

Ministers-at-Work

*The Journal for Christians in
secular ministry*

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Editorial

Storytelling is how human beings make sense of the world around them. Storytelling is familiar to every human being. We recount stories to entertain, to educate, to change minds and to challenge attitudes. Storytelling can also help us answer key questions for each of us: Who am I? How do I relate to you? What does it mean to be human? Stories are at the heart of this issue – because parables are above all stories.

Most of the contributions to this issue came from our Reflective Weekend in Ilkley, which was titled ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is Like ...’ and introduced by Margaret Trivasse, who encouraged us to reflect on the stories and parables which arise in our work. Some of the contributions included are novel or contemporary, others reworkings of the familiar.

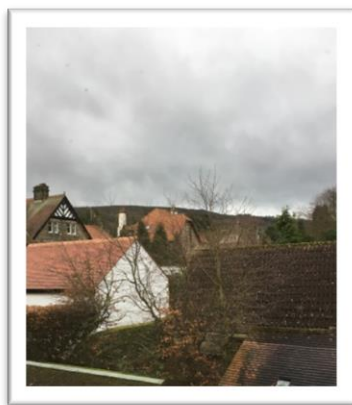
We heard that parables are, generally, subversive – designed to shift attitudes and open up new thinking or action. As we spend the next weeks in the run up to a General Election, I wonder which stories will go viral in our media dominated world – what attitudes they might confirm or alter – and what actions might result?

Meanwhile, Phil Aspinall has drawn our attention to a paper he first published several years ago on consultancy, as we prepare for our summer conference on Modern Working, Modern Ministry. As some today wrestle with the implications of the ‘gig’ economy – or debate the rights and wrongs of ‘self employed’ Deliveroo riders, others are employed on minimal part time contracts, while some in the public sector work five

days in four and wonder where their spare time has gone. As work changes shape, our engagement needs to shift too.

Elsewhere we have another book review, and a thought provoking poem – or perhaps a kind of parable – about clerical substitution (or is it?) thanks to Dorrie Johnson. In the next edition of this journal in July 2017 we will be looking at Endings, precariousness and fragility... Your ideas, reflections and contributions will all be welcome.

'The Kingdom of Heaven is Like ...'
Contributions from the Reflective Weekend at
The Briery, Ilkley, West Yorkshire



It is more than 10 years since we looked at what a Parable of the Kingdom might look like today. A group of us travelled to this West Yorkshire town, in the shadow of the moors, where we re-visited the theme and explored parables for the here and now. We enjoyed an afternoon's walk – some on the moors and some in the town, and an evening interpreting our

thinking creatively. We drew together our thinking, discussions and creativity in our worship.



Afternoon excursion

Walking

Down the hill,

Loosely companioned;

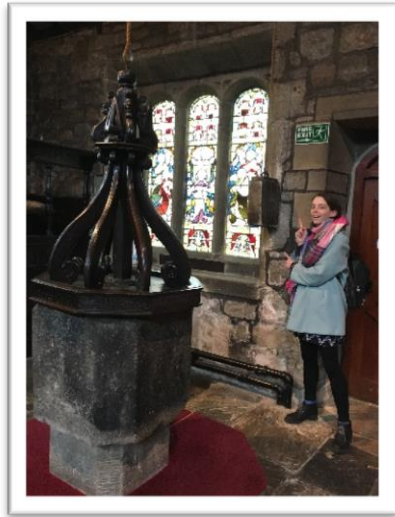
Seeing,

Unexpectedly

Footprints of the past;

Unwieldy objects, raising questions:

Who? How? And even Why?



Continuing, uncovering the new:

Technology contradicted –

By reality, unfound.

Retracing steps and then,

Going beyond,

Finding Treasure piled high,

And friends...

Together, seeking everyday risk prevention

We found more gold...

Decoupled, in the rain,
The few located joy in a cupboard,
Were refreshed,
And returned, safely,
Changed by the journey.





Parables – Margaret Trivasse

Some definitions to begin with

Parable: an allegorical narrative of real or fictitious events from which a moral is drawn; an allegory, especially of a religious kind

Allegory: a description of one thing under the image of another; an extended metaphor

Fable: a story, especially one in which lower animals are represented as endowed with speech in order to convey some moral lesson

Story: a narrative of actual or fictitious events

Tale: a narrative, an account, a story, true or fictitious

Metaphor: a figure of speech by which a word is transferred from one object to another, so as to imply comparison.

The word is from the Greek *parabole*, meaning beside/throw. The Hebrew is *mashal*, to set side by side. It literally refers to ideas being thrown alongside each other, to compare and show how different things are like each other and can illuminate each other. A particular truth is revealed through metaphor.

C H Dodd (1934) said: “At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought”. It embodies an idea rather than stands for the idea (as pure metaphor does).

“Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God through metaphorical stories which are mundane, extravagant and indirect” (Dictionary of Theology). They are related to ordinary existence, particularly relationships between people.

Stories are told for many reasons. McBride lists the following:

- To establish who we are and where we came from
- To preserve our traditions, to defend our way of seeing things
- To tell lies and hide painful truths
- To pass the time, to entertain, to enlighten
- To expose oppressive behaviour and hypocrisy
- To question cherished myths, to introduce new thinking.

The nature of parables

The parable has a plot, through which the creative tension generated points to the ways of God rather than the ways of the world. There are two ways of being in the world: that of the conventional and that of the kingdom. Listen to the parable to find out what the kingdom is like. It will usually contain larger than life characters or events but they are sufficiently obscure for the “shock of recognition” to emerge only at the end as the startled listener understands that the message is for them. Some theologians have seen Jesus's life as itself an enacted parable.

Many parables are about the kingdom of God, about God's dynamic activity. Defining the kingdom is not straightforward.

Jesus talks of it as both now and not yet. He explains it through many symbols with several layers of meaning.

In general, fiction is used to highlight truth. Telling stories is an effective way of communicating. A statement gives a general truth and focuses on meaning. A story reports a particular event. Notice the contrast at the beginning of John's Gospel, with its statement about the meaning of the Word made flesh, and Luke 2, where the author clearly sets the context for a story: "In those days ..." and introduces characters by name. The story tellers came before the theologians.

All peoples have their sacred stories which tell of their history and identity. We tell stories about who we are. Shared narratives form community. The story then leads to shared beliefs and frameworks. Counter stories emerge from those who see things differently, leading to lines being drawn up as to who is in and who is out.

Jesus's parables encapsulate his values, wisdom and teaching. Parables introduce new values and subvert the status quo. The parable aims at change; it destabilizes and overthrows. They are dangerous, subversive stories. We might ask of Jesus's parables, particularly those which raise more questions, why are they told? Who are we meant to side with? They are often told to expose and subvert destructive behaviour which has passively been accepted as normal. Why should it be accepted? It is only a story.

Parables are challenges to change. They contain conflict and controversy and demand an immediate response. They focus on vulnerable groups and expose oppressive attitudes. They force the hearer to think. We can see them in the wider

context of Jesus's life and teaching: he urges repentance, which contains the idea of turning round and changing.

There is an invitation to see the hearer's own situation in the light of what has been heard. Slaves are likely to have a very different response to landowners, for example. Direct confrontation rarely achieves a result; parables hit their mark by an indirect route. The conflict is not always resolved within the parable, but the hearer is left to make up their own mind. Coded language is often necessary not just as a literary and rhetorical device but to protect the speaker. Jesus says some very challenging things about religious leaders and the wealthy, but often wraps up the criticism in a parable.

The meaning is revealed by stealth as the story unfolds. It needs a crisis, a narrative device to create a situation which needs to be resolved. It will contain contrasts and offer new possibilities, with a question thrown out to the hearer. The language is vivid, as is necessary in oral cultures – the story has to be memorable in order for its meaning to stick in the mind. The parable will be pictorial with memorable and recognizable characters drawn from ordinary life. The ordinary is important and is the place for transformation.

Very few parables appear in Mark's Gospel, the majority being in Matthew and Luke. Some are in both, but there are more unique parables in Luke

FULL LIST

The sower (Mark 4:3-8; Matt 13:3-8; Luke 8:5-8)

The patient farmer (Mark 4:26-29)

The mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32; Matt 13:31f; Luke 13:18f)

The wicked tenants (Mark 12:1-11; Matt 21:33-44; Luke 20:9-18)

The fig tree (Mark 13:28f; Matt 24:32f; Luke 21:29-31)

The doorkeeper (Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:35-38)

Going before the judge (Matt 5:25f; Luke 12:58f)

Two houses (Matt 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49)

The children in the market place (Matt 11:16-19; Luke 7:31-35)

The return of the unclean spirit (Matt 12:43-45; Luke 11:24-26)

The wheat and the tares (Matt 13:24-30)

The leaven (Matt 13:33; Luke 13:20)

The treasure (Matt 13:44)

The pearl (Matt 13:45)

The dragnet (Matt 13:4f)

The lost sheep (Matt 18:12-14; Luke 15:4-7)

The unmerciful servant (Matt 18:23-35)

The labourers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1-16)

The two sons (Matt 21:28-32)

The great supper (Matt 22:1-10; Luke 14:16-24)

The guest without a wedding garment (Matt 22:11-14)

The burglar (Matt 24:43f; Luke 12:39f)

The servant entrusted with supervision (Matt 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-46)

The wise and foolish bridesmaids (Matt 25:1-13)

The talents (Matt 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27)

The last judgement (Matt 25:31-46)

The two debtors (Luke 7:41-43)

The good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

The friend at midnight (Luke 11:5-8)

The rich fool (Luke 12:16-21)

The barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9)

The closed door (Luke 13:24-30)

The tower-builder and the king who would go to war (Luke 14:28-32)

The lost coin (Luke 15:8-10)

The lost son (Luke 15:11-32)

The unjust steward ((Luke 16:1-8)

The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

The servant's reward (Luke 17:7-10)

The unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8)

The Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14)

A modern parable



There was a group of refugees and asylum seekers. All of them had been tortured and many were also suffering through the asylum system in this country. Music Action International and Freedom from Torture combined to bring them together in a group called Stone Flowers. Despite having very little, and sometimes being in desperate circumstances, they made wonderful music. They came together and sang. They wrote their own songs, and one of these contains a parable. It speaks for itself.

Allo, allo, allo monsieur Livingstone

Allo, allo, que faisiez vous au Congo

Allo, allo, allo monsieur Livingstone

Allo, allo, que faisiez vous là-bas?

Vous croyez, nous avoir découverts

mais nous étions déjà là

There were two friends,

One had a garden for the summer

The other had a house for wintertime

In summer the first friend was willing to share his garden

But when winter came, the second friend refused to let the
first into the warmth of his home.

My friend, how come you can enter my house without meeting
any criteria

But when it is my turn to enter your house, I I have to meet
your criteria

My friend, there is a lack of reciprocity

You can enter Africa without a visa

But we Africans are not allowed to enter your country
without a visa

Hello, Mr Livingstone

Hello, what were you doing in Congo?

Hello, what were you doing there?

You thought you discovered us

But we were already there.

*Lyrics by refugee torture survivor music collective Stone Flowers.
Supported by Freedom from Torture and www.musicaction.org*



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Publications: 1999



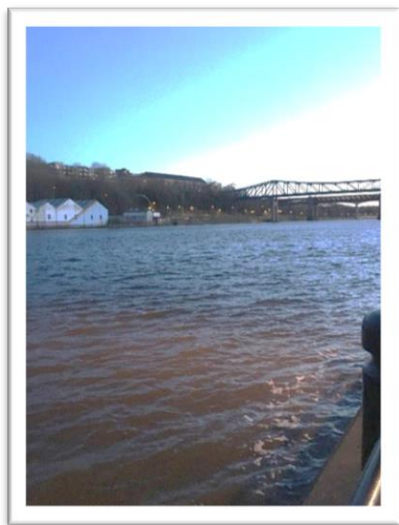
Questions When Encountering Parables

- Read the parable out loud at least once, perhaps using different translations.
- Notice your own reactions to it: how you feel, what questions arise
- Share your responses
- Who do you identify with? Who do you think you are meant to side with?
- What challenge does the parable lay down?
- Why did Jesus tell this parable?
- What truth is it communicating? What does it mean?
- What modern parallels come to mind?

A movement for change – Mike Harrison

A movement for change is like a stream which at first runs quietly through a valley. Soon it begins to build up volume and force, to challenge the obstacles in its way and to carve out a path. Those who live further down the valley notice the power of the stream and, not wanting it to change their settled way of life, try to control the stream by building a dam to control the flow of the water and channelling it into a canal below the dam.

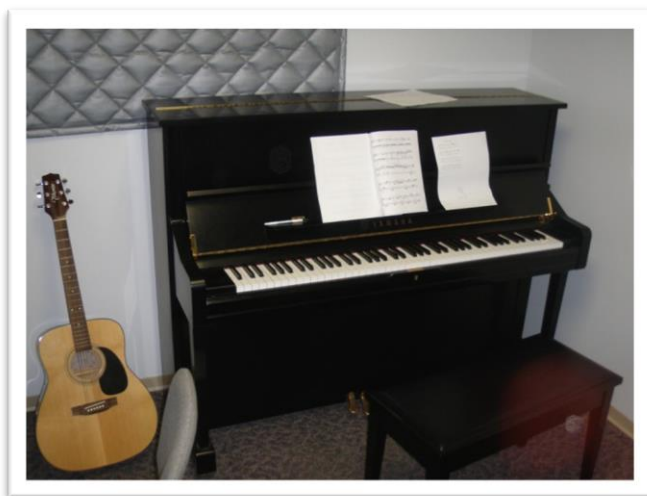
The stream presses hard against the dam which appears to be an absolute blockage. But the force of the stream continues to press against the dam and its irresistible force eventually breaks the dam and the change wrought in the lower part of the valley is greater than if the dam had not been built. Many who live there are swept away and those who remain wish that they had worked with the stream from the outset.



The boy – Margaret Joachim

The boy was where he shouldn't be again; in a corner of the school hall at lunch time, tinkering with the piano. He was the stereotypical thirteen-year-old black kid. Father deserted the family to go back to the Sudan, mother struggling to bring up three children, boy going rapidly off the rails, rude to everyone, disruptive in class and likely to end up in a gang soon (always assuming he wasn't in one already). The duty teacher spotted him and sighed. Sending him back outside would probably generate a flood of abuse. But possibly.....

'Can you play that?' the teacher asked. 'No', was the sullen, wary response. 'Would you like to?' The boy looked suspicious. 'Go back outside now, but come and see me at four o'clock and we can talk about it.' The boy slunk off, but at four he was waiting outside the staffroom.



Two terms later he was transformed. His piano teacher had allowed him to skip straight to Grade 3. The school had given

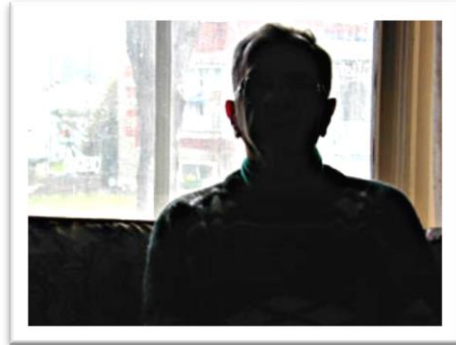
him a music scholarship, he'd started saxophone lessons and was considering the violin or the guitar. He'd joined the choir and the gospel choir, and he was always humming – while this annoyed some of his teachers, it was a great improvement on his previous behaviour, especially as, on the whole, his work was neat and tidy and handed in on time. He hadn't been in special supervision for months.

His mother told us about this over coffee after church one Sunday morning. 'You wouldn't believe the difference it's made to all of us', she said. 'At home now, it's like heaven.'

The Whistleblower

'Dare I, dare I' thought the palace servant to himself. He had just inadvertently overheard a conversation between the butler and the under-gardener. He hadn't meant to listen, but there'd been a lot of shouting and swearing and yes, crying in the end. Albert knew from the palace grapevine that the butler had just been let off for diddling the housekeeping accounts – a lot of money involved in managing the palace effectively. All the staff had been relieved, they liked their boss and didn't relish a change of immediate boss. They'd be out of their comfort zones. BUT when Albert had reluctantly overheard the conversation between butler and under-gardener, it had put a very different light onto things. How dare the boss threaten the under-gardener for stealing a few bits from the palace allotment, when he had been forgiven so much. It just wasn't right.

Albert tossed and turned all night, and in the morning his decision was made. He requested an audience with the queen and reported the unfortunate scene he had unwittingly



overheard. He was scared she would accuse him of wanting to get the butler into trouble or just making trouble generally or anything... He was pleasantly surprised. No blame attached to him, but he could tell the queen was absolutely furious. He was glad not to be in the butler's shoes when her majesty confronted him, but pleased with himself that he had had the courage of his convictions and done the right thing.

The Entrepreneur and the Managers

An entrepreneur (not French obviously, as they have no word for 'entrepreneur' – according to a past US President) called together 3 of his senior managers and gave them charge of a third each of his restaurant business. He told them they should run their part as they liked for a year, then report back to him on how they had done.

The first decided he would cut costs by reducing his staff costs. He cut pay to the National Minimum Wage, insisted that employees buy their own uniforms and safety shoes, and put as many as possible on zero hours contracts to cut the amount of Employer's National Insurance. The second decided to cut costs in the supply chain. He switched food supplier contracts to cheaper suppliers, and alcohol contracts to cash and carries. The third decided he would increase profits by making the customer experience better and increasing sales. He spent money on improving the restaurants, increased pay to retain staff, and switched to higher quality suppliers.



At the end of the year, the entrepreneur called the 3 managers together and asked them to report on their success. The first proudly announced that he had increased profits by 25%. The entrepreneur stroked his chin, and agreed. 'But', he said, 'your part of the business is being penalised for not paying the National Minimum Wage – you forgot that forcing staff to buy their own uniforms counts as a reduction in pay. This is in the papers – who say our name is mud!' He gave the manager notice there and then.

The second manager also announced that he had increased profits, by 20%, by cutting supply costs. Again, the entrepreneur agreed that indeed he had. 'But', he observed, 'we are being prosecuted for using meat unfit for human consumption, and fined for buying wine on which excise duty has not been paid'. He too was given notice there and then.

The third, quaking, confessed that he had only enhanced profits by 5%. The entrepreneur concurred. 'But', he added, 'you have greatly increased customer numbers, retained high quality staff by making your restaurants pleasant places to work, and they have received glowing reviews in the press. Because you have used this opportunity wisely, and care for our people, suppliers and customers, you will succeed me as CEO of the company when I retire next year.'

MSE and Consulting - Phil Aspinall

Our theme for the July 2017 Annual Conference is "MSE and New Ways of Working". One of the new forms we shall consider is that of the consultant, often self-employed.

I wrote the article which follows for the Journal back in 2003 – since then I have now spent a further 14 years working in consultancy, and so am looking forward to the conference as an opportunity to reflect further and in greater depth. But hope this is a useful starter for the debate and helps identify some of the issues we face.

Having spent nearly four years now working as a consultant, and part of that time self-employed, I thought I ought to respond to the request in Journal 86, in the hope that I might stimulate further debate.

The key reason why it is important that there are MSEs working as consultants, is that this is what increasingly a large number of people find themselves doing these days. Previously large employers are shedding more and more people, and then finding that they have to resource their activities by using external consultants (many of whom may be the people they have just made redundant !) This is certainly true of my own area in the chemicals, processing and oil & gas industries.

It is part of the calling of an MSE to reflect upon their work situation – its problems and its joys, its tensions and its opportunities – and to articulate the realities of the presence of God (and all the other good things embodied in the CHRISM mission statement). So I am grateful that the question raised about consulting gives us the opportunity to do this, and may enable us to explore some ways to give sense and meaning to others who share a vocation to consultancy.

Consulting is perhaps rather too narrow a focus. So let us not forget that there is, in parallel, a growth in the use of agency staff in many aspects of life and business. These temporary workers may not know where or whether they will be in paid work from one week to the next and are often receiving the lowest possible pay and conditions. There may be parallels to be drawn here – professionals may find there way into consultancy; manual workers are transformed into agency staff. (See my article on the German meeting for an example of agency work).

So how are we to make sense of our role ? An important thing that many MSEs have stressed is their exploration of God in their work (not work place) – to focus on our ministry in our secular employment. This exploration of what it means to

minister is also made easier if we are not wedded to the idea that the role of the MSE is somehow to transpose the image of the parish priest into the workplace (to “be the Vicar”). I do think that this is a very difficult model to sustain, as it implies a status in the workplace that we do not have – we are there, after all, to do our job like everyone else.

As a consultant (and particularly if self-employed) we are detached from any permanent community. The same is true of agency staff, who may never meet a fellow employee of their own firm. And yet, it is a significant feature of much consultancy work that we are for long or short periods, and often at short notice, plunged into a community, or have to create one for a particular job. We arrive at a client’s site and immediately have to work out the groups dynamics, personalities, political factions – no “settling into the parish for 6 months before I make any changes” here. It is, I think a clear ministerial function to be able to achieve this. It is also true that this is not ministry to a captive group of people – they have choices !

What models might we draw from this ? The tired old cliché “I’m a consultant, I’m here to help” may in fact point us to the key – that a consultant is there as a servant. We could clearly spell out a diaconal role in a spirit of service, in the help and support we give to others. It may undoubtedly be that the work we actually do speaks of the new life of the Kingdom of God – the “conversions” that I see in my work on the safety of chemical processes often bears this out. And great sensitivity is often required, for example, following an incident when working with the victim’s colleagues. But there is also a priestly role in this work of consultancy – interpreting the reality of others, and acting as a mediator; recognising, and, indeed, celebrating the sacraments of grace at work in the changes which see taking place. This may sound far removed

from trying to replicate pastoral parish ministry in the workplace. We also have the liberating perspective of being priest without having to be the leader.

As I write this, I look around for models which might inform this pattern of our itinerant existence – dropping into communities and then moving on, often sharing very deeply with the client's workplace issues. What comes to mind is the image of the Friar. May be this is something to expand on further!

But the bottom line is that for an MSE to work as a consultant reflects the reality of many peoples' lives in the working world today. It gives us an opportunity to reflect upon it, and opens up yet more models of what it means to minister in work.

(PA Sept 2003)



Book Review

Theology of Work – Bible Commentary – Volume 4 – Matthew through Acts

*The Theology of Work Project. Published by Hendrickson 2014
ISBN 978-1-61970-526-5 Price £17.99*

The apparently distinguished reviewers quoted on the back of this volume set the reader's expectations high: 'An invaluable resource for pastors and business professionals alike'. 'Did you ever wonder what your work has to do with your faith? The short answer is everything, and now you can read all about it in this Theology of Work Bible Commentary'. 'The authors let the distinctive voices and broader themes of Scripture illuminate our working life.'

The series has involved five years of research by 140 contributors from sixteen countries. It states that it encompasses not only paid work in its definition of work, but also volunteering, and self-employment. This volume, the fourth in a series of five, addresses the four gospels and Acts. It is divided into five sections, one for each gospel plus one for Acts. It says that the series seeks to answer the question 'Does the work we do matter to God?'

The authors introduce their book with a claim which sets the scene for the rest of the book: 'It turns out that every book of the Bible gives practical, relevant guidance that can help us do our jobs better, improve our relationships at work, support ourselves, serve others more effectively, and find meaning and value in our work'.

Given the theme of this journal, I decided to focus on some of the authors' discussion around parables. In the section on Matthew's gospel, they address the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt 20.1-16) pp32-34. Does it suggest that workers should not compare their pay to others? But, the authors say, 'this interpretation of the parable can be used to justify unfair or abusive labour practices' – for example based on race, gender or immigration status. If people are paid the same regardless of how long they have worked the authors suggest that this might be an incentive for laziness. Equally, they suggest, making everyone's pay transparent might generate industrial unrest. 'Pay for non-performance, to take the parable literally, doesn't seem to be a recipe for business success. Can it really be that Jesus advocates this pay practice?' They then question whether the parable is really about work, or, rather, about God's generosity.

Once God's generosity is identified as the primary focus of the parable, they look at what that might mean for people in work: 'If another worker receives an unexpected benefit, wouldn't it be graceful to rejoice, rather than grumble?' But they go on to examine the social context of 1st century Palestine, in which a denarius was the standard daily wage – somewhat similar perhaps to the dollar a day paid even now to agricultural labourers in many parts of the world – an amount considered sufficient for them to support their families. Roman taxation (with which of course Matthew was deeply implicated) was leading to many smallholders being forced off their land. Hence large groups of unemployed men would gather each morning to seek work. The authors state: 'If the vineyard owner

represents God, this is a powerful message that in God's kingdom, displaced and unemployed workers find work that meets their needs and the needs of those who depend on them.' However, this seems to assume that this is only true of these groups, and of work, not of people and their situations in general. Furthermore, the authors go on to say: 'this does not necessarily mean that earthly employers have a responsibility for meeting all the needs of their employees'. This may be reassuring to those who are employers in a climate of austerity, job cuts and zero hours contracts, but if employers are to love their neighbours as themselves, surely they must have a responsibility for doing their utmost to meet the needs of each of their employees as human beings, breadwinners etc. More positively the authors conclude their discussion as follows: 'The parable is also a challenge to those who have a hand in shaping the structures of work in today's society. Can Christians do anything to advance this aspect of God's kingdom right now?'

Later in the book, in the section on Luke, the authors tackle the 'parable of the shrewd manager' (pp85-6). They begin from an analysis that states 'like the dishonest manager, we cannot take anything with us when we depart this life.' They suggest that the parable encourages the building of relationships and that these help us to cope in times of trouble 'in this life, and .. will also endure into eternal life'. They go on to propose that the parable suggests that when we build good relationships with other people, we will also secure good relationships with God. However, they focus on money and resources in taking this further: 'If God can trust you to be generous with a little

bit of money and use it to build good relationships, he will be able to trust you with greater resources’.

The section devoted to the Acts of the Apostles seeks to address the activity of the men and women who were the early church, viewing the motivation for their work as service. They suggest that Acts offers a model for the way in which we might approach work as witness.

This volume – like its authors – is firmly located in the US work context. It draws on a number of authors, but is sometimes quite literal in its thinking about work: for example discussing healthcare work only in the context of healing miracles in Luke (pp79-80), and listing a range of hospital employees including ‘claims processors’ – it seems to me that wholeness might come about through the ways in which many other workers undertake their work – and healthcare workers might be engaged in power transactions, teaching and learning and many other things which the Gospels might illuminate.

Much of the content of this volume offers helpful insights, though I think the claim for ‘practical, relevant guidance that can help us do our jobs better, improve our relationships at work, support ourselves, serve others more effectively, and find meaning and value in our work’ is a little overambitious. Overall it will be a useful addition to the bookshelves of those who are interested in exploring how the gospels especially might relate to their work, or to clergy looking for a stimulating starting point to consider work and faith.

PHP

Events and Updates

Coming soon!

Modern Working; Modern Ministry

CHRISM Conference & AGM July 14th – 16th 2017



Westminster College, Cambridge

Westminster College – a URC resource centre for learning – is the venue for the 2017 conference.

We will explore the changes that are taking place in the world of work and our response through ministry to the needs of people working within this changing world.

Our keynote speaker will be **Richard Higginson** – Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

Other speakers will be drawn from the worlds of:

**Self-employment - Consultancy - Portfolio Working -
Part-time - Job share - Retirement!
and traditional big business - office and factory work**

If the above is familiar to you and you need refreshment in your ministry then join us for a compelling weekend. As always at CHRISM, we will be making visits to local business to explore what God is doing at work right there! How do people minister here in these situations? How can we join him in his creativity?

Cost, from dinner on Friday evening to lunch on Sunday,
inclusive:

£190 (members); **£195** (non-members). Please ask CHRISM
for a receipt, if required

*To book, please return the enclosed slip by 9th June 2017 to
Sue Cossey, 1 Bye Mead, Emerson's Green, Bristol, BS16 7DL*

Coming later!

**From the Church of England's Shared Ministry
Network
NATIONAL SHARED MINISTRY NETWORK
CONFERENCE 2017**

**Shared Ministry Network -encouraging collaboration
and mission**

Bread, Fish and Expectancy: Growing Disciples, Sharing Ministry

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Alfreton,
Derbyshire DE55 1AU

The conference will be framed around the story of the feeding of the 5,000 in Mark chapter 6, which will enable us to engage with themes around growing disciples, sharing ministry and encountering God.

Day 1: Growing Disciples

- Sharing stories
- Listening to God and one another Formation through community
- Roger Walton

Day 2: Sharing Ministry

- Expanding expectations
- Formation through mission
- Workshops
- Gordon Dey: Jesus Shaped People

Day 3: Encountering God

- Open to God's grace
- Turning ideas into action

From midday on Thursday 19th October to lunchtime on Saturday 21st October 2017

The fee for the Conference is £170 if paid before 30th June and £190 afterwards. *

Attendees from Dioceses that have paid their annual subscription to the Shared Ministry Network receive an additional £10 discount.

* This is for an ensuite room: if you would prefer a non-ensuite room at a lower cost, please contact us.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND OR EMAIL IT TO THE CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATOR – details below

Please accept my booking for this conference.

TITLENAME.....

DIOCESE

ADDRESS
.....
.....

POST CODE TELEPHONE

E- MAIL.....

ROLE
.....
.....

- **I am / am not happy for this information to be included in the Shared Ministry Network Directory.**
- **Please tell us if you have a particular issue related to the Conference subject you would like to be**

covered or contribute in a workshop at the Conference (we do not guarantee to do this, but it helps us to know what delegates are particularly interested in).

❖ **Special dietary requirements**

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.....

PLEASE TICK ONE

☐ I have enclosed a cheque made payable to Lichfield DBF

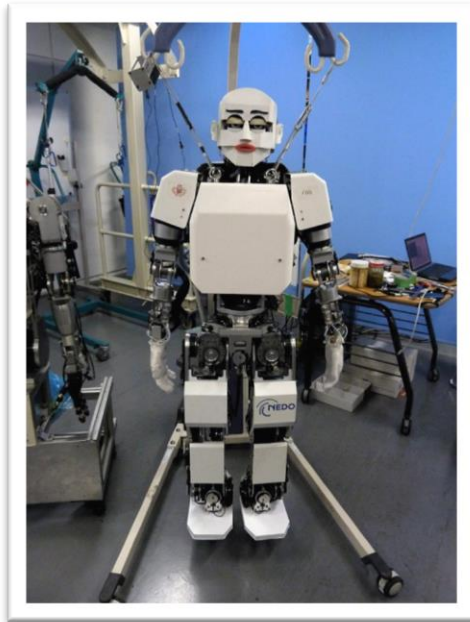
☐ My fee will be paid directly by BACS to: Lloyds TSB
Lichfield 30-95-04 Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance
Account 00030004 referencing the payment: SMN 2017
Conference

☐ I will be a day delegate on 19th 20th 21st (please
contact us for details, the cost will depend on meals required)

Please return, post or email the completed form to the
Administrator who will be pleased to answer any queries
about the Conference:

**Revd Dr Colin McCarty, 1 Seymour Close,
Newmarket, CB8 8EL email:**
test_and_eval@btinternet.com **Tel: 01638 669400**

And finally ...



Robot monologue

I am the very model of a modern robot clerical
I'll do you a nice wedding or a christening or a funeral
I know the names of Popes of old and Bishops thin and fat-ual
I'm high or low, I'm there for you in any form of ritual.
I understand church dogma and all concepts theological;
All the twists that clerics find when faced with the
phenomenal.

I cope well with those bright young things mistaken by the
fatuous

And know just what to say to those who're seeking the
miraculous.

My circuit board is programmed to eliminate iniquity.

My purity, I often find, is met with incredulity.

In short I'll do a wedding or a christening or a funeral

I am the very model of a modern robot clerical.

So many stories yet are told of robots mythological

But giants, dragons and the like are really allegorical.

I like to play my role with flair, I'm never sanctimonious

I take great care in making sure the whole is quite harmonious.

My early training taught me well to make it all look casual

Though while I'm in my present post I look best in a chasuble.

I'd follow markers on the floor to show I was reliable

But now I'm going with the flow and like to think I'm pliable.

I became a cleric robot only after hesitation

I expected repetition and I found some deviation -

So I can do a wedding or a christening or a funeral.

I am the very model of a modern robot clerical.

I think because my training was primarily industrious

I find it aggravating when my life seems parsimonious

I download all the forms I need as they are so conventional.

(I'm working on a document that prints as three dimensional)

We robots are so useful, never ill, nor needing surgery.

We need not heat nor bed nor food and don't demand a salary.

We do not really bend as such – I hardly ever speak of it

But if you're close when we kneel down then you might find we squeak a bit.

I'm a little tired now on perceptions philosophical

But if you plug me in again, I'll once more be sensational.

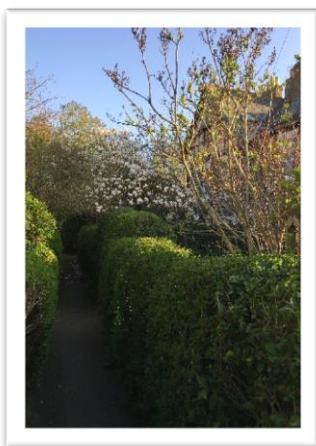
You see, I'll do a wedding or a christening or a funeral.

I am the very model of a modern robot clerical.

Acknowledgements are due to WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan

Dorrie Johnson

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CHRISM is on **Facebook**, 'Ministers at Work':
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/129656640430436/>
And **LinkedIn**, at:
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=3756477>

CHRISM is the National Association of CHRistians In Secular Ministry

for **all** Christians who see their secular employment as their primary Christian ministry, and for those who support that vision.

To further this aim, CHRISM publishes a quarterly Journal, releases occasional papers and organises an annual retreat.

Conferences are held regularly and worldwide links pursued.

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

If you would like confidential support as an MSE, please contact any member of the Committee

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

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