Ministers-at-Work

The Journal for Christians in secular ministry

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To help ourselves and others to celebrate the presence of God and the holiness of life in our work, and to see and tell the Christian story there.

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Copy deadline for next edition: 4 July.

(The views expressed in the various articles in this Journal are those of the writer, unless stated otherwise. If you would like to copy items for use in other publications, please consult the Editor).

Editorial

A few weeks of enforced idleness and illness have reminded me that the world I normally work in is not the only one. Recovering from illness I find myself in a reality peopled mostly by pensioners, women with young children and the disabled. The routines I take for granted have been taken from under me and I have to accommodate myself to a new pattern of life. At least temporarily. (I am now back at work by the way).

The layoff has also given me the opportunity to make good on my threat in the last Journal and launch into the interesting debate resulting from the article *'A RUMOR OF ANGELS',* in the October edition. It has drawn a number of responses, another excellent one (from Dorrie Johnson) appearing in this edition. The two pieces are written with different purposes in mind, Dorrie's as a critique, mine as a description. I hope both are informative.

In this edition, Jim Cummins has provided a parable full of pathos, and the poems penned by Adrian Holdstock and Dorrie Johnson at the Reflective weekend are excellent. Jane Shaw's personal piece on that weekend sums it up admirably. Our American cousins have provided the usual selection of informative chatter and shrewd observation; it is rewarding to get another slant on familiar themes – keep it coming! I also picked up a good article by Michael Kavanagh, Chaplain to the Archbishop of York and Diocesan Director of Ordinands about MSE, reproduced here. Michael is a well known speaker at various venues in the North of England. And of course we have a book review, this one of the new one from the pen of Richard Higginson, Director of the Ridley Hall foundation.

A particularly important piece is that from David Clark regarding CIPL (Christians in Public Life). As with so many ventures, much depends on the drive of a small group of people, and when the time and energy are no longer available .... The enclosed list of CIPL papers is ample evidence of the importance of this forum, which CHRISM (along with others) is pledged to build on.

I am always indebted to the contributors to 'Ministers-at-Work' for the thoughtful contributions, and marvel at their skill. I honestly have not yet received a submission that was not worthy of inclusion – so take to your writing desks / computers and share the good things you have with the rest of us! That is what the 'Newsletter' was started for over 20 years ago and that is what the Journal continues to do. This is YOUR forum.

Rob

Grain in Winter
CHRISM Reflective Weekend, Holland House   Jane Shaw

If "MSEs do it at work" then CHRISM does it reflectively. This weekend was an exploration of Donald Eadie's book of notes and 'seed thoughts', "Grain in winter", through a series of conducted meditations (or, as was observed, mediations) which invited us to consider his insights in the light of our work and life. The concerns of work were also articulated: imposed and unpredictable change, the work-life balance, keeping a human perspective in large organisations, and the life-change of retirement. The whole programme was structured as a progression through the liturgy of the Eucharist, culminating on Sunday morning in a Eucharistic thanksgiving.

These three strands of Eadie, work and liturgy, thus woven together made for a rich kaleidoscope of images - like a fugue in three parts, where a succession of themes emerged such as the meaning of waiting and trusting, healing and solace from unexpected sources, the mess and darkness from which new life germinates, the significance of 'magic moments', the potential of the unsafe place, the uncertainty of transformation and the rough humour of God.

Our intercession time generated not only a rainbow of individual prayer cards but also several schemes of work-related prayer for Daily Worship. A session of creativity produced a flowering of rainbows, mobiles, surprise boxes, poems and coloured salt jars. Our Eucharist brought all our creations together at the altar, together with a psalm and a hymn for working people from Dorrie Johnson and more reflective insights from Donald Eadie.

It was a time of sharing experiences, both "magic moments" and Gethsemane times, making new friends and reflecting on life and work together. For many of us (certainly for this new participant) the weekend provided welcome sustenance in a difficult time - grain in winter indeed.

We have a few copies of "Grain in Winter". If you would like to buy one, please contact Sue Gibbons (details inside the back cover).

Grains from the Reflective Weekend
Two poems by Adrian C Holdstock.

We are a rainbow people, a kaleidoscope of light,
Sharing patterns of our ministries, keeping God in sight.
In the workplace and retirement, in the 'secular' God's world,
As our presence touches peoples lives, and our stories are unfurled.
We are a rainbow people, a kaleidoscope of salt,
Giving taste and hope and memory, and healing every fault,
As we help our charges sweep their lives to build foundations new,
Finding treasures that will last where rust and moth
                                                    cannot break through.

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How does my still presence make you feel?
Uneasy? Angry? Bitter? Pained? So then
Am I the bearer of your Judgement Day
That you, of me, suppose that I condemn?
If so, it is not I but God within us both
Who with the truth pricks hearts that Him offend.

How does my still presence make you feel?
Sad? Regretful? Wishing for a different past?
With me, seek you a better life, forgiven?
Shall all your wrong, with mine, on God be cast?
If so, it is not I but God within us both
Who recreates us whole, true selves at last.

How does my still presence make you feel?
Calm? Receiving warmth and love and grace?
Have I become a channel for God's love?
And you, through me, are stilled, received, embraced?
If so, it is not I but God within us both
Who speaks into our lives, His time, His place.

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Studies in Self Supporting Ministry

Have you ever wished you could develop further your understanding of Self Supporting Ministry, and gain a recognised qualification? Well now we can!

The Centre for Ministry Studies, University of Wales, Bangor, offers post-graduate and post experience qualifications in Self Supporting Ministry, as Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, MTh, MMin and DMin., at St. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, near Chester. It offers a flexible part-time programme of study for those involved in Self Supporting Ministry from Christian denominations, who have completed initial ministerial education or who are of graduate or equivalent status. This includes Authorised Lay Ministers, Non-Stipendiary Ministry, Ordained Local Ministry, Ministers in Local Appointments, Auxiliary Ministry and parallel ministries.

The aims are:
1   to reflect critically on the various forms and styles of Non-Stipendiary Ministry,
2   to give particular opportunity to reflect on context with reference to Ordained Local Ministry,
3   to give particular opportunity to reflect on context with reference to Ministry in Secular Employment,
4   to apply theological resources to issues to do with Self Supporting Ministry,
5   to develop research perspectives on Self Supporting Ministry
6   to encourage self supporting ministers to be reflective practitioners,
7   to develop empirical research perspectives on Self Supporting Ministry

The programme is flexible modular and is designed to last for three years of part-time study for the MTh. And MMin. Qualifications.   There are two two-night residential seminars at St. Deiniol's Library in each of the first two years of study. Candidates successfully completing MMin may then register for a further three years of part-time study foe DMin. These three qualifications are also available as full-time study courses.

The courses are built on the empirical theology perspective developed within the University of Wales. Components of the programme give due weight to empirical evidence, theological reflection and scriptural foundations.

Costs (university fees) are currently £957 per year for the years leading to MTh. and MMin, with each residential session costing £50 (a limited number of bursaries are available for the latter).

The core staff are: (*and I am assured that they are not related. Ed.*)
Course Director: The Revd. Professor Leslie J Francis
Director of Studies: The Revd. Canon Dr. James Francis
Course Co-coordinator: The Revd. Peter Francis

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Christians in Public Life
An unfinished task…   *David Clark*

The Christians in Public Life Programme (CIPL) came into being in 1992. It was born at a time when two countervailing forces were at work in society and church. Within society, the ideology of the market dominated the political, economic, social and economic agenda. Profit, from the point of view of the producer, and 'value for money' from the point of view of the consumer, were the bottom line in the private, public and increasingly the voluntary sector. People's daily work was seen as instrumental in meeting the requirements of the market economy. Anything else occurring by way of personal fulfilment or communal enjoyment was a luxury and, if necessary, dispensable. People at work were means to market economy ends.

At the same time the church was experiencing one of its occasional vision-

ary moments concerning the importance of bringing the values of the kingdom to bear on the life of society. This was in large part the result of deep unease about the growing power of an all-pervasive market culture and the way in which 'value for people' was being steadily eroded. Thus between 1985 and 1990, the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church produced a series of highly significant reports on the role of Christian laity in today's world.

Since the early 'nineties, the grip of a market culture on the life of our society (and world) has tightened considerably, whilst the initiatives of the various denominations to affirm and resource the endeavours of Christians in daily life have faded away - yet again. For let us remind ourselves that the impressive post-war efforts of such pioneers as Ted Wickham (Sheffield Industrial Mission), Mollie Batten (William Temple College, Rugby), Bill Gowland (Luton Industrial Mission) and Mark Gibbs (The Audenshaw Foundation) had lost much of their impetus by the 'seventies if not well before.

The question still posed therefore, is why the church finds it so difficult to sustain any significant institutional affirmation and resourcing of Christians seeking to relate their faith to the challenges of daily life?

The work of CIPL

The Christians in Public Life Programme was set up to make a distinctive ecumenical contribution to the concerns what had stimulated the denominational reports of the late 'eighties. It was sponsored by Westhill College of Higher Education, a Free Church foundation and a member of the Federation of Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham. I became its Co-ordinator and remained so until the programme finished at the end of 2001.

CIPL's mission statement was: *To work for a new quality of public life by enabling Christians to engage, share and work together with others in addressing fundamental questions of common concern*. ('Public life' was a broad term which had wide use in the United States and was intended to describe the everyday life of society beyond the predominantly private and personal.) CIPL's specific aim was to develop an agenda for individual Christians, Christian organizations and the church as a whole to pursue in making its vision of a laity active in public life a reality.

CIPL's agenda-setting role was developed in a number of ways including:
- Undertaking and publishing a survey of *Christians at Work* (1993).
- Publishing well over **200 position papers** contributing to this agenda.
- Establishing an informal network of 'contact persons' across the UK willing to promote such an agenda.

- Holding a number of **consultations and conferences**.
- Founding the **Human City Institute**.

The rest of this article focuses on CIPL's position papers. Information about the Human City Institute can be obtained by logging on to its web site www.humancity.org.uk.

The position papers
CIPL's agenda-setting role relied first and foremost on the contributions made by the authors of its positions papers. The latter were deliberately kept short (most being about 1,500 words) so that they could be easily read by people often swamped by paper, as well as being easy to use within the local church or on courses run by the church. The papers were grouped to form a comprehensive agenda under the following headings:

> The Programme; Overview and Analysis; Ethics and Issues; People; Sectors; The Church in Public Life (Roles and Relationships); The Church in Public Life (Functions and Organisation); and Resource Sheets.

The 200 published papers reflected how 200 well-informed and articulate Christians, lay and ordained, saw different aspects of the church's agenda in the public arena. Not all agreed of course, but there was a surprising convergence in relation to a number of key issues. For example there was unanimity that the public sphere should be a top priority for Christian ministry and mission. A church which neglected this arena because it was spiritually domesticated, or was over-concerned about survival, would simply prolong its inevitable decline. Most papers espoused a kingdom rather than ecclesiastical theology. The means of engagement with the public sphere was seen more in terms of leaven and salt than deliberate and open encounter of Christian with non-Christian. All writers believed that the mission of the church in the public arena had to be ecumenical in nature; denominationalism making less and less sense.

CIPL's position papers still offer an invaluable overview of Christian ministry and mission in public life and how this might be put into practice in our day and age. Some papers were outstanding in their grasp of the issues or their succinct response to how Christians might approach these. Lois Green writing on *The Two Cultures* of church and secular organizations, Lesslie Newbigin on *The Gospel as Public Truth*, Mary Grey on *Christian Women in Public Life*, Christina Le Moignan writing about *A New Way of Being Church*, Alison Webster on *Questions for the churches raised by inter-agency working*, John Battle MP writing as one of a number of *Christians Speaking*, Jan Fortune-Wood on *The Human Family*, John Davies on *The*

Prophetic Tradition in the Contemporary World, Niki Pain writing about *Management and Christian Faith* and Ann Lewin's prayers for today's world, are just a handful of the papers which have a continuing message of vital importance for today. But all the papers remain a rich resource to be further analysed and reflected upon, and to be presented as an agenda which the church neglects at great cost.

In 1997, a selection of CIPL's position papers up to 1996 edited by myself, with the title of **Changing World, Unchanging Church?** (Mowbray), was published. That is still a very interesting and relevant symposium. But the CIPL *Position Paper Index, enclosed with this Journal,* and nearly all the papers will be available from me (see email address below) from May 2003. Please be selective but do get in touch if you want any of these. Your response to them as a member of CHRISM, and any thoughts you may have for ongoing analysis or practical application, would be particularly appreciated.

Christians in Public Life Position Papers are available from David Clark by email: dclark@fish.co.uk.

For hard copy, Address:
8 Lovell Close, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6LL.
Tel: 0121 475 3524

Good Work

The National Center for the Laity [*yes, west side of the pond. Ed.*] has recently celebrated its 25th Anniversary. 'Initiatives', it's newsletter, carries a commentary on the event, including reference to an observation from Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany, who notes it is a "sad commentary that the way to be an exemplary Catholic layperson is to be more involved with the Church than the world." He reminds us that Vatican II emphasised that "the prime role of the laity must be to transform the world." Hubbard notes the tendency in North America to relegate faith to private life and to stigmatize anyone who tries to live the public implications of Christianity.

NCL hosted a symposium in January this year on *Good Work*, at which it was noted that many religious people are eager to transform the world, if appropriate ways can be found. Not easy though, as the report continues:
"But where do workers find models and support? Not in their parishes, opined Lynn Rhodes of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. Business people with whom she speaks are convinced that pastors and other Church employees know little about the world of work [sounds familiar. Ed.].

Some Church employees simplistically condemn capitalism. Others advise a type of personal witness that has little bearing on marketplace policy. Where are models for Christians, Jews, and Muslims who, in a pluralistic marketplace, want to join with like-minded people in fashioning a world according to God's vision".

Now if that is not an MSE agenda, I don't know what is. Ed.

Spirituality and Work

Dorrie Johnson

I found the contribution ' *A Rumour of Angels: Researching Spirituality and Work Organisations* interesting (*Ministers at Work* No. 83, October 2002). I would like to have read the complete paper of which this article was a shortened version. Obviously I cannot pass judgment on the observations within the paper as I was not present at either of the workshops discussed, but I would like to comment on the article.

The analysis described in the paper by Emma Bell and Scott Taylor, had two sources. The first was the research of the two writers and the second the observation, from the perspective of participant, of two workshop retreats held in a Benedictine monastery, on Spirituality and Work Organisations.

A sense of unease began when reading the introduction, where the writers introduce three factors that contribute to the interest in this field.

> ...it is argued that as organisations seek increased commitment from their employees, these intense demands cannot be met without caring for the whole person. ...changes in the global economy have left workers demoralised as a consequence of downsizing; people have become more alienated and less able to cope with the compartmentalised nature of their work and non-work lives ...the traditional community structures that formerly provided employees with a source of meaning are seen by some as less relevant (Mitoff and Denton 1999; Renesch 1992). *(Ministers at Work pp27/28)*

I would like to look more closely at the suppositions.

I believe that there is almost an assumption within the words of the first proposition – admittedly not originating with the writers of the paper – that spirituality is a methodology for salvaging an organisation whose employees are working at a level below their potential. It does not seem that the initial desire is to enable employees to discern and express their spirituality within a working context.

Secondly it is not only changes occasioned by the global economy, which have removed a sense of identification and participation for people in a wide range of contexts, although they are highly significant, and contribute to pressures closer to home. Changes in the culture within an organisation can also have direct consequences for the employees. Traditional ways of working are breaking down. Anything and everything on-line and immediate and the subtle effect of advertising make their mark. Changes in working practices are not only felt within the organisation but the wider environment may also be affected which in turn, affects the lives of other people outside the organisation.

We have created a 'throw-away' culture of materials increasingly designed to be durable, products of mixed components which we cannot recycle. If we find disposal difficult in this country, we need to remember that there is an increasing habit of the west to 'hide' its unresolved problems – Asia, China, Vietnam, Singapore receive electrical waste for 'recycling' (a language cover-up for dumping?) and by so doing find themselves in a toxic waste nightmare largely of our making and, potentially, an environmental catastrophe for both people and locations.

Employees, even if aware of doubtful practices, may be helpless to address any of the issues. They sometimes welcome alternative sources of meaning, outside work, and do not see their spirituality as anything to do with work. They do not find this fragments them but rather enables them to live and cope with the constraints on their lives.

Is it then of any use at all to talk of spirituality within the workplace?

The writers of the article go on to discuss the defining of spirituality. They immediately identify some of the problems encountered, particularly since the incorporation of the word, and possibly the concept, into the management context. They describe explorations for a definition. They identify a shifting emphasis toward experience and away from objectivity, an escape from the exclusive boundaries of religion, and the use of an empty and misleading slogan but there are notions of inter-connectedness and holistic concerns. There is a divide, the authors say, (p 29) between those who believe that spirituality can be deliberately introduced into an organisation to enhance employee commitment and improve performance and those who regard spirituality as a cultural phenomenon which has the power to enhance human understanding and quality of life.

Continuing to consider definitions, Bell and Taylor then state that in their

view spirituality cannot be defined without reference to religion. By focusing on the 'spirit', we acknowledge it as a sacred power that can be arrived at only through the employment of rituals and languages drawn from religions. (p 24)

Many people would disagree. Many of the publications currently addressing spirituality in the workplace focus on spirit as an essence or quality or attribute of the individual. William Guillory defines it as 'our inner consciousness'. (Guillory 2000:33) or as a 'way of being that predetermines how we respond to life experiences'. He does say that religion is a form that spirituality takes in practice and but also that yoga, T'ai Chi, prayer, empathy, compassion and treating others with dignity and respect may be other expressions of spirituality.

Larry Gaffin (2001) defines spirituality as: the daily tasks that we perform that serve, support, bring joy, create beauty, reconcile, renew, challenge and comfort, nurture, heal all who are touched by the consequences of our performed tasks. The degree to which these tasks are spiritual is determined by the degree to which they add to or subtract from our common life.

Corinne McLaughlin, (1998) Executive Director of the Center for Visionary Leadership believes that spirituality at Work can be seen in many ways:
> Some would say it's simply embodying their personal values of honesty, integrity and good quality work. Others would say it's treating their employees in a responsible, caring way. For others, it's making their organisation socially responsible in how it impacts the environment, serves the community or creates social change. And for still others it's holding religious study groups or using prayer, meditation or intuitive guidance at work. Some see God as their business partner or even their CEO. However, some people fear the corporation has begun to co-op the function of churches. Others fear spiritual beliefs or practices will be imposed by employers, but to date this has been extremely rare... *And as long as personal spiritual expression doesn't involve company time, cost the company money, or lead to the harassment of other employees, it's usually acceptable.* (my italics)

Carole Juriewicz (2002) believes that:
> ...the term workplace spirituality refers to the idea that individuals hold a set of moral beliefs (distinct from religious beliefs) that inform their sense of right and wrong in the workplace ... by acting on these beliefs, individuals achieve a sense of sacredness in

their actions, their work, and in their world in general. When organizations act to maximise opportunities for their employees to experience this sacredness, they demonstrate a concern for workplace spirituality. Research indicates that by advancing spirituality in the workplace, organizations and the employees in them will achieve higher levels of productivity and performance. More importantly, the positive effect of such actions will extend beyond organizational boundaries to enhance the wellbeing of employees, families, communities and society in general.

The situation is complicated by another factor identified by Bell and Taylor – the individual and community aspects of spirituality.

Mitoff and Denton (2000:26) describe the analysis of spirituality by Ken Wilber, who proposes that two dimensions are sufficient both to sort and to understand the varieties of spiritual experience. These dimensions are the *inner* versus *outer* and the *individual* versus the *group, community* or *society*. While acknowledging that the *inner-individual* is the understanding of spirituality held by most people, the authors rightly give space to the *inner-communal* as a function of the culture in which the person finds her/himself. '... (it) is a function of the deep beliefs, values, rituals and celebratory acts that constitute the deep meaning of a society. Indeed culture is such a powerful force, it virtually 'creates people.'' The *outer-individual* refers to the effect of an individual's acts on others and the world and the *outer-communal* stresses that spirituality is revealed in the structures –the organisations and institutions, and also by societies.

This recognition of a corporate quality resonates with Pattison (2000) who observes:
> this spiritual aspect (of organisation) is the inner aspect of outward material reality; it can be likened to the personality or character of an individual. It needs to be discerned, understood, nurtured and cared for if it the institution is to maximise its potential for promoting human well-being for those who use or work in it.

Each organisation, however, will have its own culture, its own character. The observation was made by Wittgenstein, who said:

> ... one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not understand the people...

Many very varied writers have addressed the ethos, the characterisation, the 'feeling' that one has on entering an establishment or organisation. This has underpinned many organizational procedures. Over many years a range of management practices have been introduced to address human values or the quality of product or process. Until recently few have addressed a spiritual component although as long ago as 1984 Wink, in his introduction to his book, *Engaging the Powers*, wrote:

> Any attempt to transform a social system without addressing both its spirituality and its outer forms is doomed to failure. Only by confronting the spirituality of an institution and its concretions can the total entity be transformed, and that requires a kind of spiritual discernment and praxis that the materialistic ethos in which we live knows nothing about. (1989:10)

I believe that the communal aspect requires much more recognition, a factor indicated by Bell and Taylor in the section headed 'Discussion and conclusions.' The authors make clear that their analysis brings them to particular conclusions. Workplace spirituality, they say,

> ... primarily emphasises the role of the individual based on themes such as leadership and the personalised meaning of work, yet simultaneously draws attention to the collective nature of work as a community.

> The ideas and practices of contemporary spirituality, based on the primacy of the self, do not encourage the development of social systems. Ultimately, this tension may encourage a more Westernized interpretation of workplace spirituality as reliant on changes in the behaviour of individuals rather than encouraging a shared responsibility for each other.

From their observation of the workshops Bell and Taylor identified three themes which mirror the three arguments put forward in their introduction and are reproduced at the beginning of this article. These are language and values surrounding workplace spirituality, the rituals and practices with which it is associated and the tension between the individual and the community in the development of spiritual work practice.

The workshop participants sought a definition of spirituality which would make their organisations more 'soul friendly'. The attempt to reach a definition of spirituality at work seems to have centred round the Christian notions of service and vocation (p32). The writers provide a number of terms used within the workshops to describe spirituality: belief, journey, unity, higher power and personal fulfilment. The conclusion was tripartite:

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something that goes beyond the explanatory, scientific frameworks and prioritises experience; as a means of incorporating death as a positive part of life and as a journey to be experienced.

The writers say (p 34):
> ... conceptual attempts to distinguish between spirituality and religion are both analytically and empirically unsustainable, rendering problematic attempts that have been made to clearly differentiate and distance workplace spirituality from religion.

Many of the management courses now introducing spirituality as a component use the word value to denote ethics, justice, anti-discriminatory practices, a search for meaning or purpose, health, happiness, peace, trust, fulfilment, integrity. Tom Egan (1999) states that:
> '... in my view, the word 'spirituality' itself frequently carries negative connotations in the business environment that often puts people off or at least on guard when it is used in the workplace setting. Thus I prefer to avoid using the word 'spirituality' at least when actually in the office.'

Bell and Taylor also say that (p 35):
> ... workplace spirituality provides evidence to support the notion that religious symbols and ideas are increasingly able to 'float free' from their former points of institutional anchorage. Utilization of spirituality as the basis for management development courses suggests it is being 'adopted and adapted by different agencies to suit their own purposes... the incorporation of spiritual values in situations that are quite different from religious, institutional contexts.

Bell and Taylor comment on the ineffectuality of language to define spirituality (see King 1996), maintaining that it emerges through language and action. A definition of workplace spirituality was offered by Ottoway following a review of 17 authors all of whom were trying to articulate the role of spirit in some aspect of work. 'Spirituality of work is a source of energy, empowering and transforming the life of daily work. Described in modern language spirituality is beyond the rational and is creating a new order.' This does not necessarily reflect the Christian belief but would resonate with many people. I think the discussion on Spirituality and Work has to broaden out beyond the Christian perspective, even if, for Christians, or for practising members of other faiths, it has to come back to a concept which contains the transcendent in some form.

Bell and Taylor mention the demoralisation which accompanies

'downsizing' (p 27). The questionable use of language to hide rather than to elucidate is often a management tool. The insidious use of language, designed to mitigate the stark reality – downsizing, restructuring, redesigning, releasing, de-layering, de-cluttering, building down – or Chrysler's 'a career alternative enhancement programme' - when we mean sacking or redundancy, does not encourage identification with the corporate nature of the organisation. The 'emperor's new clothes' in which organisations dress their operations are seen as merely words by those affected by some of the policies.

Any discussion on spirituality at work must recognise the corporate character of the institution, organisation or system in which someone is working. Bell and Taylor address the 'individual and communal' but there seems to have been a focus on the need for a 'spiritual space' (p 33) to allow the transfer of spirituality into the workplace. This was either a literal space or activities such as controlled breathing or prayer. The writers note a tension when individual spirituality develops in collective organisational contexts (p34). I think the corporate aspect needs to be more strongly addressed.

The first I have written about above – the identity adopted - intentionally or unconsciously - by an organisation. Pattison (2000) states that 'Organisational spirituality is manifested in and maintained by, ritual. Ritual activity is symbolic action that sustains social meanings and values but does not itself affect reality.' Its ritual will be manifest in its policies and strategies. Levels of formality, environmental layout, mission and purpose, the size of the organisation and so on, will determine widely different cultures.   Recognising and interpreting the ritual and symbolism of an organisation may be the first step towards discerning its spirituality – good or bad. For an individual to seek to discern her or his own spirituality independent of the norms of the organisation could create tremendous tension.

Richard Barrett (2002) identifies 7 levels of Corporate Consciousness. Survival, Relationship, Self-Esteem, Transformation, Organisation, Community and Global/Society.   Successful leaders in the 21st Century, he says, will need to find a dynamic balance between the interests of the corporation, the interests of the workers and the interests of society as a whole. To achieve this goal they will need to take account of shift in values taking place in society, and the growing demand for people to find purpose and meaning in their work. Organisations which cannot move from the first three levels will increasingly find it difficult to survive. The transformation from the lowest to the highest levels involves liberating the corporate soul.

I think that there is another understanding of spirituality which is even

more important and which was not picked up by Bell and Taylor or acknowledged as a component of the workshops. This entails an engagement with something outside ourselves. As a Christian I would want to understand this as a relationship, an encounter with the holy, with God, either as an individual or as a community. It is difficult to practise Christianity in isolation (love God, love your neighbour) so I would emphasise both aspects. In addition I would look for some expression of the transcendent within this encounter.

As a minister in secular employment, however, I have long advocated the use of secular words to describe religious concepts. I have to be careful, therefore, before dismissing some of the apparently non-Christian descriptions of spirituality as non-Christian. I believe implicitly in an incarnate God. Therefore God will be found in all workplaces in any number of guises. All people, people of faith and those without, are subject to the same feelings, hopes, fears, despair and joy. In an attempt to describe the Christian *experience* there are many secular words which are effective.

To me, there appear to be fundamental questions to be asked. Is the incorporation of *spirit* and *spirituality* into management speak legitimate? Have these words been introduced as a genuine attempt to enable people to find expression of their spirituality or, much more cynically, because it is a way of harnessing yet another input from the workforce? Can spirituality be expressed by the use of words such as values, ethics, compassion, wisdom, service, empowerment? Can it only be defined either as an integration of a person (bringing your soul to work) or providing a spiritual space in which to pray or meditate or is there a third way which has not yet been widely explored? Brian Diehm (Diehm 2000) says:

> ... some misunderstandings about work are widespread in the secular world. The error common to many of these is placing the value, and the dignity, on the work being performed rather than on the human performing it ... Our work can never transform this world into an earthly paradise.

And he goes on to say:

> But that doesn't mean we can ignore this world in the expectation of the next ... our work can also be a sharing in Christ's redeeming. 'By enduring the hardship of work in union with Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth and the one crucified on Calvary, man collaborates in a certain fashion with the Son of God in his redemptive work. He shows himself to be   a disciple of Christ by carrying the cross, daily, in the work he is called to accomplish.'

It is true that many people find their working conditions extremely hard, demanding, a vicious cycle of deadlines, a separate but necessary feature of their lives which has to be endured but I want to protest most strongly at this interpretation (though it may be part of the catechism). I believe that we are capable of transformation – even in this world. I believe that because God is incarnate – in this world – then the work place is also a holy place. I believe that, therefore, it is possible to encounter God not only in some quiet place outside the work area, but right there in the work I am doing, in the place that I am doing it, in the process of doing it, in the product or service I am engaged in.

Having said all that - as a practising member of the Christian faith - can I argue that the attempt to define spirituality at work in non-religious terms is inappropriate, even if it is not recognised as such by either employer or employee? What about the motivation? If it is introduced by an astute management to enhance profits, does that negate it? Can't God work through it in just the same way? Can the experience of spirituality which has no overtly Christian words to express it, be valid? I think I have to say that the experience can be valid, can be of God.

It is widely agreed that spiritual expression may be possible through music, poetry, landscape, art and so on. But we speak of the indomitable or the courageous *human* spirit. We speak of mind, body and spirit. Can this human element be recognised as spiritual without a transcendent relationship? I think the answer is probably yes, but it then lies outside the definition of spirituality by which I live. In my understanding of spirituality there is an encounter with the holy. In this engagement, this recognition of a relationship with the transcendent, other factors come into play. It is not just 'me (my body, mind and soul) and my work', or the 'organisation and its ethos (caring, valuing and so on)', but how life is lived - at work, doing the work and within the work itself. It is about transformation.

In religious terms, as well as the more frequently mentioned elements such as meaning and purpose, there is an ongoing need, in the work place, to recognise the place for redemption (forgiveness, freedom, liberation) and atonement (compensation, making it up to someone, recompense) and absolution, (forgiveness, release, being given a clean slate) for death (loss of job, authority, responsibility, autonomy) and resurrection (new way of doing things, new things to do), for salvation (rescue from difficult situations; ways out) and hope. This is needed at the organisational level as well as for an individual. Prayer and space are only a part of it. Spirituality should not take us out of the world but be part of the transforming of it – corporately as well as individually.

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Congratulations …
... to CHRISM member and active MSE Stephen Green, who has recently

taken over as Chief Executive of HSBC. Various Newspapers reported it under titles such as "Religiously looking over HSBC's man of the ministry" and "Preacher who puts his faith in UK's biggest bank".

Stephen's book "Serving God? Serving Mammon?", published by Marshall Pickering, 1996, (ISBN 0-551-02982-X), is still available.

Rumours, Reality and Angels

Rob Fox

"A Rumor of Angels", October 2002 Journal, has drawn a number of responses, so I thought it appropriate to discuss the origins of that title and what it has to do with MSE. This therefore is the first of two articles that are – without apology - more sociology than theology. It gives an overview of some sociological concepts I have found very useful as an MSE and which underlie the research the article described on Spirituality and the Workplace.

"A Rumor of Angels" is the title of a book by the Austrian-born US Sociologist Peter Berger, (with 'u' in the UK edition!). It follows on from two earlier works, "The Social Construction of Reality (co-written with Thomas Luckmann) and "The Social Reality of Religion", and was written principally as a 'comfort' to theologians, who may have drawn unintended conclusions from them. I concentrate here on 'The Social Construction of Reality' and attempt to outline of what is said about 'reality'. The second article will apply this to the field of religion and to MSE, looking more closely at the two later books. The abbreviations SCR, SRR and aRoA are used for the books. (A fourth book, "The Scared Canopy", does not – yet – reside in my library so I have not referred to it, though part of the same body of writing). If there is any deficiency or misrepresentation, the fault is entirely mine, as are many of the examples.

Berger approaches sociology from an essentially Christian perspective and has undertaken significant work with various churches in the US; this is no 'cultured despiser'. He states in the preface to aRoA (p.10), "I consider myself a Christian, though I have not yet found the heresy into which my views would comfortably fit." (A broad grin of agreement to that).

Berger and Luckmann's field is the sociology of knowledge: how human knowledge is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations. 'The sociology of knowledge understands human reality as socially constructed reality. Since the condition of reality has traditionally been a central problem of philosophy, this understanding has certain philosophical

implications' (SCR, p.210). They set out in SCR to describe the social origins and contexts of *reality* and *knowledge*. The philosophical questions it begs are reminiscent of the debate carried on between Luther and Erasmus on the bondage of the will (more of that one later).

SCR starts by defining terms:
Reality: phenomena we recognise as having a being independent of our own volition ('we cannot wish them away', SCR p.13).
Knowledge: the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics (SCR, p.13).

We take our understanding of reality and knowledge for granted, however these will differ for each society and social group. Within what is real and known for us, individuals have freedom of will and operate in the security of their reality world, in 'the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives'. It is a world 'that originates in their thoughts and actions, and is maintained as real by these' (SCR, p.33). Reality is thus social in its context and 'religion has played a strategic part in the human enterprise of world-building' (SRR, p.28).

Within our world of being we perceive different spheres of reality, with different objects presenting themselves as constituents of these spheres. 'I am conscious of the world as consisting of multiple realities ... as I move from one reality to another, I experience the transition as a kind of shock' (SCR, p.35).

The realities in and with which we live can be broadly grouped into three types – local, general and transcendent (my way of putting it). The distinction between local and general realities tends to sharpen according to the complexity (in terms of division of labour) of a society. The more specialised individuals and social groups within a society become, the more sharply differentiated are local realities from the general and from one other. The local realities we live with are the reality worlds we move in: family, workplace, church, and social club. Each has a reality that is specific to it and symbols (including language) to reinforce that reality. Each also has its knowledge 'set', its assumptions about what is known that is specific to it. Each develops symbols to emphasise distinctiveness: club kit, a prayer book, induction rituals. Each also develops a language of it's own, one that will (normally) be sufficiently recognisable to others within the general reality but will have a special meaning to members of the social group comprising the local reality. To use the analogy of the athletic club: PB, fartlek, LSD and intervals are all part of the language of a social group sharing that local reality; the joiner can learn the language and its mean-

ing, becoming part of the group by doing so.

General reality for me is that I am a British male, with a heritage based on independence, democracy and tolerance. One of the functions of general reality is to integrate the potentially competing local realities and to ease movement between them, lessening the shock that such movement entails. I am aware that others do not share my local realities, or more than a few of them. I am also aware that there are those who do not share my general reality; it is different, I find, from a citizen of the USA, and more different still from a Zimbabwean.

Transcendent reality – which Berger addresses in SRR - is that which I perceive as being real over and above that which is socially real. I know as 'real' the God of the Old and New Testaments and in the reality of what He is and has done. I am aware that a Hindu knows something rather different to be 'real'. The point where the sociology of knowledge touches the philosophy of knowledge is how far we can be free from social dimensions of reality and knowledge so as to 'know' that what we perceive as transcendent is not actually general or local reality. (The implication of Luther's argument is that we cannot; Erasmus thought we could at least see it, though only grasp it by grace).

'We apprehend the reality of everyday life as an ordered reality ... that appears objectified ... constituted by an order of objects that have been designated *as* objects before my appearance on the scene' (SCR, p.35). Reality appears external to us, with an existence independent of us. It acts upon us rather than we on it. We share objectifications with others, which enables us to carry out social interaction with them. It gives both temporal and spatial structure to everyday life.

We navigate this structure by signs. Language is the most important sign system in our reality and gives social meanings, 'Language originates in and has its primary reference to everyday life' (SCR, p.35). It transcends the here and now and bridges the different spheres in a reality structure (my general reality) 'and integrates them into a meaningful whole' (SCR, p.54). Language both transcends and integrates; enabling us to actualise the world we live in at any moment. It enables us to participate in the common stock of knowledge; without it social life becomes problematic in ways that can only be tackled by language substitutes.

'The social stock of knowledge differentiates reality by degrees of familiarity' (SCR, p.57). 'General' reality uses a largely non-specific and general stock of knowledge (Easter Monday is a Bank Holiday) while 'local' realities

have a stock of more specific knowledge (Tuesdays and Thursdays are Running Club nights, Monday is Bible Study night). The work arena shows this clearly: 'My knowledge of my own occupation and its world is very rich and specific, while I have only a very sketchy knowledge of the occupational worlds of others' (SCR, p.57). In both contexts the stock is constantly developing and changing as 'new' or different knowledge is integrated into it. The confirmation that this has happened is that the 'new' knowledge has always been so, and as long as knowledge works satisfactorily we are prepared to suspend doubts about it.

Reality and knowledge are perceived as objective. Knowledge becomes detached from its social origins and is 'raised to the level of a relatively autonomous sub-universe of meaning' ... having 'the capacity to act back on the collectivity that has produced it' (SCR, p.104). We perceive a reality world of institutions and typified roles, acting on us from the outside. We act within socially defined roles (as Shakespeare realised) that are seen to reinforce the institutionality of society. We perceive society as a reality over and above us, rather than as the product of interaction between ourselves and other individuals. Each sub-universe has its own version of reality, each seen to act upon us, objectified. This objectification is called reification: the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, 'such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will' (SCR, p.106). The relationship between person and world is reversed: we become the product of the world rather than its producer.

This raises the problem of legitimation between sub-universes that are – potentially at least – competing with one another. Legitimation 'produces new meanings that serve to integrate the meanings already attached to disparate institutional processes' (SCR, p.107). This is necessary as 'the totality of the individual's life ... must be made subjectively meaningful ... the individual's biography must be endowed with a meaning that makes the whole subjectively plausible' (SCR, p.110). What the individual experiences and perceives to be real, in each social group to which they belong, must be meaningful and legitimate to that individual, each local reality and the movements between them part of a comprehensible whole. 'Legitimation explains the institutional order' (SCR, p.111); the individual thus 'knows' what is 'right' and acts accordingly.

A sub-universe (a local reality) may wish to keep outsiders ignorant of its existence (some religious groups do this) and will develop ways of keeping outsiders out. It may want special privileges and recognitions from society at large and may use 'various techniques of intimidation, rational and irrational propaganda ... mystification and ... the manipulation of prestige sym-

bols' to achieve this (SCR, p.105). (The rationale employed by some pro-Israel groups can be cited here). However, insiders have to be kept in, requiring 'the development of both practical and theoretical procedures by which the temptation to escape from the sub-universe can be checked' (SCR, p. 105). (Dumping the desk contents of an employee defecting to a rival at the front door of the office is principally for the benefit of those who might wish to do likewise).

A part of legitimation is the construction of symbolic universes (already alluded to above). 'They are the sheltering canopies over the institutional order as well as individual biography. They also provide the delimitation of social reality ... they set the limit of what is relevant in terms of social interaction' (SCR, p.120). This nomic structure puts everything in its 'proper' place, especially in relation to the individual. At it most basic: God is in his heaven and all's well with the world. Rites of passage are an important part of a symbolic universe; we develop these where they are perceived as needed: a rite of thanks for a new-born child, an admission ceremony to a professional body, the end of term disco, the little rituals we perform before leaving our place of work at the end of the day. Significant or done with little thought, all these actions are symbolic and ease our movements from one local reality to another, affirming each in the process.

The symbolic universe must also locate death. Death more than anything else threatens chaos on the orderly world we inhabit. 'All legitimations of death must carry out the same essential task – they must enable the individual to go on living in society after the death of significant others and to anticipate his own death with, at the very least, terror sufficiently mitigated so as not to paralyse the continued performance of everyday life' (SCR, p.118). There is a 'good' death, and rites exist to affirm this. The arrival in the UK of coffins bearing service personnel killed in Iraq showed these rites clearly: commentary about death met bravely in the service of country, military bands playing solemn music, the measured tread of the bearers, the surplices of Chaplains fluttering in the breeze.

The threat of chaos, though largely and successfully kept at bay by the symbolic universes we have constructed, is ever present. Our lives are precarious and the threat of anomic terror, all our certainties being pulled from under us, may be unleashed by a sudden and traumatic event, particularly the death of someone well known who dies violently or suddenly. The death of Diana, Princess of Wales was just such an occasion, or Elvis Pressley, John F. Kennedy, Rudolph Valentino. The public scenes of distress were the same. Events like this must be – and are – followed quickly by 'solemn reaffirmations of the continuing reality of the sheltering symbols' (SCR, p.121): funeral rites, memorial service, specially written songs

associating the person with others who have died tragically.

The process by which we 'learn' the symbolic universe and institutional order of the society in which we live sociologists call socialization. Society becomes our subjective reality, through a threefold process (SCR, p.149): externalisation, objectivation and internalisation. We learn to see the social world as 'real' and external to us. We see it as having an objective existence independent of us. We internalise it so that it becomes part of us. We own it. Internalisation is a basis for understanding our fellows and for 'the apprehension of the world as a meaningful and social reality' (SCR, p.150). We are inducted by socialization into a world that is 'given' for us. Primary socialization takes place in childhood, but we may and do undergo secondary socialization when we enter a new sector of society.

Primary socialization internalizes a reality apprehended as inevitable' (SCR, p.167). It is successful if this reality is perceived as such most of the time; it can though be threatened by the marginal situations of human experience. 'The reality of everyday life maintains itself by being embodied in routines, which is the essence of institutionalization. Beyond this ... the reality of everyday life is reaffirmed in the individual's interaction with it' (SCR, p.169). This takes place in a 'conversation' between the individual and society, where all others, significant or not, play a part in world reaffirmation, like a chorus. 'Language constitutes both the most important content and most important instrument of socialization' (SCR, p.153). This can be emphasised by pointing out differences in languages. Each has word-sets conveying reality meanings that may have no direct equivalent in another language. It is not possible to translate certain words in German into English. The reality-worlds they convey are different. Finnish has a word, *mu*, meaning 'other', in the sense 'the question does not admit of the answer'. English speakers often ask for the answer 'in a word', but we do not have one beyond yes or no.

Successful socialization will result in the 'establishment of a high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality' (SCR, p183). Where it is unsuccessful the individual is nonetheless assigned a role, one in which their presence does not threaten the taken-for-granted reality but is accommodated within it. The leper is a leper, and lepers behave as lepers do; everyone 'knows' this. The lepers may though join together (in a colony) and develop their own sub-sphere of knowledge that can become a threat to society as a whole. To society they may be lepers, but to the leper group they may be children of God. This can be done outside such a group too, with some success, as with Ghandi redefining untouchables as *harijans*, children of God. The potential for tension where role definitions

are sharply differentiated is obvious.

Where discrepant worlds are generally available in a society on a market basis, 'there will be an increasingly general consciousness of the relativity of *all* worlds, including one's own' (SCR, p.192). It becomes *a* world rather than *the* world. The individual can to a degree detach himself or herself from the role they are acting out, becoming aware that they are an actor. 'The possibility of individualism (that is, of individual choice between discrepant realities and identities) is directly linked to the possibility of unsuccessful socialization' (SCR, p.190). Particularly where a range of alternative realities is available, an individual can choose to alternate between identities. If they choose an identity denied by society, that identity can become a fantasy, objectivated within the individual's consciousness as his real self (Walter Mitty). Here Berger and Luckmann perhaps overlook one point: it is possible to inhabit several reality worlds, and thus several roles, at the same time. It is possible to 'be' a gas fitter and a father and right back in the pub football team at once. Each role belongs to a different local reality (especially the last? Excuse the pun). So long as these are not mutually exclusive the movement between them is 'managed' by plausibility structures. They co-exist happily.

The basic structure of secondary socialization has to resemble that with which we are already familiar, primary. In both the process is effected through significant others: parents, priests, managers and so on. Through them we learn what is normative. In secondary socialization we acquire role-specific knowledge and vocabularies, specific to the sub-worlds we live in. Each sub-world may be partial in relation to the base-world but is coherent and complete within itself in terms of the reality it encompasses and defines. The socialization of religious personnel is particularly demonstrative of the 'ritual and material symbols' employed. 'The techniques applied ... are designed to intensify the affective character of the socialization process. Typically they involve the institutionalisation of an elaborate initiation process, a novitiate, in the course of which the individual comes to commit himself fully to the reality that is being internalized' (SCR, p.164).

Socialization as a process of universe-maintenance is never completely successful. How successful and plausible is tested by how those on the edges are integrated (or otherwise). Children are the obvious significant group here: they ask awkward questions and do those things that ought not to be done. But they are expected to understand their place in terms of being individuals being socialised, learning to be members of society. Those who do not accept or learn this are quickly labelled delinquent and a range of therapies employed to bring them to conformity. Idiosyncratic

adults are a different matter. Idiosyncrasies become problematic 'if deviant versions of the symbolic reality come to be shared by groups of inhabitants ... the deviant version congeals into a reality in its own right, which ... challenges the reality status of the symbolic realty as originally constituted. The group ... becomes the carrier of an alternative definition of reality' (SCR, p.124). In practice most alternative definitions of reality do not pose a significant threat to the original symbolic universe. A bridge club with 'house rules' is hardly going to threaten the political institutions of the country, though it might irritate the game's ruling body. Some are perceived as a real threat though, a heresy indeed: the Roman Catholic church and Lutherans, Calvinists, Waldenses, Mazzini's Socialists.

This problem also occurs where one society is confronted by another 'having a greatly different history' (SCR, p.125). Here there is an alternative symbolic universe with an 'official' tradition and taken-for-granted reality equal to one's own. 'Heretical' groups in one's own society can be dismissed as mad, bad or dangerous to know, but another society can see our 'definitions of reality as ignorant, mad or downright evil' (SCR, p.125) with just as much validity as we can theirs. (The incredulity expressed by many US troops at not being immediately welcomed in Iraq as liberators bears witness to this). In order to maintain the plausibility of our own symbolic universe, 'the alternative universe presented by the other society must be met with the best possible reason's for the superiority of one's own (SCR, p. 126). That the alternative universe exists at all demonstrates that ours is not as inevitable as we like to think it is. The same can be said of local realities within our own society. When these external or internal alternatives become a threat sophisticated conceptual machineries are employed to protect the symbolic universe: mythology, theology, philosophy, science. (I would add history and sociology).

Mythology is 'a conception of reality that posits the on-going penetration of the world of everyday experience by sacred forces' (SCR, p.128). It sees a high degree of continuity between everyday social worlds and the cosmic order. It covers not just the myth-worlds of primitive societies, but practices such as reading horoscopes or turning over a sixpence (probably now a 5p piece) at the sight of a new moon. A great deal of 'secular mythology' also exists, social traditions or modes of behaviour that are legitimised by use.

'For our ... purposes, theological thought may be distinguished from its mythological predecessor simply in terms of its greater degree of theoretical systematization' (SCR, p.129). Whereas mythology posits continuity between the human and divine worlds, it now appears as broken, theology

serving to mediate between the two worlds. Whereas mythological knowledge is little different from the common stock of knowledge, theological knowledge is further removed, more specialised.

Philosophy in turn grew out of theology and in many of its manifestations is a secularised theology. The secularising process has been progressive in increasingly complex societies, at least as viewed in the 'West'. From theology on, 'forms of conceptual machinery became the property of specialist elites whose bodies of knowledge were increasingly removed from the common knowledge of society as a whole' (SCR, p. 130).

'Modern science is an extreme step in this development, and in the secularisation and sophistication of universe-maintenance' (SCR, p.130). This process becomes ever further removed from the 'lay' member of society, but they do know who the specialists are and accept as plausible the specialist knowledge they use to explain the world.

These 'stages' are not proposed as an evolutionary scale, rather as society becomes increasingly complex and sophisticated each successive conceptual machinery is layered over the others. There is still a mythological reality accepted as real by most members of complex societies; it may not be the same as that of a simple society, but it exists. It is perhaps this reality that underlies the 'spiritual longing' perceived to remain strong in 'modern' society.

Each 'knowledge set' has it's own specialists: those who are seen as having special expertise in that field and who serve to legitimate it in the role they act out. They claim jurisdiction over 'their' sector of the societal stock of knowledge. They use symbols and language to demonstrate and reinforce their position and role as specialists. The fortune-teller is a 'gypsy' named Lee. The priest insists in being called 'Father' and wearing black. The philosopher talks in riddles and publishes a popular novel based on a particular mediaeval school of thought. The scientist (Professor or Doctor) announces that theological belief is immature and publishes popular answers to the question of life, the universe, everything. We believe them. They are the guardians of the realities in which they and we live. Where they disagree, we find ways of holding two contradictions to be true, and do not worry so long as the plausibility structures of each can be kept apart in our compartmentalised lives.

The potential for tension between alternate realities within our own society always exists. Where there are deviant realities the following responses are possible: Liquidate (witches, Albigenses, Jews), Integrate (folk beliefs

and old gods being 'baptised as Christian stories, pagan festivals as Christian festivals), Segregate (Jews in mediaeval Europe, some migrants in Britain today). The fact remains that 'most modern societies are pluralistic – they have a shared core universe taken for granted as such and different partial universes co-existing in a state of mutual accommodation' (SCR, p.142; these correspond to my general and local reality) ... 'outright conflict between ideologies has been replaced by varying degrees of tolerance or even cooperation.'

In a pluralistic society de-monopolisation of specialist knowledge takes place. Specialists have to find ways to continue maintaining the old tradition while legitimating (or denying) pluralism. Behaving as if nothing has happened is not generally taken seriously by others, but pluralism changes the social position of traditional definitions of reality and the ways they are held in the consciousness of individuals. Thus a church that does not change with the times risks of becoming irrelevant, while one that does risks the plausibility of its world-view in the face of alternatives.

Individual identity too is shaped by social processes, the ways in which we are socialized and interact with others. In turn, identities 'react upon the given social structure, maintaining it, modifying it, or even reshaping it' (SCR, p.194). 'Specific historical social structures engender identity *types* which are recognizable in individual cases. In this sense one may assert that an American has a different identity than a Frenchman, a New Yorker than a Midwesterner, an executive than a hobo, and so forth'. These assumptions can be 'verified – or refuted – by ordinary men endowed with common sense'. The identities differ because we 'belong' to different social worlds and sub-worlds. We are most likely to be 'like' those who share our 'set' of sub-worlds; if we did not start alike, we will become so as we share reality-affirming structures. This extends to psychologies, whose theories 'serve to legitimate the identity-maintenance and identity-repair procedures established in the society, providing the theoretical linkage between identity and world' (SCR, p.197). Where an individual suffers a crisis of identity appropriate therapies will be employed to restore confidence and integrated wholeness (for the individual and the society threatened by the individual's crisis). In less complex societies the diagnosis may be, 'He has a devil', the therapy exorcism; in a Western society, 'He is mentally ill', the therapy psychoanalysis, ECT, counselling. A Haitian peasant is much less likely to be neurotic than a New Yorker! But in both cases the crisis of identity needs to be resolved and the individual successfully reintegrated with themselves and society, for the sake of both.

The organism is also a key factor in identity. It 'continues to affect each

phase of man's reality constructing activity and ... in turn, is affected by this activity' (SCR, p.201). Our biological being may be transformed in socialization but it is not abolished by it. The organism still sets limits on what is possible socially: life expectancy, nutrition. But society and the organism set limits for one another. For example, 'right' foods. In Britain it is 'not done' to eat horsemeat, and the thought of dog on the menu at a Korean restaurant is enough to turn the stomach. For a Hindu there is of course no question of ever eating beef. All these responses are socially conditioned. Similarly with sexual activity, it is biologically possible for a male of 40 to have relations with a female of 14, but not socially acceptable. In each case, sanctions, including legal, exist to enforce conformity. The individual stands in dialectical relationship with the social world around them, and in this 'dialectic between nature and the socially constructed world the human organism is itself transformed' (SCR, p.204).

Within our general reality we alternate between local realities, often several times a day. We do not usually notice this as the reality affirming structures assure us that the local realities are consistent and no harm will befall us by so moving. Some alternation is however more threatening and complete, requiring a process of re-socialization. The existing nomic structure internalized by the individual may have to be dismantled and disintegrated and the person re-socialized into a new one. Religious conversion is the 'historical prototype' of this kind of alternation (SCR, p.177), *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* being 'the empirically successful accomplishment of conversion. ... It is only within the religious community, the *ecclesia*, that the conversion can be effectively maintained as plausible.' Conversion may come first (Saul of Tarsus), but to be maintained requires the plausibility structure of the community, otherwise it will become merely an experience. 'Saul may have become Paul in the aloneness of religious ecstasy, but he could *remain* Paul only in the context of the Christian community that recognised him as such and confirmed the new being in which he now located his identity.' These plausibility structures must become the individual's world, displacing his old world. The success of religious structures makes it no accident that the most successful secular equivalents have borrowed heavily from religious models: political indoctrination, psychotherapy, Alcoholics Anonymous, and many more. The individual experiences a rupture in their biography; all past knowledge and experience is re-interpreted in the light of what they now 'know'. Paul re-interpreted his own biography accordingly, 'when I was a child I thought as a child, but now ...'.

Berger and Luckmann's venture in the field of sociology covers ground well trod by practitioners of other disciplines but from another perspective, and it is this fresh perspective that shines light on old arguments. Berger has

gone on to produce a considerable corpus of books on the themes it introduces. The central premise of "The Social Construction of Reality" is that the concept and perception of what is real is, for each social group and its members, both a social construct and mediated socially, to an extent that the members of the group are not aware of this in the course of their everyday lives. As Dorrie Johnson puts it, "Each organisation ... will have its own culture, its own character." I want to suggest here, and develop later, that MSE in general and CHRISM in particular have their own cultures. They are sub-groups (I use the plural carefully), each with a local reality that is distinct from the larger local realities of both Church and employing organisation. There are many MSEs out with CHRISM, who would not immediately identify with the latter's perception of reality on where MSE stands vis a vis Church and work.

Michael Ranken (January 2003 Journal) makes a perceptive point: "Reality is not a social construct; every human perception of Reality is." How, then, can we change perceptions? And how will the individual escape from the human perception that is a social construct in order to perceive purely the Reality that is not? Luther's answer to the latter was that we cannot; only (external) Grace can free the individual from the bondage of social construct as of sin. Erasmus took the view that the individual could perceive the reality of God, needing God's grace to then grasp it. I'm with the Dutchman.

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The Social Reality of Religion. Peter L. Berger. Faber & Faber, 1967. ISBN 0571 08865 1

There is a good summary of The Social Construction of Reality at:
http://www.theology.ie/thinkers/berger.htm

Thought

The unexpected person,
in an unexpected way,
at an unexpected time.
It is when we are off guard that God can speak to us most clearly.

Priests for Tomorrow

A recent article in 'The Tablet', entitled "Priests for tomorrow", explored the developing pattern of priesthood. It drew this published response from **Michael Kavanagh***, DDO and Archbishop's Chaplain, Archdiocese of York, reproduced here by kind permission of the writer.*

Within the Anglican Church, Non-Stipendiary Ministry and Ordained Local Ministry have been available for a number of years. Both contain some elements of what Lobinger and Zulehner describe as Corinthian priests. Age, however, is a factor in the process of discernment of such vocations. It is usual for someone to offer a Non-Stipendiary Ministry only when the candidate is past the age of thirty. It is seen to be important that if a person is establishing themselves in a career, or beginning a family, some degree of stability is present before they go on to explore ordination. Ordination training for such candidates is usually non-residential and would include a significant attempt to help them to link theological understanding with their life experiences within which context their ordained ministry would take place. This recognises that an ordained person is priestly full time, even though they may work only in a parochial context part time. Hence their ministry may find expression in their place of work, which is often described as Ministry in Secular Employment.

Ordained Local Ministry focuses much more on candidates being recognised within a local community as being foci of unity and, although their ordination is to the wider Church, their licence reflects the fact that they minister within a team of people of complementary gifts in a local context. Such Ordained Local Ministry has opened the way to effective ordained ministry by people who traditionally may not have had either the time or prior education to undertake a three-year non-residential course of training. For OLMs, the training course is tailored to take the local dimension of ministry seriously, whilst also providing a broad range of theological, educational and formational experiences.

In the Diocese of York, there has also been an exploration of training and formation for candidates over fifty-five who come to the possibility of ordination with extensive ministerial experience as Readers and often other theological qualifications. The Archbishop has sought to explore ways in which the formation of such people takes account of the fact that their Christian and ministerial formation is not simply beginning at the point where they are selected for training for ordination, but has been unfolding in significant ways over many years of public ministry and service. Such an approach has tended to be flexible and looks at the particular candidates coming through the selection process, seeking to craft ways of training that are appropriate in terms of the person's experience and also the needs of the Church.

When it works well, there can be a complementarity between deployable, Pauline ministries and local, Corinthian ministries. The crucial thing is to recognise both as priests of the Church with distinctive gifts to offer, rather than first and second class. It is our experience in the Diocese of York that an imaginative use of "Corinthian" priests has released a lot of energy that can be used in the furtherance of the Gospel. It has also helped people to realise gifts that in the past the Church has overlooked, particularly because of age.

The Editor comments:

There are two points here that are well worth drawing out. The first is that priesthood is full-time. It derives from the ministry, not the context. It is all too easy to let a parochial context condition our view of what priesthood is. Secondly, that 'Christian and ministerial formation is not simply beginning at the point they are selected ... but has been unfolding in significant ways over many years of public ministry and service.'

The experience of many MSEs has all too often been that their existing ministry has been pushed aside by conformity to parochial models. For the MSE there is another model of ministry as well as Pauline and Corinthian: the workbench!

Questions of Business Life
*A new book from **Richard Higginson***

Richard's book is a protest – against the marginalisation of Christianity by business, and the marginalisation of business by Christianity. The business world finds little of significance for its activities in the Christian faith or the

Christian church. The church feels the same about business. This is not how God intended things to be, and it is vital that both these processes of marginalisation – pushing to the edges – are reversed.

Questions of Business Life is also the story of the Ridley Hall Foundation over the last six years. The Foundation is the project relating Christian faith to the business world which Richard has run at Ridley Hall. The main focus of this is a programme of residential seminars on topical business issues, involving practising businesspeople, which have been a combination of identifying and promoting best practice and developing a Christian perspective on the particular topic. Each chapter of the book is both a report and a further reflection on one of those topics. They are:

Issues about *doing business corporately*:
- The nature and purpose of a company: the stakeholder debate
- Changing stakeholder relations: the development of supply chain management
- Can partnership really work? Establishing trust in the construction industry
- The changing faces of loyalty: rewriting the psychological contract

Issues about *doing business globally*:
- Fuelling the consumer society: the ethics of marketing
- Tackling international corruption: doing business without bribes
- Saving the planet: business and sustainable development
- Business without frontiers: the growth of e-commerce

Issues about *doing business individually*:
- Influencing organisations for good? The role of the consultant
- Changing patterns of work: the portfolio lifestyle
- Spirituality and the workplace: a new paradigm at work?
- The revived idea of vocation: calling in the secular world

On one topical issue after another a robust and imaginative biblical theology, linked to the well informed, practical understanding that businesspeople bring, has a refreshing and often unexpected relevance to the world of work. *Questions of Business Life* reveals how these insights have emerged in the life of the Ridley Hall Foundation.

So marginalisation has to stop. Richard's book shows how and why.

Questions of Business Life is available from good Christian bookshops or from Richard himself at Ridley Hall. Published by Authentic Lifestyle in

partnership with Spring Harvest.   Price £12.99   ISBN 1-85078-477-9.   338 pages.

Review

Rob Fox

For once the publicity blurb accurately tells us what the book is about and how it came to be written, so I have no need to describe the contents. It is not however simply a re-hash of the findings of seminars hosted by the Ridley Hall Foundation, rather a series of reflections on them, placed in a contextual whole. How far the seminar material is used varies, I suspect reflecting how coherent the outcomes of each were. Various contributions from speakers and participants are woven into the chapters, but the book is more of a reflection on them. Higginson also seeks to point up some common themes and directions for progress in useful introductory and concluding chapters. The latter in particular, *The revived idea of vocation,* is perceptive and pointed.

So how useful is it? Well, this is more a book about ethics and relation-ships than ministry, with the central aim of pointing to the divide between Christianity and business and how this might be bridged. It is about the contexts within which ministry at work takes place. Some of these are particular, such as the construction and marketing industries, others are general. Even in the former certain themes and principles with wider appli-cation are identified, for example the recommendations for positive ethical standards in marketing stand as sound bases in many other areas of busi-ness life (pages 154-5). The chapter on the role of the consultant clearly draws out the parallels between Christian and secular ethical standards (page 251ff) in this industry and slays a few myths about this oft-feared creature. That on globalisation ought to be required reading for the next meeting of the European Worker Priests!

Higginson clearly knows his territory well; the 9 page bibliography of works cited and referred to is not there for show, these resources are aptly used. I got the impression too that he knows the limits of his own experience and allows others to speak for themselves. This was particularly evident where there were clearly wide ranges of opinion represented at a seminar, notably in the chapters on *Spirituality and the Workplace* (I recommend this one to all interested in the subject) and *Tackling International Corrup-tion: doing business without bribes.* The agonising that many at the semi-nar had been through comes across clearly in the latter.

The biblical parallels are sometimes a little strained, for example in *The nature and purpose of a Company* and *Business without frontiers: the*

growth of e-commerce, but in fairness Higginson recognises that it is not possible to find good parallels for some of the areas covered. Jesus did not send a text message ahead to have the Upper Room ready, convenient though this may have been.

Where the book is strong is in grasp of historical information and trends: how and why we got where we are now. The summary of how the "company" has developed is simple yet sound, and the final chapter gives a good analysis of just how Christianity and Business have grown apart, with proposals as to how to address this.

It is a balanced book, with measured criticism both of the business world and its critics where this is justified, and pointing up how much of what goes on in business is constructive. There is a particularly lucid critique of the Spirituality and Business movement that chimes well with concerns I have heard expressed.

Overall this is an enjoyable and informative read. It is readable and accessible, an even pace is maintained throughout, and the modular structure makes it easy to read in chunks (I read it a chapter at a time on the train). I suspect that I will come back to it again; it is too thought provoking to leave on the shelf. If you are involved in the world of business in any way, or just interested, it is well worth having.

Pond Watch
NASSAM, one of our kindred MSE organisations in the USA, recently forwarded a report on its 2002 Conference. The following items make particularly interesting reading.

Ed Hook:
Sometimes our organization, NASSAM, is brought up [*in Church circles*] and questions ensue, such as: 'What really is NASSAM and what does it do?'

My answer is as follows: NASSAM is a presence in the church. A presence which recognizes a diversity of models of ministry for both lay and ordained persons - persons who make up the church. NASSAMites are sometimes quite active within the institutional parish and sometimes very distant from it. NASSAM has a very wide vision of ministry, and fervently includes what one does in the 'secular' world as a valid expression of one's ministry.

The institutional church speaks of parishioners ministry, but that usually

means ministries carried out within the context of the parish, not in one's secular position. This leads to a misunderstanding of what church / parish is all about. NASSAMites have a theology of secular work which includes church work and a theology of church work which includes secular work. Both are seen through the eyes of belief / faith as one goes through life on a spiritual and physical journey. Because NASSAMites see life this way, there is more understanding of diversity in all things and more openness to discussion, exploration and understanding of the great diversity of people, opinions and actions. It seems to me that the Bivocational tent-making model is a very important presence now, and has been for many decades.

UK meeting, Milo Coerper:
The English [*yes, I know! Ed.*] version of NASSAM is CHRISM (Christians in secular ministry). Milo Coerper and spouse, Wendy, were in the UK at the time of CHRISM's conference. Milo writes the following: "Phil Aspinall asked me to be one of the speakers - so Wendy and I attended. It was a wonderful completion for me in that Michael Ranken was there. He was at our annual conference at the College of Preachers when I was president of NASSAM. He was inspired to go home and start what became CHRISM. So it was a 20th year celebration for us."

Chicago's brilliant start, Davis Fisher:
(From the Diocese of Chicago's publication, *Anglican Advance*, Dec 2002).
The terms are varied - nonstipendiary, nonparochial, auxiliary, Bivocational - as are the assumptions of many lay people and full time parish-based clergy toward ordained ministers who choose employment outside the parish setting. Attitudes range from "they couldn't handle parochial ministry" to "they needed the money", according to the Rev. Davis Fisher, organizer of a new diocesan advisory committee on tent making ministry. Rarely are tent making ministers - those who do not derive their primary income from parish employment - considered to have "a notion of call".

Tent makers are the unsung and too often ignored assets of a church that increasingly is trying to expand its presence and service in the community, said Fisher, owner of Money Tree Consulting and assisting priest at St. Augustine, Wilmette. More than a supply pool for congregations in transition, tent makers can bring unique skills to the church from their secular work and serve as a link to the community, he said.

His point was echoed by Bishop William Persell, attending the morning meeting: "My hope for this council is to raise the visibility, to connect and involve tentmakers, to honor and support them in their ministries, and be creative in new ways to be the church". Noting that tent makers are under-utilized in the diocese, and too easily isolated, Bishop Persell stressed that he wanted "all our clergy to be con-

nected with one another and to the life of the church".

Joining Fisher and the Bishop were a dozen clergy, most of them tent-makers, with varied occupations including spiritual director, YMCA business consultant, counseling center director, retirement fund director and seminary dean. Fisher noted that tent-makers are a sizable, if overlooked, resource of the church. Nearly half of the 312 active clergy (those not retired) in the Diocese of Chicago are tent-makers, he said, while in the Episcopal Church at large tent makers comprise up to 20% of the church's 15,500 clergy.

Church Watch

The **Baptist Union** has recently been reviewing the role of ministry in the workplace and a position paper, "Ministry and Mission, Monday to Friday: Theology and context" is available on it's website (www.baptist.org.uk). It notes that for many years ministers have been appointed to be chaplains and missioners in places of work, but they have felt marginalised as 'real' ministry is seen by many to be within the local church.

"We live in days in which life is compartmentalised, in that different activities happen in different geographical areas", writes author Stephen Heap. As our work-place has moved away from our home-place, so there has developed a separation in our apprehension between different activities. Ministers have tended to visit homes, but not work-places, so as the work-home split has developed and widened, so has the church-work split. Church has become associated with home and leisure rather than work; "the church goes on as if compartmentalisation has not happened and the exceptions, those who operate with a different model, perhaps in sector ministry, tend to feel marginalised."

Lamenting the decline in influence of the church, heap goes on to say "Mission is needed. If we are serious about mission, and about reaching all parts of life with the gospel, we need to set up appropriate structures to reach out into all the different sections of life and express our gospel concerns there." The way he sees this happening is principally through sector ministry. Sector ministers may want to be a little distant from both church and workplace, what Heap calls "resident aliens." "We go not to take God there ... but rather to work with the God who is already there." (At this point seasoned MSEs may want to add: and with the people of faith who are already there!).

In fairness Heap does acknowledge that "sector ministry is only one way in which the church is present in places of work. In most workplaces God's people are already there, doing their work alongside their colleagues of

other faiths and none". He sees the sector minister "being there" in four ways: pastoral, priestly, prophetic, and proclaim.

Pastoral is seen firstly in personal terms, but "sector ministers are there not only to express care for individuals, but also for the place of work and what happens there."

The prophetic aspect is seen as "really getting to know a place of work: the issues, the politics, the people, the vision which drives a place, its mission, its methods." It involves "trying to discover and speak a word from the Lord."

Priestly starts at "praying for and with people and doing liturgy, but it means more than that." It is worth here an extended quotation to draw out how Heap sees this aspect:
"Part of the work of sector ministers is handling religion among the unchurched and facing the religious questions which never go away. ... Being priestly means responding to these sheep without a shepherd who don't know how to say 'thankyou' when a baby is born but know they have to say 'thankyou'. It means responding to those who need to know God is there for them even when they are not there for God ... . It means providing ritual when a factory opens or closes and when someone needs to hear that their sins are forgiven."

Proclaim: telling the story, which is often one we do not know but learn along with our fellows in the workplace. It also includes evangelising people and structures, bringing good news to both, whether that is traditional gospel good news or the justice of equal pay.

Within in scope, this paper is balanced and well written. If there is a cavil it is the lack of attention to the work of those ministering from within the workplace, as opposed to the 'resident alien'. How does what is written here about sector ministry link with ministry in secular employment? A question for the Baptist Union perhaps?

Diary

The London Mennonite Centre is organising a course on *Skills Training for Mediation in the Church*. It is a 5-day course and will take place between 6 – 10 October at Westbury-on-Trym Baptist Church, Bristol. Further details from Alistair McKay, 14 Shepherds Hill, London, N6 5AQ. Tel. 0208 340 8775; e-mail: AlistairMcKay@menno.org.uk.

Globalising God is the title of the 91st Annual Conference of the **Modern Churchpeoples Union**, being held at High Leigh Conference Centre, 15 – 18 July. The Chair will be taken by Canon John Atherton (William Temple Foundation) and speakers include: Tom Wright, Duncan Forrester, Grace Davie, Andrew Davey, Andrew Bradstock, Andrew Shanks and Malcolm Brown. Further details from the MCU Office, 9 Westward Avenue. Aigburth, Liverpool, L17 7EF. Tel. 0151 726 9730; e-mail: office@modchurchunion.org; website: www.modchurchunion.org.

The Ridley Hall Foundation …
... is holding a residential conference 20 – 22 June entitled: "**Can Business be Christian? And if so in what way?**" It is aimed principally at business people and aims to look at ways of bridging the apparent divide between the two. Cost is £145 (£95 for non-residents). For further information and to book a place, contact Dr. Richard Higginson, Ridley Hall, Cambridge, CB3 9HG; 01223 741074; e-mail: rah41@cam.ac.uk.

'Business and Church – Oil and water?'
The CABE (Christian Association of Business Executives) Fifth Paper, to be given by Ven. Malcolm Grundy.

Malcolm is Archdeacon of Craven in the Diocese of Bradford and Chairman of MODEM. He is also an author. Among the posts he has held are Senior Chaplain of the Sheffield Industrial Mission, Director of Education and Community in the Diocese of London and Director of Avec.

6.30 pm on Thursday 3 July 2003,
at **St Botolph's Church, Aldgate, London** (right by Aldgate tube station).
Refreshments and sandwiches available from **6 pm.**   Meeting will finish by **8 pm** at the latest. Admission free, but donations on exit welcome.   All are welcome at this event.

The meeting will be preceded by CABE's AGM, which will also be held in the Church at 5.30 pm.

CABE operates in collaboration with other Faith and Work organisations, including ICF and MODEM.

Liverpool Hope University College and the **Leadership and Ethics Centre** host a *Sector Ministries Conference* on 24 May,

at the Woolton Road site, Liverpool. Giles LeGood, Chaplain to the Royal Veterinary College will be delivering a lecture on "Building a firm Foundation – a Theology of Sector Ministry", which is followed by workshops in the afternoon. Cost is £7.50, including refreshments and a light lunch. Further information from the Editor, or Mrs Karen Brownrigg, 0151 291 3282, email: brownrk@hope.ac.uk.

A Parable of the Kingdom

Jim Cummins

Something came through the post which reminded me of a very apt 'kingdom parable'.

It came under the heading 'Training and Development' and included 'Top Ten Personal Safety Hints' which were:

1. Trust your instincts
2. Know your limitations
3. Always report incidents to the police and the Archdeacon, no matter how minor they may seem
4. Keep calm
5. Plan ahead
6. Report to the Archdeacon any area of your work that puts you at risk
7. Know what the rules are, not what you think they are
8. Never be afraid to run away
9. Carry a personal attack alarm in an accessible place at all times
10. No item of property or building is worth your life.

After all that there are the Top ten personal safety tips for Ministers. They are in the same vein and will probably be common sense in many situations or spheres of work.   My immediate response, though, was sadness that it was all about our security – all 'Take Care', never 'Take Risks' – and no hint of the value of loving one's neighbour.

So, The Kingdom of Heaven is like a young man (I'll call him Bob) who was making his way on foot towards a railway station in Glasgow to return to London at the end of a walking holiday in the Highlands.

Just now another youth appeared from an alley and demanded his money at knifepoint.   Bob took off his rucksack, extracted his wallet and handed it over saying, "O.K. there you are – that's all I've got" and as his mugger

wiffled through the notes inside, Bob carried on talking and asked what the money was for and why he needed it. His attacker made it perfectly clear that he had nothing and he had to have money to get what he and his friends needed from their drug supplier. "I see", said Bob, "but now you've got everything and I've got nothing. How am I going to get to London?" The upshot was that the mugger agreed to go halves with him, took out his share of the cash, returned the wallet complete with all credit cards etc., and ran off. Bob caught his train and returned to London (where he is training to become a diplomat!).

Fryer serves God and chips

Rochdale MSE Peter Zucca recently featured in the *Manchester Evening News* – in his chippy! Peter owns the Portland Plaice in central Manchester, can be found behind the counter most days wrapping chips and spreading the gospel.

He has worked in the same Portland Street shop for over 20 years - it used

to be just a sandwich shop - and he became a priest because "it just felt right". He was ordained six years, combining frying with looking after the small parish of St George's, Rochdale.

"I get a lot of leg pulling, but I don't mind as long as people don't use the Lord's name in vain," he said. "Business came before the priesthood and I just want to carry on doing both. People do come in and want to talk about God and I'm always happy to do that."

Work and prayer

On a recent Radio 4 religious programme, a Ghanaian Christian was asked at the end of an interview to join in a prayer. He replied; "You want a

prayer.... We have been praying by our work and the way we talk"

And (almost) finally ...

... at a recent memorial service in Canada for bodies and organs used in medical research, the hymns included 'Take my life and let it be ...'. It of course invites God to take our hands ...feet ...lips ...heart. Oooops!

When you face the darkness

Dorrie Johnson

> *"When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." Gen. 9:16 NRSV*

Rain strikes relentlessly.
The whole earth seems to bow its head.
We wait for its diminishing.

Far off,
the darkened sky lifts a corner.
A beam of light
shafts the sombrous air
catches raindrops
lets them fall
to puddles mirroring
a fractured sky
back to itself.

In the sky
prismatic colours
arch their gently beauty
for those who face the darkness,
their backs to the sun.

'I tell you, when you face the darkness,
then will you find my promise.
I have set my rainbow in the clouds
I will see it and remember my covenant'.

Written in response to Jean Skinner's introduction of the idea of a rainbow

in the afternoon creativity session: signs of new life. CHRISM Reflective weekend, February 2003.

CHRISM SUMMER CONFERENCE 2003
11th-13th July, Redruth, Cornwall

Theme:
Future Work, Future Church, Future Society

What is our role in a changing society?
Where is MSE going?
Where should it be going?

Hotel accommodation has been reserved for this Conference.

Invited Speakers include:
Andrew Brittan on the Future of Work
John Gladwin on the Future of MSE

Cost, from dinner on Friday evening to lunch on Sunday, inclusive: **£110** (members); **£120** (non-members).

To book your place, return the form with this edition to:

Phil Aspinall,

CHRISM

CHRistians In Secular Ministry

Our faith imposes on us a right and a duty to throw ourselves into the things of the earth   Teilhard de Chardin