

# The Wheaton Declaration on Business As Integral Calling

## **WHEATON DECLARATION ON BUSINESS AS INTEGRAL CALLING** October, 2009

During October 2009, women and men of Christian faith with diverse backgrounds drawn from sixteen countries and five global regions gathered in Wheaton, Illinois to explore the place of business in God's purposes, together with the sacred calling of a life in business. We began with an acknowledgement of God's sovereignty and Lordship over all aspects of human life, including our work, our business, our money, our profit, our economy, and our working relationships.

As a body of diverse believers, we shared a common conviction that business, as all human structures and institutions, is created, fallen and in need of transformation so that it can become an expression of the Kingdom of God for the establishment of justice and *shalom*.

### **1) Lamentations**

- We lament the pain existing in all of God's creation and we admit that our sin, indifference and actions (both what we have done and what we have left undone) have contributed and are contributing to that pain.
- As a result of our greed and idolatry, we have failed to live simply, consume consciously, give generously and invest intentionally, allowing for the structure, systems, and cultures of business to create injustice and oppression.
- We confess that we have failed to affirm, equip, and support Christians worldwide for faithful discipleship in business.

- We lament that the church and business itself have undervalued business as a vehicle for living out Christ's calling, and have relied excessively on non-profit approaches that have resulted in dependence, waste, and an unnecessary loss of human dignity.

## **2) Celebration of Faith and Hope**

- We celebrate the growing movement of people seeking to be used by God and to deploy business economic activity for God's Kingdom.
- Business can create value, provide the dignity of work, and transform communities by improving livelihoods.
- Business can be an integral calling to proclaim and demonstrate the Kingdom of God by honoring God, loving people, and serving the world.
- Business can also provide a powerful opportunity for the transformation of individuals to achieve their full potential for creativity and productivity and to flourish and experience a life of abundance as envisioned by the Kingdom of God.
- Business can be used to help restore God's creation from its degraded state.

## **3) Foundational Principles**

- In business, practicing the values of the Kingdom of God should be characterized by operational virtues, including:
  - Passion – a zeal for mission that expresses other-centered concern.
  - Humility – a commitment to serve others with respect.
  - Faith – a willingness to take bold risks.
  - Wisdom – the application of truth to complex circumstances.
  - Integrity – the alignment between our words, deeds and values.
  - Hope – the joy of expectation, especially in the midst of hardship, that comes from a conviction that God's Kingdom is already present and will be fulfilled in eternity.
- The question then becomes: What is truly valued? In particular, we call for further reflection and experimentation on how to measure areas such as:
  - Promoting human dignity and flourishing.
  - Encouraging the development of the whole person.
  - Ensuring every voice is heard.

- Aligning of mission, values and practice consistent with Kingdom purposes.
- Restoration of justice through right relations with God, others and the rest of creation.

**4) Commitments – We commit to:**

- The creation of a culture within the church to address the training of pastors, evangelists and the priesthood of all believers, to affirm, equip, and support business people for faithful discipleship in business.
- Collaborate and network with one another and with other networks to continue our process of learning and discernment.
- Affirm and advocate for Kingdom-centered corporate governance and responsible governmental action within our individual contexts.
- Strive to change our consumption patterns and personal lifestyles as Christ’s body, responsibly stewarding creation for God’s glory and the common good.
- Encourage one another and our faith communities to implement the principles and values expressed above.

It is our deep conviction that businesses that function in alignment with the core values of the Kingdom of God are playing and increasingly should play an important role in holistic transformation of individuals, communities and societies.

**Participants:**

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