

# ***Ministers-at-Work***

*The Journal for Christians in  
secular ministry*

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## Editorial

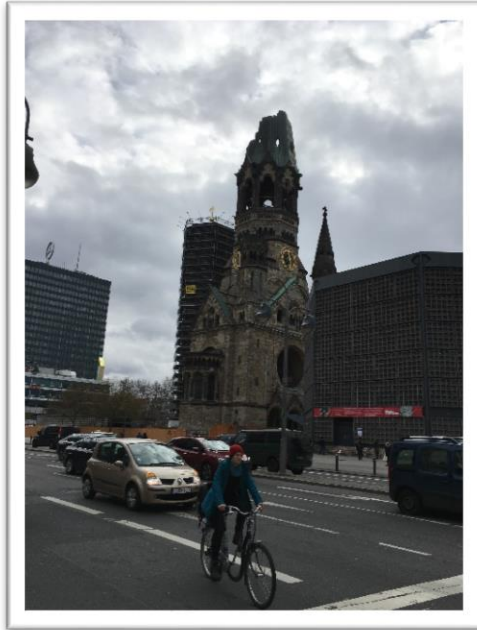
Happy New Year! Are we bridge builders and communicators? Are we translators of world to church and vice versa? Is our ministry about taking church out to people for whom it is no longer accessible (through patterns of work / life or because it is an alien culture?) Might MSEs be more like anthropologists, examining and seeking to interpret the church for the world – at least until we ‘go native’ and forget how strange it all is? Or should we be – and are we - a pain – constantly asking

questions about the churches we connect with – as well as the world we inhabit - because we look at it with a different pair of spectacles? And are we also a conduit for prayer since that is very often requested – even by non-religious people and people of other faiths. These are just some of the ideas which emerged from the discussion at Birmingham last autumn, and which Phil has summarised below for us.

Working life continues to shift and change. With the publication of the Government's response to the Taylor report, the ambition that all work should be fair and decent, and that employers might offer opportunities that give individuals realistic scope to develop and progress seems a little closer. However, there are many competing agendas.

I recently took a trip to Berlin, and was confronted by the remains of the Wall and the scale of the damage done by allied bombing. The massive inflation and acute poverty which the allies colluded in between the wars provided a launchpad for Hitler. His decisions about writing some groups (political opponents, people with disabilities, Jews, LGBTI people and many others) out of the script entirely were promoted even in school text books. The grief of those who lost loved ones was powerful and crossed boundaries. Museums and memorials connected with this story were all free and open to all.

Reading Phil's reflections from Ilbenstadt shortly afterwards, I was touched by the openness and honesty of the participants, but also acutely aware of the political and social parallels in our



world now. Phil poses the challenge to us: How and where do we meet people who hold extreme views and how do we engage with them? It is an important question. If we are to address some of the difficulties which face us now, we will need to seek dialogue even with people whose politics we don't like, and use more collaborative approaches to address change towards the Kingdom.

As for the remainder of the journal, two of our longer standing members offer very warm tributes to and memories of Jim Cummins. There are two book reviews and advance notice of several events and study days. Enjoy it!

*Pauline Pearson*

## **Reinventing Ministry in Secular Employment: *CHRISM Day Conference, Birmingham, 18th September 2018* - Phil Aspinall**

In the last edition of Ministers-at-Work, Pauline asked for reflections on the conclusions from the day and the “Questions for Discussion”. Here are some of the comments noted during the afternoon discussions and the feedback from the small group work (trying to use inclusive, non-Anglican language). I hope they will provide a basis for further debate and help us prioritise our efforts.

[What is MSE for? How can it make a difference?](#)

MSE is for: God, the people we work with, our customers and other stakeholders

Being the church for people who don't go to church

Being a “thorn in the flesh” - to challenge church institutions over Faith and Work

Making the workplace and church intelligible to each other – being the bridge: telling church people what work is like *now*

It is for God – and it is about God's calling. We are called to be there, in that work

Being authentic in a particular place. An Incarnational presence – being and/or doing

“Being” the whole of life being Holy – all of life as a vocation

Healing / Reconciliation / Forgiveness

Kingdom values – managing conflicts; care for the individual – managing differences

MSE is for prayer: for sustaining prayer, the prayers people ask us for (often of other faiths), prayers to take to the altar

Who do you come into contact with ? Our networks – including contacts with other faiths

Postman Pat – constantly coming in contact with people through his work – he is the Minister in that village.



MSE in church – for other people in work – to represent that you can be a Christian in work – how it is possible to do business ethically

To equip the whole people of God to exercise their ministry day-by-day (so that in the end we won't need MSEs and Chaplains)

Enabling stipendiary colleagues to understand the present world of work

What would we like MSE to look like in 3-5 years ?

More women

Younger (but there are many younger ordinands with no real experience of the working world)

Visible and recognised – supported by the church authorities

Responsive to changing work patterns: engaged in gig economy, contract work, self-employment, home working, hot-desking

Presence of MSEs at colleges / courses

Understanding of training and initial on-the-job training – more realistic expectations

Make use of social media more fully

For MSE to become the norm – change the structures; carry on being pioneers; maintain relationships – we are not alone

More radical change to the system to allow flexible deployment (not at local/area church level). Bottom up as well as top down.

MSE part of a radical vision – using people's individual skills



Maybe a “gig ecclesiology” - alternating stipendiary and non-stipendiary roles

Find the SSMs who are MSE – find out where God is doing something and join in

Work with keen Church Leaders and SSM officers

Encourage people to become MSE by:

- No requirement for official agreement from the employer
- Education of people managing vocations
- Expand training to explore work-based themes

Conclusions - Looking for the 3 or 4 core issues to sum up all the above

- Continue to follow a calling of being where we are - prayerfully, sacramentally
- Find, encourage and support the people who are doing MSE already
- Work with the parts of the church institutions which are open to the concept
- Work with training institutions to share the vision and enable people to think about their work

A note on action:

In relation to seeking to overturn or perhaps soften the current Church of England requirement for official agreement from the employer (mentioned above) we (the CHRISM committee) are currently corresponding with MinDiv and

engaging with General Synod members to find out how we might best influence this aspect of the selection criteria.



## **Good Work? - Rob Fox**

Readers may recall the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices, published in July 2017.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-work-the-taylor-review-of-modern-working-practices>

In December the Government published its long-awaited response, on how it was going to implement the Review's recommendations.

At the heart of the recommendations was an overarching ambition that all work should be fair and decent, and for employers to offer opportunities that give individuals realistic scope to develop and progress. Most of the recommendations were accepted in February 2018, and 4 consultations on how to implement them launched, covering:

- Employment status (joint with HMT and HMRC)
- Increasing transparency
- Agency workers
- Enforcement

Employment status has long been a bug-bear of HMRC, with numerous attempts over the past 25 years to circumvent ‘employed’ status so as to reduce taxation (by paying Corporation Tax rates, which generally means paying less than if Income Tax were in play) and National Insurance contributions (the worker pays less as self-employed NICs are lower, and the employer doesn’t pay anything). The flip side to this is that, particularly in the case of the lower paid, this transfers risk on to the individual in ways they may not be able to absorb, and removes from them the legal protections given by ‘employed’ status. Generally, self-employment is a more attractive option for those with scarcer skills commanding higher reward, but less attractive for those with readily replaceable skills and low earning power. There are of course many exceptions on both sides; for some in lower paid work the extra flexibility of self-employment is a big plus. Taylor identified that those employees that work intermittently over a period of time for the same employer can find it difficult to gain or access some employment rights, therefore stability of employment contract is a centre-piece of the legislation to give the Review effect.



The Review looked in detail at the role of agency workers in the UK economy, an area in which abuses have been highlighted often. Agency work can be seen as labour market flexibility that helps businesses to meet fluctuating demands (such as in seasonal businesses), but it also suits many agency workers, allows them to work as and when they choose. However, the Review, and subsequent consultations, found that protections are not strong enough where this model of employment transfers all the risk to agency workers. The Government has concluded that, fundamentally, prolonged use of these contracts is unfair and accepts Taylor's recommendation to ban the use of this type of contract to avoid agency workers' equal pay rights.

The Industrial Strategy published by the Government as a framework for implementation has 5 “foundational principles of quality work”:

- satisfaction
- fair pay

- participation and progression
- well-being, safety and security
- voice and autonomy

which will be monitored by the Industrial Strategy Council.

The recent above inflation rise in the National Minimum Wage was trumpeted as a contribution to fair pay. Attention was also drawn by Government to employers who retain all or part of staff tips – an important matter in those sectors affected.

How effective the strategy will be in meeting its own criteria for Good Work, and there are plenty of voices calling for greater definition on this, remains to be seen. The strategy has been tentatively welcomed by campaigning groups as at least a step in the right direction. Common criticisms include that it does nothing to address the mismatch on employment status between tax law and employment law, so that incentives to foist false self-employment on the lower paid remain.

Will this strategy make a real and long-term difference? The proof of the pudding will be in the eating.



## Jim Cummins RIP

*In the last edition we had just received the sad news that Jim died on the evening of Friday, 5th October 2018. Now MSE friends offer tributes from their memories of Jim.*

### Tribute to Jim Cummins - Dorrie Johnson

‘Come on, let’s walk’, Jim said on my first visit to Skyborry (where Jim lived with Esther and their family in the same house that he’d lived as a child) and walk we did - up and up and up the beautiful hills which were part of his farmland. These hills, to which he raised his eyes and from whence came his help and his despair - were hugely important in Jim’s life as were the striking black cattle, the sheep, ducks, hens, dogs, cat... I was challenged to identify different breeds of sheep, remember and name them. (Sorry, Jim, I’ve forgotten again, now).



It was always a delight to me that conversation could switch in a second from sheep to orchards, to dogs, to theology, to how Jim and his wife, Esther, had met - a meeting he told me about several times, relishing in the memory. Jim had left his parish-based ministry

behind him when I met him and was now a farmer, a shop keeper and a traveller (Jim's word) in farm implements (Clunside Sales and Services). He knew farmers from miles around. These were the people Jim served as a minister - and welcomed their ministry to him.

This relationship - work colleagues and ministers (in both directions) was a constant in Jim's life; ministry and secular employment - integrated, intrinsic. This was also a constant in our conversation when we met - conferences, meetings, weekends, at Jim's home, all the way to a railway station when I once gave him a lift late one day - theology, laughter, challenge, exploration, Jim's self-deprecation, questions. Heady stuff which I loved. Jim was an astute man but he wore his wisdom lightly.

Jim's sense of humour was always close to the surface, evident in his letters and cards, too. I won't have been the only one to receive a photograph of a large bullock led by Jim and labelled 'The Ox and the Ass return to the Stable'. It was Jim's theology, though, that I loved and admired. To some extent we talked about it each time we met - in everyday language and/or application. Reflecting after a fox had found access to their ducks (it was Esther who had found them) three dead, others terribly wounded ('necked'), Jim commented, 'a daily paradox that God's destruction goes hand in hand with his creation and often very cruelly - like the Cross?'

I may not have all the details correct now, but Jim told of receiving a questionnaire asking about the use of oils in church services. Several questions - do you use oil in ... and Jim answering no, no, no. Until one question asked about use of oil in his ministry and suddenly Jim could answer, yes! In his farming ministry he used tens of thousands of pounds worth of oil.

We had a break in Wales this summer (2018) and were made welcome, as always, at Jim's and Esther's home, to meet a Jim already losing many memories. I was privileged to meet him once more shortly before he died. I had felt that he would always be there to call on. I'll miss him terribly.

I come back to Esther - Jim's wife, partner, friend, lover, rock, encourager and stabiliser. Jim was, at least partly, who he was because of Esther, so I pay tribute to her, too. Each visit, each phone call has included Esther. Jim would not have had it otherwise. While missing Jim, remember Esther and their family.

Somewhere, perhaps, Jim is happy with sheep and goats, doves and swine.





## Memories of Jim Cummins - Felicity Smith

How does one capture the 'Jim-ness' of Jim ? He was a gentleman - he was very kind and was always supportive of each of us in CHRISM. He listened to our stories and shared our concerns.

Jim had a great sense of humour and an endless fund of funny stories about his own life experiences. His love for Esther and his children was the greater part of the fibre of his being.

Reflective weekends usually coincided with lambing time and as a farmer it greatly concerned him that he had left Esther to cope alone, so he would stay in regular phone contact with her throughout the weekend. On Reflective Weekends Jim, who was an energetic early morning riser, could be seen returning from his morning walk just as the rest of us were starting to get up!

Jim and Esther were always very generous with their hospitality and it was lovely to visit them and be taken round the farm in Powys, and to follow Jim plus the dogs up the extremely steep hill behind their farm up to Offa's Dyke path at the top. I was always way behind him and I know that Jim walked up there every day until shortly before his last days.

One of my happiest memories last Summer was when I visited Jim and Esther at the farm and we sat out in their garden in the sunshine having tea, looking across the Skyborry valley and sharing with Jim his favourite view.

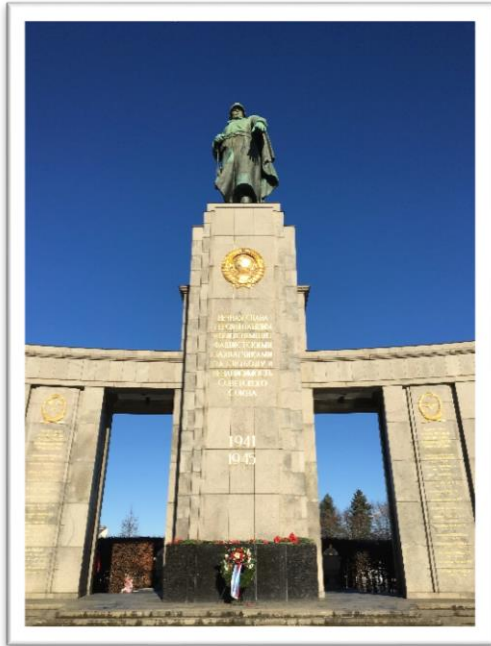
*May he rest in peace and rise in glory.  
RIP Jim, good and faithful servant.*

## **Meeting of the Arbeitergeschwister (Working brother and sisters) at Ilbenstadt, Frankfurt, October 2018 - Phil Aspinall**

The meeting comprised the usual mix of some 25 worker priests, protestant ministers, lay theologians, Little Sisters, lay men and women from Germany Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland – all committed to the Worker Priest tradition of “being with” people in the Monde Ouvriere. As always, we met at Haus St Gottfried, a huge former monastery in the countryside outside Frankfurt.

It proved to be a very disturbing and deep weekend. Rereading my notes as I have been writing this has frequently reduced me to tears – there were so many deep, personal, disturbing challenging, encouraging and motivating stories. And told in a safe environment among friends. But there were so many images that they would fill a book. So I need to preserve the personal confidences but I feel that it is important to open a window into this world.

The invitation letter contained an introduction to the theme and the usual three questions to facilitate individual contributions to the round table on the Saturday. When I received this and saw the first question, I wondered in what sort of direction it would take us: “Which personal (family) background shapes me as I look at the movement to the right in society today ?” I should explain the way the round table works; everyone is given as long as they need for an update on changes in their life and work and their own personal reflection on the theme. So this takes all of Saturday morning and much of the afternoon.



The depth of the revelations which followed were highly personal and frequently tearful – I learnt more about people than I had ever heard before, as people talked about the guilt that passed down the generations and the effect it had on families and them individually. Some people spoke of fathers who had been Russian Prisoners of War – one told of the help he had received from a Russian woman “We have been told for 60 years: US good, Russia bad – but I know a good Russian woman”. Others remembered a grandparent killed in the Normandy landings (and visiting the grave with their father), or their own experience in a Nazi school. Someone reflected “after a visit to Birkenau [concentration camp], did I work for 36 years in a care home to expiate my father’s guilt?”

Some of us followed this up in one of the working groups which took the theme: “War child, war grandchild – keep silent”. With the mix of the 4 different nations there were obviously different perspectives and histories. In this group we continued the sharing of memories – the experience of family life where the women had to be the stronger as the men were so traumatised when they returned.

We then moved on to more usual questions of where we see this movement to the right today, the effect it has on us and the things we can do about it. Most surprising to me was the number of people who said they were not directly engaged with anti-right groups and protests. But there were many images of resistance, from a Streetfest for Democracy in Germany to support for democratic movements in Brazil in the face of the recent political changes. Many found that their colleagues had right-wing populist views or live in areas where the right wing operate, witnessing AfD (Alternative for Germany) meetings in the town square; even younger people in their church congregations a very conservative and display a casual racism, as do the users of social service provisions, such as soup kitchens. And, of course, people who identify as Christians are involved in the AfD.

I am left with the challenge to us. How and where do we meet such people ? and how do we engage with them ?– or are we insulated or isolated from this part of our society?

For my own meagre input, I had researched some articles on the Football Lads Alliance protest march in London the previous weekend (now with a D in front of it, for “Democratic”), and the counter protest against it. And Rob had helpfully directed me to

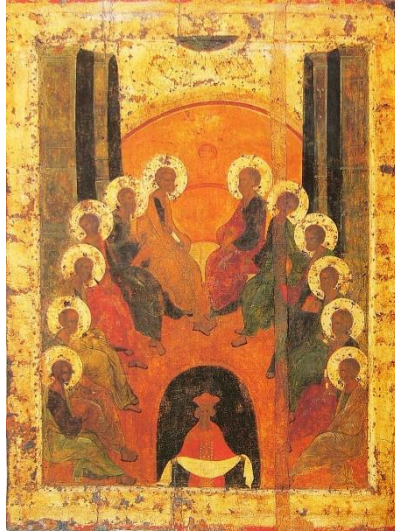
articles about Steve Bannon's efforts to form The Movement to facilitate populist right-wing parties around Europe.

After the weekend I went down to Munich to stay with family and discovered several exhibitions in Museums about the birth and rise of the NSDAP (National Socialist Democratic Workers Party) in Munich. It led me to many thoughts about discussions from the weekend, and not least the uneasy sense of Munich attempting to expiate its own sense of guilt.

The Eucharist we shared on the Saturday evening brought together the pain that had been expressed. A simple sharing of the presence of Christ, with a real sense of communion – and the only piece of paper we had was a Eucharistic prayer, from which we each said a section in turn.

Sunday morning brought more practical matters, beginning with the usual round of news from the different nations. I did, inevitably, have an inquisition about Brexit! Several had seen the People's vote protest from the previous weekend in the media and so thought a second vote was a foregone conclusion.

The German-speaking Working Brothers and Sisters meet twice each year at Haus St Gottfried, Ilbenstadt near Frankfurt. Their meetings are always challenging and stimulating – but you would be made very welcome. The dates for this year are 10-12 May and 11-13 October 2019. Do please contact Phil if you would like more information.



## **An Invitation to Meet the Worker Priests**

Many of you were able to meet with the European Worker Priests during the annual conference held in Manchester last year. You are invited to join this year's annual international conference which will be held, again, at Pentecost which this year is over the weekend from Friday 7th to Monday 10th June 2019. This year our German colleagues are organising the event, and we will meet at Nell Breuning Haus in Herzogenrath close to Aachen. The nearest airports are Maastricht or Dusseldorf.

During the preparatory meeting held in Paris on the 1st December last year, we agreed a theme intentionally focussed on the world of work. We are asked to use this to aid our discussions and for reflection before and during the conference:

**In what ways am I (are we) changed by our experience in a world of work affected by particular economic changes.**

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 us to translate into French!) **by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.**

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 to 3 days to allow more opportunities to work in small groups. There will, as always, be time for a visit related to the theme – this year to Heerlen in the Netherlands (only half an hour away), a former mining town.

The Germans have already sent out a letter of invitation, so please contact Phil Aspinall (contact details on cover) as soon as possible if you are interested in participating. Formal registration will be needed by Easter.

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.

## **Ministry in Secular Retirement**

- Retirement from our secular employment is an inevitable part of our calling to be an MSE in work.
- Retirement is something which affects all our colleagues, as a natural part of our working lives
- As with so many issues, if we as MSEs don't reflect on this, it is unlikely others will.

The first CHRISM group which considered this, which met about 12 years ago, collected its thoughts and produced CHRISM Paper 5 'MSEs and Retirement'. A second such group, comprising a second wave of members who were becoming retired, met about 6 years ago. This second group decided, in the end, that they had nothing to add to CHRISM 5. But it is clear that each generation of MSEs who retire from their paid work need time to reflect on that transition and to discuss it together.

The committee have agreed to convene a working group to consider MSE and Retirement in 2019. **If you have just retired, or are currently planning to retire, you may have reflections to offer** on the theology and practice of retirement from paid work as it is encountered in the current political economic and social climate. Please get in touch with Sue Cossey if you would like to contribute.





## **‘A Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing’**

*Comments were invited on a draft paper ‘A Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing’ written by a working party following a debate in the Church of England’s General Synod in July 2017. We thought that though it was Anglican it might be of interest to colleagues from other denominations, not least for its theological analysis.*

*The paper was available at*

*<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/supporting-clergy-health-and-wellbeing/proposed-covenant>*

*Comments were required by 31 December 2018.*

### **Our official response:**

CHRISM members believe this proposed act of Synod provides an excellent opportunity to ensure that MSE/SSM ministry is fully recognised by Synod and the work and need of care of all ministers within the Church of England is taken into account.

The following are comments from members of our committee:

"The tone is perhaps too reflective of parochial ministry and under-recognizes other expressions, such as MSE;

- responsibility for clergy welfare (however described) is inconsistent across dioceses and other Church institutions, with no national standards;

- a comment was made this week by a parish minister that in the past the first port of call for clergy for pastoral or other support was the Archdeacon, but that role has in many cases become managerial;

- it is often unclear on diocesan websites who has overall responsibility for clergy well-being (even if individuals or agencies that can give practical help may be listed).

Part of the long-term solution here might be to re-work the institutional structure. Central bodies (such as MinDiv) should, subject to approval by Synod, be empowered to direct standards to which Diocese must adhere. Clergy well-being would be a good place.

Affecting clergy wellbeing the following suggestions might be considered as part of this initiative:

- replacing the parish as the primary unit of clergy deployment,

- licensing all clergy to the Diocese as a whole, not a parish;

- changing the role of Area Dean from 'first among equals' to having pastoral oversight of all licensed ministers, paid and ordained, in the Deanery;

- creating and deploying teams on a Deanery basis, appointing first the Area Dean, then a stipendiary administrator (to undertake all legal functions falling on the Deanery and its constituent parishes), then adding stipendiary, self-supporting,

Reader and Lay ministers according to the needs of the Deanery and availability of resources within the Diocese;

- appointing a ministers' welfare officer for the Diocese as a senior member of staff.

The above structure should enable the preventative approach advocated by the report to operate effectively and provide a clear context for the continuing need for curative care.

Inclusion could be made of reference in the report to the Working Time Regulations. Whilst the WTR do not apply to stipendiary clergy, the care provision should, I think, be for all ministers, lay and ordained. The WTR are not there to restrict but to point up that health and well-being are not promoted by working excessive hours. Stipendiary clergy are as much in need of regular breaks, rest and holidays and a cap on working over-long hours as anyone else."

We commend our thoughts to you and thank you all very much indeed for the immense amount of work undertaken in this draft process. We look forward to the next stage!!

**Ruth Brothwell – Moderator of CHRISM**





## **A personal response to the draft Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing**

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to offer some thoughts on the draft Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing, which remains open for comment until today.

As a lifelong member of the Church of England, a consultant psychiatrist of ten years standing (with a particular interest in psychological therapies), and now an ordinand at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, there is much in both the overall approach and specific details of the draft covenant which I heartily support. The overall goals of shifting towards a preventative focus, stress on shared and co-ordinated responses, achieving cultural change and being pragmatic seem to me well judged. The adoption of a limited number of key recommendations, accompanied by a drive to initiate ongoing

dialogue throughout the church on the issues involved, fits well with the pragmatic and collaborative nature of the report, and I believe that the issues on which specific recommendations have been made are central to achieving the goals identified.

Despite my overall support however, there are some areas where I feel more work would be beneficial.

As someone currently training for ordained Ministry in Secular Employment (MSE), I am extremely conscious of the specific challenges and opportunities associated with this form of ministry, which I think it is fair to say remains low profile and poorly understood within the Church of England. Although I recognise that the Working Party which produced the draft intended to focus their discussion on parochial clergy, rather than to exclude non-parochial clergy (p6, para 11), it seems to me that Self-Supporting Ministers in general, and Ministers in Secular Employment in particular (whose secular work places are, by definition, of explicit concern to the church) are sadly invisible within this document. Given the significant proportion of ordained Church of England ministers who fall into these groups, this seems to me at the very least a missed opportunity.

Much of what I have read and heard whilst pursuing my own vocational journey as an MSE suggests that the ideological, if not numerical, hegemony of parochial ministry within the Church of England serves MSEs poorly, leaving them undervalued and poorly understood, with MDRs for instance rarely exploring their workplace ministry. Whilst I recognise

that the Covenant cannot address the many specific issues which have come before the Working Party (para 9), it seems to me that unless the Covenant is seen by MSEs as obviously applying to them as much as their parochial colleagues, it risks falling at the first hurdle in its important aims. Given that section 19 (the Minister as Public Figure) and its associated discussion questions already includes material on the balance of time spent within and outside the church, I wonder if this might be an appropriate point at which some explicit acknowledgement of the specific situation of those working as MSEs could be introduced.

I believe the inter-related commitments of ministers themselves, the local church and the wider church envisaged in this document are a positive way of expressing the relational, collaborative and mutually accountable nature of ordained ministry (see introductory paragraphs for sections 17 and 19), as well as allowing for the pragmatic recognition that should one relationship break down for some reason (eg between the minister and the local church) the relationships with and commitments made by the third party to the covenant (in this case the wider church) can still function to support the minister's care and wellbeing. However, I am concerned that for those whose primary locus of ministry is outside the church, such as MSEs, careful thought is needed as to how the structure of commitments proposed can function effectively and whether other parties might also need to be involved in some way, at least within the current structures of the Church of England.

Certainly, for those clergy who have some parochial role (as most MSEs do) but are also paid to work in a secular environment, any consideration of their care and wellbeing must entail consideration of both of their work places. This begins from the most basic question of the hours spent working for their secular employer and for the church and the impact this has on the time available for family life, rest and recreation, issues which are acknowledged as crucial in paragraph 17. It is of note that whilst some of those in full time parochial ministry must be encouraged to take time 'off' from their work for rest and recreation, many non-stipendiary ministers – like the congregations they serve – spend their 'spare time' working explicitly for the church. For both groups of clergy however, consideration of the regulations imposed by, but also the underlying rationale of, the European Working Time Directive, might be valuable. Some reference to the EWTD might therefore be considered within the Covenant.



On a different note, whilst I am very glad to see the responsibility of the church towards those who share the intimate lives of clergy clearly acknowledged in this report, section D seemed to me the weakest of the four, both in the proposed commitments and the suggested discussion questions. I recognise that, given the diversity of clergy households, this is a challenging area to address (see footnote 4), and the tentative way in which the offer of pastoral care from the wider church is expressed in paragraph 20 is clearly appropriate. As someone currently in training I am particularly aware of the need for support for ordinands' partners in understanding the formation of both their partners and themselves, but I am sure there are many other specific issues within the broad area of the minister's household and that there may therefore be more themes that might profitably be included under this heading.

In addition to the above general themes, I would like to make several smaller points:

Paragraph 8 refers to supporting local ministers to access services offered by the diocese, charities and others and the need for the wider church to offer services that are actually needed. Despite the clear focus of the report on general principles, some tentative examples of the type of services envisaged might be useful here.

In section 18, the local church commits to being active in offering care for the wellbeing and development of the minister. Again, some examples would be useful here.



Also in section 18, the reference to the wider church providing extended and professional support towards ordained ministers, implicitly those suffering from some form of ill health (or substance misuse?), is welcome. Given the overall subject of the covenant however, there is perhaps space elsewhere for a little more explicit acknowledgement of the potential costs of ordained ministry itself, even when holy and healthy habits of life and good supportive relationships are in place.

As a final point, I was pleased to note from the membership of the Working Party that it appeared that they had been able to draw on the expertise of those trained in a range of secular disciplines (including occupational medicine, psychotherapy, management and education) as well as theological expertise and pastoral experience. The recognition that many ordinands also bring considerable professional experience to formation which can act as a resource to their colleagues in exploring issues of clergy wellbeing (paragraph 30) was also welcome. In a similar vein, I would encourage the Working Party to remain conscious of the considerable ongoing professional skills, knowledge and expertise which many MSEs continue to bring to the church from their secular work.

Yours sincerely

Dr Marianne Hayward

Consultant Psychiatrist/Ordinand, College of the Resurrection,  
Mirfield

## **Forthcoming Events**

### ***2019 Faith in Business Cambridge Leadership Retreat - Devoted Living: Work as Worship 5-7 April 2019 - Westminster College, Cambridge***

- An inspirational leadership retreat in one the most desirable college venues in Cambridge
- A unique blend of talks, interviews, reflections, and a workshop, from accomplished Christian business leaders
- A vigorous engagement with global and corporate issues from a Biblical and personal perspective permeated with authentic faith
- A peaceful space to deepen your relationship with Christ, glimpse new horizons, think new thoughts, and dream new dreams
- A rare opportunity for deep learning in a supportive and prayerful environment
- A profound experience that will stimulate personal and corporate transformation

<https://www.faith-in-business.org/faith-business-cambridge-leadership-retreat/>

### ***Liverpool Christian Workplace Event***

Adelphi Hotel, Ranelegh Street, Liverpool. Tuesday, 12 March, 18.00-20.15, Organised by Transform Work UK. Free (£10 donation requested). Billed as an informal networking event. Further details at [www.transformwork.org](http://www.transformwork.org).

## ***LICC: Lovingly present: Lovingly disruptive. Re:Work***

At LICC, St. Peter's Church, Vere Street, London, W1G 0DQ.  
Day Conference, Saturday, 30 March, £15 (2 for £25). See [www.licc.org.uk/events-training](http://www.licc.org.uk/events-training).



## **Coming very soon –our Reflective Weekend**

***Busking Theology and MSE: Reflective Weekend 22nd - 24th February 2019***

Shepherds Dene, Riding Mill, Northumberland NE44 6AF

We shall be led in an exploration of Busking Theology and Ministry in Secular Employment by Jim Francis. He was for many years a lecturer (in New Testament Studies) at Sunderland University and served as a self-supporting minister in two parishes in the city. He is the co-author of the book *Tentmaking: Perspectives on Self-Supporting Ministry*.

**There are no more residential spaces, but day visitors will be welcome** (contact Margaret Joachim, 8 Newburgh Road, London W3 6DQ, Tel: 0208 7234514, or e-mail [margaret.joachim@london.anglican.org](mailto:margaret.joachim@london.anglican.org))

## **CHRISM Extraordinary General Meeting 2019**

Following the resignation of Susan Cooper from the post of incoming moderator, an extraordinary general meeting will be held at Shepherd's Dene, Newcastle on **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019**.

Apologies should, if possible, reach the secretary at least 24 hours before the meeting starts.

Nominations are required for the position of Incoming Moderator and should reach the secretary 24 hours before the meeting starts.

Agenda:

1. Acceptance of Susan Cooper's resignation
2. Election of a new incoming moderator

*Sue Cossey, Secretary, CHRISM*

## ***What's good about work? CHRISM*** **Conference & AGM July 19th – 21st 2019**



Saint Columba's House is an urban contemporary Christian retreat and conference centre just 30 minutes by train from the heart of London and a mile from the centre of Woking.

Newly refurbished and with en-suite facilities, Saint Columba's House is the venue for the Summer 2019 CHRISM conference.

Full details about the programme will be forthcoming but please **HOLD THE DATE!!**

As always, our conference will include visits to places of work in the neighbourhood. Woking is a thriving centre which came into real existence with the coming of the railways. Nearby Guildford is the county's market town. It includes the Surrey Research Park, a major centre of excellence in technology, science, health and engineering which is widely regarded as the best science park of its kind in the UK. There are also Business Parks, a major teaching hospital and major retail centres in both towns. With excellent rail links to London this area has long been part of the commuter 'stock-broker' belt.

Join us – to find out what is good about the work we do.

## From our Treasurer: Are you an online shopper?

If so, read on! CHRISM has benefitted in the last few years from donations received from retailers, who give a small percentage of what a shopper spends online where they are signed up to **Easyfundraising.org.uk**, or a similar giving website. It is a really good way for charities and voluntary bodies to receive a donation that costs you nothing when you shop online. The cost of what we buy remains the same - the retailer you buy from makes the donation!

To date over £200 has been raised for CHRISM using this.

In summary:

- Go to [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://easyfundraising.org.uk).
- Create an account for yourself.
- Add the 'reminder' cookie – it will flag up whenever you go on the website of a retailer offering charity donations this way, so you don't have to go through the easyfundraising website.
- Select 'CHRISM' as your 'good cause'.
- When you shop on line, go to [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://easyfundraising.org.uk), enter the retailer / business you want to buy from or browse in the 'search' box, and hit 'enter'.
- This takes you to the website you've selected and, when you buy through it, the supplier will automatically send CHRISM a donation. (I've seldom found a UK supplier I wanted to buy from that doesn't use easyfundraising).
- This is usually a percentage of the purchase price, for example 2.5%. So if you buy an item for £10, CHRISM

gets 25p. This may not sound much, but if you spent £500 on line during the year, CHRISM would receive £12.50. And if you book your holiday on line – don't forget to do it this way!

Full details of how it works are at:

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/how-it-works/>

Rob Fox

## Book reviews

***'The gift of a renewed diaconate and the contribution of British Methodism', David Clark. ISBN 978-178456-611-1, Fastprint Publishing (<https://www.fastprint.net/bookshop>), 2018, £6.95, 159 pages.***

Many years ago, as a History student, I was intrigued to learn that in pre-Reformation England about 1 in 10 adult males were entitled to claim 'benefit of clergy', which brought with it exemption from some taxes and dues, and the right to be tried in a church, rather than civil, court. In that world of Christendom the church (and it was 'the' church) created a range of posts and activities that were diaconal, serving the church and community. As the notion of Christendom has eroded so the churches' view of what is diaconal has changed too, in some at least moving away from an expression of service to others to a way-point on the journey to priest or presbyter. In recent years there has been a long overdue re-appraisal of the role of diaconate in the ministry of our churches, to which this is an important and welcome contribution. In a world radically different from that in which

the Christendom flourished, is there a place for diaconal ministry and if so, what is it? This book gives a resounding 'yes' and sets out a clear vision of the role of this ministry.

David Clark has been an influential member of the Methodist Diaconal Order since 2005, prior to which he was a presbyter. He played a leading role in the Christian Community Movement of the 1980s, set up the Christians in Public Life Programme, founded the Human City Institute, and initiated the Kingdom at Work Project (in which it has been a privilege to work with David as CHRISM's representative).

The frontispiece motto expresses well the thrust of David's message: "The gift of a renewed diaconate". Diaconate is indeed a gift: the churches' gift of service to the communities in which they are set. The book itself comprises 9 papers, framed by an Introduction, vision for the future (from Sandy Boyce, President of DIAKONIA, the international assembly of diaconal associations), 3 Appendices, and summarising with 18 theses for a renewed diaconate and a further 18 for the diaconal church. The book picks up some of the themes of David's 2016 work, 'Building Kingdom Communities – the diaconate as a new order of mission', for which they will be a review in the April edition of this journal.

In 2013 the Methodist Conference commissioned a wide-ranging review of the theology and ecclesiology underpinning the diaconal order, due for completion in 2019. David's books are important contributions to the debate. Not that this is purely a Methodist matter. Renewed thinking on diaconal service has already led to re-focussing the way that church sees its ministry (an example is close at hand to me: the local Methodist church is focussing on youth work in a community



that sorely needs to be valued). Other denominations too are re-thinking what diaconal ministry means, expressed, for example, by some C of E dioceses creating the role of Authorised Lay Minister (ALM; with a defined ministry in the licence), and what is the Community of St. Anselm, that featured in the Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year message but a diaconal community? And most relevant: ministry in secular employment is profoundly diaconal, so there is much to appreciate here.

The Introduction briefly sets out the history of the Methodist Diaconal Order and provides a simple, clear, theological and ecclesiological rationale for diaconal ministry. The papers themselves cover:

1. Kingdom community, diaconal church and the liberation of the laity – kingdom theology and diaconal ecclesiology are imperative for mission in today's world. David calls for a move away from a minister-centred model of ministry to one where the whole local church sees itself as the engine of diaconal mission. There are clear implications for selection and training of ministers, and how churches learn, which is currently too self-perpetuating, an issue by no means unique to Methodism.
2. Looks at the formal definition of presbyter and deacon in the Methodist church and recommends changes. (Other churches would do well to think about these too).
3. The diaconate as a new order of mission, and what the hallmarks are.
4. The calling of the deacon as mission enabler. Enabling others, our church members, to 'do' mission where

- they are, in their daily lives, is not something the churches are currently effective at and requires skill sets that they do not select for or train ministers in.
5. The Methodist Diaconal Order as a religious order. Again a question not unique to Methodism.
  6. Follows up the previous paper, comparing with new monastic communities.
  7. The case for a Methodist diaconal lay order. There are parallels here to debates in the Church of England around ALM, which some dioceses have adopted, others not.
  8. Presbyters as a new order of continuity – how they relate to deacons and their role in mission. There are sound historical and ecclesiological bases for what is set out here.
  9. A diaconal response to '*Mission and Ministry in Covenant*', the framework for mutual recognition between the Methodist Church and Church of England. David has long and consistently advocated unity and this paper is both a carefully crafted critique and impassioned personal plea.

The 18 theses for a renewed diaconate summarise points David has made in the body of the book. The first is critical, that a renewed diaconate is a gift of God to the church to come. Similarly, the 18 theses for a diaconal church make it clear that if the human project is to survive and thrive then we need to choose to become 'a global community of communities'. The Christian offering is the vision of the 'Kingdom community', a model grounded in the Christian understandings of God's love, the value of all, and mutual respect.

As with all David's outputs, this book covers a lot of ground, here quite briefly. It will challenge and inspire in equal measure.

*Rob Fox*

***'Vicars and Priests – What's it all about', Ruth Brothwell, 2018***

My first thought on looking through this? A neat and harmless little book. It is little and so, even as a slow reader myself, I was able to consume and even reflect upon it in a couple of hours, which delighted me. So, in this last sense it was accessible. References are included for those who insist on that kind of thing but handled with a light touch. It was harmless enough ... no reader of any age or background would be shocked by it. I wonder why I said "neat" though? Maybe I should have said "cute"? For in its layout it seems at first sight to be all over the place. The biggest question I have after a pleasant enough evening mirrors that in the title. The homely Reverend Simon, shown on the cover, could look as he does for he too may be pondering the purpose of the book in which he is one of the stars. He too might be left wondering who the book is aimed at?

Rather than beginning with a foreword, or a note on the back cover, inviting the reader into the story and explaining its relevance to them from the outset, the author launches straight into an introductory section which seeks to cover a lot of ground. This details three different types of ministry, then talks about the nature of society, then about God (assumed to exist, end of the matter), then about Creation, then the relationship between Creation and Science, then

about the decline in church attendance, then about UK population change over the last 2000 years (a rather interesting bit). So, a total of seven key issues, all “sorted” in 13 pages. Quite an impressive feat.

Only then, on page 14, is there anything like a contents page, introducing a bit of structure. The first four of the six sections which follow trace the growth and development of the church up until the beginning of the nineteenth century. They explain in some detail changes in thought and doctrine and to some extent the management of church affairs. Various key thinkers are introduced. Personally, I think that tying together the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was a mistake. The Victorian age will still seem history or pre-history to many readers. Here we are taken through different factions of the church which for me personally explain little of the day-to-day life and work of Simon or his fellow priests.

Personally, to increase the book’s appeal, I would have missed out everything from 100 CE until the year 1900. If this book is truly aimed as those seeking to understand the role (and value) of the Priest in today’s world, as I have been told it is, then this is best explained through the author’s examination of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the present day. One could in fact just skip to the section devoted to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is both reflective and realistic. Who on visiting their Doctor wants to be burdened with the whole history of medicine and medical education before being given a cure?

As noted above, the coverage of the 21<sup>st</sup> century does most to answer the question posed by the book’s title. Picking up on two themes in the previous section, the decline in church attendance and people’s loss of interest in or fear, even, of

church buildings themselves, the author stresses that importance of the priesthood is its accessibility, its visibility out and about, where people are at - an echo here of the Worker Priests we first met back on page 2. Helpfully, I feel, if we are to continue to believe in the higher value of priests, as “the face of the Holy in the world” the Ordination Vows (source?) make no mention of buildings, Synods, vestments or the like. Neither does the Bible?

Reverend Simon is an appealing exemplar when he (or she?) crops up. I was amused that, rather than have his wife seek ordination (as is so often the case) fired up by his fine example no doubt, we are explicitly told, on page 64, that Simon is now Simone. Is this just a clumsy way of introducing women priests, or a little joke on the part of the author, a nod to the church’s sometimes grudging acceptance of trans-sexuals and the like perhaps?

As to whom the book is really best suited for, or how they will ever know, I am afraid I am still none the wiser. Sorry.

*David Unsworth*



## And Finally.....

### A new year

Where shall we put the old book,  
Sewn with love?  
Is it worth treasuring,  
Those half-completed stitches,  
Sentences incomplete,  
Pictures by a child?  
But yes:  
The threads run on to now,  
The well-thumbed pages  
Showing where we've been.

We are starting a new page,  
The first in a new book,  
Somewhere to write the story yet to come.  
Pictures of people woven in:  
Places yet unknown,  
Ideas and possibilities made real.  
Threads connecting, holding,  
Stitching relationships  
And linking scraps of this and that  
Through me to you,  
Your Love  
Making the new.

**CHRISM** is on **Facebook**, 'Ministers at Work':

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/129656640430436/> and **LinkedIn**, at:

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## **CHRISM is the National Association of CHRistians In Secular Ministry**

for **all** Christians who see their secular employment as their primary Christian ministry, and for those who support that vision. To further this aim, CHRISM publishes a quarterly Journal, releases occasional papers and organises an annual retreat.

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

If you would like confidential support as an MSE, please contact any member of the Committee (see inside rear cover)

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

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