

Ministers-at-Work

*The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry*

Number 162

July 2022

Contents

Editorial 1

What is God’s economy and how do we measure it? - Julian Blakemore 3

Treasurer’s report 26

Gathering of French and European Worker Priests 29

Forthcoming Events 31

CHRISM Theology Discussion Group - Future Meetings ... 31

Deacons’ Conference 32

Evening online meeting 33

Reflective Weekend 2023..... 33

Summer Conference 2023 33

Pastoral Conference for Self-Supporting Ministers 34

Humbler Church Bigger God – HeartEdge Conference..... 34

And Finally..... 35

Why work? 35

Editorial

You might, like many people, have given up on news for the moment. The ‘blue on blue’ spats which take up many column inches seem to emphasise the unsuitability of candidates and in any case, all they ever talk about is money – which most of us don’t have in any quantity... Well, my apologies, but Ministers-at-Work this time is also talking about money – and resources in general – as the Theology Group continue their pursuit of understanding economics. Drawing particularly on Schumacher’s thinking (the need to go back

to doing things on a human scale, based on human needs, human skills and human relationships) they conclude that God's economy is not primarily money oriented. It is focused on life-giving activity through the building-up of his kingdom on earth. It seems to me that that is a message to which future prime ministers should attend. However, it is also a message for all of us as, in our various engagements with the world of work, we both contribute to and influence the management of resources.

It seems likely that this theme will continue to be important as we see pay disputes in several sectors, linked to escalating bills and widespread poverty (with perhaps as many as 25% of our population living in destitution on one recent estimate – including many people in work). It is a time to be creative and to use our gifts and connections – to act locally as well as (for some) nationally to make a difference – and to speak truth to power where we can. I would welcome your reports and reflections on this and of course on other matters for future editions.

The remainder of the journal includes an insight into CHRISM's management of resources from our Treasurer, as well as details of a considerable number of forthcoming events. I hope to see you at one!

Pauline Pearson



What is God's economy and how do we measure it? - Julian Blakemore

This article is based on a discussion at the CHRISM Theology Discussion Group on Wednesday, 25th May 2022, continuing our recent focus on economic matters.

I. Introduction

We are continuing to explore the world of economics, our place in it and how we can influence it. Previously, we have been thinking about economics and how economies have evolved over time. We have considered various economic theories that have been developed and how they operate. We have assessed them against Jesus' teaching and his supreme injunction to love God and love our neighbour (Matt. 22.37-40). We have established that the most important factor in any economic system is the people who manage and participate in it, their attitudes, values and priorities. It is people who determine whether the system will be creative, just and benevolent, or destructive, corrupt and exploitative. We have reflected on the role of governments in economic systems. We have recognised that capitalism has become the dominant economic model for satisfying consumer demand and generating wealth around the world. We have identified the pros and cons of this model and highlighted some of the inherent inequalities in the system.

From a theological point of view, the remaining task is to reflect of what the Bible has to say specifically on the subject of economy, whether the texts are applicable to our 21st century understanding of economics, and if there are any

helpful principles that we might be able to derive from them to guide our thinking and, in particular, the criteria we should be using to measure good economic performance.

2. Greek origins



The word economy is derived from the Greek *oikonomia* (οικονομία). Its root is *oikonomos*, which comprises two words, *oikos*, usually translated as ‘house’ or ‘household,’ and *nomos*, meaning ‘law,’ ‘rule,’ or ‘custom.’ Thus, a literal translation would be ‘house rule,’ which signifies management or administration of household affairs, housekeeping, the oversight of others’ property, or stewardship.

The word first appeared in texts dating from 8th to 6th centuries BCE in relation to the management of the estates of affluent landowners. This would have involved some elements of production, resource management, financial budgeting and planning on a limited scale but, on the whole, it is fair to say

that the links to modern-day economic thinking appear fairly tenuous. Whilst ends and means also mattered to the ancient Greeks, their reasons were very different to ours. Whereas contemporary economics regards the means of production/resources as scarce, the ancient Greeks believed in the abundance of the natural world which was sufficient to provide for people's subsistence. According to Leshem, it was far more important for them that resources were used for praiseworthy ends, i.e. to advance the 'good life' through support for philosophy, involvement in public life and resisting the 'unnatural' urge to "pursue economic goals or luxuries for their own sake."¹

The ethical overlay present in ancient *oikonomia* is a distinct feature that is largely missing from modern economics.

3. Biblical References

The first thing to note is that references to *oikonomia* and *oikonomos* in the Bible are relatively few and occur in the following passages:

Luke 12.42-44

*And the Lord said, "Who, then, is the faithful and prudent **oikonomos [manager]** whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions.*

¹ Leshem, Dotan, 2016. *What did the Ancient Greeks Mean by Oikonomia?*, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Vol.30, No.1, pp.225-231.

Luke 16.1-8 - The parable of the prudent steward

Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had *oikonomon* [a manager, steward], and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your *oikonomias* [management, stewardship] because you cannot be my *oikonomein* [house-manager] any longer.’ Then the *oikonomos* [manager] said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the *oikonomian* [position of stewardship] away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as *oikonomias* [manager], people may welcome me into their homes.’ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first,



‘How much do you owe my master?’ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ And his master commended the dishonest *oikonomon* [manager] because he had acted shrewdly, for the children of this age are more shrewd

in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

Romans 16.23

*Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the **oikonomos** [city treasurer, chamberlain], and our brother Quartus greet you.*

I Corinthians 4.1-2 – The ministry of the Apostles

*Think of us in this way: as servants of Christ and **oikonomos** [stewards] of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of **oikonomois** [stewards] that they be found trustworthy.*

I Corinthians 9.15-17 – The rights of an apostle

*But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this so that they may be applied in my case. Indeed, I would rather die than that—no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting! If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a wage, but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a **oikonomian** [commission, stewardship].*

Galatians 4.2

*My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than those who are enslaved, though they are the owners of all the property, but they remain under guardians and **oikonomos** [stewards, trustees] until the date set by the father.*

Ephesians 1.5-10 – Spiritual blessings in Christ

*He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as **oikonomian** [a plan for, to usher in/administer] the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*



Ephesians 3.1-9 – Paul’s mission to the gentiles

*This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you gentiles, for surely you have already heard of **oikonomian [the commission, stewardship]** of God’s grace that was given me for you and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God’s grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ and to make everyone see [bring to light] what is the **oikonomia [plan, stewardship]** of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things.*

Colossians 1.25 – Paul’s interest in the Colossians

*I became its minister according to God’s **oikonomia [commission, divine office]** that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known.*

I Timothy 1.3-4 – Warnings against false teaching

I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach different teaching and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than

the *oikonomia* [divine training, household management of God] that is known by faith.

Titus 1.7-9

*For a bishop, as God's *oikonomon* [steward], must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain, but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, self-controlled, upright, devout, and restrained, holding tightly to the trustworthy word of the teaching, so that he may be able both to exhort with sound instruction and to refute those who contradict it.*

I Peter 4.9-10 – Good stewards of God's grace

*Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good *oikonomoi* [stewards] of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.*

4. Reflections

So, what do these texts tell us about God's economy? Firstly, that it is not primarily money oriented. God's economy is focused on *life-giving activity* through the building-up of his kingdom on earth and, in explaining how this will happen, aspects of human household and estate management are useful. *Oikonomia* conveys a strong sense of dispensation, commissioning, agency, stewardship, and distribution, which are all part of receiving the God's life-giving word through Christ, responding to his call, taking his word out and sharing it with others to attract more followers, and establishing Christian communities in other places. Like those who manage human estates, this activity depends on trust and responsibility.

Oikonomia, then, is used to explain how God's plan will be implemented and his kingdom brought to fulfilment, i.e. working through trusted individuals who act as his agents in the world, managing his message, stewarding his resources, and building regional groups to support the work and help grow his sphere of influence. It is a growth strategy that starts small and, when new groups are added, they keep their local feel although they proclaim the same faith and exhibit the hallmark gifts of the Spirit.



The parable of the prudent steward is the only passage with a financial focus. It is an intriguing text because on first reading it seems as though the steward acts in bad faith throughout, first by misappropriating his master's property and then by falsifying the accounts of his master's debtors to reduce the amounts they owe for his own benefit. The difficulty is that his actions are commended by his master and held up by Jesus as an example for the disciples to follow. It suggests that there is something else going on in the story which is not immediately obvious to us. Commentators suggest that it could be that the master either admired the foresight of his steward in looking

after his own interests after he had been dismissed from his job, or that he appreciated the steward's return to fair dealing by writing down the accounts for the amount of interest due, since usury was strictly forbidden under God's law. Thus, the steward was not only acting legally and generating goodwill for himself, but also casting his master in a good light with the debtors in the process.

Jesus encourages the disciples to use the worldly wealth (mammon) at their disposal as wisely as possible to plan ahead and gain the approval of God by making friends in the shrewd way that the steward had done. Jesus recognises that they were in a transition period, in the world but not of it (Jn. 15.19), and should prepare for the coming of God's kingdom. There would come a point when there would be a reckoning and worldly wealth would not matter anymore but, in the meantime, they had a responsibility to account for what they had received and use it well to further God's work. Jesus goes on to remind them that a person who is faithful in a small responsibility can be trusted with a larger one to reinforce the point that they needed to prove themselves good stewards with the little they had now in order to be ready when God bestows his heavenly treasures in the age to come.

This is a passage, therefore, that adds faithfulness, preparation, prudence and shrewdness to the list of attributes that characterise God's economy. There is also a very important practical point about paying attention to the small things, engaging with the people and places where we are, and recognising what we can influence, rather than burying our talents on the one hand or over-reaching ourselves on the other.

I remember my grandad used to say ‘take care of the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves.’ The meaning is clear that if you look after the small things, they can add up to something much bigger.



When I started work in the finance department of a large bank, I remember my manager telling me that the numbers I would be dealing with were very large and it was easy to become blasé after a while but I should treat every *penny* as if it was my own because we owed it to the bank’s depositors and shareholders to be prudent with the funds entrusted to us. It is advice that I have never forgotten which has served me well over the years.

When it comes to God’s economy, being faithful in the small things seems to be a critical building block.

5. Small things matter

There is a saying that “the devil is in the detail.” It serves as a warning that paying insufficient attention to the details in the planning of any endeavour can have dire consequences - if we overlook or ignore the details, we do so at our peril. We can

understand why people might not want to pay proper attention to the details because it can be a painstaking, laborious and time-consuming process. It requires patience, care and commitment and they might not have the time or energy to be bothered with it. There is an alternative version of the phrase which states that “God is in the detail.” The source of both versions is uncertain. Whereas the devil being in the detail focuses on the potentially unholy effects of disregarding details, the alternate reading turns having due regard for details into a godly activity. It suggests that God is to be found in the detail, that small matters are important to him, that he cares about details that others regard as inconsequential, and values those whom society has written-off as worthless. This is the God who sees a sparrow fall to the ground and counts the number of hairs on your head (Matt. 10.29-30), who prioritises the lost sheep (Matt.

The UK’s total workforce is 32.7 million. The public sector employs 5.7 million (17.4%), with 27 million (82.6%) employed in the private sector.² It is an often-overlooked fact that within the UK private sector, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) account for three-fifths of employment and around half of turnover. At the start of 2021, total employment in SMEs was 16.3 million (61%) and turnover was £2.3 trillion (52%).³ The importance of SMEs to the UK economy is undeniable but

² Office for National Statistics (June 2022), EMP02: Public and private sector employment (source: Labour Force Survey and returns from public sector organisations).

³ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (October 2021), Business population estimates for the UK and regions 2021: statistical release.

these are the businesses that have been hit hardest by the combined effects of Brexit, Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis. In May, the Federation of Small Businesses warned that half a million firms (roughly 10% of the total) were at risk of going bust within weeks without appropriate government support.⁴ These enterprises may not be the household names and could never be accused of being ‘too big to fail.’ Yet their health and success matters, not only to their local



communities, but to the economy as a whole. Maybe the time has come to look at them in a different way and appreciate their value. Rather than focusing on the big and powerful, we should be asking if these businesses are too small to be allowed to fail? We should be encouraging, nurturing and caring for them because they are more important than we might have thought.

⁴ The Guardian, 30 May 2022, *Almost 500,000 UK small businesses ‘at risk of going bust within weeks’*

E F Schumacher is best known for his book *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (1973), which became an international best-seller and remains remarkably prescient. It challenges the notion that 'big is best' and the dehumanising effect on people, work and economic systems that comes from the constant pursuit of bigger markets and bigger entities. By reducing people to anonymous cogs in a huge machine, diminishing the importance of craft skills, downplaying the importance of relationships, making profitability king, and becoming preoccupied with growth, modern governments and organisations have collaborated in depersonalising economics for most people, thereby taking economic wellbeing, an essential part of their lives, outside their control and comprehension.

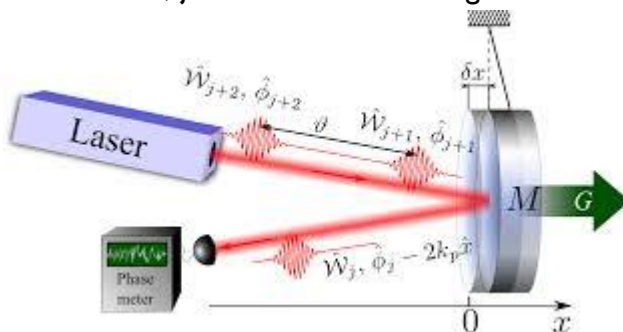
What Schumacher called for was a people-centred economics because that would, in his view, enable environmental and human sustainability. He argued that human happiness is not achieved through material wealth. His answer was to go back to doing things on a human scale, based on human needs, human skills and human relationships. Rediscovering the value of the interconnections and interdependencies between us, between our needs and capabilities, between us and the planet we inhabit, will encourage the ethical response that prioritises the common good and stewardship of the environment.

We may not be able, or want, to fully turn back the clock but responding to the combined global challenges of the climate emergency, health (including mental health issues) and lack of wellbeing, conflict, food and materials shortages, and technological developments, will require us to do things differently. We see Schumacher's way of thinking re-emerging

through farmers' markets, craft fairs, artisan bakeries, local cafes, worker cooperatives and community-owned projects. Maybe more emphasis on smaller and more local production would be helpful, both in terms of addressing the economic problems we face, helping us redefine what it means to be human and how to enjoy life, and reconnecting with God and his purposes.

6. Measurement

It is often said in management circles that 'What gets measured gets managed.' Like most management advice, it is helpful up to a point. Obviously, measures can be useful to confirm or disprove assumptions in some circumstances but the major flaw with an exclusively measurement-based, data-driven approach is some things that matter simply cannot be measured. As Einstein put it, "not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." However, just because something is not measurable



does not mean that it cannot be managed. Take love for example. It is impossible to capture what love is in a simple metric, or even a set of metrics, but relationships can still be managed to nurture love and address issues that threaten to

undermine love between those involved. Measurement has its place but when it comes to living a good life, feelings, emotions, experience and values also have an important part to play.

Accepting that measures can have value when used appropriately, it is paramount to understand in what situations they can be usefully employed. For measures to be effective, they have to be relevant and important which means being aligned to specific strategies and goals. Measures have to be clearly defined (consistent), understandable, timely and replicable on a regular basis. Results have to be comparable over time to track progress or drive change. The number of measures should also be manageable – clearly this depends on the size of the organisation but trying to focus on too many outcomes at the same time can be counter-productive. By linking measures to desired outcomes or intended behaviours, managers should be able to look at them to see how they are doing and what action, if any, needs to be taken. Where things are going off-track, it should help them work out which levers they need to pull to adjust performance. Without this kind of connectivity to what matters, measurement is a waste of time. Finally, making sure everyone is on the same page and pulling in the same direction is imperative. This is hard enough within one organisation and can be very challenging when working on international initiatives where the measures have to be agreed by all participants.

Traditional measures of economic performance, such as GDP and profit, have the advantage of being well understood and widely used. They have provided helpful comparisons between countries and corporations. However, in the context of

building a sustainable and fair economy for the future, on their own they are insufficient. In a world facing unprecedented economic challenges from the combined effects of the climate emergency, Covid-19 pandemic, conflict in Ukraine, fuel and food shortages, cost of living crisis, and widening inequalities between northern and southern hemispheres⁵, continuing to focus only on measures that put money first whilst ignoring social and environmental aspects of wellbeing is not enough. A new, broader and bolder approach is needed to drive the



transformation in our economic systems that will bring God's vision and purposes to bear for the planet and all his people. Such a vision for the planet and every living thing who, like us, depends on it requires a magnitude of change that will not be achieved just by putting a few new measures in place. First and foremost, we all need to accept the current way of running things is not working and that we cannot leave it to others to sort out - we are all part of the solution and each of us has a role to play. Secondly, it is a question of will, of wanting to

⁵ The Guardian, 2 July 2022, *'Perfect storm' of crises is widening global inequality says UN chief*

make a difference and help change things for the better. To enable this transformation, a new set of goals is needed to articulate the vision, with supporting measures that are more holistic and focus on the actions that need to be taken to deliver it. This vision must recognise the interconnectedness of the whole of creation. It must seek to enable humanity to live peacefully alongside the rest of the natural world and with each other, and create an environment in which all can flourish. This is a shared responsibility which challenges us all to consider the environmental, economic and social impact of what we currently do and how we do it. But it must not stop there. The most important part is the follow-through into making changes to our lifestyles in order to live sustainably and ensure that the choices we make do not adversely affect the lives of others. A clear set of goals linked to meaningful measures can help us to understand the consequences of how we live and enable responsible decision-making. This is the essence of being good stewards of all that we have been given.

In 2015, 193 Member States of the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁶ at its core. In addition to climate action, these include commitments to no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, clean water and sanitation, quality education, reduced inequalities, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and to fostering peace, justice and strong institutions. These are underpinned by 169 targets and indicators. Some things are easier to measure than others. For example, reductions in

⁶ For details of the 17 goals, see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

total greenhouse gas emissions per year, the number of people living in extreme poverty on less than \$1.25 a day, or the level of plastic debris density in our oceans are all precisely defined, so baselines can be established, targets set and progress tracked. In contrast, ‘the number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas’ is widely drawn and more open to interpretation. The clearer, more specific and actionable measures are, the easier it is to hold those responsible to account for their performance. Where they are loose, accountability is undermined. Whilst every attempt to introduce meaningful measurement is important across the full range of dimensions, it should be noted that not all of them will be relevant to every business, organisation, or individual.

THE GLOBAL GOALS

For Sustainable Development



The UN SDGs are not expressed in theological language but the aims they embody are consistent with Christ's teaching

about the Kingdom of God. They are goals we should be able to get behind and, as such, we are encouraged to do so. The UN recognises that the journey to 2030 will involve governments, parliaments, international institutions, local authorities, civil society, business and the private sector, scientific and academic communities and all people acting in solidarity to deliver change. Businesses have a fundamental role to play in delivering against the SDGs and are increasingly expected to report on the alignment of their activities with relevant SDGs. The responsible investment community is already using such disclosures to inform investment management decisions in relation to their portfolios.

Critics will say that a shift to such a broad set of objectives will over-complicate matters and make things confusing for people. The counter argument is that we live in a complex world and for too long have ignored, or failed to appreciate, the richness, diversity and interdependencies of life and the intricacies and fragility of ecosystems. When it comes to living faithfully and sustainably in the world, education is key to develop respect and a sense of wonder towards the natural environment that will help preserve and enhance the quality of life on this planet.

7. Conclusions

From a Biblical and theological perspective, economy is not a primarily financial concept. It is much more focused on the life-giving interactions between people, and between people and the rest of creation. There is a strong belief in the God-giveness of resources, which translates into an equally strong sense of stewardship and responsibility on behalf of those to whom they have been given to take care of them and use them

wisely. Economics is much easier to understand in the context of household or estate management where the consequences of decisions or effects of events (e.g. drought, or loss of an animal) are more visible and tangible to those involved. To them, economics is deeply personal and closely tied to the things they consider important and their aspirations in life.



Today, the global scale of production and distribution of goods and services and has made people feel less in control of their economic situation and consequently, of their ability to plan and enjoy life. It is hard for people to feel fully connected to the world around them when they can be affected global factors which are hard to foresee and outside their influence. In some ways it can be argued that, through the development of the internet and social media, humanity has never been more connected. However, in other ways we have become more disconnected with our local environment, the natural world, and with God and our spiritual selves. We have lost sight of some of the small things that really matter. Together,

these aspects of life are important in giving us a sense of belonging, wellbeing and purpose.

In calling for a return to a more people-centred economics, Schumacher was looking for people to rediscover the interactions and interdependencies that give life meaning and purpose. This sits well with the vision of God's kingdom revealed by Christ. Where aspects of this vision can be articulated in ways that can be measured (albeit in a limited and imperfect way), it is not ungodly to make use of the tools available. God is in the detail as well as the big picture. He is present in target setting and measurement as in any other human endeavour and can work through it to further his purposes. Using measures to track progress and ensure that things move in the right direction would therefore seem to be a sensible and worthwhile activity.

Rather than the vain pursuit of wealth, the key to the good life would seem to lie elsewhere. Putting our trust in God, who is trustworthy and wants the best for us, potentially offers a better way forward. Learning to appreciate and find our fulfilment in our relationships with God, with each other, and with the whole of creation through Christ, feels more like a road that leads to happiness, the enjoyment of life and a sustainable future.

8. Questions

- **To what extent should ethical and faith considerations be part of economics?**
- **How realistic are Schumacher's ideas in the 21st century?**
- **What comprises 'the good life' for us?**

- **How do we keep sight of small things that make a difference to the quality of people's lives?**
- **How important is it to try to measure progress towards things that matter?**
- **How can Christian communities provide a model for the future?**

9. Further Reading

Daly, Herman E & Cobb, John B Jnr (1989), *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*. Boston, Beacon Press.

Sachs, Jonathan (2020), *Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times*. London, Hodder & Stoughton

Schumacher, E F (1973), *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*. London, Blond & Briggs



Treasurer's report

As you may know, the financial affairs of CHRISM are handled by the charitable trust that sits behind it, the Christians In Secular Ministry Trust (CHRISSET; 294910). The trust was established in 1986 as a repository for the surplus generated by a conference of self-supporting ministers held in Nottingham, instigated by founding-father Michael Ranken. CHRISSET began hosting annual retreats for MSEs (now the CHRISM reflective weekends) and in 1993 was the platform for launching CHRISM as a constituted organisation to support MSE. The journal also started life as a Michael Ranken initiative and pre-dates CHRISM.

At each AGM CHRISM is asked to pass a resolution placing financial management in the hands of CHRISSET, and this year, at the Kairos Centre, Roehampton, was no exception. As a Trustee it has been my privilege for several years now to have been asked by fellow Trustees (all CHRISM members) to continue as Treasurer.

Our financial year is the calendar year, and during 2021 we did rather well, with a surplus of income over expenditure just over £4,000. I am of course rather pleased, but a little explanation is wise. Each year, we aim to break even on the two weekend events each year, and on any additional events. Overall, we have been successful in doing so, and any small surplus made goes towards meeting overhead costs such as the website and insurance (the balance coming from donations).

The principal source of income is from annual subscriptions (and the tax thereon recovered through Gift Aid – do sign up

for this if you haven't already!) This is allocated to the costs of the journal (two-thirds) and of committee meetings (one third, chiefly room hire and travel). For over 2 years we have been holding the latter virtually, so costs have been minimal, helping our finances considerably. Over the AGM weekend we discussed the future pattern of committee meetings and aim to hold both F2F and virtual meetings going forward, which means costs should be kept below pre-Covid levels.

Income in 2021 was also boosted by payments in advance for the 2022 Reflective weekend (subsequently cancelled as a F2F event, so there will be a corresponding adjustment for 2022) and exceptionally high donations, of over £2,400. The bulk of this was made up of a single donation, for which we are most grateful.

After taking into account the above 'exceptional items', the underlying figures show a surplus of income over expenditure of about £800. I was happy to recommend no increases in the subscription rates at the AGM. Do contact me (rob.fox36@gmail.com) if you have any questions about CHRISM's finances.

Donating to CHRISM

A welcome and useful element of donations comes from 'give as you shop', where online purchases from well-known retailers lead to a small percentage of the price paid by the buyer going to a charity of the buyer's choice, with the buyer paying nothing extra. For several years now CHRISSET has been a listed charity with **Easyfundraising** (<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>), which is partnered with hundreds of well-known retailers and service providers, and

over £250 has been passed on to CHRISSET from online purchases made. The percentages are usually small, say 0.5% or 2%, so each amount CHRISSET receives may be small, but cumulatively this has been a useful source of income.

Easyfundraising is easy to use, users just set up an account, nominate the charity they wish to support (CHRISSET is 294910), and away you go. Users can either go through the Easyfundraising site to look for a retailer, or download a 'reminder' that will flag if a retailer is partnered with them when you visit the retailer's website.

There is a similar donation service in **Amazon Smile** (<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/gp/charity/homepage.html>).

CHRISSET is set up on this too and donations from shopping with Amazon have already started coming in.

We are now set up with **Give As You Live** (<https://www.giveasyoulive.com>), which also offers donations from in-shop purchases at several supermarkets, so your Saturday shop could raise funds for CHRISSET at no cost to you – the retailer makes the donation!

There are other such fundraising partnerships and websites around, so if you know of one on which you'd like CHRISSET to be a charity option, do let me know.

Please do consider supporting CHRISSET / CHRISM through your armchair shopping, be it a CD, clothing, groceries, a holiday, or rail tickets; as one well-known retailer likes to remind us – every little helps.

Rob Fox, Treasurer

Gathering of French and European Worker Priests

Saturday 3rd to Sunday 4th September, 2022

in Orsay (south west of central Paris)

We have a rendez-vous! Not only the French worker-priests, but also the men and women with whom they journey, are invited to share a time of exchange, reflection and hope, in a friendly and congenial atmosphere. The collective of the French Prêtres-ouvriers, despite the difficulties linked to their lack of human resources, was able to create this project with a small preparation team. Admittedly, it does not have the ambition of a national meeting as we have known in the history of the P.O.s (some of you will no doubt recall Strasbourg), but it will be motivated by the same passion.



The date chosen is 3rd – 4th September 2022 (those who wish to can arrive on Friday evening). We have responded to the wish of many to link with the meeting of European P.O.s scheduled for this weekend. Our preparation group decided to take part in this national meeting at Orsay. During the meeting we shall have a session to meet ‘between ourselves’; and the rest of the time we can meet together.

The proposed title for the meeting is: *Worker-priests today - Enthusiasts for Fellowship*. In line with this theme, workshops will be offered on the following themes:

- Relevance of the Gospel today in a secularised world
- Welcoming and sharing the Gospel in the working-class world.
- Companions of humanity to live out Hope

and for the European P.O.s:

- The Christian faith today in the light of the historical experience of P.O.

This weekend will be above all friendly and festive. This is an important time to take stock. It will not be a meeting of “veterans” but an opportunity to share and reflect on all the developments that concern us. It is a message of hope for the P.O. intuition to continue, and for the future of the Gospel.

For more information, please contact Phil Aspinall. This text translated by Phil from a French call.

Forthcoming Events

CHRISM Theology Discussion Group - Future Meetings

CHRISM Theology Discussion Group - Next Meeting

This Discussion Group, which is open to all CHRISM members, provides an online forum where we can reflect on and discuss the theological aspects of our work. We meet monthly by Zoom for an hour and a half. Previous topics have included: *The Importance of our Work to God and Us*, *The Idea of Rest*, *What is Work?*, *Justice at Work*, *The Kingdom at Work Project*, *Eternal Life*, *Christian Perspectives on Conflict in the Workplace*, *Organisational values - Help or hindrance to ministry in the workplace?*, *Is it OK to be ambitious?*, *Who is Jesus?*, and *Neighbourliness at Work*.

Our next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, 20th July 2022 from 19.30-21.00 (UK time)** [*apologies. Ed*] when I am pleased to announce that Rob Fox will be leading a discussion on "The Christian Approach to Taxation." This continues to explore our recent theme of how we engage with the economic realities of the world and bring Kingdom values to bear. If you are interested in joining the Theology Discussion Group, please email me at rev.julian.e.blakemore@gmail.com and I will add you to the invitation list so that you receive Zoom links for this and future meetings. We look forward to welcoming you.

Revd Julian Blakemore

Deacons' Conference

Liverpool Hope University: Fri 2nd Sept - Sun 4th Sept 2022

The Roman Catholic Permanent Diaconate in England and Wales is celebrating 50 years of being active, and in the autumn, they are holding a National Assembly in Liverpool. They say, 'if you or your colleagues may be interested in coming to the conference, you would be most welcome.' Email deacon@hope.ac.uk



NATIONAL DEACON ASSEMBLY

50 YEARS AND COUNTING
PERMANENT DIACONATE - PAST, PRESENT ... FUTURE

Fri 2nd Sept - Sun 4th Sept 2022
Liverpool Hope University

Keynote Speakers

For all who are interested in the diaconate and a diaconal Church

For more information:
<https://www.hope.ac.uk/research/researchcentres/ministryresearchproject/nationaldeaconassembly/>

E: deacon@hope.ac.uk

BOOK NOW

The poster features a background image of the Liverpool skyline at dusk, reflected in the water. It includes three headshots of the keynote speakers: Mgr. Paul McParlan, Deacon Gerald Dupont, and Deacon John Morrill. A red diagonal banner in the bottom right corner reads 'BOOK NOW'.

Evening online meeting

MODEM - an introduction by their Chair, Vaughan Roberts

Tuesday 11th October 2022 (time and details to be confirmed)

Reflective Weekend 2023

Sarum College, Salisbury

10th - 12th February 2023



Summer Conference 2023

Rydal Hall, Cumbria

23rd - 25th June 2023

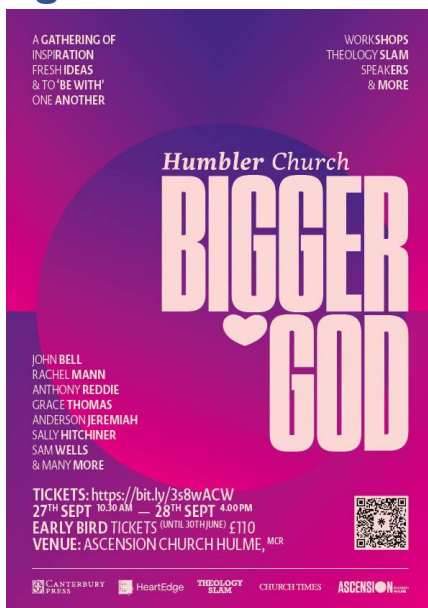
And from our European colleagues in the Old Catholic Church of Germany:

Pastoral Conference for Self-Supporting Ministers

Workers Centre, Konigswinter (near Cologne)

28th - 30th October 2022

Humbler Church Bigger God – HeartEdge Conference



Thanks to former Moderator Rebecca Craven, we are including details of the HeartEdge Conference which is taking place in her area, Hulme, Manchester this year on September 27th and 28th. The organisers say: “With people like John Bell, Anthony Reddie, Rachel Mann, Anderson Jeremiah and Grace

Thomas we have a great line up of speakers. From St Martin in the Fields we will have Sam Wells and Sally Hitchiner launching the “Being With” course.

On the Tuesday evening we are hosting the prestigious Theology Slam on its first trip out of London. We realise that in these challenging times it is difficult for many people to find spare cash for a conference but for anyone in church leadership or aspiring to be we are confident that there will be plenty here to inspire. You can find more details on our web page here: <https://www.heartedge.org/main/conference2022>

If you just want to go straight to buying your tickets go here: <https://tickets.myiknowchurch.co.uk/gb/ODYyLTM4/t>”

And Finally.....

Why work?

The last day of work was 24022022

No salary received since.

She walked out.

Left behind

Contacts – retail outlets – faces – friends.

‘She knows the world’ he says

The world where rockets demolished walls

And windows

Cracked ceilings

Frightened parents and children

Took away that routine

And swept her into this.

Face after face
Behind screens.
Tapping an icon:
Praying to communicate.
Looking for work
And meaning:
Making food, cleaning,
Working to forget
The worry.
Working
In/for/on peace
And justice.



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.

Membership Secretary:

Sue Cossey 1 Bye Mead, Emerson's Green, Bristol, BS16 7DL
Retired Insurance underwriter sue.cossey@yahoo.co.uk 0117 957 4267

Submissions for the Journal (if electronic:
.txt, .rtf, or .doc format) should be sent to:

The Journal Editor
3 Belle Grove Place, Spital Tongues,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4LH

E-mail: Pauline.pearson@northumbria.ac.uk

Visit the CHRISM website:

www.chrism.org.uk

Chrism Committee Members:

Moderators

Margaret Trivasse

Counsellor (NHS)

Catherine Binns

Chaplain (NHS)

Nicky von Benzon

Family Mediator

Hugh Lee (Emeritus)

Energy Economist

Secretary**Marianne Hayward**

Consultant Psychiatrist

114 Valley Mill Lane, Bury, BL9 9BY

margtriv@yahoo.co.uk 07796 366220

45 Riverstone Bridge, Littleborough, OL15 8JF

revcathfrog@talktalk.net 07843 388562

24 Little Penny Rope, Pershore, WR10 1QN

nicky5319@outlook.com 07503 002220

64 Observatory Street, Oxford, OX2 6EP

hugh.lee@btinternet.com

68 Woodfield Drive, Gidea Park, Romford, Essex,

RM2 5DH marianne.hayward@talktalk.net

07904 292993

Treasurer**Rob Fox**

Tax Adviser

22 Queensbury Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8JW#

rob.fox36@gmail.com 0191 270 0623

Journal Editor**Pauline Pearson**

Honorary academic

3 Belle Grove Place, Spital Tongues, Newcastle upon Tyne,

NE2 4LH pauline.pearson@northumbria.ac.uk 0775 3744349

Committee Members**Phil Aspinall**

Process Risk Consultant

139 Wiltshire Court, Nod Rise, Coventry, CV5 7JP

philaspinallo@googlemail.com 024 7646 7509

Margaret Joachim

Student & Volunteer

8 Newburgh Road, London, W3 6DQ

margaret.joachim@london.anglican.org 020 8723 4514

Ali Creasey

IT Project Manager

totleyassociate@gmail.com 07496 451687

Julian Blakemore

Banking

62 Lomond Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 6BT

rev.julian.e.blakemore@gmail.com 07889431695

Web Master**Martin Dryden**

Director, Finance Co.

Mont Ube House, St Clement, Jersey JE2 6QT

mont.ube.jsy@gmail.com

Patron

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury
