

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

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## Editorial

As this edition of Ministers at Work comes together, we in UK, along with many others in Europe, are heading into a second national lockdown. Predictions for the pandemic which two editions ago suggested that it seemed likely to be over in a few months, have, like the predictions of the early days of World War One, been shown to be overoptimistic. So we are still wrestling with work that has changed radically, or disappeared, and with a growing awareness of the damage that the pandemic is doing not only to physical and mental wellbeing for so many but to our national economy, and to hospitality, education and retail, to name but three areas of work. As Christians operating within a variety of settings, we might ask ourselves how we can celebrate the presence of God in this context and find and share hope with those among whom we find ourselves. There are some fundamental questions for us about our roles when many of the usual ways of working (in every sense and context) are no longer possible.

In this edition, we have some thought provoking explorations from different perspectives of what MSE is about, as well as some reflections on the impact of COVID-19 on the life of an MSE in the USA, and on plans made at our Reflective Weekend back in February. We also have papers prepared for the International Worker Priests Meeting in Lille which in the end did not take place – but which I hope you find stimulating, particularly in the big contextual issues they raise for us to

grapple with. Surely our calling is to engage with the challenges of the world in which we live, and to look for what God wants us to do and be in relation to them.

We also have a book review, and details of some of the still fluid and adaptable plans we have for meetings over the next 9 months. We hope that you will feel inspired to join some of them. As ever, should you feel moved to write something to share with colleagues, please do get in touch. I already have one offer pending for January, and look forward to having more!

*Pauline Pearson*



# Chrism AGM Address 20 Aug 2020 : MSE – saying goodbye to the promised land?

*John Lees, author of Self-Supporting Ministry: A Practical Guide (SPCK) and Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ministry in Exeter Diocese, asks if it's time to stop longing for an ideal world of MSE recognition.*

## **Where I thought this talk was going...**

I am a Minister in Secular Employment. I have no piece of paper to prove it, but it is who I am, it's where my heart is.

What I expected to say to you today was what I often say to gatherings of this kind. Something about the position of ordained ministers with work outside the church. Some of them recognised as MSEs, many of them in the twilight zone of being SSMs with a day job. I expected to say something about lack of recognition and support. Calling again for return from exile, for a restoration. It's what we talk about year after year, pointing to that promised land where MSEs will flourish.

Or, at least, find again the recognition they seem to have received in the 1980s and 1990s, the era of Rod Hacking's *On the Boundary* and the important 1998 book *Tentmaking*.

I bought a copy of *Tentmaking* in Grace Cathedral. San Francisco, around 20 years ago, and was inspired by its optimism. New ways of being church seemed just over the horizon, and MSE would be at the heart of it all. Change seemed inevitable, unstoppable.

What we did not predict then - although perhaps some of you did – was that a time would come when the institutional church would feel so beaten up, so wrapped up in its own difficulties that it would

lose the ability to see beyond its walls. A time when maintenance would be everything.

Do I overstate the case? You tell me.

We had great hopes for MSE, assumed its day had come. Today MSE seems to be at risk of becoming invisible. We find ourselves making the same old arguments to an institution with such short-term memory problems we re-start a new influencing campaign every 18 months.

I recently read an interesting history of careers education, looking at the way governments since the 1960s have tried to make better links between what happens in schools and universities to the needs of employers. The authors of the report pointed to initiatives, reversals, and reinventions of the wheel. They closed with a final image – we are still sailing around a buoy in the harbour, and we haven't yet set out to sea.

In short, it feels like we are sailing in circles. Sometimes it feels like we are rowing against an ever-speeding current.

That's pretty much what I was going to say. You can see I had no plans to cheer you all up.

### **MSE resilience**

Then I exchanged emails with Margaret Joachim. She said something that caused me to think for some time. She said 'I think MSE will survive as it has done for such a long time, simply because God keeps popping up people who want to do it. Our role is to try to spot them (or be found by them) early.'

That stopped me in my tracks, made me reframe everything. So, you have her to thank for my talk today.

So, what I see now is this.

MSEs emerge as they are needed. We find them in all kinds of places, bidden or unbidden. Or, as Margaret wisely says, they find us.

It is a real calling, an honest and vulnerable calling, because it has almost nothing to attach itself to.

If you're called to be a Vicar, everyone knows what a Vicar looks like, and it's obvious what to aim for.

Where you are called to express the Gospel through your work, the calling is different, and the cost is high. It needs to survive endless interrogation: 'why do you need to be ordained to do this?'

In a way, this is the deepest kind of calling - one where few people grasp what you are about, a calling with no easy labels.

It is a calling which is largely unsupported, unrecognised, and yet requires resilience because it needs to be defined repeatedly.

### **A new vision?**

Today I find myself thinking about MSEs differently. Perhaps they will never achieve public or institutional recognition. Perhaps they are not supposed to.

MSEs are sometimes cultivated, and more often tolerated. But they arise, and always will.

Those called to be MSEs often pursue that calling in the face of indifference, and overcome all kinds of barriers. But they arise.

They arise because they are called to do so. Not as second best, not just to fill in from the edges, not because they can't cut it as Vicars. They occupy a position of awkwardness, irritation, something the world and the church finds hard to label, impossible to suppress.

They are perhaps more like artists, poets, social reformers, prophets. They are William Blake, Rosa Parks, Senator John Lewis,

John Bell. I think too of someone like Richard Holloway, former Bishop of Edinburgh, someone who found he had to step outside the Anglican institution completely to critique it honestly.

They are at times the necessary irritant, the honest fool who notices how little the emperor is wearing. They work at the edges, sometimes hanging on by their fingertips.

They are called to be subversive. It comes with the territory. Our society uses the term 'subversive' to mean 'sneakily undermining the institution', but the Latin original means 'change from beneath'.

Changing things from below is what Christians are supposed to do.

Officially the church reveres prophets, in practice we muzzle them. Yet they keep coming. Sometimes they are inside the institution, more often outside it. The artists, writers, activists, , campaigners – all those who fulfil God's purposes without speaking a word of religious language.

Prophets speak about the places where the world hurts most. And if there was ever an age that needed to hear the clear-rung bell of truth, this is it. An age when the chief medical officer of the United States can receive death threats for publishing statistics.

We forget that some of the things we value most happened because of subversive pressure.

Prophets are nearly always the wrong kind of people. They aren't selected, appointed. They happen. They speak in the place of need. We think of Martin Luther King Jnr preaching in the ashes of burned down churches, smoke still rising from the timbers.

Prophets are connectors. The longer I serve in ministry, the more I think that we make the mistake of thinking we are in the comfort business, but we need to be in the connections business – making

connections between lives of faithful reflection and what's going on in this strange world.



### **Imagine the promised land again....**

Imagine a world where MSEs were commonplace. Where there were at least couple of dozen in every diocese. Imagine if we had national selectors gifted at spotting and encouraging them. Imagine we trained MSEs to be MSEs, and funding was available for their training and development.

What if MSEs were not only selected nationally, as they are right now in the Church of England, but also trained and deployed nationally? Imagine a national ordination service just for MSEs, with an MSE Bishop presiding.

Perhaps we in CHRISM should design and publish an ordination service entirely focused on MSEs, and do the same with a format for ministry development review. Rather than hoping beyond hope that something rubs off on national policy, we might publish our own standard documents, unauthorised and alive.

### **Tentmakers revisited**

The Church of England has just started to do some new thinking about self-supporting ministry. For a church in crisis to have no national policy for a third of its licensed clergy is a worrying gap. However, it seems unlikely that MSEs will get much airtime.

It's interesting how little the Church of England says today about tentmaking, when other denominations say a lot.

Here is Global Connections <sup>1</sup>, an evangelical network talking about tentmaking:

God has called us to use our gifts and skills in a cross-cultural situation. We take opportunity to share the Gospel sensitively and with integrity.

The work itself will be one means of testimony, and depending on the circumstances may be the only way.

Situations and moments where work is the only way to share the Gospel. That's a rich seam of theology isn't it? We so often forget that MSE is about doing the work alongside others, not being workplace chaplains.

MSEs are often prophets, and joiners-of-dots. They keep popping up, because they are needed.

The church sometimes identifies and encourages them, but usually in a spirit of compromise that sounds like Step this way and learn to do what parish clergy do. This training will come in handy if you're running a vacancy. We'll train you, but little of that training will be about the workplace, or being an ordained minister outside a church context.

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<https://www.globalconnections.org.uk/sites/newgc.localhost/files/papers/The%20Challenge%20of%20Tentmaking.pdf>

We will offer you ministerial reviews, but we'll put so much weighting on the needs of the parish system you'll go home feeling guilty. We will affirm you most for the things you do least, and affirm you least for the ministry you are made for.



Yes, the church says, we select and ordain MSEs. Sometimes it encourages. But often it suppresses, marginalises, inhibits, or simply ignores.

Can we really deny that MSE really now means 'SSM but doing something vaguely churchy at work'? Does it need a revival? A reinvention?

So, some questions we might spend time with today...

**Do we accept the status quo, and stop campaigning?** If not, CHRISM would leave a gap. Who else would be there for MSEs? Are we simply watchkeepers, observing from the margins? How can we stop circling the buoy and begin the voyage?

**Do we keep on shouting in the wilderness?** That may be an image of frustration, but the lonely voice is still prophetic and important.

**Do we change tack? Adopt a new approach?** We are pouring in quality information, but a weak institutional memory doesn't retain it.

**Should MSE disconnect itself from the system?** Has the time come when the institutional church and worker priests should part company for a while?

CHRISM is an inventive organisation and punches above its weight. It has the experience and resilience to keep asking good questions.

Do we keep talking to an institution with short-term memory problems? What else can we do?

### **A modest proposal**

One important, tangible project may be within our grasp.

I would like CHRISM to create a national mentoring scheme for MSEs.

Yes - every MSE, new and existing, should have a mentor. Not just a mentor, but a simple resource pack or weblink outlining the history and impact of MSEs. I know this is no modest task, but I would love to see that any MSE who wants the support would have a well-informed mentor who understands the joys and frustrations of MSE.

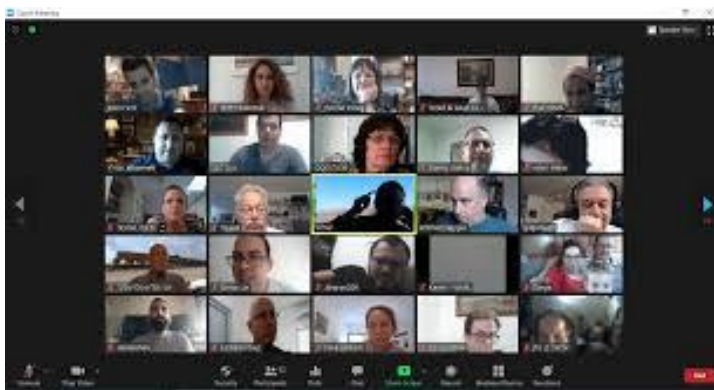
We can all use Zoom now, which means that the mentor can be on the other side of the country, well outside diocesan reporting structures.

I rest my challenge there. The danger in asking for an AGM address is that your speaker may want you to stretch beyond your reach.

Bishop Phillips Brooks wrote the carol O Little Town of Bethlehem. He also wrote: "Do not pray for easy lives ... Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then

the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be the miracle.”

MSEs make Christ known in every part of the world that God loves. Let's feed the next generation.



## 35 years on: or half a lifetime as an MSE: reflections on non-parish focused ministry - Graham Cornish

*Graham P Cornish is a retired librarian and a priest*

When I went to my selection conference for ordination I was asked how I saw my future ministry. I replied that it would be work-focused. To the question “how will that work?” I replied I did not know but believed God would show me. This brought the reply “Well, we don’t understand it but leave you to work it out.” Hindsight is a wonderful gift so just how did it

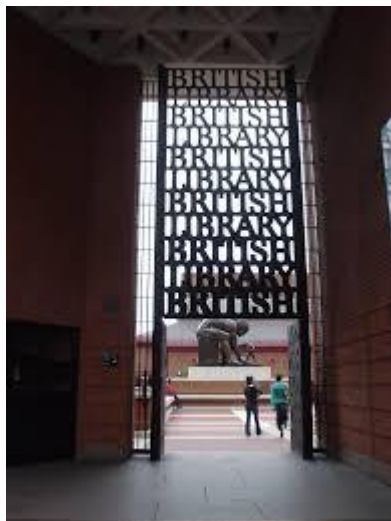
work out in the end? At that time such ministry was labelled “NSM” but the emphasis on remuneration eventually led to the alternative title of MSE – Minister in Secular Employment. I have never been comfortable with this label as I reject the idea of the “secular” as opposed to the “sacred”. For me, all is sacred but you have to accept general usage of terms if you want to minister in the world outside the church!

### **A brief biographical note**

I read theology at Durham but did not proceed to ordination: instead, did a post-graduate qualification in library and information science at Liverpool. Whilst in Durham I met my (now) wife who came from Yorkshire (I hailed from deepest Croydon) so, after qualifying, I looked for a job in the Yorkshire area. I joined the staff of, what is now, the British Library at their northern site at Boston Spa, near Wetherby. I worked my way up through the ranks to a senior level before leaving in 2001 to set up my own training and consultancy business.

After leaving Durham I was licensed as a Lay Reader and continued in this role until 1984 when I was ordained deacon and priest a year later. In 2005 I also took up the role of chaplain to a local superstore chain, a function I continued to fulfil until 2018. At ordination I was licensed as an associate priest of the local parish where we had worshipped for 15 years, until 2009 when I “retired” but still hold PTO but worship in a different parish as trying to “retire” when you are a volunteer anyway is never easy if you stay in the same place.

## Ministry and the workplace



Just after I was ordained Gerard Hughes produced his well-known book *God of Surprises*. What an apt title for the ministry on which I was about to embark!

The British Library site at Boston Spa is somewhat remote but had, at that time, about 800 staff. This seemed to me a discrete element of the workforce where a ministry might develop. Having sounded out the management as to their reaction if I presented myself for ordination, I was delighted to find their attitude was one of benign indifference! Their approach was that, so long as I fulfilled my duties as a member of staff, how I used my spare time (tea breaks lunchtime) or what I did out of hours was my business. So, having been accepted for ordination, I undertook a somewhat truncated training course at NEOC which gave me a chance to probe various issues at work as part of my training, such as attitudes to clergy held by staff members, both Christian and non-

Christian, and issues such as confidentiality and whether this could conflict with my role as a manager.

A significant number of colleagues turned up for my ordination as deacon but, significantly, far fewer for my priesting, something on which I want to reflect later.

I made no serious attempt to import church into the workplace. Liturgical events were limited to a Eucharist for Maundy Thursday and another for Pentecost, informal events for harvest and New Year and an annual carol service. This last was allowed in staff time – a common practice in the public sector.

However, my perception that this would be a ministry with a local focus was soon to be changed. I had always been an active member of my professional organisation and just before ordination I was elected to the governing council. Immediately this expanded my potential role for ministry from 800 staff to a membership of some 24,000. Council members had a high profile in the profession throughout the British Isles and very soon I was being asked for views on both ethical and social issues relating to information provision.

Shortly before my ordination the Director at Boston Spa asked me to become the focus for copyright law for the site, despite having no legal training! This coincided with the government's announcement that they were planning a new copyright act. But within two years this responsibility expanded to include the British Library in London as well. On the one hand I found myself working with groups in publishing, academia and industry to lobby for the changes wanted in the law and also becoming part of the scene in the London

operations too where the combined staff numbered nearly 2,000. Moving beyond the library profession into publishing, legal services and parliamentary lobbying gave me a further opportunity to provide an overt Christian presence, for I always wore my dog collar, especially at the first meeting of any group. I am certain that, had participants discovered later on that I was a clergyman, I would not have enjoyed the acceptance that I did.

All this was way beyond what I had anticipated for ministry at work but my horizons were to be stretched even further. The British Library funded a research office on behalf of the NGO for library and information science whose HQ is in The Hague. I was then asked to take over this responsibility and combine it with copyright. The duties were to focus on maximizing access worldwide to publicly-available information wherever it was produced. Apart from attending the annual international conference, the venue for which changed year by year, this also required organizing regional workshops to encourage governments and major research bodies to adopt an open approach to making their information available. This was not always well-received by governments. In all, I visited about 50 countries around the world which, once again, gave me the chance to show an open Christian involvement, regardless of the culture or politics of the countries I visited.



Formal retirement brought with it the challenge of how to minister in the future. I set up my own training and advice service for the information and cultural heritage industries which involved travelling, mostly around the UK, explaining and teaching copyright principles and the intricacies of the relevant law. At this point I felt MSE meant “minister in self-employment”. There was no permanent base for this as a consultancy or workshop might never be repeated in the same place or for the same client. The best that I felt could be achieved was to make known my clerical status and leave the participants to make of it what they would. As in all the other spheres of my work, reaction was mixed, ranging from indifference to curiosity, but never hostility.

Although my ministry at work was not formally recognized, sometimes it was felt to be useful. For instance, during the second Iraq war it was suggested that a weekly service of prayer and reflection would be helpful as some staff had relatives and friends involved in the conflict. Also, when the husband of a staff member collapsed and died at home, I was asked to find her and break the news. I also had the pleasure

of conducting the marriage of a staff member and baptizing the baby of another as well as actually baptizing a young member of staff before she emigrated to America. Less joyful, but equally strengthening, was to conduct the funeral of a long-time colleague who collapsed on site and died shortly afterwards. One unexpected opportunity for debate came when I undertook some training for a society jointly with a prominent lawyer who happened to be legal adviser to the Chief Rabbi. We became good friends but what the participants made of their tutors sporting respectively a yarmulke and a dog-collar we never knew!

### **Ministry and the Church**

I had made it clear during ordination training that I did not feel called to traditional parish ministry. I had nothing against it as a model and much admired those who could carry it out effectively, but I was convinced my ministry was at the interface of work and church. As the bishop of the time said to me “you are to reflect the church to the world but also the world to the church”.

Naturally (I use the term with some hesitation) I was licensed to a parish as the assistant curate and I willingly undertook liturgical duties there but I did not feel it was my role to carry out much pastoral work within the parish or help other parishes in an interregnum, for example. Apart from anything else the constraints of my work made such involvement impracticable. The local parish appreciated this, especially as I had been part of the community there for 14 years, but the wider church authorities took more persuading that this was not my calling. However, I did develop a liturgical role and

preached and celebrated regularly in the two churches that constituted our parish. The workplace was not the forum to exercise an extensive worshipping ministry so it was important to make sure the parish was a Eucharistic base from which to build the ministry to which I felt called. [I felt tempted to say “my ministry” but, of course, it isn’t mine at all].

This approach led on occasions to a real conflict between my two roles. There were often times when the church expected one thing but work dictated another. For example, an instruction to be present for the diocesan Maundy Thursday liturgy conflicted with the need to be in Paris for a management meeting. It may sound trite to say “He who pays the piper calls the tune” but that is effectively what it amounted to. My ministry at work relied on my credibility as a competent professional colleague and any attempt to duck my responsibilities as an employee in favour of a church commitment would have seriously undermined my ability to say that I stood with my colleagues. However, during the 18 years I fulfilled this particular model of ministry (ordained but in full-time non-church employment) I did detect a change in attitude amongst my fellow clergy which amounted to “We don’t really understand but we’ll leave you to work it out”! Does this sound familiar?

I would liken being an MSE to the role of a special constable in the police force. You have the authority but no managerial or organizational responsibility. Consequently you may be viewed with scepticism by both the “regulars” and also the general public. Some in both groups appreciate what you do but others are less positive. This confusion is aggravated in some dioceses because MSEs and NSMs are grouped together

with house-for-duty and other self-supporting ministry models. The very nature of MSE is its interface between the working world and the church itself.

### **Issues that arose**

#### *The eternal triangle*

This leads me to the thorny problem of the eternal triangle, one of the issues I found most difficult to deal with when talking to clergy, rather than lay people. The basic problem is this: for the average MSE there is an ongoing conflict between family, work and church. The needs of these three strands of life have to be balanced as all bring obligations as well as joys. Often, when explaining this to fellow “full-time” clergy I had the reaction that this was just as true for them. But they rarely grasped the basic fact that for them work and church coalesce into one element and therefore there is no triangle for them, only a two-dimensional conflict to resolve. I readily agree that this conflict does exist and it is often difficult to get the balance right: however it is significantly easier to manage a two-dimensional conflict than a three dimensional one. To give what may seem a fairly trivial example (but wasn’t so trivial at the time!): work required being away from home Monday to Friday and I was taking a service on Sunday so why wasn’t I at the church bazaar on Saturday like everyone else? I don’t need to spell out the answer. For me, the bazaar was an optional extra whereas for the other members of the team it was part of their work. Until the church acknowledges this triangle of tensions this type of ministry will not flourish to provide the church with the reflection of working life it so desperately needs.

At the same time the MSE needs to appreciate this dilemma. There is a temptation to think that family and friends will understand but it can be as much a mystery to them as to the church.



### *Deacon or priest?*

One important issue I have had to grapple with is why be a priest at all. Wouldn't ordination as a deacon be sufficient? Clearly my colleagues at work saw great significance in an event in which I "turned my collar round" but the importance of being priested was lost on most of them. To the non-church world what is meaningful is that you have been somehow given a role with some authority from the church from which you can speak and act to show what that organization's view on a particular issue is. The name of that role and its internal importance to the church has little or no meaning. But, on a spiritual and theological level, my strong belief is that I could and did bring my work environment to the altar and celebrated the Eucharist for them and well as taking out to the

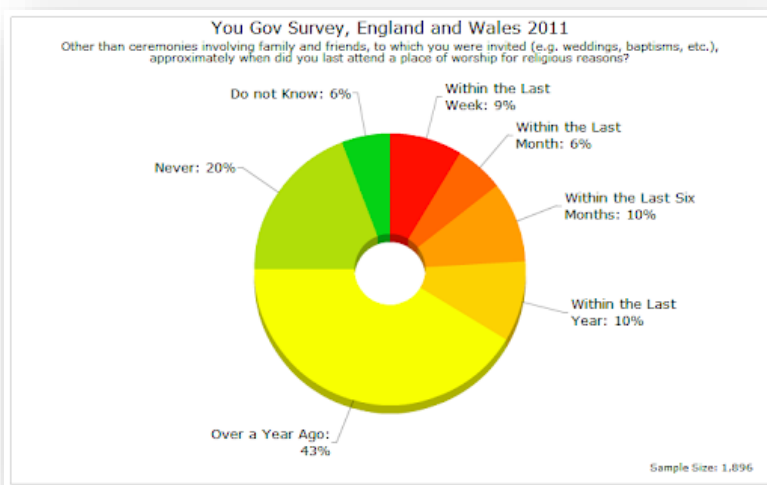
workplace the strength and support I was given by performing those celebrations. This does not for one moment undermine the concept of any worshipper bringing those same concerns to the altar but this is a different spiritual experience from including them in the celebration. The concept of the priest doing something for others is central to my understanding of the Eucharist and has been highlighted during the COVID19 pandemic. Many people watched Eucharistic celebrations and had their own bread and wine set out to consume during the service but this emphasizes the fact that this was not communion in the sacramental sense but the priest was celebrating on their behalf. Obviously people in different traditions will view this differently but I am trying to explain my own spiritual experience and how I worked it out for my particular shape of ministry.

*Hiding your light under a bushel*

Don't! I discovered very early on in my ministry that almost everyone would accept that I was a priest and it was clear that even those with no religious convictions found the novelty of an ordained minister within their group quite curious. However I soon found that, if I failed to make my status clear at the first meeting of a committee, project team or conference, then this could easily arouse some feelings of resentment with such comments as "well, you might have told us". Somehow people felt that they had been conned in some way by a fifth-columnist infiltrating their group.' Show your hand straightaway' became my motto.

*Whose ministry is it anyway?*

The impact of being ordained on family and friends must never be under-estimated. I was fortunate that my family supported me through some demanding training schedules but I became acutely aware that this was my calling, not one to which anyone else was actually called. Equally valuable was the support of the parish where I had been a Reader for 14 years. This is very important for anyone who is fulfilling a calling when their lifestyle has been settled for some time and the shape of that ministry is not the conventional one. Even those close to you may not fully understand what you are called to do: it takes tact, patience and clarity to make sure as many people are on our side as possible. I'm not saying I possessed all or any of these qualities but they are surely essential!



*Measuring achievement*

One question that has been posed innumerable times to me is: “How do you know you’ve made any impression?” Traditional church structures use all kinds of data to measure success: bums on seats, financial improvement, number of Occasional offices (weddings, baptisms, funerals). None of these data are available to the MSE. The only measure of “success” is personal intuition. You may know that you have been fortunate enough to influence an individual and, perhaps, you can identify an issue in the workplace where your input had a real influence but there is nothing tangible you can demonstrate that you have actually achieved something. This is both frustrating and liberating. Frustrating, mainly because others do not understand the lack of identifiable yardsticks: liberating because you do not have or need specific data and your aims and objectives are set in an entirely different plane. On a more personal level, the measures of “success” such as preferment in the church structures (Rural/Area Dean, Canon, Archdeacon and even Bishop!) are not really available to the MSE. Occasionally MSEs may be given recognition as honorary canons but, by the nature of their employment status, they rarely have the opportunity to fulfill the requirements of other posts.

### *Changing roles*

Sometimes people say “Don’t you really want a parish of your own?” This comes from both church and non-church groups. There is an assumption in many quarters that being an MSE is a step on the road to “real” ministry. This question is a real opportunity to explain the nature of your own ministry whilst not denigrating the motive behind the question which is often not intended to be critical or challenging but merely rooted in

a misunderstanding of the nature of ordained ministry. Sensitive handling of this question can be a real opportunity for promoting this particular form of ministry. For some this path is what they feel called to follow but care needs to be taken to ensure that this is understood not to be the right process for all MSEs. We need to adopt the slogan *Vive la difference!*

### *The art of ministry*

I have often been asked: “If you had your time over again, would you still choose MSE?” For me “choice” is not an option. Vocation depends on what you believe God wants you to do and therefore you just do it. I would draw a parallel between being called to ordination and becoming an artist. Many (auto)biographies of artists contain a phrase somewhere that simply says “I have to paint”. It is a driving force in their lives to which there is no resistance. Similarly, many artists have produced, and continue to produce very fine works in accepted traditions of artistic expression whilst others bring new and exciting, if sometimes challenging, insights to their productions. Use of light, perspective and the Impressionist movements are examples of this. These will, nonetheless, draw on the inspiration and practices of their more formal predecessors. They are not exactly thinking outside the box but certainly trying to expand the margins of the box. Others again do not look to these traditions and methods for their inspiration but rely on what they instinctively feel is the right way to present their attitudes, emotions and feelings. These are, nevertheless, regarded as an intrinsic part of the artistic world and they themselves would not deny they are part of that community. There is no “box” for them to think about: rather they create a new environment within which they feel

capable of working. These are fresh expressions of the power of artistic creativity.



This is just the same for Christian ministry: the tried and tested methods of ministry continue, with many good results; others find a grounding in these traditional methods but feel called to find a new way of expressing them. The Church has for some time given space for Fresh Expressions (something which some MSEs would say they have practised for many years without the appropriate recognition!) but Fresh Expressions is seen as a way of thinking outside the box. What I would contend is that we do not need to think outside the box: rather we need to forget the box and see where the Spirit leads us. A parallel can be found in what St. Paul says about Jesus and his ministry. He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. Jesus did not abandon his status as Son of God but deliberately put it aside to develop an entirely new context for expressing God's love. So this is not to say that the box is not valid: it certainly is. But we need to discard the box when considering the shape of our ministry and start with

a blank canvas. Then, at some undetermined point, we may well find a way to graft what we do onto the box but continue to protect it from the constraints that the box imposes. Revolutionary? Off the wall? Heretical? I would willingly accept the first two but strongly reject the third possibility! The box is where we come from but it must not be allowed to dictate where we are trying to go.

## Conclusion

This has been a very personal reflection on 35 years of ministry. It has been a ministry peppered with joy, fulfillment, wonder, humbling experiences, frustration, despair, anger, spiritual challenges but above all, the determination to carry out what I believe God called me to do. Would I have done anything different? I never felt I had a choice.

## **Pandemic experiences in Kansas and beyond – Radona Smythe**

I work for an electric utility cooperative that provides electricity and broadband internet services to mostly rural members of our cooperative. Because of the essential nature of the services we provide, our company took a very strict approach to the Covid pandemic with the goal of making sure NONE of our work force contracted the virus. So far, I am happy to say, we have accomplished that goal. Our company territory is spread out over different areas of the State of Kansas, from Southwest to the mid-section, to the Southeast

portions of Kansas. Our employees were restricted from traveling outside their county of residence without written permission from a company committee formed to make those decisions. There were also several “hot spot” states that we were not allowed to even ask permission to travel to. Several of our employees that needed to provide childcare or assist



their children with what had now become online education, worked from home. Daily Microsoft Team meetings were the new “normal” occurrence to maintain communication between employees still working in the office and those working from home. Social distancing of 6 feet or more was required and gatherings of fewer than 10 people was to be maintained with masks being worn when social distancing could not be achieved. More in-depth daily cleaning was provided by our janitorial service and hand sanitizer was everywhere! I continued to work in the office since I had no children at home to care for and my office was structured in a way to allow me to isolate myself from others.

This was the work environment we were becoming accustomed to in March 2020. My daughter and her husband were expecting our third grandchild on May 23rd, 2020 which was wonderful! Only problem---they were in Alabama and I was in Kansas, a good 15-16 hour road trip away or 4-5 hours by plane. I couldn't travel out of the county, let alone the State of Kansas. But in March, I was hopeful the pandemic would slow down or go away by the time I needed to go to Alabama and welcome the new baby and surely by then, my company travel restrictions would be a memory. With two little boys ages 4 and 2 already keeping Mom and Dad busy, my daughter had asked if I could come to Alabama and stay for two full weeks. I was thrilled at the opportunity! "Of course I would", I had told her.

Fast forward to the beginning of May 2020, and the State of Kansas had been in full lockdown mode, but was putting into place a phased-in re-opening of businesses from May until June 15th 2020. The area where I live had become a "hot spot" due to a sharp spike in Covid cases resulting from the concentration of meat packing plants in the area. Therefore, my company elected to maintain its travel restrictions out of county until the June 15th phase-in completion. I began to think I would not be allowed to travel to Alabama. To further complicate the situation, my daughter and her two year old son were considered high risk for the virus due to their asthma conditions. Their whole family had been sheltering at home for several months and restricting and limiting contact with the outside world as much as possible. They asked me if I could quarantine for two weeks before I arrived in Alabama.



*Samuel and new baby Will.*

I read our company policies carefully and felt perhaps my travel would qualify under the clause “to take care of a family member who has been quarantined (as directed by a government agency or health care provider)”. I asked my daughter to send me a form from her doctor stating she was at high risk for complications from Covid then submitted a company request to quarantine myself and work from home for two weeks prior to leaving on my road trip to Alabama. I had decided I should not go to Alabama unless I could safely quarantine myself for two weeks prior to the visit so I was ecstatic when I received communication back from my company approving my request to work from home and travel to Alabama! I loaded up all my computer equipment, gathered what papers I thought I would need over the next month, and setup my workspace in my home office. For the next two weeks, I quarantined at home by ordering everything I needed

online, having it delivered, and restricting all in person contact with the outside world (thank goodness for video calls and conferencing!). That meant isolating myself from my better half as well, as he was not making the trip to Alabama with me.

After my two week self-quarantine, it was time to hit the road to Alabama. I packed as many groceries as I could for the meal plans I had created to avoid doing much shopping once I arrived and even threw in a couple of rolls of toilet paper! I packed snacks for myself to avoid stopping much along the trip other than for gas and bathroom breaks. I planned to leave in the evening and travel straight through the night to avoid contact with people. I had my pocket size hand sanitizer and several face masks in the car, so I was ready to go!

I arrived in Alabama over the weekend. My grandson had been born in the hospital and was on his way home. It felt strange not to be able to go to the hospital to see the baby and help my kids bring him home, but I had quarantined for a reason and knew it would all be worth the effort soon. I hadn't seen my daughter and her family since Thanksgiving, so I was excited to see them all! The two weeks I spent with them went fast and soon it was time to return to Kansas and my job. I submitted a form to my company verifying that I was not knowingly sick or contagious from Covid and was approved to return to work without quarantining for another two weeks. The middle of June, Alabama was put on our company list of quarantine states, meaning it was a "hot spot" we would not be allowed to travel to. I smiled at the picture I keep of my grandsons and thanked God for all the blessings He had given and was certainly glad that grandbaby had been born on time!



*Older brother Luke holding new brother Will*

*Radona Smythe is Director of Finance, Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc., USA*

## **Reflecting on our Reflections - Phil Aspinall**

In the final session of our Reflective Weekend back in February 2020 (remember that ? – before the world shifted on its axis) we were sent off into pairs to share our personal priorities : What we would stop doing; what we would keep doing; and what we would start doing. We were also asked to arrange to follow up that discussion to see what has been achieved. I wonder how many of you have done that – I did try.

But before that you might recall that we were asked to identify 15 things that we each do to be good to ourselves. I took this

one stage further in that Saturday morning session and produced a second list of 15 actions that I could take to increase or enhance the benefits of those 15 things.

I set out to work on them. But then, of course, Covid happened !

Some things became, overnight, completely impossible: to find more theatrical and musical events and to go to them; to start doing some of the creative arts that I have spoken about for a long time; to find new places to visit in those parts of the UK that I do not know at all well.

But on the other hand some things which, if left to myself, I would never have had the self-discipline to begin, became a reality. I shall not include all the personal detail, but here are



some representative examples: I have had more people round for socially-distanced meals in the garden throughout the summer; I have been for more walks and taken more exercise, cycling to places that I had not reached in many years; I have tended the garden to the point at which I can actually just sit in it and enjoy it; I have had time to do more reading and have

been taking a book with me to read when I go out. And I have found new ways of prayer and meditation and, indeed, I was forced into, almost, a silent retreat (One should be careful what one wishes for !).

And I did indeed find a form of church worship which supports me, in the intimate U-tube recorded services presented week by week from people's living rooms and gardens in the Parish of Christchurch – it reinforced the CHRISM message that God is to be found and named anywhere. It seemed to me very retrograde to go back into the church, to trap God back in only to be encountered inside the Church building. I feel so much was lost !

My signal failure is in not yet having found a CHRISM event in which I have no role in the organising !

I am writing this piece not because I really want to talk about me and my experiences ! But I am hoping to remind you all of the things that surfaced for you during the February Reflective Weekend – and ask, have you been able to do anything about them since ? This is, after all, why we hold reflective weekends!

## **Planned contribution from England to the International Meeting of European Worker Priests 2020**

*Below is the paper which was submitted by us for the international meeting – due to be held near Lille - which in the end was cancelled.*

*The emergence of new social movements in our countries. What are the consequences in my life ?*

In the UK there have been two significant social movements whose impact has, to an extent, been overwhelmed by the current Covid19 pandemic. But they continue and still remain very important.

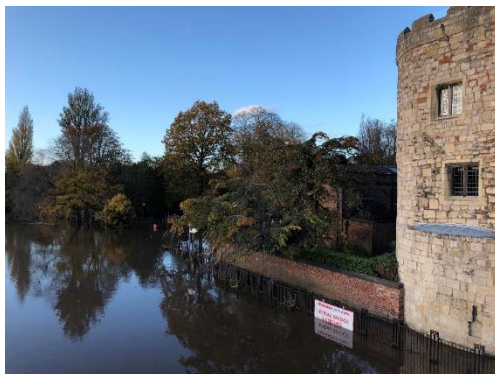
1. Ecological movements such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and more conspicuously Extinction Rebellion (XR). Eric says that they have raised consciousness for many people on the challenges of climate change. Many activists say that the crisis year for reduction of carbon emissions to zero, is 2030 – only nine years away and closer than the Paris Agreement which specified zero emissions by 2050.

XR sponsored ten days of peaceful protest demonstrations during April 2019, and continuing during the year. Hundreds of protesters of all ages and all walks of life were arrested and many were fined or threatened with jail.

XR says that the UK government is guilty of "criminal inactivity" in addressing the climate change "crisis" and has made three key demands:

- The government must declare an "emergency" and work with "other institutions" to make changes
- The UK must enact legally binding policies to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2025
- A citizens' assembly must be formed to "oversee the changes" needed to achieve this goal

XR says that if we remain as we are today the UK is "headed for disaster". Climate change will cause food shortages and "destroy communities".



2. The movement Black Lives Matter, has existed for some years in the United States and in other countries, such as the UK. On 25 May 2020, an unarmed black man, George Floyd, was brutally killed by a police officer in the US. . The killing led to mass protests not just in the US but also in many other countries, and the movement has taken on great importance. We hope that Black Lives Matter and allied anti-racist movements will have a lasting effect. The movement is bringing to awareness the depth of racism which remains in the UK and the work which needs to be done. The events have raised of consciousness of Britain's history of Imperialist exploitation and its endorsement of slavery of Black people in the 18th and 19th Century. We have discovered many questions about the current life-chances and quality of life of British citizens who are Black, Asian or of minority ethnic origin.

Margaret T wrote: I have found two statements written in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. One is from the

Chair of my own professional association, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, Natalie Bailey, who is black. The other is from an activist, Maatin Patel, from a grassroots organization called Hope not Hate. I also note statistics quoted by Paul Vallely in the Church Times of 5 June 2020, that young black people are ten times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people, and three times more likely to be excluded from school.

I usually work in a very multi-ethnic environment, so I am aware that the PO (and certainly for us in the UK) are very white organizations. So it is essential that we reflect on our white privilege, listen to the experiences of black people and act to make changes. We need to be guided by movements like Black Lives Matter, but not to leave all the work to black people. They write that it is emotionally exhausting to be constantly explaining to white people what racism means. Their experiences of racism are often dismissed or minimized. But the pain of being passed over, of being followed by security personnel, being moved away from in the street – these are everyday experiences.

We were probably all shocked by the way George Floyd died but I doubt that we experienced it as viscerally as have people of colour: “I felt the pain way down deep in my abdomen”, writes Natalie Bailey. Black people have been deeply disturbed: angry, grief-stricken, robbed of sleep and concentration. “Try to do the work of learning, listening and understanding yourself. Don’t turn it into a task that has to be completed by a person of colour”, writes Maatin Patel.

I hope that Black Lives Matter does maintain prominence and make a difference. My friend who is black went on one of the

marches. I remembered how she described feeling much more unsafe around the time of the Brexit vote. And we see that deaths from Corona are disproportionately higher in the black community. This is less likely to be from genetic reasons as from a higher proportion of black people being on the front line, in the kind of jobs which expose them to the public, and without adequate PPE.

Black Lives Matter presents us with a challenge. We must examine ourselves for our own unacknowledged racist assumptions. We must be more aware that racism is an everyday experience for people of colour and can be more insidious than actual violence. Finally, as Maatin Patel writes: “It’s not enough not to be a racist. You have to be an anti-racist”.



Sue says: I live in Bristol, a city built on profits from trading in human lives, but now a multi-cultural city, and a city with

many different cultures. The statue of Edward Colston was torn down on 7th June 2020 and thrown into the harbour – he was a slave trader and later the Member of Parliament for Bristol and a benefactor to many local institutions. Various buildings and institutions named after Colston are now thinking about changing their name, after many years of debate.

The question is: should we remove all the statues to people who were racist, or who profited at the expense of others ? Or should we tell the stories from many different viewpoints, and educate ourselves, so that we don't erase our history ? But we can learn from this history and avoid making the same mistakes again? There are questions for the Church: how can they and Christians throughout the world make sure that justice and peace are available to all, but allow for the possibility of forgiveness for the wrongdoers?

3. But what of the pandemic itself ? – we see that it has created new social movements. In many towns and the districts of cities people have worked together voluntarily to help those who have been hit by this plague. They are too many to enumerate, but for example; the food banks, which existed previously but which have become more necessary; social projects created to support those who have been isolated during the past four months. We hope that such movements will continue, but already we see that many people are returning to think only of themselves.

Margaret J explained that she has worked during the pandemic in the district of London where she lives (Ealing) to organise a team of around 50 volunteers to support the most isolated in

the area. And now she must establish for how many people it will be necessary to continue to give support.

**Build back Better.** A movement to develop a Coronavirus recovery plan that Builds Back Better. It says:

“Let’s not go back to normal. It’s time for a new deal that protects public services, tackles inequality in our communities, provides secure well-paid jobs and creates a shockproof economy which can fight the climate crisis

The coronavirus pandemic has turned the world upside down, exposing major weaknesses in our economy and the deep-seated inequalities in our society that mean the most vulnerable people have been hit the hardest.

But what we do next could change everything. As the world recovers, we have a chance to reset the clock and build back better than before. What we want:

1. Secure the health and needs of everyone in the UK now and in the future
2. Protect and invest in our public services
3. Rebuild society with a transformative Green New Deal
4. Invest in people
5. Build solidarity and community across borders

Have you ever thought normal is just not good enough? You are not alone. It's time to create a change that's anything but normal.”

The Lockdown will have demonstrated three things:

1. Our economy collapses as soon as it stops selling useless stuff to over-indebted people
2. It is perfectly possible to greatly reduce pollution
3. The lowest paid people in the country are the most essential to its functioning

CharlieHebdo 25 June 2020

## **Summary of Papers for The Planned European Worker Priests Conference - Margaret Trivasse**

The annual conference of European Worker Priests, planned to take place near Lille in France over the weekend of the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September, was eventually cancelled, after many weeks of debate. But, as usual, each of the participating countries (Belgium, Catalonia, England, France, Germany with Austria and Switzerland, Netherlands and Spain) had prepared a paper as input to the discussions. Here is our summary:

Unsurprisingly, Covid 19 dominated the papers. The topic overtook the original request for reflections on new social movements although there were plenty of references to the work done by volunteers to help those in need. Most contributors wrote about the impact of the virus on their communities and the measures taken by their governments to cope with the situation, with many parallels with the conditions we have been through. Several of the worker priests live in solidarity with the poorest members of society and have jobs which bring them into direct contact with those affected. There was criticism about the old ways of doing

politics and hopes were expressed for what the future could look like.

Specifically, there were many references to the plight of the poor. Although some countries had provided shelter for homeless people during the initial phase of the pandemic, that had now come to an end and vulnerable people were once more on the streets (Spain). Several wrote about the problems faced by migrants, both those with papers and those without. It is the poorest who must go out to work and who have the least access to digital technology. They live in the worst conditions (Netherlands), have not the facilities for teaching their children and domestic violence is on the rise (Belgium). The need for solidarity with the poor was repeatedly expressed. (Spain, Germany, Catalonia, Belgium)

Alongside this concern was worry about the impact on employment. There were several references to businesses having to close and three (Belgium, Germany and France) specifically mentioned the damage done to employment in the aerospace industry and aviation (and with knock on effects in other industries – the only German to lose their job worked in car rentals). Another of the French contributions pointed to tensions between those who could work from home and those who could not. Others noted the importance of the provision of public services and that the essential jobs were often the worst paid.

A number of the worker priests work in health and social care. The Catalan paper mentioned health workers dying for lack of personal protective equipment. This was echoed by Lionel, who is a First Responder driving an ambulance. In addition to not having PPE in the beginning, there was no way

of knowing who was Covid 19-positive and who was not. Hospital workers were undervalued and ambulance crews seemed to be forgotten. A social care worker wrote of residents being isolated and afraid, and noticed how they were deteriorating, while someone else in a different medical setting wrote more positively of having supplies and of new relationships being forged. Anne-Marieke from the Netherlands, who works in domiciliary care, chose to visit her clients without PPE and reported how much her visits were appreciated.

There were other positive stories. Volunteers had helped in food distribution (Spain, Belgium). A group had made music in front of a care home (Germany). Women had been most affected by the virus (Spain) but had been most appreciated for their dedicated work in health and social care (Belgium). In Switzerland there had been acts of “Silence for Peace” and in Germany there had been demonstrations for better conditions for hospital workers and for refugees.



Although there were a few references to ecological concerns (Spain, Germany, Belgium) and to social movements such as the Gilets Jaunes (Catalonia, France) and Black Lives Matter (Germany) the main thrust of the papers with regard to the future was more generalized. There was a plea for better pay for health and social care (Spain) and a fear that riches would remain in the hands of the few (Spain, Catalonia). The hope was for a greater solidarity with the rest of the world, as had been experienced at the beginning of the pandemic (Netherlands) rather than a continued exploitation of its resources (Belgium). The Belgian paper feared a push towards greater consumption and argued for a fundamental change to the fiscal regime. The free market should be questioned and there should be initiatives for change in the political, financial and individual spheres. The French paper too argued for human rights and political renewal and also questioned the nature of capitalism.

Some seemed to make paradoxical points. For example, Spain spoke of the many propositions that have appeared to defend the planet earth and its climate, but also said that the impact on tourism in Spain, which represents 12% of the GDP, is very severe; the Netherlands saw the increase in working from home as a sign of hope, but also spoke of the vulnerability of those in the most insecure work, including the hospitality industries, where we have seen significant impacts on city centre cafes and takeaways.

There was some criticism of the response of the churches. The church had been more concerned with religious problems than with ethics (Catalonia). There were hopeful signs in communities but where were the churches? (Netherlands). The church had adapted by using the internet for worship but

without asking fundamental questions about its future choices and priorities, especially as far as the environment is concerned (Belgium). It was felt that the churches had accepted too quickly the prohibition by the State of celebrating the Eucharist (Germany). Nevertheless, vigils and outdoor celebrations had been held. What has sustained people throughout this time has been prayer (France) and the knowledge that we are all children of God (Catalonia).

If you are interested in reading the contributions in more detail, please contact Margaret T or Phil who have copies of all the original papers in French and German.

*A date has already been fixed for next year's International Worker Priest Conference. We shall meet over the weekend of 17th - 19th September 2021 at Herzogenrath, near to Aachen in Germany. Please make a note of the date if you are interested - and contact Phil for more details.*

## **Membership Forms for 2021**

Enclosed with this journal, you will find a membership form for 2021. Some of you will complete it and return to me, and I am very grateful to receive them, but last year less than half the members completed a new form.

PLEASE make an effort to complete this and send it in, even if you think nothing has changed, as it means that we can make sure you get your copy of the journal, in your preferred format (pdf or paper), and we will have your up to date details to contact you if necessary. Addresses and email addresses

change over the years, and we gradually lose touch with a proportion of members.

So, you may think we have all your details, but as one member wrote last year – ‘for the avoidance of doubt’ – please return the form to me while you remember (i.e. now!).

If you don’t like sending paper through the post, I can send you a Word version that you can complete and return electronically.

With thanks to all our members who continue to support CHRISM year on year.

*Sue Cossey - Membership Secretary*

## **Books and bits**

Book Review: “In your loving is your knowing: Elizabeth Templeton - Prophet of Our Times” edited by Peter Matheson and Alastair Hulbert. Published by Birlinn 2019 ISBN 978-1-78027-563-5

This is, without doubt, one of the most challenging and theologically alive books I have read recently – and one I would recommend to all readers of CHRISM. It is certainly a book to “disturb the comfortable” rather than “comfort the disturbed”.

Elizabeth Templeton, who died in 2015, was a Scottish freelance theologian with a degree in English and then in Theology. She lectured in the philosophy of religion at New

College, Edinburgh. After her death, colleagues at the Centre for Theology and Public Issues at New College met to consider how best to keep alive her “vision and insight -in the fields of theology, Church, education,, broadcasting, ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue”. They agreed to put together an anthology of her addresses, sermons and talks – and this book is the result. Consequently, its style is lively, almost conversational at times and if not exactly an easy read, it is not difficult to absorb.

The book starts with “An Appreciation” of Elizabeth’s life and is then divided into 6 sections, each with an Introduction by a leading theologian, as follows:-

- Christ and Culture: Richard Holloway
- Making Sense of Theology: Charlotte Methuen
- The Common Life: Tim Duffy
- Ecumenism: Alastair Hulbert
- Living, Loving and Dying: Lesley Orr
- On Being the Church: Rowan Williams

Each Section consists of 5/6 addresses, few more than 6 pages long. This makes them easy to access and gives time for reflection. So many resonate with the concerns and focus of CHRISM. Elizabeth is not afraid to challenge – (even her former Professor!) – but it is always done from a place of love – and “more in sorrow than in anger”. One of the best addresses, in my opinion, called “Worldly Ministry” contains these words: “ We have got out of the habit, in our ecclesiastical mode, of recognising that we receive gifts from the worldliness of the world, and are not simply relating to it as would-be converters, improvers and spiritual blood donors. A worldly ministry would have its pores open in receptivity to

all that potential. It would not romanticise or idealise the world.” (Page 32) and “Whatever priesthood or ministry mean, in such a theologically positive account of the world, they do not mean being superhuman, far less sub-human, but as human as possible” (Page 33). Time and again the theme of being real, of being as human as possible, is reiterated in Elizabeth’s writings.

Her talks often contain quotations from a wide range of literature. She herself writes from a place of wisdom and personal experience of life’s often tragic events. She never accepts the easy answer – but is always questioning, always seeking after truth by means of rigorous thinking. She acknowledges her debt to the theologian, John Zizioulas.

In my copy, by the section called “From Canberra to Jerusalem” I have written “Phew!” – the passion with which she wrote of the pain and anguish on hearing voices from other parts of the world as to how we are perceived – of how so often we do not hear, made it a salutary read.

By another section called “Sexuality and Marriage” I have made a note “so measured” – and it includes words I could share with couples preparing for marriage.

The whole book is so rich. It could be read again and again – or dipped into.

Elizabeth’s words at the start of the book encapsulate why indeed she is a prophet of our times: “My whole vision of theology is a convivial, energising conversation, engaging every aspect of the self, and open to every partner from any quarter. That it is so often experienced, inside and outside the Church,

as a dry, remote, eccentric and restrictive discipline is tragic and needs remedy!" Surely one of the aims of CHRISM is indeed to remedy that!

I count it as a great privilege that I knew Elizabeth as a friend, despite the fact we rarely saw each other and lived so many miles apart. Do read this book. I am confident you will not regret it.

*Ruth Stables, September 2020*

### [An MSE Harvest Festival: Phil Aspinall](#)

I have been using a book a friend gave me, which contains a series of suggestions for services which the author describes as "incarnational worship". Writing this on the day when many churches are celebrating Harvest Festival, I found the Harvest Thanksgiving to have a very MSE feel.

"Harvest is a time to celebrate our "productive" lives, at work, in the community and in our homes. What are the fruits of our hands ? What is our harvest ?

The writer of Ecclesiasticus describes the passionate intensity of the true craftsperson and focuses on occupations and work that are often taken for granted, often overlooked, even undervalued; and yet these occupations are essential to "maintain the fabric of the world" (Eccl 38.28, 38.34).

Harvest festival can be a time to see our work in a new light and to allow God to speak to the whole of us and to make

connections that unite the different parts of our lives. When we divide the world into sacred and secular we create a false separation, for everything in life is important, everything is sacred, to our incarnational God !"

From *Dancers and Wayfarers*, by Chris Thorpe, published by Canterbury Press.

## Forthcoming Events

### COVID-19 changes:

COVID related changes continue. Please note these dates and details in your diary – we shall post more details on our website and social media.

### Reflective Weekend

The Committee have decided that it will not be possible for our Reflective Weekend next February to go ahead 'live' However, we will be organising it as a virtual day conference on **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February** led by Gill Frigerio, on Career, Calling & Vocation. Gill is a Principal Teaching Fellow in the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Warwick, where she is Co-Director of the MA in Career Development and Coaching Studies. She has a scholarly interest in women's career development and how it intersects with issues of faith and calling. The day will be on Zoom: Please see our website for details of how to take part.

### Other meetings

We also hope to organise other virtual evening meetings on Zoom in the interim, as those attending recent meetings have fed back very positively.

## AGM and Summer Conference

Later next year, we are looking forward to our AGM and Summer Conference hopefully to be held in real life at Sarum College, Salisbury between **16th - 18th July 2021**



**And Finally.....**



## Chat

The chat button.

In accordance with guidance issued centrally

Describing incidents and individuals,

Systematic back translation.

Does not the ear test words as the palate tastes food?

There are several questions which at present we can't answer:

Contact us if you have any questions.

We take the handling and storage of your data very seriously.

It is necessary to remember that we know something they don't:

You whitewash with lies

Once uttered they could not be recalled.

Collateral damage?

CHRISM is on Facebook, 'Ministers at Work':

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/129656640430436/>

and LinkedIn, at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=3756477>

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

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

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

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

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

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**Visit the CHRISM website:**

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