

Ministers-at-Work

*The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry*

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Contents

Editorial	3
Doing God’s Work? - Izzy McDonald-Booth	5
Spirit in Stone – Faith in One’s Life & Work: Derek Nicholson	8
Prayer Diary for People at Work - Phil Aspinall	15
A wholly remarkable sermon...	17
Sermon: Durham Cathedral: Four before Advent 2016 Sung Eucharist	18
Vocations – Bishop’s Study Day in Guildford: Ruth Brothwell	23
An Invitation to Meet the Worker Priests: Phil Aspinall	27
Book Review	29
Theology of Work – Bible Commentary – Volume 5 - Romans through Revelation	29
New Book Published	32
The Worker Priests after Vatican II: Faithfulness Reclaimed. ..	32
Events and Updates	33
Coming soon!	33
Coming later!	34
Update from the Church of England’s Shared Ministry Network	34
Resources	36
The Kingdom at Work Project Bulletin 9	36
And finally	36

Editorial

Happy New Year, whatever you find yourself doing! The theme of this issue is 'Doing' – what we do – how we do it – where in the doing of it we might find God tapping us on the shoulder – or making us jump! To do something is (en/oxforddictionaries.com) 'to perform (an action, the precise nature of which is often unspecified); to work on (something) to bring it to completion or to a required state; to solve; work out; and – (often in questions) work at for a living: 'what does she do?'

But what we 'do' is not quite as clear cut as one might think... I asked two people to write something about doing their work – and where they might glimpse God in it.... I asked them because I knew that they both had interesting jobs, were committed to connecting faith and work, and they were both actively engaged in a variety of ways in 'mission and ministry'. Both of them took up the challenge – and I hope you will find food for thought in each piece – not least what constitutes ministry in secular employment? However, I was struck by how intertwined the strands of work, leisure and church communities are for each of them: work doesn't happen in a box separate from everything else. The interactions between individuals, their situations and communities, with reflection on scripture, and openness, act as lenses as we do whatever we do.. Work? Leisure? Study? Ministry in secular environments? Some of that 'doing' will be specified precisely – health and safety regulations for instance – but more of it will be about working it out as we go along, and occasionally noticing when we are lined up with or focusing God's love.

Elsewhere in this issue we hear from Ruth about a study day exploring some of the issues facing the institutional church in seeking to 'grow a godly and gifted ordained workforce for the

future' – and yet also encouraging lay people (like the first two contributors) to feel affirmed in *their* ministries, and that everyone has something to offer the body of Christ. After all, we are frequently dispatched from worship to love and serve the Lord on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday – and so on... A reader request led me to contact David Kennedy, Precentor of Durham Cathedral, and ask to reproduce a sermon he had preached which had looked at just that– exhorting his listeners to 'bring on Monday, for every day is a day of worship.' Phil writes about the ways in which his prayers (and discussions with friends) about a variety of jobs have been enriched by using the prayer diary which you received with the last journal. Further reflections will be very welcome.

I am still learning – feedback on this issue, and suggestions for future contributions will also be most welcome. The theme for the next issue (April 2017) will draw on contributions at the Reflective weekend and will focus on Parables. In July 2017 we will be looking at Endings in a world of precariousness and fragility – but in which we hold on to hope.



Doing God's Work? - Izzy McDonald-Booth

My full-time work consists of running a retail operation in a visitor attraction and art gallery in the North East of England. I manage a small team of staff and share some operational responsibility for the building as a whole. As we are a venue open and free to the general public we get a wide cross section of visitors (200k per annum) - lots of children and



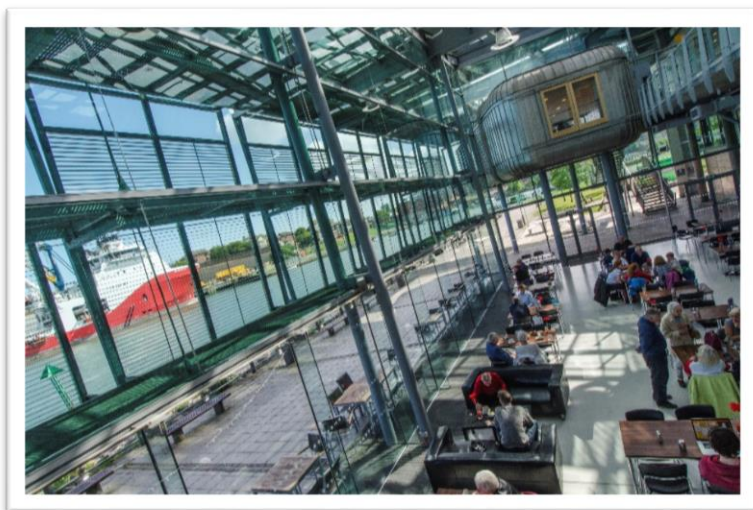
young families in the school breaks and older people at the other times. My job involves a lot of administration as we are part of a university and that means I have to go through a fair amount of bureaucracy to get things done. I choose and buy the stock for the retail business and have purchasing and sales targets set every year; the crucial thing for me is that any profits we make go straight back into the organisation and that helps to keep us free. In many ways it is a role which is autonomous within a large organisation, so I am mostly left to get on with running a small business, which I really enjoy. My

background is a mixture of high street retail management and the arts - which come together nicely in my role.

About 5 years ago I decided to be open about my Christian faith at work; before this point I never spoke about my faith and very rarely spoke about my private life at work. A number of things coalesced to bring me to that point, but the biggest factor was that church and faith had become entirely separate from both friendships and work. I had become isolated and unable to merge the different aspects of my life - which felt very jarring and uncomfortable, not least because my faith had become a rock that underpinned everything else.

This change brought about the most wonderful opening up of my experience, especially at work. I was obviously careful about how I mentioned it, but if asked I would always say where I'd been on a Sunday, or why I would never work on Good Friday for example. I began to form a friendship with the University chaplain who was trying to open an inter-faith centre for staff and students on campus and this enabled me to meet other people of the same and different faiths. My approach is not of the theology that says our work is offered to God and is for God. I am very lucky in that I enjoy my work and enjoy the people I encounter every day, but I see it as a means to enable me to live; God is always present in all situations at work or not. All areas of life are ministry in some form or another and I choose to try and look for these moments - I don't always succeed but my hope is that I can be a small sign.

Often I get asked about the meaning of Christian festivals, and I have even been asked what the Christian response might be in a very difficult and acrimonious staff situation! There are the quiet times for example when I found a young colleague hiding and devastated from the grief of losing her younger brother a month or so earlier, asking what and where is God right now? This situation required all of my faith and all of my mindful presence. Another time I spent time with a customer who was a retired member of the clergy, had lost his faith and needed to speak about his loss and what it meant for him. There have been many other times just like it and they have taught me so much about what and where God is, even in the loss.



I have been asked to pray for people's friends and relatives. These requests have grown over the years and people know I will tell them later when I have lit a candle in my church and

said a prayer for them. I am humbled and constantly amazed at how grateful this makes people. I have started to understand the responsibility of bringing the hope that others want but may not feel. Most of the time it is an absolute privilege to be let into people's lives at a moment where they are needing something, even if I cannot give it. There is no separation between work and home in many ways - people experience life in all its joy and loss wherever they happen to be.

Izzy works in retail and is a member of General Synod for Newcastle Diocese. Images courtesy of National Glass Centre.

Spirit in Stone – Faith in One's Life & Work: Derek Nicholson

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3 v5-6) is a biblical phrase that has resonated in my head as something profound since one of my children received a Baptism card with this reference on it. Whilst on one day it fills me with faith and hope, on other occasions I can only ponder its virtues.

I consider this challenge that the phrase provides is the way I perceive that my own Christian faith life is borne out at home, at church and in my secular working life. When the email request was received from the Editor some weeks ago, knowing that all the pressures of Christmas were imminent (as church warden in interregnum) and I had so much to deal with in my working life, I think I groaned that yet another “challenge” had been offered up to me – how on earth could I,

someone who is not an academic or wise scholar, let alone have any time on my hands be able to “write something about doing your work – and where you might glimpse God in it....”. Well, not one to let anyone down, here I am having “survived” Christmas and writing this before the deadline offered up – like being back at University (or in my case Polytechnic) again!

So I find myself writing at the time of Epiphany and perhaps it is appropriate I reflect on my journey in life and faith to try and find an answer to the question asked. My own faith life began in the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene, Newark Upon Trent where my single parent mother found support and friendship in the church community (and in the Mothers Union). My young life was dominated by church services having become a chorister at the tender age of seven. The choir is extremely rare in that it is endowed to the parish through trust funding since the days of Henry the Eighth (see episode 3 of the latest Great Train Journeys series with Michael Portillo). I “climbed” the ranks and became Head boy as well as a server. My mum was a ringer so our lives were completely intertwined in the Christian yearly diary.

In 1987 I moved to Newcastle to study (and bizarrely now sing in a choir with the Editor’s husband who used to be my lecturer/head of year – small world). This move away gave me the opportunity to explore/review my own faith in many ways, including visiting more evangelical churches and attending Scripture Union. Very swiftly I realised that the traditional catholic environment I had grown up with was very much for me. I met new people of my own age, some of whom attended

church, including the church I have attended all my life since moving to the North East. This gave me sustenance by being with like-minded young people who had a faith and attended church.

During my period of study was also a moment in time when my faith was severely challenged. Being a Nottinghamshire lad I went with a friend to watch the FA cup semi-final at Hillsborough. We were at the other end of the pitch; we were very lucky. The images and memories will stay with me for ever. Many questions of why resonated for a long period after that event. But life goes on and there are always impossible questions that cannot be answered. I ultimately gained strength in the support of parishioners who knew I'd been there and realized that I was a lucky person that day – there but for the grace of God.

After qualifying as a Quantity Surveyor I was fortunate in being offered a job as soon as I graduated. This threw me into the world of private business and commerce, dealing with amongst other things pub and night club refurbishments, dealing with a very different culture of people. Soon after I went through another fundamental life moment when I collapsed at the end of the Great North Run and found myself on the critical list in hospital for a couple of days, and on a dialysis machine for three weeks. This was a faith changing moment again as I recovered and really felt that God had been with me in my recovery and through the love of the friends and parishioners that I had made since arriving at St George's in Newcastle.

My life then moved on and I was indeed blessed with meeting my wife and having three very healthy and wonderful children. Having sung at literally hundreds of weddings in my lifetime the words from the service “God is love and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them” are probably the most important words of faith in my life, and to hear them regularly repeated at others’ weddings each year is a sustaining influence.

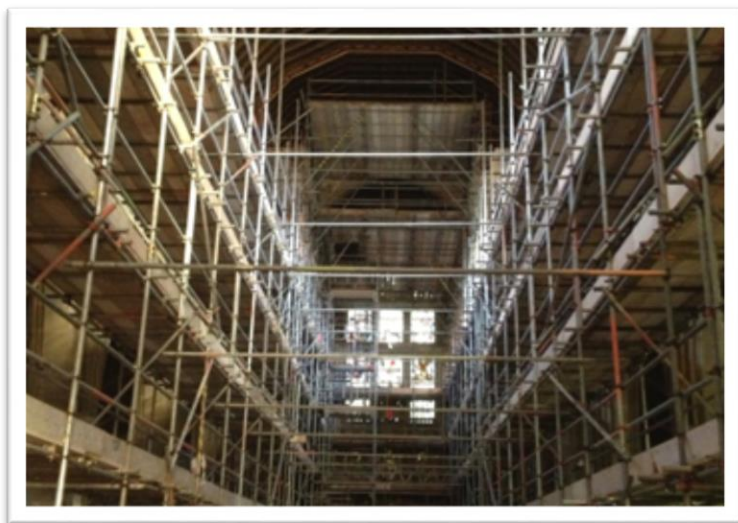
My wife being also of strong faith was a huge support when we went through the parental pressures of seeing one of our children undergo corrective brain surgery for Epilepsy at Great Ormond Street. We both found huge inspiration (and sadness) whilst sitting in the chapel in the hospital.

In reference to the question raised for this article, I very much compare my own faith in my personal work life to that of my wife who is a district nurse. She therefore deals on a constant basis with end of life care, and therefore human mortality and all the questions that this raises for those both with faith, and the secular world we work in. I admire her very much in that context, and in a similar vein when my own faith is being challenged, take comfort in the multi skilled and variety of parishioners I am fortunate to be with; their faith in their weekly worship helps maintain mine when I feel so far removed during the Monday to Friday period of working in a secular environment.

I have worked for a specialist regional Stonemasonry contractor for the last twenty years. The office management team is a very small mixture of a family RC church attendee, those who are C of E or RC but don't attend any regular worship, and one who is atheist. They all know of my own faith and church involvement, especially over the last (nearly) four years whilst I have been churchwarden. That at times has prompted the atheist staff member to query my own faith when she hears of issues (without betraying confidences) that I have to face or deal with and asks the question as to where is the Christian love towards each other – a difficult one to answer.

Similarly it is somewhat difficult to provide a Christian perspective and understanding in a secular world when faced with so many atrocities and evil as well as tragedies. “Where is now thy God” is a phrase from the Howells choral anthem ‘Like as the Hart Desireth the Waterbrooks’ that resonates with me at moments like this. Conversely I believe I have been able to provide an element of comfort to others knowing that my own faith whilst constantly challenged (as it should be from my perspective) is there and perhaps acts as a support through a difficult past year of many funerals of friends and families for staff members. I also keep a small wooden hand cross in my drawer, which helps me focus at moments when the going gets tough.

So whilst the nature of a private commercial specialist building contractor revolves around profit, time pressure, stress, confrontation and exploitation with a large blue collar workforce onsite, I like to believe that my faith does come through in certain circumstances (for example) of heated contractual meetings in providing a voice of conciliation and a willingness to listen and to understand, and through difficult periods of employee reviews and redundancy issues when I endeavour to help manage these with a level of Christian virtue and humility.



How much my own faith is seen by others is a question that I cannot answer, but I believe whilst paradoxically my faith has been even more challenged whilst being church warden (and the issues and problems I and my co-wardens have had to face), it has hopefully made me a better person in how I go about my working life and my interaction with others.



Ultimately the work role and career that I have give me at times a very unique, personal and physical link to glimpse moments with God, as the firm is constantly involved in tendering for and undertaking work on many Ecclesiastical buildings in the North East of England. To view the beauty and majesty and marvel at the craftsmanship of the construction of same by skilled tradesmen from hundreds of years ago, be challenged by what I see when working in areas of urban deprivation and poverty, and having sat in some of the most beautiful cathedrals, climbed to the top of many a church tower, visited the smallest of schemes in a simple Quaker meeting house in the middle of the beauty of the Northumbrian countryside has provided me with very

special moments of contemplation in a busy working day and week, and I am very much blessed for those special moments of tranquillity, awe and wonder in my working life, which help me to seek to 'do God's will' in my working life.

Derek is a Quantity Surveyor and Church Warden among many other roles

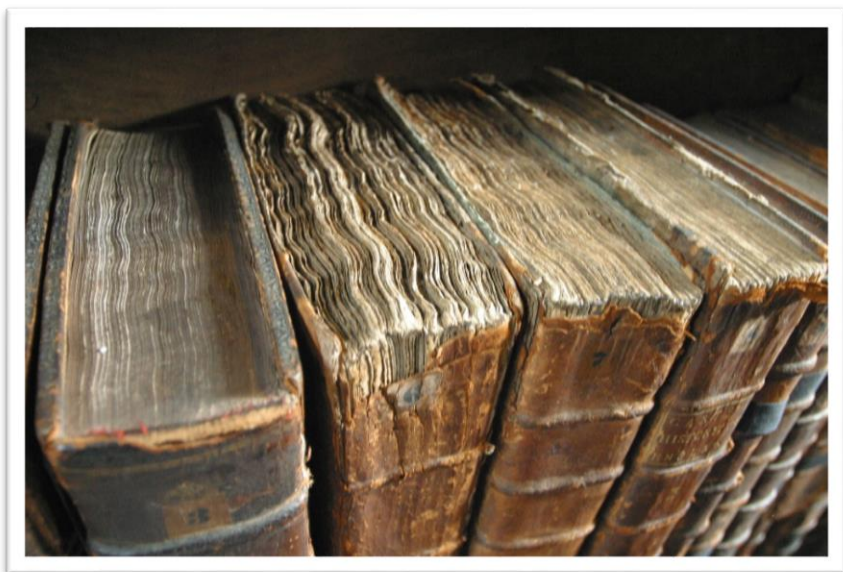
Prayer Diary for People at Work - Phil Aspinall

I hope that you have been making use of the booklet of the Prayer Diary for People at Work (CHRISM 14) which arrived with the October copy of the Journal. I have been very, and pleasantly, surprised by the way in which it has been working for me. I had thought, when I first glanced through it, that the list of job descriptions looked rather dry and regimented. But I have discovered that these simple titles have unleashed a wave of creative praying.

Let me give just a couple of examples, from consecutive days. For the 9th December we were given "Bookmaker". I took this to mean those who take the bets in betting shops and began praying for those who run them and work in them. But my thoughts led me on very quickly to other aspects of gambling and the "gaming industry" both in Casinos and through the many adverts we see on television and on-line. I went on further to think of those who get sucked into gambling, and to pray for friends who are unable to disengage from this addiction.

When I mentioned these experiences to friends, one went down a different creative route, and started talking about those involved in horse-racing, including jockeys and vets – but

I think we might find these separately somewhere else on the lists. Another friend asked if “Bookmaker” might not also mean “those who make books”, and wanted to include prayers for people such as authors, publishers, book binders and printers.



The following day gave us the title “Kennel Hand”. This led me to think of all those who look after animals, and especially people running cat and dog kennels and “holiday homes”. (Why can one say “catteries” but not “doggeries” ?). But again my thoughts went further to pray for the charities that care for injured, abused and neglected animals – and, particularly in this time before Christmas, for those who will receive pets as presents but find it hard or impossible to manage with them.

But a friend also suggested that the title “kennel hand” specifically related to those who care for the hounds used in hunting, and so we began to think about, and talk about, all the people involved in hunting – both for and against – and the issues of sustainability and use of the countryside.

I could expand on many others – indeed, all of them ! “Quartermaster” was a particularly interesting one, and I found myself in the whole world of logistics and “Supply Chain Management”!

So, thank you for the list – it is proving a wonderfully creative process. Maybe you have found something similar. It would certainly be helpful if you would share your experiences of using the prayer list by writing a short piece for the Journal.

Phil Aspinall is a member of the CHRISM committee

A wholly remarkable sermon...

Dear Pauline, as a retired MSE and as a subscriber to the Journal, I wanted to make mention of a wholly remarkable sermon which the Precentor at Durham Cathedral (David Kennedy) preached last Sunday. It was on the theme of the relationship between worship and serving God in daily life. Its closing invitation was “to bring on Monday”. It is not often that one hears an erudite and accessible exploration from the pulpit of faith in daily life, and I wonder if I might invite you to

be in touch with David to see if his sermon might be published in the Journal. Jim Francis

Yes indeed: and here it is. See what you think! P

**Sermon: Durham Cathedral: Four before Advent
2016 Sung Eucharist**

May the words of my lips and the meditations of our hearts be now and always acceptable in your sight, O Lord our strength and our redeemer.

Text: Isaiah 1. 10-18

Theme: Acceptable worship

God forbid that the divine response to what we are doing this morning should be like Isaiah chapter 1. If it is, we are in big trouble.

We must remember how shocking these words are. The setting is God's temple in Jerusalem, and the animal sacrifices were commanded in God's Law. Indeed, the sacrifices were intended not only as an expression of worship and fellowship, but to maintain the holiness of God's people within their special relationship with God.

But, listen again to the language. These divinely instituted sacrifices are now to God as *nothing*. God is literally 'fed up' with them. God has had enough of this sacrificial force-feeding; the sacrifices bring him no pleasure at all.

Moreover, in Temple worship there was the daily offering of incense, which was also divinely instituted. Like animal

sacrifices, the ascending incense was meant to be a pleasing aroma reaching up to heaven, and a symbol of ascending prayer. But, God says, now incense is an *abomination*; it gets right up God's nose.

The Hebrew people kept the Sabbath day and the divinely instituted festivals. But, again listen to the language – God *hates* them, they have become a burden, they are wearisome; God can't be doing with them.

And just in case this all sounds a bit 'high church', then even more seriously, God actually refuses to listen to the *prayers* of the people. Not only does he shut his ears, he won't even look on them – he turns his face away.

Of course, it is tempting to say that this was all sham worship. And yet, I wonder. If we could stand in the Temple in Jerusalem in the eighth century BC, and listen and watch, I wonder if we might think that God's people sounded pretty sincere; after all, there was clearly an awful lot of worship going on.

And in some ways, the situation of the people was similar to our situation. Let me read to you the verses that precede today's lesson:

Daughter Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a shelter in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.

If the Lord of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.

The glory days are long gone; only a remnant is left. Life is tough – will the faith survive? Perhaps all this worship was intended to bring about a reversal of fortunes. And to be honest, they sounded pretty committed.

So, what was the problem? The problem was there was a disconnect between all this Temple worship and what was going on in society.

So, for Isaiah, the worship of God, a worship which should be transformative; a worship that should result in holy living; a worship that should seek and demand God's justice, had simply become an end in itself. It wasn't worked out in the every day.

And Isaiah is saying to us, that when we appear before God in worship, what God reveals to us is his burning holiness; God's passion for just dealing; God's care for his children and especially for those in need. We experience God's active love.

In other words worship in the Temple should lead to the worship of God through everyday living. To love God means to love our neighbour also.

So, God demands,

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

Now our context is different as 21st century Christians in Durham. But there is a truth to which we must attend.

There is a well-known story about Cranmer Hall, our local college for trainee clergy, back in the 1980's. The Tutor in Ethics met the Tutor in Christian worship and the Tutor in ethics said – 'I teach what the New Testament calls worship. You teach religious group dynamics!'

And there is a profound truth in that. If you look at the Greek words that are often translated as *worship* in English, the root meaning of those words is more like ministry, service, or discipleship. This shows that there is a direct connection between what we do when we come together in Church on Sundays and how we live from Monday to Saturday. There must be no contradiction between what we profess in Church and how we live.

The principle is illustrated by good old Zacchaeus. I am sure that his life changing encounter with Jesus led him into worship. I picture him falling at Jesus' feet in utter gratitude. But his worship also led him into service, amendment of life, ethical action

Lord, look, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.

I had a really interesting conversation with someone this past week. He had attended a Cathedral service but said it was so very different from his own Church. I asked him to describe his usual experience of Sunday worship. It went like this: an

extended time of sung praise, followed by a substantial talk, followed by personal prayer ministry. Now this is certainly a popular formula among many growing churches and churches that attract young people. And all that is fine as far as it goes. But, I said, that the Cathedral was an interceding Church and I asked, 'Where does intercession for the world fit in in your worship? And the worrying thing is that there wasn't an answer. And yet, intercession is when we bring before God the world as it is, in all its wonder, need and brokenness. You see, God is not obsessed with the Church, and while he does indeed give attention to us personally, God's heart is for the world. 'God so loved the world'. And when we intercede, then often we know in our hearts that as well as God's action, we are part of the answer to our own prayers:

Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

You see, the fruit of true worship on Sunday is what happens on Monday to Saturday. Worship is bound up with ethics, service, discipleship. And of course, we bring the daily realities of life into our Sunday worship, not least when we intercede.

And without that, it may be that God takes little or no pleasure in our gatherings, our rituals, our music, our festivals. Without that, he may indeed shut his ears and turn his face away.

But thank God that here today, like Zacchaeus, we meet Jesus; we eat and drink the meal of salvation; we re-connect with the

divine passion. Once again, we are changed and we are sent out to love and serve the Lord.

So, bring on Monday, for every day is a day of worship.

David Kennedy, Precentor, Durham Cathedral



**Vocations – Bishop’s Study Day in Guildford:
Ruth Brothwell**

The Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson, is chair of the Vocations Working Group in the Church of England. He has introduced the Guildford Diocese to a major project known as 'Transforming Church, Transforming Lives'. This has 12 goals. 'Vocations' is Goal 5 and it was in the spirit of exploration that the clergy of Guildford met for the Bishop's study day to explore how we might encourage the increase of vocations especially among younger people. The results of the day are interesting for those who support the furtherance of the MSE model.

We started by acknowledging that the Church of England has an aim to grow the number of clergy by 50% from 2020 and beyond. The Guildford Diocesan response to this national challenge includes 'an exciting commitment to provide an extra three curacies a year from 2020 onwards. Internships and a more proactive approach to discernment will be especially important in achieving this, as together we seek to grow a godly and gifted ordained workforce for the future.' (taken from the Guildford publication 'our diocesan vision and 12 transformation goals. 2015). The clergy of Guildford acknowledged that we needed to encourage and foster a sense and culture of vocation.

Do we know who is sitting in our pews we asked?

Might the head of the NHS be there or a senior politician? We agreed that the church is about so much and not just about people wearing funny coloured clothes. We needed to affirm, accept and say thank you to people for their work. We need to be vulnerable and accept the different kinds of vocation

including those of health and politics for example. We shouldn't assume that the church has the only omni-competent people. The trouble is that the baby boomer generation was taught NOT to be vulnerable so many of us need to learn how to be, as the new generation considers vulnerability to be a mark of authenticity.

How do we assess our current culture?

- Our core belief in God results in a church, the body of Christ where everyone has a ministry
- Our core belief in God results in a belief that Jesus Christ is head of ALL, offers service to all – we need to work out how this can be worked out in everyone's everyday lives.

What stories do we tell?

Our language shapes our culture and a culture of vocation is one where everyone listens and creates a space for people to hear God.

- We should pray for vocations and name them in our intercessory prayers. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out workers into the harvest.
- We should identify people with the gift of discernment and not leave it all to the vicar!
- We should grow leaders.
- We have to be talent spotters!

What are we looking for?

- Potential – not the finished product
- People in unexpected places
- Spiritual vitality
- Character (based on the 9 learning outcomes of ordination training is a good start)

We don't want just MORE clergy. But, clergy who are right for the church today, in our time. People who can deal with the realities of today and the situation in which we find ourselves. (I was particularly left thinking about MSE at this point and made a mental note to contact our vocations officer. Would people in work, whether full or part time, feel able to respond to a sense of vocation while staying in work? Would they be encouraged to see and tell the Christian story there?)

For the sake of many – invest in a few

Jesus invited 'the twelve' to be with him – not to do things alone. We are all pioneers – we need to provide a space in our churches for risk and a safe environment where new stuff can be tried out. Potential people should be encouraged to lead groups, take mission away days, take responsibility for tasks – we, the clergy, need to learn how to give out such responsibility and take the risk ourselves. We need to provide opportunities for people – to find role models because if people see people who are a bit like them they are more likely to respond.

We need to look after ourselves – knackered ministers do not recruit well!!

We need to enjoy our own ministry. We should identify what makes us happy.

It was a good day. I left with a sense of some thinking to do and some discussions to have back at base!! Yes, there WAS a message of recruiting to full time stipendiary ministry but it came as part of a larger more encompassing message about everyone's vocation having something to offer the body of Christ. And beyond the church.... We need to realise that some holiness exists outside of the church! The Eucharist belongs to the people.

Let us ask ourselves 'how is God using us in the world?'

Ruth Brothwell is a member of the CHRISM Committee

An Invitation to Meet the Worker Priests: Phil Aspinall

You are invited to join the annual international conference of the Worker Priests which will be held, as always, at Pentecost which this year is over the weekend from Friday 2nd to Monday 5th June 2017. This year our German colleagues are organising the event, and we will meet at Kardinal Hengsbach Haus, the Diocesan Retreat House in the city of ESSEN, in the heart of the Rohr region where many people have been left behind by the collapse of large scale industry.

During the preparatory meeting held in Paris on the 3rd December last year, we agreed the theme, and some questions

to aid our discussions, for reflection before and during the conference:

Condemned to Insecurity?

- 1. Our experiences of work and of life in the current situation in our societies**
- 2.**
 - a. Where do the fears and feelings of insecurity come from - for us and for the people around us?**
 - b. What view do we take of the rise of nationalisms around Europe?**
- 3. What helps us in this situation to create together a way of stability, security and confidence?**

As usual, we are asked to prepare a paper of 2 pages with our reflections on this theme to send to the groups in the other European countries. Even if you cannot attend, please send me your thoughts (in English which it is possible for me to translate into French!) by 1st April 2017.

During the conference, there will be opportunities for all the participants to share their thoughts on this theme, and we plan to increase the time spent working in small groups. There will, as always, be time for a visit related to the theme.

Do come and take this opportunity to meet with these interesting and committed groups of people, who always challenge our way of life and our Christian living. You will be made very welcome.

The Germans have already sent out a letter of invitation, so please contact Phil Aspinall (philaspinall0@gmail.com) as soon as possible if you are interested in participating.

Book Review

Theology of Work – Bible Commentary – Volume 5 - Romans through Revelation

The Theology of Work Project. Published by Hendrickson 2015

I was delighted to be introduced to this work in all its volumes while at the Chrism Summer Conference, It felt as if it was very much needed, filling a hole in Biblical theology right now. I approached them with glee and agreed to write up a review on volume 5.

As this was produced by the Theology of Work project I anticipated a Bible commentary which would explore the subject of work as it was portrayed and experienced in scripture. I anticipated learning something of how our great worker God was understood by those who followed him in the early years and who in the main worked themselves. I anticipated something to provide a balance to other commentaries, rooting itself in the type of life I led.

I fear I was disappointed.

We all understand I am sure that the world of work offers many opportunities for ministry and of course living out the Christian life. It is there, in our 'normal' lives that we will experience sin, both ours and others. It is there that issues of injustice and unfairness will be ever visible. Where we will face

head on issues of discrimination and where some people will be faced with issues of discipline and righteousness for all. Most good commentaries will help us to explore how the words of scripture address these problems. Living out discipleship within our daily lives will prove the justice and love of God to us, aided and abetted by the wise words of those who might have gone before. So it is with this volume, and I can only speak for Volume 5 exploring as it does the words of biblical books starting with Paul's letter to the Romans through to John's Revelation.

An example from Romans chapter 3;

Judgment, the source of broken relationships (Romans 3:1-20)

The chapter starts by asking 'what can be done with a world of people separated from God by idolatry and from one another by judgment? God's true justice is the answer.' It goes on to explore the terminology of justice and righteousness explaining Paul's use of the Greek word for justice and its various forms. It talks of Paul's use of the word (36 times in Romans) and how he interchanges the words to mean the same thing. The book asks 'can we see concrete implications at work? It recognises that people make false judgements about one another and that these are the root of broken relationships and injustice. 'If a manager and employee disagree about over the employee's performance review which of these causes greater damage – the performance gap or the hostility arising for their judgement?'

I can certainly see that this is one example of how work based issues arising can be seen in the light of scripture and yet I feel that any commentary on our reaction as people to just criticism, might pick upon an example such as this. I would have hoped for an exploration of how God's justice and righteousness might be found at work within the sphere of performance reviews for instance and the responsibility held by anyone reviewing another to hold God's justice in their hands responsibly. The piece concludes that 'God's grace can bring reconciliation and justice in a factory, office block or petrol station just as fully as in a cathedral, abbey or church. Paul's gospel is not only for the church but also for the whole world.'

Who is this book written for then? The Christian who does not understand God outside of the church? The church go-er who cannot see God outside of Sunday services? I believe the words can help the church based minister, whether ordained or not, who might not understand the issues faced each day by those who go to work on Monday. The foreword explains that the book tried to fill a gap by applying faith to issues at work. It tries to address what it sees as 'a great divide between the leadership of the church and the everyday lives of the people they are called to equip.' To help them apply scripture to relevant and topical situations – although I fear for them if they have not experienced the situations for themselves. And if they have, or do, then this book is not adding much to the many treatises readily available.

I also found myself disagreeing a bit with some of the theology, which is good because it pushes me to go and find out for myself. (As a non-Greek student I wonder, did Paul really interchange words emanating from an historical Jewish perspective or is it a fault of our translations?)

I am sorry – I expected so much more and am aware of the time and scholarship held within the pages. Let's push this book towards our church based ministers. I feel though, that we MSEs might still have a gap – and any gap analysis will aim to find a way to fill it. Come on scholars...and MSEs!

Ruth Brothwell

New Book Published

The Worker Priests after Vatican II: Faithfulness Reclaimed.

Tangi CAVALIN and Nathalie VIET-DEPAULE (Ed.) - In French

Just 50 years ago, the Roman Catholic Church rethought its relationship with “the World” during the Second Vatican Council and reauthorised priests to enter into work in factories and construction works. After the sudden interruption in 1954, hope was reborn. In order to mark this event and to restate the relevance of the motivation of the Worker Priests, the national organisation (ENPO) had wanted to organise a colloquium in December 2015 at the Labour Exchange in St Denis, Paris.

Under the direction of Tangi Cavalin and Nathalie Viet-Depaule on the first day of the colloquium, various

contributors analysed the facets of the religious, social and cultural history which stirred up the presence of priests in the factories after 1965. During the second day, philosophers and theologians set out to identify the characteristics of our modern society to establish the significant elements for structuring an ordained ministry in a church at the service of humanity.

The proceedings of this colloquium, enriched by the contributions brought from the regional events held to celebrate this same 50th anniversary, are an essential contribution for keeping open the reflection between all those who are concerned with the future, in the Church and in society, of what was and is still the motivation of the Worker Priests.

336 Pages; Published 4th
October 2016;

ISBN 9782811116781
25,00 €

If you are interested in a copy, please contact Phil Aspinall (philaspinal0@gmail.com) or for more information, please look at:

<http://www.karthala.com/signes-des-temps/3104-les-pretres-ouvriers-apres-vatican-ii-une-fidelite-reconquise-.html>

Events and Updates

Coming soon!

'The Kingdom of Heaven is Like ...'

It is more than 10 years since we looked at what a Parable of the Kingdom might look like today. We re-visit the theme and explore parables for the here and now.

Reflective Weekend at The Briery, Ilkley, West Yorkshire 24 - 26 February 2017

(<http://www.briery.org.uk/wordpress/>)

Cost, from dinner on Friday evening to lunch on Sunday, inclusive: £140 (members and spouses); £150 (non-members)

Grants may be available from your Church to cover all or part of the cost – apply now to get their support! A limited number of bursaries are available to enable attendance. Please ask CHRISM for details or a receipt.

To book contact Rob Fox, 8 Manor Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE7 7FS as soon as possible

Email: rob.fox36@gmail.com

Coming later!

CHRISM Annual Conference 2017, Westminster College, Cambridge 14th – 16th July *‘Ministry in modern ways of working’*

Update from the Church of England’s Shared Ministry Network

Following a recent meeting of the Steering Group we are pleased to be able to update you on developments, and in particular to provide some details about our next conference.

NEXT CONFERENCE: 19th – 21st October 2017

This will take place in the Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire, following the same timings as the last conference, 12noon on Thursday 19th to lunchtime on Saturday 21st October. Shaped around Mark's story of the feeding of the 5,000, the title is "Bread, Fish and Expectancy: Growing Disciples, Sharing Ministry". Our aim is to focus on the theme of growing disciples and leaders through team work. Speakers will include the Revd Dr Roger Walton, President of the Methodist Conference, who is a published writer on discipleship (including "Disciples Together" and "The Reflective Disciple"); and the Revd Canon Gordon Dey, who has developed a whole church discipleship programme 'Jesus Shaped People'.

We hope that this will inspire and excite as many of you as possible to attend. Our aim, given the national church's focus on collaborative ministry, is to open the conference up to a wider constituency – if you know of anyone who might be interested, please let them know.

Further details on booking will be made available early in 2017.

FACEBOOK GROUP

We have set up a new Facebook Group "Shared Ministry Network". We would love you to join and be active on this group to make it worthwhile. There are two Shared Ministry Network Facebook pages: please make sure that you ask to join the 'Shared Ministry Network Group' rather than just following the 'Shared Ministry Network Page'.

We value your prayers as we seek to discern how best to resource and inspire dioceses, parishes and people in re-imagining, theologically and practically, mission-shaped collaborative ministry for the challenges of the 21st century.
Penny Evans on behalf of the SM Network Steering Group

Resources

The Kingdom at Work Project Bulletin 9

The Kingdom at Work Project is an initiative led by the Methodist Church which explores how the gifts of the Kingdom can be offered to the world through engagement with work. Bulletin 9 published in November 2016 focuses on the concept of 'Servant Leadership'. It contains a wide variety of reflections including several contributed by members of MODEM. Further information and copies of the Bulletin can be obtained from Deacon Dr David Clark at:

david@clark58.eclipse.co.uk 01629 810172

Hill View, Burton Close Drive, Bakewell DE45 1BG

Past issues of the Bulletin can be downloaded from -

www.saltleytrust.org.uk/faith-and-work-in-theological-education-and-training/

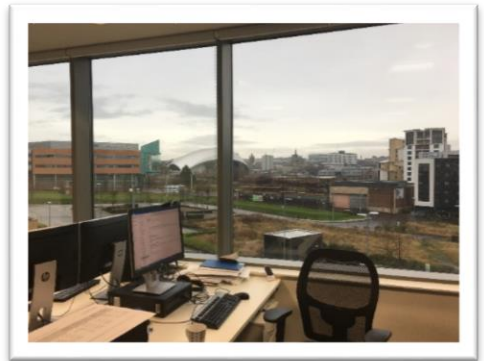
And finally ...

Ignorance is bliss?

The mouths of the ungodly

(Or perhaps not?)

Utter unconsidered ideas,
Discard reflection
In their desire for change,
Fail to hear
The voices of the ordinary
Or to imagine action by others:
'This is for us to do!'
Casual – without respect
For those he's come to meet;
The gift of power to more
Declined as unimportant,
A worthless jigsaw piece.
Instead technology will link
Need to solution (if it exists),
An operative – skilled?
Only required (for now)
To enter data...



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

CHRISM is the National Association of CHRistians In Secular Ministry

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

To further this aim, CHRISM publishes a quarterly Journal, releases occasional papers and organises an annual retreat.

Conferences are held regularly and worldwide links pursued.

CHRISM welcomes members, both lay and ordained, from all Christian denominations, encourages them to be active within their own faith communities and to champion ministry in and through secular employment.

If you would like confidential support as an MSE, please contact any member of the Committee

Further information may be obtained from the Secretary or the Journal Editor.

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www.chrism.org.uk

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