

Religion in the Workplace

by Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach



Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach

This is the 2007 Hugh Kay Memorial Lecture, printed here by kind permission of CABE. Lord Griffiths notes the extraordinary growth of the 'Faith and Work' movement, particularly in the USA, and makes a valuable distinction between Faith Based, Faith Neutral and Faith Friendly Companies. He concludes with a personal challenge to Christians to follow their divine calling at work through integrity, service and the development of people.

It is a great pleasure and privilege to be invited to give this eighteenth Hugh Kay Memorial Lecture. I knew Hugh Kay well and respected him greatly. He was a talented journalist, broadcaster and writer, and while a person of great faith he never hid his own struggles, not least from the problems of ill health with which he suffered most of his life. I owe him a great personal debt because as the director of the Christian Association of Business Executives he was the person responsible for encouraging, then prodding and finally insisting that I write on the subject of wealth creation and business. As a result it is a great honour to be invited to give a lecture in the memory of someone I counted a real friend.

The subject I have chosen for this lecture is 'Religion in the Workplace'.

The word religion could easily have been replaced by faith, which

would have made it more inclusive, informal and less emotionally charged, or by spirituality which would have made it seem less dogmatic, prejudiced and divisive. I have chosen religion, however, because it is a more challenging subject to relate to the workplace than either faith or spirituality. Some religions, in particular Judaism, Christianity and Islam, have a clear theological underpinning, an ethical teaching about what is right and wrong, holy days which are to be observed, and in the case of Islam certain clothes which should be worn and times at which prayers should be said; and along with Judaism dietary practices which must be observed, all of which have implications for the workplace.

For any believer to start with there is the question of discovering exactly what his or her religion says about work, business and wealth creation, something incidentally which is

far easier said than done. The three Abrahamic religions have as the basis of their faith a theology which includes among other things a certain view of the created world, the nature of the human person and the significance of work. Other religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism may not have so clearly developed a theology but they certainly have insights which need to be explored.

On the basis of this teaching an individual who takes their faith seriously will wish to explore how it relates to issues raised by the particular workplace in which they find themselves. What does it mean for example to show integrity in a financial transaction? How does a partner in a leading international accounting, law or investment banking firm maintain an appropriate work – life balance? How does the idea that 'my word is my bond' apply in a fast-moving negotiation? How does

one handle a conflict between being an agent and a principal?

The subject also raises issues for management.

How much knowledge of other religions should managers be expected to have? How should a manager deal with the zeal of a new convert who wishes to share his/her faith with others? Should people be allowed to wear jewellery which are religious symbols at their place of work? Should people who are opposed to same-sex unions be required to



Chatty receptionists in burkha

attend training sessions in order to better understand sexual preference? Should women be allowed to wear a burkha or a hijab (veil)? How should management respond to a person of religious conviction who refuses to travel on business to a certain Middle Eastern country? Should employees in a company have the right to hold a Christmas carol service? Or an Eid party?

All of these are practical issues faced by employees and managers in today's world.

The Changing Climate regarding Religion in the Workplace

What I find remarkable is the way in which these issues are now being discussed openly and seriously in the business world as well as in business schools. Not that long ago the subject of religion in business was a taboo subject. Religion and business simply did not mix. They were entirely separate enterprises.

Within the last ten years, however, Fortune magazine has run a cover article on *God and Business: The Surprising Quest for Spiritual Renewal in the Workplace*, Business Week has led with a piece on *Religion in the Workplace: The Growing Presence of Spirituality in Corporate America*, and there have been numerous articles in the Financial Times, the Times and the Wall Street Journal dealing with similar issues. In 2001 Laura Nash and Scotty McLennan of Harvard Business School published a book called *Church on*

Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life.

David Miller, who is the director of the Centre for Faith and Culture at Yale University, earlier this year published *God at Work*, which grew out of his doctorate at Princeton, in which he analysed the extraordinary growth since the early 1980s of what he terms the 'Faith at Work' movement. This is a movement which tends to be decentralised, made up of small groups, organised outside

of formal church structures and led by lay people rather than professional clergy. It tends to shun doctrinal disputes and transcends denominational barriers. The *International Faith and Work Directory* in the US lists more than 1300 groups, institutions and organisations that are in some way part of the movement.

This covers small and medium size companies but it also covers Fortune 500 companies. Many leading companies such as American Airlines, American Express, Boeing, Coca Cola, Hewlett Packard, Intel, Microsoft and Tyson Foods have informal faith at work groups, while others such as Ameritech, Deloitte, Domino's Pizza, Fedex, Ford Motor Company, Motorola, Timberland, Walmart and Xerox (and I could go on) have authorised formal employee groups, frequently under the banner of diversity initiatives or affinity groups, who meet regularly on company premises to discuss issues of faith and work.

An interesting question is why this movement has grown up.

One reason I believe is that employees today have very different expectations of the workplace from their predecessors. They are part of a culture which has placed a strong emphasis on the freedom to choose – not just for goods and services, but the freedom to choose their own value systems, beliefs and lifestyle. In a post-modern world which denies any sense of transcendence or absolute truth, all choices in this area are equally valid. People today are more

open about their views than previous generations and so expect the place at which they work to be a place where they can express their opinions openly.

Another is the desire of employees to integrate their faith with their work. People turn to faith to find a deeper meaning to life and to try and answer its most basic questions. They also find that faith brings with it a community in which they can develop close relationships based on trust, in what to many is an increasingly fragmented and impersonal society. In taking that



Martha Stewart

step of faith and becoming part of a community they soon find that faith is something which affects the whole of their life.

Faith is not restricted to attendance at a church, synagogue or mosque. Faith cannot be compartmentalised. It relates to the other six days of the week just as much as it does to religious observance on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday. A religious faith provides the contours of a worldview. Certainly the Abrahamic faiths all speak of origins and destiny, of

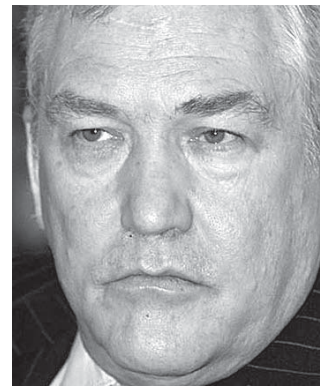
identity and purpose, of responsibility and fulfillment. Because of this people expect that at the very least what they do in the workplace should be consistent with their worldview, which in turn is rooted in their faith.

For people who work in business, the last few decades have not been easy. Takeovers and the growth of LBOs and private equity resulted in the charge that in the US and the UK the '80s and the '90s were decades of greed, symbolised by Oliver Reed's film *Wall Street* and Gordon Gekko's line 'Greed is good', and books such as *Barbarians at the Gate*, *Liars Poker* and *Bonfire of the Vanities*. Then we had the scandals of the 1990s involving Enron, WorldCom, Tyco and more recently Martha Stewart and Conrad Black.

One way in which people will explore these issues is by talking to people of the same faith with whom they work. They will be curious to discuss with their colleagues the meaning of integrity at work, the work-life balance, the tensions created by spending time making money, as well as the way stress, success, disappointment and failure should be handled. They will in particular wish to ask themselves how the tenets of their faith relate to the business principles of the company in which they work – and then to judge those standards by what actually happens in practice.

It might be said that all this could be done outside of the firm and within a religious institution. It could. The problem, certainly

from a Christian perspective, however, is that the typical vicar, pastor or priest knows very little about business and is therefore not really in a position to help. Indeed the Christian world has tended to treat business more as a necessary evil than as a place in which a Christian vocation can be pursued with integrity. From a company's perspective it is far better to ensure that people of faith feel at home in the company, that their religion is respected and valued, so that there is no inherent conflict between faith and work.



Conrad Black

Another reason the subject has become part of the business agenda is because of the significance of what is termed in today's management jargon, 'cultural competence'. Because of the migration of people and the growth of globalisation over recent decades, most multinational companies now employ people from many different faiths and a variety of cultural backgrounds. They operate in countries with very different cultural traditions from their own. Because of this, and the fact that religion is an important source

and ingredient of culture, managers in the companies require knowledge of religion and its significance in the culture.

The downside of mishandling these situations can create enormous negative publicity. In October 2006 a British Airways employee was asked to cover up her necklace, which was shaped like a cross. When she refused, she was placed on unpaid leave. She claimed it was

religious discrimination because Sikhs and Muslim workers were allowed to wear religious garments at work. This created a furore in the country at large, with Cabinet Ministers and over 100 MPs protesting, and finally the Archbishop of Canterbury calling BA's stance "deeply offensive".

BA ultimately backed down, stating that employees would be able to wear a symbol of faith openly. In another high profile case in the US in 2000, Liz Claiborne had to recall DKNY jeans which had verses from the Quran embroidered on the rear pocket. They were forced into a major u-turn. They issued an apology to the Muslim world, instituted change in their design process, conducted sensitivity training to prevent such a thing from happening in future and disposed of the recalled jeans as recommended by Islamic scholars and consultants.



■ *Nadia Erweida, who refused to hide the cross symbol she wore at the BA check-in counter* ■

One further factor which has influenced companies is legislation. In the US, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act 1964 'bars discrimination in the workplace on the basis of religion'. This was amended in 1972 to "require employees to 'reasonably accommodate' an individual's sincerely held religious observances or religious practices. The employer can avoid making an accommodation

only if to do so would constitute an 'undue hardship' on the employees business". In the UK the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations of 2003 which emanated from Brussels, and which applies to all organisations regardless of size, made discrimination in employment on the grounds of religion or belief unlawful. In the US

in 2006 over 2500 cases of discrimination in the workplace on religious grounds were brought before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

It should also be remembered that these developments have taken place at a time in history in which religion has been perceived to play a more significant role in public life. Religion was one factor, especially through the leadership of the Polish Pope John Paul II and the Polish trade union Solidarnosk, which led to the downfall of communism. While apartheid in South Africa

was built on a particular theology, religion was also one of the most powerful forces in removing it. The '80s and '90s were also the years which saw the emergence of the moral majority in the US as well more liberal religious groups being outspoken in their opposition to racism and poverty and their defence of women's and gay rights.

Faith-Based, Faith-Neutral and Faith-Friendly Companies.

Against this background I would like to examine the choices facing management in thinking about these issues. I should hasten to add that the views I express are solely my own and do not represent any company on whose board I sit or with which I have been connected.

I believe there are three distinct approaches which we need to think about, or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that there is a spectrum along which a choice can be made, in which these three models stand out conveniently as representative positions.

One approach is best described as faith-based. These companies would most likely be small or medium size, family owned or privately held and, crucially, companies in which one religious tradition was dominant. Then there are companies which are best described as faith-neutral, in which management have made a clear decision not to encourage the creation of affinity groups or employee networks based on religion or to allocate a particular room for prayer, meditation or

religious services. A third category is what David Miller usefully describes as “faith-friendly” companies, which respect the variety of religious traditions and spiritual identities among its employees, including those of an agnostic, atheist or humanist persuasion.

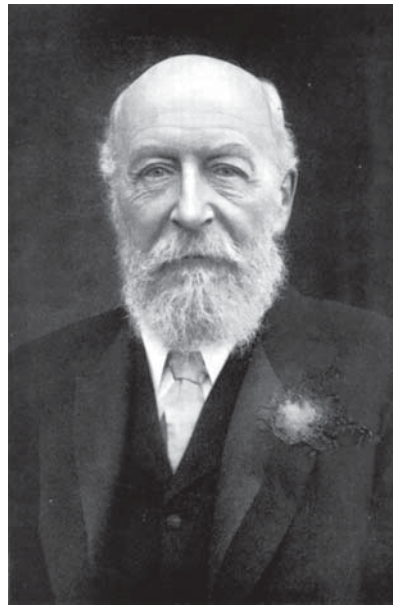
We need to consider each in turn in somewhat more detail.

Faith-based companies

The classic faith-based companies were the extraordinary Quaker companies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which included famous names such as Barclays, Lloyds and Gurney in banking, Fry, Cadbury and Rowntree in chocolate, Bryant & May in matches, Huntley & Palmer in biscuits, Lever Brothers in soap and then Price-Waterhouse in accounting, Swan Hunter in shipping and Clarks in shoes. Most of these companies were founded on explicitly Christian principles. They had a very positive view of the workplace. They believed in hard work, honesty and plain dealing. They were part of a closely-knit community and tended to employ if possible from within their own ranks, namely the Society of Friends. Business was viewed as part of the broader world of Quaker life and Friends were encouraged ‘to have a watchful eye over all the members’ (p34, *Quaker Faith and Practice*), to warn those heading for commercial trouble and if necessary to help them out. These traditions carried on into the twentieth century. For example, Sir George Cadbury who was chairman and chief executive of Cadburys and

who built up the company to be a major force in confectionary started the working day with a religious service.

It is easy to dismiss these companies as simply a reflection of the prevailing culture of the period. It is certainly true that while society then was not as diverse as it is today (certainly in



■ Sir George Cadbury ■

terms of other religions) we should remember that there were at that time also many companies which would never have thought of claiming that they embodied Christian principles in the way they went about their business. Indeed for some it would have been exactly the opposite. In addition, while starting the working day in business with a religious preamble may appear to us to be an anachronism, we should remember that the flagship BBC news programme *The Today Programme* has *Thought for the day* at 7.50 a.m.,

and that many parliaments, certainly the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and congresses such as the US Senate and House of Representatives, invariably start their daily proceedings with prayer.

I doubt however if today there are any companies, certainly among those trading on public exchanges, which could be described as faith-based.

The nearest I have experienced to this approach is company, ServiceMaster, on whose board I served for fifteen years. It was a service company with a turnover of US\$4-5 billion and was traded on the New York Stock Exchange but is now privately owned. Its culture grew out of a Christian background, but its workforce of over 200,000 included people of all faiths and no faith. It had four corporate objectives – To Honour God in All We Do, To Help Individuals Develop, To Pursue Excellence and To Grow Profitably. Each board meeting started with a reflection and a prayer. Harvard Business School wrote over a dozen case studies on the company and it was always the first objective which sparked controversy. The definition of God was left open and so people of different religions felt comfortable with the objective. The leadership of the firm went out of their way to ensure that it was inclusive of other faiths and because of this there were almost no objections to the first objective. The few that there were, and they could be counted on the fingers of one hand, were typically a letter to the Chairman at the time of the annual meeting and usually on the ground that

religion and business were entirely separate enterprises.

Such companies have enjoyed periods of great success. In their book on corporate culture and performance, Hesketh and Kotter from the Harvard Business School, who devoted significant resources to researching this subject, drew some interesting conclusions about companies with a strong culture. They claimed that the danger facing such companies is that they become over-confident, inward looking, cliquish and bureaucratic; leadership is replaced by management and so companies such as these can easily lose their way. Being sympathetic to faith is no guarantee of success.

Faith-neutral companies

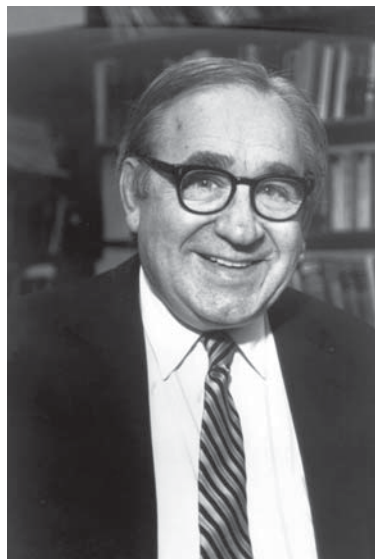
Another option open to management is to choose a faith-neutral approach.

The benign version of this is based on the assumption that we live in a pluralistic and largely secular society and that we should avoid at all costs giving offence to people's deeply held private views, we should recognise that religion and business are two entirely different enterprises and so the best approach is to separate religion from business. As a result a company should be careful not to endorse, however unwittingly, any particular religion, or to be associated with any religious symbols which might be seen to support, or promote one religion over another. Religion is best discussed and practised outside company premises.

The less benign version would argue that secularism is an ideology, that it has its promoters and that under the guise of political correctness it has supported the faith-neutral company to further its cause. Regardless of the reason for management choosing this option, this approach entails least risk in handling religion in the workplace.

Unlike in the past I now believe that this approach has a number of shortcomings.

One is that it fails to meet the expectations which employees have of the corporation in today's world, especially those who come from strong religious backgrounds. Such people will wish to discuss their faith openly with fellow believers within the



Robert Fogel

company and, for certain religions, would prefer a place where they can say prayers. In any case the probability is that, regardless of the wishes of management, informal religious

affinity groups will emerge, in which case it might be better for management to be seen to be accommodating and even welcoming them rather than being perceived as indifferent or opposed.

In this connection one should also note that the law, or regulations based on it, have become increasingly sympathetic to religious expressions in the workplace. For example, I was struck by the White House Guidelines on *Religious Exercise and Religious Expressions in the Federal Workplace* published in 1997 when President Clinton was in office. It stated that agencies:-

- “shall permit personal religious expression to the greatest personal extent possible, consistent with requirements of law and interests in workplace efficiency”
- “shall accommodate employees’ exercise of their religion”
- “shall not discriminate against employees on the basis of religion, require religious participation or non-participation as a condition of employment or permit religious harassment”

A third possible shortcoming of this approach is more complex and involves some background. It comes out of the work of the Chicago Nobel Prize winning economic historian, Robert Fogel. His thesis is that periods of religious and political upheaval in American history – what he calls Awakenings – are a response to rapid economic and technical

change. The First Great Awakening in the early eighteenth century laid the ideological foundations for the American Revolution, the second starting in 1800 for radical reforms including the abolition of slavery, and the third, from 1890 to 1930, for greater social justice, which launched the welfare state. The Fourth Great Awakening started in the late 1950s with a revival of what he calls 'enthusiastic religions' accompanied by a growth in church membership, leading to many single-issue campaigns regarding the family, abortions, schools - something incidentally which is in great contrast to Europe in which such a movement has been notably absent. He makes it clear that in this analysis he is not speaking as a religious person; in fact he goes out of his way to say that he himself is the secular child of the Third Great Awakening.

His argument is that if America is to continue to be an inclusive and egalitarian society, then the key aspect of inequality today is not the inequality in the distribution of material resources such as food, clothing and shelter, but the distribution of immaterial or spiritual assets, something which he labels 'knowledge capital'. He then describes these vital spiritual resources as "a sense of purpose, vision of opportunity, a sense of the mainstream of life and work, a strong family ethic, a sense of community, a capacity to engage with diverse groups, an ethic of benevolence, a work ethic, a sense of discipline, the capacity to focus and concentrate one's efforts, a capacity to resist the lure of

hedonism, a capacity for self-education, a thirst for knowledge, an appreciation for quality and self-esteem". He goes on to argue however that each of these fifteen qualities must be possessed in moderation. For example, too much of a sense of purpose turns dedication into ruthlessness. Too little purpose may cause one to be uncompetitive.

Many of the spiritual resources which he outlines, though not all, are equally important in corporate life and the issue which I feel he raises is that if their redistribution is crucial for the future of an inclusive and egalitarian society, what is the responsibility of the corporation in this connection, and in particular what part could or should religious people involved in the firm play in it.

Faith-friendly companies

A third category of companies are those termed faith-friendly. These would appear somewhere on the spectrum between faith-based and faith-neutral. In these companies religion in the workplace would be an issue on the diversity agenda along with race, gender, disability and sexual orientation. Any kind of discrimination against people because of their religious beliefs would not only be illegal but would violate the integrity of the corporate culture. A faith-friendly company would most likely have a written policy on the subject which would include religious holiday leave (whether paid or unpaid), dress code, the

variety of food provided for employees in the cafeteria so as to accommodate the religious needs of employees, the formation of on-site religious networks or affinity groups, decoration of office space and religious practice in the workplace, possibly with a room dedicated for prayer and meditation. It should be stressed



The Employees' Meditation Room at Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, USA. A Golden Rule picture is being presented, which has logos of major world religions and a quotation from the sacred texts of each. 'It will keep everyone who uses the space mindful of the respect being shown to all religions in the Mall of America way of doing things'.

that such a list as this is not a blueprint or a formula. It is more an approach, a frame of mind in which religious people feel appreciated rather than just tolerated.

Making a decision to be a faith-friendly company still leaves many questions unanswered. What words and phrases should be placed on the company's greeting card at Christmas? Should employees be free to hold a Christmas Carol Service? If there are *de facto* religious networks, should they be officially recognised or not? Given the sheer diversity of religions, how many should be represented? Can different religions be accommodated without alienating non-believers? I would not for

one minute wish to suggest that these are easy issues but I believe they are the ones we should be grappling with.

Let me sum up where I believe we have reached.

We started by arguing that over the past 25 years or so there has been a major change in the way religion is perceived as relating to business. Religion is no longer the taboo subject it once was. In fact religion has now emerged as an important issue on the diversity agenda of companies, which in turn has been underpinned by legislation.

Companies therefore have to draw up a policy as to how religion should be handled within the workplace. I very much doubt whether some of the practices of those early Quaker companies would meet the requirements of the law, were they to be around today. To the extent that investors wish to support or establish a faith-based company, it would almost certainly have to be small and probably family owned, and even then would need to ensure its policy on dealing with religion in the workplace fitted in with the law.

Faith-neutral companies which want to have as little as possible to do with religion are beginning to look like something of an anachronism in today's society. More importantly because of the suspicion by employees that to work in these companies they must leave their religion at the office door, the commitment the company will get from them might well be less than it should.

It should not come as a surprise therefore to observe the emergence of faith-friendly companies as the direction in which we seem to be heading, recognising of course that this still leaves many questions unanswered.

Religion in the Workplace – the Personal Challenge

I would now like to turn to the final section of this lecture, namely the personal challenge posed by the title of the lecture, *religion in the workplace*.

In addressing this aspect of the subject I can only speak within the limitations of my own experience. I am a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ. The Christian faith is first and foremost about a person and a personal relationship, a following of the risen Christ. It is a personal relationship however which is only really fulfilled within a community, the body of Christ, the Church. The important point is that the Christian faith in the first instance therefore is not a philosophy or a set of ideas or even a set of rules for everyday living. Having said that, my faith has been important to me in terms of my thinking. I have found it crucial to understanding my identity (who am I as someone created in the image God?), my destiny (is this life all or is there future life for which we should prepare?) and my vocation (namely the career or careers that I should choose to follow?). More than this, through

prayer, fellowship, the sacraments and the scriptures, faith for me has made all the difference in the world.

Before I look at some implications of this personal dimension of the subject however I would like to deal with one issue.

When we speak about the personal dimension of religion in



The Great Commission
Benvenuto Tisi Garofalo
The Ascension of Christ, 1510-1520

the workplace, this for many Christians raises the question of how we should respond to the Great Commission of Jesus as stated in the gospel of Matthew. Should the workplace be seen as a forum for evangelism? This is I believe an issue about which Christians need to be very sensitive to non-Christian colleagues. We must never deny our faith. Colleagues who work

with us however did not choose to do so because of our faith. They chose to work with us because of our professional competence and in an institution which had no obvious preference or bias in terms of religion. In this sense the workplace is very different from a university campus in which one of the purposes of an academic institution is the discussion of ideas. Earlier in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus, after setting out the Beatitudes, tells us that we are to embody these qualities in our lives, and that to the extent that we are able to do so, the effect will be similar to that of salt and light. He makes it very clear that it is our 'good deeds', based on our character, to which people will respond. I believe therefore that the authentic Christian stance in the workplace is to be a witness, not an evangelist. If people ask us what we believe, that is a totally different situation and one to which we should be prepared to respond openly and honestly.

In this final section I would like to say something about being a Christian in the workplace.

I believe that the Christian faith has a very positive approach to work and the workplace. It draws heavily on the Old Testament and especially the Pentateuch, so much so that I would normally refer to it as the Judeo-Christian approach and understanding and not just the Christian. Work is an essential aspect of our human existence because through work we reflect what it means to be created in the image of God. The divine mandate which every human

being has been given is to subdue, to take control, to organise the resources of the earth for the common good. It is through doing this, in other words through work, that a person fulfills their humanity, namely what it is to be a human being. There is therefore a pleasure in a job well done. For the Christian all kinds of work are a vocation, a divine calling. God has given us gifts, personality, intelligence, creativity and freedom and through these we serve Him by working with others and through others. In working as a carpenter Jesus confirmed and sanctified the dignity of human work.

Because of this I believe that the challenge of work for the Christian is to live out our divine calling with God's help and to the best of our abilities. Our problem is that we are imperfect, frail and human, and so forever open to the charge of hypocrisy. But even recognising that we fail, we should embrace the teaching and follow the example set by Jesus, and in this context I would wish to emphasise three qualities which I believe are important in the way we work.

One is integrity, which is about much more than honesty, though it certainly includes that. (Incidentally, it is interesting that one element of the sub-loans crisis in the US has been dishonesty: people declaring false

incomes in order to borrow - credit which has become known as 'liars loans'.)

One of the most striking examples of integrity that I remember was at a meeting of the board of Herman Miller, the US office manufacturing company and leader in design in the 20th century. We were building a new plant in Georgia and at the board meeting the Chairman asked us to

go to the next room where there was the architect's model of the building. After we had looked at it we returned to the boardroom and he asked for our views, which were uniformly positive. He said however he had one problem. The

company had a policy that every employee should have a workspace in which they had access to natural light and could see something of nature. There was one area in the building he said in which this was not possible, and so after discussion, we agreed that the architect be asked to redesign the structure to accommodate our policy.

That is integrity. As Marion Wade, the founder of ServiceMaster put it, 'If you don't live it, you don't believe it'.

For myself I have found in business that integrity is when you advise a client not to carry out a transaction even though that means a loss of income to your bank. Or when you carry through with a commitment to



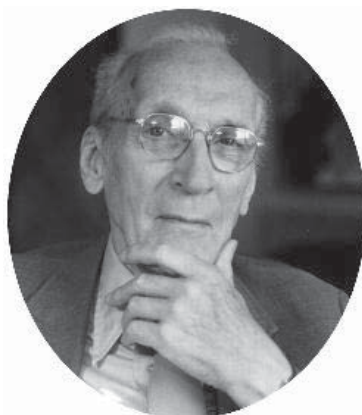
sell a property at an agreed price even though you know because the market has moved you could get a higher one. Or when you take time to listen to the information provided by a whistleblower, rather than picking up the phone and calling the law firm to shut them up.

Another quality I would emphasise is service. Business is typically not viewed as service in the way that public service, community service or military service are. Yet business is as much service as any other profession. Every Christian is called to a life of service – helping or assisting others. Jesus defined leadership in terms of service. “Whoever wishes to be great among you shall become your servant. Whoever wishes to be first among you must become a servant of all. For the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10: 43-45).

When I first heard the expression *servant-leadership* as the model of leadership I have to confess I was not impressed. Then when I read about Robert Greenleaf, who coined the expression and set up an institute in this area, and his background at AT&T, the Sloane School at MIT and Harvard Business School, I realised I had to take it more seriously.

The idea of the servant as leader came to him from reading Herman Hesse’s novel *Journey to the East*. The story is about a band of men on a mythical journey and might even be autobiographical. The central figure, Leo, is the servant of the

party who does the chores but also entertains them with singing and who is a great presence. The journey goes well until Leo disappears and then it falls apart. The narrator who was one of the party, many years later discovers Leo and enters the Order which had sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo whom he had known as a servant was in fact the titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit and an inspirational leader. Leo was a great leader but first he was a servant. He wanted to serve and then he found leadership bestowed on him. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that both his parents for a time, and



Robert Greenleaf

his maternal grandfather, had all been Christian missionaries and that he himself spent some time in a theological seminary.

Thirdly there is the development of people. I have found that helping people develop takes time, can be inconvenient and frequently comes at some cost. But if our faith is to be taken seriously in the workplace it is important that we treat people

properly. William Pollard who was chairman and CEO of ServiceMaster was a great example of this to me. I learned that leaders in business need to create an environment which

- respects the dignity and worth of each individual
- helps each person to realise their potential and not just uses them for what they are worth
- stresses the value of teamwork in everything we do
- is an open and supportive community in which people can raise questions on any subject including religion without feeling threatened or discriminated against.

It is when people see the difference that faith makes in our lives, and the way in which we treat colleagues and clients, that they will begin to realise the potential of religion in the workplace. ■

This is a slightly abridged version of the lecture. The full version can be found on the CABE website: www.cabe-online.org.

Lord Griffiths was a Director of the Bank of England from 1983-85, when he was invited by CABE to write The Creation of Wealth (1984). As Head of Mrs Thatcher’s Policy Unit (1985-1990), he was one of the chief architects of the privatisation and deregulation programmes. He is Vice Chairman of Goldman Sachs International and Chairman of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lambeth Fund and Christian Responsibility in Public Affairs.