

Dignity, Worth and Value in the Working World

Why are we offering workplace chaplaincy? Giving people a sense that they matter has to be high on the list of reasons. This will often be by simple appreciation, by giving them our time, as we listen to their stories, and by hearing of their hopes and aspirations, their worries and concerns. Employers may provide assistance programmes, colleagues may be very supportive, and trained counsellors may be available, but the chaplain is often the person who encourages, or provides the voice of affirmation that we all need to hear.

You could sum it up in one word: dignity. People need to feel that they have worth and value in work, family life, voluntary roles and church life. For Christians, it is an inherent part of our humanity, founded on our being created by God in his image. As the writer to the Hebrews puts it, we are created, "a little lower than the angels, ... crowned with glory and honour."

In essence, to be treated with dignity is about being considered worthy of respect. Some things affirm us and bring out a clear, conscious sense of our own dignity. To feel dignified, one must feel a sense that we are appreciated and that we matter to others.

Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, one of the great allied commanders of the Second World War, said, "The most important people in the army are the nursing sisters and the padres (chaplains): the sisters because they tell the men they matter to us and the padres because they tell the men they matter to God."

Sadly, for many, the sense of dignity and worth has been in marked decline. Many traditional industries, around which strong communities were formed, are a thing of the past. Unemployment and material poverty have contributed to a lack of purpose and personal value, while at work meeting targets can seem to override staff well-being. Government austerity policies, with reductions in benefits, can easily be seen to imply that people are liabilities to be managed rather than human beings with potential that can be developed, people who have as much right to lead fulfilled lives as those who are wealthy.

Part of the role of a chaplain is to bring a Christian perspective to the places we visit. Sometimes this may mean drawing attention to any occasions where we see people being treated with less than the respect that they deserve. Once again it is about dignity: people matter and must not be treated as means to an end.

As St Paul put it succinctly, "Encourage one another."

Contact: enquiries@bcuim.co.uk 01902 710407 Twitter: @bcuim

The BCUIM Team and associates have:

- Maintained chaplaincy visits to around 38 locations, including fire stations
- Introduced new chaplaincies for Bloxwich and Willenhall Town Centres and Bloxwich Fire Station
- Appointed a Missioner/Chaplain to work with the churches in West Bromwich
- Offered informed comments to managers about general working conditions
- Organised a training session on Modern Slavery
- Played a full part in Black Country Chamber of Commerce, Business Breakfasts and other events, maintaining and encouraging a Christian presence
- Supported staff at branches of Toys R Us and Maplin after their insolvency
- Appointed a new development officer for the Ethical Money Churches project
- Led the "Chaplaincy Everywhere" Course as part of Lichfield training programme
- Run the annual Black Country Induction Course for Clergy
- Supported & encouraged the work of "Bluefish Chaplaincy" by Wolverhampton Pioneer Ministries for young people in Wolverhampton
- Delivered basic budget training for 49 people
- Supervised two student ordinand placements in workplace chaplaincy
- Coordinated Wolverhampton City Centre Churches Engaged Group
- Contributed to annual Workers' Memorial Day observances
- Fulfilled numerous speaking and preaching engagements, offering a "Mission in the Economy" emphasis
- Organised workplace Remembrance and Christmas services
- Attended "Ordinary Working Families" seminar with presentation to team
- Initiated Penn churches Lent study groups on "Feast or Famine - How the Gospel Challenges Austerity", leading one group
- Trained new chaplains
- Worked with LICC through Lichfield Diocese on "Faith on the Front Line"
- Organised study day for West Midlands Industrial Mission Association, "The Precarious Working World and Our Response"
- Three radio interviews
- Faith based support for field workers of "Hope Into Action" housing charity
- Commenced the development of multifaith chaplaincy at Merry Hill Shopping Centre
- Used social media constructively to promote BCUIM's work

Chaplains:

Ivor Anderson	<i>Aldridge Industrial Areas, including Shaylor Group</i>
Mike Batchelor	<i>Basic Budgeting Training</i>
Steve Bentham	<i>The Metal Centre & Wednesbury Automotive Park</i>
Allen Bower	<i>Walsall Bus Garage</i>
Cath Brumfitt	<i>Wolverhampton Bus Garage (Placement to June 2017)</i>
Peter Carmody-Heaton	<i>Brockhouse Forge, West Bromwich YMCA, Sandwell College, Health Futures UTC (Sandwell)</i>
Louise Clark	<i>M&S & Beatties, Wolverhampton</i>
Gennie Evans	<i>Wolverhampton Science Park</i>
Matthew Gordon	<i>Learn Play Foundation & Walsall & Dudley Mental Health Services NHS Trust "Grit" Project</i>
Vanetta Griffith	<i>West Midlands Ambulance Service, Waterfront</i>
Jeff Guest	<i>West Bromwich Missioner/Chaplain</i>
Ian Hancock	<i>Pensnett Bus Garage</i>
Anthony Harris	<i>Walsall Town Centre</i>
Ian Host	<i>JLR Engine Manufacturing Centre</i>
Shaun Kelly	<i>West Bromwich Bus Garage</i>
Annah Magutta	<i>Willenhall Town Centre</i>
Bill Mash	<i>Marston's Brewery, Merry Hill Shopping Centre, Chamber of Commerce, Excalibur Engineering & Adullam Homes</i>
Roberta Maxfield	<i>Grand Theatre Wolverhampton, The Royal School & PayCare Wolverhampton</i>
Lynne Morris	<i>Wolverhampton College (from September 2017)</i>
Millie O'Connor	<i>Sandwell Council</i>
Jeremy Parkes	<i>Leader of Dudley Town Centre Team</i>
Angela Partoon	<i>Bloxwich Town Centre</i>
Jim Perry	<i>JLR EMC (from January 2018)</i>
Ruth Reynolds-Tyson	<i>Wolverhampton College & Beatties</i>
Melissa Rose	<i>Merry Hill Shopping Centre (Student Placement to June 2017)</i>
Tony Stone	<i>ASDA, Brierley Hill</i>
Sue Watson	<i>Wolverhampton Courts</i>
John Welsby	<i>National Express Buses, Wolverhampton Bus Garage</i>

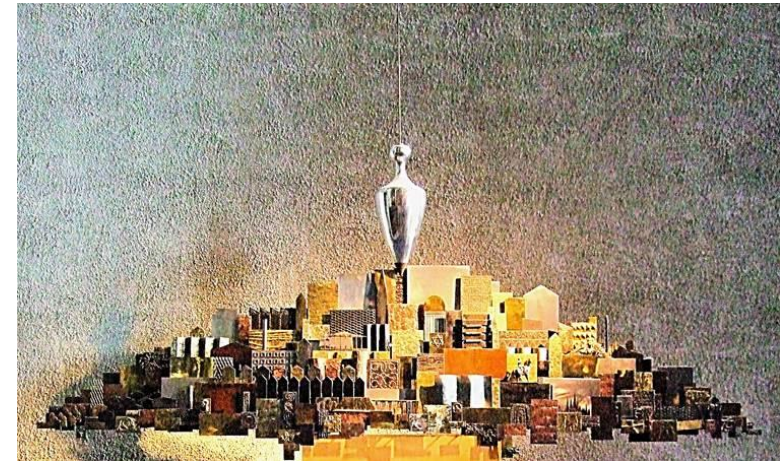
Chaplains at 10 Black Country Fire Stations.

Also supporting Wolverhampton Pioneer Ministries Blue Fish Chaplains, and close links with Wednesfield and Shifnal Town Centre Chaplaincies.

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Summary Annual Report 2017 – 18



The Black Country Urban Industrial Mission is a partnership between:
The Anglican Dioceses of Lichfield and Worcester, The Wolverhampton and
Shrewsbury Methodist District, The Birmingham Methodist District,
The United Reformed Church West Midlands Synod
& The Heart of England Baptist Association.

Supported by:

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham, Central England Quakers
& The Apostolic Church

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