

Ministers-at-Work

*The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry*

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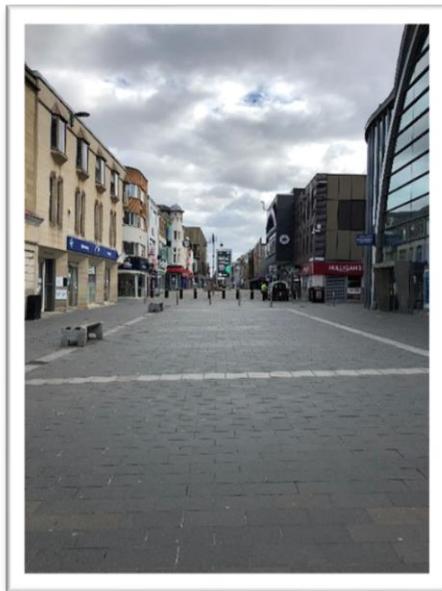
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Editorial

Whatever else, this edition of *Ministers At Work* will be the Lockdown edition.. Hopefully by the next edition, constraints will have begun to be relaxed – but for now, all sorts of boundaries around home and work and community and leisure are being radically reshaped – and along with them, ministry. COVID-19 (the disease) and the particular SARS variant coronavirus which causes it have undoubtedly caused a massive shift in our day to day lives, and the day to day patterns which we might until only a few weeks ago have taken for granted. Specific contacts and connections along with certain types of worker have been transformed from important to unimportant, and vice versa.

Corner shops and delivery drivers, along with bus drivers and cleaners have suddenly rocketed in importance alongside care home staff and the (rightly) much lauded NHS workforce. Teachers seem somehow to have passed beneath society's gaze as their role has moved from the guardians and guides of young peoples potential to child minders under vast pressure as well as encouragers and imaginative online educators. The disparities of experience between a resident in a small upper flat and someone living in a large house with a substantial garden, between young upwardly mobile professionals with good IT skills and frail older people who are marooned with only a landline are painfully exposed. But communities have pulled together to meet needs. Nevertheless, it seems that many businesses, despite government grants and loans, will struggle in the future. Newspapers and printed media are one group who may suffer.

In the pages that follow, questions are raised about the need for a journal such as this when social media may allow a more immediate support – and perhaps Zoom could provide an accessible forum for theological debate. Several other pieces address the impact of lockdown on ministers in secular employment, and ways in which support is offered to them and by them, as well as some of the gaps they perceive. The possible impact on the church in future is also touched on, as responses from church leaders to the pandemic seem (loosely speaking) split between an inward looking (sustaining worship) and an outwardly focused (sustaining community) approach. Elsewhere, the pandemic has been likened to the Exodus – Taking Christians out into a wilderness experience, separating them from their taken for granted assumptions and patterns, and forcing all of us to rethink what we are doing and why.



We also have some reflections on MSE in retirement, and a consideration among European worker priests about changing patterns of work (though again, in the wake of COVID-19, no one can yet be sure about future 'normality'), and an obituary, courtesy of the Church Times, for Revd Paul Nicolson whose energy and commitment to social justice put to shame many decades his junior. I hope that you will find something helpful, thought provoking or annoying (!) here, and that you will consider putting pen to paper or finger to keyboard either for this journal, certainly for our next edition which should be in July 2020, or for whatever alternative vehicle for debate emerges from the committee's further deliberations.

Pauline Pearson

The Reflective Weekend: The Fruits of the Spirit for Ministers in Secular Employment

21st – 23rd February 2020 at Shallowford House – based on participants' notes



MSE is a calling which integrates our faith and our activities in the 'secular' world in a unique way. But it also means that we are busy building the kingdom and being there for others alongside all our other responsibilities, which can be hard work! This weekend gave us the opportunity to consider what's good about our own ministry, what support we and other MSEs might need to become even more fruitful, and what our individual and collective priorities might be to enable us fully to enjoy the fruits of the Spirit.

What's good about MSE?

A variety of characteristics were identified as being good about Ministers in Secular Employment / Environments. These are listed below:

Visionary	Freedom
Messy	Out-there
Involved	Presence
Approachable	Liberation
Pathfinder	People
Evangel....	Opportunities
Intentionality	Engagement
Justice	Space
Impact	Groundedness
Normal	

What are our MSE needs?

Asked what MSEs might need, from their churches and from CHRISM, there was also a substantial list:

- Regional retreats – vocations – cover full range of possibilities
- Part of a group that 'gets it'
- Space to be honest – local groups – not more meetings

- Recognition – personal and official – being valued
- Place for MSE theology – CMD strand
- Generating community care – wherever
- MSE community
- Two-way communication for effective collaboration
- Affirmation, validation
- Love and trust
- Mutual support
- Finding the people who don't know they're MSE
- Buddying/mentoring/cell groups
- Recognition of time commitments
- Social media/survey
- Support in lonely situations
- Support and freedom to be prophetic

Priorities for CHRISM

The third exercise asked those present to look at priorities for the future (remembering that this was before COVID-19 really came into play, there are likely to be some shifts).

People were asked what should stop, what should be kept, and what else might be started.



A: From the group as a whole

Stop

- Relying only on the committee (membership lists, publicity, financial records, meeting planning)
- Prune committee agenda of things which keep appearing and are never done
- Two annual events
- One-day event (not residential) (I think this was actually a 'Start' as replacement for conference)
- Journal
- Trying to get into ministerial training events
- Chasing church leaders

- Talking about parish work

Keep

- Journal
- Reflective weekend
- Visits into workplaces (in conference, not reflective w/e)
- Facebook page and make more use of it (Emma):
- Regular updates
- Everyone to use it
- International links

Start

- Committee becomes executive, not management committee, with subgroups (e.g. for conference)
- Technology for admin (Office 365, SurveyMonkey)
- One three-day event (inc. one quiet day) – instead of two events each year
- Regular email feed (findable articles) – as replacement for Journal
- Make more use of membership
- Contact members individually
- Establish network of local contacts
- Local meetings
- Buddies – 1 to 1 contacts – with GDPR consent
- Small cell/support groups
- Social media group – decide which media
- Use younger ‘experts’
- Website, Twitter (Catherine)
- Theology resources generated from conference

- Theology discussion group (Marianne)

B: From individual worksheets

Note: not everyone had suggestions in all sections, and some people had several in each!

Stop

- Two annual events
- One meeting a year (leaving one)
- Summer conference for 2 years (perhaps one-day conference in midlands every other year)
- Doing things on your own/relying on committee to deliver
- Doing everything by hand/stop the structural load (see 'Start') x2
- Keeping agenda items going for many committee meetings
- Vocations and ministerial training events
- Journal – find less work-intensive and maybe cheaper way to produce info to members (see 'Start')
- Put library on hold
- Chasing after church leaders (e.g. bishops) and institutions that do not respond x3
- Organisational focus (*I think this means 'on church organisations'*)
- Talking about parish work
- Wasting time

Keep

- Two meetings per year
- Reflective weekends – two per year, to support members (no conference)
- Reflective weekend x5
- Annual conference x4

- Delegate work to small groups to free up committee meetings
- Vocations
- Journal x7
- Following up and supporting new contacts x3
- Networking
- Develop theological position in relation to MSEs – develop depth and recognition at higher levels in the schools and institutions
- **Social media /internet presence**
- **Training resources**
- International links
- Improve and update institutional contacts
- Banging the MSE drum



Start

- Combine 2 events into one – extra 24 hours' retreat before the conference
- Use freed-up committee time to concentrate on engaging with members
- Use deadlines and keep people to them
- Make wider use of membership

- Organise by a flowchart methodology which could also be used online to direct people to the information they need instead of having a human being doing it
- Convert everything to an online or electronic format; stay current with payment methods and social media outreach communications x2
- Subgroup of website-literate people to produce weekly/monthly information (instead of Journal)
- Force members receiving print media to convert to digital formats
- Establish local/regional groups as basis for mutual support, mentoring/buddying, finding MSEs in area x5
- Local groups to contribute an element to CHRISM work
- Cell groups – organiser plus voluntary attendance
- Buddying x6
- Theological think-tank
- Social media group
- Twitter
- ‘Employ’ a child or grandchild to get social media up and running
- WhatsApp group or expanded website or blog
- Members’ page on website
- Resources for MSE (theological reflections, case studies) distributed electronically
- Training modules
- Shift from concern about membership numbers and focus on provision of service, fiscal accountability, opportunity, network and relationships
- Meet MinDiv at Church House and bishop at Lambeth to get MSE bishop appointed and realise that MSE is an important part of the ministry of the church



Health and Social Care MSEs speak about the journey with COVID-19

Every Thursday evening people applaud keyworker heroes – especially those working in NHS and social care. This week on Tuesday, we also took a minute in the day to remember all those who have sadly died. COVID-19 and the pandemic are impacting on people working in health and social care in many ways – including on many ministers in secular employment. Some of them reflect on the strength of their colleagues, and the ways in which support is offered to them and by them.

Adrian is an ordinand working in a general practice in Wales, and is the lead clinician for COVID19. He says that his experience of this pandemic and faith is that ‘It has tested me in the way I respond to those around me and to policy. I have been dealing with all the practical things about how we are responding to the disease, running the service and staffing, and as part of various groups that are planning and delivering care.’ However, he goes on to say that ‘the spiritual support for

patients and staff is seemingly non-existent outside of what I am doing. Yes, normal parish priests and pastors of other churches are continuing to do their work. But there is nothing from the "official " channels of the chaplaincy or the Church itself. In all the planning locally I am the one mentioning spiritual provision. But I am not the only Christian or person of faith in the planning groups. There is nothing from the centre that I have found. The health authorities are focused on the physical. Mental, social and spiritual are not really on the radar! So, my experience feels like a bit of a wilderness one: pastoral support where I come across the need. Prayer and worry about staff, patients, the service. Bringing up spiritual provision in my professional groups for the services that are constantly being designed and tweaked in response to a never before seen set of circumstances.'

Peter, a Consultant Physician in the north and an Assistant Curate says he is completely overawed by the way colleagues both medical and nursing have risen to the challenge. The vast majority seem to be completely "up for it" saying that this is one of the things they trained for and seem keen to exercise their calling. He has been surprised that even on wards where seven people a day were dying, staff do not feel particularly deflated and seem to gain strength from one another. However, he fears that there might be a real deflation as the crisis settles and all this mutual support dissipates. Bryony also combines work in hospital, but as a pharmacist, with a role as Assistant Curate. She says that she feels it's particularly important to discern "what does serving God look like" at present, in terms of balancing the needs of her parish, the needs of her NHS role, plus home schooling children and looking after family as is the case for so many. She goes on: 'At a time when things have slowed down a bit for some people, I

feel as though I am busier than I have ever been, and am focusing on remaining mindful of the need to take time out with God to process what is going on, remain rooted in loving and serving God, and to remember that I can't take care of anyone else if I don't take care of myself too. When I am in my NHS role I feel that the most important thing I can offer to others is just listening. And I am also finding that my faith and trust in God is proving so important in giving me strength when I need it.'

Thank you to all three members for sharing their experiences and reflections in this intense period of time...

Being MSE in lock down - Rob Fox

Strange times, and what the coming weeks and months hold are far from clear. I suspect that by the end of the year we'll have a clearer idea of what being and doing MSE means in the midst of a crisis, but indulge me while I venture some thoughts at this early stage. I am indebted to the many folk who have emailed me and commented on the Facebook page (Ministers at Work, if you don't know already).

Firstly, how we are MSE at the moment is as varied as being MSE has always been; there are as many different expressions as there are MSEs. Our circumstances, though we may have aspects in common with other MSEs, are unique to us. Secondly, just as MSEs have always shared with the day-to-day experiences of those whom we work with and among, so we are sharing these now. Some of us are self-employed and have seen work dry up almost overnight. For those without reserves or savings to fall back on in the short term, and with what support might come from Government unclear, there is real insecurity and reason for anxiety, especially where

physical presence is essential. (I'm minded of a photographer I know, for example). I have been impressed with the speed and ingenuity with which many of the self-employed have found alternative means of delivering their service – through webinars, online tuition, and virtual concerts (watching 3 / 4 musicians perform flawlessly as they play together from different locations makes one appreciate their skills all the more!) The creativity I've consistently found among MSEs is certainly blooming.

It has also been an interesting experience being classed as a 'key worker'. For those very much on the front line, such as in the NHS or social care, this is not surprising, but let us not forget the bus / train / tube drivers (and the engineers behind them) who keep essential transport running, logistics workers who keep food supply chains flowing, shop staff for keeping



the shelves stocked, and refuse collectors for the upkeep of

public help. In my case? Well, someone has to keep tax revenues coming in to help pay for the financial support made available by Government. Specifically, advising businesses changing over to producing alcohol-based cleanser, or importing it from elsewhere, which would normally require notice and lengthy authorisation.

I think the key point for me is that we share in what happens to our work colleagues. If our place of work has shut down as non-essential, if we have been told to work at home, if we are unsure for how much longer we'll be paid, if we are asked to carry on working under high pressure, we stand (2 metres apart, or virtually) beside our colleagues, offering an ear to hear, an eye to see, and a shared experience to empathise with. And as we always have done, seeing, and encourage others to see, signs of the Kingdom of God in the midst of the mess.

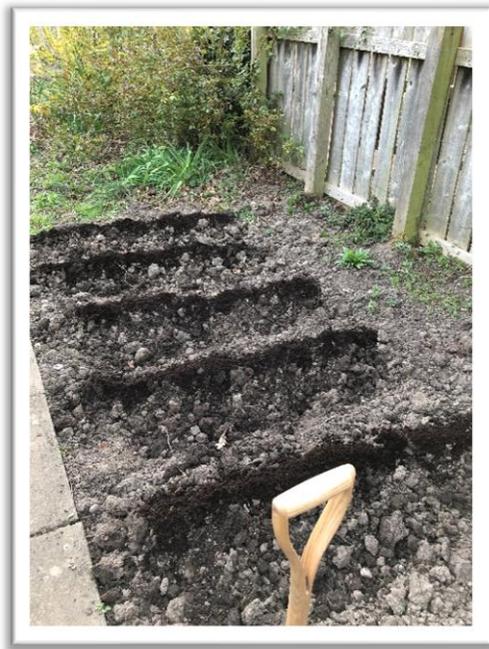
Can you be MSE... Without the SE ?? – Ruth Brothwell

I am the voice on the CHRISM committee who is often heard talking about 'retirement'. That is...are we going to convene the group to talk about it? To explore it theologically? To meditate on what it means to the MSE? To consider each other's experiences and how we can feel our call and vocation to be valid as an MSE is we don't have any SE??

It is easy of course for a middle-class woman living in green and leafy Surrey in a reasonable 3 bed detached with pension income to ruminate on such things. Different if you are living hand to mouth and wondering where the rent money might

come from? But nevertheless...God has called and presumably has a message for those of us who are fretting about not actually being on the frontline and what is it we can DO then....??

Yet this 'lockdown' has provided a time to think about this differently. The whole country – indeed the world – has just had to stop. To stop and just 'be'. To stop and think. To stop and regain a perspective on what the priorities really are. I have been reading – as many of course will have been – some reflections for Lent. One of them has been using Genesis this week. Considering the beauty of the first creation and the wonders of God's intention for it.



I have been gardening!! Well, you do. Actually, according to Genesis I think we are supposed to. Those of us who can of course. The garden provides lots of time to 'be' but also lots of time to wonder. Lots of thinking time and considering time. Of theologically reflecting time...and the results are maybe not what our most learned teachers would have hoped for!!

Certainly, my thoughts have wandered to the hopelessness of it all for the many people who are not like me.

An article I read about how to survive the lockdown mentioned things like 'not letting yourselves go', washing your hair and putting on clothes each day as many were tempted to work from home in their pyjamas. I bet it's hard when you're of a certain age and living alone and dependant on the kindness of strangers.

I have been reading Bishop Richard Holloway. He says that the 'sudden inexplicable kindness of strangers is the best thing in the universe, and it is uniquely human. It is a break in the order of nature that tells us, with cold ruthlessness, that in times of terror and calamity each of us is bound to save ourselves and leave the world's wounded to perish. Yet, throughout our history there have always been those who have made these defiant challenges against the pitiless order of things...'

And so, we have seen society react to need. Strangers delivering parcels of food to strangers. People caring. Not leaving the world's wounded to perish. What will we become? After all this, what will our world look like? What will the new 'normal' actually be? Who am I? What is church? What is an MSE? God knows! Answers on a postcard please.....I think I'll go back to the garden.....

Worker Priests in Work (POAP) - Phil Aspinall

Within the movement of the Worker Priests in France there is a new group of younger Worker Priests who are in paid work, known as the POAP (Prêtres Ouvriers en Activité Professionnel). The majority of the older PO are now retired, although still very much engaged in the world of workers, through trades unions, social projects, community organisations and others. But this new group was established to return the focus to the world of work, and the changing conditions and pressures which it presents. (I could see parallels here with the purpose of CHRISM and our mission statement).

This was my first opportunity to attend, as we intentionally convened the planning group for the international conference over the same weekend in February in Paris. The meeting began with lunch on Saturday and ended with lunch on Sunday. I focus on the meals because they were excellent, provided by one of the PO who is, by profession, a chef.

It was a little disappointing that there only 7 French PO attended (out of an expected total of 19), but it was still good to understand and enter into the dynamic of their group. We international delegates, including lay women, were made very welcome. The initial sharing round the group threw up many interesting and challenging work situations: redundancies due to out-sourcing, dismissal following industrial injury. But I was also interested to discover one PO who is the director of a medical/social institute, managing some 240 people – so rather more like some of us !

The main theme was the paper: “Shaping the Future of Work” produced by COMECE (Commission of the Bishops’ Conference of the European Union) in consultation with many faith and work organisations. We were given a summary by the Auxiliary Bishop of Lille, who had chaired the working party which had produced it, and happened to be in Paris for another meeting. The paper is available at:

http://www.comece.eu/dl/OtmNJKJKKIKOJqx4KJK/Future_of_Work_Report_EN_2P.pdf

“Shaping the digital as well as the ecological transformation of our economy will be a common challenge for European politics. Both trends will transform the world of work, changing our understanding as well as the labour conditions in Europe, and will require the political will and the vision to shape the world of work”. The report aims to encourage a common European vision to ensure that everybody, and society as a whole, will benefit from these changes.



The report reflects on work as an integral part of human identity and then moves on to analyse the challenges which undermine the potential of work for the common good. COMECE then propose ways to shape these trends towards a world of work which is decent, sustainable, participative and inclusive of all. They conclude with 17 policy recommendations, grouped under these four headings, touching on topics such as working conditions, working hours, stable and secure employment, life-long learning, representation in a separated workforce, programmes to curb long-term unemployment etc.

I would be happy to provide a fuller summary of all the subjects raised but, in the meantime, would refer you to the report. In our discussions which followed the Bishop's introduction there appeared a general feeling that the ideas in the report were great - but a real concern about how would it be made real!

However, I am writing this at the end of March at the height (?ed) of the Covid pandemic. We have heard commentators expressing the hope that people, enterprises and organisations will have learnt from the experience and saying that when things return to "normal" it will be a new normal – perhaps this could be the opportunity to really transform the future of work.

Before our Saturday dinner (yes, another meal), the Bishop led our Candlemas Eucharist, around the table where we were working. A meal in France, of course, is not to be rushed and so occupied the rest of the evening.

The final session was billed as an analysis of the paper to consider how this related to the “Intuition PO” and the presence of Christ, but became more of a reflection on the contrast between the structure of the church and the demand to follow the Gospel. Marcel Annequin, a theologian supporter of the PO, developed the themes from his article “New Horizon” in the October 2019 edition of Courrier PO. (I shall try to arrange a translation of this piece.) He asserted, among other provocative thoughts, that the call of a Worker Priest is not to a ministry of religion, but a call to Christian life outside religion. I found myself wondering: is he speaking of a new reformation?

But again I find some resonances with the implications of the Covid pandemic. Many believers have had to discover new ways of being church and have spent more time engaging (from a distance !) with their immediate neighbours and support networks than with church business. Perhaps (at risk of repetition) we can hope that people and institutions will have learnt from the experience and that when things return to “normal” it will be a new normal – perhaps this could be the opportunity to really transform the future of the church.



Obituary: The Revd Paul Nicolson

First Published in CHURCH TIMES 27 MARCH 2020



Geoff Crawford/Church Times

Canon Nicholas Sagovsky writes:

IT IS just over a month since the Revd Paul Nicolson, who died suddenly on 5 March, was pictured on the front cover of the Church Times (21 February). Aged 87, he sat on the pavement outside Church House during the meeting of the General Synod, with a paper cup and a cardboard sign that read, “With and for street and family homeless”.

Paul was an irrepressible, lifelong campaigner, who, after a colourful early adulthood, dedicated his abundant energy to working on the side of the angels. A faithful priest, a man of simple, unclouded faith, he was a life-enhancing friend to an extraordinary range of people, and a clear-sighted prophet to

anyone who would — or would not — listen. He knew he could be difficult to live with, but how we shall miss him! Sitting outside was typical of Paul. He had no interest in ecclesiasticism, but when he needed to get the Synod behind some new initiative on behalf of the poorest, he was a past master at working the system. He believed that the gospel requires us to focus on the most needy. “If you take that literally, that’s what inspired everything I tried to do.”

Paul’s confidence in confronting power and authority came from his privileged upbringing. After school, he went to America rather than university, and then did his National Service in the Royal Green Jackets; he made a lifelong circle of friends among the rich and the powerful.

After the army, he followed his father into the family firm, selling Veuve Clicquot champagne around the best restaurants, hotels, and clubs in London. His 12 years as a champagne salesman left him with a store of sparkling anecdotes, on which he drew liberally to lighten painful conversations about social injustice.

In later years, the question of ordination became more pressing. Newly married to Robina, and with a growing family, he applied to Cuddesdon College, where Robert Runcie was principal. Cuddesdon trained parish clergy only, but Paul had read about French worker-priests and wanted to be like them — outside the parish system, self-supporting, working in industry, an MSE (minister in secular employment).

Runcie read his man well: “Let’s explore the unknown,” he said, before two bishops refused ordination. Runcie then approached Harry Carpenter, Bishop of Oxford: “I told Harry

that Paul is scarred with episcopal incomprehension.” In 1967, Paul was ordained deacon by Harry Oxon:, and, in 1968, priest in the study of Robert Runcie, who was by then Bishop of St Albans.

For 14 years, Paul worked in the personnel department of ICI. High numbers of redundancies got him interested in employment law — and in what was really going on. In 1971, having himself been made redundant (and wondering whether the real problem was that his face and his views didn’t fit), he took ICI to an industrial tribunal, which he lost. He responded by forming the Confederation of Employee Organisations in support of those who, by the “closed-shop” legislation of the time, could lose their job because they belonged to the “wrong” trade union.

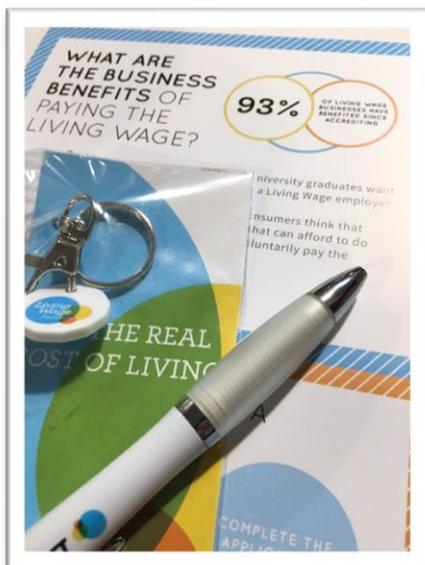
Ten years later, with the support of Robert Runcie, he became Vicar of Turville, in the Hambleden Valley, famous as the location for The Vicar of Dibley. Paul was surrounded by extremes of wealth and poverty. For 16 years, he made it his priority to support the poorest.

In 1989, Mrs Thatcher introduced the poll tax. Non-payers were imprisoned not because they wouldn’t pay, but because they couldn’t pay. Paul went to court with them to prove that this was the problem and to show magistrates that they could remit the debt. He worked with lawyers who won case after case.

A sharp barrister unearthed the practice of being a McKenzie Friend: there was precedent for a lay person being permitted to stand by a person brought to court without legal representation. Paul was one of the first to apply this to cases of

debt. With the draconian cuts to legal aid in 2013, McKenzie Friending has now become standard practice throughout the court system. Paul also laid bare the lack of regulation of debt enforcement by bailiffs, and, as a result, there is now a Code of Practice which provides greater protection for the vulnerable. Paul asked questions about why people did not have enough to meet their needs. He uncovered the fact that benefit levels had never been set using any measure of need. So he commissioned work on minimum income standards from the Family Budget Unit to establish the actual cost of a “low-cost but adequate” standard of living.

From this came the scientifically based UK Living Wage and the London Living Wage (LLW), both now set by the Living Wage Foundation. The LLW (currently £10.75 an hour) has transformed the lives of countless low-paid workers. The



fundamental insight — that people should measurably have enough for healthy living — was Paul's.

Paul focused on the need for housing. Once more, he worked with experts to identify why so many people cannot afford proper housing in London. As a local resident, he was a fierce critic of housing policy in Haringey. Driven by the profit to be made from redevelopment around the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, the Council evicted many of its most vulnerable tenants, often rehousing them outside London. Paul fought the Council all the way.

When he died, he was heavily involved with the drafting of the Elimination of Homelessness Bill, which — if it ever becomes law — will compel councils to count the homeless in their borough, and make an inventory of unused property and land. The Secretary of State will then be forced to use the resources identified to provide truly affordable housing for the homeless (Letters, 13 December 2019). What a memorial that would be!

It is hard to imagine anyone who knew more about the workings of the benefit system than Paul, or who wrote more Letters to the Editor exposing its failings. With this wealth of knowledge behind him, he founded Zacchaeus 2000 (Z2K), a charity that uses casework to prevent homelessness and to help people to access the benefits that they are entitled to. As a high-profile campaigner, Paul thought his activities might imperil the charitable status of Z2K; so he resigned as chair and set up Taxpayers Against Poverty, which was not a charity and gave him greater freedom to sound the tocsin against the effects on the poorest of the government's programme of "austerity".

No sketch of Paul's life should omit the part played in it by prayer. In the late 1980s, a small group met in St Faith's Chapel, in Westminster Abbey, to pray for peace. For most of an hour we sat in silence, but from time to time we said one of the prayers for peace which he had written for Turville. Here is one, addressing Jesus as "brother", because, in Paul's words, "Jesus is a brother to men and women and to Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, other faiths, and many to whom any kind of faith is difficult": "Jesus our brother, lead us out of illusion, out of injustice, out of oppression, out of suffering, out of poverty, out of darkness into the light, the light of hope, of peace, of love, of understanding, into the wonder, into the mystery. Amen."

This prayer will be said at his funeral on Monday. Sadly, in the present circumstances, only a few close members of the family will be there. Later in the year, God willing, there will be a great gathering to celebrate Paul's extraordinary life, through which the lives of so many others have been changed for the better.

On the day that he died, he was planning to sit with his cup "in solidarity with the poor" outside Downing Street. Few priests can have left a more challenging legacy.

The Revd Paul Roderick Nicolson is survived by his children, Krissie, Claire, Tom, Hugo and Rod, and nine grandchildren. *Reproduced with kind permission from the Editor of Church Times - www.churchtimes.co.uk – subscriptions available by email: subs@churchtimes.co.uk*

Forthcoming Events

CANCELLED the 2020 Annual conference at Mirfield: 17th – 19th July 2020

Due to Government restrictions and high levels of uncertainty about the future possibilities our summer conference has been cancelled though we hope to come back North soon..

BUT Next February 12-14th 2021

The Reflective Weekend will take place at the Kairos Centre and will be led by Gill Frigerio to reflect on Career, calling & vocation. Gill is a Principal Teaching Fellow in the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Warwick, where she is Co-Director of the MA in Career Development and Coaching Studies. She has a scholarly interest in women's career development and how it intersects with issues of faith and calling. More details next time!



And – our AGM

Will be finalised following the next committee meeting in June, to take place either at a day conference to be arranged in the Autumn when we have slightly more clarity about restrictions on public gathering going forward, or by Zoom at a time to be advised. We will advertise either as widely as possible.

And Finally.....



The Dragons

They breathe over us

Unmasked fire

Invading space

As we strive

To live,

Normally.

To be ourselves.

They build walls
around us,
Set arrows in our path,
To split
And separate
Connections.

Leave one outside, tethered
Whilst one hunts,
Fruitlessly,
For flour
And eggs.

They hide in plain sight
And use
What they have
To make more
While those who have none
Lose even that.

Meanwhile men and women
In gowns (where they have them)
Goggles,
Masks and gloves
Go on working,
Caring
Loving



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

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 the Journal Editor.

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