

Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry

Number 114

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

CHRISM is the National Association of CHRistians In Secular Ministry

for **all** Christians who see their secular employment as their primary Christian ministry, and for those who support that vision.

To further this aim, CHRISM publishes a quarterly journal, releases occasional papers and organises an annual retreat. Conferences are held regularly and worldwide links pursued.

CHRISM welcomes members, both lay and ordained, from all Christian denominations, encourages them to be active within their own faith communities and to champion ministry in and through secular employment. If you would like confidential support as an MSE, please contact any member of of the Committee (see inside rear cover).

Further information about CHRISM may be obtained from the Secretary or other members of the Committee

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Copy deadline for the next edition: Friday 8th October 2010
Please e-mail contributions to: Mike.Rayner@dphpc.ox.ac.uk

Editorial

Once again I find myself doing too much and I wonder why. Many of my friends claim that they have too much to do but don't appear to be doing anything about it. So are we trapped or do we live this way by choice? But no time to wonder: I'm off on holiday on Saturday so I must get this journal to the printers today.

As usual the CHRISM Summer Conference - held this year at the University of the West of England in Bristol from the 16th - 18th July - was a welcome break from rushing around. This year the theme was 'Being human at work' and it gave about twenty-five of us time to think about that. But you'll have to wait until the next edition of this journal for reports/reflections, for the new membership of the CHRISM Committee (elected at the AGM held at the conference), etc.

Thanks to everyone for contributing to the theme of 'training for MSE' which has, I hope you will notice, been the subject of various items over the last few issues of this journal and a letter in this. There will, I hope, be more on this theme over the coming year. See for instance Rob Fox's promise on page 4.

But the idea for a new theme has arisen as a consequence of some e-mail correspondence between the members of the CHRISM Committee about public-liability insurance. The theme is an old question: 'Can you be an MSE in any job?' Margaret Joachim - in her article on page 9 - says: 'Any legal occupation is permissible for a Christian - and Christians ought to be there, working away with everyone else.' I would agree that any legal occupation is permissible but I am not so sure that every occupation is desirable. Should you be a hangman, for example, even if it's legal? If anyone would like to submit something that could start a debate on this theme/question that would be fantastic.

Sorry, yet again, about the lateness of this edition. I'll try to do better next time. Meanwhile block out 25th - 27th February 2011 in your diary - these are the dates for the next CHRISM Reflective Weekend (see page 6 for an advance notice).

Oh and there is no list of forthcoming events in this edition. It is however replaced by a list of 'new resources for MSE' courtesy of Rob Fox. Any views?

Mike Rayner

Letters to the Editor

From Michael Powell

I was interested in your editorial on MSE training.

MSE at its best, it seems to me, is person-specific and situation-specific. 'Work out what there is that you can do where you are and do it, or be it'.

If that's the case then we are talking about a mix of self-development and some form of mutual mentoring among MSE's. The core skill is about recognizing and reading one's situation. Given that, any formal Continuing Ministerial Education or Post-Ordination Training is about systematically enhancing one's ability to meet the specifics of who and where one is, it can be practical, pastoral, spiritual or academic.

The big step I took before ordination (25 years ago) was doing the William Temple Foundation Certificate on Christian Theology and Urban Industrial Life and much later my PhD (Built Environment and Biblical Theology). I think I know a little of what I'm 'professing' when I say that there is a theological facet of architecture, town planning, construction management and all the rest. One has a foundation and a commitment which is more than professional traditions, the market, public opinion and the law.

By contrast my most recent experience has suggested that local church ministry is a good deal more generally definable. There is a fairly clear range of knowledge, skills and insights that every

practitioner is properly expected to have or acquire, and the church needs to ensure all such ministers are seen to have them.

I have gained enormously from Anglican and Roman Catholic insights to MSE practice but am really glad as a URC minister not to have to try to cope with what ordained priesthood means in MSE training and practice!

Hope this is of interest.

Presiding Moderator's address to the CHRISM Annual General Meeting, 17th July 2010, Bristol

Rob Fox

It seems a lot longer than 10 months since the last AGM, and spending two-thirds of my term as Presiding Moderator across the Channel was an interesting experience. It has though been a pleasure.

My grateful thanks to all members of the Committee for their hard work and support during the year. It has been a pleasure working with you. It is important in an organisation like CHRISM to have a good mix of old hands and fresh faces serving on the Committee, and this last year proves the point.

For last year's AGM – which coincided with my sister's wedding – I wrote, setting a tone for the year ahead, a call that we get the basics right if we are to effectively develop CHRISM and the cause of MSE. We have made good progress in stabilising the finances and up-dating the membership and mailing lists, enabling us to plan more confidently for the future. And the website has been improved and developed by our new webmaster.

I noted that at root CHRISM is a means of supporting and encouraging MSEs, and we do this by meeting one another - at conferences, in local groups, or "where two or three gather in my

name". We also do it through the Journal and papers, and through the website. I said that maintaining these is our highest priority, and we have done more than simply maintain. CHRISM is in good shape.

At its last meeting in June, the Committee set specific goals for the coming year, to carry out various promotional activities to raise awareness of MSE in general and CHRISM in particular. These are to:

- Contact all colleges and training courses at the beginning of the academic year and offer our resources in raising awareness of MSE.
- Produce a basic CHRISM enquiry and membership pack.
- Make proposals to the Church Times, Church of England Newspaper, Methodist Recorder, Baptist Times, the URC newspaper and The Reader for interviews with interesting MSEs and an article on "Whatever happened to the Worker-Priests?"
- An incentive scheme for members to recruit new members and a gift subscription scheme.

I also commenced a project during the year looking at provision of continuing ministerial education about and for MSEs, which I will continue and complete this year. All these will raise our and MSEs profile, and show that CHRISM is an organisation worth joining.

Finally, I hand over presiding into Hugh Lee's capable hands. I know he will have our support, and hope he enjoys it as much as I have.

CHRISM Reflective Weekend 2011

25th – 27th February 2011
Holland House, Crophorne, Near Pershore, Worcestershire

Minding the threshold

Being an MSE in a church without walls

Led by the Revd Donald Eadie,
formerly Tutor in Pastoral Theology at Wesley College, Bristol,
and Chairman of the Birmingham District of the Methodist Church.

Please book the date in your diary now!

For more information, or to register your interest in attending,
please contact margaret.joachim@london.anglican.org

Are you a member of CHRISM ?

If not, please join now. You can find a membership subscription form on the website at www.chrism.org

The Annual Subscription is currently
£35 for individuals and for organisations,
£25 for the retired and unemployed,
£15 for students (for a maximum of three years).

You can pay by cheque or credit card; and if you are a UK tax payer, CHRISM can reclaim tax through Gift Aid.

For more information, please contact the Membership Secretary Lyn Page at: Willowbank, Hawkey Liss, Hampshire, GU33 6NF; e-mail lynpage@btconnect.com

The Michael Ranken Memorial Library for Christians in Secular Ministry

Phil Aspinall

Introduction

Following the death of Michael Ranken in May 2003, his family offered CHRISM a selection of the books from his bookshelves related to MSE and its theology. The committee were also considering the most effective way to create a memorial to Michael, and the two strands came together in the project for a Library for MSE.

The Memorial Library

A key part of the project was to find a suitable home for the proposed library, and we were very pleased to enter into an arrangement with The Royal Foundation of St Katharine in Limehouse, London. It provides a secure home in an established library, in a place which is open to developing new forms of ministry, whilst providing a space for study and reflection.

Michael had also created, some 15 years ago, a personal and selective list of books which he had found useful, stimulating and informative. This formed another strand in the project, as we have used the list as a starting point to expand and include other books from different perspectives - titles that we have found helpful, and those published more recently. The list serves as a powerful resource to augment the books currently available in the library. But it is our wish and desire that the library should eventually contain all the books on this list and continue to grow!

So we invite you to contribute other books you may have, and other important titles to add to the list. Please contact Margaret Joachim (for contact details see inside back cover).

The master catalogue is in two parts: one full alphabetical list by author and one list sorted by category. There is a hard copy at St

Katharine's, but it is also available through the CHRISM website at www.chrism.org.uk

Library access

The resources in the Library are open and available for use at St Katherine's. Please contact St Katherine's to arrange to visit, and to check that the library is not in use for a meeting or conference. You can contact their reception at: 020 7702 7603 or 0845 409 0130. For more information, please visit their website at www.rfsk.org.uk

MSE archive

The books are just a beginning. We conceived of this as a project to build an archive of all materials related to the development of MSE in the UK. We have visited other projects compiling similar archives, and have recognised that this is a task which requires much systematic planning and organisation and time.

However, we believe that it is important that personal information and historical detail are not lost to the researches of future generations of MSE, and will continue to take this forward. The important message is to ask you to please ensure that you retain your personal materials for handing on eventually to CHRISM.

Michael Ranken

Michael was the lynch-pin for the Network of Ministers in Work which grew out of the 1984 conference which he convened at Nottingham University. He was a food technologist who firmly believed, and told anyone who would listen, that this work was his ministry as a Church of England priest. He was instrumental in the creation of CHRISM as an organisation embracing the former looser network, and became an Honorary Moderator. He published numerous papers (included in the Library list) and set out his philosophy and theology in his book *How God Looks - if you don't start in Church*.

The integrated life: an aspiration

Margaret Joachim

Almost thirty years ago, I went to Nepal. At that stage I was just a token churchgoer and had no particular interest in religion. But while I was there I happened to notice a stallholder in Kathmandu market, and watched him as he sold some meat, had a conversation with a passer-by, whisked the flies off his wares, nipped round the corner to say a brief prayer in front of a little god in a wall shrine, came back to his stall, chased off an inquisitive dog and started to argue with his assistant. And a train of thought started up which, almost thirty years later is still going on.

Halfway through those thirty years I was ordained – and ordained specifically as an MSE. I felt that was my calling, and managed (just) to convince enough other people to enable it to happen, and have managed (just) to stick to it since then. At the last training weekend before ordination, we were given some serious advice by one of the course staff. He drew several separate circles on the board, and labelled them 'Church', 'Home', 'Work', 'Leisure', 'Friends', 'Voluntary Activities', and so on. Then he told us two things:

- These activities must not be too far apart (literally), or you will waste too much time travelling between them
- You cannot reasonably engage in more than three - or at the most four – of all these things, or you will be under too much strain, you'll be split between too many commitments and you won't be able to do any of them properly.

So, clearly, if you managed to fuse 'Church' and 'Work' into the same thing (by being a stipendiary minister!) you might be able to have some friends as well as a family life. I felt at the time that there was something wrong with this, but could not, at that point, articulate it.

The same sort of thinking is behind two other phenomena. The first is that, when you are introduced to someone, you usually only

see them in one context. I worked with an excellent risk manager for two years before I discovered that he also spoke fluent Spanish, supported a football club for street children in Chile and had written a book on insectivorous plants. The church is particularly bad at compartmentalising people. You'll meet 'Ted, our church treasurer' – but no-one will tell you (and they may not even know) that he runs a skills training and employment agency business. Or 'Heather, who runs the coffee rota' – and spends the rest of the week making people feel a bit better about themselves by doing their hair and listening to all their problems.

The second aspect of wonky thinking is behind the questions we are so often asked. 'How do you find the time to be a priest with all the other things you do?' 'What does a Minister in Secular Employment actually do?' And (a clergy favourite, this) 'Why do you need to be ordained if you're not working for the Church?'

As I started to learn and explore and talk to others about MSE, I came across various examples which struck a chord. There was Brother Lawrence in the monastery kitchen, frying cakes in his pan to the glory of God. There was St Paul, sitting cross-legged sewing tents and talking about Jesus. There was the underlying theme of the Rule of St Benedict – *laborare est orare*. And there was Peter who (according to Luke), had he not had a boat and also had a lousy night's fishing, might never have heard and followed Jesus. Then I discovered that both Judaism and Islam acknowledge that responsible work (of whatever kind) is a requirement of a faithful life. What my Nepalese butcher had, and what these and many other faithful people had, was an integrated life. They were not living in a series of separate circles, each with its own expectations and constraints. They had each come to realise that everything they did was part of one integrated life which they offered to God.

Trying to live this way is at the same time both a great freedom and an enormous responsibility. It is a freedom because everything you do is part of building the Kingdom, part of your work in God's service. It is a responsibility because, simply by saying that 'everything counts', there is the risk that you will allow yourself to get away with paying less attention to spiritual and

personal disciplines than you should. You are ultimately responsible for your relationship with God – you must not let yourself slide.

Several exciting things spring from this understanding of an integrated life. Everything everyone does is part of their service to God – and a key task of ministry is to help them realise this. MSEs have a unique contribution to make in this area. Any legal occupation is permissible for a Christian – and Christians ought to be there, working away with everyone else. So suggesting (for example) that the church should keep out of politics is ridiculous – the political sphere is where important decisions are made, so it is important that Christians are fully involved in making them. (But you do need to think carefully for yourself about what work you should do, and how to do it. If, for example, you don't approve of rampant consumerism, maybe you should not work in advertising – or, more subtly, perhaps you should concentrate on advertising ethical products.)

There is a hymn which begins: 'Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands which holy things have taken.' The hymn-writer probably thought that the 'holy things' were the bread and wine, the chalice and paten, the body and blood of Christ. But the hands are the same throughout, and whatever they take is holy, whether it is a pen, a spanner, a keyboard, a nappy, a trowel, a briefcase, a spoon or another hand. All things are holy, because they are all used in God's service, and everything we do is done in his service.

Trying to live an integrated life means not allowing others to drag, coerce or embarrass you into all those separate boxes, each with the assumptions and behaviours they want you to conform with. It means concentrating on becoming more aware of the presence of God in and alongside everything that you do. It is hard work, and you will need support and encouragement along the way. I find it essential to have a spiritual director, to make an annual retreat guided by a wise and understanding nun, to tap into the MSE network that CHRISM provides so that I can share experiences and encouragement, and to measure and challenge myself against others – the European worker-priest meetings provide an excellent

opportunity. There are many other possibilities; you will need to discover what works for you.

On my last retreat the nun, pondering my typically hectic lifestyle, made two comments which relate directly to becoming more integrated. "Be fully present in whatever you are doing – so that you can be alive to God's presence in it too." And: "Do what you are doing because you are doing it, not so that you can get it done and move on to something else." This is a tremendous challenge to the way we live today, and it leads straight back to Brother Lawrence, practising the presence of God in his kitchen.

Probably the biggest stick we beat ourselves with, and the biggest burden trainers, incumbents and other clergy lay on us, is that of 'proper prayer'. I've been a ministerial reviewer for several years, and almost everyone I've worked with (including some very stipendiary and very well-respected clergy) has been concerned that they may not be praying properly, or often enough, or for long enough. I know I don't either. But we are each responsible for our own relationship with God, which means finding a prayer pattern which is both achievable and sustaining. If you can say two offices a day and find this helpful, fine. If not (for whatever reason), there is no point feeling guilty about it. Experiment until you find a framework which works for you. Michael Ranken, MSE *extraordinare*, a founder of CHRISM and a mentor to many of us, at one point observed that "Thoughtful consideration of your 'to do' list is prayer." All sorts of things can be prayer, and prayerfulness goes far beyond the recitation of words. Ultimately you become prayed-in, rather than being a pray-er.

And if, now and again, we could get that far, we would truly be living an integrated life.

Promoting CHRISM and MSE

Rob Fox

Those who pioneered MSE 30 and more years ago (some of whom remain readers!) recognised that the best way to promote and support it was to go and tell. It still is. This article is a little about the past, but much more about action for the future.

Over these years more organised ways of supporting MSE have developed: this journal, CHRISSET (the charity that sits behind CHRISM), and, in 1993, CHRISM itself. But the most effective way to nurture new MSEs and to support 'old' ones remains personal contact, conversation and commitment.

I was struck by a tale told by one CHRISM member recently of discovering a small group of MSEs who felt they were new and alone, developing MSE for the first time. They were unaware that the church where they meet was the venue for a similar group 30 years before, who felt new and alone, developing MSE for the first time. May the day never come when we think MSE has been 'developed', that there is nothing more to learn and explore, when we feel comfortable. Each MSE, in each generation, will make new discoveries, have to fight old battles, and often feel alone, yet there is now a wealth of experience we can and should use.

Elsewhere in this edition is an appeal to hang on to historic material and information about MSE, and to use and develop further the Michael Ranken library, housed at the Royal Foundation of St. Katharine, Limehouse. The greater library is that which lives in the experience and reflection of every MSE. And as yet another e-mail, just before I write this article, confirmed, there are many out there who eagerly seek to explore a vocation to MSE. So what can we do to make that 'library' available to others?

Firstly, talk about MSE to others we meet with. These might be at clergy fraternals, chapter meetings or synods. Giving an account of MSE should be a natural part of how we relate to others in our churches.

Secondly, offer to talk about MSE, using opportunities such as the meetings above, and creating others. We can and should, I think, ask to talk to churches, church organisations, training courses, vocation events, making people aware that MSE is a real option for ministry, and explaining how we and others 'do' it. With recent re-organisations in training courses around the country, the one we trained on may no longer exist. Go out and find out about your local course and ask to go and speak. By their very nature, MSEs tend to have a range of skills and experience that courses should be biting hands off to use. If you don't feel you have the right presentational skills yourself, but think your local course is interested, contact CHRISM; we can usually find a good speaker. In particular check if your church, diocese or district gives an opportunity to those exploring a vocation to meet an MSE. If there isn't, offer your services. Every vocations team should include at least one MSE, even if on a 'call-off' basis.

Thirdly, take up the pen (or more likely keyboard these days). Write about your experience of MSE and get it out there: local church and diocesan magazines, church and secular newspapers (the local press is often interested in stories like ours), blogs, facebook, twitter. If you use any of these and talk about MSE, tell us.

Fourthly: meet together. There are MSE groups that meet regularly, and others that are less formal networks. Again, tell CHRISM about your group. What works for you? Who should someone contact if they are in your area? If you would like to know if there is a group near you, do ask us.

Lastly, what do you do to promote and support MSE? There will be many ways being used that I've not covered above. Don't hide your light, tell us what works. Let's share good practice.

I haven't met an MSE yet who didn't, like me, have an awakening moment when they first met an MSE in their ministry story. We are that MSE for those starting on the way, and those who will stumble across it in the future. What we do now may provide some with a map, so they know what they are looking for, and where it is God is leading.

Dropped in it

Rob Fox

In the last edition of Ministers-at-Work I invited readers to share their experiences of two similar situations. Firstly, in your local church, have you, as an MSE, found yourself expected to shoulder more of the burden when the stipendiary minister leaves? Then, at the other end of our experience, many of us have at some time experienced a major re-organisation at work, often arising from a merger or takeover. In both cases, I asked you what issues and expectations you experienced, and how you and others addressed them.

My thanks to all those who responded. There are a number of common themes and experiences that are well worth exploring. Examples remain anonymous (to protect the guilty!).

I'd like to begin with work. Business mergers have been commonplace recently and a number of readers have been through some testing times. The three main issues appear to be:

- Uncertainty, particularly about what job I will have, and whether I will have one at all. Explaining to staff how a business re-organisation affects them generally appears well down management's priorities, and sometimes not at all.
- Establishing new chains of decision. Organisations seem to have informal decision maps that are missed when there is a re-organisation, so staff are unclear who they should look to, and managers unaware that they have oversight of people or processes.
- Linked to both the others: relationships. This is a particular issue with mergers and take-overs, where the cultures and people have to forge a new relationship with and understanding of each other.

In each case MSEs say that they have found themselves being 'glue', or a catalyst, helping colleagues and the organisation identify what has been missed, and taking the initiative in fixing and

building. How high up an MSE is in the management structure does not seem to determine how effective they are in this.

A prophetic role also clearly emerges. One example given was of a re-structuring at a university where administrative staff were made surplus and told to re-apply for their old jobs, while the academic staff were protected. The MSE here sought to meet the vice chancellor about the unfairness of the plan, was fobbed off and ended up 'ambushing' them. It is clear from the account that although initially an angry confrontation, both parties came away with something positive.

Two examples were given to me of a senior manager tragically dying (one on a social trip with work colleagues) and the impact this had on the workplace. Initial shock (lasting for many weeks) was followed by a deep sense of personal loss, then a realisation of just how much that person meant to the business. The MSEs here say they found a role in affirming that it was right to feel the loss, which helped all to grieve well.

Not surprisingly, the local church featured heavily in the responses. In Anglican churches the most frequently mentioned issue is the title 'curate'. Dioceses seem to have a problem with describing MSEs as anything other in their license (unless it is 'priest-in-charge'), and the license title generally appears in diocesan directories. 'Curate' generally leads to pre-conceptions among clergy and laity alike of 'assistant', 'subsidiary' and 'in training'. One illustration I have heard is being treated as a perpetual learner driver. Why Anglican churches should have such a problem is surprising, given the historic titles of 'missioner' and 'lecturer' that could be used. Even better: formally recognise MSE! This seems to be less of an issue in the free churches, where titles are less tied to roles.

On the other hand one respondent told of finding himself installed as 'priest in charge' of the parish when the incumbent left, and it being assumed that he must know all that an incumbent should. Consequently, as the temporary step extended for many years, he did not receive the support he needed, and would have liked to be seen as a curate.

Another talked of the rapid reduction in stipended clergy in the multi-church team parish he is licensed to, and the assumptions (by team rector, Diocese and many in the congregations) that he would take up more parish work as a result, particularly Saturday weddings. When a new team vicar was licensed, the contribution of the MSE during the shortage was overlooked. "What hurt most, was when the new stipendiary team vicar was inducted by the archdeacon and the rector was thanked profusely for his sterling solo efforts in running the benefice. I was present at the service but didn't get a mention."

Most MSEs are licensed to a local church, and most successfully negotiate a role description and pattern of ministry in that context that uses their experience and talents, even though this may take some time. When there is a significant change though, they can find themselves starting all over again, fighting the old battles anew. This is not unlike the case of a business re-organisation in the workplace, and generally occurs where the incumbent changes or where churches are linked (for example, a new team parish or circuit re-organisation). One such story is worth telling as it came to me.

After ordination and in a first curacy, the MSE established a good working relationship with the training incumbent and church. "This worked well until there was a change of incumbent (while I was still technically serving my title). The interregnum went OK because we had retired priests living in the parish and the congregation had got used to the idea that I wasn't the curate. The new incumbent at first had no idea I was still serving a title and also had no concept of ministry at work and so felt threatened by my presence in the parish. After a few months he realised I was rarely in the parish, so the threat lessened and we got on quite well. However, when my three years were up, the bishop proposed a licence to the workplace and the deanery. The new incumbent then took the line that had he known I was "only" a curate he would have treated me differently, tried to train me as a parish priest and would have expected more of me and more accountability. The period between the incumbent's discovery of what I had been and establishing a new licence and working arrangement was very fraught because he

attempted to treat me in the (bullying) way he had been treated as a curate. The result was that with the new licence to the deanery I had to move to another parish in the town to find a spiritual base.”

Another respondent told of the problems caused during pre-ordination training by a change of incumbent who had no understanding of or interest in MSE, again resulting in a move of church.

It is noteworthy here that problems arising from a new incumbent or re-structuring are not unique to MSEs, but are shared by Readers, lay preachers, deacons, NSMs, Ordained Local Ministers (where a Diocese uses that ministry), and church workers. Where a stipendiary minister is seeking a post in which they will work alongside any of these, the selection process should be robust enough to identify potential clashes and training needs. All too often though, getting someone – anyone – in post is paramount. And hang the consequences. I can only describe this as unprofessional.

The advent of Common Tenure (see elsewhere in this edition) provides an opportunity to reinforce good practice for MSE in its relationship to the local (Church of England) church. There are several other examples of good practice drawn to my attention, so let's finish on that positive note.

Most important appears to be **recognition**, that the MSE has an important ministry outside the local church, and by the MSE that the ministry of the local church is foundational to the health of the worshipping community. MSE is for the local church one outward focus of its ministry, and grounding in the local church is vital (in most cases) to the MSE. They must feed from each other.

Secondly, focussed and timely **support** is essential to the local church ministry of the MSE when they are expected to shoulder more responsibility. When the stipendiary minister moves on, the role of the MSE in the local church needs to be clear to all parties and agreed – before the move takes place. Indeed, the local church should have a 'disaster plan', as do many businesses, in

case a key person is struck down. I was grateful during a two year interregnum (in a two church parish) for the burden shouldered by the area dean, archdeacon and area bishop, who spelled out to the congregations at the outset that they could and should not expect me to do more than I already was.

Then, make sure you have an agreed and regularly reviewed **role description or working agreement**. This should set out what your responsibilities are within the local church and what it can expect from you. If necessary, a time limit should be included, so that a license doesn't just drift. One respondent had such an agreement, timed to end three months before the stipendiary minister was due to move on. The United Reformed Church has a sensible approach here, with a specific role of Interim Moderator (IM) in which an outside Minister or Elder steers the vacancy process from profiling through to induction. The IM has no obligation to do anything else, but may assist if they wish. Said a respondent who had filled this role, "Over one period of a year or so as an IM I offered to lead maybe seven or eight services and chair the monthly Elders' meeting."

Another sage piece of advice is to distinguish **between project and pastoral**. "Pastoral will suck you into everything and is unplanable and time-consuming. Project enables you to identify and pursue specific objectives." By its nature MSE is often better suited to projects in the local church, where time can be used more flexibly. Those familiar with project management principles will recognise this immediately. (If you want to know more, I recommend visiting <http://www.apm.org.uk> the website of the Association of Project Management).

Finally, **don't confuse expertise with time**. The ministerial training we have received including Continuing Professional Development, is designed to build expertise; it seldom touches time management skills. One specific point: make sure you have an agreed day off (usually this will be Saturday), make sure the local church knows this (put in the magazine, on the website, wherever your contact details are), and guard it as zealously as our stipendiary colleagues guard theirs!

As for creating time, I think we've all tried it at some time, and found out the hard way that there is only one person who can do that, and we work for him.

Common Tenure and MSEs

Rob Fox

Most MSEs in the Church of England will have heard of Common Tenure, and many will have been to or had a Diocesan briefing. Anglican it may be, but others will recognise what follows. If it hasn't already, it may be coming soon to a church near you.

The purpose of this article is not to describe it in detail, but to identify those aspects of which MSEs should be aware.

What is it?

Common Tenure is a way of defining the relationship between a licensed person, lay or ordained, and the Diocese in which they are licensed, setting out the rights and responsibilities of each. It is centred on a role description, setting out details of the post held, the role purpose and context, key contacts, and a summary of the benefice. The form of the role description will vary slightly between Dioceses, but the substance is the same. The wider framework sets out the processes by which the agreement will be implemented and reviewed. It also sets out a review and appraisal process.

Who is affected?

Any ecclesiastical office-holder in a Diocese of the Church of England, and cathedral clergy. This takes in parochial and non-stipendiary clergy and lay stipendiary license-holders. It does not however include clergy directly employed by the Diocese (such as Director of Ministry or Communications Officer), chaplains

employed by secular organisations (such as a Healthcare Trust or University), Readers (unless paid a stipend) or those with permission to officiate. It does include senior clergy and bishops. Those affected are asked to 'opt in' prior to that date (though anyone can opt in later). Those who choose not to opt in are unaffected in their then current post, but any change of post will automatically be on Common Tenure terms.

When will it take effect?

Conditional on a final piece of legislation, introduction is planned for 31st January 2011.

How does it affect MSEs?

A great deal of Common Tenure is concerned with appointment and tenure of stipendiary clergy, and arrangements for their housing and expenses. Expenses do of course affect MSEs too, as do other important features: the appraisal procedure, entitlement to rest/leave, continuing ministerial education (CME) and the processes followed for capability, discipline, grievance and complaint.

Appraisal. Each Diocese has developed its own detail but the pattern to expect is similar to annual appraisals we experience at work. Structured self-appraisal, covering performance, development and suitability for a move, followed by an appraisal interview and an agreed written action plan. This process should be a on a maximum of a two-year cycle. Some Dioceses have well-established procedures, others not.

Entitlement to rest/leave. Common Tenure stipulates that each post-holder is entitled to an uninterrupted period of 24 hours rest each week, and 35 days leave each year. This applies equally to non-stipendiary posts. In my experience MSEs are not very good at protecting a weekly day off (which in most cases will be Saturday). It is now to be an entitlement, set out in our role description.

CME. MSEs face two key problems with CME as provided by the Diocese: it tends to be aimed at parochial matters and is of limited interest or value to MSEs, and it tends to be during the day! Common Tenure places an obligation on the Diocese to provide appropriate development and training opportunities to license-holders, at an accessible time.

Intervention and support. This element seems to cause the most concern among stipendiary clergy, with less recent experience of similar provision in secular employment. There are four distinct processes and, though these may overlap, the procedures for dealing with each are separate.

1. *Capability.* This addresses the question of whether the post-holder has the capability to carry out their role. Most obviously this may be identified during the appraisal process, but can arise at any time, including out of the following processes. It is primarily concerned with identifying any capability issues, exploring remedial steps, setting 'smart' objectives for improvement and reviewing progress. Measures can include providing training and support to enable the person to carry out their role, but may identify unsuitability for that role. This should be identified when the person applies for a post, but may arise later, for example where a period of ill-health or an accident reduces the person's capacity to fulfil that role. The measure of this is whether the person is satisfactorily performing the requirements of the post held, as set out in the role description.
2. *Discipline.* There is nothing new here. Established discipline procedures are reiterated, and there is no new definition of gross misconduct introduced.
3. *Grievance.* This is concerned with grievances relating to the exercise of the post held. For example, disagreement between a post holder and their 'line management' or with a person with whom they work in the context of their role, such as between team clergy, or a training incumbent and a

curate. The procedure provides for an opportunity for informal resolution, or formal, with an independent review panel, which will include, where appropriate, person from outside the Diocese.

4. *Complaint.* Again there is nothing new here, with established procedures for dealing with complaints made against a post-holder. It is however set out in a clear format, with provision for an independent review panel.

I mentioned earlier that the form of role agreements is up to each Diocese. The drafts I have seen so far are couched in parochial terms and do not contain provision to recognise ministry exercised outside the internal structure of the Church of England, such as the workplace. CHRISM publishes a model job agreement for MSEs on our website; joined now by a model Common Tenure agreement. MSEs are encouraged to use this as the basis for their role agreement, and to feed back to CHRISM how useful they have found it, helpful changes they have made, and any resistance met!

Resources:

The CHRISM model agreement is at: www.chrism.org.uk

There is a dedicated website at: www.common tenure.org

Diocesan websites should also be informative.

Book Review: Reshaping the mission of Methodism – A diaconal church approach.

Ed. David Clark, Church in the Market Place Publications, 2010; pp285; ISBN 978-1-899147-74-8.

Rob Fox

The latest book in David Clark's exploration of a diaconal model of being church, this is, literally, a book of two halves. The first, just over half the total pages, comprises 16 case studies, written by a variety of contributors. In the second David applies the diaconal ecclesiology he has developed over some 15 years to the mission of the church. The overall purpose is to show that "Methodism has a distinctive contribution to make to the world of the twenty-first century and to the church to come" (p.1). This book is about how the church itself can be re-shaped for diaconal mission, and how that mission might look.

The context is Methodist, and there is a clear voice addressing that church. However the implications drawn out have wider application, and this book deserves to be on the reading list of anyone concerned for mission and how the structures of their church, and all churches, can support or hinder it.

I would have liked a little more explanation of the purpose of the case studies in the Introduction. This became clearer as Part 2 developed and can be summarised as:

- "This is the context from which we move forward", for example the covenant with the Church of England, recent re-organisations within Methodism, and pressure on finance, and
- "These are current initiatives in mission that reflect a diaconal model of church, and why they work."

Not all the case studies achieve this. A few describe an activity or organisation, without reflecting on them, for example that on Action for Children. Others accomplish both, including the two from Yorkshire, St. Athan (south Wales) and the Birmingham mission. Only one relates explicitly to faith and work, though we

should be grateful there is one at all; many authors would miss it entirely.

There are a number of key concepts in this book, picked out below.

Diaconal church. This is defined as “one whose theology is centred on the universality of the kingdom community, which sees its mission as being a servant of that community, regards the people of God as being the primary resource for mission, and seeks to embody these principles in the nature and style of its leadership and governance” (p.163). Such a church is to model “**communal holiness**” as a “**community of character**” (p.164). There is an explicit link made here to virtue ethics, virtues that express holiness. In these contexts, mission is the primary role of the laity, not left to licensed ministers. The point is well made that Methodism has not successfully differentiated ‘lay ministry’, within the church, from the ‘ministry of the laity’, which looks out beyond the church. The same can be said of other churches.

The church must be a **kingdom community** that has a number of **gifts** to offer (pp.175-6), derived from the nature and inter-relatedness of the Trinity. (The connexional character of Methodism is regularly referred to in this context). The gifts are: life – reflecting the nature of God as creator, liberation – both personal and collective in Christ the liberator, agape – divine love/fellowship with the Holy Spirit, learning – from the Trinity as a learning community.

David Clark has studied the nature and dynamic of communities for over 40 years, and uses this experience to differentiate **communities of place**, such as the gathered church, and **communities of practice**, such as the workplace. A simple distinction is between where people meet together and when people ‘do’ together. In the latter, doing is primary, even if associated with a place. The point is well-made that over the last 50 years the first has become relatively more important to the least socially mobile, whilst communities of practice are more significant for the most mobile. He goes on to point out that the dominant model of church, ‘Christendom’, is posited on place, not practice. This will come as no surprise to MSEs. For Methodism,

communities of practice should become more important, of place less so.

In order to fully appreciate the two expressions of community, mission is most effective when it conforms to the *zone humaine* (p.194ff), the organic boundaries of the human community. To this end, Clark advocates re-organising the church structure. In particular a city should be served by one circuit, as has happened in Birmingham and several others. The city-wide circuit should be staffed to serve and support mission, for example with staff employed to be administrators, trainers, links to secular authorities, as well as serving churches. Living in a town (and borough) split between two Church of England dioceses, I think this has much merit.

The resulting strategy requires three **strands of mission**, relating to: gathered community (so far dominant), dispersed community (referring back to the 'ministry of the laity'), and the church as itself a human community engaging in mission primarily as an institution, a concept "unfamiliar to all the churches" (p.202). The first strand is addressed in terms of the city-wide circuit, as above. The second strand by equipping the laity to be the prime resource for mission. Here Clark laments that positive developments in training during the last decade have been side-lined as attention has focussed on re-organising pre-ordination training. The third is described (pp.226-234) by example, such as a series of public 'hearings' held in Birmingham, debates on what it means to be a human city. (The 12 signs that emerged are included at Appendix 3). In particular, the language the church uses must be meaningful and acceptable, which some often it is not. Critical to developing the human city, "the experience and skills of lay people engaged in the world of work should be readily available" to those engaged in building it (p.235).

Emphasis is also placed on co-ordinating resources with other churches, so that resources are as far as possible shared and effort not duplicated. This requires identifying which church is best placed to act and an agreed division of labour. Clark quotes (p.206 -7) Elaine Graham and Stephen Lowe (*What makes a good city?*

DLT, 2009), on the “organisational weight” of the Church of England, which will generally be a key player. However the assumption that the parish system covers every square metre of England is, I think, uncritical; there are business parks, shopping centres and new housing estates a-plenty untroubled by Anglican interest.

The final issue addressed is the role of leadership in mission, particularly from the licensed ministry. The strategy requires “servant-leaders” (p.241), with consequences for the training and support of ministers, who are rarely if at all, trained for roles with a dispersed community (p.244). Local church ministry finds its time and energy absorbed in serving a congregation and maintaining church plant, tasks that might be undertaken by pastoral teams and circuit-wide task forces. In the Rotherham and Dearne Valley circuit, for example, church plant is run by a company limited by guarantee, formed for the purpose.

Chaplaincy and sector ministry too must be re-structured if the strategy is to be supported. Most chaplains, Clark points out, tend to undermine the ministry of the laity, are “focussed almost entirely on informal counselling and support” (p.246), and import into their work context the pastoral and sometimes liturgical functions of ministers of place. “Virtually all” also applies to sector ministers. However there is a role for both in the mission strategy as community builders and educators.

This is no theoretical treatise, but a blueprint for mission based on a clear theology and ecclesiology. The book is packed with examples, over and above the case studies, and is rooted in praxis. Clark sets (pp.258-60) seven requirements for action; I won't spoil your enjoyment of the book by saying what they are. I challenge anyone to read it and not be challenged.

News from the Coventry MSE Group

Phil Aspinall

Ministry where you work

The Coventry group held another 'Ministry where you work' study day on Saturday 8th May and, although we were small in number, we had a stimulating and challenging discussion about our different work issues and workplaces.

One new participant said she valued: "All of the discussions and aspects of ministry that people shared; in particular how God's kingdom can be built in the workplace with people that you work with regularly and those you meet briefly". Someone else spoke of: "The opportunity to have time to share with each other, openly and honestly, about matters about work and those with whom we work, and the chance to reflect theologically and come to some deeper understandings".

We agreed that the format worked well, because it does offer such good opportunities for reflections, sharing and working on "what next?" But, as always, it would be good if we could share these sessions with more people, and we always feel we could use more time.

So our next session, to be held on Saturday 16th October at Sutton Cheney in Leicestershire, will run from 10am to 3 pm and include lunch to allow more time for discussion. We hope to make direct contact with more Readers and include ordinands in training, OLMs and anyone exploring a vocation to MSE. Please encourage anyone you know in the area who might be interested to attend.

Felicity Smith retires

Our last meeting also marked the end of Felicity Smith's time as convenor of the group. She had led us for some ten years and has also championed the cause of MSE in the Coventry Diocese as an

MSE representative on the Forum for Ministry (as it was called) and been a point of contact for people exploring a call to MSE. Although now retired from her secular work for some seven years, she has continued to beat the drum for the distinctive and important calling to MSE.

Felicity will continue as a member of CHRISM to enjoy attending Reflective Weekends thus remaining in touch with old friends and continuing to meet new ones.

The Coventry MSE Group thanked Felicity for all her hard work and support she had given both to the group and to us as individuals.

News from the Portsmouth area

Lyn Page

Initially, I believed, that in the Portsmouth area we didn't have any local groups relating to MSEs. Prompted by Rob Fox I began to explore the possibilities of setting one up, then I realised that I had joined one without realising it. It was our local ministers' forum, which comprises a group of lay and ordained ministers.

On the surface it sounds like a 'Churches Together' group and indeed that is how it began. But somehow the group attracted other ministers who either live in the area or work there. So now we have a group comprising of army chaplains, and Acorn healing centre chaplain, MSEs, church leaders, incumbents and those who have retired. The meetings are always lively because the forum members have a broad range of theological backgrounds.

Diversity is a key strength of the group, whether discussing a theme that lies outside of the institutional church or one that affects a particular denomination. It engenders a shared understanding of the problems and issues that arise in ministry that may affect the community as a whole. For example, at the beginning of this year, the new eco-town plans assumed they

would redevelop the Roman Catholic parish church into a road junction. The forum discussed the possible implications of losing the church building and supported objections raised with the planning committee.

More recently, there was a visit from the Aldershot army pastor. He was talking about the Blackwater Valley Big Tent event this September, where he hopes to promote the local ministries to the army communities and their families who live in the Bordon area. He strongly feels that army families will benefit from a closer relationship with the churches in the area. This will help the army chaplains in their work, knowing that army families are part of the wider Christian community.

I have benefitted from much support and encouragement from the members of the forum. Speaking from the position of an Anglican assistant curate, I am pleasantly surprised and encouraged by the large number of ministers who work in my parish. Sometimes it can seem that the workers are few when we look within the bounds of our own denominations and congregations. I know from many years of ministering in my own workplace how easy it is to feel isolated. I feel a group such as ours helps to make the difference and opens up a wider perspective.

International Conference of Worker Priests, Dilbeek, Brussels, Belgium, Pentecost 2010

Phil Aspinall

The annual conference of Worker Priests was held this year at a well-appointed former seminary just outside Brussels in Flemish-speaking Belgium. Our hosts were the Flemish group - a mixture of men and women, lay and ordained who, as always, came up with a colourful image for our unity together - this time a wooden train of carriages bearing each of our initials.

There were some 20 participants in total with other delegates from Germany, France and Italy. Susan Cooper, Margaret Joachim and Phil Aspinall represented the UK. As well as the intense discussion on the theme of the economic crisis and recession, we had time for much socialising, including a good sing-along on the Saturday evening. Our visit on the Saturday afternoon was a canal trip through sub-urban Brussels passing through areas, which were once the heart of the industrial city and the focus of much social action.

We celebrated the Pentecost Eucharist on Saturday evening, led by two of the Belgian women – and were given large bright red and yellow flames to offer our hopes for the future in the power of the Spirit. And despite our different backgrounds, nationalities and languages we heard with one voice the works of the Kingdom of God.

Here below is a version of a paper, written originally back in March, in French, based on contributions from Susan Cooper, Stan Frost, Phil Aspinall and Ruth Brothwell. It was sent to all conference delegates before the event, along with the papers from all the participating countries – these formed the basis of our discussions.

International Worker Priest Conference

Pentecost 2010 Belgium

English Contribution

1. The economic crisis imposes constraints

In businesses we find: mass redundancies, blackmail (“take reduced hours to keep your job”) and insecurity. And in society as a whole: an increase in unemployment, reduced job prospects and loss of status (e.g. graduates forced to take menial jobs), repression by the powerful, loss of civil liberties etc...

This is the reality of our lives. In industrial businesses there are immediate and dramatic changes caused by the national economic situation. But one might ask if these businesses have used the recession as a justification for reducing the workforce and making redundancies.

But, on the other hand, this situation is not caused by the leaders and directors of these businesses – they have to support their businesses without having to pay for new financial resources, and they are afraid of the banking system. But the same question is true for individuals and families, as well as for businesses and society. It is a very important question – is it necessary to live in debt/on credit from others?

In England, the [previous Labour] government had said that they would like 50% of young people to become university graduates. They presented a vision of new possibilities for these young people – but they will be disappointed in this new world of the crisis. It is no longer possible. We need artisans – skilled workers who can work with their hands in practical activities. But to arrive at a society such as this it is necessary to give the same value to all different forms of work.

Susan said that she worked as consultant, providing advice to regulators of insurance in different countries outside the UK. During the crisis, her department had gained a lot more work – the regulators had need of more advice. However, one of them, from a large country on the Arabian Gulf had restrictions imposed on his budget. And so now they are losing work, and not having contracts renewed or finding that they are very short term. [Since that was written the situation has reversed and they are taking on more actuaries for three to six months to deal with a rump of extra work].

2. Who pulls the strings?

We found this a very difficult question to answer. Perhaps it is the large businesses and corporations? Or are there others – the

banking system, the banker, the uncontrolled chaotic market?

Or perhaps it is the media – television, newspapers and now, increasingly, the open network of communications on the Internet. It is the journalists (in all these media) who decide the most important subject for each day.

In the voluntary sector, it is necessary to find financial support from the larger charities or from the government – for example, from the National Lottery. The media can reduce the confidence of small charities, so that they do not apply for grants. For example, they imagine that the decision to hold the 2012 Olympic Games in the UK means that money will only be available for sports and not for other smaller charities.

Is there a possibility for Christians, in union across Europe, to pull the strings to steer the social and economic systems towards the ways of justice demanded by the Kingdom of God? There are Christians working at highest levels in banking, in politics and in industry.

3. What prospects do we discern for change and liberation? Where do we see signs of hope? How do we contribute to them?

Are there changes? Bankers are still getting their large bonuses!

We only see very small signs of change. But there are, perhaps, signs of hope – as banks and individuals attempt to control their debts. In the UK, people have demanded new responsibility from government and ministers – it became a theme during the national election campaign.

Among young people we see new ways of working – they do not like the old systems and embrace electronic systems, freed by the Internet. They engage, one with another, outside the historical and national structures – free to talk of new possibilities. Perhaps this will lead to a new way of collaboration between different countries, to address the issues that are important for all people today –

climate change, global economics, justice and peace.

And we? We can work together, as ministers in our work and in our own levels of society, and we can share a vision of these new possibilities.

Stan described how, in a small charity, new hope arrived through the energy and enthusiasm of men and women with a vision for changing their world. They gave living examples to others, of how to find new forms of work even though it is difficult during these times of the crisis. Worker Priests can present images of what is possible – to encourage others.

But for **Phil**, an important question still remains. We have spoken much at these annual meetings of the Worker Priests of the new world which is possible. But at this moment of the crisis – when all the structures and systems of capitalism have been beaten and almost destroyed – there has been no birth of a new politics, of a new society. Why not? Why do the forces of the “Monde Ouvrier” remain quiet and unheard?

4. How does the light of the Gospel shine through this and what strength does it bring us?

The light of the Gospel sometimes becomes very dim and difficult to see – but one can see it, often in the most unlikely places.

Stan told how they had to make two people redundant in his small community charity. But the others who worked with them had helped them, and had continued to find small amounts of money and had succeeded in paying them right up until they finished work. But this also brought about big changes with a new spirit – they decided to continue the work, but without any paid employees. This meant the volunteers had much more to do. But there was a great change in attitudes – the air of anger and infighting disappeared, and in its place there came a new spirit of calm and of engagement together. It was like the work of the Holy Spirit - among those who could not see it.

We must understand that the Gospel is larger than us. But the hope of the Gospel can shine through all that we do. The structures of the church need to change to comprehend the way the Worker Priest see the world – to be with men and women where they live, work and make their lives. It is a very great change for the church – to find itself in the difficult places of society and the world of work, and to help those who have to make the difficult decisions in businesses and the structures of the market.

There are images in the Gospels of the Bible that support us – the calm in the middle of the storm; the house built upon the sand; the Christ resurrected after the horrors of the cross; the new life which waits for us.

Postscript: responses to the paper

The discussions during the conference picked up on two particular phrases from the paper. Our assertion that we need artisans – skilled workers who can work with their hands in practical activities – resonated with one of the Italians who lives in a hill-top hermitage which he has rebuilt with his own hands, and where he makes his living by marquetry.

Our statement that: “We can work together, as ministers in our work and in our own levels of society and we can share a vision of these new possibilities” triggered a very strong response and led to a long and detailed discussion on the Sunday afternoon. Many of those present have a commitment always to take the lowliest jobs with the lowest pay, and to work and live alongside those who are excluded. They believe that only by living in this way can one truly be a follower of Jesus. So our talk of working at higher level of society is challenged on social, political and theological grounds.

In the light of this same Gospel, parts of the original paper – in the response to the fourth question - were modified, as they were based on assumptions alien to many of the Worker Priests. The

expectation that the institutional church will change is seen as a waste of time. To be a Christian doing this work with and alongside the poorest is to be the Church – this is at the heart of the belief of the Worker Priests and their self-understanding. They would say we put too much time and effort into concern for the institutions.

The Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers and the National Association for the Self-Supporting Active Ministry (US) Tentmaker Conference 2010

APT, the Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers, and NASSAM, the National Association for the Self-Supporting Active Ministry (Tentmaking Clergy of the Episcopal Church of the USA), invite you to their 2010 National Tentmaker Conference, 12th – 14th November 2010.

The theme this year is:

Emergent Christianity and Tentmaking Ministry

The Conference is again being held at the University of Saint Mary's of the Lake, 1000 East Maple Avenue, Mundelein, Illinois 60060 (in the Chicago area). For more information on this great venue, and a map and directions, go to: www.usml.edu/conference

The principal presenter will be Phyllis Tickle author of *The Great Emergence - How Christianity Is Changing and Why*.

Phyllis Tickle is founding editor of the Religion Department of Publishers Weekly. One of the most respected authorities and popular speakers on religion in America today; she is often quoted and interviewed in such media outlets as the New York Times, USA Today, Newsweek, Time and CNN. A lay eucharistic minister in the Episcopal Church and a fellow of the Cathedral College at the National Cathedral in Washington, she is the author of more than two dozen books, including The Divine Hours prayer manuals and,

most recently, *The Words of Jesus: A Gospel of the Sayings of Our Lord*.

For more information about this event please contact Phil Aspinall (for contact details see inside back cover) or one of the conference coordinators: Davis Fisher davisfishr@aol.com or Robert Hattle rhattle@mac.com. Alternatively, look on the Associations' websites: www.nassam.org and www.pcusatentmakers.org

There is a range of registration fees, but typically \$350 covers a single room for a non-member with reduced rates for shared double rooms. Please send registration forms by 1st October 2010, to: Fred Bunning fcvfbunning@msn.com.

This is a great opportunity to meet more of our MSE colleagues in the USA, and particularly in this year when there will be a significant number of Episcopalians present. The Diocese of Chicago has, for many years, been a leader in the field. Chicago is easily and directly accessible from many airports in the UK and the venue is about a half hour ride from O'Hare International Airport. So do come and join us!

New resources for MSE

The **Methodist Church** has recently produced a series of 20 worksheets supporting faith and work, which can be downloaded from <http://www.methodist.org.uk/businessworksheets>. Topics include: the separation of faith and work, ethical investment, engaging the local church with the world of work, prayers for the working day, and a directory faith and work groups and associations. These are well put together and user-friendly. Elsewhere on the website are interesting resources for 'Mission in the Economy' (on supporting workplace chaplains), worship resources for Business Sunday, and tax justice.

Richard Oastler was a leading figure in the mid-19th century factory reform movement, campaigning against child labour, for safe working conditions, and a 10 hour working day. He strongly believed that faith and work were inseparable. Fitting then that a venture in Leeds, seeking to develop Christian engagement with economic life in the city should be named after him. The Oastler Centre website, do a search on 'Oastler Centre', or visit http://www.networkleeds.com/Groups/52336/Network_Leeds/Associated_Sites/Oastler_Centre/Oastler_Centre.aspx. The website includes papers on spirituality at work, faith and economics, and Leeds as a faithful city.

Sanctus1 is "an emerging church in Manchester engaged in a journey of creative exploration into spirituality, culture and faith" (<http://www.sanctus1.co.uk/>). The website is in the form of a blog, and hence interactive. It might be useful for ideas.

More than gold is aimed at helping churches to make the most of the mission and ministry opportunities around the 2012 Olympics (<http://www.morethangold.org.uk>). The website includes a wealth of information useable by churches and other groups. The organisation aims at being a catalyst and connecting service for

others, and welcomes enquiries and offers from anyone who can contribute. They are particularly keen to hear from Christians working in the Games organisation or any of the public and private bodies working at or with the Games. So if you are an MSE with a connection, please get in touch.

Late in 2007, Ridley Hall, Cambridge, launched the **Simeon Centre for Prayer and the Spiritual Life**, built around the Simeon Community. The Centre's purpose is to provide spiritual under-pinning for the whole work at **Ridley Hall**, including the Ridley Hall Foundation. The centre runs retreats and day seminars on practical spirituality. To find out more visit <http://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk/scabout.html>.

Peterborough Diocese continues to provide an impressive range of downloadable material, including on faith and work. The website features, at <http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/downloads/downloads.htm>, a working discipleship questionnaire (useful for self-audit, or as a group discussion starter), and a three session course on 'Being a disciple at work', a talk outline, a short reading list, and helpful organisations. They seem to have missed CHRISM though!

And finally

Priests on vacation

Two priests decided to go to Hawaii on vacation. They were determined to make this a real vacation by not wearing anything that would identify them as clergy. As soon as the plane landed they headed for a store and bought some really outrageous shorts, shirts, sandals, sunglasses, etc.

The next morning they went to the beach dressed in their 'tourist' garb. They were sitting on beach chairs, enjoying a drink, the

sunshine and the scenery when a 'drop dead gorgeous' blonde in a bikini came walking straight towards them. They couldn't help but stare.

As the blonde passed them she smiled and said 'Good Morning, Father ~ Good Morning, Father,' nodding and addressing each of them individually, then she passed on by. They were both stunned. How in the world did she know they were priests?

So the next day, they went back to the store and bought even more outrageous outfits. These were so loud you could hear them before you even saw them! Once again, in their new attire, they settled down in their chairs to enjoy the sunshine.

After a little while, the same gorgeous blonde, wearing a different coloured bikini, taking her sweet time, came walking toward them. Again she nodded at each of them, said 'Good morning, Father ~ Good morning, Father,' and started to walk away.

One of the priests couldn't stand it any longer and said, 'Just a minute, young lady.' 'Yes, Father?'

'We are priests and proud of it, but I have to know, how in the world do you know we are priests, dressed as we are?'

She replied, 'Father, it's me, Sister Kathleen.'

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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