

Ministers-at-Work

*The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry*

Number 166

July 2023

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Editorial

Well, this is it! My final editorial after about six years... First of all, some thanks. Editors work as part of a team: without contributors there would be no journal; without a printer there would be no journal; and without the contribution of the membership secretary the journal would never reach you! So a heartfelt thank you to all of them, as well as to you: without readers there would definitely be no journal!

Editors come and go, each bringing something of their own to the finished product... Their own style, their own judgement, their own interests and concerns. In an early issue I pondered the nature of doing work: what we do, how we do it, and where, as we do it, we might find God nudging us in particular directions. Inevitably perhaps in this edition I am interested in the nature of endings – and particularly retirement. In a game, to retire means to stop playing. In



this case, retirement is usually due to injury of some sort, though some retire at the top of their game! However, to retire is defined primarily in dictionaries as 'to stop working'.

Retirement in the secular context is usually about stopping work. However, it is also often viewed as ceasing to be of value, at least in our fast moving western context. Ceasing to be up to date on the latest technology, or training can create issues in a business. However, stopping work (as an editor or anything else) does not mean ceasing to be interested, nor does it mean ceasing to have skills or gifts to offer. A lawyer, a doctor or a heating engineer do not suddenly stop being themselves, with all their wisdom and expertise – even if they choose to apply it in different circles. Amongst our number we have several examples of people who are no longer in paid employment but use their innate gifts to continue an active ministry in secular environments, in politics, in the voluntary sector or as consultants.

To retire can also be used to describe stepping away from a place or situation – for example retiring in a conflict to regroup and restore troops, or, perhaps more usefully, leaving the clamour and commotion of day to day life to go to a quiet place – a place for reflection. For me this is a more useful image – not least because it allows for two things: The renewal of the parties engaged in the work – the refreshment in our case of the journal with a fresh perspective under Rebecca's guidance - and the opportunity for me at least to find some space to consider where in the everyday environments around us, and certainly not just in paid work, God is nudging us now. As I sit writing, the challenge of climate change in every area of work and life, and the continuing impact of economic policy on individuals and communities seem significant.

This journal includes three items which emerged from the Summer conference at Rydal Hall – two exploring particular issues around work in a Lake District context, and one reflecting on restoration and stepping back. In addition, we have the usual contribution from the Theology Group, this time focused on blessing in secular situations, as well as a report from the German Worker Priests

conference, memories of David Clark, and a few dates for your diaries.

I'm sure that the journal will flourish in fresh hands – if you have ideas, articles, or contributions of any kind, please send them to Rebecca Craven, whose contact details are on the cover. And once again, thank you all for being part of the whole!

Pauline Pearson

“I Go to the Hills....” Annual Conference 23rd – 25th June 2023

This year's CHRISM Summer Conference was held at Rydal Hall, sitting beside Rydal Water, just north of Grasmere. It was a chance



to explore natural beauty, to come to a place of refreshment, to recharge our batteries. But we came also as Ministers in Secular Employment, and so inevitably asked the questions – where is work to be found here? And how do we encounter God in that work?

The planning group came up with many examples. There is the (obvious) work in the tourism and hospitality industry – pubs, hotels but also craft centres and boat trips of Lake Windermere. There are people who work on the land in agriculture, forestry and the care of animals, but also in the heavier industries in the larger towns, at Sellafield over the mountains, and, of course, those caught up in the current debate about new coal mining.

The conference would engage with some of these jobs and themes, and meet with people involved as well as sharing in discussions around them. The pieces that follow, and some photographs capture something of the outcome.

Heading for the hills – CHRISM Summer Conference 2023 – Rebecca Craven

For our annual CHRISM conference, we went to the hills of the Lake District, remembering Psalm 121, A Song of Ascents.

I lift up my eyes to the hills; ♦
from where is my help to come?

My help comes from the Lord, ♦
the maker of heaven and earth.

We stayed at the splendid Rydal Hall, near Ambleside, and strolled around its grounds with views of Lakeland hills. At the end of the drive is Rydal Mount which was the (rented) home for William Wordsworth and his family from 1813 to his death, aged 80, in 1850. Windermere Lake was a short distance away and several of us enjoyed an evening boat trip. We savoured the beauty and history of the lakeside and noted the luxurious exclusive lakeside homes.

Since 2017 the Lake District has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its mountains and valleys, shaped by the glaciers of the Ice Age. The National Park is the largest in England and contains both its highest mountain (Scafell Pike) and its deepest lake (Wastwater). But behind the picture postcard views is a different reality for many who work or live in this area. Despite the obvious prosperity of many there are plenty of others not included.



As background, the Lake District National Park Authority has recently identified some of the key challenges¹.

¹ Lake District National Park Authority. 2023.

<https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/lake-district-national-park-partnership/management-plan/annex-10-key-challenge-background-information>

“1: An economy particularly vulnerable to external change, such as covid-19, but also other factors such as economic, legislation and policy changes as a result of being primarily based on tourism and land-based industries.

2: Acute pressure for local and affordable housing resulting from a high number of second and holiday homes, a lack of homes in permanent occupation and high property prices.

3: A threat to the viability of local services, such as primary schools, as a result of decreasing resident populations.

4: A changing age structure of the resident population resulting from the lack of suitable, affordable housing for younger people.

5: An environmental capacity which cannot accommodate a level of housing growth that would be necessary to meet the demand for local occupancy, especially affordable housing.

6: A lack of a range of high productivity employment opportunities (as much of the economy is reliant on the visitor economy) and a shortage of resident workforce.

7: Inadequate digital infrastructure including broadband and mobile phone coverage in some more rural areas of the Lake District.

8: A potential reduction in migrant labour and economic impacts on the farming sector as a result of Brexit.

9: The impacts of climate change on residents and businesses.”

On this last point, of climate change, Wordsworth words, lamenting the effects of the First Industrial Revolution, still ring true.

“The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers”.

We cannot seem to stop our busy round of getting and spending and laying waste, not just our powers, but our planet too.

One obvious area for discussion was the controversial plan to open a new coal mine in Cumbria. This initiative would bring much needed jobs to the area but at what cost? More on this is in the article by Hugh Lee, written from his professional perspective.



During the weekend, we were privileged to hear from several people working in various sectors of the local economy. We heard about the precarious nature of farming, always on the brink of disaster. There have always been bad harvests but since the start of the Russian war the price of fertiliser sharply rose fivefold in cost. The workforce is aging with few young people viewing farming as an attractive career. The low margins with big supermarkets controlling prices, the changing, often conflicting pressures for increased food production while increasing environmental protections, all add to the stresses as do the very long hours and isolation in farming. The risks to mental health are serious and we heard about support available to farmers and growers.

In hearing about the local tourism industry, we celebrated congregational minister, Thomas Arthur Leonard OBE (1864-1948). As his memorial on Catbells states, he was "Father of the Open-Air Movement in this Country" playing a key role in founding three organisations: Holiday Fellowship (now HF Holidays); Ramblers' Association and the Youth Hostels Association. He was inspired to help Lancashire textile workers to get away from the mills and enjoy the countryside. One hundred and ten years later HF holidays is still a not-for-profit co-operative. We heard about the contribution of HF Holidays to helping to conserve Lake District paths and to provide funding for some families to have a holiday they could otherwise not afford. One vivid picture is from the early days of the Covid pandemic when travel restrictions were beginning to be implemented internationally. The head of tour operations described one agonising night deciding whether to cancel a tour to India and have the accommodation refunded but risk the airline not refunding the flights. The decision risked the jobs of close colleagues and the viability of the business. Fortunately, it ended well.

We heard about music making and instrument making locally. These hand-made musical instruments are for historically informed

performance, aiming for a sound similar to that originally conceived by the composer. We were treated to some lovely Bach and Northumbrian pipes too. Our visitors told us of the frantic pace of work to earn even a modest living from music and being forced, by high house prices, to live outside the national park boundary.

One memorable image was of local junior school children dressing up in costume and enjoying Tudor music and dance. The increasing rates of obesity among these young children has meant the costumes needing adjustment for their expanding waistlines. This reflects the worrying statistic that around 38% of year 6 children are overweight or obese in England with all the long-term impact on their health. As with so much else, those living in deprivation are worst affected².



² NHS Digital. The National Child Measurement Programme. 2022.

The sun shone on us and we walked and climbed hills together. One walk included climbing over 1,000 ft.! So, we formed natural groupings according to our interests and ability. For some the right choice was the delights of the Ambleside shops. Others, venturing uphill, had the reward of glorious views. At height, not just at the summit, we can see new horizons and gain new perspectives.

As our time together drew to a close, we worshipped in the chapel with views down the valley as the low clouds cleared from hillsides. On the altar a small “mountain” of stones was dismantled as we jointly confessed our part in the brokenness of the world. We each held a stone named with a particular issue we had discussed. Feeling the hardness and speaking the prayer for that issue we added it to a pile. The stones together remade a mini mountain symbolising our hope of what, together, our actions and prayer can achieve.

Of course, coming down from the mountain, the hard work begins and Monday morning. We wanted to retain the vision and perspective. We had delighted in the stunning beauty of the Lake District but realised that behind the picture postcard can be people struggling for basic human dignity and survival.

We wanted to keep and nurture that sensitivity to those among whom we work and live. They may be struggling but it may not be obvious. As we left Rydal the question for each of us - what can we do, in all our different settings to address the challenges and injustices we come across, and their causes?

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/national-child-measurement-programme/2021-22-school-year#>

A New Coal Mine in the Lake District:

Hugh Lee

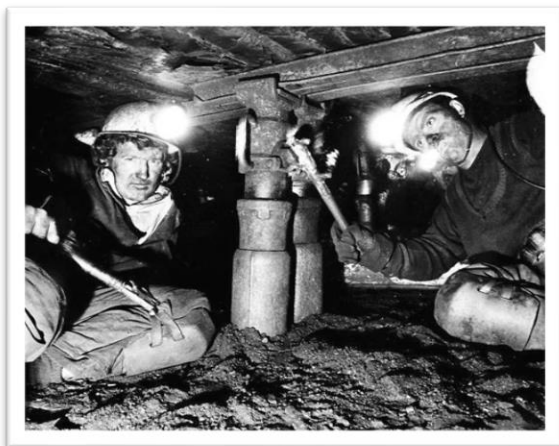
In 2021, the International Energy Agency (IEA) concluded that no new fossil fuel production should be started anywhere in the world for global temperatures to remain within the Paris target of 1.5oC warming. This conclusion was reached after a very detailed study of world energy supply and demand, and of the climate crisis caused by emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from fossil fuels and other sources. The IEA is a coalition of the government of all the advanced economies (and some crucial emerging economies) including the British government. Nevertheless, in December 2022, our government decided to approve the planning application for a new coal mine near Whitehaven in Cumbria.

The construction of the underground mine is due to start before the end of 2023. Coal will be produced from 2025 to 2049. The owners, West Cumbria Mining Ltd, have committed to end production in 2049 because Britain is committed to have net zero carbon emissions by 2050! They also say that they will do everything possible to make the mine as environmentally friendly as possible from now until then. The project is expected to generate 532 direct jobs when in full production.

The two main arguments in favour of the mine are that it will provide local employment and that it will produce a special type of coal needed by the steel industry in Britain and elsewhere despite the climate crisis.

The employment it will provide will be mostly working underground. These are horrible jobs. I know because I have worked underground in coal mines. There is excellent camaraderie, but this is mainly because the environment is so unpleasant and so unsafe. It is pitch black. The machinery is noisy and dangerous.

The working height is only few feet, so one cannot stand up straight for hours. As the coal is mined, it emits methane, a highly explosive gas, so lots of air is sucked through the mine to dilute it. This creates lots of dust which can cause permanent lung diseases including cancer. Minor roof falls are common. In this proposed



mine, the coal faces will be a few miles under the sea so there is the added fear that the pressure of the sea will break through and rush into the workings. (This week's submersible disaster at the wreck of the Titanic will make this fear more real.)

It would be much better and easier to provide local employment making wind turbines and solar panels. This might require a subsidy in the short term but it is almost certain to be more profitable than a coal mine in the longer term. The Inflation Reduction Act in the USA is providing such subsidies there.

The mine will produce 'coking' coal which is the type of coal used until now by the iron and steel industry around the world. And the coal at Whitehaven is particularly high-quality coking coal, so it will get a premium price, which is why the owners think the mine will be profitable. (Mines producing 'normal' coal in the UK are definitely

unprofitable because the remaining coal in the UK is in much worse geological conditions than competing coal mines around the world; that is why all the UK mines have been closed.)

The world steel industry is well aware that it must not go on using coal because of its carbon emissions. So a lot of research and development is being undertaken to use hydrogen instead of coal. Hydrogen is even more effective than coal at taking the oxygen out of iron oxide which is the main component of iron ore. Hydrogen was expensive in the past but, now that low-cost electricity can be produced from wind and solar, electrolysis of water can produce affordable hydrogen. Hydrogen is already being used in some plants; by 2035 about half of world steel is likely to be produced this way. There will then be a glut of coking coal in the world and its price will fall so much that this mine will be unprofitable even with its high quality product.

In the last week, the Labour Party has announced that, when it comes to power, it will stop all new exploration and production of fossil fuels in line with the IEA conclusion I mentioned at the start. Also last week, there was a case in the supreme court challenging the present government's decision to allow a new coal mine and new gas and oil wells. So there is hope that this mine will not go ahead.

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23rd June 2023

I go to the hills: Third Sunday after Trinity, 18th June 2023 - Margaret Joachim

Readings: Job 38. 1-11, Psalm 121, Luke 6. 12-13; 17-23

Those of you who like Shakespeare, or had it dinned into you in school, will remember Duke Senior's words in *As You Like It*:

And this our life, exempt from public haunt

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,

Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

(Confession time: I looked it up.) Thoroughly appropriate for this weekend, when we have been surrounded by stunning scenery, 'well fed up and agreeably drunk' (to quote Gerard Hoffnung's Swiss hotel proprietor), and finding out about what goes on and how people live and work in a landscape very different from the ones most of us normally inhabit. 'I will go to the hills', indeed.

But why do we go to the hills? Growing up in Brighton sixty years ago when children had much more freedom, I would tramp the South Downs on my own whenever the opportunity presented itself. There was something about the solitude, the wind, the skylarks (and the occasional sparrowhawk taking out a skylark) and the absence of busy noise that didn't exist anywhere else. My first PhD supervisor used to make a point of climbing Skiddaw on August Bank Holiday and solemnly intoning: 'Thank God for Blackpool and Butlin's!' before knocking back a slug of whisky and coming down again. Getting up a hill or mountain requires effort, with the reward at the top of a brief rest, a sense of achievement and a new view of



the surrounding area. We use the same metaphor for work – a mountain of paper, of emails, of debt, even (in our European days) of butter or beef – always something to be got round or over; always something to get rid of, always requiring energy and commitment.

It's not just getting to the top. Things happen on hills and mountains. They are strange places. Set out to climb one and you often don't see the real summit until you're almost on top of it. (That can be true of work, too.) Their peaks can be lost in cloud, or appear and disappear mysteriously. Chunks fall off, water cascades down, snow and ice come and go. Some of the most exciting ones rumble and quake and spit fire, and can rain down destruction at a moment's notice. It's not surprising that so many hills and mountains are held to be sacred.

The Bible, of course, is full of the rugged landscape of the near east, and of people making very specific use of it. If you had a rigorously geographical understanding of God, he was 'above', and although he sometimes came down the best way to get closer to him was to climb a suitable eminence. Abraham took Isaac to Mount Moriah to sacrifice him. Moses went up Mount Sinai repeatedly to receive the

commandments and talk with God. Elijah hid in a cave on Mount Horeb while the wind, earthquake and fire raged outside, before meeting God in the sound of sheer silence. Jerusalem, the City of David, was built on Mount Zion and overlooked by the Mount of Olives, itself (according to Ezekiel) a temporary home to the glory of the Lord. Over and over again altars were erected and sacrifices made on high places, either to Yaweh or to the heathen gods when the Israelites had turned away from the Lord. The nearer they were to heaven the more notice God might take of their worship.

And in the New Testament the Transfiguration took place, very appropriately with Moses and Elijah, on an unnamed mountain. Jesus and the disciples went out singing to the Mount of Olives before his arrest, and later, according to Luke, Jesus ascended into heaven from the same hill.

We are not sprinkling the blood of bulls and goats on our mountain-top altars, or burning meat and grain to attract God's attention. For us, hills and mountains may be significant in different ways. The Old Testament reading we've just heard is the beginning of the magnificent section at the end of the book of Job where God finally speaks – and says: 'Who do you think you are? Were you around when I made all this? Do you know how it is all put together; how it all works? Could you do even a fraction of what I have done? Go on – show me! You know nothing – I made you just as I made everything else.' And Job is forced to acknowledge the might and omnipotence of God. Those verses, about the foundations of the earth, the mountains, the seas and rivers, deserts and glaciers, spoke to the geologist in me. Of course I had learned the scientific explanation for all these things. But however much I thought I knew, could I do any of this stuff? No. Behind it all was the power and glory of God. Truly, sermons in stones.

The hills are also places of refuge and refreshment, places to come aside for a while, to breathe, to recollect and re-collect. In the midst

of his ministry Jesus goes alone to a mountain and spends the night in prayer, before calling his disciples and delivering the Sermon on the Mount to the huge crowd who were waiting for him. If there is one thing I know about us all, it is that we are too busy. We juggle work and family and formal church commitments. We step in to cover for others and respond to work crises and pastoral emergencies, we take precious leave days to fulfil training requirements and attend meetings, and we let ourselves become SSM officers and MDR reviewers and unofficial interim clergy when there is no-one else in sight. We do it because that is what God called us to do. But we too need the time on the hill or the mountain-top. Time in the 'thin place' where we can come closer to God without interruption, where – at least for a brief time, exempt from public haunt, we can listen to the trees, watch the flow of the water, read the stories of the stones and let God re-create and re-charge us.

And then, of course, it will be Monday again.



“They are to bless the people in God’s name ...” Rob Fox

The topic for the April meeting of the CHRISM online Theology Group was inspired by a comment Jim Francis made at an earlier meeting about the value of going back to the Ordinal of Priests when we consider what it means to be a Minister in Secular Employment. A key charge in the Ordinal is that Priests “are to bless the people in God’s name”. Bravely (or stupidly?), I volunteered to take this on.

What appears to be a straightforward injunction is, on reflection, far from it. Who “they” are is clear enough: those ordained as priest, here in the Church of England, but it begs a few questions, such as:

- What is meant by “bless”?
- Who (and where) are “the people”?
- When are we to bless?
- And why in God’s name?

Some background is helpful by way of explanation. The Cambridge Dictionary defines “to bless” in a religious context thus:

To ask for God’s help and protection for someone or something, or to call or make someone or something holy.

We may be struck here by what does not fall within this definition: affirmation, approval, or a promise of success. However, there are a number of other uses of “bless”, in other contexts, in particular:

- To speak well of, approve of.
- We say that someone is blessed with an ability they excel at.
- As an exclamation: “bless my soul!”

- To show we think something was sweet or that we feel sorry: “Oh bless.”
- To express good fortune: “The land is blessed with abundant resources.”
- By way of thanks: “Bless you, sister dear.”

No doubt we can think of other colloquial usages.



Easton’s Bible Dictionary observes that “bless” is used in 5 ways in the Bible:

1. God blesses his people when he bestows on them some gift temporal or spiritual (cf. [Gen. 1:22](#); [24:35](#)).
2. We bless God when we thank him for his mercies ([Ps. 103:1](#), 2; [145:1](#), 2).
3. A person blesses himself when they invoke God's blessing ([Isa. 65:16](#)), or rejoice in God's goodness to them ([Deut. 29:19](#); [Ps. 49:18](#)).

4. One blesses another when they express good wishes or offer prayer to God for their welfare ([Gen. 24:60](#); [31:55](#); [1 Sam. 2:20](#)).
5. At Passover, the master of the feast took a cup of wine in his hand, and after having blessed God for it and for other mercies then enjoyed, handed it to his guests, who all partook of it (cf. [Ps. 116:13](#); also alluded to in [1 Cor. 10:16](#), where the apostle speaks of the "cup of blessing.")

Bearing in mind how "bless" is used in the Bible, church usage, and colloquially, we discussed the following questions:

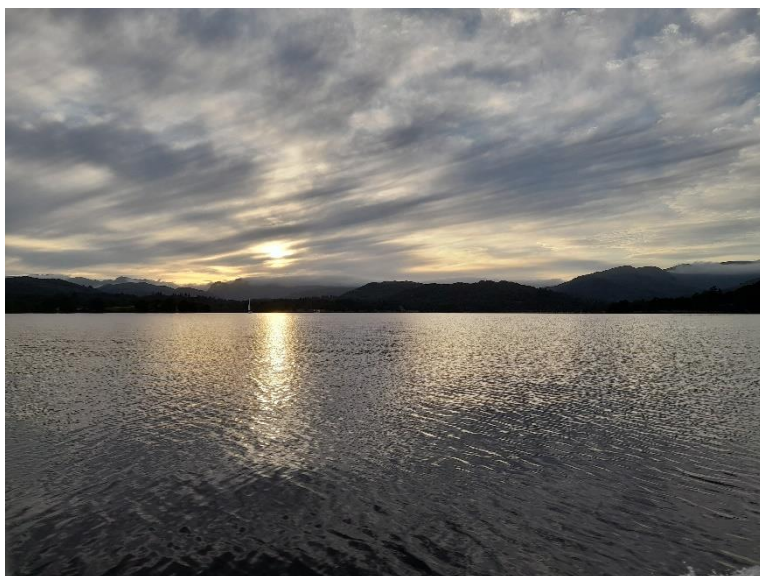
- What does it mean as MSEs to "bless"?
- Who (and where) are "the people" we bless?
- How should we bless?
- When?
- And why in God's name?

Typically for CHRISM, the discussion began with the final question. It was observed that as God is the source of all blessing, it must be in God's name, reflecting back the nature of God, as a thanksgiving for life itself. It is in God's nature that he delights in his creation and blesses it. It is therefore God who blesses, rather than the Church. Another added that as MSEs our presence in the workplace as authorised representatives can itself be a blessing from God and is often seen as such by those among whom we work. Our presence as authorised persons is a sign of God's blessing. Several examples were shared – what are your examples?

Receiving a blessing is just as important as blessing in God's name; how can we do this if we have not ourselves been blessed, and received it. As blessing is a gift from God, it must be received to be

effective. There was much discussion following this around feelings of failure when our efforts to see something, often relationships, blessed (especially by healing broken relationships) does not appear to bear fruit. Three points were discussed and appreciated:

- We sometimes seek to define what the outcome should be and are disappointed (not least with ourselves) when that outcome does not ensue. Openness to the blessing being something unexpected is important.
- The longed-for blessing may come some time, even years later. We can't gainsay when, and if we are tempted to force the issue we may damage the prospects for blessing to occur.



- Human agency is always a factor we cannot control. Going back to the point that to be effective the gift of blessing must be received, accepted, if the person(s) we would like to see blessed choose not to accept it, then that is their

choice, which they are, autonomously, free to make. And we cannot know if the blessing may be accepted at some time in the future.

The discussion continued around whether, and if so how, it was important that the words included “you” rather than “we”. The latter can reflect the need for the person announcing God’s blessing to themselves be blessed, but it was agreed that on occasion it is important, especially to those being blessed, to use “you”.

The Ordinal charge also includes the charge for Priests to “search for God’s people in this wicked world”, and the connection to blessing was noted, not least as blessing involves bringing people into a right relationship with God (and consequently our fellow people). Again, to be effective in this the person blessed must want to be drawn into a right relationship.

Next, we discussed whether blessing in God’s name is restricted to Priests. The consensus here was that in a formal situation it is a matter of Church order that blessings should be by a Priest, however it was noted that as part of a service the “we” for blessing (and absolution) can be used by any person authorised to lead public worship. There are also circumstances (with the dying, for example) where a blessing in God’s name is important no matter whom it comes from. In practice, blessing by a Priest does carry more weight to the person seeking God’s blessing. What people think a blessing is covers a wide range, and if someone attaches more weight to blessing by a Priest so that they are more receptive to the blessing that can only be positive.

This took us back to what blessing is. Our understanding of what the resurrection means is important here; as one contributor observed, the resurrection was not about putting the cross ‘right’, but about showing what the cross is. Neither was a failure, even if the former looked so at the time. As another observed, we often

see success and failure as black and white; seeing them as a diffuse continuum is more helpful. Put another way: how can we know when we've been successful? We can't. We control neither the way in which someone responds to blessing nor the time. To label what we don't expect as 'failure' is to blame ourselves and to limit our perception of God's wisdom and power, of how the Spirit 'disturbs' others.



Finally, we discussed the role of clerical dress in blessing. Several examples were shared of when it was appropriate to wear a dog-collar at work, and when it wasn't. It was agreed that at times and places it can be helpful, but it also defines or

narrows the relationship of the MSE with their work colleagues. When such defining is helpful (as an agreed statement of authorised ministry) then it is appropriate; when it is not (e.g., "I expected a tax inspector, not a vicar") then it can become an unhelpful barrier. Thought and sensitivity are very much part of blessing.

Who are the people whom we are called to bless? Everyone in need of blessing. When should we bless? Whenever blessing is requested, needed or helpful. There is nothing different for an MSE about blessing; all who are ordained Priests are called to bless, at all times, and in all places. Perhaps our stipendiary colleagues might give some thought to this.

Rob Fox



Impressions from the meeting of Arbeitergeschwister 21-23 April 2023: *Margaret Trivasse*

A large, modern, luxurious youth hostel on a hill. A view of the Rhine with ancient ruins, very long barges and even longer goods trains. An historic town with connections to a particularly interesting holy figure. Meeting with old friends for interesting discussion punctuated by singing. What more could one want?

This was the latest meeting of the German working siblings, held this time in Bingen. Although the venue was due to the refurbishment of the usual meeting place in Mainz, most of us would be very happy to return to Bingen, as lengthy discussion about future plans on the final morning showed!

Our theme was “Work – Poverty – Gospel” and our individual submissions were about how well these words related to our lives and work today. As is traditional in meetings of the Arbeitergeschwister, we began by each addressing the question. Because my German is very limited, I prepared my response beforehand, assisted by Microsoft translation and improved by Phil Aspinall. This pattern works for me and helps me to participate.

Themes for small group discussion were then suggested and voted on, and we dispersed to tackle our chosen subjects. My group kindly either spoke in English or translated German for me and we

had a very positive interchange, on which I have continued to reflect. A Eucharist focused on the words of the prophet Amos followed. Sunday morning saw us sharing news from the different countries represented (Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and UK) and concluded by forward planning and final contributions.

This was my second participation in the Arbeitergeschwister meeting and I now have a much better understanding of how the group works. There were eighteen of us, evenly divided between men and women. Although I needed Phil's help from time to time, everybody was most friendly and welcoming and I look forward to further gatherings. I will also try to improve my German!

David Clark RIP



We heard in mid-April that David Clark had been diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer. He asked that Julian let CHRISM know. Sadly, he died only a short time later. He had been a long-time member and a regular attendee at the theology discussion group.

David was a Methodist minister, and worked as a lecturer for some thirty years at Westhill College, a college of higher education in Birmingham. His full-time occupation was training youth and community workers, social workers and teachers. During his years as a lecturer, he was involved in a number of projects to help renew and reshape a church in the UK struggling to engage with a rapidly changing society. In 2005 he became a member of the Methodist Diaconal Order, the first Methodist presbyter to become a deacon. Since 2014 he has co-ordinated the Kingdom at Work Project seeking to relate the Christian faith more effectively to the world of work.

Phil writes: 'We have a great deal for which to thank David, not least his support for MSE and CHRISM. Indeed, he hosted a CHRISM conference at the Selly Oak College, and we should remember his tremendous Christians in Public Life project in which many of us were involved. He was my first introduction to MSE when he invited me to a residential weekend in his home, along with Felicity Smith and others. It was here that I first met Michael Ranken and John Sherrington, the passionist Worker Priest. A key moment on my journey.' Rob notes that David was a seminal thinker and practitioner from whom we will continue to learn.

There was a service of thanksgiving for David's life on Friday May 26th at Bakewell Methodist Church, CHRISM was represented by Ali Creasey. The family asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be given to Christian Aid. Please remember David, his wife and family in your prayers

Letters

Hello Pauline,

While reading the journal I couldn't help but love Alison Finch's item [*Ministers-at-Work* 165] on communion with the builders. It really

spoke to my heart. In case people don't know they may be pleased to understand that the big build for London 2012, now known as the Queen Elizabeth Park in Stratford, East London, had a chaplain plus others including me, who felt a ministry to those working on the park. The local vicar, Kevin, unofficially climbed a fence to get to the canteen!! He had many stories to tell. Some of these builders were immigrants, separated from their families but living here to earn money to send home. Lots of stories of healings and help in relationships.

The stadium canteen during the build, was run by a small local company and many other local companies wanted the chance to get involved too. So we created a market in the canteen where builders and all staff could come and sample local wares. Good times!!

Let's hear it for the builders I say...and all those who have the privilege to share communion over tea and biscuits!!

Best wishes

Ruth Brothwell



Forthcoming Events:

CHRISM Theology Discussion Group - Future Meetings

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. Recent 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.

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 future meetings.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Revd Julian Blakemore

Coming soon!

Southwark Ordination Course anniversary celebration

Saturday 9 September 2023 (1330-1630). Seminar and a special service in Southwark Cathedral, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the first ordination of SSMs.

Keynote speaker, Eleanor Sanderson , Bishop of Hull.



Eucharist (1500): Preacher: Julie Conalty, Bishop of Birkenhead (former SSM). President: Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark.

The booking link is:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/celebrating-60-years-of-self-supporting-ordained-ministry-tickets-564995395437>



A date for your diary: 2024 Reflective Weekend: 16-18 February 2024 at the Kairos Centre

The Kairos Centre is an urban oasis in south-west London situated within acres of landscaped gardens and overlooking the historic Richmond Park. The provisional theme for the weekend is Christian ethics and workplace ethics.

Meeting of European Worker Priests 8-10 September 2023, Lille

Members are warmly invited to join Margaret Trivasse and Phil Aspinall at this gathering, where the theme is changes in the workplace and who we are working alongside in times of increasingly remote working. We want to particularly encourage new people to join us in September (we are assured it is not too late to sign up). Contact Phil or Margaret if interested!

And Finally.....

Where do you live?

Where do you live?
How long must you pummel dough
To make enough for life?
How much dough is enough?

Can you be here:
Outstanding location
Excellent studio flat
Close to Earls Court station
Its £1300 per month, that
(unfurnished)
Walk to work?



Perhaps instead
A room to rent in Willesden Green
On a quiet street
With a table, chair, and even
Fridge/freezer in a shared flat.
Six months at least
For £788 each
Bus or cycle in
Takes 48 min...

How long must you pummel dough
To make enough to live?
How much dough is enough?

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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