Anglican Monasticism:
A Talk for Cumbria Theological Society 27th June 2013

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Introduction

The paper is in three main parts:

> Current situation for Anglican Monasticism
> Consideration of how this situation was reached
> Consideration specifically of the Community of the Resurrection

with a attempt at a conclusion relating Anglican Monasticism to the Church of England

If there is time I may introduce some thoughts about New Monasticism based on an article about living in Community that I wrote when living and working at Rydal Hall

An Entertaining Anomaly

In starting to look at monasticism for this talk I was struck by the perversity of the term. The word 'monk, comes from the Greek 'monos' meaning one or alone, yet when these religious are considered together they are described as living in a monastery! The term coenobitic is much more pertinent when describing religious living together, being derived from the Greek 'koine' and 'bios' which means 'together' and 'life'. There is, as in many aspects of religious life in the 21st century, an implicit irony which often escapes us together with clues about the origins of the institutions with which we feel ourselves familiar.

Anglican Monasticism: All Kept Secret

Nicholas Stebbing in his book on Anglican Monasticism refers to it as a well kept secret (a quotation form George Carey who at the time of the publication of the book was Archbishop of Canterbury).

Anglican Religious Life Today

Members of traditional religious communities usually take the vows of poverty, obedience and chastity – which implies a celibate life. The *Anglican Religious Life* year book [Anglican Religious Life: A Year Book of the Religious orders and Communities in the Anglican Communion, and tertiaries, oblates associates and companions, 2012-13 Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2011] lists 88 traditional celibate religious orders and communities, of which 29 have bases in the UK. Many Orders have more than one community house in each country where they are present. Of the Anglican community houses 31% are in the UK, 12% in the USA, 12% in the Solomon Isles 7% in Papua New Guinea and 5% in Australia accounting for nearly 2/3rds of the listed houses. [Anglican Religious Life: A Year Book of the Religious orders and Communities in the Anglican Communion, and tertiaries, oblates associates and companions, 2012-13 Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2011 p 193 -6] As might well be expected the majority of the Anglican Religious Communities exist in countries that are part of the British Commonwealth or were at one time part of the British Empire.

There are an estimated 2.082 celibate Religious in the Anglican Communion. (949 men and 1.133 women).

The approximate regional totals *are:* Africa: 338 (Men *43*. Women 295); Asia: 71 (Men 14, men **57); Australasia** & Pacific: 898 (Men 682. Women 216); Europe: 507 (Men 123. Women 384); North & South America & Caribbean: 268 (Men 87, Women 181) [Anglican Religious Life: A Year Book of the Religious orders and Communities in the Anglican Communion, and tertiaries, oblates associates and companions, 2012-13 Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2011 p 20]

Additionally there are other forms of religious community within the Anglican Communion.

The year book lists one dispersed celibate religious order Oratory of the Good Shepherd which has bases in Australia, Canada, South Africa, UK and USA. From its foundation it has lived as a dispersed communities whose members do not live a common life in community, but come together for chapter meetings and other occasions each year. Like traditional communities, members take vows that include celibacy. [Anglican Religious Life 2011:147]

Acknowledged communities, of which the year book lists 12 communities, 4 having bases in the UK. These communities are 'acknowledged' by the Church as living out a valid Christian witness, but whose members do not all take traditional Religious vows. Some communities expect their members to remain single whilst others may include members who are married: some have both members who remain celibate and those who do not. The specific vows they take therefore will vary according to their own particular Rule. However, communities in this section have an Episcopal Visitor or Protector. Some are linked to traditional communities listed, others were founded without ties to traditional celibate orders. This section also includes some ashrams in dioceses in Asia.
[Anglican Religious Life 2011:151]

Five other communities are listed in the year book, none of which have bases in the UK. These are either monastic or acknowledged communities, that whilst not Anglican in ecclesiastical allegiance are in communion with Anglicans and includes a community in the USA, inter-denominational in its

origins, which includes Lutherans as well as Anglicans, as the ELCA is now in full communion with the Episcopal Church[Anglican Religious Life 2011:171]

The Birth of and Course of Christian Monasticism

Of course coenobitic monasticism was not new to Christianity, being evidenced in the first centuries both before and in the Common Era in Judaism *inter alia* in the Essene community. However, early (1st century Christianity) does not have any evidence of monasticism, and it is only by the third century that a developed pattern of asceticism emerges, with individuals retreating into the desert (particularly the Egyptian Desert Fathers) to be able to live out a life of prayer and contemplation.

As the number of these men (and they were predominantly men) increased and they became better known in the Christian community two things happened:
one was that they tended to live their solitary lives in contiguity to one another for protection and support, meeting occasionally for prayer;
the other was that people would come out to them for spiritual counsel and advice.
So it was that the monasticism with which we are now familiar was born, and these 'outbreaks' of colonies of solitaries developed by the tenth century into strong, and often wealthy communities.
Within these communities a way of life emerged that was defined by the rule of the order – and the rule usually included vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The aim of the rule was to enable those who entered to grow into Christian charity and so the vows were taken for a life-long growth towards God.

Of course this form of religious life was not unique to Christianity, and there is another talk which could be given about Hindu and Buddhist monasticism – which predated Christian monasticism by many centuries, and whose influence on the development of Christian monasticism is worthy of study.

Of course the split between the Easter and Western churches in the eleventh century led to a divergence between the ways that monasticism developed, and from our stance in the UK in the 21st century it is the Western branch – which became Roman Catholicism – that has the predominant influence.
By way of an excursus it is interesting to note that in our present day the contrast between Eastern and Western monasticism seems insignificant, partly because of the distance society has moved from being centred around religious institutions and partly because of the impetus of ecumenical cooperation (partly no doubt in reaction to the change in cultural morés) that has led to an increasing congruence between the modes of religious life.

In the Western church there is some evidence that there was tendency for the monastic communities to become comfortable and privileged ways of life, with considerable influence with the powerful figures of emperor and pope. Various attempts were made to reform the monastic orders, and the clash between the Benedictine, Domincan and Franciscan approaches to the ordering of religious life has given rise to much literature (including some superb fiction such as Umberto Ecco's *The Name of the Rose*).

Developments in England

The monastic way of organising religious life ran in parallel with the diocesan and parish system, derived from the Roman church and adopted in England since the Synod of Whitby in 664, which ensured that a particular parish priest had specific pastoral responsibility for every resident in England. Parish priests were responsible, under their diocesan bishops, to God, and there was a clear hierarchy. However, as well as running in parallel, there was also an overlap between the systems of serving religion to the population in that the monasteries had a good resource of ordained and educated clergy who could serve in parishes – which also enabled the monasteries to receive the glebe income and stipends relating to the parishes that were served. Often monasteries were in a position to purchase the patronage from impoverished Lords of the Manor.

Economically Benedictine monasticism can be seen to have had great advantages in its time – accounting for the accumulation of much of its wealth. The discipline of Work, Study and Prayer gives the key. The fact that monks were required to work, but did not receive pay gave them a competitive advantage over other estates, thus increasing the surplus that they were likely to make on the sale of any produce over and above the community's requirements. The obligation to study provided a centre of literacy whereby the monasteries could offer both education and a library for others in the nation. Rich members of the gentry might wish to acquire copies of books (especially the bible and devotional manuals) for their libraries, and the monasteries were able to provide these copies for a price. Many people at that time – especially the rich – would have been living in fear of eternal damnation. The idea of asking a monastic community to continue to offer masses for ones soul more or less indefinitely would have been very attractive, and the monasteries received gifts of land and money to ensure that they continued to pray for their benefactors. Additionally, with their links to monasteries of the same order on the continent, the monasteries were the ulti-nationals of their day, able to arrange exports and imports as well as the transfer of wealth between nations.

While these observations might seem to be rather peripheral to my subject of Anglican Monasticism, I think that they provide a necessary background to the understanding of our present situation in regard to Anglican religious orders. It was the wealth and power of the monasteries, and particularly their allegiance to the bishop of Rome, that was at the core of Henry VIII's decision to dissolve the monasteries from 1535 onward.

King Henry VIII split from the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church in 1534 ostensibly over his wish to divorce Catherine of Aragon, his first wife with whom he had failed to have a male heir, and to marry Anne Boleyn whom he hoped would provide a male heir to the throne of England. In 1537 and 1538 he dissolved the monasteries, confiscating their wealth which was then available to him to finance the state and its necessary military engagements. The dissolution of the monasteries effectively put an end to coenobitic religious life in England for three hundred years, and the fear that was engendered in the population as a result of the notion that Roman Catholicism necessarily entailed loyalty to a foreign power, and therefore treason in England, should not be underestimated.

In the 17th century the community of Little Gidding was founded on Anglican principles by Nicholas Farrer, adopting the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer as their daily diet of prayer and meditation. However, the community was raided from time to time, being suspected of aligning itself with the Roman Catholic church, and was dissolved on the death of Nicholas Ferrar in 1657

After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1537 and following, and prior to the Industrial Revolution when the bulk of the population lived in a rural agrarian setting, many parish priests were appointed by patrons who had again been granted the status of Lords of the Manor or local land owner, dignitaries or employer as a result of some service offered to the crown. The parish priests were themselves accorded high status within their parishes, and frequently fulfilled the role of local magistrate. Hence there tended to be a congruence between the church and state hierarchies. The migration of population to urban centres consequent upon the Industrial Revolution eventually led to the building of churches in towns and cities and the creation of new parishes, but these took their place within the established hierarchical system.

The 19th Century Rebirth of Monasticism in the Church of England

Some societies were founded to minister to the poor and dispossessed in the 18th and 19th Centuries (who had often found themselves marginalised as a result of the industrial Revolution), but these generally took their place within the established order. The founding of women's monastic communities to undertake this work of providing relief and care in the mid 19th Century did not need greatly to challenge the order, since they were reliant upon clergy to provide spiritual support to their cause and their members, and this could be drawn from the parochial clergy.

In the early 1830s a group of Oxford academic clergy of the Church of England, concerned by the development of liberal tendencies in theology and

politics, issued a series of tracts calling for a return to the religious and social values of earlier ages. These clergy were generally of high church persuasion, and issued a series of pamphlets or tracts outlining their argument as well as preaching to the same effect. The movement became known as the Tractarian movement (and later as the Oxford Movement). Among the members were John Henry Newman (who subsequently converted to Roman Catholicism and was made a Cardinal) and Edward Bouverie Pusey.

The Tractarian movement gave impetus to the development within the Church of England of pressure to enhance the quality of training provided for those entering ordained ministry and an emphasis on the proclamation of the Christian gospel especially to the poor in the growing urban centres with a growth of the use of aesthetic enhancements to worship – high church practice including the use of candles, vestments, incense and the use of bells. These were practise that, towards the end of the 19th century gave rise to many trials of clergy in church courts on charges of ritualism. The fear of treachery through Roman religious practice instituted in the Tudor period had abated little in the following four hundred years (as may be evidenced in the continued use of the following of the 39 Articles which we are assured may be said with good conscience by all members of the Church of England!):

XIX OF THE CHURCH
> The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of god is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.
> As the church of *Jerusalem, Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, have erred; so also the church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.

XXII OF PURGATORY
> The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping, and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of god.

XXIV OF SPEAKING IN THE CONGREGATION IN SUCH A TONGUE AS THE PEOPLE UNDERSTANDETH
> It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of god, and the custom of the primitive church, to have publick prayer in the church, or to minister the sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people.

XXVIII OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
> The supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.
> Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of bread and wine) in the supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.
> The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper is faith.
> The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

XXX OF THE ONE OBLATION OF CHRIST FINISHED UPON THE CROSS
> The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

XXXII OF THE MARRIAGE OF PRIESTS
> bishops, priests, and deacons, are not commanded by god's law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

 The Tractarian movement of the 1830s, beginning in Oxford, led to a resurgence of catholic emphasis in the Church of England, and it is in that context that Anglican monasticism began to flourish. As a result many of the newly forming religious communities adopted forms of liturgy and rules of life which had survived in the monasteries of the Roman Catholic Church. The offices of lauds, terce, sext, none and vespers were used, adapting the roman Catholic liturgical texts to suit the new order, holy communion was celebrated daily and by every monastic priest, the term 'mass' being adopted, sacramental confession was reintroduced as a norm, and in the community churches candles, bells, incense began to be in evidence. The brethren referred to one another using the style father. The monks used these influences from history and the Roman Catholic tradition in order to confirm to themselves that that they were a continuing part of the catholic Christian church – using the term to mean universal rather than in a denominational sense.

CONTESTED LOYALTIES AND LIMINALITY OF ANGLICAN MONASTICISM

When, however, male priests chose to enter into community together to undertake work of a social or evangelistic nature, their obedience was pledged to God through their Abbot, Prior or Superior, and they would embark upon their enterprise without consultation with the parochial clergy of the geographical area, and would not necessarily have (or require) the support of the Bishop of the Diocese in which they resided or ministered. The existence of male priestly monastic communities, which were often able to offer parochial ministry and mission in poor areas of the newly growing urban centres of population, therefore sat outside the ordinary jurisdiction of the church hierarchy, and to some extent also of the State hierarchy. In the nineteenth Century it was not unknown for monastic communities to move their base from one place to another or to open new Houses (daughter communities or mission outposts) in a distant place – thus suggesting an independence similar to colonial evangelistic efforts in the British Empire or church planting today.

Awareness of this new style of Anglican worship and life became known among the population where the communities provided pastoral and social care, and some monasteries would admit lay members of the public to their liturgy. Thus in the nineteenth century, not only were the newly formed Anglican monasteries somewhat detached from the hierarchical structure of accountability of the Church of England, they were also seen as promoting an image of Christianity that had Roman Catholic appurtenances yet was allegedly Anglican. For the monastic communities, this positioning on the 'high church' wing of the Church of England marked their marginality liturgically and spiritually, and led to suspicion that their members were more loyal to the Pope than to their Bishop, Archbishop(s) and Monarch (who since the reign of Henry VIII had been accorded the position of Supreme Governor of the Church of England).

The difficulty presented to the marginal position of the monks in relation to the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church is well illustrated in the responses of the Anglican monastic communities to the declarations of the Second Vatican Council. The proposals from the Council for simplifying the offices, no longer requiring every priest to say mass every day and requiring mass to be said in the vernacular rather than Latin, led to changes for Roman Catholic religious communities. The Anglican communities, who had modelled their life and liturgy on the traditional Roman Catholic practice had to determine whether to hold to their pre 1963 practice and become more

distant from their Roman Catholic counterparts (risking a feeling of breaking the catholicity of communion) or to adopt the changes proposed by the Council (risking being labelled as being more in communion with Rome than with the Church of England). Furthermore if changes were to be made the Anglican Religious communities had to decide whether to follow the changes taking place within the Roman Catholic orders or whether to change by adopting liturgies from the Church of England. While within the Roman Catholic communities this change was very rapid, new practices being required by those in authority to take place almost immediately, the process of change took many years for the Anglican Religious communities to accomplish. Similar tensions are observable within Anglican monasteries today over the ordination of women to the diaconate, priesthood and episcopate (which the Church of England has accepted), while the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church (which also accords with the teaching of the Orthodox Church) has ruled that such changes are not and cannot be compatible with the Christian faith. There is the potential for a similar tension in regard to the issue in 2012 by the Roman Catholic Church in England of a new missal to replace the English missal that had been adopted by many Anglican Communities (and Anglo-Catholic parishes) for use in place of the Book of Common Prayer (1662), Alternative Service Book (1980) and Common Worship (2000), where the issue of using the same rite is considered vital as an indication of the state of being in communion with the world-wide catholic Christian church.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF ANGLICAN RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Financially the Anglican monastic communities have been independently funded, being unable to repossess the endowments of their antecedents which had been acquired by the state in the sixteenth Century dissolution of the monasteries. The people who entered the religious communities would take vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, and so would give their wealth to the communities they joined or give it away before joining or would assign the income from their capital to the communities for their lifetime in the community. It is worth noting that an attempt to form anew or reconstitute an organisation will have the support of enthusiasts, and Anglican Monasticism is no exception. Thus, there was a considerable level of new endowments to support the nascent Anglican monastic orders.

Since few of the ordained monks would hold parochial cures (cure of souls) there would be no receipt of stipend, unlike the situation that had held sway before the dissolution of the monasteries. This had a double effect. On the one hand it meant that the community had to derive its necessary income for survival from other sources than the Church of England's traditional funding

structure, but on the other had it meant that it had financial independence from the structures of the Church of England, facilitating the possibility of offering a critique of the church authorities and enabling an independent form of ministry to be offered. Some of the community members would take employment in the teaching and caring professions and their pay would accrue to the community, assisting the day to day financing of its mission. In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century this ability to offer free of charge a prophetic (critical) ministry and message to those who felt dispossessed at a time when there was a burgeoning groundswell of anticlericalism led to growing lay support especially from urban areas. This often resulted in donations and the communities often found ways to enlist their supporters through 'friends' or 'associates' organisations, thus ensuring a significant and relatively secure stream of income. While this income support base has now largely evaporated, many communities retain a substantial capital endowment that had been accumulated over the first fifty or sixty years of their existence.

The purposes for which Anglican religious communities were formed can almost all be described as evangelistic. Those early members who joined themselves to communities wanted to proclaim and promote the gospel through direct preaching and proclamation or by social action, by education or by prayer interceding for the world and its people and supporting the missionary work other Christians. Fulfilling these aims required education and many communities founded schools where the Christian message could be taught, Teacher Training Colleges where students could be imbued with the Christian ethos while learning how to teach, and Theological Colleges where those training for ordained ministry might be formed into the way of life appropriate for Christian ministry as envisaged by the community. In the 19th century there was very little provision of education in theology for those who were called to ordained ministry – a degree from one of the Universities being sufficient evidence of ability to read and there being a presumption that English men would have a familiarity with the Christian faith.

The birth of the religious communities in the fervent debate of the Tractarian Movement's challenge to the growing liberal tendencies in politics (which at that time included economics in the guise of political economy), philosophy and theology gave rise to a recognition that it was important to provide sound education in theology for those entering ordained ministry. Thus, several theological colleges were established by the Anglican monastic communities, teaching young men a catholic understanding of the Christian faith. It may be noted that the more protestant wing of the Church of England also recognised the challenge and established colleges teaching the faith with more of a reformation emphasis.

By the mid- twentieth Century the Church of England attempted to make training for ordained ministry more uniform and more accountable. This was not straight forward as the choice of whether to ordain a candidate and the training that would be required lay (as it still does) with the Bishop of the diocese, and the bishops largely have independence within their own dioceses. Financial measures were helpful in bringing about a normalisation, in that the central financial structure of the Church of England agreed to fund the training for candidates who had been approved by a central appraisal system at Colleges that had been similarly inspected and approved. In this some of the theological colleges established by the monastic communities were able to exercise influence because, although their teaching style and syllabus might seem to be at the limit of what was generally acceptable to the central authorities, their for training cost was low because members of the communities were the teachers, and required no remuneration. The Colleges' buildings were often integral with, or on the same site as the community's buildings, reducing the capital investment required and many of the communities' colleges had been founded with endowments from benefactors, relieving the communities of the burden of continual fund raising.
Not only did such links enable community based theological colleges to sit more lightly to the requirements and accountability of the structures of the Church of England, but it also created a stream of parish priests with fond memories and allegiance to the communities in which they had been trained – often generating a loyalty among them and their congregations that provided ongoing financial, spiritual and moral support to the communities for generations.

RESPONSE TO THE TURN FROM ORGANISED RELIGION

The mid to late twentieth century trend away from organised religion, combined with high levels of inflation and low returns on investment have seriously affected the viability of many of the Anglican religious communities formed in the nineteenth century. Fewer men and women have been prepared to offer themselves for a vowed life, preferring to enjoy the higher standard and quality of living that has become available since the Second World War. The effect on the religious communities is two-fold. Firstly it reduces the number of members available, but secondly it means that the average age of the community increases. These two effects together lead to an increased proportion of the available effort of the community being devoted to caring for its aging members, thus having less energy available to carry out the mission for which the community was formed. Many communities have, therefore had to 'buy in' lay assistance for tasks such as caring for the community property and grounds and even for cleaning cooking and washing. Many communities

would wish to renew their buildings having recognised that they are no longer appropriate for their new circumstances of a smaller and an older membership. The additional burden on the financial resources of the community combined with a reduction in the incoming funds (as fewer members are able to bring in income and capital) and the reduction in real returns available on investments capital combined with cost inflation has led to financial anxiety. This added to the loss of ability to pursue the original mission has by the beginning of the twenty-first Century led to a downward spiral in the life and confidence of many Anglican religious communities.

There has been a marked tendency for dwindling religious orders to seek to combine resources, often beginning by closing some of their outlying houses and then agreeing to join accommodation with other orders to reduce costs. In some instances this has led to the closure of some orders, and the members choosing to become members of the majority order resident at the jointly occupied property. In some case there have been exciting developments such as the complete abandonment of large economically and ecologically inefficient monasteries and the construction of new purpose built premises either in the grounds of the previous premises or in completely different locations. Such developments tend to require capital – at least on a transitional basis and often more permanently, which in the present declining market often raises insuperable obstacles to such rationalisation.

Thus, it may be seen, that the Anglican Religious communities evolved on the margins of the Church of England and seemed to gain standing and influence in the Church f England again find themselves to occupying a liminal position theologically, denominationally and financially.

New Monasticism- New Growth?

It might be argued that despite the obvious decline in formal religious monastic communities over the pat sixty years, there has, in the last twenty to thirty years, been a resurgence of interest in communitarianism. Perhaps Alasdair MacIntyre's seminal book *After Virtue*, which concluded with the aspiration for a new Benedict to rescue 20th (as it was then) century society from moral relativism, could be seen as the main signal for this development. Also the climate change debate has led to an increasing awareness of the necessary inter-relatedness of all life on the planet. Thus communities of people who have in various ways committed themselves to live together have emerged – and the New Age movement has been particularly conspicuous (e.g. the Findhorn Community).

The attributes of new monasticism are that the vows or commitments taken are not life-long, but tend to be for fixed and limited periods of time, do not require celibacy and may be related to enterprises other than finding Giod

The extent to which this has led to a growth in the numbers of people seeking affiliation to the mainstream religious orders, through the tertiary r companion movement, is however, not clear.

Certainly within the Community of the Resurrection, the decline in number and increase in the average age of the tertiary membership does not appear to have abated, and this will be apparent in the section of this research considering the Community.

My own experience of the life and work of Rydal Hall, set out in the article on Living in a Christian Community, may be an expression of that new monasticism

Living in a Christian Community
DAVID S. SIMON

Introduction

Living in a Christian Community does not provide an escape from the problems of life in 20th century western society. However a careful theological examination of community life can provide pointers for all Christians in their daily life. Admittedly Community life at Rydal Hall is a great privilege that is available to very few, but it is essential that ice use this privilege for the whole church and do not restrict the good news to an apparent Christian elite. This article will look at the problems of living in community, as well as how the theology of the kingdom of God might have a practical application.

The personal context

Rydal Hall is the conference centre, and retreat house of the diocese of Carlisle. It is a large, beautiful and eighteenth century building, set in the Lake District, a few miles from the nearest town. When I moved there to live in 1998 I was asked whether I would still call myself a Minister in Secular Employment
(MSE). I said 'yes' for this reason:
Until last August I was a lecturer in Accountancy and Finance at the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, and I knew I was an MSE. When Michael Kitchener became the Warden of Rydal Hal in 1995 he asked me to visit the Hall for a week to look at the management control systems. There was no doubt in my mind that I was an MSE using my God given talents to do my best for the Kingdom.
Now I am the Administrator of Rydal Hall, and an Assistant-Warden I receive a salary from the church, because the diocese owns the Hall and pays salaries out of the revenue the Hall earns. Since I am ordained share the daily celebration of the Eucharist in the Hall and I am available for spiritual direction. My license from the Bishop is as Administrator of the Hall.
This all sounds like ecclesiastical employment, and a betrayal of my almost messianic zeal in promoting ministry in secular employment as the way forward for the kingdom. Yet:
if I were the administrator responsible for the financing, marketing and smooth running of any other organisation having an annual turnover approaching a half a million pounds with a 30 bedroom historic house, a self catering youth centre and 30 acres of grounds which entailed supplying water to a village and

the use of hydroelectric power generation to provide environmentally friendly heating for the estate I would clearly be an MSE;
• if in any other context in purchasing coffee or gas or arranging the disposal of waste I was able to consult colleagues and jointly we could attempt to make ethical and environmentally sensitive decisions for the whole organisation then this would be a demonstration of a ministry harnessing the power of the market to the values of the kingdom;
• if this whole enterprise were not taking place in property owned by and leased from the church, through a limited liability company wholly owned by a diocesan board of finance, it would seem like a miracle that everyone who lived and worked here should pray together at least once (and some four times) each day;
• it would be as remarkable as the Mondragon co-operative that 25 people (of whom only 8 receive a salary) of many denominations and nationalities, should govern themselves, without a hierarchy of power, as a community, having as their aim the offering of their lives to God by regular prayer and offering hospitality to guests.

Theological considerations

So in theory it does seem that what is going on in community life at Rydal Hall represents the struggle to live out the values of the Kingdom of God. We devote ourselves to the worship of God, and we try to express love for others in caring for our guests and one another. We consider the infinite value of each human as being made in the image of God and we have regard for the whole of creation in making purchasing and consumption decisions. The Warden of Rydal Hall presides over the community and is also the priest-in-charge of the parish of Rydal. The daily worship on weekdays in the Hall and on Sundays in the parish church is available for and offered by community members and other parishioners. So there is a very clear ecclesiastical model of what a parish should be.

Problems and difficulties

There are, however, many human difficulties, which challenge the attempt to live together in community. I list six of them.

Diverse individual objectives

Volunteers come to Rydal for many different reasons., and they bring many cultural values with them. Many come from other parts of the world to improve their English in order to further their own careers. Voluntary work does not require a work permit, and being provided with board, lodgings and pocket money appears to be a cheaper option than a one, three or six month holiday in the UK. Although all potential members of the community must demonstrate a Christian faith this is not necessarily their prime motive in coming here. So the requirement of worship and the difficulty of giving of

ourselves in hospitality to guests and one another can seem an onerous and intrusive restriction of self expression and development. When we are tired by our efforts to live together and to serve our guests it often seems easier to take time for ourselves, rather than voluntarily to come together in worship. This can be particularly difficult because in a changing community the possibility of an appropriate pattern of worship emerging, maturing and so commanding overall support is limited. However the alternative is a style that has at some time been adopted in the past is imposed upon a different set of members. Nevertheless we learn that it is only by spending time in prayer together before God that we can hope to grow together in love. Regular worship (and for us this is four daily offices of which one is attended by all members) is a necessary, but not an easy, discipline. Regular corporate recreation time (in addition to eating together) is equally necessary, but a discipline that is even harder to maintain. Members of voluntary communities expect to be able to please themselves about how to spend time, outside work.

Similar problems are found in learning the value of the wealth of cultures and Christian traditions, which are brought to Rydal. The fact that the longest serving members of the community are predominantly white, Western Europeans makes it too easy to accept the norms of that group and to fail to learn what a multi-cultural Christian community and worship could be. Thus although life at Rydal has the potential to be an exciting deepening and enriching experience there is sometimes a failure to realize that potential.

Damaged humanity

In the second place, most people who consider coming to join the Rydal Hall Community do so because they have some problems in their lives which they wish to escape or solve. These problems are brought into community, so we find that we are a community of damaged people. There seems to be a limit to how many and how damaged people can be, if the community is still to offer service to guests and not spend all its time caring for itself and its own members. To this end the community does try, carefully and prayerfully to evaluate applicants for community membership, but this necessarily conflicts with the aim of providing loving help to all who call upon the community for assistance.

Community Government

In the third place there is an awkward suggestion of hierarchy in that some members of the community (the Warden and Assistant Wardens) are appointed by the diocese and are responsible to the diocese for the business of running the diocesan Retreat House. Thus it appears that the leadership of the community is imposed from outside - even though the community is given one voice among many in making these appointments. Those who are appointed in this way are paid salaries and provided with (modest) self-contained accommodation. They are are substantially more privileged in comparison with the rest of the community. This makes true community government difficult as these salaried members tend to be expected by other community members to take leadership and responsibility roles rather than speaking with equal voices. This argument cuts both ways in that the salaried members may argue that the community must do such and such to satisfy the diocese in order to relieve the tension of their own roles. The other members of the community may argue that it is the responsibility of the salaried members to make and implement the less pleasant duties or decisions, which can encourage the community as a whole to collude in avoiding some of the difficulties of governing community life. The apparent hierarchy makes even more difficult the issue of managing volunteers, since they make up only some of the community.

The differing periods of residence of community members makes full participation in community government almost impossible - a 3 month volunteer will only be beginning to have an understanding of the place and will only be beginning to gain the confidence necessary to comment on many issues before leaving. Community government may appear to operate smoothly but this may be because many members are effectively disenfranchised by the arrangements for residence and membership.

The wider church community

In the fourth place the relationship between the community and the wider church through the diocese is not an easy one to manage. There are many different levels of understanding of what it is to be community and to run a retreat house with a resident community. Many members of the wider church in the diocese have difficulty in understanding what a lay community might be. Some members of the diocese expect that using a community of volunteers will be a cheap way of running the retreat house. Yet others are of the opinion that the community is an expensive luxury that the diocese can ill afford at a time of financial difficulty for the parishes. Others again choose to see the diocesan retreat house as the community's responsibility and that provided no cost is passed on to the diocese there need be no concern or involvement by the diocese in the whole venture. Finally some expect the community and the retreat house to make a profit for the diocese.

Management of conflict

In the fifth place there is the failure of natural human tendencies to overcome the problems of differences of opinion. Within the community there are naturally disagreements because all of the members will have their own agenda and priorities both or themselves and for the community. Managing these disagreements requires patience and understanding, but this has to take place while continuing to serve guests who have their own reasons for coming

to Rydal - at times it seems impossible even to hold the tension. Yet this is what is required by Christ's command that we should love one another, and we continually learn how hard, if not impossib1e that is. Every difference gives an example of the fallen nature of humanity. If an explicitly Christian community cannot, through prayerful struggle, manage its own conflict there can be no hope for the nations of the world without God's intervention.

Conflicting Objectives

In the sixth place there are tensions between the continuing needs of the Hall and its guests and the imperative to offer immediate Christian hospitality to those in need. The need to comply with the law in relation to child protection means that it is not legal to have staying in the Hall or grounds people who might interfere with the children staying here. Thus the homeless who turn up at our door can rarely be allowed to stay unless we can be sure there is no risk to guests. 'Gentlemen and ladies of the road' who at one time could sleep in the warmth of the launderette under the Youth Centre must now be turned away.

Those who have fallen on hard times and come to the Hall hoping for shelter and food might occasionally be taken in to join the community for a few days. This often creates a considerable strain in relationships within the community, and poses the question about the balance between being charitable and taken advantage of. Although the Hall wishes to help those in search of God to spend time in quiet contemplation living in an atmosphere of prayers it is also necessary to receive sufficient revenue to meet the costs of running the Hall. Thus a charge has to be made for those who stay, and this can often put it beyond the means of some who would benefit from staying in the Hall.

Lessons from the obstacles

Life in community can, at times, be very difficult, and always impossible in our own strength, yet the recognition of inevitable failure brings to the surface pointed and useful practical lessons for all who try to live out the Gospel. We are thrown back on the love and mercy of God to redeem our mistakes and to build upon our faltering start. We rely on ourselves at our peril for we are all damaged in some way. We are forced to make decisions and prioritise actions in a way which, though we know to be less than perfect, cannot be avoided, and these decisions have far- reaching implications.

It is always difficult to balance the competing claims, but the more often we attempt to consider this and the more people who are involved in the consideration the more skilled we become as stewards of the creation - though the more difficult decision making seems to become. This demands patience, the valuing of difference, and the importance both of recreation and corporate worship.

Community life requires conducting our lives together as if we were all volunteers, avoiding reliance on hierarchies of economics or power. There is an essential tension between the needs of our own community and the needs of those we are called to serve. This tension is not ultimately avoidable or resolvable, but must be accepted as a part of the human attempt to live the Gospel. We must proclaim the gospel by living it rather than by being satisfied with a verbal interpretation. We are called to live in communion with others, and recognize them as all God's children. Although this is difficult, it is also fulfilling and ultimately it is the only way of personal integrity by which to live out the Gospel commands of Christ.

The Community of the Resurrection: A Case Study in Anglican Monasticism

<u>History</u>
In 1892 six priests, including Walter Frere and Charles Gore committed themselves to one another and to their bishop to live lives of poverty, obedience and chastity promoting the gospel, and so brought into being the Community of the Resurrection. As the annual reports of the charity record:

> The Community was founded in 1892, to act as an Association of Christians who desire to follow the Gospel life after the pattern of those recorded in the Acts of the Apostles of whom it is said that 'they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and in the fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers and the company of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and no one said that any of these things which he possessed was his own, but they have everything in common."
> Members of the Community of the Resurrection follow a daily routine of prayer and worship.
> The Community undertakes charitable work at home and overseas, this includes pastoral, evangelistic, literary, educational and other charitable works for the advancement of religion.
> The Community also makes grants and gives support to others engaged in similar activities.

Initially the six lived together in the Rectory at Radley (near Oxford where Gore was the incumbent), but in 1898 took the decision to move to the industrial North to witness where there was poverty and deprivation. They purchased a mansion in Mirfield, that had belonged to a Yorkshire industrialist and set about extending it (to provide accommodation for the many priests who were joining the new community and building a church in the grounds. Soon after the turn of the 20th century the Community had 80 professed members and it established, within the same grounds, a college for the education of those training for ordained ministry – the College of the Resurrection.

Members joined the monastic community by entering the novitiate – a period of about three years where they tested their vocations and might choose to, or be asked to leave – after which they would make their profession – vows of chastity, obedience and poverty for life, binding themselves to remain in the community. At this point they would renounce their wealth, either giving it away to their friends, families or good causes, or donate it to the community where it is held in trust, the income from which being available to the Community.

In the Community house(s) the Benedictine routine of prayer, work, and study was followed. There would be an early (06:15) service of Morning Prayer followed by the Mass (Holy Communion), breakfast and a morning of work. At 12:30 the Midday office would be prayed, followed by lunch. Afternoon work with a break for refreshment at about 16:00, Evening Prayer at 19:15 followed by Supper, Compline at 21:45 after which complete silence would be observed until after breakfast. Silence was observed in the church, corridors and public rooms at all times, and members would commit themselves to an additional hour or so of private prayer and meditation each day.

The members of the Community witnessed to the gospel through missions and pastoral work in the North of England, working closely with parish priests, and in due course with the priests who had been trained in the College, which had itself been funded to provide theological training to those poor men who would notn othe5rwise be able o realise their vocations to the priestly ministry. Some members of the community would take teaching jobs, donating their earnings to the community. The Community participated in missionary work abroad, founding a house in South Africa, a London base, a hostel for students at the University of Leeds and in due course a retreat house in Huntingdonshire. The mansion, now called the House of the Resurrection, was extended to provide further accommodation both for the monks and for visitors who would come on retreat to join the community for prayer and to receive spiritual direction from the monks. At one time the Community had over ten daughter houses where members of the Community were directed by the Superior to serve.

As the community grew in size it also grew in influence, and many priests and lay people asked to be associated with its Christian work. Some priests chose to take vows of celibacy and commitment to the Community continuing to operate as parish priests, chaplains and lecturers, supported by and supporting the Community: these members were known as *Oblates* (offering their lives to God through the Community). This second order of the community included tens of priests. Other, priests and lay people who wanted association but a lighter level of commitment were able to join the Fraternity of the Resurrection (later to be called Companions of the Community of the Resurrection) accepting a simple discipline of prayer and service to be lived out in their ordinary lives. This third order came to include many hundreds of members.

Development

The great influence growth and strength of the Community lasted for over 50 years and throughout its existence its standing might be encapsulated by the phrase 'Christian Socialist'. Archbishop Desmond Tutu may be taken as an indicator of the influence of the work in South Africa. In the era of apartheid, the young Desmond was impressed by the fact that a white priest (Trevor Huddleston) raised his hat to Desmond's mother on passing her in the street – inspiring in him the call to ordained ministry. In the 1950s and 1960s there would be well over a thousand people joining the community on the first/second Saturday of July to celebrate the commemoration day with a high mass and the equivalent of a village fair.

However, from the 1960s there was a distinct downturn in the numbers of priests seeking to explore a call to the religious life, with the result that as the earlier members of the community became older, ill and died, the average age of the community increased, more of the community's effort had to be directed towards maintaining its own inner life, less energy and resource was available for outreach. The community continued to provide spiritual direction and retreats, but through the final three decades of the twentieth century had to withdraw from its commitments away from the mother house at Mirfield. At Mirfield the community began to accept laymen to membership, having previously been only a priestly monastic order. The same aging process was evident in the profile of the Oblates and Companions of the Community of the Resurrection. Fewer came to Commemoration Day, but the number of those wishing to make retreats at Mirfield continued to be substantial.

The College of the Resurrection, despite attempts at closure in 1992 by the House of Bishops, continues to prepare priests for ordination and the College gained a reputation as being one of the bastions of Anglo-Catholic training in the Church of England. The decision by the General Synod of the Church of England to allow the ordination of women to the priesthood caused great anguish in the Community and at the College.

Retreatants continued to come to Mirfield, but the standards of accommodation expected had changed from the days when the retreat house had been built, and considerable (and expensive) refurbishment was required.

At the beginning of the 21st century the community embraced ecumenical cooperation and recognised the multi-cultural area in which it was set, and provided a base for the Mirfield Centre, a facility for religious education and discussion, and the College and Community also entered into partnership with the Yorkshire Ordination Course (emerging from the Northern Ordination Course), a part-time training institution for accredited ministers of the church of England, Methodist and URC.

By the end of the fist decade of the 21st century it was clear that the House of the Resurrection – which could accommodate over 80 – was unsuitable for a community with only about two dozen monks, the church at over a hundred years old was in need of considerable structural and servicing refurbishment. The Community launched an appeal to build a new smaller and ecologically designed monastery in the grounds and to refurbish the church in a manner suitable for 21st century Christian worship. The daily pattern of prayer was softened (Morning Prayer being delayed by 30 minutes and Compline brought forward by 30 minutes) to recognise the aging of the community and the changed sensitivities and expectations of individuals and society. While the proposed changes have required a great deal of planning and work, the energy that has been generated in the process, together with the upsurge in a cultural interest in spirituality, seems to have led to an increase in the number of enquiries from men wishing to test their vocation in the novitiate, and may signal a renewed strengthening of the community with its work of witnessing to the gospel being revised to match the requirements of 21st century Britain.

Self-Disclosure of The Community of the Resurrection

The annual reports of the charity disclose that:
> The Community was founded in 1892, to act as an Association of Christians who desire to follow the Gospel life after the pattern of those recorded in the Acts of the Apostles of whom it is said that 'they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and in the fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers and the company of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and no one said that any of these things which he possessed was his own, but they have everything in common."
> Members of the Community of the Resurrection follow a daily routine of prayer and worship.
> The Community undertakes charitable work at home and overseas, this includes pastoral, evangelistic, literary, educational and other charitable works for the advancement of religion.
> The Community also makes grants and gives support to others engaged in similar activities.

The Michaelmas 2012 prayer cycle for members of the community reveals that there are currently 20 professed monks, 2 novices and 14 Oblates in the community. Some of the monks and the oblates are senior in age and therefore not all have specific duties assigned to them within the community or wider world. Of the 22 professed monks and novices 5 are not assigned duties within

the monastery and of the 14 oblates 5 are ministering in retirement. This intensifies the work of the remaining brethren.

An analysis of the work of the brethren for the seven months June to December 2012 showed that of the time spent by the brethren working outside the house and the college, nearly a quarter was spent on leading retreats and quiet days, just under a third in contributing to religious life and 40% in contributing to the wider church. While only about 5% of the time available to the brethren allocated duties is explained by the prayer cycles that were analysed, preparation for the work undertaken would not have been apparent, nor would the work at the College for the Principal and tutors during the 150 or so days of term and the preparation and administrative work during the College vacations.

Of the 9 Oblates who do not declare themselves as being in retirement, 4 are in various forms of chaplaincy, one living as a hermit and the remaining four contribute to parochial ministry in the areas where they live.

The September 2012 Companions Prayer Cycle shows a total of 235 names (in 1953 there were reported to be 1,400 Companions, in 1966 there were reported to be over 8,000 Companions, and in 1999 506 [A History of the Fraternity of The Resurrection, Part Two: 1953 to 2002 Extracts from the CR Quarterly journals])

The Community's journal *CR Review* gives an insight into the issues of concern to the Community. In summary these may be seen as the need to maintain and refurbish Community buildings to make them appropriate for a smaller community with more restricted finance, to show a relevant presence in the world through the wider church, the hope for an upturn in the numbers of young men seeking vocations to the religious life, and discovering what can be learnt from living with the tensions created within the Community by (changes in) the Church of England's understanding of the place of homosexuals and women in ordained ministry.

Financing the Work of the Community of the Resurrection

The community operates through a Company limited by Guarantee and therefore has a legal obligation annually to publish a Report and Accounts. An analysis of these shows that although during the past decade there have been various changes in terms of inclusion of various buildings and the College into the reported figure, nevertheless in a half of the years there has been a deficit, and in every year the work has only been affordable as a result of capital gains, asset disposals and investment (and other) income. Ingenious accounting approaches of bringing assets which were previously considered inalienable

into the balance sheet in the year of their sale enabled current deficits to be covered by capital disposals. Despite the proposal to raise money through fund raising for a reordering of the whole Mirfield site, this, combined with the declining number of vocations, has serious implications for the long term viability of the community.

Research Bias
The narrator has been a Companion of the Community of the Resurrection since 1984, when finding the House of the Resurrection as a suitable (both in terms of geographical location and church tradition) place to make retreats when preparing for ordained ministry in the Church of England. The researcher has spent at least 48 hours, and often more, every year living alongside the monks in the community receiving spiritual succour and direction. Companions are remembered by the Community in their daily prayer and remember the Community in their own prayers, supporting the Community both by Rule of Life (being part of the Community's outreach) and financially.
The narrator's mother adopted the Anglican expression of Christianity when at Teacher Training College and was confirmed by Walter Frere (a founder member of the Community of the Resurrection), who was at that time Bishop of Truro.

Parallels for the Church of England

It might be argued that the Anglican Monastic movement reflects and possibly precedes the changes that have taken place in the Church of England over the past 100 years, and could b used as a lens through which to examine approaches available to an established church.

Unlike the Anglican monastic movement the C of E did not see huge growth in the last century, however it has certainly witnessed the decline seen in Anglican monasticism (though possibly at a slower rate.) The Anglican monastic communities have had to react to their declining and aging numbers by consolidating, closing houses and merging orders. They have attempted, and in recent years succeeded, to attract those who have shown the societally evidenced increased interest in spirituality. In order to do this they have undertaken significant reordering of their premises to make them culturally acceptable to the 21st century, while also recognising that they needed to provide a 'user friendly interface'. This they have to some extent succeeded in doing by making a separation between the life and work of the monks and the outward facing work of their guest provision. This is not a break with their tradition, but a return to the work of offering hospitality and so both bearing witness to the gospel and proclaiming it afresh.

The lessons from the Anglican Monastic Communities could be harnessed to interpret developments in the Church of England, and there may well be expertise among the leaders of the Anglican Religious Communities which could be used by those responsible for reshaping the Church of England for the 21st century.

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Community of the Resurrection

Summary of Annual Accounts

Year Ended	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Income										
Donations, Receipts from Guests & CR work	110	158	268	212	262	769	659	673	946	863
Tax Recoverable	10	28	2	11	11	28	-			
Investment Income	243	235	217	260	234	453	354	306	236	262
Legacies	119	95	188	38	340	306	435	118	106	122
Bretherens' Pensions	175	179	180	174	163	192	153	205	209	253
Other	172	66	823	15	27	408	5	14	80	13
OPERATING INCOME	**830**	**761**	**1,678**	**711**	**1,037**	**2,156**	**1,607**	**1,316**	**1,578**	**1,512**
Expenditure										
Grants & Cost of CR Work	435	81	127	375	608	590	402	490	512	481
Support Costs	972	731	629	659	412	1,324	1,135	1,352	1,175	930
Management and Admin	60	50	54	84	12	30	41	43	43	50
OPERATING EXPENDITURE	**1,466**	**863**	**811**	**1,117**	**1,032**	**1,945**	**1,577**	**1,886**	**1,730**	**1,462**
Net on Year	**-636**	**-102**	**867**	**-406**	**4**	**211**	**29**	**-570**	**-152**	**51**
Holding Gains/Losses	-210	-405	506	216	1,070	367	-636	-424	325	163
Movement on Funds	-846	-507	1,373	-190	1,075	578	-606	-994	173	214
Opening Balances	5,459	4,613	4,106	5,479	5,289	8,417	8,995	9,303	8,309	8,482
Closing Balances	**4,613**	**4,106**	**5,479**	**5,289**	**6,364**	**8,995**	**8,389**	**8,309**	**8,482**	**8,696**

The value of the land and buildings of the 19 acre Mirfield and other sites owned by the Community are not included in the balance.

The properties are insured for	18,737	18,361	24,143	26,923	26,923	29,477	28,752	30,949	32,200

Community of the Resurrection

Funding of CR Work

Year Ended	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Income from CR Work										
Donations, Receipts from Guests & CR work	110	158	268	212	262	769	659	673	946	863
Cost of CR Work										
Operating Expenditure	1466	863	811	1117	1032	1945	1577	1886	1730	1462
Net Cost of Work	1356	705	543	906	771	1175	918	1213	783	599
Investment and Other Income	720	603	1410	499	775	1386	948	643	631	650
Overall Surplus/Loss on Period	-636	-102	867	-406	4	211	29	-570	-152	51