

CHAPLAINS AT WORK

February 2019

supporting the workplace, caring for people

They say that time flies don't they - can someone tell me where January has gone? Christmas seems such a long time ago, but we thought we'd share some of the Christmassy things that Chaplains got up to, as well as asking questions about what it means for us to believe in Christ as King of all in the World...

Chaplains making The Spirit Level:

Peter Sellick writes . . .

"IT'S NOT FAIR!" Is that a grown up thing to say or not? Which of these categories are most important to us: SAME : EQUAL : DIFFERENT : FAIR ?

CIGB Chaplains discussed these words as part of our Equal Opportunities training. Is the word 'Fair' merely a subjective concept? or does it tell us something important about what it is to be a living, breathing Child of God?

FAIR

Workplace Chaplaincy reduces inequalities of power and respect. Chaplaincy involves showing dignity and respect to people of all types and experience: whatever age, gender, skill, status, salary ...

EQUAL

"The Spirit Level" is a book that was written almost a decade ago by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. It demonstrated that economic inequality was a cause of social unease and spiritual discomfort. The Brexit referendum result was partly the consequence of inequalities in the UK.

Inequality wounds: that is the conclusion of Wilkinson and Pickett's research. Many of us can share memories of when, because of some difference, we have felt that we did not belong. The situations can be so uncomfortable that they mark us for life. They may have been times when we were rejected because of our sexuality; or discriminated against because of our ethnicity.

Socio-Economic Inequality was not a theme that cropped up very loudly when we as Chaplains discussed Equal Opportunities at a recent training. We discussed Gender, Age, Sexuality, Ethnicity, Health ... some of the legal 'protected characteristics' that are usually the focus of Equal Opportunities training. But I am not sure that we talked about Poverty and how that excludes people as well. Yet it is one of the issues that Chaplains encounter. Do we do enough about this inequality?

Unemployment when people are young leaves lasting damage. They lose confidence job-hunting in later life.

In the West Midlands there are a number of growing faith initiatives that are fighting for Equal Socio-Economic Opportunities. These include the Poverty Truth Commission; Church Action on Tax Justice; Just Finance; Credit Union engagement; Christians Against Poverty; Jubilee Debt Campaign "Great British Debt Trap"; and Ethical Money Churches—as well as the many Food Banks etc. Inequality is a Spiritual Matter.

Chaplains encounter people's wounds: these can be about relationships, or problems of health or circumstance. Sometimes we also see socio-economic injustices: how do we meet these? Chaplains say that we are there for everyone: 'Bear with one another in love' (Ephesians 4:2).

Justin Welby spoke to the TUC Congress last year: "Two thousand five hundred years ago, the Prophet Amos, speaking into a society divided between rich and poor, which had forgotten the values which alone could establish stability in a hostile world, cried out 'but let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.' same

"Five hundred years later, near Nazareth, a young pregnant woman called Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth. Mary, greeted by Elizabeth as the mother of the Saviour Jesus, cried out in what we know as the Magnificat, saying about God: 'He has shown strength with his arm; He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.'

The faith call for Equal Opportunities focusses a light on my own caring, but also on how I am challenging the structures that perpetuate unfaithful inequality.

DIFFERENT

"Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13v34).

Share your views with Friends of CIGB Workplace Chaplaincy (see page 2)

QUOTABLE QUOTE

“News of great joy, news of great mirth: news of our merciful King’s birth”

Get Involved with Friends of CIGB Workplace Chaplaincy

After that tantalising taster on page one, here’s a bit more information about a completely new group that is being launched this year.

The “Friends of CIGB” group will give individuals and churches an opportunity to be more involved with the Workplace Chaplaincy in Birmingham and Solihull. A small annual fee will open the door to more engagement and activity.



If you would like more context and understanding of our ministry, we’ll send you a regular magazine—bigger and fatter than this one, with feature articles including history and analysis, as well as the stories about our work.

If you would like to be a ‘prayer warrior’ (our Chaplains do work on the frontline interface between the church and the world) you could be partnered with a Chaplain, or receive a regular prayer letter with a general overview of prayer needs.



We will have a ‘Friends’ social event with the opportunity to meet Chaplains and hear face-to-face about their work, and to get to meet other Friends.

The more of us working with God to make a difference in the Economy, the further the love of God will be known. Becoming a ‘Friend’ of CIGB Workplace Chaplaincy is one way to join in with our work.

GOD IS AT WORK!



If you would like to become a Friend email val.dalton@cigb.org.uk. We would like to hear your news and share your experiences and thoughts.



You can of course already find regular updates on what we are up to at our Facebook (“@CIGB1”) and Twitter (@CIGBChaplaincy) accounts.

Workplace Chaplains—supporting people in the good times and the bad.

What Chaplains got up to at Christmas . . .

Christmas is a time when Chaplains are often able to raise the profile of Chaplaincy...

I’m sure you’re all familiar with the Frankfurt Christmas Market in the city centre, but did you know that there’s a Chaplaincy team who visit the market traders? Elaine Hutchinson reports . . .

“Chaplaincy re-charges batteries!”..

...well not literally!! But this was a comment from a trader at the Frankfurt Christmas market on one of our visits. It was at 10.30 in the morning, it was cold, and I could see that he looked slightly dishevelled as I asked him how it was going?

Its great to have the Market here but it doesn’t come without its challenges. One of which is for traders having to smile constantly! “It can be so draining”, the trader tells me, “But with the Chaplain you can be yourself. You re-charge my batteries”.

He was here with his mother and daughter from the Czech Republic and this was their first time in England. They didn’t know if they would be able to come back as Brexit may present challenges.

Chaplaincy to the Frankfurt markets has been a journey, and I feel that we’ve really made some headway. be.friend Retail Chaplaincy has been offering Chaplaincy to traders at the Frankfurt Christmas Market for 3 years. We have produced leaflets in Romanian and Polish, which helped with the language barrier, and had a large enough team for Chaplains to visit traders regularly and build relationships.



Elaine and two Chaplains



Selfie with Santa!

Father Christmas joined us on December 6th, St Nicolas day, which is celebrated in many parts of Europe. We handed out mini chocolate Santas and they were much appreciated... as was Father Christmas himself!

My grateful thanks to all the ‘Christmas volunteers’ and a special thank you to Santa for being on our team!

Our prayer is that God continually meets with people in their places of work. And that as Chaplains we can keep up with the Holy Spirit in the workplaces we visit.

**QUOTABLE
QUOTE**

“Joy to the world! The Lord is come! Let earth receive her king.
Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and angels sing.”

What more Chaplains got up to at Christmas . . .

At the Airport Tanya Arroba was delighted that the annual Carol Service was not only well attended, but also looked-forward-to by staff. The Chaplains gave out little chocolate angels to the staff at the Carol Service, alongside the carols and prayers. Tanya herself went to the airport on Christmas Day and was joined in the multi-faith room by other staff.

At the NEC the Chaplaincy team were invited to the staff Christmas party where “Everything is better since you’ve been here” was said by a Muslim member of staff!

At the Town Hall/Symphony Hall Elaine was invited to deliver an address in a special event organised for families and children with learning difficulties.

At Longbridge Shops, Val, Peter and Lyn sang Carols in Sainsbury’s with a group of people from the churches in Longbridge. (Val’s the one with the guitar, Peter took the photo and Lyn’s in the Christmassy red coat.) The store Manager was really welcoming—insisting we stand in a nice warm place—and took some photos herself.



There was also a Memorial Prayer tree in the staff canteen of Sainsbury’s Longbridge—because family and friends are missed at Christmas; cards and chocs were given to the smaller Longbridge shops and were much appreciated!

At West Midlands Fire Service, Sallie was asked to judge the Christmas decorations in the HQ offices! She also put up a Prayer Tree, as did Peter at the



City Council, near a quiet seating area so that staff could spend a few moments of prayer during the busy-ness of their working day.

At Solihull, the Chaplaincy Team distributed hundreds of mince pies and Christmas cards to the delight of the traders, workmen, police and hecklers!

At Bournville College, Thelma reports that “the Christmas concert on the last day of term was both raucous and reverent! Christmas karaoke and carol singing were interspersed with gospel nativity readings by the Chaplains, as well as a piece from Henry Van Dyke ‘*Keeping Christmas*.’ A young student told how Christmas is celebrated in her home country of Ethiopia. We closed in near silence with prayers and a blessing. The atmosphere throughout was joyful and fun and the many students who participated or looked on declared it a ‘*great party*’! The concert was followed by a feast of piping-hot samosas, fresh from Handsworth, and delicious mince pies made by some of the catering students.”



**Holocaust Memorial Day 2019:
Torn from home**



More news from Bournville at the start of the year.. Bournville College Chaplains recently held an event for Holocaust Memorial Day which was 27th January. Thelma writes . . .

“A quiet morning became a busy lunchtime. The small but steady stream of individual students and staff enquiring about our display became larger groups.

We had some in in-depth conversations about the Holocaust, and current situations of unspeakable suffering in the world. We recorded people and places discussed on leaf-shaped post-it notes and pinned them to the display. The chaplains handed out Holocaust Memorial stickers and booklets, including taking them to busy staff in some of the offices.

It was a bit quieter memorial than some years, but this was appropriate both for the day, and the college, which is mourning the loss of two members of staff who died suddenly in the Christmas holiday. But it is vital to remind the world, or at least our small corner of it, of the horrors perpetrated by humans to each other.

‘*Our soul waits for the Lord, He is our help and shield.*’
Psalm 33: 20

**QUOTABLE-
QUOTE**

“Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” And the Lord said to Samuel: “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle”.
1 Samuel 3:10-11

MEET THE CHAPLAIN

Dolvis Ferdinand: a member of the [be.friend](#) team in Birmingham city centre.

My Chaplaincy story has taken a while. We read in the Old Testament how the Lord called Samuel and he thought it was Eli, until Eli himself realised it was the Lord. (1 Samuel, 3). My brothers and sisters how often the Lord calls us and we don't recognise his voice, how often do we miss his calling and let other things get in the way, or we mistake him for something else?

Almost fifteen years ago I went to a meeting and saw some information about retail Chaplaincy. This really interested me as I had been looking and hoping for ways to extend my church pastoral ministry into the community. After the meeting, I spoke to my Minister about the nature of this kind of chaplaincy and, after much thought and prayer, I took part in CIGB's training course.

Unfortunately I became ill and had to postpone completing the course. A few years on, the thought of being a Chaplain had not left my mind and there was a nagging voice in my head saying “When are you going restart?” Something always seemed to get in the way, but I prayed about it and asked the Lord “Is this what you want me to do? And can I do it?” Some months later I restarted and completed the course, thoroughly enjoying every moment.

Corrie Ten Boom said: “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God”.

I joined the team of Chaplains in the Bullring shopping centre and Link Street, in Birmingham city centre believing that the Lord wanted me to minister as a retail Chaplain.



Chaplaincy has its highs and lows: there are moments of elation and then the challenging times when you wonder what you've got yourself into and how to get out of it. But I've found that with prayer and a bit of humility, I find the right thing to say or do.

I used to be a midwife and news of births takes me back to the maternity scene!

Hearing the words “new addition” brings extra joy to me. It's such a privilege when folks talk about themselves and their families, such as telling you when a new addition to the family is due.

I find being a retail Chaplain very rewarding and feel blessed to be of service. People speak to me freely, and simply listening provides the key to most answers, along with reassurance. One of the greatest things about listening to people in this way is that different views can be exchanged.

Respect shown for others views is a good basis for friendship. I quote the writer S.Day “All human beings are in my view, creatures of Gods design, we must respect all human beings. This does not mean that I have to agree with their choices or agree with their opinions, but indeed I respect them as human beings”.

One of the low points for me is the closure of shops and of course the loss of jobs.

Sometimes there is notice of a closure and I am able to support staff – and hopefully hear about new jobs elsewhere. It is heart-wrenching when you arrive at a shop that was supposedly doing well only to find it closed and you never get to see the staff again.

Prayer is a really important and powerful tool in my ministry. Sometimes these requests come from the most unexpected quarters, from those who have told me in the past they have no faith or they are a nonbeliever. This is satisfying to me, as it seems that the more they come to know me as an individual representing God, they love what they see in the person.

Someone said to me **“Dolvis, I love speaking with you, as each time you put a smile on my face”.**

That was good to hear, but, I know that what I said or did was not just me but God working through me.

Chaplaincy can be a bit of a rollercoaster, but it is very fulfilling and I give God praise for giving me the strength and courage to accept the call and carry out his work here in the heart of the city.



QUOTABLE-QUOTE

“What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man I would do my part, yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.”

Ethical Money Churches Workshop

A report by Peter Sellick

How we use money is a spiritual issue. “You cannot serve both God and Money” (Matthew 6:24).



A recent Ethical Money Churches Workshop was challenging: we were asked to share our personal approach to money. But growing in Spirituality involves bringing to light those parts of life that we may try to hide from ourselves. Jesus knew that the money area of life is difficult for discipleship.

The fourteen participants at the workshop were asked to discuss how we had grown up with money. Attitudes we learn when young can become part of our spiritual way. I grew up in a family that did not talk about money very much. Fortunately there was usually enough to go round in my family. In the workshop I found it quite hard to talk about what I do with my money: it is usually a private matter.

Homelessness on our own streets, the recent mining tragedy in Brazil, and political corruption in mineral-rich nations come to mind when we think of what can go wrong when money talk is too private. Financial inequality goes too far.

It is usually the poorest people without access to money or power who lose out ... and sometimes that may be because we have not made choices in the right light in our consumer acts and investment decisions. Shining a light on our financial power has shown that we can make a structural impact with our beliefs.

The Episcopal Church in the United States is to start buying shares in gun manufacturing companies in the US precisely in order to change the industry from the inside. Shareholdings will give the church business influence in order to reduce gun violence.

It is the first time that the Church has bought shares with the sole purpose of engaging in shareholder action. Organisations like ShareAction encourage this sort of purposeful, missional engagement with businesses. The Church of England is using its Shareholding influence to push the environmental agenda onto energy companies.

Our Churches locally, regionally and nationally have similar power to start forcing change if we want it enough. A number of churches in the region are looking at a response to the homeless issue by investing land and/or finance in local housing solutions.

What Actions can Churches take?

Some churches have moved their banking arrangements to more ethical lending banks - and church members have done likewise. Some have made a commitment to only use renewable energies. Many are already engaged with Fair Trade; some are also involved in other campaigning networks – like Church Action on Tax Justice (catj.org.uk), Jubilee Debt (jubileedebt.org.uk). Some churches are joining the Church’s Just Finance initiative (justfinancefoundation.org.uk) and making financial inclusion connections with Credit Unions and Social Enterprises.

Colin Darling, in leading the workshop, connected our theoretical discussions about spending, choosing and using money with reality on the ground. He gave examples and told stories about how peoples’ lives are changed, often in poorer parts of the world, by the decisions that we make here.



If you want to reflect on how you connect your beliefs and your money, more Ethical Money Churches Workshops are planned for this year. Contact Colin on colin.darling@eccr.org.uk or Peter Sellick (peter.sellick@cigb.org.uk) for more information.

**QUOTABLE
QUOTE**

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.”

Matthew 25 v 35

Dolvis’ “Meet the Chaplain” piece talks about the ups and downs of Chaplaincy, and how we meet people who have all sorts of things—good and bad—going on in their lives. Rev’d Lyn Busfield is lead Chaplain at Heartlands hospital and sent us this poem inspired by an encounter she had.

The Embrace

i first saw You being held by two paramedics
a filthy, smelly heap of humanity being carried into
A&E
found collapsed in a shop door way – malnourished
and struggling to breathe.

You were held by a nurse as another cut off your dirt-
encrusted layers
and held by the doctors as they examined you
and arranged tests.

You were held by the porters
as you were transferred on to a ward
your dignity restored as you were washed and your
beard trimmed.

i held your hand as you were told you didn’t have
long to live
an inoperable lung tumour that two years of
coughing inside prison hadn’t been picked up on.

We held each other’s hands as you died - symptom-
controlled and peacefully.
Now freed from your diseased, poverty wracked
body
and freed from the growing gulf between rich &
poor
that allows people like you to fall through the gaps.

Your body was labelled and held in our mortuary for
months whilst next of kin was sought - to no avail.

You were held by the undertakers as your coffin was
carried to the Paupers part of the cemetery.
and with the background hum of traffic
on the motorway
i spoke what little I knew of your story
and thanked you for adding meaning to our lives,
through letting us help you.

As your coffin was lowered into the embrace of the
earth
i prayed that your soul was safe in God’s hands.

On our streets

This is taken from a BBC report on 30th January—that
brief cold snap we’ve just had.

“A homeless man has died on the street in Birmingham
city centre, an organisation has said. The man was
found by paramedics in cardiac arrest in Pershore Street,
near the Bullring shopping centre, at about 15:30 GMT
on Sunday.

Helping the Homeless Charity in Birmingham named the
man, and said the charity had previously helped him.
The founder of the charity, Peter Caine said: “Every time
we did outreach sessions in Birmingham we bumped into
him, and we got to know him. He is only a young lad.
When you got to know these people and their circum-
stances, and then realise you won’t be helping that per-
son on the street any more, it is a shock.”

There are lots of reasons why a person becomes home-
less — lack of affordable housing, loss of a job, divorce,
illness, substance abuse, domestic abuse, et cetera.
When training volunteers, local Foodbanks stress that a
huge number of working people are just one payslip
away from a crisis—no fault of their own, but a cata-
strophic change in circumstances which may lead to
homelessness further down the line. With the rollout of
Universal Credit many people have had to suffer long
waits for benefits—sometimes 12 weeks with no money
at all, so it’s not even a question of ‘heat or eat’ - they
can’t afford either.

Foodbanks need food—and you’ll see labelled contain-
ers beside the supermarket checkouts where generous
shoppers have donated goods, but here’s a cautionary
tale—apparently Birmingham Foodbanks have enough
baked beans to feed an
army for several weeks . . .
but have no long-life milk!
Many workplaces, schools
and churches have regular
collections of food for their local Foodbank. If you or
your church donate regularly it might be worth phoning
to see what the Foodbank is short of!



STAY IN TOUCH

We love hearing your stories— the exceptional ones
and the more everyday ones. It’s great to be able to
share these stories. We’re very good at ‘anonymising’
so we can make sure important details and individu-
als are not identified, if necessary ...

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