, please contact the Hon. Secretary before 3 August 2007.

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of AGM held on 16 July 2006
3. Matters Arising

4. Presiding Moderator's report
5. Hon. Secretary's Report
6. Membership Report
7. CHRISSET Financial Report
 - Adoption of Accounts for 2006
 - Report on financial arrangement between CHRISM and CHRISSET
 - Motion to continue the arrangement with the CHRISSET trustees
1. Subscription for 2008
2. Election of Officers and Committee members (See below)
3. CHRISM Nomination of a CHRISSET Trustee
4. Date and Place of next Annual General Meeting
5. Remarks by the in-coming Presiding Moderator

Election of Officers and Committee Members

Nominations are invited for the following committee posts:

- Moderator—To serve for three years, and preside for one year from the 2008 AGM.
- Journal Editor—To serve for one year
- Three Committee Members—Each to serve for one year
- CHRISM representative to CHRISSET—To serve for one year
- Membership Secretary—To serve for one year
(not necessarily a committee member)

Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you wish to make a nomination. The current committee, detailed on the back cover of this Journal, comprises:

Moderators:	Adrian Holdstock	(elected until 2007)
	Peter King	(elected until 2008)
	Margaret Joachim	(elected until 2009)
Hon. Secretary:	Susan Cooper	(elected until 2008)
Journal Editor:	Rob Fox	(elected until 2007)
Committee Members:		
	Pauline Pearson	(elected until 2007)
	Catherine Binns	(elected until 2007)
	Ruth Brothwell	(elected until 2007)
Co-opted	Phil Aspinall, Wendy White	
CHRISM Rep. to CHRISSET:	Hugh Lee	(elected until 2007)
Representative of CHRISSET:		to be appointed

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