

*The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
And the Word became flesh
and lived among us.*



One of my day jobs
is Chaplain at Bluewater.

One of my responsibilities there
is to manage
the 'Place of Quiet'.

It's the only place
in the whole mall
that *is* quiet.

Everywhere else,
piped music
serenades guests
as they shop,
and they dine,
and they powder their noses.

Even in the bowels,
back of house,
music accompanies
the unloading of pallets,
the pushing of cages,
the smoking of fags.

Only in the 'Place of Quiet'
can you actually
hear yourself think.

And as chaplains,
in practical ways,
humanly down-to-earth ways,
the team 'flesh out'
that 'Place of Quiet':
becoming 'places of quiet'
out on the mall,
as we are who we are,
and do what we do.

Maybe Jesus
is God
hearing Godself think.

Maybe Jesus
is God
fleshing Godself out.

*The Word -
through whom the world
came into being -
was in the world.
Yet the world did not listen.*

The Bluewater chaplaincy team,
and other workplace chaplains,
across Kent,
and the world over,
are a pretty eclectic bunch.

But one of the things we *all* do -
all we really do -
is make time and space
for people to talk,
time and space
to listen.

It can be hard to talk
about things we struggle with,
things we don't understand,
things we can't put into words.

We might be
embarrassed,
anxious,
or afraid.

We might tell ourselves
people are too busy to listen,
too busy to care.

Sometimes
it might even be impossible
just to get a word in edgeways.
Even if we wanted to.

Maybe Jesus
is God
making time and space.

Maybe Jesus
is God
getting a word in edgeways.

*So God came
to what was God's own,
and even God's own children
did not make God welcome.*

Wherever we are,
workplace chaplains are
invited
to be there:

to produce
nothing but openness;
to sell
no-one short;
to buy
nothing but time;
to pay
nothing but attention;

just to be there:
open-eyed and -eared,
open-hearted and -minded
to what others might not be.

Maybe Jesus
is God
being here and now.

Maybe Jesus
is God
inviting us to be open:

to the Word of God's calling,
to the light of God's coming -
God longing to be heard,
God longing to be noticed -
wherever we are,
wherever God is.