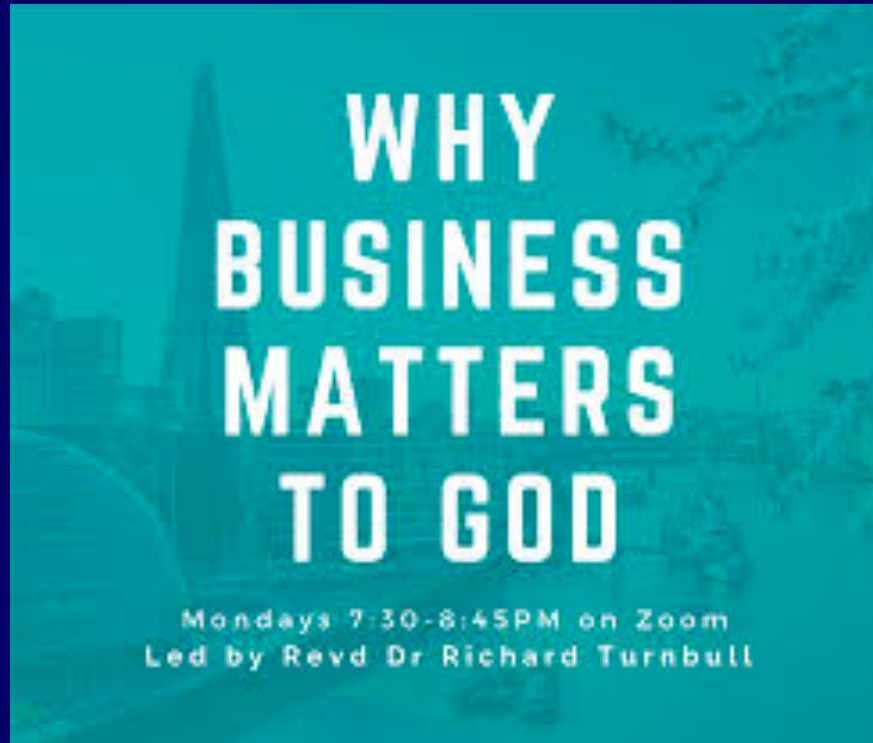


International Presbyterian Church - Ealing

Why business matters to God?



Richard Turnbull, May 2021

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- January *A biblical theology of work*
- February *Divine imperative of wealth creation*
- March *Call and vocation*
- April *Enterprise and entrepreneurship*
- May *In person discussion evening*

Why business matters to God?

‘the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables.’

Dorothy Sayers, *Why Work? An Address Delivered at Eastbourne, April 23rd, 1942* (London: Methuen, 1942), p18

Why business matters to God?

‘...is the business of the Church to recognise that the secular vocation as such is sacred.’

Dorothy Sayers, *Why Work? An Address Delivered at Eastbourne, April 23rd, 1942* (London: Methuen, 1942), p. 17.

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‘Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let that admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God’s excellent gifts.....What then? Shall we deny that the truth shone upon the ancient jurists who established civic order and discipline with such great equity?.....Shall we say that they are insane who developed medicine, devoting their labour to our benefit? What shall we say of all the mathematical sciences? Shall we consider them the ravings of madmen. No, we cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without great admiration. We marvel at them because we are compelled to recognise how pre-eminent they are. But shall we count anything praiseworthy or noble without recognizing at the same time that it comes from God?’

John Calvin, *Institutes*, II.2.15

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‘The vocation of the businessperson is a genuine human and Christian calling...The importance of the businessperson’s vocation in the life of the Church and in the world economy can hardly be overstated. Business leaders are called to conceive of and develop goods and services for customers and communities through a form of market economy. For such economies to achieve their goal, that is, the promotion of the common good, they should be structured on ideas based on truth, fidelity to commitments, freedom and creativity.’

Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection*, 4th edn (Vatican City: Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, 2014), p. 5.

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‘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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‘In an ideal world capitalist work would be necessary....contrary to a widespread belief among the clergy that good work and capitalist work are inconsistent with each other.’

Deirdre McCloskey, *The Bourgeois Virtues*, p462

Why business matters to God?

Key questions

- Foundational importance of robust theological and biblical framework
- Understanding how and why the church has failed business

Why business matters to God?

Getting the theology right

- Clear, robust appreciation of the creation principles
- Idea of the sovereignty of God over all things
- Recognition of dignity of the human person
- Challenge of discipleship in fallen world

Why business matters to God?

‘Business matters to God because the idea of business represents a fundamental aspect of God’s purpose in creation and call to humanity to work and create wealth. Business matters to God because He equips humanity with gifts of innovation and creativity for use in His world over which He is sovereign. Business matters to God because He remains sovereign over a fallen world. Business matters to God because it is a field of discipleship and faithfulness in a fallen world. In short, business matters to God.’

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How and why the church has failed business?

- Failure to appreciate Calvin's two-fold knowledge of God
- Prioritisation of spiritual over secular
- Pietistic turn inward
- Over-emphasis on role of the state

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Some questions

- The purpose of business
- What is good work?
- What is good wealth?
- What are good business ethics?
- How can the church help?

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