

# EXPLORING FAITH, WORK and ECONOMIC LIFE

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## INTRODUCTION

Workplace Ministry is part of the generic movement often described as 'Industrial Mission', which was an attempt by the Church to connect with industrial life. initially the Sheffield Steel Works, through the enthusiasm and dynamism of Ted Wickham who called the church to demonstrate its relevance' upon all human activity even to those who are insensitive to the religious dimension.'

Wickham saw the key role of chaplains being to support lay Christians in their witness which was both pastoral in terms of support for individuals and organizations but also prophetic, in the sense of challenging systems and practices which go against the heart of the Gospel. He described it as engaging 'with the principalities and powers of modern society.'

In *Laborem Exercens*, the late Pope John-Paul II wrote: 'Man is made in the image of God partly through the mandate received from his Creator to subdue, to dominate the earth'. While we might prefer the image of stewardship today, this concept encourages us to see work as promoting values of human progress and cultural improvement and encourages the concept of Good Work as was outlined by Christian Schumacher in his 1980s book, 'To Live and Work'.

Schumacher's concept of 'Whole Work' rests largely upon his catholic theology of the Eucharist, where God and nature are united. For him the Holy Communion is a model of the true process of transformation, in which the bread and wine, themselves the product of a number of transformations through harvesting, fermentation and baking are transformed into symbols of God's grace.

This concept is familiar to many Church traditions and expressed in the well known Offertory Prayer:

***Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation.  
Through your goodness we have this bread to offer,  
Which earth has given and human hands have made,  
It will become for us the bread of life.***

Schumacher saw the division of labour on the production line leading in many cases to a deterioration of human relationships in which people became commodities thus leading to a feeling of alienation.

As Sue Howard and David Welbourn explain in the book, *The Spirit at Work Phenomenon*, much of our business thinking arises from Adam Smith's famous book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). 'It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self interest. By promoting his own self

interest, he frequently promotes that of society more effectually than when he intends to promote it.'

Their book available from Amazon UK has much to contribute to our knowledge of what is happening in the workplace around this topic in both the US and here in the UK. Howard and Welbourn go on to point out that, 'No one can look objectively and dispassionately at global capitalism-surely the ultimate outworking of Adam Smith's philosophy- and deny that it has served to create massive inequalities in our world, both within and beyond nations.'

We could well today add the comment that the global credit crunch can to a large extent be laid at the same door.

Since the Millennium there has been a deeper interest shown by many businesses in what is often known as the Spirit at Work Movement. And through such diverse organizations as Cranfield University and the Benedictine Douai Abbey, where Father Dermot Tredget and David Welbourn co-founded the Spirituality in the Workplace Movement.

Dr Bridget Adams in her book *Christ in the Marketplace* speaks of Business Chaplaincy as being at the interface, 'where it can represent the Church in the work world, and represent the world of work in the church world.... A Christian chaplaincy offers pastoral support and an authentic spirituality that can help overcome the consequent alienations that arise out of an alienation from God.... Equipping the transformed to become transformers of the world around them'.

### **Why the Church should go to Work and what we are doing about it in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.**

In the last National Census there was a free question about what faith people belonged to. Over 70% of this nation said they were Christians when they could easily have remained silent. In a Gallop Poll of about the same date, 70% of these said they believed Jesus was the Son of God. In other words nearly 50% of the UK believes Jesus is the Son of God - an amazing statement that some have been trying to understand the importance of, and ask what it really means for Christians on our journey of discovery.

However, according to the figures maintained by Peter Brierley of Christian Research at that time, far fewer than 10% of the population ever attend any church. Has the Church lost its market place? More recently some church attendance figures seem to be growing but this has been greatly influenced by some of those who have chosen to come and work in the UK from countries more steeped in attending church regularly such as Poland. Indeed the Polish Church in Bedford, St Cuthbert's, has taken on a new lease of life recently!

Meanwhile most of the population have not lost their spirituality or sense of belief – most commonly defined as that which gives meaning and purpose to life. Indeed, just as most churches are complaining that we are becoming a more secular society and less interested in religion, there does seem to be a growing interest in spirituality, spiritual intelligence and so forth, in young people and the workplace. This is being increasingly addressed by personal development consultants and organisational transformation facilitators, often from outside the church, with rather less interest being shown by the Church who could have a great deal to offer people in this quest.

Some years ago a team led by the Revd David Clark, then at Selly Oak College in Birmingham, was looking at the subject of Christians in Public Life. In this context Public Life meant not at home and not in church. He was focusing particularly on what support the churches give to Christians in their daily work, and commissioned a series of articles on this subject over a four year period. He brought these together in a book called: *Changing World; Unchanging Church?: Agenda for Christians in Public Life*. In essence at the turn of this Millennium the Churches were doing very little to support Christians in their daily work and for many their work was not seen as a Christian activity at all, unless it was for the so called caring professions!

In the last Century some organisations such as The Industrial Mission Association ([www.industrialmission.org.uk](http://www.industrialmission.org.uk)) and the Industrial Christian Fellowship (ICF - [www.icf-online.org.uk](http://www.icf-online.org.uk)) have been addressing this issue but often with shrinking resources and less Church interest. Indeed many current local Industrial Mission units, or more recently called Workplace Ministry or even Church and the Economy units, have to be self funding with little or no support from their local Church or churches. Some rightly remain ecumenical, whilst others only receive financial support from the Anglican Church. However whilst these are constantly trying to change and modernize some parts have a distinctly last-Century feel to them. Newer organisations that are interested in Christianity and work are springing up but have usually remained relatively small albeit many punching above their weight. These include Chrism (Christians in secular ministry ([www.chrism.org.uk](http://www.chrism.org.uk))) with its many ordained members as MSEs (Ministers in Secular Employment) and usually NSMs (Non-stipendiary Ministers)); CABE (Christian Association of Business Executives – [www.cabe-online.org](http://www.cabe-online.org)) recently going through somewhat of a renaissance with the launch of their 'Principles for Business' – (see [www.principlesforbusiness.com](http://www.principlesforbusiness.com)); MODEM encouraging dialogue between those interested in Leadership and Organisation and Theology and Ministry with its e-zine Spirit in Work (the voice of leadership, management and ministry - [www.modem-uk.org](http://www.modem-uk.org)); Faith in Business Quarterly – a magazine published by the Ridley Hall Foundation and ICF ([www.ridley.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk)); and the recent amalgamation of two

organisations to form Transform Work UK a loose federation of Christian organisations in work places who wish to transform the world of work through their One-Stop Portal, providing resources, networks, forums, events, and encouragement to inspire Christians across denominations in the UK to: serve their workplaces faithfully, pray for colleagues, employers and company, share faith with others, and provide an opportunity to learn about Christian faith and practice ([www.transformworkuk.org](http://www.transformworkuk.org)).

Clearly in this diverse age we now live in employers have to run a fine line between making space for one faith or denomination over another. Usually by insisting that if they assist members of one faith that they will help similar groups from other faiths and that their staff are not to be subjected to a 'hard sell' from any group. Some organisations in the spirit at work mould have set themselves up as being for those of all faiths and none such as the International Center for Spirit at Work and Spirit in Business (ICSW - [www.spiritatwork.org](http://www.spiritatwork.org) and [www.spiritinbusiness.org](http://www.spiritinbusiness.org)) both presently lying dormant but both having done much good work especially ICSW with its International Spirit at Work Awards to organisations demonstrating that they are practicing 'spirit at work' for their staff and clients. A list of past awardees and the factors contributing to these awards can be seen on the spirit at work website.

We also know that whilst there are good organisations that do enable people to bring their whole self to work – body, mind and spirit and practice a good set of ethics (see Institute of Business Ethics established more than 25 years ago by CAGE and now sponsored by all the main stream religions [www.ibe.org.uk](http://www.ibe.org.uk) ) and work to sound Christian principles (often shared by other faiths) there are many examples of bad business with bad or even evil practices as we have seen recently through Enron and similar scandals. It is argued that in a capitalist society it is not the creation of wealth that is evil but rather the way in which it is distributed and used. Many feel the latest banking crisis is just a call for us to make Christian Principles even more central to business. Recent Hugh Kay memorial lectures by CAGE would attest to this.

So if these are some of the issues what are we doing about it in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire?

Firstly, the Diocese of St Albans promoted a recent General Synod debate on Faith, Work and Economic Life which culminated in the following motion being put and carried: That this Synod:

- a. affirm daily work, be it paid or unpaid, as essentially a spiritual activity;
- b. recognize the importance of Christian values within economic life;

- c. encourage bishops and clergy to give greater priority to equipping and resourcing Church members through teaching, prayer, affirmation and celebration, to fulfil their vocations, ministries and mission in their places of work; and
- d. request the Mission and Public Affairs Council to:
  - i. convene a symposium on a theological understanding of work for today (as outlined in an attachment)
  - ii. compile a collection of supportive resource materials for church members (as outlined in a further attachment).

During this debate the then Bishop of St Albans, the Rt Revd Christopher Herbert, made a point which we would echo, that in his experience of his time as a member of the General Synod some 90% of all debates were inwardly focused with a mere 10% having an outward focus. As such he was delighted that his Diocese was putting the motion forward. This is the big issue. How to turn from being an 'introvert' church to one that reaches out to people where they are (could this be at work?) and not where the church would like them to be (in the pews?).

Secondly, by continuing to support Workplace Ministry in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire ([www.workplaceministry.org.uk](http://www.workplaceministry.org.uk)). WMHB is ecumenical initiative supported by the senior regional church leaders of the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army and United Reform Churches.

The environment in which WMHB is operating is part of a maelstrom of change in the economic life of the nation as a whole. The issue of how the church relates to a diverse and multi cultural society is a greater challenge than it was twenty years ago.

Its vision is to encourage a positive connection between faith and economic life and be a transformative presence in the workplace founded on the principle that God's love is for all people. This principle inspires, underpins and permeates its work.

What does this mean in practical terms?

WMHB has one of the most proactive chaplaincies in the UK with over 35 chaplains (the majority voluntary, both lay and ordained) providing support to thousands of employees in the emergency services (Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue;) transport (London Luton Airport;) manufacturing (General Motors, Luton;) and retail (Waitrose, Sainsbury's and John Lewis.)

It also supports *fresh expressions* of chaplaincy. There has been a growth in the interest in a number of chaplaincy posts to the larger super markets and in town centre ministry. The initiative in Watford which is an associated chaplaincy is an independent beacon initiative in

Hertfordshire and a model of best practice contributing to social cohesion, diversity and community.

New developments in chaplaincy include opportunities in the media, leisure and hospitality, regeneration and the waterways.

Chaplaincy is only one of the key strands of our work but not the sum of it.

WMHB affirms that Mission in the Economy (MITE) is a task for the whole Church. It recognises that the relationship between faith and the economy needs to be a more prominent aspect of the Church's learning and development and over the next three years we will be preparing the ground to launch a new initiative and a network of faith in the economy - enablers to strengthen and make a more positive connexion between our work and our faith.

How important then that Workplace Ministry makes a positive contribution to the Church's wider mission helping it to live on the margins and from there to witness to Christ and his Kingdom.

This approach echoes strongly with the thrust of the statement made to the Crown Nominations Committee for the appointment of the new Bishop of St Albans as well as the recommendations in the Methodist Conference report, *Let your Light Shine*, that, being a Christian presence in the economic life of our society (in our case Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire) ought to be a priority for the Churches (developed through Partnership) as an integral part of an ecumenical approach to Mission and Development. And who knows where this will lead – possibly to a re-invigorated church with more new members transforming the way it works.

Want to know MORE..... [www.workplaceministry.org.uk](http://www.workplaceministry.org.uk)

## **Session 1**

### **Towards a Theology of Work**

#### **Aim**

To enable course participants to get beyond the Sunday-Monday divide and see that God is interested and involved in our work, whatever it is and wherever it takes place.

*“Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:17*

The Christian life is lived out in the world not inside the church building. In order to understand how to be the distributed Church (which is what most of us are for all but a couple of hours a week when we are the gathered Church) we need to understand that work is theologically important.

#### **Input Guide**

Work is an intrinsically theological issue! Theologian Jurgen Moltmann writes; “A person’s conception of work always stands in close relationship to his or her understanding of the gods, or of the meaning of his or her life.” For example, Ancient Greeks believed that Mount Olympus was a work free zone; so for them work was only for slaves, not freemen. We don’t think that. Why?

#### ***In the beginning...made in the image of a God who works***

We only get 5 words into the Bible before the concept of work appears. “In the beginning God created”. Various OT passages refer to the creation as the work of God’s hands (see eg Ps 8:6). We believe in a worker God, who is still actively at work in his creation. And God has job satisfaction; “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good”. The Bible also tells us that we are made in his image;

“So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” Gen 1:27

- We are made to work, and to have job satisfaction.

#### ***Alienation....separated from that God and losing job satisfaction***

The story of mankind’s disobedience told in Genesis 3 has explicit effects on human work. God tells Adam “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.”

Gen 3:17

- Work becomes toil.

We all feel this tension in our working lives; work can be satisfying and a real blessing, but it can also feel like a curse. The negative side of the working experience is alienation, a word Karl Marx used. Through the fall (whatever that means to us it somehow describes our separation from God) we are alienated from God, and that in turn means we are alienated from our work. Reading the whole Genesis story we will find that we are alienated from each other, from the rest of creation and from our true potential. All of these feed into negative work experiences, such as bullying and exploitation. When we restore our relationship with God through Jesus then we restore these relationships too. How?

### ***Transformation...the work of the Holy Spirit***

When we become followers of Jesus we are filled with the Holy Spirit, which transforms us. "So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image." 2 Cor 3:18

- We are transformed by the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit enables us to work alongside God (connection, eg 1 Cor 2: 11-16)
- The Holy Spirit equips us to work alongside God (gifts eg 1 Cor 12)
- The transformed become the transformers

But we are living in the "now and not yet"; the Kingdom is not here in its fullness. We still feel the affects of alienation, not least because we work in fallen structures alongside other fallen people. It won't always be like that!

### ***A new beginning...the new heaven and the new earth***

As Christians we wait for the day when Jesus comes back and sets the world to rights. Both the OT and the NT promise a new heaven and a new earth (eg Isa 65: 17 and Rev 21; 1). So does that mean that everything that we do now is meaningless because it will be destroyed when the new heaven and earth appear? I don't think so. Consider

- Isa 65 promises that on the new earth "my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain". Work will be redeemed.
- Paul writes that on the day of the Lord each man's work "will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's

work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.” (1 Cor 3:17) Our work can be used to build the Kingdom now.

- The whole flow of the Bible is from a garden in Genesis to a city in Revelation; this is the city of God, the new Jerusalem, but it still somehow represents the work of people. It is built not created, and this says something about our work.
- The parable of the talents (Matt 25) is a story specifically about how we are to wait for Jesus to come back. And it's not in idleness! It's about growing his Kingdom so we have something to show him when he comes.

### **Discussion**

- In your experience, how is work experienced as both a blessing and a curse? Do you feel the tension in different areas of your work?
- We all have God given skills and talents (gifts). How do these help us decide what work will give us personally most satisfaction?
- Jesus was a businessman, and he chose people from the workplace rather than from the religious institutions to be his first followers. Out of 52 parables Jesus told, 45 had a workplace context. In the book of Acts business people play a key part in the growth of Christianity; (eg Paul, Lydia, Dorcas, Aquila and Priscilla) and historically Christianity spread along the trade routes. What does this mean to us about being a Christian at work?

## **Session 2**

### **In the Marketplace.**

#### **Aim**

To encourage us to see that the Marketplace (the place of work) is a mission field and a place for Christians to be engaged in ministry and that a Chaplain to the Market Place has a valuable contribution to make, not just to other Christians, but to those of other faiths and none.

Our town centres are full of people at work, it is estimated that an average married couple in the UK spend over 70 hours a week (combined) at their place of work and although less than that spent in the early nineteenth century when many people started work before sunrise and didn't finish until after sunset we spend 100.000 hours of our lives, at work more than any where else. We need to understand our response to the call into the work place. Many people face the daily stress of being in the market place, worried about their work performance and whether their position is safe. The work of a Chaplain can enable these concerns to be dealt with.

#### **Input guide**

The Bible contains accounts of those in the market place and the blessing they can be to others:

#### **Acts 18 verse 1 – 18**

Paul joins Aquilla and Priscilla in their tent making business.

#### **Colossians 3:23**

Whatever you do, work at it with all of your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men

#### **Ephesians 6:6**

Work hard, but not just to please your masters when they are watching. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

#### **Proverbs 16:11**

The Lord demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standard.

## Discussion

How does this compare to your attitudes and market place role. Do people see Christ in you because of your behaviour and values?

How can you make changes to your market place activity that will enable people of all faiths and none to see that you are different from others?

In being a Christian or having the role of Chaplain in the market place we must seek to be Jesus' representative to all people, regardless of their faith or none faith position.

This means understanding the position of others, respecting their right to be who they are, building relationships that will grow and develop over time to allow a discussion and sharing of our faith values in Jesus.

It is not difficult to develop these relationships as a chaplain by visiting and meeting with the various faith leaders in your town. Developing an understanding of other faith groups beliefs and culture.

In the market place to offer to care for Christians, those of others faiths and none by::

- To listen to their concerns with out judging or commenting on their personal stance. Listening skills are vital in the market place to develop relationships that can lead to faith sharing or good chaplaincy practice.
- By being sensitive to the faith context of other market place colleagues and knowing when their faith festivals are.
  - Offering to pray – this is often the first time a Christian has offered to pray for others in the work place. Regardless of the other persons faith or no faith position to pray for them or their family is usually a welcome activity.
- The outcome of these is that you start to show true concern and are for those in the market place. By holding to your own faith without compromise, yet respecting the faith position of others it is possible to develop long term and close relationships with those of differing beliefs. Indeed many other faiths are only too pleased to find Christians who will not compromise their belief, yet are able to care for, pray for and be true friends and colleague.

## Discussion

- How can you be more like Jesus in your market place role?
- What do you need to change, an attitude, a misunderstanding?
- What do you need to develop, how good are you at listening to others, for example?

## Closing comments:

The market place is a truly normal place to be working out our faith, either as employees in that market place or as chaplains to the market place. Both have a role to play in being Jesus to each person they meet. Changing attitudes and atmospheres by the way we are. By allowing the Jesus of scripture to permeate our every being that others may meet him through us. To be the carers, those who people look to share and talk things over with, to make time for others, to listen rather than preach a sermon. To realise that the market place is our calling, our very own mission field.

## Remember:

**“Ministry that costs nothing, accomplishes nothing.”**

**John Henry Jowett, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Preacher.**

There is no standard recipe for integrating your faith and your work. It is different for every person at every company. That's why it is so challenging. However, here are some excellent ideas for you to use in being intentional about shaping your personal journey.

- ✠ Have an organized prayer life so that God will strengthen you, focus you and lead you in every aspect of your work life, especially in your efforts to influence others for Christ.
- ✠ Conduct yourself in a manner completely consistent with what God would want ... a life beyond reproach. Be strong, yet gentle, action oriented, yet patient, tenacious, yet never bowing to pressure or stress.
- ✠ Love and accept everyone that you come in contact with. This is not tolerance, but genuine, active, demonstrated love and acceptance.
- ✠ Serve your co-workers, clients, and vendors. Be a humble, consistent servant whose caring turns the heads of everyone.
- ✠ Know what you believe and why you believe it. Have and be constantly pursuing a knowledge of the Scriptures.
- ✠ † Have a sensitivity for when to speak, and when to just listen.

- † Be ready, willing and able to "give a defence" of any aspect of your faith, when the situation calls for a defence.
- † Be a "sought after" resource for Biblical truth and God's answers to life's tough questions.
- † Be consistently investing in relationships and building trusted friendships, with the intention and purpose of helping people move one step closer to Christ.
- † Be willing to tell your story, in part or in whole, as a witness to what God has done in your life.
- † When led by the Spirit, help your "trusted friend" to step over the "line of faith," either by leading him there personally or by bringing him to a pastor or friend who has the tools and experience to lead him into a relationship with Christ.
- † Follow through with new believers to help them grow.

### **Session 3**

#### **Christians at Work**

#### **Aim**

Too many Christians have never considered how to do the practical aspects of their job from a faith and biblical perspective. This session encourages your thinking around a number of themes.

Giles Legood, editor of *Chaplaincy: the Church's Sector Ministries*, says in his introduction:

Sector Ministers are paid to spend their working time with those who are not church members (those the church claims it most wants to reach). Paradoxically, it is chaplaincy posts which are often the first to be examined when questions of 'downsizing' are being faced by the church, even though many of the institutions they serve (for instance a University or a major Retail Outlet or an International Airport) are the size of small towns.

Stephen Heap, (Chaplain to BELIEF) writes:

This (being in the marketplace) is core work at the edge, reaching people other parts the church does not normally reach. Reality has changed. The church used to be at the centre – now it is increasingly at the margins. That is the brutal reality. The church now is a marginalised rump of its former self. This is a post-modern people in a post-Christendom age in which the church tells one story amongst many and represents one faith amongst many and is no longer at the centre but increasingly on the margins. “

#### **Discussion**

What is your understanding of the phrase “Mission shaped Church”?

#### **Input Guide**

Dr J I Packer in an essay, *Hot Tub Religion - Towards a Theology of Pleasure*, argues that pleasure is good and God-given. In *Hot Tub Religion*, however, Packer suggests that human happiness becomes the highest objective and feeds a belief that we can confidently look to God to shield us from all unpleasantness.

He also suggests that devotees of this religion make the Church look like the world, "driven by the same unreasoning desire for pleasure seasoned with magic".

## Old Testament

**Daniel 6:3-5** “Now Daniel so distinguished himself among (his peers) by his exceptional qualities that the King planned to set him over the entire kingdom.....They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. “We will never find any basis for charges against Daniel unless it has something to do with his God”<sup>1</sup>.

## New Testament

**2 Peter 3:10-12** “The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar... Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.”

## Discussion

Do you agree that the lifestyle of a Christian should be different from others?

- Reflecting on Peter's words, how do you think that lifestyle will be evident to others?
- How should our lifestyle create opportunities for us to talk about our faith at work?
- How might we begin to share our faith at work?

## Old Testament

**Nehemiah 5.6-7**“When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. “You are exacting usury from your countrymen.” So I called together a large meeting....”

## New Testament

**Eph 2:13-16** "Now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who made the two one (that is Jew and Gentile) and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility."

## Discussion

- How should our relationships at work reflect the peace Christ has brought us?
- Can Christians witness to the difference their faith makes at work?
- Should Christians witness or evangelise in the workplace? Is there a difference between being a “witness” and being an “evangelist”?

## Session 4

### Prosperity with a Purpose

#### Aim

The environment in which Christianity currently sits is part of a maelstrom of change in the spiritual and economic life of the nation as a whole.

It is impossible to look in detail at the complex relationship between our faith, life work and the global economy. The aim here is simply to kick start some reflection and thinking in an attempt to start bridging the divide between our faith and the harsh realities of the world in which we live.

#### Luke 18 25-27

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God,” said Jesus. Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” He replied, “What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.”

#### Input Guide

“**Prosperity with a Purpose – Christians and the Ethics of Affluence**” is the name of a report produced by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland in 2005. It states that all mainstream Churches in the British Isles support the idea that, under the right conditions, economic growth can serve God’s purposes.

These conditions are:

- That humanity is seen as one human family, with a universal bond of solidarity
- That wealth creation and the pursuit of social justice are inextricably linked
- That market forces encourage economic growth but are regulated in the interests of the community
- That the environment is safeguarded by substantial efforts to mitigate the harm caused by pollution
- That advancing prosperity leaves no-one behind; not children, retired people, those who care for families, disabled people, not any other section that is vulnerable or liable to neglect
- That globally, priority is given to those whose economies are burdened by unmanageable international debt, or those who are victims of unfair international trading conditions
- That the structures of civil society are renewed so that local communities can shape their own future.

**Discussion:**

What kind of society do we want to live in?

- What are the demands of justice in a more prosperous world, when many are still poor?
- Can the pursuit of self-interest serve the common good?
- How do competition, inequality and risk relate to one another?
- Does the inexorable quest for profit and gain at all costs harm our society?
- How can work contribute to the enhancement of God's purpose in creation?

With God, all things are possible. Prosperity with a Purpose makes important recommendations and points of principal so that all can share in increased prosperity and well-being, and that poverty is alleviated.

## Session 5

### Principles At Work.

#### Aim

Go through each of the 6 priority aims – check understanding, is there anything missing, could they be expressed more clearly?  
Consider individually and then discuss in groups what is going well and what areas could be improved for you in your workplace.  
Get feedback from all groups – which area do we think is our biggest gap? Explain why and what we might be able to do about it. Pray in pairs for guidance.

#### Input Guide

##### 1. Corporate Values

These are most helpful if everyone is working for the same organisation, however they are generic and could equally apply to most people in any organisation.

Clearly we can't change many of the areas – unless we are the owner/a director but we can have an influence in many of them.

Discuss in pairs one area you think you can influence and pray together about it.

##### 2. Personal Qualities – part 1

Do the gap analysis in the guide on p13-16 of the Principles resource pack. In groups discuss your strongest areas and the ones you struggle most with where you need God's help. Identify the top 3 struggles and share with the wider group. Consider whether those areas a challenge outside work as well/at church. Are there any discrepancies e.g. caring for others is easy within our family/church family but not something we consider at work; serving others vs personal ambition? Where is our heart? Do we role play at work? Do our thoughts and actions match?

Read Daniel 6:1-10

Which personal qualities (from the CABE Principles list) did Daniel display?

v10:

- there was no debate – he went straight to pray
- there was no deception – he did not hide but was totally transparent
- there was no deviation – he did just as he had done before – the same in and out of work.

Pray through Daniel 6:26-27.

### 3. Personal Qualities – part 2

Take the 5 (depending on number of groups) business principles we find most difficult in our workplaces e.g. serving others (19), care (26), forgiveness (27), prayerfulness (28), interpersonal behaviour (29).

In groups prepare a 3 minute presentation on one of the principles which answers these 3 questions:

- a) Why is this Business principle such a struggle to live out? *(give at least one example from your workplace)*
- b) what are some of the Biblical principles we need to hold onto in seeking to live out this Business principle? *(no more than 2)*
- c) what are some of the workplace tips which come about by applying the Biblical principles into our daily working lives? *(include a couple of real examples from your workplaces)*

Conclude by praying in your group what you discussed and for the change you want to effect at your work.

**CABE****Principles for those in Business**

An input embracing corporate responsibility and personal values, drawn from a Christian perspective. The Principles resources comprise 31 Principles one for each day of the month.

**Priority Aims****1 Serve wholeheartedly,**

as if you were serving the Lord, not men and women, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does." *Ephesians 6 v 7,8*

**2 Strive for Excellence:**

As leaders we strive for excellence in all that we undertake, and aim to play a full part in contributing to the overall success of an organisation. We are serving God directly through carrying out such activities effectively, as well as the actual business in which we work; it may be a strictly commercial organisation, a public service or a not-for-profit charity.

**3 Create Wealth:**

We affirm the principle of wealth creation as a process through which the resulting economic prosperity has the potential for benefiting humanity throughout the world. However, we shall challenge whether the particular form of wealth creation in which we engage is contributing to the Kingdom of God. Within a single business, we aim to fulfil our role in achieving acceptable financial and operating returns that will benefit appropriately all stakeholders in the business.

**4 Achieve Targets:**

We strive to assist in developing and setting targets for business goals which, when achieved, will lead to a successful and sustainable business. We aim to contribute personally to a successful financial outcome through target achievement by our own endeavours. We shall uphold the principle of wealth creation by taking all possible steps to achieve optimum business results, whether commercially or not-for-profit.

**5 Attain Vision:**

Healthy organisations have a strong and shared vision for the future of their business. We seek to contribute to a strategic vision for whichever organisation we belong to and intend to help optimise the way forward for this business and its employees. We hope to be visionary in the expression and witness of our personal faith in Christ, both at work and in our local communities.

## **6 Work Ethically:**

Business ethics are essential in guiding employees and managers in their actions. Leading businesses care how results are obtained and will choose the course of highest integrity in guiding their affairs, avoiding such malpractices as price collusion. Honesty is not subject to criticism in any culture. Compliance with the law, and required business accounting regulation and practice, will be the duty of each employee.

## **Corporate Values**

### **7 Trust**

lies at the heart of any successful and enduring personal or business relationship, so each organisation will do everything possible to establish and maintain the trust of all its stakeholders. We strive both as individuals and leaders to build trust within our teams, particularly as Managers and Directors, and aim to take specific steps to achieve this vital objective.

### **8 Customer relationships**

are of primary significance for any business. Success depends on the ability to satisfy ever-changing customer needs. We expect to be innovative and responsive while delivering high quality goods and services. We will respond to customers' complaints effectively and with seriousness and respect. We seek to safeguard in confidence all customer information, both corporate and personal.

### **9 Employees**

create the distinctive competence and capability of each organisation. We seek to develop imaginative, fair employee policies that will encourage colleagues to work effectively, and to find real meaning and purpose in their roles that will embrace body, mind and spirit. We aim to be open and honest with all staff members, and seek to reinforce clear and fair terms of employment and related remuneration. Through establishing supportive relationships we aim to show our concern and help motivate team members. We expect to provide equal opportunities in the workplace, and encourage staff to develop new skills and progress their careers.

### **10 Diversity**

We are committed to maintaining a workplace enriched by diversity, and characterised by open communication, trust and fair treatment for all employees, business partners or visitors irrespective of race/colour, gender, age, sexual orientation, class, creed or education..

### **11 Providers of capital**

play an essential part in a successful business. We seek to enhance the long term value of our business by running it responsibly and successfully, so that this participation will be rewarded fairly and appropriately. We

shall contribute fully to the achievement of the financial success of the business so that this objective may be realised.

## **12 Suppliers**

depend on sales to the business for their commercial prosperity, and we expect to establish open and honest working relationships with all suppliers. Our aim is that each supplier should provide a high quality and reliable service for the goods and services procured, at an acceptable price. We seek to pay suppliers in accordance with agreed terms, and aim to procure goods and services from those who demonstrate good ethical practice.

## **13 Community and environmental interests**

are major concerns in society. We aim to encourage businesses to maintain appropriate environmental standards and to pay due attention to the specific interests of the local community. We strive to conduct business in accord with applicable environmental laws and regulations, while seeking to improve environmental performance. In addition, we expect to encourage businesses to develop and implement realistic corporate social responsibility programmes that will be demonstrably beneficial to the wider community.

## **14 Stewardship,**

making the best possible use of and conserving scarce resources, is a vital objective from both a corporate and an individual perspective. This presents an opportunity for creative solutions in given situations, and possibly the adoption of counter-cultural approaches that will avoid waste and use resources more sparingly through some form of recycling.

## **15 Corporate Reputation:**

A well-founded reputation for scrupulous dealings with customers, employees, investors and suppliers is a priceless asset. Such reputations depend on the effective leadership of Directors and Managers in relation to employees and the external bodies representing stakeholder interests. Businesses should take every opportunity to implement ethical practices and to introduce imaginative external initiatives. Such reputable practices, with a demonstrable commitment to quality, should form part of every Annual Report.

## **16 Life Balance**

continues to be a struggle for everyone in today's world of work. The challenge is to achieve a balance between commitment to the organisation and to family, local church, community and life beyond work. Accepting that no perfect solution is possible, we strive to enable a fair allocation of commitment, time and energy between these varying demands. We aim to persuade senior colleagues to adopt family-friendly working practices, and we expect, as a leader, to apply this flexibility within our own area of responsibility.

## Personal Qualities

### 17 Personal Behaviour:

'As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.' *Colossians 3 v 12-17*

### 18 Commitment:

We aim to be faithful and committed in all the tasks and roles that we undertake, adopting an approach that is actively supported by prayer. We seek to balance this commitment in relation to the various calls upon our time, so that each aspect of our lives is allocated a fair span of energy and attention. It is our aim to demonstrate personal integrity in all such decisions we take, aiming to serve one another with humility, which admits that we have nothing that we have not received and acknowledges our insufficiency.

### 19 Serving others

will be a hallmark of our lives, balanced by a choice of priorities that determine which individuals or group of people are appropriate for our personal attention at any given time. We always seek to be genuinely interested in the lives of the people we meet and discern their needs. This may lead us to make a sacrificial choice through opting for the least attractive alternative when faced with competing demands.

### 20 Courage:

We seek to follow the strength of our convictions rather than accept automatically the views and decisions that are put to us. We are prepared to face opposition firmly based on these heartfelt and tested convictions, but strive to find bridges which provide solutions that are generally acceptable to others. This quality requires an underlying strength and preparedness to speak out for the truth. We draw on our faith to affirm a stand that may be unpopular, but which we believe to be the right course of action to be taken.

### 21 Justice:

In each situation we meet we aim to exercise justice, and to discern the appropriate balancing of rights and claims in a given human context. We recognise fairness to be a concept that is good in itself, since it calls on us to put ourselves in the place of others and act accordingly: 'Do to others as you would have them do to you'. We seek to reach conclusions that are unselfish and tempered by moderation, involving self-control to deter us from exerting undue personal influence.

**22 Openness and Honesty**

in all dealings is a key aim, so that this will stimulate trust in every encounter. We strive to avoid deceitful actions and to display integrity in all the activities with which we are involved. We seek to build a personal reputation for trust and reliability, so that there may be a genuine responsiveness in situations with others that might otherwise be fraught. It is our aim to be known as someone who is entirely reliable and upon whom one can depend in times of difficulty.

**23 Resourcefulness:**

We endeavour to respond positively to whatever events and occurrences that may befall us, even if completely unexpected and critical in nature, such as an accident or explosion. We believe that our inner faith will give us a resilience to address such situations pragmatically, and enable us to assess priorities for assisting those adversely affected. We rely on our faith to provide us with a positive outlook, even in the darkest of circumstances, seeing that our life view is set in the context of eternity rather than the current moment.

**24 Creativity:**

Inherent in the majority of human beings is the capability to think beyond the confines of everyday existence; we support a view that takes advantage of this God-given creativity. We believe that such creativity draws upon the latent talents and skills that lie below the surface and is essentially a force for good. We recognise that progress is normally achieved through the introduction of new concepts, and that this can bring with it the need for change, which can be painful.

**25 Joyfulness,**

which we hope will be demonstrated through the grace and beauty of divine joy in our lives. We delight in fun and laughter, rejoicing in the world, its beauty and its living creatures. We aim to mix freely with all people, ready to bind up the broken-hearted, and to bring joy into the lives of others. We strive to carry within us an inner peace and happiness which others may perceive, even if they do not know its source.

**26 Care:**

We aim to show a sympathetic response to all we meet during the course of our professional and business lives. Inspired as disciples by love, we seek to practice an ongoing caring relationship with work colleagues, family and friends. Where it may be necessary to take tough decisions in our work, the implications for those affected will never be far from our thoughts. Wherever possible we seek to ameliorate adverse effects of decisions and endeavour to give gladly of ourselves, remembering that genuine love frequently involves sacrifice.

**27 Forgiveness:**

We aim to practice a forgiving approach when experiencing painful opposition or personal attacks. It will be our intention to adopt a conciliatory approach that, despite implicit rights or wrongs, will enable the particular event to be set aside and forgotten, so that the parties involved may move on. If this may mean that difficult personal exchanges will be necessary, we see it as beneficial to come to terms with the reality of each situation for those issues to be resolved.

**28 Prayerfulness:**

We seek through prayer to discern the divine will for our lives; we recognise that we cannot fulfil these aims unless our lives are supported by prayer. We use prayer as the means of communicating with God and seek to pray regularly, whether daily in specific times of prayer or from time to time in our working lives. Our purpose will be both to listen to God and to offer given situations for His blessing. We aim to give ourselves the necessary time to make such prayers possible, and regard attention to prayer as a priority for our personal spiritual development.

**29 Interpersonal Behaviour:**

'Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.' *Romans 12 v 9-13*

**30 Maintaining personal integrity:**

We are committed, in the face of so many temptations, distractions and personal difficulties that beset us, to remain true to ourselves and to faith in our God. We are reminded that nothing whatsoever can separate us from the love of Christ, and we are determined to live our lives according to our perception of God's will for us personally.

**31 Contributing financially:**

We all expect to give generously when discharging our community responsibilities, based on the widely recognised principle of tithing. For those of us who are highly paid because of market circumstances, we strive to give a disproportionately higher level of our assets and income to community or charitable ventures that we feel committed to or are inspired by.

***Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation.  
Through your goodness we have this bread to offer,  
Which earth has given and human hands have made,  
It will become for us the bread of life.***