



LINK

supporting the workplace, caring for people



Welcome to the Christmas edition of the CIGB newsletter! As I write the sun is beaming down on Birmingham city centre from a clear blue sky—a beautiful crisp cold winter day. I've been out with my camera earlier this morning to have a look at the city centre—some pics for you below. Chaplains and Management council have been considering ways to raise the awareness of the work done by CIGB. One of the ways we might do this is by people from CIGB speaking in churches and community groups. Do pass on Peter's offer!

Peter Sellick

Peter has been in post for just 5 weeks as Development Director for CIGB. For those of you who haven't met him yet, here's an introduction:

I discovered excitement in sharing faith with working age people when I started a voluntary police chaplaincy in Leeds, as part of my parish ministry there. The parish church was in contact with only a small slice of humanity (and usually the well behaved bit!) despite its best efforts. More recently I have been a parish priest, and chaplain with industry in West Bromwich.



One of my duties was visiting a forge in the Black Country. It is successfully exporting to China and India. Although the work looks arcane, skills were at the cutting edge of what could be done anywhere in the world. On retirement, one of the workers was given a framed picture of himself wearing my dog-collar that I had lent him. Another member of staff went to train as a Baptist Minister after his job had been made redundant.

I had a taste of reconciling faith and business when I worked in a church gift-shop in Oxford. I also worked at a local Cash 'n Carry and a book publishers while was studying Philosophy and Psychology there. Earlier, I had a year working as a Secondary School teacher on a Roman Catholic Mission in rural Zimbabwe. Despite being a cash-poor place of subsistence farming, life there was full of faith. The area has now become the centre of Zimbabwe's diamond trade, and I dream of what I might have discovered, if I had examined the soil more carefully when we toiled over digging out the much-demanded football pitch.

Industrial Mission makes you vulnerable: missionaries put themselves in alien territory. Being observed across open-plan offices as you try to catch into conversation with staff is not very comfortable. But God works through vulnerability and awkwardness. As I went through divorce, I had a deeper connection with some of their stories. Human Resources tend to be delighted that chaplains can take the time to hear into life the stories that they have no time for.

CIGB is sharing in work that God in Jesus has already begun and I am delighted to be joining a rich team.

An offer to be tempted by ...

Peter Sellick is available to visit churches, lead worship or preach on Sundays. He can come with a focus on economic or workplace issues, and would be happy to meet



with church members on an evening in the week after the service to talk through any of the issues that have been raised, and suggest resources or ways forward. He is an ordained Anglican priest, but very happy to visit other denominations (with the appropriate authorisation). His general availability is on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.



Christmas around the city

A very happy Christmas to everyone and may God bless us all





Quotable Quote

A scientist said, making a plea for exchange scholarships between nations, "The very best way to send an idea is to wrap it up in a person." That was what happened at Christmas. The idea of divine love was wrapped up in a Person.

Halford E. Luccock

Stable times

"I thought you might like to see this poem". A member of staff at Birmingham Council offices handed me a photocopy:

*A little child,
A shining star,
A stable rude,
The door ajar,
Yet in this place
So crude, forlorn
The Hope of all
The world was born.*

(from Best Loved Christmas Carols and Readings, Ed Manser; Collins 2011)

This was the first time I had been in the office on Woodcock St. I was the stranger and was made welcome. I was at the stable.

'The door stood open' and we had a conversation about the meaning of Christmas. A few minutes later I was deep in another conversation with another church-goer and his experience of Christmas. Someone else spoke to me having just returned from bereavement leave and was feeling that office life now seemed so shallow...

Before I came to work with CIGB, I was a chaplain to manufacturing industries in West Bromwich and Sandwell. From the outside industrial units are dirty sheds; pictures of my chaplaincy workplaces featured in a film about 'desolate places' in the Black Country; yet I knew the same places as treasures of life and community.

Staff at Birmingham Council can read the newspapers like the rest of us and know which way the wind is blowing: politicians and commentators regularly speak down to them and their future is not stable.

Thank Christmas that we cannot keep God out of the world by our prejudices and narrow vision. Green shoots of the Kingdom of God are growing healthily even in times of austerity.



Commissioning Service

A member of the congregation reports on this annual CIGB celebration.

The service took place on the afternoon of 25th November at the church of the Sacred heart and St Teresa, Coleshill and was well attended. Peter Sellick was licenced into his new post; Jane Jarvis, HR Director at the NEC gave an address which was both challenging and affirming and Cllr Randall Brew of Birmingham City Council spoke with feeling of a time when he had been grateful for the listening ear of a comparative stranger – just a part of the role of a chaplain.

It was good to see so many chaplains and members of CIGB's Management Council gathered in one place to worship together, celebrate the past year and dedicate themselves afresh to this work to which they have been called.



A very encouraging part of the service was the commissioning of 5 new chaplains to Birmingham City Council, Birmingham City Centre Retail and Birmingham Airport, all very welcome members to the teams! The service was followed by coffee and cake and a wonderful opportunity to catch up on all the news.

DON'T FORGET ...

Send us your news, your stories, your pictures, your quotable quotes and your jokes and stay in touch:

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LAST WORD

*May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace,
The gladness of Christmas give you hope,
The warmth of Christmas grant you love.*



City lights at sunset