

International Presbyterian Church - Ealing

Why business matters to God?



Divine imperative of wealth creation...and the awesome responsibility

Richard Turnbull, February 2021

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

Why business matters to God?

- 18<sup>th</sup> January *A biblical theology of work*
- 22<sup>nd</sup> February *Divine imperative of wealth creation*
- 15<sup>th</sup> March *Call and vocation*
- 19<sup>th</sup> April *Enterprise and entrepreneurship*
- May *In person discussion evening*

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

Overall aims and objectives

- Understand the role of business and the economy in God's world
- Appreciate the theology and biblical teaching around work, business and the economy
- Recognise the distinctive contribution that a Christian can bring to bear to questions of calling, ethics and values

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

Biblical theology of work

- Work has intrinsic value and reflects God's glory
- Creation mandates demonstrate importance of work
- All human work reflects God's character, not just spiritual
- The Bible shows the central place of work, business and entrepreneurship
- The Bible warns against both laziness and oppression

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

Wealth creation and wealth responsibility

- Morality and the market – basic principles and moral challenges
- Wealth creation as a biblical imperative
- Wealth creation and spiritual responsibility
- Morality and the market – theological principles and the response to poverty

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

'Capitalism survives because it still satisfies the basic, simple impulses of ordinary men and women. It will not continue to satisfy them however, without the bedrock provided by the Judeo-Christian tradition....It gives certain answers to ultimate questions that modern philosophy or modern thought of any kind cannot provide.'

Irving Kristol, in 'The Disaffection from Capitalism and Socialism,' quoted in Griffiths, Morality and the Market Place.'

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

'Of all the systems of political economy which have shaped our history, none has so revolutionized ordinary expectations of human life – lengthened the life span, made the elimination of poverty and famine thinkable, enlarged the range of human choice – as democratic capitalism.'

M. Novak, The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism, p13

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

Reasons cited as to why capitalism is working:

- Encourages Personal Responsibility 33%
- Provides Equal Opportunities 29%
- Promotes Individual Freedom 24%
- Creates Wealth 11%
- Other 3%

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

Reasons cited as to why capitalism is not working:

- Encourages Greed 34%
- Does not provide Equal Opportunities 28%
- Creates Poverty 14%
- Creates Inequalities 11%
- Other 13%

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

Wealth creation as biblical imperative

- The economic creation mandate (Gn 2:15)
- Provision of resources (Gn 2:8-14)
- The goodness of gold (Gn 2:12)
- Development of enterprise (Gn 4)
- Development of skills (Ex 35:30ff)
- Parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30)

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

Wealth creation and spiritual responsibility

- Renouncing all (Lk 14:33)
- The disciples in business (Mk 2:20)
- Varied response to wealth (Lk 18:19-27, Lk 19:1-10)
- Other examples – the women (Lk 8:1-3); Paul the tentmaker (Ac 20:33-35); Lydia (Ac 16)

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Morality and the market – theological principles

- Positive mandate to create wealth
- Private property
- The family as the basic economic unit
- The relief of poverty
- Accountability and judgement as part of economic life
- Moral behaviour is essential to the functioning of the market and to economic justice

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

‘strongly bespeaks a higher agent, by whose transcendental wisdom it is that all is made to conspire so harmoniously and to terminate so beneficially’

Thomas Chalmers, *Natural Theology*, volume 2.4.4.6

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

‘we cannot translate beneficence into the statute-book of law, without expunging it from the statute-book of the heart.’

Thomas Chalmers, *Natural Theology*, volume 2.4.4.6

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Divine imperative of wealth creation

Principles for using wealth and capital

- *Invest* – skill, microfinance, social enterprise, Christian work
- *Educate* - teach the church about the value of the business enterprise and teach the commercial world the value of faith principles.
- *Give* - to God, to church, to family, to those in need, to gospel work, without strings.

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