

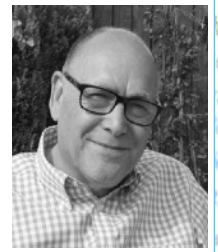
Canopy of Prayer

February #102-2021

Author

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Dear Prayer Partners in Europe

The sacred-secular divide is dead – Long live Business for the Glory of God!

Deuteronomy 8 v 17-18

... You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce (create) wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

And there it is – the purpose of business is to bless the nations and God gives us the ability to do just that – the covenant of Abraham!

Supporting Christians in Business

As I write, I hear about incredible challenges facing us as individuals, churches, schools, hospitals, businesses and nations. I have no idea what to do or how to pray, I can only turn to the Scriptures and enquire of the Lord. I read Romans 8 or Psalm 2 and ask, "Why Lord are the nations of Europe groaning or raging?"

Within weeks of the Covid-19 outbreak, it became clear that the pandemic would take businesses across the globe prisoner, whether Christian or not. Sales and revenues disappeared from many businesses led by Christians; this was going to be like nothing I had seen before. I joined an early Zoom discussion and cried.

Now, one year on, we ask the question, how might we support Christians in business in Europe? I looked back at my own journey as a Christian and business owner for over 30 years and considered the support that I had received.

I considered, what is the true purpose of business? I grew up under Milton Friedman's doctrine that the only purpose of business was to increase shareholder value and that business has no right to have a social, spiritual or environmental output. However, I thank God for thought-leaders like Bruno Roche, the Said business school in Oxford and Arleen Westerhof from the Netherlands, who reminded us that actually the reason why business exists is to bless society. Financial capital is only one output - the reward for doing great business.

Business As Mission is all about doing business with a Kingdom of God purpose or bottom line. It is a vehicle or tool used for proclaiming the Kingdom of God to all its stakeholders. Sometimes this is overt, with public strategies to positively impact the environment (care of God's creation) and society, through its stakeholders and the communities it operates in. Sometimes it has to be more low key and pray for opportunities. In both cases,

Christian workers and business leaders covet your prayers as they engage in the marketplace.

Personally, I benefited in previous recessions from our business prayer team, a small group of 9 faithful pray-ers who prayed through the issues my business faced. What a difference that made, that was one of the best strategies we adopted.

Let's also remember that many business strategies and principles apply also in other sectors, for example in the administration of churches, hospitals, theatres, schools and universities.

I have discovered that a good way to pray forward is to look back at some of the prayers that have helped in the past. I am obliged to one of the BAM Global Chairs, Mats Tunehag, who customised the well-known prayer of St Patrick to be a **prayer for business in Europe**.

Let us pray...

- **Christ with us**, as we pray and work across Europe, as business leaders and as those who work within and around them (the stakeholders);
- **Christ before us**, as we pray with hope for opportunities to share faith in our workplaces, to demonstrate the Kingdom of God and to bless many;
- **Christ behind us**, for history is His story, as we remember the giants whose shoulders we now stand on, so that we can see further;
- **Christ in us**, a guiding light to the nations;
- **Christ beneath us**; He is the foundation and the values we stand on;
- **Christ above us**, as we seek justice and mercy in our supply chains;
- **Christ on our right, Christ on our left**, He is Lord of the marketplace and the public square;
- **Christ when we lie down**, and rest from our work;
- **Christ when we sit down**, and do our work;
- **Christ when we arise**, enthusiastic or weary;
- **Christ in the heart of every person who thinks of us**, and our vision;
- **Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of us**, and our work;
- **Christ in every eye that sees us**, young and old, rich and poor, countrymen and foreigners;
- **Christ in every ear that hears us**, speak about hope for Europe;
- Glory be to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen!

Additional Prayer points:-

1. Pray for wisdom for the French Assemblée Nationale, currently considering a law whose aim is to curb radical Islam, but which poses a real threat to the freedom of religion of evangelical Christians.
2. Pray that political rivalries can be put aside in the new Italian government of national unity under new Prime Minister Mario Draghi, that they could bring stability and make wise decisions about how to use EU funds to help the economy.

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