

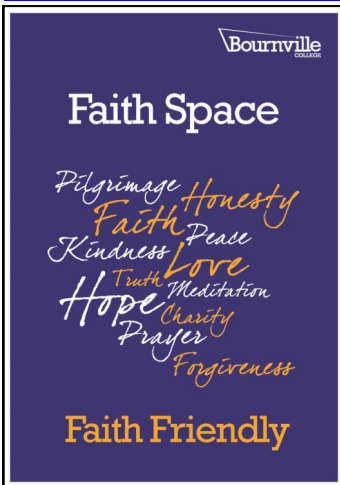


LINK



supporting the workplace, caring for people

Welcome to our March newsletter—it may be March, but snowdrops still seem an appropriate illustration! Chilly weather—the perfect excuse to pull up a chair and enjoy our usual chocolate-box mix of articles, this month featuring some lively thoughts from Bournville College, an original poem, an encounter with an Archbishop and Chaplaincy as Mission. Enjoy!



“What does love mean? “

Thelma Mitchell,
Chaplain to Bournville
College shares some
thoughts

“I’m Muslim, innit! I don’t do that stuff..!” – a sharp retort to our survey to find the college’s favourite Christmas song .

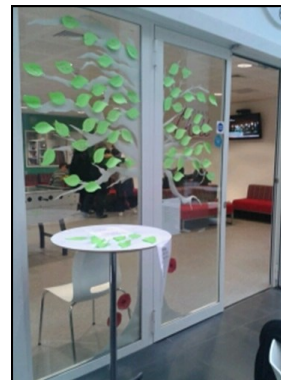
We have grown our engagement activity as our confidence grows and we have become better known and accepted across this massive institution of up to 15,000 students plus staff. The team was in on Enrichment Day at the start of the autumn term, inviting answers from students to questions such as;

If God exists, what would you ask?

Describe yourself in 3 words.

What are your top three priorities in life?

It was a surprisingly popular activity and a chance to get to know them as people with all their hopes and fears.



We marked 11th November last year with a **Tree of Remembrance**. Staff and students were asked to write the name of someone they wanted to remember on leaf-shaped notes and post them on the tree. The names of beloved family and friends juxtaposed more general posts such as serving military plus one for Michael Jackson!

There was an enthusiastic response from most people to the seasonal quiz, including the Hungarian Jehovah’s Witness who enjoyed sharing her faith and values. The muslim young man was sitting with two others, their baseball caps at jaunty angles, surprised that I had stopped to speak to them.

Suddenly he softened, “I do like Maria Carey’s ‘All I want for Christmas’”. A good discussion about what it is like being Muslim in Birmingham followed. Another 3 students taught me ‘Crazy Eights’ (a version of Blackjack without the gambling!) Later I was bopping around the Faith Room with a young Muslim woman, fully swathed, to her favourite Christmas song – Brenda Lee’s wonderful ‘Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree’!

It is now two years since we first met to discuss the possibility of a chaplaincy presence in the college. The college then was an isolated, futuristic structure rising like a phoenix from the ashes of the old Rover car factory at Longbridge. Now a whole town is being built around it, shops, park, housing – and the biggest Marks and Spencer in Europe due to open soon!

We are currently a team of 5 volunteers who come in on a regular basis, overseen by Shelley Phelan who has given us huge encouragement, as have the staff of the Student Support office. Sadly many jobs are now under review and we are needed more than ever as witnesses to the Light of Christ in this work place.

The Christmas term ended with a **Carol Concert** in the Learning Zone – what we used to call a library! – with participation from staff, students and chaplains, followed by mince pies and mulled drinks made by the catering students. I had a lively discussion with one student, adamant that Jesus could not have born in December. She was a bit taken aback when I agreed with her!

In January we marked **Holocaust Week** again when we presented a display to encourage commemoration of all who suffer worldwide; in February, for **Valentine’s Day**, we asked ‘What does Love mean?’

We’ll cover the week of **Mothering Sunday** in March and an **Easter celebration** then **Christian Aid** week in May. And by the way, their favourite Christmas carol was the beautiful, haunting ‘**Silent Night**’!

AGM

The date of CIGB's Annual Meeting has now been finalised as Monday, May 11th and the venue is Hall 7 at the ICC on Broad Street. As usual, refreshments will be served from 5.30pm and the meeting will end at 8.00pm. Our theme for this year is "Business views of Chaplaincy" - an opportunity to hear from businesses who receive Chaplaincy.

A "Day of Refreshment" for Chaplains

Thelma Mitchell writes ...

On a bitterly cold, snowy, dark, damp day in January a group of about 40 West Midlands chaplains from a variety of work locations - retail, education, hospital, airport, waterways - met at the Jesuit retreat house in Harborne. It was a day of peace, worship, discussion, creativity and sharing in the supportive atmosphere of Manresa House.

We opened in informal worship in the chapel after introductions which set the pace and tone for the day. Despite the rather overwhelming smell of lilies and incense - which almost did for a couple of us (!) - we settled in together to explore what it means to be a chaplain. A choice of activities saw some of us outside our comfort element, pushing personal creative boundaries in a calm, prayerful atmosphere. The world's worst artist, I came away with a fridge magnet (which I had not only designed but made), and a sense of achievement!

As is often the case, the informal sharing over a good lunch and washing up was equally important. We met and talked and often laughed about our experiences, joys, fears, triumphs and occasional hurts. We realized that the environment where we practice may differ widely but we are there for the same purpose. We come to bring the light of Christ's presence, whether overtly in evangelism or in silent witness, to our surroundings and can transfer so much of our individual experiences and skills.



Manresa House on a sunnier day!

Thank you so much for organizing it, Val. Sharing faith, fun, food amongst friends in a prayerful place - what more could we ask for at the start of another year as we go forward, privileged to call ourselves chaplains in the work place?



One of the creative activities of our 'Day of Refreshment' was a poetry workshop run by Pat Raymer. Sallie Morgan kindly sent me her poem, started at the workshop, based on the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

O Lord O Lord I wish you would,
Come see me, *me* Just as I stood
I need your help, I need your love,
I need something to lift me up
To raise my head, set my eyes above,
the dusty road, the past,
the sub-standard life I have been living, the stares,
the gossip,
the unforgiving!

Hello! Who's this? A stranger stands,
beside the well with folded hands.
He speaks! To me! Does he not know, we are opposed –
I wish he'd go.
Will you not give me water? Please? He asks, what cheek!
Does he not tease?
I tell him quick, we are not the same!
He should not be here, I am not to blame!
But then he speaks and makes the claim,
He knows me, and my life, my shame!
He offers me His 'living water',
streams of which flow from above.
I am, He says, my fathers daughter.
No matter what, an object of His love.

O people, people I wish you would,
come see me, *me* just as I stood.
A ransomed soul, a reclaimed daughter,
a contrite heart, partaker of His living water.
He is here, the one we long for,
come at last, don't take my word for it,
come see and hear Him speak, a balm to pain,
strength to the weak
A path for the lost, acceptance for the freak.

O to be immersed in this living stream,
to drink my fill, be cleansed, reborn
A gift beyond all expectation,
a chance to see a brand new dawn.



**QUOTABLE
QUOTE**

"Feel for the people we most avoid ...
Strange or bereaved or never employed.
Feel for the women and feel for the men
Who feel that their living is all in vain."

John Bell

Chaplaincy Mission Experience

Peter Sellick reflects ...

As the name says, The Acts of the Apostles confirms that they were people of action; but they were also people who used words as part of their witness. The early disciples used so-called 'Speech Acts' to make a difference.

In our multi-attitude society, are there appropriate Speech Acts that we can use alongside our Service Acts? What are the Principalities and Powers (Eph 6:12) that need converting? How can we talk about the Christian God who has been powerful in our lives, in a way that can be heard and encourages helpful changes - without proselytising?

What does it mean to be people of Mission when we are fleeting visitors within organisations? We struggle with these questions sometimes: The West Midlands IMA have set up a training day on this (see advert) with input from Simon Sutcliffe, Evangelism tutor from Queens College, Birmingham, and a Pioneer Ministry leader in Stoke.

When Chaplains are Guests within organisations, can the experience of 'Pioneer Ministry' have something to help us? What does our experience of Mission have to teach the church? Most Pioneer Ministry models still rely on individual people being invited onto home 'turf' to be taught by us, the Hosts. Chaplaincy as Mission is a very different model: we are invited into an alien organisation, and have to abide by their language and rules, yet we want to share our faith for people, and the organisational life as a whole.

We have to be careful with 'Mission' language within Chaplaincy. Our Introductory Training Programme becomes very lively when we talk about setting out to challenge and change. There is a danger that we are veering too close to 'proselytising'. Chaplaincy's Mission Witness inspires people's thinking about the church because we are not there to 'recruit': this fact shatters their preconceptions, and opens them up to fresh thinking about what the Christian faith is about.


On the other hand, if we have come to know that we are fulfilled as humans because of the God who has been good to us, then we want, at appropriate times, to share that process of 'coming to know' as part of our desire to see others fulfilled.

Chaplaincy may be 'Pre-Evangelism', or what the theologian Alastair McGrath describes as 'Apologetics': helping people to see "that there is a door to another world". Os Guinness says, "Apologetics is pre-evangelism, Communication that clarifies."

All language and communication involves communicating beliefs and attitudes, even if only implicitly. What opportunities do Chaplains have for real conversation and clarification? For telling enigmatic stories like Jesus' Parables? "What gives you courage in your life? What are you striving for?" "What drives me is this story about a rich man and a poor man..." Can we talk with people and "hear them into new life" if we ask the right questions?

Organisations need to repent and find 'New Life' too. Changes in society and politics require new enterprising solutions. The focus of power is shifting from the public sector to the private sector: eg schools and hospitals are now (self-proclaimed) 'businesses thriving on competition and separation'. The huge rise in self-employment and small enterprises points to a future of 'fragmented individualist micro-preneurs'. Connectivity and communication is reduced and organisations have got to find good life in this new context too. Chaplains need to be Missionaries to organisations as well as to individuals.

The Book of Acts portrays people who use their work as part of their faith. St Paul did his tent-making (Acts 18:1-4); Tabitha makes clothes and shares them with widows (Acts 9:36-43); Simon, a tanner, opens his home to Peter (Acts 10:5). Today there are many people who likewise combine their work (carer, lawyer, volunteer, retailer ...) with their faithfulness. The work context offers Missioners credibility, role modelling and a shared language. Work needs to consider the questions of Love and Sin in today's world and Chaplaincy can facilitate that.

**Study Day and AGM**
Tuesday March 10th 2015
10.00am—3.30pm
The Ark, St Laurence church
Alvechurch B48 7SB

The Language of Mission in Chaplaincy

With Rev Simon Sutcliffe who has a particular interest in forms of ministry – including chaplaincy – that are seeking to engage with the world and people who have no faith language or background.

Simon will lead us in reflecting on the role of the chaplain as minister, missionary and evangelist, to think about the language we use in the conversations we have as chaplains and how this can move from friendly chat to something more significant.

Cost for the day—to include refreshments and a light lunch will be £10. CIGB will cover cost.
For more information please contact Dick Johnson at dickim@globalnet.co.uk

**QUOTABLE
QUOTE**

“Christ’s is the world in which we move,
Christ’s are the folk we’re summoned to love.
Christ’s is the voice which calls us to care,
And Christ is the one who meets us here.”

John Bell

Chaplaincy news ...

New Chaplaincy at Jericho Foundation

The Jericho Foundation (www.jericho.org.uk) works with people who face barriers to employment. They improve their skills, gain a sense of fulfilment and move into sustainable employment. Two new chaplains have started recently, and been well received: Rotimi Benjamin, a church pastor with Triumphant Church International in Birmingham, and Pat Saunders, who is a counsellor with young people and worships at Shiloh Apostolic Church. Jericho is a Christian Social Enterprise and wants to explore more deeply what it means to be a Christian organisation: they are passionate in their wanting to offer more than just formal skills training and are sensitive to the diverse nature of the people they work with.

National Express West Midlands

Chrissy McAteer writes ...

During the autumn 2 drivers from one of the garages died suddenly of heart attacks. One driver passed away during the time of the CIGB Commissioning Service whilst driving the number 6 bus. He had had his regular medical check up only a few days before and had just been cleared. CCTV footage showed that during the last few moments of his life he did all that he could to ensure the safety of passengers. I attended both funerals. John Bradley accompanied me to the second funeral.

Archbishop Justin Welby visits JLR



JLR Chaplain Linda Granner with the Archbishop.

Archbishop Justin said this of his visit:
"I am delighted to have enjoyed a brief immersion in the life of the diocese of Birmingham – and return fired up after witnessing the Spirit of God so evidently at work across the region. I’m struck by the many examples of *working together* – of churches serving together on the streets and with the homeless, of ethnic groups worshipping together across cultural differences, of differing faith leaders committing

together for the common good. I met some extraordinary people of faith as well as some very courageous leaders – in business, in schools, in public service as well as in church and charitable sectors – which confirms my conviction that the ‘front line’ is *where they are*. As archbishop, it is those on the frontline – leaders, evangelists, saints – whom I seek to serve."



“What’s gender got to do with it?”

Women and the Economy: the core issue is Dignity for All People

Report from St Paul’s Institute www.stpaulsinstitute.org.uk

St Paul’s Institute seeks to foster an informed Christian response to the most urgent ethical and spiritual issues of our times: financial integrity, economic theory, and the meaning of the common good.

A debate entitled ‘What’s Gender got to do with it?’ took place on 26th January with speakers Vicky Pryce, former Joint Head of the UK’s Government Economic Service, Jerome de Henau, Lecturer in Economics for OU, Rebecca Omonire-Oyekanmi, Journalist, and Stefan Stern, Visiting Professor at Cass Business School. Here are some of the suggestions made:

- We need to help low-income workers and carers much more. Social investments, services and benefits to support women have been drastically cut in recent years. Revaluing care work is critical for gender equality. This means increasing wages and improving conditions for paid care workers whilst incentivising men to participate more in unpaid care, which is currently provided mainly by women.
- Companies should have quotas at the *executive* level. This will create the kinds of corporate structures that encourage proper work flexibility, training and employee loyalty. Although the number of women in board roles has increased recently, the number of executive roles and senior management roles hasn’t improved – and has actually regressed a little.
- Gender equality requires a long-term commitment to social infrastructure, which should be seen as an investment in the future rather than an unproductive cost. Women have been disproportionately impacted by current austerity measures. We need to remember that at the core of the issue is human dignity. An economy that values people holistically, rather than just as productivity outlets and wealth creators, is required to see true progress.
- Conditions and pay for part-time and job-shared employment, including at a senior level, should be improved— to allow for a better work/life balance. We should also seek to increase wages and reduce the hours of full-time work opening up more space for shared care, recreation and family life overall

“To the lost Christ shows his face;
To the unloved he gives his embrace.
To those who cry in pain or disgrace
Christ makes, with his friends, a touching place. “

John Bell

Chaplaincy Fortnight June 7th-21st 2015:

“Celebrating the Whole Body of Christ”
**A time for churches to invite Chaplains to
speak and to pray for Chaplaincy everywhere.**

Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge
(Ruth 1:16)

Many people’s favourite Bible story is that of Ruth: her faith to travel to a new land and to trust in God. It is a surprising story because Ruth is a Moabite, not a Jew.



Chaplaincy is a ministry of Walking With people in their Journeys. It is also a ministry of Discovery: Chaplains are constantly surprised to find that God is already at work in new places.

Churches and Industry Group Birmingham and Solihull is again facilitating a fortnight this summer on behalf of many types of Chaplaincy. Chaplaincy in its different forms is going to be celebrated in a fortnight of meetings, prayer and discussion during **Chaplaincy Fortnight (June 7-21)**. Chaplains from healthcare, emergency services, retail, prison etc will make themselves available to come to churches to tell of what they have seen and heard, as well as to ask for prayer for chaplaincy.

If you would like to be involved – go to:
www.cigb.org.uk/resourcesforchurches/chaplaincy-fortnight

*Go into the wide world that God has created.
Hear God’s invitation to be with him
and collaborate in re-creative acts.
Know that his blessing will flow towards you and others.
For the good of the whole world.
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”*
(from ‘Chaplaincy Everywhere’ Course, Methodist Church: www.opensourcechaplaincy.org.uk/course)

Annual Meeting

“Business Views of Chaplaincy”

The Annual Meeting of CIGB will be held on Monday May 11th in Hall 7 at the ICC on Broad Street, Birmingham.

Refreshments will be served from 5.30pm
Business meeting at 6.00pm
Guest Speakers and discussion from 6.45pm
Meeting ends at 8.00pm

The theme for this year is ‘Business Views of Chaplaincy’ - how do organisations value the Chaplaincy they receive? Can it be different?

Please put the date in your diary!



CONGRATULATIONS!



Elaine Hutchinson
will be ordained as a
URC Minister on
Saturday 14th March
at Hall Green Baptist
Church

Congratulations, Elaine, and very best wishes for your future work with the churches in Hall Green.



Huge thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition of “LINK” - it’s always a pleasure to hear your stories and to be able to share them with a wider audience!

STAY IN TOUCH ...

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