



*Light in the darkness: A Christian business*



bereavement to mention but a few issues. God calls us to care for those under our charge (1 Peter 5:2). By caring for our employees, we honour Christ in our businesses.

***Do we really care for our employees? If so, how do we show that we care for them?***

Other than employees, it is customers who are most likely to judge us as Christians in business. The Mitchell Group prides itself on exceptional service. Despite what he said about putting employees first, Mark also says 'It is all about customer care'. Such a statement is not unusual in the sales and service industry, but Mark, in his enigmatic style, takes this a step further. Each Christmas Mitchell Group celebrates a carol service with 1,300 of their customers at Chester Cathedral. Mark says 'customers are invited to sing

carols and hear the gospel gently and sensitively'. Once a month, Mark welcomes Men's Groups to invite their mates to the dealership for a 'Men and Motors' evening. After a few hours of test drives with the latest cars, consuming 'mountains' of Chinese food washed down with a few drinks, Mark takes the opportunity to reflect on life's challenges and the joys of being a Christian. Apart from being rollicking good fun, Mark has witnessed how these sessions helped to open men up, allowing them to express their innermost feelings and grapple with sensitive issues that are troubling them. ***How do we bear witness in the workplace?***

Mark continues to honour the Lord in all that he does, striving to operate his company in a manner consistent with biblical principles, by putting God first, people second and the business comes third. His example provides a set of challenging question for all of us running a business. ■

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## Who Paid for Paul's Travel?

In the last issue I wrote an article about the way Paul and his fellow church leaders travelled around the Mediterranean by ship. A week ago my copy of *Christianity Today* (March 2014) came through the door and I read about the work of Stephen Smith, one of the instigators of the Bibletch conference, a meeting for self-confessed Bible geeks. This led me to the work he has done on the costs of Paul's travel and below is a quote from the Open Bible project based on the interactive map of the 1st Century world produced by Stanford University. 'The apostle Paul went on three missionary journeys from A.D. 46 to 57, travelling around much of Asia Minor and Greece. In 60, he was also taken to Rome. ORBIS allows us to calculate how long these journeys would have taken in pure travel time (excluding time spent at each destination) and how much they would have cost.'

| Journey | Distance (miles) | Travel Time (days) | Cost per Person (denarii) |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| First   | 1,581            | 53                 | 237                       |
| Second  | 3,050            | 100                | 314                       |
| Third   | 3,307            | 92                 | 481                       |
| Rome    | 2,344            | 36                 | 699                       |

The geek in me made me wonder what that would equate to in terms of travel today. It would be nearly £20,000 for the trip to Rome, the equivalent of a return first class air fare to Sydney.

It brings into focus why Paul often referred to the generosity of his benefactors like Erastus, Gaius and Phoebe. Mission requires money and perhaps your calling in business is to have enough to give to support those who are in front-line ministry and mission today.

<http://www.openbible.info/blog/2012/07/calculating-the-time-and-cost-of-pauls-missionary-journeys/>. ORBIS is the Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World.

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