

Ministers-at-Work

*The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry*

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

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Editorial

Rob Fox

The first MSE I ever encountered, though I didn't understand this at the time, was a Methodist minister. He was a lecturer at a teacher training college (there were lots of these back in the 1970s). My uncle was a lecturer at the same college, knew Geoff, and had obvious respect for him. Unusually he was attached to the Anglican church I went to; quite why I never knew, and I think the Bishop had given him Permission to Officiate.

What I remember clearly about his sermons, contributions to debates, and simply talking with him was how grounded he was in everyday life. He used examples I could easily relate to and lived out his faith in a way that seemed integrated with his life and work. As I later discovered MSE I thought back to this early experience and treasured it, as I have the wisdom and wit shared by so many MSEs since.

This summer's conference was, by general agreement, one of the best we've had, and a theme that kept coming out was that MSEs have a particular role in helping others make the link between faith and everyday life, especially at work. John Applegate, principal of the All Saints Training Course, lamented that so few of the ordinands and Readers on the course seemed able to make a meaningful connection between faith and workplace, which was echoed several times over the weekend. However, as noted in the report on the first Conference session, Training courses do very little to actively help students to do so.

While there are a number of organisations and initiatives working hard to help Christians make that connection (see, for example, the review in this edition of a new short study from the LICC), the outcomes so far are little more than pin-pricks. Part of the problem here, and this came out several times during the weekend too, is that our national Churches are pre-occupied with how to staff local churches with fewer paid clergy and diminishing resources. *Fresh Expressions*, for example, is almost exclusively about church, as opposed to equipping Christians to be the people of God in the world, and *Mission Shaped Church* is sometimes, and reasonably,

described as Church Shaped Mission. Having been CHRISM's voice in helping develop the *Kingdom @ Work* project over the past 3 years, I'd be delighted if our Churches put as much energy and resource into it as FE and MSC, but I'm not holding my breath.

This edition features reports on the various sessions at the Conference last month and on the AGM. Having held the **annual subscription** to £35 for some years we have taken the difficult decision to increase it to £40 (£25 where a reduced rate is applicable – students in training, retired and un-waged); if you pay by standing order, please adjust it accordingly. The principal reason for the increase is that postage costs have increased significantly, by over 20% during the past two years, and with subscription income falling a little too, this means the journal and other costs of running CHRISM are spread across fewer payees. We are very conscious of keeping costs down, for example modelling Committee meeting costs so we can hold them where the expense is least (and we pay for our own lunches!) If you pay by standing order, please amend the payments accordingly.

From the January 2015 edition we are also offering members the option of receiving *Ministers-at-Work* by email, in .pdf format. This will help reduce our costs, and also makes it easier for you to be able to give an example copy to enquirers about MSE, or someone whom you'd like to influence / inform! If you'd like to receive the .pdf version *instead of* or *in addition to* the hard copy edition, please contact me. (We will of course need an email address to send it to).

We also decided it was time to make more use of social media. CHRISM has had a LinkedIn group for some time, which we'll make more use of, but we've also set up a Facebook group. See the 'Resources' section for more details.

As readers will know, taxation is a subject dear to my heart (sadly I actually find it interesting!) and I've included two articles highlighting how Christians' attitudes to taxation can differ. The first concerns the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, where tax non-payment is amongst the highest in Europe. The second is on the Presbyterian Assembly in the USA passed a resolution supporting the principle of taxation as a moral duty. To be controversial: will the declared

policy of one of our major parties (and a newcomer that fancies its chances) to deliberately create poverty in order to fund cuts for the better off be a key factor in how Christians vote in next year's general election? Answers and comments most welcome!

A new book on the morality of taxes and tax avoidance is about to be published; I plan to review it in the next edition. And, I know it's early, but Happy Christmas!

Rob Fox

New Patterns of Ministry: Broadening Horizons CHRISM Conference, 12-14 September

Luther King House remains an oasis amidst the bustle of Manchester's inner southern suburbs, nestled between the famous 'Curry Mile' and the student land of Fallowfield. The facilities have improved somewhat since your Editor studied there on the Northern Ordination Course (of increasingly distant memory!) Much has changed in ministry training over the past 25 years, in all denominations. Anyway, it was an ideal venue for us.

This year we decided to follow up on the fallout from the CofE's Ministry Division conference, 'New Patterns of Ministry', last year, knowing that a further conference is planned in 2015, and CHRISM has been invited to contribute to the planning.

The business was divided into 6 sessions, mostly with one or more guest speakers to kick off our theme (and very stimulating their contributions were). These were:

- Introductions – and is there anything new in New Patterns of Ministry?
- Vocations to MSE
- Selection for MSE
- Training for MSE
- Deployment of and support for MSE
- What can CHRISM do?

So, here are notes of each session. Do feel free to comment or ask questions.

Friday evening – Introducing ourselves and our theme

We began by introducing our neighbour to the assembled group and revealing some little-known facts about them.

David Clark challenged us to broaden our horizons so that we remember that the work of CHRISM is for all Christians in Secular Ministry, lay or ordained. He observed that the church is way out of touch with the world of work and what is needed to support people in the face of the dramatic changes taking place. The challenge is how to enable people to be Christian people in their work.

Hannah Matthews (on behalf of the Saltley Trust) has carried out a survey of the amount in the curricula of training courses addressing Christians in the world of work, and found it to be very small. There are some exceptions – Cliff College is planning a session in its degree course on Ministry in Work. The Kingdom at Work conference in Birmingham on 13th November aims to address these themes.

David argued for developing the role of Mentor to people who are out in the world working day by day. CHRISM and ordained MSEs should have a key role in this – using our experience to help others. The key purpose is ‘enabling the people of God to **be** where they are’ and to plough our experience back into the church.

We talked of resources that are available for use to develop people’s understanding of their work as ministry (for use in Parishes, study groups, with trainee MSEs):

- “Joined up Living – Weekday Faith” (Coventry MSE Group Lent Course)
- “Theology Resource Book Training Guide” (CHRISM)
- “God on Monday” materials (Ridley Hall, Cambridge)

We noted that some materials available elsewhere are often presented as “taking the gospel in” rather than building the Kingdom of God in that place of work.

Wendy White spoke of the survey she has carried out of Christians in their workplaces, where she found many people actively doing

theology in their work and reflecting on it. Many people had given it a lot of thought, but found it frustrating to be up against the wall of the church. The first task for MSEs (CHRISM) is to listen to what people are already doing!

There is a need to give people space to do this, and space to meet others who are thinking in similar ways. (Others observed that the narrow thinking of the church often does not allow this – there is much inertia in clergy and congregations). There may be much to be learnt by looking back at good patterns in the past.

A recurring strand was the need for CHRISM to recover its mission to all Christians in their work, and not simply be a support group for ordained MSEs.

Ian Anthony (by contrast, with a focus on ordained MSEs) asked us to consider what can be done to make Portfolios focus more specifically on the MSE at work, and in particular to encourage the person to reflect on:

- What they do at work
- How they can mentor other people at work
- What help they need / can give

It was suggested that the existing questions can be used and interpreted from an MSE perspective, but Ian wanted help to make them official.

This portfolio approach seems to drive the newly-ordained MSE into self-justification, proving what they can **do**, rather than supporting them in **being** an MSE in their work.

There will, hopefully, be an opportunity to feed all this into the C of E Ministry Division at a conference they are planning next year.

Session 2 – Vocations to MSE ***with Richard Collins, DDO, Durham***

We need to pray for the dustman and make space for prophets.

Each and every one of us creates refuse. We commit it to the bin and are grateful that the local council takes it away. But do we know the name of any who provide the service and have we ever prayed for them privately or publicly?

After 20 years of CHRISM it is clear that the recognition, discernment and encouragement of vocation to MSE is still erratic in practice irrespective of denomination and location. Richard Collins suggested to us that the way language is used, or not used, in the church and the workplace excludes and diminishes in such a way that even the possibility of some vocational routes is invisible.

He cited the way intercessions in church rarely included non-professionals, political correctness at work excluded God and mentioned a survey which suggested that there was an invisible underclass who were rarely seen or listened to. These exclusions are well recognised by our European colleagues who often question the professional status of most CHRISM members.

David Clark challenged us to consider how ordained MSE is different from what the committed lay Christian did in the workplace and CHRISM may well need to think more deeply about this. Perhaps the action is in the reaction of what is imputed to MSEs by their fellow workers which then gives permission for other to release their faith from the private zone to which it has previously been restricted. MSEs should act like yeast so that all Christians are enabled to become active in their workplaces.

Richard Collins noted that the criteria for assessing a vocation was that it was realistic, obedient and informed. This left a sense that there must surely be more to it than that and made me wonder how those charged with applying these criteria would deal with the balance of prophetic and obedient in a presenting vocation.

Richard further suggested that distinctive tasks of a priest were to absolve, bless and celebrate. This felt very Anglo-Catholic and there was insufficient time for us to glean the insights of Methodists and URC members present.

MSEs in their essence do not neatly fit the structures the church has waiting for its ordained ministers. Those present wanted space to think, to speak, to act and to be “outside the box” to see the world differently and respond prophetically to what they saw. Our eyes need not only to be lifted up to wards heaven but to see God inaction in all around us – including the dustman.

Session 3 - Selection for MSE

We had hoped to have ‘multidenominational leadership’ for this session, but unfortunately the URC facilitator was unable to attend, so Richard Collins, DDO for Durham diocese, did a sterling job of leading the discussion and did his best to prevent the conversation becoming purely Anglican. Our focus was on the ways in which people with a specifically MSE vocation might be selected for training, so discussion naturally veered off to exploration and reiteration of the ways in which MSE differs from other forms of ministry, and the possibilities of discerning and confirming this at the selection stage.

There was a general feeling that selectors understood and could manage the concept of a potential ordinand in a secular job who presented with a vocation to self-supporting ministry in a conventional (e.g. church-facing) context, but were less comfortable with MSE and did not necessarily appreciate how this could be different. There are issues relating to the language of work, the difference between MSE and workplace chaplaincy, and the extent to which MSE goes beyond the activities of deeply-committed lay people in the workplace.

Both MSEs and lay Christians live out their faith in their daily lives. Not only does the MSE model this for others, but should also have the ability to frame and articulate a theological understanding of work. Other Christians impute to an MSE the qualities of leadership, the ability to make safe space and the willingness to mentor and affirm others. Other people – those with a different faith or even with none – also have certain expectations and will often talk to an ordained MSE in a way that they would not do with others. Many

MSEs feel called to a sacramental role. The comparison was again made with the priest in church who absolves, blesses and celebrates, and an MSE finds ways to carry out the same functions in a different environment, articulated (if necessary) in very different language.

There is often a marked prophetic element to workplace ministry. Prophets are uncomfortable and sometimes awkward people; the ability and willingness to challenge authority means that they do not always fit comfortably into their environment. Selectors sometimes do not take this into account, but they should.

At the same time, MSE is frequently about being: being a witness, being a presence, being alive to tensions and inconsistencies, being the oil in the machine (or the grit in the oyster), being a model, being alongside and in the mess, rather than about doing. So selecting future MSEs on the evidence of activities they are already undertaking may be unhelpful, or it will focus on what they are 'doing' in their church rather than who they are at work.

The Church of England selects people to train for ministry – not for a specific ministry (though the provision of separate training for Pioneer Ministers appears to contradict this.) The normative model is church-based, and anything else is seen as an exception. There are nine criteria for selection of which three, all related to Vocation, are particularly important.

- Personality and character: is this person 'real', secure in who they are, not trying to be something different (cf. the Velveteen Rabbit)? Will ordination enable them to be more fully themselves?
- Relationships: how does the person relate to the others among whom they are set? What do others say about them?
- Leadership and collaboration: 'and' is the most important word! Is the person listening to others, not trying to impose their own views, helping the group to work together to find a way forward?

The episode of 'Rev' which included discernment is particularly instructive here. The Reader tells his vicar: 'I can do this better than you', but in his world there would be no gaps for God. Training can be helpful in strengthening performance against some of the criteria,

but these three must be evident from the beginning. Vocation takes precedence; it must be obedient, realistic and already being worked out in practice.

Selectors (of whichever denomination) must apply their criteria with common sense and experience, but they must also be able to detect, affirm and promote vocations arising in 'non-church' contexts and expressed in unconventional language. For example, in the workplace a soapbox in the canteen may be a much less appropriate springboard for evangelism than a quiet practical awareness and involvement in the situations and tensions of day-to-day work. It could be helpful to have some vocations advisers, directors of ordinands and selectors who have direct experience of SSM and MSE and can bring a realistic understanding of ministry beyond the church walls.

Session 4 – Training ***With John Applegate, Principal, All Saints course***

The All Saints Mission & Ministry Course covers 6 dioceses in the north-west and in the north-east midlands.

John had read our Paper 6 - based on a survey of MSEs in 1996. He made particular note of:

1. The hallowing of work
2. Kingdom Values
3. Misseo-Dei

However, 1996 was a long time ago and he considered the changes that had taken place since that time.

Tony Blair had come to power in 1997 so all the changes that he had wrought to our society had occurred since the paper had been written.

The Church of England published the Hind Report, which had been compiled to address issues including

- The Learning Church
- Regional and Ecumenical Training

- That things would be cheaper!

The Mission Shaped Church Report had been written, and it was noted that:

- There was no mention within it of MSE Ministry
- There was no mention of the Methodists who had originated within the working contexts

Offerings for ordination continued to be strong. As many or more ordinands were coming through now but:

- Most are to non-stipendiary ministry of one form or other
- There was a change of focus in deployment needs – how could they now staff parishes?

Liberation Theology had become part of the church's thinking and it built upon contextual theology

There was growth in theological reflection on training.

So, what has happened to all this?

Shortly after it was published a change in government funding of Higher Education abruptly ended the Hind Report recommendations being carried through. Training for ministry was no longer eligible for HE funding. However MinDiv were forced to promise Synod cost reductions in training as Synod looked to save money.

In the Church of England, congregational chaplaincy became the name of the game. Tension between the model of priest for the parish or congregational chaplain was causing nervousness in many congregations who wanted their priest to be there for them.

Ordinands were often now unable to work full time during training – many reducing or giving up their work in order to meet the demands of training despite being trained for non-stipendiary ministry.

There had been a growth in chaplains – including workplace chaplains and Street Pastors.

In training itself, Common Awards had now been implanted. The curriculum for training on all courses had been set by the University of Durham. This was instead of each course being moderated by a different University. Common Awards are now coming online. (John has since stressed that not all ordinands will take a degree award; training is structured so that many will study for an award at Foundation or first year of degree level).

There is work still to be done. The Theology of Common Awards was being considered:

- There was no theology at present
- There was no educational introduction to the course
- It was becoming necessary to have an agreed statement about the nature of ministry
- Theological conversations were needed to discuss the nature of ordained ministry

Training has also largely ceased to be Ecumenical. It cost too much to offer training outside of the Church of England, and the free churches felt swamped, within the courses, by the Anglicans.

Quality is looked for in the formation element of training. This must embrace:

- Basic theological approaches
- Reflection
- Formation – what the Church requires of its' ministers competences

Margaret Yates' draft response to MinDiv on behalf of CHRISM had been looked at. It was noted that there was very little about 'mentoring' skills and training.

Over 7 years, of 200 people had come forward for ordination on the All Saints course – only 1 had presented for MSE. Discussion followed about whether this was because of the lack of information. A question was asked about the content of the course and whether this would train SMs to minister to those at work in their parishes. This raised the question of how we equip and train mentors and affirm people in our churches to be ministers where they are.

It was noted that Church of England Canon Law states that everyone must be licensed to a parish.

At All Saints students are on a placement throughout their entire training. There is a problem with people not connecting their vocation to priesthood with their work. Many are unable at present to make those connections. Although an example was cited of an ordinand who confessed that the course had helped him to be a pastor at work.

(Copies of the PowerPoint slides John used are available from the Editor)

***Session 5 – Deployment and support for MSE
led by Richard Church, moderator of NW Synod in the
URC, and Chris Edmondson, Bishop of Bolton.***

Introduction – Richard – URC nationally has 100 NSMs, including 16 MSE from the database. He used Wendy White as a case study, and how deploying her was trying to keep her anchored to a local church to avoid total detachment, but also wanted to avoid her being sucked into church matters. There is a tension between being missional and staying anchored.

He sees us as being on 'Non-ecclesial' employment, rather than 'secular'. He also mentioned building bridges.

He also sees us as ambassadors – reminding church of the dualism, and MSE as being within a spectrum of ministries.

Introduction – Chris. He gives thanks for the people we are and what we do. He has a passion to see people fulfil their God-given potential and ministries developing. An MSE he worked with in a parish helped that church to change understanding, and to alter their ways to include her – e.g. in meetings timed to be inclusive. Again he mentioned role as bridge builder and to remind church of her role.

As a parish priest, he ran sessions over 6 – 8 weeks asking workers what they were ready to share through a short interview in the service, and then added concerns and thanks to the intercessions.

He also ran This Time Tomorrow (from LICC) – where will I be, what's different from being here, how can we pray for you. He ran this every 3 to 4 weeks.

Recommendation: Fruitfulness on the Frontline from LICC (see product review later in this edition).

He saw the tensions in ministry as an outworking of what we are (as son / daughter of God in Christ) rather than what we do.

Statistics: 120 SSMs in Manchester diocese. He has SSM officer (Ian Anthony) and also others helping (inc Catherine Binns) in each archdeaconry – offering training and retreats – In Feb next year will be a session on MSE. They are offering support and do have a list of MSEs.

A short discussion followed on level of support – the good practice in Manchester is not seen everywhere, including Yorkshire and London, where Margaret has been interviewing SSMs, none of whom have ever been offered a move to another parish.

Richard stated that in theory in the URC, NSMs are deployed by the Pastoral committee for 5 years and there should be a review after 4 years to see if the vocation is still right. The common problem is that opportunities are limited by circumstances. He agreed that out of sight can mean out of mind.

In Eastern Synod, he mailed out NSM stories. He felt that good communication can address issues. He appreciated that it is good for NSMs to be on the edge, as that may not be where the church is.

Chris stated that everyone has a review every 18 months to 2 years. Again, discussion showed that this is not always so, and often the forms to be completed are purely church based, and don't allow for work based ministry.

Charles Sutton: Teresa Morgan's research is being repeated in more depth and being used as a lever to change the way people think.

In Carlisle, SSM has been expanded, but a lot of this is house for duty and purely parish based.

Chris has been running a 3 year program called Sowing, growing, harvesting to increase the vocations to all sorts of ministry – he ordained 20 people at Petertide and now has 50 / 50 SSM / stipendiary.

Phil Aspinall asked a question about whether we identify place and then seek to deploy MSE into that place, or just accept that MSEs are already in a job and therefore a place.

Chris mentioned that there is a city centre business missioner (stipendiary). We need to embrace doing church differently – for example Fresh Expressions.

There was a question about Mission shaped Church – was it really church shaped mission? Church initiatives tend to default to stereotype rather than listening to see what the needs are.

Ruth Brothwell felt she was affirmed in her ministry by her colleagues rather than in her church.

Richard stated that incarnational ministry is a struggle – every congregant faces this and we are up against a conceptual problem. He suggested creative worship as suggested by Chris. However this type of worship needs confidence and many people don't have enough confidence to take part.

Chris agreed that many people compartmentalise their lives – church on Sunday and work on Monday are separate, even for those stipendiary ministers who have worked for many years before ordination.

Chris is happy to affirm what we do and to add his name to the part CHRISM must play.

In a general discussion, the following points were made:

- Pass on our ability to reflect theologically about our work
- Industrial chaplains serve to commission people to do their jobs
- Often we have to act locally, but also CHRISM or its members can be the grit in the oyster of General Synod
- We are people on the edge of the church – we need to ask sharp questions (in a friendly way)
- Not everything is about church
- TLS (URC lay training) was set up to affirm all types of ministry but tends to default to lay preaching
- We have to have confidence in who we are and share it
- We need to be bloody minded about training offered to make sure it is relevant to our vocation and not just accept the standard offering
- We need to have mission and evangelism at the top of the agenda and avoid the tendency to default to the safe.

Session 6 – What can CHRISM contribute?

Chrism is a place of great safety, a group sharing God's calling to do a piece of work in the world – what can we contribute back to the body? The following suggestions emerged from the discussion.

Use technology better. Facebook? – set up an active group (*we now have a Facebook group, moderated by Catherine Binns! Ed.*) Other social media outlets? (*We also have a LinkedIn group – so if you use LinkedIn, please join. Ed.*)

Summarise Chrism's resources back to DDOs and other denominational training officers

Feed into training officers and Vocation Days. There is a concern that the Anglican 'portfolios', and training generally, is all church-ward.

Challenge training. Current training focusses on achieving an academic standard – not skills. Disciples were unlettered men – use of NVQs? Vocation-based. A practical interpretation of training could open training to more people. Learning has been hijacked by

academia - Anglican training at the moment is more like doing a degree followed by an NVQ once ordained.

(Rob Fox commented that in Finland ordinands take a university degree – and then you are a minister – but there has been recognition that there is little vocational training, no spirituality. Advice is being sought outside Finland as to how to develop this).

Developing a module for lay people may be useful.

Encourage members to expand intercessions. Modelling prayer, helping people to understand how they can be habitually outward-looking. Sue Cossey has a list of occupations which could be used as part of a year-long prayer cycle?

Lent course (created by Coventry group and available from Phil Aspinall) – run this next to help people discuss their own MSE.

Encourage people in congregation to talk about work, mention MSE without labelling.

Each area to have an organising person for MSEs and recruiting. Using output to send to local church organisations and whoever needs to hear.

Something that says what Chrism does – this is what MSEs can do for you.

If we believe ministry is more than pastoral care how do we encourage people to explore and understand that? An 'available crèche' for those searching, almost there but don't know.

Comment: CHRISM must be realistic about what it can achieve, but - Laws of physics and the lever principle – a small force can move a huge amount if you know where to put the effort.

Balance between Be-ing and encouragement and nurture of others.

So – what next?

The CHRISM Committee is considering each matter raised, particularly the suggestions on what CHRISM can do, incorporating what is appropriate into further work with MinDiv (Anglican) and similar in other denominations. We particularly want to identify what we can do directly ourselves, what is most effectively achieved in collaboration with others, and what we can do by influencing. We welcome members' feedback and additional suggestions.

We are also looking to arrange a meeting with our patron, when we can pin him down!

CHRISM AGM report

Secretary's report

Margaret Joachim reported that four committee meetings had been held in 2013/14 (one in Oxford and three in Birmingham.) The committee had organised the February Reflective Weekend and the September annual conference day. Committee members had also provided feedback on the original report of the C of E Ministry Division consultation on self-supporting ministry; as a result CHRISM has been asked to continue to be involved with this work.

Justin Welby, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, has agreed to be CHRISM's patron. As yet we have not been able to arrange a meeting with him, but will continue to try to do so.

The business-as-usual activities of maintaining membership records, keeping contact with various colleges and courses, general publicity for MSE activities and international liaison had continued. Phil Aspinall, who had been co-opted to the committee in October 2013, was thanked for his work on publicity, course contacts and international activities.

Four issues of the journal had been produced, for which Rob was thanked as journal editor and Mike Rayner also thanked for continuing to organise printing and distribution.

Members of the committee have also reclaimed and reorganised the material in the Michael Ranken Memorial Library. This is now shelved in a separate room from the main library at the Royal Foundation of St Katherine, making it accessible to visitors at any reasonable time. The new Master of RFoSK is interested in the library and willing to give it greater publicity.

Membership Secretary

Mike Harrison reported that CHRISM had approximately 80 paid-up members. He is cleaning up the membership list and expects to take about 18 months to complete the work, allowing for a full year for membership subscriptions to come in (not everyone pays at the same time).

We have a number of overseas 'members' who pay subscriptions 'as and when' – which is usually when Phil Aspinall represents meets them, in Europe or the USA. The current contact names for many of the institutions which receive free journals are out of date. He is about to re-initiate a process for electronic payment of subscriptions, which should make it much easier for overseas members to subscribe.

Financial report

Rob Fox reported that the balance sheet shows a deficit for the year of £1948.68. This is accounted for as follows:

- No gift aid refund was received in 2013. However, a claim for approx. £1500 has been submitted.
- The CHRISM donation to the 2013 International Worker-Priest meeting totalled £612 (a saving on the expected amount of £1000) – a number of generous individual donations towards the costs of this event will also allow an additional gift aid claim for about £500 to be made
- Postage costs for the journal have increased by approximately 20%. Because of ongoing work to trim the mailing list, the overall 2014 journal costs should fall slightly.

- Subscription income has decreased. There is no single reason for this, but a number of members have retired or died during the year.

For accounting purposes subscription income has (as usual) been divided 2:1 between journal costs and membership support, the latter covering committee and general administration costs. Further costs were incurred to pay for public liability insurance and the website.

The CHRISSET Trustees, who appoint the Treasurer, will approve the accounts at a separate meeting.

Margaret Joachim (Chair of Trustees) reported that all trustees have completed the Charity Commission's 'Fit and Proper' declaration, and that at present there are sufficient CHRISSET trustees to carry out the work of the Trust.

Elections

Margaret Yates was elected as Incoming Moderator, with Ruth Brothwell taking over as Presiding Moderator from Sue Cossey. Both expresses thanks to Wendy White, stepping back after her three year stint as Moderator (having recently moved from Bolton to Southampton).

Rob Fox was unanimously press-ganged into remaining as Journal Editor, and Mike Harrison (re-)elected as CHRISM nominee to CHRISSET. Elected to the Committee were: Pauline Pearson, Mike Harrison and Rebecca Craven. (Phil Aspinall is regularly co-opted at the first meeting after the AGM).

Of the making of many books there is no end (Eccl. 12:12)

...and the good news is that the **Michael Ranken Memorial Library** is alive and well-organised and living in the Woodard Room at the Royal Foundation of St Katherine in east London, where it is much more accessible than it used to be. RFoSK doesn't hire out the

Woodard Room for meetings, so you can use the collection at any reasonable time – just phone first (0300 111 1147) to let them know you'll be coming.

Longer-standing members will remember that the library was set up to collect material 'of relevance to Ministry in Secular Employment'. It was based on a book list that Michael had drawn up, and initially consisted of books and pamphlets from his own bookshelves. Since 2003 the collection has grown as a result of additional donations, and now contains nearly 150 volumes, as well as a full run of CHRISM journals and many papers from the Industrial Christian Fellowship and Christians in Public Life.

Michael's book list was devised as a comprehensive reading list on MSE, and as well as books in English it includes French and German material about the worker-priest movement in Europe. The library catalogue (available on the CHRISM website) indicates which of the books are already in the library, those that have been promised to it, and which ones are not yet available.

But if it is to continue to be relevant, the Library needs your help. You probably know the old adage that you can tell when the minister was ordained by the publication dates of the books on his shelves. The same, in a sense, is true of the Library, which has comparatively little post-2000 material. Meanwhile many of us have lots of books and too little shelf-space!

So – do you have material relevant to MSE which you could donate to the library? These could be older works on the catalogue 'wish list', or more recent ones. 'Relevant to MSE' includes the theology of work, work and spirituality, doing theology in the workplace, relevant general theology and training for MSE, and some aspects of alternative church, as well as the history, practice and stories of MSE in Britain and elsewhere.

If you can contribute in this way, please – to avoid us being swamped by a deluge of copies of the same book (Margaret Kane's 'Theology in an Industrial Society' is an excellent book, but we've already got three copies of it) – would you do the following:

- Check the on-line catalogue to see:
 - Whether the book is already in the library (in which case – no thank you)
 - Whether it is listed but not yet on the shelves (yes, please!)
 - If it isn't listed, but is MSE-related (probably yes please, but someone might have offered it already)
- Then contact Margaret Joachim (margaret.joachim@london.anglican.org) to tell her which books you'd like to donate – she'll confirm that they will be useful to the library, and tell you where to send or take them.

Please don't send books directly to the Royal Foundation. They won't be expecting them and are likely to put them in their own (separate) library rather than ours. And we won't know that something needs cataloguing, labelling and shelving.

As far as we know, the Michael Ranken Library is unique – no-one else is maintaining a similarly-themed collection. As MSE grows and develops, we want the Library to do the same. Neither we nor it should fossilise!

When is an MSE not an MSE? – another answer!

Graham Cornish

In the July 2014 issue of "Ministers-at-Work", Wendy White¹ raised the question of when is an MSE not an MSE? I would like to share my experience of this transition (or not) to see if other MSEs have had the same experience.

I was ordained in 1984 with a specific mission to be a minister in the workplace. At the time I worked for a government agency which viewed this transition from layman to priest with what I am grateful to acknowledge was benign indifference. At the same time I was licensed to be Assistant Curate of the parish where we had worshipped for the previous 14 years. I agreed with the parish that

¹ White, Wendy. When is an MSE not an MSE? MaW, 2014 (129) 17-19.

my involvement was limited to a couple of services a month and looking after a mid-week Eucharist when I was available. But the major focus of ministry was the workplace.

In 2002 I left my employment after 33 years' service and set up as an independent consultant. This required a re-think of what MSE meant as it was really Minister in Self-Employment, albeit also secular. However, I discussed this with the diocesan NSM officer but got little help or advice on how to reshape ministry. This has been, and still is, a matter of reflexion for me.

In 2009 we decided for various reasons it was perhaps time to move on from the parish where we had worshipped for 39 years so I spoke to my bishop and surrendered my licence as Assistant Priest in the parish, obtaining PTO (permission to Officiate) instead. What I did not realise was that this automatically made me no longer an MSE in the eyes of the diocesan authorities – I was in fact a retired priest. No more invitations to meetings about MSE/NSM, no more circulars about ministerial issues; not even still on the Bishop's Christmas card list!

I enquired why this was and was politely told that as I had resigned from my parish status I was now considered retired and, being retired, could not be in secular employment.

So one answer to Wendy White's question is: when you are no longer licensed to a parish.

A novel reason for not paying taxes

The reason Italians do not pay tax is because they are Catholics, according to Rossella Orlandi, new head of Italy's Agenzia delle Entrate (Inland Revenue) – which caused rather a stir.

"We are a deeply Catholic country used to committing sins and receiving absolution," she told a meeting of top Italian businessmen.

The remark prompted embarrassed laughter from her well-heeled audience but it did not amuse the Catholic church, as an editorial in *L'Avvenire*, the daily newspaper of the bishops, made clear: "Catholic culture, and even more so Catholic doctrine, say quite the opposite on tax evasion and considers it theft, a grave sin and a serious social injustice, and reminders of this in the sermons of bishops and priests are frequent."

Signora Orlandi – appointed to her post by the new centre left Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi – felt compelled to issue an apology in the form of a letter to *L'Avvenire* which was not really an apology at all: "I am sorry if my words caused misunderstanding or upset people's feelings," she said. Her remark, she explained, had been meant as "a joke".

But she does have a point. In Italy, tax evasion is endemic and the black economy accounts for roughly 20% of GDP. According to the Agenzia delle Entrate's own estimates, €130bn a year is lost in unpaid tax in Italy – more than in any other country in the developed world.

Yet the truth is that the Catholic church's attitude to tax is not as simple as either Signora Orlandi or *L'Avvenire* would have people believe.

The reason there is so much tax evasion in Italy is simple. Those Italians who do not work for the state but whose small businesses form the backbone of the economy regard the state as the enemy – a corrupt and parasitical monster – whichever political party is in power.

Yet the state controls – thanks to tax – so much of the economy that many millions of other Italians, in addition to public employees, also depend on it for their livelihoods. So while most small businessmen despise the state, many big businessmen take a different view because the state is often bankrolling them. Even newspapers in Italy receive large state subsidies.

The fiscal burden in Italy is now 53% of GDP – the highest in the developed world – which means that for every euro earned more than half – 53 cents – goes in tax – in theory at least.

Many in Italy feel that whoever is in government does not represent them, yet they tax. One small businessman observed, “We Italians are like the Americans at the time of the Boston Tea Party. No taxation without representation, do you remember?”

This goes to the heart of the matter as far as the Catholic church is concerned on tax: it must be imposed by a legitimate, representative government and it must be just.

In August 2007, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican Secretary of state from 2006-2013, caused a stir when he gave a speech in Rimini in which he said: “We must all do our duty and pay taxes as long as they are imposed according to just laws and destined to pay for just works.”

His words were interpreted by many to mean that Italy’s taxes are unjustly imposed and spent on unjust works and that he was endorsing tax evasion. After all, Saint Augustine, back in the fifth century, wrote that it is not a sin to refuse to pay an unjust tax.

Father Carlo Rusconi, a noted theologian and former professor at the Vatican University, goes even further. “If I jump a red light without looking and risk killing someone my transgression is morally wrong but if I jump a red light having checked that no one else is there then I’m morally clean,” he says. “Of course, if I get fined I pay up but I am free of both guilt and obligation.”

A tax system must be demonstrably “equitable” otherwise paying tax is “an injustice”, he says, and it must allow citizens the right to refuse to pay for things that would cause them to commit sins, he adds, such as “state abortions or wars”.

The Catholic journalist and author Antonio Socci, on the other hand, draws a distinction between tax evasion by the rich and the poor.

He says: "In certain cases small jobs done on the black market literally guarantee the survival of a single income family. This is human, even heroic. The scandal in Italy though is the systematic tax evasion by the professions and by big companies. Only 1.7% of taxpayers declare an income of more than €70,000. Their tax declarations make one's hair stand on end."

Perhaps the most detailed recent exposition on unjust tax by a senior figure in the Catholic Church was that of Carlo Caffarra, Cardinal Archbishop of Bologna, in a sermon to the Guardia di Finanza (Italy's tax police) during the mass to celebrate Saint Matthew, its patron saint, in September 2013.

He warned that, yes, paying tax is a moral obligation but on the other hand if the fiscal burden imposed by the state becomes too big then the state too, and not just tax evaders, has "violated" the "social pact". He gave several examples: If "taxation is so high that the defence and promotion of fundamental human values such as work become impossible", especially in times of economic crisis; if "public expenditure . . . is exorbitant"; and if the state "fails to provide services" or provides services of "poor quality". Each one, of course, applies in spades to Italy! His point was: there is nothing unconditional about tax.

As Signor Socci says: "The role of the state is to make laws, in the first place fiscal laws, but according to the church it is not true that a law, merely because it exists, is automatically just and moral. Above the state there is natural law and people have natural rights that the state cannot violate. The state does not have the right to drink the citizen dry of his blood."

Tax evasion may well be defined as theft in law but as the great theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas himself wrote in the 13th century: theft is not a sin if it is committed as a result of extreme need.

Editor's note: the Tax Authority in Argentina has embraced new technology in clamping down on tax avoidance, using drones to identify expensive houses – signs of undisclosed wealth - in Buenos Aires. HMRC has no plans to follow suit in Cheshire.

On the other hand

The U.S. Presbyterian Church was presented with the following recommendations as its 2014 General Assembly:

“It is a basic mark of a healthy social covenant that all share in the society’s benefits and burdens. Just taxation is a foundational part of a moral society’s answer to poverty and its close relatives, inequality, economic insecurity, and social immobility. Just taxation is also a key tool for enabling communities to thrive, for advancing science and culture, and for sustaining democratic institutions. Each citizen has an affirmative duty to contribute to the common good by paying their fair share of taxes.

“The church’s moral claim recognizes the reality that even the greatest individual and corporate fortunes depend on the shared goods of physical and institutional infrastructure, governance, social peace, and intellectual capital built up over years of civilization. Morality, and particularly the morality that we as a society adopt through our political choices, is indeed at the heart of the problem of tax justice. We as a society are tolerating immoral tax laws when we allow tax minimization strategies, whether individual or corporate, to shift payment for these shared goods to those who have less ability to underwrite the costs and to share in the benefits.”

The impact of inequality in America today is undeniable, prompting many comparisons with the first ‘Gilded Age’ a century ago, when the permanent graduated income tax was put in place. Progressive taxation alone cannot rectify the imbalance that puts 35.6 percent of total U.S. wealth in the hands of one percent of the population, almost as much as the 36.6 percent held by the lower 95 percent, even in the recession year of 2009. Yet fair taxation is a key part of providing adequate revenue for government and, indeed, for maintaining public investment, social mobility, and equitable public policies.

The recommendations to the Assembly report seek to make the U.S. tax system fairer, calling it to be:

- more progressive, taxing those with greater wealth at higher proportions of their income, wealth, and inheritance;
- more transparent, which includes both simplicity and accountability for all tax preferences and tax expenditures;
- more solidarity-focused, which means reducing the use of tax expenditures, shelters and havens, and supporting more adequate international standards to reduce tax competition within and among nations;
- more sustainable for current and future generations, which means avoiding unproductive financial and ecological indebtedness; and
- more adequate, effectively addressing broader objectives of economic and social health than efficiency alone, such as meaningful employment, improved family life, and restored public trust. The tax system must be characterized by both efficiency in tax collection and revenue sufficient for the common good.

The recommendations were approved, though not without some dissent.

Resources

Fresh Expressions has recently published the 11th in its series of 'Share' booklets, titled 'Self-Supporting Ministry'. It is available in 3 formats, priced from £2.50 to £5. Before rushing to buy, it "explores the practicalities of raising finance for those involved in a fresh expression of church and the role of others who share your vision in supporting you financially. It highlights the biblical perspective on income generation and examines the advantages and disadvantages of self-supporting ministry. It also considers contemporary challenges and opportunities offered by this style of funding."

In other words, it is aimed at showing how a minister leading a fresh expression of church can be self-supporting *in that role*, rather than what we might understand by the term. If you have read it, feel free to comment on whether it has any value for MSEs.

The ***Quakers and Business Group*** now has a second edition of "Good Business: Ethics at Work", on sale as a paperback.

It is available on-line from the publishers, FastPrint Publishing, in Peterborough, and at Amazon.co.uk.

The Theology of Work Project - Biblical Perspective on Faith and Work (www.theologyofwork.org)

The Theology of Work (TOW) Project exists to help people explore what the Bible and the Christian faith can contribute to ordinary work. The Christian scriptures have much to say about work, although we may not be aware of it.

The Theology of Work Project is an independent, international organization dedicated to researching, writing, and distributing materials with a biblical perspective on non-church workplaces. The Project's primary mission is to produce resources covering every book of the Bible. It is also developing resources for the most significant topics in today's workplace, such as calling, ethics, truth and deception, provision and wealth, motivation, finance, and economics and society. Wherever possible, it collaborates with other faith-and-work organizations, churches, universities and seminaries to help equip workplace Christians for meaningful and fruitful work of every kind.

The ***London Institute for Contemporary*** Christianity has recently launched a resource package title ***Fruitfulness on the Front Line***.

Comprising a book, DVD, and discussion guide, the package is a companion to the DVD course, ***Life on the Frontline***.

The DVD offers "a fresh, simple framework for discovering a rich variety of ways in which God may work in us and through us right where we are." Sessions are:

- The Big Picture
- Modelling Godly Character
- Making Good Work

- Ministering Grace & Love
- Moulding Culture
- Mouthpiece for Truth & Justice
- Messenger of the Gospel
- The Journey On

Each session includes an 8-13 minute film, a Bible study, discussion questions and a takeaway action to help connect the theme to your frontline. Shot both on location and in a studio, and accompanied by quirky animations, the films explore six dimensions of fruitfulness through biblical lenses and real-life stories. The session format is flexible, designed for approximately 75 mins, but can easily be adapted to suit the context.

Prices range, depending on the package bought, from £12 for 2 copies of the DVD to £28 for a full church pack. (The first is described as a 'multipack offer'; whilst sounding supermarket it falls a little short of a 'bogof'). For further details see: <http://www.licc.org.uk/splash/index.html>

The Discussion Guide is free to download, at <http://www.licc.org.uk/resources/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/FOFL-Discussion-Guide-Printer-Friendly-1.pdf>

Overall these are professionally produced resources which provide a sound introduction to linking our faith with everyday life outside our churches. Coming from LICC it does focus more on Christian witness than some may be comfortable with, but in an area where such resources are still scarce, they are to be welcomed. If you have experience of using either, do write a review.

Miranda Threlfall-Holmes is a regular blogger and has recently uploaded a talk she originally gave in 2004 on Work, Admin and Spirituality, at <http://mirandathrelfallholmes.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/work-admin-and-spirituality.html>

These early sentences give a good idea of her line. "I'm not going to be talking about the kind of work that we can easily understand as

vocational – about being a teacher or doctor or nurse or priest. Not about specifically paid work. And not about how to pray for or at work, even. I'm talking here about dull, routine, boring, humdrum work, and how we see it." Recommended reading.

If you use **Facebook**, join our group, 'Ministers at Work':
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/129656640430436/>
As well as good way of supporting each other, we'll put hot news up too.

And if you use **LinkedIn**, we've a group there too, at:
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=3756477>

Events

CABE

Tuesday 4 November – 1815 for 1830 start
HUGH KAY LECTURE

Herta von Stiegel - Executive Chairman of Ariya Capital group and non-executive Chairman of Stargate Capital Investment Group

"Catastrophe, Complacency or Courage?"
based on the story of the Titanic

To book CABE Events contact Jayne Payne, events@cabe-online.org

The Future of the Church of England

The team behind the Westminster Faith Debates, in association with Ripon College, Cuddesdon, and the Church Times, is hosting a new series of debates on the Future of the Church of England, to be held in Oxford this autumn at the University Church. The topics are:

Parishes – what future for the parochial system?

Dr Andrew Davison, Professor Robin Gill, Lord Mawson, Revd Canon Anna Norman-Walker. Thursday, 9th October.

Heritage – how can buildings, endowments and pensions become assets not burdens?

Andrew Mackie, Bishop John Pritchard, Dame Fiona Reynolds, Sir Barney White-Spunner - Thursday, 23rd October.

People – how can Anglicans of all kinds be engaged in the Church of the future?

Sir Tony Baldry MP, Revd Canon Jane Charman, Very Revd Dr Jane Shaw, John Tuckett. Thursday, 6th November.

Diversity – what kind of unity is appropriate nationally and internationally, how can diversity become a strength?

Very Revd June Osborne, Canon David Porter, Andrew Symes, Bishop Alan Wilson. Thursday, 20th November.

Vision – what does the Church of England offer the next generation?

Vicky Beeching, Revd Canon Rosie Harper, Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch, Christina Rees. Thursday, 4th December.

The debates will be held at University Church of St Mary the Virgin, High Street, Oxford, OX1 4BJ, from 17.30 to 19.00 (followed by a drinks reception).

For further details and to register for a free place please visit the website (<http://faithdebates.org.uk/category/debates/2014-debates/oxford-faith-debates-the-future-of-the-church-of-england/>) or telephone Peta Ainsworth (01524 510826) with the name, institution (if applicable) and email address of each person you wish to register. Please also let Peta know which category you come under, e.g. Academic, Policy, FBO/voluntary organisation, religious group, media or other.

The **William Temple Foundation** presents **'Reclaiming the Public Space: Archbishop William Temple 70th Anniversary**

Conference on Monday, 10 November, 1030 to 16.30, at the People's History Museum, Manchester.

Exploring the role of religion in contemporary public life, as well as looking at the legacy of William Temple's visionary thinking, the conference aims to bring together academics, clergy, community activists, and policy makers to learn from one another.

A diverse range of excellent speakers includes Prof Craig Calhoun (LSE), Lord Raymond Plant (KCL), Prof Linda Woodhead (Lancaster) and Prof Elaine Graham (Chester) alongside practitioners such as Chris Mould (Trussell Trust) and Economist journalist Bruce Clark.

To read more about the conference, including booking details, please visit: <http://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/conference2014/>

Educating for Mission in the World of Work

St Peter's Saltley Trust and the Kingdom at Work Project are organising a day consultation on the above topic to be held on:
Thursday, November 13th, 2014, 10.30 to 3.45
at **Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham**
(accommodation available at Woodbrooke College if required)

The consultation will focus on three main issues:

- What is preventing the church equipping its people for mission in the world of work?
- A new model of mission for the world of work?
- How can the ordained ministry and other Christian educators be equipped with the skills to prepare church members for mission within the workplace?

The consultation explores the implications of two recent publications:

- ❖ Faith and Work in Theological Education and Training: an Enquiry by Hannah Matthews (St Peter's Saltley Trust, 2013), and
- ❖ The Kingdom at Work Project, designed by David Clark (2014).

The Kingdom at Work 'Bulletin' available for **download** at www.saltleytrust.org.uk/publications.

Order the Faith and Work in Theological Education and Training report via: St Peter's Saltley Trust, Grays Court, 3 Nursery Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3JX / bursar@saltleytrust.org.uk

Booking details will be on the Trust website.

Holey, Wholly, Holy - Ministering locally

A conference, 13-15 November, at Britannia Country House Hotel, Palatine Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 2WG.

Organised by the Local Ministry Network (www.localministry.net/), the conference is from noon Thursday to lunchtime Saturday and is shaped around four points:

- There is only us, **holey** though we might be;
- We are called to minister, **wholly**, to all in our parish;
- We remain inspired to create and serve local **holly** communities.
- And what will the **Network's** role be in all that?

The main speakers are Joanna Cox, the Church of England's National Adviser for Adult Education and Lay Development, Alan Billings, writer and Deputy Leader of Sheffield City Council, and Chris Edmondson, Bishop of Bolton. There are also a number of workshops, with a variety of leaders.

The cost is £185 and bookings can be made with Revd Dr Colin McCarty, 1 Seymour Close, Newmarket, CB8 8EL; email: test_and_eval@betinternet.com

Forthcoming events at ***St Paul's Institute***, London:

6th Nov 2014

What is Stewardship?... And Why Does it Matter?

Biologist and Pulitzer Prize winning author E.O. Wilson gives a keynote speech on biodiversity and the meaning of stewardship, in support of the MEMO project.

24th Nov 2014:

God and the Moneylenders: Championing Financial Justice
A clergy learning day exploring the theology of money and practical initiatives that can be taken by churches to promote financial justice.

Theos - Clear thinking on religion and society

www.theosthinktank.co.uk

Conference - Chaplaincy in the UK London - March 11th, 2015

This day-conference will bring together chaplains and thought leaders from an unprecedented number of fields, providing the opportunity for theological and empirical exploration of chaplaincy. It will also launch of a major study by Theos of the scope and impact of chaplaincy - 'A Very Modern Ministry: Chaplaincy in the UK'

In a changing - and allegedly increasingly secular - religious landscape, the rapid growth of chaplaincy and its every greater expansion into new fields of activity is a story that hasn't been told. Few have asked what is driving its growth or sought to understand its impact. The conference will include two plenary lectures from leading thinkers in chaplaincy, lunch and time for networking and discussion, all delegates will receive a free copy of the report.

Speakers will include:

- Rev Dr Andrew Todd, Director of the Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies
- Ben Ryan, Researcher at Theos and author of 'A Very Modern Ministry'
- Dr Ataulah Siddiqui, Course Director of the Muslim Chaplaincy Course at Markfield Institute of Higher Education
- Professor Joy Carter, Vice-Chancellor Winchester University.

To book tickets please visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/chaplaincy-in-the-uk-a-theos-conference-tickets-12893808729>

Save the date!

2015 CHRISM Conference - 24-26 July

At High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire
(<http://www.cct.org.uk/high-leigh/introduction?gclid=CILG0fGmr8ECFcbMtAodnkIAvQ>)

2015 CHRISM Reflective weekend, 20-22 February "Send us out, in the power of your Spirit ..."

At Shepherd's Dene, Riding Mill, Northumberland
(www.shepherdsdene.co.uk). See flyer for details.

The Retreat House is in delightful countryside, not far from Hadrian's Wall. It isn't difficult to get to either, being close to a rail station and the main Newcastle to Carlisle road, half an hour from Newcastle on both. Cost: £140 members, £150 non-members. Details and bookings: Rob Fox (see inside cover for contact details).

If you want to extend your stay then the area is well worth exploring: the Roman Wall, Kielder and Hexham to start with.

And finally

Burton and Speke had spent two years now pushing south through the central African bush, in search of the origin of the great river.

Now, at last, they realised they had achieved their goal. There, looming before them, stood an enormous bottle of tomato ketchup.

Yes, they had found the sauce of the Nile