



RADIO COVERAGE OF WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY

The BBC contacted WCM UK via our website in order to have input for twelve of their regional Sunday morning radio programmes focusing on the return to work and particularly looking at the retail sector. Revd Dick Johnson did a series of 4½ minute interviews with each radio station which were broadcast live. Following on from this, Revd Alex Gowing-Cumber has had the opportunity of a longer piece on BBC Radio Essex, in which he had the chance to expand on the theology of the lockdown experience. There has also been coverage involving WCM UK member Chris Lewis on BBC Radio Wales commenting on an article looking at employment and insecurity, and on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire with in depth coverage and input from the chairman of Cambridgeshire Workplace Chaplaincy, Alastair Reid.

If you have had similar opportunities do let us know.

THANK YOU TO CHIC LIDSTONE

After many years as a chaplain with Workplace Chaplaincy Scotland, and for the last year as Interim Director, Chic is retiring and will be moving onto new ventures.



The leadership will be passed to Andy Gregg, who is the Edinburgh City Centre Chaplaincy Team Leader.

CHAPLAINS RECEIVE A WARM WELCOME BACK

Around the country chaplains have started to take the first steps to resuming face to face chaplaincy, with Covid - 19 safety measures in place. Many chaplains reported feeling very nervous about the reception they would receive as they returned – would they be welcomed back? It is still not possible to visit all workplaces previously visited, especially if social distancing measures make the chaplain's visit impractical.

Where chaplains have been able to visit, they have discovered that their fears have proved unfounded as reports, from all regions, are that those they used to visit are delighted to see the chaplain again. Chaplains have been overwhelmed by the warmth of the reception they have received. Some have even said that a few of those who, prior to lockdown, only gave them a polite but disinterested response, now, in contrast, are keen to engage with them.

This news is hugely encouraging for all workplace chaplains and especially for those who are still worried about restarting their normal visits. It is acknowledged and understood that for some chaplains it is not possible to resume visiting. But again, all chaplains can take heart in the knowledge that people have said that they valued the fact that they have been remembered in the prayers of the chaplains and continue to be so.

There are of course many ongoing concerns for businesses as the economy has been severely hit by the pandemic and many businesses are struggling or have already closed, and this may get worse as the next VAT instalment is due. Many employees are having to cope with redundancy, with more likely to join them as the furlough scheme comes to an end.

Chaplains are finding that there is a massive need for chaplaincy and that they are picking up a backlog of issues as they chat with people once again. These are wide ranging, from the expected fear of losing employment and facing illness and bereavement, to the strains and stresses of long periods of lockdown and the relationship difficulties that has created. In response chaplaincy teams around the country have been supporting their chaplains with further training to enable them to offer the right support as it is needed.

It is looking likely that some workers, particularly office workers, will be adopting new work patterns in the future, having found that they are able to work from home quite successfully and without any disruption to their productivity. This poses a challenge for workplace chaplains, as it is looking increasingly likely that an online model of offering support will be required for the long term and not just for the lockdown period. A number of WCM UK teams are reviewing the success of the online support they have been able to offer over the last few months, with the expectation that this strand of their work will continue.

A helpful and short video to share with those whose job is in danger has been produced by the CIGB Team and can be found here:

<http://www.workchaplaincyuk.org.uk/job-seeking1/>