

Kenneth Adams, CVO,CBE

Kenneth Adams, who died at the age of 92 on July 1st 2012, was a long-standing advocate and pioneer of improved understanding within the Christian churches of the purpose and conduct of business and the wealth creation process.

He served in the army throughout World War II in the Middle East and North Africa and continued his military career until 1959, attending Staff College in 1953. On leaving the army he was invited by Bishop Mervyn Stockwood to become the secretary of the South London Industrial Mission (SLIM). He then worked for Hay's Wharf Ltd where he became a director and he also held other non-executive directorships.

In 1969 Kenneth was appointed as Director of Studies and later as Fellow at St George's House, Windsor Castle. This began his forty-year association there and the work to which he dedicated himself, most notably in the series of consultations on 'Attitudes to Industry' in which he sought to counter the anti-industry attitudes of the 1960s and 1970s. These discussions culminated in the designation of Industry Year 1986. He was especially concerned to address negative attitudes within the Christian churches towards the activity of business. He became Chairman of ICF in 1977 after a traumatic period in its history and steered it into its modern form, including writing many of its Theme Pamphlets, until he handed on in 1988. One outcome of his efforts was the establishment of the God on Monday project (now Faith in Business) at Ridley Hall Cambridge by its then Principal Hugo de Waal. Kenneth wrote, discussed and lectured widely and tirelessly to overcome prejudice and misunderstanding within the churches about the creation of the wealth upon which society depends.

Kenneth Adams drew deeply upon his Christian faith and was concerned for its practical application in his life and in society at large. He wished to see the highest standards upheld in the conduct of business and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Institute of Business Ethics when it was set up in 1986 by the Christian Association of Business Executives (CABE); he served on its Council and as its President for many years. He was distressed at the culture of greed that emerged in business, as manifested for example in excessive pay awards.

Throughout his life Kenneth was a dedicated and committed servant of the Church of England and worshipped faithfully at the great Chapel of St George at Windsor. The liturgy and traditions of the Anglican Church sustained his thoughtful and warm faith. He became Chairman of SLIM, Vice-Chairman of the Archbishops' Council on Evangelism and a member of the Board for Social Responsibility. His services and dedication were widely recognised. In addition to becoming a CVO and receiving the CBE he was given a Lambeth MA and a Templeton Foundation Award. Although he greatly appreciated these honours his life was characterised by personal modesty and simplicity.

Kenneth Adams shared his great wisdom with many friends and others with whom he came into contact. He was a man of great determination and integrity who served with courage and distinction in the many and varied aspects of his long life. We are grateful for the example he gave us.

Clive Wright

Clive Wright, OBE, worked for 40 years in the oil and chemical industries, with Shell, Esso and ARCO Chemical. He was a founder trustee of the Institute of Business Ethics, served as a Trustee of ICF and CABE, is a member of the Faith in Business Council of Reference and is former chair of the FIBQ steering group.