

The Gift of an Entrepreneurial Approach to Priestly Ministry in the Parish

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Abstract

This article introduces and considers the term, *entrepreneur*, in relation to Anglican priestly ministry in the parish. I propose that the language of entrepreneurship offers the Church a useful lens through which to imagine the shape of mission for our emerging culture. The concept offers a way of thinking about the missional task to which we are called and the kind of approach that some Christians might take towards it. The contested nature of the term, *entrepreneur*, in relation to Christian mission and ministry is considered. Discussion focuses on the possibility, proposed by Casson et al., that the enterprise culture of the 1980s and 1990s generated a 'highly competitive and materialistic form of individualism'¹ that came to be associated with the entrepreneur and continues to negatively shape perceptions of the term. I suggest that at the heart of Christian discomfort with the idea of the entrepreneur is a rejection of greed in line with Jesus' proclamation of the coming kingdom of God. I propose that entrepreneurship can more accurately be conceived of as a cooperative, consistently energetic approach to life and work in which creativity and innovation are core values and which has at its heart the desire to create something of recognised value. The absence of a widely agreed definition of the entrepreneur in the literature is noted. The origin of the term is outlined and discussion follows on some of the ways in which the work of key thinkers has shaped understandings of the entrepreneur. The work of Bolton and Thompson is introduced, their definition of the entrepreneur presented and its constituent parts discussed in relation to wider literature and the notion of the entrepreneurial parish priest.

Keywords: Entrepreneur; Mission; Mission-Shaped Church; Pioneer; Anglican; Parish; Priest; Enterprise culture; Greed; Habitually; Create; Innovate; Build; Recognised value; Perceived opportunities.

A way of being: playground swap-shops and parish priests

I am an Anglican priest. I am also an entrepreneur. The exercise of entrepreneurship has rarely made me any money and in the context of this article, that is precisely the point. I use the term 'entrepreneur' to make reference to a way of being in the world that is characterised by a relentless and energetic pursuit of opportunities to do

¹ Casson, Mark, et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Entrepreneurship* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 10.

things in new ways in order to achieve improved outcomes for those involved. Of course, some entrepreneurs act in this way in order to generate financial capital, but the exercise of entrepreneurship is not limited to the world of commerce. Entrepreneurs use their gifts in a diverse range of contexts including schools, hospitals and churches, and their efforts generate social, artistic and spiritual capital. My own entrepreneurial nature has found various expressions as an undergraduate art student, parish youth worker, budding author, mission-team member, Ordained Pioneer Minister and, most recently, as a theological educator. Entrepreneurship is a fundamental aspect of my personality. I have never been taught to be an entrepreneur but through establishing and running secret clubs and playground swap-shops at primary school, persuading a leading computer manufacturer to deliver a lorry-load of free equipment to my secondary school and establishing and running a successful club night as a young adult, I recognised my entrepreneurial flair, experimented with it, learnt from my mistakes and grew in entrepreneurial confidence. Once I was ordained it was natural to apply this ‘way of being’ to my work as a priest. I did not mention entrepreneurship overtly during my selection process, theological training or deployment into first curacy, but my way of approaching the task of ministry and mission was (and continues to be) innately entrepreneurial and I have attempted to find creative and innovative ways to engage in loving service as a priest in the communities in which I have served. The experience of being an entrepreneurial priest was one of the key drivers for the doctoral research informing this article.² A second, intimately related key driver was my understanding of the nature and shape of the mission context in England in which Anglican priests seek to engage in appropriate and faithful ministry. Sixteen years of professional experience in the Church of England, as an entrepreneurial lay minister, priest and theological educator has led me to believe that a faithful and effective response to the mission situation³ requires the contribution of lay and ordained entrepreneurs.

Roots...

In February, 2004, the General Synod of the Church of England welcomed and commended the report, *Mission Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*⁴ (hereafter referred to as *MSC*). In the report’s recommendations the word ‘entrepreneur’ appeared in direct relation to Anglican ministry.⁵ *MSC* was published in the same year that I entered full-time training for Anglican ordination. Since I was training for priestly ministry and felt myself to be

² My doctoral research was undertaken at the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University between 2008–2013. I was supervised by Professor Robert Song and the Rev’d Dr Gavin Wakefield. My thesis was titled, *An Entrepreneurial Approach to Priestly Ministry in the Parish: Insights From a Research Study in the Diocese of Durham*.

³ In speaking of the, ‘mission situation’, I am making reference to my understanding of the context in which Anglican priests attempt to engage in a ministry of loving service. My understanding of the mission situation in the UK is informed by a wide reading of the literature, including *MSC*’s understanding of the rapidly changing cultural context, and by my own experience as a priest. I explored this in depth in my doctoral thesis.

⁴ The Archbishop’s Council, *Mission Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expression of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).

⁵ *MSC*’s Recommendation 11 states that ‘those involved in selection need to be adequately equipped to identify and affirm pioneers and mission entrepreneurs’. *MSC*, 147.

an entrepreneur, MSC's direct link between Anglican ministry, mission and entrepreneurship caught my attention and provoked ongoing reflection that consequently found full expression in my doctoral research. MSC assumed a link between 'mission entrepreneurs'⁶ and the planting of fresh expressions of church; specifically that the latter would be undertaken by the former. Church planting is important and in my opinion MSC is right to highlight the need to identify individuals who have the gifts to undertake this ministry appropriately in the emerging culture. However, it was the contention of my thesis that the planting of contextual⁷ churches by mission entrepreneurs is but one necessary part of a much bigger picture in the current context. My research was designed and undertaken in the belief that the entrepreneurs have a wider contribution to make to the task of mission in the emerging culture and that it is important for the church to recognise the entrepreneurs who are engaged in ministry and mission in parishes across the UK and to encourage, support and learn from them. In this article therefore, I suggest that the understanding of the sphere of activity of the 'mission entrepreneur' should be broader than the planting of new contextual churches⁸ and can in fact take in a whole range of activities undertaken by entrepreneurial parish priests. In the early stages of the development of my research my intention had been to focus on researching aspects of entrepreneurship as exercised by Ordained Pioneer Ministers (hereafter abbreviated to OPMs). Since OPMs were the category of ordained minister that eventually emerged from the church's consideration of MSC's recommendation of identifying 'mission entrepreneurs', a focus on OPMs in my research would have allowed the maintenance of a clear link between my work and the way in which the term, entrepreneur, was used in MSC. After further consideration however, I moved my focus from OPMs to embrace the possibility of 'regular' Anglican priests, i.e. those without the designation 'pioneer', serving primarily in a parish context, being entrepreneurs and exercising entrepreneurial ministries. Although I recognise the potentially important contribution that OPMs are making to the ministry and mission of the church, the fact is that the majority of Anglican priests are not and will never be labeled 'pioneers', and do not generally have a direct brief or necessary freedom from other responsibilities to plant 'new' or 'fresh' forms of church, but rather, they exercise their priestly ministry in parishes.⁹ My experience as a priest and my involvement in research have led me to believe that there are likely to be

⁶ MSC, 147.

⁷ Michael Moynagh uses the umbrella term 'new contextual church', 'to describe the birth and growth of Christian communities that serve people mainly outside the church, belong to their culture, make discipleship a priority and form a new church among the people they serve'. Moynagh identifies four overlapping tributaries, representing four responses to the new situation and from which new contextual churches are emerging. These are: 'Church planting'; 'The emerging church conversation'; 'Fresh Expressions of church'; and 'Communities in mission'. Michael Moynagh, *Church for Every Context: An Introduction to Theology and Practice* (London: SCM Press, 2012), x-xiii.

⁸ Moynagh, Michael, *Church for Every Context: An Introduction to Theology and Practice* (London: SCM Press, 2012), x.

⁹ At the end of 2009, there were 19,504 ministers licensed by Church of England dioceses, including clergy, readers and Church Army officers. The total does not include more than 1,600 chaplains to prisons, hospitals, the armed forces and in education, nor around 7,190 retired ministers with permission to officiate. Source: <http://www.Churchofengland.org/about-us/facts-stats.aspx> (26/06/12). By contrast, only 146 OPM candidates were recommended for training during the years 2005 – 2012. Sources: Graham Cray, *Ordained Pioneer Ministry: A Report for the Ministry Council* (2011), and Stephen Ferns *Report on Attendance at Bishop's Advisory Panels for Ministry Council* (2013).

(varying numbers of) entrepreneurial priests ministering in each of the forty-four dioceses in the Church of England. It is my contention that, given the mission situation faced by the Church of England it would seem expedient to recognise and invest in such a resource, rather than settling for the notion that it will primarily be OPMs (a minority of those ordained) who will exercise ministries characterised by entrepreneurship.¹⁰ When I was first ordained I worked as an OPM in Gloucester but a significant part of my role involved collaborating with local parish priests and I quickly learnt to value the breadth of their activity and the potential for positive change that they could affect when adopting what might be described as an entrepreneurial approach to their ministries. This continued in the Diocese of Durham where, as a result of arranging student placements, I have been required to collaborate with a wide range of parish priests. I have observed and reflected on the positive impact on congregations and local communities that those who adopt an entrepreneurial approach to their ministry in the parish have been able to affect.¹¹ Further, in my professional practice as a theological educator, my main area of responsibility has been with those training to be ‘regular’ parish priests. As a result of my own experience and my understanding of the current mission situation, a significant aspect of my work with Anglican ordinands has involved a focus on understanding and encouraging entrepreneurship and stimulating reflection on what an entrepreneurial approach to priestly ministry in the parish might look like.

It is important to point out that I do not suggest that all priests or ministers should be entrepreneurs. Nor do I suggest that entrepreneurial priests are the only solution to the numerical and financial decline being faced in some dioceses in the Church of England. I do contend, however, along with Bill Bolton and John Thompson, that entrepreneurs make a positive difference and are therefore a potential resource to the Church of England in the current mission context. According to Bolton and Thompson:

entrepreneurs create and build the future and they are to be found in every walk of life and in every group of people. Every community group, every public organisation has within it an entrepreneurial potential.¹²

A contested term

The word, entrepreneur, draws a mixed response when it is used in conjunction with Christian ministry. Although some are happy with it, more often than not it prompts responses ranging from discomfort to fervent

¹⁰ In 2010 the report of a review of the selection procedures for OPMs report stated that ‘the discernment of pioneer ministry is designed to assess a candidate’s potential and capacity for entrepreneurial and innovative ministry in fresh expressions of Church’. Ministry Council: *Review of the Selection Procedures for Ordained Pioneer Ministry: Paper 2: Criteria for Pioneer Ministry*. (2010).

¹¹ I recognise the importance of lay entrepreneurship and the possibility of congregations becoming entrepreneurial. However, limitations on time and space during my research meant that my focus had to be relatively narrow, hence the emphasis on entrepreneurial priests. Further research into entrepreneurial lay people and congregations may prove fruitful.

¹² Bill Bolton and John Thompson, *Entrepreneurs: Talent, Temperament, Technique* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2004) (2nd ed.), 1.

objection. No doubt this is due to the association of the word with a worldly approach to wealth creation for personal gain.¹³

I wrote these words in one of the chapters I contributed to a co-authored textbook on fresh expressions of church and pioneer ministry, published in 2012. The comment comes in the middle of a passage of reflection on the kind of approach to Christian ministry that might be necessary in the current cultural context in the UK. I deliberately used the term entrepreneur to prompt the reader to consider the sorts of qualities that might be desirable in those engaging in this task. As part of my research for the chapter I invited thirty men and women from diverse backgrounds and who were each engaged in various forms of Christian ministry to complete a survey. They were asked to provide responses to a number of questions. Among these was the following: 'Comment on the use of the term entrepreneur in relation to Christian pioneering'.¹⁴ The responses were interesting and varied and I have reproduced nine of them below.¹⁵

John Went

Sometimes entrepreneurs have a tendency to be sole-operators, not good at listening to others, so I would wish to qualify entrepreneur with the ability to listen and to collaboratively involve others in the mission task.

Chris Howson

I loathe the use of the term entrepreneur. We do not need to borrow more terms from the market – our faith has been privatized enough as it is! The word entrepreneur has too many connotations with taking risks for personal gain. The risks that a Christian takes are at personal cost, not gain. If one looks at contemporary understanding of the entrepreneur it is associated with programmes such as *The Apprentice* and *The Dragon's Den*. These programmes reflect the ruthlessness of modern Capitalist society, and are inherently confrontational and combative. Collaboration and solidarity are terms that might be more helpful.

David Wilkinson

I like the term entrepreneur. In a business context it speaks of someone who builds for the future, who sees new possibilities, who is prepared to take risks. I can see how some within the Church would react against it but there is creativity with entrepreneurship.

Ian Meredith

I run a business as well as being active in ministry (although I don't agree with the distinction). I am entrepreneurial in both.

¹³ Michael Volland, *God's Call to Pioneer*, in David Goodhew, Andrew Roberts, and Michael Volland, *Fresh: An Introduction to Fresh Expressions of Church and Pioneer Ministry* (London: SCM Press, 2012), 143.

¹⁴ Volland, *God's Call to Pioneer*, in Goodhew, Roberts, and Volland, *Fresh*, 146.

¹⁵ Volland, *God's Call to Pioneer*, in Goodhew, Roberts, and Volland, *Fresh*, 146-149.

Janet Sutton

Entrepreneur is not a term I would use in relation to my own pioneering ministry. I would prefer to use a word like prophetic. I suppose my own role is entrepreneurial as I began more or less with a blank piece of paper and a time span in which to achieve something. But it is not a definition that sits comfortably with me.

John Drane

I have no problem with the use of the word entrepreneur in relation to ministry just so long as we don't imagine it excludes some people.

Jonny Baker

An entrepreneur is someone who builds something. And I like people that spot opportunities or gaps and are able to create something there. It's an exciting word. For those of us who remember Margaret Thatcher it is also tainted with capitalist overtones but it's pretty clear that it's not being used in that way in the context of mission.

Robert Warren

Entrepreneurs are not often team players and can be driven rather than called. Servants and vocation are more important aspects of ministry that need exploring.

Ian Bell

I understand the reason why the term is used, but I struggle to feel entirely comfortable with it. It is difficult to detach the word 'entrepreneur' from the world of business and commerce – which has sufficient connotations of consumerism and materialism to make it somewhat unhelpful. Maybe "spiritual entrepreneur" is slightly better?

The nine responses set out above are a selection of those received but they highlight the fact that the understanding and use of the term entrepreneur in relation to Christian ministry is not straightforward. Although some of the respondents are content with the association, with David Wilkinson, for example, stating 'I like the term',¹⁶ others express varying levels of concern and one respondent, Chris Howson, goes as far as stating 'I loath the use of the term'.¹⁷ The responses from my survey were not subject to rigorous analysis and cannot claim the authority that accompanies the conclusions of a robustly designed research project. In that sense, therefore, there is no claim that they are broadly representative of wider Christian attitudes. However, I strongly suggest that the responses point to the fact that in relation to Christian ministry, and therefore in the context of practical theology, the use of the term, entrepreneur, is contested.

¹⁶ Volland, *God's Call to Pioneer*, in Goodhew, Roberts, and Volland, *Fresh*, 147.

¹⁷ Volland, *God's Call to Pioneer*, in Goodhew, Roberts, and Volland, *Fresh*, 146.

In *The Enterprise Culture*, Peter Sedgwick acknowledges that ‘There has been a suspicion of the market, wealth-creation and enterprise in the churches for a long time.’¹⁸ This suspicion, as noted above, embraces the concept of the entrepreneur and is likely to be shaped by a number of factors including gender, personality type, social class, family history, political affiliations, profession, personal experience of financial matters, church denomination and tradition, understanding of scripture and image of God. I suggest, however, that there is a further, external factor, which has made a significant contribution to the negative perception of the entrepreneur articulated by some Christians. It comes from an observation made by Mark Casson et al., who make reference to the period in the West, since the early 1980s, during which a particular image of the entrepreneur emerged in the public consciousness. I contend that this image continues to shape perceptions of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial activity in the minds of many Christians who are uncomfortable with, or hostile to, the term. Casson et al. write:

The enterprise culture of the 1980s and 1990s was a natural reaction to some of the anti-entrepreneurial attitudes that had taken root in the West in the early post-war period. It should not be inferred, however, that this enterprise culture was based on a correct understanding of the role of the entrepreneur. The highly competitive and materialistic form of individualism promoted by ‘enterprise culture’ did not accurately represent the dominant values of successful entrepreneurs of previous generations.¹⁹

I suggest that in relation to my own research into entrepreneurial parish priests, Casson et al.’s observation is useful because it identifies a significant contribution to the negative associations that some make with the term, entrepreneur. An image of the entrepreneur as being responsible for, as well as a product of, a ‘highly competitive and materialistic form of individualism’ is arguably still a dominant one for some Christians.²⁰ One might say that, for some, the entrepreneur has become the personification of the morally suspect side of enterprise culture. This negative image was caricatured and widely popularised in 1988 by the comedian Harry Enfield in his creation of the obnoxious character, Loadsamoney²¹, and has arguably been maintained by television programmes like *Dragons Den*²² and *The Apprentice*.²³ I propose that the image of the entrepreneur as obnoxious, self-seeking and money-motivated continues to be a key association for some Christians. In his interview response, set out above, Jonny Baker recognises that for some, the term, entrepreneur continues to have negative associations with the culture of greed in the UK during the 1980s and early 1990s. With regard to the use of the term, entrepreneur, in relation to Christian ministry Baker states that ‘For those of us who remember Margaret Thatcher it is also tainted with capitalist overtones’.²⁴ However,

¹⁸ Peter Sedgwick, *The Enterprise Culture: A Challenging New Theology of Wealth Creation for the 1990’s* (London: SPCK, 1992), 6.

¹⁹ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 10.

²⁰ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 10.

²¹ ‘YouTube’, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ON-7v4qnHP8&feature=related> (04/05/12).

²² ‘BBC Programmes’. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006vq92> (05/06/12).

²³ ‘BBC Programmes’. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0071b63> (05/06/12).

²⁴ Volland, *God’s Call to Pioneer*, in Goodhew, Roberts, and Volland, *Fresh*, 149.

he goes on to point out that ‘it's pretty clear that it's not being used in that way in the context of mission’.²⁵ Interestingly, having made their point about the enterprise culture of the 1980s and 1990s generating a wrong understanding of the role of the entrepreneur, Casson et al. go on to argue that the evidence ‘suggests that successful entrepreneurship is as much a co-operative endeavour, mediated by social networks, as a purely individualistic and competitive one’.²⁶ I suggest that those Christians who respond hesitantly or negatively to language around entrepreneurship are likely to have less of an issue with entrepreneurship when conceived of as a co-operative, mutually supportive and non-competitive approach to life and work (and all that this implies for Christian ministry and mission) rather than as competitive, individualistic wealth creation. In early 2012 I interviewed an Anglican priest in the Diocese of Durham as part of my research for an article on entrepreneurship that was subsequently published in the *Church of England Newspaper*. In the article I wrote,

One parish priest, initially uncomfortable with the prospect of associating her ministry with that of being an entrepreneur, commented after a long discussion, “When I look at it like that, I’d like to be more entrepreneurial!”²⁷

I am not suggesting that conclusions can be drawn from this single example, however, I do propose that it is possible that when provided with an alternative understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship, those Christians for whom the term has negative associations might be helped to understand ways in which it could also be considered useful in reflecting on the potential shape of Anglican priestly ministry and mission in contemporary culture.

I have proposed that negative associations of the entrepreneur articulated by some Christians are, at least partially, a result of the image that has emerged from the enterprise culture discussed by Casson et al. At the root of discomfort with this image for some Christians is a dual recognition that *greed* is a primary motivating factor for a good deal of wealth-generating activity and that greed (whether expressed individually or corporately) is entirely inconsistent with Jesus’ proclamation of the coming Kingdom of God.²⁸ It is possible to argue that Jesus’ proclamation of the coming Kingdom of God includes a ‘preferential option for the poor’²⁹ and implies, therefore, a degree of hostility towards the creation, retention and use of wealth. Exponents of a theology of liberation,³⁰ for example, ‘respond to the ‘reality’ which confronts millions: poverty, appalling living conditions,

²⁵ Volland, *God’s Call to Pioneer*, in Goodhew, Roberts, and Volland, *Fresh*, 149.

²⁶ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 10.

²⁷ Church of England Newspaper. <http://religiousintelligence.org/Churchnewspaper/?p=23985> (Published in print and online on 15/03/12).

²⁸ There is extensive literature dealing with Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Much of this is surveyed by George E. Ladd in *A Theology of the New Testament*, (revised ed.), (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1994), and by N. T. Wright in *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 2004). These two scholarly works discuss the significant contributions made by Schweitzer, Bultmann, Dodd, Jeremias, Cranfield, Allison, Beasley-Murray, Meyer and Dalman among others.

²⁹ The Medellin Documents of the Conference of Latin American Bishops (1968) quoted in Joseph Milburn Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Social Thought* (New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 31.

³⁰ For an introduction to Liberation Theology see Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (new ed.) (London: SCM Press, 2001), and Leonardo Boff, and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996).

malnutrition, inadequate health care, contrasting with the affluence [of the wealthy elites].³¹ Those who cite Jesus' preferential option for the poor, including, but not exclusively those who embrace theologies of liberation, point to the identity of those with whom Jesus chose to spend the majority of his time (the poor), the warnings he aimed at the rich and the explicit message of aspects of his teaching and a number of his parables. In support of this view, particular examples from the gospels³² might include Matthew who, at Jesus' call, abandons his toll-booth,³³ exchanging lucrative employment for a life on the road with a homeless rabbi.³⁴ One might also highlight the account of the rich young ruler³⁵ to whom Jesus said, 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'³⁶ There is the account of Zacchaeus,³⁷ who, upon encountering Jesus, repents of his corrupt and self-seeking existence, returns four times what he has taken from those he has cheated and gives half of his possessions to the poor. In the same chapter Luke records Jesus telling his hearers to, 'Sell your possessions and give to the poor'.³⁸ In Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus tells his hearers, 'Do not store up for yourself treasures on earth but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. You cannot serve both God and money'.³⁹ We might also note Jesus' parable of the rich fool⁴⁰ who resolves to build bigger barns in which to store his surplus, but from whom God demands his life and about whom Jesus says, 'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God'.⁴¹ It is possible to see from these examples how one might begin to construct a case for arguing that Jesus' agenda was firmly anti-wealth and its creation and that following him meant becoming *like* the poor; turning one's back on worldly wealth and time spent in its acquisition and embracing instead a life of austerity, if not outright poverty.

On the other hand there are plenty of examples of Jesus spending time with those who retained and used their wealth and who articulated solidarity with his message. Among examples that might be proffered are Zacchaeus, described by

³¹ Christopher Rowland, (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.

³² In reflecting on Jesus' attitude to wealth in the Gospels I worked with the following commentaries: John Barton, and John Muddiman, (eds.), *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: OUP, 2001); Fred B. Craddock, *Luke: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1990); James D. G. Dunn, (ed.), *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003); Donald English, *The Message of Mark* (Leicester: IVP, 1992); Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997); Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew* (Leicester: IVP, 1998); Douglas A. Hare, *Matthew: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1993); Leander E. Keck, et al., (eds.), *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 9) *Luke, John* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995); William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974); Bruce Milne, *The Message of John* (Leicester: IVP, 1993); Gerard Sloyan, *John: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1988).

³³ Mark 2: 14, Matthew 9: 9, Luke 5: 27-28.

³⁴ See Tom Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 2004), 297-301.

³⁵ Matthew 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, Luke 18: 18-25.

³⁶ Mark 10: 21.

³⁷ Luke 19:1-10.

³⁸ Luke 12: 33.

³⁹ Matthew 6:19-21, 24.

⁴⁰ Luke 12:16-21.

⁴¹ Luke 12: 21.

Luke as wealthy,⁴² who gave away half of his possessions, and about whom Jesus announced, 'Today salvation has come to this household'⁴³ but who appeared to continue living in his home with the remaining half of his possessions and to pursue his occupation as a chief tax collector. Luke also reports that as Jesus travelled with his disciples from village to village proclaiming the kingdom, a large number of women, including the wife of the manager of Herod's household 'were helping to support them out of their own means'.⁴⁴ Joseph of Arimathea is described as a rich man⁴⁵ who is also a disciple of Jesus⁴⁶ who buries Jesus in his own tomb.⁴⁷ In relation to the examples provided about Jesus' attitude to wealth and its creation and use by those around him, Tom Wright argues that it is possible to detect in Jesus' call to various of his followers, different levels of challenge in relation to what must be abandoned and what might be retained. Wright states:

It is clear that, while Jesus was perfectly content for some (like Mary and Martha) to remain loyal to him at a distance, he challenged some others to sell up and join him on the road. Some appear to have been with him from time to time; others to have provided for him and his disciples from their private property, which assumes that they still had property from which to gain income.⁴⁸

We note, therefore, the need to proceed cautiously when attempting to articulate a view of Jesus' attitude to the creation and use of wealth. From what the gospel writers report of Jesus, we receive the impression that the thrust of his teaching was not concerned with opposition to making money in business, or to the fact of personal wealth, but was concerned rather with the *greed* that all too often lay behind these things. As noted above, those contemporaries of Jesus who were his followers and supporters included those who had personal wealth and those whose lives involved them in trade and commerce. Jesus told parables in which merchants and land-owners⁴⁹ were not the focus of disapproval but players in a wider drama. The central point here is that it is *greed* and not wealth or its generation that is inconsistent with Jesus' proclamation of the coming Kingdom of God.⁵⁰ Jesus inaugurates the Kingdom and announces the inevitability of all things, including the creation and use of wealth, being brought under God's sovereign rule⁵¹ and in line, therefore, with principles of justice and provision for all.⁵² This is part of the *Good News* announced by Jesus:⁵³ an end to an unfair system in which abundance for the powerful few was at the cost of scarcity for the powerless majority.⁵⁴ So, although

⁴² Luke 19: 2.

⁴³ Luke 19: 9.

⁴⁴ Luke 8: 1-3.

⁴⁵ Matthew 27: 57.

⁴⁶ John 19: 38.

⁴⁷ Matthew 27: 57-60, Mark 15: 43-46, Luke 23: 50-53, John 19: 38-41.

⁴⁸ Wright, *Jesus*, 298.

⁴⁹ Examples include: Matthew 13: 45-46, Mark 12: 1-12, Luke 15: 11-32 and 16: 1-13.

⁵⁰ Matthew 23: 25, Mark 7: 22, Luke 11: 39 and 12: 15.

⁵¹ Matthew 4: 17, Mark 1: 15.

⁵² See Leviticus 25.

⁵³ Matthew 11: 5, Luke 4: 18.

⁵⁴ See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992).

we may argue that Jesus did not have a particular issue with business and the creation and use of wealth, his understanding of the nature and shape of the coming Kingdom of God led him to say some very significant things about the *place* that wealth and its generation occupied in the heart and life of the individual in relation to God and to others.⁵⁵ For twenty-first century Christians, Jesus' proclamation of the coming Kingdom of God continues to imply consequences for every sphere of human life and work, including business. Jesus' teaching and example echo the Jewish Law and the Prophets and include warnings about the creation of wealth for its own sake,⁵⁶ since at the heart of this lies greed, which is a form of idolatry⁵⁷ and which points to a disregard for the needs of others. Both greed and a disregard for fellow human beings are outward signs of an attitude of the heart that is contrary to that which is demanded by Jesus' summary of the Law⁵⁸ and are therefore inconsistent with the values of the coming Kingdom of God.

The purpose of this brief discussion has been to highlight the fact that where the creation of wealth is motivated by greed (whether individual or corporate), this is in direct conflict with Jesus' proclamation of the coming Kingdom of God. I contend that the suspicion of the term 'entrepreneur' articulated by some Christians may ultimately be rooted in a perception, generated and, to some degree, sustained by the enterprise culture of the 1980s and 1990s outlined by Casson et al., that what motivates wealth-generating entrepreneurial activity is greed. For such Christians, greed indicates a disregard for God and for others, both of which are inconsistent with Jesus' teaching about the coming Kingdom of God. In relation to this point, we must keep in view Casson et al.'s contention that the understanding of the entrepreneur that emerged in enterprise culture was in fact based on a wrong understanding of the entrepreneur when that role is considered in relation to the activity of entrepreneurs at other points in Western history. It is also important to note that although the image of the entrepreneur that emerged in enterprise culture may continue to have a negative impact on the associations some Christians make with the term, social science research in the area of entrepreneurship suggests that generation of wealth is a natural bi-product of entrepreneurial activity rather than a primary motivating factor for many successful entrepreneurs. In commenting on the work of Joseph Schumpeter, Swedberg comments that 'It should be pointed out that money *per se* is not what ultimately motivates the entrepreneur, according to Schumpeter.'⁵⁹ Schumpeter argued that the entrepreneur is driven by 'the desire for power and independence', 'the will to succeed' and 'the satisfaction of getting things done'.⁶⁰ According to significant studies, becoming involved in entrepreneurial activity because it is interesting and enjoyable is a key motivating factor for many entrepreneurs,⁶¹ as is a high need for achievement,⁶² and a desire for autonomy.⁶³ In relation to this last point, Kirby echoes Schumpeter's view in stating that 'desire to

⁵⁵ See Wright, *Jesus*, 302-303.

⁵⁶ Luke 12:13–21.

⁵⁷ Exodus 20:3 and 23.

⁵⁸ Matthew 22: 37-40, Mark 12: 29-31.

⁵⁹ Richard Swedberg, (ed.), *Entrepreneurship: The Social Science View* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 16.

⁶⁰ Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 16.

⁶¹ See Deci and Ryan (1985), Delmar and Witte (2000), Amabile (1997).

⁶² See McClelland's theory of nAch (1961).

⁶³ See Caird (1991), Cromie and O'Donoghue (1992), McClelland (1961).

manage or take ownership of one's own life is a central feature of entrepreneurship'.⁶⁴

As I make deliberate use of the term 'entrepreneur' in relation to Anglican priestly ministry, it is important to note the suspicions and negative associations that some Christians might have and to remain alert to the contested nature of the term. However, my own research in this area proceeds from the belief that the term has much to offer the Church of England when the focus is moved away from wealth-creation and placed instead on a range of visionary and creative qualities that entrepreneurs exhibit and which, when exercised by Anglican priests and lay people in a receptive context, have the potential to produce outcomes that have recognised value for a wider group or groups.

The trouble with a definition...

It is important to acknowledge that there is no agreed definition of the entrepreneur in the social science literature or in common use. Drucker goes as far as saying that there is 'total confusion over the terms entrepreneur and entrepreneurship'.⁶⁵ While Brockhaus and Horwitz point out that 'the literature appears to support the argument that there is no generic definition of the entrepreneur'.⁶⁶ Kuratko and Hodgetts highlight the fact that 'no single definition of 'entrepreneur' exists and no one profile can represent today's entrepreneur'.⁶⁷ Ricketts follows this, explaining that 'Entrepreneurship is not a concept that has a tightly agreed definition'.⁶⁸ Licht and Siegel also acknowledge the lack of an agreed definition for entrepreneurship and, with an economic focus uppermost in their minds, they ask 'for example, whether innovation is a necessary element or does self-employment suffice, or whether self-employment and ownership of a small business firm are equally entrepreneurial'.⁶⁹ They go on to highlight the fact that the lack of '[a widely] agreed definition makes it difficult to compare and even relate studies to one another'.⁷⁰ In the introduction to their work on the entrepreneurial personality, and having highlighted the absence of a 'standard, universally accepted definition of entrepreneurship',⁷¹ Chell et al. quote Livesay who suggests that 'successful entrepreneurship is an art form as much as, or perhaps more than, it is an economic activity, and as such is as difficult as any other artistic activity to explain in terms of origin, method or environmental influence'.⁷²

⁶⁴ David A. Kirby, *Entrepreneurship* (Maidenhead: McGraw Hill Education, 2003), 113.

⁶⁵ Peter F. Drucker, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (Oxford: Elsevier, 1985), 19.

⁶⁶ Robert H. Brockhaus, 'Foreward', in Brockhaus, Robert H. Brockhaus, et al. (eds.), *Entrepreneurship Education: A Global View* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), ix.

⁶⁷ Donald F. Kuratko, and Richard M. Hodgetts, *Entrepreneurship: A Contemporary Approach* (5th ed.), (Sydney: Harcourt College Publishers, 2001), 28.

⁶⁸ Martin Ricketts, *Theories of Entrepreneurship: Historical Development and Critical Assessment*, in Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 34.

⁶⁹ Licht and Siegal in Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 512.

⁷⁰ Licht and Siegal in Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 512.

⁷¹ Elizabeth Chell, et al., *The Entrepreneurial Personality: Concepts, Cases and Categories* (London: Routledge, 1991), 1.

⁷² Livesay (1982), in Chell, et al., *The Entrepreneurial Personality*, 13.

Chell et al. ponder whether persistence in asking questions about *what* entrepreneurship is and *who* the entrepreneurs are is a futile pursuit and they draw on Kilby's (1971) likening of the search for the entrepreneur to hunting the Heffalump to emphasise the point. Kilby writes,

[The Heffalump] is a rather large and very important animal. He has been hunted by many individuals using various ingenious trapping devices, but no one so far has succeeded in capturing him. All who claim to have caught sight of him report that he is enormous, but they disagree on his particularities.⁷³

And it is here that we are able to see and articulate a pertinent issue. The term 'entrepreneur' means different things to different people. The term itself is relatively young and the nature of the activity to which it pertains has evolved, and continues to do so, over time and across cultures. It is widely used in large and small business contexts, in industry, in politics, in the media, the entertainment industries and increasingly in the not-for-profit sector. It continues to be studied, and therefore variously understood, by academics working across the social sciences in a variety of disciplines including economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology⁷⁴ and practical theology. Given the widespread recognition in the literature that there is no agreed definition of entrepreneur or entrepreneurship, and given the diversity of contexts within which these words are in use, I note that no authoritative, widely agreed definition of the entrepreneur straddling the range of practical contexts or academic disciplines is in existence, or indeed, will ever be possible. However, as we shall see, this does not imply that the term is unusable or that we cannot propose and work with a definition that is in sympathy with a mainstream understanding of it.

Origin and evolution of the term 'entrepreneur'

A recognisably modern idea of the entrepreneur began to emerge in Europe, England and the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷⁵ The origin of the word provides us with some helpful insights into the development of the concept. 'Entrepreneur' derives from the French words *entre* meaning 'between' and *prendre*, which is the verb 'to take'. The French verb *entreprendre* means 'to undertake' or 'to do something'.⁷⁶ Bolton and Thompson suggest that these origins might imply that entrepreneur 'was another name for a merchant who acts as a go-between for parties in the trading process'.⁷⁷ Swedberg draws on the work of Hoselitz to argue that the verb 'was originally used in the Middle Ages in the sense

⁷³ Peter M. Kilby, (ed.), *Entrepreneurship and Economic Development* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), in Chell, et al., *The Entrepreneurial Personality*, 2.

⁷⁴ For a survey of the social science literature see, Swedberg, (ed.), *Entrepreneurship*.

⁷⁵ See Sydney G. Checkland, *The Rise of Industrial Society in England 1815-1885* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1964).

⁷⁶ Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 11.

⁷⁷ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 14.

of ‘a person who is active, who gets things done’.⁷⁸ For Bolton and Thompson the origin of the term, entrepreneur, is an important indicator of what the entrepreneur does and achieves, or of the process and results.⁷⁹ They argue that, although the term, entrepreneur, may not have emerged until the eighteenth century, subsequently giving rise to a range of commercially-related understandings that shape our modern understanding of it, it is possible to identify the entrepreneur throughout history. They draw on the French verb *entreprendre* and explain that this relates to undertaking a venture ‘but it can also be used in relation to starting a new venture, and this is central to the use of the word ‘entrepreneur’ in English’.⁸⁰

In the view of Bolton and Thompson it is possible to identify figures throughout history including figures in scripture as entrepreneurs because the process of entrepreneurship is not shackled to the emergence of the word in eighteenth century France or the subsequent evolution of the concept in economic theory.⁸¹ Casson et al. assert that ‘the term ‘entrepreneur’ appears to have been introduced into economic theory by Richard Cantillon (1759), an Irish economist of French descent’.⁸² In his theory of the entrepreneur, presented in a work entitled *Essay on the Nature of Commerce in General* (circa 1730), Cantillon ‘stresses function, rather than personality or social status’.⁸³ ‘According to Cantillon, the entrepreneur is a specialist in taking risk.’⁸⁴ This notion is consistent with Bolton and Thompson’s association of the word with a merchant acting as go-between for trading parties; an undertaking that would almost certainly involve personal financial risk. Drawing on Hebert and Link,⁸⁵ de Montoya writes ‘Cantillon’s entrepreneur is someone who engages in exchanges for profit, using business judgement in a situation of uncertainty, buying at one price to sell at another, uncertain price in the future.’⁸⁶ Cantillon’s entrepreneur

insures workers by buying their output for resale before consumers have indicated how much they are willing to pay for it. The workers receive an assured income, while the entrepreneur bears the risk caused by price fluctuations in consumer markets.⁸⁷

De Montoya tells us that as well as highlighting the bearing of risk as a function of the entrepreneur, Cantillon also identified:

business judgement, or decision-making as important to entrepreneurship; a theme echoed by Marshall (1925), Mises (1951) and Schultz (1980) among others such as Kirzner (1985) who writes of the entrepreneur as someone who

⁷⁸ Bert Hoselitz, *The Early History of Entrepreneurial Theory: Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* 3 (1951), 193-220, in Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 11.

⁷⁹ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 14.

⁸⁰ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 15.

⁸¹ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 14-16.

⁸² Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 3.

⁸³ Monica Lindh de Montoya, in Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 338.

⁸⁴ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 3.

⁸⁵ Robert F. Hebert, and Albert N. Link, *The Entrepreneur: Mainstream Views and Radical Critiques* (New York: Praeger, 1988).

⁸⁶ de Montoya, in Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 338.

⁸⁷ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 3.

discovers profit opportunities and is an allocator of resources among alternative possible uses.⁸⁸

This identification of the entrepreneur with judgement and decision-making is picked up by Casson et al. who, argue that the insights of economists such as Cantillon (1759), Marshall (1919), Knight (1921), Schumpeter (1934), von Hayek (1937) and Kirzner (1973) ‘can be synthesized by identifying an entrepreneurial function that is common to all approaches. This is the exercise of judgement in decision making’.⁸⁹

John Stuart Mill, whose writing highlights an important distinction between the entrepreneur (or undertaker) and the manager, is credited with introducing the term, entrepreneur, into English economics in the mid-nineteenth century.⁹⁰ Mill stated that the profit from an undertaking engaged in by an entrepreneur had to be sufficient to provide

a sufficient equivalent for abstinence, indemnity for risk, and remuneration for the labour and skill required for superintendence. While the difference between the interest and the gross profit remunerates the exertions and risks of the undertaker.⁹¹

Mill’s use of the phrase ‘indemnity for risk’ is highly significant and is likely to have influenced his choice of the word ‘undertaker’ rather than manager when outlining the function of the entrepreneur. Although Cantillon is credited as being the first to identify the bearing of risk as a key function or specialism of the entrepreneur, the reward for which is profit, in Mill’s writing we have, *in English*, the beginning of the association of the entrepreneur, or one who undertakes, with the notion of risk bearing; an association which continues to the present day. The association has been contested by some, the most prominent of whom is Joseph A. Schumpeter,⁹² for whom ‘the supply of capital and the supply of entrepreneurial services were quite distinct, and risk attached to the former not the latter’.⁹³ Schumpeter’s work will be discussed in a little more depth shortly. In his book, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit*,⁹⁴ the US economist Frank Knight worked with and developed Cantillon’s ideas and ‘distinguished between risk, which is insurable, and uncertainty, which is not’.⁹⁵ According to Knight ‘Risk refers to recurrent events whose relative frequency is known from past experience, while uncertainty relates to unique events whose probability can only be subjectively estimated.’⁹⁶ In Knight’s opinion, the majority of risks relating to production and marketing fell into the second of these two

⁸⁸ de Montoya, in Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 338.

⁸⁹ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 3.

⁹⁰ Joseph A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954), 556.

⁹¹ John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy: The People’s Edition*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1898), pp. 245-6.

⁹² See Joseph A. Schumpeter, *The Theory of Economic Development* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1911).

⁹³ Martin Ricketts, *The Entrepreneur in Classical Political Economy*, in Casson et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 41.

⁹⁴ Frank H. Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1921).

⁹⁵ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 3.

categories. The owners of businesses cannot insure against such risks, argued Knight, which meant that they themselves were left to bear them. Casson et al. report that for Knight 'Pure profit is the reward for bearing this uninsurable risk: it is the reward of the entrepreneur.'⁹⁷

As mentioned, above, the writing of Joseph A. Schumpeter has arguably contributed most to popular notions of entrepreneurship. According to Casson et al. Schumpeter was 'concerned with the 'high level' kind of entrepreneurship that, historically, has led to the creation of railways, the development of the chemical industry, and the growth of integrated oil companies.'⁹⁸ He viewed the entrepreneur as a revolutionary innovator who, in creating new industries, participated in major structural changes in the economy. He emphasized the importance of the entrepreneur in national economic development and is responsible for the metaphor 'gale of creative destruction'⁹⁹ which describes the 'competitive processes of capitalist development.'¹⁰⁰ The 'unceasing gale derives from the energy of entrepreneurs'.¹⁰¹ Ricketts tells us that for Schumpeter, entrepreneurship is 'the force that prevents the economic system running down and continually resists the approach of the classic stationary state'.¹⁰² This notion is particularly interesting when transferred to the context of the Church of England, where one might argue that the presence and activity of entrepreneurial priests and lay people are a force that prevent the institution as a whole from 'running down' and becoming stationary.

In as much as it is to be found in a particular place, Schumpeter's theory of the entrepreneur is articulated in the second chapter (*Entrepreneurship as Innovation*) of the translated version (1934) of the second edition (1926) of *The Theory of Economic Development*.¹⁰³ It is here that Schumpeter

says that entrepreneurship can be defined as the making of a 'new combination' of already existing materials and forces; that entrepreneurship consists of making innovations, as opposed to inventions; and that no one is an entrepreneur for ever, only when he or she is actually doing the innovative activity.¹⁰⁴

The emphasis here is on function: what the entrepreneur *does*, so that we might say that for Schumpeter particular individuals engage in necessary entrepreneurial activity from time to time. Schumpeter's emphasis on discontinuous activity differs from that of Bolton and Thompson who tie identity and function together more tightly and associate the entrepreneur's ability to innovate with habit. For Bolton

⁹⁶ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 3.

⁹⁷ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 3.

⁹⁸ Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 3.

⁹⁹ Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942),132.

¹⁰⁰ Ricketts, in Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 46.

¹⁰¹ Ricketts, in Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 46.

¹⁰² Ricketts, in Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 46.

¹⁰³ Swedberg reviews Schumpeter's contribution to economic thought with particular attention to his theory of entrepreneurship which, Swedberg points out 'is part of an attempt to construct a whole new type of economic theory'. Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 12.

¹⁰⁴ Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 15.

and Thompson, the entrepreneur *habitually* engages in creative innovation in order to ‘build something of recognised value’.¹⁰⁵ Whereas Schumpeter focused on the entrepreneur as a person with ‘the vision and willpower to “found a private kingdom”’¹⁰⁶ and who performed a vital economic function by engaging in ‘revolutionary and discontinuous’¹⁰⁷ innovation, Bolton and Thompson’s entrepreneur ‘just cannot stop being an entrepreneur’,¹⁰⁸ and is likely to be found in any number of contexts beyond the world of business and commerce.

Entrepreneurs: Talent, Temperament, Technique

In *Entrepreneurs: Talent, Temperament, Technique*, (2004) Bolton and Thompson set out their understanding and definition of the entrepreneur.¹⁰⁹ The first part of the book deals with the talent and temperament of entrepreneurs. Here Bolton and Thompson ask *who* the entrepreneur is. They begin by presenting their definition of the entrepreneur and reviewing the relevant research literature. They go on to explain their use of Talent, Temperament and Technique and to examine ways in which it might be possible to identify entrepreneurs. The first part of the book concludes with an exploration of the strategic contribution of entrepreneurs. In the second part of the book Bolton and Thompson provide practical examples to show how the three factors of talent, temperament and technique combine to produce entrepreneurs. These are the *what?* questions: what does an entrepreneur do? What happens in the real world? What do they achieve? In the third part of the book technique and entrepreneurial environment are examined. These are the *how?* questions: how do entrepreneurs do what they do? In this final section of the book Bolton and Thompson explore the practical issues of finding, developing and supporting entrepreneurs.

In light of my earlier comments on the contested nature of the term entrepreneur, Bolton and Thompson’s remarks about their hoped-for outcomes from the book are interesting. They write

¹⁰⁵ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹⁰⁶ Ricketts, in Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 46.

¹⁰⁷ Ricketts, in Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 46.

¹⁰⁸ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹⁰⁹ Bolton and Thompson’s work on entrepreneurship has been used with Anglican clergy in the dioceses of Chelmsford and Southwell (this information was provided by e-mail by Bill Bolton on 22/12/11), and by the Church of England more widely in relation to the selection of Ordained Pioneer Ministers. A review of the selection procedures for ordained pioneer ministry in 2010 included the following statement: ‘The candidate would also have to complete on-line Bill Bolton’s test to measure entrepreneurial capacity.’ Paper 3, *Selection Process for Candidates for Pioneer Ministry: Pre-Conference Paperwork*, 7., MC(10)04, The Archbishop’s Council, Ministry Council, *Review of the Selection Procedures for Ordained Pioneer Ministry* (March 2010). The test to which the report makes reference is Bolton and Thompson’s First Screening Entrepreneur Indicator (hereafter referred to as FSEI). The FSEI is an online tool that assesses entrepreneurial potential. My doctoral research utilised the FSEI to generate research data. The Church of England’s use of Bolton and Thompson’s work prompted my own professional and research engagement with their writing and with the FSEI. It is also important to note that Bolton is an Anglican Lay Reader in the diocese of Chelmsford. This factor is highly significant since it prompted and informed much of his thinking in the area of entrepreneurship and, in my view, made him an ideal research partner. My evolving research interest in Bolton and Thompson’s work resulted in a five-hour face-to-face interview with Bolton in London on 17 February 2011. In November 2011, at my invitation, Bolton gave a public lecture on *Kingdom Entrepreneurs* at St. John’s College, Durham.

We hope that it [the book] will make you think differently about entrepreneurs and understand that not all of them are out there making money at other people's expense. We would like to redeem the word 'entrepreneur' and give it a more positive image linking it with concepts such as integrity and philanthropy. Our emphasis on entrepreneurial talent, as being something a person is given, promotes that end.¹¹⁰

They go on to say that:

'We want entrepreneurs to become both socially acceptable and academically respectable. Only when this happens will the culture barriers in society come down'.¹¹¹

Other outcomes that Bolton and Thompson hope will result from their provision of insight into what entrepreneurs do and achieve include: a desire that various financial and bureaucratic hurdles to entrepreneurship are removed; those with the potential to be entrepreneurs are given opportunities, and those who work in large organisations become more enterprising. Their hopes apply to those working entrepreneurially in a diverse range of contexts. The attention that Bolton and Thompson pay to entrepreneurial behaviour in a range of contexts was one of the factors that made their understanding of the entrepreneur particularly helpful in the context of my own research. Among the most significant of their hopes is their desire that the role that 'clusters of entrepreneurs can play in economic and social development [is] recognised'.¹¹² They argue that:

A few entrepreneurs can make a difference but when there are many of them and their number reaches a critical mass, a region or community simply takes off. Economic growth and social development become self-sustaining and an entrepreneurial culture develops.¹¹³

They provide examples of this, including the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution and examples of the current high-technology revolution such as the Silicon Valley phenomenon. They point out that some argue that those with real entrepreneurial flair will simply get on with it regardless of whether they are alone and in spite of the difficulties involved. However, they explain that they do not subscribe to the 'macho view of entrepreneurship'¹¹⁴ and point out that when the environment is not receptive to entrepreneurs 'there will be significantly fewer of them and it is the number of entrepreneurs that is the critical factor'.¹¹⁵ In the context of my own research, the point about clusters of entrepreneurs is pertinent since the dominant model of Anglican priestly ministry is that of the priest essentially operating alone, or possibly with a small leadership team. Clergy are, of course, members of their

¹¹⁰ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 5.

¹¹¹ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 5.

¹¹² Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 6.

¹¹³ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 6.

¹¹⁴ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 6.

¹¹⁵ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 6.

deanery chapter and are encouraged to gather regularly with their local colleagues in this forum. However, reflecting on my personal experience of attendance at many deanery chapter meetings in a variety of contexts, and given the house-keeping nature of the business that tends to dominate such gatherings, I suggest that this is not a forum that can be realistically compared with what Bolton and Thompson have in mind when they talk about clusters of entrepreneurs. If we take Bolton and Thompson's point about the importance of entrepreneurial clusters seriously, it is worth noting that where the Anglican priests interviewed as part of the empirical element of the current study are engaged in entrepreneurial activity, they would appear to be doing so in spite of their environment rather than as a result of it.

In moving towards a definition of the entrepreneur, Bolton and Thompson point out that entrepreneurs are 'a minority group',¹¹⁶ and do not fit a particular *type*. Both of these points had significance for my research and were to some extent confirmed by the empirical work both in my pilot study and in subsequent data generation. The pilot study involved fourteen members of the academic teaching staff at St. John's College, Durham. Of these, four (a minority) achieved relatively high scores in the FSEI. Follow-up interviews with these four confirmed Bolton and Thompson's assertion that entrepreneurs do not fit a 'type'. Two were male and two female, three were married, one single. Each differed from the others in terms of family, educational, employment and financial backgrounds. In short, they didn't easily fit a 'type' either in relation to each other or a particular notion of the entrepreneur. Bolton and Thompson's points about minority and 'type' were also supported by the experience of the wider data generation during my doctoral research. The eighteen priests in the wider data generation were male and female, married and single, ranging in age and differing from one another in terms of family, education, employment and financial backgrounds. The one area in which all the respondents showed little variation was ethnicity, with all being white European or white American. Significantly, Bolton and Thompson also contend that 'our education system and our professions – to name but two factors – not only inhibit the flowering of entrepreneurial talent, they positively discourage it'.¹¹⁷ Given that the current study has emerged from my own professional practice as a theological educator, a position which involves me in delivering training for those seeking to exercise priestly ministry, this last point is pertinent and, although there is not space in this article to explore the impact on entrepreneurial priests of clergy training and the move towards professionalisation, I note that Bolton and Thompson's point provokes reflection on the pedagogy underpinning and informing not only my own professional practice but that of Initial Ministerial Education (IME)¹¹⁸ and Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD).¹¹⁹

Having argued that the 'who' question in relation to entrepreneurs is difficult, Bolton and Thompson go on to state that the 'what' is easier because the answer is based on what the entrepreneur does (i.e. the process) or on what the entrepreneur

¹¹⁶ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 14.

¹¹⁷ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 14.

¹¹⁸ 'Church of England'. <http://www.Churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/ministry/ministerial-education-and-development/initial-ministerial-education.aspx> (12/06/12).

¹¹⁹ 'Church of England'. <http://www.Churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/ministry/ministerial-education-and-development/continuing-ministerial-development.aspx> (12/06/12).

achieves (i.e. the results). In constructing their definition of the entrepreneur, Bolton and Thompson state that they ‘see the ‘who’ as a person and the ‘what’ as a process that is habitual and involves creativity and innovation and results in something of value that can be recognised by others’.¹²⁰ They go on to remark that ‘The building process, of course, first needs an opportunity to build on and this is something the entrepreneur is always able to spot.’¹²¹ Bolton and Thompson’s definition of the entrepreneur is

‘A person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognised value around perceived opportunities.’¹²²

‘A person’

Bolton and Thompson explain that in opening their definition with ‘a person’ their aim is to emphasise the involvement of personality rather than a system and that ‘a person’ can be a group of people since ‘it is possible to describe teams and even organisations as entrepreneurial’.¹²³ In this, Bolton and Thompson echo Schumpeter’s later writing, in which he expressed the view that ‘the entrepreneur does not have to be a single person but can equally well be an organisation, either a political or an economic one. What matters is behaviour, not the actor’.¹²⁴ In an ideal situation entrepreneurial priests would find themselves operating as members of entrepreneurial teams within an entrepreneurial organisation. In reality entrepreneurial priests are likely to be working alone and against the grain since local congregations, as well as the Church of England more generally, tend, like most large organisations, towards an inherent conservatism. Entrepreneurial priests will find ways to satisfy their habitual entrepreneurial flair. With grace and wisdom this has the potential to be well directed and to gain and retain the support of the congregation, resulting in the creation of real value at a range of levels. At worst there is the risk of the entrepreneurial priest being responsible for starting initiatives that the congregation are unwilling or unable to support, or which result in the priest being viewed by the institution as difficult, eccentric or otherwise problematic. Kirby picks up on what is at the heart of the last point, stating that

Enterprising individuals are often not attracted to large organisations and tend not to be found in them. When they are, either they become worn down by bureaucracy or they leave. Often, large organisations see such people as loners rather than team players, or as eccentrics more interested in pet projects than corporate objectives. They are frequently viewed as cynics, rebels, free spirits.¹²⁵

The Church of England is a large institution and it is possible to recognise Kirby’s point in relation to it. It is possible to make a challenging contrast between the radical life and teaching of Jesus Christ (and the example of the early Christians) with the church as it developed into an institution through the ages and across the

¹²⁰ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹²¹ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹²² Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹²³ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹²⁴ Schumpeter, in Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 17.

¹²⁵ Kirby, *Entrepreneurship*, 302.

globe. In spite of the fact that the contrast is all-too-easily simplified, the tension between the radical and the institutional is an inherent part of the story of the church and is something with which it continues to wrestle. The perception and treatment of entrepreneurial priests by others in the institution is an aspect of that struggle.

The terms ‘organisational entrepreneurship’, ‘corporate entrepreneurship’ and ‘intrapreneurship’ have all become popular ways of describing the ‘process in which innovative products or processes are developed by creating an entrepreneurial culture within an organisation’.¹²⁶ Whether the Church of England is moving in this direction is outside the scope of this article. The point here is to note that entrepreneurial priests cannot accurately be described as ‘intrapreneurs’ simply because they work for a large organisation. According to Kirby, intrapreneurship is a deliberate and strategic approach by large organisations to ‘integrate the strengths of the entrepreneurial small firm (creativity, flexibility, innovativeness, closeness to market, etc) with the market power and financial resources of the large organisation’.¹²⁷ The Church of England has not adopted an explicitly intrapreneurial approach at any level and I suggest that those priests who act entrepreneurially do so because it is in their nature to act in this way and not because the organisation of which they are a part has made any deliberate strategic effort to encourage this type of activity. It might be helpful to point out that while intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship share characteristics such as a focus on innovation, the creation of value-added products and an involvement in ‘risky’ activities, there are a number of significant differences. Kirby tells us that ‘intrapreneurship is restorative while entrepreneurship is developmental’.¹²⁸ Intrapreneurship is ‘intended to counter stagnation within the organisation’.¹²⁹ Kirby goes on to say that ‘while the entrepreneur is concerned to overcome obstacles in the market, the intrapreneur has to overcome corporate obstacles’.¹³⁰ I contend that the priest acting entrepreneurially has to overcome both!

While Bolton and Thompson state that ‘a person’ can be either an individual or a group of people, in *Faith Entrepreneurs* (2006), Michael Simms contends that being ‘an agent of change who adds value through creatively and passionately launching bold initiatives, all the while taking calculated risks *for God*’¹³¹ is never a solitary venture. Simms argues that, for those acting entrepreneurially ‘for God’, the key is to join with likeminded others whom he describes as ‘gifted and passionate visionaries and implementers who help define our mission, help assess needs, analyse opportunities, and work together in meeting human needs and operating in our community’.¹³² Although the lack of presence and availability of likeminded others may well be an issue for entrepreneurial priests working in rural or socially-challenging contexts, the priest’s role, summarised in the *Common Worship* Preface to

¹²⁶ Kirby, *Entrepreneurship*, 300.

¹²⁷ Kirby, *Entrepreneurship*, 300.

¹²⁸ Kirby, *Entrepreneurship*, 300.

¹²⁹ Kirby, *Entrepreneurship*, 300.

¹³⁰ Kirby, *Entrepreneurship*, 300.

¹³¹ Michael Keith Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs: Empowering People by Faith, Nonprofit Organisational Leadership, and Entrepreneurship* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2006), 22-23.

¹³² Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 23.

the Ordination of Priests,¹³³ obliges the entrepreneurial priest to attempt to seek out and utilise whatever others have to offer¹³⁴ as they endeavor to ‘habitually create and innovate to build something of recognised value’.¹³⁵

‘Habitually’

Bolton and Thompson tell us that ‘habitually’ is the characteristic that distinguishes entrepreneurs from owner-managers in business and they explain, as noted, above, that ‘the true entrepreneur just cannot stop being an entrepreneur’.¹³⁶ To illustrate this point they quote entrepreneur Bo Peabody, who says ‘People ask me how to become an entrepreneur and I can’t tell them. It’s something innate. I couldn’t stop even if I wanted to.’¹³⁷ Ucbasaran, Westhead and Wright comment that the ‘evidence generally suggests that habitual entrepreneurs are a widespread phenomenon’.¹³⁸

For Simms faith entrepreneurs act as change agents in the social sector and one of the ways in which they achieve this is by ‘recognising and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission’.¹³⁹ We might argue that Simms’s word ‘relentless’ catches something of what Bolton and Thompson have in mind when they use the word, ‘habitual’. While ‘relentless’ arguably implies a less rhythmic or sustainable approach to activity than ‘habitual’, both words open up a hugely important theme in relation to those who engage in entrepreneurial activity, and that is consistency of involvement in entrepreneurial activities over time. For Bolton and Thompson and for Simms, the entrepreneur *consistently* builds things of recognised value. They start a project, or a number of projects, that are very likely linked together, and as each project reaches completion, they begin something new. One successful project leads to the next, or may even open up the opportunity for the next, and so it goes on. Entrepreneurial priests may experience less fertile seasons when, because of illness, family concerns or the sheer weight of other demands, entrepreneurial activity is ticking over or even temporarily placed on hold. But this will not be the normal state of affairs, and what marks the entrepreneurial priest out is that ‘normal’ operating mode will involve the experience of being driven towards ‘habitually creating and innovating to build something of recognised value.’¹⁴⁰

‘Creates’

Bolton and Thompson explain that the word ‘creates’ features in their definition in order to highlight that ‘entrepreneurs start from scratch and bring something into being that was not there before’.¹⁴¹ This notion has particular significance in the

¹³³ ‘Church of England’,

<http://www.Churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/ordinal/priests.aspx> (16/06/12).

¹³⁴ Moynagh points out that ‘entrepreneurship is a team process’ and explains that it ‘involves a variety of activities’, and ‘requires one or more teams rather than a single person’.

He goes on to say that entrepreneurs ‘contribute to the team in many different ways, depending on their capabilities and personal traits’. Moynagh, *Church for*, 230.

¹³⁵ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹³⁶ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹³⁷ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹³⁸ Deniz Ucbasaran, Paul Westhead and Mike Wright, in Casson, et al., *Oxford Handbook*, 464.

¹³⁹ Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 25.

¹⁴⁰ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹⁴¹ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

context of my research since the concept of creativity has enormous theological traction for Christians. Simms remarks that ‘If we catch God’s entrepreneurial vision... creativity and dreaming become the norm’.¹⁴² Each Sunday Anglican priests lead worship in which a confession of faith includes a statement of belief in a creator God.¹⁴³ Christians believe that in some sense human beings are created in the image of God¹⁴⁴ and might therefore express something of God’s creativity in their own lives.¹⁴⁵ In Bolton and Thompson’s view this creativity is clearly in evidence in the entrepreneur and is an essential element in the process of entrepreneurship. According to von Hayek, it is not just that the entrepreneur is creative and exercises creativity in the process of building something, but that ‘new and unknown knowledge is being *created* through the process of entrepreneurship. To be an entrepreneur implies a ‘discovery process’.¹⁴⁶ Monica Lindh de Montoya tells us that Kirzner also ‘emphasised entrepreneurship as a creative act of discovery’.¹⁴⁷ These views dovetail well with the Christian understanding of discipleship as an ongoing and relational process of discovery of God, of others, of self and of the nature of living as created beings, made in the image of a creator-God, in a created world.¹⁴⁸ In *The White Spider*, a classic work in mountaineering rather than economic literature, Heinrich Harrer writes of the ‘enterprising and daring men’¹⁴⁹ and their ‘out-of-the-ordinary ideas’¹⁵⁰ and tells us that it is ‘the eternal longing of every truly creative [person] to push on into unexplored country, to discover something entirely new’.¹⁵¹ I suggest a link between the sentiment communicated by Harrer’s words and the nature of entrepreneurship that Bolton and Thompson outline and which I am exploring in relation to Anglican entrepreneurial priests. The notion of ‘enterprising and daring’ *priests* with ‘out-of-the-ordinary ideas’ and a creativity of spirit that continually provokes exploration into unexplored places and opportunities as part of a process of building things that did not exist before is a stimulating one. My research was motivated in part by a desire to engage with such priests, to learn from them and to share knowledge and insights with the wider church in order that it might be better equipped to participate in the building of God’s kingdom. I note however, a view articulated by Duncan and colleagues, with which I do not concur but which is nonetheless a view that one might argue appears to be present to varying degrees in the various forums of the Church of England. Duncan writes,

¹⁴² Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 21.

¹⁴³ The Nicene Creed and the Apostles’ Creed include references to God as ‘maker’ (Nicene) and ‘creator’ (Apostles’).

¹⁴⁴ Genesis 1: 27.

¹⁴⁵ For an exploration of this theme see Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker* (London: Continuum, 2004), and Oliver Davis, *The Creativity of God: World, Eucharist, Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁴⁶ Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 20.

¹⁴⁷ Monica Lindh de Montoya, *Entrepreneurship and Culture: The Case of Freddy, the Strawberry Man*, in Swedberg, *Entrepreneurship*, 339.

¹⁴⁸ The use of ‘creator’ and ‘created’ in relation to God, the world and human beings, is to be distinguished from ‘creationism’.

¹⁴⁹ Heinrich Harrer, *The White Spider: The Story of the North Face of the Eiger* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 30.

¹⁵⁰ Harrer, *The White Spider*, 30.

¹⁵¹ Harrer, *The White Spider*, 29.

Creative people are, to be honest, a pain in the neck. They disrupt the established order by asking questions and experimenting with new ways of doing things when well-established procedures are available to provide direction.¹⁵²

It is this negative view of the creativity demonstrated by entrepreneurs that leads to opposition to some of their initiatives and it is overcoming such opposition that is one of the challenges outlined under the next heading.

‘Innovates’

Bolton and Thompson include innovation in their definition, arguing that it differs from creativity in its importance to delivering the final application of the entrepreneurial venture. It is innovation, they argue, that ensures that ideas generated by creativity become reality. According to Bolton and Thompson, entrepreneurs ‘use their innovative talents to overcome obstacles that would stop most people. For them every problem is a new opportunity’.¹⁵³ Simms echoes this, stating that

Entrepreneurship is about seeing, sizing and seizing new opportunities. This means taking on challenges in new ways, acting boldly and taking risks whilst expecting results that change lives. Change stands at the heart of entrepreneurship.¹⁵⁴

Simms anticipates obstacles and difficulties for the faith entrepreneur, arguing that ‘to get new results it’s necessary to challenge existing mindsets’.¹⁵⁵ Challenge of this kind is arguably the most difficult of territories to navigate, and is central to the experience of the Anglican entrepreneurial priest since, unless the entrepreneurial priest identifies projects or opportunities that are in line with the congregation’s norms and expectations, it is the hearts and minds of the members of the congregation that are likely to need changing before the process of building something of recognised value can be embarked upon. Simms goes on to state that

Entrepreneurs introduce new rules and new conditions for living. They don’t accept what everyone else sees as reality. They look for a new reality behind what is seen by others. They go deeper to discover the truth that sheds light on what is masquerading as truth. They probe and investigate and consider alternatives. They develop new initiatives to bring the truth and power of God’s kingdom to bear on our temporal world.¹⁵⁶

In this Simms outlines a role for the entrepreneur that is, one might argue, prophetic in its nature.¹⁵⁷ As well as working with those whose minds may need changing and who may need to be helped to see differently, Simms’ entrepreneurs also have to

¹⁵² W. Jack Duncan, Peter M. Ginter, Andrew C. Rucks, and T. Douglas Jacobs, (1988) *Intrapreneurship and the Reinvention of the Corporation*. *Business Horizons* 31 (3), 16-21.

¹⁵³ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 16.

¹⁵⁴ Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 22.

¹⁵⁵ Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 22.

¹⁵⁶ Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 22.

¹⁵⁷ For treatment of the nature of ‘prophetic ministry’ see Walter Brueggemann *The Prophetic Imagination* (2nd ed.), (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001).

overcome difficulties in terms of lack of resources or bureaucratic obstacles. To do this, Simms, in line with Bolton and Thompson, argues that entrepreneurs engage in a 'process of continuous innovation, adaptation, learning',¹⁵⁸ and by 'acting boldly without being limited to resources currently in hand'.¹⁵⁹ Simms explains that the faith entrepreneur 'Sees needs and seeks new ways to meet those needs – with little regard for what has been tried or never attempted.'¹⁶⁰ Simms' point resonates with my own experience of pioneering work as an entrepreneurial priest. I frequently heard the mantras, "We tried that once and it didn't work!" or, "We don't do that sort of thing here!". In response to this I developed strategies for shaping a culture in which ideas that were perceived to be out of kilter with a previous culture could be generated, discussed and absorbed with enthusiasm and anticipation.¹⁶¹

Kirby points out that large organisations inherently have too many levels of approval and argues that 'Multiple levels of management tend to stultify innovation as each level has the potential to kill the project'.¹⁶² The Church of England doesn't quite have multiple levels of management and, in the sense that they are not 'managed', the majority of parish priests operate with a fair degree of autonomy. However, for entrepreneurial priests in an episcopally-led church, seeking to build something of recognised value, there will clearly be a need for large initiatives to gain the support of deanery colleagues and senior staff within the diocese, including the Archdeacon and possibly the Bishop himself. Here, Kirby's point about the potential death of projects at the hands of various levels of management has some traction. It is outside the scope of the current study, but one might question whether entrepreneurial priests are more likely to opt for undertaking local, low-key, low-cost and potentially low-impact initiatives over larger projects because this leaves them in control of the situation rather than risking the death of an idea further up the hierarchy.

'To build something'

Bolton and Thompson include the phrase 'to build something' in their definition in order to describe the *aim* of the process referred to in the phrase 'habitually creates and innovates'. According to Bolton and Thompson, entrepreneurs 'build an entity that can be identified and is not just an idea or a concept though it may start that way'.¹⁶³ Entrepreneurial priests are those who *do* things, or get things done, rather than those who have a hundred great ideas before breakfast and realise none of them. The following part of Bolton and Thompson's definition has a bearing here. The building of the 'something' must be taken through to completion. According to Bolton and Thompson's definition the 'something' that is built must be 'of recognised value' and for this to be the case, the work cannot be left half-finished.

¹⁵⁸ Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 25.

¹⁵⁹ Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 25.

¹⁶⁰ Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 20.

¹⁶¹ For an account of my pioneering work as an entrepreneurial priest see Michael Volland, *Through the Pilgrim Door: Pioneering a Fresh Expression of Church* (Survivor: Eastbourne, 2009).

¹⁶² Kirby, *Entrepreneurship*, 301.

¹⁶³ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 17.

‘Of recognised value’

Bolton and Thompson point out that the generally held view of the entrepreneur is that they create financial capital. In their use of the phrase, ‘of recognised value’, they state that they want to broaden the definition beyond financial capital and ‘expand upon the use of the word ‘entrepreneur’ so that it also includes those who create social capital and aesthetic capital’.¹⁶⁴ In a Grove booklet, Bolton adds ‘spiritual capital’ to the forms of capital already mentioned. Bolton defines spiritual capital as, ‘All the Father’s riches made available to the disciples of his Son, Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer’.¹⁶⁵ He explains that the same talents are used to create all kinds of capital but reminds us that in his view, entrepreneurs do not focus on capital. He argues that ‘Their target is to build something of recognised value. In the process they both use capital and create it but essentially it is a by-product of their building enterprise.’¹⁶⁶ Drawing on the work of Fukuyama, Bolton argues that spiritual capital can enhance social capital. Making reference to the Great Awakening of the nineteenth century, Fukuyama discusses the connection between Christian faith and transformed social conditions. He writes ‘In the battles against alcoholism, gambling, slavery, delinquency and prostitution and in the building of a dense network of voluntary institutions ministers and lay believers were the footsoldiers’.¹⁶⁷ This view of the link between spiritual and social capital is echoed by Simms, who argues that those who catch God’s entrepreneurial vision ‘can become agents for change in families and communities [and] help connect people of faith to their divine mission of meeting needs of people in society’.¹⁶⁸ We might expect to identify entrepreneurial priests through evidence of the generation of spiritual and social capital at a congregational level and, if the congregation catches the vision for wider community transformation, one might expect to see evidence of the generation of social capital in the wider community.

‘Around perceived opportunities’

Direction and focus are provided, argue Bolton and Thompson, by the inclusion of ‘perceived opportunities’. The entrepreneur may not have original ideas ‘but spotting the opportunity to exploit the idea is a characteristic of the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs see something others miss or only see in retrospect’.¹⁶⁹ Simms states that ‘A faith entrepreneur sees what others are blind to and dreams of new realities.’¹⁷⁰ Kirzner’s approach to entrepreneurship was marked out by an emphasis on ‘alertness’. For Kirzner the profit gained by the successful entrepreneur was not a reward for bearing uncertainty but for being alert to, and taking action on, previously unnoticed opportunities. In discussing Kirzner’s focus on alertness, Ricketts reports that, ‘The gains from trade have to be *noticed* before they can be

¹⁶⁴ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 17.

¹⁶⁵ Bill Bolton, *The Entrepreneur and the Church* (Grove Pastoral Series. P 107) (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2006), 21.

¹⁶⁶ Bolton, *The Entrepreneur and the Church*, 19.

¹⁶⁷ Francis Fukuyama, *The Great Disruption – Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order* (London: Profile Books, 1999), pp16-17 in Bolton, *The Entrepreneur and the Church*, 21.

¹⁶⁸ Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 20.

¹⁶⁹ Bolton and Thompson, *Entrepreneurs*, 17.

¹⁷⁰ Simms, *Faith Entrepreneurs*, 21.

achieved.¹⁷¹ I note that the *Common Worship Preface to the Ordination of Priests* states that ‘They share with the Bishop the oversight of the Church’.¹⁷² I contend that a crucial aspect of exercising oversight is alertness.¹⁷³ The priest’s sharing in the oversight of the church is to the end that the people of God ‘grow into the fullness of Christ’.¹⁷⁴ Facilitating this growth requires, among other things, consistent alertness to opportunities to undertake the task in new and appropriate ways. In recent years, the Church of England has made a more active commitment to seeking to select, train and deploy priests who are alert to opportunities in ministry and mission. Evidence for this is to be found in the 2005 report, *Formation for Ministry in a Learning Church*,¹⁷⁵ which states that the church seeks ministers who, among other things ‘Are passionate about the transformation of the whole created order into one that reflects the redemptive love of God’.¹⁷⁶ In light of this report, I suggest that Anglican priests who are to be selected, trained and deployed to be catalysts and participants in *transformation* must necessarily (and therefore increasingly) be those who, to varying degrees, are alert to opportunities to bring about transformation.¹⁷⁷ Further evidence of the Church of England’s recognition of the need to deploy priests who are alert to a range of opportunities for the sort of entrepreneurial activity that will effect transformation is found woven into the ‘Learning outcome statements for ordained ministry within the Church of England’,¹⁷⁸ contained in the report which state that, at *selection* candidates should ‘Demonstrate a passion for mission that is reflected in action’. At the point of *ordination* candidates should be able to ‘Participate in and reflect on the mission of God in a selected range of social, ethical, cultural, religious and intellectual contexts in which Christian witness is to be lived out in acts of mercy, service and justice.’¹⁷⁹ In addition they should be able to ‘Engage in and reflect upon practices of mission and evangelism, changing forms of church, and their relation to contexts, cultures, religions and contemporary spiritualities.’¹⁸⁰ Candidates should also be able to ‘Communicate the gospel in a variety of media

¹⁷¹ Ricketts, in Casson, (et al.), *Oxford Handbook*, 48 (italics mine).

¹⁷² ‘Church of England’, <http://www.Churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/ordinal/priests.aspx> (16/06/12).

¹⁷³ For a treatment of the oversight ministry of priests and bishops see Steven Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1999), Part Four: *Episcopate: Ministry in the Third Dimension*, pp 139-192.

¹⁷⁴ From the preface to the Common Worship Ordination of Priests, ‘The Church of England’. <http://www.Churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/ordinal/priests.aspx> (17/07/12).

¹⁷⁵ The Archbishop’s Council, *Formation for Ministry Within a Learning Church: Shaping the Future: New Patterns of Training for Lay and Ordained* (London: Church House Publishing, 2005).

¹⁷⁶ Archbishop’s Council, *Formation*, 64.

¹⁷⁷ Stuart Read, et al., set out the arguments around opportunities being found and made, or between a ‘search and select (causation)’ approach and a ‘creation and transformation (effectuation)’ approach. They explain that whereas causation involves a focus on ‘achieving a desired goal through a specific set of given means’, effectuation involves a ‘focus on a set of evolving means to achieve new and different goals’. They point out the effectuation ‘evokes creative and transformative tactics’, and they tell us that ‘effectual logic is the name given to heuristics used by expert entrepreneurs in new venture creation’. Stuart Read, et al., *Effectual Entrepreneurship* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 6-7. I suggest that effective entrepreneurial priests will collaborate with their congregations in adopting both approaches to opportunities, i.e. both finding and making opportunities for transformation on various levels. For an in-depth consideration of effectuation see: Sarasvathy, *Effectuation: Elements of Entrepreneurial Expertise* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, 2008).

¹⁷⁸ Archbishop’s Council, *Formation*, 64-72.

¹⁷⁹ Archbishop’s Council, *Formation*, 71.

¹⁸⁰ Archbishop’s Council, *Formation*, 71.

demonstrating sensitivity to audience and context.¹⁸¹ In order to be licensed to a post of incumbent status or equivalent responsibility candidates should 'Demonstrate understanding of the imperatives of the gospel and the nature of contemporary society and skills in articulating and engaging in appropriate forms of mission in response to them.'¹⁸² And 'Demonstrate a readiness and openness for a ministry of oversight and vision, expressed in continued study, reflection, openness to new insights'.¹⁸³ We see from these extracts from the Learning Outcomes that all Anglican priests are expected to be alert to opportunities to lead others in communicating the transforming love of God in acts of service in the church and wider community. We might expect entrepreneurial priests to demonstrate this alertness to opportunities in very particular ways, providing an example of both a) the sorts of opportunities that might be taken (noting that these will vary according to context) and, b) the type of approach that might be required in doing this.

Concluding comment

This article is based on material adapted from my doctoral thesis, an adapted version of which will be published by SPCK in spring 2015 under the title, *The Minister as Entrepreneur: Leading and Growing the Church in a Time of Rapid Change*. In this article I have proposed that the concept of entrepreneurship offers the Church of England a helpful lens through which to view priestly ministry and an understanding of an approach to priestly ministry in the parish that is well fitted for the current mission task in England. My research was rooted in reflection on my personal experience as a priest and an entrepreneur and drew on deep engagement with the relevant literature and findings emerging from thematic analysis of qualitative interviews with entrepreneurial priests. It has been my intention in this article to draw attention to the presence and positive impact of entrepreneurial parish priests (and lay people – although that is a further article!) and to contribute to a widespread shift towards a more positive understanding of entrepreneurial priests and their potential for helping the church to inhabit the breadth of its calling to witness faithfully to Jesus Christ in the twenty first century. In short, I believe that entrepreneurial priests are a gift of God to the church for such a time as this.

I am optimistic about my hopes for a shift in perception and for a wider acknowledgement of the potentially positive impact of entrepreneurial priests in the church because during the process of writing up my thesis, the Bishop of Durham, Justin Welby, moved to Lambeth to take up the post of Archbishop of Canterbury. Justin Welby is an entrepreneur and, if what we observed of his approach to ministry and mission while he was Bishop of Durham continues to mark his approach to leading the Anglican Communion, an entrepreneurial approach to the Christian life, including priestly ministry, is likely to be in evidence. I close with a quotation taken from an interview that I conducted with Justin Welby in January 2012, while he was Bishop of Durham.

¹⁸¹ Archbishop's Council, *Formation*, 71.

¹⁸² Archbishop's Council, *Formation*, 71.

¹⁸³ Archbishop's Council, *Formation*, 71.

Entrepreneur? It's a useful word. I think it's a very useful word because it reminds us that we're meant to innovate and create. It is essential that an entrepreneurial example is set by the people who are responsible for the leading and the organizing.

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