



WORKTALK WEEKLY

13 FEBRUARY 2009

**This WORKTALKweekly is written by Maria Shattock wife of our Founder. It is the first guest written edition. It is being broadcast on a Friday so that those in the education system who may be away next week can read it before they leave.**

### **Keep Looking Down**

I go to school every day. And mostly I love it. Of course, it is a far cry from those days, over four decades ago, when I started my own formal education. Then, my teachers stood in front of the blackboard, on a raised platform, and told me what I should learn. Classroom behaviour under strict control, teachers were free to dictate and were, most certainly, in charge. Bombarded with a great deal of information, some of it like seed falling on hard, rock-strewn and weedy soil my young mind, curious, inquisitive and very lively, grew to learn by rote and rarely felt like fertile ground. I was a Christian, even then, and to be honest Sunday school, and later church, was not much different in style.

Some twenty years after leaving school, I found myself back. Charged with running one of the learning support departments, my main aim was to be and do the best I could by taking my faith to work (along with some useful knowledge and skills). I was in for quite a shock! Gone were the blackboards and chalk, neat rows of wooden desks and teachers dispensing knowledge from on high. New teaching methods, technologies and styles of communication have transformed the teaching and learning process.

And, frankly, it was just as difficult to see God in all of this as it was in the old days.

Couple that with the challenges of working in an inner-city school and an education system still not making much room for God then the picture becomes even clearer. I determined, however, that I would try to make room. A deep desire to see God at work, a deep conviction that He could use me and a deep longing to witness His kingdom come, surely that would do the trick?

You may or may not work in the education business. But your experiences will not be that different. Imagine your workplace forty years ago and look around now. A total transformation will have taken place. It is quite likely, however, that it is just as difficult to see God in your organisation now as it was for a Christian colleague long retired. Your line of business is unlikely to have its focus higher than the bottom line, and so you face the same challenge to be salt and light, to stop the rot and arrest the darkness.

And the good news is that you and I do it, day in and day out. We do our best and it works and we know it even when we mess up. When I let go of the creative presence of the Father, the redeeming love of the Son and the transforming power of the Spirit, the truth of working spiritually becomes self-evident-something to do with strength showing through weakness. This is not an optional extra, or something I must do in order to be a good witness at work. This is how God made us and how we must work.

But this is not the whole story. It's not just about looking back. God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. May I invite you also to look down? What do you see? A fallen world in desperate need of Christ. True. Principalities and powers manifested in oppressive structures, exploitative relationships and damaging behaviours. True. And our calling, as Christians, to tell the truth, show the way, demonstrate the life. True. Us versus them? Please keep looking down. What do you see?

In my line of work, I see a revolution - learning is now life-long, dynamic and personalised.

Students are encouraged to see their education as much more than the piece of paper describing their academic qualifications. The dynamic comes because the principal learner is the teacher. And the personal has to do with starting where the students are and taking them where their gifts and talents lead. In my school we live and breathe this stuff. And it works. In a social and economic context where the odds are stacked against them, our students achieve well above the national average. Keep looking down. What do you see?

I see Jesus, the Jewish Rabbi, the Son of God. He makes life-long disciples, constantly learning from His heavenly Father and starts where we are. So, when I go to work every day, I take my faith with me, but I also encounter the kingdom. A revolution at work. As you look down from your Heavenly seat, look out for the Kingdom in your organisation - in its ethos, in its structures, in its activity. The truth is not 'us versus them'- God is at work. In you, through you and around you.

Keep looking down.

Work Well

Maria Shattock

© Maria Shattock Feb 2009. Gently edited by an unknown editor in time for 2-14-09.

## **BIBLE SECTION**

### **Ephesians 2:6-10**

6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

All WORKTALKweekly archives are for personal use only. For permission to use for any other purposes please email using the address below thank you.

**WORKTALK, 56 Baldry Gardens, London SW16 3DJ**

**T: +44 (0)20 8764 8080**

<http://www.worktalk.gs>

[comms@worktalk.gs](mailto:comms@worktalk.gs)