

People sometimes feel that the Church has much to say about what is perceived as the 'softer places of work', e.g. service industries, work at home ... as opposed to the 'tougher world' of business, commerce, manufacturing, industry ...

### Pam's Story

*I am a chartered accountant and one of the difficulties for me is to battle against the culture which suggests that accountants run the country, are 'hard-nosed' and mostly lacking in the ability to see the human being behind a client. As a woman and a Christian I have added complications in the environment in which I work. I could cope with all this if I found some real understanding about the issues I face when I am involved in my church.*



*I am also a parent so I appreciate some of the ways in which that role is affirmed and prayed for. People speak caringly about the pressures of having to travel to the City every day on trains that are often late. However, if I start to talk about the issues that are specific to being an accountant there seems to be embarrassment and jokes from the treasurer about when I am ready to take over from him. The last thing I want to do is handle more money. However, I would like to get together with others who face similar issues. I once suggested this to our curate and she said that most clergy feel the need to stay within those areas they understand and that it is difficult to ask leaders to put themselves into a position where they may not have the answers.*

*I don't need them to help me be an accountant; I need someone to help me think about the biblical/theological perspectives of a life which is bound up with law and the management of other people's resources. I don't believe that I should have gained so much experience and insight and then have no space to reflect on this with others within the totality of my life. Perhaps this is too much to expect of my own church and instead I should be setting up a support group of like-minded people. There is definitely a need as far as I can see.*



# Called to New Life

## - stories of working people



**Black Country Urban Industrial Mission**

**Some working church members feel that the Church does not or could not understand the issues they face from Monday to Saturday.**

Margaret's Story

*I work in a café in a small market town which receives several tourists, especially at the weekends. I work part-time but when things are really busy, I frequently find myself*



*working a full week. I work all day on Saturdays. The work is very tiring and sometimes very frustrating but there are many opportunities to relate to people; some are regulars who come in for a cup of tea and stay for two or three hours, some are Saturday shoppers wanting refreshment and a rest, some are passers-by who want the best service and in a hurry, and almost all want to talk about their lives.*

*I love to listen to their stories, about their journeys, their elderly parents who take a lot of time, their work and their love lives. It seems that people will talk to a comparative stranger like me about all manner of personal matters. When I go to church on Sunday, I find that the prayers, the sermon illustrations and visiting speakers all seem to focus on 'important' jobs such as being a teacher, a doctor, a police-officer or a parent. I am none of these and I gain the impression that the vicar and others think that I am in a little job for 'pin money' but that it doesn't have much significance or contribute much to anything.*

*As a result I don't find anything within the worship that speaks to me about my life through the week, so I depend on my personal prayer to help me to serve God in my work. When I was asked to think about this I came to realise that I cannot expect people to understand what I do in my work, and that the church is not the place to help me in that aspect of my life.*

---

To contact Black Country Urban Industrial Mission

[enquiries@bcuim.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bcuim.co.uk) 01902 710407

[www.bcuim.co.uk](http://www.bcuim.co.uk)

Twitter: @bcuim

**Would you like to share your story of being a Christian in the workplace?  
Contact BCUIM.**

**People sometimes look to escape from their Monday to Saturday lives and want the church to be a haven on Sunday that does not remind them of the pressures and difficulties they face during the week.**

Jeremy's Story

*I work as a senior salesman in a reputable car showroom. Much of the time at work is spent walking around the showroom trying to engage with people who are 'just looking'. We are*



*on commission so there is quite a lot of pressure to make a sale.*

*I am not proud of some of the things I find myself saying in order to get people to become interested in a particular car. The problem is that it is not until I think about it afterwards that I wonder if a Christian should exaggerate or use psychological pressures such as flattery to make a profit.*

*These matters are not discussed in our team meetings at work. On a few occasions I have tried to open up the subject with our Unit Manager because there are others who are not Christians but who worry about the morality of some of the training we are given.*

*As far as church is concerned I find that I am too embarrassed to discuss these things. Most people I meet at church seem very 'together'. I can't imagine them being involved in some of the things we have to do when selling cars. I belong to a house group but mostly we talk about the children and schools and relationships etc. In any case I don't really want to talk about work when I am off duty, especially on Sundays. I want to forget about it all until Monday morning.*

---

BCUIM provides workplace chaplaincy  
in industry, commerce and the public sector.

We facilitate a ministry of local churches  
by selecting, training, introducing, connecting and supporting chaplains.

**Would your workplace benefit from having a chaplain?**

*Whilst the accounts in this leaflet are derived from people's experiences, the names and pictures do not represent the people concerned.*