



He is Risen

“Christ has died - Christ is risen” is a refrain that has not only been recited by congregations across the world in recent days, but one that embodies this season of Easter. It connects us of course with those faith-defining events that are recorded in the narratives of the Gospels, but is also the foundation on which we are called to engage in our contemporary society. The image of a Daffodil breaking through the dark ground, puncturing the grey landscape with the first golden tints of a new season of life, reminds us that this same narrative of death and resurrection is stamped into the very landscape of our planet.

The resurrection stories not only impress upon us the historic reality of the events they recount, but the challenge and struggle of the first disciples to define and live their own lives in the wake of what had seen and experienced. Those stories lead us to many places, including a lake shore where Peter and other colleagues had returned to the safety and familiarity of their workplace. It is here that Jesus finds them, just as he did some years earlier, and from here that Peter is commissioned to be a shepherd to God’s people.

It is easy to latch on to stories like this as a rejection of the world of work. Is this not Jesus, for the second time, calling Peter to leave behind the tools of his trade and walk a different pathway? For Peter that may have been true, but for many other followers of Jesus, work is part and parcel of our call to discipleship. It was through the ministry of a seamstress called Tabitha, that Peter found himself at the house of a tanner where he received a missionary call to cross traditional cultural boundaries and embrace a Gentile community of believers. It was his posting as a Roman Centurion that had led the leader of that particular congregation to the place where this would become possible. God was to be found in the seams and stiches of a generous dressmaker, the stench of a tannery and the barrack house of an army of occupation. In these most diverse of places, the events of Easter morning were being re-lived and re-embraced in the midst of everyday life.

For those who are open to the possibility, work can be the means through which we engage in the mission of God. Yet as recent events and scandals remind us, it can also be the means of abuse, exploitation and immoral gain. As we engage in our own, and the workplaces of others, the refrain with which we began needs not to be contained within the sanctuaries and liturgies of our churches, but define the values and purpose our every commercial enterprise and activity we encounter and engage in - “Christ has died - Christ is risen”.

Phil Jump - Chair