

CHAPLAINS AT WORK



Christmas 2017

supporting the workplace, caring for people

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas ... in fact, as I edit this there is still a lot of snow around even in the city centre! There are lots of stories from Chaplains in this issue and news of a new appointment to a Chaplaincy teams, and, as usual, Peter's challenging article. Definitely time to pull up a comfy chair, make a hot drink, and 'Read all about it'!

Reformation to the Economy ...



Poundland got into trouble this year for its copycat confectionery. With a bit of repackaging they were allowed to keep selling their "Twin Peaks" chocolate bars. Mondelez decided that they sell enough Toblerone at Christmas through Poundland for it not to be worth falling out over.

The Bible itself is not against a bit of disruptive ingenuity. In Genesis, Jacob dresses up like Esau to get his father's blessing.



We are living through inventive times. As long as power and skill are distributed more widely because of these changes, then perhaps that is good news.

This autumn's 500th Anniversary of the Reformation is a history lesson warning us of the dangers of authority being concentrated between too few hands. Amongst other things the Reformation was a step towards greater social and religious equality.

The Christmas story tells us also that God works through diversity. Luke's Gospel gives parallel narratives of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus. The combined ministry of the two young men seems to be needed, in the same way that Moses and Aaron are needed for the Exodus.

We are usually suspicious of powerful people who think they know it all. In the economy, Monopolies are usually unhelpful. The 27 EU nation states have demanded changes to the practices of businesses like Microsoft, Google and Amazon. Diversity in the market is good for less powerful consumers.

At the Reformation Luther was disrupting the established church monopoly of Rome. Not least, it was the Roman church's economic activities of abusing its monopoly to sell indulgences that sparked off the Protestant challenge.

Roman indulgences undermined local churches' and rulers' generation of income from religious believers. Sometimes that money was also being taken from the poor to send back to Rome. Economists suggest that the Roman church's malpractice encouraged competitive entry into the religious market from another type of church: the Protestant church.

The Reformation creed of 'sola fide' ("justification by an individual's faithful response in conscience to God alone") perhaps leads to the rise of the value given to the 'heroic entrepreneur'. The one who is willing to challenge the principalities and powers in the marketplace with their own new business.



'Holy Corner' In Edinburgh is a road junction with four churches: Calvinist, Episcopal, Baptist, Congregational. The Reformation encouraged copycat diversity in church practise. Today Holy Corner is a place where many faiths have premises and collaborate.

Although we will be praying for, and witnessing to, Christian Unity in January, that does not mean that church (and economic) diversity are bad. "Good competition" between different churches can actually be a form of co-operation. Different skills and voices interact together to witness to a greater truth.

Peter Sellick

QUOTABLE-QUOTE

O little town of Bethlehem how still we see thee lie.
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by
 Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light
 The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight



Remembering ...



Acts of Remembrance took place all over our region and Chaplains took part in some of these.

Retail Chaplains Val and Peggy joined staff at the Sainsbury's Longbridge store. All the music was turned off, the traveller was stopped and the checkouts were closed. At 10.50am staff and customers came together where the British Legion had been selling poppies. Gradually silence descended until at 11am the proverbial 'pin' would certainly have been heard if it had been dropped.

In a shop as big and as busy as Sainsbury's is on a Saturday, it was especially moving to share that brief, two-minute silence in memory of those killed in various military conflicts with the people we visit each week and their customers.



Afterwards we walked up to the town centre when an outdoor event had been organised by church group, God's Heart for Longbridge (GHFL). Although we missed some of the presentation because we joined with the Sainsbury's staff for the two-minute silence, there were quite a number of people from the local community around. Many had written messages on red ribbons which were tied to the trees; others had helped wind red wool onto a huge red poppy.



The Chaplains at Bournville College marked Remembrance Day with a reading and a prayer. Students and staff stood or sat respectfully. Some joined in the encounter activity: to write on poppy notes the name of anyone or institution they would like remembered, to be pinned on the tree of remembrance and displayed for the day.



Some students asked for prayer and others lingered to chat about lost loved ones. The Chaplains were asked to remember and pray for the brother of one of the staff who had died suddenly over the weekend. This was a sombre, united occasion when the chaplains were able to offer their support to all who asked for help and remembering.



In Solihull, Chaplains from the team working in the town centre laid a wreath at the war memorial in the town as part of the civic Remembrance event. In Billesley, John Bradley, Lead Chaplain to National Express West Midlands buses attended a Remembrance event at the bus workers war memorial.



Job Vacancies

Just Finance Development Worker: Black Country



To work with churches, schools and local groups across the Black Country, using new resources to equip them to engage with issues around money, debt, savings, and credit in their local community. This full-time three-year post is part of a Church Urban Fund, Lichfield Diocese and Just Finance Foundation collaboration. Salary £30,000.

For further details visit www.lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies. Application date 11th January 2018. Interviews 20th January.



Ethical Money Churches Development Manager, Birmingham and Black Country

To work with churches to help them to develop, and bring into action, their vision of how they can use their finances for good, thereby providing a solid basis of support, engagement and knowledge sharing. Drawing on the Ethical Money Church study course.

12 months part time role 15 – 19 hours per week apportioned over a four-week period, working from home with access to Birmingham & the Black Country. Desk space potentially available in Birmingham. £27,300/annum pro rata.

Working for Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, in partnership with CIGB and Black Country Urban Industrial Mission.

For further details visit www.eccr.org.uk/about-us/work-for-us
 Application date 22nd January 2018

**QUOTABLE
QUOTE**

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given.
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive him still the dear Christ enters in



A new Waterways Chaplain

Richard Alford has sent us some stop-press news from Mark Chester, National Waterways Chaplain:

Debbie Nouwen has been appointed to develop the ministry of Waterways Chaplaincy in the Midlands and North of England. Debbie has experience as a Christian engaged in social work and has lived on the waterways and been part of the boating community.

She writes: *"I am a proud Yorkshire lass born and bred! For the last 10 years I have enjoyed the many escapades that come with living on a canal boat. I'm a social worker by profession, but God has flipped me upside down and I'm now embarked on a new journey. I am tremendously excited about being part of Waterways Chaplaincy, let this new voyage begin!"*



Please pray for Debbie and the ministry at this important juncture. She will be commissioned into this ministry in her church in Leeds on 25 January.



Chaplaincy news from Olton Hollow

Tina Hands sends an update on her Chaplaincy to the shops in Olton Hollow

In September I went to my shops in Olton hollow and offered a "prayer harvest". I invited people to write down any things they would like prayed for.



The uptake was amazing. Virtually everyone was happy to be prayed for and some people had specific requests. I also gave everyone an apple to help them to visualise harvest. Having gained the permission of the people I had spoken to, Olton Baptist church dedicated a service to pray for these prayer needs. On another visit I was asked to pray with someone, and also gave out two "try praying" booklets. I really feel that trust is beginning to grow.

During December I gave out little bundles of sweets to each of the shopkeepers: Just three or four chocolates in cellophane with a bow. People love them and some said how much they looked forward to them. I don't know what my next visit will bring but I am excited to see.



A VERY Grand Day Out!

You may remember back in the June edition of "Chaplains at Work" there was the wonderful news that Beryl Moppett had been awarded an MBE. Here's Beryl's account of her VERY Grand Day Out!

Back in May a letter dropped through the letterbox. It looked as though it might be yet another unwanted and unnecessary letter from the tax man – but no! Would I like to accept the award of MBE? Well who would say no?

With great difficulty I had to keep quiet for six weeks or so until the Queen's birthday honours were officially announced in June. A bit later on an attractive certificate arrived and finally the great day itself at the end of November.

I could take three guests, so my two sons and my eldest granddaughter accompanied me to the Palace. As we walked up the Mall, anticipating the forthcoming occasion, we remembered the instruction: 'Bring some form of identity!'. Immediate panic ensued when realised that only one of us could comply! But all was well.

We walked together through the state rooms of the palace; and then I was taken to a room where some hundred or so recipients of awards were gathered for the practical instructions. We then learnt that it would be Prince Charles presenting the awards.

We processed in groups through corridors ... the moment finally came. The medal was pinned on, a brief conversation: 'I assume that you have done voluntary work for the number of years?', 'Yes', 'Are you still doing it now?', 'Yes'. And then the handshake, a wobbly curtsy and back to sit behind the guests.

Official photographs in the very cold palace Yard! My sons ensured that my hat remained in situ until the last minute! A family lunch concluded the day.

A great occasion, a great day and one to be remembered. Such a great privilege to have been so honoured.

Congratulations, Beryl, from all of us at CiGB!!!



**QUOTABLE
QUOTE**

O holy Child of Bethlehem descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in be born to us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us our Lord Emmanuel



Reflections on the Annual Commissioning Service

Pat Saunders, one of the Chaplains to the Jericho Foundations, shares her thoughts.

Late on a cold and dark Sunday afternoon in November a warm welcome awaited me on arrival at the New Testament Church of God The Rock, in West Birmingham. It's come around so quickly! Our annual service where CIGB Chaplains gather together to celebrate the commissioning of our new Workplace Chaplains and to invite existing Chaplains to re-dedicate themselves to this work. The whole service was a true celebration of our work and an opportunity for reflection and worship. The Rock's praise and worship team lent their voices and keyboard skills; which harmonised with ours to the glory of God.

As we listened to each new Chaplain talk about their calling in turn, the reading, sermon and prayers; a common thread ran through them: 'listening'. Proverbs 1: 5 *"let the wise listen and add to their learning..."* It was encouraging to see a great mix of ages of the new Chaplains as they walked us through their Christian journeys and the encounters within the various workplaces where they minister. Nine new Chaplains were commissioned: Steve Bavington – Acivico Building Consultancy; Maxine Chamberlain – Bull Ring Centre; Matthew Gordon – NEC; David & Sonia Jackson – Longbridge Residents; Chris Milton – Cadbury FE College; Deirdre Moll – Solihull Town Centre; Israel Okunwaye – WMFS and Celia Porter – Birmingham City Council.

For we *"are God's co-workers"*
2nd Cor 6:1. We continue to support others not just in relation to their work lives but the challenges and uncertainties they may face with their work / life balance. We are there to join in the celebrations of lives but also there during their challenges; we are privileged to be invited to into their intimate spaces of work and all it holds.



Let's pray God will continue to make the harvest plentiful and the workers too...



**Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy
From Monday 5 Feb 2018**

This course is starting to fill up, but if you're interested—or know someone else who might be interested—it will run on 6 Mondays from 5– 7pm starting on February 5th.
Cost £20.

Please contact Peter to book your place at:
peter.sellick@cigb.org.uk

The light of the Christmas star to you.
The warmth of home and hearth to you.
The cheer and goodwill of friends to you.
The hope of a child-like heart to you.
The joy of a thousand angels to you.
The love of the Son and God's peace to you, and
until we meet again
may God hold you
in the palm of his hand.

Have a joy-full Christmas!

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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