

CHAPLAINS AT WORK



April 2017



"For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land" Song of Solomon 2: 11-12 (KJV). Welcome to the Spring edition of Chaplains at Work. As usual there are articles on a variety of subjects, and the third of our "Meet the Chaplain" series. Lots to enjoy!

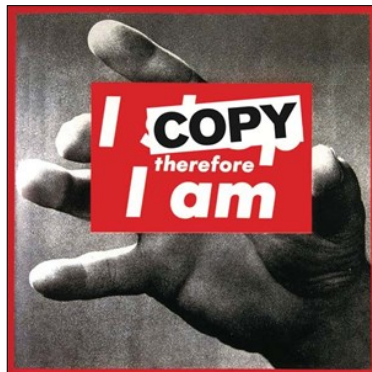
Putting Spirituality to Work

A reflection by Peter Sellick

"All of life is spiritual, for all is part of God's creation; there is no division between sacred and secular, work and worship, religion and politics. Spirituality is not apart from our daily lives, it is our daily lives." (Alan Ecclestone)

"Never under-estimate people's spirituality" (Simon Foster speaking to CIGB Chaplains about Saltley Trust research 'What helps disciples grow?')

People decorate their workspaces with reminders of what that matters to them. Since doing chaplaincy in the City Council, I have been noticed how many people have verses from the Psalms, and Bible passages, printed out on their personal work noticeboards.



A piece of ongoing research by Professor Clive Morton, Middlesex University and Paul Ballard, Emeritus Professor at Cardiff University, is looking at whether more people are turning to 'spirituality' in times of stress in the workplace. The academics describe current work contexts as Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) and history suggests that under such pressure more workers have been led to question "what's it all about?"

Questions of Spirituality, of 'What Matters?', and of 'Meaning of Life' have varied answers. Some people respond with ideas and words; others focus on relationships and emotion; some look for beauty and symbol; still others may want to act and change things.

Workplace Chaplains have opportunities to use our spiritual experience to help grow spirituality at work.

CIGB Chaplains looked, in January, at some words we might associate with work, and some words we might associate with spirituality. We found that there were some surprising commonalities.

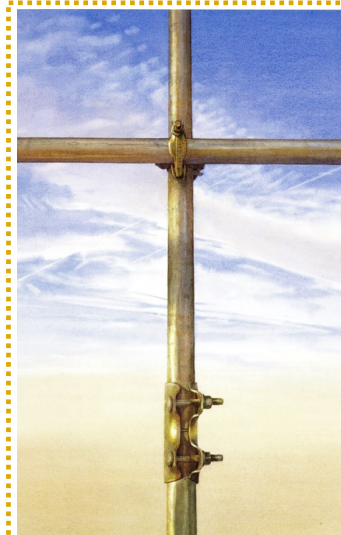
Many words can be applied to both topics: 'deep', 'choice', 'change', 'skill', 'experience', 'relationship', 'overpowering', 'need', 'power'....



There is clearly a relationship between what is going on at work, and what is going on within spirituality.

CIGB Chaplains will be learning together about our spiritualities on our Study Day in July. We will be reflecting on how we can help people in workplaces give voice to the spirit within them.

As we recognise that the economy and society is at a turning point, this is an opportunity for chaplains to help remind people engaged in working life talk up their values and set new directions.



Easter in the Workplace

Loss and new life are regular experiences at work. Chaplains help hold these experiences side by side, like scaffolding brackets. Sensitive Easter posters in the workplace, gathering staff around Easter food might help staff to have these conversations?

QUOTABLE QUOTE

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

A Day of Refreshment ...

Thelma Mitchell reflects on our Day of Refreshment

"The careless shepherd makes excellent dinner for the wolf! "

Our theme for the Chaplains' day of refreshment in January was **The Good Shepherd**. The image of the King being a shepherd to his people was popular from Egyptian times. Shepherds have a long and honourable history in the Bible.

Abel was a keeper of sheep, as was Abraham, Moses and David. Israel's religious leaders at the time of Jesus revered the imagery of the shepherd but reviled actual sheep-herders as unclean outsiders.

Mediterranean shepherds walk in front of the sheep. English shepherds push their flock, accompanied by sheep dogs nipping at their heels. Even today Mediterranean shepherds stay with the sheep in the field throughout the day and night. The good shepherd does not abandon his sheep to be a wolf's lunch but walks in front, caring, loving, in charge. It was a most appropriate image of Jesus for us, as Chaplains in the workplace, to ponder, develop and apply.

Once again, the setting for the day was Manresa House, the Jesuit retreat house in Harborne. The house, until recently up for sale, has been saved and is to be upgraded. It is warm and comfortable on a cold, grey day, with lots of rooms, large and intimate, to retreat into and a lovely garden to walk in. As I arrived I met a man carrying a guitar! This was John who led the 'Song and Action' music workshop. We explored the theme of the Good Shepherd through our worship and prayer together, discussion, study, retreat and fellowship while we strengthened our commitment to our role of chaplain.

We considered the imagery of the Good Shepherd in art with Peter; explored 'Faith and Narrative' creative writing with Thelma; reflected on a Samaritan Shepherd bible study with David. There was space to retreat in silence, to meditate and pray alone or with others at Prayer Stations organized by Tina and Pat.

The informal chatting over lunch, sharing stories,

concerns, doubts and joys – and quite a bit of laughing! – is equally important. We are no longer isolated, out on an odd limb from the church family. Instead we recognize and share a common purpose, and often experience. We are part of a team.

Even a nightmare journey home due to the closure of Harborne Lane could not spoil the restful, prayerful value of the day! Our final prayer sums it up:

Good Shepherd of the flock, you tend your flock unceasingly and know our every need. You tend and feed and protect your chosen people, and only ask us to put our trust in your loving care. As host you entertain us at your welcome table and anoint us with your Holy Spirit. Help us to draw close to you today.
Amen.



... and a Day of Study!

Graham Wigley reflects on our Day of Study ...

**Workplace Chaplaincy Mission UK Study Day
"Chaplaincy Ministry and the Mission of the Church"**

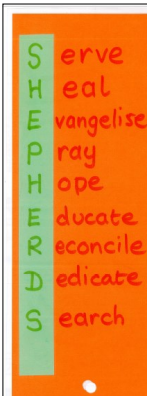
There was a buzz in the air, not just because it's Springtime, but because 42 chaplains from around the West Midlands, and further afield, had gathered together for their annual Day Conference, the regional part of Workplace Chaplaincy Mission UK.



Like-minded people were drawn together to the beautiful surroundings of The Ark, St Laurence Church, Alvechurch to enjoy good company, abundant food, share experiences and hear

sound teaching from an accomplished speaker. The secret was out that this was a must-attend event as we welcomed chaplains from York, Chester and Deeside, and St Albans as well.

Our speaker, Revd Dr Victoria Slater, Honorary Research fellow at The Queen's Foundation for Theological Education; co-author of a major report on Chaplaincy for the Church of England, and author of 'Chaplaincy Ministry and the Mission of the Church' stimulated our thinking with the theme, 'Chaplaincy as Mission – a challenge to the Church'. She posed two core questions:



Tina made book-marks as part of a prayer station

QUOTABLE QUOTE

"God has to be discovered in the situation, it is in and through the people we meet, the day-to-day happenings of life ... that God comes to us."

1) Is what chaplains do 'Mission' if it doesn't always lead to people joining the Church?

2) How can the challenges of chaplaincy be presented to the wider Church and what might that mean in terms of necessary change?

These were unpacked by exploring the nature of Mission, the Church and Chaplaincy and culminated in suggested areas of development for chaplains:

- ◆ Develop a theology and mission narrative for the work that we do as chaplains
- ◆ Pay attention to the language that we use – "chaplains are culturally multi-lingual"
- ◆ Think about how we can reflect on our practice so that we can feed back what we find into best practice; and at the same time gather evidence of the value and effectiveness of our work
- ◆ Recognise the power and importance of statistics – if we keep no statistics or case studies then we may become 'invisible'?
- ◆ Be willing to find opportunities to connect with and enter into dialogue with the wider church



Pat & Graham at the Conference

Bishop John Taylor (in "The Go-between God") said: "The heart of mission is communion with God *in the midst of the world's life*". (my italics)

For those among us in church leadership the challenge is to incorporate this thinking into our teaching and practice.

For those who do not occupy this role, the challenge is how to make our voice heard within the Church, and its structures and people.

The remainder of the day explored Missional Chaplaincy in small groups before sharing together the joys and challenges of our own situations and praying for one another.

Meet the Chaplain:

The third article in our series features Beryl Moppett—Team Leader for the Solihull Town Centre Chaplaincy. Beryl writes ...



Leaving University with a maths degree, I worked as a scientist for British Gas, and brought up two children. I then became a teacher and school librarian before finally retiring from paid work.

What now? By this time I had been a Reader in the Church of England for nearly ten years and I wanted to broaden my role into working within the local community in some way.

My retirement coincided with the opening of the 'new' shopping centre in the centre of Solihull, 'Touchwood'. A Chaplain had been appointed to the building site; this work extended into the formation of a Town Centre Chaplaincy. This was a very new venture for Solihull and a team of us began working on how it could function. Chaplaincy was 'sold' to local shops beyond Touchwood itself.

I, along with a colleague, began visiting one of the larger stores in the town. We were introduced to the HR Manager and attended an induction course along with new employees. We had a few friendly faces before we began in earnest. But we didn't have the opportunity to shadow an existing Chaplain and I still remember how daunting it was for the first time to approach people and endeavour to explain the Chaplaincy role.

In 2004 I took on the role of team leader to the Solihull Town Centre Chaplaincy team. What were my aims? Firstly that we can be of service to all who work in the town by affirming and 'just being' for all whom we encounter; secondly to grow the Chaplaincy team so that we can be present regularly in all the town centre shops and businesses; and thirdly that we can have opportunities to share within the local churches our experience of finding God at work in the Solihull shopping community.

Shops have changed a lot in the last fifteen years, partly because of the Internet. This has meant less staff being employed and in increased pressure: more and more targets to be met and less time for personal 'customer care'. Despite these changes the staff we meet are always smiling and welcoming.

I feel privileged to share in God's work in the workplace.

QUOTABLE QUOTE

"If we idolise wealth we create poverty;
if we idolise success then we create the inadequate;
if we idolise power we create powerlessness."

Ethical Money Churches—NEW Bible Study Course

'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things' (Matt 25:21)



People with the least money are often noted for their shrewdness, and their generosity. A speaker at a money management event recently said: "If you want to know about generous budgeting, go and speak to someone living on benefits". The Parable of the Talents tells us that even small actions can lead to growing the Kingdom. Justin Welby says "The spending of God's life gives an infinite quantity to the life of the world", in his book 'Dethroning Mammon'.

Ethical Money Churches (a project of ECCR: www.eccr.org.uk/what-we-work-on/ethical-money-churches) has launched **Churches Bible Study Course**



to help churches discern what faithfulness means when it comes to the use of church monies.

Should they keep their money with an ethical bank? Can they shop at Social Enterprises who give a local return to their profits? Are any savings invested in funds that are evidencing the church's beliefs? Do they give money for charity or for justice? What is a biblical, and legal, approach to risk? What is our church's 'reserves policy'?

How we use what we have, speaks of our beliefs: "a sacramental use of money.. is not just about helping the church but about using it in ways that gives life to the world". The EMC Bible Study course helps us to see that even when we think we have few resources, we often have much.

Abi Nicholls, the Ethical Money Churches Officer in the West Midlands, is available to help churches think through the story of their 'Talents' explore how their use of money can be even more in line with their beliefs. She can link your church up with



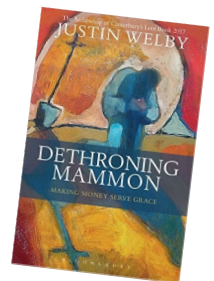
opportunities to use your everyday funds for local or national benefit, such as credit unions, green energy, social enterprises or economic justice. Contact abigail.nicholls@eccr.org.uk.

"Dethroning Mammon"

Peter Sellick reviews the latest book by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby:

Firstly, he admits that he has written quite a personal book. He says that he was challenged when he was formerly Group Treasurer of Enterprise Oil: "What is a *Christian* Treasurer that anyone else is not?". What does our faith bring to working in the economy? Shouldn't we "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's"?

Justin Welby admits that he is not a 'professional economist nor a professional theologian'. This makes the book a fairly easy read: but it leaves one or two unanswered tricky questions. He never really says what Mammon is. He sees when things are not quite right, and calls those situations 'Mammon'.



'Love of Money' (1 Tim 6:10) brings problems.

"Ecological destruction, religious extremism, violent political regimes – these all have their roots in greed and the impetus to have more and more and more". We tend to hang on to money too much, rather than giving it away. There are important values other than just money.

But money has also been vital as a means of circulation of value. According to Yuval Harari, in his book *Sapiens - a Brief History of Humankind*, it is a token of trust that has had huge benefits to world development. Harari describes money as 'the most universal and most efficient system of mutual trust ever devised'.

Justin Welby's antidote is to encourage the valuing of things that we cannot see or measure. "Jesus economics are so much bigger than this. They do not balance". We should be prepared to 'waste' resources, if necessary: in the same way that Mary anointed Jesus' feet in Bethany (John 12:1-11).

Worship is a way to orient ourselves to these better values. We need to be willing to 'waste' time in worship in order to re-orient our values. When we give away, we also gain.

But we also need to act in the world: we need to do what we can to 'enthroned Christ while dethroning Mammon', eg to challenge the pay gap between rich and poor; to restore tax and benefit justice; to champion good working practices; to increase fair trade and fair finance.

Cont'd ...

**DIARY
DATE**

Tuesday 16th May, 5.30—8.00

See below for details!



**Annual
Meeting**

“Dethroning Mammon” - contd

Mammon rules, Welby says, when Power is held only by economists and financiers; when economics is an end in itself rather than as a tool for human flourishing; when ethics are not fundamental.



This book is not saying anything new that has not been said many times over. Justin Welby refrains from criticising the capitalist, free-market model. Would Jesus have been a free-market economist?

It is also ironic that the Church of England’s own Archbishop’s Council is currently pumping over £20m of church commissioners money only into those diocesan projects that offer tangible results that can be seen and measured: forecasts of numerical congregational growth, and increased finances for the church.

It is good news that a number of churches and Christians are using this book in Lent to reflect on their own attitude to money and how they worship.



**CIGB Management
Council**

CIGB Management Council is seeking new members, to act as Trustees of the Charity.

Ideally we are looking for people with experience of connecting working life, economy and church membership, to help direct and support our workplace chaplaincy teams.

The Trustees are formally appointed by recommendation from the Church Presidents, but anyone interested in becoming a trustee is invited to have an informal conversation with Hayward Osborne, Chair. We are particularly keen to broaden the diversity on the Council. Contact: hayward@cofebirmingham.com

The Management Council meets four times a year, 8-9:30am at 1 Colmore Row; with an AGM in May.

“Spring is when you feel like
Whistling ...even with a shoe full of slush.”
Doug Larson



CIGB Annual Meeting

“Brexit for Birmingham Businesses”

Tuesday 16th May, 5.30—8.00pm

**Unison Birmingham, 19th Floor,
McLaren Building
46 Priory Queensway Birmingham B4 7LR**

Refreshments served from 5.30.
AGM Business at 6.00 Speakers from 6.45

Perspectives on opportunities and challenges
for Birmingham’s Businesses from:

Professor Monder Ram OBE

Director, Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME), Birmingham University

Paul Faulkner

CEO, Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce

“Spirituality at Work”

A training day for Workplace Chaplains



**Monday 10th July 2017
Newman University**

Led by

**Helen Bardy, Leader Chaplaincy Studies
Margaret Holland, Newman Univ Chaplain**

**If you haven’t already booked your place,
please contact val.dalton@cigb.org.uk**

PENULTIMATE WORD

More stories, please! It’s a wonderful way of raising awareness of what we do and it’s great to be able to share these stories as they are so encouraging.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition of “Chaplains at Work”.

STAY IN TOUCH

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