

# Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in  
secular ministry

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

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*Copy deadline for next edition: 4 July.*

*(The views expressed in the various articles in this Journal are those of the writer, unless stated otherwise).*

## *Editorial*

Two bishops in one edition! Is this a first? Included here is the third part of the article by Christopher Mayfield, Bishop of Manchester. The series shows the touch of someone who understands what MSE is about, having been involved since his days in Luton many years ago, and who clearly reads "Ministers-at-Work"! Regrettably, Christopher retires later this year; we hope his successor will be as well informed as he.

The second Episcopal item is the text of an address given by William Persell, Bishop of Chicago, to a recent meeting of Episcopalian MSEs (Tentmakers). It is well worth including here for (at least) three reasons. Firstly, it is a good piece! Secondly, it shows how the concerns of a church across the pond are very similar to those in the U.K.: first and foremost with the survival of the local church. Then it also shows how there is a growing realisation there too that these unpaid, ill-disciplined and novel (remember – we have to be around for several centuries to lose that tag) specimens might actually be useful as something other than Sunday service fodder. (I re-read Dorrie Johnson's contribution – page 38 - with even more amusement after this item came in).

MSEs know we have something to say about Christian ministry to the churches, to others in authorised ministry, to all our brothers and sisters in Christ and to the world we live in. It's getting that message across that is the long, hard part.

As well as speaking we do need to listen though. Without rooted-ness in a Christian community our part in the ministry of the church is seriously diminished. That community may not be a conventional local church, though for most of us, most of the time, it will be. MSEs do represent the local and organisational church that has authorised (ordained, whether capital O or not) them. That church therefore has a reason-

able expectation that the way we represent them will be in accord with the way it wants it done. For an Ordained minister, it is not unreasonable for the church that selected, trained and authorised us to ask us to carry out certain roles and duties in a local church. Those roles and duties are not though the whole of the ministry in which we share, which is the part that is so hard to get across to others.

Included in this edition is a job description. This one is from the Diocese of Newcastle but is a representative example of the kind of framework document I've been receiving. There is also a commentary, highlighting some of the strengths and weaknesses. Do read this item and let me know your thoughts and suggestions. CHRISM would like to assemble as much in the way of job description best practice as possible and we can't do that without your help!

"All this is too Anglican and too Ordained" I hear you say. I quite agree. Yes, there is a review of a book by a Salvationist, but it is high time there were more contributions from MSEs of other backgrounds, traditions and churches - so come on you Methodists, URCs, Lutherans, Orthodox, Baptists, Catholics, .....

A recent – and very pleasant – meeting with Michael Ranken, first Editor of the "Newsletter" as it was 20 years ago, reminded me that this esteemed Journal started life as a means of exchanging ideas, experiences and thoughts among the scattered but growing band of MSEs. And so it should be! This is *your* Journal – and the next edition is our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday issue! It is for you to contribute to, ask for support through and share the joys, pains and pleasures of being an MSE. Lets have those stories, insights and reflections (theological or just plain poignant)!

*Rob*

## ***HOW IS IT FOR YOU ?***

Share and find out at CHRISM's 2002 Conference

**Luther King House, Manchester  
Friday evening 19 July – Sunday lunchtime 21  
July**

*Booking form enclosed with this edition of the Journal*

In keeping with our priority to make events accessible to as many people as possible, CHRISM is holding this year's annual conference in a central northern location. Luther King House is just 2 miles south of Manchester city centre, and is able to offer secure parking in its own grounds, with single accommodation, a library, chapel and meeting rooms.

As ever, the conference will aim to provide MSEs with opportunities to

- share experiences from the workplace
- engage theologically
- take part in local visits
- meet other MSEs
- worship together
- enjoy some social time
- find out more about CHRISM and contribute to its development

**During the past 12 months CHRISM members have been considering the nature of language in the workplace. The words we use can be the key to valuing human experience and to establishing our identity as MSEs.**

*What happens when we take away the vocabulary of the church in order to speak the language of the workplace ?*

**The July conference will focus on**

- **how we do/don't use 'God-language' in the workplace**
- **our own parables - 'The Kingdom of Work is like.....'**
- **how and when we communicate who we are**

In the January edition of the Journal Dorrie Johnson wrote: "How can we recognise the working out of confession and repentance, of mission, of resurrection, of eschatology perhaps, or prophecy, or revelation – in our working lives and describe it using not church words but ordinary every day language? We have to look for examples, but they are there before us all the time. We have to train ourselves to recognise them in a language which is that used in our working environment. Only then, I think, will we be able to help other people to recognise their experiences in their work, at work, as of God."

**We hope that you will want to share in our continuing debate about language and the workplace, by bringing your own experience and opinions to the conference.**

In order to reserve a place, could you please complete and return the enclosed form as soon as possible. If you would like more information, especially if you haven't previously attended a CHRISM event, please contact **Phil Aspinall**. Contact details of all CHRISM committee members, including Phil, are given on the inside of the back cover of this edition of the Journal.

## **To Act**

*How do we relate the redeeming nature of God's rule to the range of actions open to us within the workplace?*

*(This is the third part of the article by Christopher Mayfield, Bishop of Manchester, entitled 'To See, To Judge, To Act', examining Ministry in Secular Employment. It was delivered as a talk to a gathering of MSEs, NSMs and OLMs in Manchester Diocese, September 2001).*

The priest is a representative figure. In experiencing the sensations of feeling trapped, compromised, or wounded by the sin of the world, we are sharing in the same process of incarnation that God risked in Jesus Christ - giving up the security of heaven for the compromise of living within a fallen creation. We experience solidarity with the victims. We are motivated by a hope that promises some of liberation or resolution.

What makes this priestly is that our role is a focal one - representing the concern of God and God's people for the whole world, interceding for the world we know, helping the world perceive its own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the light of Christ's teaching and life.

For some, this is a pastoral role - perhaps our role within the workplace is to help others to handle the bereavement of moving jobs, or offices, or retirement.

For some, this is a prophetic role. This may not be the dramatic whistle-blowing that hits the headlines. It may reside in quiet, patient negotiation, interpretation and mediation. The Ridley Hall Foundation in Cambridge sponsors a project known as Faith in Business. A seminar held in March 1998

on Establishing Trust in the Construction Industry made real progress in encouraging partnerships between all the different parties that often falls into acrimonious debate during a building project: clients, main contractors, specialist contractors, engineers, architects and surveyors.

For some, there is a role of intercessory prayer. Richard Syms, the professional actor and priest, writes movingly about life within the theatre, where there is no community as such: simply a ministry to be exercised 'among' whichever cast and team to which he belongs for a particular production. He says, "I keep a prayer list, inevitably a somewhat arbitrary one, of people I've worked with, and colleagues who have died. It's the nearest thing to a system that I have. If it starts to feel empty, I tell myself that I might be the only person praying for that person, and so possibly a deeply priestly function.

Some will seek opportunities for evangelism. They will see some dilemmas within the workplace as appropriate opportunities to witness to their faith with sensitivity - and as a result in some professions they can discover that far more people than they realise work alongside them motivated by Christian or other faith-based outlooks. This might be the case in the health-care profession, for example.

Within each workplace there is the critical need to see which creative activity within it reflects the character of God the creator, to judge which activity obscures it, and to act in such a way that the rule of God is sought.

These "kingdom moments", or "kingdom challenges", present themselves in a variety of ways. There will be a variety of responses according to the nature of each situation. But I wonder which you find the most attractive.

a. To challenge directly.

Maybe we see a form of institutional hypocrisy in the place where we work, and the only way it can change is for us to help challenge it directly. An example might be in the realm of education, where students are invited to apply for courses unsuitable for their needs but which keep a college's funding secure. We might be unhappy that our company delays paying its bills yet puts the screws on its own customers when they can't cough up straight away. We stand up for patients who can't always make their hospital appointments, yet are in need of medical attention and understanding, rather than a peevish and irritable welcome from the receptionist.

The advantage of a direct challenge is that clear communication can deliver clear results. The disadvantage is that we have to be secure in our role unless we are ready to take a deliberate risk with the safety of our job. Our free speaking might cost us the promotion our abilities deserve, and we might have a responsibility to provide for our family as well.

Some employees may experience an overwhelming sense of powerlessness or despair if they discover that the people to whom they would appeal over suspicions of corruption in others are themselves corrupt as well.

Yet, where a trust has been betrayed, or discipline has been broken, a clear challenge can promote good teamwork and a better outcome for many, including those who benefit from the product or service a workplace provides. This is a "kingdom" issue.

**b. To resign**

The advantage of this course of action is that it gives the clearest possible indication of our moral position. The disadvantage is that we can no longer influence events within our workplace - and the crisis within it continues. There are some situations where our integrity is compromised so badly if we stay that we feel we have no alternative but to seek alterna-

tive employment. It reminds us that we are, in the end, capable of defining our own goals in work, and are challenged to keep them.

But, if we are tempted to resign, I wonder how we react to those who see that approach as a little like Jesus coming down from the cross. Listen to this from Peterborough Diocese' Faith and Work programme: "The point of being where you are is to affirm what is good and resist what is not, even if your ability to resist is very limited. Christ is also limited by the misuse of human freewill and by the corruption which infects everything in society to some degree or another. As Jesus said, it's not the whole who need a physician but the sick. If you feel your situation is pretty sick making then maybe you are well placed in it. You aren't necessarily going to make the world a better place by looking for somewhere more pleasant and rewarding. It would be like a doctor preferring to work with people who don't trouble him with unpleasant conditions. The best doctors are most effective at the point of greatest need."

### **c. To accept, but actively to question.**

It's important to win the trust of those around us, otherwise we can't achieve very little. This means accepting the limitations of our role and of the realities the workplace has to address. But this does not mean that we accept them at face value. We can prompt our colleagues to think through the consequences of their actions.

As a Journalist we understand the concept of deadlines. We meet them, but does that mean that at 10.45 we have to place hurried pressure on a bereaved relative to speak about a tragic death in time for the 11.00 bulletin?

There are wider questions that can be sown in our colleagues' minds to identify the broader context in which we work. For example, to ask what it is that drives many to

work over-long hours and to expect others to do the same. It is too simple to put it down to greed. It is to do with our expectations, our family demands, maybe our sense of self-worth.

**d. To acknowledge our vulnerability.**

There is a fourth way of engagement. As a priest, and as a person in secular employment, we can make the same mistakes, or errors of judgment, or take decisions the consequences of which weigh heavily upon us for a long time, as would any member of the workplace where we are based. Henri Nouwen's image of Christ as the Wounded Healer is important here. Often, through shared vulnerability, the shared admission of weakness, profound Christian ministry – and even healing – can take place. To work for redemption requires first an admission of need. That applies to us all, wherever we may be. To acknowledge vulnerability, in the appropriate context, can liberate.

You will have examples of these and similar issues. Which model do you identify with most? Do you walk into a situation? Walk away from it? Walk cautiously around it, looking for an opportunity to intervene? Or get hurt by it, being alongside others who are hurt?

These questions, of course, are not unique to the workplace, though they are in very sharp focus there. You have insights that those in stipendiary ministry, and within the worshipping community, need to hear.

A very important and influential article about this whole process was written as long ago as 1973. It can be found in the book *"Tentmaking"*, a collection of key theological reflections upon self-supporting ministry, edited by James and Leslie Francis. The article, written by Kenneth Mason, is entitled *"Can a priest be part-time?"* He answers with an emphatic

“No!” The reasons he offers are fascinating. Here is part of what he says:

“What God calls, claims and means to use is not some part of the human potential but the whole, the concrete individual, the person.”

It is then that you can spot what some might call secular sacraments – signs of God’s work and grace within the world of work, leisure and daily living. These in turn point the church towards offering a more authentic witness to the coming Kingdom of God. These may be signs which demonstrate penitence, forgiveness and reconciliation; justice for the poor; healing for those who grieve; freedom for those whose humanity is diminished, oppressed, incarcerated. The manifesto, in fact, of the Year of Jubilee which Jesus used to describe his mission, a mission to be expressed within the world, not merely for the benefit of a select few.

*(Christopher is to retire as Bishop of Manchester in September this year. We wish he and Caroline well in the future).*

## ***Transforming Church***

... is a new bi-monthly Journal “for pastors and their people”. Edited by Edmund Flood, Kenneth Leech and Peter Worden, it is “about our faith as it can in fact transform us and, through us, some of the world around us.”

It is available in both printed (annual subscription £12) and internet (annual subscription £8, \$12 USA) formats, from *Transforming Church*, Ealing Abbey, London, W5 2DY, or [www.transformingchurch.org](http://www.transformingchurch.org).

**And God said,**

$$\frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r^2 D_r) + \frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (D_\theta \sin \theta) + \frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial D_\phi}{\partial \phi} = 4\pi \rho ,$$

$$\frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r^2 B_r) + \frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (B_\theta \sin \theta) + \frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial B_\phi}{\partial \phi} = 0 ;$$

$$\frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \left[ \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (E_\phi \sin \theta) - \frac{\partial E_\theta}{\partial \phi} \right] = - \frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial B_r}{\partial t} ,$$

$$\frac{1}{r} \left[ \frac{1}{\sin \theta} \frac{\partial E_\phi}{\partial \phi} - \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r E_\theta) \right] = - \frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial B_\theta}{\partial t} ,$$

$$\frac{1}{r} \left[ \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r E_\theta) - \frac{\partial E_r}{\partial \theta} \right] = - \frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial B_\phi}{\partial t} ;$$

$$\frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \left[ \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (H_\phi \sin \theta) - \frac{\partial H_\theta}{\partial \phi} \right] = 4\pi j_r + \frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial D_r}{\partial t} ,$$

$$\frac{1}{r} \left[ \frac{1}{\sin \theta} \frac{\partial H_\phi}{\partial \phi} - \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r H_\theta) \right] = 4\pi j_\theta + \frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial D_\theta}{\partial t} ,$$

$$\frac{1}{r} \left[ \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r H_\theta) - \frac{\partial H_r}{\partial \theta} \right] = 4\pi j_\phi + \frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial D_\phi}{\partial t} ,$$

**and there was light!**

*From the "Thoughts" board, 1984 Conference at Nottingham University; the first major British meeting of MSEs.*

*If you were there and would like to comment or reflect on how MSE has developed since, your contribution to the Journal is most welcome.*

## ***What's a "Tentmaker"?***

*Davis Fisher*

I am a tentmaker. The term "tentmaker" is one of many terms used to describe ordained clergy who are engaged in work other than full-time parish ministry. The term "tentmaker" comes from a Biblical reference in Acts 18:3, where we learn that St. Paul – a missionary, church founder, and Apostle to the Gentiles – supported himself by making tents.

### **So what is a tentmaker?**

Tentmakers represent another model for ordained ministry, complementing the parish model that is common in the church today. In the parish model, the local church employs an ordained person to function sacramentally in the church, to carry out ministry as pastor on a full-time basis to members of the congregation, and to tend to the business of the local church.

The tentmaker model involves an ordained person functioning sacramentally in the church but not serving the church on a full-time basis. The tentmaker may or may not be compensated financially by the church and typically has part-time or full-time work elsewhere. The tentmaker perceives ministry as taking place in both church and secular contexts.

### **What do tentmakers do?**

In addition to serving part-time in a local church, tentmakers do their "secular thing." They are engineers, piano tuners, house-husbands and house-wives, farmers, salespeople, lawyers, bankers, politicians, securities dealers, postal workers, elevator repairmen, and much more. Currently, 68 Episcopal clergy are also full-time physicians! Tentmakers -- as well as

full-time parish clergy -- see a ministry in all that they do.

### **What's my tent?**

That's another way of asking about my work outside the parish. I am a money consultant. I help individuals and groups examine the role that money plays in their lives by exploring the impact money has on their relationships, behavior, and decisions. I do this through corporate workshops, workshops for the non-profit and church communities, keynote speaking, writing, and consulting to individuals and families. How we relate to money was a major focus of Christ's teaching and is a core concern for Christianity. I feel deeply called to this ministry in the "secular" world.

### **Why do tentmakers need to be ordained?**

Clearly, not all Christians are "called" to ordination. Ordination relates to what a person is as well as what a person does. Those who are called to the ordained ministry are to "proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (from The Ordination of a Priest, BCP page 531) and to preside over sacramental functions (baptism, communion, matrimony, burial, etc.). In modern history, this ordained ministry has traditionally taken place in a full-time, parish setting.

The tentmaker, however, usually affiliates part-time with a parish and full-time with work in the secular world. Because the tentmaker is ordained – a fact usually known to those in the tent-maker's workplace – he or she has additional opportunity for ministry: the presence of the ordained tentmaker invites faith-based dialog in a neutral setting, especially with people who are not churchgoers. The tentmaker also represents a very visible model for the ministry of all Christians in this setting.

## What Does the Church Say About Tentmakers?

*"I see tentmakers needing to take on a real critical role in interpreting the church to the world and the world to the church. Tentmakers are uniquely situated to do that, considering their theological education and understanding and being in very different kinds of contexts from the parish church. I think tentmakers can remind the church that our current denominational and parish structures are not the only way to be the church. And tentmakers can really help us to be in mission in new ways to communities, to businesses, governments, social service agencies, and other critical structures in our society."*

The Rt. Rev. William D. Persell, Bishop of the Diocese of Chicago

*"I regard the contemporary development of a priesthood which combines a ministry of word and sacrament with employment in a secular profession not as a modern fad but as a recovery of something indubitably apostolic and primitive.... This is to say that what we call our tentmakers today belong most truly to the apostolic foundation, and we may learn from them of that inward meaning of priesthood which we share with Jesus Christ."*

The late Most Reverend Arthur Michael Ramsay, 100th Archbishop of Canterbury.

## What's a Tentmaker? (continued)

And back in the parish setting, the ordained tentmaker is often viewed as one who understands – through ongoing involvement in the secular setting – the challenges and pressures of the workaday world of parishioners and, therefore, brings additional insights and understanding to ministry with church members.

## Are there lots of tentmakers?

Lots more than you would think. Actually, the real number is not known, because the institutional church does not keep statistics for this category. (*Now there's a familiar story! – Ed.*) It is estimated that tentmakers comprise 15-20% of the 15,500 ordained Episcopal clergy.

## Why do we need tentmakers?

Some people feel we don't; others believe that tentmakers are critical to the current life and unfolding future of the institutional church. These feelings are reflected in the title of a recent national conference of Episcopal tentmakers -- "Tentmaking Ministry: Outer Fringe or Cutting Edge?".

Speaking at that conference, The Rt. Rev. William D. Persell, the Bishop of Chicago, said, "I think that tentmakers need to be a lot more visible than they are in the life of the church so that we gain more of an understanding of what this model for ministry is all about."

Ultimately, doesn't a person have to be ordained to really be in the ministry? Absolutely, NO! Sure, the Episcopal Church does require ordination for those individuals who are called to a ministry of word and sacrament. However, all baptized Christians are called to ministry, in whatever they do and wherever they are.

Ministry relates to how you lead your life, how you invest your time, the kind of work you do, the quality of your work, the compassion you show for others, and the moral and ethical life you strive to lead.

Ministry relates to intentionally leading a Christ-focused life. It's not about parish ministry or tentmaking ministry. It's about the full Christian ministry to which we all are called!

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## ***Remarks about Tentmaking Ministry*** ***The Rt. Rev. William D. Persell, Bishop of Chicago***

*(Davis Fisher was inspired to write the previous article for the annual meeting of NASSAM, the Tentmakers of the US Episcopal Church. At that meeting Bishop Persell gave the following keynote address. The sections in italic are my emphasis. Ed.)*

How do I see tentmaking ministry playing today? I'd say it's largely hidden and not understood by most people within the context of the church. *I think the church as a whole does not recognize ordained ministry that happens outside the context of the parish or possibly a chaplaincy.* Something that they can think, "Aha, this is the church's work". I think we have a long way to go to get real understanding of what so many of you are about and have been about for so many years. I think that when people pay attention to, or recognize, your ministry they do so within the context (unless you are specifically dealing with them where you work) that you are connected to a parish or a congregation. And that's where this "Aha, well, yeah... he really is a minister"; or "He really is a priest because I see him here on Sunday morning doing something at the altar." I think that is where we are.

I'd say right now in the present context that what we have to pay attention to - as we think of the future of tentmaking ministry - is the decline and end of Christendom. In some places it has obviously ended, and in other places it is obviously in decline. We see the breakdown of denominational loyalties where people easily shift from church to church.

Another side of that, however, is ecumenism and interfaith activity. That's part of our context - secularism, economic pressures on congregations, and the need for new ways of being the church. Things that you've heard about – “Total Minister”; and also structural issues, such as yoking of congregations and clustering. Many congregations in their context today cannot afford full-time, paid parish clergy and assistants.

We also have a changed frontier for mission, where we used to think that we had to go overseas to send missionaries. If we look around people from all those countries that we used to send missionaries to are right here and if we are going to be in a relationship with them, or spreading God's word, it's right here on our own doorstep.

Mainline congregations have become sidelines. Ordained ministry has really changed from high-status, low stress kind of work to the exact reverse of that. We're now low-status, high stress in most church positions - in our multi-cultural, post-denominational, post-Christendom, post-modern world.

I hope we'll be open to opening up a number of really new and exciting ways to be the church. I think this is where tentmakers will have much to contribute to that conversation and what that will look like. *I think tentmakers need to be a lot more visible than they are in the life of the church so that we can gain more of an understanding of what this is all about.*

*I see tentmakers needing to take on a real critical role in interpreting the church to the world and the world to the church. You are uniquely situated to do that, considering your theological education and understanding and being in very different contexts from the parish church. I think you can help the church adjust to the new realities that I just listed. You can remind the church that our current denomi-*

*national and parish structures are not the only way to be the church. And you can really help us to be in mission in new ways to communities, to businesses, governments, social service agencies, etc..*

*We need to foster respect for differences in all levels of the church's life so that this kind of ministry is not viewed as second -class. Some people, I think, look on tentmakers as having failed in some ways, as if they didn't quite make it in the congregation, so you are doing something else. Those attitudes are very much there.*

*We need to develop structures for more participation and interaction for tentmakers in the structures of the church as we make decision for the Church's life. And we need more accountability one to another - the church to the tentmakers and the tentmakers to the church.*

*What impact would the expansion of the tentmaking ministry have on seminaries in the shape of theological education? I think it would greatly enliven our seminaries with a variety of ministries and context for ministry that would force a lot of rethinking and questioning of assumptions within our seminaries. It would force seminaries to pay attention to the world of work, theology of work, economic justice issues, power issues in organizations and more.*

*How would the expansion of tentmaking ministry impact church government? We might need new canons, new laws. We would need to change meeting times in order to give tentmakers greater voice and standing in the councils of the church. Congregations might thrive that are now failing as clergy and laity share ministry.*

*It would allow some congregations to have ordained clergy who cannot under the current system.*

I think we might differ slightly in terms of “the gaps” between clergy and laity. I don't see the gap as all that bad; it's how we approach the gaps, I think, that is important that we recognize the ministry of the laity. This would further reduce the expectation that one priest or pastor or one altar is the normative thing for the life of the church. It would position the institutional church as a whole for new mission work and new forms of ministry in business and other settings. *It would strengthen the church by having theologically astute persons bringing the needs and strengths of the world into the common life of the church.*

## **Book Review**

*Rob Fox*

**“More than a job – creating a portfolio lifestyle”.**  
**Jani Ruberry. 2001, Spring Harvest Publishing and Paternoster, £5.99. 88 pages. ISBN 1-85078-430-2.**

I have long thought that some of the more ‘democratic’ churches might have something to say about work and ministry; I was not disappointed.

Jani Ruberry is a member of the Salvation Army and a management training consultant. She combines freelance consultancy, training with the SA Mission Team, and family life. In what is admittedly a slim volume she nevertheless sets out the principles involved in a portfolio lifestyle, how it can be managed and points to some agencies that can help.

The book is exactly what it says it is and is therefore about managing a pattern of life made up of a number of potentially competing elements, yet at the same time freeing up our potential as ministers in God's service in each part of the portfolio. In practice this is exactly what MSEs are called to do, hence its usefulness to us.

The sections are:

- § What and Why? (self-explanatory)
- § Myths, Truths and Challenges (gets straight to the point on separation of work and ministry – should be compulsory reading, especially on training courses!)
- § Discovering Vocation (recognising that work is a vocation setting and the right job for us is a vocation)
- § Creating a Portfolio Lifestyle (how to put the elements together)
- § Managing a Portfolio Lifestyle (managing the elements and getting the balance right)
- § Appendices with a number of useful tools.

There is a particularly good summary of the changing face of work in recent years early in the book. I was particularly taken with the following view of a contemporary employment contract:

“We can’t tell you how long we’ll be in business.

We can’t promise we won’t be bought by another company.

We can’t promise there will be room for promotion.

We can’t promise you a job until retirement.

We can’t promise there will be money for your pension.\*

We can’t expect your undying loyalty and we aren’t sure we want it – and we certainly can’t give you ours!”

(\*With raids on pension funds becoming more common, this certainly rings true!)

The strengths of this book are that it is practical, easy to follow, challenging, and places our employment – whatever it may be – firmly in the context of Christian ministry. Jani knows what she wants to say and communicates effectively. It is well worth the price!

## ***MSE Job Descriptions***

*A number of job descriptions were sent in as a result of the request in the July 2001 Journal. A good example of a framework designed to fit a range of circumstances is that produced by the Diocese of Newcastle. This has already proved useful to several enquirers and it is reproduced below with an introduction and notes. The suggested method here is to read through the "Working Agreement" on its own then to repeat with references to the notes. The latter are my own, and any comments and suggestions from fellow MSEs are most welcome.*

*Whilst this is an Anglican job description a number of features are clearly transferable to other churches. The agreement itself is in plain type; everything in italics is my material. The footnotes are cross-referenced to the relevant part of the Agreement.*

*Rob Fox*

### ***Introduction***

*Like all 'one size fits all' frameworks, this one has many features that are not specifically 'MSE'. How the Agreement is read and understood is as important to its usefulness in practice as the detail. If read prescriptively it can become a straitjacket, but if seen as a framework on which the necessary components can be assembled, this stands as a good foundation on which a Working Agreement can be constructed.*

*Two overall criticisms that might be made are that it is too*

*parish-focused and too clerical. I think there are two factors in particular at work here. Firstly, the Church of England (as are most churches) is organized on the basis of residential geography and thinks of ministry largely as located in local churches. Secondly, those who ordain to authorized ministry have an expectation – not unreasonably – that those whom they ordain will exercise ministry predominantly within this context. MSE does not sit comfortably within the prevailing concepts of ministry in any of the major denominations. Part of CHRISM's vision is to widen that of the churches!*

**Suggested Working Agreement** (which is intended to cover all forms of ministry other than stipendiary, after the serving of title)<sup>1</sup> between (1) a Minister other than Stipendiary (the Minister) and (2) the Minister's Incumbent (the incumbent) or where the Minister is also the Incumbent, between the Minister and the Bishop.

### **Preliminary Notes**

1) Copies of this agreement can be obtained from the NSM Officer at Bishop's House. It can be amended and supplemented as necessary to suit a wide variety of ministries.<sup>2</sup>

Many different types of ministry will be covered by this draft, and many different availabilities of time for ministry. Ministry occurs not only in church or recognizable ministerial surroundings, but in the whole of life.<sup>3</sup>

3) The agreement needs to be specific and realistic. To avoid later misunderstanding and difficulties, careful consideration should be given by both parties before the agreement is drawn up to all potential areas and implications of ministry. These will include:

§ The mutual and separate (and possibly conflicting) expectations of the parties. It can be helpful for both to list these at an early stage.

- § Perceived specific needs and interests of the Minister.
- § The expectations and needs of the Minister's spouse and family.
- § The hopes and needs of the parish.
- § The need for the wardens and PCC of the parish to be aware of the main features of the agreement, including recognition and affirmation of a work-focused ministry and any consequential limitations of time for parochial ministry (which the agreement should reflect).
- § The time the Minister has to offer, recognising that preparation for acts of worship and sermons can take a long time, and also that CME, Deanery, Diocesan and any voluntary commitments are taken account of.
- § The building in to the agreement of any relevant skills and experience of the Minister gained through their secular employment.
- § Provision if appropriate for support and review of ministry I the work place, and / or a mentor / work consultant with experience of ministering in a secular environment, and / or support group.
- § Any other matters relevant to the parties, the parish or the Ministers secular employment.<sup>4</sup>

4) When completed, a copy of the Agreement should be sent to the Bishop and to the NSM Officer.<sup>5</sup>

### **Working Agreement and Ministry Specification**

The Minister is the Revd. ....

The Incumbent is the Revd. ....

The Parish is .....

### **Focus and style of Ministry<sup>6</sup>**

The main centre of ministry will be parish / work / sector based at .....

(and the balance of time between work / sector and parish will be .....

### Particular areas of responsibility<sup>7</sup>

1) The Minister will officiate ..... Sundays per month at the following services:

.....

2) The Minister will preach ..... Sundays per month.

3) The Minister will be allocated Funerals, Weddings and Baptisms as follows:

.....

4) Pastoral responsibilities in the parish will be:

.....

5) The Minister will be expected to be involved in administrative responsibilities as follows:

.....

6) The Minister will be assigned the following particular areas of responsibility, and will be accountable for each of them to the person specified:

Area of responsibility	Accountable to
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

### Wider responsibilities

There will be recognition of time devoted to voluntary societies (e.g. CMS, Oxfam etc) and community involvement.<sup>8</sup>

### **Spiritual Development and ongoing training**

Appropriate time is to be allowed and set aside for private prayer, spiritual direction, study, retreats and courses. The parish and / or Incumbent will provide support for these by ..... (list as appropriate, including resources, financial support etc.)

### **Reimbursement<sup>9</sup>**

Expenses: All expenses relating to the work of the minister will be reimbursed by the agreement with the PCC on the following basis:

- § Travel
- § Stationery
- § Books
- § Postage
- § IT
- § Telephone
- § Other

### **Office facilities (if applicable)**

The parish will provide:

- § Office space
- § Copying
- § Filing
- § Chairs
- § Provision for refreshments
- § Other

### **Housing (if applicable)**

The parish will pay:

- § Water Rates
- § Council Tax
- § Other

### **Conditions of Agreement<sup>10</sup>**

1) The hours to be given by the Minister will average ..... hours per week, inclusive of preparation of sermons and worship, pastoral work, participation in occasional offices, PCC and evening meetings, Deanery and Diocesan meetings, CME and the time taken by matters listed under *Spiritual Development and Ongoing training*.

2) Holidays and time off:

- (a) Weekly days off
- (b) Sundays off duty
- (c) Amount of annual holiday
- (d) Other holiday allowances

### **Fees**

NSMs do not retain fees unless this has been particularly specified by the Bishop.

### **Provision for staff meetings<sup>11</sup>**

There will be a regular meeting between Incumbent and Minister on ..... to arrange duties and timetable.

### **Provision for renewal of Working Agreement<sup>12</sup>**

This Agreement will be reviewed by the parties on ..... and every ..... thereafter.

### **Roles of NSM Officer**

Any dispute or grievance arising from this agreement which the parties cannot resolve themselves is to be referred to the Bishop's Officer for NSMs.

**Date** .....

Signed by the Minister  
Signed by the Incumbent  
Signed by the Wardens  
Signed by the NSM Officer

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> *Though intended to cover all kinds of authorized ministry, presumably lay as well as ordained, the concept of serving a title in a parish is retained. This is not necessarily always appropriate, even for ordained ministers, and may not be so for ordained MSEs.*

<sup>2</sup> *This is arguably the most important clause in the Agreement. It is essential that "amended and supplemented as necessary" means just that. Read also to include "deleted".*

<sup>3</sup> *The second most important clause and easy to lose sight of in the detail of the Agreement. A weakness is that it envisages that ministry time can be identified and quantified, yet in the same breath we read that "Ministry occurs not only in church or recognizable ministerial surroundings, but in the whole of life."*

<sup>4</sup> *Again, very easy to lose sight of expectations in the detail of the Agreement, but before even considering the detail all parties need to be clear about what they expect, what their needs are, and what constraints exist now or may exist in the future. The considerations listed here are well put. The only addition I would make is to recognise that an Agreement may need to be even more flexible and dynamic than is suggested here and later in the outline.*

<sup>5</sup> *Given the increasing numbers and particular needs of NSMs of all kinds, specific pastoral support and oversight is essential. Some dioceses (and equivalents) have NSM Officers, others do not. Do YOU receive the support you need?*

<sup>6</sup> *For the MSE this is a particularly important clause and for-*

*mally recognizes that the workplace may be an important and valid place of ministry.*

<sup>7</sup> *Having just recognized the workplace it is anomalous that the specific areas of responsibility should be heavily focused on the parish.*

<sup>8</sup>*To include voluntary organisations is good practice. The choice is interesting though: what would be made of my Athletic Club, or the British Hovercraft Society (in which a local MSE is very active)? All such organisations are as in need of Christian ministry as the 'worthy' ones.*

<sup>9</sup> *It would be interesting to hear of the kind and / or level of expenses that are reimbursed!*

<sup>10</sup> *Feedback is also invited as to what time is included in Agreements. Is, for example, time used in voluntary organisations included, or is the Agreement focused on time at the disposal of the local church? Is time off also recognized and how flexible is it when unforeseen time is needed?*

<sup>11</sup> *How often do you have staff meetings? Who is involved? What part do you have in planning and decision-making? How far do stipendiary colleagues understand / appreciate your part in the church's ministry? Are clergy meetings held at times you can attend?*

<sup>12</sup> *Annual is probably appropriate in most cases. For some, in relatively stable situations, a longer period may be reasonable. It is good practice not to be bound by the review period: if circumstances change mid-year then the Agreement needs to be flexible enough to allow for an interim review.*

***And finally ...***

*As job descriptions go this is a useful template. The preliminary notes in particular contain sound guidelines. Although designed as multi-purpose it is clearly weighted towards parish-based NSMs, but it does appear flexible enough to form the basis of an Agreement for MSEs.*

*The opportunity is still open for you to send in your job de-*

*scription, or any standard framework. Anything CHRISM receives will help other MSEs!*

*Copies of the above Agreement can be obtained from the Editor.*

### ***Christians at Work - Conference 2002....***

Is being held Saturday, 18 May, on the theme of coping with change from a Christian perspective.

Further information from Christians at Work, PO Box 1746, Rugby, CV21 3ZS. E-mail: [office@christiansatwork.org.uk](mailto:office@christiansatwork.org.uk).

### ***The Ridley Hall Foundation....***

Is hosting a residential conference entitled "Globalisation: The Big Issue?" at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, 21 – 23 June. The conference has been organised jointly with The Jubilee Centre, Cambridge, and London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

Further details from Dr. Richard Higginson, Ridley Hall, Cambridge, CB3 9HG; e-mail [rah41@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rah41@cam.ac.uk).

The Ridley Hall Foundation is currently carrying out a strategic review of its role and work, seeking to strengthen its network of contacts and identify the key issues affecting businesspeople – issues on which the Christian faith has something important to contribute.

### ***2002 National Bi-vocational Ministers***

## *Celebration....*

.... Takes places at Arlington, Texas, 25 – 27 April. Bi-vos are the US Southern Baptist NSMs and number well into five figures! A quarterly newsletter, the “Bi-vocational Beacon” is published, edited by Leon Wilson. If you have any material Leon might find useful he can be contacted at e-mail: [Bivowilson@compuserve.com](mailto:Bivowilson@compuserve.com).

As in the UK, stories are very popular!

## *CHRISM website*

*Rob Fox*

With a steadily rising number of visitors and downloads of CHRISM Papers (and subscription forms!) the website is playing a full part in raising the profile of CHRISM and MSE. When the Committee were considering how to set it up and who might take on the task I recall there was a lot of toe gazing. Typically Michael Ranken volunteered to turn his technical experience to a new area: learning about websites. The result has fully justified the confidence (and relief!) placed in him.

Having done the hard bit and got the website up and running, Michael has decided to stand down and on a recent trip to the foothills of the Pennines entrusted the webmaster role to another Lancastrian, David Fox (yes, he is related!). David is an experienced webmaster who runs his own airline – a virtual one that is – and welcomes visitors to [www.flyvortex.com](http://www.flyvortex.com).

If you have not yet visited the CHRISM website you can keep up to date with us at [www.chrism.org.uk](http://www.chrism.org.uk).

## *Renew*

The People of God Trust announces a Study Day at **Vaughan House, Francis St., Westminster** on **Saturday 27 April** from 10 to 6p.m. on:

## Priest Shortage - Threat or Opportunity?

Speakers, workshops, plenary session. Details and tickets from POGT, 020 7235 2841.

## *Agony Aunt*

*Michael Ranken submitted this apt quotation from Richard Holloway's 'Doubts and Loves', pages 65-67, ISBN: 1 84195 179 X. It is a timely reminder of how our attempts to communicate the Gospel can come unstuck if we are using a different mind-set and language to our friends, neighbours and colleagues.*

"There is a letter on the internet originating from the United States that captures the complexity of it all. It purports to be written by a troubled Christian to Dr Laura, a fundamentalist agony aunt.

Dear Dr Laura,

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from you, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind him that Leviticus 18.22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate. I do need some advice from you, however, regarding one or two specific laws and how best to follow them.

- a. When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odour for the Lord (Lev.1.9). The problem is my neighbours. They claim the odour is not pleas-

ing to them. How should I deal with this?

- b. I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as it suggests in Exodus 21.7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price?
- c. I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanness (Lev.15.19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offence.
- d. Leviticus 25.44 states that I may buy slaves from the nations that are around us. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify?
- e. I have a neighbour who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35.2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?
- f. A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev.10.10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?
- g. Leviticus 20.20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20 or is there some wriggle room here?

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help. Thank you for reminding us again that God's word is eternal and unchanging."

## ***At Work Together 2002 ...***

... organised by Spring Harvest ... is taking place Sunday (evening) 3 – Wednesday (afternoon) 6 November in Eastbourne. Aimed at:

- seeing your work from God's perspective,
- being more spiritually effective at work,
- tackling the tough issues of working life,
- helping church leaders understand the

needs of their members.

Cost to a "full-time church leader" is £99; the rest of us £197  
– but £30 off if booked before 30 April.

Further details from Spring Harvest on 01825 746512, or  
[info@springharvest.org](mailto:info@springharvest.org).

## ***The MSE? No, sir!***

***Dorrie Johnson***

*In consideration of the non-auxiliary, non-stipendiary, self-supporting, voluntary ministers who have been in, are and intend to remain in secular employment or non-employment or closely associated with it...*

*the Minister in Secular Employment.*

Whence forth came this beast,  
this – this bête noir of church established?  
From what embryo  
    emerged this being manifest?  
Is it of God or is this thing of Satan wrought?  
From the canon's seat with what jaundiced eye  
    is this form perceived?  
Sharp the thorn it plants  
    in breasts with purple clad.  
T'will disoblige,  
outrage the man of God,  
who, with his trouser cuffs  
tucked deeply down inside St Michael hose  
treads gently through the glebe in holy haze,  
or, in casual jeans, steams about his patch.

This man, yet not man only, for  
by all the runes I swear, yet woman too,

(who with such perversion,  
turns the church upon itself),  
this man doth don this mantle of the MSE,  
and is as such by ABM blessed  
with validation won by means most foul.  
Licensed by respected Fathers in God  
who, with gaiters in a twist  
bemoan the clear decline of men whose fathers  
could not find the land or family plate  
to feed the aspirations of their sons and  
so sent them to the mother church with  
certain knowledge that once there they'd find  
a faithful housekeeper and holy task.

Now – this beelzebub, this upstart clerk,  
claiming it was God who so provoked  
this wondrous call,  
this farcical vocation  
walks with the world, his - her- hand outstretched  
to those who never darken its oak doors  
nor themselves submit to office or to sacrament.  
I tremble like the aspen leaf when thinking of this heresy  
that would make God real, accessible to wretched workers.

No, I say, it shall not be.  
Creation was not meant to spawn such entities  
that would have their holy cake and eat it!

Away, Sir!  
This false talk of justice,  
equity and hope is only for the likes  
of those whose buttons, bands or  
soft guitars show that they know  
just what the church should be.  
– then let the DDO  
refrain from such considerations.

## *Tailpiece*

*Journalism is the only reasonable alternative to work*  
(Here, here! Ed.)

**Geoffrey Barnard**

*Notice is hereby given that the*

### ***2002 Annual General meeting of CHRISM***

*will take place on Saturday July 20, 2002, at 6 p.m. in Luther King House, Manchester.*

#### ***Agenda:***

- *Apologies for absence*
- *Minutes of AGM July 2001*
- *Matters Arising*
- *Presiding Moderator's report*
- *Secretary's Report*
- *Membership Report*
- *CHRISSET Treasurer's Report*
  - *Adoption of Accounts for 2001*
  - *Motion re CHRISSET trustees*
- *Subscription for 2003*
- *Election of Officers and Committee members*

# CHRISM

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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