William Leech Research Fund

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Human Resources?

Recognising the Personhood of Workers in the Charity and Public Sectors

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The hand-drawn illustrations used through this document are extracts from visual timelines created by research participants interviewed for this report. People's names have been changed throughout. Pictures of individuals aren't necessary representative.

Introduction:
Why do we work?

What does it look like to be treated as a proper human being at work? This report offers answers to that question, and to begin it I would like to introduce three people:

...The teacher...

In the early 2000s secondary school teacher Sarah was given additional money to work with ten teenage boys whose behaviour had caused them to be taken out of lessons and who were at risk of exclusion from school. Realising they could source cheap flights within the budget, she decided to take them to Barcelona. The kids had never been on a plane before. At the airport, the beepers went off at the security check, and Sarah thought, "oh no, they've got a knife." But it turned out they had brought knives and forks with them because they didn't know whether there would be cutlery in Spain! At the start of the trip one of the teachers had her handbag snatched, and after that the kids became really protective of the staff. This led to real bonding, a bonding that continued as teachers and students cooked and ate and lived together in the apartment they had rented. The students were taken to the type of places they had never been before, like the Gaudi Museum and the Nou Camp football stadium. They went out for a meal in a tapas restaurant – they'd never been to restaurants, only eaten out in places like MacDonalds, Sarah said. Upon their return the students made a presentation about their trip to hundreds of people at a business park, which was a significant boost to their self-esteem and confidence. The whole experience led to a marked change in their behaviour; and they were re-integrated into mainstream classroom education. None of them were excluded, whereas previously they had all been at risk of permanent exclusion. Sarah describes this as "definitely one of the highlights of my career," and as a significant humanity-affirming moment.

...the church leader...

Andrew is a church leader in a deprived part of Newcastle. He is active in his parish, playing a key role in a range of community organisations. During his tenure the work of the church has grown considerably amongst local children and youth, in part through his close involvement with the neighbourhood school. He hasn't always done this job. Previously working at the intersection of the public-private sector, he and his wife took a combined annual salary loss of around £150,000 for him to enter seminary. He calculated that when he left his previous job he was earning around £100 an hour, but now doesn't even get the minimum wage. When asked about how he experienced a call to ministry he replied, "Oh, God wouldn't go away until I did it! It wasn't necessarily what I wanted, it was something that just wouldn't go away."

> I wanted to help people and it was interesting
>
> **Jasmine, on desire to be an academic in a medical school.**

... and the academic.

University lecturer Simon can clearly remember the "pivotal" moment that precipitated a dramatic career change from management consultancy to academia. Over a drink with colleagues after a day's work, he began reflecting on how he thought the Private Finance Initiative-funded hospital and prison projects on which they were working were a good deal for business, a good deal for management consultants, a good deal for the government, but a bad deal for the citizen. This discussion led him to quit his job and enter academia to research, write about and teach students ethics and business. He took "a significant pay cut" to do this, and said that many years on "I am still earning considerably less than I was in my previous role." But he did this because he believes that there is "something important to be said, and it's interesting." He takes satisfaction from it, regarding it as "important for the world – it is nice to feel you are changing the way people think."

> seeing what school has done in my life... as I grew up, I wanted to be part of that in other people's lives
>
> **Ariana, schoolteacher.**

As these examples show, teachers, academics and church leaders commonly see work not simply as a 'job' (to make a living) or a 'career' (with an expectation of linear 'advancement' in recognition, responsibility and remuneration, in relation to other people), but also as a *vocation* or *calling*. Psychologist Daniel Pink in his influential 2009 book *Drive: the Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us*, argues that much of mainstream management common-sense doesn't work for people, like these, who are intrinsically motivated.

This report asks: what does it mean to manage or treat people well in what is termed this 'vocational sector'? What does it look like to treat them as proper human beings? Its purpose is to help us all understand what we can do to foster the development of life-enhancing workplaces that respect our humanity.

Whilst focussed on these three occupations, it will have direct relevance to people in other public sector, educational and charity employment, and relevance to any workplace.

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Key findings and recommendations

What does it look like to be treated as a proper human being at work?

This report offers an answer to this important question. Its purpose is to help us all understand what we can do to foster the development of life-enhancing workplaces that respect our humanity.

Although informed by debates in management studies and theology, the answer it offers is derived primarily from 52 in-depth interviews conducted with teachers, university lecturers and church leaders in 2018-19. They were asked to narrate the stories of their working careers, and highlight moments they experienced work as particularly humanising or dehumanising.

From these interviews, eight themes emerged as important: trusting staff by giving them freedom to work and innovate based on their intrinsic motivation; the ability to make a difference; mediating audit cultures in ways that respect the dignity of staff; being listened to; 'the magic power of human sympathy'; the quality of working relationships; the existence of communities of care; and contractual affirmation (employment conditions).

Get these right, and the workplace is more likely to be experienced as humanity-affirming and life-enhancing. Get them wrong, and it will be dehumanising and toxic. This report is written to help workplaces get it right.

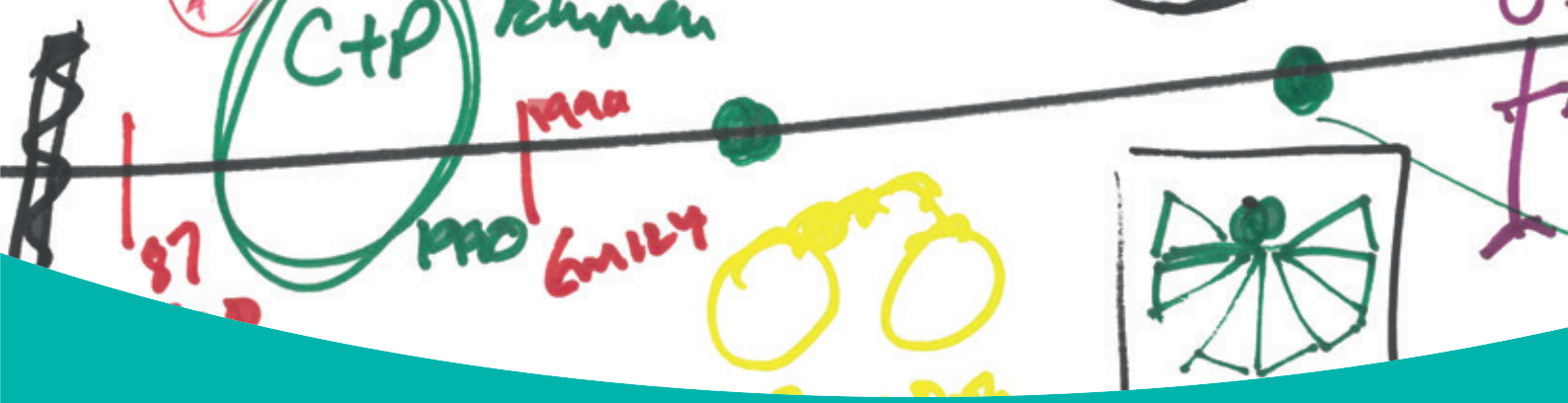
RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

Although there are some specific recommendations offered to churches, schools and universities (see conclusion), this report isn't a 'how-to' manual. Rather, it foregrounds the experiences of real people. Some of the experiences relayed are horrendous. Some are inspiring. Many are mundane. But what they all do is invite us to reflect on our workplaces and, perhaps more challengingly, our own practices in them. So the 'recommendations' are:

Managers: read this report and ask, 'do your HR practices recognise and respect the humanity of your staff?' Ask your staff the same question.

Groups of colleagues (in staff meetings, CPD sessions etc) **or church congregations:** read this report and ask, 'are we creating humanity-affirming or dehumanising workplaces?'

Individuals: read this report and ask, 'do my actions each day make my workplace more humanity-affirming, or are people dehumanised because of me?'



Part 1: Questions, and how to answer them

Human Resource?..

Sarah, Andrew and Simon, whom we met at the start, are obviously human beings. But what do we mean when we say they are 'human'?

In the modern workplace they might be considered as 'human resources,' and we may take for granted the existence of an 'HR' department. However although it has older foundations (see boxes, next page), Human Resource Management (HRM) was a controversial idea that rose to prominence only in the 1980s as 'HR' increasingly replaced 'personnel' or 'industrial relations' units. Some commentators dismissed it as a fad of Reagan-Thatcher era economics. But far from vanishing, it has spread not only worldwide in business, but also into the public sector, charities and even some churches.

HRM encompasses personnel issues such as recruitment, payroll, sick-leave, and disciplinary procedures, but goes beyond this in seeking to align individual working practices to an institution's 'vision' or 'strategic objectives' set by managers in the belief that this will enhance performance. As Karen LEgge (2005) argues, HRM models "emphasise the management of the organisation's culture as the central activity for senior management."

Advocates contend that HRM improves competitive performance and affirms the worth of employees by treating them as valuable 'resources' that require development and care. Critics claim there is no convincing evidential base showing that HRM improves performance, and worry instead that it devalues workers because 'resources' implies they are 'things,' 'commodities,' a means to an end.

HRM PRECURSORS#1:
Frederick Taylor, 1856-1915

Industrialist and pioneer management consultant, his 1911 book *The Principles of Scientific Management* argued that just as 'national resources' like forests and rivers are managed, so workers need to be managed scientifically.

HRM PRECURSORS#2:
Elton Mayo, 1880-1949

Harvard Professor who believed that industrial disputes or workplace unhappiness were caused by irrational impulses that could be uncovered and resolved by sympathetic counselling interviews. This is the origin of the 'annual review' common under HRM.

HRM PRECURSORS#3:
Mason Haire, 1910-1988

Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor who wrote that in order to challenge the power of trade unions companies needed to ditch older approaches to personnel management and adopt "more powerful techniques for managing human resources."

… or 'Image of God?

'Theological anthropology' is the academic discipline exploring from a theological perspective the question about what it means to be human. It offers a very different conception of the human to that of the 'resource' in HRM.

People first appear in the Bible's creation narrative at the end of the first chapter of Genesis:

> So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
>
> **(Genesis 1: 27, New International Version)**

This idea that humans are created *imago Dei*, in the image of God, has been very important in Christian theology. The Bible doesn't explain in detail what it means, so scholars have interpreted it in different ways. Some have argued it refers to **capacities** or **attributes** such as reason, transcendence, creativity, or moral judgment. Others suggest it is primarily about how we **relate** to other people. Another tradition sees the image as being **functional**, that is, stewards of creation.

What these conversations generally lack is a discussion of *ethics*. This is something that the African-American theological tradition certainly does not miss.

For example, Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), the former slave who became a leader of the anti-slavery movement and who formed a close bond with Christian activists in Newcastle, insisted in his 1850 essay '*The nature of slavery*' that "The slave is a man, 'the image of God.'" For Douglass, this was what made slavery so abominable, because:

> **"It is *such* a being that is smitten and blasted. The first work of slavery is to mar and deface those characteristics of its victims which distinguish men from things, and persons from property. Its first aim is to destroy all sense of high moral and religious responsibility. It reduces man to a mere machine."**

In the same tradition James Cone (1938-2018) wrote in his germinal 1969 book *Black Theology and Black Power* that "The crucial question, then, for the black man is, "How should I respond to a world which defines me as a nonperson?" Cone's answer was to translate the *imago Dei* into ethical-political action:

> **"To be for God by responding creatively to the *imago Dei* means that man cannot allow others to make him an It. It is this fact that makes black rebellion human and religious. When black people affirm their freedom in God, they know that they cannot obey laws of oppression."**

The African-American tradition of theological anthropology helps us think about the workplace by insisting that we can't think about 'Human Resource Management' without thinking ethically and politically about 'the human' who is being managed as a resource.

Martin Luther King – the dignity of "somebodyness"

> Every human being has etched in his personality the indelible stamp of the Creator
>
> **Martin Luther King Jr, 1965**

Arguably the clearest exposition of the tradition of exploring the ethical implications of *imago Dei* is provided by Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. King visited Newcastle University in 1967 to receive an honorary doctorate. In his acceptance speech, he identified "great and grave problems that pervade our world" – racism, poverty, and war.

But *why* did King devote his life to opposing racism, poverty, and war? Not because that's what civilised, cultured, decent people do, but because he believed people were made in God's image and this had ethical implications. According to Richard Wills, *imago Dei* was the core concept in King's life and work.

For example, on July 6th, 1965, King was invited to address a congress of the predominantly white United Church of Christ in Chicago on the topic 'Man in a revolutionary world.' He argued that segregation was wrong first and foremost because we are made in God's image: "The innate worth referred to in the phrase the image of God is universally shared in equal portions by all… Every man must be respected because God loves him." Segregation ignores this, King reasoned, distorting the way white southerners view African-Americans. They see them more as tools than humans, so their "only concern is performance not wellbeing." In contrast, King insisted:

"man is not a thing. He must be dealt with not as an "animated tool," but as a person sacred in himself. To do otherwise is to depersonalise the potential person and desecrate what he is. So long as the Negro or the member of any other oppressed group is treated as a means to an end; so long as he is seen as anything less than a person of sacred worth, the image of God is abused in him and consequently and proportionately lost by those who inflict the abuse"

Of course, no comparison can be drawn between the conditions of 1960s African-Americans and workers in modern British schools, universities and churches. But King's insistence that we ask whether people are treated as proper human beings with intrinsic dignity is important: tellingly, HRM textbooks or scholars rarely discuss what the 'human' side of 'HRM' means, and many barely engage with issues of ethics.

Unlike the majority of theologians, King insists that reflecting on *what* it means to be made in God's image is inseparable from asking *how* people are being treated. This insight informs the approach used to research this report: not asking people 'what does it mean to you to be human?' in the abstract, but asking them the concrete question 'have you been treated as a proper human at work?'

Method

The research for this report aimed to find out how church leaders, academics and schoolteachers experience work as either humanising or dehumanising.

To do this, three methods were employed. First, institutional documents on HR / personnel / welfare strategies and procedures were collected. Second, formal interviews were conducted with eight people employed by churches, schools/Local Education Authorities, and universities, responsible for these procedures.

However, the main method was **visual timeline interviews** conducted with secondary teachers, academics, and church leaders in the Baptist and Anglican churches. Visual timeline analysis is a method develop by Angela Mazzetti (Newcastle University) and John Blenkinsopp (Northumbria University) to explore career trajectories retrospectively.

Interviewees were asked to tell the story of their working life by drawing a timeline, using visual metaphors as far as possible. They were requested to draw particular attention to how they came to be teachers, academics or ministers, and to subsequent high and low points. This was done using coloured pens on one or more sheets of A1 cartridge paper.

Following this, interviewees were then asked to mark on the timelines moments or periods when they felt treated in humanity-affirming or dehumanising ways, and to reflect on these. Finally, they were asked how schools, universities or churches could ensure they are treated in humanity affirming rather than dehumanising ways.

52 such interviews were conducted, each lasting between 1 ½ to 4 hours, the average length being 2 hours. Interviews were not audio recorded, allowing greater openness.

Recruitment

Interviewees were recruited randomly or by gatekeepers, and ranged in length of service from people who had worked five decades to those in their first year. Indexing the gender balance in these professions, the majority of schoolteachers interviewed were female, the majority of church leaders were male, and academic staff were more evenly split.

Most interviewees said they enjoyed the experience or found it valuable. Quite a number took photographs of their timelines at the end. "It's so interesting, I wouldn't think of doing this normally, wouldn't have time – everyone should get the chance to do it," said one academic, reflecting on many decades of work drawn out in front of him. Some people used it to consider their next steps in life: for example, a teacher emailed me afterwards saying "it made me think about why I'm not ambitious anymore and I decided that I should be and I've got two applications in as we speak. Fingers crossed!"

Analysis

Subsequent analysis for this report focussed on these moments marked by interviewees as humanising or dehumanising. I collated all experiences thus marked, and sought to identify the key themes which went on to structure part 2 of this report.

In repeating narratives presented to me, I am not endorsing them as accurate accounts of particular events nor of how certain institutions work overall. Rather I am interested in how individuals in these workplaces experience work in them as humanity-affirming or dehumanising. Respondents have been anonymised.

Why the North East?

> I feel as if I've had a counselling session - I feel like I should pay you twenty quid for this!
>
> **Gary, teacher**

All interviewees were conducted in the North East of England: from Teesside and Durham in the south to Northumberland in the North, with the majority being in Newcastle, Gateshead, and North and South Tyneside.

The findings and conclusions of this report have general relevance to the UK because churches, schools, universities and similar workplaces are found everywhere. But there are two specific reasons why they are of particular importance to the North East.

First, the North East is more dependent upon public sector employment that any other region in England. 20.2% of employees in the North East work in the public sector: the figure for the South East is only 15.1%, and for London it is 14.5%.

Second, a recent report by Newcastle University's Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies shows how the North East is relatively disadvantaged in many ways. It has the lowest life expectancy and regional GDP per capita of any region in England, the UK's lowest household aggregate wealth and the smallest increase in jobs 2007-2017, the highest proportion of jobs paid on the minimum wage, and the greatest economic vulnerability to recession in the UK.

Given this, education is crucial for our region, public sector employment matters greatly to us, and churches are increasingly stepping in to strengthen communities and provide social provision. Treating teachers, university lecturers and church leaders well is particularly important for this region.

> I've never done this before, never had the chance to talk so much about my life
>
> **Sheila, church leader**

Part 2: Findings: the eight habits of highly human workplaces

As explained in part 1, by listening to my 52 interviewees I identified eight characteristics of workplaces that they marked as humanising if present or dehumanising if absent, and these are considered here.

It should be noted that, unlike teachers and academics, church leaders are office holders and not employees, appointed by the bishop in the Anglican Church and by the congregation in the Baptist Church. For convenience sake, however, they are sometimes referred to as 'staff' or 'employees' in this report.

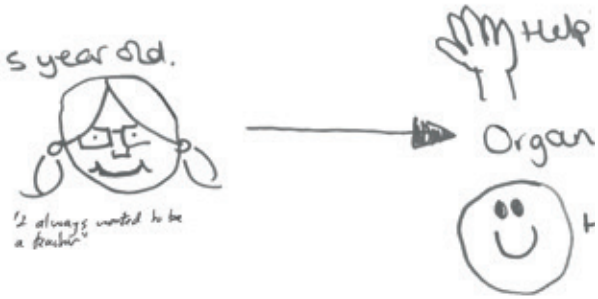
1: The ability to make a difference

As a teenager, Jessica was struggling at school while her mum and dad went through a divorce. Her form tutor, Sandy, carefully built a relationship of trust and support with her. When Jessica fell pregnant, in year 11 of school, the first adult she told was not her parents but Sandy. To Sandy this felt like a great privilege, and she worked hard to support Jessica and her family in life and in her studies. Jessica kept the baby, carried on her studies, and was subsequently able to establish a career in healthcare. A decade and a half on, that baby is now a pupil at the same school, and when Jessica comes for parents' evening she and Sandy hug each other.

This example illustrates that **the ability to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, communities and society at large was** one of the most frequently-identified humanity-affirming themes for teachers, ministers and academics alike

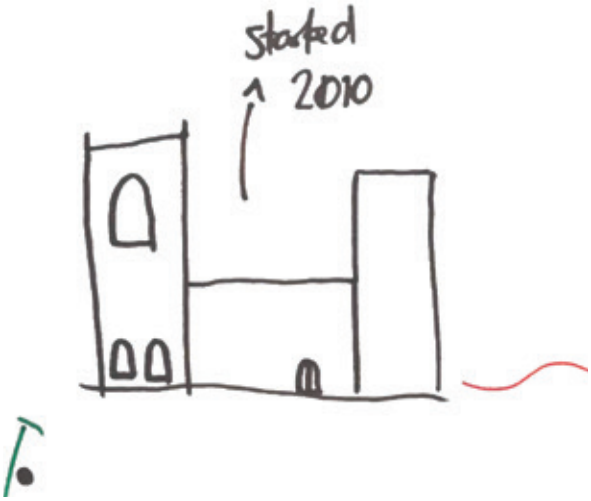
For example, Francis, a design teacher, spoke with pride about a former student who was now working as a Lego designer in Denmark, and who had said that this career success was in part because of the help that Francis had given him. Another teacher recalled a student, Kevin, a boy who was on the verge of exclusion in years 7 and 8 for "outrageous" behaviour, but they had kept him in the school and worked with him. The teacher recounted that "I remember at his prom, he hung back right until the end, after everyone had gone, and shook my hand for a whole minute, thanking me." Similarly Damien, a church leader, told me about his experiences with Vera, a women who was experiencing serious depression and had had a bad experience with a very controlling religious group. He met up with her for an hour and a half every fortnight over an 18 month period. He recounted that he found himself out of his depth initially, but "She came out of it a different person." He became very interested in mental-health work after this, studied the topic and eventually co-authored a book on it. "I feel affirmed by people whose lives are touched, and where relationships are formed," he concluded.

> "I love being with the kids, being able to effect change for the kids"
>
> **Aileen, teacher:**



As with teachers, many academics also drew my attention to evidence that they had been able to make a difference in students' lives. One academic recalled that an undergraduate, a mature student, wrote to her to thank her for her support. She had got a first class degree and said she wouldn't have done this without her help, and is now doing a PGCE: "so you have helped me secure my future and secure a better standard of living for my children." Being researchers as well as teachers, many academics note key humanity-affirming events as the ability to contribute creatively to society more broadly: the licensing of a new drug to treat cancer, the production of new art, the recognition of contributions made by the bestowing of a national award. Strikingly, Steven, a highly-successful fine arts academic did not identify promotions and similar recognition of career success as the key humanity-affirming moments, but rather giving major exhibitions and talks on his work: it is more about the production of art, the "here's my baby!" moments, and the collaborative experiences of producing that with others, he said.

Sometimes the ability to make personal and societal changes came together in powerfully-humanising experiences. Simone, an academic, spoke about how her research had led her to being involved in campaigning to help asylum seekers access education. "This is what makes me feel more complete", trying to "bring about change for people who have been marginalised," she explained. "It goes against everything that is corporate and horrible within the university" and "it gets me connected into the values that are part of me as an academic."



Respondents marked as dehumanising events or processses that prevented them from having impacts on people they were working with. Pete, a schoolteacher, had developed his school's work with excluded and marginalised kids, helping them develop broader thinking and employability skills, and was proud to have seen many of them overcome chaotic or otherwise difficult backgrounds to establish themselves as independent wage earners with their own stable families. In 2009, working with a national children's charity, they had set up a non-profit company to train kids in the renewable energy industry and were on the verge of setting up a pioneering schools-based apprenticeship scheme. Then in 2010, as he put it, "The Tories got elected and all our funding was cut overnight", so it didn't happen.

Similarly, Yannick, a church leader, spoke about how he and his wife developed a relationship with a homeless man, Mike, who was sleeping in a vehicle on their street. During the cold winter of 2010 they invited him to live with them. A lay leader in the church took him aside and said, 'what do you think you are doing, having a tramp in your house? This isn't what a minister should do.' Yannick found this dehumanising both of Mike, and of Yannick himself who saw his role as helping this man. "He didn't see Mike as a human being. It wasn't his caricature of what a minister should do," Yannick reflected, "But I think Jesus would do this."

The ability to make a difference was a recurring theme in reflection on what it means to be properly human at work.

2: Freedom-trust/autonomy

> I had ten years of doing what I wanted, helping the bereaved, doing some research – a wonderful time.

Thomas, Church leader

Damien described experiences of leading two churches, one in the north and the other in the midlands, before moving to the North East. In the north, he said that "an eldership cartel wanted to direct everything." He described an established leadership of two elected elders who overruled all his suggestions and ideas, such that "I was always in a minority of two-to-one." They dominated congregational life and prevented him from properly exercising his role, so that he had to leave. This he regarded as extremely dehumanising. In contrast, at a subsequent incumbency in the Midlands, the congregation gave him the freedom to take some risks and develop alternative forms of worship service around coffee tables, videos and discussion, which reached out to a demographic who had not previously engaged with the church.

Damien's contrasting examples demonstrate the single factor that was flagged most commonly and most strongly by church leaders, teachers and academics alike when asked to reflect on humanity-affirming or denying experiences of work: **freedom, autonomy and trust**.

This was marked most strongly amongst church leaders, who often have unparalleled leeway in choosing how they will spend their time in working with their congregation and other sections of local or wider communities. "At the moment I can do anything I like so long as I turn up on Sunday and takecommunion," as one vicar put it. He has chosen to devote particular energies into working with children and young people in his church and community and facilitating wider community life, as well as conducting part-time doctoral research on feminist readings of marginal figures in the Old Testament. He found this freedom extremely humanity-affirming, and regarded potential threats to it through standardised training programmes as alarming.

As with church leaders, for academics freedom and trust was often the lynchpin of their reflections on humanisation/dehumanisation. Indeed, 'academic freedom', or the autonomy to choose which topics to research and what to say about them, is a principle enshrined in university charters. Academics spoke in general terms of their pleasure at being able to use their time in ways they chose to pursue topics they thought were interesting and important. Thus Jasmine emphasised how humanising she found her "autonomy" in being able to choose to locate herself within a particular academic unit of the university, a certain research centre, a certain teaching sphere, and a hospitals trust: "I do have a line manager, but I'm pretty much allowed to do it my own way."

> Vicars are very autonomous,

church leader

> you're treated more like a professional here - If you do your job, they leave you to it. Because you are trusted, you put that little bit more effort in.
>
> **Bryony, teacher**

It was commonly the sense that being trusted to initiate changes to working practices and activities was identified as humanity-affirming. Andrea, an academic, described going to her head of department and asking for a reduction in administrative duties so she could take up the opportunity that had emerged of a placement in a public policy-making unit, a request that was granted – "we'll make room for it". "When the Head of School says, 'yes, go and do it, if it makes you happy', this is very affirming," Andrea relayed.

Andrea spoke about the freedom to "make room for my individual interests," such as setting up small reading groups to create networks of people to talk about her research with, as research interests change over time. This was humanity affirming, in contrast to the example of another academic who had set up a reading group that he enjoyed and found interesting. He said, however, that when a new head came into the unit, she made it quite clear that this didn't fit in with the direction she wanted to take, so this group was stopped – an erosion of autonomy that he found dehumanising. Likewise, the imposition of a technology of dashboard-driven micromanagement in universities was identified as dehumanising by Alicia. She described how task lists, deadlines etc come up on the dashboard management panel, representing "more surveillance, and that makes me feel less human."

But the most egregious examples of dehumanisation through the denial of this freedom were reported by academics on casualised contracts. For example, Amelia recounted being asked to continue teaching a module which, she considered, "was a fraud". It was being delivered entirely by Teaching Fellows with no relevant scholarly background. This lacked integrity, she reasoned, in the face of students who were signing up to learn, so she told the department that she couldn't run it. But, she recounted unhappily, "I wasn't allowed to refuse things" – she said no, but was forced to do it: "I felt completely powerless," and "the sense of value and worth I got from teaching was lost."

For secondary school teachers working under the national curriculum and tighter audit cultures, freedom of manoeuvre is more curtailed. But it was nonetheless immensely important to teachers, explained by one as "leeway" which he defined as this message: "get off my case and let me do what works in helping kids move on." The opening example at the start of this report, of the teachers who were given freedom to take kids to Barcelona, is a prime case in point. In a different example a music and drama teacher, Carrie, spoke of how she feels that her subject easily gets devalued in relation to those like Maths and English, but recounted how valued it – and therefore she – was made to feel in one school. In this school, request for additional time and resources for workshops, residential theatre trips, choirs, Saturday rehearsals and the like were warmly endorsed. This had seen many more kids "given the opportunity to try music", and a significant increase in children learning instruments. In Carrie's experience such support by the senior management "made you feel a bit valued."

Damien's contrasting examples demonstrate the single factor that was flagged most commonly and most strongly by church leaders, teachers and academics alike when asked to reflect on humanity-affirming or denying experiences of work: freedom, autonomy and trust.

In my interviews, trusting people to do the work to which they felt called and were committed to, and giving them the freedom to make decisions about how to do that work, was correlated closely to a high sense of humanisation. In contrast, the denial of autonomy was linked to strong senses of dehumanisation.

3: Targets: mediating the audit culture well

Steven was head of an academic department subject to an external audit exercise. Over a number of days, auditors met staff and looked at their work to build up a picture, in their terms, of the 'quality' of the department. It seemed to be going well, but on the last day a new person came in. Steven described him as somewhat pompous, "twiddling his bow-tie," who then "started to pull us apart." At the end of the assessment Steven sat in the university's vice-chancellor's office to hear the outcome. As negative verdicts were pronounced and scores on different categories were revealed one by one, Steven realised they had not done as well as they had hoped. He marked the experience as one of the few dehumanising ones in his entire working life, noting that he felt "diminished" as a person – not simply by the verdict, but by the manner in which it was delivered.

Steven's experiences were echoed by many teachers and academics in the interviews, and the negative experiences were accentuated where people felt the poor verdicts were in part mis-informed or based on prejudice or delivered in dehumanising ways. In a different and later audit exercise, used to generate league tables that influenced government funding, Steven's department came nationally near the top, which he identified as a humanity-affirming moment as he had written the submission.

Schools, universities and other publicly-funded bodies increasingly find themselves subject to multiple external audits that determine in part access to resources and the futures of staff and managers. They are unavoidable. The data from this research however shows that **the ways in which individual schools and university departments respond to audit exercises** have significant impacts on processes of humanisation/dehumanisation.

How to respond to and prepare for audit regimes

The corrosive effects of badly-handed audits were frequently recounted to me. An academic recounted how in the 1990s preparation for a Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) audit produced dehumanising effects on the departmental collective by turning younger staff against older-established ones who were held responsible for poor performance: "we should avoid a blame culture," he reflected. Similarly, a teacher observed the divisive effect of a 'panic'-induced response to an unexpectedly poor Ofsted rating, as the senior leadership team's relations with staff and governors and each other broke down. According to her, a small number of staff (including my interlocutor) were adjudged 'outstanding' by Ofsted and the other staff instructed to observe and emulate their good practice. These teachers were "moseying along, good solid teachers, maybe not the most creative or enthralling lessons, but kids made progress.' However, by being forced to emulate others their own teaching styles were not recognised and they "lost heart", their teaching subsequently adjudged to have deteriorated rather than improved in the subsequent interim 'health check.'

> The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor.

Donald Campbell, 'Campbell's Law,' 1979

But this needn't necessarily be the case. Gary, a teacher, observed how the ways in which two different schools prepared for Ofsted had differential humanising/dehumanising effects. In the first school what he termed a "stick" approach was employed by management who seemed entirely focussed on a good Ofsted outcome: the mantra being "this is the requirement, you are accountable" as individual staff. The approach was characterised by pawing over the 'data' for individual staff and students, and lots of staff were sacked for not performing well enough, producing an ugly culture of bad-mouthing. Endless Ofsted dry-runs ensured a perpetual focus on Ofsted, and he recounted that "we were then in fear of Ofsted until Wednesday lunchtime" when we knew they wouldn't come, leading to a collective sigh of relief. This whole experience was dehumanising, in contrast to the more humanity-affirming approach of the second school. This one, he said, didn't have this "culture of fear", but instead "senior leadership drip-fed a healthy diet for us to follow." This was characterised by "trusting us more" in drawing up a plan, working on aspects of it, supporting us through CPD, and expecting to see the evidence of this work in time – rather than going around constantly checking up minute aspects of work. He prefers it because it is more "student-centred", rather than the previous school where "you farm children to get results for your school" and where "they were treated like machines" as "we became more corporate, less student-centred." Ultimately, he reflected, Ofsted doesn't matter as much as helping vulnerable kids get a good education.

Subtle effects of audit

Apart from overall approaches to Ofsted, REF (Research Excellence Framework, a government audit of research that is used to allocate funding and generate league tables) and the like, respondents reported more subtly dehumanising effects of audit regimes. In schools, audit regimes and associated league tables valorise particular subjects seen as core. Thus schoolteacher Aileen drew attention to the marginalisation of subjects such as music, performing arts and Religious Education in the English Baccalaureate (EBAC), a suite of GCSEs the government wants all schools to teach and on which take-up rates are assessed. She complained that "people who teach music are also told to teach RE or drama or something they don't know anything about, because these are seen as less important. If a music teacher was put in front of the maths class they'd be lots of criticism – these are valued more." This is dehumanising because "it gets implied that our contribution is less valuable because we don't teach one of these valuable subjects."

Similarly, university funding regimes and international league tables like those drawn up by the Times Higher Education place a greater emphasis on research than teaching, and this has subtle implications: "there is pressure from the REF, it is not hard and fast, but it is there" said Andrea (an academic) drawing a raincloud to represent the negative, overshadowing influence of the REF on her working life (see image, p.17).

An example of the subtle effects of audit regimes is change in contractual practices. Some universities creating what are effectively teaching-only contracts, with research time allowed not for work in the scholar's field of expertise but for 'pedagogical' topics, in which they may not well have been trained or conducted PhDs. Thus Andrea, who enjoys teaching more than research but wants to remain on a teaching and research contract, vouchsafed her fears that she will be pressured into a teaching only contract because "the centre" doesn't "understand that we are all individual people." Likewise, Stuart's research is on important social and ethical issues, and he has made a contribution to the teaching and student-experience side of his department that has been nationally recognised and is seen of strategic importance for the university. But because he isn't publishing what are deemed in the language of the REF 'four star articles', he cannot get promotion, which would be a "a recognition by the university that you count as a person who is contributing to what really matters to the university." The consequence of this is that you come to feel you are "not being seen as a full, valuable contributor" to the mission of the university, he explained. The promotion criteria structured by external audit "legitimates a set of ways of thinking about a human being and what counts," which he finds dehumanising.

> "You feel like you are doing a rubbish job when you get the 'D' word, data, and you are a 'minus'."
>
> **Felicity, teacher**

In contrast, church leaders did not talk about formal targets, although informally they sometimes used the increase or decrease of congregation numbers as proxies of success. One minister, Thomas, used the *absence* of targets as an example of an aspect of his work he found humanity-affirming. As a young minister in a socio-economically disadvantaged urban parish, one night he witnessed a burglary and reported it to the police. The burglars learnt he had been the 'grass', and perpetrated a campaign of revenge against him including instances of assault, graffitiing his house and the church with 'The vicar is a grass', smashing his windows, repeatedly damaging his car, breaking in and trying to set fire to his house. He admitted that remaining there felt like 'masochism' at times, but said that "you stay because in your deepest self you feel this is what you are called to do." Instead of leaving, he obtained grants to initiate a whole series of programmes to engage with 'detached youth' – youth clubs, cultural events, etc, to provide activities and connect them more broadly across the community. After a period of time he was able to see many lives touched and engaged, and the violence against him ceased, and this for him was marked as a particularly humanity-affirming activity. He commented, tellingly, that he likes working with churches who are "in it for the long term:" "unlike the council we don't demand results in 18 months," and "we do not have targets." He elaborated later: "we do what we can to be generous and self giving - trying to walk the way of the Cross- not knowing outcomes. It's God who brings the transformation. That cannot be predicted."

External audit through multiple metrics-gathering exercises is an unavoidable aspect of the way that educational institutions work today; although as the churches remind us, they are not inevitable and there are other ways of enabling social interventions. Nonetheless, schools and universities have leeway in how they respond to and prepare for these audits, and the choices they make can have important implications for how staff are treated in humanity-affirming or dehumanising ways.

4: Being listened to

Tina is a classroom teacher who took on her first major cross-school administrative role as head of sixth form. Although enjoying the challenge, she was finding it difficult to manage this role and teach her classes properly, and realised that it was also impacting her frame of mind at home. She therefore went to speak to her head-teacher about this. "The head respected how I felt, and acted on it," initially suggesting some techniques to help her manage her time better. But, she reported, he had obviously been thinking about it and reflecting on it, and came back to her and reduced her weekly teaching timetable. She identified this as a humanising moment, explaining "It felt like he'd really listened to me as a person, I wasn't just a figure on a timetable."

The interviews showed that to feel **genuinely listened to** was frequently experienced as humanity-affirming, whereas to feel ignored or not heard was a dehumanising experience in the workplace.

In striking contrast to this example, one of the most dehumanising experiences in the working life of Carrie was at her very first permanent job. Conditions were not promising in a school where she felt her subject was undervalued, and CPD was non-existent. Classroom behaviour was dreadful, and as an inexperienced young teacher she was struggling. On one occasion she ran out of a classroom of 30 teenagers, crying, and went straight to the head for help. Instead of listening and assisting, he said, "It's your class, your job, you need to sort it out," and walked off forcing her to go back in alone. She felt undermined in front of the class, and without anyone who could help her.

Being 'listened to' was the key factor RE teacher Ariana emphasised every time she reflected on humanisation and dehumanisation. She became line manager of a colleague whom she described as uncooperative and refusing to try new approaches, who would, she said, "sit there doodling skull and crossbones whilst I was talking to him." However, she could point to many more humanity-affirming times when she felt properly listened-to. On one occasion her school was reflecting on how to respond to an Ofsted report, and a suggestion from the leadership team was to have literacy targets for every activity in every subject area across the school. She emailed the assistant headteacher who proposed this, saying it wasn't feasible because of the large numbers of assessments they set as part of the agreed assessment policy for her subject areas she had developed with her subject team. The deputy head made enquiries with other people with heavy assessment workloads, considered the issue, and then agreed to ditch the idea.

> The new head, when he came, had a meeting with every teacher to ask them what they liked about the school and their job, what they didn't like, and how they would like to see their careers move forwards. This felt humanity-affirming.
>
> **Ariana, teacher**

Ariana gave another affirming example of being listened to, when pre-GCSE RE classes were reduced from weekly to fortnightly. This predated the above Ofsted report, but Ariana thought it was in response to pressures from a new external measures of pupil's attainment and progress, the EBAC (see above, p.18). Although she felt RE was valued by the school leadership, it was seen as a "non-core subject" in the EBAC. Ariana wasn't happy as she felt the students would miss out, so instead suggested to the leadership that the school run off-timetable days to do things like holocaust memorial commemoration and a Gurdwara trip, and this was accepted. "I felt that I was listened to," and that was humanity-affirming.

A final example Ariana gave was, as a newly-qualified teacher, being asked to teach an English class with 'moderate learning difficulties.' She struggled because this was not her subject and she didn't know what to do. So she went to her assigned mentor, told her she was struggling, and the mentor listened and helped put in place a range of support measures including fortnightly meetings with an English teacher to help guide her, letting her observe how others were teaching the subject, and being shown examples of previous reports so she knew the expected format.

Being genuinely listened to was identified by many interviewees as humanity-affirming because, as teacher Ariana put it, "it shows respect for other people."

Interview extract

Question:

"What could schools do to treat teachers in more humanity-affirming and less dehumanising ways"?

Answer:

"I always feel better when I know the reasons for things, changes, new proposals: context, background, aims, etc. So *consultation* is important; students and staff should be listened to."

Frederick, secondary teacher.

5: "The magic power of human sympathy"

In his 2002 book *Identifying the Image of God*, about anti-slavery literature in the pre-Civil War USA, historian Dan McKanan argues that 'Identifying the image of God' in slaves was the key strategy of radical Christian social reformers. These writers placed victims (slaves, native Americans, children, women) in situations understood to be universally human, depicting them as loving family members and victims vulnerable to physical and emotional abuse. McKanan defines this strategy as 'sentimentality', asking people to acknowledge the full, equal humanity of another by appealing to common experiences of family relationships or bodily pain. The example *par excellence* of this was Frederick Douglass, the former slave who was afrequent visitor to Newcastle and whose autobiographical narrative was arguably the greatest anti-slavery text. Douglass described this as the technique as tapping into **"the magic power of human sympathy"** in challenging the dehumanisation of slaves – by asking readers to identify with their pains, joys, and familial ties, and thus see them as human.

No comparison can be drawn between the conditions of enslaved African Americans and my interviewees. However, it is nonetheless the case that interviewees frequently referred to moments when their pain, pleasure and familial relations were recognised – or not – as points of humanisation/dehumanisation in the workplace. This "**magic power of human sympathy" is the fifth characterisation of humanity-affirming workplaces**.

This was rooted in the ordinary things of life. One church leader, Hayley, spoke of a friend in the church who would go out with her for meals and concerts, and of a couple who invited her round for cups of tea: "they treated me as an individual, saw me as someone other than the vicar." Another spoke of how humanity-affirming it was when people invited him to watch amateur dramatics performances or football matches. For one teacher, Sarah, a highlight of the school year was the annual "wellbeing CPD" session, when rather than be taught something to do with work staff are allowed to pick something fun to do such as playing tennis or cocktail making. This was marked as humanity-affirming because it was fun, relaxing, and made staff feel valued by "giving us time to enjoy being us." All these acts sent messages that employers were interested in these workers as human beings rather than just as emloyees.

The recognition that workers may have familial and other personal commitments that are meaningful and important to them was also humanity affirming. A church leader spoke of the invaluable assistance of a couple who would help with his children at a time when he was overworked and neither he nor his wife had parents nearby. A teacher with leadership responsibilities described her supportive workplace culture as humanising, with pre-planned meetings rarely over-running and thus eating into family time. Despite her added responsibilities, "I've never missed a nativity play, a rewards assembly, etc" for her own children, she recounted, as the school supported covering her in attending those.

> The slave is a man, "the image of God,"... The first work of slavery is to mar and deface those characteristics of its victims which distinguish men from things, and persons from property.

Frederick Douglass, 'the nature of slavery', 1850.

It was in moments of crisis that differential attitudes to the humanity of the worker were most starkly drawn out. Academic Philippa has suffered with cancer over the course of her work in two different educational establishments. In the first, the employers were what she called "difficult" about her sick leave and its implications for the workplace; in the second, they were "fabulous" – supportive in terms of work implications, but also demonstrating a clear personal concern for her. Schoolteacher Susan recounted a very difficult time at work where two colleagues were constantly criticising her over minor issues, making her feel "valueless, worthless, stupid" – "but I know I'm not stupid," she added. This dehumanising experience led into a period of ill-health, and she described how the head-teacher, as she put it, "rescued" her. He insisted that she was lazy or stupid, telling her to "just go home until you are better enough to come back." Susan reflected that she appreciated someone understanding what it meant, that she didn't need to feel embarrassed or ashamed – "To be treated like a human being, knowing that someone was there."

Finally, how bereaved employees were treated was seen as a touchstone for how humanising or dehumanising the workplace was. A minister spoke of going through a time of family turmoil compounded by a bereavement. The denominational overseer gave money for him and his family to take a weekend holiday in Scarborough, while he covered his Sunday services. "Okay, so Scarborough is not that glamorous," he joked, "but it helped and it was affirming that it was noticed." Similarly, an academic newly in her first, permanent job, was faced with the impending death of her father on another continent, during the intense marking season. With some tredipation she approached the head of department who encouraged her to return, told her not to worry about the marking as we'll find a way to sort it out: "be a human," people said to her, which she found supportive.

Like many people working in university medical faculties, Jasmine has one foot in the academic world of research and teaching, and one in the clinical world of the NHS. She contrasted two different experiences. She described working for one NHS trust as "brutal", for example with rotas being changed at short notice which prevented people going on pre-planned family holidays. A particularly egregious event she drew my attention to was the death of a relative. The Trust wouldn't provide cover for her to attend the funeral, so her already-overworked colleagues had to do it instead: "they genuinely didn't give a shit." She remarked on never seeing or meeting a manager - "you don't have a particular identity, you're just a number." She contrasted this dehumanising experience to the humanity-affirming experiences of a later academic role. In particular, she appreciated that managers were taking an interest in her, asking her informally about her research and work. She was nominated for a national teaching award and the Dean of Teaching and Learning came down from the North East to the event in London with her. Although she didn't win the award, she was touched that this "came across as being a genuine thing rather than PR." When employers recognised their staff as human beings marked by pain, joy, and familial bonds and responsibilities, this was appreciated and remembered. In contrast, it was marked as dehumanising when they overlooked or disregarded these key signifiers of humanity.

6: Quality of human relationships

Anya's trajectory as an academic is marked by two instances of prolonged mistreatment by superiors that she experienced as dehumanising. As a PhD student, her relationship with her two supervisors deteriorated to the point where she descried them as being very unpleasant towards her. A low point was the publication of a scholarly article that garnered significant media attention. As she had done most of the work on it, she put herself down as the corresponding author, and so was mentioned in the media coverage. Anya described their reaction as furious. Later on, having established herself as an independent academic in another institution, she found herself in a position of essentially being bullied by someone in a higher position. She experienced work as dehumanising, with lots of slander, back-biting, and a confrontational, aggressive and humiliating culture of character assassination and rumour-spreading. This was compounded for her by a lack of clarity about what can be done and whether she can seek help from HR or other sources.

In a different experience also labelled dehumanising, Michelle finds herself isolated in her school. She feels marginalised both on account of being part-time for child-care reasons, and because her subject is not seen as important in audit exercises. With, as she sees it, the school leadership focussed on jumping through inspection hoops, "there's definitely a concept of education as a machine" with children being taught exam technique rather than really learning. Indeed, she blames Ofsted inspection regimes and their differential impact on different subjects and teachers for "the erosion of the team spirit." She finds her isolation particularly dehumanising: "I am not in a team," she laments, "I never speak to anybody. I could go two weeks not speaking to anyone."

We can probably all imagine the unpleasantness of the above situations. They not only make us enjoy work less, but are diminishing of our humanity. What, in contrast, do **humanising workplace relations** look like? My interviews supplied plenty of examples.

Working collaboratively

Working in genuinely collaborative ways was marked by many people as humanity-affirming. Schoolteacher Ariana spoke with relish of how she and colleagues worked together to redesign the curriculum for their department. They got a large piece of wallpaper to map out the curriculum from year 7 to the end of GCSE, asking questions about what a good curriculum in their subject looks like, and how they should deliver it. Being able to go on and implement this, with the support of the school was something Ariana spoke of with relish. Similarly, pastor Sam drew my attention to the new team dynamic he had brought to his church's leadership. In creating a new coordinating committee with a more diverse membership to replace the older top-down, male-dominated model, he described meetings where "we listen to each other, and take each other seriously. It feels like we are coming together to seek God as friends, being open and honest with each other." This is marked too by worshipping and eating together, and by a culture where people can operate within their strengths and question things he says as they "share responsibility" together. Sam identified the quality of this new set of working relationships was identified as humanity-affirming.

Likewise, academic Timothy described the quality of relationships in his research group over an extended period of time as humanising, down in particular to the leadership shown by its founder and head, Dave. According to Timothy, Dave created a culture where people would not only collaborate on research projects and grant applications, but regularly all have lunch and meet together for an annual summer party. This team collaboration fashioned an environment that" felt stimulating, conducive, dynamic, life-affirming," he recounted with relish.

This particular role of leaders/managers in helping craft humanity-affirming environments was mentioned most often by schoolteachers and academics. One teacher spoke warmly of a head who "walks along the corridors and say 'hello' to everyone, every day." In contrast, Tina told me about her previous experiences of working in a school that presents itself as being "in the vanguard of educational developments" and has attained a "World Class Schools Quality Mark", a rare award (as of June 2019 only given to 82 UK schools) beyond the Ofsted 'outstanding' grade. Tina, however, said that she only met the head at annual reviews to look at her 'data' (on student attainment). When Tina came to her current school, it made a lasting impression on her that the head-teacher not only greeted her for the interview (which was not the case in her former school), but also deigned to speak to the cleaner in passing! Tina marked this as a humanity-affirming approach to staff-management relations, in contrast to the higher-achieving previous one.

Collective struggle

Although leaders had an important role in fashioning inter-personal environments that were humanity affirming or denying, it would be a mistake to think that this was only in their gift to do this.

A number of academics spoke about how collective struggle of some sort had forged a quality of workplace relations that they experienced as humanity-affirming. Oscar, an academic, described a strike in 2018 as part of industrial action over pensions as "the best two-and-a-half-grand I ever spent!" He joked that he could have gone to the Seychelles for a holiday with the amount of money he lost by going on strike, but wouldn't have got as much out of it. He spoke about the camaraderie on the picket-lines, and drew particular to the teach-ins. This was a series of off-campus talks, lectures and debates organised by the union to take place during industrial action. Oscar described them as "phenomenal," with the university moving out of university buildings and engaging the public, and academics talking with each other about the future of education and their institution.

Steven spoke in similar ways of a different struggle; this time, not an industrial dispute with university management, but a battle to persuade the university to keep his department open. In the threat of closure, he and a group of younger lecturers worked to save it. They implemented internal changes, got support of well-known public figures, and were featured in national radio and the press. They persuaded the Vice-Chancellor to keep it open, and the "battle" felt positive and collegial, not unpleasant at all.

Nigerian theologian Ezekiel Nihinlola argues that an important essence of *imago Dei* theology is that we find our true humanity in relation with others. This is borne out by the interviews. Workplace relations marked by creative collaboration, care and support are experienced as humanity affirming. Those characterised by isolation, competition, and bullying are experienced as dehumanising.

7: Communities of care

Church leader Dominic was leading a Sunday morning service as usual, and, as usual, at a certain point near the start he announced that the congregation was going to join together to sing a certain hymn. He was shocked when the organist responded "Oh no we're not." Dominic was alarmed, fearing that an "insurrection" was taking place. Instead, he recounted with a chuckle, the organist played "happy birthday to you" and the kids all burst in from the back of the church carrying a cake – to celebrate Dominic's 60th birthday! As well as the cake, the children brought as a gift an album of memories the church had carefully created, where members of the congregation recounted the positive impacts he had had on their lives. This type of affirmation by the whole congregation (which obviously took a lot of forethought and careful planning to keep it secret) was "quite overwhelming" and unsurprisingly he recalled it as one of the most humanity-affirming moments of his working life.

It is big or small actions like this, **creating communities of care**, which numerous interviewees marked as being humanity-affirming.

The quality of welcome upon starting a new job – inviting people for cups of tea or lunch, sharing helpful details about good child-minders or plumbers, and the like – was important. An academic noted as humanity-affirming his family's warm welcome upon their arrival by colleagues who "helped us settle in to the city."

Ministers, teachers and academics alike spoke of how humanity-affirming it was to be given or sent cards, letters, emails, social media posts or gifts to acknowledge their work. A church leader spoke of how affirming it was "when people go out of their way to say things to you, or do things, they don't have to say" – for example not just saying, 'thank you for the sermon' on Sunday morning, but ringing up, emailing, or posting on Facebook a few days later, when he wasn't expecting it, and saying "I really appreciate what you do." "You can't separate that really from who you are," he explained. Another church leader remembered when someone knocked on his door one night with a box of chocolates and said, "I'm not coming in, but I really appreciate what you're doing for the spiritual life of our family." Equally significant, albeit differently phrased, was the recollection of a teacher about how affirming it was when her head-teacher sent her a Christmas card writing inside it, "well done on a successful first term" – even though, as she reported, the head "knew I had had a shit time with year 9."

These tokens of affirmation didn't always just vanish into the ether. Many interviewees had what one minister called "a rainy day file" where he kept such cards, messages and the like, as well as printed-out emails. One church leader said he keeps a box of these, and "when you feel you are stuffed up, you get them out and have a look and feel you've done something right." I am sure he was not the only one who did that. Whilst interviewing a new teacher in her classroom, she went to a shelf and got down to show me a message of affirmation and gratitude written by a student and rolled up in a bottle.

A number of church leaders – who have relatively low stipends rather than salaries – spoke about more substantial acts of affirmation. Mark, an Anglican vicar, told me how affirming it was for his family when they arrived in their new vicarage "and there were four boxes of food on the kitchen table," and cash gifts in envelopes to follow when the congregation realised the family were struggling financially. Similarly a Baptist minister and his family were struggling with the low stipend and the high cost of living in the south of England, but the church helped. Another minister, Phil, spoke of how loved he felt by his congregation, and this was demonstrated not simply by affirming words and everyday help with childcare, but by acts like erecting them a greenhouse for his 40th birthday, and giving the family extra money for a holiday during their sabbatical – "thank you, they said, go and get a decent rest." As he said in reflecting on all these acts, "they shared their lives with me - I felt that they appreciated our ministry, they were friends with us."

> "I have a rainy day file, where I put cards, gifts, tokens etc., I've been given. God made us this way – we thrive when we feel affirmed, valued and loved."
>
> **Mark, Church leader**

In constructing his timeline, Rory drew a sharp contrast between two churches he had led. In the first, the congregation was split theologically between competing hostile wings represented by abusive and abrasive individuals who tried to co-opt him to their cause and were unpleasant when he refused. In the case of one of the parties, this unpleasantness extended to rubbishing his name across the denomination, he recounted. Their dehumanising treatment of him was brought into sharp relief by the culture of care in his second church which was characterised, he said, by "people who valued me, loved me, prayed for me, accepted me – treated me as [Rory], as a fellow human-being." They did this by sending Christmas cards thanking him for who he was and what he had been doing, by telling him that they pray for him every day, by generous financial gifts, and by affirmation and appreciation after Sunday morning service – all of which was "so encouraging."

Most people don't get every position and every promotion they apply for, and not everyone is in a position to influence how an institution responds to audit exercises – all factors identified as humanity affirming in this report. But everyone can cultivate practices of care for colleagues, including those above or below us in the formal hierarchies. It sounds clichéd, but the little things really can go a long way in creating humanity-affirming workplaces; and their comparative absence is noted by people fortunate enough to have enjoyed them or seen them elsewhere.

8: Contractual affirmation: Employment conditions.

Affirmation by formal processes

Ariana had from childhood always wanted to be a teacher: "seeing what school has done in my life… as I grew up, I wanted to be part of that in other people's lives," she said. Following training, she was eventually offered a job at a school where she really wanted to work. She recalls it as a very humanity-affirming moment, saying "I was speechless, so happy" when she was offered it. This was underlined by the fact that she was given a permanent contract, when previously they had had five different teachers in that role over five years.

The conditions of employment that interviewees experienced were one of the most important factors correlated to humanisation or dehumanisation that came up in the interviews. Many of us will be able to identify with Ariana's elation: to be given jobs, promotions and awards was marked as affirming. But some of us won't be able to - possibly like the unnamed temporary staff whom she succeeded. Poor employment conditions – in particular temporary work, sidelining women returning from maternity leave, and constructive dismissal – were undoubtedly the most dehumanising aspects of the modern workplace for many people.

> "It was a wonderful affirmation for me, to be given this role and responsibility as a young person"
>
> **Sandy, teacher, on a promotion**

Following the offer of a job itself, promotion was marked by many people as humanising. Andrea described her promotion to Senior Lecturer as a "restoration of balance." She felt she had been looked down on by some colleagues who thought she could teach but not do research, and so had 'crap' administrative roles dumped on her. Suddenly, she said, those colleagues didn't treat her with the same disrespect. Similarly, for teacher Stan getting a promotion "felt as if somebody was saying 'you have a valuable role to play'". Within work, what schoolteacher Leia described as "I'm worth it moments" stuck out for many interviewees: an article being accepted for publication by a good journal, the bestowing of an award by a scholarly society, and the like.

Ongoing support within work was also affirming. One church leader, Daphne, recounted the time when someone in her congregation began "kicking off against me," as she put it, and made a complaint about her. Daphne sought advice and help from her denominational leaders who decided there was no case against her. What Daphne found particularly humanity-affirming was that she felt trusted and supported through the situation. The denominational leader, Daphne told me, didn't say, "we'll do this" but "what do you need? we'll make it happen" and helped Daphne put a barrier in between her and this person so that she could continue to do her other work.

Such experiences were related by most interviewees. They spoke more positively about the affirmation that came from postings and promotions than they did about the pecuniary benefits. Similarly, the denial of hoped-for promotion was interpreted as the institution not valuing what they could offer and who they were – the two being inseparable. This section will look in example at the three most commonly-encountered topics.

8A: Return from maternity leave

Bryony, the only woman in her department, returned to work part time after becoming a mother. She highlighted two dehumanising aspects of her treatment. First, she was only given lower-ability sets to teach (unlike previously) and second, she was the only person not given her own key to the store cupboard. When asked why she was told, "you've had a baby, you may take time off." Likewise Alicia, an academic, found the workplace experience of becoming a mother dehumanising in many ways, complaining of poor discretionary maternity pay and a lack of institutional support on campus upon her return. For example, initially there was no breast feeding room and then when one was made available that it was cumbersome to access. Further, she was not allowed to opt out of teaching slots for nursery pick-up time. She regarded it as ironic that her department had been given a 'bronze' charter mark by 'Athena Swan,' a gender equality audit. She was scathing of the award: "the application said that we did x and y for women returning to work. You claim to be enabling flexible working, but you aren't." By not attending to her specific needs "they didn't see me as an individual at all," she remarked. "It was pretty inhumane and quite brutal".

The poor treatment of women returning from maternity leave was a major source of dehumanisation reported by interviewees.

Philippa, an academic in a management position, requested flexible working under the 2002 Employment Act and found the employer's refusal to give this, while not technically illegal, certainly dehumanising: "I had given them everything, but they wouldn't give me one thing." The pressure was increased from her more traditional religious family who felt she should spend more time at home now she was a mother. She appealed, and a meeting with management was called. The human resources director, a woman with children herself, remained unsympathetic: "I can do it, so why can't you?" she said.

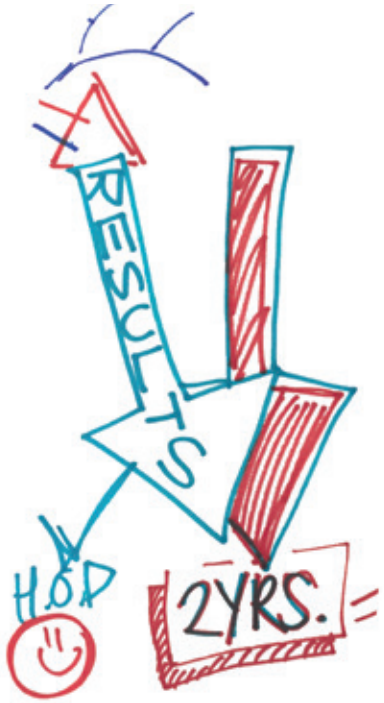
"A part-time nobody"

More subtle than these egregious examples was that it became harder for female teachers going part-time after childcare to pursue or continue leadership roles in their schools. I became "a part-time nobody," one teacher reflected on giving up her previous leadership role in returning to work part-time post maternity leave. She noted how strange it was to be at a meeting and no longer looked to as a meeting leader with something to contribute, as she had previously. She was not able to apply for 'lower middle or middle management' roles, as these were full time. Similarly, Tina felt she had done a good job in her head of year role, and when she wrote informing the school that she would like maternity leave she said she would still like to be involved in this type of work when she returned. However, upon coming back part-time this was never mentioned, and she was given no classes in her preferred subject. She described the attitude as, "well, you're here for just 3 days, you'll have to do what's left." On top of this, no longer having the leadership role she lost her former office: "I felt I'd lost everything." "Do you mind just being a teacher?" people asked, "as if I were a different person." All this was dehumanising.

Maternity issues interweave with those of budget restraints and the distorting effects of audit exercises in exacerbating experiences of dehumanisation for women returning from work for maternity issues. A third teacher had been head of two allied subjects before maternity leave, and when she returned part-time she was told she had to drop one of those headships and the accompanying salary points. After her second maternity leave, according to her narrative, the head told her bluntly that she would never be given a full time job there because her salary scale makes her too expensive and her subject is not a core one. She tried to apply for an Assistant Head role but was told by the head-teacher that he wouldn't even physically accept her application letter. This dehumanising loss of identity was unfortunately not uncommon amongst schoolteachers.

Employment practices for women returning from maternity leave in schools and universities were often dehumanising. However this was not inevitable, as shown by the example of Carly, an assistant head-teacher. She related how, before having children, she assumed she would stop her career when she became pregnant: "you know, mother earth and all that." But when she did have a child, she reconsidered this and applied for - and was given - the role of assistant head teacher. She described this as a "made it" moment for her, and she was never made to feel bad about needing maternity cover. Being "supported through major life events of getting married and having kids" was extremely humanity-affirming for her. Another teacher recounted that she was struggling after childbirth and went to see the head-teacher with her concerns over return to work. He said, "as your employer I'd like you back as I need you, but as a human I think you should stay off longer." This she found wonderfully affirming."

> "the worst conversation I've pretty much ever had"
>
> **Teacher, after being told by the head-teacher that he didn't want her back as head of department after maternity leave.**



8B: Constructive dismissal/bullying

Damien is the church leader we met above (p.15) who found his autonomy to act in a new pastorate circumscribed by "an eldership cartel [that] wanted to direct everything." These two men, who had had a long-standing role in the church, led what he described as "an attempt to assassinate my character over a period of time by attacking my character and credibility." One of them made an accusation against him to the police that turned out to be unfounded, and the minister relayed that he was "completely exonerated" by the investigation. Nonetheless he was suspended during the investigation, and ultimately felt he could no longer stay at the church. He resigned, having to do other work for a period of time to support his family before later finding another – and much happier – pastorate.

Damien regards this as "**constructive dismissal**" – that is, when employers create a work environment that is so hostile that the worker is forced to resign. For those people who had experienced it, it was undoubtedly the most dehumanising experience of their working lives.

Christie had been very excited to take up her job as an art teacher in a new school. She had helped built up the department so that student uptake of the subject had significantly increased, and could draw attention to high-points such as student involvement in a local work of public art being featured in national news media. - Enabled by the dynamic working environment of a close group of good colleagues, she marked this period as humanising for having the freedom to initiate and effect change, collegiality, and being given the job in the first place.

However her experience of work significantly deteriorated over a relatively short period of time, initiated by poor sets of exam results for her students. This was linked, she reckoned, to a number of factors. Personally, having a baby and returning from maternity leave changed priorities and limited the extra energy she could put into teaching as well as making her question "what her identity was." Colleagues had taken on more of her previous responsibilities and she was now "bottom of the pecking order," as she put it, in an environment that had become competitive with a new head of department who knew nothing of her previous achievements. Significantly, too, the "landscape of education" changed. The policy reforms of Education secretary Michael Gove adjusted grade boundaries "so that what was a 'C' a couple of years back was no longer a 'C'." As the school sought to improve exam results in maths, she reported, children were being taken out of GCSE art classes to have extra maths tuition, making it even harder to maintain her grade standards. So the management attitude "became punitive on me, and all that I had previously done was forgotten." Colleagues, she said, were suffering from mental health issues due to the stress.

Upon becoming pregnant again, she spoke to her head who rather than congratulate her, rolled his eyes and said, "We don't want you back as head of department; if you fight us on this we'll take you to capabilities and we have a good case, and will win." The union supported her, but she came back "under a cloud," in an atmosphere poisoned by Ofsted designating the school as "requires improvement." She described a personally "hostile" environment created by managers for her: senior management team ignoring her when they passed in the corridors, being given an undesirable classroom, late night text messages from managers berating her for behaviour, and being prevented from teaching the GCSE classes that she enjoyed most of all.

> Ministers are held to the whims and fancies of their local church, and it destroys people.
>
> **Damien, church leader:**

"This was their way of saying they wanted me out," she reasoned, and moved to her present job where, she says, because "I'm part of a team that want me around," so now "I feel valued again. This example shows how a range of factors identified above leading to dehumanisation – negotiating the audit culture, reduction of autonomy, lack of trust, lack of affirmation by formal procedures, post-maternity work, and the absence of good working relationships – come together in an environment of constructive dismissal that was not merely hostile, but also dehumanising.

In churches, it was more commonly the environment created by congregations (rather than formal denominational structures) that equated with constructive dismissal or the attempt to achieve it. Andrew provided a sobering account of how elements of his congregation treated him. Coming to the parish, he wanted to make the church more inclusive by improving access for disabled people so mobility scooters and wheelchairs could reach the altar rail for communion, rather than have the bread and wine brought to them at the rear of the church. For this to happen, a pew needed to be shortened. At a church meeting where this was discussed, one man stood up and said, "You fucking bastard if you move that pew I'll punch yer face out!"

This is a shocking story, but more insidious were the actions, according to this leader's narrative, of a small clique of people who held a certain amount of power within the church, running activities such as Sunday school, Guides, and annual youth camps. The key member of this group was a woman who worked as a part of the teaching staff at the local school, so knew many young people in the parish.

However the new church leader developed a number of concerns about these activities, which he described as being run as their "little domain." He was worried at a lack of transparency – some adults who wanted to help with this work were excluded, and certain children were given permission and allocated funds to go on the summer camps, for example, but not others. The criteria for these decisions appeared to be based on personal relationships. He was also concerned at shouting, bullying and controlling behaviour towards children. So he asked her for a meeting to discuss the children's work. She didn't come, but instead left the church telling people she had been "forced out." She moved her Guide pack away, and spread what the church leader described as "libel" about him in the school and parish. He said that the teacher screamed at his daughter in school, reducing her to tears and giving her nightmares. The school's headteacher had to prevent this teacher having any contact with her. "She was essentially trying to drive me out of the parish," he reasoned, not because of theological differences "but because she had her control and little territory and didn't want anyone encroaching on it or challenging her." He noted how the family in question would not even use his name, but referred to the vicar as "him." The apparent attempt to hound him out failed and he has been able to exercise a significant role in community organisation, Andrew reports that subsequently people in the congregation had become better at thinking more of what the impact of what they say and do might have on him, but the whole experience was very dehumanising: "they didn't care about the collateral damage on my family."

8C: Temporary positions

Music teacher Carrie's first job was going into about a dozen primary schools over the course of each week and provide specialist musical teaching. This was an opportunity for her to reflect on how she was valued, or not, in different schools. Some schools "tried to make you feel part of the life of the school" and "respect your expertise", for example by allowing her to use the photocopier by herself, and welcoming her into the staff-room and giving her a cup of tea with the other teachers. Others, she said, were "sniffy" about her: for example, making her wait at reception each time she came, or not giving her the photocopier password. She identified the former as humanity-affirming, and the latter as dehumanising. They "sound like silly things really," Carrie acknowledged, but insisted they were important because they were about her "dignity" and respecting her. The schools in the first category did that, whereas for those in the second it "felt me being there was just ticking a box" – they didn't really care about her, or the quality of her teaching, she said.

Churches, schools and universities depend on trainees for their long-term health, and schools and universities depend on short-term employees when the demand for teaching and research assistance outstrips the availability of permanent staff. For all three institutions, **the treatment of temporary staff was closely connected to these employees' experiences of humanisation or dehumanisation**.

Trainees

In the church apprentice staff may be known as "curates" or "ministers-in-training," and in the school they are "placement students" during PGCEs and after that "Newly Qualified Teachers." These terms reflect that these people are in training with the expectation that they will one day be fully qualified ministers or teachers, subject to satisfying various requirements, and it may be in the gift of their supervisor to extend their contract or not. Being thus at the figurative bottom-of-the-pack, they are particularly vulnerable to suffer dehumanising treatment.

One church leader, Mark, had two contrasting curacies. The first experience was "so horrendous that I felt I did want to continue in the church." His vicar, he felt, "really wanted my head on a platter," he recounted, saying he was lazy and a troublemaker, when in fact he had been on sick leave. This vicar severely restricted what he was allowed to do in the church, telling him, "Your personality has no place in the Church of England." He was moved by the bishop to continue training as a curate in another parish, with a vicar, Ian, whom, he said, "believed in me" and "never rubbished me." Mark told me that Ian recognised his pastoral skills, and "gave me autonomy to develop my own ministry at a distance… but affirmed and valued and nurtured me." Mark relayed to me that Ian wrote a report saying that "if the Church of England invests in me, they'll be richly rewarded." Various other church leaders I spoke to reported similar experiences in training as particularly humanising or dehumanising.

Supply teachers

Schools make frequent use of "supply teachers" to fill in temporary and short or medium-term gaps in teaching provision caused by factors such as sickness and maternity leave. Leia has worked as a supply teacher in many different schools, and drew attention, as did other teachers who had been in her position, to the apparently minor things that made her feel valued and treated like a proper person (or not). At one school, for example, upon arrival she was given a school iPad, personalised so that her name appeared on the start-up screen: "But I'm only supply," she said in surprise to the IT technician. "You're here for a while so you get an iPad," he replied, which she felt valued her.

More major ways in which supply teachers were valued or not was in the type of classes they were given to teach, when a choice was involved. Rather than being given the more fun and interesting classes, Leia recounted, they are often given those that are harder work, such as resit classes.

But it was gestures not usually extended to supply teachers that stood out as particularly humanising for Leia. In one school, the (female) head of department used to buy her flowers and other presents, and invited her to her home to meet her family, "even though I was only a supply teacher." When she left, as a leaving gift she bought her a Pokemon scarf, a humorous reference to the time she had been spotted playing Pokemon on her phone. Leia contrasted this to a leaving event for her at another school when she was only given generic wine and flowers. She appreciated this, of course, but the personal attention to detail underlined for her that she had been treated and appreciated as an individual human being in her time at this school. As she of another school that looked after her very well, and where the head came into one of her last lessons to thank her, "I was never treated as a supply teacher once" – implying, of course, that the standard treatment of a supply teacher is very different.

Casualised academic labour

Whereas churches have curates/ministers in training and schools have PGCE placements and NQTs, there is no equivalent position in academia. That role once may have been played by PhD students, but changing employment structures have led to a proliferation of people on 'temporary' contracts, mostly doing various research and teaching roles in support of academics on permanent contracts.

A number of my interviewees were either on such contracts now or had been on them prior to securing permanent positions, and spoke of these **casualised employment conditions** as dehumanising because of the invisibility, vulnerability and lack of agency they engender.

The first dehumanising aspect of casualised labour was the **invisibility** of those subject to it. Amelia had worked a number of temporary or part-time jobs over half a decade, sometimes in 2 or 3 different universities at once. In one of these she was given slightly better conditions than the others, and said, "I was a real person, an office all to myself, with my name on the door": seeing her name written with the title "Dr." in front moved her, as it made her feel like "an academic." This is telling - telling that her extended experience of casualised labour was dehumanising. She gave an example of one place where was given a six month contract to fill in teaching for someone who had got a grant. She was given this without interview, training or vetting, and simply told to read out verbatim notes the lecturer had left. It was not, she reported, a great module and students were unhappy, but "No one wanted to give me anything in terms of training or emotional support." Because I was just seen as a stop-gap, she continued, she was barely visible to the system - "you never met HR". "People rarely see you, they don't think about you, and they don't care about you, because you're only ever temporary." This invisibility continued from start to finish. "No one ever says farewell" – those in the most vulnerable temporary roles, such as the hourly paid, "are never introduced to anybody so why should you be given a farewell?"

This invisibility enabled a second dehumanising aspect of casualised academic labour, **vulnerability**. A number of respondents explained how they were given contracts to start teaching in September but which required unpaid preparation labour over the summer. One interviewee described as "corruption" the example of a manager formally registering her as a member of support staff recruited by an agency, which was not true – but this meant she was not given academic rights such as a mentor, nor were payments required for her pension. "If I'd been treated properly I'd have had an extra year of pension," she complained.

Another academic, Keira, spoke of her relief at getting a permanent contract after years of casualised work because it represented "freedom to step away from compromised standards and people who break the rules." She gave the example of a supervisor insisting she add not only the supervisor himself as an author on one of her publications, but also his partner who had only a perfunctory involvement in the article (reading it once and giving brief comments, but no active involvement in the research). This was an unfair request, but one she felt powerless to resist as the continuation of temporary work and the promise of permanent work in the future seemingly depended upon this person.

Akin to the vulnerability of casualised staff, in their accounts of dehumanisation, was, thirdly, their **lack of agency**. Keira described years of working on temporary contracts before getting a permanent job, doing research for someone else whilst all the while trying to build the experience and CV to win permanent employment. The structure of hierarchy in research that empowers permanent staff with grants to employ casualised staff to help with their research is conducive to the university doing well, she reflected, "but not conducive to me being a person." She was "despondent at this time," as "you start to look unemployable if you have been an RA [research assistant] for 6 or 7 years." Her manager – who held the grants that employed her – wasn't a great manager, and PDRs (annual reviews) in particular were very negative, as she was being told she needed to publish more articles and get more grants. However these were the very things she wasn't being given the freedom to do, with her time spent facilitating his career: temporary contracts rarely allow the same time to research and publish that established academics get, and are frequently fewer than 12 months long or less than 100% of time. Keira described this situation as "the systematic destruction of my self-esteem and dismissal of my personal ambitions", with her teaching not being appreciated and her individual research goals not being valued. "There wasn't a single PDR that I didn't leave in tears," she said. She used psychologist Martin Seligman's famous term "learned helplessness" to describe her state, a condition that can be observed in laboratory rats and dogs if they are punished indiscriminately and end up docile and dulled. It was a striking and disturbing evocation of dehumanisation.

Churches, schools and universities depend on trainees for their long-term health, and schools and universities depend on short-term employees when the demand for teaching and research assistance outstrips the availability of permanent staff. Temporary staff are amongst the most marginal and invisible, and institutions can all too readily mistreat them by failing to recognise their equal personhood.

Part 3: Conclusions and recommendations

Summary: Recognising personhood

As a child at school, Guy admitted that he didn't really apply himself as much as he could have done. However at university, he told me, he "discovered a real love of history." After graduating he wanted to experience first-hand some of the places he had studied, so took a gap year travelling around the USA seeing key sites of the civil rights struggle. He was particularly moved by visits to places significant in the biography of Rev Martin Luther King Jr., such as Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery. In doing this, he developed a keen sense of the value of education, and returned to university to do a PGCE and train as a history teacher. He has remained in this profession because, he said, teaching is "about making a difference in kids' lives."

Guy's vocation illustrates two key ideas in this report.

First, teachers, academics and church leaders (and others) are generally **intrinsically motivated people**. This has implications for how they are managed under contemporary models of 'Human Resource Management' (HRM).

Second, the African-American tradition of theological anthropology, in particular the ethical-political understanding that humans are created 'in the image of God' as epitomised by Martin Luther King, provides an insightful way to think about how people are treated in the workplace by **insisting that their humanityis recognised**.

This expands our ways of thinking ethically about how to make good workplaces. For example, the issue of women struggling to gain promotion after returning from maternity leave has been highlighted in this report. This is not simply a legal issue about equality, a moral issue about justice, or a utilitarian issue about wasting talent. That it is an issue about recognising their humanity is a different and more fundamental argument, underpinning all these other issues.

This report identifies eight aspects of work that are humanising when present or dehumanising when absent. There are certain ways in which individual schools, universities and churches are constrained by structural factors such as national policies. But there are many ways in which they can make their workplaces humanising or dehumanising. These will be elaborated in the recommendations.

Although some scholars consider the term '*human resource*' to be conceptually problematic, interview data did not explicitly suggest widespread unease at its use. Indeed, some people wanted more contact with 'HR' as institutional recognition that they were visible and valued members. Hiring, sick-leave, and other contractual issues need handling by someone. Perhaps it is less important what that department is called, than how people are treated. Affirming the humanity of people in the workplace is the issue, and that is not solely the responsibility of personnel units. By our actions we can all contribute to making workplaces humanising – or dehumanising.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

To treat people well in the workplace, we shouldn't just ask about workloads, stress, or if they are being treated fairly and equally - important though these are. We should also ask: are they being treated in humanity-affirming or dehumanising ways? Are they being treated, not just as resources, but, as Martin Luther King believed, as beings of superlative intrinsic worth?

This report has sought to answer the question, "What does it look like to be treated as a proper human being at work?" It doesn't offer 'recommendations' in the style of 'do X and Y and Z will happen.' Rather, it has introduced the experiences of real people, and invited the reader – be that manager, HR director, church congregation or leadership, workplace staff collective, or all of us as individual workers – to reflect on our workplaces and, perhaps more challengingly, our own practices in them.

So, the recommendation is that you engage with the examples of people presented here, and ask what they say about your workplace – is it humanising or dehumanising? Do you affirm the humanity of your colleagues – or dehumanise them?

WHAT TO DO:

Managers: read this report and ask (with your workforce), 'do our HR practices humanise or dehumanise our staff?'

Groups of colleagues (in staff meetings, CPD sessions etc) **or church congregations** (in church meetings, small home groups): read this report and ask, 'are we creating humanity-affirming or dehumanising workplaces?' if not, what can we do differently?

Individuals: read this report and don't simply use it as a way to criticise your own institution, Instead, ask, 'do my actions each day make my workplace more humanity-affirming, or are people dehumanised because of me?'

HOW TO DO IT:

Eight key themes are identified. These can act as points of discussion, for example one per session, meeting or consultation. The method is simple: a facilitator should provide an overview of the key ideas at the start of the report, then give the relevant section (or an edited extract from it) to staff to read, and staff should then discuss in groups, 'In what ways does our school/church/university department/other workplace look like this?'

For example, focus on either **freedom** or **cultures of care**:

Session on freedom: With their skills, most people interviewed for this report could probably earn more money doing other work; indeed, some of the people encountered took significant pay cuts to pursue what they see as important work. This intrinsic motivation needs harnessing. Does your workplace recognise this by giving staff the autonomy and opportunity to innovate, to make a difference in people's lives? Or do top-heavy institutions, by well-meaning procedures and excessive surveillance and performance management, get in the way and prevent them from doing this?

Session on cultures of care: everyone can make the effort to build the cultures of care that interviewees found so humanising. How good are you at showing appreciation for people in your workplace?

> We need to put into practice what Jesus taught us. You'd expect those who do believe in God to offer an alternative model to the world.
>
> **Mark, church leader**

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS: SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The first seven factors identified in this report apply to churches, schools and universities, and probably apply more widely. But for the eight factor, employment conditions, specific recommendations emerge from this research:

Schools

1 Be better at enabling staff returning from maternity (or other similar) leave who adopt flexible working practices to assume positions of leadership and responsibility. The Department of Education recognises that flexible-employment arrangements (such as job shares or part time work) can work well for senior leadership in schools, but are considerably less common in teaching than other professions.[1] As one senior leader said in an interview, "if you want to go part-time in school, the assumption is you lose your leadership role." One response may be to actively develop a culture of job shares for senior leadership and responsibility roles.

2 Trust staff more in approaching audit exercises like Ofsted. Teachers work very hard because they are motivated to help young people enhance their lives through education, not because they want a particular school to rise up league tables or attain certain Ofsted categories (although they may be proud when their school does well in these). Ofsted inspections are unavoidable, and schools need to do well in them, but school leaderships have considerable leeway in how they approach Ofsted. Losing sight of the purpose of education by an undue focus on audit outcomes, micromanaging data production, and creating cultures of blame is not only stressful but dehumanising. Good schools will trust their staff, recognise their intrinsic motivation, and help them work as a team to succeed together in audits: this is humanity-affirming.

Churches

1. Deal with abusive congregations. Churches afford unparalleled freedom and autonomy for leaders and congregation to develop specific ministries in the church, community and beyond. But some congregations can misuse this freedom and create toxic environments for their leaders. At worst this leads to situations akin to constructive dismissal. The most egregious examples of employment practices in this regard I encountered were in churches, and the stories of them were far too frequent. This may be because in churches the boundaries between 'work' and 'life' are more fluid than for schools and universities. This issue may best be addressed by denominational structures: not simply reactively supporting clergy during crises, but proactively coming into churches and assisting congregations to reflect on their practices. This could occur at inductions but also on a regular but infrequent basis, eg bishops/archdeacons or regional ministers visiting individual congregations to preach on the theme or lead church meetings.

2. This (point 1) is particularly the case in with **looking after trainee clergy**, who are more vulnerable. Denominational structures and seminaries should provide greater ongoing support for trainees, and education for congregations in how to treat them.

[1] Department for Education. 2017. *Flexible working in schools: Guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, academies and free schools.*

> The art of leadership is not to spend your time measuring, evaluating. It's all about selecting the person. And if you believe you selected the right person, then you give that person the freedom, the authority, the delegation to innovate.

Accenture CEO, Pierre Nanterme, announcing abolition of annual performance reviews, 2015.

Universities

1. Curtail the culture of casualised labour. The increasing reliance on casualised workers for the delivery of teaching or for assistance in research is one of the most dehumanising aspects of the university workplace. There will always be a role for temporary staff. But they should not be treated as second-rate 'Teaching Fellows' or 'Teaching Associates' often on contracts of less than a year and at less than 100% hours; instead, employ more permanent staff, and employ temporary teaching staff as temporary lecturers with equal status as demonstrated by equal provision of office space, access to travel funds, mentoring, and time in their contracts for their own research and writing as this is important to enable them to build up the CVs to obtain permanent jobs.

2. Trust staff by creating cultures of minimal performance management. Recognise the intrinsic motivation of staff by creating the conditions for them to succeed and giving them the autonomy to do that, rather than seeking to micromanage and monitor their behaviour and performance. Universities do need to be seen to perform well in certain external audit exercises, but they have significant leeway and autonomy in how they approach these. As Michael, a retired professor with significant management experience in the university put it, "Mostly, academics are highly self-motivated, they don't see the university as a big amorphous organisation where they can try and find a corner to hide in and get away with not doing much. You need to get out of the way a bit and let them get on with it."

Interview extract

Question:

What can universities do to ensure that staff are treated in humanity-affirming rather than dehumanising ways?

Answer:

"Not have teaching fellows."

Kyle, academic

"Remove the target culture that is a manifestation of top-down culture."

Michael, academic

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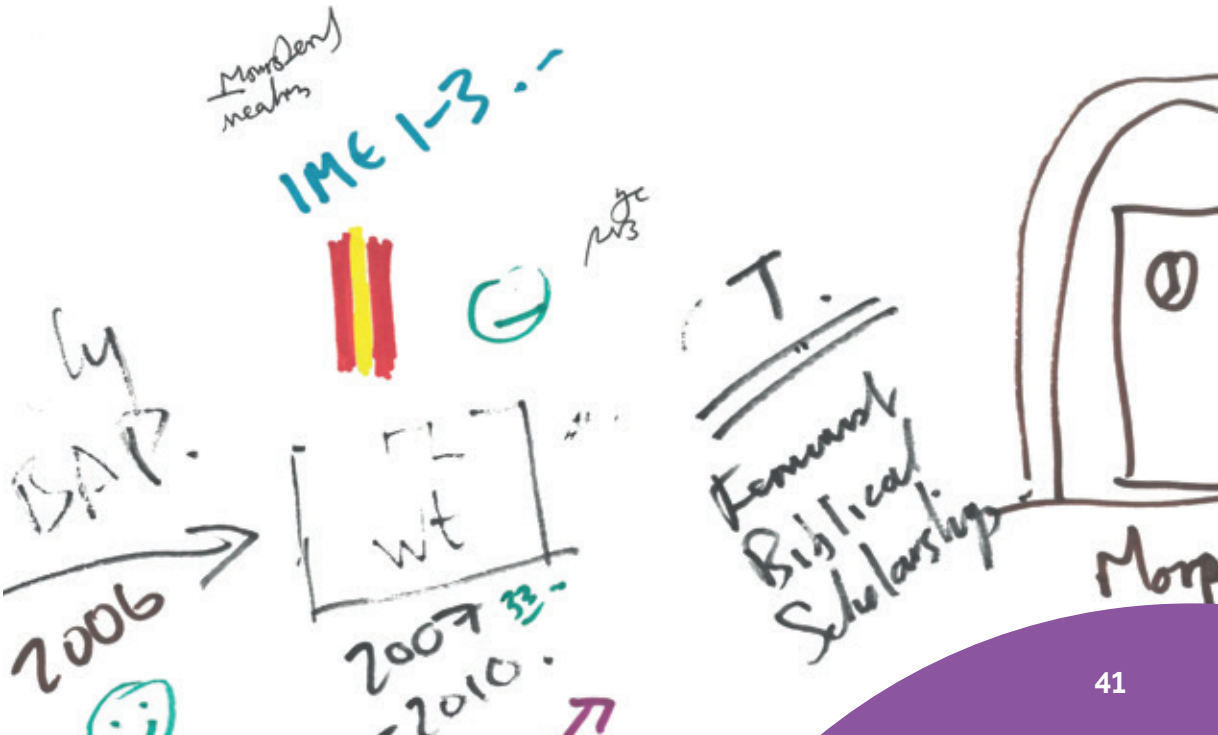

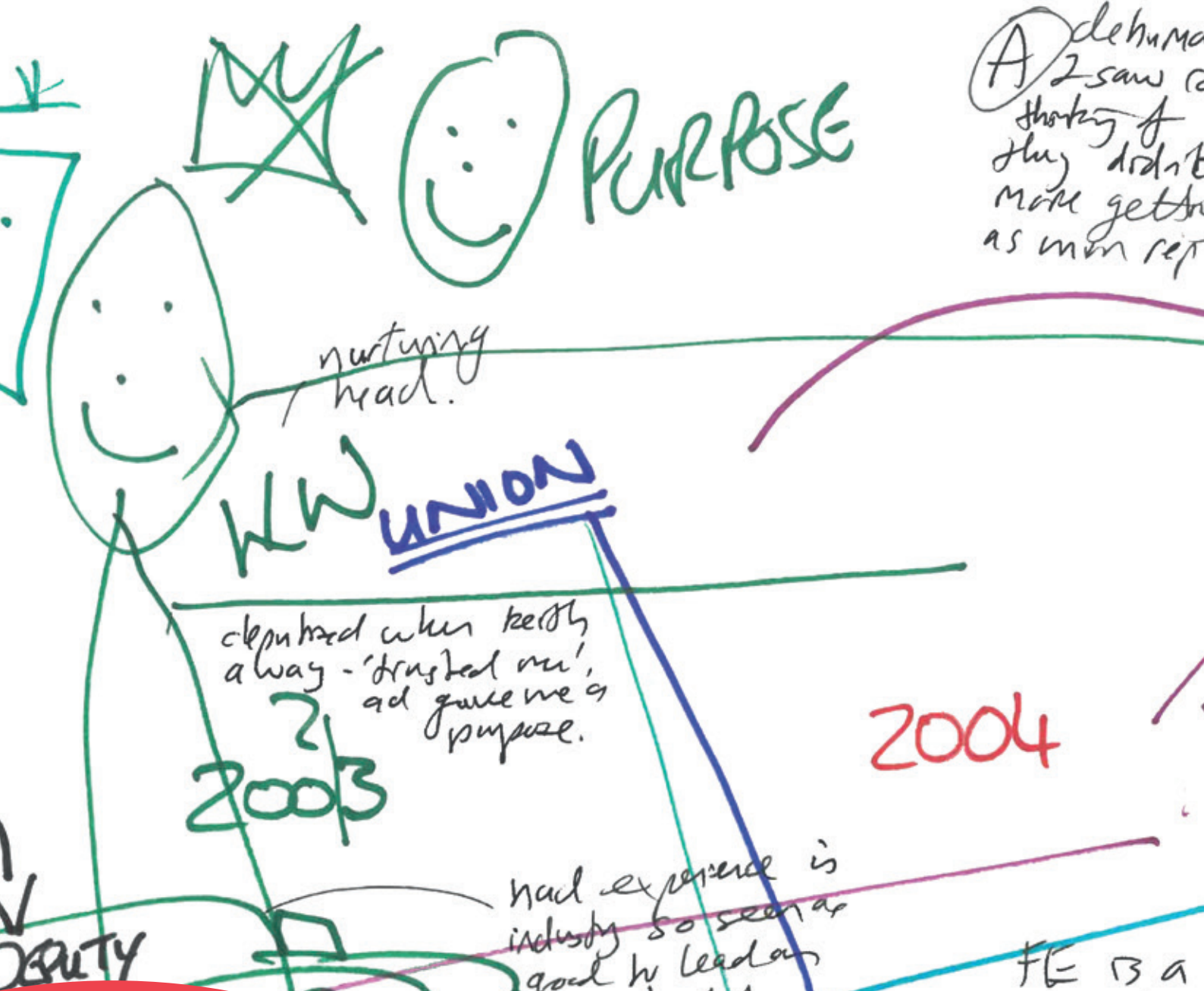

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