

Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry

Number 119

January 2012

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 the Committee (see inside rear cover).

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

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EDITORIAL

Now that the New Year has begun thoughts occasionally turn to reflections of time past and times to come. In our last edition of this CHRISM Journal Mike Rayner issued a number of challenges to you the reader and to me as Editor. As the last edition was a joint July / October one I had opportunity to invite responses to Mike's article. Mike issued some challenges about the Journal and its format, content and style. He also issued some challenges about CHRISM in general and especially about the category of Ministers in Secular Employment and about our target audience. I have had one response. There are implications we could draw from this but we have no way of knowing if they would be correct or not. For example:

the readership is happy with the Journal and MSE title as they are

the readership is not interested in engaging in this discussion

the readership has too many other things to deal with – particularly over the Christmas period

Whatever the reasons and the implications are is not for me to judge nor to comment. With the author's permission I have presented the one written response in full to balance Mike's own contribution. The reason I refrain from comment is related to the fact that this is my first edition of the Journal as Editor and may well be my last. Since the last edition when I was unemployed my position has changed and I am now in full employment once again.

As a consequence I need to put my energies into my new job and balance that with time for my family and for myself. CHRISM therefore needs a Journal Editor to take over certainly by our AGM in September or preferably before.

If you are interested or know someone who may be please get in touch.

Meanwhile I hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to receiving any contributions for the next edition by 15th March 2012.

Happy new year and happy reading!

Peter Johnson

RESPONSE TO MIKE'S CHALLENGES

Hi Peter,

I've only attended one Chrism meeting but am a member (paying through Standing Order) and read the journal avidly. I have retired from teaching and now am House-for-Duty in my local Benefice where I spent my teaching career. I hope that this will allow me to attend more Chrism events but who knows? In any case, I wanted to respond to Mike's issues.

Change is fine if it is for a purpose; I believe you should feel empowered to change it if you so wish.

To increase the circulation is indeed likely to be synonymous with increasing membership. It's primarily word of mouth via the membership but maintaining a profile within dioceses and other organisations must also play a part.

I'm uneasy with the "young people" aim since I don't like categorising any group of people; Chrism is by its nature likely to attract people who have already reached a certain level of commitment and focus in life and I for one appreciate its adult content and feel. Like yourself I've worked with young people throughout my career and I still

don't know in what fundamental way they're different from us oldies; when they're ready they may embrace ChrisM/the journal but I don't really understand this aim.

Stop wasting trees - I agree, 100%, but for other reasons as well. It took me ages to get signed up simply because it involved sending stuff through the post. The request to send in another piece of paper merely to continue to subscribe is frankly irritating, but I don't mean that nastily. It's just so old fashioned. How much cheaper is electronic publishing, for goodness' sake? Above all, we can, just as I'm doing now, participate when time is available rather than making it into a chore. I would favour an annual printed journal with several electronic editions in between publications - but the contributions to the printed version would need to be weighty and well selected by your good self.

Regarding the challenge to the whole, either I've missed the point (and I do mean that) or Mike is, in the words my supervisor used when wading through my earnest argument that Samuel Richardson deserved to be called the first English novelist, "gagging at gnats". Yes Mike, of course you're right that any term which tries to identify people according to the paid work they do or don't do is faintly ridiculous but surely we all see

it as shorthand? Otherwise the journal would need to be called, "The journal for those who believe that all that we do in all walks of life must be legitimately seen as being significant ministry" which is unlikely to appeal. It isn't even about being paid for it; I now receive an allowance but am as committed to the ministry of NSMs and the entirety of the laity as I was in the 20+ years I spent as an NSM. A few thoughts which may or may not be of interest in the debate which Mike hoped to ignite, I'm sure.

God Bless,
Alan Wearmouth

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**International Conference of the European Worker
Priests
Pentecost 2012 Thursday 24th- Monday 28th May**

The leaders at St Paul's were faced with a dilemma - who are their companions? More importantly, perhaps, how did their actions and words appear to those on the outside of the church? - would they appear to support the world of the financial institutions of the City of London? Or would they champion the cause of the anti-capitalist protestors camped at their gates?

Of course, it is not that simple! But you are invited to engage with these and other issues with the Worker Priest of Europe. The theme the 2012 Pentecost conference is:

Companions in Humanity to live out Hope

Who are your companions on this journey of hope? The small planning group met in Paris in November and has proposed some questions to help us think about this, bearing in mind two key phrases:

Listen to the cry of my people
Our spirituality of seeing
(as in the CHRISM mission statement!)

In the places we are situated, who are our companions. Our companions in work and struggle, in distress and anger, in joy?

In the current movements: the Occupations, the “Indignados”, in the countries of North Africa, in the strikes - do we see an Other World being born?

How do we contribute to the creation of resistance, locally and globally? (“to reorganise resistance in the microscopic and the macroscopic”)

With what symbolic actions do we celebrate our hope with our companions? What signs of the Gospel and of the Kingdom do we see there?

We are asked to prepare a two-page paper with our responses to the questions. So **even if you cannot attend**, we would welcome any thoughts or comments you may have on this theme. Please send these to me **by 17th March 2012** - and please remember that we have to write the paper in French, so please keep contributions short and in simple English.

The conference will be held in Lourdes, over the Pentecost weekend, 24th – 28th May. The first two days will be for the international delegates, but then, over the weekend itself, we shall join the National Meeting of the French Worker Priests, which takes place every four years and brings together all the French Prêtres Ouvriers – a sense of history of a great movement and a present reality in the world of work.

Do come and join us! It is always an opportunity to expand our horizons, meet old and new friends, and to be challenged. Please contact me if you are interested and would like more details, and please register as soon as possible and certainly **by February 2012**.

Phil Aspinall

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Book review:

*Every-Person Ministry – Reaching out in Christ”,
Teresa Morgan*

*SPCK, 2011; 149pp; ISBN 978-0-281-06447-2; £8.99.
Also available as an e-book.*

Books on every-person ministry have come along regularly over the past few years, and one may be forgiven for thinking there is little more to be said. As this practical and readable book shows though, the topic is by no means exhausted, and I haven't come across a better one.

There are a number of strengths to this book and it is worth highlighting four of them in particular.

First, the book arises out of discussions in a Pentecost study group in Teresa's home parish, exploring the questions raised by the group members. It is rooted in the day to day lives and experiences of the members, which makes its handling of questions and issues notably practical. In this sense it is also a very good example of process theology.

Second, as a Minister in Secular Employment, Teresa comes at the topic by thinking outside the

‘church as institution’ box. Ministry is much about what we do on Monday – at work, in the community – than what lay people can do on Sunday.

Third, it is liberally illustrated with stories from life, often as parables, often from Teresa’s own experience, always both entertaining and thought-provoking.

Lastly, Teresa is a fine writer, able to explain often difficult and complex ideas with deceptive simplicity. She uses her expertise as a scholar and writer to good effect.

The book itself is divided into seven chapters, nestled between an introduction explaining how it came about and a neat conclusion. The chapter titles, largely self-explanatory, are:

The meanings of love (noting that in the famous passage at 1 Corinthians 13, Paul speaks about what love *does*, not what it *is*).

Attentiveness: the ministry of listening. (I particularly appreciated here the links made between attentiveness and building community).

The call to prophecy (seeing things as God them).

Forgiveness and reconciliation. (There is an intriguing discussion of whether forgiveness comes before or after faith, and of the role of community).

Freeing the Spirit (overcoming unhelpful passions that inhibit our being effective in ministry for God).

Living prayer (including a discussion of the relationship between contemplation and action).

Speaking of faith. (Here Teresa gives a foretaste of her current writing project, a study of how *pistis* was used generally in the 1st century AD. Prepare to re-think your understanding of faith).

Each chapter concludes with questions that might be used as ‘starters’ in a study group, and the book lends itself well to that use – group members can read through a chapter in advance of a session and come prepared to discuss the questions raised. There is also a list of varied and useful further resources in the last 3 pages (starting with CHRISM!). My only cavil is that the editor has placed the footnotes at the end of the book rather than the foot of the relevant page. Overall a rewarding and readable book with much to think on, and even more to act on.

Rob Fox

An invitation to a 40th Anniversary.....

The German Worker Brothers and Sisters will be celebrating 40 years of their meetings in the Spring, and everyone in the international network is invited.

This group (or rather, network) comprises a mixture of people from the German-speaking area – Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Alsace. They include Catholic laity with a conviction to work among the excluded in their society, Little Brothers and Sisters in the order of Charles de Foucauld, Protestants who have become involved by sharing the same agenda (mainly through networks in Berlin) and Catholic Worker Priests.

The weekend is being called a “Festival of Stories” – a chance to reflect on the history of 40 years and the challenges faced today. Attendance should be large - invitations are being sent to previous members, those who have accompanied their theological reflections, work place organisations and European colleagues.

It will be held at the former monastery of St Gottfried in Ilbenstadt just outside Frankfurt am Main over the weekend of 11th – 13th May, 2012. Please contact Phil Aspinall for more details. Do come and meet them there!

Phil Aspinall

How the Internet started.

In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a young wife by the name of Dot. And Dot Com was a comely woman, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she was often called Amazon Dot Com.

And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when thou canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?"

And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply said, "How, dear?"

And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale, and they will reply telling you who hath the best price. And the sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."

Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price, without ever having to move from his tent.

To prevent neighbouring countries from overhearing what the drums were saying, Dot devised a system that only she and the drummers knew. It was known as Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS), and she also developed a language to transmit ideas and pictures – Hebrew To The People (HTTP).

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites, or NERDS.

And lo, the land was so feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums that no one noticed that the real riches were going to that enterprising drum dealer, Brother William of Gates, who bought up every drum maker in the land. And indeed did insist on drums to be made that would work only with Brother Gates' drumheads and drumsticks.

And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we have started is being taken over by others."

And Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or eBay as it came to be known. He said, "We need a name that reflects what we are."

And Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators." "YAHOO," said Abraham. And because it was Dot's idea, they named it YAHOO Dot Com.

Abraham's cousin, Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid (GEEK) that he was, soon started using Dot's drums to locate things around the countryside. It soon became known as God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything (GOOGLE).

And that is how it all began.

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You may find this blog of interest!

<http://victhevicar.blogspot.com/2011/07/its-ok-for-stipendiaries-but-we-have-to.html>

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Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers Stony Point 4th – 6th Nov 11

I was amazed that it was 15 years since the last time I (and they) had met for a conference at Stony Point. It is another delightful location – set in a wooded valley near to the banks of the river Hudson about an hour's drive north of New York city. And the weather was great – warm and sunny – although only a week after the first and early snow storm of the year (several of the participants were still without power at home, and

the centre had itself lost power for 36 hours).

There were a total of 26 participants (including the speakers and officials), mainly Presbyterian, although there were a couple of UCC, and one other Episcopalian in addition to me. Davis Fisher, who some of you know, was the only NASSAM person – I need to follow up some of the other regulars. Among the participants were Bill and Lois Dodge who have become “regulars” at CHRISM events.

There were many new faces – at least 6 newcomers. Three were from seminaries, encouraged by the APT bursary scheme paid out of their own funds *[now there's an idea !]* at various stages of training, but interested in exploring their own call to work other than fully-funded by the church.

Rick Ufford-Chase, who I first met at the Colorado meeting about 6 years ago, when he was Moderator of Presbyterian General Assembly (GA), now runs the Stony Point Centre. Founded in 1949 (many of the rooms and facilities reflect this !) “to further the course of the mission of the church” but as a missionary development centre, with a strong critique of the “Imperial” model. It is, he says, “the most diverse place in the

Presbyterian church” and there were, indeed latino and afro-caribbean groups there at the same time as us. He aims to build a not expressly Christian community there dedicated to peacemaking and non-violence – currently 2 Jews and 2 Muslims live in the community. He shared his very radical views of the future of the church.

“If you imagine the church in 10 year’s time, what does APT have to do to get there ?”

The theme “Lifting the Tent Flaps” was led by the keynote speaker, Bob LaRoche, based on his recent book “Part Time Minister; Full time Church”. He had regretted and wished he’d not used the “part time” in the title! Many people took him to task over this, and also the use of the phrase “bi-vocational” - “I have one vocation but it shows in a variety of ways”. He was formerly a Roman Catholic Permanent Deacon (we spoke about the contacts I have been trying to develop with the deacons in the UK) who left to become a Minister in the UCC – and with the aim to work as well. He found APT via the website while he was researching for the book. *[the value of websites !]* Bob talked a lot about the life of churches and congregations especially as they dwindle in size and so can no longer fund a fully paid pastor, and what that means for the concept of being church.

But he also reflected on the impact on the relationship between the church members and their “part-time” pastor, and their lack of understanding of the world of the Tentmaker, who is no longer constantly available. But he also brings his RC understanding of the church as the “People of God” (Vatican II).

This led into discussion of Job Descriptions for the Tentmaking pastor, the description of the needs of the congregation, strategy and vision for a congregation, and the tasks that uniquely fall to the minister.

But there was a lot more practical stuff: respect and collegiality, time planning, self-care, relationships, spirituality, training for tentmaking. And the strengths of a tentmaker: respect for the lifestyle of others who work, their role in their workplace (to free up others to minister); and some of the dangers and pitfalls.

The afternoon panel session returned to the question of what the church will be like in 10 years’ time and what that means for tentmaking – and its relation to the many Presbyterian new immigrant churches. Again Rick Ufford Chase has much that is challenging to say, from the context of a “community of different communities”.

I could give a lot more of the content. But one quotable quote: “Denominations are about branding and franchising – I know what I am going to get when I walk into a Starbucks or into a Subway”.

This year there was no representative from the GA in Louisville (I think for the first time). Some people saw this as a retrograde step, but others assured us of the enthusiastic support from people in GA during the course of the year.

Ralph Wright has written a paper on “The secular side of Tentmaking” which is still in draft form but will be published shortly. It talks about types of secular work and the relationship of the Tentmaker with their colleagues, boss, employees etc; financial issues (particularly in the US with the implications for pensions and healthcare); family relationships and self care. *[It might be worth considering as a CHRISM paper but would I think need editing]*

The morning worship was relaxed and informal, as indeed was the final communion service (although several people had left by the Sunday morning)

APT Business

The APT Business meeting (there was no NASSAM meeting) turned out to be very odd:

The Nominating Committee (of past Moderators) had made no nominations but instead proposed suspending the standing orders, so anyone present could be asked to serve on the exec. So the three seminarians were “elected“ !

The finances remain sound, not least because of a surplus on previous conferences.

They continue their programme to visit Church Seminaries, using a grant received from the GA. Next year’s conference will also help this (see below).

One of the new Seminarian exec members was charged with finding next year’s venue, and has already confirmed that we shall meet at the Seminary in Austin, Texas over the weekend of 2nd – 4th November, 2012. Book the date in your diary now!

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**MSEs of the Old Catholic Church of Germany
Erfurt 17 – 19 Oct 2011**

Some 21 participants, a mixture of priests and deacons of Old Catholic Church (AKD) met.

Someone said that MSEs now comprise some 50% of the clergy of the AKD. There were, as always, several newcomers to the group, but there were many old friends, including Franz Segbers and Nico Bachtler, who have attended our conferences.

The meeting was held in a new venue - the Evangelisches Zentrum Zinzendorfhaus in Neudietendorf, a ten minute train journey from Erfurt, a delightful city I had never visited previously. Very well appointed with excellent rooms and food, and housing a number of different training bodies, including the protestant seminary for the three adjacent Landeskirche.

Friday evening gave an opportunity for us to introduce ourselves and catch up on recent news, since the similar meeting last year. We then adjourned to the Cafeteria (a rather pleasant and cosy bar) to continue socialising.

Some 7 Permanent Deacons; only 3 women. Most of the newcomers were former Roman priests who had become Old Catholic when they had married or moved into partnerships. We also caught up on news of the regulars who were not present.

On Saturday, the new Bishop of the Diocese of Germany, Matthias Ring, gave a summary of his

annual “Bishop’s Report” – not verbatim as he reckoned most people had heard it already. He is a different personality from Bp Joachim. His report included:

The AKD must stop defining itself but what is not (Roman) but by what it has to offer – the signs of a welcoming community of the Kingdom [I paraphrase]. He wants to turn the key development project of the church from “Growth” to “Life” – it is the life of the church which will touch others. He tours the congregations doing Bishopry things (confirming, blessing altars, ordinations): “ I either visit for a festival or for a crisis”. He gets too many emails, and prefers people write letters: “in emails we write as we speak; we need to relearn how to write”. He spends a lot of time on ecumenical issues: relationships with the Utrecht Union and the various dependent churches (Poland, Italy); the Orthodox (“it goes slowly”); the Roman Catholics (which he wants to try to improve); the Protestant churches (EKD); the Anglicans (C of E and Episcopalians).

His comments led into much discussion about the relationship between the MSEs and the Stipendiary clergy, and the level of support the MSEs receive.

The working sessions kicked off with a “written discussion”. We wrote on four flipcharts, with a different heading on each - in silence – and added to each other’s comments. An interesting technique and worth trying.

After lunch each of four working groups took one of the four flipchart sheets and looked at it for key points and themes which were fed into the final plenary and will be used by the committee to plan the next steps for pastoral and personal planning and development in the diocese. [Again, I could give more content]

There were elections to the organising committee and, as noted previously, the committee of this group are automatically elected to the Church’s General Synod. *// wish !]*

On the Saturday evening – we were led in another spiritual journey by Hilde, one of the Deacons. Refreshing! We then adjourned to the bar/café in the house.

Sunday morning commenced with a relaxed Eucharist led by a Bp. Matthias. There was also worship each morning and evening led in different styles by different people.

People so liked the venue – so it has been booked again for next year: 30th November 2012 – 2nd December 2012 at the Evangelisches Zentrum Zinzendorfhaus in Neudietendorf. Another date for your diary .

The focus of these weekends often comes back to the inner workings of the Church, but there were many conversations with those who do want to talk about MSE, and to continue developing the link with CHRISM - and one at least is hoping to attend CHRISM events.

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“Spirited Organisations”
Programme
September 2011 – July 2012



www.telosspirituality.org.uk
www.churchinwales.org.uk

TELOS works to promote a new view of leadership, management and organisational behaviour as a creative stimulus for businesses and organisations of all types and sizes across Wales.

TELOS contributes to a growing international interest in spirituality as a creative and crucial dimension of enlightened organisations.

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TELOS aims to contribute to the transformation of Wales by creating opportunities for leaders to discover and develop together a new understanding of the meaning of work and of spirituality in organisations, to create *better work, better society, better government and a better world*.

For more information about the work of the TELOS group, please contact:

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Timetable of Events

27 January 2012 10.00 am – 12.30 pm
'The Spirituality of Human Responsibility and Development from a Primary School Perspective.'
Isobel Davies, Head Teacher, Twyn Primary School, Caerphilly

24 February 10.00 am – 12.30 pm
'What do Christians do all day?'
The Revd Carol Wardman, Bishops' Adviser on Church and Society

22 March 10.00 am – 12.30 pm
'Vocation - who's calling and is it for me?'
Christopher Ward, The Management Preacher

24 April 10.00 am – 12.30 pm
'What does it mean to be human?'
Revd Ian Hodges

18 May 10.00 am to 12.30 pm
'Headhunting / Executive Search'. The why, what and how with examples of some of the high profile roles Odgers have filled in Wales as the UK's largest headhunter'
Jemma Terry, Managing Partner Wales, Odgers Berndtson

14 June 10.00 am – 12.30 pm
'The Transformation Challenge'
Helen Birtwhistle, Director, The Welsh NHS
Confederation

July (date to be confirmed)
'Sacred Space' Business Retreat, Abergavenny

The events are free of charge unless stated differently. The venue is 39 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9XF. (Parking is usually available at the rear of the building via Hamilton St or Talbot St – otherwise Sophia Gardens opposite.)

BOOK NOW 02920 348252

lisamartin@churcheinwales.org.uk

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CABE DATES

Wednesday 8th February - 6.30pm for 7.00pm

LONDON NETWORK

Ram Gidoomal, businessman, entrepreneur and public servant.

"Global Business - Am I my brother's keeper?"

Venue - To be announced

To register for this event contact Jayne at

events@cabe-online.com

IN BEAUTY MAY I WALK

In beauty may I walk;
All day long may I walk;
Through the returning seasons may I walk.

Beautifully will I possess again
Beautifully birds
Beautifully butterflies...

On the trail marked with pollen may I walk;
With grasshoppers about my feet may I walk;

With dew around my feet may I walk.
With beauty before me may I walk
With beauty behind me may I walk
With beauty above me may I walk
With beauty all around me,
may I walk.

In old age, wandering on a trail of beauty, lively;
In old age, wandering on a trail of beauty, living
again...

It is finished in beauty.
It is finished in beauty.

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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