

Lord God, bless the labour of our hands,

Whether in the office or in the kitchen; on the farm or in the garden;
on the hospital ward or with an unwell friend; in the school of the world of business;
on the phone or on the computer; when holding our children or our grandchildren.
May all we do this day be done to your glory. So, Lord, bless the labour of our hands.

(Brian Hudson [adapted])

STAY IN TOUCH ...

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Pop-up Prayer at NEC

In recent months at the NEC, the Interfaith Chaplaincy has evaluated 'Pop Up Prayer Rooms'. A Pop-up Prayer Room does exactly as it says on the tin. If an Interfaith Prayer Room need is identified and a room or space is available we can simply pop along with a suitcase full of Faith books, reflection materials, prayer mats and Faith guides. Within minutes the space is converted into a Prayer Room for the duration of an event.

During the 'Spring Fair international' we opened three extra spaces to offer Faith based hospitality to the 65,000 visitors. The feedback was simply amazing – welcoming this generous provision. We repeated this at "The Big Bang Fair", which is the UK's largest celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths attracting 75,000 young people.

A university was impressed with our offering and suggested that they may follow suit in their university libraries: especially in times of exams when students are anxious and welcome greater access to prayer spaces.

David Butterworth



Evangelism and Proselytising

What is the difference between evangelism and proselytising? How can we 'represent' the Church in a Multi Faith Chaplaincy context?

Simon Sutcliffe, Tutor in Evangelism and Pioneer Ministries at Queens Foundation Birmingham (and Methodist Minister), led a useful workshop for West Midlands Workplace Chaplains in March. "Mission is the whole activity of God; when we are living within the purposes of God, we are part of God's Mission" His definition of Evangelism: "Evangelism is helping people to be church where they are".

Workplace Chaplains take their part in God's mission by placing themselves in other people's space. They are often like guests and have to exercise their ministry in that context. That environment can set rules and codes of behaviour. But the Guest/Host relationship is a powerful dynamic and both Guest and Host can be changed by the encounter. Simon Sutcliffe retold the Gospel story, (as something like!): Jesus lives as a Guest in our 'mastered world', but through his actions, he draws the powerful 'Hosts' into God's purposes.

Participants appreciated the way in which Simon listened to, and respected, their experiences. Chaplaincy shakes up some people's prejudices about 'Faith and God'. It can encourage people to think of the bigger issues in life. Some recent reports have described Chaplains as 'embedded apologists', or as 'pre-evangelists'.

Peter Sellick

Living Wage Celebrations at NX Buses

CIGB NX Bus Chaplains are delighted that Birmingham-based bus company, National Express West Midlands, has become the biggest private sector employer in the region to say it will pay its workers the living wage.

The operator, which employs 6,500 people, has pledged to pay employees, agency workers and contracted staff a minimum of £7.85 an hour from 2016. The current minimum wage is £6.50 per hour. 340 staff at National Express will see their pay go up.

According to research carried out last year, 494,000 (24%) people in the West Midlands are paid below the living wage - a rate two per cent higher than the national average. Figures from the Living Wage Foundation show that 1248 employers across the country are signed up to pay staff £7.85 an hour.: only forty-eight of those are in the West Midlands.



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Ethical Banking?

Tues 23 June c7pm Venue TBA

Charles Middleton, Managing Director, Triodos Bank UK, will be speaking about the Triodos experience of putting ethics and banking together; and what other banks can learn from this.

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