

The Kingdom at Work Project



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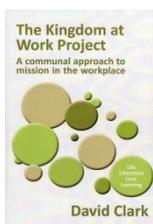
Educating for mission in the world of work - where next?

Editorial: 'Faith at work' - taking stock

David Clark

Since the collapse of Christendom, the mission of the church within the world of work has been very confused and extremely tentative. One reason for this failure is sociological. Engagement with communities of place, on which the parish system was founded, has continued to dominate the use of the church's human and economic resources. However, after the industrial and, more recently, technological revolution, the world of work has spread well beyond parish boundaries with the church finding it extremely difficult to work out new forms of engagement.

An even more important reason for the church's inability to engage effectively with today's world of work is theological. The church seems unable to decide whether mission in this context is about individual salvation - making disciples; concerned with pastoral support - a ministry of care and counselling; or about institutional transformation - seeking the redemption of the workplace and those economic and social forces which impinge upon it. Thus Christian engagement with the world of work oscillates blindly between setting up work-related groups for prayer and nurture - with the focus on making disciples; putting more and more resources into chaplaincy - with an increasingly pastoral emphasis; or, by far the most neglected of these missiological approaches, equipping lay people to be kingdom community builders in the workplace - mission as communal transformation.



The Kingdom at Work Project is largely based on the last of these theological approaches to mission in the world of work. Its foundational text, *The Kingdom at Work Project - a communal approach to mission in the workplace*¹ explores many facets of this approach, theological, spirituality, and economic, and provides many resources to assist those pursuing this expression of faith at work.

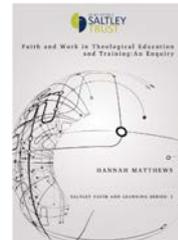
¹ Clark, D. (2014) Fast-Print Publishing: Peterborough.

Because one of the project's core purposes is to further dialogue of an open nature - within the workplace *and* the church - the Kingdom at Work Project has undertaken the publication of a series of *Bulletins* on a variety of themes of relevance to Christian faith 'at work'. These have been on topics such as: Sustainability at work, Ministers in secular employment, the Christian entrepreneur, Servant leadership, Spirituality in the workplace, Christian faith and the economy, and Chaplains and chaplaincy.¹

Each *Bulletin* has included a range of articles written by those with particular experience of, or expertise related to the topic concerned. Because the project has sought to honour the open nature of genuine dialogue, the *Bulletin* has encouraged contributions from those with different theological perspectives on mission at work from its own.

The Kingdom at Work Project is committed to continuing to further this process of open dialogue concerning the theological basis and practice of ministry within the workplace. It wishes to do this so that a more integrated, informed and dynamic theological understanding of, and approach to mission at work might emerge. It also wishes to undertake this process so that the vital task of education for mission in the world of work might move much higher up the agenda of all churches, at national, regional and local level.

In November 2014, the Kingdom at Work Project and St Peter's Saltley Trust set up a consultation at Woodbrooke College, Birmingham on the theme of 'Educating for Mission in the World of Work'. It did so to draw attention to the failure of the church to equip lay people for ministry and mission in the world of work. At parish level this neglect has been well documented in a number of studies. In 2013, St Peter's Saltley Trust published research by Hannah Matthews entitled *Faith & Work in Theological Education and Training: An Enquiry*. This showed that those in training for the ordained ministry were also getting little guidance as to how to equip their lay people for this area of ministry.



The Woodbrooke conference was over-subscribed and resulted in a concerned and vigorous discussion. However, little has changed since then to help in addressing the church's problems concerning the delivery of training for ministry in this field.

The Kingdom at Work Project and St Peter's Saltley Trust are, therefore, convening a small consultation in the autumn of 2018 on the theme of:

'Educating for mission in the world of work - where next?'

The purpose of the consultation is to bring together representatives of a number of agencies, as well as a few actively engaged individuals, from across the churches to address this concern. The St Peter's Saltley Trust, in collaboration with the Kingdom at Work Project, is currently exploring how it might support, on a longer-term basis, the sharing of experience, insights resources and approaches for equipping lay people for their ministry and mission in the workplace.

The papers that follow have been written to raise issues of relevance to this consultation.

¹ Back copies of the *Bulletin* can be downloaded from:
<http://www.saltleytrust.org.uk/faith-and-work-in-theological-education-and-training/>

‘And the Laity...’?

Jennifer Tann

Lay people make up some 98% of members of the Church of England yet, despite the espousal of the ‘royal priesthood’ of all believers, there are unfortunate divisions in the church between the ordained ‘and the laity’. The ordained are seen as the leaders. Lay people are asked to engage in practical roles such as churchwarden or parish secretary, or tasks such as mowing the grass and making cakes. As a participant said in a recent Report from the Archbishops’ Council: ‘I didn’t know I was lay until I joined the Church of England.’ (*Setting God’s People Free*, 2017)

With some notable exceptions, clerical engagement with the laity focuses on Sundays - with the exception of parish work in schools, youth work, visits the sick, PCC meetings; and, for a minority of clergy, on various diocesan boards and committees - that is on the different expressions of the ‘gathered church’. However, there is neglect of the discernment and support of lay vocations and gifts used by Christians in the world of work – that is with the ‘sent church’.

Clerical emphasis on ‘the gathered church’ may appear (perhaps unfairly) to be a lack of interest in what occupies the laity from Monday to Saturday. A lay person wrote to an enquiry in the 1990s:

I have been a member of the Church for many years, yet as I enter church on a Sunday I leave my brain and heart at the church door. No local priest has ever asked me about my work, let alone suggest that they might visit me in the workplace.

Lay people often feel their values potentially compromised or unsupported, their leadership and decision-making lacking biblical reference, and to be generally un-affirmed in their Christian presence at work. Sunday sermons rarely refer to the Monday-Saturday worlds of the congregation. In its entirety, Sunday worship may frequently not even begin to address the spiritual, emotional and practical support that many people at work frequently need.

There has been a succession of reports over the past eighty years or so, each one of which espouses the need to ‘liberate the laity’ to become confident disciples at work, home and church - but to little effect. Yet there have been visionaries, such as Archbishop William Temple during whose term of office a report ‘Towards the Conversion of England’ (1946) was published. It states that: ‘Christian laity should be recognised as the priesthood of the church in the working world, and as the church militant in action in the mission fields of politics, industry and commerce.’ The report recommended that lay people be invited to address church gatherings on ‘my job’ as naturally as are missionaries. In 1982, The London Centre for Contemporary Christianity was founded to engage in ‘double listening’ to the word of God and to the world, thereby growing whole-life disciples.

Respondents to a mission survey undertaken in 2009 said that the most challenging context in which to be a disciple of Christ was the workplace. Yet 62% of those in full-time employment experienced little or no help or preparation from the church to deal with the issues they faced. 59% said that their church did not equip people well for today’s world of work, home, or elsewhere (*Apprentice*, Spring Harvest). This situation may not be unconnected with the missing generations in church attendance. Perhaps clergy lack

confidence in how to engage a lay person in a discussion about work. Certainly those who trained some years ago were firmly told to leave their previous working lives at the door of the theological college.

A call for radical shifts in both culture and practice was made in the 2017 *Setting God's People Free* Report. Two recommendations, potentially representing a 'seismic revolution', are made:

- to form and equip lay people to follow Jesus in every sphere of life;
- to recognise that clergy and laity, based on their baptismal mutuality, are of equal worth and status, complementary in gifting and equal partners in mission.

The report is a breath of fresh air. However, implementation will require focus, creativity, accountability, and will take time.

Each Sunday the congregation is sent out to 'love and serve the Lord'. Yet there is little hint of what this might look like. In the workplace environment, roles are reversed, the clergy are 'lay'. Sadly, some ministers find it difficult to cope with this. Thus lay people are 'inhibited in their calling to serve and witness to Jesus Christ in every aspect of their lives', struggling with the church's lack of understanding or interest in their calling to the wider world. I pray that the phrase 'and the laity...' will very soon be a term of the past.



Jennifer Tann is Emeritus Professor of Birmingham University, her field being Innovation. She undertakes consultancy in creativity and change management; researches and writes; and is on a variety of Gloucester Diocesan boards.

Gaining a wider perspective

Bill Mash

The failure of the church to equip lay people for ministry and mission in the world of work is not new. It reflects a longstanding disregard of professions and labour, which itself springs from a limited theology and soteriology. Examining this theology and enlarging our soteriology may offer some indications of how the failure may be addressed.

Historical evidence of this disregard was provided on a visit to Lichfield Cathedral. Walking round and looking at the memorials, I saw plenty of soldiers, many clergy and some wealthy landowners, together with their wives and children. But only Erasmus Darwin 'Physician, Philosopher and Poet', was commemorated for his professions. There were no merchants, manufacturers or millers, no surveyors, scientists or sportspeople, no barristers, builders or bakers.

Any of us who have a preaching ministry can easily find evidence of limited theology. Ask any congregation where they expect to spend eternity, and the response will, almost certainly, be 'heaven.' Most church goers base their expectations upon a personal profession of faith, and accepting the grace of God, made available in and through Christ. This is fundamental to my Christian experience, but it can so easily lead to a private and individual faith. The Gospel is so much more than this. Our eternal destiny, the bible tells us, is sharing

in the 'New Earth', the perfect act of God's new creation. As we grasp this, we see that salvation has a corporate dimension. Our individual faith makes us part of something far bigger – the kingdom – and the realised expression of that kingdom will be a solid reality, rather than an ethereal existence all too easily caricatured as playing harps on clouds.

Tom Wright offers a helpful metaphor. An individualistic view of salvation is comparable to the medieval belief that the sun went round the earth. A revolution of thought occurred with the discovery that the earth actually orbits the sun. We need a similar revolution of thought to grasp that we are not, individually, at the centre of God's plans.

Two consequences, of direct relevance to the churches' engagement with the world of work, spring from this. Firstly, if we are destined for a real existence in the New Earth, and if 'things', reconciled to God through Christ (Colossians 1: 15 – 20), are part of this, then our work, the things we do and make, the services we provide to people, have an eternal significance which imbues them with worth here and now. Secondly, if our salvation is something corporate, rather than just individual, then the interactions of the workplace have added and deeper significance. The people around us, the people we serve, may be people to whom that kingdom is drawing near and in whom it may already be taking root.

My field of work is chaplaincy, and it has a dominantly pastoral emphasis. Listening at times of crisis is valuable. However, there is a wider dimension. It should be an ongoing ministry of affirmation and encouragement, helping people to see that what they are doing is (wherever it is) good in itself. It should help people appreciate their contribution to the group with whom they work, the people they serve and the wider society to which they contribute. Then they will more fully appreciate the service of other people and be encouraged to raise their eyes above individualism.

A chaplain is simply a representative presence in the workplace. All those who have grasped and been grasped by the good news of the kingdom need to share in this ministry of affirmation, encouragement and solidarity with those around them. In so doing, the kingdom at work will move forwards.



Bill Mash, after working on London Underground and twenty years in parish ministry, is now Team Leader of the Black Country Urban Industrial Mission, providing workplace chaplains in Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell.

Faith at work - where the church misses out

Hugh Valentine

I have sometimes puzzled over the claim that we go to church to 'worship' God. It has seemed that this really never occurs. What is called 'worship' in church is more like the short-cut on a modern computer's desktop – a cipher, a link to something actually sitting (and happening) elsewhere.

I see that this is not an entirely satisfactory view, but it could be fruitful. ‘True’ worship – or maybe I should say immediate, responsive, change-bearing and unselfconscious worship – occurs in and through our engagement with life. That happens (let it be said) outside the church-as-building far more than inside it. Sometimes church life inhibits it.

Think of the numberless moments in life when we act responsibly, conscientiously and generously out of care, wonder, awe, delight and truth. Given that many of us spend vast amounts of our lives at work, selling our labour in one way or another, it may well be claimed that the workplace is where much of this unselfconscious and authentic worship of an irrepressibly and generously creating God finds expression. So wouldn’t the church want to be in on all that?

This is just one reason why the church should take the world of paid work far more seriously and urgently than it does or ever has. The obstacles to it doing so are fairly clear. The dominant class in the life of the church, the ordained, are for the most part routinely excised from the wage-earning world. Indeed, as one London assistant bishop put it at an ordination I attended, they are ‘raised’ to the priesthood, removed to another and seemingly superior realm. So we have a situation where we place clergy (stipendiary clergy) in something of a confined, circumscribed world and deprive them of exposure to that levelling and shaping activity of having to earn a living in the secular world. This can be bad for the clergy, and it can be bad for the rest of us. And what effect might it have on our apprehending the gospel in the way intended – that of illuminating and changing our lives?

That may seem harsh. I must acknowledge the stipendiary clergy I have known who remain connected to the world beyond the institution in ways that are essential to their ministerial work. However, the point I am making is that the established model of official ministry *tends* to separate the ordained from the world of work, as most people experience it. In fact, it not only separates them but renders them pretty uninterested in it except in some generalised pastoral way. This situation must surely explain at least one aspect of the church’s great difficulty in engaging with the world of paid work.

It is not a new problem and I confess I see no easy solution. But the outcome is extremely serious. It leads to generations of laity, for whom the gospel is mediated via a class of interpreter where right belief is held to be more important than right living, being urged to be good and reliable employees, and never shakers or challengers for God’s sake.

Hugh Valentine has sought to follow the model of the worker-priests since his ordination in 1989. He has worked in social services and the third sector. He maintains a website concerned with this neglected vocation at www.with-intent.confiteor.org.uk/

The Alban Institute and an end to the Christendom model of church

Malcolm Grundy

One of the most formative and influential independent church organisations of the 1970’s and 80’s was the Alban Institute based in Washington DC, USA. Founded by a pioneering

individual, Lauren Mead (who has recently died), it examined the nature of local congregations, from all denominations, and related their work to the needs of their local community and to the missionary task defined by their denomination. Based on his own account of its origins, Mead traces his deepened understanding of the life of the local congregation to a sabbatical year which he spent in a parish in outer London, in 1963, and away from his congregation in South Carolina.

Comparing his UK immersion to his American Episcopal experience, he first became aware of the distinction between a local congregation and a local parish and from then on was careful to develop the distinctive roles of both. He says that he saw the churches in Europe surrounded by the ruins of their past, and the churches in the USA searching for new identities as their founding energies diminished.

In 1974, with colleagues he set up the Alban institute. What is interesting in Mead's initial internal debate about the nature of congregation and parish was not that he could see the difference between the two, but that he wanted to develop the dynamic of the interplay between the life of the local congregation and the tools which needed to be rediscovered to interact with and serve the local community. Most of his emerging ideas were set out in Mead's *The Once and Future Church* (Mead 1991).

Mead saw what he called the end of a hierarchical, dominating Christendom model and the emergence, from within declining congregations, of a new missionary task. Christendom he said, 'tells us that the church's supposed relationship with the world out there is to take it over and control it, "Go and make disciples of all nations"... I think that there are some very serious questions about that, both biblically and in terms of what that has led the church to become what is basically an imperialistic institution.

It is the tension and interplay between a Christendom model and an emerging new model which came to characterise the contribution and publications of the Alban Institute. Whether liberal, Catholic or renewal he worried that the great danger was to perpetuate the Christendom model which was for the leadership to want to win over and to control the members of the congregation.

He also argued that we are all on a faith pilgrimage and that the task of those ordained was to facilitate and help the laity find a way to express and share their faith in new and challenging situations, not least in the world of work. Influenced considerably by the theology of Jürgen Moltmann, Mead and the Alban Institute developed the fundamental idea that it was lay people in their congregations, and then in their working lives who were the theologians. It was their learning which needed to be transmitted upwards to seminaries and church leaders. This was a turning upside down of the power dominating Christendom model which Alban staff felt would no longer equip the baptised for their missionary calling.



Malcolm Grundy is a Canon in the Church of England and Visiting Fellow at York St John University. He has written extensively on leadership in the life of the church.

Practical approaches to kingdom-building

Andrew Fincham

The scriptures have always proved something of a mixed blessing when trying to establish 'truths' - whether secular and spiritual. History is scarred by the strife caused by differing interpretations - as recorded in the books of martyrs, the wars of religion, and the struggles of individual conscience conflicted by rival accounts of salvation from religions competing for souls.

Yet any approach we take to upholding the teachings of Jesus must inevitably rest upon some interpretation of scripture; there is simply no other choice. In general, we learn to lessen the likelihood of *mis*interpretation by looking for the common ground across the gospel narratives, assembling of body of teaching which is - at the very least - not inconsistent, and which at best sustains that unique set of core values which we cherish as 'Christian'.

Notwithstanding the obvious merits, there is a drawback to this approach, and perhaps a significant one: creating such a coherent collection of teachings also implies a compatible 'teacher Jesus' to deliver the message - a logical construction which fits a contemporary Western preference for change which is not only progressive, but reasoned and constructive.

However, it seems equally clear that the Jesus visible in the Gospels does not always reflect such an approach. Much useful analysis on this contrasting Jesus can be found, and the work of John Dominic Crossan in particular sheds an intriguing light on the possibility that the 'pre-Christian' Jesus intended his followers to work to establish 'the kingdom of God on earth' - in contrast to the later church which would establish such as a destination for the saved in a 'life eternal' after death. Considered from this perspective, the nature of the challenge to build the kingdom becomes, at the same time, different and more compelling: different, because it becomes our responsibility; more compelling, since we lose the reasonable option of standing by in hopes of a kingdom to come.

Of all scriptural arguments, the resolution of soteriological 'cause and effect' has perhaps been the most convoluted - not least because most churches have placed the saving of souls at the heart of their religion, and the power to do so firmly in the hands of the minister-priest. In this respect, Quakers - with their avoidance of both minister and doctrine, have managed largely (for many, entirely) to avoid problems associated with salvation.

Perhaps this has, in turn, freed Quakers to engage in a practical form of kingdom-building - exemplified in notables such as John Woolman, Elizabeth Fry, or the conscientious objectors who formed the Friends' Ambulance Unit during World War I. George Cadbury may yet remain the pre-eminent example of a practical Quaker faith in action: certainly his success in earthly kingdom-building was acknowledged by all those with whom he engaged, regardless of religious orientation. The source of his uniqueness seems to spring from a vision that admitted no distinction between kingdoms of earth or heaven. His friend and biographer, A.G. Gardiner, observed he allowed 'no gulf between the world of spiritual ideas and the world of fact... he translated one into the other with a directness that was often disconcerting to the conventional mind.'

There may be lessons, here (even unreasonable ones) on how we can free ourselves sufficiently to try and emulate such an approach.



Andrew Fincham is a member of Britain's Quaker Yearly Meeting. He has over thirty year's experience as an international management consultant. He is the author of '*Service Excellence Strategies*' (Haymarket, 1999). His innovative and pioneering work on the inter-relationship between Quakers and commerce was nominated for the 2017 Michael K. O'Rourke Best Publication Award.

Reshaping 'social imaginaries' in order to speak meaningfully about work

Jake Belder

A couple of years ago, I spent a year with an evangelical Anglican church in the North East, conducting a piece of fieldwork for my doctoral dissertation. I was researching the question of the role churches can play in helping their parishioners cultivate a theological vision of work that invests their work with deep meaning and significance, and enables them to begin to reorient how they think about and practice their work.

My research involved taking ten participants through a recently developed small-group course, *Transforming Work*, produced by the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity. The stated aim of the course is to gather 'a group of working Christians to form a learning community who meet together for eight sessions spaced over a year' in order to take 'a journey of seeing work differently and doing work differently; of God at work with us and in us, and in those we work with'. I found the course's material to be thoughtful, and the course itself nicely structured, creative, and well suited to the type of church where small groups feature as a regular part of its ministry. That said, my research concluded that the course on its own was insufficient to help participants begin to re-imagine the significance of their work. This, of course, poses a challenge to churches that rely heavily on the method of small groups to facilitate an understanding of discipleship.

One of the key findings of my research was that, while things like small groups have their place, it is crucial to be attentive to the fact that formation is the product of much more than the bi-weekly or monthly input these groups provide. I observed two things that need to be noted by churches thinking about how to help Christians in the workplace. First, the postures towards and practices of work are shaped by deeply rooted 'social imaginaries', to borrow a term from Charles Taylor. Social imaginaries are formed by the cultural webs of meaning we inhabit that provide us with structures to help us make sense of our lives and feel our way around in the world. They are so dominant and powerful that, even when we encounter something like a theological vision of work, the latter is filtered through these imaginaries and what does not fit is ignored or rejected.

More, these imaginaries or frameworks are deeply embedded to the point of being largely subconscious, because we are primarily shaped by the habits and practices we are immersed in every day. This includes the practices of work. In the end, my research

demonstrated that people take the input from something like *Transforming Work* and attempt to fit it into their existing frameworks, rather than allowing the frameworks themselves to be reshaped.

Second, and related to this, if churches are to begin to speak meaningfully to Christians seeking to be faithful at work, they must be attentive to the formative power of these frameworks. They must begin to create counter-formative practices and cultures within the church that begin to redress these dominant webs of meaning. To enable parishioners faithfully to imagine and engage in their daily work in fresh ways requires a whole shift in the culture of a church. All of a church's practices must communicate and envision a holistic gospel that gives new shape and meaning to all of life.

For instance, a church that primarily focuses on *individual* spirituality and evangelism will fail to provide its members with a vision of their daily work that goes beyond praying about the personal difficulties they encounter or sharing the gospel with colleagues. Christians with this outlook will struggle to conceive of the possibility of the redemption and transformation of work itself and the workplace as a whole.

Therefore, and perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, one of the most important things a church can do when it faces the challenge of meaningfully equipping its people for their ministry at work is to be much more attentive to making its own culture holistic – its practices of worship, the message it communicates and the habits that shape its members. If church members are to make the presence of the kingdom known in the world of work, they must be shaped by a gospel that provides a framework for making sense of the whole of reality.



Jake Belder holds a doctorate in practical theology from Durham University. He currently serves as assistant curate at Selby Abbey in the Diocese of York.

Faith at work – towards a more holistic context

Mark Greene

Over the last fifteen years, the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity team have changed our overall approach to envisioning and equipping Christians for mission and ministry at work. This is precisely because prior strategies seemed not to have affected the changes so many of us, like David Clark, have long yearned for. Yes, there were stories to tell – of evangelistic endeavour and organisational transformation – but very little evidence of the kind of definitive changes in local churches or theological colleges that might lead to the widespread discipling of congregations for workplace mission.

It became clear that the problem was deeper than work. It was not so much that workers were not being disciplined for workplace mission. Rather, it was that the vast majority of people were not being disciplined for Monday to Saturday mission, wherever they were. As such, it was not so much the absence of a theology of the work that was the issue, but the absence of a theology for daily life.

Similarly, our work, with Langham Partnership and theological educators on four continents, revealed that the key challenge was not to introduce a workplace theology to the curriculum. It was to introduce a whole-life, disciple-making culture. This was not to help people see ‘work’ themes or applications in particular biblical texts, but to develop a hermeneutic of the whole bible as the inspired word of the Creator-Redeemer God of all things. It was not just to develop more robust theologies of vocation and work, but to see the whole-life application of primary doctrines to everyday life. Overall, the core culture of the church was being strangled by the sacred-secular divide, making many a one-off intervention ineffective over the long term. Seed sown in sand. The soil needed to change.

With that in mind, our work has continued on two fronts. We continue to do all we can to envision and enable workers and are developing new resources for students, new workers and first stage managers. In parallel, we have invested significantly in seeking to help church leaders create a whole-life disciple-making culture (cf *Imagine Church* by Neil Hudson and the work being done in Anglican Dioceses on the *Setting God’s People Free agenda*). The goal is that workplace ministry is assumed because daily ministry wherever we are is assumed.

The potential of this approach has been born out by the impact of two resources that produced welcome but unintended results – *Life on the Frontline* and *Fruitfulness on the Frontline*. These two resources have helped more people engage with fellow-church goers about their work in the last four years than all the resources we produced in the previous ten. This is precisely because the language of ‘frontline’ gave pastors and group leaders a common congregational language for daily mission that did not privilege one arena over another. After all, not everyone has a workplace but everyone has a frontline (some place where they engage in the world in the week).

Similarly the 6M framework of *Fruitfulness* gave whole churches a common integrated set of criteria for faithful mission in daily life, not privileging evangelism over transformation, but allowing for both, and helping people to see what God had already done through them. Of course, resources on their own do not change church cultures. However, in this case their impact pointed a way forward for cultural change: What kinds of disciple-making approaches engage the whole church? What kind of language creates a new common whole-life consciousness? We have much to learn!



Mark Greene is Executive Director of LICC and author of a wide range of resources on work and whole-life discipleship, including *Transforming Work*, *Thank God it’s Monday*, *Fruitfulness on the Frontline* and *Supporting Christians at Work*.

‘Faith at work’ – a response

Richard Higginson

I greatly welcome the opportunity to respond to David Clark’s introductory paper to this issue of the Kingdom at Work Project *Bulletin*. I am deeply appreciative of the work he has done in championing the mission of the church in the world of work, sustained over many years, and for his generosity in involving a wide range of organisations in the Kingdom at Work Project, *Bulletin* and conferences.

That said, I must confess to being uncomfortable with the polarity he describes between two approaches to mission in the workplace: one being concerned with individual salvation and discipleship, the other with institutional transformation – the Kingdom at Work Project’s clear preference being for the latter. My view, and that of ‘Faith in Business’, is that these two belong together, and should not be played off against each other.

It is of course true that the central theme in Jesus’ teaching was the kingdom of God, a concept that Jesus never actually defined: his favourite method being to say what the kingdom was ‘like’, and to narrate a telling parable. But clearly the kingdom is multi-faceted and does point in the direction of institutional transformation, with the possibility of some surprising people being a part of it.

At the same time Jesus was passionately concerned to restore individuals to a right relationship with God, and in his final words to his disciples (Mt 28:20) told them to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’. This is not, therefore, something incidental or optional for his followers. It makes sense for Christians to share their faith with colleagues because, in today’s fragmented world, they often know the person at the next desk better than the neighbour next door.

In my book *Faith, Hope & the Global Economy*, I have argued that Christian faith is a power for good when it fosters discipleship alongside the other aims of stimulating enterprise, reducing poverty, promoting integrity and ensuring sustainability. However, I believe it is by showing a lively commitment to the latter four aims that Christians will earn credibility. Out attempts to commend our faith to our peers are more likely to be heard if we can show that Christian faith has something important to contribute concerning enterprise, poverty, integrity and sustainability.

What this amounts to is a *holistic* approach. We live in an age when Christian thinking about mission is moving in a holistic direction. The fact that the Anglican Church’s ‘Five marks of mission’ have been so widely accepted across a broad range of Christians and Christian denominations world-wide is an illustration of this. These marks are:

‘To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
To respond to human need by loving service
To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind
and to pursue peace and reconciliation
To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth.’

Rather than opt for one or other of the two alternatives that the Kingdom at Work Project has described, I think a more constructive approach would be to spell out what adopting the ‘Five marks of mission’ might entail in the contemporary workplace.



Richard Higginson has just retired from Ridley Hall Cambridge where he was Lecturer in Christian Ethics and Director of Faith in Business (of which he is now Chair) for 29 years. He is the author of several books on faith and business.

Faith at Work **– why it matters and why the Churches are missing a point**

Rob Fox

Recent years have seen a welcome renewal of interest in what it means to be a Christian in the workplace, though little of this is found in the churches as institutions. The latter, driven by dwindling funds and fewer paid ministers, have by and large retreated into maintaining local church networks, and focus on ‘vulnerable’ groups. It is largely extra-institutional networks and bodies, such as the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, the Kingdom @ Work Project and Faith in Business that have sought to make and develop links between faith and the world of work.

A significant reason for this is the way churches decide what is ‘worthy’ of their attention and support, hence my parentheses around ‘vulnerable’. In our services we regularly pray for the sick, the unemployed, the poor, and the ‘caring’ professions. We are enjoined to support food banks, ‘people’s kitchens’, those who suffer discrimination – and so we should, in all these cases. But should we not also pray for and support the folk we work alongside? Those who serve us in the shops, restaurants, cinemas we visit? The shareholders, directors and managers of the businesses we work in or live by?

Part of this imbalance stems from a misconception, promoted in the sermons we hear and the Christian charity literature we read, that Jesus had a ‘bias to the poor’; that he preferred to go to the weak and vulnerable, shunning the rich and powerful. CHRISM (CHRistians In Secular Ministry), which I have been active in for many years, this summer hosted the conference of the European Worker Priests – with representatives from Spain, Cataluña, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, as well as the UK.

The European worker priests largely take manual, low-skilled and insecure jobs, so they can work alongside the most vulnerable workers, often migrants. There is of course much to commend this approach, and the stories they tell are both heart-rending and heartening. I engaged in conversation with a group at the conference and observed that, as well as encounters with the sick and infirm, Jesus associated more regularly with people we would call middle class – the president of a synagogue, tax collectors, property owners, a rich young man. The point was well taken.

If we look at Jesus and his disciples, it is clear that they too were ‘middling sorts’ – partners in the family carpentry and fishing businesses, a tax collector, and – arguably – an

accountant (Judas)! Far from a bias to the poor, Jesus showed no bias at all! He accepted as God's children all whom he encountered, including non-Jews, neither kow-towing nor condescending to any.

One result of this imbalanced faith-view is that work, and the environment in which most of us spend the majority of our adult lives, is neglected as a sphere in which faith operates. Too often what teaching there is focusses on personal ethics and pastoral care for the 'vulnerable'. However, by working through our faith, God can have a significant influence for the kingdom, and for good, in our workplaces. How? The many stories are for another day.



Rob Fox is a Chartered Tax Adviser, working in HM Revenue & Customs on the tax affairs of large business, some household names. He is an ordained minister in the Newcastle diocese of the Church of England, where he and wife, Louisa, have recently moved, from near Manchester.

Living abundantly at work

David Sims

Jesus came so that we might all have life abundantly. Most of our lives are led at work, so that abundance needs to be apparent at work. Do we lead lives at work which show abundance, where we can be seen to be enjoying that abundance? Does our abundance spill over and intrigue others who are feeling short of time, resources, or life? And was that really an overspill of abundance, or just us acting out what we think we should look like when living abundantly? How can we Christians best support each other's working lives? How can we enable each other to enjoy abundance?

Last year's MODEM conference asked 'What is the church for?', and featured Professor Mike Higton speaking on 'witness'. That witness is both somebody who sees something, and somebody who tells others what they have seen. The two activities are not independent. You only understand something when you tell it to someone else (how do I know what I think until I hear what I say?), and by the time you have passed it on it has changed. We do not 'possess' the truth, because it continues to grow as it is passed on. We go on receiving the good news. How we witness is inextricable from what we bear witness to. Our witness includes holding ourselves open to the strange and surprising and, like Jesus, being open to people disrupting our flow.

Some years back a big church asked me to talk in a Lent series on my experience as a Christian who was also a senior university leader. We emailed about it for a while, until I realized that what was wanted was a story of how I was persecuted by secular academia for my faith. Nothing could have been further from my experience and I did not give the talk. They wanted a narrative of the godless at the gate and how Christians can circle the wagons to ensure their own safety. Such a fearful, over-anxious view of faith at work is the opposite of having life abundantly.

What would support living abundantly at work? Not, I suggest, having some kind of mini-church in the work place. Definitely not groups to which to commiserate. By

contrast, there are examples of joyful, open chaplaincy that builds networks of people who support each other's abundant living, networks that enable those involved to be more open to being both surprised and surprising. There are tough moments of course. For example when you hold in your prayers the person you are about to discipline or fire. You sometimes need people you can talk to, though not as much as you need to know that, under grace, you are forgiven, loved and free. You need to know that you will never get it right, and nor are you called to do so. Our calling is to live abundantly, infectiously.



David Sims is Emeritus Professor of Organizational Behaviour at Cass Business School, City, University of London. He is the Chair of MODEM (www.modemuk.org). He is co-author, with Vaughan S Roberts, of *Leading by Story: Rethinking Church Leadership* (2017) London: SCM Press

Faith, work, and looking for God where he is

John Lees

How can Christian thinking connect with the world of work?

I have problems with the idea that Christendom is lost and gone and we're living in a post-Christian society. It might technically be correct, but it's a notion which encourages fortress thinking. Describing people as 'unchurched' encourages the 'us and them' thinking society believes is Christianity's only mode of thought. More worryingly, believing that God is present only when bidden or named is frighteningly narrow-minded.

This issue matters when we are supporting Christians in the workplace, or being witnesses, prophets, pastors and signposts in contexts outside church. The problem about finding God in the workplace is that work is considered firmly 'other' because it is secular. This is of course a misuse of the word. In the Middle Ages 'secular' clergy were those embedded in parishes rather than living in religious communities. As an institution, we increasingly use 'secular' to mean 'Godless'.

The idea that God is not involved in every part of creation is not only theologically illiterate, it excludes and condemns. Our churches lack a coherent policy on workplace ministry because of we think we can decide where God is not. We make God small, confined, and exclusive to Sunday regulars. The prayer for the preparation in Common Worship says 'all things come from you', perhaps it really does mean *all* things.

The irony is that today's church is so focused on inclusion – welcoming all, loving those with different views and lifestyles. This is, after all, a Gospel imperative. Even so, the emphasis is on opening the doors wider to draw people in church, not using them as exits to venture out, explore, and discover in wonder what God is doing in those parts of life we have been ignoring.

It would be an interesting experiment for each church community to spend a full twelve months moving in the opposite direction – supporting people where they live and

work, building on ways God is known and experienced outside the tramlines of liturgy and creed.

We need to reach people at work, because that's where most people are between the age of 20 and 65-plus. Work absorbs our best energy, creativity, and attention. And yet for some it can be what the American writer Studs Terkel described as a 'Monday through Friday sort of dying.'

Christians in the workplace, especially licensed ministers, can do a great deal more to bring meaning to work - not just through pastoral engagement. There are many rites of passage around work and career that we offer no words for in our prayer books: the empty nest when children leave home; someone's first day at work; their last day at work; retirement, redundancy, under-employment, switching career paths. Difficult decisions faced by managers. Perhaps a liturgy which names the pressure of 24/7 working and zero hours contracts; or prayers to support those who work in isolation? These too can be hallowed moments. We can do more to remind people that God is at work - literally.



John Lees is a Minister in Secular Employment (MSE) and Bishop's Officer for Self-Supporting Ministry in the Diocese of Exeter. He is author of *Self-supporting Ministry: A Practical Guide* (SPCK, 2018). He also works full-time as a career coach and is the author of 14 books on work and careers including *How to Get a Job You Love*.

Entrepreneurship and faith at work

Peter Sedgwick

Twenty-five years ago, I finished a project on the way entrepreneurship was changing British economic life and published my findings in *The Enterprise Culture*. That was in 1992. When David Clark asked me to write a short piece for this edition of the *Bulletin*, my mind went back to that project. I spent three years interviewing those who had started their own businesses. Some were Christian, some were not, but the message was clear. You needed faith to start your own business, because the risks of failure were high, and many small businesses crashed and burned. That faith could and should be seen as related to the Christian faith. Let me spell this out more clearly.

Chris Beales in *Practicing Jesus* (Rainmaker Books, 2013) sees St Paul as the great entrepreneur *par excellence*. Radical, fiercely independent, innovative and change-making, he turned the Christian faith into a message of salvation for all, stressing the gifts of grace and the Spirit. Chris, who himself has been a great social entrepreneur, sees Paul as an advocate of human liberation. William Temple follows this up, in words that are deeply prophetic, even if written long ago in 1942 (*Christianity and Social Order*, pp.96- 97): '(It) is no part of the duty of a Christian as such to draw up plans of a reformed society. But it is part of his duty to know and proclaim Christian principles, to denounce as evil what contravenes them, and to insist how such evils should be remedied'.

One of the evils which Temple denounced in 1942 was the way in which work was ‘so monotonous and engages so few human faculties that it is hard for a man (sic) to find in it any real vocation.’ So, Temple called for workers to have a say in their employment, the satisfaction of knowing that their work matters to human well-being, and proper leisure and reward for their work. His is, like Chris Beales, a call to value the dynamic nature of God’s creation, and our own God-given freedom. In 1992, I put it like this (*The Enterprise Culture*, p.160): ‘Freedom in the enterprise culture... is to be understood as established through the fostering and nurture of communities that encourage self-worth and creativity’. God’s self-giving is mirrored in the value we place on human creativity.

All of this is echoed in a recent editorial (October 12, 2017) in *The Economist*. It said there was a need for Britain to change by ‘recognising the power of entrepreneurs..., the unique power of entrepreneurs to produce abundance out of scarcity and dynamism out of stagnation.’ What was not needed was more free-market and less government regulation; nor was it more nationalization and state control. In themselves, these are political and economic plans for a reformed society, and this is exactly what Temple said Christians should not try to imitate.

But given that *The Economist*, and many Christian social entrepreneurs like Chris Beales, see the power in unleashing change; given that much of work is still either very insecure and demeaning, or boring and monotonous - perhaps it is time again to celebrate the freedom which God has given his creation, and his people. ‘To train citizens in the capacity for freedom and to give them scope for free action is the supreme end.’ Temple wrote this in 1942. It is a quotation still deeply relevant today in the world of work, and above all in thinking about ‘faith in the world of work’.



Peter Sedgwick has written about Christianity and work for over three decades. His books include *The Enterprise Culture*, *The Market Economy and Christian Ethics*, and *Economic Theory and Christian Belief*. In retirement, he administers a project for housing destitute asylum seekers (Home4U Cardiff).

Friends House (London) Hospitality Limited - a successful ‘modern’ Quaker company

Elizabeth Redfern

Friends House (London) Hospitality Limited, or as it’s simply known to us as ‘Friends House’, is the trading company of the Quakers in Britain charity: and it is a big success story.

If you walk out of Euston Station in London, Friends House is the impressive - Grade 2 listed - building directly opposite with colonnaded entrances. Completed in 1928, it has won a number of Royal Institute of British Architects awards over its life including, recently, for a major renovation and upgrade project. It was built as the British administrative centre of the Religious Society of Friends, and is still that today. The building holds an extensive



library of modern and historic books and documents, seen as of high historic importance.

Once a year Quakers hold a Yearly Meeting where they come together to worship, discuss administrative matters, and any subject that they feel needs attention. In recent years this has included the environment and sustainability, same sex marriage, and world peace is always a major focus. Most years Quakers come together in Friends House, with its impressive 1,000 seater auditorium.

Since construction the use of the building has steadily changed and spare rooms hired out to people from other charities. Just over ten years ago, for both legislative and practical reasons, it was decided that if this hiring out was going to carry on, it needed to be done properly. This required a separate trading arm, with its own dedicated and qualified staff, and a full service offering including catering and conference equipment. So, Friends House (London) Hospitality Limited was incorporated, wholly owned by the Quakers in Britain.

Remember Friends House is on Euston Road, in an area with a huge demand for event space, even within the charity sector. Over the last ten years the company has steadily grown. In 2017 its turnover was £4M, with £900k of profits donated back to Quakers in Britain to significantly contribute towards the charity's work and costs.



The Friends House company now has 32 high quality 'Quaker plain' rooms. The 1,000 seater auditorium, rebuilt in 2014 with an impressive skylight, has proven to be a real hit and has even hosted shows as part of London Fashion Week.

The company now manages all services at Friends House, including room hire, bookshop, café and restaurant: as well as Swarthmoor Hall in Cumbria, partly Grade 2*, which has also had major refurbishment making it a bed and breakfast retreat and Quaker pilgrimage destination. Why is the company doing all this? Because it now has ten years of experience and appropriate skills.

However, there is far more to this than good event management and hospitality professionalism. Every day, the work is underpinned by Quaker values. These are visibly applied to the actions of staff and implemented in their approach to others. These applied values are reflected in the prizes and accreditations won, and in the praise and loyalty received from customers, suppliers and staff. We talk at Friends House about 'the three Cs': 'Church, Charity and Company'. These work together in Quaker harmony, upholding and being a witness to our values and faith.



Elizabeth Redfern is Director of Friends House (London) Hospitality Limited, a member of the Quakers and Business Group and of Northamptonshire Quakers. She is a retired engineer, software developer, and business mentor.

Where next? Reflections on the papers in this *Bulletin*

David Clark

The papers in this issue have been written in response to my introductory article which appears at the beginning of this *Bulletin*. In the limited space available, authors have only been able to address those issues which were at the top of their agendas. However, taken together, the papers represent a comprehensive and important coverage of current concerns about the church's engagement with the world of work. In this final paper, I attempt to identify those concerns and use them to set an agenda which, I believe, from the passion shown by the authors writing here, needs urgent attention across all churches.

Key aspects of this agenda will form the basis for discussion at the consultation which the Kingdom at Work Project and the St Peter's Saltley Trust are convening in October. Attendance has been by invitation and the response from agencies involved in the faith and work field had been very encouraging. However, if any individual reader of the *Bulletin* would like to attend this event please contact me as soon as possible as there may be a few spare places available (see the notice at the end of this *Bulletin*).

Premise - the church appears unable to engage effectively with the world of work

Many papers in this *Bulletin* explore the continuing inability of the church to engage effectively with the world of work. Jennifer Tann sees this as resulting from the destructive influence of clericalism which marginalises the ministry of the laity in the world of work. Bill Mash and Hugh Valentine believe that the church has for generations screened out the world of work, not least because ordained ministry has been seen as 'above' worldly occupations. However, Bill Nash reminds us that neglect of the working world robs a vital sphere of human activity of that vision of a 'New Earth' which Christian faith should be offering society, and thus of faith's life-giving power for transformation.

How, then, do we begin to address what Mark Greene sees as a disastrous sacred-secular divide? Here I suggest some of the key questions raised by these papers. At our October consultation we shall be addressing a number of these matters and asking how the church's concern about them can be deepened, vigorous debate promoted and new learning opportunities and resources provided.

1. How can a holistic theology of mission to guide Christian engagement in the world of work be developed?

Jake Belder, from his hands-on research in an Anglican parish, argues that there needs to be a radical change of culture in the life of the church if it is to have any hope of engaging effectively with the working world. The implications are that such a cultural change will require a fundamental re-appraisal of the church's theology of mission in the world of work. The argument in a number of these papers is that such a theology must encompass mission as individual salvation *and* as institutional transformation (Richard Higginson and Mark Greene). To set the one over against the other is to deny the holistic nature of ministry and mission in the workplace.

Mark Greene and Jake Belder go further. They believe that it limits our vision of workplace mission if our theology of mission fails to be about the whole of life (within *and*

beyond the workplace). In reality, ministry and mission in the wider world should be about being on the 'frontline' in every aspect of our living, not just when at work. Thus a holistic theology of mission needs to offer guidance for every encounter in daily life.

Andrew Fincham and Bill Mash argue that the way to further the holistic nature of mission is to bring the presence of the kingdom throughout the whole of life much more to the fore. As Richard Higginson's paper reminds us, it is the good news of the kingdom which appears as the first 'mark of mission' for Anglicans (as it should be for all churches).

I welcome this holistic approach to mission. I would argue that the Kingdom at Work Project's conviction that mission should be about the communal transformation of the workplace is relevant to the communal transformation of every human collective, from the family to the nation. However, I would not want a holistic view of the nature of mission to lead us to ignore the fact that engagement with the world of work has particular challenges. It is a very complex, materialistic and rapidly changing world, often hostile to the intrusion of Christian values, and mission as transformation in this sphere of life requires informed, tenacious, resourceful and skilful intervention.

There are other aspects of a theology of work which the authors of these papers argue need to come into the frame. David Sims believes that 'abundant' life, a sense of liberation and joy, is something that should be at the heart of Christian witness in the workplace. Peter Sedgwick, alongside Richard Higginson, urges Christians to adopt an 'entrepreneurial' approach to the world of work - taking imaginative risks and feeling free to be creative. Rob Fox wants any theology of work to be inclusive, not denying the importance of a 'the vulnerable' but embracing, as did Jesus, the situation of those 'in the middle' and at the top.

Liz Redfern indicates how such a theology of work might be expressed in practice in her encouraging description of Friends House, London, a Quaker enterprise founded on Quaker values.

2. What form of education is required to equip Christians for mission in the world of work?

This aspect of any new agenda for mission in the world of work must be built on the holistic kind of theology suggested above. However, the form of the education and nature of resources required to equip lay people for mission at work require more attention and care than they have had so far been given.

The place of the bible in such an education is an interesting issue discussed in these papers. Andrew Fincham believes that seeking to reach a coherent view of the teaching of Jesus for pursuing a Christian way of life at work, as elsewhere, is by no means easy. He rejects a dominantly 'soteriological' interpretation of scripture which he believes places power in the hands of the clergy. Instead he advocates a Quaker view of engagement which sees kingdom-building, and its ability to empower lay practice, as the hall-mark of 'mission' at work. Mark Greene, from another theological perspective, rejects a textual pick-and-mix approach to mission at work and argues for a 'whole bible' foundation for Christian education.

Mark Greene, based on the considerable experience of the LICC, believes that many courses for engagement with the world of work are outmoded and, following his holistic approach to theology and the bible, suggest that they should be about mission in daily life

rather than simply mission in the workplace. Jake Belder questions whether church courses on mission at work for small groups make much long-term educational impact. As already noted, he feels that much more focus on a radical change of the church's often insulated culture is needed before lay people can be adequately equipped for mission at work.

Mark Greene and Jake Belder remind us that we shall not get very far in providing an appropriate education for Christians engage in mission in the working world unless we engage in serious research and evaluation. To depend on material produced from well 'beyond the fray' to meet the immense challenges faced by Christians in market-driven workplaces is simply not good enough.

One matter emerging from many of these papers is the pressing need for all those concerned about ministry and mission in the workplace to encourage more research into and reflection on the value-added contribution of Christian faith to the economic foundation, organizational forms, nature of leadership and wider social responsibilities of the world of work. This, in turn, means exploring how insights, experiences and resources can be more effectively shared by Christians operating in this field of mission.

3. How can the church provide 'mentors' trained to equip Christians for mission in the world of work?

In a number of papers it is argued that the ordained ministry is poorly equipped to encourage and equip lay people for mission at work. Even if clergy were once in touch with the working world, their responsibilities in relation to the gathered church and local neighbourhood soon remove them from contact with and knowledge of a very fast changing scene. Bill Mash stresses the importance of chaplaincy in keeping the church in touch with working life but recognises its limitations. Chaplains need to consider how they can expand the scope of their ministry beyond the pastoral if they are to further a holistic form of mission in the world of work.

No paper in this *Bulletin* addresses the important issue of where mentors, who can offer the kind of educational experience needed to equip lay people for mission in the workplace, might come from. In the *Kingdom at Work Project* (2014), I suggest what should be required of such mentors, and indicate from where they might be drawn (including from amongst chaplains and, especially, ministers in secular employment). I also argue in *Building Kingdom Communities* (2016) that a greatly expanded diaconate as 'a new order of mission' is at present a source of leadership (including as mentors for mission at work) neglected by all churches in the UK (though not in North America). Both the Kingdom at Work Project and the St Peter's Saltley Trust have also argued for a number of years that, at least for a good number of presbyteral and diaconal ordinands, initial theological training should prepare them to be mentors in this important field of mission.

However, Malcolm Grundy, drawing on the experience of the Alban Institute in the United States, makes the radical suggestion that it is experienced lay people who should be educating the ordained ministry as to how the gathered church can engage more effectively with the world of work, and not vice versa.

4. What is needed to bring into being gathered churches committed and able to support the engagement of their members with the world of work?

Jennifer Tann, Hugh Valentine, Malcolm Grundy and John Lees, amongst others, feel strongly that the gathered church currently lacks the ability to relate creatively to ministry and

mission in the working world - be that in worship, education or pastoral care. They believe that the gathered church should become more open to affirming the presence of the kingdom everywhere, not least in the working world. This means the gathered Christian community looking outwards not inwards and, especially in worship as John Lees imaginatively illustrates, adapting what it does to preparing its members for ministry and mission in the world.

I have written elsewhere about the importance of the church investing in the expansion of a renewed diaconate (Clark, 2016). I include in the important responsibilities of latter, the part that the deacon should play in enabling worship to connect the church with the wider world, the gathered church with the dispersed church. There are many situations, especially within Anglican and Roman Catholic liturgies, where such leadership in worship can widen the vision of the church and empower its members to be animators for the coming of the kingdom in the whole of life, not least within the world of work.

‘Educating for mission in the world of work - where next?’

**The Kingdom at Work Project and St. Peter’s Saltley Trust
invite you to a consultation on -**



**Tuesday, October 9th from 10.45 to 3.30
at the Ark - St Laurence’s Church -
Alvechurch, Worcestershire**



*If any Bulletin reader would like to attend this event, please contact David Clark (Kingdom at Work Project Co-ordinator) as soon as possible as there may be a few places available.
david@clark58.eclipse.co.uk*

Themes of past Kingdom at Work Project Bulletins

These can be downloaded from

<http://www.saltleytrust.org.uk/faith-and-work-in-theological-education-and-training/>

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No.4 (April 2015)	The Kingdom at Work project – ten key questions
No.3 (Dec. 2014)	‘Educating for Mission in the World of Work’ - conference report
No.2 (Oct. 2014)	Faith and work agencies in the UK and beyond
No.1 (Feb. 2014)	The Kingdom at Work Project and related initiatives