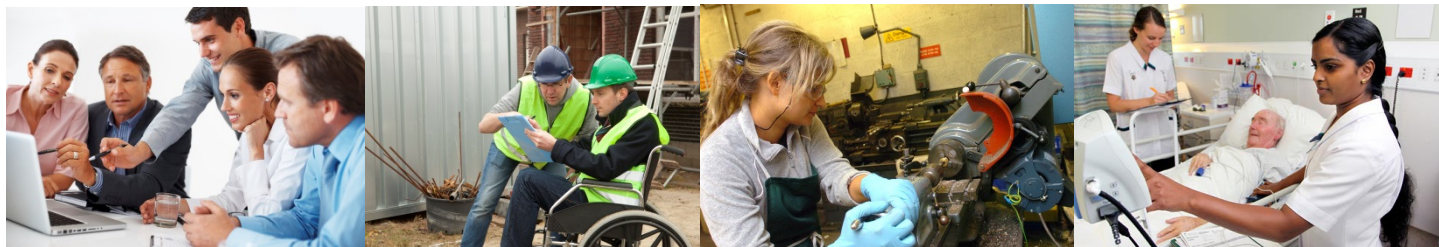


# The Kingdom at Work Project



## ***Bulletin 6*** **October 2015**

### **Chaplains and chaplaincy**

The Kingdom at Work Project is in its early days. The book (of the same name as the project) setting out its agenda was published just a year ago and was launched at a conference set up in Birmingham in partnership with Saint Peter's Saltley Trust last November. Though the project's *Bulletin* first appeared in February 2014 it has taken a little time to clarify what its main focus should be. Our current view is that it should seek to facilitate a discussion of some of the main issues facing those committed to ministry and mission in the world of work.

In *Bulletin 4* (April 2015) we moved in this direction by setting out ten key questions raised by the project (there are of course others). These included the kind of theology and spirituality which should inform and empower our engagement with the working world, the nature of a communal economy, how we can discern what God is already doing in the workplace, how the workplace might more fully manifest the gifts of the kingdom community, how we can better equip ourselves for ministry at work and what learning opportunities and resources should be available to further that task.

*Bulletin 6* continues to address this agenda by focusing on the issue of how chaplains and ministers in secular employment can best support lay people at work (within the workplace or through the gathered church), how they might offer this support and what training they might require for this task. Below (pp. 2-9) we present the comments of **a number of leading figures** associated with this form of ministry on this issue.

Two other important contributions are made to this *Bulletin*. The first (pp. 9-10), is a response by **Jenny Sinclair**, founder of the Common Good Project, to our article in *Bulletin 5* in which we raised the question of whether initiatives to create a more just and equal society, including within the world of work, would be given greater impetus by employing the concept of 'the *communal* good' rather than of 'the *common* good'.

The second (pp. 11-12) is an article by **Roger Walton**, President-Designate of the Methodist Conference (2016-2017) and a prominent writer in the field of discipleship, in which he reviews *The Kingdom at Work Project* very positively but challenges its stance on the concept of discipleship and its definition of work as 'paid employment'.

**David Clark** (Project Co-ordinator)

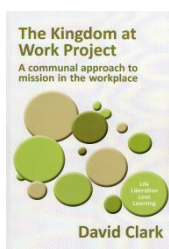
## **The role of chaplains and ministers in secular employment in supporting Christians at work**

The issue addressed here is:

**How chaplains and ministers in secular employment can best support lay people at work (either within the workplace or through the gathered church),  
how they might offer such support and  
what training they might require for that task.**

### **What *The Kingdom at Work Project* says about this issue**

[Stage 11 (pp. 359-381)]



#### **Chaplains**

The project argues that chaplaincy is still largely moulded by a Christendom ecclesiology. It contends that, even where chaplaincy once attempted to espouse a kingdom theology (for example within early industrial mission) this has now slipped into the background. The project believes that chaplains have a very important role to play as enablers and educators of the laity for their ministry within the workplace. However, it concludes:

A Copernican revolution will be required if chaplains are to break free from the mould of a Christendom church, escape the omnipresent danger of clericalism and offer their considerable resources as mentors to equip the church's primary but neglected missionary resource, its laity already engaged within the workplace. To initiate such a revolution, the recommendation of this project is that all training courses for chaplains, initial or in-service, ordained or lay, should henceforth include the skills of mentoring Christians at work, and those of enabling the gathered church to support the latter, as a core component of their curricula. (p. 373)

#### **Ministers in Secular Employment (MSEs)**

The project argues that many of the factors that currently shape the role of chaplaincy also shape that of ministers in secular employment. This form of ministry also remains circumscribed by a Christendom ecclesiology and, though to a lesser extent than chaplaincy, a kingdom theology is little in evidence. Thus MSEs, though possessing invaluable experience and resources, are not well placed to adopt the role of enablers and educators of the laity at work. The project concludes with a similar plea:

As in the case of chaplains, all this means that a Copernican scale revolution will be required if MSEs are to escape the ever-present danger of clericalism and employ their considerable experience to inform and develop the role of mentor to lay people within the workplace. To kick-start this radical change, the recommendation of this project is that MSEs should undertake in-service training which equips them with the expertise for mentoring Christians at work and with the skills to enable the gathered church to support the latter. (p. 381)

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## What leaders in the field of chaplaincy say about this issue

From Andrew Todd

Director of the **Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies**

CARDIFF  
CENTRE FOR  
CHAPLAINCY  
STUDIES



The Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies at St Michael's College, in partnership with Cardiff University School of History, Archaeology and Religion draws together practitioners and academics to study and research chaplaincy in the UK and beyond. It is recognised as a Cardiff University research centre. At: <http://www.stmichaels.ac.uk/chaplaincy-studies.php>

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The hidden significance of the chaplain's role in the workplace was one of the important findings of research conducted by the Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies and the Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology & Practical Theology - Todd, A., Slater, V., & Dunlop, S. (2014) *The Church of England's involvement in chaplaincy: research report for the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council*, available at: <http://stmichaels.ac.uk/chaplaincy-studies/research-activity>.

In relation to the impact of chaplaincy in the workplace, research participants spoke of the 'calming' or 'normalising' influence of chaplaincy; and of chaplaincy's role in relation to making organisational change 'as faithful as possible'. They also spoke of the importance of chaplaincy bringing religion into the workplace and enabling faith to be seen as part of everyday life.

It became clear that one way in which chaplaincy's influence in the workplace became concrete was in chaplains' interaction with other people of faith. When asked about nurturing Christians at work, chaplains highlighted the following: 'discussion meetings with Christians at work about issues like management', 'failure', 'honesty'; 'holding on to the values of disciples in the workplace'; 'chaplaincy help(ing) Christians to integrate their faith and work lives – discipling them to become mature Christians'.

All this is skilful work, requiring chaplains to understand their organisational and political context. They also need to be skilled interpreters working between the language of faith and other value-based languages, including those associated with commerce. And in order to connect with their context and act as interpreters, they need both to be reflective practitioners themselves; and to enable others in the workplace to stand back and reflect on how their work is shaped and organised. This confirms the value of including practical theological and ethical approaches in chaplaincy education programmes within the educational frame of developing chaplains as reflective practitioners, as we do in Cardiff.

It is clear from the above that Christian chaplains' engagement with the world of work is an aspect of mission. Chaplains live and interpret Christianity within that context,

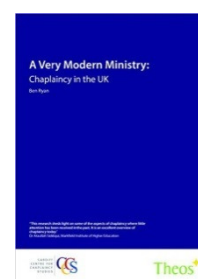
alongside others who work there. Together, they demonstrate by their presence and engagement that faith is significant for understanding work and its relationship to God. Chaplains were clear, however, that this is little understood by the wider church.

The benefits of better connecting chaplaincy with other aspects of mission in the workplace would be threefold: first, chaplains would be better enabled and supported; secondly, the congregational life of the church would be enriched by the wisdom from the workplace that chaplains can communicate; and, thirdly, congregational life would therefore be more accessible and supportive for those who wished to bring their exploration of faith at work into that community.

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**From Ben Ryan**  
**Researcher at the Christian think tank Theos**

**Author of *A Very Modern Ministry: Chaplaincy in the UK***  
(<http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/publications/2015/03/11/a-very-modern-ministry-chaplaincy-in-the-uk>)



Few readers need reminding of a sad but basic fact: Church attendance and Christian affiliation are in decline. Despite this, chaplaincy, perhaps paradoxically, is something of a boom industry. Critically for the Church, chaplains have the advantage that by their very nature they are located where people actually *are*; chaplains are increasingly the public face of religion.

This raises an interesting prospect for chaplaincy as a role to empower, inspire and mentor Christians at work. The recent Equalities and Human Rights Commission's public consultation on religion in the workplace (<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/your-experiences-religion-or-belief>) reveals, if nothing else, a great deal of confusion and a widespread feeling that faith has to be kept private at work. Perhaps chaplains can play a role here in questioning those Christians who reflect this view and enabling them to live out their faith in all aspects of their life, including work.

Such mentoring will need to be done carefully. Chaplains who are seen as 'preachy' or as trying to convert people are often a turn-off for organizations and employees, a style that can cause more harm than good. But there is much to be said for chaplains equipping lay people to be Christian in their workplace. Indeed there are already numerous examples of this - such as a scheme at Canary Wharf where employees meet to talk about their faith and work. This type of ministry - exploring challenges, perhaps dispelling misunderstandings and just being someone to whom Christians at work can talk to as faith figures living and working outside church buildings - can be very valuable.

However, a mentoring role for chaplains is one with which the Church is unfamiliar. It is less about bringing people to faith and more about empowering those with faith already in the workplace to live it out in practice. With such an understanding of mission comes a need for a different kind of training for chaplains. At present there is little specific training focus on the role of mentor. The training we need is one that knows the law and what is permitted of faith in the workplace. Training should also prepare chaplains for finding ways of encouraging expressions of faith within that framework, of the marrying of legal nous and innovative, practical catechesis.

One note of warning! There is a real danger of over-expectation. There needs to be a recognition that chaplains are not going to be able (except in rare circumstances) to bring about dramatic changes in organizational culture or individual behaviour. Putting too much responsibility on their shoulders could be counter-productive, not least if it gets in the way of people feeling able to come to chaplains with their pastoral concerns. We should not expect chaplains to be creating saints!

A lesson from Canary Wharf is that any approach to ministry in the workplace must be empathetic. Engaging in 'banker bashing' just doesn't fly - if people feel attacked they won't trust us. Empowering Christians for their ministry in the workplace needs to be done carefully and in ways sympathetic to the overall organizational culture or it risks undermining other aspects of chaplaincy work.

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**From Phil Jump**  
**Chair of the Industrial Christian Fellowship (ICF)**  
**Member of the Joint Public Issues Team**  
(Methodist, Baptist, Church of Scotland and URC)



It was obvious from the tone and demeanour of the voice on the other end of the phone that a tough week was taking its toll. A teenage cancer unit brings into sharp relief two life-experiences that few of us will ever confront together. I had nothing but admiration for the way in which its chaplain faithfully sought to make sense of all the hope, ambition and self-discovery of those teenage years with a group of people, of whom many might never make their twenties. In the last few days, two of those bright young lights had been extinguished, and he had once again journeyed with their families into anguish, devastation, yet defiant commitment to celebrate and not simply mourn a life now over.

As I said, I could only admire his relentless commitment to seek out the presence of Christ in the most demanding of human circumstances. Yet I sensed that much of his struggle lay not so much in that difficult ministry as in the attitude of his local church towards the work he did. 'Why is it that the only thing we ever want to offer young people is a high-octane, live-life to the maximum version of faith?' he lamented. 'Don't church members realise that teenagers face the same struggles and fears and questions as everyone else?'

As we talked, I was reminded of a similar conversation some months earlier with a friend who had become a military chaplain. The majority of those in his care were aged between 18 and 25, many of them dealing with the upheaval, challenge, highs and lows of military training before embarking to some of the world's most demanding conflict zones. He had offered some reflections and insights at a church council about their youth work only to be more or less told that he didn't really understand young people and should leave decisions in that connection to the experts who knew what they were talking about.

I suspect that the two examples I have shared are not the only ones where the expertise, insight and experience of workplace chaplains get overlooked. Chaplaincy is one of the front lines of mission. Day by day those engaged in it have to make sense of the



Christian Gospel in the face of all the ethical, relational, technical and economic challenges that make up the world of work. We have much to gain when their role and potential is properly recognised, particularly in helping other Christians to make the vital connection between their faith and work.

Yet often they are an under-used resource or, as one healthcare chaplain recently shared with me, perceived simply as a 'first-reserve' minister who is obligated to stand in when the 'official' church minister can't be there. How much more might be given and received if the experience and skills of chaplains were used to the full within the life of our congregations?



***Faith in Business***  
the quarterly  
magazine of ICF and  
Ridely Hall - Faith in Business

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**From Robert Fox**  
**Customer Relationship Manager at HM Revenue and Customs**  
**Editor of *Minsters-at-Work* - the CHRISM Journal**

***CHRISM – CHRistians In Secular Ministry*** at: [www.chrism.org.uk](http://www.chrism.org.uk)



The growing interest in relating faith and work is a welcome shift in the ways the Christian churches see their role in contemporary society. Less has been

said about mission in the world of work, and most of what there is has focussed on traditional evangelism. As a Minister in Secular Employment (MSE), I'd like to propose a different dimension.

Expressing faith in our work should come naturally to Christians (as it often does to devout Jewish and Islamic colleagues). Mission goes beyond the passive – personal holiness in how we are – to actively seeking change in our workplace and even in our work itself. This may be through involvement in formal bodies such as a trades union, employee panel or social group, but it will often be informal. What sets our contribution apart is – and should be – our faith in God and the values following from that which we bring to our work. It also lies in recognising what God is already doing where we work. (I'm happy to share examples of this with readers if they would like to contact me.)

In the workplace MSEs can and do model ways of changing the relational dynamic so each person and their contribution is valued. This means a loving recognition, driven by our faith, of each person's worth. There is added value where an MSE engages in such recognition because they are usually known to be a minister, a church 'official' if you like. This gives permission to others to express similar forms of recognition.

Within the churches MSEs can also help equip members to live out their faith at work, to discern where they can influence how the office, factory or warehouse works, both as a community and a business, and to recognise that we are all loved by God. However, I would like to see MSEs much more closely involved in ministerial training, as mentors to those called to MSE or in equipping church leaders to support the day-to-day ministry of their congregations, not least when they are at work.

Much of the training of church leaders focusses on what goes on within the church building rather than on how to equip their members for mission outside. An example of this is the set of Learning Outcomes used by the Church of England. With few exceptions, examples of the outcomes cited are 'internal' to church life. However, outcomes should also be illustrated by examples taken from the community or workplace.

I feel it is important to use the pastoral cycle (learning, action, experience, theological reflection - the order can vary) every day in my work as a tax professional in HM Revenue & Customs. In particular we need to learn to think outside the church box. As James puts it (1: 22), let us 'be doers of the word, not hearers only' for we help build the Kingdom of God by living it, not least within the workplace.

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**From Randell Moll**  
**Moderator of IMA Workplace Chaplaincy Mission UK**



'So what do you do from Monday to Friday?' It was an unexpected question. As a small group of regular church members, we knew each other quite well although we were from three different congregations. We talked a lot about congregational decline, mission, café church, the Bible, sick visiting, families, moral attitudes, maintaining buildings... We never talked about work!

The visitor asked us to introduce one another by our occupations. We couldn't - at least not properly. No-one knew enough about how any of us made a living. In church circles, talking about life at work had always seemed irrelevant, even vaguely improper. Apart from Harvest Festival and an occasional prayer for the unemployed it was never mentioned. Funny that - when you consider that work fills so much of peoples' waking hours and provides the very means by which humanity lives.

'Why work?' we were asked. The answer was obvious. But now it didn't seem enough. Faith *and* work?? Well, of course we always try to live out our faith wherever we are but workplaces are not heavenly places! People and processes are not perfect: good and bad things happen there.

'Such as?' Gradually, cautiously, people started to talk about real-life scenarios. We all had mixed experiences but it became obvious that our lives are hugely influenced –

even controlled – by the demands, rewards and pressures and opportunities of work. We were startled to discover that the Bible had far more to say about money, occupations and fair dealing than about prayer, hymns and congregations. It dawned on us that work is not just about doing a job or making money. It is essentially about providing people with the goods and services they need to live.

We discovered that this is where God is also to be found – in the workplace, doing what God does - sharing, providing, suffering, redeeming. Our work, paid or unpaid, is part of God's creative and redeeming activity. The workplace is holy ground where God's love and justice must prevail - even if it often doesn't feel much like it!

The visitor asking the questions was a workplace chaplain. A Christian of many years' standing, she retired recently after a career in commerce and industry. Her congregation understands, supports and is supported by her new ministry in a working environment. She was commissioned for chaplaincy by local church leaders, her congregation, the workplace and the regional chaplaincy team which provides training and nationwide networking through *IMA Workplace Chaplaincy Mission UK* - [www.industrialmission.org.uk](http://www.industrialmission.org.uk).

Excitingly, through the Kingdom at Work Project and in partnership with workplace chaplains, local churches are slowly beginning to discover their mission in 'the economy' – the very means by which we live. That, assuredly, is God's work!

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**From Tony Bryer**

**Edinburgh city centre**

**Workplace chaplain and team leader - [www.wpcscotland.co.uk](http://www.wpcscotland.co.uk)**

[Tony states that he writes in a personal capacity]



Workplace chaplains are in a unique position when it comes to questions of living out Christian faith in the world of work. They interpret the meaning of the good news by their engagement with people in their working lives. Within the church they interpret the world of work to the institution and to all its members enabling them to see how the good news addresses that world.

Working across a wide range of employment contexts, chaplains can speak at first hand of the challenges and demands people face every day of their working lives. They see good practice in employment (a 'sign of the Kingdom?'); they see appalling behaviour, sometimes by reputable companies. They understand the difficult choices faced by managers and employees; they see that there are no easy answers to many of the issues that arise daily. They develop the skill of listening in such a way that they discern the signs of God's presence. As importantly, they listen to others so as to help them become more aware of how they should act or decide matters. Above all chaplains spend most of their time with people who do not practice any faith. Interpreting that experience to the church, local and national, is thus very important.

How might chaplains use their experience and skills to equip other Christians at work? A vital part of any ministry, and especially chaplaincy, is reflection on experience. For me that means pastoral and theological reflection. The more chaplains are able to



engage in such reflection, the more they will have to offer in equipping others for their ministry in the workplace.

My experience some years back in running groups on 'Faith at Work' for local churches suggested that chaplains, with their reflective skills, can provide a space in which people are able to share stories of their experiences at work and together reflect on them. Through this they found ways of understanding those experiences in the light of the gospel of the kingdom of God. Bringing people together from a mixture of different working contexts enhanced this process as they could gain insight from one another's experience.

Are there obstacles to this happening? Clearly, a first imperative is that chaplains should be deeply involved in the life of the church, locally and nationally. Otherwise they become marginal to the church and their work. Then their insights and contributions are not heard. However, just because the majority of chaplains these days are not ordained, it may make it easier for them to speak and be heard. Nevertheless, for any such contribution to be made, the church needs to realise the importance of mission in the world of work, to recognise it as a place where many Christians exercise their ministry as a key context in which the relevance of faith is demonstrated.

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### **'The *common* good' or 'the *communal* good' - alternative or complementary calls to thought and action?**

In *Bulletin 5* the project sought to participate in the discussion about the future of society initiated by **Together for the Common Good (T4CG)** in the light of their recent publication *Together for the Common Good*. The Kingdom at Work Project remains wholeheartedly supportive of the endeavours of T4CG. However in *Bulletin 5* we raised the question, though not in any pedantic sense, as to whether the concept of 'the *communal* good' might have greater potential than 'the *common* good' to inspire people to express a more passionate concern for a fragmented society and a world in the throes of mass migration.

In response to the points we raised in *Bulletin 5*, **Jenny Sinclair**, founder of Together for the Common Good, sent the comments set out below for which we are very appreciative. Jenny is the only daughter of Bishop David and Grace Sheppard. She is responsible for the Sheppard legacy and administers the Better Together Trust which she established in 2011. Raised an Anglican, she was received into the Catholic Church in 1988. In previous years she worked in freelance project management and charity development as well as taking commissions as a screen-print artist and serving as an ambassador in London for Liverpool Hope University.



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I'm not sure I agree with you that *'The common good is a concept which emphasises the importance of the collective and the corporate'* and that it is somehow in opposition to community building.

The common good, in my understanding of Catholic social thought, does not emphasise collectivism (although it is often misinterpreted as such); rather it emphasises the strengthening of civil society - which is all about community - in order to counterbalance the

forces of the market and the state, both of which have a tendency to dominate and dehumanise. It is the principle of solidarity by itself that has that collectivist tendency.

I wonder if the following might be helpful: an extract from a recent lecture by Clifford Longley:

Solidarity, left to itself, can exert a pressure towards collectivism – the notion that mutual responsibility can only satisfactorily be organised by joint action, for instance by the state on behalf of the community. It has a centralising, and therefore disempowering, tendency. Subsidiarity is an equal and countervailing force to solidarity, pushing against centralisation and collectivism. It has an empowering effect.

And this quote from *Caritas in Veritate*:

The principle of subsidiarity must remain closely linked to the principle of solidarity and vice versa, since the former without the latter gives way to social privatism, while the latter without the former gives way to paternalist social assistance that is demeaning to those in need.

Certainly you will not find a single clear definition of the common good in the T4CG book and this is deliberate. Recognising and respecting the diversity of strongly held views, our colleagues the editors [Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail] were careful not to lay down a 'fundamentalism of the common good' but instead to set these views in chapters alongside each other (in dialogue as it were) to provoke discussion. Perhaps the key attribute of that book is the opportunity for people from different traditions to encounter 'the other', which we hope will aid the mutual understanding of those traditions and deepen the quality of discussion.



T4CG is not advocating a 'toolkit' for social action, rather we hope to inspire and prompt people to discern for themselves what their actions for the common good can be. This is a matter of vocation, and for Christians comes through a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. The 'toolkit' was Baroness Neuberger's challenge in the Foreword to the book as you pointed out. She is right to say that the next stage needs to be more practical. The T4CG project is careful not to be policy prescriptive or partisan, but instead wants to encourage people to work out the common good together. As it happens, one of the forthcoming strands of our work is a common good conversation model. We are producing a toolkit for that this later this year. This is absolutely about building community and problem solving together across our differences.

In terms of definition, the Catholic view of course is 'the set of conditions that allow every individual in the community to flourish.' I would like also to put alongside that the Jeremiah quotation 'Seek the welfare of the city for in its welfare you will find your welfare.' From all that I have learned over the past three years (and I'm still learning through conversations such as this), I think the most helpful way to describe the common good is to say it is a *practice*. Rather than it being a utopian ideal (which would be collectivist in tendency), I have learned that the common good is something we do, create, together across our differences, applying [the principles of the common good](#) to our daily lives and to problem solving. Relationships are at the core of the common good. This practice (a commitment to bridge-building, negotiation of estranged interests, applying the principles of the common good wherever we have agency) builds community.

## Roger Walton

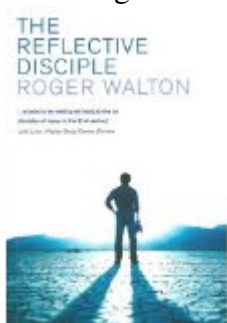
### reviews

### *'The Kingdom at Work Project - a communal approach to mission in the workplace'*

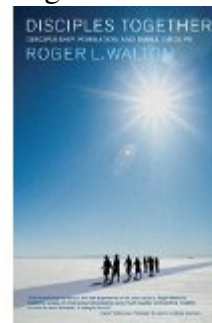


**Roger Walton** is a Methodist minister. He was Director of the Wesley Study Centre from 1999 to 2010. He was previously the William Leech Research Fellow at Durham University and became Chair of the West Yorkshire Methodist District in 2011. He is President-Designate of the Methodist Conference (2016-2017). He is a leading writer in the field of Christian discipleship.

*The Kingdom at Work Project* (2014)<sup>1</sup> is an extraordinarily stimulating book. It locates Christians in the workplace firmly back on the agenda of the churches after a time of neglect, or perhaps after a time of never fully realised intentions in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its huge strength lies in the sheer comprehensiveness of the vision, combined with a myriad of practical ideas, structured responses and imaginative, evocative prayers. I liked the section on the gathered church (pp. 338-358). It provides tangible ways of realising what I was



feeling for in my own writing (*The Reflective Disciple*; *Disciples Together*<sup>2</sup>) about garnering and sharing the signs of the Kingdom which people meet in their daily lives and so enriching the gathered church. Overall, David Clark's book is a compendium of resources to be used to fuel the debate and to resource this arena of discerning and responding to the imminence of God's Kingdom in our midst.



I have some reservations, however. First, I am a little suspicious of comprehensive plans and Clark's 12 stage process, whilst full of rich, insightful and useful material, is too neat and tidy. Second, in order to make some of his points, Clark polarises approaches. The diagram contrasting a discipleship model of mission over against a kingdom model does not do justice to either and seems to assume that there are no connections and continuities. If one takes the view that where you spend large amounts of your time is a site of discipleship and mission, seeking for signs of the Kingdom and opportunities for transformation is not an either/or but a natural way of working out of one's calling. Third, the emphasis on 'paid employment' as the locus and focus of the theology marginalises other experiences of the workplace (of trustees, volunteers, users, etc.) in which kingdom discernment, intervention and response might also be modelled prophetically.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 12 of this *Bulletin*

<sup>2</sup> Walton, R. *The Reflective Disciple*. London: originally Epworth (2009), reprinted SCM Press (2012)

Walton, R. (2014) *Disciples Together*. London: SCM Press

Last Saturday I attended the final celebrations of what was known in our area as the ‘Blenheim Project’. This project was set up 37 years ago to meet the needs of homeless women in Bradford and in particular those who were fleeing domestic violence. It grew in the first period through the passion of some Methodist women, though eventually becoming an independent charity. At its closure event there were as many Muslims as Methodists.

That event was a moment of mixed emotions because the repeated funding cuts from central government, passed on through local government, eventually ended the project’s life – it could no longer offer the high standard of care and respect for its ‘clients’ within the relentless and increasing financial constraints – and this made people angry and frustrated. At the same time personal testimonies were given to the rebuilding of lives through the work of this agency.

The words of the last employed leader of the project were the most telling. She spoke of the achievements of staff, voluntary workers and those who gave their time to trusteeship, management and fund raising. She recalled some of the life transforming effects of the work but her ‘top of the list’ of good outcomes was that *every* person, paid staff, volunteer and client, was better for being part of it. Together they had formed a community which reflected on its life, discerned much about human dignity and intervened regularly to enhance the work. In that process all involved had become better people. It had, as she put it, got under the skin and transformed every participant. In this workplace, where some were in paid employment, a larger number were volunteers and most were vulnerable women and children in desperate need, a mixture of faiths and no faith, *everyone* learned how to become a kingdom community. There is much to be learned from workplaces which embrace and enrich the lives of a very wide diversity of people.

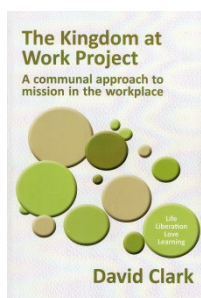
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***‘The Kingdom at Work Project  
- a communal approach to mission in the workplace’***

**David Clark**

Peterborough: Upfront Publishing (£14.99 paperback; £8.99 e-book)  
[also from Amazon.co.uk]

**This book ‘may represent the beginning of another stage in the historic and contemporary Christian engagement with work’** (*Crucible*)



Unique in recent literature on faith and work in that its focus is on the transformation of the workplace - founded on an innovative communal theology of the kingdom - ‘profoundly lay-centred’ - a wealth of resources for practice - argues for a new mentoring role for chaplains and ministers in secular employment - a comprehensive mission agenda for the local church

**‘A brilliant work-book for the servant leader’**

(*Peter Challen - Sloan Fellow of London Business School*)

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For all matters relating to this *Bulletin* please contact -  
**Deacon Dr David Clark** at: **david@clark58.eclipse.co.uk**   **01629 810172**  
Hill View, Burton Close Drive, Bakewell DE45 1BG



# The Kingdom at Work Project



## ***Bulletin 6*** **Addendum**

**October 2015**

[Due to the vagaries of the Internet the arrival of the article below, scheduled for inclusion in *Bulletin 6*, was delayed.

It is here published as an addendum to that *Bulletin's* discussion of how the church might better equip lay people for their ministry and mission in the workplace.]

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**From Malcolm Brown**

**Director of Mission and Public Affairs for the Church of England**

### **Disciples at work?**



The Church of England's 'Reform and Renewal' programme is seeking to develop more effective lay ministry and leadership. When I help present the 'Reform and Renewal' programme, again and again someone mentions resourcing lay Christians in their secular occupations and there is a buzz of interest – even a round of applause. This, indeed, is one of the deepest felt needs among lay people. But here's the paradox – there are many excellent programmes and resources on this topic, but the take-up is disappointing. What is going on?

Maybe they are the wrong sort of resources – and instead we should be considering the kind of resources that don't come on paper, between covers, or in a course of meetings. Maybe the missing ingredient is not so much about words as about confidence. Generating lay confidence is about the whole church changing the way it thinks and speaks about the laity – not pew-fodder (a crude term - people resent being on the receiving end) but disciples and missionaries.

However, even terms like 'disciple' make the workplace seem dangerous - any religious belief is counter cultural. Yet discipleship is worked out as much in the humdrum, unremarkable ways we build relationships day by day as in grander gestures of in-your-face proclamation. In small acts of neighbourliness and friendship we can begin to engage with the tensions and compromises that characterise most workplace issues – that, indeed, characterise Christian ethics in the theological 'interim' where we live with both the presence of the Holy Spirit and the persistence of sin.

We need to understand ethics less as grand choices between good and evil and more as negotiating the tensions between competing goods and rival evils. The fascinating paradox is that most people at work understand this approach instinctively but can't place it within a conceptual framework. When Christians start to value the implicit theology in the ethics of



their working lives, the opportunity arises for discipleship to make a difference. But if we are paralysed by the fear that discipleship always means exposing oneself as ‘different’, no resource packs or courses will bridge the gap.

What lead is the church giving? So long as working life and the church are seen as separate bubbles, we fail to equip people to be the disciples they know they are called to be. The church needs its chaplains who recognise the secular environment to be a place where God is already at work. However, it also needs its congregations to be safe places where people can face issues of working life head-on in the language of faith.

If any church – not just the Church of England – is to be reformed and renewed, it must respond to what lay people know they need and build their confidence to meet those needs themselves.

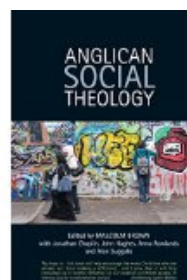
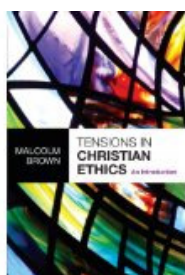
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*The Revd Dr Malcolm Brown is Director of Mission and Public Affairs for the Church of England. He has been a parish priest, industrial missionary and academic specialising in Christian ethics.*

*He is author of several books on Christian ethics including those noted below.*

*Tensions in Christian Ethics (SPCK, 2010)*

*Anglican Social Theology (CHP, 2014)*



For all matters relating to this *Bulletin* please contact -

**Deacon Dr David Clark** at: **david@clark58.eclipse.co.uk**    **01629 810172**

Hill View, Burton Close Drive, Bakewell DE45 1BG