

The Kingdom at Work Project

Transforming the world of work



Bulletin 1 February 2014

The Kingdom at Work Project and related initiatives

Dear Friends

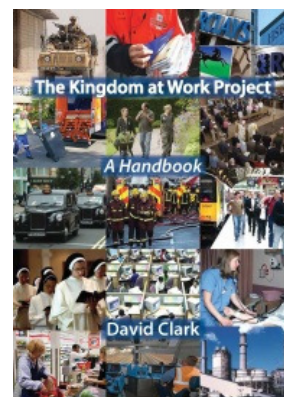
I hope most of you will have received a copy of the Kingdom at Work Project's *Handbook* over recent months as an introduction to the project (if not, details of how to obtain a copy are given below). This bulletin is to let you know a little more about the project. It includes an overview and synopsis of the project as a whole, and some initiatives of note offering new insights into different stages of the project (see diagram page 5).

A number of people have offered helpful comments on the *Handbook* and, in a few cases, on the full draft of the project. I have set the end of March as the dead-line for such comments so if you are able to make these, please get them to me before that date. In the light of the comments made, I shall be revising the full draft of the project and the *Handbook*. My intention is to get the former published in hard copy (as well as available on the web) by the autumn. However, I want to stress that the project will remain a work in progress and ongoing contributions will continue to be very welcome.

In November, I am collaborating with Ian Jones, Director of the Saltley Trust, Birmingham, to set up a consultation to discuss both the Saltley Trust's recent publication of Hannah Matthews' important research entitled *Faith and Work in Theological Education and Training: an Enquiry* (see pages 13-14) and the future of the Kingdom at Work Project. The two pieces of work complement one another very well, with the project offering one way of following up Hannah's enquiry. We will send details of this event later in the year.

The *Handbook* is now in its second edition (with a new format for the 'signs' section, the Bakewell case-study and a short section on mentoring included). It costs £7 (post-paid) from me - Deacon Dr David Clark at Hill View, Burton Close Drive, Bakewell DE45 1BG (01629 810172 or david@clark58.eclipse.co.uk). Cheques made out to 'David Clark'.

This bulletin is going out to some hundred contacts - all individuals and agencies working in fields related to this project. Please forward or pass on copies of the bulletin to anyone else who might be interested. All good wishes. David



Overview of the Kingdom at Work Project



The origins and purpose of the project

The Kingdom at Work Project developed out of the endeavours of the Faith and Work Group of the Methodist Diaconal Order, of which I was until recently the convenor. However, the project's current shape and content, including its strengths and weaknesses, are my own responsibility.

The project has been given considerable impetus by the recent collapse of trust in the financial system and other aspects of public life. These events have brought home to many of us that there is not only an acute ethical deficit within society at large, but that the economic models which have been taken for granted for so long are in need of radical repair if not replacement (as contributors to the latest issue of *Crucible* also argue¹). The disastrous impact of these events on the lives of many ordinary citizens, not least those on very limited incomes, underlines yet again that the world of work is a profound shaper of culture and contributor to (or destroyer of) human well-being. Its transformation needs to be high on the church's agenda.

However, the reality is that since the mid-twentieth century the church has steadily lost ground in its endeavour to engage effectively with the world of work. The closures of William Temple College (Anglican) in 1971, and of Luton Industrial College (Methodist) in 1996, are simply symbols of this retreat. Trevor Beeson, for many decades an astute commentator on the mission of the church in the public realm, recently expressed the view that 'the church is no nearer (than in the days of Industrial Mission) to bridging the gulf between its own life and that of industrial and commercial Britain'².

The consequences of the church's retreat from active engagement with the working world are serious. One consequence is our inability as Christians to be in a position to help transform the world of work into a sector of society which fully promotes the common good. We remain largely on the edge of the fray struggling, as isolated individuals, to witness to our faith convictions.

Another detrimental consequence of this disengagement is that the life of the church - its mission, its worship (including its preaching and praying), its learning and its pastoral care - fail to be influenced by, and thus lose their relevance to a hugely important sector of the life of society. It is little wonder that Christian faith has become of little relevance to those actively engaged in the world of work.

The Kingdom at Work Project seeks to initiate a debate concerning why the church is failing to fill this gaping hole in its missionary endeavours. More importantly, however, it is an attempt to offer a vision of how Christians might be enabled to exercise their ministry more effectively in this key sector of public life. In that process, it is hoped that the relatively small number of agencies currently concerned with mission in the world of work might be encouraged to share their experiences, insights and resources more fully. The different theological perspectives which motivate these agencies are important. However, I believe that all have contributions to make which, if shared in the spirit of genuine dialogue,

¹ 'Deep Purple? Post-liberalism and the Churches' in *Crucible* (January-March 2014) Norwich: Hymns Ancient and Modern

² Beeson, T. (2013) *Priests and Politics - the Church Speaks Out*. London: SCM Press, p. 187

would greatly enhance the prospects of our being able to further the transformation of the world of work.

The foundations of the project

The vision of mission which the Kingdom at Work Project offers is based on four foundations. The first is my conviction that *building and sustaining new forms of community* is of paramount importance in today's world. As humankind faces a future in which it has to live together or perish together, the quest for community is one that must take centre stage.

The second foundation is my belief that mission has to be based on *the art of discernment and appropriate skills of intervention*. The project assumes that the kingdom is present and active in the whole of life. The mission of the church is to try to discern when, where and how God is at work in his (her) world and, in response, to intervene in order to make its human contribution to that endeavour. The project does not regard the mission of the church as exercising power or persuasion in order to impose its own predetermined understanding of the Gospel on the world.

The third foundation of the project is my conviction that *mission should be undertaken primarily by lay people* equipped by those with the experience and skills to prepare them for that task. I do not believe that mission is primarily the responsibility of those ordained with the lay people acting largely as their back-up and funders.

The fourth foundation on which the project rests is my contention that *the role of mentor* must be put at the heart of the church's task of equipping the people of God for mission.

Mission within the workplace

A vision of mission founded on the quest for community, the art of discernment and skills of intervention, the primacy of lay people in any missionary endeavour and the enabling role of the mentor, is relevant to *all* spheres of human affairs - family life, neighbourhood life, voluntary organizations, leisure-time associations and so on. However, *this project chooses to bring that vision of mission to bear on the world of work*, for the reasons set out above. The world of work is defined here as that sphere of life in which people are engaged in paid employment.

Because the project places the quest for community at the heart of mission, its focus is not so much on the nature of work, though that remains important, but on *the workplace as a community*. Its immediate concern, therefore, is the communal strength of relationships in that context.

The holistic nature of mission in the world of work

Much that has been written concerning mission in the world of work focuses on relatively circumscribed aspects of such a mission. Some publications focus on a theology of work, *or* on a Christian approach to the economy and the public realm, *or* on the kind of ecclesiology required to address a changing societal culture, and so on. Others recount the experiences of individual Christians at work, though most seem to be written by those holding, or having held middle or top management roles. There are also a few short courses on offer to equip lay people for their ministry at work. However, these diverse contributions to the faith and work arena rarely connect up. Thus there is little joined-up thinking about the purpose, theology, methods, preparation and resources required for mission in the world of work.

Consequently we are often left with principles superficially related to practice, or with practice superficially related to principles.

The Kingdom at Work Project seeks to address this lack of integrated thinking by presenting a holistic approach to mission in the world of work which connects principles and practice. It sets out a theological basis for mission within the world of work, applies this to the art of discernment and the task of intervention and identifies the roles and resources required to implement the whole process. That process is described in a number of stages which are intended to form an integrated whole (see diagram page 5), but one which is always a work in progress. However, it is recognized, that those participating in the project, whether as mentors or practitioners, may choose to engage with only one stage of the project at a time.

The stages of the project

Stages 1 to 5 provide the *academic foundations* of the project.

Stage 1 gives an introduction to the concept of ‘communities of character’, a term drawn from the work of Stanley Hauerwas but adapted for this project and informed by the author’s personal experiences over many years.

Stage 2 describes the key components of a theology of what is called ‘the kingdom community’ and its universal and inclusive gifts of life, liberation, love and learning.

Stage 3 describes a communal spirituality drawn from Celtic (life), Jesuit (liberation), Methodist (love) and Quaker (learning) traditions.

Stage 4 sets out the basic principles of a communal economy, drawn largely from Roman Catholic Social Teaching.

Stage 5 explores the implications of a communal theology for all institutions.¹

Stage 6 describes how the foundations of the project can be applied to the world of work through attention to *human scale initiatives* which have the potential to be seminal and potent instruments of change.

Stages 7 and 8 are about ways of approaching the *discernment* of the gifts of the kingdom community in the workplace and of engaging in *intervention* as a response to that process.

Stage 7 looks at critical incidents and signs as important aids to discernment.

Stage 8 discusses forms of intervention. These can be implicit or explicit, individual or collective, and facilitated by dialogue and symbols and messages. Prayer and worship are also explored as explicit forms of intervention.

Stages 9 to 11 are about ways of *equipping Christians for mission in the workplace*.

Stage 9 explores the contribution of education and the role of mentor in facilitating mission at work.

Stage 10 sets out a range of initiatives which the gathered church might take to support its members in their ministry at work, as well as ways in which it might approach mission to nearby places of work.

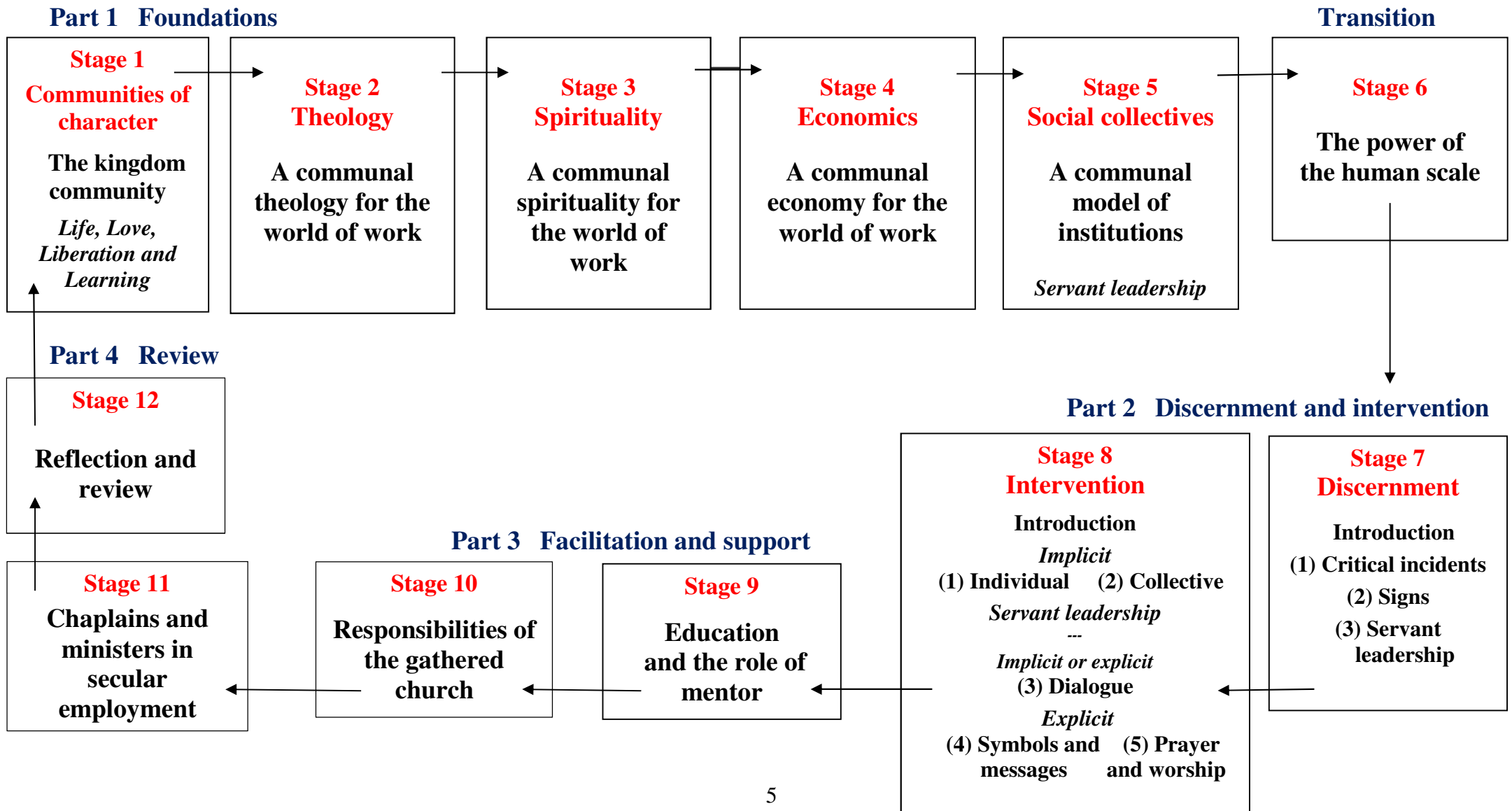
Stage 11 explores what is required of chaplains and ministers in secular employment if they are to fulfil the role of mentor.

Stage 12 involves *a review* of the whole project.

¹ See also Clark, D. (2005) *Breaking the Mould of Christendom - kingdom community, diaconal church and the liberation of the laity*. London: Epworth

The Kingdom at Work Project

Diagram of stages



Some important initiatives reflecting the vision of the project

Below are offered details about a number of initiatives which I believe to be making an especially innovative contribution to the various stages of the Kingdom at Work Project (see diagram page 5). *The title of each initiative appears in bold blue italics.* The initiatives are focused on the UK. Just a few examples are taken from elsewhere in the world. I need to stress that the initiatives described are only some examples of what can be achieved - other initiatives are also active in this field.

Stage 1 ‘Communities of character’ as a resource for the project’s academic foundations

My main purpose in **Stage 1** of the project is to stress the importance of personal experience in designing any theology of mission. For me, significant insights have come particularly from my involvement with the Christian community movement from the 1970s to the 1990s.

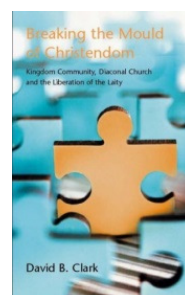
See Clark, D. (1969) *Community and a Suburban Village*. University of Sheffield: unpublished Ph.D. thesis; Clark, D. *Basic Communities – Towards an alternative society*. London: SPCK (1977); Clark, D. (1987) *Yes to Life*. London: Collins; and *Building the Human City - the Origins and Future Potential of the Human City Institute (1995 - 2002)*. Birmingham: Human City Institute (available from HCI, 239 Holliday Street, Birmingham B1 1SJ, or download from www.humancity.org.uk).

My other concern here has been to break free from the *ecclesiological* limitations of Stanley Hauerwas’ otherwise useful concept of ‘communities of character’ and to apply that concept to both religious *and* secular social collectives. See Hauerwas, S. (1981) *A Community of Character*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Stage 2 A communal theology for the world of work

I have so far found little offering a sociological understanding of the concept of community as a springboard for shaping a theology of mission. My own exploration of this theme, rooted in the images of Trinity and the kingdom, has led me to coin the core concept of ‘the kingdom community’.

See in particular Clark, D. (August, 1973) ‘The Concept of Community – a Re-examination’ in *The Sociological Review* 3 (21) Keele: University of Keele; Clark, D. (1987) *Yes to Life*. London: Collins; and Clark, D (2005) *Breaking the Mould of Christendom: Kingdom community, diaconal church and the liberation of the laity*. Peterborough: Epworth



Stage 3 A communal spirituality for the world of work

In this stage I discuss Celtic, Ignatian, Methodist and Quaker spiritualities, taken together, as making an invaluable contribution to a communal spirituality for the world of work.

Stage 4 A communal economy for the world of work

My material for this stage of the project comes mainly from Roman Catholic Social Teaching, especially in relation to the concept of the common good (see also an Appendix to **Stage 2**).

A key resource here is the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (English edition, 2005), London: Continuum. Inspirational on a wide canvas is *Caritas in Veritate* -

Charity in Truth (2009), Pope Benedict XVI. San Francisco: Ignatius Press. Also of note in applying Catholic Social Teaching to the world of business is *The Vocation of the Business Leader* (2012), a report on a seminar, set up in February 2011 at the Centre of Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota.

The St Pauls Institute [www.stpaulsinstitute.org.uk]

St Pauls Institute is one of the few places which currently promotes *public* discussion of a model for an economy in harmony with the values of the common good and of the kingdom community.

The Institute sets up ‘theology focused, events... of varying sizes surrounding the topics of finance, economics, and social justice.’ Some recent events have been entitled - ‘Good People, Good Money, Good Banks: What Role for the Church?’ (Dec 2013), ‘Faith in Finance’ (Nov 2013) and ‘Market Ethics: Caught or Taught?’ (June 2013).

The Institute also offers informative videos of some of these events, such as that of the debate on the topic of ‘Good Banks’, to which Archbishop Justin Welby contributed (June 2013).



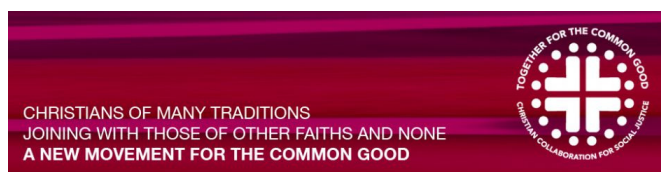
Faith in Business - Ridley Hall, Cambridge [www.faith-in-business.org]



Faith in Business, under the leadership of Richard Higginson, has been active for over 20 years in ‘supporting lay Christians in demanding working contexts and raising awareness among present and future church leaders to the critical issues of business and contemporary culture’.

It is engaged in conferences, publications and research concerned with the interrelationship between faith and the world of work. These also contribute to the training of ordinands at Ridley Hall. In April 2014 it is organizing an important conference on ‘The Lifecycle of Business’. Richard Higginson recently (2012) published *Faith, Hope and the Global Economy*. Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press.

Though rather more concerned with issues of social justice than the economy as such, ***Together for the Common Good (T4CG)*** [www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk]



is making a significant ecumenical contribution to shaping the future of Christian engagement in public life. It describes its purpose as - ‘building a new, broad coalition between Christians of different traditions, other faith communities and secular allies, to re-imagine political life and commitment to the flourishing of all people’.

Professor Hilary Russell is Professor Emeritus at Liverpool John Moores University European Institute of Urban Affairs and leads the T4CG research process. She reflects on the work of T4CG as follows in an email to myself (January, 2014):

‘***Together for the Common Good (T4CG)*** is an initiative setting out to explore how faith groups can work better together for social justice. It is looking back to learn from the Liverpool story of the 1980s when the church leaders saw the social imperatives of their time as bigger than the concerns of their individual faiths. They worked with their laity to address

them and, along the way, discovered that there was more to unite than to divide them. But T4CG is also looking at collaboration today across the country, examining how the context has changed, identifying present and future challenges and giving case study examples of groups standing side-by-side with their communities.

There was a major conference in September 2013 and there will be a book in 2014/15. The conference was informed by past and present examples of joint working drawing on various Christian traditions. Over 170 people attended spanning clergy and laity, academics and activists, policy makers and practitioners, commentators and campaigners, together providing a vast range and depth of expertise. People with first-hand knowledge of the Sheppard-Worlock partnership mingled with current players scarcely old enough to remember the 1980s... Videos of the conference sessions can still be viewed on the website and the texts of addresses can be downloaded (address above).

I was left with many impressions after the conference and can only cite a few here. First, there were very evident shared concerns, for example, about the treatment of asylum seekers, about the need for and increasing use of food-banks, about housing issues and, in particular, the bedroom tax. But delegates not only spoke out against various policies and practices, they also had alternatives to offer, such as the living wage campaign, alternatives to payday lenders and local projects and social enterprises that can transform the lives of individuals and strengthen neighbourhoods.

Secondly, it was clear that although the common good is a very helpful concept, there is no necessary consistency in the way it is used. For many Roman Catholics, it is well defined with its roots in Catholic Social Teaching and critically it includes the ideas of subsidiarity and solidarity, human dignity and the preferential option for the poor. Others use it in a much more general way so that a variety of people may deploy the term without quite meaning the same thing. Perhaps even more crucially there is something of a gap between those who bring an academic approach and practitioners on the ground who may implicitly be working towards 'the common good' without ever spelling it out. Yet without setting such activity within a conceptual framework there is a danger that our response to need remains palliative and never moves on to asking the questions about how that need has arisen. One of the helpful aspects of Anna Rowlands' keynote address was that she spent considerable time rooting the common good in relation to a practical example - in this case, immigration, a subject very close to her own heart. Testing policies and practices against 'common good criteria' reveals just how counter-cultural it is.

The conference findings are feeding into the research process which continues until the end of this calendar year. It is exploring how people of different Christian traditions, other faiths and secular allies can work better together and side-by-side with communities for the common good. At least one publication is planned for late 2014/early 2015. This last phase of the T4CG research is an attempt to take up the challenge of developing a new common good narrative. It will concentrate on exploring the views of those running social justice projects to ascertain how they see the absence of the common good in their own situations and what their common good alternative prescriptions would be.

An appetite for the idea of the common good is apparent today in various arenas, faith-based and secular. Another conclusion from the T4CG conference was that collaboration is an essential pre-requisite in working towards the wellbeing of all: to extend practical action and to share insights, energy and expertise as well as vision and – for Christians – to present a more effective witness.'

Stage 5 A communal model of institutions

I have not come across attempts to set out a *communal* model of institutions - including of the church - other than my own discussion in the publications below. If there are any such publications I would be grateful to know about them.

See Clark, D (2005) *Breaking the Mould of Christendom: Kingdom community, diaconal church and the liberation of the laity*. Peterborough: Epworth (pp 85-129); Clark, D. (2010) *Reshaping the mission of Methodism*. Oldham: Church in the Market Place (pp. 167-283); and Clark, D. (2012) *Building the Human City - the Origins and Future Potential of the Human City Institute (1995 - 2002)*. Birmingham: Human City Institute (available from HCI, 239 Holliday Street, Birmingham B1 1SJ, or download from www.humancity.org.uk)

Stage 6 The power of the human scale

The main inspiration for me in this context has been the work of Ernst Friedrich “Fritz” Schumacher.

See Schumacher, E. F. (1973) *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*. London: Blond & Briggs. Note the sub-title of his book.

Stage 7 Discernment - Critical incidents and signs within the workplace

Stages 7 and 8 (see diagram page 5) form the heart of the Kingdom at Work Project’s vision of mission as practice.

Stage 7 is concerned with *the art of discerning* the signs of the kingdom community at work. It maybe argued that the idea of discerning such signs is selling out to the current fixation on auditing everything and publishing endless league tables. It might also be argued, from a biblical perspective, that ‘the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed’ (Lk: 17:20), even though, in the next verse, we are told that ‘the kingdom of God is in the midst’ of life.

Nevertheless, I believe that the Gospels overwhelmingly encourage us to try to discern what I call signs of the kingdom community - provided that we always accept that we may be mistaken. The art of discernment is to be aware of what Jonathan Sacks calls ‘intimations’ of the presence of God in daily life. Thus the examples of critical incidents and signs suggested in this stage need to be regarded as *possible* pointers to those situations and circumstances within which the gifts of the kingdom *might* be present.

In the **Introduction** to **Stage 7** (see diagram page 5), I review attempts throughout the world of work to identify and document signs of ‘the good business’. These endeavours are important because they can assist us in our own attempt as Christians to discern of signs of the kingdom community within the workplace. In this context, one recent *secular* initiative is of particular note and is described below.

Economy for the Common Good [www.gemeinwohl-oekonomie.org]

This movement began in October 2010 in Austria. It advocates an alternative economic model founded on the principle of ‘the common good’ and co-operation, instead of on profit and competition. However, the association makes no reference to Catholic Social Teaching in its web site literature and states openly that it seeks not to be ‘ideological’.



The catalyst in the creation of this movement was Christian Felber, an Austrian university economics professor, and his book *Die Gemeinwohl-Ökonomie* (*The Common Good Economy*).

By the end of 2013, the association had over 1400 companies signed up as supporters of the movement, most on the European mainland. The association is mentioned here because of its unique approach to the creation of the communal workplace. It is gradually becoming known about on the UK scene.

The association offers a Common Good Balance Sheet covering issues such as the 'Just income distribution', 'Corporate democracy and transparency', 'Ethical customer relations', 'Reduction of environmental impact' and 'Contribution to the local community'. Companies, usually in partnership with other companies similarly involved, draw up their own Common Good Report in the light of the items on the Balance Sheet. This report is peer evaluated and, from 2014, must also be checked by an external 'auditor'. The company then receives an audit report and certificate. It is honour bound to make its Common Good Report available to the wider public. There is a strong emphasis on mutual learning throughout the whole process.

London: Quakers and Business Group [www.qandb.org].

I believe that one of the most significant contributions to features of 'the good business' from a *religious* perspective is that offered by the **Quakers and Business Group**. The group would not call itself an explicitly Christian body. However, it seeks to draw on the inspiration of 'the Light' in discerning the hall-marks of a 'good business'. The publication concerned is entitled: ***Good Business - Ethics at work (2000 - updated 2012)***

In this publication the group sets out to relate Quaker principles to good business practice. It does this by using a distinctively Quaker method of discernment. This begins by stating an 'Advice' indicating a principle of Quaker practice followed by a 'Question' which prompts the reader to examine whether he or she has honoured this principle in practice.



The booklet covers topics such as 'honesty and integrity', 'business and profit', 'obligations to shareholders and investors', 'ethical trade', 'environmental responsibility', 'health, safety and security', 'advertising and promotion', 'taxes', 'gifts and donations', 'trade unions' and 'whistle blowing'. The booklet is a rich and thoughtful source of what we describe in this project as gifts of the kingdom community at work.

Also making a notable contribution to the task of discerning of signs of the kingdom community at work is:

CABE (The Christian Association of Business Executives)

[www.cabe-online.org]

In 2006, CABE published:

Thirty-one 'principles for those in business'



These principles were inspired by John McLean Fox, a former chairman of CABE and a tertiary Franciscan. They are meant to be prompts for individual reflection and practice, one for each day of the month, by Christian executives involved in business. CABE believes that the principles 'provide a sound and robust framework within which business can be conducted honourably and responsibly... (as well as helping) to develop personal values and standards'.

The principles cover concerns such as 'priority aims', 'corporate values', 'responsibilities to stakeholders', and 'personal qualities' like 'creativity, joyfulness, forgiveness, courage, openness and honesty, prayerfulness, maintaining personal integrity' and so on. CABE's principles are intended to be more a rule of life for the Christian business executive than a means of discerning specific signs of the kingdom community within workplace. However, they offer useful insights into the broad sweep of those signs.

In **Stage 7 (2)** (see diagram page 5) of the Kingdom at Work Project, I suggest some possible pointers to the presence of the kingdom community at work based on secular and Christian tools for assessing 'the good business'. However, I also seek to link these pointers with biblical references mainly in the gospels. A resource of considerable value in this context is:

The Theology of Work Project - Biblical Perspective on Faith and Work

[www.theologyofwork.org]



This ambitious international project (based in the USA) has been documenting and commenting on references to the world of work in every

book of the Bible. It is a mine of information for those seeking to relate the Scriptures to the world of work. Will Messenger, its Executive Editor, describes the Theology of Work Project as follows:

'Mission

The Theology of Work (TOW) Project exists to help people explore what the Bible and the Christian faith can contribute to ordinary work. The Christian Scriptures have much to say about work, although we may not be aware of it.

Products

In 2014, the TOW Project is completing its online *Theology of Work Bible Commentary* covering what every book of the Bible says about non-church work. The website also covers topics such calling, ethics, truth and deception, provision and wealth, motivation, finance, and

economics and society. Resources include text/graphical articles and Bible studies, videos, audios, and eBooks. The TOW Project's eBook *Calling: a Biblical Perspective* is available on Amazon.

Users

TOW Project materials are being used by Christians in all kinds of workplaces - by pastors, Bible study leaders, small groups, faculties in seminaries and business schools, and individuals interested in applying Christian faith to ordinary work.

Organization

The Theology of Work Project is an independent, international organization dedicated to researching, writing, and distributing materials with a biblical perspective on non-church workplaces. Wherever possible, we collaborate with other faith-and-work organizations, churches, universities and seminaries to help equip workplace Christians for meaningful and fruitful work of every kind.'

Discerning the signs of *servant leadership*, that form of leadership which I argue is the hallmark of the communal institution, is addressed in **Stage 7(3)** (see diagram page 5) of the Kingdom at Work Project. An association which has worked long and hard to explore this form of leadership is:

MODEM [www.modem-uk.org]

MODEM describes itself as 'a national ecumenical Christian network, which encourages authentic dialogue between exponents of leadership, organisation, spirituality and ministry to aid the development of better disciples, community, society and world. (It) is a membership network made up of individuals and affiliated organisations. MODEM has an established track record of publishing substantial books in the areas of leadership, management and ministry. (It) also publishes journals for members, covering spirituality at work and the latest news, views and reviews. (It) runs occasional conferences and supports regional groups...'

Stage 8 Intervention within the workplace

Stage 8 of the project covers numerous *means of intervention* which could follow up the process of discernment in order to enable the workplace to manifest more fully the gifts of the kingdom community. Here I comment on only one such intervention, that of *dialogue*.

I believe that dialogue as a form of mission at work requires far more attention than it has so far received. It is a conversational competence which, like so many aspects of intervention, needs both the relevant skills and spiritual awareness. An outstanding contribution to the nature of dialogue in the context of the workplace has been made by Margaret Whipp, formerly on the staff of Ripon College, Cuddesdon, in an unpublished PhD thesis summarized below.

Speaking of faith at work: towards a Trinitarian hermeneutic
PhD thesis, University of Glasgow
Whipp, Margaret Jane (2008) [Available on line at - <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/194>]

This thesis presents a theological exploration of the problems and potentialities of speaking about Christian faith in the context of working life. It is based on a qualitative investigation of the experience of Christians working in secular institutions. The argument is that the discursive interface between work and worship raises critical questions of identity, of power and of language which challenge the integrity of Christian discipleship. The practice of articulating faith-talk in the working context is analyzed in the light of a Trinitarian hermeneutic.

The thesis addresses the practical theological question: How may a Christian speak adequately and appropriately of their faith at work? This question is explored through an integration of qualitative-representational analysis and theological-evaluative critique. An ethnographic method is developed, based on extended immersion in the field of secular work, and focused in a series of research conversations and reflective meetings.

Analyzed from the perspective of a Christian woman who has struggled and continues to struggle to forge an adequate and contextual articulation of faith in workplace settings, the problematic is described through the metaphor of 'a life in two languages'. A faithful resolution of the problem is approached through the contextual discovery of three Trinitarian practices: of engagement, fluency and communion.

The thesis makes a contribution to academic knowledge in the practical theology of working life. By addressing the communicative dimension of working life, and exploring the experience of Christians in the workplace using the resources of cultural theory and discourse analysis, the thesis presents a contemporary and practical perspective on work. In a field which attracts a large volume of popular and motivational writing, the study contributes a sustained and critical reflection and offers a creative map for interpreting the challenge of Christian witness at work in the light of a Trinitarian understanding of faithful practice.

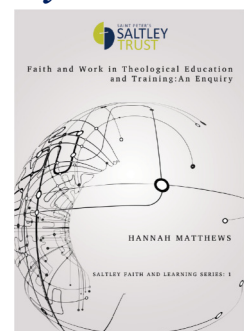
Stage 9 Education for mission in the workplace and the role of the mentor

Stage 9 of the project critically reviews a range of courses intended to equip Christians for mission at work. One major omission is noted - that of theological colleges giving little or no attention to mission in the world of work, and thereby offering minimal training to enable future church leaders to equip their members for ministry in the workplace. This omission has been recently documented by the research project described below.

Faith & Work in Theological Education and Training: An Enquiry ***Hannah Matthews***

St Peter's Saltley Trust - Faith and Learning
Series: 1 (2013)

If clergy, readers and local preachers can play an important role in encouraging congregations to reflect on faith and work, what are the implications for the way we train people for authorised ministry? What place does reflection on faith and work have in existing theological education and training? And how might this be done better? Based on



interviews with those involved in selection, training and theological education in the mainstream historic denominations (particularly the Church of England), this report aims to provide an insight into the understanding of faith and work in theological education and training, and interviewees' perceptions of the theological, cultural and systemic factors surrounding it.

Regarding selection for licensed ministry, interviewees identified both strengths and weaknesses. Current selection criteria were widely seen as permitting (though not necessarily demanding) exploration of a candidate's attitude to faith and work. However some frustration was expressed that unless such questions were followed up in initial training, the ability to connect faith and work could unintentionally remain simply 'an entry requirement'. Within initial training, interviewees identified some course units or modules which permitted exploration of faith and work issues. Growing attention to contextual theologies and the broadening of placement opportunities was seen as beneficial. However, opportunities to explore the theology and practice of work head-on (for example, in dedicated modules or as a theme within course units) were comparatively uncommon. Moreover, it appears that in both initial and continuing ministerial development, more attention is currently given to helping individual clergy, readers and local preachers reflect on faith, life and work issues within their own experience, rather than on teaching church leaders to help others to make these connections for themselves.

Regarding the barriers preventing the effective exploration of faith and work within church life, interviewees highlighted a number of factors. These included competition from other priorities, the disproportionate number of retired people in many mainstream congregations, a lack of confidence amongst clergy to explore work issues outside the ecclesiastical sphere (something exacerbated by a historic assumption that clergy should be omni-competent 'experts'). A tendency to think of mission primarily in terms of growing congregations and engaging with the spheres of home, neighbourhood and leisure time rather than workplaces was also cited as a factor. Interviewees also noted a tendency to assume a 'hierarchy' of work, with church work, educational and caring professions at the top of the pyramid and business and commerce at the bottom. Interviewees also noted a historic tendency to split life into 'sacred' and 'secular' spheres and for the church to be regarded as a place of retreat from everyday concerns. Underlying all of these concerns, some interviewees noted a lack of deeper exploration of/reflection upon existing theologies of creation and of work within creation.

Regarding how to improve engagement with faith and work issues within theological education and training, interviewees found it more difficult to offer suggestions. Respondents were divided over whether new resources and materials were needed – indeed, many admitted they were unfamiliar with what already existed. Several noted the potential value of pooling material and resources (for example, through online hubs) to enable easier access.



To purchase the full report, which includes extensive quotation from interviews plus recommendations based on the research findings, contact Lin Brown (0121) 427 6800 / bursar@saltleytrust.org.uk. Cost: £4 (pdf) or £7 (hard copy).

St Peter's Saltley Trust is a West Midlands-based charity initiating and supporting creative projects in Christian learning, discipleship and theological education, the churches' work in further education, and religious education in schools [www.saltleytrust.org.uk].

If Christians are to be adequately equipped for mission within the workplace then *mentoring* becomes a necessity. 'Mentoring' has a large literature informing it, though its precise definition is still disputed. Suffice it to say here that I see it as a role typified by enabling and educating. However, it is a role that needs professional skills to which the church and, as noted above, theological colleges have so far given minimal attention. An initiative which is taking the importance of this role to heart is being pioneered by *Carole Milligan*, a Coaching Academy Licenced Trainer. She has called it:



Carole writes: 'Kingscompass is a coaching practice with a mission to help Christians develop their influence and impact in the world through coaching and coach training. We offer:

Executive coaching

A faith sensitive approach to confidential one-to-one conversation of particular value during periods of change and transition.

Leadership Development

Programmes for Christian leaders in corporate or other settings that build high performing teams and great places to work - whether secular or faith based.

Coach Training

Equipping Christians from all walks of life and in all contexts with a faith centred approach to enabling others. Bring one of our programmes to your church or organisation.'

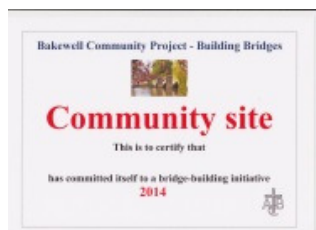
Carole Milligan can be contacted on 01564 336 325. Email - enquiries@kingscompasscoach.com
More information on - www.kingscompasscoach.com

Stage 10 Responsibilities of the gathered church for mission at work

What local churches can do to support their members engaged in the world of work has been fully documented in **Stage 10** of the full draft of the project, and in the project *Handbook*. However, the Bakewell Community Project, which appears as a case-study of an association of local churches engaged with the whole life of that town, continues to develop apace.

The Bakewell Community Project - Building Bridges

In this project, over a hundred organizations (including many businesses) have made a pledge, as Community Sites, to enhance the life of Bakewell as a community. The project is continuing throughout 2014.



A new development is that the hundred pledges made by Community Sites have now been grouped under 'ten visions' for Bakewell. Participants commit themselves to try to implement one of these during 2014. (Further details from me - david@clark58.eclipse.co.uk)

The visions for 2014 are as follows (note the first in particular):

The great workplace! Businesses as community builders
All matter - each counts! Caring for those 'on the edge'
Getting together! Harnessing the power of gathering
Life begins at 80! Enriching life for those in our residential homes
Learning for living! Pursuing a life-long journey of discovery
Arts for all! Engaging every generation
Going Green! Maintaining a sustainable and beautiful planet
Working together! Hands across the town
In the know! Keeping everyone in touch
A just world! Meeting the needs of the poorest

Stage 11 Chaplains and minsters in secular employment as mentors

In the full-draft of the project, I discuss the extent to which *chaplains and ministers in secular employment* might be in a position to take on the role of mentor discussed in **Stage 9**. It is interesting to note that despite the decline of the model of chaplaincy typical of industrial mission, part-time and voluntary chaplaincies within other aspects of the economy are finding many recruits. One initiative promoting this recent development is:

Chaplaincy Everywhere

[www.methodist.org.uk/mission/chaplains]

**CHAPLAINCY
EVERYWHERE**



Jonathan Green, Chaplaincy Development
Project Officer, writes:

'The Chaplaincy Development Project is an initiative of the Methodist Church of Great Britain which has a vision to see *Chaplaincy Everywhere*. Chaplains are guests in other places – beyond our church buildings – offering space and time for conversation and pastoral care. Though chaplains would never claim to be the only representative of the church in the workplace - though sometimes they might be - chaplains can offer a different kind of presence and play a complementary role to other Christians in an organisation.

The project works with members of local churches across all denominations to identify opportunities to inhabit spaces in the community. Those places might include visiting the staff cafe of the local Asda for two hours a week, being available at the training sessions of the local sports team or taking time to visit the strip of 20 shops in your local town on a regular basis on behalf of the local churches. Whatever the context might be, chaplains can make a lasting difference.

There are lots of resources to guide you to develop lay chaplaincy teams which are freely available at www.opensourcechaplaincy.org.uk.'

Contact **Jonathan Green**, Chaplaincy Development Officer of the Methodist Connexional Team at jon.green@methodistchurch.org.uk to find out more.

Jonathan and I met recently and talked about the *Chaplaincy Everywhere* project. I have his permission to report that, though I warmly welcome the concern demonstrated by the project for greater engagement by the church with the world of work, I expressed my hope that chaplains (and ministers in secular employment) would begin to take much more seriously what they have to offer as mentors to church members often facing immense challenges to living out their faith at work. I argued (and do so in this stage of the Kingdom at Work

Project) that most chaplaincy courses are neglecting to equip chaplains to undertake (as at least part of their responsibilities) a mentoring role which could equip lay people in employment for their ministry in the workplace. Whilst this apparent devaluing of the laity as the church's *primary* resource for mission at work continues, the task of the communal transformation of the workplace is made all the more difficult. Jonathan agreed that training chaplains and ministers in secular employment as mentors to lay people in employment should come far higher up the church's agenda.

Stage 12 Reflection and review

This stage simply underlines that fact the Kingdom at Work Project will always remain a work in progress. Thus **Stage 12** prepares the way for revisiting other stages of the project as and when necessary.

Other initiatives and resources

The initiatives and resources to which attention has been drawn in this bulletin are only a selection of endeavours by numerous individuals and agencies in the UK to facilitate the engagement of Christians and Christian faith with the world of work. The inclusion of these initiatives is not meant in any way to devalue what else is happening. However, I have tried to include ventures which seem to be breaking new ground and, in the process, addressing the range of matters that need to inform a holistic approach to mission in the working world. The purpose of this bulletin is not to offer a comprehensive overview of what is going on but to pin-point those agencies, associations and individuals making an innovative contribution to furthering the coming of the kingdom at work as envisioned by the Kingdom at Work Project

I add below details of one other initiative, outside the UK. This is because Alistair Mackenzie has been deeply committed to this aspect of mission for many years and a person from whom I have learnt a great deal.

Faith at Work (NZ) [www.faithatwork.org.nz]



Faith at Work (NZ) aims to help encourage and resource Christians to live out their faith at work. It promotes books, articles, video material, links and research papers related to the theology of work and vocation, career and life planning, everyday spirituality, ethics for the marketplace, and the

everyday ministry of the laity. These resources all seek to explore and enrich the sense of connection between God's work and human work. Alistair Mackenzie who heads up this ministry is particularly concerned to see churches playing a fuller role in this resourcing. His masters thesis and other research papers related to this are available free on the above website.

**Contact for any matters relating to this bulletin -
Deacon Dr David Clark at Hill View, Burton Close Drive, Bakewell DE45 1BG
(01629 810172 or david@clark58.eclipse.co.uk)**