

# FOCUS ON FAITH

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## THE BEST IS YET TO COME

The reality of the global financial crisis was brought home locally last week with the announcement that Bridgnorth's largest employer, Novelis, was in consultation with its workforce regarding the company's future and potential redundancies.

There's no doubt this is an extremely distressing time for those involved and I for one know both from first hand personal experience and from my professional life how difficult and demoralising it can be. It's happened to me twice – first in my late twenties when the firm I was working for closed the office at which I was employed and secondly some 20+ years later when I was offered a "package" by the company I went to work for.

Subsequently though I went on to a new role with the world's largest "outplacement" company specialising in helping people who, due to company reorganisation, restructuring or disposal, have had to make the demanding decision to lay off staff. I still occasionally "keep my hand in" as a consultant helping people to develop their personal marketing materials (CVs and application forms) or advising on interview preparation as they try to work out their next career move.

Obviously each person involved in a situation like this approaches it in their own unique way. I've worked with

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some folks where it was a relief and the "best thing since sliced bread" because they'd been considering a move but hadn't got round to it. But for the majority sadly it's more about "putting bread on the table" as they contemplate how they are going to pay the mortgage and meet all their other personal and household bills.

Situations like this place enormous strain on family life as anxiety and worry set in. It often creates a crisis of confidence in people as they reconsider what the options are and how they are going to face the inevitable job search process, interviews and starting out all over again when they eventually find a new role.

And then there are the questions such as "why has this happened to me and why now?" or "what could I have done differently?"

Thankfully there is much more assistance available these days. I well remember the first time I had to queue up outside

the old "Labour Exchange" in order to sign on feeling embarrassed as people I recognised walked past me on their way to work. Nowadays Job Centre Plus has a more "user friendly" approach with timed interview appointments and banks of PCs to help in the search for employment vacancies rather than rows of cards stuck on a wall.

But whilst it is often disheartening to be in such a position, let me try and bring some reassurance. These are not meant to be well-meaning platitudes – remember I've been there and found out from experience there is life after a setback of this nature.

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The Bible records the Apostle Paul in a famous passage that's often read at weddings says there are three eternal qualities – **faith, hope and love** (1Corinthians chapter 13). Whilst he cites love as the greatest of these, it's the other two that I'd like us to consider.

Faith in Biblical terms is not blind obedience or "que sera, sera" – it's proactively trusting that there is a purpose in life. Often we do stumble seemingly by chance into a career or maybe a relationship but I believe that if we are willing to entrust our future to God He will guide us.

And hope according to the Bible is not wishful thinking but a sincerely held belief that God – who Jesus referred to as a heavenly Father who only gives "**good gifts to his children**" – will not abandon us in times of catastrophe or uncertainty.

Bad things do happen to good people through no fault of their own but thankfully good people happen to bad things. Adverse experiences and often tragedies form and mould us just as much, if not more, than the pleasant ones. Partly this is because we have to come back to the realisation that we can't make it alone in life – we need other people, and especially God, around us supporting and encouraging us.

Each of us has a history but we also all have a destiny. And when we seek God in sincerity the Bible promises, "**The Lord will guide you always**" (Isaiah 58:11).

Maybe the best is yet to come.

To find out more about the Christian faith and resources available plus information on local Churches together with contact details, please log on to [www.lifting-jesus-higher.org.uk](http://www.lifting-jesus-higher.org.uk).