

# CHAPLAINS AT WORK



July 2017

Summer at last with lazy days sipping cool drinks—just add this latest CIGB newsletter to complete the picture! As always there's a huge variety of subject matter, news, stories from Chaplains, social comment and more. We hope that you will enjoy reading this newsletter—if you have any comments, our contact details are on the back page—we'd love to hear from you!

## THE ROBOTS ARE COMING ...

Peter Sellick considers the technology and its impact on workplaces. How does the Book of Job offer insights?

"Where does wisdom come from? And where is the place of understanding?" (Job 28: 20). Like the Book of Job, we can sometimes despair at change. The World Economic Forum is currently predicting a Fourth Industrial Revolution.

'Disruptive Innovation' is what is said to be going on in many parts of the economy. Companies like Uber, Airbnb, Netflix, are upsetting the status-quo as they make use of Technology. Change can be good, but it can also be painful. I find updating my computer pretty frustrating!

The Bible, and Christianity, happened as technology was disrupting human life in the Middle East. Reading and writing were new inventions changing ideas. Tools, weapons and transport were developing in the iron age. Some of this was Good News: Job 28:3 describes miners under the ground as those who "put an end to darkness". Disruptive Technology was shining new light on life.

Often we see the problems before the benefits. Job struggles with his personal tragedies. Many of us have 'narratives of suspicion' about change:

- "Be careful what you wish for!" desires lead astray?
- 'It's a Pandora's Box'... releasing new evils?
- "Don't mess with Nature"... rejecting the Sacred?
- "I am in the Dark"... I don't understand anymore?
- "The rich get richer"... Results will not be just?

Yet our Faith History, and the Bible, says that disruption can be good: Jesus's life and death are stories of transformational disruption.



How can we not be just 'Job's comforters' in speaking of 'Hope' against structural change in the workplace? When jobs are lost to technology, or work conditions changed? Retail Chaplains already report that High Street shop staff are having to work very creatively to draw in business versus online competition.

"Automation will be blind to the colour of your collar" is the prediction for this fourth Technological Revolution. Whether you are a factory worker, a legal advisor or a shop assistant, automation is going to disrupt your working life; overturning high paid and low paid jobs alike.

According to one report, more than 100,000 jobs in the UK legal sector are likely to be automated in the next few years. As HSBC moves its banking HQ to Birmingham City Centre, the Bank of England predicts that even amongst banking roles there are going to be significant job losses.

The church teaches that to work is part of what it is to be a child of God (Gen 2:15). Pope Francis describes unemployment as 'sin'. We work to celebrate and bless creation. Yet robots and computer algorithms are increasingly doing the jobs that people did. There will be new opportunities: but first there "will be a period of relatively higher losses than gains".

'The Future of Employment' says that jobs that are predictable and repetitive are most likely to be taken over by machine. Workers who are least likely to be replaced have irregular patterns of work, manage complex human relationships and are creative. Mental health staff and faith workers (!) should be 'secure'.

The Royal Society and British Academy are calling for action, so that we anticipate, evaluate and regulate the changes. Technology should promote human flourishing. "Society does not serve data, but data should be used to serve human communities".

There is a call to reflect on the spiritual nature of human life, and the truth of God.



**QUOTABLE-QUOTE** "Chaos in the world brings uneasiness, but it also allows the opportunity for creativity and growth."

Tom Barrett, U.S. Politician

**"The Brexit Effect in Birmingham & Solihull"**

Peter Sellick reports on the Annual Meeting of CIGB held on 16th May.

"A Good Brexit" is what businesses want the Government to deliver for the West Midlands, said Paul Faulkner, CEO Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, echoing some of the governments soundbites.



The annual meeting of CIGB Workplace Chaplains was hosted this year by the Unison Offices in the McLaren Building in Birmingham, with its grand views of the city centre from the 19<sup>th</sup> floor!

40 Chaplains, Management Committee members and visitors gathered to hear a business view on Brexit. Despite the meeting coinciding with a day of Birmingham gridlock, chaplains said the discussion was well worth it.



Prof Monder Ram

Professor Monder Ram, from Birmingham University's Centre for Research into Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship, said that Brexit changes could give the West Midlands Ethnic Minority Businesses a greater profile and productivity, by using their international connections. He noted that the

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), as forerunners to the new West Midlands Combined Authority, had not been very successful in connecting with diverse small businesses, but Brexit could be an opportunity to correct that.

Changes in our relationships with the European Union could have a big effect in the West Midlands. 25% of all West Midlands economic activity is connected with exporting to the EU, and about 45% of the West Midlands total exports are to the EU. What happens to West Midlands exporters will have significant effect to the rest of the UK: the region is the country's largest exporter of goods to the EU.



Paul Faulkner

The West Midlands draws much of its workforce talent from the EU, and threatened changes to immigration rules are apparently already having an effect. Although Judging by comments made by The Chambers of Commerce after the General Election, businesses are anxious and feeling considerable frustration at not being listened to by national government.

Professor Monder Ram noted that any business failures would have social impact as well as economic impact. Businesses, particularly small ethnic enterprises, are social hubs, as well as places of economic productivity. His research had shown that there was a 'culture of care' within small entrepreneurial communities. They are important places of social capital in poorer communities.

In West Midlands, Ethnic Minority Small Enterprises create about 14% of employment, and this could be more with assistance and policy focus. For instance if you take the businesses together in an area like Handsworth as one economic organism, then the turnover of that entire unit is larger than many multinationals.

CIGB Chaplains are in touch with businesses large and small. The meeting received the annual accounts for CIGB, the review of chaplaincies and the updated constitution. Hayward Osborne, Chair, gave thanks for the work of the chaplains and management committee members. He particularly noted the work of Paul Dilkes who standing down as Honorary Treasurer; and introduced Patrick Bryan who was taking up that role.

Patrick Bryan works for a Housing Association formed out of an Afro-Caribbean Church community. Diversity is good for business: companies receiving investment from abroad tend to become more productive, as that investment brings with it new ideas of how to do business. Trading is one way that diverse people learn the deep values they share. Internationalism tests our faith: some multinationals have recently failed that test, with evidence of corruption.

Internationalism is also good for communities of faith: what we understand of God is honed and improved by the challenge and support of diverse perspectives. In the Epiphany story (Matthew 2) we are taught to see God in Jesus because of the insights of foreigners – the Wise Men. They use products of international trade (Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh) to explain who Jesus is.

Questions that followed the addresses showed that there was an interest that CIGB chaplains and friends should make greater connections with our own local international businesses.



**QUOTABLE  
QUOTE**

“Go out into the world today and love the people you meet. Let your presence light new light in the hearts of people”

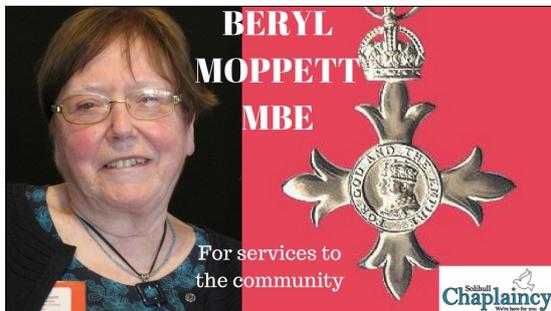
Mother Teresa

**News from around the Chaplaincies**

It's always good to catch up and to hear what our Chaplains have been up to. First of all some almost STOP PRESS news ...

**Beryl Moppett MBE**

We were thrilled and delighted recently to hear that Beryl, who along with other community activities leads the team of Chaplains in Solihull Town Centre, had been awarded an MBE! Congratulations, Beryl— what a fantastic achievement. Enjoy your visit to the palace!



Easter may seem a long way back, but Thelma Mitchell, Lead Chaplain at Bournville FE College and the team celebrated in style!

**Chaplains, Chocolate and Prayer**

In March we celebrated the week of Mothering Sunday by asking 'Who Cares For You?' and, yes, giving out chocolate - ALWAYS popular! Responses were put on post-its and attached to a poster of a tree. These encounter times are so rewarding and we get to chat to a diversity of folk.

A member of staff told us she couldn't eat the chocolate as she had to have a procedure in hospital later. We chatted then asked if we could pray for her. She was just delighted and said that this had been her best day that week!

Meeting her again during our Easter activities I asked her how it had gone. She told me that she had been calm, sailed through the procedure and the results were negative. She had told her son she knew it was all because we were praying for her. I think we both cried a little as we hugged!

A few weeks later we celebrated Easter with glowing golden daffodils and Lenten purple tops. The Chaplains at Bournville College gathered round our

decorated table for prayers and readings, and finished with a rousing chorus of Thine Be The Glory.

Afterwards we handed out little chocolate eggs and Easter book marks which read 'Easter blessings from the Chaplains', which were much appreciated. Some of the staff in the downstairs offices and at reception said they had so enjoyed listening to it, especially the singing, even though they couldn't leave their posts. They were especially pleased that we had gone to find them, knowing that they couldn't join us.

Moments of great encouragement. I left for with an overwhelming feeling of goodwill, of having maybe doing a good job. Back for more of the same next term!



Linda, Becky, Jason, Gillian and Thelma



We mentioned this next item before, but as this is the last newsletter before the summer holidays, we thought we'd give you all the opportunity to sponsor one of our Bus Chaplains. Christine McAteer writes ...

**On yer' bike - Raising Money for QE Hospital**

“In October I needed plastic surgery after I was driven into by a van whilst cycling and I am really grateful to the QE Hospital for all the care I was given. I am currently training for Birmingham's first 100 mile closed road cycling which is taking place on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September. “



To read Christine's story click the link below: <https://www.qehb.org/news/local-woman-back-on-her-bike-after-crash-to-support-the-hospital-that-treated-her>  
If you would like to sponsor Christine please visit her just giving page <https://www.justgiving.com/ChristineMcAteer>

**QUOTABLE  
QUOTE**

"Spirituality is ... the multiple ways in which persons maintain and nurture balanced relationships with themselves, others, the world and their creator... individual search for meaning... a way of living in relationship with God... the search for meaning in life events and a yearning for connectedness to the universe..."  
Research from Newman University

**News from around the Chaplaincies ... cont'd**

We've had to 'anonymise' this next story, but it just shows the diversity of situations encountered by Workplace Chaplains, and the humour needed!

**Getting To the Bottom of the Problem!**

As a Workplace Chaplain I meet lots of people including a large group of 'Blokey Men'. Inevitably such a group is home to wannabe comedians.

Walking towards them one afternoon I could sense they had something in store for me. My senses didn't fail me!

*"Hey Chaplain have a word with the kid – he's suffering"*

Suddenly all eyes and ears were fixed upon me.

*"Why what's the matter with him?"*

*"He's got Haemorrhoids"*

*"No he ain't" replied his comrade, "he's got piles – great biguns – hanging down like grapes of wrath".*

*"He needs you to lay hands on him".*

Turning my gaze towards the kid I could see him flinching and cowering from embarrassment. His mother in her keenness to find him work here could never have imagined what lay before him.

Dismissing the comedians I took the young man to one side and learnt that he was indeed suffering. And he wished dearly that he had never confided in one person. It only takes one I told him! But my career had been in nursing so I reassured him and told him that I would return next day with a solution to his problem.

The following day I returned armed with over-the-counter products and sound advice from Dr Google. His problems were over. He was touchingly grateful.

It was good over the next couple of weeks to see his self confidence return. I knew that it was fully restored and he was back to his cheeky self when one day walking passed him and his colleagues I heard him shout

*"Hey Chaplain – how's your haemorrhoids?"*

*"Fine thanks kid" I replied "Thanks for asking – God Bless you!"*

**Meet the Chaplain**

Richard Alford is a Waterways Chaplain and kindly agreed to be the next Chaplain to be put in the spotlight for our on-going series. Richard writes:



**How did I become a Waterways Chaplain?**

The story goes back a number of years as it always does with God. He sees the bigger picture. In the early 2000's I was responsible for a group of churches in the Erewash Valley on the border of Nottinghamshire. Out walking along the tow-path of the Erewash Canal I met Alan Dilnot who was the joint chair of the Boaters Christian Fellowship (BCF). Seeing the logo on his shirt I asked him what it was. Before long I had become a member.

Fast forward to 2013 and I was now resident in Kings Norton looking for what God had for me next. I saw an article in the BCF magazine about the Chaplaincy. Over many years my wife and I had hired a number of boats and I love the canals, so it all came together.

**Why do I keep going?**

Basically, because I love the work and God has not told me to stop. I have made many good friends not least in CIGB and the Chaplaincy generally. I receive support from all of them, also good advice and training.

I have managed to assist a number of people in a number of ways which has meant that their lives have become a bit easier. Also, I have had good conversations with people about my faith and what motivates me: so I thank God for calling me into this work!

**But it's not all plain sailing ...**

I find myself getting a bit frustrated sometimes – when people I meet seem unable (or unwilling) to do things that would make their lives easier! However, I am called to draw alongside them and help if I can, not to take over their lives.

Then there's some people at the Canal and River Trust who spend a lot of time in an 'ideal world' rather than seeing what's going on in the real world – for example when I'm trying to help someone find a permanent mooring. The thing that really upsets me is when I see people forced to live in poverty on the canals because of injustices in our bureaucratic system.

I make as much of a difference as I can.



**QUOTABLE  
QUOTE**

“Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, people cannot live without a spiritual life”

Buddha

**‘Spirituality and Work’ study day**

This Study Day for Chaplains took place at Newman University on 10th July. Sallie Morgan reflects on the day ...

From the moment we arrived we were made very welcome: we were soon chatting and catching up. It is good to spend time with other haplains as it can often be a very lonely occupation.

In the first session of the morning Helen Bardy, senior lecturer in Community Chaplaincy Studies and Margaret Holland, the Chaplain of the university, took us through some understandings of the word ‘Spirituality’ and some historical aspects of it. We then looked at some more modern ideas and added our own thoughts to the mix.

This enabled us to reflect on our own spirituality and how we talk about that with others, especially those from other faiths or none.



The second session of the day was led by Chis Whittington, former COO of the World Community of Christian Meditation. He spoke interestingly about the history and practice of meditation in

the Christian faith and gave us a tantalising taster session.

He compared and contrasted the methods of the Christian Desert Fathers (and Mothers) with those of other faiths and none. He also told us how the secular world sometimes makes use of meditation as a health tool but cuts out the spiritual element thus leaving the job incomplete.

After a lovely lunch provided by the university we met in their impressive chapel for worship. Val Dalton very kindly led us in diverse song and prayer like the variety of a ‘box of chocolates’. Sharing Communion with others of different church traditions is always uplifting.

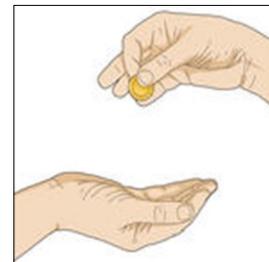
The final session ‘Places and Spaces’ was an informative look at where, when, how and with whom we can make time and space



sacred: over a shop counter, in a corridor? The general consensus was that it had more to do with the interaction between people than the actual geographical or temporal situation.

**Chaplaincy Expenses**

Most of CIGB’s 50+ Chaplains are volunteers: we don’t get paid for our Chaplaincy work. CIGB’s Management Council would like to encourage Chaplains to claim legitimate expenses: This could include travel to and from the Chaplaincy location, and the cost of a hot drink while out on chaplaincy ‘duty’.



How this is administered varies across the different Chaplaincy Teams and Locations. Some teams have their own budget for expenses, in which case Chaplains should submit any claims to their Team Leader.

Other Chaplains—particularly those who are not part of a team—can claim from CIGB directly: if in doubt, Chaplains should contact their Team Leader or Peter Sellick.

CIGB’s Management Council value very highly the gift of time and energy that Chaplains give to this ministry – and do not wish Chaplains to be unnecessarily out of pocket.

**Here’s how to claim from CIGB:**

You can either complete the expense claim form at the back of your little ‘Record keeping’ booklet and send it to Val at the usual address. Alternatively, email Val to ask for a claim form. Once completed, return it to Val.

We leave it up to you how often you claim, but as there’s quite a bit of paperwork involved, the suggestion is that you claim quarterly if possible. It’s irksome to keep receipts, but it would be very helpful if you could keep them and attach them to the claim form when you submit it.

Apologies for the process—but don’t let that put you off! And finally, a huge *‘Thank you’* for all your work!



**QUOTABLE  
QUOTE**

“You cannot recover from anxiety by just staying calm. You cannot recover from depression by just being positive. You cannot recover from anorexia nervosa by just eating more. If mental illnesses were that simple we wouldn’t be struggling in the first place.”

**Mental Health First Aid in West Midlands Workplaces**

Peter Sellick writes

Work can be good for our mental and physical health. Part of the new West Midlands Combined Authority’s (WMCA) Commission on Mental Health, is a drive to get people with mental health needs back to work and to make workplaces more ‘mental health friendly’.

More needs to be done to get West Midlands businesses to offer leadership and a non-stigmatising culture around mental health at work. Chaplains are well placed within businesses to be part of the prevention and promotion of mental health issues. WMCA is calling on businesses to sign up for, and work towards the Workplace Wellbeing Charter that has been designed by Public Health England.

It is estimated that mental health concerns cost businesses about £1000 per employee each year, in terms of sickness and underperformance. Health issues like depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm and psychosis now form the most common cause of sickness absence in workplaces: about 40% of days off work. There is good evidence that staff with a greater sense of wellbeing at work are more productive.



How work is organised effects mental health. Young people on zero-hours contracts are 1.5 times more likely to have worse mental and physical health than peers with more reliable, stable work positions.

Using the Wellbeing Charter, Workplaces can measure themselves and try to improve their ranking. The Commission is also encouraging Workplaces to take part in the Mental Health First Aid training, that is offered by organisations like MIND, which helps people to understand and respond appropriately to Mental Health challenges.

John 14:27: ‘Let not your hearts be troubled, do not be afraid.... my peace I give to you’

**Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy  
Autumn 2017**

A 6-week training course for voluntary Workplace Chaplaincy led by the Churches and Industry Group Birmingham - Solihull

Six Mondays  
starting 2nd October 2017  
5pm—7pm

8th Floor, 1 Colmore Row  
Birmingham B3 2BJ

Please contact Peter Sellick to book :  
peter.sellick@cigb.org.uk

Spirituality is a quality that goes beyond religious affiliation, that strives for inspiration, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose, even in those who do not believe in God.

(Murray and Zentner, 1989)

**LAST WORD**

We love hearing your stories—and there are a few in this edition— both the exceptional ones and the more everyday ones. It’s great to be able to share these stories as they are so encouraging. We’re very good at ‘anonymising’ stories so we can make sure important details and individuals are not identified, if necessary ...

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



**STAY IN TOUCH**

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