

Introduction

As I set out to write this book, it is important to state why I'm doing it, particularly when there are so many books about chaplaincy already written; why another one? Many of the books written to date are either a brief survey of different types of chaplaincy, or they tend to be mainly about healthcare chaplaincy. In writing about my particular chaplaincy expertise in the workplace I believe that I have something new and unique to say.

In writing this book I will argue that far from disappearing from our society, faith and religion are still very much present and an important part of many people's lives, as well as active in the public arena. This has been my experience, having spent a number of years working as a chaplain within the financial and professional services industry. During this time, I have become aware of an increasing open generosity towards religion and belief and the distinctive role chaplaincy can play in the workplace. It is my hope that business leaders as well as leaders of faith communities will read this book, and that it might also prove useful for anyone, whether they have a faith or not.

Chaplaincy, in particular multifaith chaplaincy, is well established within hospitals, prisons and universities, all of which have their own models. Following the decline of the manufacturing industry in the UK (known as Industrial Mission), had all but disappeared. However, in recent years, this trend has been reversed and more and more chaplains

can be found in different workplace contexts. Chaplaincy is now found within retail malls, city centres, airports and other places of work. However, the majority of workplace chaplaincy initiatives have come from the Christian churches and are being undertaken mostly by volunteers.

For me, it is important to tell the Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy story, because it is unique in being multifaith from the outset, working with global companies in East London and operating within the bounds of a private business park. Through it being multifaith, my colleagues and I have discovered that it has enabled us to speak openly and with integrity about faith and how it can positively impact the workplace and contribute to the wellbeing of employees and their behaviour.

Within this book I describe how I developed the model for multifaith chaplaincy within Canary Wharf; how it relates to and supports global businesses; why the businesses need chaplaincy; and why a multifaith chaplaincy is able to make a greater impact and contribution than a solely Christian one.

In establishing the chaplaincy it was important to understand from the beginning the context and challenges companies and employees face. So in Chapter 1, I describe some of the issues we encountered, such as living within a fast and changing world, where technology is evolving constantly, continuing to change the way business operates. Economic activity is global and other new economies are beginning to emerge and contribute to the global economy. This has implications for the workforce, which is becoming more diverse in terms of nationality, cultures and faith. It would be hard to write a book telling the story of setting up a chaplaincy for the business community – in my particular context for the financial and professional service industries – without mention of the contributing factors of the global financial crisis. Surprisingly, this created a number of positive opportunities for the fledgling chaplaincy.

Chapter 2 tells the story of the evolving chaplaincy, its challenges and opportunities. It explores how faith is becoming more prominent in the public arena and in the life of companies, particularly around enshrining religion within UK employment law and as a strand of the diversity and inclusion agenda of many organizations. The establishing of the chaplaincy was a long-term project dependant on building strong relationships with the companies through getting to know individuals. At the same time, it was a process of patiently helping companies to understand that they could no longer just have a nodding acquaintance with faith in the workplace in terms of ensuring that people of faith were not discriminated against, and that faith can no longer be ignored or side-lined and could have a positive influence on the working environment.

As I mentioned earlier, the majority of workplace chaplaincy initiatives have come from the Christian churches, within both the UK and the USA. However, in my experience the reason the chaplaincy in Canary Wharf has become firmly embedded is that it is truly multifaith. In Chapter 3, I explore why building a multifaith team is important, given that we live in a globalized world where 80 per cent of the population adhere to a religion and there is much movement of the workforce between countries and indeed continents which has an impact on employees' expectations within the workplace.

Another important factor is that as companies seek to set up office bases outside Europe, often they find themselves in a country that is overtly religious and they have to learn to navigate the challenges that this presents. I explore also the added value that multifaith chaplaincy can bring to the workplace, with reflections from both my Muslim and Jewish colleagues. Finally, I comment on the role of the established Church of England, the opportunities it presents in facilitating and supporting people of all faiths and its contribution in helping to shape the work and ethos of chaplaincy.

As a multifaith chaplaincy team we are committed to offer assistance in promoting the role and value of wisdom from a faith perspective, as it helps to bring a more integrated approach and give a wider context to values and ethics. One of the consequences of the global financial crisis was that global banks had to change and improve their internal cultures and ensure that the right values and ethics were embedded throughout their organizations. This was driven by the regulators and the need to restore public trust. It provided an ideal opportunity to engage with the companies and have conversations around drawing on wisdom, which has a long tradition within many world faiths. In Chapter 4, I recount some of the challenges, issues and ideas around the role of wisdom alongside ethics, values and culture and how we can help people make the best decision possible when the issue is not black and white (as is the case with the majority of business decisions).

There is much anxiety around allowing religion within the workplace, and in Chapter 5 I explore the main concerns. The biggest concern is around the issues of proselytizing, as both Christianity and Islam are concerned with making converts. I explore a wider definition of mission within faith and how fruitful conversations within and between religions can be possible, within a framework of hospitality and embassy. Often there is much misunderstanding about religion, or even between religions, and so mature and adult discussions are important in learning to respect and value each other, as well as living comfortably with differences of opinions.

In Chapter 6, I explore why faith communities need to support chaplains and why chaplains need the support and encouragement of their faith communities. How can chaplains act as translators of the world to their particular faith communities and how can their faith communities inform their theology and work as a chaplain?

And finally in the Conclusion, I follow the principle of open questions, offering some themes and topics either for

individual or group exploration from the perspective of different faiths. I suggest themes that are related to work and the economy and how we might equip people of faith within the workplace to have a more informed understanding.

I have tried to write a helpful account of the establishing and work of the Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy and the increasing role that faith plays within public life, which I hope will be read by both business and faith leaders. I am aware that as a Christian chaplain and as a Church of England priest, much of what I have reflected on and shared has been through the Christian lens, but I hope that I have given enough material to enable food for thought for the intended wider audience.